

Meri Panchayat

m-Governance Platform for Panchayats

Edited by **MOHAN DAS VISWAM**

Over the past few decades, Panchayats have embarked on a digital transformation journey, evolving into professionally managed institutions. The Ministry of Panchayati Raj (MoPR), in collaboration with various Ministries, State Bodies and Agencies, has been working to empower Panchayats and align their efforts with the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. Throughout this journey, MoPR has introduced several phased initiatives, encompassing a range of online applications and portals aimed at automating and enhancing various Panchayat functions and processes, thereby promoting good governance. This transformation has been further facilitated by the widespread adoption of smartphones and increased internet connectivity in rural areas. As a result, the aspirations of elected representatives, functionaries, and rural residents have been elevated, and there is a growing desire to actively engage with their Panchayats using their smartphones.

In response to these evolving needs, the Meri Panchayat app was launched by the Hon'ble Minister of Rural Development & Panchayati Raj, Shri Giriraj Singh, on 21st August 2023, to provide a platform that empowers citizens to participate actively in their Panchayats' functioning.



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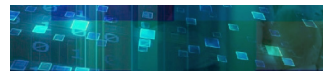
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Meri Panchayat mobile app aims to create a unified mobile governance platform for rural areas, including residents, functionaries, and Panchayati Raj Institution System stakeholders. It seeks to streamline and consolidate various functions and information scattered across different portals into one cohesive mobile platform, thus serving the varied needs of Gram Panchayats. Additionally, the mobile app encourages collaboration among stakeholders, cultivating an environment that supports efficient and transparent governance.



At the core of Meri Panchayat's mission is a commitment to Participatory Governance, empowering residents to take an active role in shaping their Panchayat's development plan. Using the platform, residents have the opportunity to suggest projects and activities for inclusion in this plan, with the added feature of being able to upload geo-tagged photos of the proposed work sites. Additionally, residents can engage in reviewing and rating ongoing development projects, promoting transparency and accountability. They can further contribute by providing geo-tagged photos to track the progress of these projects effectively.

In addition, the Meri Panchayat app includes

provisions for Social Audit, allowing village residents to monitor the Physical and Financial Progress of projects. They can share quick reviews with geo-tagged photos and videos from work sites, vote on other citizens' reviews, and access lists of beneficiaries of welfare schemes, ultimately contributing to a greater transparency and overall community participation in local governance.

Communication Channels

Meri Panchayat App functions as a comprehensive communication hub that bridges the gap between government officials and residents of Gram Panchayats. It enables key figures, including the Hon'ble Prime Minister, the Hon'ble Minister of Panchayati Raj, and officials at various government levels, to engage with Gram Panchayat residents through notifications, video, audio, and text messages, all facilitated by the app.

Further, Gram Panchayat Sachivs at the grassroots level have the capability to share messages and notifications, including crucial announcements like Gram Sabha Meeting notifications. This communication network is incredibly flexible, allowing alerts, notifications, and messages to seamlessly reach any designated Gram Panchayat, regardless of whether they originate from the National, State, or District level.

Additionally, the app promotes active Citizen-to-Government (C2G) communication by offering channels for residents to provide feedback, suggestions, and complaints. It also empowers citizens to evaluate projects, enabling them to share their perspectives on project quality and expenditure. This, in turn, enhances transparency and accountability in local governance.

Online Services

Meri Panchayat App extends the objective of the Provision of Urban Amenities to Rural Areas (PURA) by enabling rural residents to access services offered by Panchayats. This user-friendly app provides following services:

- Submit complaints with Geo-Tagged and Geo-Fenced photo evidence
- Supports tracking of complaints related to various issues
- Covers concerns such as garbage disposal, cleanliness, street lights, water supply, and more

- Offers payment tracking with search function
- Provides access to Panchayat orders, circulars, acts, and a multimedia information library
- Integrates disaster management and weather forecast alerts

Key Features

Following are the key features of this app:

- **Unified App:** A centralized platform for Panchayat information and services, providing a cohesive experience
- **Integration with MoPR:** Leverages other MoPR applications to provide a wide range of services
- **Enhanced Transparency:** Promotes transparency by making information readily available
- **Public Participation:** Encourages increased public participation, fostering a sense of community involvement
- **Accountability:** Enforces accountability among Panchayat functionaries by facilitating the tracking and monitoring of their actions
- **Social Audit:** Helps in conducting social audits of Panchayats, ensuring that their operations align with expectations of the community
- **Location-Based Services:** Access location-specific information and services, making it easier to find resources and services in local area
- **Local Language Support:** Supports multiple languages, ensuring accessibility for a broader audience
- **Push Notifications:** Real-time updates and notifications related to Panchayats activities
- **Seamless Integration:** Integrates with external systems, allowing data exchange and interoperability with other services
- **Secure Access:** Robust Ensure secure access to the app's functionalities, protecting sensitive data and ensuring the privacy of users

Information Dissemination

The app empowers residents by providing following information

- **One-time Registration:** Access services from any Gram Panchayat with a single registration
- **Elected Representatives:** Access information on Elected representatives, Panchayat officials, and members, promoting transparency
- **Gram Panchayat Profile:** Access Panchayat-level demographic data, infrastructure, and facilities for informed decision-making
- **SDG Resolutions:** Information on resolutions



▲ Fig. 9.1: Meri Panchayat App

taken by Panchayat in alignment with SDGs, highlighting their commitment to local development

- **Asset Register:** Access to the Panchayat's asset register, including information on physical assets



▲ Fig. 9.3: Smt. Sunita Jain, Sr. Technical Director, demonstrating the Meri Panchayat app to Shri Giriraj Singh, Hon'ble Minister of Rural Development & Panchayati Raj during its launch

- **Panchayat Budget:** Details of the Panchayat's budget and its allocation, providing insights into financial resources and priorities
- **Bank Accounts:** Information on the Panchayat's bank accounts and transactions
- **Fund Utilization:** Monitoring of fund utilization, offering transparency and accountability
- **Panchayat Audit Status:** Provides panchayat's audit status, promoting financial accountability
- **Development Works:** Detailed profiles of on-going and completed projects, including their locations, photos, and expenditure, allowing residents to track progress
- **e-Payment Orders (ePOs):** Track ePOs status - pending, processed, or rejected - with Panchayat / Bank / PFMS for financial transparency
- **Notice Boards:** Access to messages, circulars, and orders issued by the Gram Panchayat, keeping residents informed

Technologies

Meri Panchayat App, built with Flutter, is currently on Android and will soon be available on the Apple Play Store. It seamlessly integrates with various platforms using APIs and web services.

Way Forward

Meri Panchayat App is set to transform governance, empowering rural residents to actively participate in their Panchayats' development. It will serve as a go-to mobile platform for rural residents, promoting interaction and contributions for more effective and inclusive governance.

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▼ Fig. 9.2: Through Social Audit, the Panchayat Stakeholders can access to Development Plan, Work Progress, Expenditure, Funds, Reviews, Social Audit, Suggestions, and Complaints

