

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF PANCHAYATI RAJ
RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1048
ANSWERED ON- 31.07.2024

EMPOWERMENT OF PANCHAYATS

1048. DR. LAXMIKANT BAJPAYEE:

Will the Minister of **PANCHAYATI RAJ** be pleased to state:

(a) the steps taken by Government for empowerment of Panchayats and the details thereof; and

(b) the details of basic facilities being provided by Government to panchayats with a view to developing rural areas, towns and tehsils in Uttar Pradesh?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR PANCHAYATI RAJ

(PROF. S. P. SINGH BAGHEL)

(a) Panchayat, being “Local Government”, is a State Subject and part of the State List in the Seventh Schedule of the Constitution of India. Accordingly, Panchayats are set up and operate through the respective State Panchayati Raj Acts. Empowerment of Panchayats is done mainly by the State Governments. However, Ministry of Panchayati Raj has taken continuous steps to provide assistance to the States & Union Territories and reviews their performance from time to time, through studies, review meetings, field visits, video conferencing, Information Technology applications, Common Review Missions etc.

To strengthen functioning of Panchayati Raj Institutions across the country, the Ministry has launched eGramSwaraj(<https://egramswaraj.gov.in>), a user friendly web-based portal, which aims to bring in better transparency in the decentralised planning, progress reporting, financial management, work-based accounting and details of assets created. Further, for ensuring timely audit of Panchayat accounts i.e. receipts and expenditures of Gram Panchayats, Ministry has rolled out an online application – AuditOnline (<https://auditonline.gov.in>). This application not only facilitates the auditing of Panchayat accounts but also provides for maintaining of audit records. This application streamlines the process for audit inquiries, draft local audit reports, draft audit paras etc. and thus ensures proper maintenance of accounts by Panchayats to improve transparency and accountability.

The Ministry of Panchayati Raj has circulated detailed advisories to the States and Union Territories in August 2021 and September 2022, to revitalize the institution of Gram Sabhas by taking up measures such as sharing basic details of flagship schemes of the

Government in Gram Sabha meetings, increasing the frequency of Gram Sabhas, preparation of regular standing agenda for the Gram Sabha, preparation of annual calendar for Gram Sabha, attendance of Group 'A' and 'B' officers in the Gram Sabha meetings, ensuring maximum attendance in Gram Sabha, formation and functioning of Standing Sub-Committees of Gram Sabha, and assigning meaningful and effective roles to the ward members as sector enablers and members of the sub-committee etc. Further, to facilitate meetings of Gram Sabha become more participatory, transparent and vibrant, Ministry of Panchayati Raj has also launched Panchayat-NIRNAY app.

Article 243D of the Constitution of India provides not less than one-third reservation for women out of 'total number of seats to be filled by direct election in every Panchayat' and 'total number of offices of chairpersons in the Panchayats at each level'. However, 21 States and 2 Union Territories have gone even further and have made provisions of 50% reservation for women in Panchayati Raj Institutions in their respective State Panchayati Raj Acts/Rules.

To deliver various citizen centric services online in the rural areas and Gram Panchayats, Common Service Centres have been setup through a 'Common Service Centre - Special Purpose Vehicle', a society of Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology.

Under the Centrally Sponsored scheme of revamped Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan (RGSA) funds are released to the States for development of governance capabilities of Panchayati Raj Institutions through capacity building and training and supplements the efforts of the States by providing infrastructure facilities like Panchayat Bhawan, Computers etc. on limited scale.

Further, this Scheme promotes capacity building and training for elected representatives and officials of Panchayati Raj Institutions, focusing on topics such as Own Source Revenue (OSR) to ensure effective grassroots governance. States and Union Territories have been advised to prepare annual calendars for Gram Sabha meetings to discuss OSR and to organise presentations by high-performing Panchayats.

Under the Fourteenth Finance Commission (XIV FC) award for the period of 2015-2020, grants to the tune of Rs. 2,00,292.20 crore were allocated to GPs in 26 States. The grant was provided to GPs for delivering basic services.

Under Fifteenth Finance Commission (XV FC), Grants to the tune of Rs. 60,750 crore were allocated for the interim period FY 2020-21 and Rs.2,36,805 Crore are allocated for the period FY 2021-26 to Panchayats in all the three tiers and Traditional Local Bodies and Sixth Schedule areas in 28 States. The XV FC Grants have two components—Tied and Untied. Tied Grants are to be used for drinking water, rainwater harvesting, water recycling, sanitation and maintenance of Open Defecation Free status. Untied grants are to be used for felt needs under the 29 subjects enshrined in the XI Schedule of the Constitution of India, except for salaries and other establishment costs. Further, upto 10% of the allocation of XV FC Untied Grants is allowed for meeting the technical and administrative support towards Operations & Maintenance and capital expenditure, including manpower on outsourcing

basis and other administrative expenses as essential.

Since the notification of “The Provisions of the Panchayats (Extension to the Scheduled Areas) Act” (in short PESA Act) in 1996, all the ten PESA states have incorporated its provisions in their respective State Panchayati Raj Acts. Further, eight PESA States have notified PESA Rules and two PESA States namely, Jharkhand and Odisha have notified their draft PESA Rules. The Ministry has been engaging with States throughout these years in organising regional and national conferences. Recently, the Ministry has organised two Regional Conferences on PESA on 11th & 12th January, 2024 at Pune, Maharashtra and on 4th & 5th March 2024 at Ranchi, Jharkhand. The focus on the conferences was to draw out limitations being perceived in the implementation of the PESA Act by the implementing stakeholders and to look at remedial measures. The Ministry has also constituted seven number of committees of officers, comprising both Central and State Governments, to draft training and implementation Manual/Standard Operating Procedure/Guidelines on key PESA subjects.

(b) Government of Uttar Pradesh has informed that basic facilities have been provided to Panchayats for development of rural areas, cities and Tehsils in the State. These details are placed at **ANNEXURE-A**.

ANNEXURE-A

Annexure referred to in reply to part (b) of the Rajya Sabha Unstarred Question No. 1048 answered on 31.07.2024

Basic facilities provided to three-tiers of Panchayats for development of rural areas, cities and Tehsils in the State of Uttar Pradesh:

Cooperation for structural development:

1. Every Gram Panchayat office has been developed as 'Village Secretariat' so that better communication can be established between the general public and public representatives, officers/employees and quick benefits can be provided to the villagers and public complaints can be resolved quickly.
2. In the last 5 years, Panchayat buildings have been constructed in more than 26664 dilapidated / Gram Panchayats without Panchayat buildings.
3. Mandatory availability of computers, internet, drinking water and sanitation facilities has been made in every Gram Panchayat.

Cooperation for arrangement of human resources:

4. Cluster wise system was implemented for the smooth deployment of about 10931 secretaries in 57691 Gram Panchayats, due to which a systematic structure to the deployment of secretaries could be provided.
5. For the regular operation of the Village Secretariat, an additional employee in the form of a Panchayat Assistant/Accountant cum Data Entry Operator was arranged in each Gram Panchayat. With this, regular operation of Gram Panchayat offices has been ensured.
6. In view of the increased work of the Panchayats, 1875 registered architects/consulting engineers whose educational qualification is Diploma and B.Tech in Civil Engineering have been empanelled to assist in the technical work so that the technical needs of the Gram Panchayats can be fulfilled.

Cooperation in developmental and economic reforms:

7. The work of registering and training Panchayat Assistants as Village Level Entrepreneurs for setting up Common Services Centers in Village Secretariats has been done, Due to which, along with strengthening the service delivery, the own income of the Gram Panchayats has increased.
8. A call center has been established at the state level, through which arrangements have been made for mutual communication and resolution of problems along with monitoring of works and ensuring the presence of village level workers

9. Gram Panchayats of 399 development blocks have been affiliated with Material Recovery Facility, built in urban areas, for plastic management so that better management of plastic waste can be done in rural areas.

10. For better waste management in rural areas, 34782 solid waste management centers have been established through which Gram Panchayats are being provided assistance in waste disposal.

11. Community toilets have been constructed in all 57691 Gram Panchayats of the State and human resources have been arranged by the state government for their maintenance. This has strengthened the livelihood of women workers of self-help groups.

Arrangements for capacity building and training:

12. For capacity building of three-tier Panchayat officials and personnel, separate Panchayati Raj Training Institutes, 25 District Panchayat Resource Centers and one Regional Panchayat Resource Center have been established and separate funds have been arranged for their operation. Technical and non-technical trainings are being organized regularly by Panchayati Raj Training Institute, District Panchayat Resource Center and a Regional Panchayat Resource Centre. So far, more than 7.50 lakh Panchayat representatives and personnel have been trained.

Availability of financial resources:

13 From the financial year 2014-15 to 2023-24, Rs. 66,196.21 crores from Central Finance, Rs. 56,757.89 crores from State Finance, Rs. 639.4 crores under Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Yojana, Rs. 171.4 crores under the State Sector Panchayat Building Construction Scheme and Rs. 1,074.78 crores for the development of funeral sites have been allocated to three-tier Panchayats. Due to which, development of infrastructure in rural areas, development of drinking water & sanitation, electrification, arrangement of lighting in rural areas and other social upliftment programs have been conducted.

Development of infrastructure for education, health and child development:

14 Operation Kayakalp scheme has been run by the State Government to provide basic facilities for education, health and child development. Under which, with the funds received by the Gram Panchayats from the recommendations of the Finance Commission, installation of tiles on the floor in 83,066 primary and upper primary schools located in rural areas, construction of boundary walls, construction of separate toilets and urinals for boys and girls and provision of pure drinking water was made. Similarly, 22,812 Anganwadi centers and Auxiliary Nursing Midwifery centers were also repaired. Baby friendly and child friendly toilets were constructed in 59,349 Anganwadi centers and schools.

Incentives and other supporting arrangements:

15. A separate Chief Minister Panchayat Incentive Scheme is being run to reward Gram Panchayats doing excellent work.

16. Panchayat Welfare Fund has been established to help the dependent families in case of death of presidents and members of three-tier Panchayats in the state, through which an amount of Rs 56.04 crore has been provided to the dependents of 1463 Panchayat officials, till now.
