

- Waiver of wheeling charges on Inter-State Transmission System (ISTS).
- Fiscal incentives like custom duty concessions, excise duty exemptions, 10 year income tax holiday and incentives from States like stamp duty waiver, reduced/nil wheeling charges, etc. to enable solar power developers to offer lower tariffs.

#### **Devolution of powers to panchayats**

1516. SHRI SANJAY SANCHETI: Will the Minister of PANCHAYATI RAJ be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government has increased its efforts to promote devolution of powers from States to Panchayats and if so, the details in this regard; and
- (b) how far Panchayats in Maharashtra have been benefited by these measures?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI NIHAL CHAND): (a) and (b) As per the Constitutional provisions State Governments are charged with the responsibility of devolution of powers to the Panchayats. The Rajiv Gandhi Panchayat Sashaktikaran Abhiyan (RGPSA) supports State Governments to strengthen their Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs), thereby improving functional devolution. A National Workshop on Own Sources of Revenue (OSR) of Panchayats was held by the Ministry of Panchayati Raj (MoPR) to promote increased financial devolution to Gram Panchayats to raise their own revenue through tax and non tax measures. MoPR also annually assess the extent of devolution of powers and authority to PRIs by States through an independent study, which ranks States on a Panchayat Devolution Index (PDI). The study for 2014-15 was conducted by the Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS). Maharashtra ranked 4th among States on overall PDI and was appreciated with 'citation' conferred by the Hon'ble Prime Minister on 24th April, 2015, the National Panchayati Raj Day.

#### **Revival of State of Panchayats report**

1517. SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR: Will the Minister of PANCHAYATI RAJ be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is proposed to revive the biennial State of Panchayats report;
- (b) if so, whether Government itself would prepare the report and if not, the institution to which this would be entrusted;

(c) whether the Index of Devolution would be incorporated in the report or continue to be prepared annually; and

(d) whether the steps are being taken on the basis of the Index of Devolution to incentivize States to devolve more powers to Panchayats and promote transparency and accountability in the transactions of Panchayats?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI NIHAL CHAND): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) No, Sir. The preparation of the report would be entrusted to an independent agency.

(c) Index of Devolution will continue to be prepared annually.

(d) To incentivize devolution, the best performing States are honoured with citations on the National Panchayati Raj Day. As a follow up to the assessment of devolution of financial powers of taxation and ability to raise non tax revenues, a National Workshop on Own Source Revenue (OSR) was held to support States to improve devolution to PRIs for own source revenue generation (tax and non tax). National Workshop on Participatory Planning for Gram Panchayat Development Plan was conducted to enable greater community participation and by extension greater transparency and accountability in the planning process.

#### **Comprehensive developmental activities of Panchayats**

1518. SHRI K. C. TYAGI: Will the Minister of PANCHAYATI RAJ be pleased to state:

(a) the steps taken by Government for comprehensive developmental activities of village Panchayats:

(b) the alternative programmes proposed by Government in this regard ; and

(c) the details of States that have given the complete data for the project?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI NIHAL CHAND): (a) The schemes implemented by the Ministry of Panchayati Raj, *i.e.* the Backward Region Grant Fund (BRGF) and Rajiv Gandhi Panchayat Sashaktikaran Abhiyan (RGPSA), transferred to States from 2015-16, supported States/UTs in developing and empowering their Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs). Under RGPSA, financial assistance was provided to States for engaging administrative and technical staff, construction of Gram Panchayat Bhawans, training and creation of training infrastructure for Elected Representatives and functionaries of Panchayats