

(c) Yes Sir. Four such cases have been reported. Penalties have been imposed in 03 cases and disciplinary proceedings have been initiated in 01 case.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Q.No. 65, Questioner is absent. Any supplementaries!

श्री अमर शंकर साबले: माननीय उपसभापति महोदय, मैं आपके माध्यम से मंत्री जी से जानना चाहता हूँ कि क्या केन्द्रीय भंडार से 3 लाख रुपए तक की purchase करने के लिए Government का circular निकल सकता है?

डा. जितेन्द्र सिंह: सभापति जी, hon. Member ने जो केन्द्रीय भंडार से संबंधित प्रश्न पूछा है, वास्तव में जैसा हमारे ध्यान में है कि केन्द्रीय भंडार की जब स्थापना हुई थी, आज से लगभग 50-55 वर्ष पहले, 1963 में, उस समय यह Central Government Employees Consumer Cooperative Society के रूप में था। उसके उपरांत वर्ष 2000 में इसे Multi-State Cooperation Society के रूप में परिवर्तित कर दिया गया, जिसमें लगभग 51 प्रतिशत शेयर सरकार का रहता है। इसके मापदंड स्थापित हैं कि कितनी purchases होंगी, किस तरह की होंगी। इसके अनेक retail stores हैं, दिल्ली में ही लगभग 109 हैं। देश के अन्य भागों में भी फैले हुए हैं। बुनियादी तौर पर इसका उद्देश्य और मकसद यह था कि सरकारी अधिकारियों को कुछ वस्तुएं या रोज़मर्रा की चीज़ें सस्ते दामों पर और अच्छी क्वालिटी में वहां उपलब्ध रहें। कौन-कौन सी चीज़ें वहां उपलब्ध करानी हैं, उसके लिए हमारा एक बोर्ड है, गवर्निंग बॉडी है, जिसके 9 Directors हैं। वे समय-समय पर जिस प्रकार की आवश्यकता होती है, तदनुसार निर्णय लेते हैं।

श्री उपसभापति: मैं समझता हूँ कि इस प्रश्न पर कोई दूसरा supplementary नहीं है।

India's rank in Global Gender Equality Index

*66. DR. K. V. P. RAMACHANDRA RAO: Will the Minister of WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether India is ranked 95th out of 129 countries in recently published Global Gender Equality Index and if so, the details thereof:

(b) whether the country is lagging behind in achieving several sustainable development goals included for the ranking; and

(c) whether Government has any strategy to promote gender equality in the country?

THE MINISTER OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT (SHRIMATI SMRITI ZUBIN IRANI): (a) to (c) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) to (c) Equal Measures 2030 (EM2030), a joint effort of regional and global organisations from civil society, development and private sectors, has published Global Gender Equality Index and ranked India in 95th position out of 129 countries.

Though the report claims the said index to be based on Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) the report is based on only few indicators out of 232 UN approved global indicators, have been used for compiling the index. India has developed its own framework to monitor the SDGs, which is based on 306 India specific indicators. The Equal Measure report has been published without consulting the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation.

However, Government has various strategies to promote gender equality in the country. These include interventions in the form of schemes, legislations and other initiatives to create an environment wherein women will be able to achieve their full potential.

The principle of gender equality is enshrined within the Indian Constitution. The Constitution of India not only guarantees gender equality but also empowers the State to formulate affirmative action in favour of women.

The government has made several schematic interventions to address the issue of gender equity and equality in India. Some of the major schemes are given below:

Beti Bachao Beti Padhao Scheme addresses declining Child Sex Ratio and related issues of empowerment of women over a life cycle continuum. The Scheme for Adolescent Girls aims to empower and improve the social status of out of school girls in the age group 11-14 through nutrition, life skills and home skills. The Mahila Shakti Kendra Scheme empowers rural women through community participation to create an environment in which they realize their full potential. Further, Rashtriya Mahila Kosh (RMK) aims to extend micro-finance services to bring about socio-economic upliftment of poor women. 7 crore women have been benefitted under the Ujjwala Yojna. More than 9 crore women entrepreneurs have been benefitted through Mudra Yojna and Stand up India programme. More than 7.25 crore toilets have been built under the Swachh Bharat Mission, to give dignity to women, *inter alia*. Under the Pradhan Mantri Sukanya Samriddhi Yojna, 1.26 crore bank accounts of girls have been opened for their economic empowerment.

Gender Budgeting, as a strong tool for advancing gender equality, has been adopted by India at the National, State and Panchayat Level. It ensures that a gender perspective is incorporated into all budgetary stages from planning to implementation. Gender Budgeting is an important strategy towards advancing gender equality and furthering women's empowerment.

India already has in place legislations like The Equal Remuneration Act, 1976 which ensures equal remuneration to both men and women workers for same work or work of a

similar nature. The Maternity Benefit Act, 1961, along with its amendment in 2017, while recognizing the productive and reproductive role of a woman, provides her with an enabling environment to participate equally and effectively in the work sphere. In the recent years, there has been enactment of various legislations by the Indian Parliament which addresses the issue of gender inequality, discrimination and violence faced by women. Some of these include The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013 to provide a safe and secure environment to women at the workplace.

Further, in order to ensure that the marital status of a woman does not subject her to any form of discrimination or hardship, the Passport Rules were suitably amended by the Government, so that now the applicant does not have to mandatorily submit father's name or to provide marriage/divorce certificate while applying for passport. Similarly, in the PAN Card application forms, mentioning the father's name is no longer mandatory for a person whose mother was a single parent.

The above schematic, legislative and other initiatives and interventions send a strong message towards gender equality.

DR. K.V.P. RAMACHANDRA RAO: Sir, first, let me thank the Chair for giving me the privilege of putting the first question to the hon. Minister. The hon. Minister left us for a place in the Lower House. Of course, I don't know whether it is her decision or the decision of her party.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Please put your question.

DR. K.V.P. RAMACHANDRARAO: Yes, Sir. Thank you for this privilege. I appreciate the hon. Minister for listing the schemes and programmes intended for promoting gender equality. Sir, here, the hon. Minister in her reply has stated that under the Pradhan Mantri Sukanya Samriddhi Yojana, 1.26 crore bank accounts have been opened for their economic empowerment. Sir, I don't see any purpose in just merely opening bank accounts.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Please put your question.

DR. K.V.P. RAMACHANDRA RAO: Sir, I think it is just for the purpose of mentioning that it is stated that so many bank accounts for girls have been opened. Sir, the question which I would like to ask of the hon. Minister is: Has the Government got any proposal to deposit money in these accounts of girls age-wise till they attain marriageable age so that they can have financial independence after their marriage?

SHRIMATI SMRITI ZUBIN IRANI: Sir, at the outset, let me express my deep gratitude to this House. I had the privilege of serving in this House for seven years and I have the privilege of being guided not only by the seniors in my party but across party lines, many leaders were extremely affectionate and guided me sometimes in the most challenging circumstances. I never had an opportunity to express my grateful thanks to the entire House. I do so today. I have gone to the next House with fond memories of this House and with many lessons. I am grateful to all the leaders who met me in this seven-year journey.

The hon. Member was wondering why opening of bank accounts is a purpose that has been celebrated by the Government in the response given to him. I think that when women's equality, जब महिला सशक्तिकरण की कहीं-न-कहीं समीक्षा होती है, उसमें बार-बार इसका उल्लेख होता है कि financially how we have made women more and more independent and stronger, to use a very casual word. Sir, here, I must say that apart from one facility that the hon. Member has highlighted, schemes like MUDRA Yojana, in fact, encourage more and more women to become financially independent. As a female MP, I am very proud to say that under MUDRA Yojana 70 per cent of the beneficiaries turned out to be women. For the hon. Member to look at a girl's progression in life only from the perspective of marriage possibly binds her in a silo but I must say here, Sir, that when we encourage programmes such as 'Beti Bachao, Beto Padhao', we encourage families to save in the name of the girl child so that the girl child, when she reaches an age of maturity, then decides where and how she would like the family to use that money. Some girls may opt for marriage but many girls today opt to be financially independent and start their own businesses.

DR. K.V.P. RAMACHANDRA RAO: Sir, my second question is this. Hon. Minister and myself had been in this House together for the last five years at least, I mean, she was a Minister. All the five years, she was in the Cabinet. ...(*Interruptions*)...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Please put your second question. We have heard it and she has also explained. ...(*Interruptions*)...

DR. K.V.P. RAMACHANDRA RAO: Sir, I want to know from the Minister: Is the Minister satisfied with her Government's efforts —she was a member as well as Minister for five years —in bringing about the Women's Reservation Bill and get it passed? I want to know from her that if, at least, in this term she, along with her Cabinet colleagues, would take all the steps possible to ensure that Women's Reservation Bill is passed.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Please be brief, Ramachandra Raoji.

SHRIMATI SMRITI ZUBIN IRANI: Sir, I would like to attract the hon. MP's attention to the fact that when we sat in those very Benches, we supported the then Government to

ensure that the Bill was passed here. The way he seeks an assurance from me, I am sure that the Member is well aware that the issue does not fall within my legislative purview. I can say here, Sir, today that when you look at our progression as a women-friendly nation, I must acknowledge here today that many agenda items with regard to women are studied on a perspective or on the basis of gender budgeting. I must say here today, through you, and inform the entire House that even when it comes to gender budgeting, in the year 2005-06, the proportion of money —that is a part of our administrative history —was close to ₹14,738 crores. Today, in 2019-20, if you look at the Budget expenditure, we have reached a position of ₹1,31,699 crore. In 2005-06, we had 9 departments that had looked at how to make women schemes more strong in our country through budgeting. Today, that has reached 34 departments. Can I be ever satisfied? ...(*Interruptions*)...

DR. K.V.P. RAMACHANDRA RAO: Sir, the Minister has not. ...(*Interruptions*)...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Thank you. Ramachandra Raoji, please take your seat. ...(*Interruptions*)...

SHRIMATI SMRITI ZUBIN IRANI: Can I ever be satisfied, Sir? ...(*Interruptions*)...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Please. ...(*Interruptions*)...

SHRIMATI SMRITI ZUBIN IRANI: Ask any well-meaning citizen in this country. Till such time development does not reach every lady, and every woman is not inspired to dream for a better tomorrow, no one in this House or outside would stand satisfied. ...(*Interruptions*)...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Please take your seat. ...(*Interruptions*)... She has already replied to that. Now, Shri Jairam Ramesh.

SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH: Sir, yesterday, there was a question that was answered in Parliament on the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare. It related to child sex ratio. It has a very significant bearing on gender equality. Sir, elections are over; so, we do not have to now go back to election times but my question is a very serious question. We all know that child sex ratios were adverse in Punjab, Haryana, Delhi, in the North-West part of the country. What is very, very puzzling and very disturbing from the answer given yesterday is that there are new States where there is a decline in child sex ratio. Gujarat, Maharashtra, these are prosperous States. These are urban States. These are industrialized States but we are seeing a decline in child sex ratios. Now, I do not want the Minister to say 'Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao'. We know all of that. Would the hon. Minister please look into this

alarming trend where new States are coming on the map with figures of child sex ratios actually declining and are being adverse to girls and thereby to women later on?

SHRIMATI SMRITI ZUBIN IRANI: Sir, the hon. Member has attracted the attention of the House on an answer given by the Ministry of Health and then put a question to me and presumed that he would not want to hear 'Beti Bachao Beti Padhao' from my end.

But, I must say here that the consistent effort in the past four years has shown a bettering of prospects for the girl child in 25 States. The hon. Member rightfully said that in some of the most industrialized, well-read areas you do find a dip at times. This is an issue on which you will find numbers spike and dip year after year. The fallacy that the girl child is un-protected only amongst the un-educated is a fallacy and a myth that we need to burst. It is true that in areas where very well educated families reside, this kind of discrimination has been witnessed. It is an issue that has been studied not only in my Government but also Governments of the past.

The 'Beti Bachao Beti Padhao' *Andolan* actually seeks to engage even with civil society groups in such areas to address this very issue.

श्रीमती कहकशां परवीन: मैं माननीय मंत्री जी के जवाब से बहुत स्पष्ट हूँ। उन्होंने बेटी बढ़ाओ, बेटी बचाओ योजना और मुद्रा योजना सक आत्मनिर्भरता की बात कही है। यह बात सही है कि जब तक औरतें तरक्की नहीं करेंगी, मजबूत नहीं होंगी, तब तक समाज का विकास नहीं हो सकता। मेरा सीधा सवाल यह है कि बिहार में माननीय मंत्री जी ने, माननीय मुख्य मंत्री जी ने महिलाओं को नौकरियों में 35 प्रतिशत आरक्षण दिया है, तो क्या माननीय मंत्री जी का प्रयास रहेगा कि हमारी महिलाओं को नौकरियों में सभी जगह 35 प्रतिशत आरक्षण मिले और पूरे हिन्दुस्तान में इसे लागू किया जाए?

†محترمہ کہکشاں پروین : میں مانیہ منتری جی کے جواب سے بہت مطمئن ہوں۔ انہوں نے بیٹی پڑھاؤ، بیٹی بچاؤ یوجنا اور مُدرا یوجنا سے اتمِ نربھرتا کی بات کہی ہے۔ یہ بات صحیح ہے کہ جب تک عورتیں ترقی نہیں کریں گی، مضبوط نہیں ہوں گی، تب تک سماج کا وکاس نہیں ہوسکتا۔ میرا سیدھا سوال ہے کہ بہار میں مانیہ منتری جی نے، مانیہ مکھیہ منتری جی نے مہیلاؤں کو نوکریں میں پینتیس فیصد آرکشن دیا ہے، تو کیا مانیہ منتری جی کا پریاس رہے گا کہ ہماری مہیلاؤں کو نوکریوں میں سبھی جگہ پینتیس فیصد آرکشن ملے اور پورے ہندستان میں اسے لاگو کیا جائے؟

†Transliteration in Urdu script.

श्रीमती स्मृति जूबिन इरानी: उपसभापति महोदय, मैं माननीय सदस्या को अवगत कराना चाहती हूँ कि इस सरकार की ओर से महिलाओं के सशक्तिकरण और नौकरी में उनके इजाफे के लिए हमारे पिछले कार्यकाल में एक एडवाइज़री जारी की गई। Women in Police Force के संदर्भ में 33 परसेंट आरक्षण पहले ही दिया जा चुका है। वर्तमान में उसे 10 राज्यों और सात Union Territories में अप्रूव करके लागू भी किया जा चुका है। सरकार मुद्रा योजना जैसी अन्य योजनाओं के माध्यम से प्रतिबद्ध है। 'स्टार्ट-अप' कल्चर को भी महिलाओं की दृष्टि से किया गया है और 'स्टैंड-अप' में बैंकों के लिए विशेष प्रावधान किया गया है, जिससे महिला सशक्तिकरण हो, महिला खुद entrepreneur बनें और वह दूसरों को भी नौकरी दे। इसका प्रावधान भी सरकार कर रही है।

SHRI K.J. ALPHONS: Sir, yesterday, I was talking about celebrating our small successes. Yesterday, very happily, I read....

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Please put your question.

SHRI K.J. ALPHONS: Yes, I am putting it. A village in Nagaland has achieved an amazing thing where women and men get equal wages. Now, would the Minister kindly take the initiative to ensure that we could do this nationally? If a village in Nagaland could do it I am sure that India can do it. Would the Minister take the legislative initiative, please?

SHRIMATI SMRITI ZUBIN IRANI: Sir, the hon. Member is, I am sure, well aware that legislation with regard to equal remuneration for women exists in this country since the 1970s. Yes, it is a matter of celebration that in a particular district you have found such a success story. Through the Ministry of Corporate Affairs, the Ministry of Women and Child Development does pursue such issues. But, as a civil society, as the hon. Member has highlighted, we need to celebrate more such success stories.

Bilateral relations with neighbouring countries

*67. **DR. ANILAGARWAL:** Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has entered into any agreements with our neighbouring countries Paksitan, China, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Bhutan, Bangladesh, etc improve bilateral relations during the last three years and the current year;

(b) if so, details thereof, year-wise and country-wise; and

(c) the benefits accrued or likely to accrue as a result thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI V. MURALEEDHARAN): (a) to (c) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.