

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF PANCHAYATI RAJ
RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO- 2974
ANSWERED ON- 26.03.2025

10-FOLD INITIATIVE FOR WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

2974. SMT. REKHA SHARMA:
SHRI RYAGA KRISHNAIAH:
DR. MEDHA VISHRAM KULKARNI:
DR. PARMAR JASHVANTSINH SALAMSINH:
SHRI MADAN RATHORE:
SMT. SUNETRA AJIT PAWAR

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

- (a) whether Government has any plan to integrate the 10-fold initiative with the existing Panchayati Raj framework to ensure women's active participation in grassroots governance;
- (b) whether Government has any plan to introduce policy to encourage more women to contest elections at the panchayat level, ensuring a stronger representation in local governance;
- (c) if so, the details thereof;
- (d) whether there is a structured training programme under the Ministry to build the leadership and governance skills of women representatives in rural local bodies; and
- (e) if so, the details thereof?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR PANCHAYATI RAJ

(PROF. S. P. SINGH BAGHEL)

(a) to (c) "Panchayat", being "Local Government", is a State subject and part of State List of Seventh Schedule of the Constitution of India. Panchayats are set up and operate through the respective State Panchayati Raj Acts which may vary from State to State, subject to the provisions of the Constitution.

To ensure women's active participation in grassroots democracy, 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(UTs) have gone even further and have made provisions of 50% reservation for women in Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) in their respective State Panchayati Raj Acts/Rules encouraging increased participation in the grassroots governance. In respect of remaining States/UTs, Constitutional provision as prescribed in Article 243D applies (i.e. one-third of total seats).

Further, the Ministry of Panchayati Raj through its thematic approach of Localisation of Sustainable Development Goals (LSDGs) including Theme 9 – Women Friendly Panchayats is ensuring women’s active participation in grassroots governance. The Ministry of Panchayati Raj has issued advisories to States to facilitate the holding of separate Ward Sabha and Mahila Sabha meetings before Gram Sabha meetings.

As per information received from the Ministry of Women and Child Development, the Government of India has adopted a “whole-of-government” and “whole-of-society” approach to address issues on a life-cycle continuum basis for the holistic empowerment of women from all sections of the society, and this includes political empowerment of women. Through various policies, the Government of India is promoting greater participation of women in local governance and political leadership roles.

(d) and (e) Under the Ministry’s scheme of Revamped Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan (RGSA), there is provision for the training of ERs including Women Elected Representatives (WERs), functionaries and other stakeholders of Panchayats in different categories on orientation and refresher training, thematic training, specialised training, Panchayat Development Plan training. Apart from these different trainings, the Ministry also supports exposure visits within & outside the States for cross-State learning experiences, etc. In addition, a new initiative has been taken to enhance the capacities of including women elected representatives and functionaries of Panchayats through institutes of excellence under the Leadership/Management Development Program.

Further, under the scheme, the Ministry has assisted the States in developing comprehensive training modules for assisting States/UTs in imparting training to enhance the capacity and leadership and management skills and effective execution of tasks for good governance by WERs.

The Ministry has collaborated with Transform of Rural India (TRI) as Knowledge Partner in developing comprehensive Training Module for assisting the States/UTs for the Capacity Building of WERs of Panchayati Raj Institutions to further strengthen their leadership & managerial skills for effective delivery of good governance.

The Ministry has also collaborated with the United Nations Population Fund (formally the United Nations Fund for Population Activities -UNFPA) as Knowledge Partner to develop the training modules and to train cadre of Master Trainers so as to assist States/UTs in building the capacity of their grassroots level Elected Representatives and Panchayati Raj Functionaries on different features of Women Friendly towards developing Model Women Friendly Gram Panchayat. This effort aims to build the capacity of grassroots-level Elected Representatives, Women Elected Representatives and Panchayati Raj Functionaries to foster women-friendly governance and empower female leadership in rural governance structures.
