

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
PANCHAYATI RAJ
LOK SABHA**

STARRED QUESTION NO:130

ANSWERED ON:09.12.2004

STRENGTHENING OF PANCHAYATI RAJ INSTITUTIONS

Rao Shri Kavuru Samba Siva;Sahu Shri Chandra Sekhar

Will the Minister of PANCHAYATI RAJ be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government is taking any steps to strengthen the Panchayati Raj Institution in order to bring economic reforms in rural areas;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether some States have been demanding constitutional Amendment in respect of the Panchayati Raj System;
- (d) if so, the details thereof;
- (e) whether the Government propose to restructure various centrally sponsored schemes to give more role to Panchayats;
- (f) if so, the details thereof alongwith the number of schemes currently in operation;
- (g) whether the Government propose to launch some new schemes for giving boost to Panchayati Raj Institutions; and
- (h) if so, the details thereof?

Answer

MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR)

(a), (b), (c), (d), (e) (f), (g) & (h) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN PARTS (a), (b), (c), (d), (e) (f), (g) & (h) OF LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 130 DUE FOR REPLY ON 9.12.2004 REGARDING STRENGTHENING OF PANCHAYATI RAJ INSTITUTIONS

(a) & (b) A Conference of Chief Ministers and State Ministers in-charge of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj on 'Poverty Alleviation and Rural Prosperity through Panchayati Raj' was organised at New Delhi on 29-30 June, 2004, jointly by the Ministry of Rural Development and the Ministry of Panchayati Raj.

Issues relating to effective implementation of Parts IX and IX A of the Constitution on Panchayati Raj were tabled as agenda for discussion by the Ministry of Panchayati Raj. These issues included effective devolution of functions, finances, functionaries, planning, Gram Sabhas, women, reservation for SCs/STs, special problems of SCs/STs, elections, audit, parallel bodies, capacity building and training, and State of the Panchayats Report and jurisprudence. The Conference decided to hold seven Round Table Conferences to formulate a draft action plan towards achieving the objective of strengthening of Panchayati Raj Institutions to enable them to become true institutions of selfgovernment for the planning and implementation of programmes of economic development and social justice as envisioned in the Constitution. Six Round Table Conferences have already been held in which 16 of the 18 identified dimensions of Panchayati Raj have been discussed. The remaining two dimensions will be discussed in the seventh Round Table Conference scheduled to be held at Jaipur on 17-19 December, 2004.

Ministers in charge of Panchayats and their representatives have agreed to reconunend to their respective Governments the conclusions reached during the six Round Table Conferences on the subjects under consideration for further necessary action. Similarly, the conclusions reached during the seventh Round Table Conference are also proposed to be recommended by the Ministers in charge of Panchayats to their respective Government for adoption.

(c) & (d) During the Chief Ministers Conference held on 29-30 June, 2004, some representatives of the States/UTs demanded Constitution Amendments to the Panchayati Raj system. Having considered all aspects of the proposals, the Ministry of Panchayati Raj has decided to prioritize, facilitate and secure implementation of the Constitution (73rd Amendment) Act, 1992 in letter as well as spirit, by encouraging StatesjUTs to adopt carefully drawn up plans of action to implement the existing provisions of the Constitution.

(e), (f), (g) & (h) The Ministry of Panchayati Raj has gone through the list of approximately 300 schemes listed in Volume-II of the Expenditure Budget 2004-05 which, in the explanatory notes, itemizes, inter alia, the various Centrally Sponsored Schemes. The overwhelming majority of these schemes is related to the 29 subjects listed in the XI Schedule. In most Centrally Sponsored Schemes, there is considerable scope for increasing the involvement of Panchayats in line with the letter and spirit of Parts IX and IX A of the Constitution. As such, it is not until the provisions of Article 243G pervade the conceptualization of Centrally Sponsored Schemes that

Panchayats will actually be empowered to function as `institutions of self-government` in respect of such schemes. These are among the issues that are being pursued through evolution of consensus in the series of seven Round Tables of Panchyati Raj Institutions being organized by the Ministry of Panchayati Raj, six of which have already been held as stated above.