

ELECTION COMMISSION OF INDIA
Nirvachan Sadan, Ashoka Road, New Delhi-110001

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

Date: 29 May, 2015

To

The Chief Electoral Officers of
All States and U.Ts.

Subject: Deployment of Booth Level Awareness Group (BAGs) for ethical voting campaign after the announcement of elections – matter reg.

Sir/Madam,

The Commission has reviewed the functioning of currently set up Village/ Ward Level Awareness Groups (VAGs/WAGs) and has decided that the said system of VAG/WAG shall be discontinued and in its place the unified Booth Level Awareness Groups (BAG) shall be set up for the purpose. In supersession of the instruction No. 76/Instructions/2014/EEPS/Vol-IV, dated 7th March, 2014, I am directed to inform the following:

1. With reference to the Commission's letter No. 23/1/2015/ERS, dated 27-02-2015, Booth Level Awareness Group (BAGs) are to be formed by BLOs comprising of Booth level government functionaries, para workers, representatives of Local body, BLAs, BLVs, Head or representative of Local body, BLAs, BLVs, Head or representatives of Schools/Colleges in the Booth area, NSS/NYK volunteers and member representatives of local CSO/NGO ensuring that members other than BLAs are not aligned to any political party.
2. In addition to their role in purification and authentication of electoral rolls of the booth, in connection with the NERPAP, I am further directed to state that the BAGs shall, after the announcement of election, function as under:
 - (a) To spread the message of ethical voting among voters to abstain from any inducement like cash, gift, liquor or community feast organized for campaign purpose, during election process, as the receiver is also punishable with one year imprisonment and fine under Section 171 B of Indian Penal Code.
 - b) To organize 'nukkad' meetings/rallies/group discussion against the evil effects of bribe during elections in their respective areas and the Sector Officers may be present in such meeting.

- c) To associate senior citizens, retired officers, NSS or NCC Cadets, civil society organization for spreading the message of ethical voting.
 - d) To popularize advertisements/posters/banners against bribery
 - e) To encourage collection of evidence of malpractices either by mobile software developed by the Commission or otherwise, to train any member of the group or any citizen to capture such photos, videos, audios of malpractices and to upload to DEO website/ CEO website and the control room or inform authorities by any other means confidentially. This group shall not directly take any action against any malpractice and it shall inform the District Complaint Monitoring Cell or upload end users for necessary action.
3. I am further directed to inform that-
- (a) The DEO shall draw a district level plan for ethical voting campaign, associating the BAGs, well in advance so that the public are aware of penal consequences of accepting bribe during election process.
 - (b) The DEO shall arrange to download the mobile software from the Commission's website and train all BAGs about the procedure of uploading photo/ audio/video wherever applicable. The contact numbers of the BAGs shall be given to the complaint monitoring cell and Flying Squads so that action on their complaints is taken seamlessly.
 - (c) The DEO shall put in place proper system to receive the complaints through the website and procedure for taking immediate action against such complaints. In case, the BAG gives any information, it should be ensured that Flying Squad reaches the spot within shortest possible time and take necessary action and gather corroborative evidences. The action taken shall be informed to the BAG, so that they get assurance that action is being taken.
 - (d) The DEO shall also give wide publicity of the facility of uploading complaints and the software available to the public.
 - (e) Any information given by BAG shall be marked as "BAG" in the complaint register and the Expenditure Observer will also examine the action taken by the teams, on such complaints. Identity of the BAG members giving information/complaint to District Complaint Monitoring Cell shall be kept secret, keeping in view their personal security.
 - (f) The DEO shall hand over advertisement materials on ethical voting to the BAG for public display and shall also interact with the members for their confidence building and sensitizing them.
 - (g) The list of BAGs with contact numbers should be given by the DEO to the

Awareness Observer, General Observer and Expenditure Observer on their arrival so that during their visit to the area, they will sensitize such team members, about their role in spreading the awareness.

(h) The DEO shall periodically check that prompt action on the uploaded photos/videos/audios to the website, is taken by the complaint monitoring cell and Flying Squads.

4 This shall be brought to the notice of all concerned including all observers the sector magistrates and police I/C Officers and BAGs.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S.K. Rudola', written in a cursive style.

(S.K. RUDOLA)
SECRETARY