

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF PANCHAYATI RAJ
LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO-3479
ANSWERED ON: 17.12.2024

VILLAGE DEVELOPMENT

3479. SHRI SANJAY HARIBHAU JADHAV:
SHRI OMPRAKASH BHUPALSINH ALIAS PAVAN RAJENIMBALKAR:
SHRI DAROGA PRASAD SAROJ:
DR. KALYAN VAJJINATHRAO KALE:
SHRI BALWANT BASWANT WANKHADE:

Will the Minister of PANCHAYATI RAJ be pleased to state:

- (a) the details of works being carried out at panchayat level for the all-round development of villages in the country along with the required amount of funds in this regard during the last five years;
- (b) whether the Government proposes to increase the funds of central share for the development of villages in the country and if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor;
- (c) the funds released under central share for development work in villages of the country, particularly in Uttar Pradesh during the last five years and the development works executed under the said head;
- (d) whether it is a fact that the elections to Local Self Government Institutions of Maharashtra have not been held even after the expiry of their term, if so, the details thereof;
- (e) the reasons behind the non-election of Local Self Government Institutions after the end of their term in Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh;
- (f) the details of the steps taken by the Government in order to ensure that elections are taken up on time along with the details of any communication done in this regard;
- (g) the reasons for not holding elections even after the end of term of the Local Self Government Institutions of Uttar Pradesh;
- (h) whether the Government is aware about serious view taken by the Courts in the past over delay in rural body election, if so, the details thereof and future course of action in this regard; and
- (i) whether any such case has been noticed where the funds allocated for the purpose mentioned above have been misused and if so, the details thereof and the salient features of the Panchayat Election Process?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR PANCHAYATI RAJ

(PROF. S.P. SINGH BAGHEL)

(a) to (c) By utilizing grants from the Central Finance Commissions, based on their requirements Panchayats undertake various works such as maintaining sanitation and open defecation free status, providing basic drinking water supply services, rainwater harvesting, water recycling, and the construction and repair of village roads. During 2019-20 to 2023-24, a total of Rs. 2,59,869.13 crore was allocated to rural local bodies under the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Finance Commissions. Specifically, Rs. 42,813 crore was allocated for the RLBs in Uttar Pradesh for the same period. The allocation of funds varies from one Finance Commission to another, depending on the criteria adopted by successive Commissions.

To strengthen the Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) and rural local bodies (RLBs) that play a crucial role in village development, the Ministry of Panchayati Raj (MoPR) is implementing three schemes. Under the Centrally Sponsored Scheme of Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan (RGSA), capacity building and training for elected representatives and functionaries of the PRIs are provided, along with infrastructural support like Gram Panchayat Bhawans and computers with peripherals. The Incentivization of Panchayats (IoP) scheme awards financial incentives to the best-performing Panchayats, recognizing their good work in improving service delivery and public welfare. The Mission Mode Project on e-Panchayats funds various e-governance projects aimed at the digitalization of Panchayats to enhance efficiency, accountability, and transparency in PRIs' functioning for their overall transformation (no funds are released to States under this scheme). Over the last five years, a total of Rs. 3231.80 crore was released to States/UTs under the RGSA and IoP schemes, of which Rs. 474.56 crore was released to the State of Uttar Pradesh.

Additionally, the Ministry of Rural Development implements major asset-generation linked employment and infrastructure creation schemes such as the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (Mahatma Gandhi NREGS), Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana-National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM), Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY), and Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Gramin (PMAY-G) for village development.

(d) & (i) Panchayats, being part of "Local Government," fall under the jurisdiction of the States as per the State List in the Seventh Schedule of the Constitution of India. Therefore, Panchayats are established and function according to the respective State Panchayati Raj Acts, adhering to the provisions of the Constitution.

According to Article 243K of the Constitution, the oversight, direction, and control of the preparation of electoral rolls and the conduct of all Panchayat elections are vested in a State Election Commission, headed by a State Election Commissioner appointed by the Governor. Additionally, State Legislatures may enact laws related to Panchayat elections. Article 243E stipulates that the tenure of Panchayats is five years from the date of their first meeting, and elections must be conducted before the end of this term or within six months of dissolution. Under Article 243-O, the validity of Panchayat elections can only be challenged

through an election petition presented to the appropriate authority as defined by State Legislature laws.

In view of the Constitutional provisions, it is clear that the responsibility for conducting timely Panchayat elections, managing related court cases, allocating election funds, and monitoring falls within the purview of the respective State.

The Ministry of Panchayati Raj periodically issues advisories to States, encouraging adherence to these Constitutional mandates and ensuring timely receipt of Central Finance Commissions grants for duly constituted Panchayats.

Regarding Panchayat elections in Maharashtra, the Government of Maharashtra has informed that Gram Panchayat elections are held regularly at the end of their terms. However, elections to 26 Zilla Parishads and 289 Panchayat Samitis have been delayed due to stay orders from the Hon'ble Supreme Court in Special Leave Petition (SLP) 19756/2021 in relation to reservations of seats for Other Backward Classes. Necessary steps will be taken by the State Government to conduct these elections following the final decision of the Hon'ble Supreme Court in SLP 19756/2021. The Government of Uttar Pradesh has also stated that efforts were made to conduct Panchayati Raj Institution elections on time, but they were slightly delayed in the last term due to the COVID-19 pandemic and orders from the Hon'ble High Court.
