

46

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON
RURAL DEVELOPMENT
(2012-2013)**

FIFTEENTH LOK SABHA

**MINISTRY OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT
(DEPARTMENT OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT)**

**WORKING OF VIGILANCE AND MONITORING
COMMITTEES IN STATES/UTs**

FORTY-SIXTH REPORT



**LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT
NEW DELHI**

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COMMITTEES IN STATES/UTs

Presented to Lok Sabha on 30.08.2013

Laid in Rajya Sabha on 30.08.2013



LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT
NEW DELHI

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COMPOSITION OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON
RURAL DEVELOPMENT (2012-2013)

Shrimati Sumitra Mahajan — *Chairperson*

MEMBERS

Lok Sabha

2. Shri Thangso Baite
3. Shri Pulin Bihari Baske
4. Dr. Ratna De (Nag)
5. Shri Premchand Guddu
6. Shri Bijoy Krishna Handique
7. Shri Maheshwar Hazari
8. Shri Ramesh Vishwanath Katti
9. Shri Nimmala Kristappa
10. Shri Bishnu Pada Ray
11. Shri M. Rajamohan Reddy
12. Shri Anantha Venkatarami Reddy
13. Shri Arjun Charan Sethi
14. Dr. Sanjay Singh
15. Shri Prabhunath Singh*
16. Smt. Supriya Sule
17. Smt. Annu Tandon
18. Shri Narendra Singh Tomar
19. Smt. Usha Verma
20. Shri P. Viswanathan
21. Shri Madhu Goud Yaskhi

Rajya Sabha

22. Shri Munquad Ali
23. Shri Mani Shankar Aiyar

*Nominated to the Committee *w.e.f.* 14.08.2013 *vice* Shri Uma Shanker Singh expired on 24 January, 2013.

24. Shri D. Bandyopadhyay
25. Sardar Sukhdev Singh Dhindsa
26. Shri Vinay Katiyar
27. Shri Mahendra Singh Mahra
28. Dr. Chandan Mitra
29. Shri C.P. Narayanan
30. Shri Mohan Singh
31. Prof. Saif-ud-Din Soz

SECRETARIAT

1. Shri Brahm Dutt — *Joint Secretary*
2. Smt. Veena Sharma — *Director*
3. Smt. Meenakshi Sharma — *Deputy Secretary*

INTRODUCTION

I, the Chairperson, Standing Committee on Rural Development, having been authorized by the Committee to present the Report on their behalf, present this Forty-sixth Report on 'Working of Vigilance and Monitoring Committees in States/UTs'.

2. The Committee took evidence of the representatives of the Ministry of Rural Development (Department of Rural Development) at their sittings held on 09 November, 2012 and 21 January, 2013. The Committee wish to express their thanks to the representatives of Ministry of Rural Development (Department of Rural Development) for appearing before the Committee for evidence and furnishing the information, desired by the Committee in connection with the issues relating to the subject.

3. The Draft Report was considered and adopted by the Committee at their sitting held on 27 August, 2013.

4. The Committee also wish to express their thanks to the Members of Parliament for giving their valuable suggestions on the functioning of Vigilance and Monitoring Committees in States/UTs.

5. The Committee place on record their deep sense of appreciation for the invaluable assistance rendered to them by the officials of the Lok Sabha Secretariat attached to the Committee.

6. For facility of reference and convenience, the observations and recommendations of the Committee have been printed in bold letters in Part-II of the Report.

NEW DELHI;
27 August, 2013
05 Bhadrapada, 1935 (Saka)

SUMITRA MAHAJAN,
Chairperson,
Standing Committee on
Rural Development.

REPORT

PART I

NARRATIONAL ANALYSIS

I. INTRODUCTORY

1.1 Vigilance/Monitoring Committees were in existence at various levels, including village level, under different programmes of the Ministry of Rural Development. However, these Committees had very little representation from Members of Parliament. Keeping the importance of involving the Members of Parliament in the monitoring of these Schemes, Vigilance and Monitoring Committees (V&MCs) were set up at district and State levels in the year 2002, in supersession of all the vigilance/monitoring Committees at various levels under different programmes. These V&MCs at State and district levels are expected to function as an important instrument for effective monitoring of implementation of the programmes of the Ministry of Rural Development with a crucial role for the Members of Parliament and elected representatives of people in State Legislatures and Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) in reviewing the implementation of the programmes of the Ministry of Rural Development, and to put in place a mechanism to monitor the execution of the schemes in the most effective manner and within the given time-frame so that public funds are put to optimal use and Programme benefits flow to the rural poor in full measure.

1.2 The V&MCs are constituted with a view to fulfilling the objective of ensuring quality of expenditure, particularly, in the context of large public funds being spent under all the programmes of the Ministry of Rural Development. These Committees would keep a watch on the implementation of the Programmes in accordance with the prescribed procedures and Guidelines.

1.3 The Department informed about new initiatives taken in respect of V&MCs which are as under:

- Guidelines were revised in 2010 and posted on the website of the Ministry;
- Member Secretary of the Committee is responsible for convening the Meetings;

- Rupees 1,00,000 per Meeting for State VMC and Rupees 50,000 per Meeting for district VMC is reimbursable from the Ministry;
- Clear and unambiguous Guidelines formulated for nomination of non-official members and NGOs.

1.4 The scope of the District level V&MCs has now been enlarged by including the programmes of the Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Ministry of Panchayati Raj and the Rajiv Gandhi Grameen Vidhyutikaran Yojana under the Ministry of Power in addition to the programmes of the Ministry of Rural Development and Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation for monitoring and review by these Committees. However, the scope of the State level V&MCs is confined to the programmes of the Ministry of Rural Development and the Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation.

II. TERMS OF REFERENCE OF V&MCs

1.5 The Department of Rural Development informed that the Terms of Reference of State level V&MCs include the following:

- (i) The Vigilance & Monitoring Committee at State level would supervise, exercise vigilance and monitor the implementation of Programmes of the Ministry of Rural Development.
- (ii) The Committee would monitor the flow of funds through various channels, including allocations, releases, utilization and unspent balances.
- (iii) The Committee should ensure that the schemes are implemented as per the Guidelines.
- (iv) The Committee would look into complaints received in respect of the implementation of the Programmes, including complaints of mis-appropriation/diversion of funds and recommend follow-up actions.
- (v) The Committee would take all necessary measures to ensure that programme benefits flow to the rural poor in full measure.
- (vi) The Committee would consider Evaluation Reports, Area Officers' Reports and other such Reports sent and would cause to take necessary follow up action and corrective measures wherever required.

1.6 As regards the Terms of Reference of District level V&MCs, the Committee were informed as under:

- (i) The primary responsibility is to effectively monitor the implementation of the schemes and programmes of the Ministry of Rural Development as also to ensure that the funds are used for the purpose for which they are meant.
- (ii) This forum should effectively liaise and coordinate with the Ministry of Rural Development and State Government.
- (iii) The Committee shall ensure that all schemes are implemented as per the Guidelines.
- (iv) The Committee would keep track of the progress of the implementation processes to ensure that the agreed targets are met. The Committee would undertake both Input monitoring (*i.e.* whether resources are being mobilized as planned) and Output Monitoring (*i.e.* whether services and projects are being delivered on schedule).
- (v) The Committee should look into complaints/alleged irregularities received in respect of the implementation of the Programmes, including complaints of wrong selection of beneficiaries, mis-appropriation/diversion of funds and recommend follow-up actions. The Committee shall have the authority to summon and inspect any record for this purpose. The Committee may refer any matter for enquiry to the DC/CEO/PD or suggest suitable action to be taken as per rules which shall be acted upon by him within 30 days. If such action is not initiated within this time, the relevant programme funds to which the direction pertains to, may be withheld.
- (vi) The Committee shall exercise preventive vigilance to ensure that irregularities, diversion and misappropriation of funds are avoided and the selection of beneficiaries is strictly in accordance with the Guidelines of the Programmes.
- (vii) The Committee would monitor all the Schemes of the Ministry of Rural Development implemented in the District and, in particular:
 - (a) Closely watch the flow of funds at various channels including the funds allocated, funds released by both Centre and the State, utilization and unspent balances under each Scheme.
 - (b) Monitor the works under the different Schemes.

- (viii) For action on any points pertaining to the State Government, the Committee shall forward their observation/recommendation to them. The Ministry of Rural Development shall be informed of any gross violation noticed.

1.7 The V&MC at district level is also required to monitor the programmes of the Ministry of Tribal Affairs, the Ministry of Panchayati Raj and Rajiv Gandhi Gramin Vidyutikaran Yojana of the Ministry of Power.

1.8 During evidence, the Secretary, Department of Rural Development while dwelling upon the relevance of Vigilance and Monitoring Committees stated as under:

“.....The normal audit process, which was there even before the Vigilance Committee came up, is in place. Therefore, it is not the position that there is no vigilance or there is no audit or there is no direct oversight on the spending of money. Actually, there are multiple mechanisms to ensure that money is getting spent. But the reason why this Committee was set up, in my understanding, is that since Parliament has voted for huge amounts of money, Parliament would like to know directly, through the ground-level mechanism in which Members of Parliament personally participate, as to how this money is being spent and whether it is properly spent, but also whether the results that are expected from the schemes are coming. So, the Vigilance and Monitoring Committee is an additional layer on the total vigilance and monitoring mechanism, which is multi-layered, and we, in the Central Government, and all the Ministries, whoever are participating Ministries in this, fully appreciate and would be greatly benefited if this particular mechanism is in place.”

1.9 He further added:

“What is important here is that the aim of this Committee was to examine the expenditure of funds allocated by the Central Government to the State Government and then through State Government allocated for the upliftment of intended population. To examine the outcome in terms of poverty reduction or creation of assets, with this aim of the scheme, the District and State level Committees of Public representatives were formed. The matters which can not be solved at District level and where policies, strategies or State level intervention is required, there is a provision in the scheme to constitute a State level Committee. Though, as

far as the aim is concerned, the scheme is adequate and need based. However, it can not be ruled out that same results were not achieved in every State while implementing this scheme with the same goal, speed and efficiency.”

III. COMPOSITION OF V&MCs

1.10 Department of Rural Development regarding composition of State Level V&MCs are stated as under:

The Chairman of the Committee would normally be Minister of Rural Development of the concerned State.

- (i) Minister in-charge of the Departments of State Government is responsible for implementation of various other programmes of this Ministry shall be Co-Chairman. In case any of the Co-Chairmen is senior to the Minister of Rural Development; the Chairman would be nominated from among the Co-Chairmen by the Chief Minister.
- (ii) In case of non-elected Government in the State, Senior most Member of Parliament (LS) in the Committee shall be deemed Chairman and next senior most Member of Parliament (LS) shall be deemed Co-Chairman. In case of non-existence of any Member of Parliament (LS), the Member of Rajya Sabha nominated in the Committee shall be Chairman. The Secretary-In-charge of Rural Development Programmes in the State/UT would be the Member Secretary of the Committee.

1.11 The other Members of the State level V&MCs include the following:

- (i) Four MPs (Lok Sabha) to be *nominated by the Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India.*
- (ii) One MP (Rajya Sabha) representing the State/UT to be *nominated by the Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India.*
- (iii) Five MLAs to be nominated by the State Government.
- (iv) The Secretaries/Heads of Departments of Rural Development, Finance, Public Works Department dealing with Rural Roads, Revenue, Planning, Agriculture, Animal Husbandry, Irrigation, PHE, Social Welfare, Cooperation, Forests and Fisheries and other related departments.

- (v) Chief Post Master General of the Circle (s) in the State.
- (vi) Director, Institutional Finance.
- (vii) Managing Director/Head of SC/ST Development Corporation.
- (viii) Managing Director/Head of Women's Development Corporation.
- (ix) One representative of KVIC to be nominated by the Ministry of Rural Development.
- (x) Four Non-Official members to be nominated by the *Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India*.
- (xi) One representative each of two reputed NGOs/Voluntary Agencies *to be nominated by the Ministry of Rural Development*.
- (xii) One representative (Area Officer of the respective State/ UT) of Ministry of Rural Development.

1.12 The composition of District Level V&MCs is given below:

The Chairman of the District Level Vigilance & Monitoring Committee would be a Member of Parliament (Lok Sabha) elected from the District or a Minister, nominated by the Ministry of Rural Development. The nomination would be done as per the following criteria:

- (i) Where there are more than one Member of Parliament (Lok Sabha) or Union Minister(s) representing a district, the order of nomination of Chairperson would be the Speaker (Lok Sabha), Deputy Speaker (Lok Sabha), Minister in the Union Council of Ministers or Leader of the Opposition as available.
- (ii) If none of the Members of Parliament (Lok Sabha) representing the district holds any office as referred to at (i) above, the senior-most Member of Parliament (Lok Sabha) shall be nominated as the Chairman.
- (iii) Further, in case of same seniority, the Chairman shall be the Member of Parliament having the largest part of the district under the jurisdictions of his/her Parliamentary Constituency.
- (iv) If the District has more than one Parliamentary constituency (Lok Sabha) as its segments and the senior-most Member of Parliament (Lok Sabha) is made Chairman of District Level Vigilance & Monitoring Committee in some other district, the next senior-most Member of Parliament (Lok Sabha) shall be the Chairman.

- (v) The other Members of Parliament (Lok Sabha) representing the district shall be designated as Co-Chairman.

1.13 In the absence of the designated Chairman, Co-Chairman (if any), with consensus among the Co-Chairmen present, would preside over the meeting. If no Chairman/Co-Chairman is present, the Members who are present shall elect a Chairman from among themselves to preside over the scheduled meetings.

1.14 The Member Secretary of the District Level Vigilance & Monitoring Committee would be the District Collector/District Magistrate/Deputy Commissioner except in cases where specific exemption has been given by the Union Government.

The other Members of the Committee shall be as follows:

- (i) All MPs (Lok Sabha) of the District to be designated as Co-Chairman.
- (ii) One Member of Parliament (Rajya Sabha) representing the State and exercising option to be associated with the District level Committee of that District (on first come basis), to be designated as Co-Chairman.
- (iii) All members of the State Legislative Assembly belonging to the District.
- (iv) One representative of the State Government/UT Administration.
- (v) Chairperson of the Zilla Panchayat.
- (vi) All Chairpersons of Panchayat Samitis.
- (vii) Chief Executive Officer of the Zilla Panchayat.
- (viii) Project Director, DRDA.
- (ix) One Member from a reputed NGO to be nominated by the Chairman in consultation with other Members of Parliament in the Committee.
- (x) One Professional from the field of Social Work/Social Science to be nominated by the District Collector.
- (xi) One representative each of SC/ST and Women to be nominated by the Chairman in consultation with other Members of Parliament in the Committee.
- (xii) Lead Bank Officer of the District.
- (xiii) Senior Superintendent/Superintendent of the Postal Department.

1.15 Asked whether the State Governments were consulted while nominating MPs as Members of V&MCs, the Department informed the Committee that the existing guidelines do not provide for consultation with State Governments and, therefore, the Ministry nominates MPs with the approval of Minister of Rural Development.

1.16 The Committee enquired about as to how the ratio of 4:1 (LS/RS) in State level V&MC's has been fixed, the Secretary, Department of Rural Development stated during evidence as under:

"Madam, as far as ratio of 4:1 is concerned. Where Rajya Sabha Members are concerned, the Members have a choice for opting for any District of the State to become the Co-Chairman. As far as 4 members of Lok Sabha are concerned, there is no sanctity in it. The only background in this was that due to two members, may be regional parties on whose tickets MPs are elected, all may not be represented. Due to this reason the number has been increased to four. We expect that by making it four, all major parties will be included."

1.17 A representative of the Department further dwelt upon this by stating as under:

"Madam, so far no criteria has been made to nominate MPs. Often this decision is taken at Minister level. It is going like that. We are trying to bring in a democratic process, but this is not included in the Guidelines so far."

1.18 On increasing the representation of Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha MPs in V&MCs depending upon the area of the State for their effective functioning, the Department in post evidence reply submitted to the Committee stated that the State level Committee includes 4 Lok Sabha MPs, one Rajya Sabha MP and 5 MLAs. The ratio of 2:1 could be applied and one more Rajya Sabha MP may be added. However, this may necessitate increase in the number of MLAs also.

IV. CONSTITUTION OF V&MC's

1.19 In respect of constitution of V&MCs, the Department in a written reply submitted to the Committee stated that the State/Union Territory level V&MCs for monitoring the implementation of the programmes of the Ministry of Rural Development are constituted by the concerned State/Union Territory, whereas the District level V&MCs are constituted by the District Administrations.

1.20 According to the Department, after the constitution of the Fifteenth Lok Sabha, they have advised all States and UTs on 26.08.2009 for reconstituting State and District level V&MCs and nominated members for State level V&MCs and Chairmen/Co-Chairmen for District level V&MCs. State Governments/District authorities were further advised to reconstitute State/District level V&MCs accordingly. The Guidelines for constitution/holding meetings of the V&MCs were revised in September, 2010.

1.21 The status of re-constitution of V&MCs after constitution of the XV Lok Sabha, is reported to be as under:—

Status of Reconstitution of State and District Level V&MCs

Sl. No.	Name of State/UT	Reconstitution of State VMC (Y/N)	No. of districts where V&MCs have been reconstituted
1	2	3	4
1.	Andhra Pradesh	Yes	22
2.	Arunachal Pradesh	Yes	16
3.	Assam	Yes	27
4.	Bihar	Yes	38
5.	Chhattisgarh	Yes	16
6.	Goa	No	2
7.	Gujarat	Yes	26
8.	Haryana	Yes	21
9.	Himachal Pradesh	Yes	12
10.	Jammu & Kashmir	Yes	22
11.	Jharkhand	Yes	24
12.	Karnataka	Yes	30
13.	Kerala	Yes	14
14.	Madhya Pradesh	Yes	50
15.	Maharashtra	Yes	33
16.	Manipur	Yes	9

1	2	3	4
17.	Meghalaya	Yes	7
18.	Mizoram	Yes	8
19.	Nagaland	Yes	11
20.	Odisha	Yes	30
21.	Punjab	No	20
22.	Rajasthan	Yes	33
23.	Sikkim	Yes	4
24.	Tamil Nadu	Yes	31
25.	Tripura	Yes	4
26.	Uttarakhand	Yes	13
27.	Uttar Pradesh	Yes	72
28.	West Bengal	Yes	19
29.	Andaman & Nicobar	Yes	2
30.	Daman & Diu	Yes	1
31.	Dadra & Nagar Haveli	Yes	2
32.	Lakshadweep	No	1
33.	Puducherry	No	1
Total		29	621

1.22 Asked about delay in constitution of State and District level V&MCs in Goa, Punjab, Lakshadweep and Puducherry, the Department in their post evidence replies informed the Committee as under:

“It has now been informed by the States of Goa and Punjab that the State level V&MCs have been constituted during July, 2010 and September, 2010 respectively. It has been informed by the UT of Lakshadweep that they have constituted only a district level VMC and not a State/UT level VMC as there is only one district in the UT of Lakshadweep. The UT of Puducherry has informed that the proposal of reconstitution of VMC had been sent to the former 12th assembly for nominating MLAs. Due to oversight, the proposal of reconstitution was misplaced in the Assembly. Thereafter, new proposal for reconstituting the VMC has been sent to the current 13th Assembly for nominating MLAs. As soon

as nominations of MLAs are received, the State level VMC will be reconstituted.”

1.23 Regarding nomination of MPs to State level V&MCs, the Department informed that MPs to all State level Committees except 1 MP (LS) in Himachal Pradesh have been nominated by the Ministry of Rural Development.

1.24 In respect of District level V&MCs, the Department informed that there are 635 districts which qualify for constitution of district level V&MCs but the Ministry of Rural Development has nominated Chairman/Co-Chairman of the district level V&MCs in 621 districts, with advice to the concerned district authorities to issue order constituting the Committee.

1.25 When asked about the reasons for the underlying gap of 14 districts where Chairmen/Co-Chairmen were not nominated so far and the time by when the Chairmen/Co-Chairmen were likely to be nominated in the remaining districts, the Department in their post evidence replies furnished to the Committee stated as under:

“These are newly created districts, each one of which may have more than one Lok Sabha constituency or in UT with only one MP who is already Chairman of another district in the UT. The list of MPs and the geographical area covered by each of the MPs in the district are pre-requisites for nominating Chairman. The delay in nominating Chairman is due to delay in getting the information from the State Government concerned.”

1.26 Further giving status of nomination in District level V&MCs, the Department informed that MoRD has nominated Chairman/Co-Chairmen for all District level Committees (except some newly created districts and recently elected MPs). Details are available on the Ministry’s website. Modifications are done from time to time, due to changes in the status of MPs.

V. NOMINATION OF NON-OFFICIAL MEMBERS AND NGOs TO V&MCS

1.27 According to the Department of Rural Development, Guidelines have been evolved for nomination of non-official members and NGOs in the V&MCs with a view to make it more transparent and to ensure quality of such members.

1.28 The Department furnished status of nomination of non-official members and NGOs to V&MCs which is as under:

**Vacancy position of Non-Official Members and NGOs for
nomination to State Vigilance and Monitoring
Committees (V&MCs)**

Sl. No.	Name of State/UT	Number of vacancies in the State level V&MCs	
		Non-Official	NGO
1	2	3	4
1.	Andhra Pradesh	0	0
2.	Arunachal Pradesh	0	2
3.	Assam	0	1
4.	Bihar	0	0
5.	Chhattisgarh	0	2
6.	Goa	0	1
7.	Gujarat	0	2
8.	Haryana	0	0
9.	Himachal Pradesh	0	2
10.	Jammu & Kashmir	0	1
11.	Jharkhand	1	1
12.	Karnataka	0	0
13.	Kerala	0	0
14.	Madhya Pradesh	0	0
15.	Maharashtra	0	0
16.	Manipur	2	2
17.	Meghalaya	0	0
18.	Mizoram	0	2
19.	Nagaland	0	0
20.	Odisha	0	1
21.	Punjab	0	1
22.	Rajasthan	0	2

1	2	3	4
23.	Sikkim	0	0
24.	Tamil Nadu	0	0
25.	Tripura	4	2
26.	Uttarakhand	1	0
27.	Uttar Pradesh	0	0
28.	West Bengal	0	2
29.	Andaman & Nicobar Islands	2	2
30.	Dadra & Nagar Haveli	0	2
31.	Daman and Diu	4	2
32.	Lakshadweep	4	2
33.	Puducherry	3	0

1.29 Regarding nomination of non-official members and NGOs in the V&MCs, the Secretary, Department of Rural Development during evidence stated as under:

“Madam, I wanted to say that our contribution in this is mainly with reference to nomination of four non-official members by our Ministry and two NGOs to be nominated by our Ministry and our own officer and also the Members of Parliament.

But the actual notification of the Committee is done by the State. Ultimately, the notification is issued from the State Government based on the guidelines; the nominations made by the State Government; and the nomination made by our Ministry. It is supposed to be a cooperative effort to bring out the notification.”

1.30 The witness further added:—

“We have advertised for NGOs but in some cases it has not come. Otherwise whatever we had to nominate we have done that and have sent to the States.”

1.31 In view of vacancies of non-official members and NGOs lying vacant and the advertisement issued during the years 2011 and 2012 also not bringing enough number of eligible applicants, the Committee wanted to know as to how the Department proposed to tackle such situation when the nominations had already been delayed considerably.

In this regard, the Department in their post evidence replies furnished to the Committee informed as under:

“Since the open advertisements have not brought sufficient number of eligible applicants, the Ministry has requested the concerned States/UTs to identify and forward a panel of eligible candidates for nomination as Non-official members and NGOs to their State V&MCs against vacant slots.”

VI. MEETINGS OF V&MCs

1.32 As per the Guidelines, the meetings of State and District level V&MCs should take place once in every quarter. According to Department of Rural Development, the State Governments and District Administrations are also advised from time to time to ensure that meetings of V&MCs are held in every quarter. In case regular meeting is not held in the first Quarter, the Member Secretary should fix a date, time and venue for a Special Meeting in July/August.

1.33 As per Transaction of Business, State level V&MCs, meeting can be convened even if all Members have not been nominated. However, for District level V&MCs, in case, the Chairman has not indicated any date for convening Meeting, the Member Secretary, in consultation with Co-Chairmen, is to ensure that the Meeting is convened within 15 days of end of each Quarter.

1.34 The year-wise details of number of meetings held by V&MCs at State/UTs and district level for the years 2004-05 till February, 2013, are given below:

The details of State Level V&MCs Meetings held from the year 2004-05 till Feb. 2013 are as under:

States/UTs	No. of meetings to be held during a year	2004-05		2005-06		2006-07		2007-08		2008-09	
		No.	Percent-age	No.	Percent-age	No.	Percent-age	No.	Percent-age	No.	Percent-age
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Andhra Pradesh	4	0	0	0	0	1	25	1	25	1	25
Arunachal Pradesh	4	1	25	0	0	2	50	1	25	1	25
Assam	4	0	0	0	0	1	25	1	25	1	25

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Bihar	4	0	0	0	0	1	25	1	25	3	75
Chhattisgarh	4	1	25	2	50	2	50	1	25	1	25
Goa	4	1	25	0	0	1	25	3	75	1	25
Gujarat	4	1	25	1	25	0	0	0	0	1	25
Haryana	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Himachal Pradesh	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	25
Jammu & Kashmir	4	1	25	0	0	1	25	0	0	0	0
Jharkhand	4	0	0	1	25	0	0	1	25	1	25
Karnataka	4	0	0	1	25	1	25	2	50	2	50
Kerala	4	0	0	0	0	1	25	1	25	1	25
Madhya Pradesh	4	1	25	1	25	3	75	2	50	1	25
Maharashtra	4	1	25	1	25	1	25	1	25	0	0
Manipur	4	0	0	0	0	1	25	1	25	0	0
Meghalaya	4	0	0	0	0	1	25	0	0	1	25
Mizoram	4	0	0	2	50	2	50	0	0	0	0
Nagaland	4	0	0	1	25	1	25	1	25	0	0
Odisha	4	0	0	2	50	3	75	1	25	1	25
Punjab	4	0	0	0	0	1	25	1	25	1	25
Rajasthan	4	0	0	2	50	3	75	3	75	1	25
Sikkim	4	1	25	1	25	0	0	3	75	2	50
Tamil Nadu	4	0	0	1	25	2	50	2	50	2	50
Tripura	4	0	0	0	0	2	50	0	0	1	25
Uttarakhand	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	25	1	25
Uttar Pradesh	4	0	0	1	25	0	0	0	0	3	75
West Bengal	4	0	0	0	0	1	25	3	75	3	75
A & N Islands	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	25	1	25
Daman & Diu	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	25
D & N Haveli	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Lakshadweep	4	0	0	0	0	1	25	1	25	1	25
Puducherry	4	0	0	2	50	0	0	2	50	2	50

States/UTs	No. of meetings to be held during a year	2009-10		2010-11		2011-12		2012-13 (as on 05.02.13)	
		No.	Percent- age	No.	Percent- age	No.	Percent- age	No.	Percent- age
1	2	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
Andhra Pradesh	4	1	25	1	25	1	25	1	25
Arunachal Pradesh	4	1	25	1	25	0	0	1	25
Assam	4	1	25	2	50	0	0	1	25
Bihar	4	0	0	0	0	1	25	0	0
Chhattisgarh	4	0	0	1	25	2	50	0	0
Goa	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Gujarat	4	0	0	0	0	2	50	0	0
Haryana	4	0	0	1	25	1	25	1	25
Himachal Pradesh	4	0	0	0	0	1	25	0	0
Jammu & Kashmir	4	1	25	1	25	0	0	0	0
Jharkhand	4	0	0	0	0	2	50	0	0
Karnataka	4	1	25	3	75	2	50	1	25
Kerala	4	0	0	1	25	0	0	1	25
Madhya Pradesh	4	1	25	1	25	1	25	1	25
Maharashtra	4	1	25	2	50	2	50	2	50
Manipur	4	0	0	0	0	1	25	1	25
Meghalaya	4	0	0	2	50	1	25	0	0
Mizoram	4	1	25	1	25	1	25	1	25
Nagaland	4	1	25	1	25	0	0	0	0
Odisha	4	1	25	1	25	0	0	0	0
Punjab	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Rajasthan	4	0	0	2	50	0	0	0	0
Sikkim	4	1	25	2	50	2	50	1	25
Tamil Nadu	4	1	25	2	50	0	0	0	0

1	2	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
Tripura	4	0	0	2	50	2	50	1	25
Uttarakhand	4	1	25	1	25	1	25	0	0
Uttar Pradesh	4	0	0	2	50	0	0	0	0
West Bengal	4	0	0	3	75	4	100	2	50
A & N Islands	4	0	0	1	25	2	50	0	0
Daman & Diu	4	1	25	1	25	0	0	0	0
D & N Haveli	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Lakshadweep	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Puducherry	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

The details of District Level V&MC Meetings held from the year 2004-05 till Feb. 2013 are as under:

States/UTs with No. of VMC Distt.	No. of meetings to be held during a year	2004-05		2005-06		2006-07		2007-08		2008-09	
		No.	Percent- age	No.	Percent- age	No.	Percent- age	No.	Percent- age	No.	Percent- age
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Andhra Pradesh (22)	88	4	4.5	11	12.5	37	42.0	42	47.7	29	33.0
Arunachal Pradesh (16)	64	0	0.0	26	40.6	20	31.3	18	28.1	10	15.6
Assam (27)	108	4	3.7	13	12.0	27	25.0	25	23.1	15	13.9
Bihar (38)	152	0	0.0	31	20.4	44	28.9	45	29.6	43	28.3
Chhattisgarh (16)	64	3	4.7	14	21.9	34	53.1	36	56.3	12	18.8
Goa (2)	8	0	0.0	2	25.0	4	50.0	4	50.0	2	25.0
Gujarat (26)	104	8	7.7	38	36.5	43	41.3	60	57.7	60	57.7
Haryana (21)	84	2	2.4	12	14.3	25	29.8	25	29.8	13	15.5
Himachal Pradesh (12)	48	1	2.1	10	20.8	18	37.5	17	35.4	4	8.3
Jammu & Kashmir (22)	88	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	2.3	9	10.2	2	2.3
Jharkhand (24)	96	0	0.0	15	15.6	34	35.4	33	34.4	6	6.3
Karnataka (30)	120	8	6.7	28	23.3	32	26.7	41	34.2	16	13.3

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Kerala (14)	56	0	0.0	15	26.8	23	41.1	40	71.4	32	57.1
Madhya Pradesh (50)	200	17	8.5	67	33.5	87	43.5	76	38.0	63	31.5
Maharashtra (33)	132	9	6.8	32	24.2	38	28.8	59	44.7	38	28.8
Manipur (9)	36	2	5.6	0	0.0	7	19.4	5	13.9	3	8.3
Meghalaya (7)	28	0	0.0	1	3.6	6	21.4	7	25.0	7	25.0
Mizoram (8)	32	8	25.0	9	28.1	10	31.3	15	46.9	11	34.4
Nagaland (11)	44	0	0.0	0	0.0	14	31.8	9	20.5	3	6.8
Odisha (30)	120	19	15.8	33	27.5	50	41.7	49	40.8	34	28.3
Punjab (20)	80	7	8.8	12	15.0	19	23.8	28	35.0	8	10.0
Rajasthan (33)	132	2	1.5	33	25.0	41	31.1	47	35.6	41	31.1
Sikkim (4)	16	0	0.0	1	6.3	2	12.5	1	6.3	2	12.5
Tamil Nadu (31)	124	12	9.7	43	34.7	52	41.9	57	46.0	51	41.1
Tripura (4)	16	0	0.0	0	0.0	7	43.8	5	31.3	4	25.0
Uttarakhand (13)	52	5	9.6	15	28.8	15	28.8	17	32.7	13	25.0
Uttar Pradesh (72)	288	18	6.3	85	29.5	92	31.9	105	36.5	63	21.9
West Bengal (19)	76	0	0.0	2	2.6	33	43.4	34	44.7	15	19.7
A & N Islands (2)	8	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	12.5	3	37.5
Daman & Diu (1)	4	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	25.0	0	0.0
D & N Haveli (2)	8	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	3	37.5
Lakshadweep (1)	4	0	0.0	1	25.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	25.0
Puducherry (1)	4	0	0.0	3	75.0	0	0.0	2	50.0	2	50.0
States/UTs with no. of VMC Distt.	No. of meetings to be held during a year	2009-10		2010-11		2011-12		2012-13 (as on 05.02.13)			
1	2	No.	Percent- age	No.	Percent- age	No.	Percent- age	No.	Percent- age	19	20
Andhra Pradesh (22)	88	23	26.1	28	31.8	29	33.0	21	23.9		
Arunachal Pradesh (16)	64	12	18.8	23	35.9	13	20.3	6	9.4		

1	2	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
Assam (27)	108	38	35.2	33	30.6	37	34.3	21	19.4
Bihar (38)	152	41	27.0	19	12.5	25	16.4	17	11.2
Chhattisgarh (16)	64	10	15.6	26	40.6	24	37.5	28	43.8
Goa (2)	8	0	0.0	1	12.5	2	25.0	2	25.0
Gujarat (26)	104	39	37.5	54	51.9	56	53.8	26	25.0
Haryana (21)	84	21	25.0	34	40.5	35	41.7	30	35.7
Himachal Pradesh (12)	48	6	12.5	11	22.9	15	31.3	0	0.0
Jammu & Kashmir (22)	88	1	1.1	4	4.5	2	2.3	0	0.0
Jharkhand (24)	96	16	16.7	27	28.1	39	40.6	17	17.7
Karnataka (30)	120	31	25.8	53	44.2	59	49.2	45	37.5
Kerala (14)	56	19	33.9	26	46.4	32	57.1	26	46.4
Madhya Pradesh (50)	200	39	19.5	89	44.5	98	49.0	67	33.5
Maharashtra (33)	132	23	17.4	49	37.1	56	42.4	41	31.1
Manipur (9)	36	9	25.0	11	30.6	7	19.4	5	13.9
Meghalaya (7)	28	11	39.3	14	50.0	12	42.9	9	32.1
Mizoram (8)	32	12	37.5	22	68.8	20	62.5	16	50.0
Nagaland (11)	44	2	4.5	2	4.5	0	0.0	0	0.0
Odisha (30)	120	37	30.8	52	43.3	41	34.2	42	35.0
Punjab (20)	80	17	21.3	37	46.3	20	25.0	19	23.8
Rajasthan (33)	132	18	13.6	56	42.4	64	48.5	29	22.0
Sikkim (4)	16	3	18.8	2	12.5	6	37.5	1	6.3
Tamil Nadu (31)	124	29	23.4	41	33.1	26	21.0	16	12.9
Tripura (4)	16	9	56.3	8	50.0	11	68.8	4	25.0
Uttarakhand (13)	52	10	19.2	16	30.8	6	11.5	13	25.0
Uttar Pradesh (72)	288	43	14.9	88	30.6	60	20.8	25	8.7
West Bengal (19)	76	8	10.5	17	22.4	27	35.5	7	9.2
A & N Islands (2)	8	0	0.0	2	25.0	5	62.5	2	25.0
Daman & Diu (1)	4	1	25.0	0	0.0	1	25.0	0	0.0
D & N Haveli (2)	8	1	12.5	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Lakshadweep (1)	4	0	0.0	1	25.0	1	25.0	0	0.0
Puducherry (1)	4	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0

1.35 Looking at percentage achievement of States/UTs in conducting meetings of V&MCs the Committee enquired as to how does the Department view and rates this performance. In this context, the Department in a written reply furnished to the Committee stated that the performance falls short of the requirement prescribed in the Guidelines. The performance varies from State to State and depends largely on the keenness of the State Government concerned.

1.36 Asked as to which State is doing better in terms of performance and working of V&MCs and can be termed as a Model State, the Department in a written reply submitted to the Committee stated that the performance cannot be assessed in terms of number of meetings alone. Even in terms of number of meetings, no State has achieved the target every year. Therefore, it would not be appropriate to categorise any State as better performing or poor performing. On the proposal to incentivize the States who are performing better the Department stated that there is no such proposal under consideration and may not also be feasible.

1.37 In reply to a question the Department admitted that despite frequent advices from the Ministry, the number of Meetings at State and district levels have been far less than the stipulated number. The matter has, however, been vigorously pursued with the State Governments and district administrations to convene more Meetings, particularly in view of the personal responsibility of the Member Secretary to convene the Meetings.

1.38 The Secretary, Department of Rural Development in this context stated during evidence as under:

“In some States, meetings are held regularly and in others, these meetings are not held on a regular basis. The Chairman and rest of the Members find it difficult to hold the meetings in some States. This is an open secret and we are also concerned about it. We review the situation with the States to find out as to which States have held State level and District level meetings and which have not? If meetings have not been held, what are the reasons therefor and which type of help can be sought from Ministry to solve this problem? When the briefing meeting was held with the Committee, Hon’ble Members had given some suggestions. We considered those suggestions and based on that, follow-up Guidelines were issued. We issued an advisory in the said Guidelines to ensure concentrated attention on behalf of the State Government to hold meeting at State level and District level. They

were told that the matter at District level should be brought to State level, if it is not solved by them. If it relates to Central Ministry, it should be referred to Central Ministry and Ministry of Rural Development so that we can coordinate at Central level.

But the main problem is that the meetings are not being held as per the frequency given in the Guidelines. There are many reasons behind it. In our opinion, we can only pressurise State Governments in this regard and we are doing so regularly. We hope as soon as meetings will be held at State as well as District level and the outcome of the meetings would be before us, then the States will feel themselves that the efficiency that has come from the implementation, all that is in their interest and the State Governments would be benefitted from that. This is the main issue that I want to place before the Committee at present.

....Notably, the structure in which we are working is a federal structure. Had we, in the Ministry, directly been implementing the schemes; if we had our own ground staff; and we had directly been doing it, then by now the Vigilance and Monitoring Committees would be in a far better position and would have really helped us deliver results that we are looking for. The federal scheme of things was developed in the larger context, but given the federal nature, beyond the point of actually putting our best persuasive influence to bear on the State Governments to constitute these Committees, we cannot take direct action with the District Collector, and we cannot take direct action with the Chief Secretary. They are also answerable to the elected Government of that particular State.

We are in that specific position of having to deal with two sets of public representatives and elected Governments, and we are trying to find a via-media and a reasonable solution that ensures that the overall objective—which is the best use of scarce public resources in the best possible way is achieved.”

1.39 Asked about the reasons for less number of meetings of V&MCs, the Department furnished the following reasons:

- (i) Special circumstances like elections, natural calamities etc. in the State;
- (ii) Difficulty in deciding date for Meeting;
- (iii) Pre-occupation of Member Secretary;
- (iv) (District Collector/Deputy Commissioner) with other time-bound or urgent matters. (Presentation).

1.40 With a view to encourage the States/Districts to hold more number of meetings, the Member-Secretary has been made personally responsible for convening the meetings as per the revised V&MCs Guidelines in September, 2010.

1.41 Asked whether responsibility to Chief Secretary can be given to hold district-wise meetings, the Department in their post evidence replies stated that the Chief Secretary of a State can be made responsible for ensuring the number of meetings at the district level. However, it will not be possible to enforce it as the Chief Secretary is not accountable to the Ministry of Rural Development and is administratively under the control of State Government concerned. Chief Secretaries of the States have been requested to make relevant entries in the Annual Performance Appraisal Report/Annual Confidential Report of the Member Secretaries of State and District V&MCs who do not achieve target of four meetings in a year.

1.42 When asked about the kind of restrictions/pressures apart from withholding the funds can be imposed for not holding stipulated number of meetings, the Department of Rural Development in a written reply furnished to the Committee stated as under:

“The programmes of the Ministry of Rural Development are intended for the benefit of the poor. If funds are withheld only on the ground that VMC meeting has not been held, and there is nothing to suggest that the programme itself is being misutilised, implementation of these programmes will be adversely affected by the withholding of funds and the poor would be deprived of benefits for no fault of theirs. Therefore, the Department has not followed up on this issue. However, where there is definite evidence that programme funds are not being properly utilized; the Department does consider withholding of funds till the position is clarified. Release of funds has not been withheld, so far, on this ground. It may also be clarified that funds under major programmes of the Ministry of Rural Development such as MGNREGA, PMGSY, NRLM etc. are released to the State rather than to Districts.”

1.43 When enquired about the concrete steps to streamline the process so that stipulated number of meetings are held as mere pursuing the matter with State Governments and District Administrations and revising Guidelines in September, 2010 has not helped much, the Department in a written reply furnished to the Committee stated that holding of the V&MC meetings is in the larger

public interest, and helps improve the quality of delivery of the programmes. To this extent, it is also in the interest of the State Governments to utilize the mechanism of the V&MC to ensure better execution. It is expected that with the passage of time, as the efficacy of the V&MC system gets institutionalised the State Governments will play a more facilitatory role. The Ministry of Rural Development will continuously engage with State Governments to speed up this process.

1.44 Guidelines for V&MCs provide that the Ministry may consider withholding releases to Districts which do not hold regular meetings of Vigilance and Monitoring Committees. When enquired in this regard, the Department in their post evidence replies furnished to the Committee stated that it may not be possible to withhold funds under the programmes, which are meant for poverty reduction. Continuous pressure will be exerted on States through meetings and official communications. State-wise compilation of State and District level V&MC key decisions and how they have improved programme quality can be encouraged and incentivized.

1.45 The Committee enquired about the complaints received from MPs from non-holding of meetings and action taken by the Department thereon. In response thereto the Department furnished details of the complaints received from Members of Parliament regarding non-holding of meetings of the V&MCs and follow up action taken which are at Appendix-I.

VII. EXPENDITURE ON HOLDING MEETINGS

1.46 The V&MC Guidelines *inter-alia* provide that the Ministry of Rural Development would reimburse the amount claimed by the State Government based on the actual expenditure incurred within the overall ceiling of ₹ 1.0 lakh per meeting. However, the district administration may incur expenditure on holding the meetings of Vigilance & Monitoring Committees as per the norms applicable. The total expenditure should not, however, exceed Rs. 50,000 per meeting and the bills will be cleared by the DRDA of the State administration based on actual.

1.47 On being asked about the procedure for settlement of Bills, the Department informed the Committee as under:

- (i) Guidelines provide that the bill for holding District level VMC meeting will be cleared by the DRDA and this Ministry would reimburse the amount claimed by the DRDA based on the actual expenditure incurred within the overall ceiling of Rs. 50,000/- per meeting.

- (ii) The Ministry of Rural Development would reimburse the amount claimed by the State Government based on the actual expenditure incurred within the overall ceiling of Rs. 1,00,000/-.
- (iii) Bills are settled after receiving the following:
 - (a) Utilization Certificate for expenditure incurred;
 - (b) Audit Report;
 - (c) Bank Details;
 - (d) Meeting wise and item-wise details of expenditure incurred and copy of minutes of the meeting; and
 - (e) Meeting dates should be uploaded on website of Ministry of Rural Development.

1.48 Asked about the details of reimbursable expenditure for holding State and District level, V&MC meetings, the Department in a written note furnished to the Committee stated as under:

- (i) "The Non-Official members of the State and District level VMCs are entitled for reimbursement of local travel within the State and District respectively for attending the VMC meeting.
- (ii) Daily allowance may be allowed to Non-Officials and NGO Member at the rate Rs. 150/- per day or at the State Government DA rate, whichever is lower.
- (iii) The State and District administration may incur expenditure on light refreshment, arrangement of venue, minimum stationery required, etc.
- (iv) No expenditure would be allowed on items like computer, office accommodation, furniture, telephone etc."

VIII. WORKING OF V&MCs

1.49 The Committee desired to know as to who is entrusted with the responsibility for finalizing the agenda for the meetings. In this regard, the Department in a written reply submitted to the Committee stated that Member-Secretary of the V&MC is personally responsible for convening meetings and is expected to finalise the agenda for the meetings, in consultation with the Chairman.

1.50 When pointed out by the Committee regarding receipt of agenda either late or at the time of meeting, the Secretary, Department of Rural Development during evidence stated as under:

“We will definitely issue guidelines for this and if possible, agenda will be uploaded on the website prior to the meeting and Hon’ble Members will also be intimated in this regard.”

1.51 In respect of content of agenda placed before State and District level V&MCs, when enquired whether the agenda also contained information on complaints received on irregularities during implementation of programmes of rural development, the Committee were informed by the Department that the Terms of Reference of both State and District level V&MCs provide that the V&MC should look into complaints received on irregularities during implementation of programmes of rural development, the agenda placed before State and district level V&MCs should contain information in this regard. However, the Department had no information on the contents of agenda for all these meetings.

1.52 Asked whether Department give directions for mandatory presence of District level officials in the V&MCs meetings, the Committee were informed that the V&MC guidelines already stipulate that Officers-in-Charge of the line departments executing the programmes and other related departments will assist the V&MCs in the discharge of its functions. However, since these officials are under the administrative control of the State Governments, such a direction from the Ministry of Rural Development would not be appropriate and even if issued, difficult to enforce.

1.53 On the suggestions to include Chairman of the Autonomous District Council to participate in the meeting, the Department in a post evidence reply furnished to the Committee stated that this suggestion is already under consideration of the Ministry of Rural Development. The suggestions of Governments of North Eastern States have been sought in this regard.

1.54 Regarding working of V&MCs, the Department informed the Committee that after V&MC meeting is held, the minutes are to be drawn and circulated to all the members. The recommendations of the V&MC are to be considered by the State Government concerned for appropriate action in accordance with the Guidelines.

1.55 Asked whether any mechanism exists to ensure that action is invariably taken after each meeting, the Department in a written reply submitted to the Committee stated that such mechanism has already

been prescribed in the Guidelines in this regard and action taken report is required to be circulated before the next meeting. However, it is difficult for the Department to ensure action, as the action is to be taken by the State Government concerned.

1.56 Enquired whether the information of meetings held at State level is intimated to the Ministry of Rural Development, the Committee were informed that provision has been made for online submission of details regarding holding of meetings of State and District levels. Hard copy of the details of meetings held is also received from some of the States/Districts.

1.57 On the existing mechanism set up to study the proceedings of meetings of V&MCs so that action can be taken and problems resolved before the next meeting is held, the Department informed the Committee that although no specific mechanism has been prescribed, it is expected that proceedings of meetings will be examined at District/State level as appropriate and necessary follow up action taken before the next meeting, as it is a function of the Government machinery.

1.58 On the question of decisions taken at State Level V&MCs and the proceedings to be made available at District level V&MCs, the Department stated that the instructions have been issued to all State Governments for uploading the minutes of meetings of State and District V&MCs on the websites of the Ministry and the State Government, so that these proceedings are visible to all concerned. This would ensure decisions taken at State level V&MCs as well as proceedings to be available to District level V&MCs.

1.59 The Committee enquired whether any feedback is received in the Ministry from the State or District Vigilance & Monitoring Committees, the Secretary, Department of Rural Development during evidence stated as under:

“The Guidelines issued by us and the proceedings of State V&MCs would be put on website for information. Besides, if a decision is taken in the State V&MCs to the effect that it should be done or it should not be done at District level, a separate circular will be issued on the basis of proceedings of State V&MCs for that purpose i.e. both things will be done. The minutes would be put on website, the specific advisory Guidelines and directive would be sent to District Collector from concerned Department so as to enable him to put it before District V&MCs.

If there is any problem at District level, it will be referred to State-level from District level. If meeting of State is held, if it has informatory items then it would be put on website, if it is actionable, a separate advisory is issued from State level on the basis of minutes. It goes to all Districts concerned for action, which is a normal procedure within the Committee.”

1.60 As per the operational guidelines, the State Governments/UT administrations are required to provide the detailed status reports regarding meetings of the Vigilance & Monitoring Committees held, after compiling the requisite information received from the districts. The information has to be given in Proformas for State and District Level Vigilance & Monitoring Committees. Asked whether all State Governments/UT Administrations are submitting the required information to the Ministry of Rural Development within the timeframe as given in the Guidelines, the Department replied in negative. The Department also stated that there is no such practice to send action taken report on the discussions held in the meetings to the Ministry of Rural Development.

1.61 Asked whether the Department is satisfied with the existing vigilance and monitoring mechanism in place or it needs to be further strengthened, the Department informed that the existing mechanism is not fully effective. Some of the issues are inherent to the federal structure and the division of subjects between Central and State Governments. Since the State Governments are responsible for implementation of the schemes of the Ministry of Rural Development, it would be difficult to intervene beyond a point. Therefore, it would be appropriate to further strengthen the mechanism through persuasive steps, rather than direct intervention.

1.62 The following suggestions were proposed to make V&MCs effective and strengthen their working at State and District levels so that they function as an important instrument for effective monitoring of implementation of the programmes which are as under:

- (i) Put in place a transparent procedure for conducting meetings of the V&MCs, for preparing and processing action taken report and for sharing recommendations of the V&MCs;
- (ii) The meetings should be held on fixed days of the year and substantive issues should be discussed in the meetings.
- (iii) The agenda should be confined to the programmes which V&MCs have been mandated to monitor and discussion on other programmes should be avoided.

- (iv) In all the meetings, Action Taken Report on the recommendations of the previous meeting should be considered as the first agenda item.

1.63 The Department further stated that in the above context it has addressed the Chief Secretaries of all States prescribing transparent procedure for conducting meeting of the V&MCs, for preparing and processing action taken report and for sharing recommendations of the V&MCs.

IX. IRREGULARITIES IN IMPLEMENTATION OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES

1.64 As per Terms of Reference, V&MCs would look into complaints received in respect of the implementation of the Programmes including complaints/alleged irregularities of misappropriation/diversion of funds including complaints of wrong selection of beneficiaries and recommend follow-up action. The V&MCs shall have the authority to summon and inspect any record for this purpose and may refer any matter for enquiry to the DC/CEO/PD or suggest suitable action to be taken in accordance with rules which shall be acted upon by him within 30 days. If such action is not initiated within this time, the relevant programme funds to which the direction pertains to, may be withheld.

1.65 In reply to a question the Committee were informed that the Department has not come across any case where the time-limit was violated.

1.66 The Committee desired to know the cases and nature of complaints of alleged irregularities reported by different V&MCs at State and District levels for each programme of the Ministry to the State Governments. In this regard, the Department in their post-evidence replies stated that Guidelines provide that for action on any point pertaining to the State Government, the V&MC have to forward their observations/recommendations to them. The Ministry of Rural Development is to be informed of any gross violation noticed. However, no such gross violation has been reported.

1.67 On the question of how far these V&MCs have been able to control such irregularities, the Department stated that the very fact that V&MCs exist with mandate to look into irregularities would be a deterrent and would hopefully minimize irregularities. There are, however, no studies on this aspect based on actual working.

1.68 On remedial action suggested by different State and District level V&MCs on the complaints/alleged irregularities, the Department stated that no such information is available with them. Since the programmes are implemented by the State Governments, corrective/punitive action is to be taken by the State Governments and not by the Ministry of Rural Development. Monitoring of the complaints, received at State/district level, by the Ministry has not been envisaged under the VMC set up.

1.69 The Department further informed that to enquire into the complaints in Uttar Pradesh during the year 2011-12, NLMs were deputed to enquire into 69 complaints who visited 318 districts for regular monitoring of programmes and 19 districts for enquiry on complaints. Reports received from the NLMs were sent to concerned State Government for appropriate action since the action is to be taken at their end.

1.70 Considering the fact that though the action is to be taken by the concerned State Government, the Committee enquired whether any follow up was done by the Department, the Committee were informed that the Department pursues with the concerned State Government for getting the Action Taken Report.

1.71 The Department in a written submission to the Committee stated that where there is definite evidence that programme funds are not being properly utilized, the Department does consider withholding of funds till the position is clarified. However, there has been no such instance where the funds have been withheld.

1.72 In this context, the Secretary, Department of Rural Development also added during evidence:

“Madam, the point is, while we cannot stop the funding, we certainly try and put pressure on the State Government. I think that is a very valid point. We do it in those cases where we find we get initial reports that money has not been properly utilised. Then, we would be certainly entitled to withhold the funding till the States explain the position. The States have the fund with them and they continue to use it and in the meanwhile they used to get these matters clarified. In NREGA, it is payment based. We cannot stop the funding because the muster roll is already there. In such instances, we restrict the releases to the States. But as regards the funds of the States, which is their right, we withhold that till their complete reply is received and so many States have submitted their replies many a times and where we are satisfied,

it is alright and where we are not satisfied, we have recommended and we follow up that if there is any officer or any functionary of Panchayat is guilty and action is required to be taken against him, that should be taken. This is what we follow up on a continuous basis.”

1.73 Enquired as to whether action is taken against district officials who do not take action on the complaints received, the Department stated that since the programmes are implemented by the State Governments, corrective/punitive action is to be taken by the State Governments. The Department has limitations in taking direct action against employees of State Governments

X. COORDINATION BETWEEN MINISTRY OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT, CENTRAL MINISTRIES AND STATE GOVERNMENTS/UT ADMINISTRATION

1.74 Enquired about the coordination mechanism in the Ministry of Rural Development to coordinate with the Ministries of Tribal Affairs, Panchayati Raj and Power, the Department informed that no such specific coordination mechanism exists at present.

1.75 In this context, the Secretary, Department of Rural Development during evidence stated as under:

“I will have to say that we don’t have any mechanism at this level explicitly. Till now we did not need them because most of the complaints that we were getting were to be solved by the State Government only whether it was the matter related to rural development or Panchayati Raj. If we come across any problem regarding these matters we immediately used to forward the report to the State Government on behalf of Central Government. We were only enquiring whether the State Government has taken the action or not. Recently, I was considering the fact whether we can have any such mechanism at the level of Centre or not. It will definitely help in a way if the coordination at the level of Centre improves a bit, then Tribal Affairs and Panchayati Raj can also pressurise alongwith the pressure being put by us and it will lead to good results. We will definitely devise a mechanism after considering these facts.”

1.76 Regarding coordination with State Governments, the Department further informed that as per standard practice among Ministries, issues relating to these Ministries which come to notice are referred to them for appropriate action. One representative of the

Ministry of Rural Development is a member of the State level V&MC of each State. State Governments have been requested for involving the concerned departments in the State and the officials of the concerned line departments in the districts in the review process.

1.77 The Committee asked that since the V&MCs are under the administrative control of the Ministry of Rural Development, can the Ministries of Panchayati Raj and Tribal Affairs etc. issue any advisories or directions to the V&MCs, the Department stated in a written reply that as per standard practice, it is for the Ministry having administrative responsibility to do so. If any participating Ministry desires to issue advisories to the V&MCs with regard to their programmes, such Ministry may, in normal course, refer the matter to the Ministry of Rural Development for issuing the advisories to the V&MCs.

1.78 In view of Rajiv Gandhi Grameen Vidyutikaran Yojana (RGGVY) also coming under the ambit of V&MCs, the Committee enquired what kind of coordination exists amongst the officials, as Ministry of Power is a different Ministry. The Secretary, Department of Rural Development during evidence responded by stating as under:—

“We have issued Guidelines in this connection on 11 January, 2013 and have specifically stated that the scope of the Vigilance and Monitoring Committee has now been enlarged by including the programmes of the Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Ministry of Panchayati Raj and the Rajiv Gandhi Vidyutikaran Yojana in addition to the programme of the Ministry of Rural Development, Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation for review and monitoring by these Committees. On that basis, with the expansion of scope of district level Vigilance and Monitoring Committee, a strong need for coordination with the State Government and nodal Ministry has arisen and we have gone on to suggest what steps need to be taken by the State Government and district to effect that coordination. We have also requested the sister Ministries whose programmes will be monitored by the Vigilance and Monitoring Committee to similarly effect coordination with the concerned States. In effect, basically, if there is an issue which requires to be taken up from the district level to higher level, the district level will make a reference either to the State level or to the concerned Ministry which will issue an advisory, if need is required, in order to solve the issue that has been raised or pointed out by the District Committee.”

1.79 The witness in this context further added:

“In the Guidelines, we have said that the Secretary In-charge of Rural Development Programmes in the State would be the Member Secretary of the Committee, and the implication is that the Rural Development Department would be the nodal Department in the State Government for the State-level Committee. Therefore, it follows that they would also be the Administrative Department for the District Level Committee and it would be with the Rural Development Department. The Tribal Affairs is a participating Ministry for us. Therefore, we have said that the Tribal Affairs will coordinate at the Central Level and similarly at the State Level because most of the programme funds flow through Rural Development Department. The Panchayati Raj, the Tribal Affairs, Rural Development, Drinking Water and Sanitation and now, the Ministry of Power comes for the purposes of the RGGVY.”

1.80 The Ministry in their post-evidence replies further informed that a coordination mechanism has been evolved and prescribed procedure has been circulated among all the stake holders on 11.1.2013.

1.81 The Committee desired to know whether this coordination mechanism is satisfactory, the Ministry in a written reply submitted to the Committee stated as under:

“The coordination mechanism has been introduced only recently and it is too early to judge its effectiveness, although the Ministry expects it to work satisfactorily. For ensuring proper working of the coordination mechanism in all districts and States, the Ministry will need to create a large infrastructure with huge man power and financial resources. Even then, it will not be possible for the Ministry to ensure action by the State Governments.”

XI. MONITORING MECHANISM

1.82 Asked whether any mechanism exists for taking feedback from the monitoring and evaluation work of the State and District level V&MCs, the Department informed the Committee that the Performance Review Committee (PRC) meeting is held periodically with the State Governments to discuss issues, including those relating to the V&MCs, with the State Governments.

1.83 According to Annual Report of the Ministry of Rural Development, it has *inter alia* been stated that the Ministry has evolved a comprehensive multi-level and multi-tool system of monitoring and

evaluation for implementation of its programmes. Appropriate objective, verifiable performance indicators have been developed for each of the specific programme both by the Ministry of Rural Development and the State Authorities for effective programme monitoring at District Block, Gram Panchayat and Village level so that alarm signals can be captured well in advance for the mid-course corrections.

1.84 Asked whether this system of monitoring is over and above monitoring through Vigilance and Monitoring Committees, the Department informed that the system of monitoring and evaluation is required for all Government programmes and is generally part of the Scheme and its guidelines. The Monitoring and Evaluation system helps in understanding some of the deficiencies in the implementation of rural development schemes. This knowledge helps in making mid course corrections both at policy level and at operational level.

1.85 Enquired whether any mid course corrections have been effected in the policy as well as at operational level in the rural development schemes due to this system of monitoring and evaluation, the Department in their post-evidence replies furnished to the Committee stated as under:

“The Department has not received any report from V&MCs requiring mid course corrections at policy or operational level, and, as such, no corrective action has been taken.”

XII. PRACTICAL DIFFICULTIES

1.86 On being asked about the practical difficulties coming in the way of smooth functioning of V&MCs in different States/UTs, the Department in a post evidence reply furnished to the Committee stated that the practical difficulties include delay in indicating the date for the meeting, post-ponement due to inability of the Chairman to attend the meeting, elections, preoccupation of Member Secretary, lack of proper follow up action on decisions taken in the meeting and limitations in taking action against erring employees of the State Governments, etc.

1.87 To increase efficacy of V&MCs the Department also made the following suggestions:

- (i) Reducing frequency of Meetings to two per year, instead of four; and fixing two dates *e.g.*, 1st Monday of January and July each year as mandatory meeting days for all V&MCs at State and district levels.
- (ii) Notice, Agenda and proceedings of all State and District V&MCs to be put up on MoRD website by Member Secretary concerned.

XIII. SUGGESTIONS BY MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT

1.88 The Committee while deliberating on the subject felt that V&MCs which have been constituted with the main objective to monitor funds given by the Government of India for implementation of various Rural Development programmes are not being taken seriously since stipulated quarterly meetings of V&MCs are not held regularly. Therefore, before arriving at a just conclusion in this regard, the Committee desired to obtain suggestions of all Members of Parliament regarding functioning of V&MCs in their respective Districts/States/Parliamentary Constituencies. The Committee, therefore, decided to invite suggestions of all Members of Lok Sabha/Rajya Sabha on the working of V&MCs in their respective States/Districts/Constituencies *inter-alia* covering status of constitution of V&MCs, number of meetings of V&MCs held and suggestions for improvement in the system, etc. The suggestions as received are at **Appendix II**.

XIV. MISCELLANEOUS

(A) Complaint Redressal System

1.89 Since no specific mechanism was reported to have been prescribed for lodging complaints to V&MCs by common man regarding irregularities in the implementation of the programmes, the Committee sought the views of the Department to devise a suitable mechanism for the same. The Department, however, informed the Committee that some specific, simple mechanism for this purpose will facilitate lodging complaints by common man.

(B) Awareness about V&MCs

1.90 Asked about the efforts made to spread awareness among public about the existence and functions of the V&MC, the Department informed that no exclusive publicity campaign has been undertaken for creating awareness among the public about existence and functions of V&MCs. However, all relevant information, *i.e.* the position of release of funds to the States and Districts under various programmes has been placed in the public domain through the website of the Ministry for the information of the general public.

1.91 The Committee enquired whether any seminar/conference etc. has been conducted for involving MPs/MLAs, representatives of PRIs, and other members of State and District level V&MCs to educate them about objective, working and relevance of these V&MCs, the

Department in a written reply furnished to the Committee stated that the information relating to V&MCs, including Guidelines, nomination of Chairman/Co-chairman, meetings etc. are uploaded on the website of the Ministry. However, no seminar/conference etc. has been organized in this regard.

PART II

OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE COMMITTEE

2.1 The Committee note that Vigilance and Monitoring Committees have been set up at State and District level in the year 2002 to provide an important role to the Members of Parliament/ State Legislatures/PRIs in monitoring and reviewing the implementation of programmes of the Ministry of Rural Development to ensure that these programmes are implemented properly. One of the main objectives of V&MCs is to ensure quality of expenditure, particularly in the context of large public funds being spent under various programmes of the Ministry of Rural Development. The Committee are further apprised that the scope of V&MCs at District level has been enlarged and they are also required to monitor the programmes of Ministries of Tribal Affairs, Panchayati Raj and Rajiv Gandhi Grameen Vidhyutikaran Yojana (RGGVY) of Ministry of Power apart from programmes of the Ministries of Rural Development and Drinking Water and Sanitation.

(Recommendation Sl.No. 1, Para No. 2.1)

2.2 The Committee feel that setting up of V&MCs is an appropriate step to monitor the Government schemes. The Committee are of the view that if this particular mechanism is used effectively, all participating Ministries would be greatly benefited as these would help in understanding the aspirations of the people as also the deficiencies in the implementation of various programmes of Rural Development, Tribal Affairs, Panchayati Raj and RGGVY. The Committee trust that with efficient functioning of V&MCs, not only the funds allocated for various programmes/schemes would be properly spent but also the results expected from these various programmes/schemes of the participating Ministries will achieve the desired objectives of the various schemes.

(Recommendation Sl.No. 2, Para No. 2.2)

2.3 Noting V&MCs as an effective tool for not only implementing the various Government schemes but also in bringing the executive, people's representatives and other stakeholders together to forge development works, the Committee find that more emphasis is laid on monitoring of financial aspects of the schemes.

They therefore, desire that qualitative aspects of works done under the schemes should also be monitored. In Committee's view inclusion of objectives, measurable targets and achievements would help in evaluating the implementation of the schemes in a better way.

(Recommendation Sl.No. 3, Para No. 2.3)

2.4 The Committee note that Chairman of State level V&MC is Minister of Rural Development of the State. The Member Secretary is Secretary-in-charge of Rural Development programmes in the State. Further, the members of the Committee include 4 MPs of Lok Sabha, 1 MP of Rajya Sabha, 5 MLAs, representative of SC/ST/ Women, 4 Non-officials, 2 NGOs and officials, Chief Post Master General of the postal circle. The Committee are further apprised that all MPs, Non-officials, NGOs and representatives of KVIC are nominated by Ministry of Rural Development. The Committee note that Ministry nominates 4 MPs of Lok Sabha and 1 MP of Rajya Sabha to State level V&MCs with the approval of Minister of Rural Development. The Committee are of the considered view that Members of Parliamentary Standing Committee on Rural Development should be given preference while nominating MPs to these State level V&MCs. The Ministry may also consider increasing the representation of Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha Members in the V&MCs depending upon the area of the State for effective functioning of V&MCs.

(Recommendation Sl.No. 4, Para No. 2.4)

2.5 The Committee note that Chairman of State Level V&MCs is Minister of Rural Development. In this context, the Committee are of the view that V&MC being a Vigilance Committee, it would not be appropriate for the Minister of the Rural Development to chair meetings of V&MCs which have been constituted with the sole purpose to mainly supervise, exercise vigilance and monitor the implementation of programmes of the Ministry of Rural Development. The Committee are of the opinion that senior most member of Parliament of the State should chair the meetings of State Level V&MCs.

(Recommendation Sl.No. 5, Para No. 2.5)

2.6 The Committee have been apprised that after the constitution of the Fifteenth Lok Sabha, the Ministry advised all States and UTs on 28.08.2009 for reconstituting State and District level V&MCs and

also to nominate Members for State level V&MCs and Chairman/ Co-Chairman for District level V&MCs. The Committee are apprised that State/UT level V&MCs have been reconstituted in 31 out of 33 States/UTs (barring Lakshadweep and Puducherry) whereas District level V&MCs have been reconstituted in 621 out of 635 Districts in the country.

(Recommendation Sl.No. 6, Para No. 2.6)

2.7 Regarding nomination to two States and 14 District Level V&MCs, the Committee are apprised that the Ministry of Rural Development nominated MPs to all State Level Committees (except 1 MP of Lok Sabha in Himachal Pradesh) and all District level Committees except in case of newly created districts and recently elected MPs. The Committee are informed that delay in nominating Chairman which is due to delay in getting the information from the State Government concerned regarding newly created Districts having more than one Lok Sabha Constituency or in a UT with only one MP who is already Chairman of another District in the UT. The Committee would like the Government to expedite constitution of V&MCs in remaining 2 States and 14 Districts.

(Recommendation Sl.No. 7, Para No. 2.7)

2.8 The Committee find that there are 21 vacancies of non-officials in 8 States and 32 vacancies of NGOs in 19 States in State Level V&MCs. The Committee further note that despite formulating clear and unambiguous Guidelines for nomination of non-official members and NGOs and giving open advertisements, there are still vacant slots which is a matter of deep concern. While expressing concern at the inordinate delay in nominating non-officials members and NGOs to State Level V&MCs, the Committee recommend the Department to take necessary action to obviate delay in nominating non-officials and NGOs to State Level V&MCs in future. The Committee expect the Government to have a broader panel of non-officials and NGO's to fill up the slots immediately.

(Recommendation Sl.No. 8, Para No. 2.8)

2.9 The Committee are apprised that meetings of V&MCs are to be held every quarter of the year. The Committee, however, are constrained to note that so far during 15th Lok Sabha, the performance of V&MCs falls short of the requirement as prescribed in the Guidelines as the meetings held are far less than the stipulated number. The Committee feel that these V&MCs are not

being taken seriously and the performance of V&MCs also varies from State to State despite being implemented with the same objectives in all the States/UTs. The Committee find that West Bengal is the only State where during the year 2011-2012, 100% State level V&MCs meetings were held. The Committee further note that not a single State level V&MC meeting was held in Jammu & Kashmir, Nagaland, Odisha, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh and Dadra & Nagar Haveli during the years 2011-12 and 2012-13. The Committee are also concerned to note that in Goa, Punjab, Daman & Diu, Lakshadweep and Puducherry, no State level V&MC meeting was held during the years 2009-10 to 2012-13. In case of District level V&MCs, the Committee find that no meeting was held in Nagaland, D & N Haveli and Puducherry during the years 2011-12 and 2012-13.

(Recommendation Sl.No. 9, Para No. 2.9)

2.10 The Committee have been apprised of the reasons for less number of meetings held which *inter alia* include special circumstances like elections, natural calamities, difficulty in deciding date and preoccupation of Member Secretary (District Collector/ Deputy Commissioner) with other time bound or urgent matters, etc.

(Recommendation Sl.No. 10, Para No. 2.10)

2.11 The Committee note that despite various efforts taken by the Government *viz.* revising V&MC Guidelines in September, 2010 thereby making Member-Secretary personally responsible for convening the meetings at stipulated intervals; advising State Governments to give concerted attention to conduct meetings at State and District level and requesting Chief Secretaries of States to make relevant entries in the Annual Performance Appraisal Report/Annual Confidential Report of the Member Secretaries of State and District V&MCs who do not achieve targets of four meetings in a year; the stipulated number of meetings are not being held. Ministry of Rural Development's contention that it would not be possible for them to enforce these measures on Chief Secretaries as they are not accountable to the Department and is administratively under the control of State Government is not acceptable to the Committee. The Committee are of the opinion that since holding of V&MCs meetings is in the larger public interest and helps improve the quality of delivery of the programmes, the State Governments should effectively utilize this mechanism to ensure better execution and

should play a more facilitatory role to institutionalize this system. To encourage holding of regular meetings, the State Government may evolve ways to give incentives for holding meetings. The Committee also recommend that the Department should continuously press upon the State Governments so that State and District level V&MCs meetings are conducted as per the Guidelines in this regard. The Committee strongly feel that the Department has to be vigilant in this respect to ensure that funds sanctioned for centrally sponsored schemes are effectively utilized.

(Recommendation Sl.No. 11, Para No. 2.11)

2.12 The Committee have been apprised that as per Guidelines revised in September, 2010 the actual expenditure incurred with the overall ceiling of Rs. 1 lakh for State level V&MC meeting and up to Rs. 50,000/-for District level V&MC meeting is reimbursable from the Ministry. The Committee note that the non-official members of the State and District Level V&MCs are entitled for reimbursement of local travel within the State and District respectively for attending the V&MC meeting. Further, daily allowance at the rate of Rs. 150 per day or at the State Government DA rate, whichever is lower, is also allowed to non-officials and NGO members. The Committee desire that in view of current inflationary trends, TA/DA given to attend the V&MC meeting should be suitably enhanced. The Committee would also like the Department to regularly review enhancing the existing financial limits for holding V&MC meetings for which necessary amendments in the Guidelines be made accordingly. This could be linked to consumer price index.

(Recommendation Sl.No. 12, Para No. 2.12)

2.13 The Committee are informed that Member-Secretary of the V&MC who is personally responsible for convening the meeting is expected to finalize the agenda in consultation with the Chairman. The Committee find that agenda is either received late or is made available at the time of meeting only which causes inconvenience. To obviate this, the Secretary, DoRD had assured the Committee that necessary Guidelines to make available agenda before the meeting would be issued and if possible, the agenda would also be put up on the website. The Committee would, therefore, like to be apprised of the action taken by the Department to make available agenda to Members before the meeting so as to enable them to study and verify the facts beforehand.

(Recommendation Sl.No. 13, Para No. 2.13)

2.14 The Committee are informed that on the suggestion to include Chairman of the Autonomous District Council to participate in the meeting of V&MCs, the Department has sought the suggestions of State Governments of North-Eastern Region. The Committee would, therefore, like to be apprised of the follow up action taken in this regard by the Government.

(Recommendation Sl.No. 14, Para No. 2.14)

2.15 The Committee are apprised that after V&MC meeting is held, minutes are drawn and recommendations considered by State Governments concerned for appropriate action and the action taken report is required to be circulated before the next meeting. The Committee are also informed that DoRD has expressed its inability to ensure action as follow-up action on the recommendations made by V&MCs is to be taken by the respective State Governments. The Committee are, however, of the view that being nodal agency, the Department of Rural Development should set up a suitable mechanism to ensure prompt action by State Government because in the absence of action taken on the recommendations of V&MC, the whole purpose of setting up these V&MCs gets defeated. This would also help the Central Government to review their schemes, proposed funds and the intended beneficiaries.

(Recommendation Sl.No. 15, Para No. 2.15)

2.16 The Committee note with satisfaction that in order to make V&MCs effective and to strengthen their working, Department has addressed the Chief Secretaries of the States prescribing transparent procedure for conducting meetings of V&MCs, for preparing and processing action taken report and for sharing recommendations of V&MCs. The Committee are hopeful that if implemented properly, these measures would go a long way in strengthening the working of V&MCs. The Department may also explore the feasibility to undertake field visits by these V&MCs to get first hand information.

(Recommendation Sl.No. 16, Para No. 2.16)

2.17 The Committee are informed that V&MCs look into complaints/alleged irregularities/misappropriation of funds received for implementation of the programmes and recommend follow up action. In this context, V&MCs may refer any matter for enquiry to the District Collector/Chief Executive Officer/Project Director which shall be acted upon by him within 30 days. The Committee are further apprised that where there is definite evidence that

Programme funds are not being properly utilized, the Department does consider withholding the funds till the position is clarified. If it is not to the satisfaction of the Department, in that case, action, if any, taken against any official is followed up on continuous basis as corrective/punitive action is to be taken by the State Governments. The Committee would like the Ministry of Rural Development to examine this matter afresh for amending V&MCs Guidelines appropriately.

(Recommendation Sl.No. 17, Para No. 2.17)

2.18 The Committee are perturbed to note that no specific coordination mechanism existed between Ministry of Rural Development, Central Ministries and State Government/UT Administration till recently. The need to have a strong coordination becomes all the more important with the expansion of scope of V&MCs, by including programmes of the Ministries of Tribal Affairs, Panchayati Raj and RGGVY of Ministry of Power in addition to the programmes of the Ministries of Rural Development and Drinking Water and Sanitation for review and monitoring by these V&MCs. The Committee, however, have been apprised that coordination mechanism has recently been evolved and prescribed procedure circulated among all stakeholders. The Committee would, therefore, like to be apprised of the progress made in this regard.

(Recommendation Sl.No. 18, Para No. 2.18)

2.19 The Committee are apprised that Performance Review Committee (PRC) meeting is held periodically with the State Governments to discuss issues including those relating to the V&MCs. The Committee desire that to make monitoring system more effective, better coordination of V&MCs with PRC and National Level Monitoring should be established so that the objectives of V&MCs are achieved *i.e.* meetings are held regularly and funds given for the programmes are effectively utilized and are not misused.

(Recommendation Sl.No. 19, Para No. 2.19)

2.20 The Committee are apprised about the practical difficulties coming in the way of smooth functioning of V&MCs in different States/UTs which *inter-alia* include, delay in indicating date of meeting, postponement of meetings, inability of Chairman to attend meetings, elections, preoccupation of Member Secretary, lack of proper follow up action on decision taken in the V&MC meetings and limitation in taking action against erring employees of the State Governments. The Committee desire that Department should make concerted efforts to resolve/overcome these difficulties by taking

suitable remedial measures/amendments in the Guidelines so as to ensure smooth functioning of the V&MCs.

(Recommendation Sl.No. 20, Para No. 2.20)

2.21 The Committee note that no specific mechanism exists for lodging complaints by common man to V&MCs regarding irregularities in the implementation of the programmes. The Committee, therefore, recommend setting up of such a mechanism which would facilitate lodging complaints by common man so that remedial action can be taken thereon. The Committee would like to be apprised of the action taken by the Department in this regard.

(Recommendation Sl.No. 21, Para No. 2.21)

2.22 The Committee find that no exclusive publicity has been undertaken by the Department for creating awareness among the public about existence and functions of V&MCs. In this context, the Committee are apprised that all relevant information *viz.* position of release of funds to the States and Districts under various programmes is uploaded on the website of the Department for information of general public. The Committee, therefore, desire that Department should also undertake publicity campaign through advertisements etc. to create awareness among public about existence and functioning of V&MCs.

(Recommendation Sl.No. 22, Para No. 2.22)

2.23 The Committee further note that no seminar/conference etc. has ever been organized for MPs/MLAs, representatives of PRIs and other members of State and District level V&MCs to educate them about the objectives, working and relevance of these V&MCs. The Committee therefore, recommend that to have full cooperation and participation of MPs/MLAs, representatives of PRIs and other members of State and District level V&MCs, Department of Rural Development should ensure that seminars/conferences are conducted periodically.

(Recommendation Sl.No. 23, Para No. 2.23)

NEW DELHI;
27 August, 2013
05 Bhadrapada, 1935 (Saka)

SUMITRA MAHAJAN,
Chairperson,
Standing Committee on
Rural Development.

APPENDIX I

DETAILS OF THE COMPLAINTS RECEIVED FROM MPS REGARDING NON-HOLDING OF MEETINGS OF THE
V&MCs AND FOLLOW UP ACTION TAKEN BY THE MINISTRY

(Vide Para No. 1.45 of the Report)

Sl.No.	Name of the MP	District & State	Nature of complaint	Action Taken	Remarks
1	2	3	4	5	6
1.	Shri Naranbhai Kachhadia, Amreli, Gujarat MP (Lok Sabha)		Non-holding of district VMC Meetings	Member Secretary was advised to hold the Meetings as frequently as envisaged in the Guidelines	District Collector, Amreli informed that a date for holding the meeting had been sought from the Hon'ble MP and the MP was informed accordingly.
2.	Shri Premchand Guddu, Ujjain, Madhya Pradesh MP (Lok Sabha)		Non-holding of district VMC meetings	Member Secretary was advised to hold the Meetings as frequently as envisaged in the Guidelines	Secretary, Rural Dev., MP informed that the district collector was directed to take necessary action. Thereafter, the meeting was held.
3.	Miss Anusuiya Uikey, MP (Rajya Sabha)	Chhindwara, Madhya Pradesh	Non-holding of district VMC meetings in Chhindwara	Member Secretary was advised to hold the Meetings as frequently as envisaged in the Guidelines.	Thereafter, the meeting was held.

1	2	3	4	5	6
4.	Shri Devji Patel MP (Lok Sabha)	Jalore & Sirohi, Rajasthan	Non-holding of district VMC meetings	The Member Secretaries were advised to hold the Meetings as frequently as envisaged in the Guidelines.	As informed by the State Government, the Meetings have since been convened in both the districts.
5.	Shri Brijbhushan Saran Singh, P (Lok Sabha)	Bahraich, U.P.	Non-holding of district VMC meetings	State Government directed to take necessary action.	As informed by the State Government, Meeting was subsequently held in the district.
6.	Shri Bal Kumar Patel MP (Lok Sabha)	Mirzapur, U.P.	Non-holding of district VMC meetings and misutilisation of central funds	Member Secretary was advised to hold the Meetings as frequently as envisaged in the Guidelines.	On the basis of reply of the District Magistrate, Mirzapur, a reply was sent to the Hon'ble MP
7.	Shri Inder Singh Namdhari, MP (Lok Sabha)	Palamu, Jharkhand	Non-holding of district VMC meetings	Member Secretary was advised to hold the Meetings as frequently as envisaged in the Guidelines.	Meeting was subsequently held.
8.	Prof. Ram Shankar Katheriya, MP (Lok Sabha)	Agra, Uttar Pradesh	Non-holding of district VMC meetings	The Principal Secretary, Department of Rural Development, U.P. and District Magistrate, Agra were requested to furnish comments.	District Magistrate, Agra informed that MP had already been requested to fix a convenient date for Meeting. The MP was informed accordingly.

1	2	3	4	5	6
9.	Shri Suresh Kumar Shetkar, MP (Lok Sabha)	Zaheerabad, Andhra Pradesh	Non-holding of district VMC meetings	The Principal Secretary, Department of Rural Development and District Collector, Medak were requested to furnish comments.	District Collector, Medak informed that during the year 2011-12 only one meeting on 18.02.2012 was held due to Telangana Agitation, Parliament Session, etc. and the MP was informed accordingly.
10.	Shri Arjun Rai, MP (Lok Sabha)	Sitamarhi, Bihar	Non-holding of district VMC meetings, Non-implementation of decisions taken in the meetings, Non working of sub-Committees constituted and non-uploading of information on the website.	The Secretary, Department of Rural Development, Bihar and District Collector, Sitamarhi were requested to furnish status report.	District Collector, Sitamarhi furnished the status report and the MP was informed accordingly.
11.	Dr. Sanjay Jaiswal, MP (Lok Sabha)	West Champaran, Bihar	Non-holding of meetings as per guidelines and not issuing minutes of the meeting.	The Secretary, Department of Rural Development, Bihar was requested to issue necessary instruction to all the member secretaries to ensure that minutes of the VMC meetings were issued with the approval of the Chairman of the Committee.	The meeting was held subsequently and the MP was informed of action taken.
12.	Shri Kunvarjibhai Bavaliya, MP (Lok Sabha)	Rajkot, Gujarat	Non-holding of meetings and misuse of Government Money under various schemes of Ministry of Rural Development.	District Collector, Rajkot was requested to furnish status report.	District Collector furnished the status report and Hon'ble MP was informed accordingly.

APPENDIX II

SUGGESTIONS RECEIVED FROM MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT IN CONNECTION WITH WORKING OF VIGILANCE AND MONITORING COMMITTEES IN 15TH LOK SABHA SO FAR

(LOK SABHA)
(Vide Para No. 1.88 of the Report)

Sl. No.	Name of MP with Constituency	Name of State / District	Date of Constitution			Number of Meetings			Number of Meetings Chaired / Attended			MP's Suggestions
			State Level V&MC	District Level V&MC		State Level V&MC	District Level V&MC		State Level V&MC	District Level V&MC		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10			
1.	Shri C.L. Ruala, Mizoram	Mizoram	14.4.2009	September, 2009	4	79	3	72	The Committee may meet at an interval of four months. (Not Quarterly)			
2.	Shri Kailash Joshi, Bhopal	Madhya Pradesh, Bhopal	—	14.5.2010	—	07	—	07	NIL			
3.	Shri Pawan Kumar Bansal, UT/Chandigarh	Chandigarh	Not Constituted	Not Constituted	—	—	—	—	Need to set up V&MCs immediately.			

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
4.	Shri Zafar Ali Naqvi, Khiri	Uttar Pradesh, Lakhimpur-Khiri	09.06.2003 and again 08.04.2010	After 2009	2	01	—	01	<p>▲ Budget to be stopped if meetings are not held. Physical verification/social audit of programmes should be done.</p> <p>▲ All programmes of Rural Development to be brought under ambit of VMCs.</p> <p>▲ Action to be taken on financial irregularities</p>
5.	Shri Anant G. Geete, Ratnagiri	Maharashtra, Raigarh	—	05.06.2010	—	06	—	06	Regular meetings at District level should be held.
6.	Dr. Sanjay Jaiswal, Paschim Champaran	Bihar, Paschim Champaran	—	—	—	1 (In Purvi Champaran)	—	—	NIL
7.	Shri Makhan Singh Solanki (Babu Ji), Khargon-Barwani	Madhya Pradesh, Barwani	—	26.08.2009	—	09	—	09	Ensure compulsory holding of meetings of the V&MCs.
8.	Shri Sukhdev Singh Libra, Fatehgarh Sahib	Punjab Fatehgarh Sahib	—	26.08.2009	—	09	—	All Meetings	NIL
9.	Shri Narayan Singh Amlabe, Rajgarh	Madhya Pradesh, Rajgarh	—	03.10.2009	—	08	—	08	<p>▲ Agenda to be made available in time.</p> <p>▲ Timely action not taken on the decisions taken in the meetings. Members should also be apprised of the action taken.</p>

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
10.	Shri H.D. Devegowda, Hassan	Karnataka, Chikkamagalur	—	MoRD Letter No. Q 13018/6/2009-A.IV&MC (RD)	—	02	—	02	NIL
11.	Shri Anto Antony, Pathanamthitta	Kerala, Pathanamthitta	—	19.11.2005	—	11		09	Secretaries of Gram Panchayat must attend the meetings. The ceiling of expenditure for the implementation for district level Vigilance and Monitoring Committee may be raised.
12.	Shri Sisir Kumar Adhikari, Kanthi P.C.	West Bengal Purb Medinipur	—	04.10.2010	—	03	—	03	Monthly meetings to be organized.
13.	Shri Naveen Jindal, Kurukshetra	Haryana Kurukshetra & Kaithal	—	04.01.2010	—	10	—	10	Not only financial aspects of the various schemes but more qualitative aspects viz. inclusion of objectives, measurable targets and achievements to be included.
		Haryana, Yamuna Nagar	—	13.12.2009	—	05	—	01	To bring other major Central Government Schemes viz. NRHM too under the purview of this Committee.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
									<p>➤ Since the Committee can only recommend inquiry against the defaulting officers but cannot suggest any penalty. The powers to the Committee should be given to suggest any penalty to be imposed against such officers, especially in cases of misappropriation of funds or negligence of duty.</p>
14.	Dr. (Prof.) Ranjan Prasad Yadav, Patliputra	Bihar, Patna	—	23.07.2005	—	17	—	17	NIL
15.	Shri D. Napoleon, Perambalur	Tamil Nadu, Trichy District	—		—	2	—	2	<p>➤ The District Collectors may be suitably instructed by the Government to convene the meeting in time. All the Members (though relates to other parties) of the Committee may be strictly directed to attend the meeting.</p>
		Karur District	—	26.08.2009	—	2	—	2	<p>➤ Necessary disciplinary action may be taken against the defaulters for which necessary amendment may be issued.</p>
		Perambalur District	—		—	4	—	4	

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
16.	Shri G.M. Siddeshwara, Davanagere	Karnataka Davanagere	—	09.12.2009	—	05	—	05	➤ It is better to provide an opportunity for all Zila Panchayat members to participate in V&MCs meetings.
17.	Shri Ravindra Kumar Pandey, Giridih	Jharkhand Bokaro	—	18.01.2010	—	07	—	07	➤ Timely holding of meetings. ➤ To ensure action on suggestions made in the meeting.
18.	Shri Magunta Sreenivasulu Reddy, Ongole	Andhra Pradesh	26.08.2009	26.08.2009	—	06	—	01	➤ The suggestions made in the meetings shall be implemented by the Executive Agency.

SUGGESTIONS RECEIVED FROM MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT IN CONNECTION WITH WORKING OF
VIGILANCE AND MONITORING COMMITTEES IN 15TH LOK SABHA SO FAR

(RAJYA SABHA)

Sl. No.	Name of MP with Constituency	Name of State/District	Date of Constitution		Number of Meetings		Number of Meetings Chaired/Attended		MP's Suggestions
			State Level V&MC	District Level V&MC	State Level V&MC	District Level V&MC	State Level V&MC	District Level V&MC	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1.	Smt. T. Ratnabai, Andhra Pradesh	Andhra Pradesh, East Godavari District	—	01.04.2002	—	28	—	25	➤ Inclusion of Forest Deptt. and Mining Deptt. in the composition. ➤ Fullfledged Vigilance Officer under law should attend and act. ➤ V&MCs should also make field visits.
2.	Shri Rama Chandra Khuntia, Odisha	Odisha, Jajpur	—	—	01	—	—	—	➤ At least 3 meetings every year at all levels should be held.
3.	Shri P. Rajeeve, Kerala	Kerala	—	—	—	—	—	—	➤ Not informed about the date of the meetings of V&MCs. The member of the Upper House be given proper consideration in the functioning of this Committee.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
4.	Shri Avinash Pande, Maharashtra	Maharashtra Nagpur	—	08.10.2005	—	17 Since constitution of VMCs	—	03	<p>➤ Recommended meetings (4 in a year) should be followed in a strict manner.</p> <p>➤ There should be better coordination with other monitoring mechanisms such as Performance Review Committees and National Level Monitoring.</p> <p>➤ Field inspections by district officials should be conducted after sufficient research and in the presence of experts in the concerned field.</p> <p>➤ Efforts should be made to minimize occurrences of non-conducting of meetings.</p> <p>➤ The notice and agenda papers for the meeting to be submitted 15 days in advance to enable the members to study and verify the facts before the meeting.</p>

APPENDIX III

STANDING COMMITTEE ON RURAL DEVELOPMENT (2012-2013)

MINUTES OF THE SECOND SITTING OF THE COMMITTEE HELD ON FRIDAY, THE 9TH NOVEMBER, 2012

The Committee sat from 1200 hrs. to 1400 hrs. in Committee Room No. G-074, Parliament Library Building, New Delhi.

PRESENT

Shrimati Sumitra Mahajan — *Chairperson*

MEMBERS

Lok Sabha

2. Shri Thangso Baite
3. Shri Pulin Bihari Baske
4. Shri Premchand Guddu
5. Shri Maheshwar Hazari
6. Shri Nimmala Kristappa
7. Shri Bishnu Pada Ray
8. Shri Anantha Venkatarami Reddy
9. Shri Arjun Charan Sethi
10. Dr. Sanjay Singh
11. Shri Uma Shankar Singh
12. Shri Narendra Singh Tomar
13. Smt. Usha Verma
14. Shri P. Viswanathan
15. Shri Madhu Goud Yaskhi

Rajya Sabha

16. Shri Vinay Katiyar
17. Shri Mahendra Singh Mahra
18. Dr. Chandan Mitra
19. Shri C.P. Narayanan
20. Prof. Saif-ud-Din Soz

SECRETARIAT

1. Shri Brahm Dutt — *Joint Secretary*
2. Smt. Meenakshi Sharma — *Deputy Secretary*

**Representatives of Department of Rural Development
(Ministry of Rural Development)**

1. Shri S. Vijay Kumar — *Secretary*
2. Shri S.M. Vijayanand — *Additional Secretary*
3. Shri C.R.K. Nair — *Adviser*

2. At the outset, the Chairperson welcomed the members of the Committee to the sitting convened to have briefing by the representatives of the Department of Rural Development (Ministry of Rural Development) in connection with examination of the subject 'Working of Vigilance and Monitoring Committees (VMCs) in States/UTs'.

[Witnesses were then called in]

3. After welcoming the witnesses, the Chairperson read out Direction 55(1) regarding confidentiality of the proceedings. The Chairperson then highlighted the issues of stipulated quarterly meetings of VMCs not being held regularly, withholding of funds in case stipulated number of meetings are not held, delay in nomination of non-official members and representatives of NGOs, consultation with State Governments while nominating MPs as Members, revision of guidelines to review the programmes of the Ministries of Tribal Affairs and Panchayati Raj and due seriousness not being given to VMCs in States/UTs. Thereafter, the Secretary, Department of Rural Development briefed the Committee on the working of VMCs. After permission from the chairperson, the representative of the Department made a Power Point presentation on various issues relating to working of VMCs in States/UTs *inter-alia* covering their composition, mode of appointment, status of nomination, terms of reference, business transacted, reasons for less number of meetings held alongwith suggestions to increase their efficacy.

4. The members sought clarifications on various issues pertaining to the criteria for nominating 4 MPs of Lok Sabha and 1 MP of Rajya Sabha to State Level VMCs; reasons for holding less number of meetings; implementation of provisions for withholding of funds for not convening regular meetings; desirability of fixing accountability

for convening meetings; details of performing and non-performing States; status of reconstitution of State level VMCs; action taken on the complaints made by Members of Parliament during meetings; desirability of constituting VMCs at block level; decisions taken at State Level VMCs to be informed to District level VMCs; giving due publicity to funds received from Central Government for various programmes as well as efforts to be made to make VMCs effective. The clarifications sought were responded to by the witnesses. On those queries, on which the information was not readily available, the Department was directed to furnish written replies to the Secretariat.

[The witnesses then withdrew]

A verbatim record of the proceedings was kept.

The Committee then adjourned.

APPENDIX IV

STANDING COMMITTEE ON RURAL DEVELOPMENT (2012-2013)

MINUTES OF THE SIXTH SITTING OF THE COMMITTEE HELD
ON MONDAY, THE 21ST JANUARY, 2013

The Committee sat from 1500 hrs. to 1630 hrs. in Committee Room
No. 'C', Ground Floor, Parliament House Annexe, New Delhi.

PRESENT

Shrimati Sumitra Mahajan — *Chairperson*

MEMBERS

Lok Sabha

2. Shri Thangso Baite
3. Shri Pulin Bihari Baske
4. Dr. Ratna De (Nag)
5. Shri Maheshwar Hazari
6. Shri Nimmala Kristappa
7. Shri Bishnu Pada Ray
8. Smt. Annu Tandon
9. Smt. Usha Verma
10. Shri Madhu Goud Yaskhi

Rajya Sabha

11. Shri Mani Shankar Aiyar
12. Sardar Sukhdev Singh Dhindsa
13. Shri C.P. Narayanan
14. Shri Mohan Singh
15. Prof. Saif-ud-Din Soz

SECRETARIAT

- | | | |
|--------------------------|---|-------------------------|
| 1. Shri Brahm Dutt | — | <i>Joint Secretary</i> |
| 2. Smt. Veena Sharma | — | <i>Director</i> |
| 3. Smt. Meenakshi Sharma | — | <i>Deputy Secretary</i> |

**Representatives of the Department of Rural Development
(Ministry of Rural Development)**

- | | | |
|-------------------------|---|----------------------|
| 1. Shri S. Vijay Kumar | — | Secretary |
| 2. Shri S.M. Vijayanand | — | Additional Secretary |
| 3. Shri C.R.K. Nair | — | Adviser |

2. At the outset, the Chairperson welcomed the members of the Committee to the sitting convened to take evidence of the representatives of the Department of Rural Development (Ministry of Rural Development) in connection with examination of the subject 'Working of Vigilance and Monitoring Committees (VMCs) in States/UTs'.

[Witnesses were then called in]

3. After welcoming the witnesses, the Chairperson read out Direction 55(1) regarding confidentiality of the proceedings. The Chairperson then highlighted various issues pertaining to stipulated quarterly meetings of VMCs not being held regularly, delay in nomination of non-official members and representatives of NGOs, status as well as performance of State and District level VMCs, number of VMCs meetings actually held, decisions taken at State level VMCs to be apprised at District level VMCs, monitoring of Rajiv Gandhi Grameen Vidyutikaran Yojana (RGGVY) by VMCs, involvement of senior MPs in State level VMCs and practical difficulties faced in the functioning of VMCs. Thereafter, the Secretary, Department of Rural Development briefed the Committee on the working of VMCs.

4. The members sought clarifications on various issues pertaining to status of reconstitution of State and District level VMCs, reasons for not constituting VMCs in four States/UTs, achievement of VMCs in terms of number of meetings held, feedback received from the State and District level VMCs, incentivizing those States which are performing better, fixing criteria for nomination of MPs at the State level VMCs and ensuring presence of Central Government officials in the VMCs meetings etc.

5. The clarifications sought were responded to by the witnesses. On those queries, on which the information was not readily available, the Department was directed to furnish written replies to the Secretariat.

6. While deliberating on the subject, the Committee felt that VMCs which have been constituted with the main objective to monitor funds given by the Government of India for implementation of various Rural Development programmes are not being taken seriously since stipulated quarterly meetings of VMCs are not held regularly. Therefore, before arriving at a just conclusion in this regard, the Committee desired to seek opinion of all Members of Parliament regarding functioning of VMCs in their respective Districts/States/Parliamentary Constituencies. The Committee, therefore, decided to invite suggestions of all Members of Lok Sabha/Rajya Sabha on the working of VMCs in their respective States/Districts/Constituencies in a format *inter-alia* covering status of constitution of VMCs, number of meetings of VMCs held and attended by them, suggestions for improvement in the system, etc. through Parliamentary Bulletin.

[The witnesses then withdrew]

A verbatim record of the proceedings was kept.

The Committee then adjourned.

APPENDIX V

COMMITTEE ON RURAL DEVELOPMENT (2012-2013)

MINUTES OF THE EIGHTEENTH SITTING OF THE COMMITTEE HELD ON TUESDAY, THE 27TH AUGUST, 2013

The Committee sat from 1500 hrs. to 1600 hrs. in Committee Room No. 'D', Ground Floor, Parliament House Annexe, New Delhi.

PRESENT

Shrimati Sumitra Mahajan — *Chairperson*

MEMBERS

Lok Sabha

2. Shri Pulin Bihari Baske
3. Shri Ramesh Vishwanath Katti
4. Shri Arjun Charan Sethi
5. Shri Prabhunath Singh
6. Smt. Annu Tandon
7. Smt. Usha Verma

Rajya Sabha

8. Shri Mani Shankar Aiyar
9. Shri Mahendra Singh Mahra
10. Dr. Chandan Mitra
11. Shri C.P. Narayanan
12. Prof. Saif-ud-Din Soz

SECRETARIAT

1. Shri Brahm Dutt — *Joint Secretary*
2. Smt. Meenakshi Sharma — *Deputy Secretary*

2. *** *** ***

The Committee then took up for consideration the Draft Report on 'Working of Vigilance and Monitoring Committees in States/UTs'. After discussing the Draft Report in detail the Committee adopted the Draft Report with slight modifications.

3. The Committee also authorized the Chairperson to finalize the above-mentioned Draft Report taking into consideration consequential changes arising out of factual verification, if any, by the concerned Ministry/Department and to present the same to both the Houses of Parliament during the current session of Parliament.

- | | | | |
|----|-----|-----|-----|
| 4. | *** | *** | *** |
| 5. | *** | *** | *** |
| 6. | *** | *** | *** |

The Committee then adjourned.

***Relevant portions of the minutes not related to the subject have been kept separately.