

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF PANCHAYATI RAJ
LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 341
ANSWERED ON-05.12.2023

PESA Act

341. SHRI MAGUNTA SREENIVASULU REDDY:

Will the Minister of *PANCHAYATI RAJ* be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government is taking measures to implement Social Audit mechanisms in the areas covered by Panchayat Extension to Scheduled Areas (PESA) Act in order to enhance the level of accountability prevalent at the grassroots level;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) if not, the reasons therefor; and

(d) the details of other measures being taken by the Government to ensure transparency and accountability at the grassroots level especially in areas covered by PESA Act?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR PANCHAYATI RAJ

(SHRI KAPIL MORESHWAR PATIL)

(a) & (b) The Government has notified the 'Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, 2005' (MGNREGA) in September, 2005. Section 3 & 4 of this Act mandates that every State Government shall make an Employment Guarantee Scheme for rural areas notified by the Central Government. Section 17 of this Act mandates that the Gram Sabha shall conduct regular Social Audits of all the projects under the scheme taken up within the Gram Panchayat. Social Audit is applicable to all Gram Panchayats, where the 'Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme' (MGNREGS) is implemented, including Panchayats covered under 'The Provisions of the Panchayats (Extension to the Scheduled Areas) Act, 2005' (PESA).

To ensure social audits are done well, the Ministry of Rural Development, in consultation with the Comptroller and Auditor General of India, has notified the 'Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Audit of Schemes Rules, 2011' in June, 2011. These rules clearly specify that the State Government shall facilitate conduct of social audit of the works taken up under the MGNREGA in every Gram Panchayat at least once in six months. These rules also specify that every State Government shall identify or establish a Social Audit Unit to facilitate conduct of social audit by Gram Sabhas. These Social Audit Units should build capacities of Gram Sabhas for conducting social audit of MGNREGS and state government should take follow-up action. Social Audit Units have been established in all States, except in Goa, and thus all PESA states have these Units in place to facilitate social audits.

(c) Does not arise.

(d) In terms of Part-IX of the Constitution of India, the Panchayats, including Panchayats in PESA areas, are set up and operate through the respective State Panchayati Raj Acts. To ensure transparency and accountability at the grassroot level, the functioning and performance of Panchayats are monitored mainly by the State Governments.

Ministry of Panchayati Raj also reviews performance of Panchayats, from time to time, through studies, review meetings, field visits, video conferencing, Information Technology applications, Common Review Missions etc. Further, the Ministry has launched eGramSwaraj (<https://egramswaraj.gov.in>), a user friendly web-based portal, which aims to bring in better transparency in the decentralised planning, progress reporting, financial management, work-based accounting and details of assets created. Further, for ensuring timely audit of Panchayat accounts i.e. receipts and expenditures of Gram Panchayats, this Ministry has rolled out an online application – AuditOnline (<https://auditonline.gov.in>). This application not only facilitates the auditing of Panchayat accounts but also provides for maintaining of audit records. This application streamlines the process for audit inquiries, draft local audit reports, draft audit paras etc. and thus ensures proper maintenance of accounts by Panchayats to improve transparency and accountability.
