

# **MODEL GOVERNANCE CODE FOR MEETINGS OF GRAM PANCHAYATS**

The following is the text of the Model Governance Code for Meetings of the Gram Panchayats.

## **INTRODUCTION**

This Code seeks to prescribe a set of principles for convening and conducting Meetings of Gram Panchayats and matters related thereto.

The principles enunciated in this Code for Meetings of the Gram Panchayats are equally applicable to meetings of Standing Committees, unless otherwise stated herein or otherwise stipulated by any other applicable laws, Guidelines, Rules or Regulations.

A Gram Panchayat cannot act by itself and it acts only through its elected members i.e. Panch(s) and Sarpanch. Moreover, Panch(s) and Sarpanch are in a fiduciary position vis-à-vis the Gram Panchayat and, to that extent, they are also deemed to be trustees of the properties and assets of the Gram Panchayat. They owe a duty to the people of the village and should exercise care, skill and diligence in the discharge of their functions and in the exercise of the powers vested with them. All the powers vested in Panch(s) and Sarpanch are exercisable by them only collectively through decisions taken at a validly convened meeting of the Gram Panchayat.

The fundamental principles with respect to Governance of Gram Panchayat Meetings are laid down in the respective State laws. This model code facilitates compliance with these principles by endeavouring to provide further clarity where there is ambiguity and establishing benchmark standards to harmonise prevalent diverse practices.

This model code does not seek to substitute or supplant any existing laws. It



strives to supplement such laws for promoting better governance in the functioning of Gram Panchayat.

Gram Panchayats functioning under the different State Government(s) are free to adopt the provision of this Model Governance Code on Meetings of the Gram Panchayat. If any of the provisions of this code are or become inconsistent with the applicable laws, provisions of such applicable laws shall prevail.

## **DEFINITIONS**

In this Code, unless the context otherwise requires -

“Clear days” means days excluding the day of the dispatch of notice and the day of the meeting, however includes Sundays and holidays.

“Competent Authority” means such officer or authority as the State Government may, by notification in the Official Gazette, appoint to perform such functions and exercise such powers in relation to Gram Panchayats as are specified in the notification;

“Government” or “State Government” means the State Government of the concerned State;

“Gram Panchayat” means the institutions of self-Government for rural areas at the level of village(s).

“Member” means a member of a Gram Panchayat and includes a Sarpanch;

“Interested Member” means a Member having personal or financial interest, either directly or indirectly, in any matter placed before a Meeting of the Gram Panchayat.

“Panch” means a member of a Panchayat, other than a Sarpanch;



“Prescribed” means prescribed by respective State Acts or Rules made thereunder;

“Sarpanch” means the President or Chairperson or Pradhan of the Gram Panchayat by whatever name called, elected directly by the persons registered in the electoral rolls relating to the village or the group of villages comprised within the area of the Panchayat.

“Up-Sarpanch” means the Vice-President or Vice-Chairperson or Up-Pradhan of a Gram Panchayat, by whatever name called, elected directly by the persons registered in the electoral rolls relating to the village or the group of villages comprised within the area of the Panchayat.

“Secretary” means a person appointed with such designation by the State Government or by such authority as may be authorised by the Government in this behalf, for a Panchayat.

“Standing Committee” means a Standing Committee constituted by the Panchayat;

“Special Meeting” means a meeting, other than a regular meeting of the Gram Panchayat, convened suo moto by the Sarpanch or on the special request of the members, to discuss any specific item including matters of urgent nature.

Words and expressions used herein and not defined shall have the meaning respectively assigned to them under the State Act under which respective Gram Panchayat has been constituted.

## **1. CONVENING A MEETING**

### **1.1 Authority**

- 1.1.1 The Secretary, on the direction of the Sarpanch, shall summon a Meeting of the Gram Panchayat.
- 1.1.2 If a meeting is statutorily required to be convened within a prescribed period, the Secretary shall summon such meeting in consultation with the Sarpanch.
- 1.1.3 The Secretary on requisition by the prescribed number of Members shall consult the Sarpanch for convening the meeting.
- 1.1.4 The Sarpanch may whenever he thinks fit, and shall, upon the written request of the prescribed number of members, require the Secretary to call a special meeting within the prescribed period from the date of receipt of such request and to take such steps as may be necessary to convene the meeting.
- 1.1.5 In case the Sarpanch fails to call a special meeting, then the Up-Sarpanch or in his absence, the Competent Authority may call such meeting and require the Secretary to give notice to the Members and to take such steps as may be necessary to convene the meeting.

### **1.2 Time, Place and Serial Number of meeting**

- 1.2.1 A meeting may be convened on any day, at any time ***between 9 am to 5 pm,*** at any place within the area of the Panchayat or at such other place as may be approved by the



Gram Panchayat/Government.

1.2.2 Every Meeting of the Panchayat shall be serially numbered for ease of reference.

1.2.3 Serial number of the original Meeting and the adjourned Meeting, if any, should be the same. The manner in which Meetings may be serially numbered is given below:

[Illustration: If serial number of the original Meeting is 6<sup>th</sup>, the serial number of the adjourned Meeting should be 6<sup>th</sup> Meeting (Adjourned)]

*(i) Serially numbering on Calendar Year basis as follows:*

*"1/2015", "2/2015", "3/2015" and so on.... In the next year, numbering would be "1/2016", "2/2016", "3/2016" and so on.*

*(ii) Serially numbering on financial year basis as follows:*

*"1/2015-16", "2/2015-16", "3/2015-16" and so on.... or 1/15-16, 2/15-16, 3/15-16 and so on.....*

*(iii) Continuous serially numbering across years: 120th Meeting, 121<sup>st</sup> Meeting, 122nd Meeting and so on .....*

### **1.3 Notice**

1.3.1 Notice of the meeting of the Gram Panchayat shall be served at least five clear days before the date of the meeting.

1.3.2 If a majority of the Members agree to convene a special meeting, the Notice thereof may be given at a shorter period of time than that stated above but at least 24 hours before the meeting.

1.3.3 Where the Meetings of the Gram Panchayat are held on pre-determined dates, such Meetings may be convened



without any separate Notice, unless the applicable laws require for separate notice for each meeting.

- 1.3.4 Notice shall specify the serial number, date, day, time and full address of the venue of the Meeting.
- 1.3.5 Notice of the meeting of the Gram Panchayat shall be issued by the Secretary or by such other officer as prescribed by the Government for this purpose and in their absence, the Sarpanch or any other member, authorised by the Panchayat for this purpose may issue the notice of the Meeting.
- 1.3.6 Notice shall contain the contact details and authority of the person issuing the Notice.
- 1.3.7 Notice in writing of every Meeting (except where exempted in terms of para 1.3.3 above) shall be given to every Member and such officer as may be prescribed by the Government, by hand or by post or by e-mail.
- 1.3.8 Wherever the presence of a Patwari or other Tehsil level functionaries of the State Government or of a Panchayati Raj Institution, is required or desired by the Gram Panchayat at its meeting, the Notice of such meeting shall also be sent to them. The notice shall also be sent to such officer as may be prescribed by the Government.
- 1.3.9 In order to facilitate effective and timely communication, the Notice of a Meeting may be given through SMS or other software used by the Panchayat, followed by a copy of the written Notice as stated above.
- 1.3.10 The Notice shall also be affixed on the Notice Board of the Gram Panchayat. In case of pre-determined dates a



general notice specifying day, interval, time and full address of the venue of the Meetings shall be kept affixed during such period.

- 1.3.11 The Notice should preferably be sent either on the letter-head of the person issuing the Notice or on the letter head of the Gram Panchayat, if any.
- 1.3.12 Notice shall be sent at the registered address of the Member or such other address, if any, provided by the Member for the purpose.
- 1.3.13 The Gram Panchayat shall maintain proof of sending Notice and its delivery.
- 1.3.14 In case of delivery of Notice by hand, the signature of the recipient will be obtained in a register maintained for this purpose and be kept as record of proof of delivery.
- 1.3.15 In case of Notice sent through e-mail, the proof of delivery may be maintained by way of the soft copy.
- 1.3.16 Proof of sending Notice and its delivery shall be preserved for a period of five years or such higher period as may be decided by the Gram Panchayat.

**(A sample format of Notice is placed at Annexure-A)**

#### **1.4 Notice of an Adjourned Meeting**

- 1.4.1 Notice of an adjourned meeting shall be given to all Members including those who did not attend the Meeting on the originally convened date.



1.4.2 If the date of the adjourned Meeting is decided at the Meeting itself where all the Members are present, the Notice should be given forthwith at the Meeting.

1.4.3 Notice of every Meeting so adjourned shall be affixed on the Notice Board of the Panchayat.

## **1.5 Agenda of the Meeting**

1.5.1 The Secretary shall finalise the Agenda and Notes on Agenda of every Meeting in consultation with the Sarpanch.

1.5.2 Each item of business to be taken up at the Meeting shall be serially numbered.

1.5.3 Agenda setting out the business to be transacted at the Meeting and Notes on Agenda shall be given to all the Members along with the Notice of the Meeting, unless otherwise provided in the applicable laws.

1.5.4 The Notes on Agenda shall specify details about the business to be transacted at the meeting.

1.5.5 The Notes on Agenda may be sent separately after issuing the Notice, but at least 3 clear days before the Meeting.

1.5.6 Agenda and Notes on Agenda of the Meeting of the Gram Panchayat shall be sent by the Secretary or by such other officer as prescribed by the Government for this purpose and in their absence, by the Sarpanch or any other Member, authorised by the Panchayat for this purpose.

1.5.7 Wherever the presence of the Patwari or other Tehsil level





functionaries of the State Government or of a Panchayati Raj Institution, is required or desired by the Gram Panchayat at a Meeting, the Agenda and Notes on Agenda of such meeting shall also be sent to them.

- 1.5.8 Agenda and Notes on Agenda shall also be sent to such officer as may be prescribed by the Government.
- 1.5.9 If majority of the Members agree to convene a special Meeting, the Agenda and Notes on Agenda may be circulated at a shorter period of time than stated above. In such cases, the Agenda and Notes on Agenda shall be given at least 24 hours before the meeting.

**(A list of Standard Agenda Items is placed at *Annexure-B*)**

#### **1.6 Consideration of any other item of business**

- 1.6.1 No item of business other than those included in the Agenda shall be considered at a Meeting of the Gram Panchayat.
- 1.6.2 Any other item not included in the Agenda of the Meeting, may be placed at the next meeting of the Gram Panchayat or in case of urgent matters a special meeting may be convened.
- 1.6.3 However, items of urgent nature having wider public interest may be taken up for consideration with the permission of the Sarpanch and with the consent of the majority of the Members of the Gram Panchayat.

## **2. FREQUENCY OF MEETING**



- 2.1 A Gram Panchayat shall meet for the transaction of business as often as may be necessary.
- 2.2 Unless otherwise provided under the applicable laws, the Gram Panchayat shall meet at least once in every month.

### **3. QUORUM**

#### **3.1 Quorum for the Meeting of the Gram Panchayat**

- 3.1.1 Quorum for a Meeting of the Gram Panchayat shall be majority of the total number of Members of the Gram Panchayat for the time being or such minimum number of Members as prescribed under the applicable laws.
- 3.1.2 Quorum shall be present throughout the meeting.
- 3.1.3 If the required quorum is not present at any stage of the remaining item of business shall not be taken up for consideration and be deferred for the next meeting, with reasons to be recorded in writing.

#### **3.2 Quorum of Non-Interested Members / Disclosure of interest**

- 3.2.1 An Interested Member (whether or not the Sarpanch/ Up-Sarpanch), shall neither be reckoned for Quorum nor shall participate during discussion and voting on respective item in which he is interested.
- 3.2.2 If the Sarpanch is interested in any item of business, such fact shall be disclosed by him at the meeting before consideration of such item and he shall leave



the Chair to any Non-interested member in respect of such item.

3.2.3 If disclosure of interest is already communicated to the Secretary before circulation of the Agenda and Notes on Agenda, then such disclosure shall be indicated in the Notes on Agenda in respect of such item.

3.2.4 The disclosure of interest by interested Member(s) in a matter to be considered at the Meeting and the fact that they abstained from the discussion/voting at the meeting on the said matter shall be recorded in the Minutes.

### **3.3 Adjournment of the Meeting for want of quorum**

3.3.1 If, at the appointed time for the Meeting, a quorum is not present, the Member(s) present shall wait for at least 30 minutes or for such longer period as may be prescribed by the Government or agreed to by the Member(s) present at the meeting and if within such period there is no quorum, the Meeting shall be adjourned to any future day on such time as the Chairperson or in his absence as the Member(s) present at the meeting may decide.

3.3.2 If even at an adjourned meeting no quorum is present, the Meeting shall stand cancelled.

3.3.3 If at a Meeting where the quorum is present, few agenda items remain pending for discussion/decision due to insufficiency of time, the meeting may be adjourned to the following day or any other future day to discuss the unfinished agenda of that Meeting.



### **3.4 Adjournment of the meeting otherwise for want of quorum**

- 3.4.1 The Sarpanch with the consent of majority of the Members present may adjourn a validly convened Meeting of the Gram Panchayat.
- 3.4.2 The facts and reasons of such adjournment shall be recorded in the proceedings of the meeting.
- 3.4.3 The procedure of adjournment, if any, approved by the Gram Panchayat or the Government shall be complied with.

## **4. ATTENDANCE OF THE MEETING**

### **4.1 Attendance**

- 4.1.1 Every Gram Panchayat shall maintain a separate attendance register for the Meetings of the Gram Panchayat.
- 4.1.2 The attendance register shall contain the following particulars: Serial number and date of the Meeting; place of the Meeting; time of the Meeting; name and signature of the Members, the Secretary and of other person(s) attending the Meeting by invitation.
- 4.1.3 The attendance register shall be maintained at the Office of the Gram Panchayat or such other place as may be approved by the Gram Panchayat.
- 4.1.4 The attendance register shall be open for inspection by



the Members.

- 4.1.5 Entries in the attendance register shall be authenticated by the Secretary or in his absence, by the person authorised by the Government.
- 4.1.6 Attendance register shall be kept in the custody of the Secretary or a person authorised by the Government.
- 4.1.7 The attendance register shall be preserved for a period of at least five years from the date of the last entry therein or for such other higher period as may be specified by the Government.
- 4.1.8 The attendance register or any other records of the Panchayat shall not be destroyed except in accordance with the policy approved by Government.

**(A sample format of attendance register is placed at Annexure-C)**

#### **4.2 Leave of Absence**

- 4.2.1 Leave of absence shall be granted to the Member(s) only when a request for such leave has been received by the Secretary or by the Sarpanch.
- 4.2.2 The request for leave of absence shall state a reason for his inability to attend the meeting.

### **5. READING OF AGENDA AT THE MEETING**

The Sarpanch or the Secretary shall read out the Agenda at the Meeting. The Sarpanch or the Secretary shall explain the objective, need and implications of the matters/resolutions before they are put



for discussion and voting at the Meeting.

## **6. MINUTES OF THE MEETING**

### **6.1 Recording of Minutes**

6.1.1 The proceedings of every meeting shall be recorded in the Minutes Book by the Secretary.

6.1.2 Minutes shall be read over at the Meeting immediately after deliberation and be accordingly recorded in the Minutes Book.

6.1.3 Minutes shall contain a fair and correct summary of the proceedings of the meetings including the following:

- Minutes shall be written in clear, concise and plain language either in Hindi or in the official language of the State.
- Minutes shall state, at the beginning, the serial number and type of meeting, date, day, venue and time of commencement of the meeting. Minutes shall also state at the end, the time of conclusion of the Meeting.
- Minutes shall record the names of the Members present in the meeting along with the names of the Secretary and the invitees.
- Minutes shall record the reason for convening the meeting at shorter notice, if any
- Dissenting views of Member(s), if any, on any matter shall be recorded in the Minutes with the name of the dissenting member.

- 6.1.4 Any Document, report or notes placed before the Meeting of the Gram Panchayat and referred to in the Minutes shall be identified by initialling of such document, report or notes by the Secretary or the Presiding authority of the Meeting.

## **6.2 Maintenance of Minutes**

- 6.2.1 The Secretary shall maintain the Minutes.
- 6.2.2 Distinct Minutes Book shall be maintained for the meetings of the Gram Panchayat and its Standing Committees.
- 6.2.3 The Minutes shall be maintained in Hindi or in the official language of the State.
- 6.2.4 Pages of the Minutes Book shall be consecutively numbered.
- 6.2.5 Minutes shall not be pasted or attached to the Minutes Book or tampered with, in any manner.

**(A sample format of Minutes Book is placed at Annexure-D)**

## **6.3 Modification or Cancellation of Resolutions/Decisions**

- 6.3.1 No resolution of a Gram Panchayat shall be modified or cancelled except through a resolution passed by a majority or such higher number of the total Members of the Gram Panchayat as prescribed and permitted



under the applicable laws.

- 6.3.2 Such modification or cancellation of a resolution shall be done within the time prescribed, if any, by the Government.

#### **6.4 Signing of Minutes**

- 6.4.1 Minutes of the Meeting of the Gram Panchayat shall be signed and dated by the presiding authority of that meeting or the next Meeting.
- 6.4.2 The person signing shall initial each page of the Minutes and sign the last page.
- 6.4.3 The date and place of signing the Minutes shall also be mentioned at the last page of the Minutes.
- 6.4.4 Minutes once entered in the Minutes Book, shall not be altered. Any alteration in the Minutes as entered shall be made only by way of approval of the Gram Panchayat at its subsequent meeting and shall be recorded in the Minutes of that meeting.

#### **6.5 Inspection of Minutes**

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Gram Panchayat shall be open for inspection by any person, at the office of the Gram Panchayat and a certified copy of the Minutes or extract thereof may be issued to any person on his request, in accordance with the applicable laws.

#### **6.6 Preservation of Minutes**

- 6.6.1 Minutes Book shall be kept in the custody of the Secretary or a person authorised by the Government for this purpose.
- 6.6.2 Minutes of all Meetings shall be preserved permanently in





physical or electronic form.

6.6.3 The Minutes Book shall be kept at the office of the Gram Panchayat.

## **7. Functions of the Secretary**

7.1 The Secretary of a Gram Panchayat is expected to perform the following functions:

- Take necessary steps to execute and implement the resolutions passed by the Panchayat at its Meetings.
- Communicate the decisions concerning persons of respective Panchayat area to them.
- Convene Meetings of Gram Panchayat and its Committees
- Attend every Meeting of the Gram Panchayat including the Gram Sabha Meetings.
- Write the proceeding of every Meeting in the Minutes Book either in physical or electronic form.
- Place all the correspondence received by him, especially various schemes of the Government and instructions issued by the Government, before the Sarpanch and also for the information of all the Members during the meeting.
- Receive all correspondence on behalf of the Gram Panchayat and take appropriate action on the same.
- Finalise, in consultation with the Sarpanch, the Agenda and Notes on Agenda of every Meeting..
- Maintain all the registers and records prescribed under the applicable laws.



- Report to the Block Development Officer for any vacancy in the office of the Sarpanch/Up-Sarpanch or a Member.
- Be responsible for the safe custody of Panchayat funds, assets and the records maintained by the Gram Panchayat.
- Report to the Block Development Officer about any illegal act or misconduct or misuse or abuse of powers, any infringement of the legal provisions by the Sarpanch or Up-Sarpanch or the members of the Gram Panchayat, as soon as the same come to his knowledge.
- Comply with the instruction issued by the Government from time to time.
- Maintain cordial relations with the elected representatives of Gram Panchayat.

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**Annexure-A**



**Notice for \_\_\_\_ Meeting of Gram Panchayat  
(Name of Panchayat & Block/ District))**

Date:

**To**

**Name & Address of the Member**

Madam/Sir,

This is to inform you that the \_\_\_\_ Meeting of \_\_\_\_\_ (name of Gram Panchayat) is scheduled to be held on \_\_\_\_\_ (Day & Date) from \_\_\_\_\_ (time) onwards at \_\_\_\_\_ (place) to discuss and transact the following matters:

- (i) \_\_\_\_\_
- (ii) \_\_\_\_\_
- (iii) \_\_\_\_\_
- (iv) \_\_\_\_\_

The detailed Agenda and Notes on Agenda are enclosed.

You are requested to kindly make it convenient to attend the meeting.

Yours faithfully

(signature)

(Name of Secretary/ Authorised Officer)

**Annexure-B**



### **Standard List of Agenda Item**

The following items shall be invariably be included in the Agenda of Meetings:

- To grant Leave of Absence
- To take note of the Minutes of the previous Meeting
- To take note of the Minutes of the Meetings of Standing Committee(s)
- Follow up and Action Taken Report (ATR) on the decisions of the Previous Meeting;
- Approval/Concurrent review of Gram Panchayat Budget and Annual Plan implementation/utilisation
- Statement of Income and Expenditure and the reasons for fluctuations in the financial statements ,if any ;
- Approval of New Works and Schemes
- Review of utilisation of funds under various schemes;
- Review of physical progress of construction work, other projects and activities;
- Review of Village Sanitation, Street Lighting, Rural Roads, Drinking Water, Anganwadi, Fair Price Shops, Maintenance of School Buildings; Health Centre, etc.
- Any other matter

**Annexure-C**

**Attendance Register of Members**

(Name of the Gram Panchayat)

(Block)

(District)

No. & Date of the Meeting:

Place:

Time:

Type of meeting (Ordinary/Special/Urgent)

Sl. No.	Name of Member Present	Ward No.	Sign/Thumb Impression	In Time	Out Time	Attested by Secretary/Sarpanch (in case of Thumb impression)
1)						
2)						
3)						
4)						
5)						
6)						
7)						
8)						
9)						
10)						
11)						
12)						
13)						
14)						
15)						
16)						
17)						
18)						
19)						
20)						



**Annexure-D**

**Minutes Book of Gram Panchayat Meeting**

(Name of the Gram Panchayat)

(Block)

(District)

No. & Date of the Meeting:

Place:

Time:

Type of meeting (General/Emergency/Specially convened)

Members Present

Sl. No.	Name	Designation	Representing Ward
(i)			
(ii)			
(iii)			
(iv)			
(v)			
(vi)			

**Minutes/ Record of Proceedings:**

**Item No. 1**

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**Item No. 2**

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**Item No. 3**

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**Item N0.4**

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**Meeting concluded at\_00:00\_ with a Vote of Thanks to the Chair.**

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**Date:** /\_\_/\_  
**Place:**\_\_\_\_\_

**(Signature)**  
**(Name of Sarpanch/Presiding Authority)**

