

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT

LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 3154
TO BE ANSWERED ON 09.08.2024

ACTION FOR GENDER EQUALITY

3154. SHRI S JAGATHRATCHAKAN:

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

- (a) whether the Government agrees with the view that important contributions to the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of women must be translated into effective action by all the States;
- (b) if so, the details of the steps that have been taken/being taken by the Government in this regard;
- (c) whether the Government has made any efforts to develop and strengthen norms policies and standards on gender equality and the empowerment of women; and
- (d) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT
(SHRIMATI ANNPURNA DEVI)

(a) to (d): India is witnessing a rapid transition from women's-development to women-led development with the vision of a new India where women are the leading partners in fast paced and sustainable national development. Government has adopted a multi-pronged approach on a life-cycle continuum basis to address the issue of educational, social, economic and political empowerment of women.

The greatest leap forward for women empowerment was taken by representation of women in the National and State legislatures, by enactment of "the Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam, 2023" (Constitution One Hundred and Sixth Amendment) Act 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.

In order to encourage employment of women, a number of enabling provisions have been incorporated in the 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 to create congenial work environment for women workers.

Multiple initiatives for increasing participation of women in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM), such as Women Scientist Scheme, Vigyan Jyoti scheme, Overseas Fellowship Scheme, have been undertaken.

The Ministry of Women and Child Development implements an umbrella scheme, "Mission Shakti" for safety, security and empowerment of women. Under the scheme, the Government has set up One Stop Centres across the country to provide integrated help and support to women facing violence or those in distress, a 24x7 women helpline with telephonic short code 181 which, besides provides emergency and non-emergency support to the needy women by connecting them with appropriate authorities, also provides information related to various government schemes, policies and programmes to enable them to avail the benefits. The Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP) component of the scheme, is for preventing gender based sex-selection and also focuses on awareness generation on gender equality and discouraging child marriage. The component of Shakti Sadan provides help and support to women in distress, destitute and victims of unfortunate circumstances including the victims of trafficking. The Sakhi Niwas component is for providing safe and affordable accommodation with childcare facilities to the working women and women and girls pursuing higher education and training for employment and self-employment. The Palna component provides childcare facilities in the Anganwadi –cum-crèches to promote women's participation in the workforce. The Hubs for Empowerment of Women at the national, state and district levels address the issue of information asymmetry with regard to government schemes pertaining to women in rural and urban areas. Under the Pradhan Mantri Mantru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY), cash benefits through direct benefit transfer (DBT) mode are provided to pregnant women and lactating mothers.

The schemes such as Sukanya Samriddhi Yojana have incentivized financial investments into the girls' future. Schemes like Samagra Shiksha, provision of separate toilet for girls in schools, various scholarship schemes, provision of affordable and quality sanitary napkins under Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Jan Aushadhi Pariyojana, etc. have also contributed towards behavioural changes resulting in increased enrolment of girls in educational institutions.

The Government of India, through the Public Procurement Policy, has mandated that all Central Ministries/ Departments/ Public Sector Enterprises procure at least 3% of their annual procurement from women-owned Micro and Small Enterprises.

To ensure economic independence of women through skill development and vocational training, the Government has also introduced Skill India Mission. 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. Similarly, Government implements the Pradhan Mantri Gramin Digital Saksharta Abhiyan (PMGDISHA) to provide digital literacy to rural population. These schemes have also helped women and girls in gaining necessary skills required for jobs and entrepreneurship.

One of the most successful schemes of the Central Government is Deendayal Antyodaya Yojna - National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM), under which approximately 90 lakhs women self-help groups having nearly 10 crore members are changing the rural landscape for employment/ self-employment. Similarly, National Urban Livelihoods Mission (NULM) is for urban areas. Besides, there are schemes like the Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana (PMMY), Stand-up India, Start-up India, Pradhan Mantri Street Vendors AtmaNirbhar Nidhi (PM SVANidhi), Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS), for providing employment/ self-employment and credit facilities. Majority of the beneficiaries under these schemes are women.

Recognizing language as a fundamental force for positive cultural change, striving to cultivate an environment where diverse perspectives are acknowledged, valued, and empowered, Government launched a Guide on Gender-Inclusive Communication, in November 2023, aimed at changing entrenched linguistic norms to promote and provide practical insights and strategies to overcome the deeply rooted biases present in language.
