

E-mail : bciinfo21@gmail.com
info@barcouncilofindia.org
Website : www.barcouncilofindia.org



Tel. : (91) 011-4922 5000
Fax : (91) 011-4922 5011

भारतीय विधिज्ञ परिषद् BAR COUNCIL OF INDIA

(Statutory Body Constituted under the Advocates Act, 1961)
21, Rouse Avenue Institutional Area, Near Bal Bhawan, New Delhi - 110002

BCI:D:2198/2026

To,

Date: 21.04.2026

The Hon'ble Chairmen,
All the State Bar Council/s

The Secretaries/ concerned in charge official of the State Bar Council/s
All State Bar Councils for information, dissemination and compliance

&

Women Advocates enrolled with State Bar Councils/who may be members of
Bar Associations
Through the State Bar Councils

&

All the Women Candidates in State Bar Council Elections
Through the State Bar Councils

Sub.: Hearing before the High Powered Election Supervisory Committee
regarding co-option of women in the State Bar Councils on 26.04.2026 at 11 and
on 27.04.2026 at 5 pm.

Sir's/Ma'am's,

The Hon'ble Supreme Court of India vide its order dated 08.12.2025 directed that 30% of the total seats of the State Bar Councils, where elections are being held in the current election cycle should be represented by women wherein 20% are to be filled up by way of election and 10% through way of co-option.

The Bar Council of India had framed the rules in regard to co-option of women candidates which were challenged before the Hon'ble Supreme Court having IA No 62386/2026, 62395/2026 and 62401/2026 in W.P. No. 1319/2026, wherein the Hon'ble Court observed

"2. Following the past practice, we dispose of these applications with liberty to the applicant(s) to approach the High Powered Election Supervisory Committee headed by Justice Sudhanshu Dhulia, former Judge of this Court. With respect to the legality of the rules, we request the Committee to assist us with its expert opinion. Further orders shall be passed keeping in mind the recommendations of the Committee. The parties shall be at liberty to approach the said Committee to raise all the issues sought to be presented before us through these applications."

Thereafter, another writ, W.P. No. (Civil) No. 372/2026 titled 'Siva Kumari R v. Union of India & Ors.' was filed before the Hon'ble Supreme Court regarding co-option of women in the State Bar Councils, the court while disposing of the matter in its order dated 13.04.2026 observed that

"8. These are all suggestions, and each option has its own merits and demerits. It seems to us that the High-Powered Supervisory Committee headed by Justice Sudhanshu Dhulia is well-equipped to take a final call in this regard. It goes without saying that the petitioners/intervenors, State Bar Councils, Bar Council of India, and the women candidates, who are in the fray in different States, and other women advocates, would be the direct stakeholders whose assistance to the Supervisory Committee would be helpful in taking a transparent and objective decision.

9. We, therefore, dispose of these writ petitions, at this stage, with liberty to the petitioners/applicants to approach the High Powered Committee. We request the Supervisory Committee to pass an appropriate order with respect to the manner in which the co-option exercise shall take place. As noted above, the Bar Council of India, the State Bar Councils, and other stakeholders may be heard before passing the order."

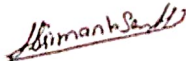
Therefore, in the High Powered Election Supervisory Committee has directed that a virtual hearing with all the concerned stakeholders shall be held on 26.04.2026 at 11:00 A.M. and 27.04.2026 at 05:00 P.M. The virtual link of which shall be shared in due course of time.

Accordingly, all the concerned stakeholders send their representations/submissions to the given email id: sec.supervisorycommittee@gmail.com. at the earliest feasible as per directions of the Hon'ble High Powered Election Supervisory Committee.

The Secretary/concerned in charge official of the State Bar Council, shall be required to ensure that the present communication is disseminated forthwith to all concerned stakeholders by every available and expeditious means at his/her disposal, including, WhatsApp, e-mail, publication on the official website of the State Bar Council, display on the notice board of the State Bar Council, and circulation for display on the notice boards of the concerned Bar Associations.

It is requested that Hon'ble Chairman of the respective State Bar Council/s should endeavour to attend the meeting virtually and personally.

This is for your necessary information and for compliance of directions of the Hon'ble High Powered Election Supervisory Committee, pursuant to the orders of the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India.


Srimanto Sen
Principal Secretary
Bar Council of India

Minutes of Meeting dated 21.04.2026 of the High-Powered Election Supervisory Committee constituted by the Supreme Court order dated 18.11.2025 in W.P (C) No. 1319/2023

Vide order dated 08.12.2025 in W.P(C) No. 581/2024, the Supreme Court had ordered that 30% of the total seats in each State Bar Council shall be represented by women members of the Bar. Out of these 30% seats, 20% were to be filled by election of women candidates, and the remaining 10% seats by way of co-option. However, no method for co-option was prescribed and it was directed that proposals regarding co-option be placed before the Supreme Court of India.

Thereafter, the Bar Council of India framed certain Rules regarding the co-option of women candidates and the same were challenged before the Supreme Court. Consequently, vide order dated 24.02.2026 passed in certain I.As in W.P(C) No.1319/2026, Supreme Court sought this Committee's opinion regarding the Rules framed by the Bar Council of India as regards co-option.

Meanwhile, another Writ Petition [W.P(C) No. 372/2026] was filed before the Supreme Court with the same issue regarding co-option of women candidates in the State Bar Councils. The Supreme Court, vide its order dated 13.04.2026, asked this Committee to pass an appropriate order prescribing the manner in which the exercise of co-option shall take place. The relevant portion of the said order dated 13.04.2026 reads as follows:

“5. We are informed that, meanwhile, the Bar Council of India has notified the Bar Council of India Rules for Co-option of Women Advocates in State Bar Council and Removal of Women-Representation Deficiency for the Current Election Cycle, which, inter alia, provides that the selection of candidates for 10% co-option shall be made by the Bar Council of India.

6. The lack of clarity in the previous orders of this Court as to what ought to be the mode and manner of 10% co-option is the essential cause of action giving rise to the present proceedings.

7. It is urged before us that in various States, like Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, there are instances where women candidates have succeeded and won the elections, securing votes even more than their male counterparts. On this premise, it is urged that instead of the Bar Council of India proceeding with co-option, one of the following alternatives be adopted:

(a) the co-option should be from amongst the contesting women candidates who have secured the highest votes, though they could not be elected within the initial 20% representation;

(b) the discretion of co-option should be left to the State Bar Councils; or

(c) the exercise of co-option be done by the State Election Committees.

8. These are all suggestions, and each option has its own merits and demerits. It seems to us that the High-Powered Supervisory Committee headed by Justice Sudhanshu Dhulia is well-equipped to take a final call in this regard. It goes without saying that the petitioners/intervenors, State Bar Councils, Bar Council of India, and the women candidates, who are in the fray in different States, and other women advocates, would be the direct stakeholders whose

assistance to the Supervisory Committee would be helpful in taking a transparent and objective decision.

9. We, therefore, dispose of these writ petitions, at this stage, with liberty to the petitioners/applicants to approach the High-Powered Committee. We request the Supervisory Committee to pass an appropriate order with respect to the manner in which the co-option exercise shall take place. As noted above, the Bar Council of India, the State Bar Councils, and other stakeholders may be heard before passing the order.”

The three members of the Supervisory Committee met today to work out the details in the implementation of the Hon'ble Supreme Court's order dated 13.04.2026. After the discussion, it has been decided that this Supervisory Committee must first hear all the stakeholders before coming to any conclusion.

Mr. Srimanto Sen, Principal Secretary, Bar Council of India, is hence requested to give notice to all the concerned parties indicated in the order dated 13.04.2026 so that we have before us a view of all the stakeholders and, in particular, the women advocates.

This Supervisory Committee will hear the concerned parties virtually on 26.04.2026 at 11 AM and on 27.04.2026 at 5 PM in virtual mode. The Bar Council of India is requested to make proper arrangements for the virtual hearing.

Meanwhile, all the concerned stakeholders may send their representations/submissions, along with their suggestions as to the process which shall be adopted for co-option. These suggestions shall be sent to the Supervisory Committee on its official email id i.e. sec.supervisorycommittee@gmail.com, with the subject 'Representation/Suggestion regarding co-option'.

New Delhi
21.04.2026



Justice Sudhanshu Dhulia
Former Judge, Supreme Court of India
Chairperson

For and on behalf of the Supervisory Committee