



WOMEN EMPOWERMENT THROUGH VARIOUS SCHEMES: AN ANALYSIS

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Abstract

Women empowerment is closely related to the opportunities that they have, especially through better education, sound health and good economic and political participation. Now a days, our Government has been undertaking a lot of projects to empower them. Moreover Women empowerment is a process of several interrelated and mutually reinforcing components. Their empowerment can be possible only through education and health in clear. Both are moving hand by hand. These are essential for their participation in economic as well as in political activities. The experience of Kerala in this regard is noteworthy and holds promise for others to follow the example. Kerala's high levels of human development and gender development and the consequent gender empowerment is the result of its achievements in the field of health and education for women.

Key Words: *Women Empowerment, Education and Health.*

Women empowerment is closely related to the opportunities that they have, especially through better education, sound health and good economic and political participation. Now a days, our Government has been undertaking a lot of projects to empower them. Women empowerment is a process of several interrelated and mutually reinforcing components also. UNDP interpreted empowerment should be in a comprehensive manner. The policy aims at, among other things, providing women with access to empowering facilities like education and training. But, equally important is the provision of good health because good health is an essential prerequisite not only for women's participation in economic activities but also for their better control of their own lives. The experience of Kerala in this regard is noteworthy and holds promise for others to follow the example. Kerala's high levels of human development and gender development and the consequent gender empowerment is the result of its achievements in the field of health and education for women.

Kerala's realization in human progress is in fact the product of the improved condition of women in provisos of education and health. Today, Kerala stood first among the Indian states in terms of its performance on the Human Development Index (HDI), Gender Equality Index (GEI) and Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM). States such as Haryana and Punjab, which have very high levels of economic development and per capita income have greater gender disparity and lower overall levels of human development compared to Kerala. Also the extent of gender empowerment is much lower in these states compared to Kerala. By contrast states such as Kerala, Maharashtra, Karnataka and Tamilnadu rank high in terms of gender development, as well as overall human development. The National Human Development Report 2001 defines gender development in terms of a newly developed index called the Gender Equality Index (GEI). The average attainments of women is highest in Kerala, i.e., 83% of the attainments of men, while at the national level it was only 68%. It is a clear indication of the fact that Kerala had the highest gender equality in the entire country.

POSING THE PROBLEM

Women empowerment is closely related to the opportunities that they have, especially through better education, sound health and good economic and political participation. Now a days, our Government has been undertaking a lot of projects to empower them. Women empowerment is a process of several interrelated and mutually reinforcing components also. Even though the government is trying to have such aim, the accessibility is of great concern.

IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

Women empowerment is closely related to the opportunities that they have, especially through better education, sound health and good economic and political participation. Women empowerment is of very much important, because, the development without their improvement is inaccessible.



METHODOLOGY

The methodology adopted for the study is completely secondary data. The data were collected from various articles, magazines, books and internet.

OBJECTIVE

- To identify and conceptualize various programs by the government on women empowerment.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The Planning Commission says Gender Empowerment is a process in which the women can overcome many hurdles that they face such as education, work status, employment opportunities, healthcare, and social security position in decision making by virtue of their gender. In short Gender Empowerment of women to do away with “subordination” or “discrimination” and injustice done to them in male dominated story. Wikipedia asserts that Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM) is more agency focused than well being focused. It is based on three indicators: proportion of reserved seats held by women in national parliament, percentage of women in economic decision making positions and female share of income. K.R Lakshmi Devi defines Empowerment of women by means of income creating activities is a newly accepted view in development discourse which signifies a paradigm shift from ‘women in development’ to ‘gender and development’ and subsequently to ‘gender empowerment’. Education and health are the two important factors which determine the women’s economic participation. And thus have a powerful influence on their ability to control their environment and their lives. At the same time, education and health are also the two important areas in which persistent gender inequality exist.

DATA ANALYSIS

Since women empowerment is completely based on education and health, the government has been stressing out those. For their upliftment various programmes and projects were under their purview. Major advancement over the years are the following heads.

Women and Education: The Sarva Siksha Abhiya (SSA) has had positive outcomes in the girl child education helps to an increase in the gender parity index (GPI). In primary education the index value is 0.94% and in upper primary level it is 0.92%. Enrollment of the girls both at primary and upper primary is increasing always. Data shows the number of girls in schools in the age group of 5-14 years has increased from 79.6 per cent in 2004-05 to 87.7 per cent in 2009-10. Similarly, the number of girls in the educational system in the 15-19 years age group increased from 40.3 per cent to 54.6 percent in the age group 20-24 years from 7.6 per cent to 12.8 per cent over the same period. According to India Human Development Report 2011, regardless of attaining high enrolment rates, the net attendance rate (NAR) remained low. In additional, attendance at the upper primary level was poorer compared to primary level. Therefore the real challenge is to translate the high enrolment into high attendance. The National Literacy Mission or Sakshar Bharat targeted female literacy as a crucial instrument of women’s empowerment. This has led to an increase in literacy amongst women from 53.67 percent to 65.46 per cent, for the first time, out of the total of 217.70 million literates added during the decade, women (110.07 million) outnumbered men.

Women and Health: Discharge of National Rural Health Mission has resulted an expansion in many development indicators for women. As per the Indian Human Development Report, fertility rates have come downward and have reached replacement levels in a number of states; Maternal Mortality Rates has come down to 212 per 100000 live births in 2009 from 301 in 2003. Infant Mortality Rate, though still high, has fallen to 50 per 1000 in 2009. Institutional deliveries have raised from 39 per cent in 2006 to 78 per cent in 2009.

Women and the Economy: The partaking of women in workforce, the eminence of work allotted to them, and their contribution to GDP are indicators of the extent of their being mainstreamed into the economy. The National Skill Development Programme (NSDP) has branded 231 modular courses for women. It is grave that the training has significance to the changing labour markets. Pains are needed to tie skill development programmes to the NSDP to ensure relevance and boost employability. An imperative strategy for financial inclusion of women,



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which is crucial for their incorporation into the economy, has been micro-finance. The model encourages access of Self Help Groups to banks to both as a means of savings and as providers of loan services. By March 2010, 69.53 lakh SHGs including those shaped under the SGSY had been roofed under the National Bank for Agricultural and Rural Development's (NABARD) SHG- bank linkage programme. Of these 76 per cent are utterly women SHGs, accounting for 72.5 per cent of savings and 82 per cent of dazzling loans.

Promoting Gender Mainstreaming through Gender Budgeting (GB): Recognizing that women, constituting 48 per cent of India's population, holdup behind men on many social indicators like health, education, and economic opportunities and warrant special attention due to their defenselessness and lack of access to wherewithal, GB as a means for achieving gender mainstreaming, has been adopted by the Government in 2005. GB is not a secretarial exercise but an ongoing process to make sure that the payback of development reach women as much as men. It entails incorporating a gender perception at all levels and stages of the budgetary process. The first step in this direction was the establishment of Gender Budgeting Cells in 56 ministries/ departments at union level. A momentous burst through was the introduction of the GB statement in 2005-06, which is placed in parliament with the Union Budget documents every year. It serves as an exposure mechanism and provides a hint of the funds flowing to women. Over the years, the number of ministries/ departments reporting in the GB Statements has gone up from 9 (2005-06) to 29 (2011-12). The enormity of GB allocations as a percentage of total budgets has also gone up from 2.79 per cent in 2005-06 to 6.22 per cent in 2011-12.

National Mission for Empowerment of Women (NMEW): The NMEW, an great mission to augment inter-sectoral convergence and assist the course of dexterity of all the women's wellbeing and socio economic development programmes across ministries and departments, was launched on 8 March 2010 to guarantee economic and social empowerment of women. The NMEW is piloting the convergence model across the country in 32 select districts with the aim of bridging the gap between demand and supply of women-related services by the task of pragmatic estimates of the demand, creating superior awareness about women-based schemes and programmes of the government, augmenting the demand for various services/schemes for women, and linking them with the service providers, The model includes the overture of convergence- cum-facilitation centres for women at district, tehsil/ block and village levels. The first such pilot convergence project was launched in Pali district in Rajasthan on 16 September 2011 with the opening of 150 village-level centres.

THE MAJOR SCHEMES FOR THE EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN ARE THE FOLLOWING

- **KASTURBA GANDHI BALIKA VIDYALAYA (KGBV):** The scheme is intending for the setting up of upper primary residential schools for the SC/ST, OBC and minority students. The scheme is mostly implemented in Educationally Backward Blocks (EBBs) where rural female literacy is below 30 per cent and in select urban areas where female literacy is below the National average. In 2007 April first the scheme has merged with SSA. The scheme reserves its 75% seats to SC, ST& OBC and the remaining 25% for the BPL families.
- **DHANALAKSHMI:** This is a centrally sponsored programme for avoiding the deteriorating declining sex ratio. It was introduced in the year 2008 as a boosting agent & its ultimate aim is to make the parents softened towards the girl child. Under the scheme, the parents are able get certain sum on some conditional base. 5000 for birth registration, insurance coverage is also given.
- **UJJAWALA :** A Centrally sponsored scheme for avoiding the problems faced by the young children and women in the form of cross boarder trafficking from Bengal and Nepal to India.
- **INTEGRATED CHILD PROTECTION SCHEME (ICPS) :** The ICPS was launched in the year 2009. It includes three existing schemes: Juvenile justice, Integrated Programme for Street Children and Assistance to Home for Children (Shishu Greha).



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- **RAJIV GANDHI NATIONAL CRECHE SCHEME (RGNCS)** : This is a day care scheme for the 0-6 year old children of working mothers. Through this nutritional facility, healthcare facilities like polio, basic health monitoring, and recreation. The facility is available for the family having a parental monthly income less than 12000.
- **SUPPORT TO TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMME OF WOMEN (STEP)**: It is a central sector scheme, and the STEP provides skill enhancing programme to poor and asset less women in traditional sectors of agriculture, animal husbandry, dairy, fisheries, handicrafts, khadi and village industries, sericulture, social forestry, and waste land development.
- **RASHTRIYA MAHILA KOSH (RMK)** : It introduced in the year 1993 as a National Credit Fund for women. The condition under this are the women should be an asset- less and poor women in the informal sector.
- **SWADHAR AND SHORT STAY HOMES (SSH)** : The scheme intends to ensure the safety and protection of women. It is also a centrally sponsored scheme.
- **INDIRA GANDHI MATRITVA SAHAYOG YOJANA**: For the better health of women and child the government introduced this scheme. Under which cash transactions have been made to pregnant and lactating women.
- **RAJIV GANDHI SCHEME FOR EMPOWERMENT OF ADOLESCENT GIRLS (RGSEAG) RS.SABLA**: The scheme is implementing through ICDS and Anganwadi centers with the aim of empowering the adolescent girls in the age group of 11-18 years. It is done by improving the health and nutritional requirements of the girls. Under this various skill development like home skills, life skills, and vocational skills.

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