

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
PANCHAYATI RAJ
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:507
ANSWERED ON:23.11.2009
ROUND TABLE CONFERENCE
Joshi Shri Mahesh;Kataria Shri Lal Chand

Will the Minister of PANCHAYATI RAJ be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Union Government have recently organized any round table conference of Panchayati Raj Ministers of the States / Union Territories;
- (b) If so, the details thereof;
- (c) the details of the major suggestions made by the round table conference; and
- (d) the steps taken by the Government to implement the said suggestions?

Answer

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

(a) to (d): Ministry of Panchayati Raj has not recently organized any Round Table Conference of the State Ministers of Panchayati Raj. However, Seven Round Table Conferences of the States Ministers of Panchayati Raj had been organized during July – December, 2004. The recommendations covered 18 identified dimensions of Panchayati Raj ranging from the effective devolution of the Functions, Finances and Functionaries to District Planning, Training and Capacity Building and IT-enabled e-governance.

During the 16 years since the 73rd Amendment came into force, the process of political empowerment of the Panchayats has largely been set in place. Panchayat elections have been regularly held in all the States and Union Territories (UTs) where Part IX of the Constitution is applicable, except Jharkhand. Reservations have been provided for the Scheduled Castes (SCs), the Scheduled Tribes (STs), and the Other Backward Classes (OBCs) (in some of the States). State Election Commissions and State Finance Commissions have been set up in all the States. Now, the priority area before the Ministry is to take the States towards meaningful and effective devolution of functions, funds, and functionaries (3Fs) to the PRIs. The Ministry has constantly pursued preparation and notification of detailed Activity Mapping by the States, opening of Panchayat Windows in State budgets, and assignment of functionaries in accordance with the devolution of functions and funds.

The devolution of the 3Fs needs to be backed by grass-roots planning in conformity with the provisions of the Constitution. As the concept of grass-roots planning through the District Planning Committees (DPCs) was almost non-existent in most of the States, the Ministry has pursued, in the first instance, the establishment of DPCs in all the Districts where Part IX of the Constitution applies, and thereafter, to make them fully operational. As of now, 22 States, out of the 24 covered by Part IX of the Constitution, have constituted the DPCs, the exceptions being Jharkhand and Uttarakhand.