To

The Chief Electoral Officers of
All States and UTs

Subject: Account Reconciliation Meeting with the candidates/ election agents with the District Expenditure Monitoring Committee (DEMC) - regarding

Sir/Madam,

In supersession of Commission’s Order No. 76/Instructions/EEPS/2013/ Vol-I, dated 14th March, 2013 regarding under-stated amount of election expenditure and the decision of the District Expenditure Monitoring Committee (DEMC), I am directed to forward herewith revised order of the Commission to be followed by the DEMC in disposing of the cases of under-statement of account of election expenses of the candidates (Changes in italics).

2. I am further directed to request you to bring it to the notice of all the DEOs, Expenditure Observers, officials concerned, candidates and political parties.

3. Kindly acknowledge the receipt of this letter.

Yours faithfully,

(S. K. Rudola)
Secretary
ELECTION COMMISSION OF INDIA
Nirvachan Sadan, Ashoka Road, New Delhi-110001

File No. 76/Instructions/EEPS/2015/Vol-II

Date: 29 May, 2015

Annexure-74

Order

Whereas, the Superintendence, direction and control of all elections to Parliament and the Legislature of every State is vested in the Election Commission under Article 324 of the Constitution; and

Whereas, reports are received that the candidates at elections to Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assembly are spending excessive amount in their election campaigns, which disturbs the level playing field, and are often not showing correct expenses in the day-to-day accounts of their election expenses;

Now, therefore, the Election Commission of India hereby issues the following order for maintaining the purity of election process:

(i) If the Returning Officer or any officer authorized, by the District Election Officer/Returning Officer, is in receipt of information during election process that any candidate has incurred or authorized certain expenditure and has not shown either a part or whole of it in his day to day accounts of election expenditure, maintained by him under section 77(1) of the Representation of People Act, 1951, or has not produced the said accounts for inspection on the scheduled date before the authorized officer or Expenditure Observer, then the Returning Officer shall issue a notice along with the evidence thereof to the candidate preferably within 24 hours of the date of receipt of information or inspection of accounts mentioning the details of expenses, which are not shown truly or correctly in day-to-day account or informing him that he failed to produce his account, as the case may be. However, in case of suspected Paid News items, where notice is issued or is being issued by the Returning Officer as per the recommendation of the Media Certifying and Monitoring Committee (MCMC), such items shall not be covered in this notice.

(ii) Such candidate may reply to the notice within 48 hours, explaining the reasons for omission or default which is brought to his notice. In cases
where the candidate accepts the fact of suppressed expense mentioned in the notice, the same shall be added to his election expenses.

(iii) Where candidate fails to produce his day to day account for inspection and in spite of the notice, the failure continues, then FIR is to be filed under section 171 (1) of Indian Penal Code, after 48 hours of service of such notice and the permission for use of vehicles etc. by the candidate for election campaign shall be withdrawn.

(iv) Where no reply is submitted by the candidate or his election agent within 48 hours of receipt of the notice, then the candidate shall be deemed to have accepted the suppressed amount mentioned in the notice and the same shall be added to the election expenses of such candidate.

(v) If the candidate or his election agent disputes the suppressed expenditure, mentioned in the notice, he shall submit the reply mentioning the reasons for disagreement and the same shall be forwarded to the District Expenditure Monitoring Committee (DEMC) consisting of the following:

1. Expenditure Observer in charge of the Constituency
2. DEO
3. Dy. DEO/Officer in charge of Expenditure Monitoring of the District.

(vi) The DEMC shall decide the case after examining the evidence mentioned in the notice and reply of the candidate thereto, preferably within 72 hours from the date of receipt of the reply from the candidate, whether such suppressed expenditure shall be added or not to the election expenses account of the candidate.

(vii) Training:

a. The DEO shall organize one day facilitation training programme for all the candidates/election agents and the personnel engaged for receiving the accounts within one week before the last date of submission of the account of election expenses.

b. The Nodal Officer of the Expenditure Monitoring Cell and Assistant Expenditure Observer should be associated in the training programme to explain the procedure of e-filing of accounts, the forms and affidavits to be filed and frequently noticed defects. Consequence of not filing or filing
incomplete forms or not filing in the manner prescribed or not showing correct accounts shall also be explained to the candidates/agents.

c. In this training programme they will also be apprised about the Account Reconciliation meeting, in which they should come prepared with all final accounts and registers.

d. The DEO shall notify the date and venue of training on procedure of lodging the final accounts and also about the date of Account Reconciliation meeting, positively on or by the date of declaration of result.

(viii) Account Reconciliation meeting:

(a) The candidates shall be given another opportunity to reconcile the under-stated amount of election expenditure, if any, in the Account Reconciliation Meeting, to be convened by the DEO, on the 26th day of the declaration of result. The DEO shall ensure that each candidate is informed in writing on or by the day of declaration of result about this meeting, so that they/their election agents can reconcile the disputed items of election expenditure in their accounts of election expenses with the evidence gathered during election process and the notices issued by the RO.

(b) The DEMC, after scrutinizing the accounts, shall pass the order in writing giving detailed reasons in cases, where the differences could not be reconciled and serve it on the candidate/agent on the same day. If the candidate agrees with the DEMC order, he/she may incorporate the same in his final accounts. If the candidate does not agree with the DEMC order, he/she may lodge his final accounts with the DEO, with the reasons for the disagreement by way of a letter to DEO.

(c) If the candidate has already lodged his accounts prior to Account Reconciliation meeting, he/she may revise the accounts, within the statutory period of 30 days of completion of election, in order to incorporate the findings of DEMC.

(ix) If the candidate does not file his statements of election expenses without any valid reasons within the stipulated period of 30 days from the day of declaration of result, then the DEO shall call for the explanation of the candidate suo motu and send the report to the Commission along with the reply of the candidate and his recommendation.
(x) In spite of the Account Reconciliation meeting, if there is disagreement with the accounts lodged by the candidates, the DEO shall forward the Scrutiny report to the Commission, with his recommendations, DEMC Order, certified copies of registers, bills and vouchers and other pieces of evidence.

(xi) The DEO's scrutiny report has to be entered in EEMS software within seven days of its finalization.

(xii) The above procedure shall be followed with immediate effect.

2. The Commission further directs the CEOs to bring it to the notice of all political parties, candidates, members of DEMC and all concerned in the State.

By order,

(S.K. Rudola)
Secretary