

STANDING COMMITTEE ON RURAL DEVELOPMENT

(2020-21)

15

SEVENTEENTH LOK SABHA

MINISTRY OF PANCHAYATI RAJ

DEMANDS FOR GRANTS

(2021-22)

FIFTEENTH REPORT



LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT

NEW DELHI

FIFTEENTH REPORT
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MINISTRY OF PANCHAYATI RAJ

DEMANDS FOR GRANTS
(2021-22)

Presented to Lok Sabha on *09 March, 2021*

Laid in Rajya Sabha on *09 March, 2021*



LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT NEW

DELHI

March, 2021/Phalguna, 1942 (Saka)

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

Shri Prataprao Jadhav -- Chairperson

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3. Shri C. N. Annadurai
4. Shri A.K.P Chinraj
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SECRETARIAT

- | | | |
|------------------------|---|---------------------|
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| 2. Shri A. K. Shah | - | Director |
| 3. Smt. Emma C. Barwa | - | Additional Director |
| 4. Shri Nagendra Suman | - | Under Secretary |

*Vacancy created due to retirement of MP (RS), Shri Shri Nazir Ahmed Laway w.e.f. 15.02.2021

INTRODUCTION

I, the Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Rural Development (2020-2021) having been authorised by the Committee to submit the Report on their behalf, present the Fifteenth Report on Demands for Grants (2021-22) of the Ministry of Panchayati Raj.

2. Demands for Grants have been examined by the Committee under Rule 331E (1) (a) of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in Lok Sabha.

3. The Committee took evidence of the representatives of the Ministry of Panchayati Raj on 10 February, 2021.

4. The Report was considered and adopted by the Committee at their sitting held on March, 2021.

5. The Committee wish to express their thanks to the officials of the Ministry of Panchayati Raj for placing before them the requisite material and their considered views in connection with the examination of the subject.

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

NEW DELHI;
08 March, 2021
17 Phalgun, 1942 (Saka)

PRATAPRAO JADHAV
Chairperson,
Standing Committee on Rural Development

REPORT**PART – I Narration Analysis****CHAPTER – I****Introductory****(a) Background**

The Ministry of Panchayati Raj was created on 27th May 2004. It has the primary objective of overseeing the implementation of Part IX of the Constitution, implementation of Panchayats (Extension to the Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996 (PESA) in the Fifth Schedule areas and operationalizing District Planning Committees in terms of Article 243ZD of Part IX-A of the Constitution. Since most of the actions including framing of laws rests with the State Governments, the Ministry strives to reach its goals with regard to improvements in the functioning of Panchayats primarily through policy interventions, advocacy, capacity building, persuasion and financial support. Accordingly, the aim of the Ministry is to make Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) an effective, efficient and transparent vehicle for local governance, social change and public service delivery mechanism meeting the aspirations of rural local population.

(b) Overview of Demands for Grants (2021-22) of Ministry of Panchayati Raj

1.2 The Demands for Grants (2021-22) Demand No.71 that are laid on the Table of the House on 8th February, 2021 seeks to provide a provision of Rs 913.43 crore out of which Rs.876.20 crore is under Plan scheme and Rs.37.23 crore is under Non-Plan scheme.

1.3 The following is the scheme-wise amount provided for under different schemes during 2021-22:

Sl. No.	Name of the Scheme	Amount (Rs. in crore)
	Scheme Funds	
1.	Rashtriya Gram SwarajAbhiyan(RGSA)	593.00
2.	Incentivization of Panchayats	48.00
3.	Mission Mode Project on 'E Panchayats'	20.00
4.	Media and Publicity (M&P)	12.00
5.	Action Research and Research Studies (AR&RS)	3.00
6.	International Cooperation	0.20
7.	Survey of Villages and Mapping with Improved Technology in Village Area (SVAMITVA)	200.00
	Total	876.20
	Non-Scheme Funds	37.23
	Grand Total	913.43

CHAPTER – II

Overall outlays vis-à-vis expenditure

The following are the over-all details of outlays vis-à-vis expenditure of the Ministry of Panchayati Raj during 2018-19 onwards:

(Rs. in crore)			
Years	BE	RE	Actuals
2018-19	825.17	716.26	686.18
2019-20	871.52	500.00	498.26
2020-21	900.94	690.00	551.31 (as on 05.01.21)
2021-22	913.43		

2.2 During the course of evidence of the representatives of Ministry of Panchayati Raj (MoPR), when the Committee asked about the reasons behind the budgetary cut at RE stage during the year 2019 to 2021, the Ministry of Panchayati Raj submitted as under:

“1. Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan (RGSA) is a major umbrella scheme of the Ministry and variations in the allocation and cut under RGSA has major impact on the overall budgetary allocation of the Ministry. The year 2018-19 was 1st year of implementation of the scheme of Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan (RGSA). However, the budgetary provisions for the scheme for the year were made under the erstwhile scheme of Capacity Building-Panchayat Sashaktikaran Abhiyan (CB-PSA) and not under the new scheme. This necessitated allocation of fund in the name of new scheme through supplementary grants resulting in delay in availability of funds under the new scheme. It was due to this fact that no funds were released up till August, 2018. Further, being the 1st year, the States were also in the process of completing the spade work for implementation of the scheme and also there were unspent balances of erstwhile scheme of CB-PSA lying with States. This had led to late submission of UC required for release of funds. All these factors led to low expenditure till 3rd quarter and accordingly the Budgetary allocation for the scheme to the tune of Rs.720.80 crore was reduced to the tune of Rs.622.41 crore out of which Rs.598.27 crore was spent during the year.

2. The Budget Estimate (BE) for 2019-20 under the scheme was Rs.762.34 crore. Due to General Elections 2019 and unspent balance of previous year available with the States the expenditure in the 1st and 2nd quarter in the year was less. Subsequently, after constant follow up with the States, the expenditure picked up and funds to tune of Rs.406.22 crore were released to the States till December 2019. With the trend of expenditure and likely demand from the States it was expected that the budgetary provisions under scheme for the year 2019-20 would be utilized fully and the matter was taken up with Ministry of Finance to maintain the Revised Estimate (RE) provisions for the schemes at the BE level. However, the allocation at RE stage was reduced to the tune of Rs.432.96 crore which was seemingly due to less expenditure till second quarter.

3. The budgetary allocation for the Scheme for the year 2020-21 was Rs.790.53 crore. Out of the allocated Budget Estimate (BE), an amount of Rs.79.64 crore has been re-appropriated to the newly launched SVAMITVA Scheme. Due to COVID-19 pandemic and to avoid accumulation of unspent balance with State, Ministry of Finance restricted expenditure @5% per month of the BE till November 2020. Therefore, the release of funds was accordingly regulated. The BE Rs.710.89 crore for RGSA was pegged down to Rs.499.94 crore in December, 2020 due to less expenditure in the 1st and 2nd quarter.”

2.3 In reply to a specific query of the Committee about the unspent balance, the MOPR furnished scheme wise figure as under:

Rs. In crore					
Sl. No.	Name of Scheme	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21 (as on 05.01.2021)
1.	RGSA	15.69	24.14	0.06	66.79
2.	Incentivisation of Panchayats	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.67
3.	Mission Mode Project on e-Panchayats	0.19	1.84	0.25	4.82
4.	Media and Publicity	1.92	2.84	-0.25	5.22
5.	Action Research & Research Studies	0.70	0.00	0.00	0.63
6.	International Cooperation	0.06	0.05	0.01	0.00
7.	SVAMITVA	0.00	0.00	0.00	49.48
	Total	18.49	28.86	0.07	127.61
	Secretariat	0.43	1.22	1.67	11.08
	Grand Total	18.93	30.08	1.74	138.69

2.4 The Committee wanted to know whether there is a need for total revamp of these schemes so that unspent balances are eliminated in future, the Ministry of Panchayati Raj clarified:

“The Year 2021-22 will be the 4th and last year of implementation of umbrella scheme of RGSA and the scheme is due for independent evaluation during the next year. Based on the report on the evaluation of the scheme and the outcome of assessment of the existing scheme, the Ministry will be going in for formulation of revamped scheme beyond 2021-22. While formulating the revamped scheme, the impact of interventions made under the scheme of RGSA at the grassroot level and experience gained during the course of implementation of the scheme will be taken into account along with feedback from the States and other stakeholders. The firming up of focus area and intervention shall be incorporated in the proposed scheme.”

2.5 Asked how far Covid-19 hampered the work of the Ministry of Panchayati Raj in utilization of funds across States/Uts during the current year, the Ministry of Panchayati Raj clarified:

“1. The budgetary allocation for the Scheme for the year 2020-21 was Rs.790.53 crore. Out of the allocated Budget Estimate (BE), an amount of Rs.79.64 crore has been re-appropriated to the newly launched SVAMITVA Scheme. Due to COVID-19 pandemic and to avoid accumulation of unspent balance with State, Ministry of Finance restricted expenditure @5% per month of the BE till November 2020. Therefore, the release of funds was accordingly regulated. The BE Rs.710.89 crore for RGSA was pegged down to Rs.499.94 crore in December, 2020 due to less expenditure in the 1st and 2nd quarter.

2. Despite various challenges encountered during implementation of the SVAMITVA Scheme viz. availability of sufficient drones, bad weather conditions such as fog, floods and high winds etc., Panchayat elections in few States, restrictions imposed due to COVID-19 pandemic, paucity of field level manpower, the States and Survey of India worked enthusiastically for achieving the targets. Further, Ministry and Survey of India worked closely to develop Drone Ecosystem in the Country. Drone flying is completed in nearly 24000 villages till date.

3. The Ministry in their reply submitted that despite of Covid-19 situation, following important activities undertaken under e-Panchayat MMP during the year 2020-21:

(i) Launch of eGramSwaraj Application: A Simplified Work Based Accounting Application for Panchayati Raj has been developed amalgamating functionalities of planning, monitoring, accounting and online payments.

- (ii) Launch of Audit Online: Application to facilitate online audit of PRIs and to strengthen the accountability and simplify the audit process.
- (iii) On-boarding of 15th Finance Commission and other State schemes on e Gram Swaraj-PFMS integration for real time payments by PRIs.”

Over-all Analysis

2.6 The Committee during the course of evidence pointed out the following scheme wise details of outlays vis-à-vis expenditure during 2018-19 onwards:

(Rs. In crore)

S. N.	Name of the Scheme	2018-19			2019-20			2020-21			2021-22
		BE	RE	Actual Exp.	BE	RE	Actual Exp.	BE	RE	Exp. (as on 05.01.2021)	BE
Revenue Expenditure - Scheme											
1.	Rashtriya Gram SwarajAbhiyan	720.80	622.41	598.27	762.34	432.96	432.90	790.53	499.94	433.15	593.00
2.	Incentivization of Panchayats	46.00	41.00	41.01	44.00	25.00	25.00	47.00	47.00	46.33	48.00
3.	Mission Mode Project on E-Panchayats	20.00	11.91	10.07	15.50	7.50	7.25	20.00	17.82	13.00	20.00
4.	Media & Publicity	15.00	15.00	12.16	15.00	5.00	5.25	8.00	10.22	5.00	12.00
5.	Action Research & Research Studies	3.00	2.00	2.00	3.00	0.91	0.91	2.00	2.00	1.37	3.00
6.	International Co-operation	0.20	0.20	0.15	0.20	0.15	0.14	0.20	0.16	0.16	0.20
7.	SVAMITVA	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	79.65	30.17	200.00
	Total of Scheme	805.00	692.52	663.66	840.04	471.52	471.45	867.73	656.79	529.18	876.20
Revenue Expenditure: Other (Non Plan/ Non Scheme)											
8.	Secretariat Service	20.17	23.74	22.52	31.33	28.48	26.81	33.21	33.21	22.13	37.23
	Grant Total	825.17	716.26	686.18	871.37	500.00	498.26	900.94	690.00	551.31	913.43

2.7 When the Committee after perusal of the above outlays and expenditure pointed out that the over-all utilization of funds is lower during 2018-19 and 2020-21 and desired to know about the reasons for the less utilization the constraints using fund in the way of optimum utilization, the Ministry of Panchayati Raj stated:

“1. Under RGSA, the major scheme of the Ministry, funds provided for the activities selected by States / Uts as reflected in their perspective Plan and Annual

Action Plan (AAP) subject to the approval of Central Executive Committee (CEC) of CB-PSA/ Central Empowered Committee of RGSA. The releases under CB-PSA/RGSA are based on perspective Plan and Annual Action Plan (AAP) subject to the approval of respective committee and opening balance available with the States/Uts. Due to the late demand received from the States which mostly had an unspent balance with them, the Ministry experienced a cut at the RE stage. However subsequently, RE allocation of the Ministry were well utilized.

2. NIC/NICSI is the technology partner of MoPR for implementation of e-Panchayat MMP. Substantial financial assistance under e-Panchayat MMP are for central level support for maintenance, development and training of e-Panchayat applications, faculty support and program management. During 2019-20, funds were available with the implementing agency i.e. NIC/NICSI from the unutilized funds of previous year. Hence, there is reduction of BE at RE stage for 2019-20. Further, there was a reduction in demand for handholding and Capacity Building on e-Panchayat Applications from States due to the restrictions imposed by COVID. The VC mode of training costs less.”

CHAPTER – III

Scheme-wise Analysis

(i) Rashtriya Gram SwarajAbhiyan (RGSA)

The restructured Centrally Sponsored Scheme Rashtriya Gram SwarajAbhiyan (RGSA) was approved by Government for implementation during 2018-19 to 2021-22. The primary objectives of RGSA is strengthening PRIs for achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) with main focus on conversion with Mission Antyodaya and emphasis on strengthening PRIs in 117 Aspirational Districts. Funds are released to States/Uts mainly for capacity building of local government the requirement of which has increased manifold on account of huge devolution of funds under Central Finance Commission Grants and initiatives for converged local planning at different level of Panchayats.

3.2 During the course of evidence of the representatives of Ministry of Panchayati Raj while making a Power Point Presentation, the Secretary, Ministry of Panchayati Raj stressed on the following areas of RGSA:

Focus Area of RGSA (State Component)

- Capacity Building & Training (37%)
- GP Infrastructure (26%)
- Institutional strengthening (SPRC/DPRC support) (10%)
- Technology for Distance learning (IP based technology) (1%)
- E-enablement of Panchayats (4%)
- Support to PESA (6%)
- Support for innovations (3%)
- Project based support for Economic Development (4%)
- Technical Support, NPTA, NIRD & PR (10%)

(a) **Outlays vis-à-vis allocations**

3.3 The BE, RE and Actuals for 2017-18, 2018-19 and 2019-20, 2020-21 and BE 2021-22 are as under:

<u>Year</u>	<u>BE</u>	<u>RE</u>	<u>Actuals</u>
2017-18	691.90	638.10	622.41
2018-19	720.80	622.41	598.27
2019-20	762.34	432.96	432.90
2020-21	790.53	499.94	433.15
2021-22	593.00		(as on 05.01.2021)

Rs. (in crore)

3.4 Asked about the reasons due to which Ministry of Panchayati Raj have not been able to utilize the available funds fully in all these years, the Ministry of Panchayati Raj clarified:

“1.The scheme of RGSA is a Centrally Sponsored Scheme with laid down Central and State Share funding structure. Annual Action Plan (AAP) of States is approved by the CEC based on recommendations of SEC. For the release of Central Share against the approved AAP of the States/UTs, scheme mandates (i) Release of corresponding State Share; (ii) 60 percentage utilisation of the Central and State Shares release along with submission of Audited Statement of previous year. Due to the delayed submission or non-submission of requisite mandated documents, release of share is hampered.

2. However, for ensuring optimum utilisation of funds, MoPR is ensuring rigorous monitoring through period discussion with States/UTs providing technical support as well as handholding support. It is seen that 96% in 2018-19, 99.98% in 2019-20 and 89.91% (till now) in 2020-21 fund received have been utilised.

3.5 Asked about the States/UTs that are lagging behind in utilization of funds, the Ministry of Panchayati Raj gave the following details:

Sl. No	Name of the State	Amount Released 2020-21 (Rs in Cr)	Remarks
1	Andhra Pradesh	22.339	-
2	Arunachal Pradesh	0.00	Unspent balance Rs.27.24 Cr
3	Assam	14.1159	-
4	Bihar	0.00	Unspent balance Rs.76.53 Cr
5	Chhattisgarh	4.0395	-
6	Goa	0.00	Unspent balance Rs.0.458 Cr
7	Gujarat	0.00	Unspent balance Rs.21.636 Cr
8	Haryana	9.89	-
9	Himachal Pradesh	22.098	-
10	Jammu & Kashmir	25.00	-
11	Jharkhand	2.34	-
12	Karnataka	0.00	Documents not submitted
13	Kerala	5.746	-
14	Ladkah	2.1485	-
15	Madhya Pradesh	71.42	-
16	Maharashtra	66.76	-
17	Meghalaya	2.1455	-
18	Manipur	1.7064	-
19	Mizoram	9.723	-
20	Nagaland	0.00	Documents not submitted
21	Odisha	2.937	Unspent balance Rs.0.59 Cr

Sl. No	Name of the State	Amount Released 2020-21 (Rs in Cr)	Remarks
22	Punjab	13.45	-
23	Rajasthan	9.351	-
24	Sikkim	4.7475	-
25	Tamil Nadu	56.875	-
26	Telangana	0.00	Unspent balance Rs.7.6286 Cr
27	Tripura	1.26545	-
28	Uttar Pradesh	32.5407	-
29	Uttarakhand	26.751	-
30	West Bengal	33.52	-
31	Andaman & Nicobar Islands	0.00	Documents not submitted
32	Dadra Nagar Haveli	0.00	Unspent balance of Rs.2.69 Cr.
	Daman & Diu		
33	Lakshadweep	0.00	Unspent balance of Rs.1.185 Cr
34	Puducherry	0.00	NA
	Total	440.9095	

While releasing the funds by MoPR, the state share release, deficit as well as unspent balance are deducted as per scheme provision, leading to reduced releases for the States. In the current financial year 2020-21, releases have further being effected due to the mandated guideline of MoF for release of grant to States in two tranches for each instalment. However, regular meetings and correspondence with the States are being conducted to ensure compliance of mandated documents for timely release of Central Share.”

3.6 The Committee also enquired whether necessary support from State Governments/UTs in this regard been received, the Ministry of Panchayati Raj clarified:

“It is observed that the initiatives / responses of State Government in strengthening PRIs are broadly satisfactory.”

3.7 In this context, during the course of evidence of the representatives of Ministry of Panchayati Raj, the Committee pointed out that for Rajasthan funds have not been allotted during the last two years, the Secretary, Ministry of Panchayati Raj clarified:

“सर, इसमे ऐसी स्थिति है कि हम लोगों का हाथ थोड़ा बंधा हुआ है इस पर आप लोगों की तरह से सिफारिश होनी चाहिए।”

3.8 The Committee also asked whether the representative of State Governments be asked to appear before the Committee on this issue, the Secretary, Ministry of Panchayati Raj submitted:

“सर, बजट के बाद भी यदि समिति उनको साक्ष्य के लिए बुलाती है तो उससे कम से कम एक गंभीरता आएगी।”

3.9 Highlighting further on the same issue the Secretary, MOPR submitted:

सर, एक कारण तो यह है कि स्कीम की छोटी साइज होने के कारण लोगों को लगता है कि हमें डिवाॅल्यूशन का पैसा तो मिल रहा है, जो चौदहवें या पन्द्रहवें वित्त आयोग का पैसा है, वह तो सीधे मिल जा रहा है, जिसमें बड़ी धनराशि है। हम उस पर ज्यादा कन्सेन्ट्रेट करें। जो कर्पैसिटी बिल्डिंग और इस तरह के कार्य हैं, इनके लिए जो छोटी धनराशि मिलती है, इसमें वे पिछड़ जाते हैं। दूसरी बात यह है कि स्टेट में भी, हमने असम का उदाहरण दिया था कि 14 करोड़ रुपये मिला हुआ है, लेकिन वहां के सचिव उस पैसे को पंचायत विभाग को रिलीज नहीं कर रहे हैं क्योंकि उनको कैश फ्लो मेनटेन करना है। अब उसकी वजह से जब विभाग को पैसा ही रिलीज ही नहीं होगा तो फिर वह कहां से यू.सी. देगा और कहां से उसका उपयोग करेगा। इसकी वजह से स्वयं हम भी उनको रिलीज नहीं कर सकते हैं क्योंकि उसे हम रिलैक्स नहीं कर पाएंगे। इसलिए पिछले तीन-चार सालों में इस तरह का एक चक्र बन गया। कुछेक चक्र तो यह था कि योजना हमारी देर से शुरू हुई या लोकसभा के चुनाव आ गए तो उस समय तीन-चार महीने काम नहीं हो पाए या कोविड-19 हुआ, पर कुछ एक चक्र है, जहां पर वित्त विभाग की प्रायॉरिटी लिस्ट में पंचायती राज विभाग नहीं आता। इसकी वजह से भी यह छूट जाता है। इसकी वजह से फिर हमारा मुख्य रूप से कर्पैसिटी बिल्डिंग का जो काम है, ट्रेनिंग आदि का कार्य है, जो छोटे-छोटे अमाउंट्स में हैं, लेकिन जरूरी हैं, इसकी वजह से वे प्रभावित होती हैं। यह एक कारण है। इस चीज को भी हमें ध्यान में रखना होगा।”

“.....दूसरी कठिनाई इसके उपयोग करने में आती है। जैसे वर्तमान वर्ष में, जब कैश फ्लो का पोजीशन शुरू हुआ, तब यहां पर वित्त मंत्रालय ने यह कर दिया कि अब आपकी धनराशि, जो पहले दो किशतों में जाती थी, वह अब चार किशतों में जाएगी। इसका मतलब कि पहला ट्रांश भी हम पूरा नहीं देंगे। उसे दो किशतों में देंगे। अगर आपको पाँच करोड़ रुपये मिलने हैं तो पहले आप को ढाई करोड़ रुपये मिलेंगे। फिर जब आप उसे पूरा करके देंगे, तब आपको फिर ढाई करोड़ रुपये मिलेंगे। यह जो प्रक्रिया बनी है, इससे और कठिनाई बढ़ गई है।”

3.10 On the issue when the Committee enquired about the steps taken by Ministry of Panchayati Raj in case of non-transfer of funds by State Governments to Panchayats,

the Secretary, Ministry of Panchayati Raj informed:

“सर इस विषय पर हम लोग अपने स्तर से चीफ सेक्रेटरीज को और माननीय मंत्री जी के स्तर से मुख्यमंत्री जी या उनके मंत्री जी को पत्र भेजते हैं।

दूसरा, यहाँ पर यह व्यवस्था है कि जितना उनका अनस्पेन्ट बैलेंस है या जो स्टेट शेयर है, उन्होंने पिछले साल में रिलीज नहीं किया, उतना उनके अगले साल का जब एनुअल एक्शन प्लान बनता है, अगर उसमें उनको 30 करोड़ रुपये मिलना है तो पिछले साल के 14 करोड़ रुपये को एडजस्ट करके ही हम उसे बाकी अवशेष धनराशि रिलीज करते हैं।”

3.11 Asked who is ultimate loser on this delay, the Secretary, Ministry of Panchayati Raj admitted:

“सर, अंत में उसका नुकसान गाँव और पंचायत के जनप्रतिनिधि का ही हो रहा है”

3.12 The Committee further enquired about any roadmap prepared bringing out demand of higher funds for coming years to work on, the Ministry of Panchayati Raj stated:

“The priorities of Ministry under the scheme of RGSA during the year 2021-22 has been spelt out. 2021-22 will be the 4th and last year of implementation of the umbrella scheme of RGSA, which is due for independent evaluation during the next financial year. Based on the report on the evaluation of the scheme and the outcome of assessment of the existing scheme, the Ministry will be going in for formulation of revamped scheme beyond 2021-22. While formulating the revamped scheme, the impact of interventions made under the scheme of RGSA at the grassroot level and experience gained during the course of implementation of the scheme will be taken into account along with feedback from the States and other stakeholders. The firming up of focus area and intervention shall be incorporated in the proposed scheme. Also state governments will be regularly pursued for timely release of state share and utilization of funds, so that enhanced fund can be released under the schemes. The enhanced outlay for the revamped scheme shall accordingly be proposed.”

(b) Capacity Building and Training (CB&T)

3.13 During the course of evidence of the Ministry of Panchayati Raj, the Secretary, Ministry of Panchayati Raj in a Power Point Presentation showed the following details before the Committee:



Capacity Building and Training



(Number of Elected Representatives, Panchayat Functionaries and other Stakeholders trained)

Activity	Financial Years				
	2016-17	2017-18	2018-2019	2019-20	2020-21 (as on 31.01.2021)
Training (GPDP)	25,17,190	53,70,068	22,54,920	24,58,452	14,29,897
Training (CB & others)	9,20,310		20,49,731	9,39,742	
Grand Total	34,37,500	53,70,068	43,04,651	33,98,194	14,29,897

3.14 The Basic Data on Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) as on 06.01.2021 is as under:

(Annual Report Para 1.12 Page 5)

Sl. No.	Units /Representatives	Numbers
1	Number of District Panchayat	659
2	Number of Intermediate Panchayat	6829
3	Number of Village Panchayat	255487
4	Number of Traditional Bodies	16067
5	Elected Representatives (Gram/Intermediate/District Panchayats)	31.65 Lakh
6	Elected Representative Women (Gram/Intermediate/District Panchayats)	14.53 Lakh

RGSA will extend to all States and Union Territories (UTs) of the country and for the purpose of the scheme, wherever 'Panchayats' are mentioned, these will include institutions of rural local government in non-Part IX areas also.

3.15 In reply to query about workdone by MOPR towards empowerment of PRIs, the MOPR in a written reply inter alia stated:

"Article 243G allows discretion to the States in the matter of devolution of powers (funds, functions and functionaries) to Panchayats. The States vary in the extent to which they have devolved powers to the Panchayats to plan, implement and monitor schemes for economic development and social justice. This Ministry has continuously persuaded the State Governments to devolve powers to the Panchayats and has provided assistance to enable them to perform devolved functions effectively. The

scheme for the Capacity Building & Training (CB&T) of the Ministry has been restructured and being implemented from 2018-19, which addresses the requirement of enhancing governance capabilities of Panchayats through more concerted, robust and technology driven processes, and expansion of outreach and coverage of capacity building of PRIs. The comprehensive CB&T interventions of the Ministry are helping PRIs and their stakeholders to contribute significantly to the all-round change in the rural areas, including for economic development, in the state....”

3.16 Elaborating the work done so far, the MOPR has stated:

“.....The Ministry will continue to provide programmatic support for strengthening of Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) and finding solutions for local governance as well as outreach, namely:

- Capacity building of PRIs following phased saturation approach with focus on newly elected representatives and functionaries of PRIs with priority on Mission Antyodaya GPs and 117 Aspirational Districts identified by NITI Aayog.
- Orientation training of newly elected PRI Elected Representatives (ERs) within 6 months of their election, followed by refresher courses within two years.
- To mobilise, educate and transform Ward Members or Panchs into Sectoral Resource Persons with a clear role and thus greater influence to transform them into agents of change.
- Partnership and networking with institutions of excellence/Universities/Colleges, for preparation of quality training modules and developing pool of Master Trainers for PRIs from academics/faculties.
- Support for strengthening institutional structure for training
- Scaling up of exposure visits for PRIs to promote learning through peer exchange and development of model panchayats as peer-learning sites.
- Focus on digital literacy of PRIs and their stakeholders
- SHG-PRI Convergence through joint training, need based training for formulation of Gram Panchayat Development Plans and their implementation.
- Focus on Own Source Revenue Generation
- Leveraging of technology for greater outreach amongst the elected representatives of Panchayats by distant mode through IP based technology, use of smartphone based applications, use of social media, utilizing short films on best practices for wide reach.

2. The COVID situation has necessitated alternate approaches to CB&T. MoPR rose to the challenge and introduced online interventions to ensure that Capacity Building efforts are not derailed. Encouraged by this experience, the CB&T strategy of MoPR is being realigned to have judicious mix of training in online and offline mode which will ensure optimum utilization of the existing resources.”

3.17 On being pointed out by the Committee, the Ministry of Panchayati Raj also stated in Preliminary Material that under RGSA, one holistic plan for each Panchayat i.e. Annual Gram Panchayat Development (GPDP) has to be prepared envisaging therein the Vision, the Goals and the Annual Action Plans (AAPs) to reach those Goals. Further, the Ministry of Panchayati Raj has given the following status AAP Approved & Fund Released under the scheme of RGSA during 2018-19, 2019-20 and 2020-21 (As on 05.01.2021).

(Rs. in crore)

Sl. No.	State/ UT	2018-19		2019-20		2020-21	
		AAP Approved	Fund Released	AAP Approved	Fund Released	AAP Approved	Fund Released
1	Andaman & Nicobar Island	1.50	0.00	1.69	0.00	1.253	0.00
2	Andhra Pradesh	128.54	67.69	183.84	0.00	203.489	22.339
3	Arunachal Pradesh	40.72	33.19	46.58	39.59	15.65	0.00
4	Assam	77.27	39.21	76.02	23.22	88.14	9.5419
5	Bihar	108.02	4.25	76.24	0.00	105.71	0.00
6	Chhattisgarh	25.87	7.24	37.29	0.00	36.57	4.0395
7	Dadra & Nagar Haveli	1.628	0.00	2.90	0.00	4.55	0.00
8	Daman & Diu	1.21	0.00	0.89	0.00		
9	Goa	4.39	0.00	3.71	0.00	3.7163	0.00
10	Gujarat	27.92	0.00	55.09	0.00	20.24	0.00
11	Haryana	55.55	6.99	136.48	0.00	188.534	9.89
12	Himachal Pradesh	19.18	17.26	127.95	10.00	128.18	22.098
13	Jammu & Kashmir	49.51	25.06	197.21	6.19	173.48	25.00
14	Jharkhand	28.53	4.49	34.62	0.00	28.659	2.34
15	Karnataka	66.08	0.00	71.03	0.00	116.70	0.00
16	Kerala	51.78	7.68	52.81	0.00	44.34	5.746
17	Lakshadweep	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.1418	0.00
18	Madhya Pradesh	215.29	62.79	229.84	85.48	320.809	71.42
19	Maharashtra	102.54	11.54	119.71	8.44	233.00	66.76
20	Manipur	20.60	9.25	15.51	4.54	7.70	0.00
21	Meghalaya	9.86	4.44	15.02	2.63	16.906	0.00

Sl. No.	State/ UT	2018-19		2019-20		2020-21	
		AAP Approved	Fund Released	AAP Approved	Fund Released	AAP Approved	Fund Released
22	Mizoram	10.97	9.85	9.88	0.503	13.585	6.112
23	Nagaland	8.76	7.89	10.14	3.94	11.27	0.00
24	Odisha	50.68	0.00	28.55	0.00	21.49	2.937
25	Puducherry	0.00	0.00	4.01	0.00	4.667	0.00
26	Punjab	98.93	29.68	91.12	0.00	89.875	13.45
27	Rajasthan	61.81	25.57	83.31	0.00	103.04	9.351
28	Sikkim	11.29	5.08	11.80	5.095	15.069	0.809
29	Tamil Nadu	96.00	57.60	190.37	5.30	282.78	56.875
30	Telangana	66.75	0.00	279.52	0.00	242.868	0.00
31	Tripura	7.50	2.77	16.51	0.00	14.176	0.90
32	Uttar Pradesh	249.24	57.14	842.45	169.92	598.55	32.5407
33	Uttarakhand	37.37	33.05	62.80	23.79	42.68	26.751
34	West Bengal	91.59	54.94	98.24	44.10	115.53	33.52
35	Ladakh	--	--	--	--	8.594	2.1485
	Sub Total	1826.878	584.65	3213.13	432.74	3302.942	424.5686
	other Implementing Agencies		13.62		0.16		8.5902
	Grand Total		598.27		432.90		433.1588

3.18 Asked about the reasons for huge gap between AAP Approved and Funds released, the Ministry of Panchayati Raj clarified:

“1.The scheme of RGSA is a Centrally Sponsored Scheme with laid down Central and State Share funding structure. Annual Action Plan (AAP) of States is approved by the CEC based on recommendations of SEC. For the release of Central Share against the approved AAP of the States/UTs, scheme mandates (i) Release of corresponding State Share; (ii) 60 percentage utilisation of the Central and State Shares release along with submission of Audited Statement of previous year.

2. Release to States is made in two instalments as per scheme provision. It has been seen that in large number of cases that there are delays by the State in release of their State to the State Nodal Accounts and/or there is persisting deficit state share. The delayed release compounds the delay in timely utilisation of the funds and results into delayed submission/non-submission of Utilisation Certificate. It is also seen that many States/UTs have unspent balance of funds allocated from previous years.

3.19 While responding to the issue on non-release of funds, the Secretary MoPR while explaining the difficulties being faced on this aspect submitted that:

“इसका मुख्य कारण यह है कि जब हम एन्युअल एक्शन प्लान अप्रूव करते हैं, तो उसमें 60 प्रतिशत हिस्सा भारत सरकार का होता है और 40 प्रतिशत हिस्सा राज्य सरकार का होता है। हमें यह पता है कि ऐसी कई स्कीमें हैं, जो एक साल में पूरी नहीं हो पाएंगी।.....

अगर हम लोगों ने उसको अप्रूव भी किया है, लेकिन स्टेट ने रिलीज़ में शेयर नहीं किया है, तो वह कट जाता है। अगर उनका अन्स्पेन्ड बैलेंस है, तो वह कट जाता है। जो वास्तविक धन राशि फ्लो होती है, वह अत्यंत सीमित हो जाती है। इसके बावजूद उतनी सीमित धनराशि भी जो रिलीज़ होती है, उनका फाइनेंस डिपार्टमेंट समय से उसको रिलीज़ नहीं करता है। फाइनेंस डिपार्टमेंट उसको रिलीज़ करने में हीला-हवाली करता है।“.....

3.20 Asked about the reasons for only a few States have been benefitted by RGSA funds, the Ministry of Panchayati Raj clarified:

“There are certain mandatory requirements for release of RGSA funds like release of State Share and 60 percentage utilisation of released fund. Accordingly, during the current financial year under the Scheme of RGSA, AAP of all 35 States/UTs have been approved and funds to the tune of Rs.440.90 crore has been released to 23 States/UTs (till date). The funds to the remaining States/UTs have not been released on account of non-submission of requisite documents including UCs, Audited Statement, and non-release of State Share and/or availability of unspent balance lying with the States/UTs more than releasable amount.”

3.21 The Committee also enquired to what extent the RGSA has been able to strengthen PRIs in achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) on the desired lines in 117 Aspirational Districts so far, the Ministry of Panchayati Raj replied:

“1. The primary objective of the RGSA is to develop the Governance capabilities of PRIs to deliver on SDGs. There are various SDGs such as End poverty, End hunger, Health, Education, Women and child, Clean energy, Decent work and livelihoods, and Eco restoration, afforestation etc., wherein Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) can play important role in achieving the identified targets. States have been asked to focus on priority development areas of SDGs to be undertaken by Panchayats and financial assistance have been provided capacity building and training of ERs and other stakeholders of Panchayats for the same. Besides resource materials on components of SDGs viz., Sanitation, Drinking Water, Animal Husbandry and Child Development have been prepared and shared with states/ UTs.

2. Further, in the Vision Document 2024 developed by the Ministry, one of the priority area is transforming the Panchayat Ward Members as Sector

Enablers. In this direction, a sustainable capacity building and training programme has been devised as the medium through which the elected representatives can be elevated to reach such a realm and lead the Panchayats attain the vision.

3. Nearly 25 lakh elected representatives (Sector Enablers) are to be capacitated in certain thematic areas viz. Animal Husbandry, Afforestation, Agricultural and Horticultural Practices, Agricultural produces and markets; Health & Nutrition; Water conservation, Micro Irrigation and soil conservation; ODF Villages, Sanitation & waste collection; advocacy of Education, Social Issues, Own Sources of Revenue, income generating activities and other themes / matters of local importance. It is envisaged that a particular ward member (Sector Enablers) would be designated as the nodal authority for a particular sector by the GP for providing sector specific interventions in rural areas. In pursuance of the above, a National Consultation was organised on 'Transforming the Panchayat Ward Members as Sector Enablers' on 28th February 2020 in New Delhi where Senior Officers from Panchayat Raj Department and faculty from State Institutes of Rural Development (SIRDs) attended to deliberate on the above issues and to chalk out a well-structured strategy/action plan. Based on the deliberations in the Consultation, States/ UTs were advised to integrate the training for Sector Enablers in the training plan of states/ UTs for providing financial assistance under the scheme of RGSA.

4. Preparation of holistic Gram Panchayat Development Plans (GPDPs) with focus on SDGs is emphasized in providing training to the elected representatives. The gaps identified during the MA survey on different components of SDGs are to be addressed through convergence of the related programmes/schemes and available resources in the GPDP so as to achieve the identified SDGs at the grassroots level. Under RGSA, 4713372 elected representatives and other stakeholders have been trained for preparation of inclusive and quality GPDPs. With the interventions made under RGSA, the number and quality of GPDPs across all states/ UTs have significantly improved with 247,094 GPDPs having been prepared for the year 2020-21.

(c) Availability of Technical Manpower for computerization of Panchayats

3.22 As per MOPR, there are 2.58 lakh Panchayat in the country. The Committee also enquired whether the Panchayats have sufficient manpower and technical know how for the same, the Ministry of Panchayati Raj clarified:

"1. Panchayat is a state subject and the core functionaries at the Panchayat level are recruited by State Governments. The Expert Committee constituted under the Chairmanship of Shri Sumit Bose on 'Performance Based Payments for Better Outcomes in Rural Development Programmes' in December 2016 has made observations that at the gram panchayat level, there is deficiency of staff.

2. Under the restructured scheme of RGSA launched in 2018 by MoPR there is provision for providing human resource under the component of manpower support to SPRC/DPRC, SPMU/DPMU as well as assistance to the Gram Panchayats in equipping them with Computers. Through the scheme of RGSA, MoPR is supplementing the efforts of states/UTs in providing better services in panchayats. In addition, Gram Panchayat are also leveraging resources from the Grants released by Central Finance Commission. Till date under the scheme of RGSA, 589 Blocks were provided with technical support and 2155 Gram Panchayats were provided with computers."

3.23 When the Committee sought response on the monitoring the progress made under the schemes through physical verification, the Secretary, MoPR during evidence held on 10.02.2021 stated that:

"हम लोगों का इतना सामर्थ्य नहीं है और न ही हमारी इतनी शक्ति है कि हम ढाई लाख पंचायतों में फिज़िकल वैरीफिकेशन करा सकें। हम लोग पूर्णतया उन पर आधारित हैं। यह स्टेट सब्जेक्ट होने के नाते हम पूर्णतया स्टेट डिपार्टमेंट और स्टेट एजेन्सीज़ पर निर्भर रहते हैं। आपने जो प्रश्न उठाया है कि वह टेक्निकल मैन पावर नहीं है, तो वहां काम कैसे चल रहा है। यह स्थिति अत्यंत विकट है। आज की तारीख में, चाहे वह रूरल डेप्लेपमेंट के माध्यम से या पंचायतीराज के माध्यम से होता हो।.....

एसआईआरडी की टीमें जाती हैं। हम लोगों के यहां पर इस तरह का नहीं है।"

3.24 Outlining the impact of RGSA funds, the Committee pointed out that the Ministry has informed that 357 Gram Panchayat (GP) Bhawans have been constructed and 1543 number of GP Bhawans are under construction. Further, 2155 Gram Panchayats have been computerized. When asked by the Committee whether there is a need for enhancing funds for this purpose, the Ministry of Panchayati Raj clarified:

"Keeping in view the interventions planned to be made during the next year as brought out projected requirement of funds for the activities during the year 2021-22 to the tune of Rs.894.03 crore under RGSA was proposed. However, the allocation of funds for the scheme for the year 2021-22 has been approved for Rs.593.00 crore. The matter regarding shortage of funds vis-à-vis projected requirement of funds will be

appropriately taken up with Ministry of Finance by way of supplementary grants.

3.25 Asked about the State-wise details of the GP Bhawans constructed under construction and GPs computerized in the country currently, the Ministry of Panchayati Raj stated:

“Panchayats being local government is a part of the State List of the 7th Schedule of the Constitution of India and hence being a State subject is the responsibility of State. However, MoPR through its schemes and programmes supplements the State efforts on limited scale. Under the scheme of RGSA, 357 Gram Panchayat (GP) Bhawans have been constructed and 1543 are at different stages of construction. Further, under the scheme 2155 GPs have been provided computer. Additionally, GP Bhawans and Computers and its peripheral are also provided through other schemes and initiatives like grants from Finance Commission, MGNREGA and other state schemes. As a part of the efforts taken up during the GaribKalyanRojgarAbhyan (GKRA) Campaign, 1347 new GP Bhawans have been completed and 24808 Bhawans are at different stages of construction in six States of Bihar, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh. The details of total number of GPs with own building and GPs with computers is given below:

Gram Panchayats (GPs) with Own office building and GP with Computers

Sl. No.	State	GPs with Own Office Building	GP With computers
1	Andaman & Nicobar Islands	59	70
2	Andhra Pradesh	7533	5153
3	Arunachal Pradesh	267	133
4	Assam	1903	1450
5	Bihar	1163	4244
6	Chhattisgarh	10186	4898
7	Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu	25	38
8	Goa	183	191
9	Gujarat	14173	14253
10	Haryana	2369	1364
11	Himachal Pradesh	3206	3226
12	Jammu & Kashmir	3030	284
13	Jharkhand	4189	3698
14	Karnataka	5549	6009
15	Kerala	938	941
16	Ladakh	182	0
17	Lakshadweep	5	10
18	Madhya Pradesh	22634	13358
19	Maharashtra	23859	26966

20	Manipur	119	65
21	Meghalaya	5413	5171
22	Mizoram	446	363
23	Nagaland	1000	420
24	Odisha	6798	6798
25	Puducherry	77	100
26	Punjab	8070	13263
27	Rajasthan	10063	11341
28	Sikkim	142	185
29	Tamil Nadu	12525	12525
30	Telangana	7986	1262
31	Tripura	535	0
32	Uttar Pradesh	34271	58753
33	Uttarakhand	6430	1939
34	West Bengal	3309	3340
	Total	198637	201811

3.26 The Committee also enquired as to how you are going to complete the task, the Ministry of Panchayati Raj explained:

“Keeping in view the interventions planned to be made during the next year as projected requirement of funds for the activities during the year 2021-22 to the tune of Rs.894.03 crore under RGSA was proposed. However, the allocation of funds for the scheme for the year 2021-22 has been approved for Rs.593.00 crore. The matter regarding shortage of funds vis-à-vis projected requirement of funds will be appropriately taken up with Ministry of Finance by way of supplementary grants. States will be impressed upon to explore other sources of funding for GP Bhawans and Computers and its peripheral such as grants from Finance Commission, MGNREGA and other state schemes.”

(d) Other Issues

(i) Construction of Floor-wise Panchayat Ghars due to land constraint

3.27 It came out during the course of evidence that there is need to construct multi-storeyed Panchayat Ghars due to land constraints in this connection, the MOPR in a post evidence reply stated:

“Panchayat Bhawans are critical infrastructure for Gram Panchayats. Panchayats being local government, is a part of the State List of the 7th Schedule of the Constitution of India and hence being a State subject is the responsibility of State. Though the Ministry supplements the efforts of the States through financial support under its scheme/s and Advisories on different aspects of strengthening of

Panchayats, the States have full power and authority on the issues relating to Panchayats including that for construction of Gram Panchayat (GP) Buildings. The States, in constructing the GP Bhawans, may effectively converge the funds available under the different scheme of Central Government including those of RGSA, MGNREGS etc with the State funds as per requirement and resources. Further, the Ministry of Panchayati Raj and the Ministry of Rural Development issued a joint advisory, in June 2020, as a onetime measure, to permit utilization of 14th Finance Commission grants available with Gram Panchayats as well as 15th Finance Commission untied grants in convergence with MGNREGS funds so that the deficit existing in this key infrastructure may be adequately addressed. However, there is no requirement as such on the part of States to seek any permission for design or size of the Gram Panchayat Building from the Ministry. Moreover, the Ministry has not put any restriction on the building plans of the Panchayat Bhawans. Panchayat Bhawans in many Gram Panchayats are double storeyed.”

(ii) Redressal of complaints against Common Service Centers (CSC)

3.28 During the course of evidence of the representative of MOPR, the Committee pointed out about the large number of complaints being received against Common Service Centre like non-payment of salaries, non-receipt of stationary, inaccuracies in names of employees in these Centre, the Secretary MOPR submitted:

“सर, यह मेडटी इलेक्ट्रॉनिक्स मंत्रालय के अंतर्गत आता है। यह संभव है कि प्रशासनिक मंत्रालय होने की वजह से इस तरह की शिकायतें वहाँ जा रही हो। सर, कॉमन सर्विस सेंटर का जो यहाँ पर हुआ है, इसके साथ स्टेट गवर्नमेंट्स के साथ एक एग्रीमेंट होती है। इसमें वे एग्रीमेंट करते हैं कि अगर आप स्थापित करेंगे, स्टेट में अगर आप यह सर्विस प्रोवाइड करेंगे तो बहुत सारी चीजें ऐसी हैं, जो कमर्शियल बेस पर होती हैं। जहाँ पर वे बताते हैं कि इसकी इकोनॉमिक वाइबलिटी नहीं है, तो उस वजह से स्टेट गवर्नमेंट्स एक एग्रीड एमाउंट, उनको कहते हैं कि हम प्रतिमाह आपको पांच – दस हजार देंगे जो अलग-अलग राज्यों के लिए अलग-अलग है। वे जो धनराशि की व्यवस्था करते हैं, उसमें एमओयूके आधार पर वे ग्राम पंचायत को ये – ये सर्विस प्रोवाइड करेंगे, ग्राम पंचायत को जो धनराशि ट्रांसफर हो रही है, चाहे एसएफसी का हो या वित्त आयोग का हो, उससे वे उसका भुगतान करवाते हैं।”

3.29 “On a query relating to complaints against Common Service Centres preparing forged documents, the Secretary replied in negative during evidence and submitted that:

“To the best of my knowledge for the last 13 months, that I am here, I have not received any such complaint in written or oral wherein they have raised allegations against such frauds being committed by any Common Service Centres.”

3.30. Responding over the issue of opening Common Service Centres where Panchayat Bhawans have not yet been constructed, the Secretary during evidence held on 10.2.2021 submitted as under:

“डिपार्टमेंट ऑफ इलैक्ट्रॉनिक्स ने सूचना दी है कि 2 लाख 51 हजार ग्राम पंचायत की परिधि में, चाहे वहां बाजार हो या कस्बे में रेंटिड बिल्डिंग हो, वहां कॉमन सर्विस सेंटर की स्थापना हो गई है। यह उन्होंने लिखित में संसद में भी दिया है और हमें भी जानकारी दी है। हमने पहले भी बताया था कि को-लोकेशन यानी पंचायत भवन में उसकी शाखा खुल जाए। यह अभी तक केवल 70,000 ग्राम पंचायत भवनों में हो पाया है। यूपी में सीएससी के माध्यम से कर ही नहीं रहा है, उनके पास स्टेट की लोकवानी की तर्ज पर सर्विस सेंटर्स की शुरूआत की थी, वह संभवतः उन्हीं के साथ एमओयू कर रहे हैं। अभी तो संभवतः उनका एमओयू भी नहीं हुआ है। यूपी में सीएससी कार्यरत हुई हैं, वे सभी बाजार, कस्बे में रेंटिड बिल्डिंग में चल रहे हैं।”

3.31. When the Committee categorically wanted the Ministry to oversee that a display board should be invariably put at all Gram Panchayat Bhawans/Common Service Centres mentioning the various types services being provided by them along with their charges, the Secretary MoPR during evidence held on 10.02.2021, submitted that:

“उसके बारे में स्टेट्स से बात कर के, we will work out some mechanism.”

3.32 In a post evidence reply, MOPR further elaborated as under:

“The matter has been taken up with the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY). The response received from the CSC-SPV under MeitY has not been found to be satisfactory and the same is being taken up with them and MeitY to expedite.”

(iii) Need for opening Bank Branches in Panchayats

3.33 During the course of evidence of the representatives of MOPR, the issue of opening Bank Branches in Panchayats areas specially in Odisha came up before the Committee. In this context, the Committee pointed out that out of 6798 Gram Panchayats of Odisha, as high as 4873 Gram Panchayats did not have any Bank Branches, more over the whenever the Bank Branches are available, the Bank official do not give respect of Sarpanchas of Gram Panchayats. Further, need for closer network of Bank Branches / Pos was also underlined before the Committee so that the beneficiaries need not travel long distance, the MOPR in a first evidence reply stated as under:

“The matter has been taken up with the Department of Financial Services, Ministry of Finance to examine and consider opening additional bank branches to cater to the need of the villagers and issue of suitable instructions to the bank functionaries to deal with Sarpanches, the elected representatives, with honour.”

(iv) Need for holding Gram Sabha elections in Tamil Nadu

3.34 During the course of evidence of the representatives of MOPR, it came out before the Committee that in the State of Tamil Nadu conducting of Gram Sabha elections have been cancelled from time to time and as a result audit report of Gram Panchayats is not approved. At this, the Secretary, MOPR assured as under:

“We will find this out from the State authorities. It is under their law; it does not come under our law. It is under their law which states that the report of the auditor has to be placed before the gram sabha and gram sabha has to take action. So, if there is certain anomaly in this regard and it if it not being followed by the local authorities, we will find it out and bring it to their notice the concerns which has been raised by the hon. Member.”

3.35 In a post evidence reply, the MOPR informed:

“In December 2019, the State conducted elections of Gram Panchayats in 27 Districts. In newly constituted 9 districts where the process of

delimitation is in process elections are to be held. The Assembly Elections in the State are also due in April-May, 2021. The State Government has intimated that Panchayat Elections in the remaining 9 districts would be taken up after the Assembly Elections.”

(ii) Incentivisation of Panchayats

3.36 Incentivization of Panchayats, one of the Central Components of the restructured RGSA scheme, is fully funded (100%) by the Central Government. It aims to encourage competitive spirit among PRIs and States/UTs wherein awards including financial incentives are given to best performing Panchayats (District, Intermediate and Gram) and States/UTs in recognition of their good work for improving delivery of services and public goods. The awards are given on the National Panchayati Raj Day (NPRD) celebrated on 24th April every year. The awards are given under the following categories:

- (a) Nanaji Deshmukh Rashtriya Gaurav Gram Sabha Puraskar (NDRGGSP)
- (b) Deen Dayal Upadhyay Panchayat Sashaktikaran Puraskar (DDUPSP)
- (c) Child-friendly Gram Panchayat Award (CFGPA)
- (d) Gram Panchayat Development Plan Award (GPDPA)
- (e) e-Panchayat Puraskar

3.37 The BE, RE and Actuals during 2018-19, 2019-20, 2020-21 and BE 2020-21 under 'Incentivisation of Panchayats' Scheme are as given below:

	Rs. (in crore)		
<u>Year</u>	<u>BE</u>	<u>RE</u>	<u>Actuals</u>
2018-19	46.00	41.00	44.01
2019-20	44.00	25.00	25.00
2020-21	47.00	47.00	43.33 (As on 05.01.2021)
2021-22	48.00		

3.38 Asked about the reasons for no increase of funds in all these years particularly when aim of the component is to incentivize the Panchayats, the Ministry of Panchayati Raj clarified:

“Budget outlay of Incentivization of Panchayats for a period of 4 years as approved by Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs is Rs.187.00 crore. Number of awards conferred annually depends upon participation from willing Panchayats for competition, actual number of nominations received from the States/UTs and final selection by Ministry. Subsequently, release of award money towards it is subject to receipt of requisite previous

year(s)' Utilization Certificates (UCs) by the concerned States/UTs. Accordingly, budget is maintained in view of prospective expenditure to be incurred vis-à-vis anticipation of likely submission of UCs by States/UTs for the award money released for Panchayats. For this, Ministry makes vigorous persuasion by way of regular follow-up through letters/emails, video conferences and official visits."

3.39 The Committee also wanted to know the reasons for reduction of BE at RE stage during 2018-19 and 2019-20, the Ministry of Panchayati Raj explained:

"budget is sought/maintained in view of prospective expenditure to be incurred vis-à-vis anticipation of award money to be released towards awards conferred and likely submission of UCs by States/UTs for the award money released for Panchayats."

3.40 Under the head of incentivisation of Panchayats, the following is the amount of money released to States/UTs during 2017-18, 2018-19, 2019-20 and 2020-21:

Award money/financial incentives released to States/UTs under the scheme of Incentivization of Panchayats during 2018-19, 2019-20 and 2020-21 (As on 05.01.2021)

<i>(Rs. in crore)</i>					
Sl. No.	States/ UTs	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
1	Andaman & Nicobar Islands	0.00	0.00	0.05	0.18
2	Andhra Pradesh	2.27	2.34	2.20	2.47
3	Arunachal Pradesh	0.05	0.50	0.50	0.05
4	Assam	1.37	1.30	0.97	0.59
5	Bihar	0.00	0.43	0.25	2.76
6	Chhattisgarh	1.42	1.29	1.55	1.54
7	Dadra & Nagar Haveli	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.70
8	Daman & Diu	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.35
9	Gujarat	1.55	1.52	0.05	3.62
10	Haryana	0.96	1.58	0.05	2.86
11	Himachal Pradesh	0.99	1.36	1.33	1.54
12	Jammu & Kashmir	0.00	0.08	0.05	0.60
13	Jharkhand	1.24	1.07	1.36	1.52
14	Karnataka	1.50	1.55	1.63	0.10
15	Kerala	1.65	1.55	0.25	1.75
16	Lakshadweep	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.05
17	Madhya Pradesh	2.42	2.53	2.35	0.05
18	Maharashtra	2.27	2.46	0.00	1.26
19	Manipur	0.83	0.70	0.78	0.25
20	Meghalaya	0.00	0.00	0.05	0.00
21	Nagaland	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.26
22	Odisha	0.00	4.19	0.00	2.97
23	Punjab	1.51	1.64	1.62	1.64

Sl. No.	States/ UTs	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
24	Rajasthan	1.46	1.54	1.34	1.83
25	Sikkim	0.76	0.85	0.81	0.86
26	Tamil Nadu	1.59	1.86	0.05	3.56
27	Telangana	1.46	1.42	0.05	2.91
28	Tripura	1.01	0.93	1.06	0.33
29	Uttarakhand	1.33	1.33	0.05	2.96
30	Uttar Pradesh	4.07	4.65	4.70	4.79
31	West Bengal	2.00	1.75	1.60	1.65
Total		33.71	40.42	24.70	46.00

Note: The releases are based on winning of awards by the PRIs

3.41 The Committee pointed out that amount released have been increasing year after year barring 2019-20. Further, only few States like Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Panjab, Rajasthan, Sikkim, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Tripura, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal have been the beneficiaries of these funds. Asked about the reasons for this trend, the Ministry of Panchayati Raj explained:

“1. Owing to the vigorous and conscious efforts taken by the Ministry over the years to ensure greater awareness regarding National Panchayat Awards among Panchayats across the country, there has been an incremental number of participations from Panchayats and consequently, number of awards conferred annually and award money released.

2.The number of awards conferred annually depends upon participation from willing Panchayats for competition, actual number of nominations received from the States/UTs and final selection by Ministry. Accordingly, the award money released depends upon number of awards conferred annually and subject to receipt of requisite previous year(s)' utilization certificates by the concerned States/UTs. Further, specifically under the award category of DeenDayalUpadhyay Panchayat SashaktikaranPuraskar, number of awards given are broadly in proportion to the number of Panchayats in a State/UT and accordingly, award money of Rs.5-15 lakhs per GP [as per Census 2011 population], Rs.25 lakhs per Block/Intermediate Panchayat and Rs.50 lakhs per District Panchayat is given. Therefore, consequently, the quantum of award money is disbursed is realized.

3.42 The Committee also enquired whether in other States these schemes should also be promoted in a big way for uniform incentivization of Panchayats, the Ministry of Panchayati Raj explained:

“1. It is pertinent to realize that the awards are competition based and quantum of awards conferred across the States/UTs is not only based upon differential number of Panchayats in the States/UTs but also upon the participation from willing Panchayats, further nominations by States and their final selection by Ministry. Hence, Ministry endeavors to bring in the uniformity towards awareness among Panchayats across the country for incremental participation.

2. While making conscious and vigorous efforts for creating greater awareness and motivation among Panchayats across the country for National Panchayat Awards, it is ensured that States/UTs also deliver adequate encouragement, support and publicity for it through their own advertisements in local newspapers, advisories and follow-ups. The award ceremony, which is a part of National Panchayati Raj Day event, sees an overwhelming participation from Panchayat Representatives and officials in thousands of numbers across the country, thus, depicting the horizon of the National Panchayat Awards.

(iii) Mission Mode Projects on E-Panchayats and related issues

3.43 E-Panchayat is one of the Mission Mode Projects (MMP) under the Digital India programme of Government of India that seeks to transform the functioning of Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs), making them more transparent, accountable and effective as last mile cutting edge organs of decentralized local self-governments. Core Common software Applications have been developed that addresses various aspects of Panchayats’ functioning such as planning, budgeting, implementation, accounting, monitoring, social audit and delivery of citizen services like issue of certificates, licenses, etc.

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

3.45 The BE, RE and Actuals during 2018-19, 2019-20 and 2020-21 and BE (2021-22) under Mission Mode Projects on e-Panchayat are as under:

Rs. (in crore)			
Year	BE	RE	Actuals
2018-19	20.00	11.91	10.07
2019-20	15.50	7.50	7.25
2020-21	20.00	17.82	13.00 (as on 05.01.2021)
2021-22	20.00		

3.46 Asked about the reasons for steep reduction of BE (2019-20) at RE stage, the Ministry of Panchayati Raj explained:

“1. NIC/NICSI is the technology partner of MoPR for implementation of e-Panchayat MMP. Substantial financial assistance under e-Panchayat MMP are for central level support for maintenance, development and training of e-Panchayat applications, faculty support and program management. During 2019-20, funds were available with the implementing agency i.e. NIC/ NICSI from the unutilized funds of previous year. Hence, there is reduction of BE at RE stage for 2019-20.
2. Further, there was a reduction in demand for handholding and Capacity Building on e-Panchayat Applications from States due to the restrictions imposed by COVID. The VC mode of training costs less.”

3.47 The Committee also wanted to know the reasons for lower actuals during 2018-19 and 2019-20 and 2020-21 and seeking higher BE 2021-22, the Ministry of Panchayati Raj explained:

“MoPR has initiated several new initiatives viz. eGramSwaraj, AuditOnline in the current year. It is envisaged that there shall be several enhancements and development work involved for further strengthening the systems as well as trainings at various levels. Further, 100% PRIs shall also be on-boarded on eGS-PFMS Interface for online payment from 1st April 2021. The hands-on trainings for GramManchitra use are expected to be time and resource intensive.

3.48 The Committee also enquired whether the Ministry of Panchayati Raj would be able to utilize the funds at RE level during the current year, the Ministry of Panchayati Raj explained:

"An amount of Rs.17.68 crore have already been utilized against the RE allocation of Rs.17.82 crore and balance shall be utilized in the remaining period of FY 2020-21.

The projects aim to automat the functioning of 2.55 lakh Panchayats and promote the use of e-Gram Swaraj and other applications under e-Panchayat MMP for efficient functioning of Panchayats.Under Smart Governance of GPs, the Ministry endeavours to harness the digital technology towards its vision to enhance end-to-end experience of public services; Government and non-government online.

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

(a) Functional Softwares in Panchayats

3.49 When enquired about the names of software programmes available under PES and their utility areas and whether these are sufficient to meet all the requirements of the Panchayats/Rural Local bodies of the States/UTs, the Ministry of Panchayati Raj furnished the following information:

"With aim to transform Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs), Government is implementing e-Panchayat Mission Mode Project (MMP) under Digital India Programme to make them more transparent, accountable and effective organs of local self-governing institutions. List of Applications developed under e-Panchayat MMP are as under:

S.N.	Application	Description
1	eGramSwaraj	eGramSwaraj, a Simplified Work Based Accounting Application has been developed amalgamating functionalities of planning, monitoring, accounting and online payments. It also brings in a more user-friendly interface with ease of navigation that makes it hassle-free for the GPs to track, monitor and modify their Action Plan. This application is developed with an aim for tracking every expenditure incurred for each activity undertaken at grassroot level. This has further reduced the number of data entries that Gram Panchayat (GP) user performs and

S.N.	Application	Description
		eventually eased the complexities involved in e-Governance Applications. It also provides facility for geo-tagging of assets that are created under various scheme (primarily CFC) by means of a mobile app. Further, eGramSwaraj-PFMS Interface (eGSPI) also allows for online payments by the Panchayats to service providers/vendors.
2	GramManchitra (GIS)	With spatial planning gaining more impetus, the application has been developed for facilitating and supporting GP users to perform planning at GP level with the use of geo-spatial technology. It provides a single/ unified Geo Spatial platform to better visualize the various developmental works. This application supports in 'Real time' monitoring of activities/ development work implementation status and progress of execution of various schemes. It also enables de-duplication of assets under various schemes/programmes.
3	Audit Online	The Central Finance Commission has time and again expressed concerns over unavailability of audited accounts of local bodies. In this regard, the Ministry has rolled out AuditOnline Application which facilitates online audit of PRIs. This Application will strengthen the accountability and simplify the audit process at Panchayat levels.

3.50 Under the e-Panchayat MMP, a suite of core common applications developed addressing all the aspects of the panchayat functioning. Based on the inputs/feedback received from the States and other stakeholders, these applications are regularly upgraded/ modified from time to time whenever it is felt necessary.

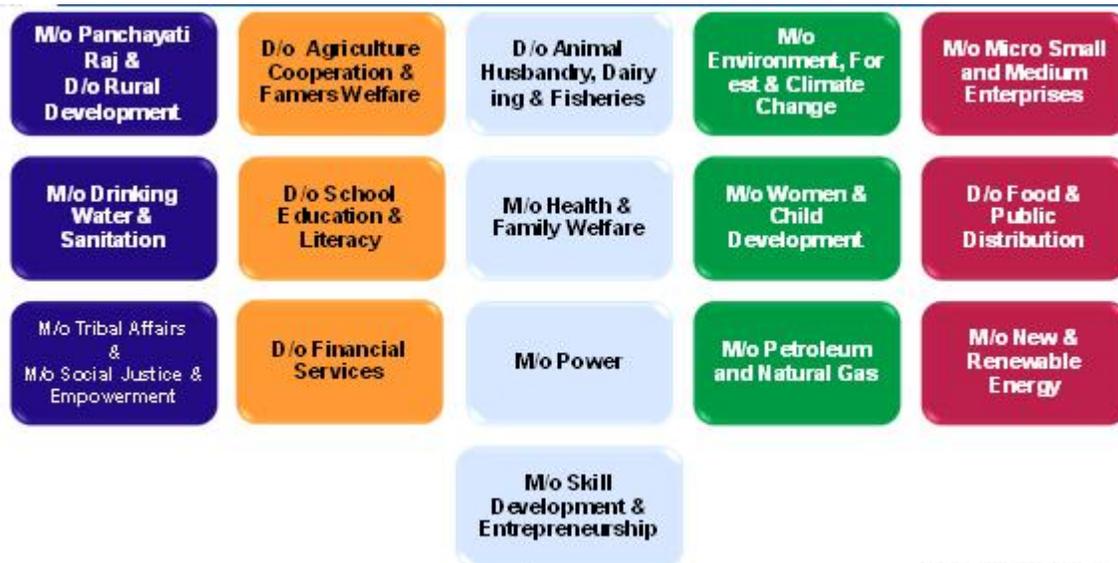
(b) Need for Panchayats' control over funds of different Ministries/Departments of Government of India being run by Panchayats

3.51 During the course of evidence of the representatives of MOPR the following facts were placed before the Committee regarding devolution of 29 Sector mandated for Panchayats under 11th Schedule of the Constitution and participating 18 Ministries/Department:

Devolution of 29 Sectors in 11th Schedule of Constitution under Article 243G:

Basic Services	Agricultural & Allied activities	Income Enhancing Sectors	Health and Nutrition	Education and Skill Development
1. Drinking Water	1. Agriculture	1. Social Forestry	1. Health and sanitation	1. Education
2. Fuel and fodder	2. Land Improvement	2. Minor Forest Produce	2. Family welfare	2. Vocational education
3. Roads	3. Minor Irrigation	3. Small scale industries	3. Women and child development	3. Adult and non-formal education
4. Rural Electrification	4. Animal Husbandry	4. Khadi, village and cottage industries		4. Libraries
5. Non-conventional energy	5. Fisheries	5. Markets and fairs		5. Cultural activities
6. Rural Housing				
7. Poverty alleviation programme				
8. Public distribution system				
9. Maintenance of community assets				
10. Social welfare				
11. Welfare of the weaker sections				

Participating 18 Ministries/Departments:



3.52 During the course of evidence of the representative of MOPR, the issue of control of Panchayats over funds of Central Sector and Centrally Sponsored Schemes being run by Panchayats was outlined for ensuring proper utilization of funds by way of making all the Departments / Ministries accountable for that purpose, the Secretary, MOPR admitted:

“बिल्कुल सही है।”

3.53 The Committee also wanted to know how far the efforts of the Ministry of Panchayati Raj has promoted Smart Governance of Gram Panchayat by way of convergence of all e-application on one platform, computerization of Panchayats

operation, leveraging Bharat Net for internal connectivity by operationalising e-governance (e-Panchayat/e-FMS initiative) with 100% Digital Payment so far, the Ministry of Panchayati Raj stated:

“In order to promote smart governance of Gram Panchayats, eGramSwaraj, a Simplified Work Based Accounting Application has been developed amalgamating functionalities of planning, monitoring, accounting and online payments. It also brings in a more user-friendly interface with ease of navigation that makes it hassle-free for the GPs to track, monitor and modify their Action Plan. This application is developed with an aim for tracking every expenditure incurred for each activity undertaken at grass-root level. This has further reduced the number of data entries that Gram Panchayat (GP) user performs and eventually eased the complexities involved in e-Governance Applications. Further, eGramSwaraj-PFMS Interface (eGSPI) also allows for online payments by the Panchayats to service providers/vendors. Also, Ministry is operationalizing eGSPI for onboarding of 100% PRIs for online payment from 1st April 2021. Ministry has also rolled out AuditOnline Application which facilitates online audit of PRIs. This Application will strengthen the accountability and simplify the audit process at Panchayat levels.”

3.54 In this connection, the Ministry of Panchayati Raj has also given the following information:

State/UT-wise number of GPs & equivalent using Gram Swaraj applications

S. No.	State/UT	No. of GPs uploaded GPDP (2020-21)	No. of GPs closed year book (2019-20)	No. of GPs with geo-tagged activities	No. of GPs & Equivalent with Online Payment
1	Andhra Pradesh	13199	12626	8594	0
2	Arunachal Pradesh	729	0	0	0
3	Assam	123	2198	2075	2197
4	Bihar	8386	0	0	0
5	Chhattisgarh	11663	10990	10242	11247
6	Goa	191	148	40	52
7	Gujarat	14213	13327	11096	0
8	Haryana	6142	6194	1544	4383
9	Himachal Pradesh	3223	2247	2552	29
10	Jharkhand	4256	4363	3542	4254
11	Karnataka	5931	6005	4133	5928
12	Kerala	941	0	0	0

13	Madhya Pradesh	22779	22602	6619	22435
14	Maharashtra	27876	27807	14446	1092
15	Manipur	161	160	161	158
16	Meghalaya	0	0	0	0
17	Mizoram	0	0	0	0
18	Nagaland	0	0	0	0
19	Odisha	6541	6790	2388	6652
20	Punjab	13215	12747	239	6951
21	Rajasthan	10981	9666	9118	397
22	Sikkim	185	174	154	0
23	Tamil Nadu	12524	12504	5473	7501
24	Telangana	12764	12581	7428	0
25	Tripura	1171	1178	483	488
26	Uttarakhand	7791	7762	3281	7688
27	Uttar Pradesh	58660	58736	14822	55782
28	West Bengal	3228	0	1386	0
	Total	246873	230805	109816	137234
1	Andaman & Nicobar Islands	70	0	0	0
2	Jammu & Kashmir	0	4136	1612	4151
3	Ladakh	0	164	0	165
4	Lakshadweep	0	0	0	0
5	Puducherry	0	0	0	0
6	The Dadra & Nagar Haveli & Daman And Diu	0	0	0	0
	Total	70	4300	1612	4316
	Grand Total	246943	235105	111428	141550

3.55 The Ministry of Panchayati Raj has informed that funds are only released to National Informatics Center Services Inc. (NICSI) for central level support for maintenance of PES applications, faculty support and programme management. Funds are also released to National Institute of Rural Development & Panchayati Raj (NIRD&PR) and State Institute of Rural Development (SIRD) for regional workshops on PES applications.

3.56 Asked funds are being meaningfully utilized, the MOPR stated:

“Yes. Ministry has undertaken several activities including launch of eGramSwaraj (a Simplified Work Based Accounting Application), Gram Manchitra (Geo-spatial planning application), eGramSwaraj-PFMS Interface (erstwhile PRIASoft-PFMS

Interface (PPI), for the purpose of making real time payments by GPs), AuditOnline (to facilitate online audit of PRIs).”

3.57 Elaborating about the workdone on the issue, the MOPR in a written note also stated:

“As a measure towards augmenting transparency and accountability in management of finances available to Panchayats from various sources, MoPR has been rigorously pursuing the States for adoption of Public Financial Management System (PFMS). In this regard, the Ministry has been pursuing States for closure of account on eGramvSwaraj as well as for Gram Panchayat(GP) registrationon PFMS. For the year 2019-20, 96% of the GPs have closed their monthly books and 96% of the Gram Panchayats have closed their year books.

1,73,286 Gram Panchayats have on-boarded eGramSwaraj-PFMS interface, out of which 1,48,144 GPs have carried out online payments through the Online Payment Module (erstwhile PRIASoft-PFMS Interface (PPI)) for the expenditure incurred under XIV FC for 2019-20. The States have also started carrying out payments under XV FC. As on date, 1,00,055 GPs have initiated payments under XVFC.”

3.58 During the course of evidence of the representatives of MOPR, the Secretary, MOPR in the Power Point Presentation made before the Committee outlined the following XV Finance Commission Critical Reform Agenda & Achievements:



(c) Need of Audit of Accounts of Panchayats pertaining to utilization of 14th and 15th Finance Commission Grants

3.59 During the course of evidence, the necessity of audit of accounts of Panchayats was outlined in a big way. In this context, the Committee wanted to know how many States have done Social Audit on utilization of 14th and 15th Finance Commission Grants and States that have completed, it timely and audit objections raised in audit reports, the Secretary, MOPR clarified:

“सर, ऑडिट का जैसा हमने अभी बताया कि पंचायती राज व्यवस्था में जो धन राशि जा रही थी, आरजीएसए का तो हमें यूटीलाइजेशन सर्टीफिकेट कंसर्न्ड स्टेट गवर्नमेंट के माध्यम से मिलता है और पूरी जिम्मेदारी उनकी होती है। अभी तक यहां पर पंचायती राज का, आरजीएसए फंड्स के सोशल ऑडिट की व्यवस्था अभी तक नहीं थी।

14वें वित्त आयोग की यद्यपि संस्तुति थी, लेकिन वित्त मंत्रालय ने जो गाइडलाइन्स जारी की थी उसमें ऑडिट की बाध्यता नहीं थी। ऑडिट उसका तब भी नहीं हो रहा था। 15वें वित्त आयोग ने जब अपनी संस्तुति के दौरान इंटर एक्शन हुआ था, तब उन्होंने कहा था कि ऑडिट होनी चाहिए। फाइनेंस कमीशन ने लगातार कहा है, लेकिन राज्य सरकारों ने उस पर कोई कार्रवाई नहीं की। हम लोगों ने भी उससे सहमति जताई थी और यह कहा था कि आप इसे अपनी रिपोर्ट में शामिल कर लें, अब उन्होंने किया है।”

3.60 The witnesses further added:

“वर्ष 2020-21 में ऑन लाइन ऑडिट की व्यवस्था शुरू की है। इसमें 23 राज्यों में यह कार्य शुरू हुआ है, इस साल हम सत्तर हजार ग्राम पंचायतों को ऑडिट कराने का प्रयास कर रहे हैं। जिसमें अभी 58,000 ग्राम पंचायतों के ऑडिट प्लान के लिए लोकल फंड ऑडिटर नियुक्त है, उन लोगों ने उसका ऑडिट प्लान लोड किया है। करीब साढ़े ग्यारह हजार ग्राम पंचायतों का ऑडिट पूरा हुआ है, जिसमें करीब दो लाख ऑडिट आपत्ति हुई हैं। यह कार्य आंध्र प्रदेश, तेलंगाना, गोवा और त्रिपुरा में हुआ है। दूसरे राज्यों में यह कार्य अभी प्रक्रियाधीन है। हमें उम्मीद है कि मार्च तक यह कार्य पूरा हो जाना चाहिए। जो ऑडिट आपत्ति बनती है, उसकी ड्राफ्ट रिपोर्ट पहले जाती है, फिर विभाग से या पंचायत सचिव या डीपीआरओ से उसका जवाब आने पर ऑडिटर उसे एक्सेप्ट करता है अथवा रिजेक्ट करता है और फिर फाइनल रिपोर्ट देता है। जब फाइनल रिपोर्ट आ जाएगी तब हम सभी राज्य सरकारों के साथ विचार-विमर्श के बाद ऐसी व्यवस्था करने जा रहे हैं कि असेम्बली में टेबल होने के बाद ऑडिट आपत्ति क्या थी, एक्शन टेकन रिपोर्ट क्या है, इसे भी पब्लिक डोमेन में लोड कर देता कि लोगों को पता चल सके कि

यह ऑडिट आपत्ति हुई थी और उस पर कार्रवाई की गई। जहां पर ग्राम सभा के सामने प्रस्तुत करने की व्यवस्था है, उदाहरण के लिए तमिलनाडु। वहां जब वे ग्राम सभा में प्रस्तुत कर देते हैं तो उसके बाद एक्शन टेकन रिपोर्ट और ऑडिट रिपोर्ट पब्लिक डोमेन में करने की कार्रवाई करेंगे। इसकी प्रक्रिया अभी बन रही है इसलिए यह पूर्व में प्रक्रिया नहीं थी।”

3.61 The Committee also wanted to know the position in Bihar, the witnesses stated:

“सर बिहार में भी कार्य शुरू किया है, अभी दो-चार गांव का ही ऑडिट प्लॉन बना कर अपलोड किया है, अभी बिल्कुल प्रारंभिक स्टेज में है। सर, ज्यादातर प्रोसीजरल लैप्सेज रहते हैं जिसको कैटेगरीज करते हैं, ये मेजर ऑब्जेक्शन हैं, ये माइनर ऑब्जेक्शन्स हैं। हमने टोटल बताया, जो लगभग दो लाख के ऑडिट ऑब्जेक्शन हैं, यह सभी को सम्मिलित करते हुए है। मैंने स्वयं इसका विश्लेषण नहीं किया है। एक अलग से बना कर देंगे कि किस तरह की आपत्ति आई है, क्या उसका किया है, उसकी रिपोर्ट भिजवा देंगे।”

3.62 In a post evidence reply the MOPR stated:

“Conduct of audit and corrective actions on audit observations fall within the domain of respective State Governments. To strengthen the financial management system in the Panchayats, the Ministry of Panchayati Raj (MoPR) has conceptualized and developed an application called AuditOnline for online audits of Panchayat accounts. It not only facilitates the auditing of accounts but also provides for maintaining audit records that have been carried out. This application is also envisaged to streamline the process for audit inquiries, draft local audit reports, draft audit Paras etc.”

3.63 In this context, the MOPR has given the State-wise details of workdone on the

issue. In this connection, the MOPR also stated:

Further, strengthening the transparency and accountability at grassroots level; the Ministry has rolled out an application - AuditOnline under e-panchayat Mission Mode Project (MMP). It allows for online audit of Panchayat accounts and records detailed information about internal and external audit. One unique aspect of AuditOnline; is that, it is completely configurable application i.e. the application can be modified/configured as per States' Audit process flow so that the State Auditors using the application can easily carry out the audit exercise using AuditOnline. To begin with; it was decided to carry out the audit of Panchayat accounts for 14th Finance Commission for the year 2019-20 of at least 20% GPs in every State. Several online training sessions were provided to the States; also video tutorials (both in English and Hindi) were also developed which were shared with the States. Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for AuditOnline highlighting the various features of the application was also developed and made available to all the States. The States are currently, in

different stages of progress of carrying out online Audit of the GPs. So far, 5,207 Auditors are registered on this application and Audit Plans have been prepared for about 54,477 GPs. 22 States have started creating GP (Auditee) users. Fourteen States viz. Andhra Pradesh, Goa, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Manipur, Odisha, Sikkim, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Tripura and Uttar Pradesh have also recorded Observations (1,95,418 observations) on the application. Four States have viz. Andhra Pradesh, Goa, Telangana and Tripura have completed the target for 2020-21.”

3.64 The Committee also enquired whether the Ministry came across problems in the use of core common software application developed for the Panchayats under the Panchayat Enterprise Suite (PES), the Ministry of Panchayati Raj explained:

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

(d) Framing of Guidelines for use of 15th Finance Commission Grants to Panchayats

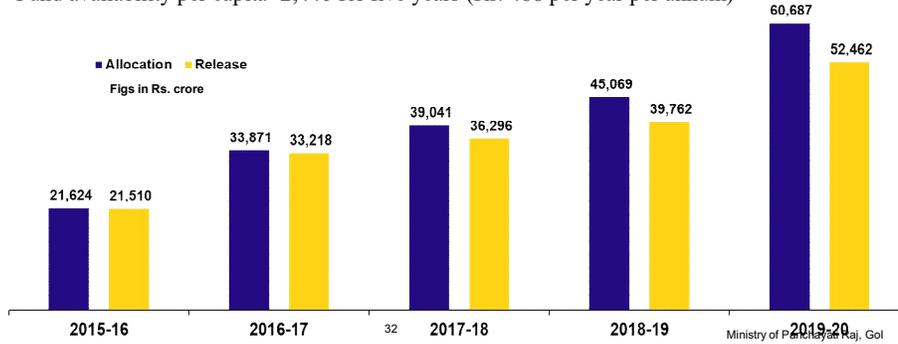
3.65 During the course of evidence, the Secretary, MOPR in a Power Point Presentation gave the following details about Fourteenth and Fifteenth Finance Commission Grants for PRIs:



Fourteenth Finance Commission



- Total allocation: Rs. 2,00,292.17 crores to GPs only, for 2015-16 to 2019-20
- **Total Release:** Rs. 1,83,248.54 (91.5%) (*Released based on MoPR recommendations to MoF*)
- Basic Grant (90%)
- Performance Grant (10%)
- Fund availability per capita- 2,440 for five years (Rs. 488 per year per annum)



14th FC - 90% of allocation for Basic Services

10% allocation



Administrative & technical support

Hiring of services

Purchase of computers, accessories & AMC

One time internet connectivity & recurring charges

One time cost for purchase of essential furniture

Payment of street light/water supply charges

One time updation of accounts; cost of social audit

Data entry cost; hiring charges for vehicles in emergent cases

Capacity building of functionaries if funds are not under any CSS or State Sector scheme

Cost of preparation of technical plan

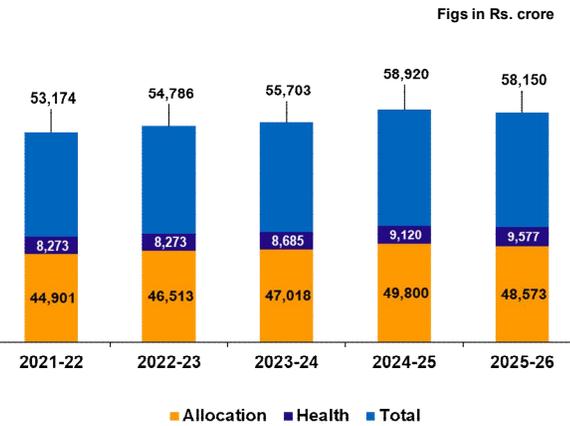
Electrification of GP including provision of solar lights



XV Finance Commission Recommendations



- Rs. 42,276.50 Crore out of Rs. 60,750 Crore allocation released for FY 2020-21(XV FC Interim Report)
- Total allocation to RLBs for FY 2021-26: Rs. 2,36,805 crores
 - 60% Tied Grants for – drinking water supply, rainwater harvesting & sanitation
 - 40% Untied Grants for felt needs (29 subjects)
- XV FC grants to all three tiers of Panchayats & Traditional bodies
- Additional Rs. 70,051 crores as health grants of which Rs. 43,928 crores for RLBs
- Therefore the total award for the RLBs during 2021-26 is Rs. 2,80,733 crores



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Ministry of Panchayati Raj, Govt.

3.66 During the course of evidence, the issue of proper utilization of 14th and 15th Finance Commission Grants funds for Panchayats came up before the Committee. The Committee pointed out that large number of Panchayats are misusing these funds as these do not have any works to do. It was also suggested that with a view to bringing about improvement in the working of Panchayats, new works may be undertaken, at this Secretary, MOPR clarified:

“15वें वित्त आयोग की संस्तुति में 60 प्रतिशत ड्रिंकिंग वाटर, वाटर कन्जर्वेशन, वाटर रिचार्ज और सेनिटेशन पर टाइड फंड्स कर दिया है जब कि 14वें वित्त आयोग में टोटली अनटाइड फंड्स था ता कि ग्राम पंचायत और ग्राम सभा अपनी प्राथमिकताओं के आधार पर कर सके। हमारे पास रिपोर्ट आई कि अधिकतर जगहों पर मुख्य रूप से इन्टरनल रोड्स पर काम हुआ, हैंड पम्प्स, पाइपड वाटर सप्लाई के भी कार्य हुए, कुछ कार्य स्ट्रीट लाइट्स के हुए और ड्रेन्स आदि भी बनाई गईं।

दूसरी मदयानी हेल्थ एजुकेशन पर तो वर्चुअली न के बराबर काम हुआ। कई ग्राम पंचायत ऐसी हो सकती हैं, जहां वाटर और से निटेशन में 60 प्रतिशत धन राशि खर्च करने की व्यवस्था नहीं है, उस दशा में क्या होगा? इसके बारे में जब हम गाईडलाइन्स जारी करेंगे तो इसका विस्तार से उल्लेख करेंगे।”

3.67 While replying to a query on social audits on utilization of funds released by the Central Finance Commission, objections thereto, follow-up action etc., the Secretary

stated that:

“पंचायती राज व्यवस्था में जो धनराशि जा रही थ, आरजीएसए का तो हमें यूटीलाइजेशन सर्टीफिकेट कंसर्न्ड स्टेट गवर्नमेंट के माध्यम से मिलता है और पूरी जिम्मेदारी उनकी होती है। अभी तक यहां पर पंचायती राज का, आरजीएसए फंड्स के सोशल ऑडिट की व्यवस्था अभी तक नहीं थी।

14वें वित्त आयोग की यद्यपि संस्तुति थी, लेकिन वित्त मंत्रालय ने जो गाइडलाइन्स जारी की थी उसमें ऑडिट की बाध्यता नहीं थी। ऑडिट उसका तब भी नहीं हो रहा था। 15वें वित्त आयोग ने जब अपनी संस्तुति के दौरान इंटरएक्शन हुआ था, तब उन्होंने कहा था कि ऑडिट होनी चाहिए। फाइनेंस कमीशन ने लगातार कहा है, लेकिन राज्य सरकारों ने उस पर कोई कार्रवाई नहीं की। हम लोगों ने भी उससे सहमति जताई थी और यह कहा था कि आप इसे अपनी रिपोर्ट में शामिल कर लें, अब उन्होंने किया है।

वर्ष 2020-21 में ऑनलाइन ऑडिट की व्यवस्था शुरू की है। इसमें 23 राज्यों में यह कार्य शुरू हुआ है, इस साल हम सत्तर हजार ग्राम पंचायतों को ऑडिट कराने का प्रयास कर रहे हैं। जिसमें अभी 58,000 ग्राम पंचायतों के ऑडिट प्लान के लिए लोकल फंड ऑडिटर नियुक्त है, उन लोगों ने उसका ऑडिट प्लान लोड किया है। करीब साढ़े ग्यारह हजार ग्राम पंचायतों का ऑडिट पूरा हुआ है, जिसमें करीब दो लाख ऑडिट आपत्ति हुई हैं। यह कार्य आंध्रप्रदेश, तेलंगाना, गोवा और त्रिपुरा में हुआ है। दूसरे राज्यों में यह कार्य अभी प्रक्रियाधीन है।”

“ज्यादातर प्रोसीजरल लैप्सेज रहते हैं जिसको कैटेगराइज करते हैं, ये मेजर ऑब्जेक्श हैं, ये माइनर ऑब्जेक्शन्स हैं। हमने टोटल बताया, जो लगभग दो लाख के ऑडिट ऑब्जेक्शन हैं, यह सभी को सम्मिलित करते हुए है। मैंने स्वयं इसका विश्लेषण नहीं किया है। एक अलग से बनाकर देंगे कि किस तरह की आपत्ति आई है, क्या उसका किया है, उसकी रिपोर्ट भिजवा देंगे।”

3.68 The Committee also wanted to know to include the suggestions of Experts/ MPs,

in this regard, the MOPR in post evidence reply informed:

“MoPR provides inputs to Ministry of Finance (MoF) which issues the guidelines on use of 15th Finance Commission Grants. The suggestions of Experts/ MPs, as received by MoPR, are accordingly taken into consideration for formulation of inputs being furnished to MoF in this regard.”

3.69 In this context, on the issue of using FC Grants funds for maintenance of rural roads, the Secretary informed:

“As far as the maintenance of assets is concerned, even in the guidelines which we had issued for interim recommendations for the current financial year, we had said that Finance Commission funds can be used even for maintenance of public buildings, public structure which have come up in the villages. Apart from Panchayat bhawan, it could include school building, it could be a cooperative seed centre or fertilizers centre, it could be a health sub-centre or it could be a Anganwadi Kendra. We had specifically mentioned this that all the time we cannot be just creating new buildings and you do not take care of existing buildings because we know that in rural areas, once these structure come up for

their maintenance, hardly any fund is given by the concerned Department. Therefore, we felt that if Gram Panchayat is to be overall responsible for providing functions relating to 29 sectors, 18 Departments, then it should also take up this opportunity to carry out minor repairs. Of course, if a large amount is required for repair of some building, say a sum of Rs. 10 lakh or Rs. 5 lakh is required and that Panchayat is receiving only Rs. 5 lakh or Rs. 7 lakh and if it is a small Panchayat, then it cannot undertake the complete repair work. So, this provision is there that they can utilize these funds even for carrying out maintenance of existing public buildings.”

3.70 In a post evidence reply, MOPR informed:

“Maintenance of Gram Panchayat Roads (within GP and inter GP) is one of the permissible activities under XV FC Basic (Untied) Grants which would be available throughout the award period 2021-26.”

(iv) Media and Publicity/Action Research and Research Studies

3.71 The Ministry of Panchayati Raj has stated that the funds under “Media and Publicity” used for mass media campaigns and publication of quarterly magazine GramodaySankalp, organization of National Panchayat Raj Day (NPRD) function and such other functions. The funds under “Action Research and Research Studies” is meant for taking up research studies through institutions to assess the impact of various schemes/ programmes/ initiatives of the Government related to rural local bodies. The BE, RE and Actuals during 2018-19, 2019-20 and 2020-21 and BE 2021-22 under the above scheme are as under:

Media and Publicity

Year	BE	RE	Actuals
2018-19	15.00	15.00	12.16
2019-20	15.00	15.00	5.25
2020-21	8.00	10.22	5.00 (as on 05.01.2021)
2021-22	12.00		
Total	50.00	40.22	22.41

Action Research & Research Studies

2018-19	3.00	2.00	2.00
2019-20	3.00	0.91	0.91
2020-21	2.00	2.0	1.37 (as on 05.01.2021)
2021-22	3.00		
Total	11.00	4.91	4.28

3.72 Asked about the reasons that as against the lower utilization of funds under both schemes during above period higher funds have been proposed for BE (2020-21), the Ministry of Panchayati Raj clarified:

“1.The principal expenditure defrayed under the Media & Publicity (M&P) scheme is printing cost and dispatch of the GramodaySankalp (GuS) quarterly magazine involving more than Rs.1.60 crore for each issue and Grants-in-aid released to selected State/s to organise the National Panchayati Raj Day celebration and such other function in connection with giving away of various Panchayat awards. During this year, due to the prevailing pandemic situation, the physical conduct of award distribution in association with State/s could not take place. Owing to the same reason, dispatch of magazines/books etc. in physical form was not possible due to complete lockdown conditions imposed. One of the issue of GuS i.e. 6th issue was not printed and dispatched and only e-book was produced leading to reduction in cost in printing and dispatch. Similarly, completion of the subsequent two issues were delayed due to the same reason leading to lower booking of expenditure.

2. Due to general cut in Ministry’s budget, during the year 2019-20 at RE stage, its impact was also on the scheme of Action Research & Research Studies (AR&RS) and its budget was reduced to Rs.0.91 crore. Given the commitment and sanction of study / progress of the study, the budgeted allocation for the current year will be totally utilized. For 2021-22, new themes are being identified for carrying out studies during the year 2021-22, besides meeting the committed liabilities of already sanctioned studies. Next year as the conditions move back towards normalcy, it is expected that the above mentioned activities will be carried out as planned. Moreover, especial nationwide media campaign on extension of SVAMITVA scheme will be carried out involving additional expenditure.”

3.73 Asked further whether the funds are sufficient enough to meet the requirements of analyzing the continuously evolving Panchayati Raj Institutions, the Ministry of Panchayati Raj clarified:

“1. The Ministry is using cost-effective communication tools like SMSs and Social Media for dissemination of information and creating awareness. If need arises, more funds can be sought at RE stage or Media & Publicity scheme.

2. Under the scheme of AR&RS the funds allocated and the study proposals under consideration will be sufficient enough for the year 2021-22.”

3.74 The Committee also wanted to know whether the number of copies of magazines can be reduced significantly by use of e-paper by Panchayats, the Ministry of Panchayati Raj clarified:

“Yes, it can be reduced. The Ministry currently sends out the physical copies of the magazine to 2.52 lakh Gram Panchayats (two copies each) and 5162 District and Block level Panchayats (one copy each). The number of copies to Gram Panchayats can be reduced to 1 from 2 at present and as such the total reduction can be 2.52 lakhs. The Ministry is also including QR Codes in the magazine for ease in readability of magazine on digital platforms. The e-copy of the magazine is also hosted on the website of the Ministry wider circulation among the masses.”

3.75 Asked about how many project/studies have been undertaken since restructuring of the RGSA after launch by Hon’ble Prime Minister on 24.04.2018 on the occasion of National Panchayati Raj Day, the Ministry of Panchayati Raj gave the following details:

“Since 24th April, 2018 onwards, the following 11 studies have been sanctioned, which are still underway:

Sl. No.	Title of the Study	Name of the Institute	Status
1	Economic Development and Income Generation through Panchayats in Rural Areas	M/s. Kerala Development Studies (KDS), New Delhi	Completed

Sl. No.	Title of the Study	Name of the Institute	Status
2	Impact Assessment of Training of PRIs	M/s. Centre for Development Communication & Studies (CDECS), Jaipur, Rajasthan	Draft Report under finalization
3	Time and Work (TAW): Study for PRI Functionaries in India	National Institute of Rural Development & Panchayati Raj (NIRD&PR), Hyderabad	-do-
4	Review of the process and content of District Plan Comparison across selected States	Kerala Institute of Local Administration (KILA), Kerala	-do-
5	Gender Responsive Initiatives for PRIs & their impact in selected States	Indira Gandhi Panchayati Raj & Gramin Vikas Sansthan (SIRD&PR), Jaipur, Rajasthan	Completed
6	Feedback from the Public on the role and effectiveness of Gram Sabha with reference to Mizoram	State Institute of Rural Development & Panchayati Raj (SIRD&PR), Mizoram	Draft Report under finalisaation
7	Role of Gram Panchayat (Village Council) in marketing of rural agricultural produces in Sihfa village, Aizawl district, Mizoram	State Institute of Rural Development & Panchayati Raj (SIRD&PR), Mizoram	In the process of submission by concerned Institute
8	Utilization and Impact Evaluation of Fourteenth Finance Commission (FFC) Grants to Gram Panchayats in selected Indian States	M/s. Institute of Economic Growth (IEG), New Delhi.	Completed
9	Status, Processes, Problems in Implementation of Gram Panchayat development Plan (GPDP) and its Impact on Panchayat Service Delivery and Way Forward for further Strengthening of GPDP	National Institute of Rural Development & Panchayati Raj (NIRD&PR), Hyderabad	Draft Report will be submitted in August, 2021
10	To Assess the	National Council for Applied	

Sl. No.	Title of the Study	Name of the Institute	Status
	Availability of Resources for Creating the Assets and Initiatives taken for Generating Various Own Sources of Revenue	Economic Research (NCAER), New Delhi	Draft Report will be submitted in June, 2021
11	Evaluation of "Media and Publicity" and "Action Research & Research Studies" schemes of the Ministry	National Institute of Rural Development & Panchayati Raj (NIRD&PR), Hyderabad	Draft Report under finalization

3.76 The Committee further enquired how many studies are still pending completion, the Ministry of Panchayati Raj explained:

"Out of these eleven studies, three studies have been finalized / completed, mentioned at Sl. No. 1, 5 and 8 respectively and draft reports submitted for the five studies mentioned at S. Nos. 2, 3, 4, 6 and 11 respectively are in the final stages of finalization and the remaining three studies, the concerned institute is in the process of submitting the draft report on the study mentioned at S. No. 7, and for the studies mentioned at S. No. 9 and 10, draft reports will get due for submission in August, 2021 and June, 2021 respectively."

(v) **Survey of Villages and Mapping with Improved Technology in Villages Areas (SVAMITVA)**

3.77 SVAMITVA (Survey of Villages and Mapping with Improvised Technology in Village Areas) is a Central Sector Scheme launched on 24th April 2020. The scheme started in 2020-21 with an outlay of Rs.79.65 crore on a pilot basis by providing funds out of RGSA scheme by way of re-appropriation. The scheme aims to provide the 'record of rights' to village household owners in rural 'Abadi' areas and issuance of Property Cards. It enables monetization of rural residential assets for credit and other

financial services. The scheme is being rolled out all across the country over 2021-22 to 2023-24. A sum of Rs.200 crore has been proposed under this Scheme for 2021-22.

3.78 Asked about the experience of implementation of this Central Sector Scheme since 24 April, 2020, the Ministry of Panchayati Raj clarified:

“SVAMITVA Scheme is being implemented in States of Haryana, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, Rajasthan and Andhra Pradesh in the Pilot Phase of the Scheme (FY 2021-2021). Despite various challenges encountered during implementation of the scheme viz. availability of sufficient drones, bad weather conditions such as fog, floods and high winds etc., Panchayat elections in few States, restrictions imposed due to COVID-19 pandemic, paucity of field level manpower, the States and Survey of India worked enthusiastically for achieving the targets. Requisite permissions from Ministry of Civil Aviation and Director General of Civil Aviation and Ministry of Defence also required before drone flying in certain areas, which were obtained. Further, Ministry and Survey of India worked closely to develop Drone Ecosystem in the Country. Drone flying is completed in nearly 24000 villages till date.”

3.79 The Committee further enquired in what way the scheme aims to provide record of rights to village household owners in rural bodies areas and issuance of property cards, the Ministry of Panchayati Raj explained:

- “Scheme provides legal document to Property owner against their Property in rural inhabited area which can be further leveraged as a financial tool.
- States have amended their State Rules/Acts to provision Property Cards and in case of Haryana Title deeds.
- As a first milestone towards the Scheme, on 11th October 2020, Hon’ble Prime Minister launched the physical distribution of Property Cards/ title deeds in 763 villages of Six Pilot Phase States, providing Property card/title deed to 1 lakh Property Owners. It has also been seen that out of the first batch of recipients of Property Cards, a few have already been able to secure loans against the Card/Deed issued to them from established banks. Some of these have interacted with the Prime Minister on 11th October 2020 through VC.
- Subsequently, there were State events on 25th December 2020 and 26 January 2021, where Property Cards/Title deeds were distributed.
- States are continuously organizing State specific events for the distribution of Property Cards/Title Deeds to the Property owners.”

3.80 The Committee also wanted to know about the roadmap drawn up for implementation during 2021-22 to 2023-24, the Ministry of Panchayati Raj furnished the following:

“Scheme will extend across the country covering all villages as per the detail given below:

S.N.	State	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
		No. of Villages Covered*		
1	Jammu & Kashmir	0	0	6850
2	Ladakh	0	0	243
3	Andaman & Nicobar		552	0
4	Andhra Pradesh	5700	11950	0
5	Arunachal Pradesh	0	0	5577
6	Assam	0	21000	7680
7	Bihar	10000	35265	0
8	Chandigarh	0	0	0
9	Chhattisgarh	8000	12578	0
10	Dadra & Nagar Haveli		70	0
11	Daman & Diu		31	0
12	Delhi	0	0	0
13	Goa	0	410	0
14	Gujarat	1000	8510	9505
15	Haryana	0	0	0
16	Himachal Pradesh	0	8000	12961
17	Jharkhand	10000	22725	0
18	Karnataka	31207	0	0
19	Kerala	464	1200	0
20	Lakshadweep	0	27	0
21	Madhya Pradesh	32600	0	0
22	Maharashtra	39137		0
23	Manipur	0	0	3798
24	Meghalaya	0	0	6846
25	Mizoram	0	0	838
26	Nagaland	0	0	1617
27	Odisha	2000	50141	0
28	Puducherry		125	0
29	Punjab	5045	6769	0
30	Rajasthan	13000	32687	0
31	Sikkim		454	0
32	Tamil Nadu	1263	17200	0
33	Telangana	1000	10234	0
34	Tripura	0	0	898
35	Uttar Pradesh	30000	0	0

S.N.	State	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
		No. of Villages Covered*		
36	Uttarakhand	12548	0	0
37	West Bengal	0	33002	8000
Total		202964	272930	64813

***Indicative Plan** - *Flexibility to add more States in the next year and targets to be transferred from one State to another depending on the traction being obtained by the drone survey operations."*

Part-II**Recommendations/Observations**

2.1 The Demands for Grants (2021-22) of the Ministry of Panchayati Raj (MOPR) make a provision of Rs.913.43 crore. The funds primarily cater to Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan (RGSA) (Rs.593.00 crore), for capacity building and training requirements of Elected Representatives (ERs) and functionaries of Panchayats, under Svamitva Scheme (Rs.200 crore) for giving Property Cards to rural households and under 'Incentivisation of Panchayats Scheme' (Rs.48 crore) for releasing award money to Panchayats in the country that fair well etc. The Budgetary allocations have been examined in the light of various issues arising before the Committee. The Committee note that 14th Finance Commission (FC) Grants (2015-19) to the tune of Rs.1.83 lakh crore and 15th (FC) Grants (2020-21) of Rs.60,750 cr. were released to Panchayats for strengthening basic infrastructure of Panchayats with tied funds for drinking, sanitation etc. and untied funds for felt needs under 29 Subjects mandated for Panchayats under Eleventh Schedule of the Constitution to work in areas like rural road, agriculture, lands and so on. The recommendations of the Committee are in succeeding paragraphs:

Downsizing of abysmal MOPR funds and utilisation of allocation

2.2 While glancing through the over-all outlays and expenditure of MOPR during the last three years, the Committee are dismayed to note that Budget estimates have been downsized to abysmally low levels with progressively higher reduction year after year for one reason or other. For instance, during

2018-19 the BE of Rs.825.17 cr. were brought down to Rs.716.26 cr. Similarly during **2019-20** and **2020-21** BE of Rs.871.52 cr. and Rs.900.94 cr. were reduced to as low as Rs.500.00 cr. and Rs.690.00 cr. at RE level respectively.

The Committee are further concerned to note procedural issue of RGSA being new scheme for 2018-19 has delayed availability of funds upto August, 2018 leading to late submission of Utilisation Certificates (UCs) for fund releases. The unspent balances with States/UTs has also been the common reason for less expenditure during all these years of 2018-19, 2019-20 and 2020-21 also leading to late submission of UCs for fresh releases. The Committee also observe that during the year 2020-21, due to Covid-19 pandemic and to avoid accumulation of unspent funds status, the Ministry of Finance imposed 5% per month restriction on expenditure till November, 2020.

The Committee are also concerned to note that unspent amount of Rs.138.69 cr. is figuring with MOPR as on 05.01.2021 cumulatively under every scheme with highest amount of Rs.66.79 cr. with RGSA.

The Committee, therefore, find that beneficiary States of MOPR funds as also MOPR are themselves responsible for downsizing of funds at RE level and the same does not at all augur well with over-all releases and their utilisation. The Committee, therefore, urge MOPR to impress upon States/UTs Governments for timely submission of proposals and their

approval at Central level pending revamp of RGSA scheme, so that amount budgeted for 2021-22 is optimally utilised without any cut at RE level.

(Recommendation Sl. No.1)

Downsizing of budget estimates under RGSA at RE level since 2018-19

2.3 The Committee note that Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan (RGSA), the umbrella scheme for capacity building need of Panchayats from 2018-2021 for achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) with focus on convergence with Mission Antyodaya with emphasis on strengthening Panchayats in 117 Aspirational Districts in the country is witnessing huge reduction at RE stage in the light of staggering unspent balances and procedural issues like late availability of funds, release of corresponding State share, delayed submission or non-submission of requisite documents.

The Committee find that during 2018-19, 2019-20 and 2020-21 as against the BE of Rs.720.80 cr., Rs.762.34 cr. and Rs.790.53 cr., the RE were brought down to as low as Rs.622.41 cr., Rs.432.96 crore and Rs.499.94 cr. respectively largely because of unspent balances. The Committee's examination have revealed that large unspent amounts are figuring in Bihar (Rs.76.53 cr.), Arunachal Pradesh (Rs.27.24 cr.) Gujarat (Rs.21.63 cr.), Telangana (Rs.7.26 cr.) etc. and States of Karnataka, Nagaland, A&N Islands have not submitted documents. The Committee while examining Demands for Grants (2021-22) of the Ministry of Panchayati Raj has come across a major issue that the State Governments are not very keen to avail of MOPR funds in the first instance as compared to funds of other Ministries as the MOPR funds are quite less and also involve a lot of formalities for

compliance. Further, the Secretary, MOPR was candid enough in submission before the Committee that Ministry of Finance latest directive of releasing the funds in four instalments instead of two instalments has further compounded the situation. In view of the facts and circumstances nurtured above, the Committee feel that, MOPR, being nodal Ministry for RGSA in the country, should give a top priority for full utilisation of available funds during 2021-22 alongwith beneficiary State/UT Governments so as to avoid reduction at RE stage. Therefore, the Committee strongly recommend MOPR to coordinate with the concerned State Governments for liquidating their unspent balances, submission of pending documents etc. so that SDGs are fulfilled and real capacity building in 117 Aspirational Districts is achieved during terminal year RGSA i.e. by 2021-22.

(Recommendation Sl. No.2)

Good work done by MOPR during Covid pandemic appreciated

2.4 The Committee appreciate that during difficult Covid 19 pandemic time, the MOPR had successfully implemented SVAMITVA facing challenges like paucity of field level manpower and drone by completing drones flying in 24,000 villages and had also undertaken e-Panchayat MMP by launching of e-Gram Application, online audit and on-boarding of 15th FC and other schemes on e-Gram Swaraj-PFMS integration for real time online payment by PRIs. The Committee feel that the same pace of implementation be maintained and accelerated further in post Covid time also so that the desired results of the scheme could be achieved as envisaged by the Government.

(Recommendation Sl. No.3)

Declining trends of Elected Representative (ER) trained

2.5 The Committee are constrained to note the declining number of Elected Representative (ERs) trained under RGSA from 53.70 lakh in 2017-18 to as low as 43.04 lakh in 2018-19 and 33.98 lakh in 2019-20 and 14.29 lakh during 2020-21 as on 31.01.2021. The Committee are also dismayed to note huge gap between Annual Action Plans (AAPs) approved for implementation of Gram Panchayat Development Plans (GPDPs) vis-a-vis Fund released during 2018-19 onwards. For instances, during 2018-19 as against Rs.1826.87 cr. of AAPs approved, the fund released were as low as Rs.598.27 cr., similar is the position in remaining years also. The Committee also find a disquieting feature in the level of approval of AAPs which has almost doubled from Rs.1826.87 cr. in 2018-19 to as high as Rs.3302.94 cr. in 2020-21 at the same time the level of funds released remained almost static between Rs.598.27 cr. in 2018-19 to 432.90 cr. in 2019-20 and Rs.433.15 cr. in 2021-22 till now. In this connection, MOPR has revealed before the Committee that out of 35 States/UTs, as low as 23 States/UTs have been released necessary funds, leaving the remaining States on account of lack of submission of documents including UCs, Audited Statement, non-release of State share and unspent balances. The Committee also find under RGSA, ERs are to act as Sector Enablers in wide variety of areas like animal husbandry, afforestation etc. to develop governance capabilities of Panchayats to deliver on SDGs that cover ending poverty and hunger and to other areas like Health, Education and so on.

In this connection, the MOPR has laboured to convince the Committee by showcasing that training has been imparted to as high as 41.13 lakh ERs with 2.47 lakh GPDPs prepared during 2020-21 in 117 Aspirational Districts in the country. The Committee, however, feel that looking at declining rate of ERs trained during 2018-19 onwards with wide gaps visible between AAPs and funds released, the facts depict altogether different story and GPDPs apparently appear only on Papers. With a view to finance these GPDPs the Committee feel that huge 15th FC Grants funds for Panchayats be meaningfully utilised. The Committee, therefore, recommend that all out efforts be made by MOPR to reverse the situation with regard to training of ERs and reducing the rising gaps between AAPs approved and funds released expeditiously.

(Recommendation Sl. No.4)

Shortage of Gram Panchayats Bhawans and low level of computerisation of Gram Panchayats in different States/UTs.

2.6 The Committee are constrained to note that out of 2.56 lakh Gram Panchayats (GPs) in the country, only 1.98 lakh GPs have their own office buildings and only 2.01 lakh GPs are equipped with computers even after the recommendations of Expert Committee headed by Sumit Bose stressed on the issue of shortage of staff in Panchayat way back in December, 2016. Apart from this MOPR has also elaborated that over 30,000 GP Bhawans are either completed or under completion through variety of schemes including RGSA, MGNREGA, FC Grants etc., besides 1347 new GPs have been constructed and 24,808 Bhawans are under construction under Garib Kalyan

Rojgar Abhiyan (GKRA) in six States of Bihar, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh. The Committee recommend that all States/UTs deficient with GPs Bhawans be pursued to construct the concerned GP Bhawans expeditiously.

(Recommendation Sl. No.5)

Computerisation of GPs in some States

2.7 The Committee while viewing the MOPR data about State-wise GPs with computers are glad to note that A&N Islands, Bihar, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Punjab and West Bengal have GPs with computers, whereas States with GPs with less number of computers are Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Chhattisgarh, Haryana, J&K, Ladakh, Madhya Pradesh, Manipur, Nagaland, Telangana and Uttarakhand. The Committee also note that as against the budgetary demand of Rs.894.03 cr. made out by MOPR only Rs.593 crore has been approved by the Ministry of Finance. The Committee have further been informed that the issue will be taken up before Ministry of Finance by way of Supplementary Grants. In the light of large number of GPs that are without computers as shown above, the Committee strongly recommend that efficacious efforts including sufficient finance is provided to the MOPR for early computerisation of GPs in concerned States/UTs.

(Recommendation Sl. No.6)

Devolution of Powers

2.8 The Committee note that Article 243G allows discretion to the States in the matter of devolution of powers (funds, functions and functionaries) to Panchayats and the States vary in the extent to which they have devolved powers to the Panchayats despite persuasion by the Ministry of Panchayati Raj. The Committee further note that Fifteenth Finance Commission (XV FC), in its interim report, for the Financial Year 2020-21, have recommended grants to the tune of Rs. 60,750 crores and XV FC in its report for the period 2021-26 has awarded grants of Rs. 2,36,805 crore to the rural local bodies in all the three tiers and the traditional bodies of fifth and sixth schedule areas in 28 States for creation of infrastructure and assets essential towards delivery of basic services to the citizens i.e. water supply, sanitation, street lighting, and connectivity by roads, various community assets like Gram Panchayat Bhawans etc. Additional Rs. 70,051 crores out of grants for local governments have been earmarked for health sector for local bodies (both rural and urban) with a view to address the vulnerabilities exposed by the COVID pandemic. The Committee, consider that central grants by way of XIVFC and XVFC for creation of infrastructure and assets essential towards delivery of basic services to the citizens makes it necessary that the States devolve powers and functions to Panchayats so that the goal of Panchayati Raj through all round development of the rural India is accomplished. The Committee, therefore, recommend that the Ministry continue their efforts to persuade States to devolve powers to the Panchayats and provide financial assistance to enable them to perform devolved functions effectively besides

seeking directions from the Central Finance Commission/Ministry of Finance over the shortcomings experienced.

(Recommendation Sl. No.7)

Regarding construction of floorwise Gram Panchayat Bhawans and need for Bank Branches in the vicinity of Panchayats

2.9 During the course of evidence of the representative of MOPR various issues relating to RGSA that came up before the Committee are construction of floor wise Panchayat Bhawans due to land constraints, redressal of complaints against Common Service Centres in Panchayats regarding non-payment of salaries to staff employed, non-availability of stationary for office work etc, need for opening Bank Branches near Panchayats in Odisha, need for holding Gram Sabha elections in Tamil Nadu for audit purposes etc. All these issues were taken up with MOPR and based on the latest update from MOPR the Committee find there is no bar on construction of double storey GP Bhawans in rural areas where there is scarcity of land.

The Committee are also perturbed to note that of the 2.46 lakh Gram Panchayats(GPs) using Gram Swaraj Applications only 1.41 lakh GPs and equivalent make online payments. The Committee, further received a lukewarm response from the Ministry, during evidence, on the point relating to non-availability of Bank Branches in the vicinity of the Panchayat Bhawans where major activities of rendering various services to the rural populace are undertaken crucial for strengthening transparency & accountability. The Committee noting that more than one lakh GPs are yet to initiate online payments and the problems being faced due to non-availability of Bank

Branches near Panchayat Bhawans in the rural India, recommend that the Ministry should work on removing the shortfall in the number Gram Panchayats making online payments and seek help of the financial institutions/Banks in coordination with the Ministry of Finance for creating an apparatus of a Small Banking Unit either in the vicinity of Panchayat Bhawans or in Panchayat Bhawans wherever feasible for rendering banking services to the rural populace. They should also seek opinion on the possibility of delegating banking functions related to services rendered by Panchayats Bhawans to the chain of Post Offices available across the country. On the issue of opening of Bank Branches in GPs in Odisha, the Committee have been informed that MOPR has already taken up the issue with Department of Financial Services. On the issue of holding Gram Sabha Elections in Tamil Nadu, the Committee have been informed that State Government has intimated that Panchayats elections would be taken up after Assembly election in April-May, 2021. In view of the foregoing, the Committee recommend that the issue of complaints against Common Service Centre and opening Bank Branches in Odisha only, not other States be taken up by MOPR in a right direction at the earliest. The Committee, further emphasise the MoPR to coordinate with States/UTs for putting a display board depicting the services rendered along with the charges in all Gram Panchayat Bhawans.

(Recommendation Sl. No.8)

Mission Mode and e-Panchayats revamp of the scheme

2.10 The Committee are dismayed to note that like other MOPR scheme, the outlays vis-a-vis utilisation of funds under Mission Mode Project on e-Panchayat has witnessed huge downsizing of Budget estimates of RE stage. For instance, during 2018-19, 2019-20, 2020-21 as against the higher BE of Rs.20,00 cr., Rs.15.50 cr. and Rs.20.00 cr. RE was as low as Rs.11.91 cr., Rs.7.50 cr. and Rs.17.82 cr. respectively. In this connection, the MOPR has conveyed before the Committee that during 2019-20 the unspent balances available with implementing agency i.e. NIC/NICSI during the previous years was due to reduction in demand for handholding and capacity building requirements on e Panchayat Application from States due to Covid 19 restrictions. The MOPR has conveyed that available funds would be utilised during Financial Year 2020-21. In the light of successive reduction of BE at RE level, the Committee recommend that MOPR should go for full utilisation of budgeted amount during 2021-22 pending over-all revamp of RGSA in 2021-22.

2.11 The Committee also note that the motive behind e-Panchayat is to transform the functioning of Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) into transparent and accountable decentralized local self-governments for which Core Common software Applications have been developed in the areas of planning, budgeting, implementation, accounting, monitoring, social audit and delivery of citizen services like issue of certificates, licenses etc. The Committee, however, view that eGramSwaraj, the simplified work based accounting application for planning, monitoring, accounting and online payments can only be truly made functional for all Gram Panchayats once all Gram Panchayats of the country become e-Panchayat enabled. This requires, infrastructure, uninterrupted internet and power connections alongwith trained manpower to operate & utilize the application for preparation of GPDP and rendering other services. The Committee, therefore, recommend

that the Ministry should impress upon the States to develop e-Panchayats in all the Gram Panchayats by ensuring uninterrupted internet and power alongwith trained manpower to achieve the goal of Mission Mode Project on e-Panchayat.

(Recommendation Sl. No.9)

Obtaining of action taken on 1.98 lakh audit objections on 14th FC Grants from concerned State Governments expeditiously

2.12 The Committee appreciate that MOPR is going for automation of 2.55 lakh Panchayats by way of promoting various Applications like e-Gram Swaraj for amalgamating various functionalities like planning, monitoring accounting and on-line payments, Gram Manchitra (GIS) by use of geo spatial technology for avoiding de-duplication of assets and Audit online for Panchayats, showcasing 2.46 lakh GPs uploading their GDPs (2020-21), 2.31 lakh GPs closing their year books representing (2019-20), 1.41 lakh GPs equipped with online payment and 98,557 GPs need to be e-audited representing at least 20% GPs in each States/UTs. They are, however, dismayed to note that only a few States of Chhattisgarh, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha and Uttar Pradesh are good performing States. The Committee, therefore, feel that all out efforts be made that similar work is done in other States/UTs also.

During the course of examination broadly issues came up before the Committee namely need for audit of Panchayats in the light of alleged misuse of Fourteenth FC Grants (2015-2019).

As regards, addressing the issue of misuse of Fourteenth FC Grants for Panchayats, the Committee are dismayed to note that as large as 1.95 lakh

audit objections have been recorded by 14 States of Andhra Pradesh, Goa, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, J&K, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Manipur, Odisha, Sikkim, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Tripura and Uttar Pradesh. In this context, the Committee find that MOPR plans to bring 98,557 GPs under Audit online fold and over 5,207 auditors already online registered with 1.94 lakh audit observations recorded and 10,853 audit reports generated. In view of the facts and circumstances shown above, the Committee recommend that raising of as high as 1.98 lakh audit objections on 14th FC Grants by Panchayats puts a question mark on functioning of Panchayats and MOPR should come up with an action taken report thereon from concerned expeditiously.

(Recommendation SI. No.10)

Ministry of Finance to issue Guidelines for reforming the functioning of Panchayats for use of 15th Finance Commission

2.13 In view of large number of audit observations regarding alleged misuse of XIV FC Grants funds of referred to be the Committee feel that there is a need to bring in reform the functioning of Panchayats by way of issuing necessary guidelines thereto and also to obtain views of Expert Committee and MPs thereon. In this context, the MOPR updating the position has conveyed before the Committee that MOPR provides inputs to Ministry of Finance for issue of Guidelines on use of 15 FC Grants and suggestions of Experts / MPs are also taken it consideration. On the issue of obtaining action taken on audit objections by MOPR the Committee are dismayed to note the MOPR stand opining that this issue falls within the domain of State Governments. The Committee, therefore, recommend that ways and means

are to be worked out for bringing transparency in use of 15th FC funds by Panchayats.

(Recommendation Sl. No.11)

Transfer of funds from State Treasury to Block Development Officer in place of Sarpanch

2.14 The Committee further observe that on visualisation of the goal, all Gram Panchayats shall evolve to undertake functions relating to the 29 Services covering the 18 departments for overall development of Rural India by way of creation of infrastructure and assets essential towards delivery of basic services to the rural population. The Fourteenth and Fifteenth Finance Commission have awarded huge grants for the purpose. However, considering Gram Panchayats still in the evolution process, it is essential that the Block Development Officers in the States are given the responsibility to oversee the implementation, release/utilisation of the central funds to the States for even rural development of the country. The Committee, therefore, emphasize that the responsibility of release/utilisation of the central allocation to Gram Panchayats for implementation of the rural development schemes should be given to the Block Development Officers(BDOs) so that the Gram Panchayats / Rural Local Bodies can recommend the BDOs to undertake the developmental works and other functions for the overall development of rural populace. The Ministry of Panchayati Raj should evolve a suitable mechanism for the purpose.

(Recommendation Sl. No.12)

'Incentivisation of Panchayats'

2.15 The Committee note that National Panchayat Awards are conferred to Panchayats across the Country under "Incentivization of Panchayats" under five different categories covering areas i.e. socio-economic development; for adopting child friendly practices; efficiency, transparency and accountability in functioning; Sanitation/civic services/ innovation in revenue generation/social sector performance; Natural Resource management and disaster management on the National Panchayati Raj Day for creating awareness and motivation among Panchayats to perform better. The allocation for BE 2021-22 at Rs. 48 crore has seen an increase of 2.13% over the BE 2020-21. The Committee desire that the funds allocated for the scheme are pragmatically utilized for awarding best performing Panchayats with wide publicity of the event in local and national dailies so as to motivate others Panchayats to make headlines in print and electronic media by improving their functioning to qualify for National Panchayat Awards. The Committee also desire that a Mobile App may be launched for the purpose of connecting all Gram Panchayats on one platform to obtain the inputs on the details of awards and the criteria for selection with prize details for easy dissemination of information.

(Recommendation SI. No.13)

Slow work done under Action Research and Research Studies (AR&RS)

2.16 In the opinion of the Committee Panchayati Raj is an evolving process wherein new developments take place continuously, requiring regular examination so as to make structural changes for effective programme, planning and implementation of the Schemes. The Committee find that since launch of the re-structured RGSA, of the 11 studies undertaken in the areas

of Economic development and income generation; Impact Assessment of training of PRIs; Gender responsive initiatives for PRIs; Effectiveness of Gram Sabha / role of Gram Panchayats in marketing of rural produce in Mizoram; Utilisation and impact evaluation of Fourteenth Finance Commission (FFC) Grants to Gram Panchayats; Gram Panchayat Development Plan(GPDP) vis-à-vis Panchayat Delivery service; Evaluation of Media & Publicity & Action and Research Studies, 3 studies have been completed, 5 are in the final stages of completion, 1 in the Draft submission stage and rest of the two studies due for submission of Draft in June and August 2021. The Committee, therefore, desires that the Ministry should complete all the pending studies in the time bound manner and prepare a comprehensive paper on the transformation of the Panchayati Raj Institutions since the launch of the Scheme and the resultant structural changes incorporated therein so far. The Committee noting that RGSA is due for independent evaluation, hope that the comprehensive paper will result in restructuring of the Scheme into a more effective and powerful tool to the transformation of Panchayati Raj Institutions. The Committee may be apprised of the outcome in this regard.

(Recommendation SI. No.14)

Media and Publicity(M&P)

2.17 The Committee note that the BE 2021-22 has been raised to Rs. 12 crore with an increase of 50% over the BE 2020-21 under Media and Publicity Scheme wherein importance is given to advocacy and publicity of the Panchayati Raj programmes that aim to build capacity and enhance the performance of Panchayats at all levels. The principal expenditure defrayed

under Media and Publicity is against printing and distribution of the quarterly GramodaySankalp (GuS) magazine involving more than Rs.1.60 crore for each issue and Grants-in-aid released to selected State(s) to organise the National Panchayati Raj Day celebration and such other function in connection with giving various Panchayat awards. The year 2020-21 did not witness the physical conduct of award distribution in association with State/s due to prevailing pandemic and dispatch of magazines/books etc. in physical due imposition of complete lockdown. Sixth issue of GuS produced as e-book led to reduction in cost on account of printing and dispatch. Completion of subsequent two issues got delayed due to COVID. The initiative of the Ministry to reach out to the Panchayats across the Country through Sixth Edition of quarterly magazine as e-book "GramodaySankalp" and other measures to maximize outreach through Panchayati Raj Day celebration and for organizing award functions is commendable. However, the Committee fail to understand why the same method of e-books was not adopted in release of the subsequent two editions in the COVID pandemic. The Committee, therefore desire, that the Ministry should should spruce up their activities again by continuing quarterly magazine "GramodaySankalp" in physical format as well as e-book format and resuming Panchayati Raj Day celebration / award ceremonies, in the improved present scenario besides dissemination of the information on various social media platforms i.e. Facebook and Twitter.

(Recommendation Sl. No.15)

Implementation of SVAMITVA Scheme for giving Property Cards to rural house owner

2.18 The Committee note that a sum of Rs. 200 crore has been proposed during the year 2020-21 for Survey of Villages and Mapping with Improved Technology in Village Areas (SVAMITVA) which aims to provide the 'record of rights' to village household and issue of property cards to owners that will facilitate monetization of rural residential assets for credit and other financial services. The Committee note the performance of the first Phase of the Scheme where deeds/property cards have been distributed in 763 villages to 1 lakh property owners thereby resulting in a few securing loans from established Banks. Drone flying has been completed in nearly 24000 villages till date and 567 Continuous Operating Reference System (CORS) network have been established for providing a network of reference stations that allows access to long-range, high-accuracy in demarcation of land. The Committee further note that in order to cover about 6.62 lakh villages in the country, the Ministry of Panchayati Raj has prepared a tentative plan of covering 2,02,964 villages during 2021-22; 2,72,930 villages in 2022-23 and 64,813 villages in 2023-24 with flexibility of shifting target from one State to other depending on the traction being obtained by the drone survey operations. The Committee on analyzing the above observations, recommend that the Ministry should lay more stress upon the need for proper coordination among the States, Survey of India, Ministry of Civil Aviation and Director General of Civil Aviation and incorporate the experiences gained during the first phase of implementation of scheme for

smooth implementation and improved performance in achieving the tentative goals from 2021-22 to 2023-24.

(Recommendation Sl. No.16)

**NEW DELHI;
08 March, 2021
17 Phalgun, 1942 (Saka)**

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

COMMITTEE ON RURAL DEVELOPMENT (2020-2021)**MINUTES OF THE SIXTH SITTING OF THE COMMITTEE HELD ON WEDNESDAY, THE
10 FEBRUARY, 2021**

The Committee sat from 1400 hrs. to 1600 hrs. in Committee Room No. 'D', Ground Floor, Parliament House Annexe, New Delhi.

PRESENT

Shri Prataprao Jadhav - Chairperson

Members**Lok Sabha**

2. Shri A.K.P. Chinraj
3. Shri Rajveer Diler
4. Dr. Mohammad Jawed
5. Prof. Rita Bahuguna Joshi
6. Shri Narendra Kumar
7. Shri Janardan Mishra
8. Shri B.Y. Raghavendra
9. Shri Talari Rangaiah
10. Smt. Gitaben Vajesingbhai Rathva
11. Smt. Mala Rajya Laxmi Shah
12. Shri Vivek Narayan Shejwalker
13. Dr. Alok Kumar Suman
14. Shri Shyam Singh Yadav

Rajya Sabha

15. Shri Shamsheer Singh Dullo
16. Shri Iranna Kadadi
17. Dr. Wanweiroy Kharlukhi
18. Shri Sujeet Kumar

Secretariat

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

Representatives of the Ministry of Panchayati Raj (MoPR)

1.	Shri Sunil Kumar	-	Secretary
2.	Dr. Chandra Shekhar Kumar	-	Additional Secretary
3.	Shri Jagmohan Gupta	-	Joint Secretary and Financial Advisor
4.	Dr. Bijaya Kumar Behera	-	Economic Advisor
5.	Ms. Rekha Yadav	-	Joint Secretary
6.	Shri Khushwant Singh Sethi	-	Joint Secretary
7.	Shri Alok Prem Nagar	-	Joint Secretary

2. At the outset, the Chairperson welcomed the Members to the Sitting of the Committee held for taking evidence of the representatives of Ministry of Panchayati Raj in connection with examination of Demands for Grants (2021-22) of Ministry of Panchayati Raj.

[Thereafter the witnesses were called in]

3. Thereafter, the Chairperson in his opening remarks welcomed the witnesses and inter alia asked them to apprise the broad outline about the funds proposed by the Ministry of Panchayati Raj for the Demands for Grants (2021-22). Thereafter, with the permission of Chairperson, the Secretary made a Power Point Presentation before the Committee highlighting broad details about vision, programmes, work done thereunder and availability of funds etc. Direction regarding confidentiality of proceedings of the Committee was also read out. Subsequently, Members of the Committee raised their individual queries that inter alia included need for Social audit of accounts of Panchayats, need for undertaking new works by Gram Panchayats in the light of local needs, addressing the issue of shortage of technical manpower in Gram Panchayats, opening construction of double storey for accommodating more than one Gram Panchayats in the light of paucity of land, need for opening Bank's new Branches in Gram Panchayat level specially in rural areas in Odisha as large number of beneficiaries especially old persons of Panchayati Raj schemes had to travel long distances, need for collecting all details of all Central and Centrally Sponsored Schemes that are being financed by different Ministries/Departments of Government of India and being implemented at Gram Panchayats level so as to have proper accountability of concerned Ministries/Departments thereon etc. Thereafter, the Secretary, Ministry of Panchayati Raj replied to the queries of the Members. The Committee desired that on certain issues where replies of the Ministry were not readily available they may furnish written note thereof.

4. Thereafter, the Chairperson expressed thanks to witnesses for appearing before the Committee. The Committee then adjourned.

[Witnesses then withdrew]

5. A verbatim record of the proceeding have been kept.

The Committee then adjourned.

STANDING COMMITTEE ON RURAL DEVELOPMENT (2020-2021)**MINUTES OF THE NINTH SITTING OF THE COMMITTEE HELD ON
MONDAY, THE 08 MARCH, 2021**

The Committee sat from 1400 hrs. to 1450 hrs. in Committee Room 'C', Ground Floor, Parliament House Annexe Building (PHA), New Delhi.

PRESENT

Shri Prataprao Jadhav -- *Chairperson*

MEMBERS**LOK SABHA**

2. Shri Sukhbir Singh Jaunapuria
3. Dr. Mohammad Jawed
4. Prof. Rita Bahuguna Joshi
5. Shri Narendra Kumar
6. Shri Janardan Mishra
7. Shri B.Y. Raghavendra
8. Shri Talari Rangaiah
9. Smt. Gitaben Vajesingbhai Rathva
10. Smt. Mala Rajya Laxmi Shah
11. Shri Vivek Narayan Shejwalkar
12. Dr. Alok Kumar Suman
13. Shri Shyam Singh Yadav

RAJYA SABHA

14. Shri Shamsheer Singh Dullo
15. Shri Iranna Kadadi
16. Dr. Wanweiroy Kharlukhi
17. Shri Rathwa Naranbhai Jemlabhai
18. Shri Ajay Pratap Singh

SECRETARIAT

- | | | |
|-----------------------|---|---------------------|
| 1. Shri D. R. Shekhar | - | Joint Secretary |
| 2. Shri A. K. Shah | - | Director |
| 3. Smt. Emma C. Barwa | - | Additional Director |
| 4. Shri Nishant Mehra | - | Deputy Secretary |

2. At the outset, the Chairperson welcomed the Members to the sitting of the Committee convened for consideration of three Draft Reports of the Committee on Demands for Grants (2021-22) in respect of XXX XXX XXX XXX XXX, XXX XXX XXX and Ministry of Panchayati Raj.

3. The Committee then took up for consideration of following three Draft Reports of the Committee:-

- (i) XXX XXX XXX
- (ii) XXX XXX XXX
- (iii) Draft Report on Demands for Grants (2021-22) of the Ministry of Panchayati Raj;

3. Draft Reports were taken up for consideration one-by-one and after discussion, the Committee adopted the above Draft Report without any modifications. The Committee then authorized the Chairperson to finalize the aforesaid Draft Reports and present the same to the Parliament.

The Committee then adjourned.
