

International Women's Day (March 8)

Gender equality today for a sustainable tomorrow

(Ministry of Women and Child Development)

March 08, 2022

“Saluting our indomitable Nari Shakti on International Women's Day! India takes pride in the many accomplishments of the women of our nation. It is our Government's honour to be getting the opportunity to work towards furthering women empowerment across a wide range of sectors.”¹

- [Prime Minister Narendra Modi](#)

Introduction

International Women's Day is a global day celebrating the social, economic, cultural and political achievements of women. The day also marks a call to action for accelerating gender parity. Significant activity is witnessed worldwide as groups come together to celebrate women's achievements or rally for women's equality.



Marked annually on [March 8th, International Women's Day \(IWD\)](#) is one of the most important days of the year to:

- Celebrate women's achievements
- Raise awareness about women's equality
- Lobby for accelerated gender parity
- [Fundraise for female-focused charities](#)

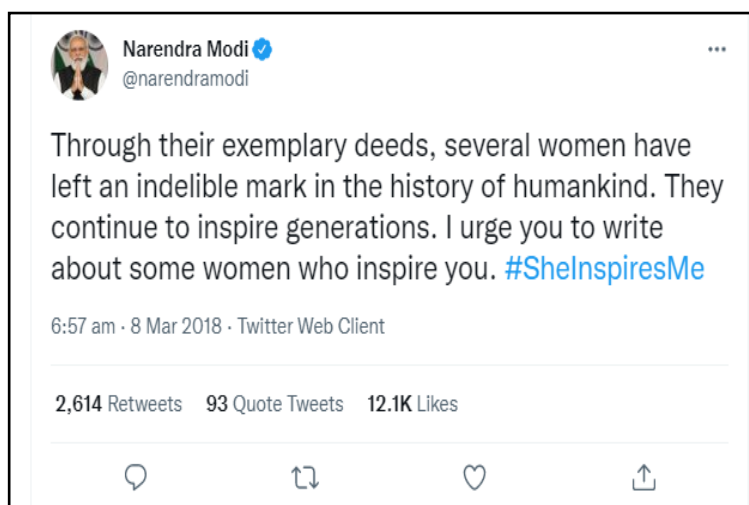
The campaign theme of IWD 2022 is: [“Gender equality today for a sustainable tomorrow”](#). IWD 2022 is aimed at recognizing and celebrating the contribution of women and girls around the world, who are leading the charge on climate change adaptation, mitigation, and response, to build a more sustainable future for all. [The](#)

¹ https://twitter.com/narendramodi/status/1368751777655312387?s=20&t=WuDgqfk2VVeY_d_NALKxDw

focus this year is on highlighting the importance of challenging biases and misconceptions to create a more inclusive and gender-equal world.

History

- ❖ International Women's Day was celebrated for the first time by the [United Nations in 1975. Then in December 1977, the General Assembly adopted a resolution proclaiming a United Nations Day for Women's Rights and International Peace to be observed on any day of the year by Member States](#), in accordance with their historical and national traditions.
- ❖ However, International Women's Day (IWD) has [at first been observed since the early 1900's](#)- a time of great expansion and turbulence in the industrialized world that saw booming population growth and the rise of radical ideologies.
- ❖ It is the result of unrest and critical debate occurring amongst women which was Women's oppression and inequality was spurring women to become more vocal and active in campaigning for change. Then, [in 1908, 15,000 women marched through New York City demanding shorter hours, better pay and voting rights.](#)
- ❖ In accordance with a declaration by the Socialist Party of America, the first [National Woman's Day \(NWD\) was observed across the United States on February 28. Women continued to celebrate NWD on the last Sunday of February until 1913.](#)
- ❖ The UN announced their [first annual theme "Celebrating the past, Planning for the Future" which was followed in 1997 with "Women at the Peace table", in 1998 with "Women and Human Rights", in 1999 with "World Free of Violence Against Women", and so on each year until the current.](#)



Re-ignition of International Women's Day

- ❖ By the new millennium, there was little activity occurring for International Women's Day in most countries. The world had moved on and, in many spheres, feminism wasn't a popular topic. [Something was needed to re-ignite International Women's Day giving it the respect it deserves and to raise awareness amongst the masses.](#)
- ❖ The [internationalwomensday.com](#) platform was launched with the specific purpose of re-energizing the day - a focus which continues to this day - celebrating and making visible the achievements of women while continuing the call for accelerating gender parity.

❖ [2011 saw the 100-year centenary of International Women's Day](#) - with the first IWD event held exactly 100 years ago in 1911 in Austria, Denmark, Germany and Switzerland.

❖ Since 2014, many efforts have been made by the Union Government to address women's issues in order to have a more holistic view of things.

[Government of India has sought to foster women empowerment in a comprehensive manner that deals with five components of women empowerment and security:](#)

health security of the mother and child, social security, financial security, security of the future through educational and financial programmes, and last but not the least, the physical safety of women. Through a slew of measures and initiatives such as Maternity Benefit

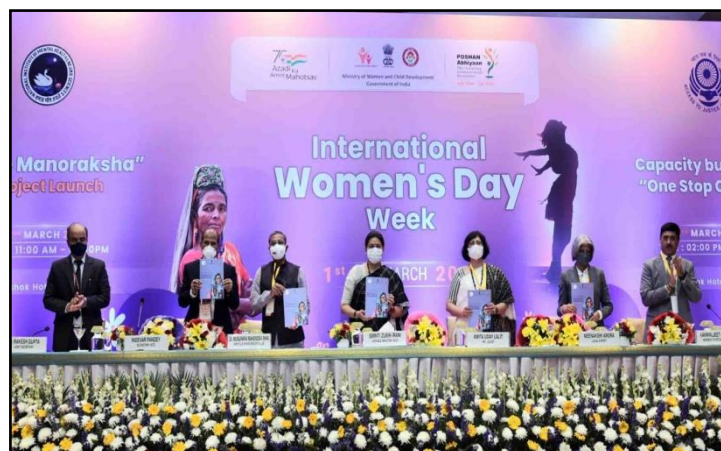
(Amendment) Bill 2017, Pradhan Mantri Surakshit Matritva Abhiyan, Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana, National Nutrition Mission, Mission Indradhanush, Swachh Vidhyalaya Initiative, Swachh Bharat Mission, Triple Talaq Bill, Haj Without Mehram, Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana, Ujjwala Yojana, Pradhan Mantri MUDRA Yojana, Stand Up India, Sukanya Samriddhi Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana, Beti Bachao Beti Padhao, Death penalty to persons accused of heinous crime like rape, Anti-trafficking Bill amongst other initiatives have expanded the idea of women's security to a more comprehensive security paradigm, where they feel safe, secure and free to pursue their dreams in India.



Events organised on the occasion of celebration of International Women's Day Week by the Ministry of Women & Child Development

[Women are an inspiration to our family, society and the nation.](#) They are the essential base of the social structure. In India too, women have made their mark in every sphere of life. Nevertheless, much remains to be done to further improve the socio-economic status of women in India. We all have to work relentlessly towards women's safety, education and independence.

Therefore, in the context of paving



the way for women, the [Ministry of Women and Child Development](#) has celebrated the [International Women's Day week](#) from 1st to 8th March 2022 as an 'Iconic Week' as a part of 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav'.

As a part of the week-long celebration for International Women's Day, the Ministry has organized various events and social media campaigns covering a variety of themes related to women's safety and empowerment. The events have been organised in partnership with national and international organisations and experts, with active participation planned with women and children, as well as personnel who work directly for their protection and empowerment.

Women's Week Celebration as part of the 'Iconic Week' by WCD:



On March 1, 2022, the celebration kicked off in collaboration between WCD and [Bureau of Police Research and Development](#) to raise awareness on safety and security of women. On this day, the [National Commission for Protection of Child Rights \(NCPCR\)](#) also celebrated its Foundation Day. The focus of the event was children, wherein an exhibition by children was displayed and children were taken on a guided tour of the Red Fort.

On March 2, 2022, WCD launched the [Stree Manoraksha Project](#) in collaboration with [NIMHANS](#) Bengaluru. This project emphasised on the psychosocial well-being and aims to improve the mental health of women in India.

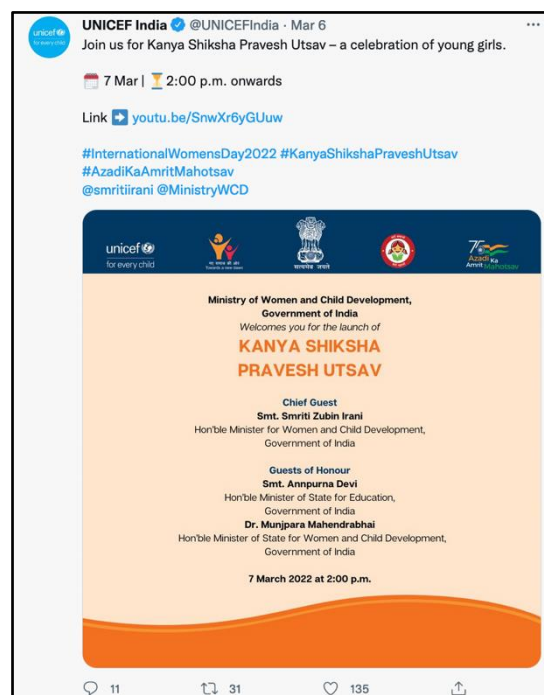
On March 3, 2022, the theme for the celebration was 'Women of Tomorrow'. There was a panel discussion on topics like Young Women in

STEM – Opportunities, Challenges and Solutions followed by #NariShaktiVarta Fireside Chat on financial literacy with the Union Minister of Women and Child Development.

On March 4 and 5, 2021 a two-day National Workshop with State Commissions for Protection of Child Rights (SCPCR)s on Contemporary issues pertaining to Child Rights was organised in Bhopal.

On 7th March 2022, 'Back to School' Campaign was launched as '[Kanya Shiksha Pravesh Utsav](#)', focusing on supporting out-of-school girls.

On the final day, 8th March 2022, two major events – [Nari Shakti Puraskaar](#) and [International Women's Day Conference for Women Police Delegates from all States/UTs](#) were held. To know more, click [here](#).





Government Initiatives related to welfare of women

Government of India promotes social and economic empowerment of women through various policies and programmes, mainstreaming gender concerns, creating awareness about their rights and facilitating institutional and legislative support for enabling them realize their human rights and develop to their full potential. For effective implementation of various schemes and programmes of the Ministry of Women and Child Development, all major schemes of the Ministry have been classified under three umbrella schemes viz. Mission Poshan 2.0, Mission Vatsalya and Mission Shakti.

The details of major schemes and measures are²:

- [Kanya Shiksha Pravesh Utsav Abhiyan](#) is a collaborative initiative by the Ministry of Education & WCD launched i.e., March 8, 2022 to ensure more girls get the joys of education.
- [Saksham Anganwadis](#) are new generation anganwadis that have better infrastructure and audio-visual aids, powered by clean energy and providing improved environment for early child development.
- [Mission POSHAN 2.0](#) is an Integrated Nutrition Support Programme. It seeks to address the challenges of malnutrition in children, adolescent girls, pregnant women and lactating mothers through a strategic shift in nutrition content and delivery and by creation of a convergent eco-system to develop and promote practices that nurture



² <https://pib.gov.in/Pressreleaseshare.aspx?PRID=1578353>

health, wellness and immunity. Poshan 2.0 seeks to optimize the quality and delivery of food under the Supplementary Nutrition Program.

- [Mission Shakti](#) envisages a unified citizen-centric lifecycle support for women through integrated care, safety, protection, rehabilitation and empowerment to unshackle women as they progress through various stages of their life. Mission Shakti has two sub-schemes 'Sambal' and 'Samarthya'. While the "Sambal" sub-scheme is for safety and security of women, the "Samarthya" sub-scheme is for empowerment of women.

The '**Samarthya**' **sub scheme** is for empowerment of women, consisting of existing schemes of Ujjwala, Swadhar Greh and Working Women Hostel.

- [Swadhar Greh scheme targets the women victims of unfortunate circumstances](#) who are in need of institutional support for rehabilitation so that they could lead their life with dignity.
- [Ujjawala is a comprehensive scheme to combat trafficking with the objective to prevent trafficking of women and children for commercial sexual exploitation](#), to facilitate rescue victims and placing them in safe custody, to provide rehabilitation services by providing basic amenities/needs, to facilitate reintegration of victims into the family and society, to facilitate repatriation of cross border victims.
- [Working Women Hostel](#) aims at providing safe and affordable accommodation to working women. These hostels have Day care facility for the children of inmates too. The Ministry provides financial support for establishing such hostels by NGOs or State Governments.
- In addition, the National Creche Scheme for children of working mothers and the Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY), which have been under the Umbrella ICDS Scheme till now, are also subsumed in 'Samarthya'.

The '**Sambal**' **sub-scheme** consists of the existing scheme of One Stop Centres (OSC), Women Helplines (181-WHL) and Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP).

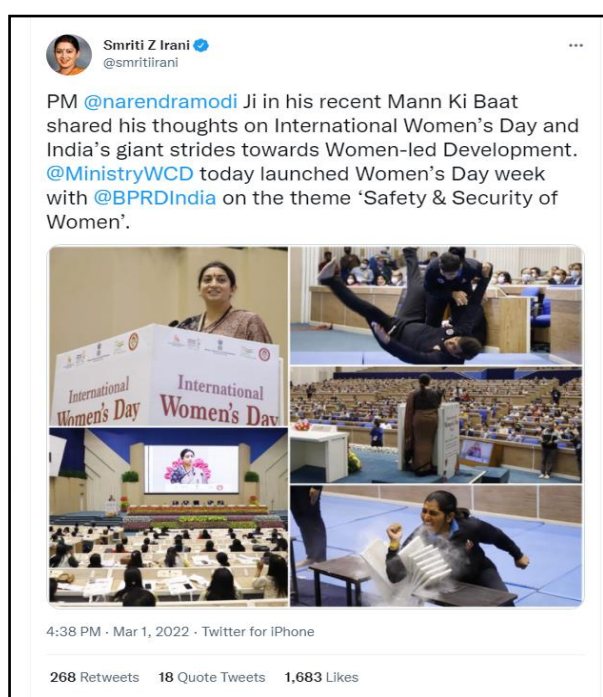
- [One Stop Centre \(OSC\) facilitates](#) access to an integrated range of services including police, medical, legal, psychological support and temporary shelter to women affected by violence. The Scheme is funded through Nirbhaya Fund.
 - [Beti Bachao Beti Padhao \(BBBP\) scheme is a tri-ministerial initiative](#) of Ministries of Women and Child Development, Health & Family Welfare and Human Resource Development with a focus on awareness and advocacy campaign for changing mindsets, multi-sectoral action in select districts, enabling girls' education and effective enforcement of Pre-Conception & Pre Natal-Diagnostic Techniques (PC&PNDT) Act. The specific objectives of the scheme include preventing gender biased sex selective elimination; ensuring survival and protection of the girl child and ensuring education and participation of the girl child.
- **Mission Vatsalya** - Children have been recognized by policy makers as one of the supreme national assets. India is home to 472 million children up to the age of 18 years and comprise 39 per cent of the country's population.

The objectives of Mission Vatsalya are:

- To secure a healthy and happy childhood for every child in India
- Foster a sensitive, supportive and synchronized ecosystem for development of children;
- Assist States/UTs in delivering the mandate of the Juvenile Justice Act 2015;
- Achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Components under Mission Vatsalya will include statutory bodies; service delivery structures; institutional care/services; non-institutional community-based care; emergency outreach services; training and capacity building.

- WCD has also advised the States/UTs to increase the representation of women in the police force. 17 States/UTs have extended 33% or more reservation for women in police forces.
- Capacity Building of Elected Women Representatives (EWRs) to empower women to participate effectively in the governance processes were taken up during 2017-18 and 2018-19. 33,332 EWRs were trained across the country.
- “Mahila E-haat”, is an online marketing platform for women entrepreneurs. Government has promoted platforms such as Government e-Market Place (GeM) and e-market place managed by National Small Industries Corporation (NSIC) to support the entrepreneurs.



- Aatma Nirbhar Bharat campaign is linking the ability of women with the development of the country. This change is visible as about 70 per cent beneficiaries of Mudra Yojna are women. The country has seen a three-fold increase in the number of women self-help groups in the last 6-7 years. Similarly, in more than 60 thousand Startups that have emerged after 2016, 45 percent have at least one woman director.
- Participation of women in the growth cycle of new India is increasing relentlessly. Women's Commissions should work to promote and give maximum recognition to this role of women in the

society. Since 2015, 185 women have been honoured with Padma Awards. This year too, 34 women figured among the awardees in different categories. This is a record as this many awards to women are unprecedented.

- The policies of the country have become more sensitive towards women. Today India is among the countries with provision of maximum days maternity leave. To ensure that marriage at an early age does not hinder the education and career of daughters, the age of marriage for daughters is being raised to 21 years.
- Govt initiatives such as 9 crore gas connections and toilets, Pucca houses of PM Awaas Yojna in the name of women of the house, support during pregnancy, Jan Dhan accounts, that make these women the face of changing India and lead to women empowerment.

Women at the forefront tackling COVID pandemic

It is a matter of great pride that Indian women continue to contribute and lead in the sphere of global health as well. The toughest challenges that humanity faced during COVID pandemic times, women across the world played the role of saviours with great élan. It has only reconfirmed an established fact that when women are empowered and placed on the frontline, history is created. In fact, 2020 which I have often called as the Year of Science, and which has helped us combat this dreaded disease, has its fair share of women scientists that have furthered the cause.

Union Health Minister Dr Mansukh Mandaviya on the occasion of International Women's Day, 2022 awarded women COVID-19 vaccinators to laud the indomitable spirit and exemplary work of India's Covid warriors.



Ministry of Health @MoHFW_INDIA · 4h

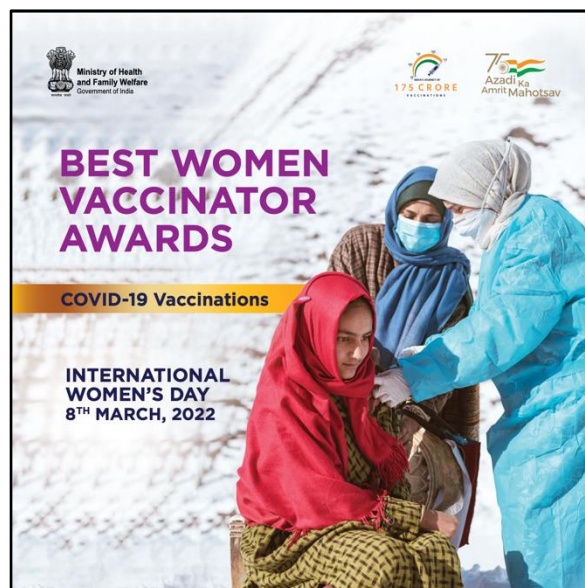
Felicitation ceremony of Best Women Vaccinators (#COVID19 vaccination) on the occasion of International Women's day happening now at National Institute of Health and Family Welfare, Delhi

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@PMOIndia @mansukhmandviya @ianuragthakur @DrBharatippawar

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Felicitation ceremony of Best Women Vaccinators (COVID-19 vaccinati...

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Conclusion

The world has witnessed a significant change and attitudinal shift in both women's and society's thoughts about women's equality and emancipation. [Many from a younger generation may feel that 'all the battles have been won for women' while many feminists from the 1970's know only too well the longevity and ingrained complexity of patriarchy.](#) With more women in the boardroom, greater equality in legislative rights, and an increased critical mass of women's visibility as impressive role models in every aspect of life, one could think that women have gained true equality. The unfortunate fact is that women are still not paid equally to that of their male counterparts, women still are not present in equal numbers in business or politics, and globally women's education, health and the violence against them is worse than that of men. However, great improvements have been made. We do have female astronauts and prime ministers, school girls are welcomed into university, women can work and have a family, women have real choices. And so each year the world inspires women and celebrates their achievements. IWD is an official holiday in many countries including Afghanistan, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, China (for women only), Cuba, Georgia, Guinea-Bissau, Eritrea, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Laos, Madagascar (for women only), Moldova, Mongolia, Montenegro, Nepal (for women only), Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uganda, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, Vietnam and Zambia. The tradition sees men honouring their mothers, wives, girlfriends, colleagues, etc with flowers and small gifts. In some countries IWD has the equivalent status of Mother's Day where children give small presents to their mothers and grandmothers.

India believes in the magic of *Ardhanareeshwar*, which establishes the fact that our civilization always considered [a man and a woman as equals](#). Therefore, every day needs to be celebrated as International Women's Day. One must do their bit to ensure that the future for girls is bright, equal, safe and rewarding. During the [various episodes of Maan Ki Baat](#), Prime Minister Modi has time and again highlighted different aspects of women empowerment and showcased the life journeys of inspiring women who have brought grassroots level changes in order to inform and inspire a whole new generation of women to come forward and be a part of the development story of New India in the *Amrit Kaal*.

Narendra Modi @narendramodi · 6h

During the various #MannKiBaat episodes, we have showcased different aspects of women empowerment and highlighted the life journeys of inspiring women who have brought grassroot level changes.

Here is a video that highlights how 'Mann Ki Baat' has celebrated our Nari Shakti....



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Narendra Modi Retweeted

Smriti Z Irani @smritiirani · 6h

On the occasion of #IWD2022, @MinistryWCD in partnership with @EduMinOfIndia has undertaken 'Kanya Shiksha Pravesh Utsav' - a mission to integrate out of school adolescent girls back into the school system as a part of Beti Bachao, Beti Badhao program.



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Video References

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Twitter links

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