

# A Study on Welfare Schemes for Women Empowerment in India

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**Abstract:** Empowerment of women essentially means improving the social, political and economic status of women, especially the traditional underprivileged one. It means creating an environment where women are free from any kind of physical, mental abuse, exploitation, and prejudice that they are the most vulnerable section in the society. Recognising the importance of women in the economic growth of the nation, the Government of India along with State Governments has been taking several efforts to uplift women from their conditions in general. The focus of Government is progressively shifting towards promoting women entrepreneurship to motivate women to participate in the economic activities. This paper attempts to analyse the need of Women Empowerment in India and highlights the methods and schemes of Women Empowerment. The study is based on purely from secondary sources. Women of India are relatively disempowered and they enjoy somewhat lower status than that of men in spite of many efforts undertaken by Government. It is found that acceptance of unequal gender norms by women are still prevailing in the society. The study concludes by an observation that providing basic facilities and implementing various schemes are enabling factors to Women Empowerment.

**Keywords:** Women Empowerment, Basic Rights, Welfare Scheme, Socio-Economic Status, Scheme implementation.

## INTRODUCTION

Today the empowerment of women has become one of the most important concerns of 21st century but practically women empowerment is still an illusion of reality. Women empowerment refers to increasing the spiritual, political, social, educational, gender or economic strength of individuals and communities of women. Women are an integral part of every economy. All round development and harmonious growth of a nation would be possible only when women are considered as equal partners in progress with men.

Women's empowerment in India is heavily dependent on many different variables that include geographical location (urban / rural) educational status social status (caste and class) and age. Policies on Women's empowerment exist at the national, state and local (Panchayat) levels in many sectors, including health, education, economic opportunities, and gender based violence and political participation. Women empowerment enables autonomy and control over their lives. The empowered women become agents of their own development, able to exercise choices to set their own agenda and be strong enough to challenge their subordinate position in the society. Women particularly in rural areas have proportionately least possessions, skills, education, social status, leadership qualities and capabilities for mobilization, which determines the degree of decision making and power, and as a result, their dependence on men increases. They have been confined to the four walls of the household, overburdened with domestic works and controlled of their mobility and personal freedoms by the men of the household since time immemorial. So they have lagged behind in the fields of education, skill development, and employment and as a result, their work is greatly undervalued in economic terms. Empowerment of women is essentially the process of upliftment of economic, social and political status of women, the traditionally underprivileged ones, in the society. It is the process of guarding them against all forms of violence. The empowerment of women include creating awareness and consciousness about situations of women, discrimination of women, rights of women, opportunities to the women and importance of gender equality, organizing a group collectively, group identity and group pressure; capacity building and skill development, ability to plan, to decide, to organize, ability to manage, ability to carry out activities, ability to deal with people and institutions in the world around them; participation in decision

making at home, in the community and in the society, and access and control over resources, over means of productivity and over distribution.

Empowerment is the process of changing power relations in favour of those at the lower levels of a hierarchy. Empowerment of women implies process by which women's power of self-realization is promoted and reinforced. They develop the capacity for self-reliance out crossing the relationship subordination on account of gender, social and economic status and the role in the family and society. The most famous saying said by the Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru is "To awaken the people, it is the women who must be awakened. Once she is on the move, the family moves, the village moves, the nation moves". In India, to empower the women, first it needs to kill all the demons killing women's rights and values in the society such as dowry system, illiteracy, sexual harassment, inequality, female infanticide, and domestic violence against women, rape, prostitution, illegal trafficking and other issues. Gender discrimination in the nation brings cultural, social, economic and educational differences which push country back. The most effective remedy to kill such devils is making women empowered by ensuring the Right to Equality mentioned in the Constitution of India. Giving priority to the gender equality facilitates women empowerment all over the country. To get the high level goal of women empowerment, it should be promoted from the childhood in each and every family. It needs women to be strong physically, mentally and socially. Since the better education can be started at home from childhood, the upliftment of women needs healthy family to bring a holistic development of the nation. Still in many backward areas, there is a trend of early marriage and childbirth because of the poverty, insecurity and illiteracy of the parents. In order to empower women, various steps have been taken by the government to prevent violence, social separation, gender discrimination and abuse against women. 108th Constitutional Amendment Bill (also called Women's Reservation Bill) was passed to reserve one-third of the seats for women only in the Lok Sabha to make them actively involved in every area. In other fields also the seats for women have been reserved for their active participation without any limitation and competition. Various mass campaigns need to be organized in the backward rural areas to make them aware about the

real values of women and all the facilities available by the government for their bright future. They need to be promoted for the survival and proper education of female child to really bring the dream of women empowerment come true.

Reasons for the Empowerment of Women:

Government of India took so many initiatives to empower the women in India. But women are discriminated and marginalized at every level of the society whether it is social participation, political participation, economic participation, access to education, and also reproductive healthcare. Women are found to be economically very poor all over the India. A few women are engaged in services and other activities. So, they need an equal economic power to stand side by side to the men. There are so many cases of rape, kidnapping of girl, dowry harassment and so on. For these reasons, they require empowerment of all kinds in order to protect themselves and to secure their purity and dignity. Other hand, it has been observed that women are found to be less literate than men. Thus, increasing education among women is of very important in empowering them. A big proportion of women in rural India are physically so weak who work more than the food they consume. This discrimination needs address the empowerment of weaker section of the society to make them powerful and respectful. Another problem is that workplace harassment of women. To sum up, women empowerment cannot be possible unless women come with and help to self-empower themselves. There is a need to formulate reducing feminized poverty, promoting education of women, prevention, and elimination of violence against women and creating the basic assets to empower the women population of the nation The makers of our Constitution were concerned for the equality and rights of women and children, and promoting their well-being to ensure a better future for them. This vision is enshrined in constitutional provisions. It is important that the Empowered women mean living with dignity and contributing as equal partners in development in an environment free from violence and discrimination. And it is also important that the wellnurtured children with full opportunities for growth and development in a safe and protective environment. Promoting social and economic empowerment of women through cross-cutting policies and programmes, mainstreaming gender

concerns, creating awareness about their rights and facilitating institutional and legislative support for enabling them to realise their human rights.

#### OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study mainly focuses the following main objectives.

- (a) To bring on light the need of the Women Empowerment;
- (b) To understand the Government's awareness of Women Empowerment in India;
- (c) To study the Government's Schemes on Women Empowerment, development, progress, equality through the Constitutional provisions;
- (d) To assess the impact of projects on women's access to various development programmes launched by government;
- (e) To review the policies, programmes and projects of central government for development and empowerment of women;
- (f) To know the measures for ensuring women empowerment.

#### THE AIMS AND SCOPE OF STUDY

The aim and scope of this study is to examine the status of women in india and related to awareness, influencing, need of women empowerment, knowledge, development, progress, practice government initiatives and women equality.

#### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study of the paper is descriptive and analytical in nature. The secondary data pertaining to the study was gathered from the records published by different published books, journals, internet sources, published research papers, magazine and articles.

Women Empowerment Schemes

- BetiBachaoBetiPadhao Scheme
- One Stop Centre Scheme
- Women Helpline Scheme
- Ujjawala : A Comprehensive Scheme for Prevention of trafficking and Rescue, Rehabilitation and Reintegration of Victims of Trafficking and Commercial Sexual Exploitation
- Working Women Hostel

- Ministry approves new projects under Ujjawala Scheme and continues existing projects
- SwadharGreh (A Scheme for Women in Difficult Circumstances) →Nari Shakti Puraskar
- Awardees of Stree Shakti Puruskar, 2014 & Awardees of Nari Shakti Puruskar→
- Awardees of RajyaMahilaSamman&ZilaMahilaSamman
- Mahila police Volunteers
- Mahila Shakti Kendras (MSK)
- NirbhayaBetiBachao, BetiPadhao Save girl child, educate girl child is Central Government Sponsored Scheme by Government of India.

The prime goal of this scheme is to generate awareness and improving the efficiency of welfare services meant for women. Also, it aims to celebrate the Girl Child & Enable her Education.

The BetiBachao, BetiPadhao (BBBP) Scheme has been introduced to address the issue declining Child Sex Ratio (CSR). This scheme is being implemented through a national campaign and focused multi-sectoral action in 100 selected districts low in CSR, covering all States and UTs. This scheme is implemented by the joint initiative of Ministry of Women and Child Development, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and Ministry of Human Resource Development. Prime Minister Modi launched the programme on 22 January 2015 from Panipat, Haryana on the occasion of International Day of the Girl Child, Prime Minister Modi, called for the eradication of female foeticide.

Scheme for setting up One Stop Centre The Ministry has approved Scheme for setting up One Stop Centre to support women affected by violence on 4th March, 2015. The scheme aims to facilitate access to an integrated range of services including medical aid, police assistance, legal aid/case management, psychosocial counselling, and temporary support services to women affected by violence. Aggrieved women facing any kind of violence due to attempted sexual harassment, sexual assault, domestic violence, trafficking, honour related crimes, acid attacks or witch-hunting who have reached out or been referred to the OSC will be provided with specialized services. OSC are set up in each State/UT. This scheme facilitates access to an integrated range of services including medical, legal, and psychological support. Indira Gandhi MatritvaSahyogYojana (IGMSY) for the pregnant and lactating women The Indira Gandhi

MatritvaSahyogYojana (IGMSY) is a maternity benefits scheme implemented by the Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India. This scheme is for the pregnant and lactating women of 19 years of age or above for first two live births to contribute to a better enabling environment by providing conditional cash transfer for improved health and nutrition and to also promote health and nutrition seeking behaviour in them. It provides partial wage compensation to women for wage-loss during childbirth and childcare and to provide conditions for safe delivery and good nutrition and feeding practices. It provides cash maternity benefit to the women.

Women Helpline Scheme: This was launched on 6<sup>th</sup> August, 2017 by the Modi Government. The objectives of this scheme are: to provide 24hrs emergency and non-emergency response to women affected by violence including sexual offences and harassment both in public and private sphere, and to provide integrated support and assistance to women affected by violence.

Stree Shakti Package for Women Entrepreneurs There is a lot of focus on promoting women entrepreneurship in India with the government and financial institutions having various schemes. One such scheme promoted by the State Bank of India (SBI) is Stree Shakti Package for Women Entrepreneurs. Thus, women entrepreneurs or women entrepreneur business in retail trade, manufacturing or services are eligible for the scheme. Also, Women professionals like Doctors, Beauticians, Architects and Chartered Accountants can avail loan under the Stree Shakti package.

ShadiShagunYojna This was launched on 6<sup>th</sup> August, 2017 by the Modi Government. Under the scheme all the graduate Muslim girls completing their graduation in any of the streams before their marriage would also be eligible to avail the ShaadiShagunYojana benefits. To motivate girls from minority groups to pursue higher education was also under initiative. Central Victim Compensation Fund: Central Victim Compensation Fund has been created under Nirbhaya, which is a corpus fund to support States/Uts for their Victim Compensation Scheme. This is helping ensure adequate and timely support for women survivors of crime and violence.

#### CONCLUSION

The government has initiated some really good schemes for Women Empowerment in the Indian Society. But more than schemes and more than laws, social discussions, debate, promotion and awareness are the areas which need to be addressed to deal with concerned problems. The day, when these schemes and programmes will reach each and every corner of our country, then our developing country will emerge as a developed and prosperous nation. The government has made many schemes for child development and empowerment of women.

Women need fresh and more capable environment so that they can take their own right decisions in every area whether for themselves, family, society or country. In order to make the country fully developed country, women empowerment is an essential tool to get the goal of development. The government and other private institutions are supporting women in the leadership positions in public sector. Leadership of women in the public sector is the key of development in the nation. Representing women in public sector is only the matter of justice however it needs to bring forward all the perspectives to make of women empowerment effective. Thus in India so many schemes for women empowerment. The day when these schemes and program will reach every corner of our country.

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