

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
PANCHAYATI RAJ  
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:744  
ANSWERED ON:21.11.2007  
FUNCTIONING OF PANCHAYATI RAJ  
Rao Shri Sambasiva Rayapati

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

- (a) the details of the major achievements of the Ministry since its inception;
- (b) the details of the difference within the Ministry has brought of late in the functioning of Panchayats in the country; and
- (c) the details of new plans to make further improvement in the functioning of the Panchayats across the country?

**Answer**

MINISTER OF THE STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR)

(a) & (b): After the Ministry of Panchayati Raj was set up, 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 organized in 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 Part IX and IX A of the Constitution on Panchayati Raj were tabled as the agenda for discussions by the Ministry of Panchayati Raj. In this Conference, a decision was taken to hold seven Round Table Conferences to formulate a draft action plan towards achieving the objective of strengthening Panchayati Raj Institutions to enable them to emerge as institutions of self-government for the planning and implementation of programmes of economic development and social justice as envisioned in the Constitution.

The Ministry of Panchayati Raj convened seven Round Table Meetings with the State Ministers in charge of Panchayati Raj between July, 2004 and December, 2004. A set of around 150 action points was evolved by consensus and adopted unanimously at the conclusion of the last Round Table in Jaipur in December, 2004. Consultative mechanisms have been set up by the Government of India and State Governments to follow up the Round Table Conferences which comprise a Council of Ministers of Panchayati Raj under the Chairmanship of the Union Minister for Panchayati Raj and a Committee of Chief Secretaries of States and Panchayati Raj Secretaries under the Chairmanship of the Union Secretary (Panchayati Raj). Further, the Minister (Panchayati Raj) has visited 23 States and Union Territories and signed a joint declaration with the respective Chief Ministers of States setting forth the path to full empowerment of Panchayats.

The Ministry of Panchayati Raj has prepared a report entitled "The State of the Panchayats – A Mid-Term Review and Appraisal, 2006" and laid on the Table of the House on 23 November, 2006. The Institute of Rural Management at Anand (IRMA) have now been commissioned to undertake an independent evaluation of the current State of the Panchayats. Their Report is expected to be submitted in the first quarter of next year.

Further, the Council of Ministers of Panchayati Raj has been convened thrice, at Kochi, Kerala in August 2005, at Bhubaneswar, Orissa in June 2006 and at Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala in August 2007, respectively. The Empowered Sub-Committee of National Development Council also reviews the progress of implementation of the provision of the Constitution during its meetings, which are held periodically.

(c): The Ministry of Panchayati Raj have started the implementation of the schemes like the Backward Regions Grant Fund (BRGF), Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Yojana,(RGSY), Mission Mode Programme under National e-governance Programme, Panchayat Empowerment and Accountability Incentive Schemes, Panchayat Yuva Shakti Abhiyan and Panchayat Mahila Shakti Abhiyan to strengthen the Panchayati Raj Institutions.