

EMPOWERING WOMEN AND CHILDREN IN INDIA

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Ministry of Women and Child Development It has launched and effectively implemented several mammoth initiatives like BBBP, NNM, PMMVY, SABLA-Universal Scheme for Adolescent Girls, OSCs, MPVs, POCSO e-Box, Mahila e-Haat. Apart from these, the Ministry has also expedited the workings of several other schemes such as passage of Maternity Benefit (Amendment) Act, 2016, Draft Anti-Trafficking Bill, Draft National Policy for Women- 2017, Juvenile Justice (Care & Protection of Children) Model Rules, 2016, training of women panchayat heads, Swadhar Greh, Mahila Shakti Kendra. The Ministry has ensured leveraging ICT to ensure transparency and quick delivery of services as well as preventing leakages.

The Union Ministry of Women and Child Development has been diligently working towards the cause it seeks to address. The conscientious initiatives undertaken from the year 2014-15 prove this to be a practice rather than a theory. It has launched and effectively implemented several mammoth initiatives like BBBP, NNM, PMMVY, SABLA-Universal Scheme for Adolescent Girls, OSCs, MPVs, POCSO e-Box, Mahila e-Haat. Apart from these, the Ministry has also expedited the workings of several other schemes such as passage of Maternity Benefit (Amendment) Act, 2016, Draft Anti-Trafficking Bill, Draft National Policy for Women- 2017, Juvenile Justice (Care & Protection of Children) Model Rules, 2016, training of women panchayat heads, Swadhar Greh, Mahila Shakti Kendra. Honest measures for promoting safety of women and children have been undertaken. The Ministry has ensured leveraging ICT to ensure transparency and quick delivery of services as well as preventing leakages. Media, in all its forms, has been put to its best use to generate awareness, indicating tremendous strides.

Landmark Schemes for Women and Children:

Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP), the flagship scheme was launched initially to address the declining Child Sex Ratio, as it graduated, it broadened and took under its ambit other concerns such as strict enforcement of PC&PNDT Act, provisions to motivate higher education for girls and related issues of disempowerment of women on a life-cycle continuum. Since its inception in 2015, it has been independently growing widely in local domains as well.

As per preliminary reports for 100 BBMP districts between April-March 2014-15 & 2015-16, a 58% increase in Sex Ratio at Birth (SRB), 69 districts reported progress in the first trimester registration against the reported *antenatal* registrations, and status of institutional deliveries improved in 80 districts in comparison to previous years.

During the last 3 years, encouraging trends in the SRB of 104 districts are visible as per the latest Health Management Information System data for 161 BBBP districts between April-March, 2015-16 & 2016-17. 119 districts have reported progress in first trimester registration against the reported ANC care registrations and 146 districts have reported improvement in institutional deliveries. In addition, as per Unified District Information System for Education 2015-16, the girl's enrolment in secondary education has increased to 80.97% against 76% in 2013-14.



All India expansion of BBBP to cover all 640 districts was launched by the Prime Minister on 08.03.2018 for deeper positive impact on CSR with an outlay of Rs. 1133 crore during 2017-18 to 2019-20 which will include multi-sectoral intervention in 244 districts in addition to existing 161, where physical implementation of the scheme will happen while 235 districts, will be covered through Alert District Media, Advocacy and Outreach.

To deal with the problem of malnutrition, government has set-up the **National Nutrition Mission (NNM)** with a budget of Rs. 9046 Cr. The aim is to achieve an improvement in the nutritional status of children of 0-6 years and pregnant and lactating women in a time bound manner, during the coming three years beginning 2017-18, with defined targets. Some of them are to prevent and reduce stunting in children (0-6 years) by 6% @ 2% p.a., prevent and reduce under nutrition in children (0-6 years) by 6% @ 2% p.a., reduce the prevalence of Anaemia among young children (6-59 months) by 9% @ 3% p.a.; reduce the prevalence of Anaemia among women and adolescent girls in the age group of 15-49 years by 9% @ 3% p.a.; reduce low birth weight by 6% @ 2% p.a. The project has emanated through Information and Communication Technology enabled real-time-monitoring (ICT-RTM) of ICDS with customized mobile based application software (ICDS-CAS). A total of 70,000+ Smart Phone devices pre-installed with ICDS-CAS software application have been provided to roll-out ICT-RTM in six states with 70,299 trained Anganwadi Workers as volunteers to help people in their application.

The **Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY)** is a maternity benefit programme that



has been made a pan-India phenomenon since 31st December, 2016. The beneficiaries would receive cash incentive of Rs 6000/- during pregnancy and after institutional delivery. The scheme implementation guidelines, the software for its roll out i.e. PMMVY-CAS and its user manual were launched on 01.09.2017. Under PMMVY, Rs. 2016.37 crores to all 36 States / UTs had been sanctioned during 2017-18 with a release of Rs. 1991.72 crores.

In 2017, government notified **Supplementary Nutrition (ICDS) Rules, 2017** to regulate entitlement of 'nutrient dense food' for every pregnant and lactating woman till 6 months after child birth, and every child in the age group of 6 months to 6 years for 300 days in a year.

SABLA is a Centrally- sponsored scheme for **Adolescent Girls**, to enable them for self-development and empowerment, improve their health and nutrition status, promoting awareness about health, hygiene, nutrition, adolescent reproductive and sexual health, family and child care and facilitating access to public services through various interventions such as guidance & counselling and imparting vocational training for girls aged 16 and above. During 2015-16, Rs. 47040.57 lakhs were released, Rs. 49479.06 lakhs utilized and 110.03 lakhs nutrition beneficiaries covered and in 2016-17 Rs. 39516.75 lakhs were released, Rs. 13870.90 lakhs utilized and 54.50 lakhs nutrition beneficiaries covered under SABLA scheme. Now, in 2017-18, the scheme stands extended to additional 303 districts in addition to existing 205 districts for further outreach.

In 2015, **Swadhar Greh** scheme was launched to cater to primary needs of women in difficult circumstances. Setting up of shelter, food, clothing, medical treatment and care are exclusively provided, meanwhile, they are provided with legal guidance to enable their readjustment in family/society. Rehabilitation for their emotional and economic state is rendered to enable them to start life afresh. Presently, 561 Swadhar

Greh are functioning in the country benefiting 17,291 women. In addition, **one widow home with 1000 inmates capacity**, has been constructed at Sunrakh Bangar, Vrindavan.

Mahila Shakti Kendra scheme was launched in 2017 to address women's issues at the rural level wherein over 3 lakh student volunteers would be engaged in 115 most backward districts for three years. These volunteers, mobilised from local colleges, NCC, NSS, NYK etc, will work with local women to help them access government schemes for their benefit and to provide 'one stop convergent support services for their skill development, employment, digital literacy, health and nutrition.

Mahila Police Volunteers (MPVs) will prove to be an effective alternative against the local police for women. MPVs were launched in all States and UTs to serve as a public-police interface and facilitate women in distress. The MPVs report incidences of domestic violence, child marriage, dowry harassment and violence faced by women in public spaces. Initiated in 2016, the MPVs is operational in 5 States.

Mahila e-Haat is an initiative to economically empower women through financial inclusion. The government launched a bilingual portal Mahila e-Haat, a direct online digital marketing platform for women entrepreneurs/SHGs/NGOs in March 2016. It received over 14.50 lakh visitors. Women entrepreneurs / SHGs / NGOs from 22 states showcased approximately 1800 products / services. It has 23000 registered SHGs with 3 lakh beneficiaries. In 6 months, women entrepreneurs / SHGs / NGOs have transacted business of over Rs. 20 lakh.

Passport rules have been amended in favour of single mothers. Now either mother or father's name can be provided in application form and applicants do not have to provide any certificate of marriage / divorce during the application.

In May 2016, **Training for Women Heads of Panchayats**, as an initiative was implemented at Jhalawar, Rajasthan where more than 40 elected women representatives participated in the workshop aiming at empowering and developing their capacities.

Apart from these developmental schemes for woman and child, the Government has also undertaken commendable measures to ensure safety of women and children in public spaces. The Ministry has launched the Scheme of **One Stop Centres** to facilitate access to an integrated range of services

including medical assistance, police assistance, legal aid/counseling and psychological- social/counseling, shelter. For girls under 18 years of age, institutions established under the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of children) Act, 2000 and Protection of Children from Sexual Offence Act, 2012 will provide guidance.

During the year 2015-16, a major thrust was on the setting of these centres for which funds were sanctioned to 33 States / UTs for establishment of OSCs, and as a result, 51 OSCs became operational with an initial outlay of Rs. 18.58 Cr. As of date, 170 centres have already been established and provided support to 1 lakh women. The government has planned to set up one centre per district by the end of 2018-19.

In 2016, the **Universalisation of Women Helpline** was launched to provide 24 hours immediate and emergency response to women affected by violence through referral (such as police, One Stop Centre, hospitals) and also provide information of women related government schemes through a uniform number with short code 181 to all States/UTs. By end of 2016, Women Helplines were operational in 18 States/UTs. During 2017, 10 new **women helplines** were started taking total coverage now in 28 States, and over 11 lakh calls of women were handled in 2017. To improve overall responsiveness to gender sensitive cases and to bring visibility and strengthen gender sensitivity in police force, an advisory has been issued to all States to increase **women representation in police up to 33%**.

To enhance the **safety and security for women**, **Nirbhaya Fund** has been set up with a corpus of Rs. 2000 Cr to implement initiatives. Under this, 13 proposals have been appraised and recommended for Rs. 2177.27 Cr, a focused **project for women's safety in 8 prominent cities** is being prepared, project for **Integrated Emergency Response Management** operated by Railways, CCTVs and monitoring rooms are being installed at 983 major stations to provide 24x7 security to women at stations and in trains. **New Taxi Policy Guidelines** have been put in place with much improved safety measures for women, a **Public Grievance Cell** is also active in the Ministry giving women and children citizens a way to send grievances directly which has already processed 18,000 complaints in one year since its inception. Apart from this, a robust online MIS has been developed to track implementation of all the projects under Nirbhaya. The 'Panic Button and Global

Positioning System in Mobile Phone Handsets Rules 2016' have been notified and roll-out in the offing.

Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act 2013, has seen massive improvement in the recent years after ensuring the establishment of Internal Complaints Committees in all Ministries / Departments of Government. To help women report incidents of **Sexual harassment at the workplace**, an online complaint mechanism, **SHe-Box** has been established. Any female employee in the country, whether employed by the government or private, can file an online complaint of sexual harassment through this portal.

The **Gender Champion Initiative** has been operationalized for sensitizing young students to create awareness on laws, legislations, legal rights and life skills education through 100 Universities and 145 colleges.

Railway Childline is implemented by Railways for runaway, abandoned, kidnapped, trafficked children. Child Helpline Centres were initially set up at 20 major Railway Stations for rehabilitation and rescue of such children. Additional 15 stations have been approved this year for providing similar facilities. Awareness campaign via posters, cautioning the passengers about the children around them who may need protection, in railway coaches was launched in November, 2015. Two lakh posters were released and distributed in trains in 2015-16.

In a first of its kind, **Kiosks with Child Helpline** have been set up at key 24 railway stations where the identified children are brought for temporary stay before they are restored to their parents or are sent to a children's home. Continuous announcements are made for passengers to keep a look-out for such children. Such assistance has been provided to more than 11,000 children till date.

POCSO e-Box was launched in August 2016 and is a simple and easy to use facility for children or any adult to register complaints of child sexual abuse or harassment. It is a direct online reporting mechanism where each complaint is handled with sensitivity and anonymity to provide optimum protection. Apart from this, the government recognized the need to place **cradle locations** in hospitals, PHC, etc to save the lives of unwanted new born babies and placing them in the adoption net managed by CARA with the intent to rehabilitate them in familial care. In an unprecedented initiative for working women, **maternity leave has been extended to a period of 26 weeks**.

The government launched a web portal called **Khoya-Paya** for reporting missing children. During 2016, with more than 7400 registered users and nearly 6800 cases of missing / sighted children, nearly 2500 cases were closed on the portal. The portal has now been integrated with Trackchild.

The 'Support to Training and Employment Programme for Women Scheme', in operation since 1986-87 to provide skills giving employability to women making them self-reliant, set up an ambitious plan to train 500 million women by 2022 has been discontinued.

In addition to conferring **Nari Shakti Puruskar** on eminent women, organisations and institutions rendering distinguished service to women's cause especially belonging to the vulnerable and marginalized sections of the society, 'First Ladies' who have broken the glass ceiling and ventured into unusual fields, like the first female Merchant Navy Captain, first train driver of passenger train, first female fire fighter, first female bus driver, first Indian woman to reach Antarctica among others are being recognized.

The **National Policy for Women, 2017** was drafted and is currently under consideration. The Policy has been prepared keeping in view the socio-economic changes that have occurred since the last policy of 2001. Over 15,000 crowd-sourced ideas have been considered as part of the policy formulation process.

Indian women, who have to stay away from their families for job purpose or do not have anyone to house them, often suffer from insecurities related to safety. Under **Working Women Hostel Scheme** 33 new hostels were sanctioned during last 3 years to meet the housing requirements of working or helpless women. Revised guidelines 2015 provide to install CCTV cameras in these Hostels and 7.5% seats are reserved ST community women.

These and many other initiatives by the Ministry of Women and Child Development, ensure a real time empowerment of the women and children in our country and thus, very significantly, paves way for a better society. However, there is a strong need to bring women working as domestic help in metropolis under any of these schemes.

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