

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 5000
TO BE ANSWERED ON 31.03.2023

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

5000: SHRI RAVINDRA KUSHWAHA

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

- (a) whether the Government has observed International Women's Day recently;
- (b) if so, the details thereof along with the theme of the event and initiatives undertaken by the Government to make the event successful;
- (c) the number of programmes organized and expenditure incurred for this purpose;
- (d) the steps taken/being taken by the Government to end all forms of discrimination against women and girls in the country; and
- (e) the total number of single women in the country as per Census 2011?

ANSWER

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

(a) to (c): The International Women's Day this year has been celebrated throughout the country with great zeal and fervor. On this occasion, several programmes, events, functions, quizzes were organized by various Central and State Government as well as other organizations. The theme of International Women's Day 2023 is #EmbraceEquity. The Ministry of Women and Child Development does not maintain the data of expenditure incurred by various authorities on celebration International Women's Day.

(d) The principle of gender equality is enshrined in the Constitution of India. The Constitution of India not only provides for equality but also empowers the State to make positive discrimination in favour of women and children. The Directive Principles of the State Policy and the Fundamental Duties cast obligation on State as well as citizens to remove discrimination renounce derogatory practices and uphold the dignity of women. In line with the principles enshrined in the Constitution, the Government has taken several steps to end all forms of discrimination against women and girls in the country through legislative framework, schematic interventions and policies/ programmes/ schemes. The vibrant Indian Judiciary also plays an important role in protecting the rights and entitlements of women and girls.

Several legislations for example 'the Protection of Civil Rights Act, 1955', 'the Equal Remuneration Act, 1976 (subsumed under Code on Wages, 2019)' and 'the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013', 'the Indian Penal Code', 'the Criminal Law Amendments of 2013 and 2018', 'the Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961', 'the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005', 'the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006', 'the Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Marriage) Act, 2019', three Labour Codes of 2020 etc. already exist to further strengthen this framework.

Moreover, in order to ensure that the marital status of a woman does not subject her to any form of discrimination or hardship, or have a bearing on access to services, the Passport rules have been amended in favour of single mothers. Now either the mother 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 anymore. Earlier, providing the father's name in the PAN application forms was mandatory. The said rule has been suitably amended to the effect that in PAN application forms, mentioning the father's name is no longer mandatory for a person whose mother was a single parent and PAN has been applied by furnishing the name of the mother only.

As a measure for improving the girl child sex ratio, the Government of India launched the '*Beti Bachao Beti Padhao* Scheme'. The scheme is a convergent effort to prevent gender-biased sex selective elimination, ensure the survival and protection of the girl child, and to ensure her education, with an overall aim of increasing the child sex ratio. To assist the women in distress, the Government has is setting up of "One Stop Centers" (OSCs) across the country with the objective of facilitating access to an integrated range of services including medical aid, police assistance, legal aid/case management, psychosocial counselling, and temporary support services to women affected by violence.

Access to sanitation is a matter of dignity. To curb the problem of open defecation in India which affects the health and safety of women the most, the Government launched the *Swachh Bharat* Mission. Under this initiative over 11.6 crore individual household toilets have been constructed. Similarly, the schemes like Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana, Stand-up India, Start-up India, Skill India, Digital India are promoting the financial and digital inclusion and economic empowerment of women. There are several other schemes implemented by various Central Ministries/ Departments for promoting social, educational, economic and political empowerment of women.

As per Census of India 2011, there are over 26.8 million persons with disabilities in India, constituting 2.21% of the population. Among these, around 11.8 million are women. The National Policy for Persons with Disabilities, 2006, endorses the need to focus special attention on the needs of differently-abled women. Recognizing the need of differently-abled mothers of additional support, the Policy envisages giving financial support to such women so that they may hire services to look after their children. The Government of India introduced the Rights of Persons with Disability Act, 2016, which implores government and local authorities to take measures to ensure that women and children with disabilities enjoy their rights equally with others.

(e) As per Census 2011, the number of widowed women is 4,32,61,478, number of separated women is 23,72,754 & number of divorced women is 9,09,573.
