

STANDING COMMITTEE ON RURAL DEVELOPMENT

(2019-20)

6

SEVENTEENTH LOK SABHA

MINISTRY OF PANCHAYATI RAJ

**DEMANDS FOR GRANTS
(2020-21)**

SIXTH REPORT



LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT

NEW DELHI

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MINISTRY OF PANCHAYATI RAJ

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(2020-21)

Presented to Lok Sabha on 03.03.2020

Laid in Rajya Sabha on 03.03.2020



LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT

NEW DELHI

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**COMPOSITION OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON RURAL DEVELOPMENT
(2019-2020)**

Shri Prataprao Jadhav -- Chairperson

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3. Shri A.K.P Chinraj
4. Shri Rajveer Diler
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31. -Vacant-

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- | | | |
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| 1. Shri D. R. Shekhar | - | Joint Secretary |
| 2. Shri S. Chatterjee | - | Director |
| 3. Smt. Emma C. Barwa | - | Additional Director |
| 4. Shri Nagendra Suman | - | Under Secretary |

*Vacancy created due to sad demise of Shri Baidyanath Prasad Mahto on 28.02.2020

INTRODUCTION

I, the Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Rural Development (2019-20) having been authorised by the Committee to submit the Report on their behalf, present the Sixth Report on Demands for Grants (2020-21) of the Ministry of Panchayati Raj.

2. Demands for Grants have been examined by the Committee under Rule 331E (1) (a) of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in Lok Sabha.
3. The Committee took evidence of the representatives of the Ministry of Panchayati Raj on 11 February, 2020.
4. The Report was considered and adopted by the Committee at their sitting held on 02 March, 2020.
5. The Committee wish to express their thanks to the officials of the Ministry of Panchayati Raj for placing before them the requisite material and their considered views in connection with the examination of the subject.
6. The Committee would also like to place on record their deep sense of appreciation for the invaluable assistance rendered to them by the officials of Lok Sabha Secretariat attached to the Committee.

NEW DELHI;
02 March, 2020
12 Phalgun, 1941 (Saka)

PRATAPRAO JADHAV
Chairperson,
Standing Committee on Rural Development

**REPORT
PART I
NARRATION ANALYSIS**

I. Introduction

The Panchayati Raj system of local self government was introduced by the 73rd Amendment of the Constitution of India and provided for the local governance of rural areas through the Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs). Part IX was inserted in the Constitution as a sequel to the 73rd Constitution Amendment in 1993, bestowing the Constitutional mandatory status to the 'Panchayats'. As per the Constitution, three tiers of Panchayats are to be constituted through elections every five years, except in States/Union Territories with population less than 20 lakhs, where Panchayats of two tiers may be created. The Constitution envisages that Panchayats will function as institutions of local government and prepare plans and implement schemes 'for economic development and social justice'.

1.2 The Ministry of Panchayati Raj was created on 27th May 2004. It has the primary objective of overseeing the implementation of Part IX of the Constitution, implementation of Panchayats (Extension to the Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996 (PESA) in the Fifth Schedule areas and operationalizing District Planning Committees in terms of Article 243ZD of Part IX-A of the Constitution. Since most of the actions including framing of laws rests with the State Governments, the Ministry strives to reach its goals with regard to improvements in the functioning of Panchayats primarily through policy interventions, advocacy, capacity building, persuasion and financial support. Its role is for strengthening the administrative infrastructure, basic services etc. by leveraging technology and capacity building of the functionaries of Rural Local Bodies (RLB). Ministry's roadmap to realise the above objective is through three pillars:

- Provision of basic services through the Finance Commission Funding
- Capacity building of RLBs through Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan (RGSA) and
- Convergent & holistic planning through inclusive & participatory process through Gram Panchayat Development Plan (GPDP) and advocacy work

1.3 The aim of the Ministry is to make Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) an effective, efficient and transparent vehicle for local governance, social change and public service delivery mechanism meeting the aspirations of local population. The Ministry strives for

empowerment, enablement and accountability of PRI to ensure inclusive development with social justice, and efficient delivery of services. The Ministry envisions :

- To attain decentralized and participatory local self-government through Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs).
- Making Panchayats and their elected representatives the drivers of rural transformation, with centrality of Panchayats not only in all government schemes/ programmes, but also as powerful agents of social and economic change.

1.4 Gram Panchayats, the grass-root centres for mobilising and motivating people are uniquely poised to be the engines of rural development. Development of rural areas has a direct bearing on generation of economic activities, availability of natural and financial resources, and improvement of service delivery—thereby paving the way for improved quality of life and ease of living for the rural population. With the Gram Panchayats being directly responsible and accountable for implementation of Schemes/ Programmes, spanning 29 sectors across 18 Departments, the quality of implementation and decisions directly impacts not only the voters, but the elected Sarpanches and Ward Members themselves.

1.5 Certain basic amenities in the Gram Panchayat would have to be saturated, such as street lights, roads, storm water drains, toilets and drinking water supply from funds provided by Finance Commission and other Government schemes. Each Gram Sabha would need to be equipped with its own building, computer with broadband facility and, critically, an institutional tie-up with an entrepreneur who would work to realize the vision through honest, remunerative and expanding business model. An opportunity is afforded through the presence of the Common Service Centres being run by Village Level Entrepreneurs, who have the skill and the industry necessary to do the job. An institutional mechanism is being conceived to give them this mandate. This one action, diligently implemented, has the potential to not only create more jobs but also to turn the entire vision into reality. This mandate will give Common Service Centres, the credibility and under the superintendence of the GPs, they will reincarnate into the epicentre of multifarious activities. Only then would we be able to achieve “Gram Swaraj” holistically. The CSCs would also be responsible for populating crucial information systems on a regular basis. This will create credible time-series data that

can help the Government make decisions that are more informed and less likely to be incorrect.

1.6 The Ministry in response to a specific query over the major challenges/constraints in achieving their primary objective, submitted in their written reply that MoPR is responsible for the work of advocacy, monitoring and implementation of Constitution 73rd Amendment. The role of the MoPR involves strengthening the administrative infrastructure, basic services etc. by leveraging technology and capacity building of the functionaries of Rural Local Body (RLB). Ministry's roadmap to realise the above objective is through three pillars; provision of basic services through the Finance Commission Funding, capacity building of RLBs through Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan (RGSA) and convergent & holistic planning through inclusive & participatory process through Gram Panchayat Development Plan (GPDP) and advocacy work. To enhance efficiency, transparency and accountability of expenditure of GPs, MoPR has been striving to implement Public Financial Management System (PFMS) to achieve cent percent digital payment.

1.7 Capacity Building & Training (CB&T) of various stakeholders of Panchayats is a complex task and it involves a range of stakeholders such as ERs, Panchayat functionaries including Panchayat Development Officers, Panchayat Secretaries, accountants, water pump operators etc., Departmental Officials that work with Panchayats, Gram Sabha or citizens, as well as people who impact Panchayats in various ways such as public representatives, experts, and media persons. The challenge is to reach out to this diverse group while ensuring high quality, context specific CB&T, which are essentially implemented by the States, mostly in their Institutes. This task involves institutional linkages among State institutes for various disciplines (Agriculture, Horticulture, forestry, skill development, engineering etc.) in realisation of the MoPR vision of training Ward Members as enablers of different sectors, making it ever more challenging. In addition to this, the Panchayats also suffer from lack of building for their Offices, HR support, e-enabling apparatus etc. Attempt will be made to address these issues through the ongoing scheme of RGSA; felt need for augmentation will be duly escalated and conveyed.

1.8 To realize the complete benefits of e-Panchayat Mission Mode Project, it is imperative that all the GPs are connected with internet and have adequate infrastructure. Hence, e-Panchayat MMP is dependent on the roll out of BharatNet Project which seeks to connect all the GPs in the country. However, merely, laying the optical fibre does not address the concerns. The last mile connectivity is also equally significant. Besides, constraints of trained manpower and capacity pose significant challenge in the rollout of e-Panchayat across States. States are currently in different levels of preparedness in terms of e-enablement.

1.9 When the Committee raised the issue internet connectivity in all Gram Panchayats, the Ministry in their post evidence reply submitted as under :

“The Ministry endeavours to harness the digital technology towards its vision to enhance the end-to-end experience of public services whether provided by Government or non-government organizations. This would entail the following:

- Convergence of all e-applications on one platform;
- Computerization of Panchayat operations, leveraging BharatNet for internet connectivity;
- Applications to be made mobile based for accessing them from anywhere and everywhere; and
- Operationalize e-Governance (e-Panchayat / e-FMS) initiatives with 100% Digital payments for all schemes & grants.

Around, 1.46 lakh GPs are provided Optical Fibre Connectivity. Since BharatNet is under the purview of Department of Telecommunication (DoT), MoPR is in touch with DoT for rolling out internet connectivity to the remaining GPs. This also forms an important part of the Ministry’s Vision 2024.”

1.10 When asked about the method through which the primary objective of bringing improvements in the functioning of Panchayats/Rural Local Bodies could be achieved without fixing responsibilities, the Ministry informed :

“.....Union Government has continuously persuaded the State Governments to devolve powers to the Panchayats and has provided assistance to enable them to perform devolved functions effectively and efficiently. Further, to enhance the accountability of the Panchayati Raj Institutions, funds under Fourteenth Finance Commission (FFC) are recommended for release to the States only for duly constituted Gram Panchayats. Ministry ensures that the State Government must submit Utilization Certificates (UCs) before releasing the funds

or installments which are due to the States in order to enhance the accountability of the States. Further, the unspent balance with the States/UTs is also taken into consideration to decide the releasable amount under RGSA for next year. Moreover, if any discrepancies are noticed in the implementation of the scheme/utilization of funds, the matter is brought to the notice of the concerned authorities.

As a measure towards augmenting transparency and accountability in the management of finances available to Panchayats from various sources, MoPR has been rigorously pursuing the States for adoption of Public Financial Management System (PFMS). Gram Panchayat Spatial Planning Application was launched on 23.10.2019. It is envisaged that the application would act as a decision support system for preparing realistic Gram Panchayat Development Plan and facilitate to perform planning at Gram Panchayat level with the use of geographic data.

To strengthen the Panchayati Raj system, the Central Government devolves funds through Finance Commissions to Panchayats. Under the Fourteenth Finance Commission (FFC), Rs. 2,00,292.20 Crore have been allocated to the Gram Panchayats constituted under Part IX of the Constitution in 26 States, amounting to an assistance of Rs. 488 per capita per annum at an aggregate level, for the award period 2015-20, for delivering basic services including water supply, sanitation including septic management, sewerage and solid waste management, storm water drainage, maintenance of community assets, maintenance of roads, footpaths and street-lighting, and burial and cremation grounds, and any other basic service within the functions assigned to them under relevant legislations. The FFC grant is more than three times the grants given under Thirteenth Finance Commission. Upto 10% of grants can be used by Gram Panchayats for their operation and maintenance including purchase of computer, paying wages for contractual staff etc. The FFC funds have improved the living conditions of the people in the rural areas.”

1.11 Over the issue of corruption and complaints thereto, the Ministry submitted :

“Complaints are received in the Ministry regarding corruption in the developmental works undertaken at the Panchayat levels, through grievance redressal mechanism in place on Centralized Public Grievance Redress and Monitoring System (CPGRAMS) Portal (<https://pgportal.gov.in/>) as well as offline. Since Panchayat is a State subject in the State List, the complaints regarding Panchayats on all issues including corruption are transferred to respective State Governments for appropriate action.

In order to promote transparency and accountability and also, inter alia, take corrective action on various complaints, the Ministry has provided guidelines to States to carry out Social Audit of the works /activities undertaken by the Gram Panchayats.

Besides, Ministry of Panchayati Raj has also setup and is implementing a holistic e-governance system under the e-Panchayat Mission Mode Project (MMP), wherein a suite of core software applications for Panchayats have been developed. These applications address planning (PlanPlus), budgeting, implementation (ActionPlus), accounting (PRIASoft), monitoring, social audit etc. Further Panchayats are required to get their accounts audited and spend funds in accordance with the approved GPDP.

To monitor the progress of implementation and ensure transparency in implementation, geo-tagging of assets is also done during various stages of progress of the works through mActionSoft Mobile Application.

As per information available in the Ministry, from 1st April, 2019 to February 2020, 1612 grievances /complaints on CPGRAMS Portal have been received. These grievances /complaints have been transferred to the concerned authorities for appropriate action.”

1.12 Over the steps that may be initiated to improve transparency in the functioning of Panchayats, the Ministry in their post evidence written reply submitted as under :

“For the Panchayats to function more independently, fiscal responsibility and accountability norms with robust mechanisms for (i) tracking fund flow to Panchayats and (ii) monitoring public expenditure incurred needs to be developed. Therefore, establishing a robust and holistic monitoring and evaluation systems, capturing the entire gamut of Panchayat activity right from the stage of planning to monitor the various stages of work, recording the expenditure incurred for the works, audit of Panchayat accounts to provide complete details of the asset created becomes a necessity. For this purpose, MoPR has put in place an e-Financial Management System (e-FMS) comprising of PlanPlus, ActionSoft, PRIASoft and National Asset Directory (NAD) with Local Government Directory (LGD) forming the base for such a robust system along with the Public Financial Management System (PFMS). A unified work-based application encapsulating all these functionalities is currently under development and would be launched on National Panchayati Raj Day, 2020 (24th April 2020), which will enable sector-wise GP/Block/District- level aggregation of planned and implemented /completed works and provide the decision-makers with a tool to identify deficiencies and take remedial measures.

As a part of effective and monitoring, it is also imperative to have field-level monitoring and monitoring of physical progress of works. Further, supplementing to strengthening the system; geo-tagging of assets (on completion of work) is of utmost importance. MoPR has developed mActionSoft – a mobile based solution to help in capturing photos with

Geo-Tags (i.e. GPS Coordinates) for the works which have asset as an output. Geo-tagging of the assets are done in at least three stages viz. (i) before start of the work, (ii) during the work and (iii) on completion of work. This would provide a repository of information on all works and assets related to natural resource management, water harvesting, drought proofing, sanitation, agriculture, check dams and irrigation channels etc.”

II. Overall Analysis

1.13 Demand No. 71 related to Ministry of Panchayati Raj mainly provides funds for implementation of the newly restructured scheme of Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan (RGSA) and small schemes i.e. Incentivization of Panchayats, Mission Mode Project on E-Panchayats, Media & Publicity, Action Research and Research Studies. The Detailed Demands for Grants (DDG) No. 71 has been laid on the table of Lok Sabha on 04.02.2020.

1.14 Under Demand No. 71, the Ministry of Panchayati Raj has been allocated a sum of Rs. 900.94 crore for the fiscal year 2019-20 with Scheme component of Rs. 867.73 crore and Non-Scheme component (Secretariat Service) of Rs. 31.21 crore. This outlay is 3.39% more than the previous year (2019-20) BE of Rs. 871.37 crore.

1.15 The details of head-wise allocation for the financial year 2020-21 are as under:-

(Rs. in crore)

S.N	Name of the scheme	BE 2020-21
Plan Scheme		
1.	Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan (RGSA)	790.53
2.	Incentivization of Panchayats	47.00
3.	Media & Publicity	8.00
4.	Mission Mode project on E-Panchayats	20.00
5.	Action Research & Research Studies	2.00
6.	International Co-operation	0.20
Non-Plan		
7.	Secretariat Service	33.21
	Total	900.94

III. Outlay and Expenditure

1.16 The scheme wise financial performance during last three years i.e. 2017-18 to 2019-20 and BE 2020-21 is given below:-

(Rs. in crore)

S. N.	Name of the Scheme	2017-18			2018-19			2019-20			2020-21
		BE	RE	Actual Exp.	BE	RE	Actual Exp.	BE	RE	Actual Exp. (as on 10 Jan 2020)	BE
Plan Scheme											
1.	RGSA/CB-PSA #	691.90	638.10	622.41	720.80	622.41	598.27	762.34	432.96	406.31	790.53
2.	Incentivization of Panchayats	34.00	34.00	34.00	46.00	41.00	41.01	44.00	25.00	6.93	47.00
3.	Mission Mode Project on E-Panchayats	17.00	13.00	12.81	20.00	11.91	10.07	15.50	7.50	2.53	20.00
4.	Media & Publicity	11.00	11.00	9.08	15.00	15.00	13.24	15.00	5.00	2.80	8.00
5.	Action Research & Research Studies	4.00	1.80	1.10	3.00	2.00	2.00	3.00	0.91	0.91	2.00
6.	International Co-operation	0.20	0.20	0.14	0.20	0.20	0.15	0.20	0.15	0.14	0.20
7.	International Contribution*	1.90	1.90	1.97	--	--	0.00	--	--	0.00	--
8.	ATM Services in Panchayat Bhawans**	10.00	0.00	0.00	--	--	0.00	--	--	0.00	--
Total of Scheme		770.00	700.00	681.51	805.00	692.52	664.74	840.04	471.52	419.62	867.73
Revenue Expenditure: Other (Non Plan/ Non Scheme)											
9.	Secretariat Service	20.79	19.21	18.78	20.17	23.74	22.64	31.33	28.48	15.75	33.21
Grant Total		790.79	719.21	700.29	825.17	716.26	687.38	871.37	500.00	435.37	900.94

From 2018-19, the scheme has been restructured as RGSA

* Allocation discontinued from 2018-19 (BE).

**Allocation discontinued from 2017-18 (RE).

1.17 When asked about the reasons for increase in BE allocation every year despite reduction in allocation at RE stage consecutively during the last three years the Ministry in a written reply stated as under:

“The schemes of CB-PSA and RGSA have been demand driven and provide funds for the activities selected by States / UTs as reflected in their perspective Plan and Annual Action Plan (AAP) subject to the approval of Central Executive Committee (CEC) of CB-PSA/ Central Empowered Committee of RGSA. The releases under CB-PSA/RGSA are based on perspective Plan and Annual Action Plan (AAP) subject to the approval of respective committee and opening balance

available with the States/UTs. Due to the late demand received from the States which mostly had an unspent balance with them, the Ministry experienced a cut at the RE stage. However subsequently, RE was well utilized and the expenditure was Rs.700.29 crore in 2017-18 which was around 97% of the RE 2017-18, Rs.687.38 crore in 2018-19 which was around 96% of the RE 2018-19 and as on 31.01.2020 expenditure during 2019-20 was Rs.483.63 crore, which was around 96.73% of the RE 2019-20 and it is expected that 100% expenditure will be incurred. In respect of simultaneous increase in BE allocation every year, it may be mentioned that the increased allocation has been made taking into consideration the projected requirement of funds *inter alia* for the activities meant to be undertaken during the financial year.”

1.18 With regard to the new priorities, that need to be covered during the year 2020-21, the Ministry stated as under :

“Ministry has been giving substantial priority to strengthen Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) by way of Capacity Building of the PRIs and functionaries. As brought out, it is endeavoured to evolve the schemes in to a sophisticated, customized resource for graduated capacity building for ERs, Panchayat Functionaries and other stakeholders. Special emphasis is being given on digital literacy of Elected Representatives (ERs) and also on mobilizing, educating and transforming the ward members or Panches into sectoral resource persons with a clear role and thus greater influence to transform them into agents of change. There would be continued emphasis on SHG-PRI convergence through joint trainings. The focus would be in realizing the objective of Smart Governance and provision of online services through co-location of Common Service Centers in the Gram Panchayat Bhawans. Under the Scheme, efforts to enhance and support the CB&T of Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) for convergent action to deliver basic services and achieving development goals will be continued. It is expected that the process of for preparation of comprehensive and holistic GDPs for 2021-22 by Gram Panchayats across the Country in a campaign mode on the lines of People’s Plan Campaign (PPC) “Sabki Yojana Sabka Vikas” launched during 02.10.2019 to 31.12.2019 will be continued.”

1.19 Over the policy initiative that need to be introduced to arrest the decline of actual expenditure at RE stages, the Ministry stated :

“Taking into account experiences gained during the last two years, more intensive efforts will be made in future to pursue with States for speedy implementation of the approved activities and utilization of funds thereof. The mechanism for monitoring of the progress of the scheme through meetings, video-conferences, field visits by Senior Officers etc. will continue. Besides, the operationalisation of MIS is expected to help in tracking the progress of the scheme in the States in a more effective manner in the future.”

1.20 The Committee specifically wanted to know the number of Gram Panchayats (GPs) yet to be computerized. In response the Ministry in their post evidence written submission have intimated that the MoPR has been supplementing the efforts of State Government for computerization of Panchayats by way of providing funds for computers and peripherals in GPs / Rural Local Bodies (RLBs) under the scheme of RGSA. During 2018-19 and 2019-20, computers and peripherals have been approved for about 8677 and 15260 GPs/RLBs respectively across States / UTs. As per information available, there are about 83761 GPs / RLBs without computers. The State/UT wise information regarding GPs without computers is given in the table below :

State/UT wise information regarding GPs without computers

Sl. No.	State/UT	Gram Panchayats (as per LGD)	GPS without Computers
1	Andaman & Nicobar Islands	70	0
2	Andhra Pradesh	13063	8218
3	Arunachal Pradesh	1785	1652
4	Assam	2199	767
5	Bihar	8387	4186
6	Chhattisgarh	10963	6434
7	Dadra & Nagar Haveli	20	0
8	Daman & Diu	18	0
9	Goa	191	0
10	Gujarat	14292	267
11	Haryana	6197	4832
12	Himachal Pradesh	3226	0
13	Jammu & Kashmir	4290	3768
14	Jharkhand	4348	483
15	Karnataka	6021	0
16	Kerala	941	0
17	Madhya Pradesh	22813	9440
18	Maharashtra	27875	918
19	Manipur	161	96
20	Meghalaya	1570	1570
21	Mizoram	804	527
22	Nagaland	1262	1238
23	Odisha	6798	0
24	Puducherry	108	0
25	Punjab	13267	12661
26	Rajasthan	11187	723
27	Sikkim	185	0
28	Tamil Nadu	12524	2509
29	Telangana	12769	7149
30	Tripura	591	239
31	Uttar Pradesh	58763	9542
32	Uttarakhand	7788	6542
33	West Bengal	3340	0
	Total	257816	83761

IV. Scheme-wise Analysis

(A) Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan (RGSA)

1.21 The restructured Centrally Sponsored Scheme (CSS) of Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan (RGSA) being implemented w.e.f. 2018-19 was approved by the Government on 21.04.2018 to be implemented from 01.04.2018 to 31.03.2022. The scheme was launched by the Hon'ble Prime Minister on 24.04.2018 on the occasion of National Panchayati Raj Day. The primary aim of the scheme is strengthening PRIs for achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) with main thrust on convergence with Mission

Antyodaya and emphasis on strengthening PRIs in the 117 Aspirational districts. The scheme has both State and Central components. Sharing pattern for the State component is in the ratio of 60:40 except NE and Hilly States and UT of J&K where Central and State Ratio is in the proportion of 90:10. For other UTs, it is 100% centrally funded. The Central component is 100% funded by Centre.

1.22 The scheme has been approved for implementation from 01.04.2018 to 31.03.2022 with total budget outlay of Rs.7255.50 crore out of which State share will be Rs.2755.50 crore and the Central share will be Rs.4500.00 crore. The scheme extends to all States and UTs including Part IX areas comprising about 2.48 lakh Gram Panchayats as well as Institutions of Rural Local Government in non Part IX areas where Panchayats do not exist.

1.23 In response to a query regarding the changes that have been introduced in the restructured Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan (RGSA) in comparison to the erstwhile Rajiv Gandhi Panchayat Sashaktikaran Abhiyan (RGPSA), the Ministry in their written reply have stated as under :

“Following table shows a comparative analysis of salient features of the restructured Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan (RGSA) with the erstwhile Scheme of Rajiv Gandhi Panchayat Sashaktikaran Abhiyan (RGPSA):

Components		RGPSA	RGSA
1. Coverage		All Part IX areas	All Part IX areas and also institutions of Rural Local Governments in Non-Part IX areas where Panchayats do not exist.
2. Scheme components			
a.	Training of stakeholders	Training of stakeholders of District, Block and Village Panchayat, TNA, Developing of training modules, exposure visits, evaluation of training	In addition, two new activities included are Handholding support for Academic Institutions for GPDP formulation and assistance for development of Panchayat Learning Centres.
b.	Collaboration with Academic Institutions / Institutions of excellence including NIRD&PR	—	New activity

Components		RGPSA	RGSA
c.	Distance learning	SATCOM or IP based technology	Focus is now on new technology based on Internet based virtual classrooms
d.	Technical Support to PRI	HR support for Gram Panchayat and technical assistance at Block level and administrative support at GP level	Technical support at Block level and Cluster of Panchayats
e.	Administrative & Financial Data Analysis and Planning Cell	--	New activity
f.	Co-location of CSC in Panchayat Bhawans	--	Provision for co-location of CSCs in Panchayat Bhawans included as New Activity.
g.	Gap funding for micro projects/economic development	--	New activity
h.	IEC	1%	2%

Sustainable Development Goal



1.24 Ministry of Panchayati Raj (MoPR) has prepared a draft vision document and broadly identified 9 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) wherein Panchayats can play important role in achieving the identified targets viz. end poverty, end hunger, Health, Education, Women and Child, clean energy, decent work and livelihoods, and Eco restoration, afforestation. This document has mapped roles of Panchayats in term of SDG vis-à-vis Centrally Sponsored Schemes.

1.25 In this regard, the scheme of RGSA, inter-alia, envisions developing governance capabilities of PRIs to deliver on the SDGs. This is due to the fact that key development challenges faced by the country viz. poverty, public health, nutrition, education, gender, sanitation, drinking water, livelihood generation etc are in sync with SDGs and fall within the realm of Panchayats. Panchayats, thus are a key player for implementation of

SDGs. Therefore, States have been asked to focus on priority development areas of SDGs to be undertaken by Panchayats and funds have been provided for Capacity Building & Training.

1.26 CB&T of Elected Representatives and other stakeholders of Panchayats for the same. It is endeavored to accord priority for the CB&T of all the ERs of GPs, including the ward members for developing them as sectoral resource persons with a clear role and thus greater influence to transform them into agents of change. Besides, resources materials on sanitation, drinking water, animal husbandry and child development prepared so far have also been shared with the State Governments.

1.27 The Status of Annual Action Plan (AAP) approved and funds released to the States/UTs during 2018-19 & 2019-20 is as under:

(Rs. in crore)

Sl. No.	State	2018-19		2019-20 (as on 10.01.2020)	
		AAP approved	Fund Released	AAP approved	Fund Released
1	A&N Island	1.50	0.00	1.69	0.00
2	Andhra Pradesh	128.54	67.69	183.84	0.00
3	Arunachal Pradesh	40.72	33.19	46.58	39.59
4	Assam	77.27	39.21	76.02	23.22
5	Bihar	108.02	4.25	76.24	0.00
6	Chhattisgarh	25.87	7.24	37.25	0.00
7	D & N Haveli	1.63	0.00	2.90	0.00
8	Daman & Diu	1.21	0.00	0.89	0.00
9	Goa	4.39	0.00	3.71	0.00
10	Gujarat	27.92	000	55.09	0.00
11	Haryana	55.55	6.99	131.06	0.00
12	Himachal Pradesh	19.18	17.26	127.95	0.00
13	Jammu & Kashmir	49.51	25.06	197.21	2.77
14	Jharkhand	28.53	4.49	34.62	0.00
15	Karnataka	66.08	0.00	71.03	0.00
16	Kerala	51.78	7.68	51.79	0.00
17	Madhya Pradesh	215.29	62.79	227.65	85.48
18	Maharashtra	102.54	11.54	116.94	8.43
19	Manipur	20.60	9.25	15.51	4.54
20	Meghalaya	9.86	4.44	15.02	2.63
21	Mizoram	10.97	9.85	8.45	0.50
22	Nagaland	8.76	7.89	10.14	0.00
23	Odisha	50.68	0.00	28.55	0.00
24	Puducherry	0.00	0.00	4.01	0.00
25	Punjab	98.93	29.68	91.12	0.00

Sl. No.	State	2018-19		2019-20 (as on 10.01.2020)	
		AAP approved	Fund Released	AAP approved	Fund Released
26	Rajasthan	61.81	25.57	83.31	0.00
27	Sikkim	11.29	5.08	11.16	1.25
28	Tamil Nadu	96.00	57.6	188.29	0.00
29	Telangana	66.75	0.00	279.52	0.00
30	Tripura	7.50	2.77	16.51	0.00
31	Uttar Pradesh	249.24	57.14	842.45	169.92
32	Uttarakhand	37.37	33.05	57.21	23.79
33	West Bengal	91.59	54.94	94.18	44.10
	Total	1826.88	584.65	3187.89	406.22

Note: The States where funds not released are mainly due to unspent balance exceeding the releasable amount

1.28 As for the reasons for the decline behind release of on Rs. 406.22 crore against the AAP approved funds of Rs. 3187.99 crore to the States/UTs during 2019-20, the Ministry in their written reply submitted as under :

“This Ministry has always put in its best to optimally utilize the budget allocated for the scheme of RGSA. The progress of the activities approved under the Annual Action Plans of States / UTs are reviewed, from time to time, in consultation with Panchayati Raj Departments of States *inter alia* through Video Conferences etc. Further in order to provide the States full year for implementation of the approved activities, the Annual Action Plans (AAPs) under RGSA for 33 States / UTs were approved well in advance i.e. in the month of February, 2019. The then Secretary specifically exhorted the States for spacing the activities approved under their Annual Action Plan for 2019-20, *inter alia* by preparing a calender of activities, with a view to ensure that the activities are completed in a well thought manner and there is no rush of expenditure at the close of the financial year for completing the activities sanctioned under AAP of RGSA. It is pertinent to mention that the expenditure under the scheme which was less in the initial quarter of the year due to unspent balance available with the State during the period, picked-up after constant follow-up with States *inter alia* regarding this for liquidating their unspent balance etc. and as a result, funds to tune of Rs. 406.22 crore released to States. This included Rs. 258.53 crore during the months of October & November 2019. With the current trend of expenditure and likely demand from the States it was expected that the budgetary provisions under scheme for the current year will be utilized fully and the matter had been taken up with Ministry of Finance to maintain the RE provisions for the schemes for current year at the BE level. However, it appears that the RE allocation has been reduced taking into account the less expenditure till second quarter. As regards, increase of BE during 2020-21, the increased

allocation has been made taking into consideration the projected requirement of funds *inter alia* for the activities meant to be undertaken during the current year.”

1.29. The Committee also enquired about the steps the Ministry propose to advise/guide States/UTs to utilize their allocations in a systematic manner, the Ministry submitted as under :

“The Scheme of RGSA is demand driven in nature and funds are released to States on the basis of approval of their proposals by CEC, submission of requisite documents and after adjustment of unspent balance lying with them at the end of year. Taking into account experiences gained during the last two years, more intensive efforts will be made in future to pursue with States for speedy implementation of the approved activities and utilization of funds thereof. The mechanism for monitoring of the progress of the scheme through meetings, video-conferences, field visits by Senior Officers etc. will continue. Besides, the operationalisation of MIS is expected to help in tracking the progress of the scheme in the States in a more effective manner in the future.”

1.30 Over the reasons for a meager increase in the BE 2020-21 under RGSA, the Ministry in their post evidence written reply submitted as under :

“The scheme of RGSA is demand driven in nature. Taking into consideration the projected requirement of funds *inter alia* for the activities meant to be undertaken during the current year, in the budget proposal for 2020-21, the request was made for increased allocation of funds to the tune of Rs.1093.94 Crore for the scheme. However, the less allocation has been made seemingly due to trend of expenditure under the scheme(s) over the years.”

1.31 The Committee during the course of evidence specifically raised the issue of incidences of malpractices in the Gram Sabha Meetings and pointed out that substantial number of Gram Panchayats (GPs) were without Gram Panchayat Bhawans. The Ministry while submitting the details of the Gram Panchayats without Gram Panchayat Bhawans intimated that MoPR fully appreciates the fact that the Gram Panchayat Buildings are of utmost importance for any Gram Panchayat to discharge its mandated functions effectively particularly for effective delivery of services. The issue related to

the shortage of Panchayat Bhawans across the States / UTs has been a matter of appropriate concern for the Ministry. In the context of above, the Ministry has been repeatedly impressing upon States to take up the construction on Gram Panchayat Buildings on priority. Ministry on its part has sanctioned construction of approximately 4400 Gram Panchayat Bhawans since 2018-19 under RGSA against the projected target of 4500 GPs under whole duration of the scheme. In view of the large requirement of Gram Panchayat Bhawans and in the context of recommendation of the Committee, Secretary, MoPR has requested Chief Secretary of the States/UTs on 3rd February, 2020 to ensure that construction of buildings for Gram Panchayats without their own buildings is taken up on priority in a phased manner by converging funds / resources under MGNREGS with other State Schemes etc. so as to saturate the gap by the end of year 2022. Further to that, the Hon'ble Minister of Panchayati Raj has on 14th February, 2020, also requested the Chief Ministers of 12 States having acute gap in respect of Gram Panchayat buildings namely Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Bihar, Haryana, UT of Jammu & Kashmir, Maharashtra, Meghalaya, Punjab, Telangana, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand to take effective steps to ensure saturation of all GPs with Panchayat Bhawans by 2022. The State/UT wise information regarding GPs without Gram Panchayat Bhawan is given in the table below :

State/UT wise information regarding GPs without Gram Panchayat Bhawan

Sl. No.	State/UT	Gram Panchayats (as per LGD)	Gram Panchayat without own Buildings
1	Andaman & Nicobar Islands	70	11
2	Andhra Pradesh	13063	1307
3	Arunachal Pradesh	1785	1233
4	Assam	2199	294
5	Bihar	8387	1055
6	Chhattisgarh	10963	0
7	Dadra & Nagar Haveli	20	9
8	Daman & Diu	18	0
9	Goa	191	90
10	Gujarat	14292	227
11	Haryana	6197	3827
12	Himachal Pradesh	3226	9
13	Jammu & Kashmir	4290	1259
14	Jharkhand	4348	276
15	Karnataka	6021	460
16	Kerala	941	3

17	Madhya Pradesh	22813	0
18	Maharashtra	27875	3789
19	Manipur	161	57
20	Meghalaya	1570	1570
21	Mizoram	804	95
22	Nagaland	1262	625
23	Odisha	6798	0
24	Puducherry	108	20
25	Punjab	13267	7624
26	Rajasthan	11187	723
27	Sikkim	185	43
28	Tamil Nadu	12524	2651
29	Telangana	12769	4390
30	Tripura	591	56
31	Uttar Pradesh	58763	26317
32	Uttarakhand	7788	1599
33	West Bengal	3340	38
	Total	257816	59657

1.32 In response to a query raised by the Committee, the Secretary, Ministry of Panchayati Raj during evidence submitted as under :

“एक और इश्यु जो आया था कि ग्राम पंचायतों के भवन निर्माण के संबंध में..... इस पर आज की तारीख में ऐसे राज्य हैं, जहां पर करीब 59 हजार ग्राम पंचायतों में भवन नहीं हैं। इसमें सबसे बड़े जो राज्य हैं, उत्तर प्रदेश में ही 26,317 यानि 59 हजार में से लगभग 50 प्रतिशत केवल उत्तर प्रदेश में ही हैं। इसके बाद पंजाब में 7,624 हैं, पंजाब छोटा राज्य है, लेकिन उन्होंने बहुत छोटी-छोटी ग्राम पंचायतों का विघटन करके बना दिया है। अब वहां पर 7,624 ग्राम पंचायत हो गई हैं, जिनके पास अपना पंचायत भवन नहीं है। इसके बाद हरियाणा में 3,827, महाराष्ट्र में 3,789 और तेलंगाना में 4,390 हैं, तमिलनाडु में 2,661 और कुछ अन्य राज्य हैं, जहां पर 1000-1200 के लगभग हैं। इन सभी राज्यों को हम लोगों ने अपनी ओर से उनके चीफ सैक्रेटरीज को लिखा है, मनरेगा के अंतर्गत यह एक अनुमान्य कार्य है, जिस में कनवर्जस के माध्यम से वे धनराशि का प्रयोग कर सकते हैं। हम लोगों ने उन से अनुरोध किया है कि जो आरजीएसए का आवंटन करते हैं, इसमें किसी भी राज्य की योजना का 25-26 प्रतिशत ही इंफ्रास्ट्रक्चर पर जा सकता है। हमारी जो फंड करने की कैपेसिटी है, वह लिमिटेड है, लेकिन मनरेगा कानवर्जस वे इसमें कर सकते हैं। सर, जो माइनिंग एक्ट के तहत माइनर, मिनरल्स वाला जो एक्ट है, अभी इनके सचिव, खनन के साथ हम लोगों की चर्चा हुई है। वे अपनी गाइडलाइन्स में भी इसे डाल रहे हैं कि कई जनपदों में यह धनराशि अप्रयुक्त रहती हैतो करीब 654 जनपदों में से 518 जनपदों में वह फंड मिनरल माइनिंग वाली, जो माइनर, मिनरल्स से सेस के रूप में इकट्ठा होता है, वह धनराशि वहाँ पर उपलब्ध है। हम लोग उनसे अनुरोध करेंगे कि पंचायत भवनों का निर्माण, क्योंकि यह वन टाइम कंस्ट्रक्शन होगा, इस चीज को वहाँ से भी वे कर लें। कुछ राज्यों में इस मद से भी धनराशि प्राप्त हो सकती है। हम लोगों ने चीफ सैक्रेटरीज को चिट्ठी भेजी है...”

1.33 In response to a question relating to the veracity of the Geo tagged progress of the works undertaken, the Secretary, Ministry of Panchayati Raj submitted as under:-

“पोर्टल पर अपलोड हो गया। क्या यह गारंटी है कि वास्तव में वह कार्य हो गया तो इस पर मेरा आंसर है - नहीं। हम पोर्टल पर कुछ भी करें, कितनी भी जियो टैगिंग कराए, लेकिन हमें some form of physical inspection की व्यवस्था रखी होगी। फिजिकल इंस्पेक्शन के बावजूद भी 100 परसेंट गारंटी नहीं है। अगर हमारी नीयत खराब होगी, तो हम उसमें भी बेईमानी करेंगे। केवल जियो टैग करके, फोटो खींचकर आपने उसको अपलोड कर दिया, that should not be enough to satisfy us. Yes, it is a very good tool. हमें पता है कि डिजिटल ट्रेल वह छोड़ रहा है कि किसमें अपलोड किया, किस तारीख को अपलोड किया, कब अपलोड हुआ, कहाँ से अपलोड हुआ? वे सारी चीजें हम देख सकते हैं, लेकिन फिजिकल इंस्पेक्शन का कोई विकल्प नहीं है। हम लोगों को रेंडम चैकिंग, सैम्पल चैकिंग कराना होगा, चाहे भारत सरकार के अधिकारी अपने दौरों के दौरान करें, चाहे स्टेट गवर्नमेंट या डिस्ट्रिक्ट एडमिनिस्ट्रेशन या ब्लॉक एडमिनिस्ट्रेशन के लोग करें। इसके लिए नियमित रूप से स्टेट सेक्रेटरीज आदि के साथ विचार - विमर्श होता है, उस पर हम लोग उनका ध्यान आकृष्ट करते रहे हैं। जो समिति के सदस्यों की चिन्ता है, उस से हम लोग उन्हें भी अवगत करा देंगे।”

(B) Incentivization of Panchayats:

1.34 Incentivization of Panchayats, one of the Central Components of the restructured RGSA scheme, is fully funded by the Central Government. It aims to encourage competitive spirit among PRIs and States/UTs wherein awards including financial incentives are given to best performing Panchayats (District, Intermediate and Gram) and States/UTs in recognition of their good work for improving delivery of services and public goods. The awards are given on the National Panchayati Raj Day (NPRD) celebrated on 24th April every year.

1.35 Best performing Panchayats/States/UTs are selected based on various criteria and indicators. This incentivization encourages awardees who make special efforts; create models for others to follow and focus public attention on Panchayats' performance, which encourages all Panchayats/States/UTs to improve their performance. Finally, this creates an eco-system for overall good governance at the local level.

1.36 The MoPR have stated that the number of awards conferred annually depends upon submission of nominations by the State Governments/UT Administrations and the final selection by the MoPR. Further, the release of award money depends upon the receipt of requisite Utilization Certificates (UCs) from the States/UTs. Accordingly, BE 2020-21 for Rs.47.00 crore is sought in view of the expenditure likely to be incurred on receipt of pending UCs from States/UTs and releases for the activities related to the

Panchayat Awards. MoPR vigorously pursues the States/UTs regarding timely submission of nominations and UCs under the scheme by way of regular follow-up through letters/emails, video conferences and flagging this issue during the visits of Hon'ble Ministers and senior officers to States concerned.

1.37 Awards are given under the following categories under Incentivization of Panchayats:

(i) Deen Dayal Upadhyay Panchayat Sashaktikaran Puraskar (DDUPSP): This award is given to best performing Panchayats (District, Intermediate and Gram) in recognition of the good work done for improving delivery of services and public goods. DDUPSPs are given for general and following nine thematic categories:

- Sanitation
- Civic Services (drinking water, street light, infrastructure)
- Natural Resource Management
- Serving Marginalized Section (women, SC/ST, disabled, senior citizen)
- Social Sector Performance
- Disaster Management
- CBOs/ Individuals taking voluntary actions to support Gram Panchayats
- Innovation in revenue generation
- e-Governance

(ii) Nanaji Deshmukh Rashtriya Gaurav Gram Sabha Puraskar (NDRGGSP): This award is given to Gram Panchayats (GPs) for their outstanding contribution to the socio-economic development by involving Gram Sabhas.

(iii) Gram Panchayat Development Plan (GPDP) Award: Introduced during the year 2018, this award is conferred to best performing Gram Panchayats (GPs) across the country which have developed their GPDPs according to the State/UT specific guidelines prepared in line with the model guidelines issued by Ministry of Panchayati Raj (MoPR) [or adopted as such].

(iv) Child-friendly Gram Panchayat Award: This award has been instituted during the year 2019 for best performing GPs/Village Councils (VCs) (one in each State/UT) for adopting child-friendly practices.

(v) e-Panchayat Puraskar: It is also given to States/UTs or promoting e-enablement of PRIs for bringing in efficiency, transparency and accountability in their functioning.

1.38 The Committee also enquired about the steps the Ministry propose to initiate to encourage the States/UTs to perform better. The Ministry submitted as under :

“Panchayats have a significant role to play in the effective and efficient implementation of flagship schemes through planning on subjects of National Importance for transformation of rural India. Gram Panchayats (GPs) have been mandated for the preparation of Gram Panchayat Development Plan (GPDP) for economic development and social justice utilizing the resources available to them. During the year 2018, GPDP Award was introduced for three best performing GPs across the country which have developed their GPDPs according to the State/UT specific guidelines prepared in line with the model guidelines issued by MoPR or adopted as such. To encourage GPs to undertake the extremely important task of developing developmental plans with greater diligence and sincerity, number of GPDP Awards has been increased from 3 across the country to one in each State/UT w.e.f. National Panchayat Awards 2020.”

(C) Mission Mode Project on e-Panchayat:

1.39 e-Panchayat is one of the Mission Mode Projects (MMP) under the Digital India programme of Government of India that seeks to transform the functioning of Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs), making them more transparent, accountable and effective as last mile cutting edge organs of decentralized local self-governments. Core Common software Applications have been developed that addresses various aspects of Panchayats’ functioning such as planning, budgeting, implementation, accounting, monitoring, social audit and delivery of citizen services like issue of certificates, licenses, etc. Together these software applications constitute the Panchayat Enterprise Suite (PES). Besides, some States have also developed their own State-specific applications for similar purpose.

1.40 e-Panchayat is a component under the flagship scheme – Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan (RGSA) from 2018-19. No funds are released to States directly for e-Panchayat. Funds are only released to National Informatics Center Services Inc. (NICS) for central level support for maintenance of PES applications, faculty support and programme management. Funds are also released to National Institute of Rural Development & Panchayati Raj (NIRD&PR) and State Institute of Rural Development (SIRD) for regional workshops on PES applications.

1.41 A sum of Rs. 20 crore has been earmarked for the BE 2020-21 under this scheme. In response to the increase in the percentage of funds sought for the BE 2020-21 under the Mission Mode Project on e-Panchayat, the Ministry in their written reply have submitted as under :

“MoPR has initiated several new initiatives viz. Gram Manchitra, Unified Portal, PRIASoft-PFMS Interface (PPI) in the current year. It is envisaged that there shall be several enhancements and development work involved for further strengthening the systems as well as trainings at various levels.”

1.42 The Committee enquired about the bottlenecks faced in the use of common software applications developed for the Panchayats under the Panchayat Enterprise Suite (PES). The Ministry in their written reply submitted as under :

“To realize the complete benefits of e-Panchayat Mission Mode Project, it is imperative that all the GPs are connected with internet and have adequate infrastructure. Hence, e-Panchayat MMP is dependent on the roll out of BharatNet Project which seeks to connect all the GPs in the country. However, merely, laying the optical fibre does not address the concerns. The last mile connectivity is also equally significant. Besides, constraints of trained manpower and capacity pose significant challenge in the rollout of e-Panchayat across States. States are currently in different levels of preparedness in terms of e-enablement.”

1.43 The Committee further wanted to know the details of the software programmes available under PES and their utility. The Ministry replied as under :

“Under the Mission Mode Project on e-Panchayat, a suite of Core Common software Applications have been developed that addresses various aspects of Panchayats’ functioning such as planning, budgeting, implementation, accounting, monitoring, social audit and delivery of citizen services like issue of certificates, licenses, etc. Together these software Applications constitute the Panchayat Enterprise Suite (PES). List of Applications developed under Panchayat Enterprise Suite (PES) are given below.”

Sl. No.	Application	Description
1	PRIASoft	It is a web based Application that captures receipt & expenditure details through voucher entries and automatically generates cash book, registers, utilization certificates, etc. It has been designed in such a way that the only requirement from the Panchayats is to make entry of the four vouchers (<i>Receipt/Payment/Contra/Journal</i>) that would automatically generate all associated Statements and Reports.

Sl. No.	Application	Description
2	PlanPlus	PlanPlus facilitates in strengthening participative decentralized planning and enables preparation of district as well as sectoral plans. It also allows the citizens/plan units to submit their development needs to appropriate planning unit. This Application has been modified for incorporating various components of Gram Panchayat Development Plan (GPDP).
3	National Panchayat Portal (NPP)	Dynamic Web site for each Panchayat (i.e. ZPs, BPs & GPs) to share information in public domain. NPP facilitates seamless access to the information and services provided by the local bodies.
4	Local Government Directory (LGD)	Captures all details of local governments and assigns unique code. Also maps Panchayats with Assembly and Parliamentary Constituencies.
5	ActionSoft	It facilitates proper recording of the Financial and Physical progress of the works. It acts as a tool to support the monitoring of the status and the expenditure incurred in works undertaken under various central and state schemes by various governments.
6	National Asset Directory (NAD)	Captures details of assets created/maintained; helps avoid duplication of works and provides for maintenance.
7	Area Profiler	Captures geographic, demographic, infrastructural, socio-economic and natural resources profile of a village/panchayat. Universal database for planning of all sectoral programmes and provides details of Elected Representatives & Panchayat Functionaries, Election details etc.
8	ServicePlus	A dynamic metadata-based service delivery portal to help in providing electronic delivery of all services in all States. The functionality of the erstwhile Grievance Redressal Application has also been subsumed into this Application.
9	Social Audit	Social Audit application aims to understand, measure and verify work under different schemes done by the Panchayat and further to improve social performance of respective Panchayats.
10	Trainings Management	Portal to address training needs of stakeholders including citizens, their feedback, training materials etc.
11	Geographic Information System (GIS)	A spatial layer to view all data generated by all Applications on a GIS map

1.44 The Committee also wanted to know about the activities to be undertaken in the year 2020-21 under e-Panchayat MMP. The Ministry have submitted as under

- (i) CB&T on Unified portal focusing on Work Based Accounting
- (ii) On-boarding of other Central and State schemes on PRIASoft-PFMS integration for real time payments by GPs
- (iii) Further enhancements in Gram Manchitra.
- (iv) People's Plan Campaign 2020

1.45 The Committee further enquired about the vision of the Ministry to devise user friendly e-platform for the rural populace to educate them about the facilities under RGSA. The Ministry intimated as under :

“The scheme of RGSA also provides funds to the extent of 2% of approved Annual Action Plan of States /UTs towards (IEC) activities, which is double of the admissible amount under this activity in the erstwhile scheme of Rajiv Gandhi Panchayat Sashaktikaran Abhiyan (RGPSA). The IEC activities *inter alia* include awareness campaign/communication material in the form of manuals, flip books, posters, puppet shows, audio material, Permanent displays such as information walls, showcasing of good practices/Innovation by Panchayats, use of social media, community radio etc. The States are expected to develop a comprehensive communication strategy to undertake Information Education Communication (IEC) activities in campaign mode as per local needs to reach out to multiple target groups like poor households, PRI representatives, Policy makers, Opinion makers, Government functionaries and Gram Sabha members.”

1.46 With regard to computerization and the measure challenges faced in making and bringing all the PRIs under e-Panchayat, the Secretary, MoPR submitted as under:-

“टेलीकम्युनिकेशन सिस्टम की विश्वसनीयता और बिजली आपूर्ति की स्थिति, इन दो विषयों पर भी ध्यान आकृष्ट किया गया था। यहाँ पर पिछले वर्षों में भारत सरकार के द्वारा जो विशेष योजनाएं चलाई गईं, इसमें लगभग हर एक राज्य में ग्राम पंचायतों में बिजली पहुँची है, गाँव तक बिजली पहुँची है और कनेक्शन दिए जाने की दिशा में भी काम हो रहा है। अभी भी कनेक्शन आदि की स्थिति में और विद्युत आपूर्ति की स्थिति में सुधार की आवश्यकता हो सकती है, क्योंकि कभी किसी माह में वह 12 से 16 घंटे रहती है, कभी वह घट कर 10 से 12 घंटे भी हो जाती है या कभी और कम भी हो जाती है। अलग-अलग राज्यों में यह स्थिति चेंज होती रहती है। इस दिशा में हमलोग क्या कर सकते हैं, अगर हम रीनूएबल एनर्जी के लिए, क्योंकि वह भी एक अनुमन्य कार्य है, तो कई जगहों पर सोलर पैनल्स आदि लगाकर, कम से कम अपनी पंचायत के लिए, अपने पंचायत भवन में, अपने कंप्यूटर आदि के लिए उससे कोई व्यवस्था कर सकते हैं। हमलोग इस चीज के लिए ग्राम पंचायतों को प्रोत्साहित करेंगे कि जो धनराशि उन्हें मिल रही है, उससे वे इस तरह की व्यवस्था करवा लें।”

(D) Media and Publicity:

1.47 Media and Publicity Scheme primarily aims at better and more effective communication through all the available media platforms for advocacy, awareness and publicity regarding Panchayati Raj and its programmes which aim to build capacity within, and enhance the performance of Panchayats at all levels. Media & Publicity Scheme is 100% funded by the Government of India. A sum of Rs. 8 crore has been earmarked for the BE 2020-21 under this scheme.

1.48 The allocated funds under Media & Publicity Scheme will be utilised in an effective and prudent manner, and the financial progress during the upcoming fiscal year (2020–2021) beginning April 2020 will be closely monitored through proper expenditure management mechanism. All the practically feasible IEC activities will be carried out in a well-designed & well-coordinated manner covering maximum outreach activities targeted at rural masses and other stake-holders as per availability of funds under the Head “Media & Publicity Scheme”. A calendar of activities is being planned out.

1.49 Apart from reaching out to the Panchayats across the country through quarterly magazine “Gramoday Sankalp”, Ministry will intensify several cost-effective measures to maximise the outreach such as catering to the information-needs of PRIs as well as rural masses through SMS services and social media platforms. Ministry will endeavor to forge partnership with different government agencies working in the rural development sector to create adequate awareness as well as a positive and conducive atmosphere for improving Ease of Living in rural areas, doubling farmers’ income, creating local employment opportunities and achieving SDGs in order to ensure qualitative change in living standard of rural masses.

(E) Action Research & Research Studies

1.50 Action Research & Research Studies (AR&RS) scheme takes up studies on subjects relevant to Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs). Such studies are critical, as Panchayati Raj is an evolving area and new developments take place continuously. This is a 100% centrally funded scheme. A sum of Rs. 2 crore has been earmarked for the BE 2020-21 under this scheme.

1.51 With regard to the number of project/studies undertaken since restructuring of the RGSA along with the number of those pending finalisation, the Ministry in their written reply submitted as under :

“Since 24th April, 2018 onwards, the following eight studies have been sanctioned, which are still underway”

Sl. No.	Title of the Study	Name of the Institute
1	Economic Development and Income Generation through Panchayats in Rural Areas	M/s. Kerala Development Studies (KDS), New Delhi
2	Impact Assessment of Training of PRIs	M/s. Centre for Development Communication & Studies (CDECS), Jaipur, Rajasthan
3	Time and Work (TAW): Study for PRI Functionaries in India	National Institute of Rural Development & Panchayati Raj (NIRD&PR), Hyderabad
4	Review of the process and content of District Plan Comparison across selected States	Kerala Institute of Local Administration (KILA), Kerala
5	Gender Responsive Initiatives for PRIs & their impact in selected States	Indira Gandhi Panchayati Raj & Gramin Vikas Sansthan (SIRD&PR), Jaipur, Rajasthan
6	Feedback from the Public on the role and effectiveness of Gram Sabha with reference to Mizoram	State Institute of Rural Development & Panchayati Raj (SIRD&PR), Mizoram
7	Role of Gram Panchayat (Village Council) in marketing of rural agricultural produces in Sihfa village, Aizawl district, Mizoram	State Institute of Rural Development & Panchayati Raj (SIRD&PR), Mizoram
8	Utilization and impact evaluation of Fourteenth Finance Commission (FFC) Grants to Gram Panchayats in selected Indian States	M/s. Institute of Economic Growth (IEG), New Delhi.

“Out of these 8 studies, one study mentioned at S.No. 1 has been completed, and draft reports have already been submitted for the 2 studies mentioned at S.No. 2 and 3, which are under examination. The remaining five studies, draft reports are due for submission in March, 2020 only.”

1.52 The Committee wanted to know the measures undertaken for identification of new sources of revenue to the Gram Panchayats for their self sustenance without putting the burden on the rural populace, majority of which comprise the socio-economic

weaker sections of the society including BPL families. The Ministry in their written reply submitted as under :

“In order to identify the new sources of revenue for the Panchayats, the Ministry is in the process of conducting a study “To Assess the Availability of Resources for Creating the Assets and Initiatives Taken for Generating Various Own Sources of Revenue”. The study is proposed to be conducted by M/s. National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER), New Delhi.”

Part-II

Observations/ Recommendations of the Committee

Demands for Grants for 2020-21

The Committee note that the detailed Demands for Grants (2019-20) of the Ministry of Panchayati Raj under demand No. 71 were laid in Lok Sabha on 04 February 2020. The total allocation for Ministry of Panchayati Raj is Rs. 900.94 crore for 2020-21 (BE), out of which Rs.867.73 crore is for schemes and Rs.33.21 crore for non-scheme (Secretariat Service). The overall allocation to the Ministry of 2020-21 (BE) is about 3.39% higher than the allocation of 2019-20 (BE). The Committee have examined in detail the Demands for Grants of the Ministry of Panchayati Raj for the year 2020-21. The Observations/Recommendations of the Committee are detailed in succeeding paragraphs.

(Recommendation Sl.No. 1)

Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan (RGSA)

2.2 The Committee note that the Ministry of Panchayati Raj has been implementing a restructured Centrally Sponsored scheme of Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan (RGSA) from 2018-19 and the major portion of the allocation is earmarked for this scheme. The scope under the restructured RGSA has increased manifold. The scheme now includes institutions of Rural Local Government in Non- Part IX areas where Panchayats do not exist in addition to all Part IX areas. Apart from training of stakeholders of District, Block and Village Panchayat etc, handholding for Academic Institutions for GPDP formulation and assistance for development of Panchayat Learning Centres have been newly incorporated. Three new activities have been also been incorporated which include collaboration with Academic Institutions, Administrative and Financial Data Analysis and Gap Funding for micro projects. In this regard, the Committee observe that the meager increase of 5.7% and 3.7% in the allocation from 2018-19 onwards does not commensurate with the manifold increase in the scope and functions of the restructured RGSA. The Committee further note with concern that the allocation at RE stage during 2018-19 which stood at Rs. 622.41 crore

was reduced to Rs. 432.96 crore during 2019-20 resulting in a decline of 30.44%. This warrants immediate intervention of the Ministry to accomplish the objectives envisaged by the Government. The Committee, therefore, strongly recommend that Ministry of Panchayati Raj should insist on higher allocation of funds and devise a roadmap for proper utilization of funds so that there is no scope of under utilization thereby enhancing the implementation process. The Committee, also desire that the Ministry revisit their approach and devise ways and means to plug in loop-holes so that allocated budget is pragmatically utilized and no scope is left for reduction of budget at RE stage.

(Recommendation Sl. No. 2)

Capacity Building & Training (CB&T)

2.3 The Committee note that Capacity Building & Training (CB&T) being an important and complex task involving various Panchayat Functionaries viz. Panchayat Development Officers, Secretaries, Accountants, water pump operators etc., Departmental Officials that work with Panchayats, Gram Sabha or citizens including Elected Representatives, etc. requires utmost attention of the Ministry. The Ministry needs to invigorate the process further and accordingly guide the States/UTs, to reach out to the remotest part of the Country so that the benefits reach to all the far-flung Panchayati Raj Institutions for enabling them to deliver on basic services in an efficient manner. The Committee, therefore, strongly recommend that the Ministry of Panchayati Raj should take steps for effective capacity building of PRIs in the country especially in the poor and backward regions of the country. The Committee also hope that the Ministry of Panchayati Raj would make judicious and full utilization of the enhanced budgetary allocation of Rs. 790.53 crore in the current financial year and train maximum number of different stake-holders of Panchayats and Panchayati Raj Institutions.

(Recommendation Sl. No. 3)

Shortage of Panchayat Bhawans

2.4 The Committee during the course of evidence note with concern about the huge shortage of Panchayat Bhavans in the Country. The Secretary, MoPR while clarifying on the issue, pointed out that around 59,657 Gram Panchayats were without Panchayat Bhawans. Fifty percent of such Gram Panchayats were in Uttar Pradesh. The Committee were distressed to find that 23.13% of Gram Panchayats are still without Panchayat Bhawans.

The Committee were further apprised that the capacity of funding under RGSA to States Governments for infrastructure is limited. However, the funds could be utilized through convergence under MGNREGA as construction of Gram Panchayat Bhawans has been notified as one of the permissible activities under MGNREGA. The Ministry, in this regard, is also exploring the idea of funding from the revenue from minerals in consultation with the Ministry of Mines. The Committee has therefore, time and again directed the Ministry to devise a time bound plan to achieve the goal in a holistic manner. The Committee also recommend that the guidelines on the subject may be updated to include other sources of revenue for development of assets relating to infrastructure and State Governments may be advised to ensure that each Gram Panchayat should necessarily have its own Panchayat Bhawan. The Committee hope that the Ministry will earnestly strive for achieving goal of Panchayat Bhawans in all Gram Panchayats of the Country.

(Recommendation Sl. No. 4)

Mission Mode Project on e-Panchayat

2.5 The Committee observe that e-Panchayat is one of the Mission Mode Projects (MMP) under Digital India Programme. e-Panchayat seeks to transform the functioning of Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) making them more transparent, accountable and effective as organs of Decentralized Self-Governing Institutions. The Committee, however, take a serious note of the fact that 83,761 Gram Panchayats which constitutes 32.49 % of the total number of Gram Panchayats are without Computers. Furthermore, available computers are lying idle in many of the Gram Panchayats in the absence of internet or power connectivity. The Committee though endorse that Rs. 20 crore allocated for the current fiscal year for several new initiatives incorporating enhancements and development works including training, the idea of e-Panchayats envisioned, is impossible to achieve in the absence of Computers, trained manpower, internet and power connectivity. The Committee, therefore, strongly recommend that all Gram Panchayats of the States/UTs may be equipped with adequate number of computers, trained manpower, internet connectivity and un-interrupted power supply so as to enable them to achieve objective of mission mode projects under Digital India programme to transform functioning of Panchayati Raj Institutions.

(Recommendation Sl.No. 5)

Media and Publicity

2.6 The Committee note that the Media and Publicity Scheme aims at effective communication through the electronic and the print media for advocacy and publicity of the Panchayati Raj programmes that aim to build capacity and enhance the performance of Panchayats at all levels. The initiative of the Ministry to reach out to the Panchayats across the Country through quarterly magazine “Gramoday Sankalp” and other measures to maximize the outreach such as catering to the information-needs of PRIs as well as rural masses through SMS services and social media platforms etc is commendable. The Committee are, however, concerned to note that meagre amount of Rs. 8 crore only has been allocated for the current fiscal year 2020-21 for undertaking this role. The, Committee also feel that the rural populace is still unaware of the facilities available to them under Panchayati Raj Institutions and services available, it is important that they are educated in this regard. The Committee, therefore, recommend that the Ministry should seriously consider dissemination of all the relevant information through the electronic and print media as well as through social media, outdoor publicity, newsletter, community radio stations, traditional forms of mass communications such as participation in major fairs & Melas etc. in a more vigorous manner and seek additional funds under this head.

(Recommendation SI.No. 6)

Incentivization of Panchayats

2.7 The Committee observe that "Incentivization of Panchayats" is a great initiative undertaken by the Ministry for incentivizing best performing Panchayats through awards. Awards are conferred under five different categories covering

areas i.e. socio-economic development; for adopting child friendly practices; efficiency, transparency and accountability in functioning; Sanitation/civic services/ innovation in revenue generation/social sector performance; Natural Resource management and disaster management. The Committee also note that the number of GPDP Awards has been increased from 3 across the country to one in each State/UT to encourage GPs to undertake the extremely important task of developing developmental plans with greater diligence and sincerity with effect from National Panchayat Awards 2020. The budget allocation for 2020-21 has been kept at Rs. 47 crore.

The Committee desire that funds allocated for the scheme are optimally and fully utilized for giving boost to the best performing Panchayats in order to encourage others to improve their functioning to be eligible for the awards being given under this scheme. The Committee also feel that information of the category of awards that can be won, may be disseminated to all the Gram Panchayats through newsletters besides advertisements in local dailies to inspire more and more rural local bodies for better performance. The Committee also hope that Ministry of Panchayati Raj would be fair and consistent in choosing the best performing Panchayats in the Country and the winning Panchayats should be highlighted in Media specially among the rural masses so that more and more Panchayats are encouraged to give their best in their functioning.

(Recommendation Sl. No. 7)

Action Research and Research Studies

2.8 The Committee note that since Panchayati Raj is an ever evolving process wherein new developments take place continuously, it is imperative that

Research Studies are undertaken to explore and examine the new developments so as to restructure the Schemes in a more appropriate manner for maximum outreach to the rural populace. The Committee are unsatisfied with the submission that the BE during 2019-20 was reduced to Rs. 0.91 crore at RE stage despite the fact that research studies serve as an important tool to scope, functions, and reach of the important programmes. As mentioned, Panchayati Raj being a continuously evolving process requires regular updates, thereby seeking regular analysis. The Committee, therefore, recommend that the Budget Estimates under this head instead of reducing should have been increased at Revised Estimates stage.

(Recommendation Sl. No. 8)

2.9 The Committee note that since launch of the re-structured RGSA, eight studies on various aspects of the scheme have been initiated. The areas of study include, Economic development and income generation through Panchayats, Impact Assessment of training of PRIs, Gender responsive initiatives for PRIs and their impact, Public feedback on role and effectiveness of Gram Sabha and role of Gram Panchayats in marketing of rural produce in Mizoram, Utilisation and impact evaluation of Fourteenth Finance Commission (FFC) Grants to Gram Panchayats etc. Of these, study on “Economic Development and Income Generation through Panchayats in Rural Areas” has been completed. Draft Reports on “Impact Assessment of Training of PRIs” and “Time and Work Study for PRI functionaries in India” have been submitted and are under examination. Draft Reports on the remaining five studies are due for submission in March 2020. Furthermore, the Ministry is in the process of conducting a fresh study to identify

new sources of revenue for the Panchayats i.e., “To Assess the availability of resources for creating the assets and initiatives taken for generating various own sources of revenue” proposed to be conducted by National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER), New Delhi. The Committee are satisfied with the efforts undertaken by the Ministry to assess the impact of the restructured scheme on the PRIs and the rural populace. The Committee, therefore, recommend that the Ministry continue their efforts to objectively analyze the effectiveness of the schemes. They should earnestly incorporate the findings of the Study Report on the aspect of economic development and income generation through Panchayats in Rural Areas and simultaneously expedite examination of the two Draft Reports which cover important aspects of “Training of PRIs” and “Time and Work Study for PRI functionaries”. The Committee may be informed in brief about the outcome of the studies and effective suggestions/feedback given to the Government for improvement.

(Recommendation Sl. No. 9)

Monitoring of the Progress made under the Various Schemes

2.10. The Committee considered the issue of monitoring of the progress made under the schemes and the major works undertaken in the rural areas whose photographs are geo-tagged and uploaded and appreciate the candid acceptance of the fact that the authenticity of the works undertaken cannot be monitored from the geo-tagged photographs so uploaded by the various PRIs of the different State Governments/UTs. The Committee, accept the fact that without physical verification by the Central and State Government functionaries, it is impossible to access the actual progress made in rural areas. The Committee,

therefore, strongly recommend that the Ministry should gear up their machinery in such a manner that extensive surprise field visits are undertaken by both the Centre & State Government functionaries to check the actual progress made under the various ongoing schemes/projects. The data of these surprise field visits may be invariably shared with the Committee along with the action taken notes on the discrepancies found.

(Recommendation Sl. No. 10)

NEW DELHI;
02 March, 2020
12 Phalguna, 1941 (Saka)

PRATAPRAO JADHAV
Chairperson,
Standing Committee on Rural Development

STANDING COMMITTEE ON RURAL DEVELOPMENT (2019-2020)**MINUTES OF THE SEVENTH SITTING OF THE COMMITTEE HELD ON
WEDNESDAY, THE 11th FEBRUARY, 2020**

The Committee sat from 1500 hrs. to 1710 hrs. in Committee Room 'C', Ground Floor, Parliament House Annexe, New Delhi.

PRESENT

Shri Prataprao Jadhav -- *Chairperson*

MEMBERS**Lok Sabha**

2. Shri Sukhbir Singh Jaunapuria
3. Dr. Mohammad Jawed
4. Prof. Rita Bahuguna Joshi
5. Shri Nalin Kumar Kateel
6. Shri Narendra Kumar
7. Shri B. Y Raghavendra
8. Shri Talari Rangaiah
9. Smt. Gitaben Vajesingbhai Rathva
10. Smt. Mala Rajya Laxmi Shah
11. Shri Vivek Narayan Shejwalker

Rajya Sabha

12. Shri Manas Ranjan Bhunia
13. Shri Shamsheer Singh Dullo
14. Shri Nazir Ahmed Laway
15. Shri Rathwa Naranbhai Jemlabhai
16. Shri A. K. Selvaraj
17. Shri Ajay Pratap Singh
18. Shri Lal Sinh Vadodia

Secretariat

- | | | |
|---------------------------|---|---------------------|
| 1. Shri D. R. Sekhar | - | Joint Secretary |
| 2. Shri Shilpi Chatterjee | - | Director |
| 3. Smt. Emma C. Barwa | - | Additional Director |

Representatives of the Ministry of Panchayati Raj

1.	Shri Sunil Kumar	-	Secretary
2.	Shri Sanjeev Kumar	-	Additional Secretary & Financial Advisor
3.	Smt. Sujata Sharma	-	Economic Advisor
4.	Shri S.K. Patjoshi	-	Joint Secretary
5.	Shri Alok Prem Nagar	-	Joint Secretary
6.	Shri Ram Darash Chouhan	-	Chief Controller of Accounts
7.	Shri Shiva Shankar Prasad	-	Director
8.	Shri Kamlesh Kumar Tripathi	-	Director

2. At the outset, the Chairperson welcomed the Members to the sitting of the Committee convened for taking the evidence of the representatives of the Ministry of Panchayati Raj in connection with the examination of Demands for Grants (2020-21) relating to the Ministry.

[Witnesses were then called in]

3. After welcoming the witnesses, the Chairperson drew the attention of the Ministry of Panchayati Raj that whatever the discussions held here would be treated as confidential and not to be made public till the Report of the Committee is presented to Parliament. The Chairperson then broadly mentioned about the scheme-wise funds proposed/allocated by the Ministry of Panchayati Raj for the year 2020-2021 and requested the Secretary to brief the Committee thereon. Thereafter, the Secretary, the Ministry of Panchayati Raj made a Power Point Presentation *inter-alia* highlighting allocation viz. utilisation of funds in different years so far along-with the budgetary allocation for 2020-21 and the initiatives taken under different schemes of the Ministry of Panchayati Raj.

4. Thereafter, the Members raised queries on issues related to adequacy of funds for different schemes and steps that could be taken for better implementation of the schemes etc., which were responded to by the witnesses.

5. The Chairperson then thanked the representatives of the Ministry of Panchayati Raj and asked them to furnish written information on points raised by the Members on which the replies were not readily available with them as soon as possible to this Secretariat.

[The Witnesses then withdrew]

A verbatim record of the proceedings has been kept.

The Committee then adjourned.

STANDING COMMITTEE ON RURAL DEVELOPMENT (2019-2020)**MINUTES OF THE ELEVENTH SITTING OF THE COMMITTEE HELD ON
MONDAY, THE 02 MARCH, 2020**

The Committee sat from 1000 hrs. to 1020 hrs. in Committee Room 'E',
Basement, Parliament House Annexe Building (PHA), New Delhi.

PRESENT

Shri Naranbhai J. Rathwa -- *Acting Chairperson*

**MEMBERS
LOK SABHA**

2. Shri A.K.P. Chinraj
3. Shri Sukhbir Singh Jaunapuria
4. Prof. Rita Bahuguna Joshi
5. Shri Narendra Kumar
6. Shri Janardan Mishra
7. Shri Talari Rangaiah
8. Smt. Gitaben Vajesingbhai Rathva
9. Shri Vivek Narayan Shejwalkar
10. Shri Brijbhushan Sharan Singh
11. Shri Indra Hang Subba

RAJYA SABHA

12. Shamsheer Singh Dullo
13. Shri A. K. Selvaraj
14. Shri Ajay Pratap Singh
15. Shri Lal Sinh Vadodia

SECRETARIAT

- | | | |
|-----------------------|---|---------------------|
| 1. Shri D. R. Shekhar | - | Joint Secretary |
| 2. Shri S. Chatterjee | - | Director |
| 3. Smt. Emma C. Barwa | - | Additional Director |

2. At the outset, the Committee expressed its deep condolences over the sad demise of Shri Baidyanath Prasad Mahto, MP and observed two minutes of silence in the memory of the departed soul. The Committee further placed on record its appreciation and contribution made by the Member in the working of Rural Development Committee.

3. Thereafter, in the absence of Chairperson, the Committee under Rule 258 (3) of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in Lok Sabha chose Shri Naranbhai J. Rathwa, MP to act as Chairperson for the sitting. The Acting Chairperson welcomed the Members to the sitting of the Committee convened for consideration of following three Draft Reports of the Committee:-

- | | | | | |
|-------|---|-----|-----|-----|
| (i) | XXX | XXX | XXX | XXX |
| (ii) | XXX | XXX | XXX | XXX |
| (iii) | Draft Report on Demands for Grants (2020-21) of the Ministry of Panchayati Raj; | | | |

4. Draft Reports were taken up for consideration one-by-one and after discussion, the Committee adopted the above Draft Report without any modifications. The Committee then authorized the Acting Chairperson to finalize the aforesaid Draft Reports and present the same to the Parliament at the earliest as it has been listed in Rajya Sabha for discussion.

The Committee then adjourned.
