

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
PANCHAYATI RAJ
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:3309
ANSWERED ON:30.08.2013
HIGH TECH FACILITIES TO PANCHAYATS
Gangaram Shri Awale Jaywant;Mahendrasinh Shri Chauhan

Will the Minister of PANCHAYATI RAJ be pleased to state:

- (a) the objectives and basic features of Backward Regions Grant Fund (BRGF);
- (b) the guidelines issued by the Government for planning under BRGF and the norms for selection of districts for grant thereunder;
- (c) whether the Government proposes to provide hightech energy facility to all the Gram Panchayats in the country during the 12th Plan period to address the difficulty being faced by them owing to shortage of power and if so, the details thereof including the funds provided/being provided under BRGF; and
- (d) the mechanism put in place for management of the programme, operationalisation of BRGF and ensuring accountability for the purpose?

Answer

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

(a):The district component of the Backward Regions Grant Fund (BRGF) Programme of the Ministry of Panchayati Raj (MoPR), implemented in all the States except Goa, is designed primarily with a basic objective to redress regional imbalances in development of 272 identified backward districts. The Programme provides financial resources for supplementing and converging existing developmental inflows into identified districts so as to bridge critical gaps in local infrastructure and other development requirements. With its emphasis on participative plans prepared from the grassroots level upwards rather than the usual top down approach, the BRGF Programme represents a major shift in approach towards planning.

(b): The Action Plans prepared by the Panchayats and Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) are consolidated into the District Plans by the District Planning Committees and are then forwarded to the Ministry of Panchayati Raj, through the respective State Governments. The detailed guidelines are also available on the MoPR's website at www.panchayat.gov.in

The identification of backward districts under the BRGF Programme is done by the Planning Commission on the basis of certain socio-economic parameters including inter-alia population, percentage of SC/ST population, female literacy rate, infant mortality rate, percentage of households without electricity, percentage of agricultural labourers to working population etc. which are used for preparing a backwardness index to determine the backwardness of a district.

(c):The District Component BRGF funds are in the nature of untied funds which can be utilised in implementing any work including energy related works provided they are incorporated in the Annual Action Plan prepared by the Panchayati Raj Institutions in participatory decentralized planning mode.

(d):The BRGF Programme is managed and operationalised through insistence on sending of various documents by the State Governments viz. periodical Physical & Financial Progress Reports, Utilization Certificates, Audit Reports of Statutory Auditors etc. BRGF funds are released in two instalments during a financial year and the essential condition for release of each instalment is 60% utilisation of the earlier releases and furnishing of the aforesaid documents by the State Governments. The BRGF Guidelines also provide for audit of works through a Review Committee at District Level and Social Audit and Vigilance at the Panchayat levels.