

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 2065
TO BE ANSWERED ON 02.08.2024

IMPACT OF CLIMATE CHANGE ON WOMEN AND CHILDREN

2065 SHRI B K PARTHASARATHI:

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

- (a) whether the Government has conducted an audit regarding the impact of climate change on women and children;
- (b) if so, the details of the women affected due to climate change especially in the rural areas of Andhra Pradesh;
- (c) whether any projects have been implemented to mitigate the impact of climate change on women;
- (d) if so, the details of the funding for the same, State/UT-wise especially in Andhra Pradesh;
- (e) whether promotional activities have been conducted to create awareness regarding climate change and its impact on women; and
- (f) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT
(SHRIMATI ANNPURNA DEVI)

(a) & (b): Ministry of Women and Child Development has not conducted audit regarding the impact of climate change on women and children. Further, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) and Ministry of Earth Science have informed that they have also not conducted an audit regarding the impact of climate change on women and children. However, according to Third National Communication (TNC), submitted to United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in December 2023, women, especially those from lower economic backgrounds, face some of the most severe effects of climate change. Globally, it is now accepted that the climate crisis and its impacts are not 'gender-neutral'.

UNICEF has recognized that children face additional vulnerabilities due to the following factors:

- i. Children are more prone to dehydration due to their lower ability to regulate body temperature, making them more vulnerable to heat waves and high temperatures.
- ii. Climate change may cause crop failures and rising prices, which in turn may lead to increased rates of malnutrition among children.

A recent study done by M.S. Swaminathan Research Foundation (MSSRF) in 2024, examines the implications of climate change on women and children across various agro-ecological zones in India. It reveals that women and children in Bihar, Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal, and Telangana are especially vulnerable to climate-related disasters. Children exposed to climate hazards are more likely to experience stunting, underweight conditions, and increased susceptibility to early pregnancies. According to the study, exposure to drought events raises the likelihood of underweight women by 35 percent, child marriage by 37 percent, teenage pregnancy by 17 percent, and intimate partner violence by up to 50 percent.

(c) to (f): The Government recognizes the adverse impact of climate change on women and children and has taken several steps to mitigate the vulnerabilities. A National Programme on Climate Change and Human Health (NPCCHH) has been launched by Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) in 2019 with the goal to reduce morbidity, mortality, injuries and health vulnerabilities to climate variability and extreme weather events especially among vulnerable groups like women, children and marginalized communities. Various activities for increasing general awareness, capacity building of health care professionals and healthcare workers, strengthening health sector preparedness, collaborative partnership and steering research on climate sensitive health issues are the key objectives of the programme. The programme focuses on health sector response to climate sensitive diseases and health issues like air pollution, heat related illness, other extreme weather events and green and climate resilient healthcare facilities. The programme is implemented through the organizational framework of Nodal Officers at State and District Levels. Activities further have coverage at sub-district level for health facility and community level implementation. MoHFW has also prepared information education and communication (IEC) materials to increase awareness on extreme weather events. Besides, public health advisory on various climate related issues are issued by MoHFW from time to time to States/ UTs. MoHFW also exchanges relevant surveillance information with National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) and India Meteorological Department (IMD) for review of preparedness and further action.

The Government implements the National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC), which is the overarching policy framework and comprises of National Missions in specific areas of solar energy, enhanced energy efficiency, water, agriculture, Himalayan ecosystem, sustainable habitat, health, green India and strategic knowledge on climate change. Further, 34 States/ UTs including Andhra Pradesh have prepared State Action Plans on Climate Change (SAPCCs) consistent with the objectives of NAPCC.

Further, schemes like Ujwala Yojana, which provides for clean cooking gas connections, Har Ghar Nal se Jal under Jal Jeevan Mission, which provides for tapped drinking water at the doorstep, Swachh Bharat Abhiyaan under which crores of

household toilets have been constructed, and Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana, the flagship scheme of Government for housing, have not only reduced the drudgery on women but also help improving their health status and empowerment. Thus, women-related challenges are being addressed in developmental and disaster risk reduction programmes of the Government of India.
