

Skoch Challenger Award

January 18, 2021

In news

Ministry of Panchayati Raj (MoPR) received SKOCH Challenger Award for the transparency in governance

Why the SKOCH Challenger Award conferred upon the Ministry of Panchayati Raj (MoPR)?

Ministry of Panchayati Raj (MoPR) received SKOCH Challenger Award for the transparency in governance category for **IT-led initiatives and transformational reforms leading to outcome-based performance improvement, better transparency and strengthening of the e-Governance in Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) across the country.**

The SKOCH Challenger Award for best performance in the area of Transparency in Governance was given virtually during the 70th SKOCH Summit (SKOCH Public Policy Forum)

Important initiative of Ministry of Panchayati Raj for strengthening e-Governance in Panchayati Raj Institutions

The following are the initiatives of the Ministry of Panchayati Raj for strengthening e-Governance in Panchayati Raj Institutions to enable them to discharge their mandated functions effectively while facilitating transparency, accountability and robust service delivery:

SVAMITVA Scheme:

- The launch and implementation of SVAMITVA (Survey of Villages and Mapping with Improvised Technology in Village Areas) Scheme has been one of the milestone and major steps ahead towards ensuring socio-economic empowerment of the rural masses with overriding objective of making the rural inhabitant self-reliant.

- SVAMITVA Scheme aims to provide an integrated property validation solution for rural India, engaging the latest drone surveying technology, for demarcating the inhabitant land in rural areas.

e-GramSwaraj:

- In order to strengthen e-Governance in Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs), e-GramSwaraj application has been developed with amalgamating the functionalities of currently available applications in the Panchayat Enterprise Suit (PES) under e-Panchayat Mission Mode Project (MMP).
- The application subsumes
 - the electronic fund management system (e-FMS) applications comprising of PlanPlus, ActionSoft, PRIASoft and National Asset Directory (NAD) along with the Area Profiler Application with Local Government Directory (LGD) acting as the underlying Panchayat directory.
- **e-GramSwaraj application provides single window with the complete profile of the Gram Panchayat, including Sarpanch and Panchayat Secretary details**, demographic details of Panchayat, details of Panchayat Finances, asset details, activities taken up through Gram Panchayat Development Plan (GPDP), Mission Antyodaya survey reports etc.
- The application aims to bring in more transparency, thus strengthening the e-Governance in Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) across the country through decentralized planning, process reporting and work-based accounting.

On-line Monitoring Systems of Central Finance Commission (CFC) Funds Flow & Proper Utilisation:

- IT based solutions like the PRIASoft – PFMS interface for making all payments under CFC grants and Mobile app

- mActionSoft has been developed to enable PRIs upload geo-tagged photos of the works/assets created out of CFC.
- As on date over 1.7 Lakh Gram Panchayats have been registered on the Public Finance Management System (PFMS) and over 1.45 Lakh Gram Panchayats have commenced digital payments of all funds released under the 15th Finance Commission

AuditOnline

- The Fifteenth Finance Commission has prescribed for preparation of online audited accounts of the RLBs.
- In this regard, MoPR has conceptualized and developed an application called “AuditOnline” for online audit of Panchayat accounts in order to strengthen the transparency and accountability at grassroots level.
- It allows for online audit of Panchayat accounts and records detailed information about internal and external audit.

ServicePlus:

ServicePlus is a versatile and secure solution for service delivery – makes all Government services accessible to the common man in his/her locality, through common service delivery outlets, and ensure efficiency, transparency, and reliability of such services at affordable costs to realize the basic needs of the common man.

Gram Manchitra – Geo-Spatial Planning Application:

- Gram Manchitra is a Spatial Planning Application for facilitating and supporting Gram Panchayat users to perform planning at Gram Panchayat level with the use of geo spatial technology.
- ‘Real time’ monitoring of development work implementation status and progress of execution of various schemes can be easily tracked.

Other achievements of MoPR can be considered are:

Empowerment

- Over the last 27 years since the 73rd Constitutional amendment gave constitutional status to the Panchayats, the PRIs have come a long way.
- Panchayats have significantly contributed to women empowerment, as about 45 % of the elected representatives of Panchayats are women.
- In addition to the constitutional provision of not less than one third reservation for women, 21 States have made provision for 50% reservation for women.

Its role during COVID-19 & Planning

- Panchayati Raj Institutions have played a stellar role in COVID-19 control and management.
- They are also playing an important role in the National COVID-19 Vaccination Drive
- Further, even during this difficult COVID-19 period, the Panchayats are actively taking up the People's Plan Campaign launched on 2nd October 2020 and so far Gram Sabha meetings of over 2.30 Lakh Gram Panchayats have been held and about 1.62 Lakh Gram Panchayat Development Plans (GPDPs) approved.

About the SKOCH Challenger Award

- These awards are distinctive for its approach of selection of awardees, which is not based on the nomination but on discovery.
- The SKOCH Challenger Award is considered India's Highest Independent Honour and is conferred after exhaustive research and expert evaluations.
- These Awards acknowledge people, projects and institutions that go the extra mile to make India a better nation.