

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1219  
ANSWERED ON:18.07.2014  
DEMONSTRATION BY WIDOWS  
Nath Shri Chand

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

- (a) whether the widows living in Varanasi and Vrindavan held demonstration in Delhi recently to protest against the disrespect, ill treatment and injustices reportedly being meted out to them;
- (b) if so, the details thereof, and the reasons therefor alongwith the demands of these widows; and
- (c) the action taken/proposed to be taken by the Government in this regard?

**Answer**

MINISTER OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT (SHRIMATI MANEKA SANJAY GANDHI)

(a) & (b): Reports appeared in the Media that about 100 widows from Vrindavan and Varanasi gathered in the capital on 23rd June 2014 demanding the Government to take measures for welfare of widows who are living in Vrindavan and Varanasi and also to introduce and pass a Bill to protect their rights.

(c): The Government is implementing two shelter based schemes for women in difficult circumstances to improve their living conditions.

i. Swadhar Scheme: Swadhar Scheme was launched in the year 2001-2002 for rehabilitation of women in difficult circumstances. The scheme provides primary need of shelter, food, clothing and care to the marginalized women/girls living in difficult circumstances who are without any social support. The beneficiaries include widows deserted by their families and relatives left uncared near religious places where they are victims of exploitation, women prisoners released from jail and without family support, and similarly placed women in difficult circumstances. At present 311 Swadhar shelter Homes including four Swadhar Homes in Vrindavan/Mathura are functioning across the country.

ii. Short Stay Home scheme: Recognising the need to prevent women from exploitation and to support their survival and rehabilitation, the scheme of Short Stay Home for women and girls was introduced as a social defence mechanism, by the then Department of Women and Child Development in 1969. The scheme provides 24 hours residential temporary accommodation, maintenance and rehabilitative services to women and girls rendered homeless due to family discord, crime, violence, mental stress, social ostracism etc. 322 Short Stay Homes are functioning across the country. The scheme is being implemented by Central Social Welfare Board.

Further, in compliance of the Order of Supreme Court dated 14.11.2008 in Writ Petition (Civil) No.659 of 2007, (Environment & Consumer Protection Foundation Vs. Union of India and others), National Commission for Women (NCW) conducted a detailed study to inquire into the plight of widows living in Vrindavan of Mathura District in Uttar Pradesh. The study report was prepared and filed before the Hon'ble Supreme Court in April 2010.

NCW has entered into an MoU with Housing and Urban Development Corporation (HUDCO) on 7th May 2013 to improve the living conditions of destitute women on the identified areas for facilities like women hostels, remand homes etc. or anything which is related to women welfare or development by enhancing quality of their habitat. NCW had already taken the initiative to renovate/reconstruct the Rasbihari Sadan, Vrindavan, Mathura for accommodating the destitute women/widows and different agencies NBCC, HUDCO and IIT, Delhi are involved in this project.