

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF PANCHAYATI RAJ
LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. †2939
ANSWERED ON 18.03.2025

PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN PANCHAYAT

†2939 SHRI BABU SINGH KUSHWAHA

Will the Minister of PANCHAYATI RAJ be pleased to state:

- (a) the details and new steps being taken by the Government to make the Panchayati Raj system more effective;
- (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 the Government to increase the participation of women in panchayats as well as to increase their leadership role; and
- (d) the special provisions made by the Government to strengthen Panchayati Raj Institutions financially and administratively for the overall development of villages?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR PANCHAYATI RAJ

(PROF. S.P. SINGH BAGHEL)

(a) to (d) Panchayat is a State subject, and the Ministry of Panchayati Raj (MoPR) supplements and complements the efforts of State Governments, including fund support under the schemes as well as grants under Finance Commissions, towards the effective functioning of the Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) on a continuous basis.

The MoPR is implementing the following schemes:

- I. Centrally Sponsored Scheme of Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan (RGSA) with the primary objective of strengthening Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) by way of capacity building and training of the Elected Representatives (ERs) and their functionaries, including women elected representatives who constitute around 46% of the total elected representatives and providing infrastructural support like Gram Panchayat Bhawan and computerization.

- II. Incentivization of Panchayats (IoP), a central component of the RGSA scheme, to encourage a competitive spirit among PRIs, under which awards, including financial incentives, are given to the best-performing Panchayats in recognition of their good work in improving service delivery and public welfare.
- III. Mission Mode Project on e-Panchayats (MMP-ePanchayat), a central component of the RGSA scheme, under which various e-governance projects are funded to promote the digitalization of Panchayats, bringing efficiency, accountability, and transparency to the functioning of PRIs and contributing to their overall transformation.

These schemes are implemented by the government in all rural local bodies (RLBs) of the States/UTs to strengthen the Panchayati Raj system and thereby improve the rural areas of the country.

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. The MoPR has been advocating for its implementation, as a result of which 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.

The Ministry has been engaging with Elected Women Representatives (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. 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.

The Ministry has been working towards attaining Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at the local level through the localisation of SDGs (LSDG) with active involvement of PRIs. To support this, it has been providing training to grassroots leaders for the formulation and implementation of theme-based Panchayat Development Plans, focusing on areas such as health, women, children, and agricultural development. Initiatives like the Leadership and Management Development Programme have been launched to empower grassroots leaders, including women leaders, in institutes of excellence like IIMs and IRMA,

in addition to training provided at National and State Institutes of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj.

The provision of financial support to rural local bodies (RLBs) is in place, and RLBs are currently receiving grants under the Fifteenth Finance Commission (XV FC) awards. XV FC grants have two components: Basic (Untied) Grants and Tied Grants. The Basic (Untied) Grants can be used for essential services under the 29 subjects listed in the XI Schedule, except for salaries and other establishment costs. The Tied Grants are designated for basic facilities, specifically for drinking water and sanitation. The Ministry also encourages Panchayats to generate their Own Sources of Revenue (OSR). The SVAMITVA Scheme of the ministry aims to create high-accuracy, high-resolution maps of rural inhabited land, serving as valuable resources for State/UT governments, enabling better planning and property tax assessment in Gram Panchayats where applicable.
