

ELECTION URGENT
BY FAX/E-MAIL

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**Guidelines for General Observers
for General Elections to Panchayats, 2022**

ORDER No. 4379, Dt. 01/12/2021

Appointment

1. General Observers of the Election Commission are appointed under the plenary powers available to the Commission under the Constitution of India. They are the appointees of the Commission working under the superintendence, control and discipline of the Commission for the period from their appointment until they are relieved after the process of elections is complete.
2. The Commission will appoint a General Observer in charge of one or more districts as may be considered expedient. By dint of their seniority and long experience in administrative service the Observers are expected to be in a position to assist the Commission in the conduct of free and fair polls to all Panchayati Raj Institutions, viz. G.P. Wards, Sarpanch, Panchayat Samiti & Zilla Parishad within the district(s) assigned to them. They will also be able to oversee the efficient and effective management of the electoral process at the field level. For all purposes, they will act as the eyes and ears of the Commission during the period of the election. They will provide direct inputs to the Commission from the field as an interface with the election machinery, the candidates, parties, and elections to ensure that the Acts, Rules, Procedures, Instructions and Guidelines relating to elections are strictly and impartially complied with by all concerned.

**Briefing
Meeting**

3. It is compulsory for all General Observers to attend briefing meeting convened by the Commission.
4. Before the General Observers are sent to the District(s) allotted by the Commission, a letter of allotment of District(s) will be handed over to the General Observer at the time of the Briefing Meeting. Those who will be kept on Reserve list will also be intimated in the same meeting. Each General Observer will also be supplied with copies of the concerned Acts and Rules as are applicable to Panchayat Elections and also Directions, Instructions and Guidelines issued by the Commission on the subject.
5. The Commission will issue instructions to the District Collectors regarding the arrangements for boarding, lodging, security and transport of the General Observers. The arrangements will also cover the escort Officer, PSO, driver, and secretarial assistance. The General Observers are required to intimate their tour programmes in advance to the Commission and the concerned Collector(s).

Leave

6. No Officer appointed as General Observer or kept in a reserved list shall proceed on any kind of leave without prior approval of the Commission till the completion of the election in the District(s) in which they have been appointed as General Observers or have been kept in reserve. All correspondence in this regard shall be addressed to the Secretary, State Election Commission.

**Tours
and
absence
from
Head
quarters**

7. The Commission would like to make it clear that after appointment by the State Election Commission as an General Observer or kept in the reserve list, services of the concerned Officer are exclusively at the disposal of the Commission, even though, while at headquarters he may attend to his own official duties for his basic post from which he has been deputed to the

Commission. The Commission would like to impress upon the General Observers that during this crucial period of his deputation he shall not go on any other official tour relating to his basic post as his services may be required by the Commission at any time to cause enquiry into allegations and/ or to submit any report to the Commission. No General Observer is allowed to go on foreign visit (either personal or official) during the period intervening between the briefing session and completion of election process.

Visit

8. Each General Observer is expected to pay at least two visits to the District(s) in his charge. He may undertake more visits on his own should he feel that such visit is called for. The Commission can also ask a General Observer to undertake extra visit to the District(s) for specific tasks. The first visit will cover scrutiny of nomination papers. The General Observer shall be present in the District(s) on the date of scrutiny and shall stay on until the expiry of the date of withdrawal of nominations. The second visit will be during the campaign period, polling and counting covering the date(s) of poll and must be undertaken in such a way that the General Observer should reach the District(s) at least three clear days before the date of poll. He shall be present there on the dates of the poll and continue there till counting process is completed and results are declared. During this visit, the General Observer should take a close look at the arrangements at the polling stations, deployment of Magistrates and police forces, stoppage of campaign and closure of liquor shops, counting arrangements, enforcement of Model Code of Conduct, the state of readiness of ballot boxes, ballot papers and other polling materials, the polling personnel, Counting Centre arrangements, Strong room arrangements etc.
9. The Collector will hand over the General Observer a folder containing a map of the district, a list of Polling Stations and a copy of the Action Plan for

managing the elections in the district and such other documents as are essential for supervision of the Poll-arrangements upon his arrival in the district on the first visit. The General Observer will inspect as many polling stations as possible and report feedback on deficiencies, if any to the concerned Collector for needful action.

**Review of
security
arrangement**

10. A formal meeting with the representative of Political Parties and the candidates for Z.P. elections should be convened by the Collector in the presence of the General Observer. Broad features of the Model Code of Conduct, Corrupt Practices and Electoral Offences should also be touched upon during this discussion. A general consensus should be evolved for making the elections in the area free and fair. The participants should be impressed upon to co-operate with the election machinery and the district administration to ensure a violence-free, clean and good election with fullest participation of the electorate. The general arrangements on how to reach the General Observers with complaints or information should be spelt out in the meeting and the fixed time during which the General Observers will be available in the base station and its location should be clearly indicated.
11. The General Observer should have a separate meeting with the Collector and the S.P. to take stock of the law and order and security situation. It is important that the Police forces, Home-Guards, Grama Rakhis, Forest Guards are deployed in such a manner as to optimize the scope of free and fair polls and provide a high level of confidence to the electors. An in depth review of the assessment of sensitive polling stations and polling arrangements for such stations should be conducted.

**Counting
of Votes**

12. In the coming General Elections to Panchayat, counting of votes shall be taken up centrally at Block level on the date and time fixed by the Commission. The General Observer should visit as many counting centres

as possible and satisfy himself that counting of votes takes place strictly according to the rules and procedures laid down and instructions of the Commission and there is no intimidation and foul play in the counting of votes. If any incident affecting objectivity in counting comes to his notice, he shall forthwith draw attention of the concerned Election Officer and also of the Collector for immediate remedial action. In case the matter is not redressed to his satisfaction he shall report the matter to the Commission.

**Report
on
re poll**

13. The State Election Commissioner has been empowered under Rule 92 E (1) of O.G.P.E Rules, 1965, Rule 46-E(1) of O.P.S.E. Rules 1991 and Rule 59 (1) of O.Z.P.E. Rules, 1994 that if at any time or in any case it appears to the Commissioner that circumstances exist for his satisfaction that conduct of free and fair election is likely to be or has been affected, the Commissioner may issue general or special order for repoll as the circumstances may require to ensure free and fair election. Apart from the report of the Collector on the extraordinary circumstances where a repoll is to be held, the Commission would like to get an independent report from the observer on any proposal for repoll.

**Model
Code of
Conduct**

14. Enforcement of Model Code of Conduct in the District where the General Observer has been appointed becomes his prime concern. He should ensure the strict observance of the Model Code of Conduct and will keep a close watch during the campaigning period where there is every likelihood of breach of Model Code of Conduct of the political parties. In case of any violation of the Model Code of Conduct either by the political parties or by the administrative functionaries it shall immediately be brought to the notice of the Commission.

**Reporting
of Major
Irregulari
ties**

15. If the General Observer, during his visits on the day of the Poll, comes across any major irregularity in Polling/Counting which is likely to affect

the impartiality of Elections, he shall forthwith report the matter to the Commission over telephone/fax/e-mail/Whatsup message etc.

16. The Collector will ensure that the place of stay, the phone number, the dates of visit of the General Observer are duly publicized throughout the District. The Collector shall render all necessary assistance to the General Observer in performing his duties and ask other offices of the District associated with Panchayat election to render similar assistance. The General Observer shall make himself easily accessible to whoever wants to meet him with election related complaint or information.

17. The General Observer shall submit to the Commission total five reports during different stages of the election process as per the proforma provided;

**Observers
Report**

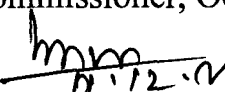
i.	GENERAL OBSERVER REPORT – 1	The First Report (immediately after the end of Scrutiny of Nomination papers).
ii.	GENERAL OBSERVER REPORT-2	The Second Report (immediately after the end of campaign period)
iii.	GENERAL OBSERVER REPORT –3	The Third Report (immediately after the end of poll).
iv.	GENERAL OBSERVER REPORT – 4	The Fourth Report (immediately after the Counting of Votes).
v.	GENERAL OBSERVER REPORT – 5	The Final General Observer's Report

On receipt of the Reports, the Commission will relieve the officer concerned from his charge as General Observer by a formal communication.

18. The Political Parties, contesting candidates and the general public as a whole have got high expectation from the General Observer for his neutrality so as to ensure conduct of free and fair poll and for listening to their grievances. The steps taken by the General Observer should be a morale booster for all including

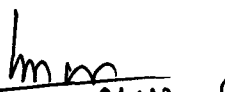
administrative functionaries and shall give confidence to all those involved in the election process for smooth completion of the poll.

By order and in the name of the
State Election Commissioner, Odisha


(R.N. Sahu)
Secretary

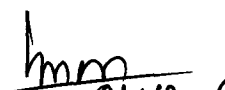
Memo No. 4380/SEC., Date 01/12/2021

Copy forwarded to Principal Secretary to Government Panchayati Raj & D.W. Department for information and necessary action.


Secretary 01/12/21

Memo No. 4381/SEC., Date 01/12/2021

Copy forwarded to all Collectors for information and necessary action.


Secretary 01/12/21

The First Report (immediately after the end of Scrutiny of Nomination papers).

GENERAL OBSERVER REPORT – 1

General Observer's Name :	
District:	

Sl No	Subject	General Observer's Report
1	Whether a copy of the electoral roll handed over to recognized political parties.	
2	Total number of nominations filed for Ward Member, Sarpanch, Panchayat Samiti Member, Zilla Parishad Member – Block wise.	
3	Total number of nominations filed for Ward Member, Sarpanch, Panchayat Samiti Member, Zilla Parishad Member – at the time of scrutiny – Block wise	
4	Whether Scrutiny has been done by the Election Officer as per the schedule fixed by the Commission.	
5	Whether scrutiny of nomination papers has been done properly in accordance with relevant rules	
6	Any complaint brought to the notice of General Observer during scrutiny of nomination paper.	
7	Local address with telephone/mobile no. of the General Observer, after arrival in the District	
8	Whether General Observer's name, contact No. and the meeting hours with venue has been notified in the notice board of Election Officer.	

Signature of the General Observer

The Second Report (immediately after the end of campaign period)

GENERAL OBSERVER REPORT – 2

General Observer's Name	
District:	

Sl No	Subject	General Observer's Report
1	Whether training schedule and contents were adhered to properly for polling personnel.	
2	Whether categorization of Polling Stations has been done and Sensitive & Hyper sensitive booths have been identified.	
3	Whether adequate preventive steps have been taken for maintenance of Law and Order	
4	Whether the security arrangement made for polling stations and poll personnel adequate.	
5	Whether strong room guarding plan is adequate	
6	Whether complaint received by the observer on violation of Model Code of Conduct and the action taken on it	

Signature of the General Observer

The Third Report (immediately after the end of poll).
GENERAL OBSERVER REPORT – 3

General Observer's Name	
State:	

SI No	Subject	General Observer's Report
1	How many Polling Stations with CCTV/video coverage.	
2	Number and name of Polling Stations, where complaints of disruption poll were received during the course of poll. Describe the nature of complaints and action taken. could not continue (indicate the specific polling stations).	
3	No. of polling station, if any, where there is, in the opinion of observer, a need for repoll indicating the name of such Polling Station.	
4.	No. of polling stations with video cameras.	
5.	General Observation regarding law and order and any specific situation.	

Signature of the General Observer

The Fourth Report (immediately after the Counting of Votes).

GENERAL OBSERVER REPORT – 4

General Observer's Name	
District:	

Sl No	Subject	General Observer's Report
1	Whether arrangements for counting has been done as per the instruction of the Commission.	
2	Whether the seating arrangements of the counting agents were done as per the Commission's instruction?	
3	Whether Videography of counting was done?	
4	Whether there was any demand for re-counting? Indicate details..	
5	Whether any significant incident occurred during counting of votes? If yes, give details	
6	Is the observer satisfied about the counting arrangement, procedure, managements at the counting Centre & declarations of results?	

Signature of the General Observer

The Final General Observer's Report - 5

General Observer's Name	
District	

Sl. No.	Subject	General Observer's Report
1.	Whether the Poll and counting was peaceful and conducted as per the direction of the Commission.	
2	Whether there was any kind of interruption or any other situation affecting the poll or counting.:-	
3	Whether there was any law and order situation disrupting the poll and counting.:-	
4	Whether there was any violation of Model Code of Conduct,	
5	General Observation including suggestions for improvement.	

Signature of the General Observer