



Prestigious Nari Shakti Puraskars given away to 33 women by the President

Number of initiatives started by the Government to ensure safety of women: Smt Maneka Sanjay Gandhi

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The President, Shri Pranab Mukherjee presented Nari Shakti Puraskars 2016 at a special ceremony/function held in New Delhi on the occasion of International Women's Day today. The awards were presented to 33 women in recognition of their efforts in rendering distinguished services for the cause of women, especially vulnerable and marginalized women.

Speaking on the occasion the President said that Government is equally concerned at the rising rate of violent crimes against women. It is inexcusable that women in India do not feel as secure and safe as they should. A greater emphasis on early sensitization of children and youth in schools and institutions of higher learning would help inculcate due respect for the female gender. This should be taken up through appropriate measures in our rural and urban populations and through well-conceived and coherent Government programmes.

The President said that on International Women's Day, it is important to reiterate that every girl child and woman in our country should be assured that Government of India is fully committed to providing her an enabling environment that affords equal opportunity.

In her address, the Minister of Women & Child Development, Smt Maneka Sanjay Gandhi congratulated the awardees for receiving the highest award for women in the country. The criteria for selection of the awardees this year was to discover unusual achievements by unsung achievers who by their sheer spirit have exhibited the courage of womanhood, the Minister said. "The story of each of these awardees represents a struggle. It is a story of how they followed their hearts despite strong odds against them and made a difference in the lives of their community through their achievements", Smt Maneka Gandhi explained.

Outlining the initiatives of Ministry of Women & Child Development, the Minister said that a large number of initiatives have been launched to empower women so that they can dream big and achieve their aspirations. Women's safety is paramount for which the Government has started several initiatives including creating a network of One Stop Centres across the country and installation of physical panic button in mobile phones which will be launched next month. Detailed guidelines for the organizations under the Sexual Harassment of women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition & Redressal) Act, 2013 have been formulated. Complaints from women are received on a dedicated e-mail & attended to by a Grievances Redressal Cell created for this purpose only, the Minister elaborated. A separate mechanism to deal with violent threats to women on social media platforms is also available in the WCD Ministry. Enumerating more such initiatives, Smt Maneka Gandhi said that the passport guidelines were revised recently to enable single women and mothers to get passports for themselves and their children. Standard Operating Procedures are being developed for women who are struggling with bad NRI marriages. At the ground level we have started the Mahila Police Volunteers Scheme so that the community can be linked to the local police authorities in a safe manner through these volunteers, the Minister said.

The Minister of State for Women & Child Development, Smt Krishna Raj congratulated the recipients of Nari Shakti Puraskars 2016, hoping that they will be a source of inspiration to others for the cause of women empowerment.

WCD Secretary, Ms. Leena Nair in her message has said that the Nari Shakti Puraskars recognize women who inspite of difficult circumstances exhibited spirit of courage. It also recognizes the pioneering contribution of the individuals in empowering women & raising women's issues.

[Click here](#) for full text of the speech of WCD Minister, Smt Maneka Sanjay Gandhi at the Nari Shakti Puraskars 2016 ceremony.

[Click here](#) for the details of Nari Shakti Puraskar Awardees.

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