

Challenges Faced by Women and Children in India : Bridging the Gulf Between Rhetoric and Reality

World women day 8th March

In 2015, the launch of the 'Beti Bachao Beti Padhao' campaign by the Union Ministry of Women and Child Development, accompanied by Prime Minister Narendra Modi's endorsement of the #SelfieWithDaughter social media initiative, symbolized a commitment to educating and empowering girls. However, the recent ground report from the Unified District Information System for Education (UDISE) presents a stark contrast. Over 20,000 schools were shut down in just one year, and the dropout rates for children in classes 1 to 8 doubled, raising concerns about the impact of the New Education Policy (NEP) 2020, which appears to hinder girls' access to education due to increased privatization and associated expenses.

Despite the government's emphasis on 'Beti Padhao,' budgetary allocations in the social sector have decreased significantly. From 4.6% in

2014-15, the allocation plummeted to 2.5% in 2023-24, impacting critical initiatives like mid-day meals and 'Beti Bachao,' which witnessed massive cuts. The merger of Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) into Pradhan Mantri Poshan Shakti Nirman (PM POSHAN) saw a rise in financial outlay, yet the effectiveness of this transformation remains to be seen.

Similar reductions are evident in women- and child-related schemes such as the National Creche Scheme, Scheme for Adolescent Girls, and the maternity benefit scheme, despite India having the highest number of malnourished women globally.

Examining the widely touted Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana, which distributed LPG connections to women below the poverty line, reveals a discrepancy between claims and reality. While 93.4 million beneficiaries were reached by April 2022, high LPG cylinder prices deterred families from refilling. This disparity is exemplified by the statement from the Minister



for Petroleum and Natural Gas, Rameshwar Teli, revealing that millions did not take refills in 2021. Another critical concern is the purported electrification of 18 lakh villages, juxtaposed against stagnant power consumption growth at 5% per annum. The Pradhan Mantri Sahaj Bijli Har Ghar Yojana mirrors the Ujjwala scheme, illustrating that even with a free connection, poor households lack

the means to purchase metered electricity.

The decline in the Labor Force Participation Rate (LFPR) of women over the last nine years, from 27% in 2012 to 23.9% in 2021, signals a worrisome trend. The Center for New Economics Studies attributes this decline to women transitioning from salaried employment to poorly paid self-employment in the unorga-

nized sector, particularly post-COVID.

Despite the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) aiming to provide a safety net for the poor, drastic budgetary cuts of 33% in the current financial year have hindered its efficacy. The allocation, now at Rs 60,000 crore, is primarily used to clear wage backlogs, exacerbating the

challenges faced by women in availing themselves of this crucial scheme, especially with the added complexity of Aadhaar-linked payments.

Healthcare expenditure across the country has reached catastrophic proportions, contributing significantly to rural indebtedness. Inequities in health facilities between states and districts have driven the proliferation of expensive private healthcare in rural India. Notably, the expenditure on health remains dismally low, fluctuating between 1.2% and 2.2% of the budgetary outlay between 2014-15 and 2022-23. The gap between rhetoric and reality in these key areas is evident, demanding urgent attention and concrete actions to address the challenges faced by women and children in India. Efforts should be directed towards aligning budgetary allocations with the lofty goals of campaigns like 'Beti Bachao Beti Padhao' and ensuring that policies translate into meaningful improvements in the lives of the most vulnerable populations.



Significant Changes in the Education Sector Over the Past Decade:CM

Udaipur: Chief Minister Shri Bhajanlal Sharma emphasized the significant changes witnessed in the education sector in the last decade, attributing it to the positive transformation brought about by timely access to education. He highlighted that education, along with essential services like healthcare, electricity, water, and roads, plays a crucial role in societal progress. The Chief Minister expressed that when society advances responsibly, it contributes to the development of the state and, ultimately, the nation.

Chief Minister Sharma made these remarks during the inauguration ceremony of the government college building in Mavli on Friday. He asserted that the 21st century belongs to India, and under the leadership of the nation's successful Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi, the central government has undertaken positive initiatives in every sector since 2014. Over the past decade, the country has seen significant changes in the education sector, with the establishment of new medical colleges, AIIMS, IITs, and IIITs. Continuous development is also evident in transportation infrastructure, including roads and railways.

The Chief Minister assured that the double-engine government in the state will fulfill every promise made in line with Prime Minister Modi's vision for development. The event was attended by MP Shri CP Joshi, Minister of Tribal Area Development Shri Babulal Kharadi, District Chief Shrimati Mamta Kanwar, and MLA Shri Pushkar Dangi, along with a large gathering of the general public.

New Sanskrit Textbook Unveiled at University

The Govind Guru Tribal University in Banswara inaugurated the 'Sanskrit Gadya' textbook for B.A. second semester in line with the National Education Policy.



Authorized by Professor Rajesh Joshi, the unveiling ceremony witnessed the presentation of the first copies to the university library. Professor Kalyanmal Singada, Vice-Chancellor, lauded the textbook's significance, covering units on Shukranasopadesha, Shivarajvijayam, and a concise history of Sanskrit prose literature. Professor Joshi highlighted the text's focus on teaching caution in materialistic challenges and showcasing Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj's triumph against Aurangzeb, imparting valuable lessons on India's sovereignty. Esteemed members and agricultural science expert Dr. Rajendra Kumar Sharma attended the event.

Sandeep Sharma Unveils Advanced Blood Collection Van

Kota: Member of Legislative Assembly, Sandeep Sharma,



inaugurated a state-of-the-art Blood Collection Van worth 48 lakh at Kota's Medical College, funded through the MLA fund. Sharma foresees this van,

equipped with modern amenities and capable of collecting 110 units of blood, setting new records for blood donation in Kota. The initiative aligns with the Bharatiya Janata Party's welfare-oriented governance, aiming for government hospitals to outshine private ones. In the presence of dignitaries, including Lok Sabha Speaker Shri Om Birla, the van's inauguration marks a significant step towards enhancing medical facilities and blood donation capabilities in the region.

Titans Prevail Over Saraswat in Mewar Cup

Udaipur: In the Mewar Cup's second-day matches at Lakeside Club, Titans Club secured a 19-run victory against Saraswat Sports Club. Titans posted an imposing score of 219 runs in 20 overs, with Rohan contributing 82 and Karan Lamba adding 44. Despite Anmol's impressive 91-run performance for Saraswat, they fell short at 200 runs. In another match, Mewar Tourism Club achieved their second consecutive win, successfully chasing G.R. Cricket Academy's target of 179. Anil Patel, Secretary of Gujarat Cricket Association, distributed awards during both matches in a tournament featuring renowned cricketers and daily audience prizes. PIMS Hospital Umrada and Mirage Pipes & Fittings sponsor the second season.

Sacred Akhand Jyoti Unveiling Ceremony

Udaipur: The Balochistan Panchayat and Sanatan Dharma Seva Samiti are orchestrating the arrival of the holy Akhand Jyoti (Eternal Flame) in Udaipur. President Nanakram Kasturi announced the consecration of a life-sized Goddess Vaishnodevi idol at the Vaishnodevi Temple on the Udaipur-Nathdwara road, scheduled for March 3. The Akhand Jyoti, starting its journey from Vaishnodevi Temple in Katra, Jammu, received a warm welcome in Shaktinagar. The Sanatan Temple will open for public darshan of the Akhand Jyoti from 9 AM to 9 PM, with systematic arrangements by the Seva Samiti and Panchayat. A procession to the Jagdish Temple is planned for March 3 at 9 AM.

Amit Shah Inaugurates National Urban Cooperative Bank



Udaipur: The Minister of Home Affairs and Cooperation, Amit Shah, inaugurated the National Urban Cooperative Finance and Development Corporation, the umbrella organization for urban cooperative banks, in New Delhi. During the event, Shah expressed strong support for

fostering collaboration within the cooperative sector.

In his address, Shah stated that until cooperatives empower and move forward together, progress will be limited. He highlighted the establishment of the National Urban Cooperative Finance and Development Corporation after

nearly two years of struggle, considering it an auspicious day for all.

Shah emphasized that Prime Minister Narendra Modi, after 75 years of independence, has revitalized the cooperative sector by establishing a dedicated Ministry of Cooperation. He underscored that the cooperative movement, which struggled for almost 750 years, now has the support of the government, ensuring swift progress and contributing significantly to the nation's economy. Shah also mentioned the effort to transform the cooperative movement into a people's move-

ment. He suggested that in a vast country like India, the parameter for development should not solely be based on numbers but rather on the active participation of people. The formation of the umbrella organization was deemed essential, representing a new beginning for self-regulation.

Shah predicted that the establishment of this organization would significantly enhance the development of urban cooperative banks across the country. He stressed the importance of upgrading and adhering to all regulations set by the Reserve Bank of India for our credibility.

BJP Gears Up for 2024 Lok Sabha Elections, Intensive Deliberations Underway

New Delhi: With the impending Lok Sabha elections on the horizon, political parties are actively preparing for the electoral battle. The ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), along with other parties like the Congress, is engaging in intense deliberations to finalize their candidates. The BJP, currently holding power at the center, is expected to release its first list of candidates soon, aiming to exert psychological pressure on opposition parties. The party has set an ambitious goal of winning 400 seats this time, rallying with its NDA allies. Prime Minister Narendra Modi envisions a sweeping victory on all 370 contested Lok Sabha seats, and the BJP might reconsider tickets for several incumbent MPs and veteran leaders. PM Modi, displaying his seriousness about the 2024 elections, remained present at the Central Election Committee (CEC) meeting until late Thursday night. After that, discussions continued into Friday



morning. The release of the candidate list is anticipated anytime now, although there are still some reservations about certain names.

In an attempt to strategize effectively, the BJP has declared slogans of '400 plus' seats in collaboration with NDA allies. PM Modi, who is currently touring states like West Bengal, is making direct inquiries about the performance of MPs through the Namo app, seeking feedback from the public. The BJP has conducted surveys in each Lok Sabha constituency to select winning candidates, and reports from independent agencies are being scruti-

nized. The party is closely monitoring the performance of its MPs over the past two years, demanding reports from each constituency.

BJP's National President J.P. Nadda, along with Home Minister Amit Shah and Organization Minister B.L. Santosh, led discussions in the meeting. The gathering included prominent leaders like Defense Minister Rajnath Singh, Home Minister Amit Shah, Organizational Minister B.L. Santosh, and BJP Chief Ministers from various states.

The party's strategy revolves around selecting the best candidates for each seat to ensure a favorable outcome. BJP is emphasizing bringing strong opposition can-

didates into the fold, and for this, special attention is being given to every state.

In a significant move, the party may drop tickets for MPs who did not perform well in the last elections, senior MPs not fitting into current political dynamics, and those who joined BJP from other parties. The BJP is also considering introducing new and young faces, including leaders who recently joined from Congress and promising legislators who lost in state assembly elections. Rajasthan, specifically, is under scrutiny, where sitting MPs may lose their tickets if they fail to secure victories in upcoming assembly elections. The BJP is adopting a multi-pronged approach, involving OBC, women, and youth candidates, to present a diverse and dynamic set of candidates for the 2024 Lok Sabha elections. The party is determined to field the most promising candidates on every seat to secure a resounding victory.

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MMTC-PAMP, India's sole LBMA-accredited Good Delivery Gold and Silver refiner, receives recognition from the India Book of Records for providing the purest gold and silver coins/bars with 999.9+ purity. The distinction sets MMTC-PAMP

apart, as they consistently deliver products exceeding 999.9 grams of precious metal per 1,000 grams. Managing Director and CEO, Mr. Vikas Singh, expresses pride in this achievement, emphasizing their commitment to excellence and Swiss craftsmanship. MMTC-PAMP's use of silver as the balance metal in gold refining aims to establish a new industry standard beyond conventional 999.9 purity, redefining customer expectations in precious metal investments.

Literary Extravaganza Honoring Bhagwati Prasad Devpura

Kota: The Sahitya Mandal Srinathdwar orchestrated a vibrant commemorative celebration on January 6th and 7th, marking the tenth anniversary of Hindi luminary Bhagwati Prasad Devpura's passing. This literary festival united enthusiasts nationwide to honor Devpura's legacy and discuss Hindi language and literature development. Led by Shyam Prakash Devpura,



the event featured cultural programs, a Kavi Sammelan, book launches, and felicitations of distinguished litterateurs. Notable figures highlighted Devpura's influence, emphasizing the Sahitya Mandal's 1938 establishment, the promotion of Ashtachhap poets' literature, and the crucial role of connecting the new generation with books. The festival's success underscored its impact on preserving Hindi language and culture.

Rahul Jain Assumes Udaipur Commissioner Role

Udaipur: Rahul Jain, Udaipur's inaugural commissioner and a 2019 Indian Administrative Service officer, officially assumed office, conducting inspections and issuing directives for efficient case resolution. Stressing proper file management, he prioritized cleanliness and implemented a ban on plastic within the premises, designating non-plastic zones. Commissioner Jain emphasized prompt office attendance and received updates from officials like OSD Jitendra Ojha, Chief Engineer Anit Mathur, Chief Account Officer Dalpat Singh Rathore, and Tehsildar Anubhav Sharma on various departmental functions. Jain's proactive approach signifies a commitment to streamlined governance and sustainable practices in Udaipur Development Authority.

Baghdara Reserve Marks World Wildlife Day

Udaipur: Udaipur's Baghdara Conservation Reserve celebrated World Wildlife Day with zest, hosting engaging activities organized by the Forest Department, WWF-India, and Green People Society Udaipur. Approximately 80 residents, spanning ages 6 to 74, actively participated in events like Eco Trail, Quiz, Photo Walk, and Conservation Talk. Deputy Forest Conservator Devendra Kumar Tiwari highlighted the diverse wildlife in the reserve, including tigers and crocodiles. Chief Wildlife Warden S.R. Venkateshwar Murthy stressed year-round conservation efforts, and Green People Society President Rahul Bhatnagar praised the success of the Eco Trail in raising awareness. The event showcased Udaipur's dedication to wildlife conservation and environmental stewardship.

S.W.M. 11 Clinches Inter-Divisional Cricket Title

In Kota's fifth inter-divisional railway sports competition, organized by the West Central Railway Labor Union in memory of Shri Keshav H. Kulkarni, S.W.M. 11 triumphed in the cricket final. The competitive event, featuring various sports and cultural programs, concluded with an intense cricket face-off, ultimately won by S.W.M. 11. Abdul Khaliq, the Mandal Secretary, highlighted the union's dedication to honoring Shri Kulkarni through these sports competitions.

Presided over by C.M. Upadhyay, Zonal President of the union, the ceremony saw the presence of special guests, including Divisional Railway Manager Manish Tiwari and Mandal Sports Officer Shri Suprakash Vishisht.