



SHAKTI VIDHĀN

WOMEN



MANIFESTO



हम वचन
निभाएंगे

उत्तर प्रदेश कांग्रेस कमेटी

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PREFACE

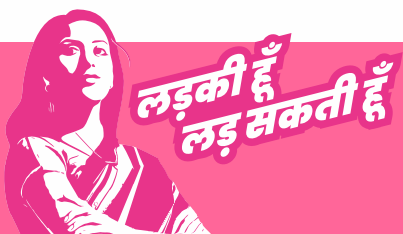
The Indian National Congress recognizes the power of the women of Uttar Pradesh to determine their own future. Women represent courage, compassion, resourcefulness, strength, determination, and hope. True empowerment of women entails the creation of a social and political environment in which their expression is unfettered and unlimited.

It is with this objective that the Congress party in Uttar Pradesh reached out to women across the state and held multiple consultations over the course of many months. The voice of homemakers, ASHA and Anganwadi workers, college students, members of self-help groups and professionals is reflected in this document that lays out the Congress Party's commitment to forge a new path for the women of Uttar Pradesh.

Proportionate political participation of women is key to transforming the nature of society, politics, and governance of a nation. The Congress party in Uttar Pradesh endorses the full inclusion of women in the political space of the state. It is this power that will change the future of Uttar Pradesh.

The Indian National Congress gave India its first woman Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi. It is the Congress that gave Uttar Pradesh its first woman Chief Minister, Sucheta Kriplani. It is the Congress that brought Panchayati Raj and delivered lakhs of women across the country the power to govern their villages and municipalities. It is the Congress headed by Smt. Sonia Gandhi, that made a commitment to 33% reservation for women in Parliament despite opposition from many political parties.

Every woman deserves dignity of life, the freedom to choose, financial independence and the unequivocal assertion of her own identity. This manifesto is a collective reflection of the hopes and aspirations of the women of Uttar Pradesh who face an unprecedented onslaught of violence, oppression, and injustice under the current government of Uttar Pradesh and its misogynist ideology. The Congress party offers a distinct alternative that is unwavering in its commitment to equality, justice, freedom, dignity, self-respect, and prosperity for women.



SWĀBHIMĀN

Political Empowerment Of The Women Of Uttar Pradesh



Merely 14 per cent of the Members of Parliament in the current Lok Sabha and 11.6 per cent in the Rajya Sabha are women. Female representation in the Parliament and Legislative Assemblies in India is below 15 per cent.

Following the implementation of women's reservations at the Panchayat level, 1/3rd of all elected members of Panchayats are women. This is a testimony to the transformative power of affirmative action and has effectively created a pipeline of 10 lakh women leaders at the Panchayat level.

However, despite this, women have not been able to break the ceiling in State Assemblies and the Parliament of India. At the assembly and parliament levels, the ratio of elected women to men drops to a shocking 1/10th. Consequently, in Uttar Pradesh, out of 403 Members of the Legislative Assembly, only 40 are women.

The Congress party in Uttar Pradesh has resolved to alter this dismal reality. In offering 40% of tickets for the upcoming Assembly Elections, it is hoped that a new opportunity for female political leadership in the state shall emerge.

The Congress party firmly believes that aggression, divisiveness, and lack of compassion in politics must be fiercely challenged. Women are best placed to bring fearlessness, competence and compassion into the political space while ensuring that policy making is more inclusive.

**IN ORDER TO GIVE
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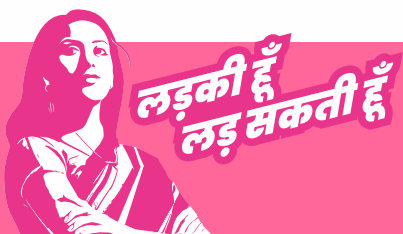
SWĀWLAMBAN

Economic Empowerment Of The Women Of Uttar Pradesh

The Labour Force Participation Rate of females in India is 26.5% as per the Economic Survey tabled in January 2021. This is one of the lowest rates in South Asia. Within India, at 9.4 percent, the state with the lowest women workforce is Uttar Pradesh. When compared to the corresponding national average, the LFPRs for women in rural and urban areas of the state are lower by 8 and 9 percentage points respectively. This ratio worsened during and after the COVID-19 pandemic. Reports indicate that Female Labour Participation in Uttar Pradesh fell to a historic low of 15 percent further increasing gender inequity. The sectors most affected include restaurants, retail, beauty, tourism, education, domestic work, and caregivers.

IN ORDER TO INCREASE THE FEMALE WORK FORCE OF UTTAR PRADESH AND REDUCE GENDER INEQUALITY, THE CONGRESS PARTY WILL ENSURE THAT:

1. 40 PER CENT OF THE 20 LAKH NEW JOBS IT AIMS TO CREATE IN THE STATE WILL BE ALLOTTED TO WOMEN IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE EXISTING PROVISIONS OF RESERVATION.
2. BUSINESSES INCREASING THEIR FEMALE EMPLOYEE NUMBERS TO 50 PER CENT SHALL BE ASSISTED BY OFFERING ADEQUATE INCENTIVES INCLUDING TAX EXEMPTIONS.
3. SPECIFIC QUOTAS FOR WOMEN IN CONVENTIONALLY MALE-CENTRIC PROFESSIONS SUCH AS DRIVERS OF PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION SHALL BE SET ASIDE AT 40 PERCENT IN ACCORDANCE WITH EXISTING PROVISIONS OF RESERVATION. TRAINING CENTERS EXCLUSIVELY FOR WOMEN SHALL BE SET UP FOR THE SAME.



4. A SPECIAL FUND PROVIDING LOW TO ZERO INTEREST RATE LOANS AND TAX REFUNDS SHALL BE INSTITUTED FOR FEMALE-RUN SMALL BUSINESSES
5. MANDATORY CRECHES SHALL BE SET UTTAR PRADESH IN ALL GOVERNMENT OFFICES, AND A PUSH WILL BE MADE TO ENCOURAGE PRIVATE OFFICES TO PROVIDE FOR CRECHE SERVICES TO WORKING WOMEN
6. 25 WORKING WOMEN'S HOSTELS SHALL BE SET UP IN MAJOR URBAN CENTERS, THESE WILL BE EQUIPPED WITH CONTEMPORARY FACILITIES FOR SAFETY, SECURITY AND COMFORT
7. A STATE AND DISTRICT LEVEL HELPLINE SHALL BE INTRODUCED FOR FEMALE VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND DESTITUTE WOMEN, THESE HELPLINES WILL BE MANAGED BY SPECIALLY TRAINED OPERATORS
8. WAGE SUBSIDIES FOR WOMEN WHOSE JOBS WERE AFFECTED BY COVID-19 SHALL BE INSTITUTED

While being vital to domestic and global supply chains, most employment avenues for women are either underpaid or unrecognized. Paid work for women in India is concentrated in low-growth, low-productivity sectors, mainly agriculture or home-based informal work. According to the Gender Gap Index in 2020, India has slipped to the 112th position and it is likely to take close to a hundred years to bridge India's gender gap in politics, economy, health and education.

Uttar Pradesh mirrors these statistics. Disguised unemployment, unpaid domestic work and massive wage disparity are rampant across the state of Uttar Pradesh. There are over 70 lakh home-based workers in Uttar Pradesh, most of whom are women. These women, who previously earned an average of Rs 40-50 a day have been pushed further into poverty post the COVID-19 pandemic. They remain in the lowest rungs of India's labour chain, performing subcontracted work in the textile and garments industry. Other home-based work includes making papads, agarbattis and rolling bidis. Over 21 lakh migrant workers returned home to Uttar Pradesh during the COVID Pandemic leading to an unprecedented demand for MGNREGS jobs in 2021. Despite the provision for 33 per cent reservation for women the proportion of women workers in MGNREGA is approximately 5 per cent.

IN ORDER TO UPHOLD THE DIGNITY OF LABOUR AND STRENGTHEN EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES IN THE RURAL AND HOME-BASED SECTOR, THE CONGRESS PARTY WILL ENSURE THAT:

1. EXISTING PUBLIC AND PRIVATE JOBS SHALL BE REGULARISED ENSURING THE INCLUSION OF SECURITY AND BENEFITS FOR WOMEN AND NEW JOBS SHALL FOLLOW THE SAME PRESCRIBED GUIDELINES
2. ANGANWADI WORKERS AND ASHA BAHUS ACROSS THE STATE SHALL RECEIVE AND AN HONORARIUM OF RS. 10,000 PER MONTH



3. THE SELF-HELP GROUP MODEL SHALL BE IMPLEMENTED ACROSS THE STATE AND SCALED UP TO COVER ALL WOMEN BELOW THE POVERTY LINE IN UTTAR PRADESH IN THE NEXT 5 YEARS WITH SPECIFIC FOCUS ON INTEREST SUBVENTION TO ENSURE THAT THAT SHGS GET LOANS AT 4 PER CENT INTEREST RATE
4. A GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENT FOR HUMANE WORKING CONDITIONS OF DOMESTIC WORKERS SHALL BE SET UP WITHIN THE LABOUR MINISTRY
5. 40% WORK UNDER MNREGA SHALL BE RESERVED AND PRIORITISED FOR WOMEN
6. 50 PER CENT OF ALL RATION SHOPS IN THE STATE SHALL BE MANAGED AND RUN EXCLUSIVELY BY WOMEN
7. A SPECIAL DEPARTMENT SHALL BE SET UP TO TRAIN AND ASSIST DIFFERENTLY ABLED WOMEN WITH SPECIFIC FOCUS ON EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES
8. ALL GOVERNMENT BUILDINGS AND WORK-SPACES SHALL BE EQUIPPED WITH ACCESSORIES TO FACILITATE DIFFERENTLY ABLED WOMEN





SHIKSHĀ

Educational Empowerment Of The Women Of Uttar Pradesh

According to a Right to Education Forum policy brief, 1 crore girls in India dropped out of secondary school due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Among other social and developmental impacts, a high drop-out rate results in increased vulnerability to early marriage, trafficking, abuse, and violence. Even under pre-pandemic conditions, a stark disparity between male and female literacy rates exists. Uttar Pradesh with just 63.4 per cent female literacy rate trails the national average of 70.3 per cent. Besides, enrolment has dipped drastically for girls from Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Muslim communities.

Poverty and a deeply entrenched patriarchy are the greatest impediments to the education of girls. Patriarchal and regressive social norms like restrictions on the mobility of girls, gender specific social roles, child marriage and the dowry system act as barriers along with existing infrastructural issues. The pandemic has also exposed the deep digital divide between males and females in education and access to skill training. This divide exacerbates the social consequences of economic dependence for women especially if they hail from economically lower, socially backward, or rural backgrounds.

The Congress Party believes that a good education lays the foundations of a strong democracy and is inextricably linked to empowerment, equality, and justice.

IN ORDER TO COMBAT THE MARGINALIZATION OF WOMEN, THE CONGRESS PARTY WILL ENSURE THAT:

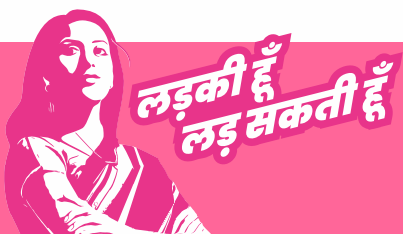
1. EVERY GIRL IN THE 10+2 STANDARD SHALL BE PROVIDED WITH A SMART PHONE TO ENABLE DIGITAL ACCESS TO EDUCATION AND SKILL BUILDING, AND TO ENSURE HER



SAFETY AND SECURITY.

2. EVERY GIRL ENROLLED IN A GRADUATE PROGRAM SHALL BE PROVIDED WITH A SCOOTY TO ENABLE HER SAFETY, MOBILITY AND ACCESS TO OPPORTUNITY.
3. SCHOLARSHIPS FOR GIRLS SHALL BE OFFERED IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS AND SCALED ACCORDING TO INCOME GROUPS.
4. EXCLUSIVELY FEMALE INDIRA DAKSHATA VIDHYALAYAS MODELLED ON KENDRIYA VIDHYALAYAS SHALL BE OPENED IN 75 DISTRICTS ACROSS THE STATE. THESE WILL BE RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS FOCUSED ON IDENTIFYING TALENT, SKILL BUILDING AND PROVIDING VOCATIONAL TRAINING ALONG WITH ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE.
5. SPECIAL EMPLOYMENT EXCHANGES SHALL BE SET UP TO INCENTIVIZE AND FACILITATE EMPLOYMENT FOR WOMEN ESPECIALLY FROM MARGINALISED SECTIONS, THESE WILL AIM TO PROVIDE VOCATIONAL TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES.
6. FUNDED PROGRAMMES TO TRAIN SINGLE MOTHERS IN VARIOUS VOCATIONS SHALL BE INSTITUTED.
7. SANDHYA SCHOOLS MANAGED AND STAFFED EXCLUSIVELY BY WOMEN SHALL BE SET UP ACROSS THE STATE TO FACILITATE THE EDUCATION OF WORKING WOMEN

A CURRICULLUM FOR GIRLS ABOVE THE AGE OF 14 YEARS FOCUSING ON REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS AND SCIENCES, SEX EDUCATION, THE REALITY OF CHILD AND FORCED EARLY MARRIAGES, AND OTHER ISSUES SPECIFIC TO WOMEN SHALL BE INCORPORATED INTO THE SCHOOL CURRICULLUM IN PARTNERSHIP WITH RELEVANT ORGANISATIONS.



SAMMĀN

Empowerment And Recognition Of The Women Of Uttar Pradesh In The Domestic Space



Indian women spend an average of 5 hours a day on unpaid domestic services as compared to Indian men who contribute less than 1.5 hours towards the same activities according to the 2019 NSS report on time use. However, inequity in the domestic space remains largely undocumented while measuring standard economic activity. Women are also the victims of physical and psychological abuse, violence, malnutrition and other detrimental social consequences of gender disparity within their own homes. Much of this suffering remains unrecognized. Economic dependence on male members of family units enables abuse and remains a major factor in preventing women from achieving psychological and social emancipation.

IN ORDER TO PROVIDE A FINANCIAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY NET FROM THE DAILY STRUGGLE OF WOMEN IN THE DOMESTIC SPACE, THE CONGRESS PARTY WILL ENSURE THAT:

1. USE OF ALL PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION SHALL BE FREE FOR WOMEN IN ORDER TO ENABLE ACCESS TO SCHOOLS, UNIVERSITIES AND WORKPLACES.
2. ELDERLY WOMEN AND WIDOWS SHALL RECEIVE A MONTHLY PENSION OF RS. 1000 EACH, ALL EXISTING PENSION PROGRAMS IN THE STATE SHALL ALSO BE REVIEWED.
3. SPECIAL TRAINING PROGRAMS SHALL BE MADE AVAILABLE TO YOUNG WIDOWS TO HELP THEM TAP AVAILABLE EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES.
4. 'MAHILACHAUPALS' SHALL BE CONSTRUCTED IN EVERY GRAM PANCHAYAT AS A SPACE FOR WOMEN TO GATHER, DISCUSS, ORGANISE EVENTS, MEETINGS AND



RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES.

5. TRAINING AND OPPORTUNITIES IN MICROFINANCE SHALL BE ENHANCED AND MADE AVAILABLE TO INDIVIDUALS AND GROUPS OF WOMEN AIMING TOWARDS THEIRSELF-RELIANCE
6. FREE INTERNET SHALL BE PROVIDED TO LOW-INCOME HOUSEHOLDS FOR EASY ACCESS TO ONLINE SCHOOL, UNIVERSITY AND VOCATIONAL CLASSES
7. 3 FREE GAS CYLINDERS SHALL BE PROVIDED TO EVERY WOMAN PER YEAR
8. 10 WORLD CLASS SPORTS RESIDENTIAL ACADEMIES EXCLUSIVELY FOR WOMEN SHALL BE SET UP IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE PRIVATE SECTOR AND/OR INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITIES WITH THE AIM TO FACILITATE OPPORTUNITIES TO COMPETE INTERNATIONALLY
9. A NEW SCHEME SHALL BE PUT FORTH TO ENABLE THE OPENING OF A FIXED DEPOSIT FOR EVERY GIRL CHILD BORN INTO A FAMILY
10. A NEW SCHEME ALONG THE LINES OF ASHA BAHUS SHALL BE INTRODUCED FOR TRAINED SOCIAL WORKERS TO TACKLE DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND DRUG USAGE IN FAMILIES
11. CASES OF DESERTION OF WOMEN DEPENDENT ON MALE FAMILY MEMBERS FOR FOOD, SHELTER, AND FINANCIAL SUPPORT SHALL BE OFFERED SPECIAL ASSISTANCE IN PARTNERSHIP WITH LEGAL AID COMMITTEES. YOUNG FEMALE ADVOCATES WILL BE PROVIDED WITH A STIPEND FOR SUCH CASES.





SURAKSHĀ

Empowerment Of The Women Of Uttar Pradesh By Ensuring Their Safety And Security

Crimes against women increased in Uttar Pradesh by over 66% in the last four years. In the last one year, the rate of crime against Scheduled Caste women increased by 18.8% across India and the largest number of these women are from the state of Uttar Pradesh.

Refusal to investigate and prosecute perpetrators, persecution of victims and their families, reputation assassination, political patronage for the accused, unwilling and complicit law enforcement agencies have characterized the government's response to the heinous crimes committed against women in the districts of Hathras, Unnao, Shahjahanpur, Barabanki, Lakhimpur, Bareilly, Hardoi amongst many others. According to the NCRGB data Uttar Pradesh reports the highest number of murders and kidnapping cases. Cyber crime against children has seen a 400 per cent jump in the state and on an average 12 women are raped in Uttar Pradesh every single day.

Section 4 of the Atrocities Act defines the duties of public servants cognizant of such crimes as immediately registering a First Information Report (FIR), recording statements of victims or witnesses, and filing a charge sheet within 60 days. Regardless of this clear delineation, instances of delay, refusal to register an FIR by officials and non-compliance with the provisions of the act are rampant. This state of lawlessness in Uttar Pradesh has ensured that it is one of India's most unsafe states for women.

Despite this horrific state-of-affairs, young women of Uttar Pradesh are standing up for themselves. Time and again, they have broken out of/ rejected victimhood and fought courageously for justice against insurmountable odds.



THE CONGRESS PARTY PAYS TRIBUTE TO THESE BRAVE WOMEN AND RESOLVES THAT IN ORDER TO PROVIDE A SAFE AND SECURE ENVIRONMENT FOR THE WOMEN OF UTTAR PRADESH IT WILL ENSURE THAT:

1. 25% ALL JOBS IN THE POLICE FORCE SHALL BE RESERVED FOR WOMEN ACROSS THE STATE. ALL POLICE STATIONS WILL BE STAFFED WITH FEMALE CONSTABLES SO THAT WOMEN CAN FEEL SAFE WHILE REPORTING A CRIME
2. NON-COMPLIANCE WITH THE DUTIES DELINEATED IN SECTION 4 OF THE ATROCITIES ACT WITHIN A PERIOD OF 10 DAYS FROM WHEN THE CRIME IS REPORTED TO THE SAID PUBLIC SERVANTS SHALL IMMEDIATELY INVITE THEIR SUSPENSION FROM PUBLIC DUTY. THIS SHALL BE LEGALLY ENDORSED.
3. A SPECIAL EMPOWERED COMMISSION CONSISTING OF SIX WOMEN- TWO JUDGES, TWO ACTIVISTS AND 2 GOVT SERVANTS, SHALL BE FORMED AT THE STATE LEVEL, TO LOOK INTO HARASSMENT OR PERSECUTION OF VICTIMS, VILLIFICATION OF VICTIMS AND/OR THEIR FAMILIES IN CASES OF RAPE AND MOLESTATION WHETHER BY THE ACCUSED, PUBLIC SERVANTS PROTECTING THE ACCUSED OR BY ACQUAINTANCES OF THE ACCUSED.
6. A SPECIAL THREE MEMBER LEGAL CELL INCLUDING TWO FEMALE ADVOCATES SHALL BE FORMED IN EVERY DISTRICT TO PROVIDE FREE LEGAL ASSISTANCE TO VICTIMS OF CRIMES AGAINST WOMEN.





SEHĀT

Empowerment Of The Women Of Uttar Pradesh By Securing Their Physical And Mental Health

Access to healthcare broadly conceptualized to encompass the “4As”: Affordability, Approachability, Appropriateness, and Availability remains a distant dream for most women in Uttar Pradesh. The state is home to some of the poorest development indicators of the health status of women and girls. At 42%, the percentage of women who have experienced spousal physical or sexual violence is higher in Uttar Pradesh than in the entire country.

The failure of the healthcare system and low penetration of health insurance schemes is reflected in an extraordinarily high share of out-of-pocket health expenses. The high financial burden on families especially impacts the female population, a significant share of whom appear to avoid the formal medical system, lest their families land in a debt trap.

The COVID pandemic exposed the complete collapse of the healthcare system that was already in shambles before the onset of the pandemic. Out of the sanctioned 4509 posts for doctors in Primary Health Centers, 70 per cent presently lie vacant even as each Primary Health Centre in Uttar Pradesh caters to over 44,000 people. Standard norms indicate that the required number of Primary Health Centers in Uttar Pradesh is 7000, however only 3560 currently exist.

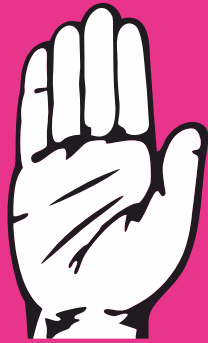
The maternal and child health services in Uttar Pradesh are particularly poor and different socio-economic groups have inequitable access to them. Uttar Pradesh is the poorest performer when it comes to neglecting the health of pregnant and lactating rural women. Just 12 per cent of the nursing women had eaten more nutritious food than usual during their pregnancy. In Uttar Pradesh, less than 60 per cent of women reported gaining any weight at all during pregnancy. Uttar Pradesh with 64 deaths per 1,000 live births has the worse under-five mortality rate.



IN ORDER TO PROVIDE WOMEN WITH INCREASED ACCESS TO HEALTHCARE AND BETTER HEALTH FACILITIES, THE CONGRESS PARTY WILL ENSURE THAT:

1. FREE MEDICAL TREATMENT SHALL BE PROVIDED FOR ANY DISEASE UPTO A MAXIMUM OF RS 10 LAKHS PER FAMILY
2. ALL VACANT POSITIONS OF DOCTORS AND MEDICAL STAFF IN PRIMARY HEALTH CENTRES AND OTHER MEDICAL FACILITIES ACROSS THE STATE SHALL BE FILLED
3. THE COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTRE AND PRIMARY HEALTH CENTRE NETWORK SHALL BE STRENGTHENED AND ITS OUTREACH BROUGHT CLOSER TO THE NATIONAL AVERAGE BY OPENING A LARGE NUMBER OF CENTRES IN RURAL AND URBAN AREAS
4. A SUPPLY OF FREE ESSENTIAL FEMININE PRODUCTS, MENSTRUAL CARE PRODUCTS AND GENERIC MEDICINES FOR WOMEN SHALL BE MADE AVAILABLE IN ALL GOVERNMENT HOSPITALS, SCHOOLS AND UNIVERSITIES
5. ANNUAL "SWAASTHYA SHAKTI" CHECK UPS SHALL BE PROVIDED UNDER THE AYUSHMAN BHARAT SCHEME FREE OF COST AT PRIMARY HEALTH CENTRES AND DISTRICT HOSPITALS TO WOMEN AND CHILDREN WHO CANNOT AFFORD BASIC HEALTH SERVICES
6. DEDICATED "SWAASTHYA SHAKTI KENDRAS" MANAGED AND STAFFED BY WOMEN SHALL BE SET UP AT EVERY PRIMARY HEALTH CENTRE AND EQUIPPED TO PROVIDE MEDICAL ASSISTANCE SPECIFICALLY FOR WOMEN'S HEALTH ISSUES
7. A HELPLINE AND WEBSITE OF RESOURCES FOCUSSED ON MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING SUPPORT SHALL BE MADE AVAILABLE TO THE PUBLIC ALONGWITH ACCESSIBILITY TO TRAINED SOCIAL WORKERS WHO SHALL BE EQUIPPED TO ASSIST WITH THE SAME





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