



Law needed to deal with cash collection by parties: CEC

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Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) V Sampath today said they would like to have a separate legislation to deal with matters such as collection of cash by political parties from aspirants of party tickets at the time of elections.

"This is a grey area," Sampath told the media here today. He was asked about the notice sent by the Karnataka High Court yesterday to Congress chief Sonia Gandhi, Election Commission of India (ECI) and KPCC chief G Parameshwara questioning the legality of funds collected by the Congress party from aspirants of party tickets.

The petitioner V Shashidhar, a member of the Congress and president of

PETITIONER SAYS

- He wanted to contest elections and submitted an application for party's ticket along with Rs 100 as application fee and Rs 10,000 as party fund
- There were about 2,500 such aspirants for the 224 Assembly constituencies in Karnataka from whom the party collected similar amounts
- Collection of fund from party members for Assembly elections was contrary to the constitution of the Congress

Akhila Karnataka Police Maha Sangha, sought direction to the ECI to frame guidelines for preventing collection of such funds by political parties, including the Congress, from ticket aspirants and others. The petitioner also sought a direction to the ECI to conduct probe by an independent agency into the collection of funds and the manner of selection of candidates by the Congress.

The petitioner wanted to

contest elections from Yelahanka Assembly constituency and submitted an application for party's ticket along with Rs 100 as application fee and Rs 10,000 as party fund for Assembly election 2013 for which he was given a receipt.

He pointed out that there were about 2,500 such aspirants for the 224 Assembly constituencies in Karnataka state from whom the party collected similar amounts.

Shashidhar claimed that collection of fund from party members for Assembly elections was contrary to the constitution of the Congress Party as amended with effect from November 17, 2007 by the All India Congress Committee (AICC).

Sampath said that though he was yet to receive the notice sent by the HC, he had read about the case in the media.

"This is an intra-party matter. Our law relating to (internal affairs) of political parties is not robust. Unless we know their (political parties') constitution we cannot comment on such things (raising funds from aspirants)", Sampath said.

KPCC chief G Parameshwara justified the fund-raising and said Rs 2500 collected from each aspirant was the "processing fee" for assessing their applications.