

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF COMMERCE & INDUSTRY
DEPARTMENT FOR PROMOTION OF INDUSTRY AND INTERNAL TRADE**

RAJYA SABHA

**UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 2300.
TO BE ANSWERED ON FRIDAY, THE 5TH AUGUST, 2022.**

PROMOTION OF WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS

2300. SHRI SUJEET KUMAR:

Will the Minister of **Commerce and Industry** be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government is intending to bring any structural reforms aiming at supporting and promoting women entrepreneurs in both private and public sectors in the country;
- (b) if so, whether Government has received any recommendations from industry associations or women entrepreneurs in this regard and if so, the details thereof; and
- (c) whether Government is further intending to create awareness and bring visibility to the existing initiatives and leverage from all existing schemes, aimed at supporting women entrepreneurs and if so, the details thereof?

ANSWER

**THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE & INDUSTRY
(SHRI SOM PARKASH)**

- (a) to (c):** Government launched Startup India initiative on 16th January 2016 with an aim to build a stronger ecosystem for nurturing India's startup culture that would further drive our economic growth, support entrepreneurship, and enable large-scale employment opportunities. It, inter alia, assists in strengthening women entrepreneurship, through policies and initiatives, and creation of enabling networks. Details of various programs undertaken under Startup India initiative, which are gender neutral, are placed at **Annexure-I**.

Sustained Government efforts in this direction have resulted in increasing the number of recognized Startups from 471 in 2016 to 72,993 in 2022 (as on 30th June 2022). Out of these, nearly 47% of them have at-least one-woman director.

Further, Government has also taken following measures to promote women entrepreneurship in the country:

- i. to promote flow of both equity and debt to women led startups, 10% of the fund (Rs 1000 crore) in the Fund of Funds for Startups Scheme operated by SIDBI is reserved for women led startups.

- ii. Women Capacity Development Programme (WING) is a unique Capacity Development Program for women-led startups, to identify and support both aspiring and established women entrepreneurs in their startup journeys. The workshops are open to variety of business sectors including Tech, Construction, Product, Machine, Food, Agriculture, Education, etc. The workshops served as a platform for emerging women entrepreneurs and other stakeholders to discuss the key challenges facing women entrepreneurs. WING workshops have created a conducive environment to share best practices and experiences in overcoming challenges and to gain insights learned from the business models adopted in the Indian context. A total of 24 workshops were conducted across 9 States, benefitting more than 1,300 women entrepreneurs.
- iii. Virtual Incubation Program for Women Entrepreneurs were conducted in collaboration with Zone Startups to support 20 women-led tech startups with pro-bono acceleration support for 3 months.
- iv. A webpage dedicated to women entrepreneurs has been designed on the Startup India portal. The page includes various policy measures for women entrepreneurs by both Central and State Governments.
- v. Through its various awareness programmes and capacity building programmes organized by the Government, and through print media and social media platforms, the Government also creates awareness about the existing schemes which support micro, small and medium entrepreneurs, including women entrepreneurs.

Furthermore, assisted by the States' Startup Rankings on Support to Startup Ecosystems, which is primarily an exercise to identify good practices including support to women entrepreneurs, learning from each other and helping each other in formulating and implementing policies in true spirit of cooperative federalism, 31 States and UTs have notified policies to support startups.

To identify the depth, quality and spread of innovation, inclusivity and diversity, and entrepreneurship in country, the Government instituted the National Startup Awards ('NSA'). The winners of NSA have emerged from Bengaluru, Delhi, Hyderabad Chennai, Mumbai Mysuru, Bhopal, Ernakulam, Gurugram, Kochi, Lucknow, Margao, Sonipat, Tiruvananthapuram etc. The 2020 and 2021 editions of the NSA had a special award category for Women-led Startups.

The Government has also launched the Women Entrepreneurship Platform (WEP) in 2018 as an aggregator platform with the aim to overcome information asymmetry in the women entrepreneurial ecosystem. By showcasing all existing initiatives and providing domain knowledge it works towards empowering both prospective and present women entrepreneurs.

ANNEXURE REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) TO (c) OF THE RAJYA SABHA UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 2300 FOR ANSWER ON 05.08.2022.

Programs Launched under Startup India initiative

The details of various programs undertaken by the Government to promote startups under Startup India initiative across the country are as under:

1. **Startup India Action Plan**: An Action Plan for Startup India was unveiled on 16th January 2016. The Action Plan comprises of 19 action items spanning across areas such as “Simplification and handholding”, “Funding support and incentives” and “Industry-academia partnership and incubation”. The Action Plan laid the foundation of Government support, schemes and incentives envisaged to create a vibrant startup ecosystem in the country.
2. **Fund of Funds for Startups (FFS) Scheme**: The Government has established FFS with corpus of Rs. 10,000 crore, to meet the funding needs of startups. DPIIT is the monitoring agency and Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI) is the operating agency for FFS. The total corpus of Rs. 10,000 crore is envisaged to be provided over the 14th and 15th Finance Commission cycles based on progress of the scheme and availability of funds. It has not only made capital available for startups at early stage, seed stage and growth stage but also played a catalytic role in terms of facilitating raising of domestic capital, reducing dependence on foreign capital and encouraging home grown and new venture capital funds.
3. **Regulatory Reforms**: 52 regulatory reforms have been undertaken by the Government since 2016 to enhance ease of doing business, ease of raising capital and reduce compliance burden for the startup ecosystem.
4. **Support for Intellectual Property Protection**: Startups are eligible for fast-tracked patent application examination and disposal. The Government launched Start-ups Intellectual Property Protection (SIPP) which facilitates the startups to file applications for patents, designs and trademarks through registered facilitators in appropriate IP offices by paying only the statutory fees. Facilitators under this Scheme are responsible for providing general advisory on different IPRs, and information on protecting and promoting IPRs in other countries. The Government bears the entire fees of the facilitators for any number of patents, trademark or designs, and startups only bear the cost of the statutory fees payable. Startups are provided with an 80% rebate in filing of patents and 50% rebate in filling of trademark vis-a-vis other companies.
5. **Self-Certification under Labour and Environmental laws**: Startups are allowed to self-certify their compliance under 9 Labour and 3 Environment laws for a period of 3 to 5 years from the date of incorporation.

6. **Income Tax Exemption for 3 years:** Startups incorporated on or after 1st April 2016 can apply for income tax exemption. The recognized startups that are granted an Inter-Ministerial Board Certificate are exempted from income-tax for a period of 3 consecutive years out of 10 years since incorporation.
7. **International Market Access to Indian Startups:** One of the key objectives under the Startup India initiative is to help connect Indian startup ecosystem to global startup ecosystems through various engagement models. This has been done through international Government to Government partnerships, participation in international forums and hosting of global events. Startup India has launched bridges with over 15 countries (Brazil, Sweden, Russia, Portugal, UK, Finland, Netherlands, Singapore, Israel, Japan, South Korea, Canada, Croatia, Qatar and UAE) that provides a soft-landing platform for startups from the partner nations and aid in promoting cross collaboration.
8. **Faster Exit for Startups:** The Government has notified Startups as ‘fast track firms’ enabling them to wind up operations within 90 days vis-a-vis 180 days for other companies.
9. **Startup India Hub:** The Government launched a Startup India Online Hub on 19th June 2017 which is one of its kind online platform for all stakeholders of the entrepreneurial ecosystem in India to discover, connect and engage with each other. The Online Hub hosts Startups, Investors, Funds, Mentors, Academic Institutions, Incubators, Accelerators, Corporates, Government Bodies and more.
10. **Exemption for the Purpose Of Clause (VII)(b) of Sub-section (2) of Section 56 of the Act (2019):** A DPIIT recognized startup is eligible for exemption from the provisions of section 56(2)(viib) of the Income Tax Act.
11. **Startup India Showcase:** Startup India Showcase is an online discovery platform for the most promising startups of the country chosen through various programs for startups exhibited in a form of virtual profiles. The startups showcased on the platform have distinctly emerged as the best in their fields. These innovations span across various cutting-edge sectors such as Fintech, EnterpriseTech, Social Impact, HealthTech, EdTech, among others. These startups are solving critical problems and have shown exceptional innovation in their respective sectors. Ecosystem stakeholders have nurtured and supported these startups, thereby validating their presence on this platform.
12. **National Startup Advisory Council:** The Government in January 2020 notified constitution of the National Startup Advisory Council to advise the Government on measures needed to build a strong ecosystem for nurturing innovation and startups in the country to drive sustainable economic growth and generate large scale employment opportunities. Besides the ex-officio members, the council has a number of non-official members, representing various stakeholders from the startup ecosystem.
13. **Startup India: The Way Ahead:** Startup India: The Way Ahead at 5 years celebration of Startup India was unveiled on 16th January 2021 which includes actionable plans for promotion of ease of doing business for startups, greater role of technology in executing various reforms, building capacities of stakeholders and enabling a digital Aatmanirbhar Bharat.

14. **Startup India Seed Fund Scheme (SISFS):** Easy availability of capital is essential for entrepreneurs at the early stages of growth of an enterprise. The capital required at this stage often presents a make-or-break situation for startups with good business ideas. The Scheme aims to provide financial assistance to startups for proof of concept, prototype development, product trials, market entry and commercialization. Rs. 945 crore has been sanctioned under the SISFS Scheme for period of 4 years starting from 2021-22.
