

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 4984
TO BE ANSWERED ON 31.03.2023

DIGITAL EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN

†4984. SHRI ANIL FIROJIYA:

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

- (a) the works undertaken to make women digitally skilled and aware; and
- (b) the efforts being made by the Government to create a safe online space for women and girls?

ANSWER

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

(a): The Government of India has taken various steps to ensure empowerment of women and girls through their educational, social, economic and political uplifting through various schematic interventions. The Government has also taken several initiatives for digital literacy of citizen including women and girls so that they are able to operate digital devices (like computers, smart phones etc.) and work on it for various purposes including for educational, commercial and digital transaction purposes. One such initiative is 'Pradhan Mantri Gramin Digital Saksharta Abhiyan (PMGDISHA)' under Digital India programme. It aims to bridge the digital divide specially targeting rural population including the marginalised sections of society, women and girls by covering 6 crore rural households. The percentage of women benefited under PMGDISHA is over 53% of total enrolled, over 54% of total trained and over 56% of total certified.

In addition, 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[1]Yantra, NEAT (National Education Alliance for Technology) etc. to ensure quality education through e-learning to students across the country.

Ministry of Women and Child Development has taken a number of initiatives to empower women through the schemes and programmes implemented in the country. The Ministry has formulated 'Mission Shakti', an Integrated Women Empowerment Programme, as Umbrella Scheme for the Safety, Security and Empowerment of Women for implementation during the 15th Finance Commission period. It aims at strengthening interventions for safety, security and empowerment of women in a mission mode through institutional and convergence mechanism for greater efficiency, effectiveness and financial prudence.

(b): With the expansion of internet and more and more Indians coming online, the incidents of cyber crimes against women and children is also increasing. The challenges of cyber space are many which flow from its vastness and borderless character. That is why the government is committed to policies and actions that ensure that Internet in India is always open, safe & trusted and accountable for all Indians.

'Police' and 'Public Order' are State subjects as per the Seventh Schedule of the Constitution of India. States/ Union Territories (UTs) are primarily responsible for the prevention, detection, investigation and prosecution of crimes including cyber crime through their Law Enforcement Agencies (LEAs). These LEAs take legal action as per provisions of law against the offenders. The Central Government supplements the initiatives of the State Governments through advisories and financial assistance under various schemes for their capacity building. The Ministry of Women and Child Development takes up the matter with Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MEITY) and Ministry of Education for taking appropriate actions to curb the menace and to ensure safety and security of women and young children on online platforms. In order to equip children in negotiating the online world with adequate safety, Ministry of Education was requested to issue necessary directions to Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) for incorporating suitable content pertaining to cyber safety in the school curriculum of children and advise State Governments to do the same through their School Boards.

To strengthen the mechanism to deal with cyber crimes including crimes against women and children in a comprehensive and coordinated manner, the Central Government has taken measures in consultation with various stakeholders which, inter-alia, include 'the Information Technology (IT) Act, 2000', 'The Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021', establishment of Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C) under Ministry of Home Affairs, a National Cyber Crime Reporting Portal (www.cybercrime.gov.in) under 'Cyber Crime Prevention against Women and Children (CCPWC)' project under Nirbhaya Fund, spreading awareness about cyber crimes, issuance of alerts/ advisories, capacity building/ training of law enforcement personnel/ prosecutors/ judicial officers, improving cyber forensic facilities, a toll free number 1930 (earlier 155260) etc.

The Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act contains effective provisions to curb the menace of child abuse. The Act provides mandatory reporting, child friendly provisions of recording of statement and evidence and speedy trial of the cases. There are adequate legal penal provisions including POCSO Act, 2012 for the sexual offences against the children, as per the gravity of offences.
