

Equal opportunity and economic growth

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Abstract

According to the most current census data, China has lost population ground to India. 140.76 crore people make up India's population, according to the Census of 2021. India's female population is 48.4%. Creating high-level corporate leadership for gender equality, treating everyone equitably at work and honouring and promoting non-discrimination and human rights are all components of women's empowerment. There are numerous government sponsored programmes that assist the empowerment of Women. The current study intends to examine a new initiative the government has taken to support women's empowerment. The study is based on secondary data gathered from a variety of sources, including magazine's, Journals, Websites etc. The result demonstrates that women have demonstrated their ability to contribute to the growth of a successful and wonderful nation if given equal opportunity.

Keywords: Women Empowerment, Government Schemes, India etc.

Introduction

The AIDS crisis in Africa, female infanticide, female genital mutilation, sex slavery, dowry killings, low value in fundamentalist Muslim and Hindu societies, abuse and displacement during war, and, where employment is even possible, poor working conditions are issues that women around the world must deal with. The highest rates of female infant abandonment, female infant murder, and female foetus abortion are found in China and India. Girls make up two-thirds of the 300 million youngsters globally who lack access to an education. The process of empowering women involves encouraging them to assert their rights to equal opportunity in the political, social, cultural, and economic areas of life and to reach their full potential. Their freedom to make decisions both inside and outside of their homes, as well as the capacity to shape social change, must go hand in hand with this advancement.¹

In Indian society, women suffer from subjection and privation on the social, political, religious, and economic levels. Furthermore, they receive unfair treatment and are not permitted to engage in democratic processes on an equal footing with males. If just 50% of the population engages in democratic decision-making and engages in economic, social, and political activities, democracy becomes meaningless and paralysed. Therefore, both men and women must participate in development efforts in order to ensure the sustainability of democracy. Without the active engagement of 50% of the population, or women, India's progress is certain to be uneven.^{2,3}

Objective of the study

The paper investigates the steps the government has made to advance the economic, social, educational, and psychological empowerment of women.

The Ministry has implemented a variety of programmes to uplift women and safeguard their safety, including the prohibition of dowry, child marriage, domestic violence, sexual harassment at work, indecent representation of women, and more. Women Help Line, Mahila Police Volunteers, Healthy Women, Thriving Families, Mahila Shakti Kendra (MSK) Scheme, One Stop Centre, Safe and Secure Women, Empowered Nation, Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY), Ujjawala Programme to Fight Human Trafficking, Educated Woman, The Foundation of a Strong Society, Nirbhaya Fund, Growing Love for Daughters,

Swadhar Greh, The Sakhi Dashboard, Social Empowerment, Stand Up Women, Stand Up India, Combating cybercrime, the Beti Bachao and Beti Padhao schemes, etc. ⁴

Economic Empowerment

- Under the MUDRA Scheme, women have received loans ranging from Rs 50,000 to Rs 10 Lakh for self-employment. Women make about 70% of the beneficiaries of this programme.
- To promote women's independence, more than 6.60 billion women have been connected to self-help groups.
- The Pradhan Mantri Jan-Dhan Yojana saw the opening of more than 22 million female bank accounts. During the Corona time, three deposits of Rs 500 each were made into these accounts.
- As part of the Stand-Up India Scheme, every bank branch is now required to offer a women entrepreneur a loan between Rs 10 lakh and Rs 1 crore to help her launch a business.

Social Empowerment

- For the first time, women are now permitted to perform combat-related activities in all three branches of the armed services. Under the CRPF and CISF, 33% of the constable positions are earmarked for women;
- More than 32,000 women entrepreneurs have registered on the Government e-Marketplace (GeM) platform, ensuring their involvement in small and medium-sized industries.
- Under the Pradhanmantri Awas Yojna, women would be given preference. Single mothers receive additional accommodations while applying for passports.
- Access to LPG connection has surpassed 98%. Approximately 8 million low-income households already have access to LPG.

Safety & Security

- The Indian Penal Code was amended by Parliament, allowing the death sentence for the rape of a girl child under the age of 12. The penalty for raping a girl under the age of 16 has also been enhanced from 10 to 20 years in prison.
- To track down those responsible for crimes against women, a national data base is created.

To hear these cases, over 1,023 fast track courts are being established across the nation.

- There is now a women's aid desk in every police station in the nation. Across the nation, more than 700 One Stop Centres have opened.
- For victims of domestic violence, One Stop Centres (OSC) for grievance redressal have been established.
- The legal prohibition of quick triple talaq has put an end to its practise. The requirement of Mehram (male guardianship) for Muslim women participating in Haj was abolished.
- The Centre and State Governments launched the 'Nari' portal for women with the intention of making more than 350 initiatives available in a single location.

Health & Nourishment

- Over 90 lakh pregnant women received vaccinations as part of Mission Indradhanush. For the dignity of women, the Swachh Bharat Mission supplied toilets in every home.
- Since 2017, the Poshan Scheme has paid out a total of Rs 7,411 Crore.
- With approximately Rs 7,849 billion being directly deposited to their accounts, the Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana has benefited 1.82 million women.
- The Medical Termination Pregnancy Act, which raises the cutoff point for abortion from 20 to 24 weeks, was recently adopted by the government with the goal of offering relief to women who are victims of abuse.
- The length of paid maternity leave has been increased from 12 to 26 weeks.
- In an effort to improve women's health, the government is offering sanitary pads for one rupee each. More than 7 billion sanitary napkins have been sold through Pradhanmantri Janaushadhi Kendras, and they are now GST-free.
- 5 Crore sanitary pads have been delivered to the poor women from 6,000 Janaushadhi Kendras.”

Educational Empowerment

- The Swachh Bharat Mission's announcement. It prompted the building of 10.29 billion toilets in rural India and 4.17 million restrooms for female students in schools. As a result, the dropout rate is lower.

- 3,011 children were adopted by Indian couples in 2015–16, according to CARA. There were 1,156 adopted boys and 1,855 adopted girls, respectively. The amount has been steadily rising through 2018–19.
- To promote innovation and scientific learning, sixteen Women Technology Parks have been established, and the KIRAN Fellowship programme helps women scientists overcome barriers.⁴

Findings

When it comes to achieving the ideal and national goals of every society, mental health at all stages of life is crucial and effective. One way to improve women's mental health and lessen their mental difficulties is through societal attitude adjustments.^{5,6} Support of the government is seen in all political, legal, social, economic, educational and psychological areas⁷. Accordingly the study showed the following results:

- 76,451 female businesses received over Rs 17,000 Crore in funding by April 30, 2020 under Start up and stand-up India programme.
- The rate of maternal mortality decreased to 113 in 2016–18 from 122 in 2015–17 and 130 in 2014–16. From 2013 to 2018, the newborn death rate decreased from 28.3% to 22.7%.
- Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana has benefited more than 1.82 million women.
- 94.23 percent of girls and 89.28 percent of boys are enrolled in school, respectively.
- The number of women elected to parliament in the 2019 general elections was the most ever (78), while the percentage of women serving in panchayati raj institutions is at the highest level ever (46%).

Conclusion

"Poverty causes suffering for women everywhere,". The implementation of policies aimed at a more fair distribution of wealth and income as well as social security coverage is necessary for an integrated strategy to eradicate poverty. Various schemes of the government helped the women. Women now have access to social security; they can increase their earning potential through advanced training in skill development and other areas, they can speak freely

and quickly with government officials or other relevant local authorities, while working mothers can now make sure that their kids are receiving proper care by enrolling them in daycare centres. Thus, they can secure a respectable life away from home without having to sacrifice their careers or jobs for their families. Empowering women is essential for a stronger country and politics. Women are reaching new heights because of this. The erroneous belief that girls are a financial burden has been disproved due to the Sukanya Samridhi Yojana and several other scholarship programmes. Economic, social, educational, political and psychological empowerment brings the nation's development.

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