

EMPOWERING WOMEN AT THE LOCAL LEVEL IN INDIA

Renu Bala*

*Assistant Professor,
Hindu Kanya College,
Kapurthala, Punjab, INDIA

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ABSTRACT

Women's empowerment at the grassroots level is a critical component of India's development agenda. Women's empowerment at the grassroots level is a critical component of India's development agenda. Focusing on local communities enables targeted interventions and sustainable progress. The present paper will study the initiative taken by the government for women's empowerment. For this paper, secondary data has been taken from books, reputed journals and newspaper articles. This paper will analyse policies, and initiatives for women at the local level, and analyse the problems and challenges faced in the process of women's empowerment.

KEYWORD: *Women Empowerment, Initiatives, India*

INTRODUCTION

Change, power, and choice are all aspects of empowerment. It is a process of change that gives people and groups who have little or no authority the ability to make decisions that will impact their lives. Women's empowerment is the process of giving women the authority they need to recognize their rights and carry out their obligations to others and to themselves in the most efficient way possible. There are various steps taken by the Government of India for the empowerment of women.

Research Methodology

This paper is based on secondary research. The secondary data has been taken from books, journals, government reports and newspaper articles.

Objectives

1. To study the government initiatives taken by government for women's empowerment
2. To study the problems and challenges in implementing policies for women's empowerment.
3. To give suggestions for further improvement.

Initiative:

1. **Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao** To ensure the survival, safety, and education of girls, the Indian Prime Minister inaugurated this project on January 22, 2015, in Haryana. The effort aims to address the recent sex disparity, increase social awareness, and enhance the efficiency of welfare benefits for girls.

2. Working Women Hostel Scheme:

This scheme Encourages the development of childcare facilities and safe housing for working women in convenient locations. This scheme supports the development and enlargement of hostel buildings, both new and old, and Provides equal accommodations for working women from all backgrounds. If there is space, permit trainees to stay in hostels, giving working women priority; children of working women can also be accommodated

3. **SEWA (Self-Employed Women's Association):** A trade union in India that organizes women in the informal sector for better working conditions, access to resources, and livelihood opportunities.
4. **Mahila Samakhya:** An Indian government initiative that works at the grassroots level to empower women through education and awareness, especially in rural areas.
5. **Women's Helpline Program** The Women Helpline program, which was established in April 2015, intends to offer 24 hour emergency assistance to women who have experienced violence in either public or private settings. The government established a toll-free number (181) to provide immediate aid in an emergency. In every state and union territory in the nation, women can call this hotline. This campaign also promotes women's safety and empowerment.
6. **MSKs, or Mahila Shakti Kendras** One of the well-known programs for women is Mahila Shakti Kendra, an effort for women's empowerment launched in India in 2017. In order to help women develop their skills, obtain employment, and increase their digital literacy, it aims to provide them with convergent support services in one place. This program is active at the federal, state, and local levels, among others. The government intends to reach the 115 districts with the greatest rates of poverty by building 920 Mahila Shakti Kendras. With the help of this initiative, women will have access to things like good healthcare, education, employment possibilities, and counselling.
7. **SWADHAR Greh:** It is one of the women's empowerment programs the Indian government launched in 2018. The main objectives of this initiative are to provide housing, food, and clothing as well as to ensure social, economic, and health security. Through this program, women receive legal assistance and are given the confidence to take the initiative to reintegrate into society.
8. **Anganwadi Services:** Under Anganwadi Services, a set of six services are offered to expectant mothers, lactating mothers, and children under the age of six. These services are (i) Supplementary Nutrition (SNP); (ii) Pre-school Non-Formal Education; (iii) Nutrition & Health Education; (iv) Immunization; (v) Health Check-up; and (vi) Referral Services. The NRHM & Public Health Infrastructure offers three of the six services—immunization, health checkups, and referral services—that are health-related.

Miscellaneous

1. 73rd and 7th amendments of the Indian Constitution reserved 33% of seats for women in local self-governing institutions.

2. Ujjawala Scheme: The Ujjawala Scheme is a centrally sponsored program for the prevention of human trafficking as well as the rescue, rehabilitation, re-integration, and repatriation of victims of human trafficking for the purpose of commercial sexual exploitation.

Problems and Challenges

1. In many areas of India, ingrained patriarchal attitudes and customs continue to be prevalent, which results in unequal opportunities and treatment for women in many areas of life.
2. Women frequently have less access to and usage of digital technologies than males do, which limits their capacity to use technology for economic, educational, and informational benefits.
3. Lack of knowledge about women's rights and the availability of support services in some areas can impede efforts to solve gender-related issues.
4. The stigma that exists in society because of things like divorce, being a single mother, and working outside the home can restrict women's options and prospects.

SUGGESTIONS

1. Awareness-raising campaigns about women's rights, especially for those from disadvantaged groups, must be organized.
2. Since women's education is a fundamental issue, it should be given the highest priority.

Consequently, extra attention must be directed to women's education.

3. Programs and Acts should be strictly enforced to stop the widespread wrongdoing in society.
4. Women should be able to work and be given the necessary protection and assistance to do so. They should be paid well and treated equally with men at work so that their standing in society can be raised.

CONCLUSION

It takes interdisciplinary work to address issues, including changes to public legislation, public awareness campaigns, educational initiatives, economic empowerment programs, and social interventions that oppose detrimental gender norms. For real women's empowerment to occur in India and to be sustainable, cooperation between the government, civic society, and international organizations is essential.

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