

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT

**LOK SABHA**  
**STARRED QUESTION NO. 396\***  
TO BE ANSWERED ON 20.03.2020

**INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY**

\*396. SHRI GAJANAN KIRTIKAR:  
SHRI SUDHEER GUPTA:

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

- (a) whether the Government observed International Women's Day recently;
- (b) if so, the details thereof along with the theme of the event and initiatives undertaken by the Government to make the event successful;
- (c) the number of programmes organized and expenditure incurred for this purpose;
- (d) the steps taken/being taken by the Government to end all forms of discrimination against women and girls in the country;
- (e) the total number of single women in the country as per Census 2011; and
- (f) the details of the schemes implemented/steps taken by the Government to empower single women in vulnerable circumstances along with the achievements thereof so far?

**ANSWER**

MINISTER OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT  
(SHRIMATI SMRITI ZUBIN IRANI)

(a) to (f) : A Statement is laid on the table of the House.

**STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 396 FOR 20.03.2020 ASKED BY SHRI GAJANAN KIRTIKAR AND SHRI SUDHEER GUPTA REGARDING INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY.**

(a) to (c): This year, the Government of India celebrated the International Women's Day with high level of enthusiasm, participation and outreach. The events this year saw convergence of activities between various Ministries, Departments and organisations. Several events and activities were organised across the country on 8<sup>th</sup> March, 2020 and also in the run up to the International Women's Day, including activities by the States and UTs as well as the autonomous bodies and associated organisations of Ministries on various themes touching upon the lives of women. The Ministry of Women and Child Development requested all Ministries/ Departments to celebrate International Women's Day as well as the week in the run-up to it to generate awareness and to highlight the initiatives and achievements of the Government in relation to empowerment and other themes and areas pertaining to women. Similar requests were made to all States and UTs as well. They were also requested to undertake and highlight initiatives for eliminating gender based discrimination and violence for bringing about a perceptible and positive shift towards greater empowerment of women in all domains. Beginning 1<sup>st</sup> March, 2020, a seven days campaign on seven verticals namely Education; Urban Women; Empowerment of Women; Skills & Entrepreneurship; Women in special circumstances viz Divyang, women from North-East & Islands, Tribal Women; Rural Women & Agriculture and Health & Nutrition was launched by the Ministry of Women and Child Development. The events under these verticals were organised by the relevant Ministries/ Departments/ Organisations.

Many Ministries/ Departments/ States/ UTs have reported celebrating the day and the week in the run up to it, with high level of enthusiasm by organising workshops, seminars, rallies, round table discussions, inspirational talks, cultural activities, yoga and wellness sessions, exhibitions, debates, slogan/ essay writing, drawing competitions etc.

The Ministry of Women and Child Development and its associated organisations had organised various activities either on their own or in collaboration with other Ministries/ Departments/ organisations in the run-up to International women's day including Launch of University Grant Commission (UGC) Chairs in the name of eminent women personalities, Nari Shakti Quiz and International Women's Day Pledge on MyGov platform, Women Organic Festival in collaboration with Ministry of Food Processing Industries (MoFPI), Seminar on Women's Economic Empowerment in collaboration with the World Bank, Exhibition on Incredible Journey of Women Artisans and Weavers at Delhi Haat in collaboration with Ministry of Textiles, Book launch on verified success stories under Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP) on the theme of Chronicles of Change Champions etc. An interactive session with the Foreign Diplomats was organised in which Minister of Women and Child Development and Minister of External Affairs jointly addressed diplomats from various countries and informed them about India's initiatives and achievements in the field of women empowerment.

'Nari Shakti Puraskars' were conferred upon selected women by the Hon'ble President of India on 8<sup>th</sup> March, 2020, recognizing the exceptional work done by them towards empowerment of women. The Ministry has also run an active awareness campaign through print, electronic and social media. No separate budget has been allocated exclusively for observing International Women's Day. However, a budget of Rs. 1.35 Crores has been kept for Nari Shakti Puraskar. The Ministry has also earmarked Rs. 75 Crore approx on media campaign and other associated activities for raising public awareness.

(d) to (f): As per the 2011 census data, the number of single women in the country was 59.36 Lakhs.

Ending gender based inequalities, discrimination and violence faced by girls and women is of utmost priority for the Government. The Government of India has enacted a number of legislations to address gender based discrimination such as the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005; Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961; Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act, 1986; the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013; the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006 (PCMA), The Pre-conception and Pre-natal Diagnostic Techniques (Prohibition of Sex Selection) Act, 1994 (PCPNDT Act), The Code on Wages, 2019 among others. Further, through 73<sup>rd</sup> – 74<sup>th</sup> Amendment of the Constitution, it has been mandated to provide at least 33% reservation for women in the local governance.

The Government is also implementing various schemes like Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Urban & Rural), Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana (PMMY), Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojna, Ayushman Bharat programme Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP), Mahatama Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGA), Pt. Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Grameen Kaushalya Yojana (DDU-GKY) and National Urban Livelihoods Mission (NULM), Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojna (PMKVY) etc which are helping in empowerment of women as well as in ending gender based discrimination. Besides, the Ministry of Women and Child Development is also implementing schemes of One Stop Centre and Universalisation of Women Helpline to provide support and assistance to women affected by violence. Further, the Beti Bachao Beti Badhao scheme is being implemented for addressing the issue of declining Child Sex Ratio (CSR) and empowerment of women on a life cycle continuum. The Ministry is also implementing the scheme of Working Women's Hostels to provide safe and affordable accommodation to working women and National Creche Scheme to provide day care facilities to children of age group of 6 months to 6 years of working women. The benefit under above schemes can be availed by all sections of the society including single women.

In order to help working women overcome the impediments caused by the lack of post-maternity support infrastructure, the Government has amended the Maternity Benefit Act, 1961 in the year 2017 which provides for increased paid maternity leave from 12 weeks to 26 weeks, pre-natal leave from 6 weeks to 8 weeks, provisions for facility of crèche in the establishments having 50 or more employees, time-off for feeding children and permitting women workers in the night shifts with adequate safety measures, etc. The Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Marriage) Act, 2019 has been passed which declares pronouncement of instantaneous and irrevocable triple talaq by a Muslim husband as void and illegal.

Moreover, in order to ensure that the marital status of a woman does not come in the way of access to services or discrimination or hardship, the Passport rules as also Permanent Account Number (PAN) rules have been amended in favour of single mothers whereby mentioning the father's name is no longer mandatory for a person whose mother was a single parent. These amendments send out a strong message towards gender equality, irrespective of marital status.

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