

“Need to strike at the root causes of gender bias ..”: says union minister for statistics & programme implementation, shri d.v sadananda gowda

Minister Inaugurates The National Consultation on -Data Generation for Gender Indicators of Sdgs

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Emphasising the need to strike at the root causes of gender bias in the country, Union Minister for Statistics & Programme Implementation, Shri D.V Sadananda Gowda, highlighted the importance of great movements to bring about behavioural changes in the society. Delivering the inaugural address at the two-day national consultation on data generation for gender indicators of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in New Delhi today, the Minister said that though the nation has succeeded in fighting many social evils and made significant progress in many sectors, much more needs to be done to ensure that the benefits of development reach all corners of the country. Shri Gowda also said that the Government is working to ensure that the fruits of development reach all sections of the people, particularly women amongst the disadvantaged sections of the society.

The Minister pointed out that India's demographic dividend is unique, as the growth rate of the working population exceeds that of the total population. He added that this demographic dividend is expected to continue till 2040s. Shri Gowda said that productive employment plays a key role in transmitting the benefits of economic growth into poverty reduction. Underlining one of the concerns in the employment market – namely, low level and declining female labour force participation, the Minister said that strategies need to be evolved to address this issue.

Highlighting some of the important initiatives recently taken by the Government for promoting gender equality and empowerment of women, the Minister referred to “Beti Bachao Beti Padhao”, Stand-up India, Swachh Bharat Abhiyan and the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana, which aims to safeguard the health of women and children by providing them with a clean cooking fuel – LPG. He also mentioned The Right to Education Act, The Minimum Wages Act, The Equal Remuneration Act, 1976 that provides equal remuneration to men and women for equal work. Shri Gowda said that the recently enacted ‘Model Shop and Establishment Act’ allows night work by women, conditional to adequate safety and other working arrangement provisions”.

Underlining the importance of Maternity Benefit Amendment Bill, 2016, passed by Parliament, the Minister said that the Bill increases the paid maternity leave from 12 weeks to 26 weeks. “It also provides, for the first time, a 12 weeks paid maternity leave to a ‘Commissioning mother’ and ‘Adopting mother’”, he added.

The Consultation will provide a platform for the stakeholders to discuss the way forward to address the gaps in gender indicators for SDGs. The Consultation with experts will lead to evolving strategies and for strengthening data systems so that development can be measured and quantified from the Gender perspective. The multi-stakeholder consultation will also promote a common understanding and harmonized approach in generating data for gender indicators of SDGs.

Addressing the gathering, Chief Statistician of India and Secretary, Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, Dr. T. C. A. Anant said that the implementation of SDGs is a much more dynamic exercise and will require a constant exchange between government's policy-makers, statisticians and civil society. Dr. Anant said that there is a need to constantly evaluate the progress being made – both in terms of policy and availability of relevant data. Secretary, Ministry of Women and Child Development, Shri Rakesh Srivastava, and Director General (Social Statistics), Central Statistics Office, Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation, Dr. Davendra Verma, Assistant Secretary-General of the United Nations and Deputy Executive Director, UN Women, Ms. Lakshmi Puri, also addressed the gathering.

The inaugural session of two-day Consultation, being held at India Habitat Centre, was well represented by officers/ experts from Central Ministries, State Governments and other national and international organizations.

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