

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF PANCHAYATI RAJ
LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.-1523
ANSWERED ON- 09.12.2025

PERFORMANCE OF RASHTRIYA GRAM SWARAJ ABHIYAN

1523. SHRI ARVIND DHARMAPURI:

Will the Minister of PANCHAYATI RAJ be pleased to state:

- (a) the key role of Panchayats in rural governance and socio-economic development of the country;
- (b) whether the Government has reviewed/assessed the performance of the Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) in the country;
- (c) if so, the details and the outcome thereof including the various loopholes or deficiencies noticed in the functioning of Panchayats as institutions of local Self-Government;
- (d) whether the Government has launched Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan (RGSA) to strengthen Panchayati Raj; and
- (e) if so, the key features of the scheme including the conditions/norms laid down to release funds to the States under RGSA?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ

(SHRI RAJIV RANJAN SINGH)

(a) Part IX, relating to the Panchayats, has been inserted in the Constitution of India as a sequel to the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act, 1992. Consequently, 'Panchayats' have assumed Constitutional status. Since then, Panchayats are in the centre of rural governance

and socio-economic development of the country. Panchayats are constituted, through elections every five years, in all States and Union Territories, covered under Part-IX of the Constitution, at village level, intermediate level and district level, which are called as Gram Panchayats, Block Panchayats and District Panchayats respectively, but the States/Union Territories having a population not exceeding twenty lakhs may not have Panchayats at intermediate level. Seats of all Panchayats are filled through direct elections and offices of Chairpersons of Block Panchayats and District Panchayats are filled through indirect election whereas the manner to elect the Chairperson of a Gram Panchayat has been left with at the discretion of the State/Union Territory. These Panchayat elections are conducted under the directions of the State Election Commission. In Panchayats, seats and offices of Chairpersons are reserved mandatorily for the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and women but for the backward class of citizens, the State/Union Territory concerned may make provisions for reservation of seats and offices of Chairpersons for them too. Panchayats are able to prepare their plans and implement the schemes for 'economic development and social justice'. For this purpose, the Legislature of the State/Union Territory has been empowered to devolve powers and responsibilities to the Panchayats to function them as an institution of local self-government. Panchayats are authorized to levy, collect and appropriate the taxes, duties, tolls and fees. All the above mentioned provisions apply to the Panchayats in accordance with the Panchayati Raj laws made by the State/Union Territory concerned, subject to the provisions of the Constitution of India.

(b) and (c) 'Panchayats', being local government, is a State subject as per Entry No. 5 of the State list under Seventh Schedule to the Constitution of India. Panchayats function in accordance with the Panchayati Raj laws of the State concerned, subject to the provisions of the Constitution. Functioning of the Panchayats depends on the extent of powers devolved to them by the State concerned, which may vary from State to State. There is therefore variation in performance of Panchayats in different States. Thus, it is the primary responsibility of the State to review/assess the performance of the Panchayats and to notice the loopholes or deficiencies in their functioning and take steps too to rectify the same.

The Ministry of Panchayati Raj has also taken various steps to provide assistance to the States & Union Territories and reviews performance of Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs),

from time to time, through studies, review meetings, field visits, video conferencing, Information Technology applications etc.

This Ministry has formulated “Panchayat Advancement Index (PAI)”, a multidimensional tool to measure the process of the implementation of the localization of Sustainable Development Goals at Gram Panchayat based on local indicators across 9 themes. The outcomes of the PAI, over time, will reflect incremental progress based on the scores achieved by Gram Panchayat, highlighting their advancement toward realizing the Localization of Sustainable Development Goals (LSDGs). Currently, PAI FY 2022-23 version 1.0 has been released on 9th April 2025. A total of 29 States/Union Territories have submitted validated PAI data of 2.16 lakh Gram Panchayats/equivalent. PAI has been compiled based on 435 unique local Indicators (331 mandatory & 104 optional) consisting of 566 unique data points across 9 themes of LSDGs. Through PAI, the Gram Panchayats are automatically made aware of their loopholes or deficiencies in the functioning of Panchayats.

Further, this Ministry has released a report titled “Status of Devolution to Panchayats in States - An Indicative Evidence-Based Ranking, 2024” in February 2025 to assess the effectiveness of devolution and the role of local governments in strengthening grassroots democracy. This report presents the Devolution Index, which provides the overall scores and ranks for all States/Union Territories covered under Part-IX of the Constitution, based on six identified dimensions: Framework, Functions, Finances, Functionaries, Capacity Enhancement, and Accountability.

(d) and (e) The Ministry has implemented Centrally Sponsored Scheme of Revamped Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan (RGSA) for the period of 2022-23 to 2025-26 in all States and Union Territories with main objective for capacitating Panchayati Raj Institutions through imparting training to all the Elected Representatives, Panchayat functionaries and other stakeholders to develop their governance capabilities for leadership roles to enable the Panchayats to function effectively. Under the scheme, this Ministry supplements the efforts of States/Union Territories on limited scale for creation of basic infrastructure for effective functioning of Gram Panchayats such as construction of Gram Panchayat Bhawans, Computers and colocation of Common Service Centres with Gram Panchayat Bhawans with

focus on North East States, as proposed by States/ Union Territories in their Annual Action Plans and later approved by Central Empowered Committee. Ministry has also been providing support to the States/Union Territories, under the scheme of revamped RGSA for setting up of Project Management Units at States, District and Block level as approved in the Annual Action Plan for effective implementation of the scheme and setting up of institutional mechanism as State, District and Block level Panchayat Resource Centres to support Capacity Building & Training of Panchayats.

As per the guidelines for implementation of RGSA, the essential conditions to be fulfilled by States and Union Territories to access RGSA funds are:

- (i) Regular conduct of elections to Panchayats or local rural bodies in non-Part IX areas.
- (ii) Not less than one third reservation for women in Panchayats.
- (iii) Constitution of State Finance Commission every five years, and placement of Action Taken Report on the recommendations of the State Finance Commission in the State legislature.
- (iv) Constitution of District Planning Committees in all districts, and issuing of Guidelines/rules to make these functional.
- (v) Preparation and submission of detailed annual State Capacity Building Plan for PRIs.
- (vi) The Economic Development and Income Enhancement projects should have approval of respective Panchayat (Gram Panchayat for the project of Gram Panchayat level, Block Panchayat for the project of Block level and District Panchayat for the project of District level) before submitting to Ministry for consideration.
