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Women Empowerment Schemes in India

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ABSTRACT: Empowerment is to have freedom of choice and action to increase one's authority and control over the resources and decisions that affect one's life. 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. Empowerment of women is essentially the process of upliftment of economic, social and political status of women, the traditionally underprivileged ones in the society. We observe in our day to day life how women become victimized by various social evils. However, women equality and empowerment has always remained a priority area and has been taken utmost care by stake holders. Women Empowerment is the vital instrument to expand women's ability to have resources and to make strategic life choices. It is the process of guarding them against all forms of violence. 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. No country can progress if its women are not full partners in the process of development. The study concludes by an observation that implementing various schemes are enabling factors to Women Empowerment.

KEYWORDS: empowerment, illusion, upliftment, victimized, implementing.

I. INTRODUCTION

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. Traditionally being a patriarchal society, women have secondary role to play in every household in India. However, issues related to welfare of women have always been a priority among policy makers since independence, though the path has witnessed repositioning with time and as per the requirement from the Fifth Five Year Plan (1974-78) onwards, there has been a remarkable shift in the approach to women's issues from welfare to development. But gender disabilities and discriminations are found in India even today. The Ministry of Women and Child Development is implementing various scheme/programme for empowerment of women. The implementation of these programmes/schemes is monitored specifically with reference to coverage of women. Objectives of the Study is to know the need of Women Empowerment and to study the Government Schemes For Women Empowerment.

II. WHY NEED OF WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

The status of women in India particularly in rural areas needs to address the issue of empowering women. About 66% of the female population in rural area is unutilized. This is mainly due to existing social customs. In agriculture and Animal care the women contribute 90% of the total workforce. Women constitute almost half of the population, perform nearly 2/3 of its work hours, receive 1/10th of the world's income and own less than 1/ 100th the world property. In the past "Vedas Purana" of Indian culture, women were being worshiped such as LAXMI MAA, goddess of wealth; SARSWATI MAA, for wisdom; DURGA MAA for power. Among the world's 900 million illiterate people, 70% of people living in poverty are women. Lower sex ratio i.e. 933, only 10% seats in World Parliament and 6% in National Cabinet are held by women. The existing studies show that the women are relatively less healthy than men though belong to same class. They constitute less than 1/7th of the administrators and managers in developing countries. Young girls are considered as a big burden in the family. Rape cases are increasing in the modern times which force us to take an initiative about the security of the female population.

Government Schemes for Women Empowerment: Government of India implemented various poverty alleviation and rural development programmes. These programmes have special components for women empowerment. At present, the Government of India has over 37 schemes for women operated by different department and ministries. Some of these are as follows:-

1. **Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY)**, {erstwhile Maternity Benefit Programme} has been contributing towards better enabling environment by providing cash incentives for improved health and nutrition to pregnant and nursing mothers.
2. **Scheme for Adolescent Girls** aims at girls in the age group 11-18, to empower and improve their social status through nutrition, life skills, home skills and vocational training.
3. **Pradhan Mantri Mahila Shakti Kendra scheme**, promote community participation through involvement of Student Volunteers for empowerment of rural women.
4. **National Creche Scheme** to provide day care facilities to children of age group of 6 months to 6 years of working women who are employed.
5. **Rastriya Mahila Kosh (RMK)** to provide micro-credit to poor women for various livelihood support and income generating activities at concessional terms in a client-friendly procedure to bring about their socio-economic development.
6. **Swadhar Greh** to provide relief and rehabilitation to destitute women and women in distress.
7. **Ujjawala**, a Comprehensive Scheme for prevention of trafficking and for rescue, rehabilitation, re-integration and repatriation of victims of trafficking for commercial sexual exploitation.
9. **Gender Budgeting Scheme** is being implemented as a tool for mainstreaming gender perspective at various stages of planning, budgeting, implementation, impact assessment and revisiting of policy/programme objectives and allocations. The Scheme helps in strengthening of institutional mechanisms and training of various stakeholders so as to mainstream gender concerns in Central and State Governments.
9. **Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP)**, a comprehensive programme is being implemented to address the declining Child Sex Ratio (CSR) and related issues of empowerment of women over a life-cycle continuum.
10. **One Stop Centre Scheme** to provide support and assistance to women affected by violence both in private and public spaces. The Scheme will be funded through Nirbhaya Fund.
11. **Women Helpline Scheme** to provide 24 hours immediate and emergency response to women affected by violence.
12. **Working Women Hostels** 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 exists.
13. **Sukanya Samridhi Yojna** Part of the 'Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao' campaign, this Government of India backed saving scheme is targeted at the parents of girl children. The programme encourages them to build a fund for future education and marriage expenses for their female child. Parents can start saving early as the minimum amount of investment required is small, and the account is active for 14 years from the date of opening the account.
14. **Balika Samridhi Yojna** This scheme was launched by the Government of India on 15th August 1997 and covered all girls born on or after 15 August 1997 who are below the poverty line. Aimed at offering financial aid to girl children born on or after 15 August 1997, the schemes key objectives include improving the enrolment and retention of the girl child in schools and helping raise daughters until their legal age of marriage. If successful, young girls will get an education that will help them with jobs to generate a steady income.
15. **CBSE Scholarship Scheme/Policy for Girl Education**, This central government scheme is available at Government CBSE schools only. It is applicable for one girl child per family across India and aims to supplement the school tuition fee.
16. **Support to Training and Employment Programme (STEP) for Women**, This scheme make a significant impact on women by upgrading skills to 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.
17. **Mahilae-Haat**, The main objective of the scheme is to strengthen financial inclusion of Women Entrepreneurs in the economy.
18. **Mahilapolice volunteers**, This scheme aim is to ensure safety and security of women. To increase the number of women in the police force.
19. **NAND-GHAR YOJANA**, This scheme was Launched on 24th June 2015 to enhance the learning environment through an e-learning module and skill enhancement programme for women.
20. **Maternity Benefit Program (2017)** To provide partial compensation to wage loss during their pregnancy and offers a cash incentive of Rs 6,000 to mothers for the birth of their first child.
21. **eSamvad portal**, Launched on 2018, to provide a platform for NGOs and civil society to interact with the Ministry on relevant subjects.
22. **Nari Web Portal**, The portal aims to spread information about schemes and benefits provided by the Government to women. Launched in 2018.



23. She-Box Portal Also Launched in 2018. Its aim is to provide speedier remedy to women facing sexual harassment at workplace.

24. New Draft National Policy This Policy aims to make women able to participate as equal partners in all spheres of life. Launched in 2019.

III.CONCLUSION

In the present scenario the condition of the Indian women is not as good as it should be and there is a need to accomplish such steps which will help to accommodate the rights and the basic needs of women population. The Empowerment of Women has become one of the most important concerns of 21st century not only at national level but also at the international level. Society must provide equal opportunity to both of the sexes for the upliftment of society and for the well being of society as a whole. Women represent half the world's population and gender inequality exists in every nation on the planet. Until women are given the same opportunities that men are, entire societies will be destined to perform below their true potentials. The best way of empowerment is perhaps through inducting women in the mainstream of development. Women Empowerment is not merely a slogan but a prerequisite for an optimal capacity for overall development of a family, society, nation and a sustainable world. The paper has covered about plans and programmes initiated by the Government. Government initiatives alone would not be sufficient to achieve this goal because empowerment will be real and effective only when they are endowed income and property so that they may stand on their feet and build up their identity in the society. Society must take initiative to create a climate in which they can get the proper benefit from the schemes made by Government for the women development. There should be no gender discrimination and women have full opportunities of self decision making and participating in social, political and economic life of the country with a sense of equality.

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