

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
PANCHAYATI RAJ
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1801
ANSWERED ON:16.08.2013
PANCHAYAT ELECTIONS
Natarajan Shri P.R.;Rane Dr. Nilesh Narayan

Will the Minister of PANCHAYATI RAJ be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government has taken note of instances where the differently-abled persons have allegedly been denied the rights to contest panchayat elections;
- (b) if so, the details thereof and the reaction of the Government thereupon;
- (c) whether the Government has withheld the central financial assistance to some States for not holding panchayat elections;
- (d) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor; and
- (e) the steps taken or proposed by Government to ensure full electoral rights to differently abled persons including the rights to contest elections and to hold panchayat elections regularly in the States ?

Answer

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

(a) & (b): Yes, Madam. On one reference received from Office of The Chief Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities about one persons with visual impairment in Odisha not being allowed to file his nomination for Gram Panchayat election, this Ministry referred the matter to the Chairperson of Standing Committee of State Election Commissioners for consideration of the issue. However, it is stated that the States / Union Territories covered by Part IX of the Constitution and their State Election Commissions have to deal with such issues in compliance with their respective statues / laws.

(c)& (d): Central financial assistance / incentives of different schemes can be withheld from being released to States on account of elections to Panchayats not being held therein. For example, the Union Finance Commission grants were not released to Andhra Pradesh for the period when elections to Panchayats were not held. Similarly, under the scheme of Panchayat Empowerment and Accountability Incentive Scheme (PEAIS), no awards were given to Panchayats in Andhra Pradesh as Panchayat elections had not been held in that State.

(e): Holding of elections to the Panchayats is the responsibility of the respective State Government and the State Election Commission concerned. The Constitution mandates that where the Part IX of the Constitution applies, Panchayat elections are to be conducted every five years, under the overall superintendence, direction and control of the State Election Commission. The Constitution also empowers the States Legislatures to make laws regarding elections.