

ROLE OF TECHNOLOGY AND VARIOUS GOVERNMENT SCHEMES FOR WOMEN EMPOWERMENT: A STUDY

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Abstract:

Women empowerment is the process of transforming or strengthening the women community and shaping them to play crucial roles in the society. Women empowerment denotes a transition from a posture of disempowerment to the one of empowerment. But, in reality, what is important to assess is that women are truly empowered, and, if not, to explore the reasons for the setback in achieving self-empowerment. The purpose of this study is to shed light on the situation of women's social, psychological and economic empowerment in the context of technology. Government Initiatives and the effective involvement of technology may make a difference in the state of women empowerment. The government also started various schemes for women that enhance their status in society.

Key-words: - Women, Empowerment, Strengthening, Technology, Schemes, Status.

Introduction:

Women empowerment focuses on giving them more authority to make decisions that affect their lives, such as access to resources, involvement in decision-making, and have power over benefit allocation. ICT (Information and Communication Technology) has the ability to reduce poverty, improve governance, overcome isolation, and provide a voice for women who have access to and utilise it.

Currently, the world is experiencing a technological revolution, which has opened up new communication possibilities. The recent advances in information and communication technology are truly revolutionary. As a result of the advances in information and communication technology, most nations, communities, and individuals are reaping the benefits. IT has quickly become one of India's most economically

significant sectors in terms of overall exports and export income. Its contribution to GDP is growing day by day. More than half of the software and services exports in the IT industry come from services alone, and this sector is expanding rapidly. It is critical that advancements in our society benefit all residents. There should be no preferential treatment given to any particular group. The only path forward is to "improve things for everyone." ICT has the ability to empower women and diminish gender inequality in the society.

In recent years, there has been a greater emphasis on women empowerment in India. India has historically been a male-dominated society, and women in India have long struggled for equality. With regard to these challenges, the Government of India is attempting to empower women through several programmes. Now, despite their traditional upbringing, many women are attempting to get out into the modern world. The Government of India has put in place several programmes to make this feasible, and has made a significant commitment to this. Most of the schemes are still relatively unknown so people need to be made aware about these.

Literary review:

The United Nations and other official and informal women-supportive groups have long recorded women's needs and concerns and issued suggestions that have become global benchmarks for women's growth. Women have expressed their concerns both in formal settings and through informal networks. As research and technology have grown, a strong link has been observed between technology and women's issues. A compelling argument has been made in at least two significant texts based on the proceedings of historic international events preceding and succeeding the **Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, China, 1995** for the importance of science and technology in promoting women globally.

Agarwal (2003) emphasised on the need of technology in developing women entrepreneurs via the development of local ability to advance the value of work life. The author is convinced that if women understood the processes and products they work with; it would increase their production competence and diminish the hard work in their routine job. Furthermore, the author has suggested that science and technology should be used to reduce the labour of women both within and outside their homes. He also acknowledged the importance of women's expertise and experience in sustainable development. This would make it easier for them to work as equivalent development partners.

Chowdhury (2006) stated that in order to design women-oriented technology for empowerment, unique professions and views for women must be discovered. The author present the subsequent principle for the development of technology for rural women: (a) reducing monotony from their lives; (b) providing employment opportunities to them; (c) improvement of environmental and hygiene conditions; d) improving their wellbeing and dietary status; and (e) protecting them from danger. The author believes that it is crucial to acknowledge women as both creators and consumers of technology. The main argument is that science and technology should be liberated from its elite structure, and women from rural areas should be reintegrated into the process of development.

Kumar and Kochher (2011) demonstrated the efficient use of technology for small-scale companies supported by women under the self-employment programme. The authors discovered that IT-based micro-enterprises run by self-help organisations of underprivileged women have helped debunk the myth that only a few elite members of society benefit from information technology. They have come to see information technology as a tool for everyone's knowledge and growth. Furthermore, the author believes that encouraging women to participate in the digital revolution will helpbreak the digital and gender barrier.

Women Empowerment, according to **Mundhe(2021)**, Women's emancipation involves the liberation from the negative impacts of socioeconomic, political, and caste discrimination. It means giving women the freedom to make their own life choices. In this regard, there are numerous components of Women Empowerment, such as Human Rights or Personal Rights, Legal Women Empowerment, and so on. The major goal is to understand the notion of women's empowerment and to research violence against women in India. This is based on secondary data gathered from several national and international agencies' reports. Physical or sexual violence against women, particularly by men, is considered violence against women in India. According to one research, 7997 out of 8000 abortions were female foeticides. In India, rape is one of the most prevalent crimes. 70 percent women in India are victims of domestic violence, and 72 percent of acid attacks in India have been documented on women. Inclusion of women in the mainstream of development is the most effective approach to empower them.

Chattu et al. (2013) has emphasised that in order for women to feel empowered, mobile technology is essential. According to the author, women are utilising mobile phones for a variety of reasons, including security in the times of crisis, as a media

connector with daily updates, and as an e-learning instrument to become knowledgeable. Furthermore, the author suggested that IT be used to empower rural women by providing virtual classroom education, training on Internet and email services, developing a web-based information system about the SHG, and popularising it in newspapers, magazines, and the internet, which acts as a motivator.

Method and Material:

This study looks at the link between technology and women empowerment. The data collection is done by the various secondary sources like periodicals, journals, books, articles, websites, reports, etc. Using proper methodologies, data acquired from diverse sources is collated, analysed, and interpreted. The current study's perspective is qualitative, and it is based on the structure of previous research and data analysis.

Government initiatives:

There are various government schemes in India that have been developed for the improvement of society and the general growth of the country. The Indian government is concerned about the safety and empowerment of women. The rising unfairness against women had to be reduced, and these initiatives are the remedies to women's primary concerns in India.

Women Empowerment scheme	Launch Year	Objectives
Working Women Hostel	1972-73	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The goal is to ensure that working women have access to safe and convenient housing. • To provide accommodation for working women's children up to 18 years old for girls and 5 years old for boys.
Support to Training and Employment	1986-87	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To provide women with skills that makes them employable. • To help women aged 16 and over in the country

Programme for Women (STEP)		country.
NIRBHAYA	2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that women are safe and secure at all levels. • Women's identities and information are kept strictly confidential and private.
Beti Bachao Beti Padhao Scheme	2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In order to avoid gender-biased sex selective elimination. • Girl children must be protected in order to ensure their survival. • To ensure that girls receive an education and are able to participate fully in society.
One-Stop Centre Scheme	2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To provide aid to women in public spaces and private spaces affected by violence. • The First Information Report (FIR/NCR) should be filled out as soon as possible. • To offer psychosocial support and assistance to women and girls.
Women Helpline Scheme	2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women impacted by violence will be able to access free 24-hour telecom service. • To facilitate 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), or social care ombudsman (OSC)

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The government provides information about appropriate support services, schemes, and programs available to women affected by violence. This information is specific to the woman's location and situation.
UJJAWALA	2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The goal is to rescue victims of exploitation and provide them with safe shelter. • Preventing the sexual exploitation of women and children. • To provide victims of crime with both immediate and long-term rehabilitation services, including basic amenities/needs such as shelter, food, clothing, medical treatment, counselling, legal aid and guidance, and vocational training.
Mahila E-Haat	2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To provide women with opportunities for entrepreneurship online. • Helping women establish and learn about various aspects of online selling and also in establishing their own business, we offer a variety of resources, including articles, webinars, and e-courses.

Mahila Police Volunteers	2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An MPV will provide a public interface for the police to fight crime against women. • The main goal of MPVs is to document instances of violence against women, like domestic violence, child marriage, dowry harassment, and violence against women in public places.
Mahila Shakti Kendras (MSK)	2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women need to be able to access eminence healthcare and education, guidance, and employment opportunities. • These opportunities at the block and district level can be facilitated through different measures at the country level.
SWADHAR Greh	2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women in distress receive shelter, food, clothing, medical treatment, and other services. • Assisting and advising women in the area of law.

Source: -<https://byjus.com/free-ias-prep/women-empowerment/>

Learning, labour, & leadership comprise the three “Ls” of women empowerment. Gaining extensive information allows women to broaden and enrich their experiences. It helps women overcome challenges.

Though the invention, distribution, and use of social media and Internet is frequently a source of empowerment for women, growing Internet access in the late twentieth century presented women with a variety of instruments for self-empowerment. Women began to engage themselves in online activism using social networking sites such as Facebook, you tube, and Twitter etc. They may empower themselves by forming campaigns and speaking their ideas for equality and rights through internet. Blogging has evolved as one educational tool for women empowerment.

Women and Technology:

Technology has been a major driving force towards the aim of women empowerment. Few major aspects in this field are discussed below:

1. Education: It is a boon for everyone in this modern world. Earlier, education was confined only to the boundary walls of educational institutions, that too the ratio of women falling with addition of every stage to the learning process. This barrier has been overcome with the advancement in technology and now, it is accessible from each and every corner of the world provided the availability of internet connection and a compatible device.
2. Awareness: Owing to different tools of digital literacy, women now are more aware about their rights and the different opportunities and schemes available to them. Different government websites are developed in a very user-friendly manner so that everyone can access them and gain insights on what is being implemented in their favour. Women now are also aware of the various helpline numbers provided for their safety.
3. Social Media: It is an umbrella that covers almost every aspect for the empowerment of women. YouTube, Face book, Instagram, Twitter, etc are emerging as a platform where women can learn and share various skills and expertise to grow and develop their potential. They can also share their experience so that others can also take advantage of it.
4. Economic Opportunities: Previously, agriculture and industry were the only source of earning for women but advancement in technology has boosted them with innumerable opportunities to make a livelihood ranging from online teaching on platforms such as unacademy, byju's, etc. to setting up online business through meesho, dukaan, etc., setting up youtube channels for cooking, beauty tips, and other skills and working for different MNCs from the comfort of home.
5. Health: Women have now become more health conscious with the availability of various online services such as consultation from renowned dieticians, gynaecologists, dermatologists, etc. Online yoga classes are also contributing towards bringing tremendous changes in the lifestyle of women.

Apart from these, women are also taking benefit of many other ways such as taking online banking services, mentorship programmes, receiving guidance in various spheres of life, etc.

Conclusion:

Though technology and government schemes proved to be beneficial for the major women population but there are many underdeveloped areas where women are still living in the clutches of typical patriarchal society and still remain untouched from the technology and advancements. Therefore, there is a need to use the best of technology to help these sections as well.

“Never forget: should there be only one economical, political or religious crisis for women's rights to be undermined. You shall stay alert your entire life.” –Simone de Beauvoir

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