

Intervention made by Mrs Sumitra Mahajan, Member of Parliament of India, at the Inter Parliamentary Union meeting , on the sidelines of the Commission on the Status of Women, at the panel discussion titled: Girls' education- a prerequisite to access to science and technology on February 23, 2011

Madam Chairperson,

Let me preface my intervention by saying that in our journey as Parliamentarian in India we have been striving to ensure that every woman in India is able to lead a life of dignity. Our efforts has been to provide every woman in India equal access to opportunity and resources as well as to ensure her participation as an equal partner in all development plans and programmes.



While several interventions have been taken by the Parliament when it comes to gender equality and empowerment of women, but in the context of today's topic I would like to mention about some of the important initiatives:

The Parliament enacted the historic the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, which came into force on April 1, 2010. This landmark Act made education for every child in the age group of 6-14 years justicible right up to 8 years of elementary education in an age appropriate classroom in the vicinity of his/her neighbourhood.

The Act has special provisions for girl child education which is a perquisite to access to science and technology. It also mandates the private schools to ensure at least 25% of its seats are available to children from marginalised households. With this legislation, special relevance has been given for out of school girl children.

I am a member of the Parliamentary Committee on Empowerment of Women. This Committee has members from

how government is working for the education programmes for women and all other training programmes etc. we also evaluate how government department are working in the empowerment of women.

There is one more mechanism in the Parliament that is the Standing Committees. There are various Standing Committees in our Parliament. There is one Standing Committee for the Human Resource and Science & Technology Ministries. This Ministry recommends special measures to ensure growth of women scientist in their professional careers. Keeping in view the leadership role they will have to play. In addition, there is a gender Advisory Committee in these Standing Committees to look into opportunities women are given to work for scientific research. They also look into the aspects related to gender budgeting.

The Committee, in addition to reviewing and monitoring the measures taken by the Government of India for women equality, status and dignity in all matters, does also suggest necessary correctives for improving the status/condition of women in respect of matters within the purview of the Government.

We also have an autonomous body called the National Commission for Women.

Yet another significant employment related Act of the Parliament was Rural Employment Guarantee Act

In India, our Parliamentarians have been working together especially in the field of women. We have several other Acts, including against sexual harassment of women in work place.

Thank you very much.

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