

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF PANCHAYATI RAJ  
**LOK SABHA**  
**UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 196**  
ANSWERED ON-02.02.2021

**PANCHAYAT ELECTIONS IN DARJEELING**

196. SHRI RAJU BISTA:

Will the Minister of PANCHAYATI RAJ be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government is aware that the last Panchayat elections in Darjeeling and Kalimpong hills, were held in 2001 and no elections to panchayats have been held since then, if so, the reasons for which the Panchayat elections have not been held in Darjeeling and Kalimpong hills;

(b) the details of funds allocated for Panchayat in Darjeeling and Kalimpong districts since 2011 and reasons for additional allocation or reduction in funds if any;

(c) whether the Government is aware that the Panchayat term in Siliguri Mahakuma Parishad areas under Darjeeling district in West Bengal has ended in November 2020 itself, but no fresh panchayat elections have been held ever since;

(d) the details of agency/agencies which are implementing development projects in the panchayat areas in the absence of elected panchayat structure in the entire Darjeeling and Kalimpong districts; and

(e) the details of data on the projects that are pending or could not be implemented due to absence of Panchayat System?

**ANSWER**

THE MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ  
(SHRI NARENDRA SINGH TOMAR)

(a) Yes, Sir. However, Article 243K of the Constitution of India vests the responsibility of superintendence, direction and control of the preparation of electoral rolls for, and the conduct of, all elections to the Panchayats in a State Election Commission consisting of a State Election Commissioner to be appointed by the Governor. Ministry of Panchayati Raj regularly advises States for holding regular and timely elections to Panchayats.

(b) The Government of West Bengal has informed that development programmes in Darjeeling and Kalimpong hill areas are being undertaken by the Gorkhaland Territorial Administration (GTA). Block Development Officers are implementing programmes in absence of elected bodies in Panchayats. No funds are allocated to Panchayats in those areas. Funds under National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP), wage component of Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act 2005 (MGNREGA) are being sent to the beneficiaries through Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) mode. Fund Transfer Orders (FTOs) for

materials components are prepared by the concerned Block Development Officer and payment made directly to the agencies.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) The Government of West Bengal has informed that one State Government Officer has been appointed in each Panchayat body for day-to-day functioning of the Panchayat. Grassroots level schemes are being implemented through existing office set-up in such cases.

(e) 'Panchayat', being "Local Government", is a State subject and part of State list of Seventh Schedule of Constitution of India. Such details are not maintained by the Ministry of Panchayati Raj.

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