

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF PANCHAYATI RAJ
LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO– †4979
ANSWERED ON- 01.04.2025

10-FOLD INITIATIVE FOR WOMEN’S EMPOWERMENT

†4979. SHRI CHANDAN CHAUHAN:
SHRI DULU MAHATO:
SHRI BALABHADRA MAJHI:

Will the Minister of **PANCHAYATI RAJ** be pleased to state:

- (a) the manner in which the Government is planning to integrate the 10-Fold Initiative with the existing Panchayati Raj framework/system to ensure active participation of women at the grassroots level;
- (b) whether the Government proposes to introduce any new policy to encourage women to contest elections at the Panchayat level to strengthen women's representation in local governance in the country especially in the State of Jharkhand;
- (c) if so, the details thereof; and
- (d) whether there is any structured training programme to develop leadership and governance capacities of women representatives in rural local bodies under the Ministry of Panchayati Raj and if so, the details thereof?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR PANCHAYATI RAJ

(PROF. S. P. SINGH BAGHEL)

(a) to (c) “Panchayat”, being “Local Government”, is a State subject and part of State List of Seventh Schedule of the Constitution of India. Panchayats are set up and operate through the respective State Panchayati Raj Acts which may vary from State to State, subject to the provisions of the Constitution.

To ensure women’s active participation in grassroots democracy, Article 243D of the Constitution of India provides not less than one-third reservation for women out of ‘total number

of seats to be filled by direct election in every Panchayat’ and ‘total number of offices of chairpersons in the Panchayats at each level’. However, 21 States, including Jharkhand, and 2 Union Territories(UTs) have gone even further and have made provisions of 50% reservation for women in Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) in their respective State Panchayati Raj Acts/Rules encouraging increased participation in the grassroots governance. In respect of remaining States/UTs, Constitutional provision as prescribed in Article 243D applies (i.e. one-third of total seats).

Further, the Ministry of Panchayati Raj through its thematic approach of Localisation of Sustainable Development Goals (LSDGs) including Theme 9 – Women Friendly Panchayats is ensuring women’s active participation in grassroots governance. The Ministry of Panchayati Raj has issued advisories to States, including Jharkhand, to facilitate the holding of separate Ward Sabha and Mahila Sabha meetings before Gram Sabha meetings.

As per information received from the Ministry of Women and Child Development, the Government of India has adopted a “whole-of-government” and “whole-of-society” approach to address issues on a life-cycle continuum basis for the holistic empowerment of women from all sections of the society, and this includes political empowerment of women. Through various policies, the Government of India is promoting greater participation of women in local governance and political leadership roles.

(d) Under the Ministry’s scheme of Revamped Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan (RGSA), there is provision for the training of Elected Representatives (ERs) including Women Elected Representatives (WERs), functionaries and other stakeholders of Panchayats in different categories on orientation and refresher training, thematic training, specialised training, Panchayat Development Plan training.

Apart from these different trainings, the Ministry also supports exposure visits within & outside the States for cross-State learning experiences, etc. In addition, a new initiative has been taken to enhance the capacities of including women elected representatives and functionaries of Panchayats through institutes of excellence under the Leadership/Management Development Program.

Further, under the scheme, the Ministry has assisted the States in developing comprehensive training modules for assisting States/UTs in imparting training to enhance the capacity and leadership and management skills and effective execution of tasks for good governance by WERs.

The Ministry has collaborated with Transform Rural India (TRI) as Knowledge Partner in developing comprehensive Training Module for assisting the States/UTs for the Capacity Building of WERs of Panchayati Raj Institutions.

The Ministry, in collaboration with the United Nations Population Fund (formerly the United Nations Fund for Population Activities - UNFPA), has engaged them as a Knowledge Partner to design training modules and train a cadre of Master Trainers. This initiative aims to support

States and Union Territories in building the capacity of grassroots-level Elected Representatives, including Women Elected Representatives and Panchayati Raj Functionaries, by focusing on women-friendly governance practices. The ultimate goal is to foster women-friendly Gram Panchayats as models of governance and to empower female leadership within rural governance frameworks.
