

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT

**LOK SABHA**  
**UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1113**  
TO BE ANSWERED ON 08.12.2023

**GENDER REPRESENTATION**

1113. SHRI SATYADEV PACHAURI:  
SHRIMATI RAKSHA NIKHIL KHADSE:  
DR. SANGHMITRA MAURYA:  
SHRI DURGA DAS (D.D.) UIKEY:  
SHRIMATI KESHARI DEVI PATEL:  
SHRI MANOJ KOTAK:  
SHRI PRATHAP SIMHA:

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

- (a) whether India has emerged as a global leader in gender representation;
- (b) if so, the details thereof; and
- (c) the specific strategies that have been employed by the Government, aviation industry and society to foster female participation in various professions?

**ANSWER**

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

(a) to (c): Gender justice is an important commitment of the Government as enshrined in the Constitution of India. In order to promote a gender just society and increased representation of women in various domains, several steps have been taken by the Government over the years. These include enactment of 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, minimum 1/3rd reservations for women in Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs), reservation for women in central/ state police forces, enabling provisions for induction of women in National Defence Academy (NDA) and Sainik Schools, Commando Forces etc.

Besides, the Government gives utmost priority to the safety, security and empowerment of women across the country. 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.

In the past few years, a number of initiatives have been taken for holistic development and empowerment of women in the country.

The initiatives like Samagra Shiksha, Scholarship schemes, Babu Jagjivan Ram Chhatrawas Yojna, Swacch Vidyalaya Mission, etc. ensure that schools are girl-friendly especially for vulnerable sections of society and have adequate facilities in place to fulfil their special requirements.

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 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 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.

The Government of India has launched the 'Pradhan Mantri Gramin Digital Saksharta Abhiyan' (PMGDISHA) to usher in digital literacy in rural India by covering 6 Crore rural households (one person per household). The Scheme aims to bridge the digital divide, specifically targeting the rural population including marginalized sections of society like SC/ST, minorities, persons falling below poverty line, women and differently abled.

Under 'Swachchh Bharat Mission' construction of over 11.60 crore toilets, under 'Ujjawala Yojana' clean cooking gas connections to 9.85 crore women below poverty line and under 'Jal Jeevan Mission' connecting over 13.75 crores out of 19.24 crores rural household with tap drinking water connections have transformed the lives of women by reducing the drudgery and care burden.

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 10,000 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.

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. A number of enabling provisions have been incorporated in Labour Codes viz. the Code on Wages, 2019, the Industrial Relations Code, 2020, the Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code, 2020 and the Code on Social Security, 2020 for creating congenial work environment for women workers. 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.

To ensure economic independence of women through skill development and vocational training, the Government has 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.

Government has also set up the Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Kendras under the Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana across the country. Emphasis has been laid on creating additional infrastructure both for training and apprenticeship for women; flexible training delivery mechanisms such as mobile training units, flexible afternoon batches along with 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.

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, the country has 10% more women pilots than the global average. According to the International Society of Women Airline

Pilots, globally around 5 per cent of pilots are women. In India, the share of women pilots is significantly higher.

There are schemes like Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana and Stand-Up India, Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP) have been launched for helping women set up their own enterprises. To economically empower women, 81% of loans ranging from rupees ten lakh to rupees one crore under 'Stand-Up India' have been made available to women by the Government.

Under one of the largest financial inclusion programmes in the world, PM Jan Dhan Yojana has benefited more than 28 crore women, mostly in rural areas to open their own bank accounts. For securing the future of the girl child, the government launched a savings scheme called 'Sukanya Samridhi Account' etc.

With special attention towards entrepreneurship, Government of India has played a key role in the facilitation and disbursement of a large number of loans to small women-led enterprises ensuring that women become a vital force in the country's burgeoning start-up ecosystem supported under the Start-up India.

The Government of India implements various schemes / programmes for welfare of women/ girls in which community participation plays an important role. Under Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana - National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM), nearly 9.93 crore women are connected with around 90 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 bank linkage of about Rs. 7.67 lakh Crores till date.

National Agriculture Market or e-NAM, an online trading platform for agricultural commodities is helping women overcome or compensate the barriers they face in accessing markets. National Cooperative Development Corporation (NCDC) 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.

Most of the nearly 3.25 crore houses sanctioned under the Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana are either in the name of women or in the joint name. All this has increased the participation of women in financial decision making.

The Anganwadi Services under Mission Poshan 2.0 is a universal scheme under which pregnant women and lactating mothers are eligible for the services including the Supplementary Nutrition Programme (SNP). 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. Benefits have been extended to around 3.21 crore women through this scheme.

Through the 73rd amendment to the Constitution of 1/3rd seats in the Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) have been reserved for women. However, there are more than 14.50 lakh Elected Women Representatives (EWRs) in PRIs, which is approximately 46% of the total elected representatives. The Government is providing training to the EWRs from time to time to build on their capacity.

The greatest leap forward for women empowerment and representation of women in the highest political offices in the country has been the notification by Government of the Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam, 2023 (Constitution One Hundred and Sixth Amendment) Act, 2023 on 28 September, 2023, for reservation of one-third of seats for women in the House of People (Lok Sabha) and in the State Legislative Assemblies including Legislative Assembly of NCT of Delhi.

The Ministry of Women and Child Development implements 'Mission Shakti', an Integrated Women Empowerment Programme, as Umbrella Scheme for the Safety, Security and Empowerment of Women. The 'Mission Shakti' has two sub-schemes namely "Sambal" for safety and security of women and "Samarthya" for empowerment of women. Under 'Samarthya' sub- scheme, a new component i.e. Hub for Empowerment of Women (HEW) has been included with the aim to facilitate inter-sectoral convergence of schemes and programs meant for women at the Central, State/ UT and District levels for creating an environment in which women are able to realize their full potential. The support under the HEW provides for guiding, linking and hand holding women to various institutional and schematic set ups for their empowerment and development including access to healthcare, quality education, career and vocational counselling/ training, financial inclusion, entrepreneurship, backward and forward linkages, health and safety for workers, social security and digital literacy at districts/ Blocks/ Gram Panchayats level across the country.

Further, based on requirements and feedback from stake holders, government takes appropriate measures to formulate policies/ programmes/ schemes as well as carry out modifications/ amendments, wherever required.

\*\*\*\*\*