

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF PANCHAYATI RAJ
LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 2951
ANSWERED ON 10.03.2026

PANCHAYATI RAJ INSTITUTIONS IN BIHAR

†2951. SHRI TARIQ ANWAR

Will the Minister of PANCHAYATI RAJ be pleased to state:

(a) the results of the recent assessments conducted by the Government regarding the functional and financial status of Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) in Bihar, especially in the Seemanchal region;

(b) the mechanisms developed by the Government to monitor the utilisation of funds provided under Central Schemes, including 14th Finance Commission grants, to ensure that PRIs are able to carry out development works in the said areas; and

(c) the specific plans of the Government for capacity building of Panchayat members and representatives, especially women in the said areas, such as extending the benefits of programmes organised on National Panchayati Raj Day to the said functionaries?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ

(SHRI RAJIV RANJAN SINGH)

(a) “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. Article 243G of the Constitution empowers the Legislature of a State to make provisions, by law, for the devolution of power and responsibilities upon Panchayat at the appropriate level, subject to such conditions as may be specified, with respect to the preparation of plans for economic development and social justice and implementation of schemes for economic development and social justice as may be entrusted to them including those in relation to matters included in the Eleventh Schedule to the Constitution. The State legislatures are to consider the 29 subjects listed in the Eleventh Schedule for devolution of power and responsibilities upon Panchayats. Accordingly, the functioning and financial autonomy of local Governments depends on the extent of powers and resources devolved to them by the States concerned, including the State of Bihar, which varies across States.

The Ministry of Panchayati Raj 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 including Bihar covered under Part-IX of the Constitution, based on six identified dimensions: Framework, Functions, Finances, Functionaries, Capacity Enhancement, and Accountability. On the basis of this report, the overall rank of the State of Bihar is 14. This report does not provide region-wise assessment of Panchayats in a State.

The Ministry of Panchayati Raj has also developed the Panchayat Advancement Index (PAI) as a composite assessment framework to measure the performance of Gram Panchayats/Equivalent to Gram Panchayats across nine themes aligned with the Localisation of Sustainable Development Goals (LSDGs). The PAI provides theme-wise and overall scores through scorecards and dashboards, enabling identification of performance gaps, relative strengths, and areas requiring focused attention at the Panchayat level. PAI Version 1.0 for FY 2022-23 was released in April 2025. Total 29 States/UTs have submitted validated PAI Data in dedicated Portal (www.pai.gov.in) covering 2.16 lakh Gram Panchayats/Equivalent to GPs across India. The exercise for PAI Version 2.0 (FY 2023-24) was launched in May 2025.

In addition, the Ministry of Panchayati Raj reviews performance of Panchayats, from time to time, through studies, review meetings, field visits, video conferencing, Information Technology applications, Common Review Missions etc. This Ministry holds extensive exercise of capacity building of Elected Representatives of Panchayats, through the scheme of Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan.

(b) The Ministry is implementing a Centrally Sponsored Scheme called Revamped Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan (RGSA) w.e.f. financial year 2022-23. The implementation of the scheme, including utilisation of funds released to States, is closely monitored through the written communication, review meetings/video-conferences, pre-CEC meeting, field visits, etc. The Central Empowered Committee of RGSA, while approving the Annual Action Plan of States/UTs, also reviews the progress of implementation of the scheme and utilization of funds thereof. States/ UTs are persistently requested to submit the requisite documents viz. quarterly, annual progress reports, utilization certificate, auditor's report, etc., and compliance with the Ministry of Finance instructions for regulating the release of funds. A transaction-based Public Financial Management System (PFMS) has been introduced for the release and tracking of funds under RGSA.

The Ministry of Panchayati Raj also provides e-GramSwaraj portal for facilitating all the Panchayats to formulate and upload their plans for utilization of grants under the Central Finance Commission each year. These plans, duly approved by the Panchayats, are monitored at each stage of implementation through the system generated vouchers, geo-tagging and responsibilities assigned to Panchayat Pradhan and Panchayat Secretary. 'Audit Online' application was launched by this Ministry in April 2020, for online audit of Panchayat accounts, financial management and transparent auditing of Central Finance Commission grants utilization.

(c) Under the RGSA Scheme, this Ministry provides capacity building & training to the Elected Representatives (ERs), including Women Elected representatives (WERs), functionaries and other stakeholders to develop their governance capabilities for leadership roles and to function effectively. A total of 30,94,748 WERs were trained from FY 2022-23 to FY 2025-26 (as on 28.02.2026) under the scheme. Increased capacity-building training in

different subject matters pertaining to Panchayats, service delivery mechanisms and leadership skills has enhanced the capacities and capabilities of Women Panchayat Members in undertaking their assigned tasks as elected representatives. Women Panchayat Members are trained on different aspects of rural governance in multiple training programmes for effective delivery of their roles and responsibilities at the grassroots level.

The Ministry has also launched a comprehensive specialised training module as a part of “Shashkta Panchayat Netri Abhiyan” for the capacity building of Women representatives of PRIs. The focus of the training module is to build the capacity of the Women representatives on different aspects of rural governance; enhance the knowledge & practical skills for effective delivery of roles & responsibilities as elected representatives; and also to develop the leadership, communication, managerial & decision making skills for effective women led governance. A total of 1,05,966 WERs (as on 28.02.2026) have been trained under this Specialised Module. On National Panchayati Raj Day, Panchayats are awarded for their exemplary work on various themes.
