



RESEARCH ARTICLE

A STUDY ON RECENT WOMEN EMPOWERMENT SCHEMES

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ABSTRACT

Women empowerment in simple words can be understood as giving power to women to decide for their own lives or inculcating such abilities in them so that they could be able to find their rightful place in the society. According to the United Nations, women's empowerment mainly has five components:

- Generating women's sense of self-worth;
- Women's right to have and to determine their choices;
- Women's right to have access to equal opportunities and all kinds of resources;
- Women's right to have the power to regulate and control their own lives, within and outside the home; and
- Women's ability to contribute in creating a more just social and economic order.

Thus, women empowerment is nothing but recognition of women's basic human rights and creating an environment where they are treated as equals to men. Women Empowerment refers to strengthening the social, economic and educational powers of women. It refers to an environment where there is no gender bias and have equal rights in community, society and workplaces. Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India have come up with various schemes, programmes, social welfare schemes, Health and Nutrition, scholarship for women empowerment, Girl Child pregnant women, mothers, ward members, Anganwadi Workers, Women Health Volunteers, the women living in the rural & tribal areas, ex-servicemen, physically handicapped, nursing women, Lactating mother, widows/destitute, Old age women, women self-help group (SHG), Women Entrepreneurs and Adolescent Girls'. Also, it helps to the women and child belonging to Scheduled Caste(SC) and Scheduled Tribe(ST), Other Backward Classes(OBC), Socially and Educationally Backward Classes(SEBC) Minority Category, below poverty line(BPL) and also for General Category This scheme provides assistance for Education, Training, Financial assistance/Cash, Subsidy on the loans, Scholarship, Nutrition, self-employment and other facilities. The prime goal is for empowerment, development, protection and welfare of Women & Child.

The Study is Purely Theoretical. The Study is based on secondary data sources. The necessary information about the Recent Women Empowerment Schemes and its various components are collected from Books, Journals, Internet Source or related topic. The Researcher study about the Recent Women Empowerment Schemes in India The Research Work includes I. Introduction II. Methodology III. Recent Women Empowerment Schemes in India. IV Conclusion.etc.

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INTRODUCTION

Gender inequality is the main Social issue in India in which women are getting back in the male dominated country. Women empowerment needs to take a high speed in this country to equalize the value of both genders. Uplifting of women in all means should be the utmost priority of the nation.

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Inequalities between men and women in the society generate lots of problems which become a big obstruction in the way to success of nation. It is the birth rights of the women to get equal value to the men in the society. To really bring empowerment, every woman needs to be aware about their rights from their own end. They need to take positive steps and involve in every activities instead of only involving in the household chores and family responsibilities. They should know about all the happenings in their surroundings and country. Women empowerment has the power to change many things in the society and country.

They are much better than men to deal with certain problems in the society. They can better understand the disadvantages of the overpopulation for their family and country. They are fully able to handle the economic conditions of the family and country through proper family planning. Women are capable enough to handle any impulsive violence in comparison to the men whether in the family or society. Through women empowerment, it can be possible to change the male dominated country into the equally dominated country of rich economy. Empowering women may easily help to grow each and every member of the family without any extra effort. A woman is considered to be responsible for everything in the family so she can better solve all the problems from her own end. Empowerment of the women would automatically bring empowerment of everyone.

Women empowerment is the better treatment of any big or small problems related to human being, economy or environment. In few last years, the advantages of the women empowerment are coming out in front of us. Women are being more conscious about their health, education, career, job and responsibilities towards family, society and country. They are taking part in the every area and showing their great interest in each field. Finally, after long years of hard struggle they are getting their rights to go ahead on the right track.

What is Women Empowerment

Women empowerment can be defined in very simple words that it is making women powerful so that they can take their own decisions regarding their lives and well being in the family and society. It is empowering women to make them able to get their real rights in the society.

Women Empowerment refers to the creation of an environment for women where they can make decisions of their own for their personal benefits as well as for the society. Women Empowerment refers to increasing and improving the social, economic, political and legal strength of the women, to ensure equal-right to women, and to make them confident enough to claim their rights, such as:

- freely live their life with a sense of self-worth, respect and dignity,
- have complete control of their life, both within and outside of their home and workplace,
- to make their own choices and decisions,
- have equal rights to participate in social, religious and public activities,
- have equal social status in the society,
- have equal rights for social and economic justice,
- determine financial and economic choices,
- get equal opportunity for education,
- get equal employment opportunity without any gender bias,
- get safe and comfortable working environment.

Why Need of Women Empowerment in India

As we all know that India is a male dominated country where males are dominated in every area and females are forced to be responsible for only family care and live in the home including other many restrictions. Almost 50% of the population in India

is covered by the female only so the full development of the country depends on the half population means women, who are not empowered and still restricted by many social taboos. In such condition, we cannot say that our country would be a developed in the future without empowering its half population means women. If we want to make our country a developed country, first of all it is very necessary to empower women by the efforts of men, government, laws and women too. The need of women empowerment arose because of the gender discrimination and male domination in the Indian society since ancient time. Women are being suppressed by their family members and society for many reasons. They have been targeted for many types of violence and discriminatory practices by the male members in the family and society in India and other countries as well. Wrong and old practices for the women in the society from ancient time have taken the form of well developed customs and traditions. There is a tradition of worshipping many female goddesses in India including giving honour to the women forms in the society like mother, sister, daughter, wife and other female relatives or friends. But, it does not mean that only respecting or honoring women can fulfil the need of development in the country. It needs the empowerment of the rest half population of the country in every walk of life.

India is a famous country proving the common proverb like 'unity is diversity', where people of many religious beliefs are in the Indian society. Women have been given a special place in every religion which is working as a big curtain covering the eyes of people and help in the continuation of many ill practices (including physical and mental) against women as a norm since ages. In the ancient Indian society, there was a custom of sati pratha, nagar vadhu system, dowry system, sexual violence, domestic violence, female infanticide, parda pratha, wife burning, sexual harassment at work place, child marriage, child labour, devadashi pratha, etc including other discriminatory practices. All such type of ill practices is because of male superiority complex and patriarchal system of the society. Socio-political rights (right to work, right to education, right to decide for themselves, etc) for the women were completely restricted by the male members of family. Some of the ill practices against women have been eliminated by the open minded and great Indian people who raise their voices for the discriminatory practices against women. Through the continuous efforts of the Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Britishers were forced to eliminate the ill practice of Sati paratha. Later, other famous social reformers of the India (Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, Acharya Vinoba Bhave, Swami Vivekananda, etc) also had raised their voices and worked hard for the upliftment of women in Indian society. In India, the Widow Remarriage Act, 1856 was initiated by the continuous efforts of Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar in order to improve the conditions of widows in the country. In the recent years, various constitutional and legal rights have been implemented by the government of India in order to eliminate ill practices and gender discrimination against women. However, in order to solve such a big issue, the continuous effort of everyone including women is required. Modern society is being more aware about the women rights which results in the increasing number of several self-help groups, NGOs, etc working in this direction. Women are being more open minded and breaking the societal barriers in order to achieve their rights in all dimensions even after crimes are going side by side. Some of

the acts passed by the Parliament are Equal Remuneration Act-1976, Dowry Prohibition Act-1961, Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act-1956, Medical termination of Pregnancy Act-1971, Maternity Benefit Act-1961, Commission of Sati (Prevention) Act-1987, Prohibition of Child Marriage Act-2006, Pre-Conception & Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques (Regulation and Prevention of Misuse) Act-1994, Sexual Harassment of Women at Work Place (Prevention, Protection and) Act-2013, etc in order to empower women with legal rights. In order to provide safety to women and reduce crime against women in India, government has passed another act Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Bill, 2015 (especially after Nirbhaya case when an accused juvenile was released). This act is the replacement earlier Indian juvenile delinquency law of 2000 (Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2000) in order to reduce the juvenile age from 18 to 16 years in cases of heinous offenses.

Government Policies and Schemes for Women Empowerment

Whatever improvement and empowerment women have received is especially due to their own efforts and struggle, though governmental schemes are also there to help them in their endeavour.

In the year 2001, the Government of India launched a National Policy for Empowerment of Women. The specific objectives of the policy are as follows:

- Creation of an environment through positive economic and social policies for full development of women to enable them to realize their full potential.
- Creation of an environment for enjoyments of all human rights and fundamental freedom by women on equal basis with men in all political, economic, social, cultural and civil spheres.
- Providing equal access to participation and decision making of women in social political and economic life of the nation.
- Providing equal access to women to health care, quality education at all levels, career and vocational guidance, employment, equal remuneration, occupational health and safety, social security and public life etc.
- Strengthening legal systems aimed at elimination of all forms of discrimination against women.
- Changing societal attitudes and community practices by active participation and involvement of both men and women.
- Mainstreaming a gender perspective in the development process.
- Elimination of discrimination and all forms of violence against women and the girl child.
- Building and strengthening partnerships with civil society, particularly women's organizations.

The Ministry of Women and Child Development is the nodal agency for all matters pertaining to welfare, development and empowerment of women. It has evolved schemes and programmes for their benefit. These schemes are spread across a very wide spectrum such as women's need for shelter, security, safety, legal aid, justice, information, maternal health,

food, nutrition etc., as well as their need for economic sustenance through skill development, education and access to credit and marketing. Various schemes of the Ministry are like Swashakti, Swayamsidha, STEP and Swawlamban enable economic empowerment. Working Women Hostels and Creches provide support services. Swadhar and Short Stay Homes provide protection and rehabilitation to women in difficult circumstances. The Ministry also supports autonomous bodies like National Commission, Central Social Welfare Board and Rashtriya Mahila Kosh which work for the welfare and development of women. Economic sustenance of women through skill development, education and access to credit and marketing is also one of the areas where the Ministry has special focus.

METHODOLOGY

The Study is Purely Theoretical. The study is based on the secondary data sources. The necessary information about the recent women Empowerment Schemes and its various components are collected from various books, journals, internet source of related topics.

Women welfare and Recent Empowerment Schemes of Government of India

Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India have come up with various schemes, programmes, social welfare schemes, Health and Nutrition, scholarship for women empowerment, Girl Child pregnant women, mothers, ward members, Anganwadi Workers, Women Health Volunteers, the women living in the rural & tribal areas, ex-servicemen, physically handicapped, nursing women, Lactating mother, widows/destitute, Old age women, women self-help group (SHG), Women Entrepreneurs and Adolescent Girls'. Also, it helps to the women and child belonging to Scheduled Caste(SC) and Scheduled Tribe(ST), Other Backward Classes(OBC), Socially and Educationally Backward Classes(SEBC) Minority Category, below poverty line(BPL) and also for General Category. This scheme provides assistance for Education, Training, Financial assistance/Cash, Subsidy on the loans, Scholarship, Nutrition, self-employment and other facilities. The prime goal is for empowerment, development, protection and welfare of Women & Child.

Beti Padhao, Beti Bachao Scheme

Aim: To generate awareness and improve the efficiency of welfare services meant for girls

Launched on: 22 January 2015

Initial Funding: 100 crore

Objectives

- To prevent sex-selective abortion
- To ensure survival and protection of a girl child
- To ensure education of the girl child

One Stop Centre Scheme

Aim: To provide support and assistance to women affected by violence both in private and public spaces.

Funds: The Scheme will be funded through Nirbhaya Fund.

Objectives

- To provide integrated support and assistance to women affected by violence, both in private and public spaces under one roof.
- To facilitate immediate emergency and nonemergency access to a range of services including medical, legal, psychological and counselling support to fight against any forms of violence against women.

Women helpline scheme

Aim: Scheme for Universalization of Women Helpline is meant to provide 24 hours immediate and emergency response to women affected by violence.

Launched on: 01 April 2015

Objectives:

- To provide toll-free 24-hours telecom service to women affected by violence seeking support and information.
- To help crisis and non-crisis intervention through referral to the appropriate agencies such as police/Hospitals/Ambulance services/District Legal Service Authority (DLSA)/Protection Officer (PO).
- To provide information about the appropriate support services, government schemes available to the woman affected by violence

Call to any of the following Women Helpline Nos

Call to Women's Helpline: 181 Toll free
Call to 1091- Police Helpline, 102 (hospital/Ambulance) & 108 (Emergency Response Services)
Contact to One Stop Centre (OSC)

Working Women's Hostel (WWH)

Aim: Scheme envisages provision of safe and affordable hostel for women.

Objective

- The main objective of the scheme is to promote availability of safe and conveniently located accommodation for working women with day care facility for their children wherever possible in urban, semi urban or even rural areas where employment opportunity for women exist.

Support to Training and Employment Programme (STEP) for Women

Aim: To make a significant impact on women by upgrading skills. The target group includes the marginalised asset less rural women and urban poor. This also includes wage labourers, unpaid daily workers, women headed households and families below poverty line.

Objectives

- To mobilise women in small viable groups and make facilities available through training and access to credits

- To provide training for skill upgrading
- To enable groups of women to take up employment-cum- income generation programs.
- To provide support for further improving training and employment conditions of women.

SWADHAR Greh Scheme

Aim: To provide temporary accommodation, maintenance and rehabilitative services to women and girls rendered homeless due to family discord, crime, violence, mental stress, social ostracism. Another scheme with similar objectives is Short Stay Home (SSH).

Launched: 2001

Objectives:

- To cater to the primary need of shelter, food, clothing, medical treatment and care of the women in distress and who are without any social and economic support.
- To enable them to regain their emotional strength that is affected due to their encounter with unfortunate circumstances.
- To provide them with legal aid and guidance to take steps for their readjustment in family or society. To rehabilitate them economically and emotionally.
- To enable them to start their life as fresh with dignity and conviction.

Rajiv Gandhi National Creche Scheme

Aim: This scheme is for the children of working mothers to take care of the children.

Launched: launched in 2012.

- It was revamped in 2016. T
- The present scheme will provide assistance to NGOs for running crèches.

Objectives

- To providing a nursery where babies and young children are cared for during the working day. Employment of women has resulted in increased opportunities for their employment and more women are now working within or outside their homes.
- Thus the children of these women, who were earlier getting support from relatives and friends while their mothers were working now in need of day care services which provide quality care and protection for the children.

Indira Gandhi Matruva Sahyog Yojana (IGMSY)

Aim: It is a Conditional Cash Transfer Scheme for pregnant and lactating (P&L) women to contribute to the better environment by providing cash incentives for improved health and nutrition. The beneficiaries are paid Rs.4000 in three instalments per P&L woman between the second trimesters till the child attains the age of 6 months on fulfilling specific conditions.

Launched: October 2010

Objectives

- Promoting appropriate care and institutional service utilization during pregnancy, delivery and lactation.
- Encouraging the women to follow (optimal) nutrition and feeding practices, including early and Exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months.
- Providing cash incentives for improved health and nutrition to pregnant and lactating mothers.

Mahila e-Haat

Aim: To strengthen financial inclusion of Women Entrepreneurs in the economy by providing continues sustenance and support to their creativity.

Objectives

- Mahila E-Haat is an initiative for meeting needs of women entrepreneurs.
- This startup Rashtriya Mahila Kosh website leverages technology for showcasing products made/manufactured/sold by women entrepreneurs.
- They can even show their services of their creative potential. This unique e-platform will strengthen the socioeconomic empowerment of women.
- To act as a catalyst by providing a web-based marketing platform to the women entrepreneurs to directly sell their products.
- To support 'Make in India' through online marketing platform.

Mahila police volunteers

Aim: The Role of Police is pivotal in ensuring the safety and security of citizens in general and women in particular.

- To increase the number of women in the police force.

Objectives:

- An MPV will serve as a public-police interface in order to fight crime against women.
- The broad mandate of MPVs is to report incidences of violence against women such as domestic violence, child marriage, dowry and violence faced by women in public spaces.
- She will act as a role model for the community.

National Mission for Empowerment of Women (NMEW)

Aim: It is an initiative of the Government of India for empowering women holistically.

Launched: 15 August 2011

Objective

To strengthen the conceptual and programmatic basis of women-centric schemes implemented. Training & Capacity Building to enhance and strengthen understanding of gender issues, build a Resource Pool (trainers) at the National and State level to bridge gaps between knowledge and practice will be the other focus area of NMEW

Conclusion

Women empowerment means to empower women with the full social rights, economical stability, political rights, judicial strength and other rights. Women should get proper rights in the society like a man without any gender discrimination between men and women. Women should know as well as get the proper fundamental rights once they born. A woman can be considered with women empowerment when:

- She gets respect and dignity.
- She lives her life independently according to her own lifestyle whether at home or outside.
- She feels free to take her own decision according to her choice.
- She gets equal rights in the society like a man.
- She does not feel gender discrimination in any field.
- She feels safe and secure whether at home or outside at work place, street, etc. Thus In India so many schemes for women empowerment.

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