

**Literacy rate of women**

1983. PROF. M.V. RAJEEV GOWDA: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

- (a) the present literacy rate of women in the country;
- (b) the steps taken to promote literacy rates of middle-aged women in the villages; and
- (c) whether action has been taken to curb the menace of a high girl child dropout amongst schools?

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRIMATI SMRITI ZUBIN IRANI): (a) The Census, 2011 reported the literacy rate of women in the country as 64.63%.

(b) In order to improve the adult female literacy rate in the country, Government is implementing Saakshar Bharat programme since October, 2009 in rural areas of all those districts that had adult female literacy rate of 50% and below as per Census, 2001, including left wing extremism affected districts, irrespective of their literacy rates. The scheme has a target of making 70 million adult non-literates, including 60 million women, with special thrust on disadvantaged groups as literates.

(c) Government is implementing the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) under the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 for universalisation of elementary education for all children in the 6-14 age group. In order to ensure greater participation of girls in elementary education SSA has targeted interventions for girls which include opening of schools in the neighbourhood, appointment of additional teachers including women teachers, free textbooks, free uniforms, separate toilets for girls, teachers' sensitization programmes, gender-sensitive teaching-learning materials, etc. Besides, Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas (KGBV) have been opened in Educationally Backward Blocks where the female rural literacy rate is below the national average to provide for residential upper primary schools for girls.

Government is also implementing Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA), a Centrally Sponsored Scheme since 2009 with the aim to universalize access to secondary education and improve its quality while ensuring equity. The scheme provides for opening of new secondary schools within 5 kms., provision of girls' hostels, toilet facilities for girls, female teachers quarters, guidance and counseling facilities, self defence training and other programmes for empowerment of girls, etc. to address the issue of drop-out of girls at secondary level.