

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
PANCHAYATI RAJ  
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2607  
ANSWERED ON:12.03.2015  
EMPOWERMENT OF GRAM SABHAS  
Jaiswal Dr. Sanjay

**Will the Minister of PANCHAYATI RAJ be pleased to state:**

- (a) whether the Government is considering to empower Gram Sabhas to monitor and make decisions on various social sector schemes (Central and State)
- (e) to improve last mile connectivity of such schemes;
- (b) if so, the details thereof ;
- (c) whether the Government has any scheme that incentivise PRIs for transparency and accountability measures; and
- (d) if so, the details thereof ?

**Answer**

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI NIHAL CHAND)

(a) & (b) Article 243A provides that a Gram Sabha may exercise such powers and perform such functions at the village level as the Legislature of a State may, by law, provide. Powers assigned to the Gram Sabha, therefore, vary from State to State. The Ministry has issued guidelines to States/ UTs that the:

(i) Gram Sabha can be an effective forum for information sharing on programmes, schemes, good practices and matters of common interest for which assistance from the State and Centre is available through different policies and programmes.

(ii) Gram Sabha can discuss issues such as quality of life and Millennium Development Goals, social security, gender justice, female feticides, substance abuse (alcohol, tobacco and drugs), hygiene, nutrition, sustainable development, diversification of agriculture, better cropping practices, opportunities for improving incomes, drought/flood management, soil & water conservation, infrastructure development, etc. Besides, the State Governments have been advised to promote the practice of voluntary disclosure by the Gram Sabha and also the social audit by it.

(c) & (d) Under the Rajiv Gandhi Panchayat Sashaktikaran Abhiyan, States are incentivized for devolving funds, functions and functionaries to Panchayats and the Panchayats are incentivized to put in place accountability systems to make their functioning transparent and efficient. Incentive awards are given to best performing Panchayats on the basis of the recommendations of State Governments based on a rigorous selection process followed by field verification at the national level through independent agencies.

Performance of Panchayats is assessed in the next financial year for the previous year. For the year 2012-13, process was completed by the end of 2013-14 and Panchayat Sashaktikaran Puruskars were awarded to 196 Panchayati Raj Institutions for their functioning and support to process of democratic and accountable functioning.