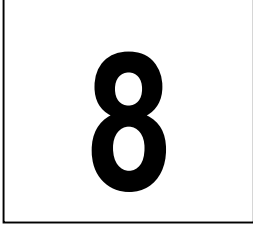


**STANDING COMMITTEE ON RURAL DEVELOPMENT**

**(2020-2021)**



**SEVENTEENTH LOK SABHA**

**MINISTRY OF PANCHAYATI RAJ**

*[Action taken on the recommendations contained in the Second Report (Seventeenth Lok Sabha)  
on 'Demands for Grants (2019-20) of the Ministry of Panchayati Raj.]*

**EIGHTH REPORT**



**LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT**

**NEW DELHI**

# **EIGHTH REPORT**

## **STANDING COMMITTEE ON RURAL DEVELOPMENT**

**(2020-2021)**

**(SEVENTEENTH LOK SABHA)**

### **MINISTRY OF PANCHAYATI RAJ**

*[Action taken on the recommendations contained in the Second Report (Seventeenth Lok Sabha) on 'Demands for Grants (2019-20) of the Ministry of Panchayati Raj.]*

Presented to Lok Sabha on 12.02.2021

Laid in Rajya Sabha on 12.02.2021



**LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT**

**NEW DELHI**

*February, 2021/ Magha, 1942 (Saka)*

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**COMPOSITION OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON RURAL DEVELOPMENT  
(2020-2021)**

**Shri Prataprao Jadhav      --      Chairperson**

**MEMBERS  
Lok Sabha**

2. Shri Sisir Kumar Adhikari
3. Shri C. N. Annadurai
4. Shri A.K.P Chinraj
5. Shri Rajveer Diler
6. Shri Vijay Kumar Dubey
7. Shri Sukhbir Singh Jaunapurua
8. Dr. Mohammad Jawed
9. Prof. Rita Bahuguna Joshi
10. Shri Nalin Kumar Kateel
11. Shri Narendra Kumar
12. Shri Janardan Mishra
13. Shri B.Y. Raghavendra
14. Shri Talari Rangaiah
15. Smt. Gitaben Vajesingbhai Rathva
16. Smt. Mala Rajya Laxmi Shah
17. Shri Vivek Narayan Shejwalkar
18. Shri Brijbhushan Sharan Singh
19. Shri K. Sudhakaran
20. Dr. Alok Kumar Suman
21. Shri Shyam Singh Yadav

**Rajya Sabha**

22. Shri Manas Ranjan Bhunia
23. Shri Shamsheer Singh Dullo
24. Shri Iranna Kadadi
25. Dr. Wanweiroy Kharlukhi
26. Shri Sujeet Kumar
27. Shri Nazir Ahmed Laway
28. Shri K. P. Munusamy
29. Shri Naranbhai J. Rathwa
30. Shri Ram Shakal
31. Shri Ajay Pratap Singh

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

## INTRODUCTION

I, the Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Rural Development (2020-2021) having been authorised by the Committee to present the Report on their behalf, present the 8<sup>th</sup> Report on the action taken by the Government on the recommendations contained in the Second Report of the Standing Committee on Rural Development (17<sup>th</sup> Lok Sabha) on Demands for Grants (2019-20) of the Ministry of Panchayati Raj.

2. The Second Report was presented to the Lok Sabha on 05.12.2019 and was laid on the Table of Rajya Sabha on the same date. Replies of the Government to all the recommendations contained in the Report were received on 24.02.2020.

3. The Report was considered and adopted by the Committee at their sitting held on 27.10.2020.

4. An analysis of the action taken by the Government on the recommendations contained in the Second Report (17<sup>th</sup> Lok Sabha) of the Committee is given in **Appendix-II**.

**NEW DELHI;**  
**10 February, 2021**  
**21 Magha, 1942 (Saka)**

**PRATAPRAO JADHAV**  
***Chairperson,***  
**Standing Committee on Rural Development**

## CHAPTER I

### REPORT

This Report of the Standing Committee on Rural Development (2020-21) deals with the action taken by the Government on the Observations/Recommendations contained in their Second Report (Seventeenth Lok Sabha) on 'Demands for Grants (2019-20) pertaining to Ministry of Panchayati Raj.

2. The Second Report was presented to Lok Sabha on 05 Dec, 2019 and was laid on the Table of Rajya Sabha on the same date. The Report contained 10 Observations/Recommendations.

3. Action Taken Notes in respect of all the Observations/Recommendations contained in the Report have been received from the Government. These have been examined and categorized as follows:-

- (i) Observations/Recommendations which have been accepted by the Government:  
Serial Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 9

Total:08  
**Chapter-II**

- (ii) Observations/Recommendations which the Committee do not desire to pursue in view of replies of the Government:  
Serial No. 10 :

Total : 01  
**Chapter-III**

- (iii) Observation/Recommendation in respect of which replies of the Government have not been accepted by the Committee:  
Serial No. 8

Total:01  
**Chapter-IV**

- (iv) Observations/Recommendations in respect of which final replies of the Government are still awaited:  
Serial No. NIL

Total:Nil  
**Chapter-V**

4. **The Committee desire that Final Action Taken Notes on the Observations/ recommendations contained in Chapter I of this Report may be furnished to the Committee within three months of the presentation of this Report.**
5. **The Committee will now deal with action taken by the Government on some of their Observations/Recommendations that require reiteration or merit comments.**

**(Recommendation Serial No.4, Para 2.6)**

**Shortage of Panchayat Bhavans**

6. The Committee in their afore-said recommendation had recommended as under:-

“During the course of examination, the issue of large number of Gram Panchayats in the country without Panchayat Bhavans cropped up before the Committee in a big way. The Secretary, MoPR admitted during evidence that as many as 62,957 Gram Panchayats (GPs) are managing without Panchayat Bhavans. In this connection, it came out before the Committee that MoPR is already seized of the issue and have termed it very crucial for smooth functioning of Panchayat for delivery of services to people. The MoPR has however, clarified that since providing infrastructure in Gram Panchayats is within the purview of States, it is upto the States to provide the Panchayat Bhavans in Gram Panchayats. The Ministry however, on its part has impressed upon the States from time to time for doing the needful. Further, the MoPR has also informed that construction of Gram Panchayat Bhavans has been notified as one of the permissible activities under MGNREGA and funds required for material for construction can be pooled form MGNREGA and in this regard the Ministry is pursuing with the Ministry of Rural Development.

In view of the large number of requirement of Gram Panchayat Bhavans, the Committee recommend that the Ministry should expeditiously work out a time table for construction of Gram Panchayat Bhavans in Gram Panchayats and necessary logistics may be provided to the States by using MGNREGA/FFC Funds also.”

7. The Ministry in their Action Taken Reply have stated as under:-

“The Ministry fully appreciate the fact that the Gram Panchayat Buildings are of utmost importance for any Gram Panchayat to discharge its mandated functions effectively, particularly for effective delivery of services. The issue related to the shortage of Panchayat Bhawans across the States / UTs has been a matter of appropriate concern for the Ministry. The Ministry envisages that all the Gram Panchayat shall have their own Panchayat Building together with Common Service Centre (CSC) so as to become the hub for services, knowledge connectivity at Gram Panchayat level thereby effectively facilitating the GPs to serve as One-Stop Shop



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

(O.M. No. H-11013 (25)/5/2019-Parl. dated 24<sup>th</sup> February, 2020)

### **COMMENTS OF THE COMMITTEE**

8. **The Committee in their 2<sup>nd</sup> Report on Demands for Grants for the year 2019-2020, observing acute shortage of panchayat bhawans in various States, had recommended the Ministry to expeditiously work out a time table for construction of Gram Panchayat Bhavans with necessary logistics through utilization of MGNREGA/FFC Funds. This entailed chalking out a clear plan with time schedule in coordination with the States to accomplish the goal. In their action taken reply, the Ministry envisages that all the Gram Panchayats shall have their own Panchayat Building together with Common Service Centre (CSC) to serve as One-Stop Shop for providing services to the Panchayat residents. As such, States have been requested to prioritize construction of buildings for those Gram Panchayats without panchayat bhawans in a phased manner by converging funds / resources under MGNREGS with other State Schemes etc., so as to saturate the gap by the end of year 2022. The Ministry on its part has sanctioned construction of approximately 4400 Gram Panchayat Bhawans since 2018-19 under RGSA against the projected target of 4500 GPs under whole duration of the scheme. Besides, the Minister of Panchayati Raj has emphasized Chief Ministers of 12**

**States with acute shortage of panchayat bhawans to take effective steps to accomplish the task by 2022. The Committee though appreciate the steps initiated by the Government in this direction, however, feel that until and unless a concrete plan with a clear time table is chalked out in coordination with the States to accomplish the goal, it may not be feasible to achieve success by simply persuading States in the matter by 2022. The Committee, therefore, would desire that the Ministry should chalk out a clear plan with time schedule in coordination with the States specially with those States which have acute shortage of Panchayat Bhawans namely Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Haryana, etc. for construction of Gram Panchayat Bhavans with necessary logistics through convergence under MGNREGA with other State schemes so that the goal is achieved by the year 2022.**

#### **Recommendation (Serial No.6, Para 2.8)**

##### **Mission Mode Project on e-Panchayat**

9. The Committee in their afore-said recommendation had recommended as under:-

“The Committee observed that e-Panchayat is one of the Mission Mode Projects (MMP) under Digital India Programme. The Committee have been informed that e-Panchayat seeks to transform the functioning of Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) making them more transparent, accountable and effective as organs of Decentralized Self-Governing Institutions. The Ministry have further added that the funds allocated to the scheme which is at Rs. 15.50 crore for the current fiscal year will be used for activities such as updation and maintenance of software application, National Project Management Unit (NPMU) and development of Gram Panchayat Spatial Application (GPSA) for enhancing transparency. However, the Committee feel that to achieve the goal of e-Panchayats in the country, all the Panchayats of the country should be digitally enabled and secondly the internet connectivity should be made easily available and should be glitch free. Only having provision of infrastructure set up would not suffice the whole rationale behind the idea of fully functioning ePanchayats. The Internet/Broadband connection need to be spruced up on an urgent basis so that there is no impediment in the functioning of e-mode of the

Panchayats for the prompt and speedy services. Therefore, the Committee strongly recommend that the Ministry should work more vigorously to ensure availability of hassle free internet services to e-Panchayats to make them more effective and successful in their functioning in all over the country especially in the backward and far-flung regions. If need be the Ministry may coordinate with other Ministries for providing basic infrastructure facilities.”

10. The Ministry in their Action Taken Reply have stated as under:-

"The Ministry would like to submit that around, 1.46 lakh Gram Panchayats (GPs) are provided Optical Fibre Connectivity. Since BharatNet is under the purview of Department of Telecommunication (DoT), Ministry of Panchayati Raj is in touch with DoT for rolling out internet connectivity to the remaining GPs. This also forms an important part of the Ministry's Vision 2024.

It is also submitted that in order to ensure that all the government services are accessible to the rural populace, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) has been signed between Ministry of Panchayati Raj (MoPR) and CSC e-Governance Services India Limited on August 21, 2019 to encourage cooperation between Common Service Centers (CSCs) and Gram Panchayat for the creation of Digital Panchayats.

With the MoU, Ministry aims to leverage Common Service Centres (CSCs) in realizing the objective of Smart Governance and provision of online services. It is also submitted that the CSCs would be co-located in the Gram Panchayat Bhawans and would be offering the following services:

- Upkeep of hardware & Network equipment
- Populating crucial information systems on a regular basis. This will create credible time-series data, providing more informed insights from the grassroots, thereby supporting policy level decisions
- Provision of Government-to-Citizen (G2C) Services online through CSCs
- Imparting trainings on Digital Literacy as well as the trainings of Elected Members & Panchayat Functionaries on basic orientation and thematic areas. Using CSCs, the Ministry aims to transition from the classroom-based training pedagogy to online trainings

Moreover, CSC co-location would also lead to generation of employment opportunities for the local populace. Furthermore, pursuant to this MoU, the Common Service Centres-Special Purpose Vehicle (CSC-SPV) would enter into individual MoUs with the respective States, based on the State specific/ local level requirements, rules, regulations etc."

(O.M. No. H-11013 (25)/5/2019-Parl. dated 24<sup>th</sup> February, 2020)

### **COMMENTS OF THE COMMITTEE**

11. The Committee considering “e-Panchayat”, a Mission Mode Project (MMP) under Digital India Programme, as an important programme, had stressed that once availability of hassle free internet services to e-Panchayats is ensured, only then the vision of e-Panchayat could be achieved with effective and successful reach all over the country especially in the backward and far-flung regions. The Ministry in their action taken notes have submitted that this forms an important part of the Ministry’s Vision 2024. Around, 1.46 lakh Gram Panchayats (GPs) are provided Optical Fibre Connectivity and since BharatNet is under the purview of Department of Telecommunication (DoT), Ministry of Panchayati Raj is in touch with them for rolling out internet connectivity to the remaining GPs. It has also been intimated that the Ministry have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the CSC e-Governance Services India Limited to encourage cooperation between Common Service Centers (CSCs) and Gram Panchayat for the creation of Digital Panchayats in order to ensure that all the government services are accessible to the rural populace. In this regard, the Committee are disappointed to note that with the total number of 255549 Gram Panchayats, 6825 Intermediate Panchayats and 654 District Panchayats in the Country, the target has not optimally been achieved by providing Optical Fibre Connectivity to around, 1.46 lakh Gram Panchayats (GPs). Further, the Committee, observing the slow progress in providing internet connectivity to Gram Panchayats, strongly recommend that Ministry should impress upon the DoT to expedite the process of achieving the goal of e-Panchayat, a Mission Mode Project (MMP) as envisioned Digital India Programme by 2024.

#### **Recommendation (Serial No.8, Para 2.10)**

#### **Setting up of Industry**

12. The Committee in their afore-said recommendation had recommended as under:-

“The Committee during the course of evidence were informed about the new component of "setting up of industry" under RGSA scheme. The Ministry stated that

the industry being set up would be based on local resources and local products and Panchayats would be the common facility centre for processing and marketing. This would make Panchayats self-sufficient to an extent. The Committee while appreciating it, feel that concept of organic farming and making useful products out of agri-waste should also be taken into consideration. The Committee, therefore, strongly recommend that MoPR should expedite the process of "setting up of industry" at the earliest possible time-frame and that it should be implemented all over the country as it would provide jobs and employment to many rural people in the village itself."

### **REPLY OF THE GOVERNMENT**

13. The Ministry in their Action Taken Reply have stated as under:-

"The restructured scheme of Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan (RGSA) being implemented from 2018-19, has a component for support for Economic Development and Income Enhancement. The objective of this component is to trigger overall economic development in the area in convergence with schemes of other Ministries and State Governments. Accordingly assistance under the scheme is provided to State/ Union Territories (UT) on their project proposals towards manufacturing/ processing, product development, local market development and cultivation of medicinal plants, not-food crops, horticulture, as well as for tourism development etc. During the current financial year i.e. 2019-20, eleven project proposals under this component have been approved."

(O.M. No. H-11013 (25)/5/2019-Parl. dated 24<sup>th</sup> February, 2020)

### **COMMENTS OF THE COMMITTEE**

14. The Committee taking note of the concept of organic farming and useful bi-products of agri-waste had recommended that Ministry should expedite the process of "setting up of industry" immediately in a vigorous manner for implementation throughout the country for it being a major source of employment to the rural populace. The Ministry on the other hand have furnished a routine response stating that the restructured scheme of Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan (RGSA) being implemented from 2018-19, has a component assistance to States/UTs for Economic Development and Income Enhancement. The assistance under the schemed is being provided to states/UTs on their project proposals towards manufacturing/ processing,

product development, local market development and cultivation of medicinal plants, not-food crops, horticulture, as well as for tourism development etc. Taking note that merely eleven project proposals have been approved during the financial year 2019-2020, the Committee, reiterate that since the restructured scheme of Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan (RGSA) has a component for support for Economic Development and Income Enhancement with a goal to be accomplished up to 31.03.2022, it becomes utmost important for the Ministry to pursue the process of setting up of industry vigorously in coordination with State Governments by persuading them to proactively participate in the setting of up of industry by submitting proposals thereto in handsome numbers for maximum outreach.

## CHAPTER II

### RECOMMENDATIONS WHICH HAVE BEEN ACCEPTED BY THE GOVERNMENT

#### Recommendation (Serial No. 1, Para 2.3)

##### Analysis of Demands

**2.3 The democratic structure of the Country is properly reflected through its robust Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs). These PRIs hold extreme relevance in our fast developing country. The essence of 'good governance' gets portrayed by the efficient functioning of PRIs. In this context, the Committee are of unanimous view that across the country, there is a strong need for capacity building of the Panchayats. The Committee find that the allocation of funds for the current fiscal year 2019-20 stands at only Rs.840.04 crore. The Committee feel that at the first instance, the Budget allocation appear to be not sufficient to meet the vision of strengthening of PRIs across the country. Therefore, the Committee strongly recommend that the Ministry should vigorously pursue the matter with the Ministry of Finance and NITI Ayog for considering enhanced budgetary support for strengthening the Panchayati raj institutions all over the country.**

#### REPLY OF THE GOVERNMENT

"The scheme of Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan (RGSA) is being implemented with the primary aim of strengthening Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs). To achieve the objectives of RGSA, the Ministry has endeavoured in a dedicated manner to evolve the scheme in to a sophisticated, customized resource for graduated capacity building. Special emphasis is being given on digital literacy of all Elected Representatives (ERs) and also on mobilizing, educating and transforming the ward members or Panches into sectoral resource persons with a clear role and thus greater influence to transform them into agents of change. The emphasis is being given on the SHG-PRI convergence in implementation of the scheme for greater transparency, community mobilization and ownership of public programmes. The focus is on realizing the objective of smart governance and provision of online services through co-location of Common Service Centres (CSCs) in the Gram Panchayat Bhawans.

In the budget proposal for 2020-21, the request was made for increased allocation taking into consideration the projected requirement of funds inter alia for the activities meant to be undertaken during the 2020-21. Hence, Ministry of Finance has enhanced the allocation of the Ministry of Panchayati Raj to Rs.900.94 crore for 2020-21 (BE)."

**(O.M. No. H-11013 (25)/5/2019-Parl. dated 24<sup>th</sup> February, 2020)**

#### **Recommendation (Serial No.2, Para 2.4)**

**2.4 The Committee are also dismayed to note that there are continuous declining trend at RE stage during the last three fiscal years and express their serious concern. The Committee feel that cut in funds at RE stage would adversely impact the progress of schemes of the Ministry which are meant to meet basic human needs of the people. The Committee are not convinced with the reasons cited by the Ministry that slow pace of release of funds is due to late submission of proposal by the States and non-furnishing/discrepancies in documents like Utilization Certificates, physical and financial reports alongwith audit reports etc. The Committee are of the view that these are not good enough causes for reduction in funds at RE stage. These aspects cast shadow upon the optimum administrative stronghold of the Ministry over the States machinery and reeks of blatant flouting of laid down guidelines. The Committee are constrained to note that such reductions have adversely impacted the progress of works under these schemes. The Committee, therefore, recommend that the Ministry should make sincere and concerted efforts to fully absorb the allocated budget so as to avoid reduction of budget at RE stage in future and also to ensure that the laid down guidelines are followed in letter and spirit by all stakeholders.**

#### **REPLY OF THE GOVERNMENT**

"The major scheme of the Ministry of Panchayati Raj is Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan (RGSA), which is demand driven in nature. This Ministry has always put in its best to optimally utilize the budget allocated for the schemes. The progress of the activities approved under the Annual Action Plans (AAPs) of RGSA is reviewed, from time to time, in consultation with Panchayati Raj Departments of States/UTs. Further in order to provide the States full year for implementation of the approved activities, the AAPs for 2019-20 for 33 States / UTs under RGSA were approved well in advance i.e. in the month of February, 2019. The then Secretary, MoPR had specifically exhorted the States for spacing the activities approved under their Annual Action Plan for 2019-20, inter alia by preparing a



calender of activities, with a view to ensure that the activities are completed in a well thought manner and there is no rush of expenditures at the close of the financial year.

Further, the release of award money under the scheme of Incentivization of Panchayats depends upon the receipt of confirmation from States/Union Territories (UTs) in the form of Utilization Certificates (UCs) regarding transfer of award money to the awardee Panchayats/similar level bodies. Number of awards conferred annually depends upon submission of nominations by the State Governments/UTs and the final selection by the Ministry of Panchayati Raj (MoPR). The release of award money depends upon the receipt of confirmation from States/UTs regarding transfer of award money to the awardee Panchayats in the form of UCs. MoPR vigorously pursues the States/UTs regarding timely submission of nominations and UCs.

Ministry of Finance has allocated Rs.900.94 crore to the Ministry of Panchayati Raj for 2020-21 (BE), out of which Rs.790.53 crore has been allocated for the scheme of RGSA. Hence, all the States / UTs have been requested for submission of Annual Action Plan (AAP) of the year 2020-21 under RGSA for consideration and approval in the next meeting of Central Empowered Committee (CEC), which is proposed to be held in the month of April, 2020. After the proposals are approved, funds will be released expeditiously to the States/UTs after completion of the procedural requirement, so that allocation of 2020-21 (BE) could be fully utilized."

**(O.M. No. H-11013 (25)/5/2019-Parl. dated 24<sup>th</sup> February, 2020)**

### **Recommendation (Serial No.3, Para 2.5)**

#### **Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan (RGSA)**

**2.5 The Committee observed that Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan (RGSA) is a newly restructured scheme with the primary aim of strengthening Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) for achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) with main thrust on convergence with Mission Antyodaya and emphasis on strengthening PRIs in the 117 Aspirational Districts. The scheme has been approved for implementation from 01.04.2018 to 31.03.2022 with total budget outlay of Rs. 7255 crore out of which State share will be Rs. 2755.50 crore and the Central share will be Rs. 4500 crore. The Committee were informed that the scheme extends to all States and UTs including Part IX areas comprising about 2.67 lakh Gram Panchayats as well as Institutions of Rural Local Government in non Part IX areas where Panchayats do not exists. However, the Committee are perturbed to note that inspite of the importance of the scheme for increasing the knowledge, capability, involvement and**

responsiveness for PRIs, the allocation of funds for the current fiscal year has been placed at Rs. 762.34 crore only from the previous year allocation of Rs. 720.80 crore. It is quite baffling as to out of a total central share of Rs. 4500 crore a mere Rs. 1483.14 crore has been released so far. This is an early indication that at this pace of Centre release there could not be optimum fund utilization meant for this scheme. This does not augur well for the success of the scheme and the Committee are of the considered view that such an important scheme for the upliftment of PRIs with an outlay of only Rs.762.34 crore for the entire country may not make much impact or out reach to the intended beneficiaries. Keeping in view the importance of the scheme, the Committee strongly recommend that allocation to the scheme should be substantially increased and expeditiously utilized so that the decentralized governance through PRIs is served even better through this scheme.

### **REPLY OF THE GOVERNMENT**

"As brought out above, the scheme of RGSA is demand driven in nature. Taking into consideration the projected requirement of funds inter alia for the activities meant to be undertaken under RGSA during the current year, in the budget proposal for 2020-21, the request was made for increased allocation of funds to the tune of Rs.1093.94 Crore. However, Ministry of Finance has provided an allocation of Rs.790.53 crore for 2020-21 (BE) under the scheme of RGSA. In respect of expeditious utilization of allocated funds, all the States / UTs have been requested for submission of Annual Action Plan (AAP) of the year 2020-21 under RGSA for consideration and approval in the next meeting of Central Empowered Committee (CEC), which is proposed to be held in the month of April, 2020. After the proposals are approved, funds will be released expeditiously to the States/UTs after completion of the procedural requirement, so that allocation of 2020-21 (BE) could be fully utilized."

(O.M. No. [H-11013 \(25\)/5/2019-Parl.](#) dated 24<sup>th</sup> February, 2020)

### **Recommendation (Serial No.4, Para 2.6)**

#### **Shortage of Panchayat Bhavans**

**2.6** During the course of examination, the issue of large number of Gram Panchayats in the country without Panchayat Bhavans cropped up before the Committee in a big way. The Secretary, MoPR admitted during evidence that as many as 62,957 Gram Panchayats (GPs) are managing without Panchayat Bhavans.

In this connection, it came out before the Committee that MoPR is already seized of the issue and have termed it very crucial for smooth functioning of Panchayat for delivery of services to people. The MoPR has however, clarified that since providing infrastructure in Gram Panchayats is within the purview of States, it is upto the States to provide the Panchayat Bhavans in Gram Panchayats. The Ministry however, on its part has impressed upon the States from time to time for doing the needful. Further, the MoPR has also informed that construction of Gram Panchayat Bhavans has been notified as one of the permissible activities under MGNREGA and funds required for material for construction can be pooled form MGNREGA and in this regard the Ministry is pursuing with the Ministry of Rural Development.

In view of the large number of requirement of Gram Panchayat Bhavans, the Committee recommend that the Ministry should expeditiously work out a time table for construction of Gram Panchayat Bhavans in Gram Panchayats and necessary logistics may be provided to the States by using MGNREGA/FFC Funds also.

### **REPLY OF THE GOVERNMENT**

"The Ministry fully appreciate the fact that the Gram Panchayat Buildings are of utmost importance for any Gram Panchayat to discharge its mandated functions effectively, particularly for effective delivery of services. The issue related to the shortage of Panchayat Bhawans across the States / UTs has been a matter of appropriate concern for the Ministry. The Ministry envisages that all the Gram Panchayat shall have their own Panchayat Building together with Common Service Centre (CSC) so as to become the hub for services, knowledge connectivity at Gram Panchayat level thereby effectively facilitating the GPs to serve as One-Stop Shop for the Panchayat residents. In the context of above, the Ministry has been repeatedly impressing upon States to take up the construction on Gram Panchayat Buildings on priority. Ministry on its part has sanctioned construction of approximately 4400 Gram Panchayat Bhawans since 2018-19 under RGSA against the projected target of 4500 GPs under whole duration of the scheme. In view of the large requirement of Gram Panchayat Bhawans and in the context of recommendation of the Committee, Secretary, MoPR has requested Chief Secretary of the States/UTs on 3<sup>rd</sup> February, 2020 to ensure that construction of buildings for Gram Panchayats without their own buildings is taken up on priority in a phased manner by converging funds / resources under MGNREGS with other State Schemes etc. so as to saturate the gap by the end of year 2022. Further to that, the Hon'ble Minister of Panchayati Raj has on 14<sup>th</sup> February, 2020, also requested the Chief Ministers of 12 States having acute gap in respect of Gram Panchayat buildings namely Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Bihar, Haryana, UT of Jammu & Kashmir, Maharashtra, Meghalaya, Punjab, Telangana, Tamil Nadu, Uttar

Pradesh, Uttarakhand to take effective steps to ensure saturation of all GPs with Panchayat Bhawans by 2022."

**(O.M. No. H-11013 (25)/5/2019-Parl. dated 24<sup>th</sup> February, 2020)**

### **Comments of the Committee**

*(Please see Paragraph No. 8 of Chapter I of the Report)*

#### **Recommendation (Serial No.5, Para 2.7)**

##### **Lack of trained manpower in Gram Panchayats**

**2.7** The issue of lack of trained manpower in Gram Panchayat also came up before the Committee prominently. The Committee were informed that inadequate trained manpower in terms of manager, development officers, accountants, engineers at Gram Panchayat level is being experienced in most of the States. The Committee noted that the staff availability in GPs is extremely low and particularly, the situation is worst where one Panchayat Sachiv is managing as many as 5 to 6 GPs approximately. With a view to address the situation, the MoPR has already prioritised operationalising the Gram Panchayat Development Plans and FFC Grants for looking after trained manpower requirements at Gram Panchayat level in the country.

The Committee feel that progress of the State-wise level of training is far from satisfactory and needs to be up-scaled in a big way. The MoPR has also admitted candidly before the Committee that there is strong need to develop capacity building of PRIs in the changed scenario. Meanwhile, the Ministry has also spelt out various State level workshops to be held from time to time and discussion held in various States/UTs. The Secretary, MoPR apprised the Committee that the Government is trying to address the issue in a multipronged way only for GP level. In the light of acute shortage of trained manpower at Gram Panchayat level and in view of slow progress with regard to training in almost all States barring few States, the Committee recommend that the aspect of making available the trained manpower to Gram Panchayats be taken up by MoPR with State Governments in a comprehensive and time bound manner.

## **REPLY OF THE GOVERNMENT**

"Ministry has been giving substantial priority to strengthen Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) by way of Capacity Building of the PRIs and their functionaries. As brought out, the Ministry has endeavoured to turn the scheme of RGSA into a sophisticated, customized resource for graduated capacity building for ERs, Panchayat Functionaries and other stakeholders. Special emphasis is being given on digital literacy of all Elected Representatives (ERs) and also on mobilizing, educating and transforming the ward members or Panches into sectoral resource persons with a clear role and thus greater influence to transform them into agents of change. The outcome of the Scheme will be enhanced capabilities of Panchayats for good governance and attainment of SDGs through participatory local planning, democratic decision-making, transparency and accountability.

The Ministry is also aware that there is a crucial gap in the availability of human resources/ technical support at the cutting edge level of Panchayats. It will be appreciated that the Panchayats being a State subject, it is primarily State's responsibility to provide suitable and requisite manpower for Panchayats. However, In the context of recommendations made by the Sumit Bose Committee constituted for considering various aspects related to the human resources at Panchayat level, provision has been made in RGSA for providing support to States for engaging personnel for works related to IT, normal functioning of Panchayats, engineering works etc. at clusters of Panchayats/ Block Level. To this end, financial assistance has been provided under RGSA to states for technical support to about 2150 blocks for GPs/cluster of GPs. However, taking into consideration the small outlay under the scheme, the assistance to the States can be provided on a very moderate level. In this regard States are also expected to undertake following measures to address the issue of inadequate manpower:-

- i) Do a mapping exercise to identify staff available at the GP/Cluster level, including those appointed under different programmes like Rural Development schemes.
- ii) Carry out mapping of all functions assigned to Panchayats for which personnel / technical support is not easily available.
- iii) Do identification of the staff wherever available under a programme which can be used for other functions and assigning work formally to them through instructions from competent levels."

**(O.M. No. H-11013 (25)/5/2019-Parl. dated 24<sup>th</sup> February, 2020)**

### **Recommendation (Serial No.6, Para 2.8)**

#### **Mission Mode Project on e-Panchayat**

**2.8 The Committee observed that e-Panchayat is one of the Mission Mode Projects (MMP) under Digital India Programme. The Committee have been informed that e-Panchayat seeks to transform the functioning of Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) making them more transparent, accountable and effective as organs of Decentralized Self-Governing Institutions. The Ministry have further added that the**

**funds allocated to the scheme which is at Rs. 15.50 crore for the current fiscal year will be used for activities such as updation and maintenance of software application, National Project Management Unit (NPMU) and development of Gram Panchayat Spatial Application (GPSA) for enhancing transparency. However, the Committee feel that to achieve the goal of e-Panchayats in the country, all the Panchayats of the country should be digitally enabled and secondly the internet connectivity should be made easily available and should be glitch free. Only having provision of infrastructure set up would not suffice the whole rationale behind the idea of fully functioning ePanchayats. The Internet/Broadband connection need to be spruced up on an urgent basis so that there is no impediment in the functioning of e-mode of the Panchayats for the prompt and speedy services. Therefore, the Committee strongly recommend that the Ministry should work more vigorously to ensure availability of hassle free internet services to e-Panchayats to make them more effective and successful in their functioning in all over the country especially in the backward and far-flung regions. If need be the Ministry may coordinate with other Ministries for providing basic infrastructure facilities.**

### **REPLY OF THE GOVERNMENT**

"The Ministry would like to submit that around, 1.46 lakh Gram Panchayats (GPs) are provided Optical Fibre Connectivity. Since BharatNet is under the purview of Department of Telecommunication (DoT), Ministry of Panchayati Raj is in touch with DoT for rolling out internet connectivity to the remaining GPs. This also forms an important part of the Ministry's Vision 2024.

It is also submitted that in order to ensure that all the government services are accessible to the rural populace, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) has been signed between Ministry of Panchayati Raj (MoPR) and CSC e-Governance Services India Limited on August 21, 2019 to encourage cooperation between Common Service Centers (CSCs) and Gram Panchayat for the creation of Digital Panchayats.

With the MoU, Ministry aims to leverage Common Service Centres (CSCs) in realizing the objective of Smart Governance and provision of online services. It is also submitted that the CSCs would be co-located in the Gram Panchayat Bhawans and would be offering the following services:

- Upkeep of hardware & Network equipment
- Populating crucial information systems on a regular basis. This will create credible time-series data, providing more informed insights from the grassroots, thereby supporting policy level decisions
- Provision of Government-to-Citizen (G2C) Services online through CSCs

- Imparting trainings on Digital Literacy as well as the trainings of Elected Members & Panchayat Functionaries on basic orientation and thematic areas. Using CSCs, the Ministry aims to transition from the classroom-based training pedagogy to online trainings

Moreover, CSC co-location would also lead to generation of employment opportunities for the local populace. Furthermore, pursuant to this MoU, the Common Service Centres-Special Purpose Vehicle (CSC-SPV) would enter into individual MoUs with the respective States, based on the State specific/ local level requirements, rules, regulations etc."

**(O.M. No. [H-11013 \(25\)/5/2019-Parl.](#) dated 24<sup>th</sup> February, 2020)**

### **Comments of the Committee**

*(Please see Paragraph No. 11 of Chapter I of the Report)*

### **Recommendation (Serial No.7, Para 2.9)**

#### **Media and Publicity**

**2.9 The Committee note that the Media and Publicity Scheme aims at effective communication through the electronic and the print media for advocacy and publicity regarding Panchayati Raj and its programmes which aim to build capacity within, and enhance the performance of Panchayats at all levels. The Committee informed that the Ministry has been making efforts to disseminate information through the print and electronic media as well as through social media, outdoor publicity, newsletter, community radio stations, traditional forms of mass communications such as participation in major fairs & Melas etc. The Committee are unhappy to note that meagre amount of Rs.15 crore has been allocated for the current fiscal year i.e. 2019-20. Therefore, the Committee are of the strong view that as Media and Publicity are very important through which the rural populace are made aware about the Panchayats and Gram Sabha services and schemes and that more funds should be allocated under this head.**

### **REPLY OF THE GOVERNMENT**

"It has been earnest endeavour of the Ministry to utilize the allocated funds to carry out effective IEC activities through better fund management in well thought-out and strategic manner. As observed by the Committee, Ministry attaches great importance to undertaking various IEC / awareness generation initiative to reach out to the rural masses & milieu.

Apart from regular IEC activities such as bringing out quarterly newsmagazine, production of audio-visual programmes in different genre etc. for disseminating information regarding key issues relating to Panchayati Raj and various people-oriented programmes / schemes / initiatives, Ministry will extensively utilize the occasions of major crowd-puller Melas / Fairs / Festivals / Utsavs which attract large congregation from among the rural masses and also the cost-effective and impactful medium of Community Radio Stations and social media interventions to facilitate two-way communication to reach out to the target segments, especially the last mile.

With regard to allocation of funds, it is submitted that an allocation of Rs.8.00 crore has been made under Media and Publicity Scheme for the year 2020-21 (BE) against Rs.5.00 crore of 2019-20 (RE), to facilitate adequate awareness among the general rural masses at grassroots level through proper use of digital media, technological interventions, social media, television, radio, print media and also utilizing all other available traditional and contemporary media."

**(O.M. No. H-11013 (25)/5/2019-Parl. dated 24<sup>th</sup> February, 2020)**

### **Recommendation (Serial No.9)**

#### **Incentivization of Panchayats**

**2.11 The Committee note that under the scheme "Incentivization of Panchayats" the Ministry incentivizes best performing Panchayats through awards and also documents their best practices starting in 2011-12 under Panchayat and Accountability Incentive Scheme (PEAIS) and these initiatives were continued under RGPSA. From the year, 2016-17 the scheme has been revamped and included as a separate scheme/budget head. The allocation under BE for 2019-20 was at Rs. 44 crore.**

**The Committee desire that funds that have been allocated to the scheme are optimally and fully utilized for giving boost to the best performing Panchayats and also to encourage Panchayats to improve their functioning to get the awards being given under this scheme. The Committee also feel that Incentivization of Panchayats and awards being given to best Panchayats should be advertised so that more and more Panchayats would be inspired to do their best. The Committee also hope that Ministry of Panchayati Raj would be fair and consistent in choosing the best performing Panchayats in the Country and the winning Panchayats should be highlighted in Media specially among the rural masses so that more and more Panchayats are encouraged to give their best in their functioning.**



## REPLY OF THE GOVERNMENT

"Through Incentivization of Panchayats, a holistic approach has been taken by MoPR towards creating an overall system of good governance by which deserving Panchayats/States/UTs gets recognition while setting a model for others to follow. Conscious efforts are being made towards strengthening of Panchayats/States/UTs and motivating them through awards wherein due recognition is given to the best performing Panchayats/States/UTs of the country. The awards are conferred on 24<sup>th</sup> of April every year celebrated as National Panchayati Raj Day (NPRD). In view of the Model Code of Conduct, which was in force for the General Elections to the House of the Lok Sabha 2019, the celebration of occasion of NPRD scheduled for 24.04.2019 was deferred. Subsequently, National Panchayat Awards 2019 function was held on 23.10.2019 at New Delhi wherein 246 number of awards were conferred to Panchayats/States/UTs across the country. The award money released for the awardee Panchayats is to be utilized for public purposes especially livelihood support, assets creation, civic amenities creation & maintenance and bridging the gaps in the funds received from Union/State Governments for various projects. The money so released is monitored through UCs received from the concerned State Governments/UT Administrations.

Encouragingly, National Panchayat Awards have become a medium for creating awareness and sharing of knowledge across the country about the achievements of the Panchayats/States/UTs thus raising the level of commitment of all stakeholders benefiting the nation as a result. NPRD, which is celebrated every year, is widely publicized at national level and well attended and graced by dignitaries and Panchayat representatives across the country. This Ministry continues to greater its endeavor for an incremental participation of Panchayats in awards across the country. Further, taking a cognizance of the fact that there are more than 2.5 lakh Panchayats across the country and also that it is important to highlight the winning Panchayats as role models for others, a broad range of publicity of awards and awardee Panchayats is spread across the country at the local and national levels through electronic, print and social media platforms.

Detailed Questionnaires for Awards have been developed by MoPR by utilizing various criteria/indicators to measure accountability system and transparent functioning of Panchayats. The nomination of Panchayats for awards is done by assessing and evaluating the information provided by the Panchayats on the basis of detailed marking scheme at various levels like Block Level Committee, District Level Committee, State Panchayat Performance Appraisal Committee and State Field Verification Teams. The nominations from States/UTs are invited online to reduce the turnaround time in the overall process. Field verification of nominated Panchayats is also conducted through independent agencies (National Level Field Verification Agencies) engaged for this purpose by MoPR which are entrusted to validate the Panchayats nominated by the State Government/UT Administration for awards. A National Screening Committee for Panchayat Awards constituted in MoPR makes final selection of Panchayats for awards."

**(O.M. No. H-11013 (25)/5/2019-Parl. dated 24<sup>th</sup> February, 2020)**

## CHAPTER III

### RECOMMENDATIONS WHICH THE COMMITTEE DO NOT DESIRE TO PURSUE IN VIEW OF GOVERNMENT'S REPLIES

#### Recommendation (Serial No.10, Para 2.12)

#### Fit India Movement

**2.12** During the deliberations, the Committee were told about the 'Fit India Programme' which is successfully running in the Country on the behest of Hon'ble Prime Minister. This is indeed a novel idea aimed at improving and strengthening the health in general and holistic mental/physical development of the citizens of the country. The Committee, in this regard, felt it appropriate that such campaign need to be promoted and propagated at each level of the country. Therefore, the Committee urge the Ministry to explore the feasibility of setting up 'Open Air Gyms' in the parks under Gram Panchayats and utilize the labour component of MGNREGS to expedite the process of giving thrust to the campaign through this effort.

#### REPLY OF THE GOVERNMENT

"In keeping with the decision of the Government to give all out impetus to the activities under the Fit India Movement, this Ministry has issued a number of Advisory to the Panchayati Raj Departments of the States. In this connection, directions have also been issued to the Panchayati Raj Departments of the States / UTs that the following activities inter alia with regard to the implementation of Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan (RGSA), are required to be reviewed and monitored with figures by the Panchayati Raj Departments of the States/UTs:-

- (i) Yoga and physical fitness activities in all capacity development programmes for Panchayat leaders under RGSA,
- (ii) Fit India Movement as a subject for discussion in RGSA capacity development programmes, and,
- (iii) Developing nodal Ward Member for sports and youth activities and for Fit India Movement to be reflected under GPDP.

Panchayati Raj Departments in the States have also been communicated by the Ministry of Panchayati Raj for coordination with their Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) for conveying appropriate advice/suggestions for active participation in 'Fit India Movement' and for taking up the development of playgrounds and parks, utilizing the Fourteenth Finance Commission (FFC) Grants. In respect of setting up 'Open Air Gyms' in the parks under Gram Panchayats utilizing labour component of Mahatma Gandhi NREGA, it may be mentioned that under this scheme only permissible activities are being taken up and line department

may converse with the scheme for the implementation of permissible activities only. The 'Open Air Gyms' is not a permissible activity under Mahatma Gandhi NREGA."

**(O.M. No. [H-11013 \(25\)/5/2019-Parl.](#) Dated 24<sup>th</sup> February, 2020)**

## CHAPTER IV

### RECOMMENDATIONS IN RESPECT OF WHICH REPLY OF THE GOVERNMENT HAVE NOT BEEN ACCEPTED BY THE COMMITTEE

#### Recommendation (Serial No.8, Para 2.10)

##### Setting up of Industry

2.10 The Committee during the course of evidence were informed about the new component of "setting up of industry" under RGSA scheme. The Ministry stated that the industry being set up would be based on local resources and local products and Panchayats would be the common facility centre for processing and marketing. This would make Panchayats self-sufficient to an extent. The Committee while appreciating it, feel that concept of organic farming and making useful products out of agri-waste should also be taken into consideration. The Committee, therefore, strongly recommend that MoPR should expedite the process of "setting up of industry" at the earliest possible time-frame and that it should be implemented all over the country as it would provide jobs and employment to many rural people in the village itself.

#### REPLY OF THE GOVERNMENT

"The restructured scheme of Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan (RGSA) being implemented from 2018-19, has a component for support for Economic Development and Income Enhancement. The objective of this component is to trigger overall economic development in the area in convergence with schemes of other Ministries and State Governments. Accordingly assistance under the scheme is provided to State/ Union Territories (UT) on their project proposals towards manufacturing/ processing, product development, local market development and cultivation of medicinal plants, not-food crops, horticulture, as well as for tourism development etc. During the current financial year i.e. 2019-20, eleven project proposals under this component have been approved."

**(O.M. No. H-11013 (25)/5/2019-Parl. dated 24<sup>th</sup> February, 2020)**

##### Comments of the Committee

*(Please see Paragraph No. 14 of Chapter I of the Report)*

**CHAPTER-V**

**RECOMMENDATIONS IN RESPECT OF WHICH FINAL REPLIES OF THE  
GOVERNMENT ARE STILL AWAITED**

- Nil -

**NEW DELHI;**  
**10 February, 2021**  
**21 Magha, 1942 (Saka)**

**PRATAPRAO JADHAV**  
***Chairperson,***  
**Standing Committee on Rural Development**

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON RURAL DEVELOPMENT (2020-2021)**  
**MINUTES OF THE SECOND SITTING OF THE COMMITTEE HELD ON**  
**TUESDAY, 27 OCTOBER, 2020**

The Committee sat from 1500 hrs. to 1650 hrs. in Committee Room. 'D,' Ground Floor, Parliament House Annexe (PHA), New Delhi.

**Prataprao Jadhav -- Chairperson**

**MEMBERS**

***Lok Sabha***

32. Shri Rajveer Diler
33. Shri Sukhbir Singh Jaunapuria
34. Prof. Rita Bahuguna Joshi
35. Shri Narendra Kumar
36. Shri B. Y. Raghavendra
37. Shri Vivek Narayan Shejwalkar

**Rajya Sabha**

8. Shri Shamsheer Singh Dullo
9. Shri Sujeet Kumar
10. Shri Nazir Ahmed Laway
11. Shri K. P. Munusamy
12. Shri Ram Shakal

**SECRETARIAT**

- |                       |   |                     |
|-----------------------|---|---------------------|
| 1. Shri D. R. Shekhar | - | Joint Secretary     |
| 2. Shri. A. K. Shah   | - | Director            |
| 3. Smt. Emma C. Barwa | - | Additional Director |

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

- |    |                          |   |  |
|----|--------------------------|---|--|
| 1. | Shri Nagendra Nath Sinha | - | Secretary                                    |
| 2. | Shri Sanjeev Kumar       | - | Additional Secretary &<br>Financial Advisor  |
| 3. | Ms. Alka Upadhyaya       | - | Additional Secretary                         |
| 4. | Dr. Biswajit Banerjee    | - | Joint Secretary/Mission Director,<br>(SPMRM) |
| 5. | Ms. Roop Avtar Kaur      | - | Director (SPMRM)                             |

At the outset, the Chairperson welcomed the Members to the sitting of the Committee convened for consideration and adoption of the XXX Draft Action Taken Reports on Demands for Grants (2019-20) XXX XXX in respect of (i) Ministry of Panchayati Raj (ii) XXX XXX XXX XXX

2. The Committee considered and adopted the Draft Reports without any amendment and authorised the Chairperson to present Reports to the House.

*[Thereafter witnesses were called in]*

- |    |     |     |     |     |     |     |
|----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 3. | XXX | XXX | XXX | XXX | XXX | XXX |
| 4. | XXX | XXX | XXX | XXX | XXX | XXX |
| 5. | XXX | XXX | XXX | XXX | XXX | XXX |

The Committee then adjourned.

A record of verbatim proceedings has been kept.

[Vide para 4 of Introduction of Report]

**ANALYSIS OF THE ACTION TAKEN BY THE GOVERNMENT ON THE  
RECOMMENDATIONS CONTAINED IN THE SECOND REPORT (17<sup>TH</sup> LOK SABHA) OF THE  
STANDING COMMITTEE ON RURAL DEVELOPMENT (2019-2020)**

I.	Total number of recommendations:	10
II.	Recommendations that have been accepted by the Government :	
	Serial Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 9	
	Total:	8
	Percentage:	80 %
III.	Recommendations which the Committee do not desire to pursue in view of the Government's replies :	
	Serial Nos. 10	
	Total:	01
	Percentage:	10%
IV.	Recommendations in respect of which replies of the Government have not been accepted by the Committee :	
	Serial No. 8	
	Total:	01
	Percentage:	10%
V.	Recommendations in respect of which final replies of the Government are still awaited :	
	Serial Nos. NIL	
	Total:	00
	Percentage:	00 %