

**Aditya Prasad Padhi, IAS**  
Chief Secretary, Odisha



GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA

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Bhubaneswar, Dated the 6<sup>th</sup> Jan, 2017

To

All Secretaries to Government  
Director General and Inspector General of Police, Odisha, Cuttack  
All Heads of Department  
All Revenue Divisional Commissioners,  
All Collectors.

**Sub: Maintenance of strict neutrality by Government officials during General Elections to Panchayats – 2017.**

Madam/ Sir,

I am directed to say General Elections to Panchayats are scheduled to be held during February, 2017. It is of utmost importance that Government officials including Police at all levels should maintain strict neutrality in the discharge of their duties and do not act in any manner in the furtherance of the prospects of election of any particular candidate/party. The Panchayat laws of our State strictly prohibit any form of canvassing or influencing of election by an employee of the Government or local Authority and prescribe severe punishment such as termination of service for infringement. For example, Section 28 of Odisha Gram Panchayat Act, 1964 lays down as follows:

“No person who is in the service of the State Government or of any local authority shall, by canvassing on behalf of any candidate or otherwise, interfere or any way use his influence in an election and a breach of the provisions of this Section shall render the person liable to have his service terminated.

In this perspective, all employees of Government, PSUs and Local Bodies are required to ensure that their conduct is completely above board during Panchayat Elections.

2. Official vehicles, machinery and personnel belonging to Government, PSUs, Cooperatives, Local Bodies and PRIs shall not be allowed to be used in electioneering work in any manner.
3. No advertisement shall be allowed to be issued at the cost of the Public exchequer portraying the achievements of the Government until completion of elections in all respects.

Continuation Sheet

4. It shall be the duty of the Police to ensure that complaints of criminal intimidation and violence and allegations relating to offences under Sections 153A, 153B, 171B, 171C, 171D, 171G, 171H and 505 of I.P.C are dealt with promptly, impartially and firmly.
5. The Code of Conduct prescribed by the State Election Commission, as applicable to the employees of the Government, PSUs, Cooperative, Local Bodies and PRIs, shall be observed by them scrupulously till completion of elections to Panchayats.

Receipt of this letter should be acknowledged.

Yours faithfully,

*A. S. Adhikari*  
6.1.17.

Chief Secretary,  
Odisha

Memo No 360 /SCS

Date 06-01-2017

Copy forwarded to the Commissioner-cum- Secretary to Govt. Panchayati Raj Department / Secretary, State Election Commission, Odisha, Bhubaneswar for information and necessary action.

*W. S. 6/1/17*  
Joint Secretary to Government