

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT

RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 2071
TO BE ANSWERED ON 17.12.2025

EMPOWERMENT OF WIDOWS, SINGLE MOTHERS AND MARGINALIZED WOMEN

2071. SHRI SATNAM SINGH SANDHU:

Will the Minister of Women and Child Development be pleased to state:

- (a) details of measures introduced under schemes of the Ministry to support the financial and social empowerment of widows, single mothers and other marginalized women;
- (b) whether the Ministry has launched any initiative specifically aimed at reducing the vulnerability of women to trafficking and exploitation, particularly in urban and border areas, if so, the details thereof; and
- (c) whether the Ministry plan to improve the mental and physical well-being of women in difficult circumstances, such as victims of domestic violence or abuse, if so, the details thereof?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT
(SHRIMATI SAVITRI THAKUR)

(a) to (c): There are a number of schemes being implemented by various Ministries and Departments of the Government of India for financial and social empowerment of women, including for widows, single mothers and women in difficult circumstances.

Major schemes and programmes of Government of India in this regard are as follows: -

(i) The Ministry of Women and Child Development during the 15th Finance Commission period with effect from the financial year 2022-23, is implementing Centrally Sponsored Schemes in the country for the welfare of women and children, which are placed under three verticals, viz. (1) Mission Shakti, for safety, protection and empowerment of women; (2) Saksham Anganwadi & Poshan 2.0 for improving nutrition & health indicators in the country; and (3) Mission Vatsalya, for protection and welfare of vulnerable children in difficult circumstances. Details of the schemes are as under:

(a) **Mission Shakti:** The 'Mission Shakti' aims at strengthening interventions for women safety, security and empowerment. It comprises of two sub-schemes 'Sambal' and 'Samarthya' for safety and security of women and empowerment of women respectively. The "Sambal" vertical is for safety and security of women and the key components namely, **One Stop Centres (OSCs)** which is an institution located at district level offering under one roof immediate help

to women such as temporary shelter, medical & police assistance, counselling and legal support, the **Women Helpline (WHL) 181** provides toll-free 24-hours telecom service to women seeking support and information. The “Samarthya” vertical is for the empowerment of women. It has the following components namely, **Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY)** under which cash incentive of ₹5,000/- is provided directly to the Bank/Post Office account of the pregnant women and lactating mothers in Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) mode for first child. Cash incentive of ₹6,000/- is also provided under PMMVY to eligible beneficiaries for second child, if it is a girl child. **Shakti Sadan** is an Integrated Relief and Rehabilitation Home for women in distress situations and difficult circumstances including trafficked women. **Home for Widows** named ‘Krishna Kutir’ set up in Vrindavan, Uttar Pradesh with a capacity to accommodate 1,000 residents to provide a safe and secure place of stay, health services, nutritious food, legal and counselling services. **Sakhi Niwas** (Working Women Hostel) that aims to promote availability of safe and conveniently located accommodation for working women in urban, semi-urban and even rural areas where employment opportunity for women exists. **Palna** is a component of day-care creche facilities that provide a safe and secure place for the children. Creche services formalise the child-care facilities hitherto considered as part of domestic work and use Anganwadi infrastructure for ensuring delivery of care facilities till the last mile. **The SANKALP: Hub for Empowerment of Women (HEW)** serves as a vehicle to bridge the information and knowledge gap regarding schemes and facilities available for women.

(b) Under **Mission Poshan 2.0**, Anganwadi Services, POSHAN Abhiyaan and Scheme for Adolescent Girls has been reorganized into 3 primary verticals: (i) Promotion of nutritional health & well-being for children below the age of 6 years, Pregnant Women, Lactating Mothers and Adolescent Girls (14 -18 years); (ii) Early Childhood Care and Education [3-6 years] and (iii) Anganwadi Infrastructure including modern, upgraded Saksham Anganwadi.

(ii) Ministry of Home Affairs implements a project named '**Setting up and strengthening of Anti Human Trafficking Units (AHTUs)**', under Nirbhaya fund. So far, 827 AHTUs are functional across the country including 807 in States/ UTs and 15 in Border Guarding Forces (BSF) and 5 in Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB). SSB has also established dedicated helpline number 1903. To ensure that the Police Stations are more women friendly and approachable, as they would be the first and single point of contact for any woman in distress including the women victims of trafficking and exploitation, walking into a police station, 14,658 Women Help Desks (WHDs) have been set up under Nirbhaya Fund, of which 13,743 are headed by women police officers. To provide help and support to needy women and women in distress, Emergency Response Support System (ERSS-112) has been established in all 36 States and UTs for various emergencies, with computer aided dispatch of field/police resources. In addition to ERSS, a dedicated Women helpline (WHL-181) is operational across the country.

(iii) Under **Ayushman Bharat**, the Government is providing free of cost treatment through over 1200 medical packages to over 55 crore citizens. Out of these, over 141 medical packages are exclusively designed for addressing medical needs of women. Seven types of screening (TB, Hypertension, Diabetes, Oral Cancer, Breast Cancer, Cervical Cancer and Cataract) are provided under the scheme, which have benefitted crores of women. There are over 1,50,000 Health and Wellness Centres (AB-HWCs), also referred to as Ayushman Arogya Mandir, in both urban and rural areas, which bring health care closer to the community. **Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB PMJAY)** is the world's largest public funded health assurance scheme, with special focus on poor and disadvantaged women. There

are over 16,000 Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Kendras (PMBJK) functional across the country. National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP), Atal Pension Yojana (APY), Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana (PMSBY) and Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana (PMJJBY) have been implemented to provide social protection through insurance coverage and pension.

(iv) The **PAN Card rules** have been amended to provide that in cases where the mother is a single parent, the applicant can choose to have only the mother's name on the PAN card by providing the necessary details. Earlier, providing the father's name in the PAN application forms was mandatory.

(v) **Passport rules** have been amended in favour of single mothers. Now either the mother's or the father's name can be provided in the passport application form and there is no requirement to provide the certificate of marriage/ divorce during application. Earlier, providing the father's name in the Passport application forms was mandatory.

(vi) **Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY)** Scheme under which deposit-free LPG connections to adult women from poor households, including widows, single mothers and women from marginalized sections, are provided. The scheme aims to provide clean cooking fuel to poor households, reduce health risks caused by traditional fuels such as firewood and cow dung, lessen indoor air pollution, ease the drudgery of women, and help prevent deforestation.

(vii) The Government of India, through the **Public Procurement Policy**, has mandated that all Central Ministries/ Departments/ Public Sector Enterprises procure at least 3% of their annual procurement from women-owned Micro and Small Enterprises.

(viii) Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) implements “**Skill Upgradation and Mahila Coir Yojana**” is an exclusive training programme aimed at skill development of women artisans engaged in Coir Sector under Coir Vikas Yojana. **PM Vishwakarma Scheme** under MSME provide number of benefits to the traditional artisans and craftspeople including women, engaged in 18 trades. MSME under **Credit Guarantee Scheme for Micro and Small Enterprises** have introduced enhanced provisions for micro and small women entrepreneurs with effect from 01.12.2022, including guarantee coverage of up to 90 per cent as against 75 per cent for others, and a 10 per cent concession in annual guarantee fees. MSME launched “**Yashasvini**” an awareness campaign to create awareness among existing and aspiring women entrepreneurs with various scheme of the Ministry of MSME, providing them with continuum of support through handholding, mentorship, and capacity building.

(ix) Schemes such as MUDRA Yojna, Stand-Up India, Start-up India, Pradhan Mantri Street Vendors AtmaNirbhar Nidhi (PM SVANidhi), Pradhan Mantri Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP) and Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) etc. provide employment/ self-employment opportunities and credit facilities. Majority of the beneficiaries under these schemes are women.
