



Government Policies pertaining to women: a review.

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The women constitute around 50% of the India Population. Being the very important element for our society, still they have to face a lot of inequalities in all sectors like educations, politics etc. The inequalities between girls and boys in excess of schooling or adequate health care are more acute among the poor than those with higher incomes. So for the elimination of such inequalities and other obstacles that women had to face at every step of life, the Government of India constituted various rights regarding women development, safety, empowerment etc in the Constitution of India so that women can lead empowered life. **In the Constitution of India The "Right to equality" is provided in Articles 14,15,16,17 & 18; The "Right to Freedom" in Articles 19, 20, 21, 21 A & 22; The "Right against Exploitation" in Articles 23 & 24; The "Cultural and Educational Rights" in Articles 29 & 30 etc.** The Government of India abolished many of the orthodox rituals and unfair customs for women by embedding acts like The "Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961", The "Protection of Women from Domestic Violence (2005)", The "Sati Prevention" Act (1987) etc. The 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendment Acts of 1993 ensure reservation of 1/3 of seats for women in all elected offices of local bodies, in rural and urban areas. In the rural areas, women have thus been brought to the centre-stage in the nation's efforts to strengthen democratic institutions. Study reviewed the National Policy Framework, and analysed the existing trends, Policies, provisions and practices among women. **Execution of Government policies by Planning Commission:-** The planning commission's "Plans and Prospects for social welfare in India 1951 – 1961" spells out social welfare services for women. The committee on status of women, in its report "towards equality", has mentioned, "women are considered to be handicapped by social customs and social values and, therefore, social welfare services have specially endeavoured to rehabilitate them." The Planning Commission defined three major areas in which they had paid special attention to women's development. (a) Education, (b) Social welfare and (c) Health. **The First Five Year Plan was launched in 1951 to 1956** focused on welfare measures for women. To implement welfare measures for the benefit of poor women, the Central Social Welfare Board (CSWB) was established to deal with the problems of women. The CSWB recognized and realized the need for organising women into Mahila Mandals or women's club as an approach to community development. **The Second Five Year Plan was launched in 1956 to 1961** and focused on overall intensive agricultural development. However, the welfare approach to women's issues was determined recognizing women as workers. Further, protection against injuries at work, maternity benefits and crèches for their children. It also suggested immediate implementation of the principle of equal pay for equal work and provision for training to enable women to compete for higher jobs. **The Third Five Year Plan was launched in 1961 – 1966** recognizing the greater importance of education for women. Papers presented in NCRET-2K16 Conference can be accessed from

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which has been a major welfare strategy for women. As regards to wealth, maternal and child welfare programmes were proclaimed in terms of maternal and child welfare, health education, nutrition and family planning. **The Fourth Five Year Plan launched in 1969 – 1974** and emphasized on promoting women's welfare as the base of operation. The outlay on family planning was stepped up to reduce the birth rate through education. Immunization of pre-school children and supplemental feeding, expectant and nursing mothers. **The Fifth Five Year Plan 1974- 1978** focused on Need for training women in respect of income generating activities and their protection was stressed in the also recommended a strategic programme of functional literacy to equip women with skills and knowledge to perform the functions as a good housewife. Under the health programmes, the primary objective was to provide minimum public health facilities integrated with family planning and nutrition for vulnerable groups, children, pregnant and lactating mothers. **The Sixth Five Year Plan 1980-1985** stressed the need of economic independence educational advance and access to health care and family planning as essential for women's development. So the strategy was threefold of education, employment and health. They are independent and dependent on the total developmental process. It sought to generate awareness among women about their rights and privileges. **The Seventh Five Year Plan 1985-1990** was launched with emphasize on the need to open new avenues of work for women and perceive them as crucial resource for the development of the country. Another salient and crucial recognition was the need for organisation of women workers and unionization. The Indian Parliament adopted a National Policy on Education 1986 included a chapter on Education for women's equality.

The Eighth Five Years 1992- 1997 Plan was launched with the view to ensure that the benefits of development from different sectors did not bypass women and special programmes were implemented to complement the general programmes. The main objective of Eighth Plan was to extend the reach of services to women both qualitatively and quantitatively. Panchayati Raj institutions are involved in the designing and implementation of women's programmes.

The Ninth Five Year Plan (1997 -2002) presented an approach paper that had been developed by the Planning Commission and accepted by the National Development Council, which had become basis for developing. In this approach paper focus was laid on empowerment of women and people's participation in planning and implementation of strategies. An important objective in the Approach paper was the empowerment of women. In planning process, empowerment at the outset, means choices for women and opportunities to avail of these choices. The supportive environment should be provided to women at all stages by the home, school, religion, government and work place. **The Tenth Five Year Plan (2002 2007)** aims at empowering women through translating the recently adopted National Policy for Empowerment of Women (2001) into action and ensuring 'survival' protection and development of children through rights based approach. **The Eleventh Five Years Plan (2007-2012)** presented the Draft Approach paper advocated to "integrated and inclusive approach to women empowerment." It recognizes that women are at the very centre of economic and social growth. And requires a co-ordinated, implementable and forward looking policy framework. It ensures 33 percent of the direct and indirect beneficiaries of all government schemes are women and girl children. **The Twelfth Five Year Plan, 2012-2017 was launched with** the mission of "Women." Promoting social

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and economic empowerment of women through cross-cutting policies and programmes, mainstreaming gender concerns, creating awareness about their rights and facilitating institutional and legislative support for enabling them to realize their human rights and develop to their full potential. Included Ujjawala and Dhanlakshami schemes.

Some important government legislative acts are : **The National Commission for Women Act, 1990:** The Act mandates the formation of a National Commission for Women to examine, investigate and review the formulation and implementation of various Constitutional provisions, policies and legislations concerning women. The note worthy operational strategies discussed in the Policy comprise formulation of action plans, institutional mechanisms, resource management, legislation, gender sensitisation, involvement of Panchayati Raj Institutions and voluntary sector along with international co-operation. This Policy highlights the principle of gender equality as enshrined in the Constitution.

National Policy for Empowerment of Women (NPEW) The NPEW was formulated in 2001, as a blueprint for “future, expression of goal, advancement, development and empowerment of women.” Government of India has declared 2001 as Women’s Empowerment year. The goal is to bring about the advancement, development and empowerment of women. Creating an environment through positive economic and social policies for full development of women to enable them to realize their full potential. The de-jure and de-facto enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedom by women on equal basis with men in all spheres – political, economic, social, cultural and civil. The following are the specific objectives of National Policies on Empowerment of women in India. Creating an environment through positive economic and social policies for full development of women to enable them to realize their full potential. Equal access to participation and decision making of women in social political and economic life of the nation. Strengthening legal systems aimed at elimination of all forms of discrimination against women. Changing societal attitudes and community practices by active participation and involvement of both men and women. Elimination of discrimination and all forms of violence against women and the girl child. Building and strengthening partnerships with civil society, particularly women’s organizations. Therefore, National Policy for Empowerment of Women (2001) made concrete suggestions towards the introduction of a gender perspective in the budgeting process.

Relief, Protection and Rehabilitation in difficult circumstances are: **Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act, 1986 (IRWA):** The Act aims to prohibit indecent representation of women through advertisements or in publications, writings, paintings, figures or in any other manner. It defines indecent representation of women as the depiction in any manner of the figure of a woman; her form or body or any part thereof in such way as to have the effect of being indecent, or derogatory to, or denigrating women, or is likely to deprave, corrupt or injure the public morality or morals.

Sexual Harassment of Women at workplace Bill (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013: This bill was passed by the Lok Sabha on the 2nd of September, 2012. And now it is the act defining sexual harassment as laid down by the honorable Supreme Court of India in the case of Vishaka & Ors. v. State of Rajasthan & Ors. (1997). The honorable Supreme Court of India in provided guidelines to address this issue pending the enactment of a suitable legislation. This Writ Petition has been filed for

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the enforcement of the fundamental rights of working women under Articles 14, 19 and 21 of the Constitution of India. The petition propounds the guidelines to be adopted by the employers at work place to ensure protection of women from sexual harassment. These guidelines focus on the certain critical areas including, duty of the employer or other responsible persons in work places and other institutions to deter and prevent acts of sexual harassment at work place, definition of sexual harassment, preventive steps, criminal proceedings, disciplinary action, complaint mechanism, complaints committee, workers' initiative, awareness and third party harassment. **Women Helpline Scheme:** The Scheme of Universalisation of Women Helpline is intended to provide 24 hours immediate and emergency response to women affected by violence through referral (linking with appropriate authority such as police, One Stop Centre, hospital) and information about women related government schemes programs across the country through a single uniform number. **One Stop Centre Scheme** Women Helpline (WHL) will be integrated with One Stop Crisis Centre Scheme (OSC) under which one OSC shall be established in every State/UT to provide integrated support and assistance to women affected by violence, both in private and public spaces under one roof. Women affected by violence and in need of redressal services will be referred to OSC through WHL (Women Helpline Scheme).

Scheme Ujjawla: A Central Government Comprehensive Scheme for Prevention of trafficking and Resue, Rehabilitation and Re-integration of Victims of Trafficking and Commercial Sexual Exploitation.

Government Policies in favour of Supported Services for development of Women:- Short Stay Home for Women and Girls (SSH), 1969: This scheme provides temporary residence to women and girls who are in social and moral danger due to family problems, mental strain, violence at home, social ostracism, exploitation and other causes.

The Working Women Hostel Scheme, 1973: This scheme focuses on the problem for accommodation by providing hostel facilities to working women in rural and urban areas.

Rajiv Gandhi National Creche Scheme : For the Children of Working Mothers. This scheme revamped in 2006.

Swadhar Greh, 1995 (Merger of Swadhar and Short Stay Home Scheme) This scheme support women to become independent. This scheme organizing women into self help group. Policies for Economic empowerment for women:

Swawlamban Programme, 1982-1983: Swawlamban Programme, is a government-backed pension Scheme. The objective of the programme is to provide training and skills to women to facilitate them to obtain employment or self employment on sustained basis. The target groups under the scheme are the poor and needy women, women from weaker sections of the society such as Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes etc. In order to ensure more effective implementation and for better monitoring/evaluation of the scheme, it has been transferred to the State governments from 1st April 2006 with the approval of Planning Commission. It was previously known as NORAD/Women's Economic Programme, was launched in 1982-83 with assistance from the Norwegian Agency for

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Development Corporation (NORAD). NORAD assistance was availed till 1996 – 97 after which the programme is being run with Government of India funds.

Support to Training and Employment Programme (STEP), 1987: The Ministry of Women and Child Development has launched this Central Sector programme with the aim of developing skills of women for self and employment. The main targets of this scheme are rural women and urban poor. This scheme provides funds to help the women and poor. Funds are released to NGOs and not to the State Governments.

Rashtriya Mahila Kosh (RMK), 1993 This scheme created by the government of India with the purpose to provide the loan to poor women to begin small businesses.

Swa-Shakti, 1999 The project jointly founded by IFAD, World Bank and the Government of India was launched in October, 1999 and culminated on 30th June, 2005. 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 was conceived as a Pilot Project implemented in 335 blocks of 57 districts in 9 states. The project established 17,647 SHGs covering about 2,44,000 women. This was a Centrally Sponsored Project.

Swayamsiddha, (2001) :The long term objective of the programme was holistic empowerment of women through a sustained process of mobilization and convergence of all the on going sectoral programmes by improving access of women to micro-credit, economic resources, etc. This is a Centrally Sponsored Scheme. The programme urges women to help themselves, literally. And in order to attain the goal, it sets in place a series of Self-Help Groups (SHGs) and mechanisms designed to streamline and distribute the benefits of awareness and advocacy among women of all social strata and through diverse regions and states. February was observed as the month for the "Economic Empowerment of Women". This was when the Integrated Women's Empowerment Programme (IWEP) or "Swayamsiddha" was also launched.

Priyadarshini, 2011: Priyadarshini is a pilot programme for Women Empowerment. This scheme offers women in seven districts, access to self-help groups and promotion of livelihood opportunities.

It is also very essential to quote the following:-
National Mission for Empowerment of Women (NMEW) The Indian Government has also launched the National Mission for Empowerment of Women (NMEW) for comprehensive empowerment of women. This is a centrally sponsored scheme, coordinating all the women's welfare and socio-economic development programmes across ministries and departments. The Mission contributes to empowering women socially, economically, erasing crime and violence against women, to educate women, establishment of policies and programmes and spreading awareness.

Rajiv Gandhi Scheme for Empowerment of Adolescent Girls – Sabla (RGSEAG), 2012: This scheme targets adolescent girls of 11 – 18. The scheme offers a package of benefits for improving their health and nutrition. This program offers many services on central level to help women to become Self Supporting, to get nutritional supplementation, education, education of health, life skills and various types of vocational training.

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Central Social Welfare Board (CSWB), 1953: This scheme launched to promote social welfare activities and appliance welfare programmes for women and children through spontaneous organizations.

Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas (DWCRA), 1982: This scheme launched by the government to improve the socio-economic status of the poor women in rural area.

Women are the backbone of any economy and shape the future of the country. Women's movements worldwide have been concerned with questions of women's participation or non-participation in paid work and employment. Still there are few challenges like Issue of sex-segregation of jobs and it's perpetuation overtime to the disadvantage of women workers. In the context of the Nineties, the period of globalisation in India. To understand the nature of the dual burden faced by women and to study their coping strategies. A women's component plan and a separate sector on "Gender Balance" has been included in the Draft Approach Paper to the Eleventh Five Year Plan for the first time. The lack of women in decision making positions is perhaps more surprising in the biosciences than in other scientific disciplines given the large proportion of females at undergraduate or postgraduate level. The Government recognises its important role in setting standards of good practice and encouraging the full participation of women in the Biosciences and in the discipline as a whole.

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