

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT

LOK SABHA
UN-STARRED QUESTION NO. 2916
TO BE ANSWERED ON 17.03.2023

REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN

2916. SHRI DILIP SAIKIA:

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

- a. whether the representation of women in the executive, legislature, Indian Administrative Services, Indian Police Services and Panchayati Raj institutions is abysmally low as compared to that of men in the country including Rajasthan, if so, the details of representation of women therein;
- b. whether among the Board of Directors of companies included in NIFTY 500 only one women is included in the Board of Directors in 95 per cent of these companies and less than five per cent companies have women as their Chairpersons, if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor; and
- c. the measures taken by the Government to formulate women empowerment policies at all levels of society in addition to increasing their representation in politics and various other fields and also their community level participation in the country including Rajasthan?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT
(SHRIMATI SMRITI ZUBIN IRANI)

(a) to (c): In the 2019 Lok Sabha elections, 724 women contested election, out of which 78 were elected. Presently, the Lok Sabha has 82 Women members. The present ratio of women's representation in Lok Sabha stands at 15.12%. This is much higher than 2014 elections in which only 68 women were elected to the Lok Sabha. Similarly, in the Rajya Sabha, women's representation stands at 33 as on 16th March, 2023. In addition, in the present Council of Ministers, there are 11 women Ministers. It has been the endeavor of the Government to make an enabling ecosystem in which women's representation in all fields increases.

The Census of Central Government employees brought out by Directorate General of Employment & Training, Ministry of Labour and Employment, in 2011 had indicated the total number of employees in various Central Ministries/ Department as 30,87,278 out of which 3,37,439 employees were women. The Government has taken several measures to increase representation of women in Government jobs, which inter-alia, includes, Maternity Leave for 180 days, Child-Care Leave for 730 days, Child-Adoption Leave for 180 days, special allowance for women with disabilities and exemption from payment of fee for examination conducted by Union Public Service Commission and Staff Selection Commission etc.

Further, as “Police” is a State subject as per the Seventh Schedule of the Constitution of India and it is primarily the responsibility of the State Governments/UT Administrations to implement police reforms measures, including improvement of gender balance. However, the Central Government also issues advisories to the States/ UTs for increasing number of women in the police forces up to 33%. States have also been advised to strengthen welfare measures such as provision of housing and medical facilities and necessary facilities for women police personnel in Police Stations. So far, more than 20 States have provided reservation for women in police forces. The number of women in State and Central Police Forces has increased significantly in the last few years. The Government has also taken a number of transformative steps for increasing representation of women in Armed Forces which includes giving permanent commissions, permitting women in combat roles and flying fighter planes/ helicopters, permission to appear in NDA examination and admission in Sainik Schools. These measures have led to significant presence of women in Armed Forces.

With aim to increase number of women scientists in the country and bring gender parity in S&T domain, Department of Science and Technology (DST), is implementing an umbrella scheme ‘Women in Science and Technology-KIRAN (WISE-KIRAN)’ including ‘Women Scientist Scheme’ and ‘Indo- US fellowship for Women in Science and Technology, Engineering, Mathematics and Medicine (WISTEMM)’ to promote women scientists.

Further, Article 243D of the Constitution of India provides for not less than one-third reservation for women out of total number of seats to be filled by direct election and number of offices of chairpersons of Panchayats. However, as per the information available with the Ministry, 21 States namely, Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha, Punjab, Rajasthan, Sikkim, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Tripura, Uttarakhand and West Bengal, have made provision of 50% reservation for women in Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) in their respective State Panchayati Raj Acts. In respect of remaining States, Constitutional provision as prescribed in Article 243D applies. The women's representation in PRIs is more than 46% today. With the objective of empowering women as leaders in politics, Government of India has been undertaking capacity building programmes for Elected Women representatives of Panchayati Raj Institutions so that they serve as catalysts of social change.

The country today has more than 82 lakh Women Self Help Groups (SHGs), having more than 8.5 crore households as members. These Women SHGs are not only economically empowering the rural women and a major source of livelihood but are also playing important role in transforming the social landscape of country.

Panchayat’, being ‘Local Government’, is a State subject and part of Seventh Schedule of the Constitution. Accordingly, all Panchayat related matters, including representation of women in Panchayat systems, are governed by the respective State Panchayati Raj Acts and rules, subject to the provisions of the Constitution. However, Government has been encouraging increased involvement of women in the functioning of Panchayats through active participation in the Gram Sabha meetings for preparation of Gram Panchayat Development Plans and various schemes being implemented by the Panchayats. This Ministry has also issued advisories to the States to facilitate holding of separate Ward Sabha and Mahila Sabha meetings prior to Gram Sabha meetings, enhancing the presence and participation of women in Gram Sabha and Panchayat meetings, allocation of Panchayat funds for women centric activities, combating the evil of women trafficking, female foeticide, child marriage etc.
