

## ROLE OF GOVERNMENT POLICIES AND PLANNING FOR THE WELFARE OF SCHEDULED CASTE WOMEN

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### **Abstract**

*The status of Indian women has undergone considerable change. Though Indian women are far more independent and aware of their legal right to work, equal treatment, property and maintenance, a majority of women remain unaware of these rights. Other factors affect their quality of life such as age of marriage, extent of literacy, role in the family and so on. In many families, women do not have a voice in anything while in several families, the women may have a dominating role. The result is that the empowerment of women in India is highly unbalanced and with huge gaps. Many policies have been made and implemented by state and central governments, and we discussed here about those schemes.*

### **Keywords**

*Beti Bachao Beti Padhao, Mahila Shakti Kendra, Mahila Police Volunteers, Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojna, Pradhan Mantri Ujjawala Yojana.*

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## **Introduction**

There were several studies done earlier that paid attention to the changing patterns in women's empowerment through different policies, schemes, authority, and reservation systems in politics as well as in services and their own decision-making strategy within family and outside. But despite of these things, the condition of women is still thinkable in every perspective.

The government of India has taken measures to empower. Women arising out of constitutional provisions as enshrined in articles 14, 15, 16, 39, 42, 43, 47, 51, and 243 which all have a direct bearing upon the empowerment of women.<sup>1</sup> (Utpal Kumar De, Bhola Nath Ghosh, 2004)

The COVID-19-induced crisis has thrown up new challenges for rural Indian women. The Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE) has observed that the female labor force participation rate in India has been consistently falling for the last few years touching 19 percent in 2022 from a high rate of 33 percent in 1972 with 95 percent engaged in unorganized. Sector or in unpaid work. Lack of security and support for the childcare wage gap, dismal, working conditions, poor career progression in so-called. Women-centric jobs like teaching and nursing are some of the reasons attributed to this decline. It has further set them back in the lab of our market with more women losing. Jobs more than men. Further, clue to the loss of jobs many families are unable to afford child care and the responsibility of caring for infants and school children, who have been locked up at home and require supervising, has disproportionately fallen on women forcing many of them to quit full-time jobs across the spectrum. The few paid formal jobs available besides MGNREGAs tend to go to men and women with degrees leaving women educated till the secondary school level in limbo shrinking availability of agricultural work has led to a decline in the number of women in the rural workforce.

The Ministry of Rural Development had started a sub-component of the Deendayal Anthodia Yojana (National Rural Livelihood Mission). Day (NRLM) which has been under implementation since 2011. Since many jandhan" accounts are opened in the names of the women for direct trans far of money from the government to the account holders has been running various schemes for the rural women under its several ministries. These schemes and programs have been designed to have a positive impact on the overall condition of our rural women. Apart from this there are several other schemes currently running for the empowerment of women and the child development ministry has adopted a two-pronged strategy (i) monitoring the performance by engagement with the publishing agency of GGGI, namely World

Economic Forum (ii) Identification of reform Areas and reform actions in consultation with concerned ministries and departments.

Some major initiatives taken by the Government of India in this regard are:

1. Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP) to ensure the protection, survival and education of the girl child.
2. Mahila Shakti Kendra (MSK) aims to empower rural women with opportunities for skill development and employment.
3. Working Women Hostel (WWH) ensures the safety and security of working women.
4. Scheme for Adolescent Girls aims to empower girls in the age group 11-18 and to improve their social status through nutrition, life skills, home skills and vocational training.
5. Mahila Police Volunteers (MPV) envisages engagement of Mahila Police Volunteers in States/UTs who act as a link between police and community and facilitate women in distress.
6. Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana aims to provide maternity benefits to pregnant and lactating mothers.
7. Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana aims to provide housing under the name of the women also.
8. Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY) aims to enable a large number of Indian youth including women to take up industry-relevant skill training in securing a better livelihood.
9. Deen Dayal Upadhyay National Urban Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NULM) focuses on creating opportunities for women in skill development, leading to market-based employment.
10. Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana empowers women and protects their health by providing LPG cylinders free of cost.
11. The Sukanya Samriddhi Yojana (SSY) scheme has empowered many girls economically by opening their bank accounts.
12. Skill Upgradation and Mahila Coir Yojna is an exclusive training program of MSME aimed at the skill development of women artisans engaged in the coir industry.
13. Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP) is a major credit-linked subsidy program aimed at generating self-employment opportunities through the establishment of micro-enterprises in the non-farm sector.

14. Female Entrepreneurship: To promote female entrepreneurship, the government has initiated Programmes like Stand-Up India and Mahila e-Haat (an online marketing platform to support women entrepreneurs/SHGs/NGOs), Entrepreneurship and Skill Development Programme (ESSDP). Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana (PMMY) provides access to institutional finance to micro and small businesses.

Likewise several steps and initiatives have been taken up in the school education system such as the National Curriculum Framework (NCF) 2005 and flagship programs like Samagra Shiksha and the subsequent Right to Education Act (RTE). Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas (KGBVs) have been opened in Educationally Backward Blocks (EBBs).

KGBVs, under Samagra Shiksha, now provide access and quality education to girls in the age group of 10-18 years aspiring to study in Classes VI to XII; belonging to SC, ST, OBC, Minority communities and BPL families to ensure smooth transition of girls from elementary to secondary and up to class XII wherever possible. KGBVs provide the facility to have at least one residential school for girls from Classes VI-XII in every EBB. Gender sensitization is also done which includes a gender sensitization Module-part of in-service training, construction of toilets for girls, construction of residential quarters for female teachers and curriculum reforms.

More so, to bring women into the mainstream of political leadership at the grassroots level, the government has reserved 33 percent of the seats in Panchayat Raj Institutions (PRIs) for women.

Also, the gender Budget has been made a part of the Union Budget of India since 2005 which entails fund allocation towards programs/ schemes dedicated to women. Through this effort the Government is continuously promoting gender parity/equality with a focus on alleviating the gender gap in all sectors and at all levels of governance. As per the Gender Budget Statement, the government has earmarked Rs. 15,3,326.28 Crore for FY 2021-22 to be used by the Ministries towards schemes/ programs aimed at reducing the gender gap in all aspects of social, economic and political life.

Likewise, Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises, Giriraj Singh, informed while replying to a question in Lok Sabha on 11 February 2019 that his ministry, through Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC), is implementing several schemes for rural women to improve their social and economic conditions, including those living below the poverty line.

## Conclusion

The economic empowerment of rural women is a priori for the overall development of the Indian society. Financially empowered rural women, are key to the success of families, communities and national economies In recent years, the government of India has given major impetus in this direction and the results of its efforts have been unprecedented.

The primary goal of any policy concerning with women is to bring about change, growth, social and individual development, equal opportunity in every field and empowerment of women to enhance their decision-making capacity at social, economic and political levels. Empowerment of women through the different policies and programs plays a major role in creating awareness, enhancing their involvement in decision-making, capacity building and delivering the services in appropriate manner.

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