

Fourteenth Lok Sabha

**Session : 9**

**Date : 08-12-2006**

**Participants :** Prabhu Shri Suresh, Gao Shri Tapir, Mahtab Shri Bhartruhari, Thakkar Smt. Jayaben B., Rijiju Shri Kiren, Swain Shri M.A. Kharabela, Singh Shri Lakshman, Wangyuh Shri W.

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Title: Discussion regarding Report on the State of Panchayats – A Mid-term review and Appraisal – 2006 raised by Shri Basudeb Acharia on the 4<sup>th</sup> December, 2006.

MR. CHAIRMAN: We now take item no. 23.

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI): Sir, I may submit that discussion on the Panchayati Raj Mid-Term Review and Appraisal-2006 which was inconclusive may be taken just now. Since few speakers were left on that day, they may speak now. Thereafter, the Minister will reply.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right. Shri Kharabela swain.

SHRI KHARABELA SWAIN (BALASORE): Sir, may I speak from this seat?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes, I allow you to speak from this seat.

SHRI KHARABELA SWAIN : Sir, at the outset, I thank the hon. Minister for bringing this subject for discussion in this House. He has already prepared and circulated three volumes on the state of the panchayats. While I rise to speak on the Mid-Term Review and Appraisal, I find that discussion has already taken place and there is not much of time left today. So, I am not going to make an elaborate speech on this, but I would like to highlight the basic points with regard to this Panchayati Raj System which does not belong to any particular political party; it belongs to the country as a whole.

I am very happy that it has really brought in a social revolution, as has already been mentioned by the hon. Minister in his book. I fully endorse his view of panchayati raj bringing a social revolution. He has already mentioned in his book that late lamented Rajiv Gandhi wanted just social revolution. It will at least take a generation to fully unfold. [\[s45\]](#) I fully agree with this.

The hon. Minister wanted course correction, and my speech for about 10 minutes will basically focus on course correction. I would try to enumerate my feelings with regard to the Panchayati Raj system as a representative of the people, and as the Chairman of the Vigilance and

Monitoring Committee of my district. I shall bring it in, and I will appeal the hon. Minister to go into it. Where does the difficulty lie in it? Where all do we need this course correction? The course correction is required for the effective implementation of the Panchayati Raj.

The first requirement of the Panchayati Raj system is for the people to take their own decision. There will be a Gram Sabha, and the people will gather in the Gram Sabha to take decisions about their budget; about the money, which is available with them; or the developmental work that they want to do in future, etc. This is the basic reason of convening the Gram Sabha. But I am very sorry to tell the hon. Minister, through you, that most of the times the Gram Sabha turns into a Sarpanch Sabha. I do not know about other States, but in my State Orissa this is the position. It has turned into a Contractor Sabha most of the time. I am saying this because it is the contractor who convenes the meeting most of the time, and not the Sarpanch. Further, the only decision taken there is with regard to the person who will get the work order in stead of taking other decisions in the Gram Sabha. This is the only issue being decided there, and you will be surprised to know that most of the contractors -- with the help of their vehicles and by paying money -- bring people from the rural areas to these meetings. ... (*Interruptions*)

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF NEW AND RENEWABLE ENERGY (SHRI VILAS MUTTEMWAR): This is not happening everywhere. ... (*Interruptions*)

SHRI KHARABELA SWAIN : I am not saying that it is happening everywhere. ... (*Interruptions*)

MR. CHAIRMAN: He is talking about his own State.

... (*Interruptions*)

SHRI KHARABELA SWAIN : Sir, if you think that I am hinting about UP, then I have told that I am not hinting about UP. I am just talking about the course correction. If you are not really interested to listen to me, then I am also not interested to tell you anything. ... (*Interruptions*)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Kindly go ahead with the business before the House, and kindly address the Chair.

... (*Interruptions*)

SHRI KHARABELA SWAIN : Sir, I do not accept this behaviour of theirs. ... (*Interruptions*)

MR. CHAIRMAN: The problem will ease if you address the Chair. Kindly go ahead with your speech.

... (*Interruptions*)

SHRI KHARABELA SWAIN : The concerned Minister will not be able to reply to this discussion today if you start interrupting me like this. ... (*Interruptions*)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Kindly cooperate with the Chair.

... (*Interruptions*)

SHRI KHARABELA SWAIN : Otherwise, I will also take a long time to conclude my speech, and you are very well aware that I will not sit that easily. ... (*Interruptions*)

MR. CHAIRMAN: There are only five speakers left to speak on this issue from your side. Kindly allow them to speak freely. Please go ahead with your speech.

... (*Interruptions*)

SHRI KHARABELA SWAIN : I would like to suggest that there should be a fixed date for convening the Gram Sabha all over India. Perhaps, it could be convened in a time interval of two months or one month or three months, but there should be a certain fixed date and a fixed place for it. It should be announced or notified by the BDO or by the Block Office. This would allow everybody to know that the Gram Sabha will be held on such and such date, time and place. This would allow the people to come there, and they will not be left to the mercy of the Panchayats, Mukhias, Sarpanch, etc.

I would like to make one more point. I have found -- as the Chairman of the Vigilance and Monitoring Committee -- that in some cases the Sarpanch is unwilling to summon the Gram Sabha, and he is not summoning the Gram Sabha for months together. Hence, the money remains unspent as there is no action-plan, which is to be undertaken by them.<sup>[R46]</sup>

The money remains unspent for years together and the District Magistrate is unable to take any action against the Sarpanch who does not convene the Gram Sabha intentionally.

Earlier, the District Magistrate - we call him a Collector in Orissa - had the power to suspend a Sarpanch but he does not have that power now. One will have to go to court in such cases. What will happen in such cases? We just feel helpless that Gram Sabha is not being convened. So, my appeal to the hon. Minister is to make a rule that if the Sarpanch does not convene the Gram Sabha, the BDO should be allowed to convene the Gram Sabha on his behalf. If the BDO is given this power, the Gram Sabha could be held even if the Sarpanch does not convene the meeting in spite of several reminders.

With regard to issuance of work order, I have just said that Gram Sabhas have been turned into Contractor Sabhas. It is the Contractors who are fighting with each other in Gram Sabhas and it leads to violence and bitterness in most of the cases. So, my appeal to the hon. Minister is that a list of eligible Contractors be prepared and it should be serialized. As the works keep coming, Contractors should be awarded those works as per their serial number in the list so that every time one does not have to fight in the Gram Sabha for works and on issues like who would get work and who would not.

On the issue of Indira Awas, I am very happy that the hon. Minister of Rural Development has now issued an order. He is probably not listening to me. I thank him for making a rule for the preparation of list for the next five years. ... (*Interruptions*) Shri Uday Singh says that it was his idea and I thank him for that. I thank the Minister also for implementing it. I appreciate it, it is a very



good idea that a permanent list be prepared. But, Sir, do something about who selects the beneficiaries under old-age pension scheme and widow pension scheme. This is another problem. Till now, it all depends upon the mercy of the Sarpanch or the *Mukhiya* because it is only they who take the decision. Who says it is decided in the Gram Sabha? Most of the times, it does not happen that way. When you have changed a rule to prepare the list for the next five years, on the same lines a list for the next five years for the old-age pension beneficiaries and widow pension beneficiaries should also be prepared.

In most of the cases, the media, and we ourselves also, say that the people in the village should take their own decisions on the activities of the village and MLAs and MPs should not be involved. Going by this, it appears that MLAs and MPs are the most corrupt people in the country and the rural representatives are *Dharma Yudhishtiras*. However, I tell you that by decentralizing the work, you have only decentralized corruption. That is the only thing that I would say. ... (*Interruptions*) You go and see for yourself in the rural areas. It is decentralization of corruption. If you go and see you will find that most of the Sarpanchs accumulate more than Rs.15 lakh to Rs.20 lakh after completion of their term of five years. We know that pretty well.[\[r47\]](#)

### **15.00 hrs**

I would like to appeal to the Minister that in the process of decision-making in the Panchayats, MLAs and MPs or at least their representatives should also be involved. In most of the cases, since the MLAs, MPs, Zila Parishad Members and Sarpanchs belong to different parties if their representatives remain present, then it would be very difficult to resort to corrupt practices. That is why, I would like to appeal to you that there is thinking that he is the only person who is honest and who would take the decision. There should not be involvement of the MLAs and MPs because people would come and say that they are the most deserving persons for getting grants under the *Indira Awas Yojana*; they are the most deserving persons for getting widow pension; and they are the most deserving persons to get old-age pension. In such a situation, being the MP, I am helpless. I cannot do anything. ... (*Interruptions*)

MR. CHAIRMAN : Kindly conclude.

SHRI KHARABELA SWAIN : You give me three or five minutes more.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You have already taken 10 minutes. You can take one or two minutes. Be brief and precise.

SHRI KHARABELA SWAIN : Thirdly, representatives of the MLAs and MPs should be involved so that decision making would be fair.

What happens is, there is a feeling everywhere, including media, that the MPLAD Scheme fund is totally swindled by MPs and that they swindle everything. This is the general impression everywhere. Even people published voluminous books to the effect that this should be scrapped.

What is our Panchayati Raj System? Members of *Zila Parishad* or Panchayat Samiti should sit together and chalk out an action plan. But what happens is, at least in my State, I know, that the



total amount that is made available is being distributed equally among the Members of the Zila Parishad and Panchayat Samiti, who are asked to recommend projects for that amount of money. Not only that, they are also given the power to issue work orders and they also recommend as to who would get the work order and who would become the contractor. That means, Mr. Minister, by this way, we have been able to create a cover for the Panchayat Samiti Members and Panchayati Raj Members. It is just the same thing because every Member knows that he is entitled to recommend projects for this much of amount. They can also recommend the executants and you know as to what is the meaning of recommending the executant executioner. You yourself understand it; I need not tell you anything more.

My appeal to you is that a serialized list of permanent contractors be prepared in the Zila Parishad and the work should be given to them and nobody should be allowed to say that who should be executant.

I also do not know what to do about this. It is a very good thing that women are having 33 per cent and 50 per cent reservation. In this way, we are gradually building up the real women leadership but in most of the cases, it is the relatives or the male Members who actually take the lead and they are the real people. I would request the hon. Minister to respond to this point.

Lastly, salaries and allowances of these representatives in the panchayati raj institution should be enhanced because that is also one of the major obstruction. Somebody works everyday, day in and day out for five years, without doing any other work, and gets sometimes Rs.500 and sometimes Rs.1,000 per month. It is a pittance. Hence, I would appeal to the Minister that this also should be given some consideration and the salaries and allowances of these representatives are increased so that they can function better.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you for your kind cooperation.

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SHRI SURESH PRABHAKAR PRABHU (RAJAPUR): Sir, firstly I would like to compliment the Minister because there is a forum available for discussing the role of panchayats.

**15.05 hrs**

(Shri Varkala Radhakrishnan *in the Chair*)

As a result of that, we will be able to establish the linkage between the apex body where we are sitting today and the grassroots where the panchayats will operate.

The same people elect the Members of Parliament as well as the gram pradhans and the sarpanchs. As a result of that, there is a lot of confusion. People elect them; the electorate is the same. The same people elect at the village level, taluk level, district level, all the functionaries, State level MLAs and national level MPs.

Sir, the Minister of Parliamentary Affairs wanted me to be brief; therefore, I am just giving the points. Now, I expect that he will tell the Chair not to ring the bell and to allow me to speak for some time.

The point that I am saying is that the same people elect different functionaries and so, there is a lot of overlapping of responsibilities and people are confused about who is supposed to do what. Therefore, having done something, having created institutions at the local level and the national level, we really need to codify the roles and responsibilities, the functions and the duties of each of the functionaries like Member of Parliament, the MLA and the local representative. If we do not do that, there is going to be a lot of confusion. People expect the Member of Parliament to do the same thing that they expect from the representatives at the local level.

Therefore, this is extremely important that the Ministry or the Government makes an attempt to codify the roles and the responsibilities. This is very important.

The second point is this. This is a very good appraisal. How can you do the appraisal? There are three important changes that are brought by the 73<sup>rd</sup> and the 74<sup>th</sup> Amendments – functions, functionaries and finances. They are the three 'F's; they are exclusively given to the local self-government. If you want to do a proper evaluation, it is important to know that the functions which have been earmarked to local self-government as the exclusive responsibility. How many panchayats have been able to exercise their powers on each of these functions? In the absence of this information, it will not be proper to evaluate them.

To the best of my knowledge, not several State Governments are very keen to give away their powers, as a result of which the responsibility is with the local self-government, but the functions have not been exclusively demarcated and handed over to them.

Secondly, we have the functionaries. Maharashtra is the State which actually initiated the Panchayati Raj System long time back. Yashwantrao Chavan, the founder of modern Maharashtra should be appreciated for doing that. Even in the State of Maharashtra, I know that the functionaries are still given by the State Governments to the local self-government. This is not the prerogative of the local self-government to employ them. Therefore, this is about the second 'F', where we are really not able to succeed.

The third 'F' is finances. Even today, after 12 Finance Commissions, for the first time, we have directly given the money to the local self-government. Till that time, we are not able to give any money to the local self-government and they are routed through the State Government. It is a Constitutional issue and I appreciate it. But at the same time, if one Constitutional provision, the 73<sup>rd</sup> and the 74<sup>th</sup> Amendment, can give this exclusive responsibility to the local self-government, how can we not give them the finances?

Therefore, I would request the hon. Minister, having done a very great job – his passion and mission is panchayati raj – let him now make a real and honest evaluation and present it before the House, on these three 'Fs'.[\[MSOffice48\]](#)

So that we may understand as to how many panchayats have really been able to perform and implement the spirit of this Constitution which we have passed in this august House.

My second point is about planning. It is a very fundamental issue. Planning at district level should be done at district level itself. All our successive Five Year Plans have failed because the Plans have not really realized the ground realities that prevail at the village level. That is why, in our collective wisdom of the Parliament, we have decided that planning should be handed over to the District Planning Boards, which should be headed by the Zila Parishad Head. I would request the hon. Minister to tell us in how many States this has happened.

Drawing from my own experience in my own constituency, in my own state, the planning is done by the District Planning Committee, which is headed by the Planning Minister. So, the guardian Minister is not supposed to do the job because this is an exclusive responsibility of the planning process... (*Interruptions*) I know, it is still to be observed. The law may have been passed but we are not implementing it.... (*Interruptions*)

MR. CHAIRMAN : Please conclude.

SHRI SURESH PRABHAKAR PRABHU : Sir, please allow me to speak. You have always been my inspiration.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All these points have already been elaborated.

SHRI SURESH PRABHAKAR PRABHU : Once we give this responsibility at the local level, as my friend was saying, are we creating local self representatives or a new breed of contractor? This should really be made clear. We should now think about making sure that the local-self Government representatives will not be able to contract to themselves because there will be direct conflict of interest. Unfortunately, in our Parliament there is an Office of Profit law but there is no Conflict of Office law. You can still continue to hold office. I can continue to engage myself in a business as long as it is not with the Government. Therefore, Sir, this is an issue which should also be addressed at the local level as well as at the national level.

We can give away the responsibilities of various types to the local self-Government. The issue that comes in is of quality. Who is to do the quality control? Some of the roads that come out of the MPLADS, are made by some of the Party functionaries who have turned contractors and that



road does not last even one monsoon. Therefore, quality control is an extremely important issue. I would request the Minister to address this issue also because when you are giving more power, more funds, there has to be more accountability and measurement of standards of productivity to make sure that quality control is properly taken into consideration.

As I was saying, we must give away this power directly and find out a mechanism wherein the Central funds can go straight to the local panchayats and they will be able to disburse them. Capacity building again is an issue and I think when you do the appraisal, please let us know State by State what is the capacity building that has really taken place.

I strongly urge the Ministry of Panchayati Raj to make sure that deserving issues are exclusively handled by the local self-Government. One of them is water. Water is going to be a very crucial issue for us and, therefore, the responsibility of water conservation and water management should exclusively be given at the small village level. When we were passing the Employment Guarantee Bill..... (*Interruptions*)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please conclude. Your time is over.

SHRI SURESH PRABHAKAR PRABHU : I am just winding up, Sir.

I was talking about the issues like water and electricity distribution. We should encourage people to go in for distributed generation. The Electricity Act, 2003, which in fact I had the honour of placing it before the House, gives opportunity to a village panchayat to generate electricity and distribute it also. The Minister of New and Renewable Energy Sources, the new name given to the Ministry, Shri Vilas Muttemwar is sitting here and he will tell you that there is so much of biomass available, so much of renewable sources of energy are available. Shri Sushil Kumar Shinde, who is piloting Rajiv Gandhi Gramin Vidutikaran Yojana will be happy if these powers are exercised by the local self government wherein you can generate electricity and distribute also. This is something which should happen.

Rural Business Hub is an idea which in my own constituency I was trying to introduce. There is so much of local entrepreneurships available in our villages that somehow over a period of time we are killed.[\[R49\]](#)

We have not allowed them to come up. As a result of this, people are migrating from village to city in search of jobs and they have become slum dwellers. The real entrepreneurs have become slum dwellers and slum dwellers are becoming the oustees and eyesores in the eyes of others. Therefore, the rural entrepreneurship is something which should be encouraged.

My last point is about their own resources. The success of any local self-government will come if you can raise local resources. I think the Minister should have mentioned it in the Appraisal how many local self-governments have been able to raise their own resources. If they are not being able to do that, I think they are not self-governments but they are remote governments and that is what should not happen.

SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR: This big book tells you what they have been doing on that.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Please conclude now. Your last point is over.

SHRI SURESH PRABHAKAR PRABHU : Sir, all right. I conclude.

श्री लक्ष्मण सिंह :माननीय सभापति महोदय, मैं सिर्फ एक मिनट का समय लूंगा। न्याय पंचायतों का प्रावधान पंचायती राज में किया गया है, लेकिन दुर्भाग्यवश न्याय पंचायतें शुरू नहीं हो पाई हैं। जो गरीब व्यक्ति है, उसे पंचायत में न्याय मिलना चाहिए लेकिन नहीं मिल पा रहा है। आप जानते हैं कि न्याय महंगा है और गरीब व्यक्ति कोर्ट और वकील की फीस नहीं दे पाता है। मैं आपके माध्यम से सदन के सामने एक उदाहरण रूप में बताना चाहता हूँ कि मध्य प्रदेश में जब श्यामाचरण जी मुख्यमंत्री थे, तब एक आदिवासी हॉट के लिए बाजार जा रहा था। रास्ते में कट्टू का खेत पड़ा, उसने कट्टू तोड़ लिया और कट्टू के खेत के मालिक ने उसके खिलाफ थाने में रिपोर्ट कर दी। थानेदार ने केस बनाया और कट्टू चोरी के केस में बेचारा आदिवासी एक हफ्ते तक जेल में बंद रहा और एक हफ्ते बाद उसकी जमानत हुई। ऐसी घटनाओं को देखकर ही हमने पंचायती राज का गठन किया। हमने देखा कि गरीबों को न्याय कैसे दिलाया जाए और इसीलिए न्याय पंचायतों का प्रावधान किया गया। मैं जानता हूँ कि न्याय पंचायतों को लागू करने के लिए मंत्री महोदय बहुत चिंतित हैं, आपसे इस बारे में चर्चा भी हुई है और आपने समिति का गठन भी किया है। समिति की रिपोर्ट आपके पास आ गई होगी और आप हमें उत्तर में उसके बारे में बताएंगे। हम चाहते हैं कि उस पर जल्दी कार्रवाई करें, न्याय पंचायतों की प्रक्रिया क्रियान्वित करें ताकि गरीबों को पंचायतों में न्याय मिल सके। आपने मुझे बोलने का समय दिया इसके लिए मैं आपका धन्यवाद करता हूँ।

SHRI B. MAHTAB : Sir, because of constraint of time, I may be allowed to lay a little bit of my speech.

I would first thank the Minister for bringing out three volumes on the Mid-Term Appraisal. Though the amendment was made in 1993 and since then more than 13 years have passed but the Mid-Term Appraisal is about your tenure from 2004 till date. But going into the history, since 1948 in Orissa, Panchayati Raj institutions had come up. In 1957, the Zila Parishads came up and in 1962, the three-tier system came up in Orissa. Of course, a revolutionary change came in 1992 in Orissa before the amendment came up in Parliament that most of the amendments that have been incorporated were initiated by our late lamented leader, Mr. Biju Patanaik.

Now, I would come to the point right away. Panchayati raj in India happens to be the greatest experiment today in democracy. More number of women are being elected at the grass roots level. That is one of the greatest experiments in democracy ever done anywhere in this world. Not less than 10 lakh women have been elected and in Bihar 50 per cent reservation is there. These are momentous decisions which have been taken.

I would like to come to the basics. In early 90s, the Panchayati Raj institutions had become the medium to transform rural India and that has been very aptly mentioned by our former Prime Minister, Mr. Rajiv Gandhi. He had envisaged of empowering Panchayat Raj institutions to function as:

“Institutions of self-government which is to plan and implement programmes of economic development and social justice.”[\[R50\]](#)

These [\[MSOffice51\]](#) are the three major components on which the late former Prime Minister had insisted upon and the challenge today as you have also defined is not only to institutionalize this system of local self-governance but to make it a mechanism of participatory democracy. I would insist on participatory democracy. My friend, Shri Swain, was mentioning about Gram Sabhas. As I was the editor of a newspaper, I have some experience about Gram Sabhas. Gram sabha has become a sabha of quarrels. Often partisan attitude rules the roost. During my limited experience in Parliament since 1998, I had tried to find out why the Gram Sabhas have become *Kali Sabhas* or sabhas for quarrel. My impression is this. The Gram Sabha is held to elect the Village Level Leader, it is not held to find out the contractor. The gram sabha has to elect the VLL. But that Leader is entrusted with the job of executing the job. He is to supervise the job that has to be executed by a different person. But the VLL takes upon himself the work that is to be executed. So, supervision turns into execution of the job. And there actually lies the problem. Bureaucracy at the taluka level or at the Block level or at the mandal level, as we call it, conveniently shifts the responsibility to VLL. As far as I understand, it is the VLL who is supposed to supervise and monitor the work. But he becomes the executant and the engineers and the Block staff become the supervisors. Can't we stop this reversal?

My second point is devolution of power to panchayati raj institutions is still a distant dream. Many States are yet to empower the PRIs. I fully agree that activity maps are precursors to the rationale devolution of finances as also for assignment of functionaries to the panchayat level to which their responsibilities and the funds are devolved. So far as good. But the basic question that perturbs me is, should PRIs especially the gram panchayats be self-reliant or dependent on doles from other bodies? You are providing an umbrella but you are not building a roof over its head and umbrella is a temporary thing. Gandhiji's gram swaraj meant self-reliance. Mira Behn vouched this. But today, panchayati raj institutions are becoming delivery mechanisms for development, an extended branch of the State.

The Planning Commission has laid down detailed guidelines to State Governments on 24<sup>th</sup> October, 2005 and 25<sup>th</sup> August, 2006 on bottom-up planning through panchayats, municipalities and District Planning Committees. But here, I would like to say that there is a need to make panchayats at all the three levels to be incentivised to ensure greater transparency and accountability. There is a need to have corruption free panchayats. But Gram Sabha is not the answer. Long back, Balwantraji Mehta in late 1950s had said that every village will be a republic or panchayat having full powers. Every village has to be self-sustained and capable of managing its affairs. What is the true picture today?



MR. CHAIRMAN: Please conclude. Your time to speak is over.

SHRI B. MAHTAB : I would conclude shortly. I will lay the rest of my speech on the table of the House.

The Panchayati Raj Minister has an ambitious plan to bring uniformity in the functioning and structures of panchayati raj system. My point here is, there are differences amongst the States. Even among Andhra Pradesh and Orissa, there is a difference. The Minister has tried to address this question. [\[MSOffice52\]](#)

My questions are: Should elections be held on party basis? Should posts be identical throughout the country? Have you reached consensus? Today, the bureaucracy is expected to work under the guidance and supervision of the elected representatives of the panchayats. But that is not happening. The solution that is emerging is there is an urgent need to sensitize and re-orient the functions of social and administrative system. There is a need to make people aware about rationale, responsibilities and rights of elected panchayat leaders.

In Orissa we have adopted two-child norm. Some are saying that it is discriminatory. I would rather say, "Why not implement it in case of legislatures and also for Parliament?"

SHRI GURUDAS DASGUPTA (PANSKURA): Mr. Chairman, Sir, the Private Members' Business has been listed for 3:30 p.m. ... (*Interruptions*)

MR. CHAIRMAN : Yes, I know that. Your intervention is not required.

... (*Interruptions*)

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI: Sir, I may submit on behalf of the Government, through you, to the House that the principal Opposition could not take part in this debate on the other day. They have made a request that a few of their Members may be allowed to speak. So, hopefully he is the last Member to speak. So, till he concludes please allow it to continue. The Minister's reply can be reserved for some other day. ... (*Interruptions*)

MR. CHAIRMAN: There are three more Members to speak. They won't be able to conclude before 3:30 p.m. Exactly at 3:30 p.m. I will take up Private Members' Business.

... (*Interruptions*)

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI: Sir, my appeal through you, with folded hands on behalf of the Government, to the House is that I want to conclude the debate on panchayati raj today. The Minister will reply the other day. Let the last Member be allowed to speak. ... (*Interruptions*)

MR. CHAIRMAN: If the House agrees, I have no objection.

... (*Interruptions*)

SHRI GURUDAS DASGUPTA : The hon. Parliamentary Affairs Minister has mentioned that the Minister will reply the other day. If the Minister can reply the other day, why can the Members not speak the other day? Why do you eat into the time of Private Members' Business? ... (*Interruptions*)

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI: I am not eating into the time of Private Members' Business. We can extend the time. ... (*Interruptions*)

SHRI GURUDAS DASGUPTA : It is not convenient to us. At 3:30 p.m. we can have Private Members' Business. After Private Members' Business, you can again continue with the discussion. ... (*Interruptions*)

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI: If fifteen minutes is encroached on the time of Private Members' Business, fifteen minutes can be extended further. ... (*Interruptions*)

MR. CHAIRMAN: We would not be able to conclude the discussion within fifteen minutes.

... (*Interruptions*)

MR. CHAIRMAN: I want to take the sense of the House. Now, the Parliamentary Affairs Minister has requested for extension of fifteen minutes. Does the House agree to it? If the House agrees to it, I have no objection.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Yes.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right. The Private Members' Business will be taken up at

... (*Interruptions*)

MR. CHAIRMAN: I would like to inform the Parliamentary Affairs Minister that we would not be able to conclude the discussion by 3:45 p.m. [\[MSOffice53\]](#)

It is because there are three or four more speakers who want to speak. So, it will not be possible humanly to complete the discussion within 15 minutes. So, let us not encroach upon the time of the Private Members' Business. We start the Private Members' Business as scheduled and we will take the other speakers next time. The hon. Minister will also reply on the next day.

... (*Interruptions*)

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSHI : Sir, I may again submit to you one thing. I got the word from an important leader of the Principal Opposition Party that their four Members will take part in the discussion. Now, if they extend their list, then it is not cooperation. ... (*Interruptions*) I did it on that basis. I never betray the House. This is not fair. ... (*Interruptions*) आप लोग एक दिन हाऊस का बॉयकॉट करेंगे और दूसरे दिन डिबेट के लिये कहेंगे। हम कितने दिन बहस चलायेंगे। फिर आप स्पीकर साहबसे कहेंगे। अगर आप

लोग ऐसा करेंगे, तो हमें भी ऐसा करना पड़ेगा। मैंने स्वाई साहब से बात की है और उन्होंने आपकी पार्टी के चार स्पीकर्स बताये हैं। अब कहा जा रहा है कि चार स्पीकर्स और बोलेंगे।

श्री खारबेल स्वाई (बालासोर) : नहीं, ऐसा नहीं है।

SHRI TAPIR GAO (ARUNACHAL EAST): Sir, we are extending our cooperation. ...  
(Interruptions) I want only three minutes to speak. ... (Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: I can agree if there is only one speaker to take part in the discussion.

... (Interruptions)

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI: Sir, this has been decided on the floor of the House. I talked to Shri Kharabela Swain, the important leader of the Opposition Party. He told me that only four speakers will take part in the discussion. Accordingly, I have scheduled my time. Now, if they say that many more speakers will speak, then this unending debate will never be replied in this Session. ... (Interruptions)

SHRI GURUDAS DASGUPTA (PANSKURA): Sir, in that case, let us take a decision. Now, we begin with the Private Members' Business. You can decide about it on the next day. They all can speak and the reply will be on that day. ... (Interruptions) It cannot be done like this. ... (Interruptions)

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI: Sir, I know the Business of my Government. I know the next Private Members' day's Business. I cannot ensure and guarantee that this Business will be completed during this Session. It is very difficult. I have to schedule my timing. How long I keep the Minister waiting every day and everyday the discussion will go on like this? ... (Interruptions)

SHRI GURUDAS DASGUPTA : No. They are not agreeing with your proposal what you are saying. ... (Interruptions)

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI: If they do not agree, I cannot help. I will have to schedule the time as I feel. ... (Interruptions)

SHRI GURUDAS DASGUPTA (PANSKURA): Sir, let us begin the Private Members' Business.

SHRI UDAY SINGH (PURNEA): No, let the hon. Member speak, if he is not coming on another day. ... (Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Now, let me know the sense of the House. Do you want the extension or not?

... (Interruptions)

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI: Sir, I did cooperate with them. Since now they are changing their policy that more Members will speak, it is very difficult.

Sir, I say you start the Private Members' Business. They will speak when the time will come. ... (Interruptions)



SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI: Shri Swain, you told me the other day. ... (*Interruptions*) श्री सुरेश प्रभु, श्री स्वाई ने कहा कि पहले हमारे मैम्बर तापिर गाव बोलेंगे। अब डा. पाण्डेय कह रहे हैं कि चार और बोलेंगे। यह आज कैसे होगा।

श्री खारबेल स्वाई : हमने अपनी लिस्ट दी थी। We stand by our words. ... (*Interruptions*)

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI: Let Shri Tapir Gao speak. ... (*Interruptions*)

SHRI GURUDAS DASGUPTA : Sir, how long this discussion will continue? Let us know the time. Hon. Speaker has talked with them, but we are not aware of anything. ... (*Interruptions*)

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI: Sir, I would request that up to 3.45 p.m. this discussion should be concluded. The Minister will not reply today. ... (*Interruptions*)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Now, please leave it to the Chair. I will decide. The House has already taken a decision to continue with this discussion up to 3.45 p.m. and at 3.45 p.m., the Private Members' Business will be taken up.

... (*Interruptions*)

SHRI TAPIR GAO : Mr. Chairman, Sir I could have completed my speech by this time. ... (*Interruptions*)

Sir, in this important discussion, I just want to add a few feathers on the wings of the hon. Minister of Panchayati Raj. I still remember in Asiad Village auditorium how Shri Mani Shankar Aiyar, the hon. Minister, was organizing the Panchayat Local Self-Government Convention with our beloved leader Shri Raiv Gandhi in those days.[\[a54\]](#) Still, I have got the literature of those days with me. At the moment, I have not brought that with me.

I have got a few suggestions to make here. I am not standing here to say anything which would embarrass a man of your stature as the Panchayati Raj Minister. I have seen your three volumes of books. I could not complete this literature. But I am really happy that you are still continuing the hard work that you have started since Rajiv ji's days. We are lucky that you are the Minister of Panchayati Raj. Here, I would like to suggest a few points.

My first point is that in your literature, it has been mentioned that this is under the State List. But if any State were to fail to implement it through the Panchayati Raj institutions, then, what are we going to do? Let us have the example of my State. You have visited my State. On the floor of the House, you have assured me. But still, devolution of power, the financial power to the elected representatives of panchayats has not taken place. With my State, you have signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Panchayati Raj Minister there. But no impact has been made. An elected representative of the panchayat has gone to the High Court, Guwahati and the verdict came out in favour of the elected representative of the panchayat saying that through devolution of power, finances should be given to the elected representatives. But still, no impact has been made. So, I

would like to request you to find out a solution so that there can be compulsory implementation of it though the subject is in the State List.

My other point is that this is a very good institution rooted to the ground level. But we are not having a training institution at the national level. We are not having any separate training institution for the panchayati raj institutions even at the State level and district level. Therefore, under your dynamic leadership, I would like to urge upon you to see that a separate, completely devoted training institution is permanently established at the national, State and district levels so that the true spirit of Gandhi's dream of panchayati raj can be implemented.

Our hon. Rural Development Minister has left. There is always a complication. In the districts, we are having a Monitoring and Vigilance Committee. Being Members of Parliament, we are monitoring this but no power has been given to the panchayati raj institutions. So, I feel that in respect of all the Centrally-sponsored Schemes of the RD Ministry, the involvement of the panchayati raj institution is compulsory. It is impractical to implement because there is no such involvement of the panchayats in the implementation of the Centrally-sponsored Schemes.

Therefore, with these words, by seeing the time, I would request the hon. Minister to kindly take note of my suggestion for setting up of a training institution at the national, State and district levels.

SHRI KIREN RIJJU : Sir, at the very outset, I would like to say that the hon. Minister is really working hard in the Panchayati Raj Ministry. He is not taking the Panchayati Raj Ministry as an ordinary Ministry but he is taking it as a passion. I really respect that spirit because somebody is there.

I need not dwell upon the subject due to paucity of time. But with you as the Minister who knows about the North-East very well, I do not need to explain things. Shri Priya Ranjan Dasmuni, Shri Oscar Fernandes and Shri Shinde are all well-versed with Arunachal Pradesh and the North East. During your tenure if nothing happens, then it is very difficult that we get the light of the day.

Today, I would just pinpoint one important issue. As per Schedule 11 of the Constitution, the State Legislature has to endow the powers to the Panchayati Raj Authority. And, as per Part -IX of the Constitution, the Minister of Panchayat has to oversee that it is implemented thoroughly.[\[R55\]](#)

Sir, I was very happy when I saw the National Common Minimum Programme because it is mentioned that the fund going to panchayati raj institutions will neither be diverted nor misused. But what happens in Arunachal Pradesh is just the opposite. In reply to my question, the hon. Minister said that his Ministry has no knowledge of the fact that either the fund has been diverted or misused. But actually Rs. 24.36 crore, which the Government of India has granted to Arunachal Pradesh in 2004-05, has been parked in the State Bank of India. I would call it as diversion of fund. The Minister may say that is a holding. But this is completely going against the spirit of the Constitution

and the work that the Minister is carrying on. How can we strengthen the panchayats if this kind of diversion of money is always practised?

Then, one district of Arunachal Pradesh is without a panchayat for the last so many years. The Minister may say that this is a State Subject, but there is no panchayat in the whole district. There are 7 Members in the Legislative Assembly, but there is no panchayat there for the last several years. I would call it a murder of democracy at the grassroots level. This is a very vital issue. So, the hon. Minister should personally intervene in this matter and do something about it.

Sir, I have many points, but due to paucity of time I do not want to speak more. But I would request the hon. Minister that he should see that we do not face this kind of a problem again in future and he should also see that more powers are given to panchayati raj institutions in the district and in the grassroots level.

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SHRI W. WANGYUH KONYAK (NAGALAND): Mr. Chairman, Sir, in the entire country, I think, it is only in Nagaland we do not call it panchayat, but we call it village council. The hon. Minister is well aware of it.

Sir, the Village Development Board was first established in Nagaland and the Government of India has copied the Nagaland model in all the States of the country. I hope the hon. Minister would agree with me.

THE MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ, MINISTER OF YOUTH AFFAIRS AND SPORTS AND MINISTER OF DEVELOPMENT OF NORTH EASTERN REGION (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): Absolutely!

SHRI W. WANGYUH KONYAK : Sir, I want that this system or model should be implemented properly in the entire country. We do not call it 'panchayat', but we call it 'village council'. During the tenure of the Government headed by Shri Rajiv Gandhi, the Government of India had accepted this traditional system of Nagaland and I appreciate that.

I would like to make a suggestion to the hon. Minister. Now, the money is going to panchayats from the Ministry of Rural Development, but the implementation is done by the Ministry of Panchayati Raj. So, I would like to suggest that there should be a Coordination Committee between the Ministry of Panchayati Raj and the Ministry of Rural Development so that we can implement all the Centrally-sponsored schemes properly in the entire country and more particularly in Nagaland.



श्रीमती जयाबहन बी. ठक्कर (वडोदरा): सभापति महोदय, पंचायतीराज द्वारा देश के सर्वांगीण विकास के लिए प्रयत्न कर रहे मंत्री जी का मैं अभिनन्दन करना चाहती हूँ। इस त्रिस्तरीय व्यवस्था को मजबूत करने के लिए गुजरात राज्य द्वारा कुछ बहुत अच्छे कदम उठाए गए हैं। मैं संक्षेप में कहना चाहती हूँ कि एक तो ग्राम पंचायतों को रैगुलर किया जाए और उनसे संबद्ध सभी अधिकारियों को हाजिर रहने के लिए कम्पैल किया जाए। इसके साथ-साथ जो भी संबंधित सांसद व विधायक हों, वे भी उपस्थित रह सकें, ऐसे प्रयास करने चाहिए। इस बारे में यहां से स्पष्ट निर्देश जाने चाहिए। ई-ग्राम और ई-गवर्नेंस सिस्टम भी इम्प्लीमेंट किया जाए जिसके अंतर्गत इंटरनेट के द्वारा तीनों पंचायतों- ग्राम पंचायत, तालुका पंचायत और जिला पंचायत- को मालदार कचहरी और बी.डी.ओ. कचहरी के साथ जोड़ दिया जाए। उसके बाद जो हम करना चाहते हैं, वह करें, क्योंकि सारे फंड्स हम ग्राम पंचायतों को डाइवर्ट कर रहे हैं। इससे उनका रिकॉर्ड भी ठीक रहेगा और हम अच्छे रिजल्ट दे पाएंगे। तीसरी बात है ई-भरा-लैंड रिकॉर्ड को इंटरनेट द्वारा एक्टिवेट किया जाए जिससे लैंड रिकॉर्ड अच्छी तरह से सुलभ हो और हरेक ग्रामवासी को तुरन्त मिल जाए, जिससे इसमें करप्शन न हो, इसमें यही भाव है।[r56]

दूसरा कार्यक्रम विश्वग्राम है, ग्राम को पूरे विश्व के साथ जोड़ने वाली जो बात है, वह भी बहुत अच्छी तरह से की गई है। मैं चाहूंगी कि इस बात पर भी ध्यान दिया जाये। तीर्थ ग्राम में झगड़े निपटाने की जो पहले व्यवस्था थी कि झगड़ों को ग्राम लेवल पर ही निपटाया जाता है। आज केस बन रहे हैं और केस कोर्ट में पैंडिंग हो रहे हैं और बहुत साल उसमें जा रहे हैं।...(व्यवधान) यह मैं बहुत इम्पोर्टेंट बात कह रही हूँ। तीर्थग्राम भी एक इम्प्लीमेंट करने लायक चीज़ गुजरात में गवर्नमेंट ने करके दिखाई है, उसको भी मजबूत करें और पूरे देश में इसके लिए प्रयास हों। समरस ग्राम के लिए मैं कहती हूँ कि हमारी ओर से जैसे गुजरात गवर्नमेंट ने दो लाख रुपये एवार्ड करने के लिए बोला था, यह उनको कोई लार्ज रिश्वत देने की बात नहीं थी, लेकिन ग्राम पंचायतों के जो चुनाव हैं, वे अगर झगड़े के बिना और खर्च के बिना होंगे तो उसे एवार्ड करना भी एक अच्छी बात है, इसे भी लागू किया जाये। गुजरात गवर्नमेंट ने जो अच्छा निर्देश दिया है और अच्छा काम हो रहा है, उसको ध्यान में रखकर काम किया जाये।

MR. CHAIRMAN : The discussion is concluded and only the hon. Minister's reply remains.

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