

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF PANCHAYATI RAJ  
**LOK SABHA**  
**UNSTARRED QUESTION NO- 1595**  
ANSWERED ON- 29.07.2025

**PROTECTION OF SCHEDULED CASTES**

1595. DR. D RAVI KUMAR:

Will the Minister of PANCHAYATI RAJ be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government is aware of the recommendations of the L. Elayaperumal Committee (1969), which noted that Panchayati Raj Institutions in most States did not adequately safeguard the interests of Scheduled Castes (SC) and specifically failed to address untouchability, if so, the details thereof;
- (b) whether the Government acknowledges that only Andhra Pradesh, at that time, had a statutory provision mandating Panchayati Raj bodies to take steps to eliminate untouchability;
- (c) whether such a clause is present in any other State today, if so, the details thereof;
- (d) if not, the reasons for the absence of a binding provision in the Panchayati Raj Act to ensure the removal of untouchability and protection of Scheduled Castes; and
- (e) whether the Government proposes to amend the Panchayati Raj Act to include specific obligations on Panchayati Raj bodies to combat untouchability and if so, the details thereof?

**ANSWER**

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR PANCHAYATI RAJ

(PROF. S. P. SINGH BAGHEL)

(a) The existing Constitutional status of "Panchayats" came into force in 1993 through 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act, 1992. The 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act, through Article 243D, provides for the reservation of seats for Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs) in every Panchayat in proportion to their population in the Panchayat area, and also mandates the reservation of the offices of Chairpersons in Panchayats at each level for SCs and STs, in such manner as the State Legislature may, by law, determine.

Article 17 of the Constitution of India abolishes untouchability and forbids its practice in any form, making the enforcement of any disability arising out of untouchability a punishable offence. Further, the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989, strengthens the provisions related to the protection of the rights and dignity of SCs and STs.

The Ministry of Panchayati Raj has been created in the year 2004 and work relating to

Panchayats, Panchayati Raj Institutions and District Planning Committees have been allocated to this Ministry whereas the recommendations of the L. Elayaperumal Committee were made in the year 1969.

(b) to (e) “Panchayat”, being “Local Government”, is a State subject and part of State List of Seventh Schedule of the Constitution of India. Article 243G of the Constitution provides that the Legislature of a State may, by law, endow the Panchayats with such powers and authority as may be necessary to enable them to function as institutions of self-government. Such laws may include provisions for the devolution of powers and responsibilities upon Panchayats at the appropriate level with respect to the implementation of schemes for economic development and social justice, including those relating to the matters listed in the Eleventh Schedule. Item at serial number 27 of the Eleventh Schedule refers to the "Welfare of the weaker sections, and in particular, of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes." Accordingly, the respective States and Union Territories have enacted their State Panchayati Raj Acts to operationalize the provisions of the 73rd Constitutional Amendment. However, this office does not maintain specific details regarding provisions related to untouchability as enacted under the respective State Panchayati Raj Acts, including that of Andhra Pradesh.

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