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Modi govt committed to prevent fraud in cooperative societies: MoS

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New Delhi, Dec 4 (PTI) The Modi government is fully committed to preventing frauds in cooperative societies and no culprit will be spared irrespective of their political affiliation, Minister of State for Cooperation Krishan Pal asserted in the Rajya Sabha on Wednesday.

Responding to supplementary queries during the Question Hour in the Upper House on the delinquencies in the multi-state cooperative societies, the minister said ever since this government came to power, several steps have been taken to stop fraud.

"Those who commit fraud, whether he is from this side or that side (pointing first towards the government and then the opposition), whether big or small, he will not be spared at any cost," the minister said.

He said action is already on in this regard. "After this government came to power and this ministry was formed, several stringent steps have been taken. If you say, I will discuss all that (with you)," the minister added.

He was responding after Congress MP from Gujarat Shaktisinh Gohil asked how many of the 100 societies currently undergoing liquidation have seen fraud and are under CBI investigation.

Gohil also wanted to know if there is any society in which no action has been taken against the people, who have committed fraud, due to some "political equation".

When members sought to know the number of cases in which the CBI investigation is going on, Krishan Pal responded, "CBI investigation will not be initiated on your request".

Dissatisfied with the reply, the Leader of Opposition in Rajya Sabha Mallikarjun Kharge intervened and said the question was not answered.

"Shakti Sinh ji asked out of 100 multi-cooperative societies, in how many inquiries are going on and how many are under CBI investigation," Kharge said.

He alleged that the cooperative department had been created to harass others.

Meanwhile, the deputy speaker intervened and said that nothing would go on record and, if the

members were not satisfied with any answers, there were provisions under the rules and procedures.

During the discussion, TMC MP Saket Gokhale sought to know the total number of banks operated by multi-state cooperative societies that have been liquidated from 2019 to 2024 because of scams and bad loan ratios.

He asked about the steps being taken by the Ministry to protect the money of depositors which is held in these banks that do scams and get caught with bad loan ratios.

The minister said there is no place for fraud in this government. "There are 70 such banks in which such activities have happened and out of that seven are in liquidation."

Earlier, YSR Congress Party MP Gola Babu Rao asked what specific steps have been taken to expedite the winding-up process of the delinquent cooperative societies and how this will impact the members of the societies.

The minister said the government has taken some good steps to strengthen as well as improve transparency for preventing fraud and mismanagement that are often seen in multi-state cooperative societies, he said.

Listing the measures, he said that a provision of concurrent audit has been made to immediately take note of any fraud, Sahkari Nirvachan Pardhikaran has been set up, cooperative ombudsmen have been appointed, information officer of committees have been appointed, auditors panel has been made by the CAG and quorum has been fixed for meetings, among others.

The minister said that 54 new initiatives have been taken since this department had been set up to help the cooperative sector flourish and contribute to the social and economic development of the country.

"Since independence 1,702 multi-cooperative societies were formed. After establishing this Ministry, 256 new multi-cooperative societies have been formed," the MoS said.

Rao asked how many societies are delinquent in the entire country as well as in Andhra Pradesh and what steps have been taken regarding the mistakes and mismanagement of the societies.

"Out of 1702 multi-cooperative societies, 100 are non-functional and the liquidation process is on. Generally, senior officials of the state cooperative departments and retired administrative officers are appointed as liquidators," Pal answered.

He added that the liquidation is a complex process as it involves court proceedings and government agencies, so it takes time.

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