

Star Campaigner

A Star Campaigner, by standard definition, is a candidate chosen by a political party to contest in a given constituency. He/she is chosen usually on the basis of popularity but there is no specific definition under Indian law and the Election Commission (EC)

The information from this article will be useful for candidates in their Civil Services Examination

Who is a Star Campaigner?

Star campaigners are the people nominated by parties to campaign in a given set of constituencies. They are usually prominent and popular faces within the party. A recognised (mainstream party) can field a maximum number of 40-star campaigners while unrecognised political parties can field up to 20 campaigners. The list of star campaigners is declared to the Election Commission within a week from the date of notification of an election.

It was recently in the news that the status of Congress leader and former Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh, Kamalnath Singh, as a star campaigner has been revoked by the Election Commission of India. The reason given by the EC was that Kamal Nath had violated the model code of conduct set by the Election Commission despite repeated warnings

Later the Supreme Court of India stated that the EC has no right to take away the star campaigner status of any political candidate.

What are the guidelines for the conduct of a Star Campaigner?

Section 77(1) of the Representation of People Act, 1951 contains the Guidelines for Star Campaigners. It is issued by the Election Commission, from time to time. The guidelines make selection or revocation of 'star campaigners' the special rights of the political party.

What are the rules of expenditure regarding a Star Campaigner?

The expenditure on rally and travel by the star campaigner is borne by the candidate in the following manner:

1. A candidate shares the stage with a star campaigner in a rally.
2. There are posters of star campaigners along with photos of other candidates displayed.
3. If the name of the candidate is mentioned by the star campaigner during a rally or any other event.
4. In the event that is more than one candidate sharing the stage, or there are posters with their photographs, then the expenses are equally divided among all such candidates.

