

Government Initiatives For Empowerment Of Women In India

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Introduction :

"If the goals of economic development includes improved the standard of living , removal of poverty, access to dignified employment and reduction in inequality ,then it is quite natural to start with women."

- Muhammad Yunus.

Empowering women is a vital social process, that ultimately leads to gender equality or engendering women or main streaming women in development process. Empowerment as a process of awareness and capacity building, leading to greater participation in various activities, effective decision-making power and control leading to transformative action. According to census 2011 percentage of female population is 48.27. All most half of the population is female population. If we try to uplift the status of women by empowering them in various ways, (Providing educational facilities, arranging skill development programs, to helping them in decision making etc.) we can achieve speedy national development.

• Concept of Women Empowerment :

The concept of women empowerment is a recent one. The year 2001 was declared as "Women Empowerment Year". While formulating policies, to think of female development with a view to alleviating inequality between male and female and to bring them at par is women empowerment.

The principle of gender equality is enshrined in the Indian constitution in its preamble, fundamental rights and Directive principles; The National commission for women as set up in 1990 by an Act of parliament to safeguard the rights and legal entitlements of women. The 73rd and 74th Amendments (1993) of the constitution of India have provided for reservation of seats for women in local bodies of Panchayats and Municipalities, raying foundation for their participation in decision making at the local levels.

- **Social Empowerment :** Create an enabling environment through adopting various policies and programs for development of women, besides, providing them easy and equal access to all the basic minimum services so as to enable them to realize their full potential.

- **Economic Empowerment :** Ensure provision of training, employment and income generation activities with both forward and backward linkages with the ultimate objective of making all women economically independent and self reliant.

• Indicators of Women Empowerment :

1. Increase in self-esteem, individual and collective confidence.
2. Charge in role and responsibility in family and community.
3. Increase in articulation, knowledge and awareness on health, Rights, Law and literacy.
4. Visible decrease in violence on women and girls.
5. Increase in bargaining and negotiating power at home, in community and the collective.
6. Positive changes in social attitudes.
7. Increase access to gather information.
8. Awareness and recognition of women's economic contribution within and outside the household.
9. Increase decision making power.

• Present status of women In India (Some selected areas) :

"You can tell the condition of a nation by looking at the status of its women"

- Jawaharlal Nehru.

• Gender Inequality Index :

In terms of gender equality in (2018) the HDI . ranks India 130 out of 189 countries with GII 0.563.A higher GII value indicates poor performance. As Compare to China-0.191(ranks-40),Brazil-0.457(ranks-97),Argentina-0.376(ranks-75).In India Maternal Mortality Rate per 1 lakh live birth (in2015) is 144,in Brazil it is 44,China-

27. Addolescent birth rate in India (2010-2015) per 1000 women ages 15-19 it is 32.8.

• **Gender Development Index:**

There are three basic parameter to calculate HDI-Life expectancy at birth, Education, GNI per capita .Gender Development Index (GDI) defined as a ratio of the female to male HDI measures gender inequality according to above parameters, GDI is calculated 148 countries. GDI value for India(2018) is 0.640 ,as compared to Singapore (0.932) ,Japan (0.909)and China (0.752) it is low.

• **Educational status :**

Investment in education promotes economic growth. It helps in creating a more productive knowledge and skills. It helps in providing widespread employment and income earning opportunities. It helps in providing basic skills and encourages modern attitudes in the diverse segments of the population. According to the 2011 census Female literacy rate is 65.46% as against 8.86% in 1951. In isolation this may look quite impressive, but the fact remains that even after more than sixty years of planning development in the county 34.54% of the female population remained illiterate. In India percentage of 25+male population with at least some secondary education (2005- 2012) was 50.4, and for female it was 26.6, As compare to Brazil it was 51.9,China-58.7,South Africa-72.7.

Percentage of girl enrolment to total Enrolment in Higher education (2010) is 41.6. According to Global Gender Gap Index 2018 for women's educational opportunity India ranked 108th (towards the bottom of the 144 countries listed in GGGI 2018) In 2016-17 Gross Enrolment Rate in higher education, for male it was 26.3 and for Female25.4.

Sex ratio :

Since 1901 over the 50 years of Pre-independence period, sex ratio registered a significant decline from 972 to 946 in India. The situation did not improve after independence, as the sex ratio was as low as 927 in 1991. However, there has been some improvement thereafter and sex ratio rose to 933 in 2001 and further to 940 in 2011. While this is a welcome development.

• **Child Sex ratio :**

Child sex ratio (CSR) indicates the number of girls per 1000 boys in the 0 - 6 age group. Census

for 2011 points a grim picture on this front with CSR declining from 927 in the previous census (2001) to 914 in 2011 a fall by 13 points.

In early seventies, prenatal tests to detect abnormalities in the unborn child were introduced in India. But now these tests are used more to determine the sex of the child. According to Tim Dyson, the practice of aborting female fetuses has probably increased due to the spread of scanning and amniocentesis techniques.

• **Labour Force Participation Rate :**

In India percentage of 15+ male labour fource participation rate (2017-18) was 82 percent and female rate was 23.3percent.As compare to female labour fource participation rate of Japan - 51,China-61,Jarmani-55 .

According to World Economic Forum Dec 2018 India's Labour force participation dropped to 51.9 percent,compared with 52.0 percent in the previous year.

• **Crime Against Women :** Approximately the crime against women during the year 2010to 2015(in some heads) are increased. The following table shows head wise details of reported crimes during the year 2010 to year 2015.

Table No. 1.

Crime Head wise Incidents of crime against women during 2010-2015.

Sr No.	Crime Head	Year				
		2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
1.	Rape	24,206	24,923	33,707	36,735	34,651
2.	Kidnapping & Abduction	35,565	38,262	51,881	57,311	59,277
3.	Dowry Death	8,618	8,233	8,083	8,455	7,634
4.	Cruelty by Husband & Relatives	99,135	1,06,527	1,18,866	1,22,877	1,13,403
5.	Molestation	42,968	45,351	70,739	82,235	82,422

Source : National crime bureau of India

• **Women's Participation in Parliament :**

Data released by Inter-parliament Union (IPU) an International group that works for promoting democracy, peace and co-operation in the world, women representation in the parliament India ranks 98.

Statistic published by IPU percentage of women in India in lower parliament is 22.2 and upper parliament is 17. There is slight increase in women participation in parliament .While Nepal is ranked 18 with 33.3 percent of female MPs in its parliament, Pakistan ranked 51.

• **Initiatives of Government in women empowerment**

Government of India plays vital role for empowerment of women. Government has declared following policies and programs for women empowerment.

• **Gender Budget :** Gender budget is a tool for achieving gender mainstreaming. In the Gender Budget statement of 2019-20, 30 Ministries/Departments reported having schemes with women's component amounting to approximately 5 percent (Rs.1,31,699.52 Cr) of total union budget.

• **Ministry of women and child Development (MWCD) :**

The ministry of women and child Development as the nodal agency for all matters pertaining to welfare, development and empowerment of women, has evolved schemes and programs for their benefit. These schemes are spread across a broader 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.

• **Autonomous Organizations under (MWCD) :**

MWCD has some autonomous organizations -National Institute of Public Co-operation and child development. (NIPCCD)

• **Rashtriya Mahila Kosh :** RMK was established in 1993 to provide micro credit in a quasi - formal manner to the poor women for income generating,

production, skill development and housing activities in order to make them economically independent.

• **Central Social Welfare Board :** CSWB was set up on 12th August 1953 for welfare and development of women and children.

• **National commission for women :** NCW was set up in 1992 to protect and safe guard the rights of women

Programs / Schemes of the MWCD :

1. **Swayamsiddha :** This is the flagship scheme of MWCD for women for holistic economic empowerment. This is an integrated scheme for women empowerment through formation of self help groups, launched in February 2001, and The scheme came to an end in March 2007.

2. **Support for Training and Employment (STEP) :** This is a central scheme launched in 1987. It aims to raise the income of rural women by updating their skills in the traditional sectors, such as dairy development, animal husbandry, sericulture, handloom and Social forestry.

3. **Working women Hostels and crèches :** This scheme is in the nature of support system to help women in their struggle towards economic empowerment. Under the scheme, financial assistance is provided to NGOs, Co-operative Bodies and other agencies for construction / renting of buildings for working Hostels with day care centre for children to provide them safe accommodation.

4. **Short stay Homes :** The Government of India launched a program in 1969 in the central sector called short stay Homes for women and girls to protect and rehabilitate those women and girls who are facing social and moral danger due to family problems, mental strains, social ostracism, exploitation or other causes.

5. **Swa-Shakti :** The objective of the program was to bring out socio-economic development and empowerment of women through promotion of women SHGs, micro credit and income generating activities. The project established 17,647 SHGs covering about 2,44,000 women.

6. **Swawlamban Programme :** (NORAD) Women's Economic program, was launched in 1982-83. The objective of the program is to provide training and skills to women to facilitate them to

obtain employment of self employment on sustained basis.

7. Beti Bacho Beti Padho : This program was introduced for increased child sex ratio and percentage of women's education.

8. One Stop Center: OSC Provides rescue and referred services, medical and aids, psycho-social support for women affected by any kind of violence.

9. Women Help Line Scheme: This help line provide 24 hours immediate response to women by any kind of violence through a single uniform number.

10. Ujjawala: A comprehensive scheme for prevention of trafficking and Rescue, Rehabilitation and Re integration of victims.

11. Awards: To encourage women Govt. of India declared Nari Shakti Puraskar, Stree Shakti Puraskar, Rajya Mahila Sanman, Zilha Mahila Sanman,

12.Indira Gandhi Matriva Sahayog Yojana : A conditional maternity benefits scheme for women.

13. Rajiv Gandhi National Crèche Scheme : for the children of working mothers; working women from the economically weaker sections are provided support services in terms of substitute care through crèches for children.

14. Mahila Shakti kendras, Nirbhaya, Mahila police volunteers, Mahila E-Haat.These schemes are also available for women empowerment.

• **National Policy for Empowerment of women (NPEW) 2001 :** Gender inequality arising out of social norms and cultural traditions has been addressed through a range of direct and indirect measures and the aim of the NPEW has been to bring about social change - changes in attitudes towards women and women's empowerment. Ratio and

• **Laws and legislations :** MWCD is the administrative ministry for implementation of these Acts like sati (Prevention) Act, Dowry prohibition Act, Indecent Representation of women (Prohibition) Act, Immoral Traffic prevention Act, protection of women from Domestic violence Act, PNDT Act,

In 2013 India passed sexual Harassment of women at work place (Prevention prohibition and Redressal) Act.

• **Suggestion for Empowerment of women :**

1. There is a need to have women friendly economic policies in order to provide employment opportunities to women.
2. Women come into politics due to Panchayatraj also they should have 50% reservation in all political frame.
3. NGO's must work hard for changing the social attitude towards women.

Conclusions :

In India sex ratio is low. Almost 34.54% of female population is illiterate. Work participation rate of female is almost half of the male participation. Women participation in parliament is approximately 17 to 18%. The rate of crime against women is also increasing. Government has declared so many policies and programs to empower women socially and Economically but still there is need for more effective programs and social support.

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