

## PREFACE TO REVISED EDITION

समानी व आकूतिः समाना हृदयानि वः ।  
समानमस्तु वो मनो यथा वः सुसहासति ॥

Citing words from the Rigveda which mean “*May your intentions be the same, may your hearts be united. May your minds be in harmony, so that you may work together with mutual understanding and cooperation*”. This shloka emphasizes on the unity of purpose, collective decision-making, and harmony, which are essential for the functioning of a Gram Panchayat. It reflects the idea that the community development requires cooperation among all members. Just as a Panchayat works with a common goal for the welfare of the village, this verse encourages individuals to think, feel, and act in unity for the greater good.

India has a rich and extensive history of implementing local self-governance, with the Gram Panchayat system evolving from ancient self-governing villages to a constitutional institution. Throughout the ages, this system has adapted to accommodate administrative and political developments, continuously refining its approach to local governance .

The 73<sup>rd</sup> Constitutional Amendment Act of 1992 formalized the Panchayati Raj system, providing a nationwide framework for rural self-governance. While the fundamental structure remains consistent across India, each state implements the system with variations tailored to regional requirements and administrative setups.

With the majority of India’s population residing in rural areas, the Village Panchayat system is crucial for effective management and advancement of rural regions. It serves as the cornerstone of local self-government, providing democratic governance at the grassroots level. The Gram Panchayat’s jurisdiction encompasses the village’s overall development, welfare, and efficient operation.

The **Model Governance Code for Meetings of Gram Panchayats**, developed by the ICSI, represents a significant step towards enhancing Indian local self-governance. It aims to standardize procedures for Gram Panchayat meetings, improve operational efficiency and increase Gram Panchayats' effectiveness, accountability, and transparency. Better policy execution, improved rural development, and heightened public confidence in local self-government are all facilitated by village-level governance improvements.

I place on record my sincere thanks to all Members of the Corporate Laws and Governance Committee of ICSI under the Chairmanship of CS Manish Gupta, Council Member and Former President, ICSI, for their invaluable contributions during the updation and finalization of this Code.

I acknowledge the dedicated efforts put in by Ms. Prachi Dwivedi, Senior Executive Assistant and CS Iqra Ansari, Executive Academics, under the guidance of CS Anamika Chaudhary, Joint Director, in updating this Model Governance Code. Their hard work and commitment, coupled with the stewardship of CS Asish Mohan, Secretary, ICSI, have been pivotal in the successful completion of this Code.

Recognizing that improvement is an ongoing process, we sincerely invite users and readers to share their valuable suggestions and constructive comments. Your feedback will be instrumental in continually refining and enhancing the effectiveness and relevance of this Model Governance Code.

Together, we can strengthen the foundations of local governance and contribute to the sustainable development of our rural communities.

**(CS Dhananjay Shukla)**

*President*

The Institute of Company Secretaries of India