

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF PANCHAYATI RAJ
RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 573
ANSWERED ON 04.02.2026

RURAL EMPLOYMENT THROUGH PANCHAYATS

573: SHRI DEBASHISH SAMANTARAY:

Will the Minister of PANCHAYATI RAJ be pleased to state:

- (a) the role of Panchayats in implementing Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) and other rural development schemes in the State of Odisha;
- (b) the steps taken to improve transparency in Panchayat-level works;
- (c) funds allocated for Panchayat-based employment generation;
- (d) measures taken to empower women Panchayat leaders; and
- (e) the impact of Panchayat governance on rural livelihoods in the State?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ

(SHRI RAJEEV RANJAN SINGH ALIAS LALAN SINGH)

- (a) As per information received from the Ministry of Rural Development, the role of Panchayats in implementation of one of the major rural development and employment schemes, Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (Mahatma Gandhi NREGS) has been mentioned under section 13 of the Act are as follows:
 - i The functions of the Panchayats at the district level are to finalise and approve block-wise shelf of projects to be taken up under a programme, to supervise and monitor the projects taken up at the Block level and district level, and to carry out such other functions as may be assigned to it by the State Council, from time to time.
 - ii The functions of the Panchayat at intermediate level shall be to approve the Block level Plan for forwarding it to the district Panchayat at the district level for final approval, to supervise and monitor the projects taken up at the Gram Panchayat and Block level, and to carry out such other functions as may be assigned to it by the State Council, from time to time.
 - iii The District Programme Coordinator shall assist the Panchayat at the district level in discharging its functions under this Act and any Scheme made thereunder.

The roles and functions defined in the Mahatma Gandhi NREGS Act is applicable in the entire country including the State of Odisha.

(b) In order to bring in efficiency, transparency and accountability at the Panchayat level, the Ministry of Panchayati Raj is promoting eGovernance for which it has developed various digital platforms and applications under the digital initiative of the Government. The eGramSwaraj application has been designed to facilitate planning, budgeting, accounting, monitoring, and online payments at the Panchayat level. The integration of eGramSwaraj with the PFMS enables real-time payments to vendors and service providers, ensuring seamless fund flow and reducing delays. The eGramSwaraj application has been integrated with the Government e-Marketplace (GeM) to bring transparency to Panchayat procurement. This integration allows Panchayats to procure goods and services through GeM via the eGramSwaraj platform. Further, applications developed by the Ministry like Meri Panchayat have endeavoured to bring transparency in Panchayat Governance by making information on planning, activities and progress of works in Panchayat accessible to public. Panchayat NIRNAY is an online application which aims to bring transparency and better management in conduct of Gram Sabhas by Panchayats. Further, the 'AuditOnline' application developed under the e-Panchayat Mission Mode Project (MMP) facilitates online audits of Panchayat accounts and supports improved financial management.

(c) There is no Panchayat-based allocation of funds under the Mahatma Gandhi NREGS.

(d) & (e) Article 243D of the Constitution of India provides for not less than one-third reservation for women in PRIs out of the total number of seats to be filled by direct election and the number of offices of chairpersons of Panchayats. 21 States and 2 Union Territories have made provisions for 50% reservation for women in PRIs in their respective State Panchayati Raj Acts. In respect of the remaining Part-IX States/UTs, the constitutional provision, as prescribed in Article 243D, applies. To build the capacity of Women Elected Representatives (WER) of Panchayat to enhance the leadership & managerial skills & effective execution of the roles & responsibilities for good governance, the Ministry has assisted the state to develop comprehensive training modules for the Capacity Building of WER of Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs). The Ministry has been engaging with EWRs to facilitate separate Ward Sabha and Mahila Sabha meetings, enhance women's participation in Gram Sabha and Panchayat meetings, and develop their leadership capacity. It focuses on strengthening the role of EWRs in Panchayats, enabling them to function effectively and discharge their responsibilities. The Ministry has created special modules to help EWRs, like "Championing Change: Helping Women Leaders in Local Government and more" and "Model Women-friendly Gram Panchayat Module." These modules are designed specifically to build skills and train EWRs effectively. Further, more than 10.80 lakh EWRs have been trained during 2024-25 and 2025-26 so far, of which more than 63,000 are from Odisha. EWRs in PRIs are also promoting gender equality, poverty alleviation, and inclusive development. The Ministry has also been encouraging increased involvement of women in the functioning of Panchayats through active participation in the Gram Sabha meetings for preparation of Gram Panchayat Development Plans (GPDPs) and various schemes being implemented by the Panchayats. The Ministry has issued advisories to the States to allocate Panchayat funds for women-centric activities, and combat the evils of women trafficking, female feticide, child marriage, etc.

As a result of transparent, efficient and accountable rural local governance, the Panchayats at all levels are now preparing participatory evidence and need-based panchayat development plans keeping in view their priorities and resources at their command. By utilising the

resources at their command, funds received from the Central and State Finance Commissions and by way of convergence of resources available under other schemes and programmes of the Central and State Governments, the Panchayats are undertaking various developmental works including provision of livelihood for the Panchayat residents and contributing towards the goal of poverty reduction. As per results of the Panchayat Advancement Index (PAI) compiled by the Ministry of Panchayati Raj, many Panchayats in the country are doing noticeable works in livelihood generation and poverty reduction including in the State of Odisha.
