

ELECTION COMMISSION OF INDIA

Nirvachan Sadan, Ashoka Road, New Delhi 110001

No.437/6/COMP/ECI/LET/FUNCT/MCC/2024

Dated: 01.04.2024

ORDER

Whereas, the Election Commission of India has announced General Election to the Lok Sabha and Legislative Assemblies of Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Odisha & Sikkim, 2024 vide its Press Note No. ECI/PN/23/2024, dated 16th March, 2024 and provisions of Model Code of Conduct for political parties and candidates have come into force from that very date; and

2. Whereas, Clause (2) of Part I 'General Conduct' of Model Code of Conduct for the Guidance of Political Parties and Candidates states that:

"Criticism of other political parties, when made, shall be confined to their policies and programme, past record and work. Parties and Candidates shall refrain from criticism of all aspects of private life, not connected with the public activities of the leaders or workers of other parties. Criticism of other parties or their workers based on unverified allegations or distortion shall be avoided."

3. Whereas, Para 3.8.2(ii) of Manual on Model Code of Conduct, 2019 provides that: -

"(a) Clause 3.8.2 (ii): Nobody should indulge in any activities or make any statements that would amount to attack on personal life of any person or statements that may be malicious or offending decency and morality."

4. Whereas, the Commission's advisory issued to the political parties on 1st March 2024 regarding plummeting levels of political discourse. Inter-alia provides that: -

"9. iii. No aspect of the private life, not connected with the public activities, of the leaders or workers of other parties is to be criticized. Low level personal attacks to insult the rivals shall not be made."

5. Whereas, the Commission's above advisory further states that:

"9. v. The political parties and candidates to refrain from any deeds/action/utterances that may be construed as being repugnant to the honour and dignity of women."

6. Whereas, the Commission received a complaint dated 26th March, 2024 from the Bharatiya Janata Party wherein it was alleged that Ms. Supriya Shrinata, Chairperson, Social Media and Digital Platform, All India Congress Committee has posted a picture of Ms. Kangana Ranaut along with the following derogatory remarks on social media platform X (formerly Twitter) on 25th March, 2024 from her social media handle:

"क्या भाव चल रहा है मंडी में कोई बताएगा?"

7. Whereas, the derogatory remarks were posted on Instagram account of Ms. Supriya Shrinata; and

8. Whereas, the Commission had issued a show cause Notice no. 437/6/COMP/ECI/LET/FUNCT/MCC/2024, dated 27th March, 2024 to Ms. Supriya Shrinata for violation of the aforesaid provisions of Model Code of Conduct for the above said post; and

9. Whereas, the Commission has taken cognisance of the fact that Ms Shrinata is Chairperson, Social Media and Digital Platform of her party at national level and is expected to know sensitivities of wider communication; and

10. Whereas, a reply dated 29th March, 2024 has been received from Ms. Supriya Shrinata in response to the Commission's above said notice; and

11. Whereas, the Commission has carefully gone through the contents and averments made in the aforesaid reply of Ms. Supriya Shrinata and is convinced that she has made a low-level personal attack and thus violated the provisions of Model Code of Conduct; and

12. Whereas, women have commanded highest respect in Indian society, past and present and while the Indian constitution and all institutions of the country have constantly pursued the ideas and ideals of ensuring the rights and dignity of women on all fronts and further empowering them; and

13. Whereas, this Commission is duly engaged in strengthening women's representation and participation in the electoral process, and while the gender gap in electoral registration and voter turnout have vastly improved, and in fact women have surged ahead; and

14. Whereas, the Commission considers the whole process of conduct of election as a major enhancer of status of women in India and is committed not to allow any erosion of this status in any manner during the election period under its own aegis; and

15. Now, therefore the Commission hereby strongly condemns to impugned statements made by Ms. Supriya Shrinete and strongly censures her for the above said misconduct. The Commission also strictly warns her to remain careful in her public utterances during the currency of Model Code of Conduct.

By Order,

(Ashwani Kumar Mohal)
Secretary

To,

Ms. Supriya Shrinete,
Chairperson, Social Media and Digital Platform,
All India Congress Committee,
24, Akbar Road, New Delhi

Copy to:

Shri Mallikarjun Kharge, President, Indian National Congress, 24, Akbar Road, New Delhi.

Kindly refer to the advisory issued by the Commission to all Political Parties on 1st March 2024 regarding plummeting level of political discourse, wherein it was inter-alia specifically brought to the notice that "The political parties and candidates to refrain from

any deeds/action/utterances that may be construed as being repugnant to the honour and dignity of women.”

You may please issue specific advisory to all party functionaries involved in election campaign and in interactions in public domain not to commit such type of violation as in the instant case, besides following the Model Code of Conduct in letter and spirit so as to not trigger a chain reaction of similar comments vitiating the election campaign.

By Order,



(Ashwani Kumar Mohal)
Secretary