

**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](mailto: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