

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 4865
TO BE ANSWERED ON 31.03.2023

SECURITY OF WOMEN

4865. SHRIMATI JASKAUR MEENA:

Will the Minister of WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government proposes to formulate any policy for security of women to promote women empowerment and raise their participation in work force;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether the Government has taken any step in this regard; and
- (d) if not, the time by which it is likely to be implemented?

ANSWER

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

(a) to (d): The Government gives utmost priority to the safety, security and empowerment of women. In the past few years, a number of initiatives have been taken for holistic development and empowerment of women. The Government has adopted multi-pronged approach to address the issue of women on a life-cycle continuum basis for their educational, social, economic and political empowerment so that they become equal partners in fast paced and sustainable national development.

The Government of India gives highest importance to and has made/ is making concerted efforts for protection of women and girls and advancing their rights to address the issue of safety and security of women. 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). 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 and legal counselling, 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 needy women. Women can dial 181 short code to avail services from Women Helpline. A new component of Hub for Empowerment of Women provides financial assistance to States/ UTs for setting up of Hub at State and District level to facilitate inter-sectoral convergence of schemes and programmes meant for women at Central and State/ UT and District level with the mandate to create an environment in which women can realize their full potential.

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; distribution of Sexual Assault Evidence Collection (SAEC) Kits to States/ UTs; establishment of State of Art DNA Laboratory at CFSL, Chandigarh; assistance to 28 States/ UTs to strengthen Forensic Science Laboratories; 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.

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 Vay 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. Under the Samagra Siksha, Self-defence training covers girls of classes 6 to 12 of government schools.

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 will be provided subject to second child is a girl child in one installment after the birth. Benefits have been extended to around 3.0 crore women through this scheme.

For reducing the drudgery and care burden on women, under the Swachh 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. In 2017, the Maternity Benefit Act was amended to increase paid maternity leave from 12 weeks to 26 weeks for the first two children.

Prime Minister's Rural Digital Literacy Campaign (Pradhan Mantri Gramin Digital Saksharta Abhiyan (PMGDISHA) that seeks to make 6 crore persons digitally literate, by covering one member from every eligible household.

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. Under National Rural Livelihoods Mission, nearly 8.50 crore women are connected with around 82 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.

The Central Government also undertakes awareness drives, media campaigns and outreach programs and issues advisories to the States/ UTs from time to time to highlight evil effects of this practice. The National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) and National Commission for Women (NCW) also undertakes awareness programs and consultations with stakeholders from time to time. In addition, Government of India has introduced CHILDLINE with short code 1098, a 24X7 telephone emergency outreach service for children in crisis which responds with suitable interventions to call for any form of assistance which a child requires, including for prevention of child marriages in coordination with police, Child Marriage Protection Officers (CMPOs), District Child Protection Units etc.

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