

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT  
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2182  
ANSWERED ON:12.08.2011  
INTERNATIONAL WIDOWS` DAY  
Tharoor Shri Shashi

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

- (a) the number of widows in the country;
- (b) whether the Government had organized any special programme to commemorate the International Widow's Day proclaimed by the United Nations for 23 June;
- (c) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor;
- (d) whether the Government has taken any initiatives to draw the attention of the country to the problems of widows and to raise consciousness about their needs;
- (e) if so, the details thereof; and
- (f) if not, the reasons therefor?

**Answer**

MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT(SHRIMATI KRISHNA TIRATH)

(a) to (c) : As per 2001 Census for which information is available, there were 3.43 crore widows in the country. United Nations has decided to commemorate June 23 as International Widows Day following the adoption of the General Assembly Resolution 65/189, dated 21st December, 2010. Government in the Ministry of Women & Child Development has not taken any decision about Commemoration of International Widows' Day, so far. Presently, Government celebrates 8th March as the International Women's Day. This day accords an opportunity of taking stock of the issues pertaining to all women including widows, celebrate her achievements and her strides towards liberation from gender-specific barriers. It also serves as a reminder of the challenges ahead.

(d) to (f) : The Government has been implementing several schemes/programmes for the welfare of women including widows, such as :

- (i) Swadhar and Short Stay Homes for relief and rehabilitation of women in difficult circumstances.
- (ii) Support for Training & Employment Programme (STEP) under which skill up gradation training is provided to asset less and below poverty line women.
- (iii) Scheme of Working Women Hostel under which assistance is provided for the construction/ expansion/renting of hostel building with the objective of providing safe accommodation to single working women who are unmarried, widowed, divorced or separated as well as to the married women whose husband or immediate family does not reside in the same area.
- (iv) Indira Gandhi National Widow Pension Scheme (IGNWPS) under which pension is provided to the widow in the age group of 40-59 years who is living below poverty line.
- (v) Indira Gandhi National Old Age Pension Scheme (IGNOAPS) to which is applicable for BPL persons of 60 years and above.
- (vi) Integrated Programme for Older Persons under which financial assistance is given to voluntary organizations for running and maintenance of old age homes, mobile medical units etc. for the destitute senior citizens and for setting up of Multi Facility Care Centre for Older Widow Women to provide full time shelter, care, training in income generating activities, conduct of religious programmes, yoga etc. to older widows.