



CRITICAL EVALUATION OF POLICY AND PROGRAMMES FOR WOMEN EMPOWERMENT IN INDIA

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Abstract

Women in India constitute around half of the Country's population (i.e.48.4%) hence they are regarded as the "better half of the society". In the official proclamation, they are at the par with men. But in real life, the truth prevails otherwise, our society is still male-dominated. Womens are not treated as an equal partners. The paper critically investigates the status of women in India compared to male. The paper develops arguments on the basis of secondary data as review of existing literature published in Books, Journals, leading newspapers and reputed national websites. The paper critically evaluatos various schemes and programmes implemented by the central government for the women empowerment in India. The present paper discuss about the India's 112th rank among 153 countries in the world Economic forum Global Gender Gap Index 2020, which slipped from 108th position in 2018, finally paper emphasized on there is an Urgent need to adopt some appropriate measures to empower women 's in India.

Key words : - *women empowerment, gender Budgeting, workforce participation rate, national policy for women empowerment.*



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INTRODUCTION: -

Women In India constitute around half of the country's population (i.e 48.4%) Hence they are regarded as the "better half of the society" In the official proclamation, they are at the par with man. But in real life, the truth prevails otherwise our society is still male-dominated. Women are not treated as an equal partners, In fact they are treated as a 'ab19', i.e. weak and dependent on men. As such, the Indian women experiences a disadvantageous status in the society. Though the constitution of India enshrines the "fundamental Duties of citizens" Under Article 5/A, among other things "to renounce practices derogatory to the dignity of women", the plight of women in India is still pitiable. The literacy rate of adult male population in India is 80.95% where as that of the female population is a disappointing low of 62.84%, The female labour participation rate in India had fallen to 20.3% in 2019 from more than 26% in 2005, according to world Bank estimates, compared with 30.5% in neighboring Bangladesh and 33.7% in Sri Lanka. Women in Rural India lack basic formal education and are mostly dependent on their husband for financial support and lack of financial independence for the of majority of their lifespan.

Apart from that women in rural India prone to more domestic abuse and violence than their Urban Counterparts. Our age-old traditions and taboos arresting the women within four walls of their houses also make their conditions more



disadvantages. These factors combinedly served as non-conducive conditions for the emergence Development of women in the country.

women according to a recent study of India Inc., make up only 6% of Indias workforce at medium and large companies and barely 4% at Senior Management Levels. Traditional Indian businesses are largely men's domain where the attitude towards women is still hinderbound. Yet, things are changing. At HSBC for example, 33% of employees are women; at infosis it is 24% women are gratually entering into walks of life including entrepreneurship / Industry.

HISTORY OF WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT IN INDIA :-

Women's empowerment In India has a long history. Great social reformers in the past like Raja Ram Mohan Ray, Swami Vivekananda, Acharya vinoba Bhave and Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar etc abolished ghastly practices like sati and child Marriage and worked relentlessly in the past for the upliftment of women in India. The Indian National Congress, one of the first political parties of India, raised it's voice to demand political rights for women in the year 1917.

The policy for women empowerment is incorporated well into the Indian constitutions which become effective in the year 1950. Article 14 insures the right to equality for women, Article 15 (1) prohibits gender discrimination; Article 15(3) empowers the state to take affirmative Steps in favour of women to name a few.

- i) The equal Remuneration Act of 1976
- ii) The sexual Harrasment of women at work place (Preparation and ProtectionAct) in 2013
- iii) The Maternity benefit Act in in 1961

are some of the few specific laws which ware Sanctioned by the Indian Parliament with respect to women right and in the year 2001, the Government of India launched a national policy for women Empowerment with specific objectives like strengthening legal system aimed at eliminating all forms of discrimination against women. The status of women in India had been declining from ancient to medieval times - before promotion of equal rights by various reformers. But even today, women face inequality and Subjugnation. It is in this regard National policy on women 2016 gains significance.

WHY DOES INDIA NEED A NATIONAL POLICY: -

Given the long - turn nature of issues which impact on women In India, there is a need to strengthen the processes that promote all-round development of women by focusing on a coordinated approach for implementation of the schemes of the concerned Ministries / Departments any by creating an enabling environment conducive to social change.

Despite the special measures that the state has taken for the welfare of the women In India, they are facing problems like feminization of poverty, Inadequate Investment in social sectors, increasing violence against women and stereotyped Portrayal of women in society.

Since 2001, when the last National policy for empowerment of women in India was formulated, the concept of women empowerment has seen changes, from being recipient of welfare benefits to the need to engage then in the development process, welfare with heavy dose of rights. This draft policy has tried to address this shift. It will define the government's action on women in India in the near future.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY : -

following are the main objectives of the study -

1. To understand the concept of women empowerment.



2. To study the Government schemes and programmes for women Empowerment.
3. To focus on critical analysis of Government schemes and programmes for women Empowerment.
4. To analyze the Factors influencing the Economic Empowerment of women.
5. To understand the gender discrimination among society.
6. To suggest an Action plan for the overall Development of women's.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY: -

This paper is basically descriptive and analytical in nature. In this paper an attempt has been made to analyzed the empowerment of women in India. The data used in it is purely from secondary sources according to the need of this study. Present situation of women in India, being equal to their male counterparts still a fwithery for Indian women. Not only are they marginal as public figures average Indian women can hardly take decision at home or outside. In the last census 2011 sex ratio of India is 940 and literacy rate among women are 65.46%, as matter of Compare to men 80% This figures shows matter of concern because in both the cases our woman population is behind race with respect to male population.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE: -

Many of the studies where are already conducted on women empowerment: policies and programmes in different part of country. To gain theoretical knowledge and to find the research gap, literature search was made from books, periodicals, research journals and reputed websites. The collected literature is classified and reviewed so as to find out the research gap in the relevant study as under.

Karadigum (2006) presented paper on “Empower of women through Rashtriya mahila kosh (RMK) program. “During the Karnataka sociological Association in 2006 at Dhawad. The author stated that the process of globalization has affected the poor really specially the rural women's in terms of increase in trafficking of women and prostitution, greater spread of female foeticides and female infanticide,dawry demand and deaths due to harassment. Apart from the above problems, rural women are battling against bad habit of their husbands and other relatives at home, like - boozing, gutka eating and losing their money on online lotteries. To Speeden up the socio - economic development of poor and rural women, various types of employment and development programmes are being introduced by the Rashtriya Mahila Kosh(RMK) Was instituted by the government to facilitate credit support through micro finance to the poor women for income generating activities.RMK offers support to develop and stabilizes self- Help group and and to conduct awareness programs among Rulal and Urban area women. The present paper covered different women employment programmes.

Prof.seema sing and Antara sing (2020) presented paper on “women empowerment in India” A critical analysis published in “Tathapi (UGC Care Journal) The paper critically investigate the Indian status among other countries and tries to find out preparedness to achieve sustainable development goal 5 of the United Nations the paper developers argument on the basis of secondary sources as review of existing literature. The paper critically examines women empowerment in India , various model and dimensions. The paper discusses constitutional safeguards as well as plan and programmes by the government and their implementation, indicators of women empowerment. However country rank low of reassessing and modifying programmes.

Dr. Shashank , Shekhar thakur, Asif Ali naikod (2016) in their Research paper “women empowerment and their empowering scheme” They focus on women empowerment in India. They also focus on the methods and schemes of women empowerment. According to them empowerment is the main process of of social development which can enable women to participate in the economic, political and social sustainable development of the rural countries.



Today the empowerment of women has become one of the most important concern of 21st century but practically women empowerment is still and solutions of reality. Empowerment of women essentially the process of upliftment economic, social and political status of women. The traditionally under privilege because in the society. We observe in our day to day life how women become victimized by various social evils. Women empowerment is the vital instrument to expand women's ability to have resources and to make strategies life choices. It is the process of guarding them against all forms of violence. In my research paper there is a further scope to evaluate the policies and programs initiated by government for the woman empowerment.

Dr.Romy devi (2017), in her research paper "Gender equauty : women empowerment" published in Political science stated that, Gender equality is a human right which entities all persons irrespective of their gender to live with dignity and with freedom. Gender equality is also a free condition for all round development and reducing poverty. Empowered women make invaluable contribution to the improvement of health conditions and educational status and productivity of whole families and communities which in tern improve prospect for the next generation. The millennium development goal also puts emphasis on gender equality and empowerment of women. It's now widely accepted that gender equality and women's empowerment are fundamental cornerstone for achieving development result. Keeping the status of women empowerment and it's determinants in India. In her papers he tried to present some of the key determinants of inequalities that exit in our country so as to have an idea about to what extent the women are empowered.

STATUS OF WOMEN IN INDIA : -

• Literacy rate : Trends -

The effective literacy rate for India in census 2011, works out to 74.04% The corresponding figures for males and females are 82.14 and 64.46% respectively. Thus three - fourth of the of the population of Aged 7 years and above is literate in the country. Four out of every five males and two out of three females in the country are literate. The country has continued its march in improving literacy rate by recording a jump of 9.21% points during 2001-2011 the increase in literacy rate in and females are order of 6.88 and 11.79% points respectively. However efforts are still required to achieve the target of 85% Set by the planning commission of India.

Following table shows the literary rate In India : 1951 - 2021

TABLE NO : 1

Census year	Persons	Males	Female	Male-Female gap in Literacy rate
1951	18.33	27.16	8.86	18.3
1961	28.3	40.4	15.35	25.05
1971	34.45	45.96	21.97	23.98
1981	43.57	56.38	29.76	26.62
1991	52.51	64.13	39.29	24.84
2001	64.83	75.26	53.67	21.59
2011	70.04	82.14	65.46	16.68
2021	77.7	84.7	70.3	14.4

Source : Census of India & NSO Data



• **WORK FORCE PARTICIPATION RATE :-**

As per the Annual Employment -U employment (EUS) surveys conducted by Labour Bureay in the various year as follows

TABLE NO : 2

Year	Female work force Participation rate
2015-16	25.08%
2016-17	11.88%
2017-18	17.05%
2018-19	18.06%
2019-20	22.08%
2020-21	20.06%

Source : EUS Survey Conducted by Labour buregy for various year.

The world bank estimates show that India has one of the lowest female labour force participation rate in the world with less than a third of women, defined as 15 year or older, working or activity looking for job. It has estimate the female labour participation rate in India at 22.8 in 2019-20 from more than 26% in 2005.This is much lower compared with 30.5% in Bangladesh and 33.7% in Sri Lanka.

Women Representation in Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha :

The 17th lok sabha has 78 women and rajya sabha has 25 women members, A very few women ministers are their in cabinet ministry. This is not a good indicator for women empowerment of India. We hope that in coming years ahead women empowerment will prove its worth.

TABLE NO : 3

YEAR WISE MEMBERSHIP OF WOMEN IN LOK SABHA AND RAJYA SABHA

Year	Members of loksabha			Members of rajyasabha		
	Total Members	Female	%	Total Members	Female	%
1952	499	22	4.41	219	16	7.31
1957	500	27	5.4	237	18	7.59
1962	503	34	6.76	238	18	7.56
1967	523	31	5.93	240	20	8.33
1971	521	22	4.22	243	17	7
1977	544	19	3.49	244	25	10.25
1980	544	28	5.15	245	24	9.84
1984	544	44	8.09	245	28	11.48
1989	517	27	5.22	223	24	9.8
1991	554	39	7.17	245	38	15.51
1996	543	39	7.18	245	19	8.52
1998	543	43	7.92	245	15	6.12
1999	543	49	9	245	19	7.8
2004	539	44	8.2	245	28	11.4



2009	543	56	10.6	245	22	8.98
2014	543	61	11.2	245	29	11.8
2019	542	78	14.39	245	25	10.2

Source : - Election commission of India (www.eci.Nic.in)

• CRIME AGAINST WOMEN :-

The principle of gender equality is inscribed in the Hindu constitution of India. In order to uphold and implement the constitutional mandate, the state has enacted various laws and taken measures intended to ensure equal rights, check social discrimination and various forms of violence and atrocities. Although women may be victims of any of the general crimes which are directed specially against women i.e. gender specific crimes are characterized as "Crime against women" day by day crime against women's are increasing.

TABLE NO : 4 CRIME AGAINST WOMEN (IPC+SLS)

Particular	2016	2017	2018
Total States	3,22,949	3,45,989	3,63,817
Total union Territories	16,005.00	13860	14460
Total All India	3,38,954	3,59,849	3,78,277

Source : - National crime Record bureau report of 2018, 2017 & 2016

• HEALTH STATUS OF WOMEN :-

Globally 800 women die everyday of preventable cases related to pregnancy and child-birth and 20% of these women from India, seven of the top 10 causes of death in women in India are NCDs led by heart attacks, stroke and respiratory diseases. India's anaemia burden among women is widespread, with 53.1% of non pregnant women and 50.3% of pregnant women being anemic as per NFHS-4 in 2016, where India carries the highest burden of anaemia despite having various programmes and policies for the past 50 years, since the launch of national nutritional anaemia prophylaxis program in 1970.

The health of women is not a priority in our country, where 75% of India's healthcare infrastructure is based in urban areas and only 1.3% of its GDP is for healthcare, which is significantly lower than the global average of 6% women seeking healthcare in remote areas often stumble upon the poor quality of services being provided, where facing mistreatment and abuse during pregnancy and childbirth is a major trouble.

NUMBER OF RAPE CASES REPORTED IN INDIA :-

In 2020 total number rape cases reported in India amounted to over 28,000. This was a decrease in rape cases compared to 2019. Even though many rapes are not reported in the country, it is an issue, that continuously makes news headlines, some leading to public protests, Although reports of rape have increased in recent years, it was still associated with shame for the victims, rather than perpetrator.

TABLE NO : 5

TOTAL NUMBER OF RAPE CASES REPORTED IN INDIA

YEAR	NO OF CASES REPORTED
2016	38947
2017	32559
2018	33556



2019	32032
2020	28046

Source: - National Crime Record bureau

NATIONAL POLICY ON EMPOWERMAN OF WOMEN (2001) : -

National policy on Empowerment of women adopted in 2001 States that “All forms of violence against women, Physical and mental, whether at domestic or societal levels, including those arising from customs, traditions or accepted practices shall be dealt with effectively with a view to eliminate its incidence, Institutions and mechanisms/ schemes for assistance will be created and strengthen for prevention of such violence, including sexual harassment at work place and customer like dowry ; for the rehabilitation of the victims of violence and for taking effective action against the perpetrators of such violence.

GOAL AND OBJECTIVE OF NEW (2001)

The Goal of this policy is to bring about the advancement, development and empowerment of women. The policy will be widely disseminated so as to encourage active participation of all stakeholders for achieving its goals, specifically, the objectives of this policy include -

- i) Creating an environment through positive economic and social policies for full development of women to enable them to require their full potential,
- ii) The de- sure and de - facto enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedom by women on equal basis with men in all sphere - political , economic, social, cultural and civil.
- iii) Equal access to participation and decision making of women in social, political and Economic life of the nation.
- iv) Equal access to women to healthcare, quality education at all levels, career and vocational guidance, employment, equal remuneration, occupational health and safety, social security and public office etc.
- v) Strengthening legal systems aimed at elimination of all forms of discrimination against women.
- vi) Changing societal attitudes and community practices by the active participation and involvement of both men and women.
- vii) Mainstreaming a gender perspective in the develop process.
- viii) Elimination of discrimination and all forms of violence against women and girl child;and
- ix) Building and strengthening partnerships with civil society, particularly women's organizatims.

GENDER BUDGETING : -

Nearly 5% of Indian total Union budget 2020-21 would be spent on schemes that benefit women,started the gender budget for the year, Amounting to RS. 1.4 lack erore (\$ 19 billion) in 2020-21, the gender budget includes allocations made by diffrent ministries for schemes that fully or partially benefit women.Gender-responsive budgeting, along with supportive laws and other policy measure, could help governments track whether public funds are effectively allocated in furthering gender equality and empowering

women. India was ranked 112th of 153 countries on the Global Gender Gap Index 2020.

In India, many crucial sectors such as health and education are funded by both central and state governments.

ALLOCATIONS AND TRENDS : -

over the last 16 years, India’s Gender budget has increased from Rs. 24,241 crore in 2005-06 to 1,43,462 crore in 2020-21,a six-fold increase in absolute terms, However, in the last 13 years, the allocation as a proportion to the total budget have stayed constant between 4.3% and 5.9 % The allocations was less than 5% of the total budget in five of



the last six years. In 2020-21, the gender budget was 4:7% of the total budget expenditure, which is 0.6% decline from 2019-20, while it was 4.1% of the total budget in 2018 -19. out of the total health budget of 2020-21, only 4% was allocated for women and girls as per the gender budget statement.

CRITICAL EVALUATION OF THE SCHEMES THAT THE GOVERNMENT INTRODUCED TO EMPOWER WOMEN :-

1. Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao:-

The most famous government scheme with regards to women empowerment is the Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao. The scheme initially aimed to address the declining child sex ratio (CSR) but has come to include gender-biased sex-selective elimination, and propagating education, survival and protection of the girl child. Of the total funds given to States under centre's Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao scheme, 78.91% have been used for advertising, the committee on Empowerment of women told loksabha. The committee pointed out only Rs.156.46 crore of the Rs.848 crore budget has been spent on the implementation of the Scheme over five years. Statistics show that over the last few years, especially 2015-2018, 56% of the budget allocated for Beti Bachao and Beti padhao was spent on media related activities, last year it was noticed that only about 25% of the funds actually went to the cause and over 19% were lower released by the government in the first place.

2. Mahila E- Haat :-

Mahila E - Haat is a government initiative to promote woman entrepreneurship program by creating direct online digital market platform. The scheme aims to support women entrepreneurs self Help Groups (SHGS) and Non - governmental organization (NGOS) to display product made service rendered by them through an online platform. The scheme talks about making women entrepreneurs come to the forefront. The scheme is providing a Web - based marketing platform to the women entrepreneurs to directly sell their product.

As per the report released by press information Bureau at the end of 2018, “ women entrepreneurs/ SGH/NGO from 31 states / Uts are showcasing over 7000 products and services and impacting over 32,000 women entrepreneurs/ SHGs/ NGOs and over 7.34 lack beneficiaries.

3. One stop centre scheme :-

Reports from UN global database for violence as against women show that above 25% women in India go through some kind of physical/ sexual violence from partners / non - partners . The scheme aims to fight all kinds of violence as against women. other than that it provides services including medical, legal , psychological and counseling support to fight against any forms of violence as against women. Under this scheme one stop centres have been made operational in each district of Punjab , where immediate emergency and non - emergency access to a range of services is being provided to the women affected by violence.

Unfortunately, the government current expenditure on specific interventions that address violence women is not even 25% of the actual requirement. One constant set back that the one stop centres scheme and all other Nirbhaya fund scheme have faced is that the money allotted to these scheme is underutilized Uttar Pradesh (U.P) has the highest number of one stop centre. It accounts 50% of the cases reported to these centres and has Utilised mere 12.5% of the amount of Rs.50.7 crore allocated to it over 6 years.

4. Working women Hostels :-

A big hindrance that most people, especially women, face when they move from their native place to another is that availability of affordable and safe places to live. Started by the government of India, almost 50 years back, the scheme has come really long way. The scheme aims to provide convenient and safe lodging to women in all Urban



/ Semi Urban / rural areas, Under the Scheme, help has been provided for construction of new hostels and expansion of existing ones. The hostels are available to any women provided her gross income does not exceed Rs. 50,000 /- per month in metropolitan cities and Rs. 35,000 /- per month in any other places. since its inception this scheme, over 952 hostels have been sanctioned so far and over 72000 women have benefited from it.

5. STEP (support to Training and employment programme for women) :-

The most powerful weapon against particularly is the voice of woman. Financial independence adds to that voice. Financial independence can be going through skill and hard work. This scheme can make the women workforce more stronger. STEP aims to impart women with skills so that they can get employment opportunities. The grant in aid Under the scheme is given to the institutions / organization against NGOs,

Financial Assistance offered to women Under

STEP are :-

TABLE NO : 6

Sr.No.	Cost item	Ceiling per Beneficiary - 3 Month Course	Ceiling per Beneficiary - 6 Month Course
1	Training cost	Rs.14,000	Rs.20,000
2	Food and travel cost	Rs. 4000	Rs.8000
	Total cost	Rs. 18000	Rs.28,000

Source : Press information Government of India 2014 - 15

6. PRADHAN MANTRI UJJWALA YOJANA :-

This scheme aimed to increase uptake of clean fuel by subsidizing LPG, while the scheme consistently achieved it's target in terms of LPG connections, a study by the research Institute for compassionate Economics found that it has not been as successful in its primary objective of displacing the use of firewood. Reasons for this range from unaffordable cost of refills to a gendered bias due to which woman are reluctant to spend on their well-being. Reconsidering pricing and disbursal mechanisms in the design of the scheme, while also increasing distributor incentives to reach remote areas, may have improved overall outcomes.

WORRYING TRENDS :-

- Falling female labour Force participation Rate (LFPR)
- India's 112th rank among 153 cameries in the world Economic Forum Global Gender Gap Index 2020, which slipped which slipped from 108th positions in 2018
- These pre-covid -19 trends warrant revisit India's fundamental approach to GRB as well.

FRAMEWORK FOR GENDER BUDGETING :-

- Stage 1: An analysis of the situation for women and men and girls and boys.
- Stage 2: An assessment of which the sector's policy addresses the gender issue and gaps describe in the first step.
- stage 3: An Assessment of the adequacy of budget allocations to implement the gender- sensitive policies and programmes.
- stage 4: Monitoring whether the money war spent as planned, what was delivered and to whom ?
- stage 5 : An Assessment of the impact of the policy / programme / scheme.

NEEDS TO TAKE MEASURE :-

- specific sectors are prioritized to bridge prevailing gender gaps.



- Increasing the size of the gender budget
- Making women-focused expenditure more targeted and enhancing GRB efforts at the State level.
- Use of gender budget should be increased to more Sectors and departments.
- Monitoring and implementation remains inadequate due to lack of accountability mechanism.
- Develop ranking for state level gender budget on the quality of gender budgets, impact analysis, and gender audits of these allocations. similar to the easy of doing business.
- Improve accountability for gender mainstreamed In line with the recommendations of the planning commission's working group on the women's Agency and Empowerment.
- Gender auditor of centrally sponsored schemes and flagship programmes should be undertaken to measure impacts.
- It necessitate increased efforts for the collection of gender disaggregated data at national, state and district level.
- Plan expenditure should be spent on schemes or programmes of women empowerment instead of spending it on media.

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