

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION
RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO-1777
ANSWERED ON- 11/12/2024

PROMOTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION AMONG WOMEN IN RURAL AREAS

1777. SHRI NEERAJ SHEKHAR:

Will the Minister of EDUCATION be pleased to state:

- (a) the details of steps taken by Government to promote higher education among women in rural areas; and
- (b) the details of dropout rate i.e. non-enrolment in higher education after school education among women in rural areas during last three years, State-wise and year-wise?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

(DR. SUKANTA MAJUMDAR)

(a) & (b): Education being in the Concurrent List, enhancing the quality of education is the responsibility of both the Central and State Governments. Various schemes/ projects/ programmes run by the Ministry have been aligned with the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. NEP 2020 aims to ensure that no child loses opportunity to learn and excel because of the circumstances of birth or background. It has taken into account the concerns of the Socio-Economically Disadvantaged Groups (SEDGs) which inter-alia includes geographical identities such as students from villages, small towns, and aspirational districts and other categories. This policy aims at bridging the social category gaps in access, participation, and learning outcomes.

The Ministry has launched the third phase of Rashtriya Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA) as Pradhan Mantri Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (PM-USHA) in June 2023 with an outlay of Rs. 12926.10 crore for the period 2023-24 to 2025-26 to cater to needs of educationally unserved/ underserved areas. It is a Centrally Sponsored Scheme aimed at funding specific State government universities and colleges, including in the rural areas, so as to improve their quality by ensuring their conformity to prescribed norms and standards. Under PM-USHA, priority is given to Focus Districts. The focus districts are identified by the concerned States/ UTs based on various criteria including low Gross Enrolment Ratio, Gender Parity, population proportion and enrolment proportion for females, transgenders, Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and Other Backward Classes, Aspirational/ Border Area/ Left Wing Extremism prone district, etc.

Further, Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) and National Institutes of Technology (NITs) also provide 100% tuition fee waiver for SC/ST/PwD undergraduate students. Besides, the most economically backward students (whose family income is less than Rs.1.00 lakh per annum) gets full remission of the fee and the other economically backward students with family income between Rs.1.00 to Rs.5.00 lakh get 2/3rd fee remission.

The Government is also implementing different scholarship schemes for providing financial assistance in higher education to promote science education & research among women.

Apart from this, UGC is implementing the scheme of “Development of Women’s Studies in Indian Universities and Colleges”. This scheme provides funds for setting up Women Studies Centers (WSCs) in universities and colleges, focusing on teaching, research, curriculum development, training and outreach activities. The objectives of the scheme are to provide financial support in advancing Women’s Studies through teaching, research and practical work.

Synergising the School Education and Higher Education, the IIT-Madras has undertaken “Vidya Shakti” scheme which aims at enhancing conceptual and foundational learning skills of children from rural areas to enhance enrolment (including women) in STEM branches in Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs).

As per All India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE), 2022-23 (Provisional), the total number of HEIs i.e. University/University level Institutions, College and Standalone Institutions, registered under AISHE has increased to 60,380 in 2022-23 (Provisional) from 51,534 in 2014-15. Total student enrolment in higher education has increased to 4.46 crore in 2022-23 (Provisional) from 3.42 crore in 2014-15.

Female enrolment in Higher Education increased to 2.18 crore in 2022-23 (Provisional) from 1.57 crore in 2014-15 i.e. 38.4% increase. Female GER increased to 30.2 in 2022-23 (Provisional) from 22.9 in 2014-15. With a view to improve female enrolment in the Undergraduate Programmes in Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) and National Institutes of Technology (NITs), supernumerary seats were created which increased the female enrolment from less than 10% to more than 20%. Women constitute 43% of enrolment in STEM education, one of the highest in the world.
