

>

Title: 'Panchayati Raj' in Pondicherry.

PROF. M. RAMADASS : Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, I wish to draw the attention of the Government of India regarding the need to strengthen the Panchayati Raj Institutions in the Union Territory of Pondicherry.

As many people know, Panchayati Raj Institutions in Pondicherry have been revived just now after 38 years. The last elections to these institutions were conducted in 1968 and in the last 38 years Panchayati Raj Institutions were defunct in the Union Territory of Pondicherry and I have also intervened in this regard in Parliament in the last two years. The hon. Minister of Panchayati Raj and the hon. Minister of Rural Development have taken the initiative to conduct elections and now elections have been completed and only last month we have established these grassroots institutions in the Union Territory of Pondicherry. Therefore, I take this opportunity to compliment and congratulate Shrimati Sonia Gandhi under whose leadership the Congress Party in Pondicherry has conducted the local body elections and I would also like to compliment the Minister of Panchayati Raj Shri Mani Shankar Aiyar and the Minister of Rural Development Dr. Raghuvansh Prasad Singh who have evinced keen interest in this matter.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Thank you.

PROF. M. RAMADASS : Sir, I have not yet come to the problem.

Now that these institutions have come into existence, they are without any infrastructure and without any facility. We are starting from the scratch. There are 98 Gram Panchayats and 108 Intermediate Panchayats covering half of the total population of the Union Territory of Pondicherry. We do not know what is in store in these Panchayati Raj Institutions because now they are the new-born children in the political map of the Union Territory of Pondicherry. Therefore, I urge upon the Government of India, particularly the Ministry of Panchayati Raj, that they have to nurture their children there because the Union Territory of Pondicherry is under the direct control of the Government of India.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Thank you.

PROF. M. RAMADASS : Sir, we are spending a lot of time on many issues. I am raising an important issue. Please give me two minutes. I will complete it as quickly as possible[[k86](#)]

Sir[[Rs87](#)], the first thing the Government will have to do is that they will have to prepare a status report of the Panchayati Raj Institutions in the Union Territory of Pondicherry.

Secondly, already the Government has constituted a Council of Panchayati Ministers under the Chairmanship of the hon. Minister of Panchayati Raj. But now that the Panchayati Raj Institutions have come into existence, the Minister of Local Administration Department of the Government of Pondicherry should also be included. The Chief Secretary of the Government of Pondicherry should also be in the Council of Chief Secretaries of various States that has been constituted by the Government.

Thirdly, these institutions must be given a special financial assistance to create infrastructure.

Fourthly, the representatives who have been elected are the first generation elected representatives in Pondicherry and they do not know the do's and don'ts of the functioning of the Panchayati Raj Institutions. They must be given a widespread training programme so that they will know the art of this.

Fifthly, the Government of India should also devolve resources as well as the functions for which the Government will have to help with its expertise for the Union Territory of Pondicherry to prepare what is called 'Activity Mapping'. Only when the 'Activity Mapping' is prepared, they will know what functions to be performed and what not to perform. The National Common Minimum Programme says that the resources should be devolved without any delay on the part of the State Governments and therefore, there should be direct funding of these Panchayati Raj Institutions by the Government of India also. The Centrally Sponsored Schemes relating to the Rural Development Department must be devolved to the Panchayati Raj Institutions to be implemented. The Government is now considering the issue of Centrally Sponsored Schemes; that must be directly given not to the DRDA but to the Panchayati Raj Institutions, which are more equipped to bring all these activities in the Government.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Please do not make a speech here.

PROF. M. RAMADASS : Sir, finally, I would like to say that there is no District Planning Committee in Pondicherry because there is only a two-tier system, that is, Gram Panchayat and then Intermediate Panchayat. The District Planning Committees

are not in existence, so the Government should find a way of district planning also. Thank you.