

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
PANCHAYATI RAJ
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1959

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WOMEN RESERVATION

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Will the Minister of PANCHAYATI RAJ be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government has conducted any evaluation about the role of women representatives in the Panchayats and also the utilisation of enhanced reservation quota for them;
- (b) if so, the details thereof alongwith the special resources to impart training and knowledge for the empowerment of women representatives;
- (c) whether the Panchayat Mahila Evam Yuva Shakti Abhiyan is fulfilling its objective of empowering Elected Women Representatives and Elected Youth Representatives; and
- (d) if so, the salient features and objectives of the above scheme alongwith the number of representatives connected with its network?

Answer

MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ(Dr. C.P. JOSHI)

(a) & (b): In 2007-08, the Ministry of Panchayati Raj commissioned a Study on Elected Women Representatives (EWRs) in Gram Panchayats which was guided by an Academic Advisory Committee and based on a nationwide survey carried out by AC Neilson ORG-MARG, New Delhi. The Study Report released on 24th April, 2008 at the National Convention of Presidents of Zilla Parishads and Intermediate Panchayats helped analyze various issues related to Elected Women Representatives vis-à-vis their male counterparts.

2. About women's positive representation and their empowerment on account of participation in the political process the findings of the study inter-alia are as under:

- (i) Four-fifths of all the representatives got elected from reserved seats and reservation emerged as an important motivator (43%) for contesting the first election.
- (ii) Prior association with any form of politics was low, and for most women the act of contesting the first election signaled their entry into active politics.
- (iii) A sizeable proportion of Elected Women Representatives perceived an enhancement in their self-esteem (79%), confidence (81%) and decision-making abilities (74%). Also becoming a Pradhans or Ward Member augments respect within the family (67%) as well as in the community at large (82%) as more attention is paid to them when they take up local issues with the concerned officials.
- (iv) Two-third of the elected representatives reported that their interaction with line Departments and parallel bodies had increased progressively over time.
- (v) 60% women representatives mentioned that they did not experience gender-based discrimination in the Panchayats and being ignored.
- (vi) Female representatives reported getting recognition from their peers and community for the work done by them.
- (vii) 95% EWRs felt that they could freely raise issues during Gram Sabha meetings.

3. As regards, capacity building of Elected Representatives, whether women or men, Government has been making persistent efforts under the Schemes of Government like Backward Regions Grant Fund programme, Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Yojana and Panchayat Mahila Evam Yuva Shakti Abhiyan (PMEYSA). In fact, PMEYSA is a specifically designed programme which inter alia aims at strengthening the capacity building and training of Elected Women Representatives (EWRs) and Elected Youth Representatives (EYRs) of Panchayati Raj Institutions.

(c) & (d): The Scheme has two components namely, Panchayat Mahila Shakti Abhiyan and Panchayat Yuva Shakti Abhiyan. Aims of PMEYSA are to knit the EWRs in a network and through group action empower themselves, so that both their participation and representation on local governance issues, improves. The main objectives of scheme are to enable them to articulate their problems

as women Panchayat leaders and discuss issues regarding the institutional mechanisms for their empowerment, to build the confidence and capacity of EWRs, so that they get over the institutional, societal and political constraints that prevent them from active participation in rural local self governments and to enable them to come up with a charter of issues to be mainstreamed into policy and advocacy support so that their concerns are addressed by the process of development adopted by the State and the three-tier PRI System.

2. Activities under the PMEYSA include holding of State Sammelans and Divisional/District level Sammelans of Elected Women Representatives, formation of Associations, setting up of State Support Centers, sensitization programmes for the Elected Women Representative and Elected Youth Representatives.

3. As per the State of Panchayat Report 2007-08 there were around 10 Lakh EWRs out of total 28 Lakh Elected Representatives of PRIs. Above mentioned activities are meant for these EWRs besides EYRs.