

Election Commission sets up panel to revise Expenditure Limit for candidates

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The Election Commission (EC) on Wednesday constituted a committee to examine whether the expenditure limit for candidates contesting the Lok Sabha and assembly elections need to be raised, given an increase in the size of the electorate and rising inflation, among other issues.

The expenditure ceiling for a candidate was last revised in 2014.

Key Highlights

- The two-member panel will submit its report within four months of its constitution. This comes in the wake of the government on Monday, upon the suggestion of the EC, enhancing the expenditure limit by 10% for bigger states such as Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Bihar and Haryana because of difficulties faced by candidates in campaigning amid the covid-19 pandemic.
- The increase is applicable from the ongoing elections, including that of the Bihar assembly.
- Some of the key issues that the two-member panel comprising former director general investigations Harish Kumar and EC secretary general Umesh Sinha will look at are assessing the impact of an increase in the electorate across states and Union territories and a change in Cost Inflation Index or any other factor on the expenditure

incurred by candidates in recent elections.

- It will seek inputs of political parties and other stakeholders. The expenditure limit for Andhra Pradesh and Telangana was enhanced in 2018, according to the EC.
- The maximum expenditure a candidate can now incur for campaigning during the Lok Sabha elections is 77 lakh, an increase from the earlier 70 lakh, with the enhancement for bigger states such as Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Bihar, and Haryana.
- For assembly polls, the limit has been hiked from 28 lakh to 30.8 lakh. The expenditure limit differs from state to state, depending on its size.

SOURCE: *The Hindu, Livemint*