

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF PANCHAYATI RAJ
LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 2536
ANSWERED ON 27.12.2018

COMPUTERISATION OF PANCHAYATS

2536. SHRI JANARDAN SINGH SIGRIWAL:

Will the Minister of PANCHAYATI RAJ be pleased to state:

- (a) whether an Expert Group on information technology programmes of the Ministry of Panchayati Raj has recommended the computerisation of all the panchayats in the country within a stipulated time frame;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) the action taken by the Government on these recommendations and the expenditure likely to be incurred in this regard, State-wise; and
- (d) the manner in which the required funds are likely to be generated for the purpose?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PANCHAYATI RAJ
(SHRI PARSHOTTAM RUPALA)

(a) & (b) Yes. Keeping in view the strategic importance of computerization at the Gram Panchayat level, the Ministry of Panchayati Raj (MoPR) had constituted an Expert Group in June 2007 to assess the current and future Information Technology (IT) programmes of the Ministry, to recommend most cost-effective technologies for reaching IT to the Gram Panchayats, the use of IT for effectively building capacities of Panchayati Raj Institutions through distance learning and the cost implications of the recommendations. The major recommendations were as follows:

- Gram Panchayats and Block Panchayats need to be equipped with computers and associated infrastructure.
- Use of open technology which includes open standards, open source and other similar open initiatives as the basis for technology options.
- States should have autonomy in defining and developing their own application software to address State specific functionalities while at the same time development of application software for core common functions centrally.
- Multi-mode training interventions using Information & Communication Technology and satellite-based technologies should be adopted.

(c) & (d) Work relating to Information and Service Needs Assessment, Business Process Re-engineering and preparation of Detailed Project Report had been completed in 27 States/Union Territories(UTs) in 2009-10. Based on these studies, a suite of core software applications commonly known as Panchayat Enterprise Suite (PES) under e-Panchayat Mission Mode Project has been developed to address various aspects of Panchayats' functioning including planning, budgeting, implementation, accounting, monitoring, social audit and delivery of citizen services like issue of certificates, licenses, tax collection etc.

For the current year 2018-19 in Budget Estimate, Ministry of Panchayati Raj made a provision of Rs. 20 Crores for the e-Panchayat MMP. Panchayat being a State subject, providing basic infrastructure including computers, net connectivity etc. and computerisation of panchayats are primarily the responsibility of concerned State Government/ Union Territories (UTs) administration. The expenditure on computerisation of Panchayats is largely borne by States/UTs. However, Government has taken initiatives for computerisation of the panchayats by providing Computers/ internet/e-Panchayat facility in the country.

Upto 10% of the Grants under Fourteenth Finance Commission can be used by Gram Panchayats (GPs) as technical and administrative support towards Operation & Maintenance and Capital expenditure. Among other activities, expenditure towards (i) purchase of computer and accessories as well as cost of Annual Maintenance in GPs, which do not have any computer at present and (ii) one-time cost for providing internet connectivity and recurring charges can also be incurred from the 10 % Operation & Maintenance expenditure.

Under the erstwhile scheme of Rajiv Gandhi Panchayat Sashaktikaran Abhiyan (RGPSA), Ministry of Panchayati Raj (MoPR) had provided financial assistance to States/ UTs for e-enablement including computers and peripherals till 2014-15. Under the newly launched scheme of Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan (RGSA), funds have been provided to States/UTs for purchasing computer for their e-enablement on a limited scale.

For attaining the vision of Digital India, Department of Telecommunications is implementing the BharatNet project in a phased manner to create network to connect all the Gram Panchayats in the country by broadband. As on 16th December 2018, a total of 1,16,543 Gram Panchayats (GPs) have been made Service Ready. As part of BharatNet project, the Last Mile connectivity is sought to provide through Wi-Fi or any other suitable broadband technology to access broadband /internet services to all the GPs in the country.
