

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
PANCHAYATI RAJ
LOK SABHA**

STARRED QUESTION NO:154
ANSWERED ON:01.03.2006
ROLE OF WOMEN IN PANCHAYATI RAJ
Reddy Shri Magunta Sreenivasulu

Will the Minister of PANCHAYATI RAJ be pleased to state:

- (a) Whether the Government has formulated the two-child norm as a qualification for contesting Panchayati Raj election;
- (b) if so, whether the two-child norm as a qualification is likely to diminish the role of women in Panchayati Raj;
- (c) whether any survey has been conducted by the Government regarding the participation of women in the Panchayati Raj on the basis of the said norm;
- (d) if so, the outcome thereof; and
- (e) the steps taken by the Government to make the role of women in Panchayati Raj more effective?

Answer

MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR)

(a) to (e) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN PARTS (a), (b), (c) (d) & (e) FOR LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO.154 DUE FOR REPLY ON 01/03/2006 REGARDING 'ROLE OF WOMEN IN PANCHAYATI RAJ'

(a) Article 243F of the Constitution lays down, broadly, the basic disqualifications for membership to Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs). Under this provision, a person shall be disqualified for being chosen as, and for being, a member of a Panchayat -

(i) if he is so disqualified by or under any law for the time being in force for the purposes of elections to the Legislature of the State concerned; or

(ii) if he is so disqualified by or under any law made by the Legislature of the State.

Some States have adopted two-child norm in their Panchayati Raj Acts as a pre-qualification to be eligible to be elected to PRIs.

(b) The Ministry of Panchayati Raj has been of the view that adherence to two-child norm as a pre-qualification for elections adversely affects women's empowerment, young people, Dalits and other weaker sections of the society. This norm is likely to negatively impact the role of women in Panchayati Raj.

(c)&(d) : While no survey has been carried out by the Central Government, there are studies available which have noted a disproportionately high number of women who were faced with disqualification for violating the two-child norm. This percentage becomes even higher in the case of Dalits.

(e) The Ministry of Panchayati Raj has been communicating with the State Governments concerned to sensitize them to the issues of gender empowerment so that the unintended consequence of such policies is not to diminish the role of women in Panchayati Raj. Comprehensive discussions on the steps necessary for the empowerment of women took place in the Third Round Table of State Ministers in charge of Panchayati Raj organized by the Ministry of Panchayati Raj. It was resolved unanimously to take the following measures to reinforce the empowerment of women achieved through reservations in the Panchayats : -

- (i) make provision for Women Component Plans in the budgets of the PRIs;
- (ii) linkages with Self Help Groups (SHGs);
- (iii) adequate training and capacity building;
- (iv) encouragement to political parties to put up women candidates;
- (v) opportunity to women to serve a full term when they are elected to posts in the Panchayati Raj system;

(vi) Mahila Sabhas (or equivalent) to facilitate women`s concerns and priorities being raised in meetings of Gram Sabhas and Ward Sabhas (or equivalent sub-Gram Sabha forums);

(vii) Separate quorum for women`s participation in Gram Sabhas and sub- Gram Sabhas forums.