

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF PANCHAYATI RAJ
LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO– 5155
ANSWERED ON- 24.03.2026

FUNDS TO PANCHAYATI RAJ INSTITUTIONS

5155. SHRI BALRAM NAIK PORIKA:

Will the Minister of PANCHAYATI RAJ be pleased to state:

- (a) the devolution of funds, functions and functionaries (3Fs) to Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) in States, including the extent of financial autonomy;
- (b) the progress under Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan, including training imparted to elected representatives and staff;
- (c) the status of e-Panchayat and digital infrastructure in Gram Panchayats, including online service delivery; and
- (d) the measures to promote women’s participation and leadership in PRIs?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ

(SHRI RAJEEV RANJAN SINGH ALIAS LALAN 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. States have made their own Panchayati Raj Act, 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 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 listed 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, devolution of funds, functions, and functionaries to Panchayati Raj Institutions depends on the extent of powers and resources devolved to them by the States concerned, which varies across States.

The Ministry of Panchayati Raj reviews performance of Panchayats, from time to time, through studies, review meetings, field visits, video conferencing, Information Technology applications etc.

The 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. This report reveals that the extent of devolution has increased from 39.9% to 43.9% between the period 2013-14 to 2021-22.

(b) The Ministry has implemented a Centrally Sponsored Scheme called Revamped Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan (RGSA) w.e.f. financial year 2022-23 with main objective for capacitating PRIs through imparting training to all the Elected Representatives, functionaries and other stakeholders to develop their governance capabilities for leadership roles to enable the Panchayats to function effectively. The details of number of participants trained under revamped RGSA since 2022-23 to 2025-26 (as on 28.02.2026) are as under:

S. No.	Financial Year	Number of participants trained
1	2022-23	42,02,293
2	2023-24	39,92,382
3	2024-25	35,54,942
4	2025-26 (As on 28.02.2026)	35,65,409

(c) The Ministry is implementing the e-Panchayat Mission Mode Project (MMP) under RGSA, which has significantly enhanced transparency, efficiency, and governance at the grassroots level. The eGramSwaraj application, developed as part of the e-Panchayat MMP, has facilitated digital planning, accounting, monitoring, and online payments at the Panchayat level. The integration of eGramSwaraj with the Public Financial Management System (PFMS) enables real-time payments to vendors and service providers, ensuring seamless fund flow and reducing delays. During Financial Year 2025–26, 2,55,254 Gram Panchayats across the country, uploaded their Gram Panchayat Development Plans (GPDs). During the same period, Panchayati Raj Institutions made payments amounting to ₹53,342 crore through the eGramSwaraj–PFMS interface.

Further, applications developed by the Ministry like Meri Panchayat have endeavoured to bring transparency in Panchayat Governance by making information on planning, activities and progress of works in Panchayat accessible to public. Similarly, Panchayat NIRNAY is an online application that aims at bringing transparency and better management in conduct of Gram Sabhas by Panchayats.

Furthermore, an application of ‘AuditOnline’ has been developed for online audits of Panchayat accounts and their financial management. AuditOnline for transparent auditing of Central Finance Commission funds utilization to strengthen financial management of Panchayats launched in April 2020. For audit period 2023-24, audit report for 2,58,074 GPs have been generated.

The Ministry has also introduced SabhaSaar, an AI-enabled voice-to-text and meeting summarisation platform, to support accurate and timely documentation of Gram Sabha and Panchayat meetings. The platform facilitates multilingual transcription, agenda-

wise summarisation of proceedings, validation of minutes by Panchayat functionaries prior to finalisation, and structured recording of resolutions and action points. SabhaSaar is intended to enhance transparency, efficiency and follow-up in grassroots governance. As on 18-03-2026, over 1.17 lakh Gram Panchayats have utilized the SabhaSaar portal for generation of Minutes of Meetings, and more than 2.39 lakh Minutes have been uploaded on the portal.

Furthermore, the Ministry has strengthened the e-GramSwaraj platform through integration with other national digital platforms. Integration with the Government e-Marketplace (GeM) facilitates transparent, efficient and rule-based procurement by Gram Panchayats. Integration with Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) enables Gram Panchayats to apply for internet connectivity at the Panchayat level. Integration with BHASHINI enables multilingual access to e-GramSwaraj, thereby improving accessibility in regional languages. In addition, integration of weather forecast information supports informed local planning and timely decision-making, particularly in the areas of agriculture and disaster preparedness.

Further, the provision of last-mile digital connectivity to Gram Panchayats under the BharatNet programme is being implemented by the Department of Telecommunications to provide broadband connectivity to all Gram Panchayats. Under the BharatNet project, as on 18.03.2026, over 2.18 lakh Gram Panchayats across the country have been made service-ready, and network upgradation and expansion are being undertaken under the Amended BharatNet Programme.

(d) To promote the participation of women in panchayats as well as to increase their leadership role in Panchayati Raj Institutions, 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 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 to facilitate the holding of separate Ward Sabha and Mahila Sabha meetings before Gram Sabha meetings.

Further, the Ministry has launched a comprehensive specialized training module “Shashkta Panchayat Netri Abhiyan” for the capacity building of Women Elected Representatives of Panchayati Raj Institutions. The focus of the training module is to build the capacity of the Women Elected 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 Women Elected Representatives (as on 28th February, 2026) have been trained on this specialised module.
