



# WOMEN POWER

WITH A PLETHORA OF SCHEMES COVERING ALL ASPECTS OF LIFE — SECURITY, EDUCATION, FINANCES, SKILL DEVELOPMENT AND SPORTS — HARYANA UNDER THE LEADERSHIP OF **MANOHAR LAL** IS ENSURING THAT ONE HALF OF THE SOCIETY GETS ITS RIGHTFUL PLACE UNDER THE SUN

PHOTO: BHARAT BHANDARI



Women police officers at Mahila Thana

**HARYANA**. The very mention of the state conjures up images of female foeticide, wife-beating, oppression of women and feudal diktats of *khap panchayats*. That reality has been changing fast, especially after it was challenged by the Manohar Lal government, immediately after it was sworn in on November 2014. The Chief Minister has initiated measures and introduced new systems to enable women overcome the hurdles in a deeply patriarchal society.

## SECURITY

**S**exual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV) is a public health issue that pervades all religions, cultures and economic classes. As per a National Family Health Survey - 4 (NFHS-4), 29 per cent women in the age group of 15-49 years in India have suffered spousal violence and in Haryana at 32 per cent, it is higher than the national average. Also, the Haryana State Health Resource Centre, (HSHRC), while conducting a study on maternal mortality, realised that many affected women visited the hospital, which became the first layer of statistical data collection and a primary assessment of the seriousness of exploitative practices. The HSHRC, headed by Director Dr Sonia Trikha, realised that the hospital is the first point of contact and the window available for implementing government schemes to help violence survivors. So the HSHRC took the key initiative in setting up “Sukoon” units at eight district hospitals to address the medical and psycho-social needs of the survivor as well as coordinate with other departments like police, legal aid and social protection agencies.

The first Sukoon centre was established by HSHRC at district hospital Panchkula in 2014. Centres at district hospitals at Ambala, Panipat, Faridabad and Yamunanagar came up in February 2015. In 2017, this initiative expanded to district hospitals at Faridabad, Gurugram, Jind and Rewari.

These centres are located near gynaecology wards or trauma centres so that women survivors have easy access. The counsellors not only provide support to them but also make the doctors aware about their condition, asking them to refer such patients to the Sukoon centre. Survivors get free medical assistance, physical and mental support through counselling, free legal aid as well as information about the process of lodging police complaints and other government services.

### ROLE OF SUKOON CENTRES

- It enables the survivor to **access medical treatment and psychological counselling.**
- It helps in **getting FIRs registered** and in following up the case of sexual/physical violence with the police.
- It assists in **engagement of a lawyer** if the survivor wants to file a case and provide legal counselling.



Counsellors at Sukoon centre with a survivor

- It assists a survivor **in getting access to shelter homes** if required.
- It **coordinates with other departments of district hospitals** to identify survivors of violence.
- It **trains health care providers** in identifying abuse, providing medical support to survivor, documentation and so on.
- It establishes database and conducts need-based assessment and research.

The Sukoon centres are playing a pivotal role in providing holistic care to the survivors of sexual and gender-based violence and their families. Since its inception, more than 2,300 survivors have received counselling through Sukoon centres till December 31, 2017.

The HSHRC recently held a workshop to make the police personnel aware and sensitive while filing complaints. The number of survivors seeking help from Sukoon has increased with time due to awareness drives among people



PHOTO: BHARAT BHANDARI

Team Sukoon interacts with Dr Sonia Trikha, Director, HSHRC

regarding sex and gender-based violence, the growing awareness about Sukoon centres and proactive measures by the counsellors.

Besides Sukoon, a one-stop centre, **Sakhi** has been set up by the Women's and Child Development department as a stop-gap for women facing violence at Karnal, Rewari, Faridabad, Gurugram, Bhiwani, Hisar and Narnaul. These would be extended further at a cost of ₹20.61 crore.

There was only one all-women police station in April 2015. Quite incredibly, the Manohar Lal government sanctioned, set up and operationalised 21 new all-women police stations — one in each district. For registration of crimes against women and to facilitate their investigation, Mahila Thanas at the District Head Quarters and Police Help Desks at the Sub-Division level are being set up, with women police officials. Eight hundred and fifty six women police constables were recruited and the recruitment process for another 1,032 women constables has also been sanctioned.

Orders have been issued that investigations in rape cases should be completed in a month's time and those related to eve-teasing and sexual harassment within 15 days. A 24-hour helpline, 1091, for women where specially trained women police officers have been deputed, has also been set up.



Sukoon holds a sensitisation workshop with the police

**A 24-HOUR HELPLINE NUMBER 1091 FOR WOMEN IN DISTRESS**





Launch of Beti Bachao Beti Padhao Yojana in Haryana

## EDUCATION

Education is the key to progress and more so in the case of women. To extend the benefits of education, the **Beti Bachao Beti Padhao Yojana (Save the Girl Child Educate the Girl Child Programme)** was launched on January 22, 2015 which would in turn address the issue of the declining child sex ratio and empower women. This programme was launched initially in 12 districts of Ambala, Kurukshetra, Kaithal, Yamunanagar, Sonipat, Panipat, Karnal, Mahendragarh, Rewari, Rohtak, Bhiwani and Jhajjar and has now been extended to all districts, excluding Mewat.

The efforts of the state government in the direction of women's education is starting to bear fruit. On January 24, 2017, on the occasion of Rashtriya Balika Diwas (National

Girls' Day), Yamunanagar district was felicitated with the Beti Bachao Beti Padhao Award for the best performance in ensuring primary education for girls. Applications had been invited from 100 districts. The award for this year is yet to be announced.

Financial hardships are often the reason why many children, especially girls, don't get an education. To encourage and promote girls' child education in rural areas, the money for the **Gramin Adolescent Girl Child Prize Scheme**, has been enhanced. Thus girls who stand first, second and third in the Matric Exam are awarded ₹8,000, ₹6,000 and ₹4,000 respectively, by the Haryana Board of School Education. The girls who stand first, second and third in the 12th exam are given ₹12,000, ₹10,000 and ₹8,000 respectively, at the division level.

The absence of toilets in school has often been the reason for high dropout rates among girls. To combat this, separate toilets have been provided for girls in all schools of the state.

Women have been exempted from tuition fees up to graduate level in all Government and aided Universities to encourage higher education. Moreover, all married girl students in universities and colleges are given 45 days maternity leave so that they don't drop out of college following marriage and motherhood. The absence of proper transport facilities to and fro from educational institutions has been overcome by providing women's bus services and more than 8,000 girl students have availed it. The State Transport has extended the free travel service provided to University girl students from 50 km to 150 km.

## WELFARE SCHEME

Financial support and independence are important for the empowerment of women. The state government has launched several schemes which provide financial help at crucial junctures. Under the **Sukanya Samridhi Khatha Yojana (Sukanya Samridhi Account Scheme)**, launched on January 22, 2015 in Panipat, an account can be opened in the name of the girl child till she attains the age of 10 years. In this small savings scheme, the government is offering the highest and best fixed interest rates in the market. Under this scheme, 3,68,335 accounts have been opened at post offices.

The Scheduled Castes and the BPL families have been the focus of special attention with schemes like **Aapki Beti Humari Beti Yojna**. On the birth of the first girl child, they are eligible for a one-time grant of ₹21,000 which is deposited with the Life Insurance Corporation of India and nearly ₹1.00 lakh is given to the girl when she turns 18.

The Chief Minister has also set up the Haryana Kanya Kosh for the welfare of the girl child and development



Aapki Beti Hamari Beti Yojana

of women and ₹69.40 crore has been deposited into this account.

Since financial independence and earning an adequate salary enhance the importance of women in the family and society, from January 1, 2017, the monthly salaries of Anganwadi workers, Anganwadi helpers and mini-Anganwadi workers were increased to ₹8,140, ₹4,250 and ₹3,820 respectively. The Asha worker's monthly salary has also been hiked from ₹500 to ₹1,000.



## SPORTS

Haryana is known for excelling in sports, and many women have made the state proud. On August 24, 2016, Pranab Mukherji, the then President of India, conferred the **Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna Award on Rio Olympics bronze medalist Sakshi Malik**, while hockey player **Rani Rampal** and wrestler **Vinesh Phogat** were conferred the **Arjuna Awards**.

To further encourage sports among women, the prize money for the first, second and third prizes of the Rural Women Games Competitions at the block level, has been enhanced from ₹500, ₹300 and ₹200, to ₹2,100, ₹1,100 and ₹750 respectively. At the district level, the first, second and third prize money has been enhanced from ₹1,000, ₹750 and ₹500, to ₹4,100, ₹3,100 and ₹2,100, respectively. While at the State Level, the first, second and third prize money has been enhanced from ₹3,100, ₹2,100 and ₹1,100, to ₹11,000, ₹8,100 and ₹4,100, respectively.

A woman athlete of any caste or age is also eligible for a grant of ₹31,000 for her own marriage.

The state government is enhancing pensions to different sections of the society. From November 1, 2017, widows and destitute women get ₹1,800 as do those parents who have only daughters, are 45 years of age and above and their annual income is less than ₹2 lakhs. The Ladli Pension Scheme has benefited 30,863 people.

Since marriage entails a heavy expenditure, the state government has extended a helping hand under different schemes. Under the Mukhyamantri Vivah Shagun Yojana, widows of all categories living below the poverty line get ₹51,000 for their daughter's marriage. The families of Scheduled Castes, denotified and nomadic tribes living below the poverty line as well as widows, divorcees, orphaned women and destitute children of all sections, whose annual income is less than ₹1 lakh, get ₹41,000 for their daughter's marriage.

BPL families and those who possess less than two-and-a-half acres of agricultural land or whose annual income is less than ₹1 lakh, get ₹11,000 for the marriage of their daughters.

## SEX RATIO

Female foeticide and infanticide have been responsible for the dip in the sex ratios in the country and Haryana had been at the bottom of the list earlier. But things are gradually changing. **For the first time, the sex ratio at the time of birth has achieved the highest figure of 914 in 2017.** The government aims to bring the sex ratio at birth to 950.

The State Government felicitated Narnaul, Bhiwani and Jhajjar districts in 2015-16 and Rohtak, Rewari, Jind and Ambala in 2016-17 for improvement in the sex ratio. **On March 8, 2016, the state was awarded Kannagi Devi Award for progress in the work for improving child sex ratio.**

Moreover, Prime Minister Narendra Modi in January 2016, in his *Mann ki Baat* address, also applauded the efforts of the State Government for being a role model in the success of the **Beti Bachao Beti Padhao Yojana** and keeping a check on female foeticide.



Hailed by national media, the sex ratio for 2017 was the highest at 914 in Haryana



Tailoring training scheme

## SKILL DEVELOPMENT

Skill development is important to earn a living and for women to establish a space in society. An agreement was signed with the United Nations Development Programme for developing the skills of 10,000 women. A **Tailoring Training Scheme (Silayi Prashikshan Yojna)** was initiated for widows and destitute women and girls from Scheduled Castes and backward classes to train them for a year to enable them to be self-employed and financially self-sufficient. They are given a sum of ₹300 for purchase of raw material and a monthly stipend of ₹600. After the training, they are also given a sewing machine.





Immunisation under the Indradhanush scheme

## HEALTH

Haryana is the only state which is working to combat micro-nutrient deficiency in India and is the first state to launch a micro-nutrient supplementation programme with a view to overcoming malnutrition in children. It has been providing Vitamin A, iodine and iron supplements to school children.

Immunisation is important to ensure that the new-borns are free from disease and lead a healthy life. Mission Indradhanush was launched on December 25, 2014 to ensure that all children and pregnant women are fully immunised by 2020. During its four phases, 262,024 pregnant women and 961,785 children were immunised.

Women's hygiene and health are interlinked, so the Chief Minister announced that around ₹18 crore would be spent to provide sanitary pads to school girls.



(Left) A dialysis machine and central research lab has been set up at Bhagat Phool Singh Women's College and (above) Nand Ghar, the country's first modernised *anganwadi*



## MISCELLANEOUS

Other measures which would have far-reaching implications in improving the lives of women too have been undertaken.

On Women's Day with the aim to encourage and honour women, the following awards are conferred: Indira Gandhi Mahila Shakti Award, Kalpana Chawla Shaurya Award and Bahin Shanno Devi Panchayati Raj Award, Life-time Achievement Award, Special Achievements in Sports Awards and other Government and Social Service Awards. Under the Best Mother Award Scheme, the prize money for the first second and third prizes has been enhanced at the circle level from ₹500, ₹300 and ₹200, to ₹2,000, ₹1,200 and ₹800, respectively; while at the block level from ₹1,000, ₹750 and ₹500, to ₹4,000, ₹3,000 and ₹2,000, respectively. The assurance that their child would be looked after well is an important determinant of whether a woman joins the workforce after motherhood or not. The state has set up the country's first modernised Anganwadi Centre (AWC), Nand Ghar at Hasanpur village in Sonipat district.

New mothers, who are employees of the State Government, are granted child care leave to take care of their children which is now exempt from the earned leave rules.

The Haryana Government has approved the implementation of the revised Village Convergence and Facilitation Service (VCFS) scheme in 12 districts of the state. The scheme is aimed at generating awareness regarding various Central and state government programmes and schemes in context of women empowerment and to mobilise the community to create demand and access and avail such services. To improve the health of women, a dialysis machine and central research laboratory has been set up at Bhagat Phool Singh Women's Medical College.

Working late often leads to security issues as well as other problems for women. The state government has granted exemption to women workers from night shifts. This exemption is granted under the condition that the employer will provide full security to the women workers during the working hours and will take full responsibility for their safe transportation.