

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF PANCHAYATI RAJ  
**LOK SABHA**  
**UNSTARRED QUESTION No. 5204**  
ANSWERED ON- 24.03.2026

**WOMEN IN PANCHAYATI RAJ INSTITUTIONS**

†5204. SHRI ANURAG SHARMA:

Will the Minister of PANCHAYATI RAJ be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the reservation of fifty per cent for women in Panchayats has led to progress in their leadership and participation in decision-making, if so, the details thereof;
- (b) whether the Government is aware of the fact that in many places the problem of 'proxy representation' or the so-called 'Sarpanch Pati' still persists;
- (c) if so, the steps being taken by the Government to address this problem; and
- (d) whether any special training and leadership development programmes are being conducted for women representatives, if so, the details thereof?

**ANSWER**

THE MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ

(SHRI RAJEEV RANJAN SINGH ALIAS LALAN SINGH)

(a) 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 namely, Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha, Punjab, Rajasthan, Sikkim, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Tripura, Uttarakhand and West Bengal and 2 Union Territories (UTs) namely, Lakshadweep and Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu, have gone even further and have made provisions of 50% reservation for women in Panchayati Raj Institutions in their respective State Panchayati Raj Acts/Rules encouraging increased women's participation in the grassroots governance.

At present, as per information available with the Ministry, out of 24,41,781 elected representatives, 12,14, 885 (49.75%) are women elected representatives as on date. This number is beyond the stipulated minimum 33% reservation because many States provide up to 50% reservation for women in Panchayati Raj Institutions, and Women Elected Representatives are also elected from 'unreserved seats'. The number of elected representatives is dynamic in nature which changes with conduct of fresh elections in the Panchayati Raj Institutions from time to time.

(b) to (c) "Panchayat", being "Local Government", is a State subject and part of the State

List of the Seventh Schedule to the Constitution of India. Therefore, any matters related to practice of 'Proxy Leadership' in Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) are taken up by the States.

Further, on the direction of the Hon'ble Supreme Court, the Ministry of Panchayati Raj constituted an Advisory Committee in September 2023 to examine the issue of Women Pradhans being represented by the male members of their families and also to examine other issues related to proxy practices. The Committee has submitted its Report with recommendations to the Ministry in February 2025, and the same has been accepted by the Ministry.

The Advisory Committee recommended that the State Governments take necessary measures, including social campaigns, legal reforms, monitoring and schemes to eliminate Sarpanch Patis in Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) and ensure empowerment of women Sarpanches. Owing to the importance of this matter and its impact on women's leadership in PRIs, this Ministry has also constituted a Task Force on 17th April 2025.

**(d)** This Ministry has implemented the Centrally Sponsored Scheme of Revamped Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan (RGSA) w.e.f. FY 2022-23 in States/ UTs with main objective of capacitating PRIs through imparting training to the Elected Representatives, including Women Elected Representatives, functionaries and other stakeholders to develop their governance capabilities for leadership roles and to function effectively. A total of 30,94,748 Women Elected Representatives were trained from FY 2022-23 to FY 2025-26 (as on 28th February 2026) under this scheme. Further, in order to effectively curb the practice of proxy leadership and to promote women's participation and leadership in PRIs, the Ministry has launched a Specialized Training Module for the capacity building of Women Elected Representatives of Panchayati Raj Institutions. The focus of this training module is to build the capacity of WERs across different aspects of rural governance and enhance their knowledge and practical skills for the effective discharge of roles and responsibilities as elected representatives, thereby promoting women-led governance. Under this Specialised Module, 1,05,966 Women Elected Representatives have been trained so far as on 28.02.2026.

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