

A STUDY OF WOMEN EMPOWERMENT SCHEMES IN INDIA

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Abstract

Women's empowerment is the process of giving women the ability to live a happy and respected life in society by honouring their perspectives and elevating their status through education, awareness, literacy, and training. They must be given the same opportunities to make decisions and engage in society, education, politics, and other activities as everyone else. Women empowerment includes social empowerment, economic empowerment, educational empowerment, political empowerment, and psychological empowerment. Women's empowerment improves their ability to influence and contribute to a more sustainable society. Empowerment opens up financial opportunities by allowing a woman to work while also supporting her family. As a result, regardless of discrimination, women should have equal opportunity in all disciplines. Women's empowerment is the most important factor in a country's overall growth. To empower women, the government has initiated various schemes such as the Beti Bachao Beti Padhao, Mahila E-Haat, One Stop Centre Scheme, Working Women Hostels, Swadhar Greh, STEP, Sukanya Samridhi Yojana etc. The present paper is an attempt to highlight the major schemes implemented for women empowerment. The study revealed that the introduction of numerous plans and procedures has undoubtedly helped women in showcasing their abilities and establishing their identities.

Key Words: - Women empowerment, Beti Bachao Beti Padhao, Mahila E-Haat, One Stop Centre Scheme

Introduction

Women's empowerment is the process of asserting their rights to equal opportunity in the economic, cultural, social, and political domain and realising their full potential. This improvement must be accompanied by their ability to affect the direction of social change through their ability to make decisions both inside and beyond the home. Gender equality

is a value incorporated in the Indian Constitution. The Constitution not only guarantees women's equality, but also authorises the government to take positive discrimination measures in their favour to offset the cumulative socioeconomic and political disadvantages they suffer. Women have the right to equal protection under the law and to not be discriminated against because of their gender. Women's empowerment improves their ability to influence and contribute to a more sustainable society. Empowerment opens up financial opportunities by allowing a woman to work while also supporting her family. Women's empowerment may be ensured if there is no discrimination in institutions, women receive equal quality education, there are no social prohibition for women, and untraditional norms are reduced. It plays a crucial part in the development of a sustainable society. Women are increasingly participating in all sectors in today's globe. Some women are elevated to high-ranking positions such as president, leader, commune chief, and others. And it's possible because women recognise the importance of self-determination. Women are empowered when they have free access to opportunities in a variety of areas, including education, career, and lifestyle. To help them improve their situation, it includes things like education, awareness, literacy, and training. When a woman makes an important decision, she feels empowered. The most crucial aspect in a country's overall growth is women's empowerment.

Women can rise to positions of prominence in a variety of ways. It can be done as part of government programmes or one-on-one. On a personal level, we should begin to value women and provide them equal opportunities to men. We should promote and encourage them to pursue jobs, further education, and business ventures, among other things. Women are becoming more literate, and they are more at ease in the job. All of this, however, occurs more frequently in cities than in rural areas, owing to the fact that in rural areas, women are still not given the option to educate themselves; instead, they are expected to perform all of the household chores and are told to focus only on them. In this era of technology, women worldwide are still fighting for their fundamental rights. That is because they do not know the real importance of Empowerment. In some societies, women are in worst condition and not having the same right as men. If a woman knows her worth and is empowered, no one can abuse her physically, sexually, or psychologically. The government has come up with various schemes such as the Beti Bachao Beti Padhao Yojana, Mahila-E-Haat, Mahila Shakti Kendra, Working Women Hostel, Sukanya Samridhi Yojana, One Stop Centre Scheme, Ujjawala, Swadhar Greh,

Nari Shakti Puraskar, Mahila shakti Kendras(MSK) and others to empower women. In view of the above the present study is an attempt to analyse the some of the schemes implemented by the government for women empowerment.

Review of Literature

In a paper titled "Empowerment of Women in India: A Critical Analysis," Mokta, M. (2014) discovered that, within the framework of a democratic polity, our laws, development strategies, Plans and Programs have all attempted to progress women in various domains. From the Fifth Five Year Plan (1974-78) onwards, the focus on women's issues switched from welfare to development, and from the Eighth Five Year Plan onwards, the focus shifted from development to empowerment. In recent years, women's empowerment has been recognised as a critical factor in defining their status. India has also ratified a number of international agreements and human rights instruments that pledge to ensuring women's equality.

Women in India are discriminated against and disenfranchised at every level of society, according to Hazarika, D. (2011), including social involvement, political participation, economic participation, access to education, and reproductive healthcare. All around India, women are observed to be economically impoverished. A few women participate in volunteer work and other activities. As a result, they require economic strength to stand on their own in comparison to men. According to the 2001 census, men in India have a literacy rate of 76 percent, while women have a literacy rate of only 54 percent. As a result, improving women's education is critical to their empowerment.

Alemu, S. H., Van Kempen, L., and Ruben, R. (2018) investigated the impact of women's engagement in SHGs on a variety of empowerment outcomes, the majority of which were related to intra-household issues, but others showing community-level empowerment. Based on cross-sectional data collected from 192 apple-producing women and their husbands in four subdistricts in Southern Ethiopia's Chench district, a scenario emerged in which SHG membership effectively supports women's empowerment at the community level, which is also strongly supported by husbands, but such empowerment gains do not translate into the household domain. In fact, increasing male assertiveness in regaining authority appears to have harmed spousal connections.

S. Bhatia and S. Singh (2019) stated in their study that women's empowerment is a bold strategy to changing power dynamics in favour of women, which is seen as critical for

global growth. As a result, developing countries are adopting an inclusive finance model to achieve basic and formative goals. The essay looks into the social, political, and economic aspects of women's empowerment. It also conducts a test to see whether the dimensions change as a result of financial inclusion. The authors use literature to create a structured questionnaire on women's empowerment and financial inclusion in urban slums in Ludhiana, Punjab, using schemes such as the Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY), Pradhan Mantri Jivan Jyoti Bima Yojana (PMJJBY), Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana (PMSBY), and Atal Pension Yojana (APY). The information was gathered from 737 females in urban slums who had PMJDY bank accounts. The result indicated that PMJDY scheme has been quite successful especially in case of women in slums and has a positive influence on social, political, and economic dimensions of women empowerment. The study adds to the current literature by furthering the discussion on women in urban slums and highlighting the critical need for the creation of a formal financial system to increase financial inclusion.

Objectives and Research Methodology

Present study aims to highlight the women empowerment schemes in India especially Beti Bachao Beti Padhao Yojana, Mahila-E-Haat, Mahila Shakti Kendra, Working Women Hostel, Sukanya Samridhi Yojana, One Stop Centre Scheme.

To achieve the above stated objective the secondary data has been taken from annual reports of the Ministry of Women and Child Development Government of India and other websites quoted in the references.

Women Empowerment Schemes in India

Although a number of schemes are there for women empowerment in India. The four schemes namely Beti Bachao Beti Padhao , Mahila e-Haat, One Stop Centre (OSC), and Swadhar Greh Scheme has been analyzed hereunder:

Beti Bachao Beti Padhao

The Beti Bachao Beti Padhao Scheme was launched by the Indian government on January 22, 2015 in Panipat, Haryana, to address the declining Child Sex Ratio (CSR). The CSR, which is defined as the number of girls for 1000 boys in the 0-6 year age range, dropped dramatically from 976 in 1961 to 918 in Census 2011. This is a tri-ministerial initiative involving the Ministries of Women and Child Development, Health and Family

Welfare, and Education, with a focus on changing mindsets through awareness and advocacy campaigns, multi-sectoral action in selected districts, enabling girls to attend school, and effective enforcement of the Pre-Conception and Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques (PC&PNDT) Act. The scheme will not only raise awareness about the importance of preserving our culture, but it will also assist them in focusing on their studies in order to achieve their goals. This new scheme will also assist women in expanding their responsibilities and asserting their rights beyond their homes and communities. The programme aims to educate residents about gender bias and increase the efficacy of girls' welfare programmes. It began with a Rs. 100 crore (US\$ 13.5 million) seed investment. The scheme has raised collective awareness about the importance of appreciating the girl child in the country. It has resulted in a greater level of knowledge, sensitivity, and consciousness around the subject of diminishing CSR across the country. As a result of concentrated efforts at the national, state, and district levels, a positive trend in the Sex Ratio of Birth (SRB) at the state/UT level has emerged. According to the HMIS, of MH&FW, the Sex Ratio at Birth (SRB) has improved by three points at the national level, from 931 (2018-19) to 934 (2019-20).

Objectives of the Scheme: i) To prevent gender biased sex selective elimination. ii) To ensure survival and protection of the girl child, building value of girl child. iii) To ensure education and participation of the girl child. iv) Improve the child sex ratio. v) Ensure gender equality and women empowerment.

Mahila e-Haat

On March 7, 2016, the Ministry of Women and Child Development introduced the Mahila E-haat scheme to promote female entrepreneurs. It's essentially a platform for direct online marketing. Women who need to start their own business will be able to do so with ease if they take advantage of the perks offered by this scheme. This project aims to address the needs and goals of female entrepreneurs. The government launched the Mahila e Haat Yojana for those women who wish to start their own business based on their skills and stand on their own two feet. Women will no longer be required to leave their houses to demonstrate their abilities; instead, they will be able to start their own business from the comfort of their own homes by sharing their skills with others. It's an internet marketing platform for ladies where they can show off their commodities. It is a nationwide effort providing a golden opportunity to women as part of the 'Digital India' and 'Stand Up India' initiatives. Through this scheme all women will now be able to start

their own business and become self-sufficient and empowered. By doing so they will be able to provide financial assistance to their country by beginning their own business and will be able to quickly improve their economic situation as a result of this scheme. Women can use this plan to register Women can register and sell any of their products online without having to leave their houses and without having to pay anything.

Objectives of the Scheme: i) To empower and strengthen women entrepreneurs' financial inclusion in the economy by providing ongoing sustenance and support for their creativity. ii) To function as a catalyst by giving women entrepreneurs with a web-based marketing platform that allows them to sell directly to buyers. iii) To use a digital marketing platform to boost 'Make in India.'

One Stop Centres (OSCs)

Many women who are victims of violent crimes are unaware about where to go for help. For this purpose One Stop Centres (OSCs) have been established across the country to serve them. The Scheme of One Stop Centre (OSC), also known as Sakhi Centres, has been in place across the country since April 1, 2015 to provide women victimised by violence with access to an integrated range of services, including police, medical, legal, psychological support, and temporary shelter. Nirbhaya Fund is the source of funding for the Scheme.

As per the Annual Report of the Ministry of Women and Child Development Government of India for the year 2020-21, 733 OSCs have been granted so far, covering 730 districts across the country. Currently, 699 OSCs are functioning in 34 states and territories. Over 3.05 lakh women have received assistance from these centres. CSOs are also integrated into 181 women's helplines and other existing services to provide the best possible access and support to women.

Swadhar Greh

The Swadhar Greh scheme was launched in 2002 by the Union government (Ministry of Women and Child Development) for women who are in challenging situations. The Swadhar Greh Scheme is being implemented by the Ministry of Women and Child Development, and it is aimed at women who have been victims of tragic situations and require institutional support for rehabilitation so that they can live a dignified life. The scheme aims to provide shelter, food, clothes, and health care, as well as economic and social security, to widows, poor women, and elderly women who are victims of difficult

circumstances. Because the Swadhar Greh Scheme is a subscheme of the Centrally Sponsored Umbrella Scheme "Protection and Empowerment of Women," funds are disbursed through the States, with a cost-sharing ratio of 60:40 between the Centre and the States (except in the North Eastern and Himalayan States, where it will be 90:10, and for UTs, it will be 100% with effect from January 1, 2016). As on 31.12.2020, total 362 Swadhar Greh are functioning in the country benefiting 7719 women for year 2020-21. During the financial year 2018-19 ten new homes were sanctioned whereas fifty one new homes were sanctioned during the financial year 2019-20 under the scheme.

Conclusion

The Indian government has taken numerous initiatives to empower women. The major schemes of women empowerment include Beti Bachao Beti Padhao Yojana, Mahila-E-Haat, Mahila Shakti Kendra, Working Women Hostel, Sukanya Samriddhi Yojana, One Stop Centre Scheme, Ujjawala, Swadhar Greh, Nari Shakti Puraskar, Mahila shakti Kendras(MSK) and others. The introduction of numerous plans and procedures has undoubtedly helped women in showcasing their abilities and establishing their identities. According to the HMIS, of MH&FW, the Sex Ratio at Birth (SRB) has improved by three points at the national level, from 931 (2018-19) to 934 (2019-20). As per the Annual Report of the Ministry of Women and Child Development Government of India for the year 2020-21, 733 OSCs have been granted so far, covering 730 districts across the country. As on 31.12.2020, total 362 Swadhar Greh are functioning in the country benefiting 7719 women for year 2020-21. During the financial year 2018-19 ten new homes were sanctioned whereas fifty-one new homes were sanctioned during the financial year 2019-20 under the scheme. The author agrees with the statement of Honourable Prime Minister that **“No country can progress if its women are not full partners in the development process.”** In nutshell there is a need He emphasised the significance of changing mindsets in order to ensure that women are completely empowered through a secure, safe, and supportive workplace.

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