

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT  
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:730  
ANSWERED ON:29.02.2000  
WIDOWS REHABILITATION  
AKBOR ALI KHANDOKER

**Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:**

(1) whether the Government are aware that thousands of widows have migrated from West Bengal to various places in U.P. due to failure of West Bengal Government to offer them rehabilitation scheme; (2) if so, the details thereof; (3) whether the Union Government have taken up the matter with the State Governments; (4) if so, the reaction of the State Governments thereto; and (5) the constructive steps taken by the Union Government for rehabilitation of these widows?

**Answer**

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

(SHRIMATI SUMITRA MAHAJAN)

(a),(b),(c)&(d) The West Bengal Commission for Women has submitted an Interim Report on the Survey of Bengali Women in Vrindavan to the State Government. The Interim Report forwarded to the Central Government on 24.2.2000 by the State Government of West Bengal reveals the following:

- (1) The number of widows coming from West Bengal to Vrindaban has been reduced to a thin trickle in the last twenty years or so;
- (2) While the majority are Bengali speaking, there are quite a few women from other States including U.P. who depend on "Bhajanashrams" for their livelihood;
- (3) There are not only widows but women with husbands who find in the 'Bhajanashrams' a way of supplementing their income;
- (4) The large majority of widows who settled here for partly economic and partly religious reason are not willing to go back.
- (e) Central Government has set up a Committee under the Chairpersonship of Minister of State for Women and Child Development to co-ordinate the efforts of Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal Governments and Central Government organisations for rehabilitation of the marginalised women of Vrindavan and to monitor flow of benefits of Central Schemes to the target group.

Besides, there are various Central Government Schemes for self employment for women such as Setting up of Employment-cum-Income Generating Units for Women (NORAD), Support to Training and Employment Programme (STEP) Indira Mahila Yojana (IMY), Socio-Economic Programme (SEP), Condensed Courses of Educational and Vocational Training for Women (CCE & VT) under which preference is given to such marginalised women in the matter of providing assistance. The Rashtriya Mahila Kosh is also implementing programmes, with special focus on marginalised women, under which financial assistance is provided for implementing self employment programmes through Non-Governmental Organisations. Other schemes such as National Old Age Pension Scheme and the Social Defence Schemes provide for pension and rehabilitation of such aged and marginalised women.