

Regarding need for introduction of women-centric schemes in national programmes of the country to promote inclusive growth and balanced economic development-Laid

SHRI KIRTI AZAD (BARDHAMAN-DURGAPUR): I wish to draw attention of the Union Government to recognise, learn from and emulate the Bengal model of women's empowerment, which has delivered tangible and measurable outcomes, particularly for poor and marginalised communities. The Government of West Bengal has implemented pioneering women-centric schemes such as Kanyashree, improving girls' school retention and delaying early marriages; Lakshmi Bhandar, one of the first large-scale direct income support schemes nationally, with women as primary beneficiaries, strengthening their financial autonomy and benefitting over 2.2 crore women; and Swasthya Sathi, providing universal, cashless health coverage with women designated as the head of the beneficiary family. Collectively, these initiatives have enhanced women's economic security, access to health, and role in household decisionmaking. This empowerment-led governance model is also reflected in political representation: nearly 35 per cent of Members of Parliament from the All India Trinamool Congress are women, compared to about 14 per cent women members in the House overall, indicating a strong linkage between welfare-led empowerment and leadership outcomes. I urge the Union Government to incorporate these core principles in national programmes and to support the replication of successful State-led models in the true spirit of cooperative federalism.