

Hon'ble LG UT Ladakh Announces New Initiatives for Women's Empowerment on International Women's Day

Leh, March 8, 2025: On the occasion of International Women's Day, the Hon'ble Lieutenant Governor of UT of Ladakh, Brig. Dr. B.D Mishra, has announced a series of initiatives aimed at empowering women across various sectors, reinforcing the administration's commitment to gender equality and inclusivity.

These initiatives encompass financial assistance, education, public transport, social welfare, and digital accessibility, ensuring that women across Ladakh receive the necessary support to thrive in all spheres of life.

To promote women's entrepreneurship and financial independence, the administration, through Sindhu Infrastructure Development Corporation (SIDCO), will offer loans to women entrepreneurs at an interest rate reduced by 2%. This interest subvention scheme is designed to encourage greater participation of women in economic activities and enable them to establish and expand their businesses with reduced financial burden.

In a significant step towards improving menstrual hygiene, sanitary pad vending machines will be installed in all middle schools, higher secondary schools, and colleges. This initiative, spearheaded by the School Education and Higher Education Departments, aims to provide easy access to sanitary products for female students, ensuring that menstrual health does not become a barrier to education.

Recognizing the challenges faced by working women in daily commuting, the administration has decided to reserve seats for women in all public transport buses. This measure acknowledges the dual responsibilities of working women who not only contribute to the workforce but also manage household responsibilities. The initiative, led by SIDCO in collaboration with the Transport Department, seeks to provide a safer and more comfortable travel experience for women across the Union Territory.

In response to the increasing instances of women in distress, the administration will establish shelter homes across all the proposed seven districts of Ladakh. These shelter homes will serve as safe spaces for women facing domestic violence, geriatric distress, or other vulnerabilities, offering them a secure environment until proper rehabilitation is facilitated. This initiative, undertaken by the Social Welfare Department, will be aligned with central government schemes to ensure comprehensive support and sustainability.

To encourage academic excellence among young girls, the administration has announced the 'Kanya Pratibha' scholarship scheme. Under this program, ten scholarships will be awarded annually to girl students securing the highest marks in Class X and XII board examinations. Additionally, meritorious girls excelling in sports and extracurricular activities will also be eligible for this scholarship. The scheme, which is expected to be implemented under the Social Welfare Department, has been allocated an estimated budget of 50 lakh for the financial year 2025-26.

Recognizing the increasing economic pressures on families and the need for dual-income households, the administration has decided to establish daycare centres cum creches in government offices and Anganwadi centres. These facilities will provide a secure and inclusive environment for toddlers, allowing working mothers to fulfil their professional commitments without compromising childcare. The initiative will be initially launched in the new Secretariat building and will be jointly implemented by the Social Welfare Department and the General Administration Department (GAD).

Furthering the government's commitment to digital inclusion in education, the administration has announced that all girl students pursuing higher education will receive tablets to support their learning and academic endeavours. With approximately 1,600-1,700 students expected to benefit, this initiative will be implemented under a special development program (SDP) for the financial year 2025-26, with an estimated budget of ₹2.5 crore. This step is aimed at ensuring that female students have access to quality digital resources, bridging the digital divide in higher education.

Speaking on these initiatives, the Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh reaffirmed the administration's dedication to fostering an inclusive society where women are empowered to realize their full potential. He emphasized that these schemes are designed to provide tangible support to women in education, employment, and social security, ultimately contributing to a more equitable and progressive Ladakh. The administration remains committed to strengthening gender-responsive policies and interventions, ensuring that women have access to the resources and opportunities they need to succeed.