

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
PANCHAYATI RAJ
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1703

ANSWERED ON:23.03.2012

BACKWARD REGIONS GRANT FUND (BRGF) PROGRAMME

Bhagat Shri Sudarshan;Dubey Shri Nishikant ;Gohain Shri Rajen;Pathak Shri Harin;Raghavan Shri M. K.;Rama Devi Smt. ;Singh Rajkumari Ratna;Tanwar Shri Ashok;Vasava Shri Mansukhbhai D.

Will the Minister of PANCHAYATI RAJ be pleased to state:

- (a) the objectives of the Backward Regions Grant Fund (BRGF) Programme, the districts covered thereunder State-wise alongwith the activities identified for development of these districts;
- (b) the BRGF grant allocated/released and utilised during each of the last three years and the current year State-wise alongwith the works undertaken and impact of implementation of the programme in removal of backwardness in such districts;
- (c) the measures taken by the Government for timely allocation and release of BRGF grants;
- (d) the details of the cases of irregularities/ mismanagement/ diversion of funds under the programme and the corrective action taken by the State Governments and Union Government thereon; and
- (e) whether the Union Government proposes to enhance annual allocation of BRGF funds to States and if so, the details thereof?

Answer

MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI V. KISHORE CHANDRA DEO)

(a): The Backward Regions Grant Fund is designed to redress regional imbalances in development. The fund will provide financial resources for supplementing and converging existing developmental inflows into identified districts, so as to:

(a) Bridge critical gaps in local infrastructure and other development requirements that are not being adequately met through existing inflows,

(b) Strengthen, to this end Panchayat and Municipality level governance with more appropriate capacity building, to facilitate participatory planning, decision making, implementation and monitoring, to reflect local felt needs,

(c) Provide professional support to local bodies for planning, implementation and monitoring their plans,

(d) Improve the performance and delivery of critical functions assigned to Panchayats, and counter possible efficiency and equity losses on account of inadequate local capacity.

The list of BRGF districts is at Annex-1

(b): The details of funds allocated and released to the States for the Local Bodies including the Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) under the Backward Regions Grant Fund (BRGF) Programme along with the expenditure reported by the States are at Annex-2. The Programme has 2 components. The Development Grant under the scheme is largely untied and used for filling critical infrastructural gaps like roads, bridges, Anganwadi Centres, class rooms in schools, Panchayat buildings, community centres, drinking water, rural electrification infrastructure, health centres etc. as included in the District Plans. Under the Capacity Building component funds are released for creation of training infrastructure and conducting training programmes for the elected representatives and functionaries of local bodies. An independent review-cum-evaluation of the BRGF was undertaken by the World Bank in eight States in July 2009. In its report it is noted that the BRGF has stimulated a process of PRI/ ULB strengthening, particularly in poor States and districts and laid the foundation for achieving its objectives. The report has also noted that the projects are generally addressing the felt needs for removal of backwardness.

(c): The Ministry has taken several steps for timely allocation and release of BRGF grants some of which are as under:

(i) Technical support is extended to the States through empanelled Technical Support Institutions (TSIs) for facilitating preparation and integration of the local plans into the District Perspective Plans and District Annual Plans.

(ii) Time lines for the preparation and submission of District Plans have been laid down.

(iii) Advisories stand issued to the States for improving programme planning and management.

(iv) Three Regional Workshops on Perspective Plans for Capacity Building & Training (CB&T) of Elected Representatives and Functionaries of Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) were conducted in the month of May-June, 2011. In these Workshops, the issues relating to CB&T of Elected Representatives and Functionaries were intensely deliberated and States advised to draw up suitable strategies and CB&T plans for the Elected Representatives and functionaries.

(v) BRGF funds are required to be transferred to the Implementing Entities within 15 days of the release of funds to the Consolidated Fund of the States failing which a penal interest is required to be paid by the State Governments.

(d): A list showing the complaints received and Action Taken thereon is at Annex-3.

(e): No Sir.