

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF PANCHAYATI RAJ
RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO - 2970
ANSWERED ON 18.03.2026

STRENGTHENING ROLE OF PANCHAYATS

2970 DR. KANIMOZHI NVN SOMU:

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

- (a) the new steps being taken by Government to make the Panchayati Raj system more effective details thereof;
- (b) the special efforts being made to strengthen the role of panchayats in areas like rural health, women development, primary education to children and agricultural development;
- (c) the special schemes being run by Government to increase the participation of women in panchayats as well as to increase their leadership role; and
- (d) the special provisions made by Government to strengthen Panchayati Raj Institutions financially and administratively for the overall development of villages?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ

(SHRI RAJIV RANJAN SINGH)

(a) to (d) “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. States have made their own Panchayati Raj Act, subject to the provisions of the Constitution. Article 243G of the Constitution empowers the Legislature of a State to make provisions, by law, for the devolution of power and responsibilities upon Panchayat at appropriate level, subject to such conditions as may be specified, with respect to the preparation of plans for economic development and social justice and implementation of schemes for economic development and social justice as may be entrusted to them including those in relation to matters listed in the Eleventh Schedule to the Constitution. The State legislatures are to consider the 29 subjects listed in the Eleventh Schedule for devolution of power and responsibilities upon Panchayats. These 29 subjects includes areas like rural health, women development, primary education to children and agricultural development. Accordingly, all matters relating to Panchayats, including steps to make the Panchayati Raj system more effective, to strengthen the role of Panchayats in areas like rural health, women development, primary education to children and agricultural development and to strengthen Panchayati Raj Institutions financially and administratively for the overall development of villages, comes within jurisdiction of the State Government concerned.

However, the Ministry of Panchayati Raj reviews performance of Panchayats, from time to time, through studies, review meetings, field visits, video conferencing, Information Technology applications etc.

To strengthen the role of Panchayats, this Ministry has launched eGramSwaraj (<https://egramswaraj.gov.in>), a user friendly web-based portal, which aims to bring in better transparency in the decentralized planning, progress reporting, financial management, work-based accounting and details of assets created. The eGramSwaraj portal has also been integrated with Public Financial Management System for online transfer of the Central Finance Commission funds by the States to PRIs and enabling Panchayats to make real-time payments to vendors/service providers. Panchayats prepare and upload their Annual Panchayat Development Plans on eGramSwaraj portal. In addition, the Ministry has integrated eGramSwaraj with the Government e-Marketplace (GeM) to bring transparency to Panchayat procurement.

The Ministry has implemented Mission Mode Project on e-Panchayats (MMP-ePanchayat), a Central component of the Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan (RGSA) scheme under which various e-governance projects are funded towards digitalization of Panchayats. Revamped Centrally Sponsored Scheme of RGSA has been implemented w.e.f. financial year 2022-23 in States/ Union Territories with main objective for capacitating PRIs through imparting training to all the Elected Representatives including Women Elected Representatives (WERs), functionaries and other stakeholders to develop their governance capabilities for leadership roles to enable the Panchayats to function effectively. A total of 30,94,748 Women Elected Representatives were trained from FY 2022-23 to 2025-26 (as on 28th February 2026). Under this scheme, Ministry supplements the efforts of States/UTs on limited scale for creation basic infrastructure for effective functioning of Gram Panchayats such as Construction of Gram Panchayat Bhawans, Computers and Colocation of Common Service Centres (CSC) with Gram Panchayat Bhawans with focus on North East States, as proposed by States/UTs in their Annual Action Plans and later approved by Central Empowered Committee. Ministry has also been providing support to the States/UTs, under the scheme of revamped RGSA for setting up of Project Management Units (PMUs) at States, District and Block level as approved in the Annual Action Plan for effective implementation of the scheme and setting up of institutional mechanism as State, District and Block level Panchayat Resource Centres to support Capacity Building & Training of Panchayats.

An application of 'AuditOnline' has been developed for online audits of Panchayat accounts and their financial management. AuditOnline for transparent auditing of Central Finance Commission funds utilization for strengthen financial management of Panchayats launched in April 2020.

Similarly, Panchayat NIRNAY is an online application that aims at bringing transparency and better management in conduct of Gram Sabhas by Panchayats. The Ministry has also launched SabhaSaar, an AI-enabled meeting summarisation tool, on 14th August 2025. The SabhaSaar platform enables structured capture and analysis of Gram Sabha proceedings and supports monitoring of key parameters such as frequency, type of Gram Sabha meetings and participation.

To increase the participation of women in panchayats as well as to increase their

leadership role, 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.

Further, the Ministry has launched a comprehensive specialized training module “Sashkta Panchayat Netri Abhiyan” for the capacity building of WERs of Panchayati Raj Institutions. The focus of the training module is to build the capacity of the Women Elected Representatives on different aspects of rural governance, enhance the knowledge & practical skills for effective delivery of roles & responsibilities as elected representatives and also to develop the leadership, communication, managerial & decision making skills for effective women led governance. A total of 1,05,966 WERs (as on 28th February, 2026) have been trained on this specialised module.

In addition to above, to strengthen Panchayati Raj Institutions financially, under Fifteenth Finance Commission (XV FC), Grants to the tune of Rs. 2,97,555 crore have been allocated for the period FY 2020-2026 (including interim period FY 2020-2021) to the Rural Local Bodies of all 28 States, out of which, Rs. 2,67,250.78 crore have been released as on 11.03.2026.
