

STATE ELECTION COMMISSION, PUNJAB

MODEL CODE OF CONDUCT FOR LOCAL BODY ELECTIONS

Under Article 243-K of the Constitution of India and all other enabling statutes/ rules, the State Election Commission, hereby , issues the following Code of Conduct to be followed in order to ensure free, fair and peaceful elections to Gram Panchayats in the State of Punjab.

MODEL CODE OF CONDUCT

- 1.(a) The Code shall be known as the Model Code of Conduct for the local body elections and Model Code of Conduct will be effective in its revenue jurisdiction areas of the Gram Panchayats, where elections are to be held.
- (b) It shall apply to political parties, contesting candidates, Ministers, employees of the State Government and local bodies and other public servants connected with Panchayat elections.
2. This Code shall come into force with effect from the date of announcement of election programme for the conduct of elections.
3. No party or candidate shall indulge in any activity which may aggravate differences or create mutual hatred or cause tension between different castes and communities, religious or linguistic.
4. There shall be no appeal to caste or communal feelings for securing votes.
5. Places of worship and places used for religious preaching shall not be used as forum for election propaganda.
6. No criticism of any aspect of candidate's private life which is not connected with his public life shall be made nor any allegations made which are based on unverified facts or incidents.
7. Criticism of other political parties, when made, shall be confined to their policies and programmes, past record and it shall not be based on unverified allegations.
8. Organizing demonstrations or picketings before the houses of individuals by way of protesting against their opinion or activity shall not be resorted to under any circumstances.

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9. All parties and candidates shall scrupulously avoid all activities which are corrupt practices and offences under the election laws such as:
 - (i) To appeal for vote or not to vote on the basis of religion, caste or community and to use any religious symbol for soliciting votes.
 - (ii) To print or publish any poster, pamphlet, leaf-let, circular or advertisement without mentioning the name and address of the printer and the publisher.
 - (iii) To publish a statement or news item which is false or not believed to be true with respect to a candidate's personal conduct or character with a view to adversely affect the prospects of his or her election.
 - (iv) To obstruct or disturb any election meeting organized by another political party or candidate.
 - (v) To take out processions or hold public meetings during the period of forty-eight hours ending with the hours fixed for the close of the poll in the case of Gram Panchayats.
 - (vi) To bribe or offer gift/reward in any form to voters.
 - (vii) To canvass or to appeal for votes within hundred meters of a polling station.
 - (viii) To use any conveyance or means of transport for the voters to or from the polling station.
 - (ix) To behave in an unruly manner within or near the polling station or to obstruct a polling officer in the discharge of his duty.
 - (x) To impersonate a voter or attempt to cast vote under the false name of voter.
10. No political party or candidate, their supporters or workers shall put up hoardings, banners, buntings, posters at any government building/property or public place.
11. No party or candidate shall permit followers for using any private property for erecting flag staffs, pasting notices, posters or slogans etc. , or suspending banner(s) without written permission from the owner/competent authority of the private property concerned. Further, a copy of such written permission shall forthwith be sent to the District Electoral Officer.
12. No candidate or his workers shall remove or deface the flag(s) erected or poster(s) pasted by another candidate or political party.
13. No candidate, his agent, supporter or his worker or worker of a Political Party shall hold any meeting during the course of election in which liquor or any other intoxicant is served.

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14. The identity slips given to voters shall be plain (white) papers and shall not contain any symbol or name of the candidate. There shall be written on it only the name of the voter, his father's/husband's name, ward number, polling booth number and the serial number of the voter in the Electoral Roll.
15. Every candidate and the political party shall co-operate with the Officers on Election Duty to ensure peaceful and orderly polling.
16. No party or candidate shall hold public meeting or processions without obtaining necessary permission from the Competent Authority.
17. No party or candidate shall use loud speakers without obtaining necessary permission from the Competent Authority and shall not use the loud speaker for purposes other than transmitting speeches live or recorded. The loud speakers shall not be used to transmit music or songs. The loud speakers shall be used only between 07.00 A.M. to 10.00 P.M. The Police are authorized to seize the offending equipment if any body violates the conditions.
18. No contesting candidate shall incur the election expenditure in excess of the expenditure fixed by the State Election Commission.
19. The contesting candidate shall maintain day-to-day expenditure record in the prescribed proforma which will be supplied to him free of cost on the date of acceptance of his candidature.
20. Every contesting candidate shall, within 30 days of announcement of results, submit the election expenditure account in the prescribed proforma to the concerned District Electoral Officer-cum-Deputy Commissioner.
21. A public servant shall remain absolutely impartial during the elections and he shall not indulge in any campaigning activity for or against any contesting candidate or political party.
22. A public servant shall not participate or accompany a Minister in any programme, organized at an individual's house for which the Minister has accepted the invitation during his election tour.
23. While granting permission for organizing an election meeting at a public place, no distinction shall be made between the candidates or the political parties. In case more than one candidate or party requests for holding meeting at the same place and on the same date and time, the permission shall be granted to such candidate or party who approaches first.

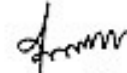


24. Use of rest houses, circuit houses and other government accommodation should be permitted to all the candidates and the political parties on the same terms and conditions on which it is permissible for the party in power. However, no candidate or party shall be allowed to use such accommodations (including premises apartments thereto) as a campaign office or for holding any public meeting for the purpose of election propaganda.
25. No contesting candidate, who is in-charge of or is in any manner connected with management of an aided educational institutions or any other institution receiving aid from the State or Central Government shall misuse the buildings, infrastructure, funds or vehicles belonging to such institution for furthering his/her electoral prospects.
26. Ordinarily, all meetings organized during election should be treated as election meetings and no government money should be spent on them. No government servant shall attend any such meeting except those who are in charge of maintenance of law and order or those deployed for security duties.
27. No vehicle, machinery or personal belonging to the government or local bodies or public undertakings, co-operative institutions or any other institutions receiving Government aid shall be used or deployed by any Minister, Member of the Parliament or the Legislative Assembly or a candidate for canvassing or for furtherance of the interest of a candidate in election in any manner from the date of announcement of the election programme till the completion of poll process.
28. The Ministers shall not combine their official visit with electioneering work and shall not make use of official machinery and personnel or other Government resources including government vehicles for furtherance of interests of any candidate.
29. Official telephones including mobiles, fax etc. shall not be used for electioneering purposes.
30. The Ministers and other authorities shall not sanction grants/payment out of their discretionary funds from the time elections are announced by the Commission. Further they shall not announce any financial grant in any form or promises thereof or make any promise of constructions of road, provision of drinking water facility etc. or make any adhoc appointment in government public undertaking etc. which may influence the voters in favour of the party

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in power. They shall not sanction any new scheme or make any announcement of any new scheme. Laying of foundation stone etc. of a project or a scheme of any kind shall not be done during this period.

31. Issue of advertisements at the cost of public exchequer in the newspapers and other media and the misuse of official mass media during the election period for partisan coverage of political news and publicity regarding achievements with a view to furthering the prospects of the party in power shall be avoided.
32. The violation of these provisions is punishable under various laws.
33. The District Electoral Officers-cum-Deputy Commissioners and the police are authorized to initiate prosecution against violation of this Code before the Competent Criminal Courts under intimation to the State Election Commissioner.
34. The Election Commission is appointing Observers. If the candidates or their agents have any specific complaint or problem regarding the conduct of elections they may bring the same to the notice of the Observer.



(Jagpal Singh Sandhu)
State Election Commissioner, Punjab.