

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
RURAL DEVELOPMENT
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:5477
ANSWERED ON:30.04.2002
TASK FORCE ON PANCHAYATI RAJ
GADDE RAMAMOHAN;M.V.V.S MURTHI;RAMSHETH THAKUR

Will the Minister of RURAL DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government have set up a Task Force for decentralisation of funds and powers to the Panchayati Raj Institutions;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether the Task Force has submitted its report;
- (d) if so, the details thereof and the suggestions accepted by the Government;
- (e) whether the Union Government have sought the response of the State Governments thereto; and
- (f) if so, the details thereof?

Answer

MINISTER OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT (SHRI M. VENKAI AH NAIDU)

(a) : Yes, Sir.

(b): A Task Force on Devolution of Powers and Functions upon Panchayati Raj Institutions was constituted under the Chairmanship of Additional Secretary & Financial Adviser in the Ministry of Rural Development consisting of State Secretaries in charge of Panchayati Raj in Assam, Chhattisgarh, Kerala, Karnataka, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal and concerned Joint Secretary in the Ministry as Member Secretary.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) A Statement indicating the major recommendations of Task Force accepted by the Government is given at Annexure.

(e) Yes, Sir.

(f) All the State Governments and Union Territory Administrations vide our letter dated 11th October, 2001 have been requested to initiate steps towards the completion of devolution of powers upon Panchayats by the end of March, 2002 keeping in view the recommendations of the Task Force.

Annexure referred to in reply to Lok Sabha Unstarred Question No.5477 due for reply on 30.4.2002.

The Major recommendations of the Task Force constituted in July, 2001 are as follows: -

(i) Each of the 29 subjects shall be desegregated into activities/tasks (as indicated in the Report of the Task Force) to be performed by different tiers keeping in view the functions to be performed by each tier to which it naturally belongs.

(ii) The responsibilities entrusted and the administrative powers extended by the State Government ought to be specific and clear, as also simple of comprehension by the Panchayats.

(iii) To enhance the financial resources of Panchayats, the PRIs may be authorized to levy, collect and appropriate taxes, duties, tolls and fees by amending the existing State Laws.

(iv) To the extent feasible, the State Government should provide `untied` grants to enable the Panchayats to utilize the same in conformity with local needs and priorities, in the context of predetermined parameters for utilization. Out of the `untied` grants the Gram Panchayats may receive 70%, while the Intermediate and District Panchayats could share the remaining 30% equally.

(v) The State Governments should initiate requisite steps for the convergence of Schemes in order that the PRIs may have greater flexibility in responding to local needs.

(vi) The State Government may extend adequate Financial Powers to PRIs in the direction of greater autonomy in the decision making process at the respective levels.

(vii) An officer (equivalent to the District Collector) may have to be posted as the Chief Executive Officer for the District Panchayat; there may be a separate Cadre for Panchayati Raj Institutions, with all Class-I posts being filled, on deputation basis, from the State Cadres and Class-II posts of the Panchayat cadre by direct recruitment through the State Public Service Commission (or on deputation basis). As regards Class-III and lower level posts, the recruitment could be at the Regional/District levels through an independent recruitment Board.

(viii) The devolution package needs to be accompanied by the availability of qualified/trained technical personnel at various levels to assist PRIs in day-to-day operations. The technical staff posted at the Block level could be assigned to a group of Gram Panchayats for the preparation of their Action Plans and to advise the Panchayats in respect of the technical feasibility of the Plans.

(ix) An Officer of appropriate level of the State Accounts Service may be posted at the District and Intermediate levels (along with supporting staff) for the maintenance of the accounts of Panchayats and its audit. For Gram Panchayats, this function may be carried out by engaging trained personnel, on contract basis, for each Panchayat (or a group of Panchayats), depending upon the size of Panchayats.

(x) Subject Committees may be constituted (and authorised) to implement Schemes and Works, as per the decision reached in the Panchayats Meetings.

(xi) Social Audit by the Gram Sabha should be made mandatory.

(xii) District Planning Committees should be set up and made functional so that Panchayats at each level are able to formulate Annual Plans in the light of their requirements.