

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
PANCHAYATI RAJ  
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1098  
ANSWERED ON:01.03.2006  
AMENDMENTS IN PANCHAYATI RAJ ACT  
Gowda Shri D.V. Sadananda;Masood Shri Rasheed

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

- (a) whether the Government proposes to make any amendments in the Panchayati Raj Act;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether the Government proposes to lay more emphasis on decentralisation of power to Panchayati Raj institutions to accelerate the pace of development in rural areas;
- (d) if so, the details thereof; and
- (e) the steps taken/being taken by the Government in this regard?

**Answer**

MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ ( SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR )

(a):- No, Sir. The Ministry of Panchayati Raj does not propose to make any amendments to Part IX of the Constitution. Panchayati Raj Acts are legislated by State Legislatures.

(b):- Does not arise.

(c), (d) & (e): Article 243G of the Constitution provides for endowment by State legislatures of powers and authority to Panchayats at the Village, Intermediate and District levels to function as institutions of self-government for

(i) making plans for economic development and social justice for their respective areas, and

(ii) implementing programmes of economic development and social justice in their respective areas, in respect of those matters devolved to them as the State may, by law, specify, including those listed in the Eleventh Schedule of the Constitution, subject to such conditions as they may specify. As the Constitution provides that it is legislatures of States that will endow the Panchayati Raj Institutions with powers and authority, States have devolved powers and responsibilities to the Panchayats in varying measure.

In order to evolve a national consensus on the measures to be taken to strengthen Panchayati Raj and ensure that Panchayati Raj Institutions function as institutions of self- government as envisaged in Part IX of the Constitution, the Ministry of Panchayati Raj convened Seven Round Tables of State Ministers of Panchayati Raj between July 2004 and December 2004. At the Round Tables, about 150 points for action, covering 18 dimensions of Panchayati Raj, were formulated by consensus. Inter alia, these cover points of action pertaining to both the Centre and the States, relating to the effective devolution of functions, funds and functionaries to Panchayats.

A Council of State Ministers of Panchayati Raj under the Chairmanship of the Union Minister for Panchayati Raj has been constituted to review the implementation of the recommendations. The first meeting of the Council was held on 5th – 6th August 2005 at Kochi, Kerala. A Committee of Chief Secretaries of States and State Panchayati Raj Secretaries has also been constituted under the Chairmanship of the Union Secretary (Panchayati Raj) to monitor the progress on the implementation of the 150 recommendations of the Seven Round Tables and the decisions of the Council of State Ministers of Panchayati Raj. Four review meetings of the Committee have so far been held in April 2005, June 2005, September 2005, and November 2005.

With a view to interacting with Panchayats and carrying out a review with the authorities concerned of the progress in implementing the points for action mutually agreed to in the Round Tables, a process of visiting the States and UTs at the level of Union Minister for Panchayati Raj has been initiated. Nine States/UTs have been covered so far. These include Karnataka, West Bengal, Uttaranchal, Haryana, Chhattisgarh, Orissa, Arunachal Pradesh, Rajasthan and Lakshadweep. Each visit is concluded with a Statement of Conclusions jointly signed with the Chief Minister of the State/UTs concerned, laying out the points of action on which the State would move to operationalise the recommendations of the Round Tables.

An exercise is underway to review different statutes with a view to harmonise them with the provisions of Part IX of the Constitution. Similarly, the guidelines of Centrally Sponsored Schemes are being reviewed to ensure the centrality of Panchayats in planning and implementation. Ministry of Panchayati Raj is in correspondence with the major Central Ministries administering Centrally sponsored Schemes to under take activity mapping delineating what should be done at the Central, State and Panchayat Levels. As regards new Centrally Sponsored Schemes, wherever relevant, it is proposed to provide for a central role for Panchayats. Thus, for example, the

National Rural Employment Guarantee Act provides for the Panchayats to be the `principal authorities` for the planning and implementation of schemes under the Act. Steps are also being taken to fill in critical gaps in infrastructure and capacity so that Panchayats can effectively fulfill their constitutional role.