

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF WOMEN & CHILD DEVELOPMENT

RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1585
TO BE ANSWERED ON 12.03.2025

SCHEMES FOR SINGLE MOTHERS AND WIDOWS

1585 SHRI BABUBHAI JESANGBHAI DESAI:

Will the Minister of *Women and Child Development* be pleased to state:

- (a) the details of the specific programs or schemes the Ministry have in place to provide financial and social security to single mothers and widows;
- (b) if not, the reasons therefor; and
- (c) the manner in which widow pension schemes are being implemented and the challenges faced in their distribution?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT
(SHRIMATI SAVITRI THAKUR)

(a) to (c): There are a number of schemes being implemented by various Ministries and Departments of the Government of India for social and economic empowerment of women, including for single mothers and widows.

The major schemes/ programmes of Government of India in this regard are as follows:-

(i) **Home for Widows** named 'Krishna Kutir' set up in Vrindavan, Uttar Pradesh with a capacity to accommodate 1,000 residents to provide a safe and secure place of stay, health services, nutritious food, legal and counselling services.

(ii) The Ministry of Women and Child Development during the 15th Finance Commission period with effect from the financial year 2022-23, is implementing Centrally Sponsored Scheme 'Mission Shakti' in the country for welfare and empowerment of women. It comprises of two sub-schemes 'Sambal' and 'Samarthya' for safety and security of women and empowerment of women respectively. The "Samarthya" vertical is for the empowerment of women. It has the following components namely, **Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY)** under which cash incentives of ₹5,000/- is provided directly to the Bank/Post Office account of the pregnant women and lactating mothers in Direct Benefit Transfer

(DBT) mode for first child. Cash incentive of ₹6,000/- is also provided under PMMVY to eligible beneficiaries for second child, if it is a girl child. **Shakti Sadan** is an Integrated Relief and Rehabilitation Home for women in distress situations and difficult circumstances including trafficked women. **Sakhi Niwas** (Working Women Hostel) that aims to promote availability of safe and conveniently located accommodation for working women in urban, semi-urban and even rural areas where employment opportunity for women exist. **Palna** is a component of day-care crèche facilities that provide a safe and secure place for the children. Creche services formalise the child-care facilities hitherto considered as part of domestic work and uses Anganwadi infrastructure for ensuring delivery of care facilities till the last mile. The **SANKALP: Hub for Empowerment of Women (HEW)** serves as a vehicle to bridge the information and knowledge gap regarding schemes and facilities available for women.

(iii) The **PAN Card rules** have been amended to provide that in cases where the mother is a single parent, the applicant can choose to have only the mother's name on the PAN card by providing the necessary details.

(iv) **Passport rules** have been amended in favour of single mothers. Now either the mother's or the father's name can be provided in the passport application form and there is no requirement to provide the certificate of marriage/ divorce during application. Earlier, providing the father's name in the PAN application forms was mandatory.

(v) In 2024, the Department of Pension and Pensioners' Welfare issued notification amending CCS (Pension) Rules, 2021, allowing female Government servants/ Pensioners to nominate her children for family pension in case of marital discord with husband, thus enabling women pensioners to exercise independent agency.

(vi) **National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP)**, which is a social security programme for senior citizens, widows, disabled persons and bereaved families on death of primary bread winners belonging to Below Poverty Line (BPL) households in rural as well as urban areas. As per NSAP guidelines, responsibility of implementation of NSAP schemes, selection/ verification of beneficiaries, disbursement of pension to beneficiaries, stoppage of pension, annual verification of beneficiaries is with the States/UTs. As informed by Ministry of Rural Development, Indira Gandhi National Widow Pension Scheme was formally launched in February 2009. The central pension under the scheme is 300/- per month per beneficiary. State Governments have been advised to contribute at least an equal amount from their resources. The applicant must be a widow in the age group of 40-79 years. The

applicant should belong to a BPL household according to the criteria prescribed by the Govt. of India. On reaching the age of 80 years, the beneficiaries get enhanced assistance of Rs. 500/- per month. At present widow beneficiaries are getting pension between Rs. 300/- to Rs. 2800/- depending on the State pension amount which varies from State to State. At present, the ceiling of number of beneficiaries under the scheme for all States and UTs is pegged at 67.36 lakh.

(vii) Under **Raksha Mantri Ex-Servicemen Welfare Fund (RMEWF)**, the Government provides financial assistance to a widow of armed forces personnel to settle in life through vocational training. Depending on the educational level and aptitude, the widows may opt to undergo the requisite vocational training. The scheme to provide financial assistance to widow of Ex-Servicemen (ESM) upto the rank of havildar or equivalent was started in August 2023 with a onetime grant of Rs 50,000/-.
