

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
LAW , JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2769
ANSWERED ON:13.03.2000
ELECTORAL REFORMS
RAGHUNANDAN LAL BHATIA;SUSHIL KUMAR SAMBHAJIRAO SHINDE

Will the Minister of LAW , JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government have lately been considering introducing electoral reforms in respect of elections to Legislatures and Panchayats, especially the procedures and practices in regard to indirect elections such as to Legislative Councils etc.;
- (b) if so, the main changes and the modifications contemplated in this context; and
- (c) the progress achieved so far in this regard and the time by which a decision is likely to be taken in this regard?

Answer

MINISTER OF LAW, JUSTICE & COMPANY AFFAIRS

(SHRI RAM JETHMALANI)

(a) & (b) : Yes, Sir. Government is committed to bring necessary reforms in electoral laws pertaining to elections to Parliament and Legislatures of the States. In this regard, inter-alia, the strengthening of the provisions for checking entry of corrupt and criminal elements in the electoral politics by making the provisions more stringent is being contemplated. Among the modifications proposed in section 8 of the Representation of the People Act, 1951, which contains provisions for disqualifying a person on conviction for certain offences, are bringing uniformity in respect of period of disqualification in all cases and also further increasing this period, reducing the minimum period of imprisonment for incurring disqualification so as to cover most of the serious criminal offences, etc. No changes are, however, being proposed in respect of procedures and practices in regard to indirect elections. Elections to Panchayats is a State Subject.

(c) : Amendment in electoral laws is a serious and contentious subject and, therefore, considerable time and attention are being given to it. It is, therefore, not possible to give any commitment in respect of progress and time for completion of the process.