

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 350
TO BE ANSWERED ON 03.02.2023

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN

350. SHRI RAHUL RAMESH SHEWALE:
DR. PRITAM GOPINATHRAO MUNDE:
SHRI GIRISH BHALCHANDRA BAPAT:
SHRI D.K. SURESH:

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

- (a) whether empowerment and protection of women and children, and ensuring their wholesome development is crucial for sustainable and equitable development of the country;
- (b) if so, the measures taken or proposed to be taken by the Government to promote social and economic empowerment of women and the success achieved in this regard so far;
- (c) whether there is a lack of better monitoring and efficient implementation of all the schemes being implemented by the Ministry for women and children in the country; and
- (d) if so, the effective steps taken by the Government for better monitoring and efficient implementation of all the schemes across the country and the results achieved so far in this regard?

ANSWER

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

(a) & (b): Yes sir. The Government is aware that holistic development and empowerment of women and children is necessary for sustainable development of the country and to realize the vision of 'Viksit Bharat'. In the past few years the Government has adopted multi-pronged approach to address the issue of women and children on a life-cycle continuum basis for their educational, social, economic and political empowerment so that they become equal partners in national development.

The Government has enacted criminal laws and special laws like 'the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005', 'the Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961', 'the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006'; 'the Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act, 1986'; 'the Sexual Harassment of Women (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013', 'the Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956', 'the Commission of Sati Prevention Act, 1987', 'the Protection of Children from Sexual

Offences Act, 2012', 'the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015 etc. The Criminal Law Amendment of 2013 and 2018 has made the penal provisions stringent in case of heinous crimes against women and children.

Further, the Ministry implements 'Mission Shakti', an umbrella scheme for safety, security and empowerment of women under which there are components of One Stop Centre (OSC) and Universalization of Women Helplines (WHL), Beti Bachao Beti Padhao(BBBP). The OSCs, popularly known as *Sakhi* Centres, facilitate women affected by violence and in distress with a range of integrated services under one roof such as police facilitation, medical aid, providing legal aid, psycho-social counselling, temporary shelter etc. Further, the Women Helpline (WHL) provides 24 hours emergency and non-emergency response to women affected by violence and in distress, both in public and private spaces by linking them with appropriate authority such as Police, One Stop Centre, Hospital, Legal Services etc. WHL also supports women by providing information about Government's schemes and programs to women. In addition, several projects/ schemes are implemented by Central Government through other Ministries / Departments /Implementing Agencies under 'Nirbhaya Fund' which include Emergency Response Support System (ERSS) which is a pan-India single number (112)/ mobile app based system for emergencies; a cyber-crime reporting portal to report obscene content; Safe City Projects in 8 cities (Ahmedabad, Bengaluru, Chennai, Delhi, Hyderabad, Kolkata, Lucknow and Mumbai) including infrastructure, technology adoption and capacity building in community through awareness programmes, training and skill development programs for Investigation Officers, Prosecution Officers and Medical Officers; setting up of 1023 Fast Track Special Courts (FTSCs) including exclusive POCSO (e-POCSO) Courts for speedy disposal of cases of rape and cases under POCSO Act; setting up/ strengthening of Anti Human Trafficking Units (AHTUs) in all districts of the country; setting up/ strengthening of Women Help Desks (WHDs) at Police Stations etc. The Government has also put in place Investigation Tracking System for Sexual Offences (ITSSO), an online analytic tool for tracking and monitoring of investigation. A National Database of Sexual Offenders (NDSO) has also been created.

Under Nirbhaya Fund, Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPR&D) has also undertaken several initiatives, which, inter-alia includes training and skill development programs for Investigation Officers, Prosecution Officers and Medical Officers, distribution of Sexual Assault Evidence Collection (SAEC) Kits to States/ UTs. BPR&D has also prepared Standard Operating Procedures (SoPs) for 'Women Help Desk at Police Stations' to ensure smooth functioning of Women Help Desks by focusing on four critical components viz. infrastructure, training, human resource development and response mechanism. A book titled 'Women's Safety and Security- a Handbook for First Responders and Investigators in the Police' has also been prepared for the purpose of prevention and investigation of crime against women with specific reference to the crime of sexual assault, which includes investigation, victim compensation and rehabilitation. Emphasis has been laid upon appropriate behavioural and attitudinal skills of the police in course of prevention and detection of crime against women and children and interaction with victims of crime. Webinars on women safety with sensitivity, gender sensitization of police personnel etc. have also been organized by BPR&D.

Ministry of Women and Child Development through National Institute of Mental Health and Neuro Sciences (NIMHANS) has provided basic and advanced training

under the project named 'Stree Manoraksha' to the staff of One Stop Centres (OSCs) across the country on handling psycho-social and mental health care needs to support the women facing violence and women in distress.

Further, the Government of India implements various schemes / programmes of welfare of women/ girls. While the schemes implemented by the Government like Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP), Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Urban & Rural), the National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP), Pradhan Mantri Vyay Vandana Yojana (PMVVY) supports the young girls and women to be socially sound, the initiatives like Samagra Shiksha, Scheme of National Overseas Scholarship, Babu Jagjivan Ram ChhatrawasYojna, Swacch Vidyalaya Mission, etc. ensure that schools are girl-friendly especially for vulnerable sections of society and have adequate facilities in place to fulfill their special requirements. The National Education Policy prioritizes gender as an important guiding principle in all curricular areas. In order to enhance the employability of female workers, the Government is providing training to them through a network of Women Industrial Training institutes, National Vocational Training Institutes and Regional Vocational Training Institutes. To ensure economic independence of women through skill development and vocational training, the Government has also introduced Skill India Mission. The National Skill Development Policy focuses on inclusive skill development, with the objective of increased women participation for better economic productivity. Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikash Kendras lay emphasis on creating additional infrastructure both for training and apprenticeship for women; flexible training delivery mechanisms, flexible afternoon batches on local need-based training to accommodate women; and ensuring safe and gender sensitive training environment, employment of women trainers, equity in remuneration, and complaint redressal mechanism. There are schemes like Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana and Stand-up India, for helping the women to set up their own enterprise. Under the Swacch Vidyalaya Mission, it was ensured that all schools have at least one functional toilet for girls. Pradhan Mantri UjjwalaYojna (PMUY) aims to safeguard the health of women by providing them with clean cooking fuel and also from drudgery of collecting firewood. Further, in order to encourage employment of women, a number of enabling provisions have been incorporated in the recently enacted three Labour Codes i.e. the Industrial Relations Code, 2020, Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code, 2020 and the Code on Social Security, 2020 for creating congenial work environment for women workers. Stand-up India scheme promotes entrepreneurship amongst women. The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, 2005 (MGNREGA) mandates that at least one third of the jobs generated under the scheme (MGNREGS) should be given to women. For securing the future of the girl child, the government launched a savings scheme called 'Sukanya Samridhi Account' etc.

Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Education is administering 'National Mission on Education through Information and Communication Technology' (NMEICT) Scheme, SWAYAM (Study Webs of Active Learning for Young Aspiring Minds), SWAYAM PRABHA, National Digital Library (NDL), Virtual Lab, e-Yantra, NEAT (National Education Alliance for Technology) etc. to ensure quality education through e-learning to students across the country. Under the Pradhan Mantri Vidya Lakshmi Karyakram, Vidya Lakshmi Portal (VLP) has been launched by the Government on August 15, 2015 to ensure that students avail education loans easily through single window system of banks. All Public Sector Banks (PSBs) have been on-boarded on the Portal.

Multiple initiatives in the past seven years for increasing participation of women in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) have been undertaken. Vigyan Jyoti was launched in 2020 to balance low representation of girls in different streams of Science and Technology from 9th to 12th standards. The Overseas Fellowship Scheme started in 2017-18, provides opportunities to Indian Women Scientist and Technologists to undertake international collaborative research in STEM. Several women scientists have played significant roles in India's maiden Mars Orbiter Mission (MOM), or Mangalyaan, including building and testing the scientific instruments at the Space Application Centre.

Under the Samagra Siksha, Self-defence training covers girls of classes 6 to 12 of government schools. Self defence training is covered in 2,29,200 schools till 2020-21 compared to 49495 schools covered in 2015-16.

The Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Marriage) Act, 2019 has been passed which declares pronouncement of instantaneous and irrevocable triple talaq by a Muslim husband as void and illegal. It has been declared as a penal offence with imprisonment of up to three years and fine. The Act also provides for subsistence allowance and custody of the minor children to married Muslim women. With this Act equality between the spouses has been ensured and rights of married Muslim women have been protected. The ban on women going to Haj without a male companion has been lifted, encouraging a large number of women to apply for the same in 2018.

The Anganwadi Services under Mission Poshan 2.0 is a universal scheme under which all children below 6 years of age, pregnant women and lactating mothers are eligible for the services including the Supplementary Nutrition Programme (SNP) provided under the scheme. Under Mission POSHAN 2.0, digital infrastructure has been strengthened to bring about greater transparency in nutrition delivery support systems. Technology under the 'Poshan Tracker' is being leveraged to support last mile tracking of nutrition service delivery to pregnant women and lactating mothers all over the country.

For partial compensation of wages and for promoting health seeking behavior among pregnant women and lactating mothers, Government has implemented Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY) which aims to promote appropriate practice, care and institutional service utilization during pregnancy, delivery and lactation by providing cash incentives in Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) mode to pregnant and lactating mothers. The benefit is available to a woman for the first two living children provided the second child is a girl. In case of the first child the amount of ₹5000 in two installments and for the second child, the benefit of ₹6000 is provided if it is a girl child in one installment after the birth. Benefits have been extended to around 2.80 crore women through this scheme.

For reducing the drudgery and care burden on women, under the Swachchh Bharat Mission, construction of over 11.60 crore toilets have transformed the lives of women. The Government has ensured that 9.60 crore clean cooking gas connections are given to women below the poverty line in India. Government of India is ensuring health for all under the 'Ayushman Bharat', with special focus on poor and disadvantaged women. Under this initiative, the Government is providing free of cost treatment through over 1200 medical packages to over fifty crore citizens of India,

predominantly enhancing access to health benefits to poor women. Further, "Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Kendras" are established so as to reduce out of pocket expenses in healthcare. The objective is to bring down the healthcare budget of every citizen of India through providing Quality generic Medicines at Affordable Prices. Over 8700 Kendras are functional across the country. In 2017, the Maternity Benefit Act was amended to increase paid maternity leave from 12 weeks to 26 weeks for the first two children.

National Agriculture Market or e-NAM is an online trading platform for agricultural commodities, scheme "Kisan Call Centres" answering farmers' queries on a telephone call in their own dialect, mobile applications like Kisan Suvidha, Agri Market, National Crop Insurance Portal, UMANG (Unified Mobile Application for New-Age Governance). These digital innovations are helping women overcome or compensate the barriers they face in accessing markets. Farmers' welfare schemes like Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi, Pradhan Mantri Kisan Maan Dhan Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana, Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana, etc. continue to nurture an enabling environment for women farmers. Through the initiatives Government is improving farm women's access to productive resources including agricultural extension services thereby bringing overall improvement in the lives of rural women. National Cooperative Development Corporation is playing a significant role to uplift women cooperatives as large number of women are engaged and involved in cooperatives dealing with activities related to food grain processing, plantation crops, oilseeds processing, fisheries, dairy & livestock, spinning mills, handloom and power loom weaving, Integrated Cooperative Development Projects, etc. Under Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture, training for skills development to women and more subsidy/ assistance to women farmers are given. Publicity on gender interventions through print, electronic and social media being carried out from time to time especially via through Doordarshan, DD Kisan and All India Radio.

India is promoting greater roles for girls in the armed forces. Government has also made enabling provisions for allowing women's participation in non-conventional sectors such as fighter pilots in Indian Air Force, Commandos, Central Police Forces, admissions in Sainik Schools, entry of Girls in NDA etc. The Government has taken multiple initiatives to increase female participation in the civil aviation sector with the creation of women aviation professionals through a special focus on young schoolgirls, especially from low-income families. Today, country has 10% more women pilots than the global average. Globally, according to the International Society of Women Airline Pilots, around 5 per cent of pilots are women. In India, the share of women pilots is significantly higher.

The initiatives taken for empowerment of women and children through Digital Literacy include 'Digital India' that ensures availability of high-speed internet as a core utility for delivery of services to citizens; a digital identity that is unique, lifelong, online; mobile phone and bank account enabling the citizen's participation in the digital and financial space; easy access to a Common Service Centre and safe and secure cyberspace. Significant milestones under the Digital India campaign include 'MyGOV', an innovative platform to build a partnership between Citizens and Government with the help of technology for growth and development of India; the 'Aadhaar database which is the world's largest biometric-based digital identity; Bharat Net, to connect 250,000 village level elected governments; MeghRaj or GI Cloud, to

accelerate delivery of e-services in the country; Swayam, that provides free online courses starting from school to post-graduate education. Prime Minister's Rural Digital Literacy Campaign (Pradhan Mantri Gramin Digital Saksharta Abhiyan (PMGDISHA) that seeks to make 6 crore persons digitally literate, reaching around 40% of rural households by covering one member from every eligible household. Over 52% of the total enrolled persons are women and the percentage of women beneficiaries who got certified under the scheme is 54 % of the total certified beneficiaries. The Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission (ABDM) aims to develop the backbone necessary to support the integrated digital health infrastructure of the country. It seeks to bridge the existing gap amongst different stakeholders of healthcare ecosystem through digital highways. This includes standardizing the process of identification of an individual across healthcare providers with an ABHA Number and a Unified Health Interface to enable a wide variety of digital health services between patients and health service providers. To economically empower women, 81% of loans of sizes from a million to ten million rupees under scheme of 'Stand-Up India' have been made available to women by the Government. Similarly, under 'MUDRA' (or Prime Minister's Micro-Units Development & Refinance Agency) scheme, 68% loans sized up to one million rupees have been sanctioned to women-owned and operated enterprises. Under one of the largest financial inclusion programmes in the world, 53% of the total accounts have been open by women under PM Jan Dhan Yojana, mostly in rural areas. During the Covid 19 pandemic Government has transferred a total of Rs. 31,000 Crore in three tranches in the bank accounts of approx. 20.50 crore women beneficiaries. Under National Rural Livelihoods Mission, nearly 8.4 crore women are connected with around 80 lakh women's self-help groups that are transforming rural socio-economic landscape in several innovative and socially and ecologically responsible ways, also availing governmental support including through collateral free loans. Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Maan-dhan (PM-SYM) has been launched to ensure old age protection for unorganised workers who are not covered by any other pension scheme. The unorganised workers including women, mostly engaged as home based workers, street vendors, mid-day meal workers, head loaders, brick kiln workers, cobblers, rag pickers, domestic workers, washer men, rickshaw pullers, landless labourers, agricultural workers, construction workers, beedi workers, handloom workers, leather workers, audio-visual workers and similar other occupations whose monthly income is Rs 15,000/ per month or less and belong to the entry age group of 18-40 years. The number of women participating in major household decisions is increasing. National Family Health Survey 5 (NFHS 5) says 88.7% women participate in major household decisions today as against 84% five years ago.

(c) & (d): The Schemes of the Ministry of Women and Child Development are implemented through State Governments/ UT Administrations. Under the three Missions implemented by the Ministry namely, 'Mission Poshan 2.0', 'Mission Shakti' and 'Mission Vatasalya', appropriate monitoring mechanism is available at all levels of implementation i.e. at National, State and District levels. The Ministry continuously monitors the progress of the implementation of all schemes through physical and virtual meetings with States/ UTs, field visit by the officials of the Ministry and through digital mode and takes appropriate measures and issues advisories to States/ UTs from time to time.
