

Vol 3 Issue 5 Feb 2014

Impact Factor : 2.1002 (UIF)

ISSN No : 2249-894X

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*Monthly Multidisciplinary  
Research Journal*

*Review Of  
Research Journal*

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## Welcome to Review Of Research

**RNI MAHMUL/2011/38595**

**ISSN No.2249-894X**

Review Of Research Journal is a multidisciplinary research journal, published monthly in English, Hindi & Marathi Language. All research papers submitted to the journal will be double - blind peer reviewed referred by members of the editorial Board readers will include investigator in universities, research institutes government and industry with research interest in the general subjects.

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## WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT: GOVERNMENT'S INITIATIVES

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### Abstract:

*As regard to the women empowerment it is not the fact that the efforts have not been made. It has been made from the first five year plan through enacting various laws and regulations. Substantial provisions has been made to protect women from the suffering among them Hindu succession act, dowry prohibition act, equal remuneration act are some of the mile stones of women empowerment. At policy level government is taking necessary action. In first five year plan the emphasis was given on welfare of women, since then government is making its sincere efforts. The constitution of India gives guarantee to provide equal status in most of the walks of the life. The details about the various efforts made by the government through five year plans are discussed in this paper.*

### KEY WORDS:

Government initiatives, women empowerment, five year plans, economic empowerment, equal status, government schemes, social welfare benefits, social protection.

### INTRODUCTION

According to McLeod, the concept 'Empowerment' derives from Latin word 'potere' which means "to be able". From the view of sociological aspect, empowerment is a multi-dimensional, multi-tiered and multifaceted concept. The term empowerment has different meanings in different socio-cultural and political contexts. World Bank Report 2000/2001 describes empowerment as a process of increasing the capacity of individuals or groups to make choices and to transform those choices into desired actions and outcomes. According to country report of Government of India, "Empowerment means moving from a position of enforced powerlessness to one of power"

India, which is a conglomerate of diverse ethnic, linguistic and geographical features, today is at the cusp of a paradigm change in its growth and its position in the world. However, India is even known for its sobriquet 'male-chauvinistic nation'. Indian myths describe our country as 'Mother India' who is a woman that serves as the mother of every Indian. While such a woman looks after every Indian child, women in general are simply being disregarded at the dominant men's best. Since the older times, women have been treated as secondary level of all across the globe. The situation is almost the same everywhere-irrespective of the developed country or the developing country-caste, community, colour or creed a position which is comparable in many ways, with that of racial minorities. Women have been relegated to secondary position despite the fact that they numerically constitute about half the world population today. This situation has caused immense loss to their self-dignity as human beings and also their independent entities, associated with men, apart from other matter, in context with intellectual and professional capability. In the very beginning of civilization, women enjoyed a respectable position in society-at par with men. They actively participated in social, religious affairs as well as in warfare. The social, religious

Title: WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT: GOVERNMENT'S INITIATIVES .Source: Review of Research [2249-894X] USHA VERGHESE AND V.V. KULKARNI yr:2014 vol:3 iss:5

#### WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT: GOVERNMENT'S INITIATIVES

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ceremonies were considered incomplete unless women participated in them. However, it was their physical constitution which acted as hurdles on the way to doing their various different difficult tasks.

During the course of social development, the position of women also changed. When society was formed, patriarchy was established. Gradually, males became dominant in society. They were to write the codes for all times and obviously women were given a subordinate position. A prominent feature of hegemonic ideologies is the projection of the dominant viewpoint as universally true. Patriarchy, as an ideological assumption, works on the same principle. And, yet, even in ages of strict dominance by males, society has thrown up women of calibre, who could match, even surpass, the skills of men. They made great progress in various fields of life and gained significant achievements as teachers, doctors, engineers, scientists, explorers, soldiers and pilots. This achievement is really plausible because they have been achieved in a highly adverse situation and at the cost of severe social criticism, indeed even ostracism.

Gradually, they became dependent on men for food, protection for their other necessities. It was due to the strong built-up of men they risked their lives in course of hunting and food collection. It is really ironical that superiority is not accorded to the fair sex who are responsible for carrying forward lives on this planet but to men who have muscle power with the help of which they can subjugate others. Later, woman became the epitome of procreation, and was very often associated and identified with Earth, which supported lives with all her resources. This thought inspired in men a feeling of respect and regard which was reflected in their worship of women as goddesses. Despite this elevated position that she enjoyed, and are still enjoying in the form of being worshipped as goddesses Durga, Kali, Lakshami, Saraswati, etc. However, a woman is fated to be subjected, owned, and exploited like the very nature, whose magical fertility she embodies. But we should not forget the history of women who have in the past demonstrated unique leadership capabilities. Razia Sultana, Rani of Jhansi Laxmibai, Sarojini Naidu and Indira Gandhi are the examples of women empowerment. Earlier, most women were able to demonstrate the leadership qualities only on their home fronts, as in Indian society man has always acted as the master of the scene and the decision regarding the issue of empowering women has always been taken by him. God has gifted women with compassion, tender-heartedness, caring nature, concern for others. These are very positive signs which imply that women can be leaders. Though some women have shown their mettle yet a large number of them have to sharpen their leadership qualities in various ways. In order to help women to be in limelight, they need to be empowered. Therefore, empowerment of women is the prerequisite to transform a developing country into a developed country. Empowerment of women had come out of the consensus arrived at the 40th Session of the UN commission on status of women in New York on March 11, 1996. In this session 'Empowerment of Women' has been depicted as conferment of power by means of law in all matters affecting gender interests, related to family well-being and socioeconomic national affairs, providing for participation in decision making in all such matters.

Famous American novelist of 19th century, Louisa May Alcott correctly opines- "When women are the advisor, the Lords of creation don't take the advice till they have persuaded themselves that it is just what they intended to do; then they act upon it and if it succeeds, they give the weaker vessel half the credit of it; if fails, they generously give herself the whole". The need for Women Empowerment was felt in India long back. Raja Rammohan Roy, the religious, social, and educational reformer and 'the maker of Modern India', demanded inheritance property rights for Women, gave tremendous effort to abolish the defunct custom 'Sati', the Hindu funeral practice. Key figure of Bengali Renaissance, Iswarchandra Vidyasagar, championed the uplift of the status of women in India. Jyotirao Phule, Pearicharan Sarkar etc also fought for uplift of women. Later, Mahatma Gandhi had announced at the Second round table conference that his aim was to establish a political society in India, in which women would enjoy the same rights as men and the teeming millions of India would be ensures dignity and justice-social, economic and political.

Empowerment of women needs to begin with her participation in different spheres of life. Education is a great determinant in this regard. To achieve empowerment, women have to be educated and aware of their rights and privileges in a modern society. It is education which can bring about awareness in them related to their social status, injustice and differentiation meted out to them. Besides, economic independence is a major factor which can contribute in empowering women. India in the very beginning realised this need. The architect of Indian Constitution was of the opinion that unless and until women are empowered, nothing was going to bring about any change in their destiny. The principle of gender equality is enshrined in the Indian Constitution in its Preamble, Fundamental Rights, Fundamental Duties and Directive Principles. The Constitution not only grants equality to women, but also empowers the State to adopt measures of positive discrimination in favour of women. Within the framework of a democratic polity, our laws, development policies, Plans and programmes have aimed at women's advancement in different spheres. India has also ratified various international conventions and human rights instruments committing to secure equal rights of women. Key among them is the ratification of the Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in 1993. According to the 2001

#### WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT: GOVERNMENT'S INITIATIVES

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Census, the percentage of female literacy in the country is 54% up from 9% 1951 by implementation of several constitutional privileges, legislative support for women, and some yojana and mission.

The need for women's empowerment arises from the subordinate position they have been accorded for a long time. The empowerment has been felt as a tool to bring about changes in their socio-economic condition. It has been felt on the part of nation as well as individual that no society can progress till women, a major constituent of society, lag behind. Empowerment of women needs to begin with her participation in different spheres of life. Education is a great determinant in this regard. To achieve empowerment women have to be educated to be aware of their rights and privileges in a modern society. It is education which can bring about awareness in them related to their social status, injustice and differentiation meted out to them. Besides, economic independence is a major factor which can contribute in empowering women. India in the very beginning realised this need.

The architect of Indian Constitution was of the opinion that unless and until women are empowered, nothing was going to bring about any change in their destiny. At that time, the women, in the name of sanskaras were tied up with the bondage of superstitions, which they had to carry till the last breath of their lives. They were considered just a matter of joy and a source of amusement. She was, according to the Hindu Shashtra, the bonded slave of her father when she was young, to her husband when she was middle-aged and to her son when a mother. Of course, all the epigrams, aphorisms, proverbs, platitudes and truisms have been naked truth about the stature of women in India. It does not mean that efforts have not been made to bring dignity in the life of women. There has been a long tradition of social reforms by our saints and social reformers which include: Raja Rammohan Roy, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, Mahadev Govind Ranade, and Jyotiba Phule, to name a few, who tried their best to bring changes in the life of women. Their efforts, however, bore fruit to some extent, but did not make too much difference to the lots of the masses. In this direction, Dr. Ambedkar tried to break down the barriers in the way of advancement of women in India. He laid down the foundation of concrete and sincere efforts by codifying the Common Civil Code for the Hindus and the principle is capable of extension to other sections of the Indian society. Besides, he also made provision in the Constitution to ensure a dignified social status to women. He, by codifying Hindu Law in respect of marriage, divorce and succession rationalised and restored the dignity of women.

In addition to this, the Sharda Act is also worth mentioning. It has set the seal of authority upon the piece of social reforms, which the heads of orthodoxy were imposing and impending. The Hindu Code Bill, which covers issues such as right to property, order of succession to property, maintenance, marriage, divorce, adoption, minority and guardianship, constitutes part of social engineering via law. Needless to say, it was a revolutionary measure. It was really a first step towards the recognition and empowerment of women in India. This gives a woman right to property, which undoubtedly strengthens her social position. Despite all these political measures, women's empowerment remains a distant dream in India. In fact, political empowerment is a key to development in this society. It is a must for an all-around development of women. It is the need of the hour to ensure her participation in the decision-making at home, in community and at the national level. It is for the fulfillment of this need that the Women's Reservation Bill was introduced in the Parliament by the BJP Government. But since then, ruling parties changed in power but the Bill could not see the light of the day.

The political parties do not seem to be honest in their perspectives. But before political empowerment, we must concentrate on imparting social education because without academic and social education, the political empowerment has failed to bring desired result as we have seen in case of 33 per cent reservation in local bodies ensured by the historic 73rd and 74th constitutional amendments. The uneducated women are quite unaware of their rights and privileges and are therefore subject to exploitation at the hands of government machinery, as well by family members. Therefore, our efforts should be directed towards the all-around development of each and every section of Indian women, not confining the benefit to a particular section of women in society, by giving them their due share. It is a must to protect their chastity, modesty and dignity and ensure their dignified position in society. Without removing social stigma, enduring progress and development could not be achieved. For this, the governmental and non-governmental organisations including media should come forward and play an active role in creating awareness in society. The task is not too difficult to achieve. The honesty and sincerity on the part of those involved is a must. If the lots of women change, definitely it will have a positive impact on society. Hence, the women's empowerment is the need of the hour. The details about the governments initiatives are discussed in this paper. India attained freedom from British rule on 15th August 1947. India was declared a sovereign Democratic Republic on 26th January 1950. On that date the Constitution of India came into force. All citizens of India are guaranteed social, economic and political justice, equality of status and opportunities before law by the Constitution. Fundamental freedom of expression, belief, faith, worship, vocation, association and action are guaranteed by the Indian Constitution to all citizens- subject to law and

## WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT: GOVERNMENT'S INITIATIVES

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public morality.

Constitutional Privileges for Women includes Equality before law for women (Article 14), The State not to discriminate against any citizen on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth or any of them (Article 15 (i)), The State to make any special provision in favour of women and children (Article 15 (3)), The State to direct its policy towards securing for men and women equally the right to an adequate means of livelihood (Article 39(a)) equal pay for equal work for both men and women (Article 39(d)), The State to make provision for securing just and humane conditions of work and for maternity relief (Article 42), Not less than one-third (including the number of seats reserved for women belonging to the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes) of the total number of seats to be filled by direct election in every Panchayat to be reserved for women and such seats to be allotted by rotation to different constituencies in a Panchayat (Article 243 D(3)). To uphold the Constitutional mandate, India has enacted various legislative measures intended to ensure equal rights, to counter social discrimination and various forms of violence and atrocities and to provide support services especially to working women. The Government has given greater focus to issues relating to women through creation of an independent Ministry of Women and Child Development, initiation of legislation that has taken the country closer to complete legal equality for women, gender budgeting and initiation of programs for greater inclusion of women.

Although all laws are not gender specific, the provisions of law affecting women significantly have been reviewed periodically and amendments carried out to keep pace with the emerging requirements. Some acts which have special provisions to safeguard women and their interests are The Hindu Succession Act, 1956 with amendment in 2005, Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956, The Maternity Benefit Act, 1961 (Amended in 1995), Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961, The Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act, 1971, The Equal Remuneration Act, 1976, The Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006, Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act, 1986, Commission of Sati (Prevention) Act, 1987 and The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005.

Apart from these, In January 1992, the Government set-up a statutory body named 'National Commission for Women' with a specific mandate to study and monitor all matters relating to the constitutional and legal safeguards provided for women, review the existing legislation to suggest amendments wherever necessary, etc. The Department of Women & Child Development in the Ministry of Human Resource Development has prepared a "National Policy for the Empowerment of Women" in the year 2001. The goal of this policy is to bring about the advancement, development and empowerment of women. On 8th March, 1996, on the occasion of International Women's Day, the parliament passed resolution to set up a Standing Committee for the 'improvement of the status of women' in India and the committee on Empowerment of women was constituted in April, 1997. Empowerment is now increasingly seen as a process by which the one's without power gain greater control over their lives. The Cairo conference in 1994 organized by UN on Population and Development called attention to women's empowerment as a central focus and UNDP developed the Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM) which focuses on the three variables that reflect women's participation in society in every aspects. 1995 UNDP report was devoted to women's empowerment.

The intervention strategy for empowering women to have informed and effective choices on their health and nutrition and for the development of children and adolescents has to be multi-pronged. Such as, Antyodaya Anna Yojana(2000), National Rural Health Mission, 2005, Janani Suraksha Yojana, 2005, Indira Sahara, 2000, Mukhya Mantri Antodaya Pusthaar Yojana, 2009, Hindu Succession Act, 1995, Rashtriya Mahila Kosh, 1993, Apna Beti Apna Dhan Yojana, Haryana(1994), Kamdhenu Yojana, Maharashtra, Girls Child Protection Scheme, Andhra Pradesh etc.

There are two main programmes in the Department of Women and Child Development, which aim at convergence of services delivery at the grass root level. Those are Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS), which reaches 85 percent of the villages in the country and Integrated Women's Empowerment Programme(IWEP), formerly Indira Mahila Yojana, which extends to 650 blocks operate through the self help groups of women. In the field of education, 2180 residential Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya schools have been sanctioned and are providing elementary education to 1,82,000 out of school girls. Gaun ki Beti, Kisori Balika Divas Yojana, Ladli Laksmi Yojana, Cycle Praday Yojana etc schemes were launched by the Government for empowering the girls in India.

In spite of several acts, laws, schemes, women and girls face violence in various forms in their daily life. This takes the form of female foeticide and infanticide, rape dowry death and more indirect forms such as abandonment of older women. Sexual harassment is one of the horrendous factors that suppress women. Molestation of a teenage girl by a group of nearly twenty men in a public place in Guwahati is a shame on Indian humanity.

Therefore, our efforts should be directed towards the all around development of each and every

## WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT: GOVERNMENT'S INITIATIVES

section of Indian women, not confining the benefit to a particular section of women in society, by giving them their due share. It is a must to protect their chastity, modesty and dignity and ensure their dignified position in society. Without removing social stigma, enduring progress and development could not be achieved. For this, the governmental and non-governmental organisations including media should come forward and play an active role in creating awareness in society. We need to focus particularly on women, because in every society they struggle against gender norms that limit their resources and opportunities for improvement and because we know that women empowerment is a tremendous resource for social change and a broader fight against global poverty. The task is not too difficult to achieve. The honesty and sincerity on the part of those involved is a must. If the lots of women change, definitely it will have a positive impact on society. Hence, the women's empowerment is the need of the hour. It would be worthy to conclude with the famous speech of Swami Vivekananda "There is no chance of the welfare of the world unless the condition of women is improved. It is not possible for a bird to fly on one wing."

### The Constitution of India - Provisions Relating to Women

The Constitution of India not only grants equality to women, but also empowers the State to adopt measures of positive discrimination in favour of women for removing the cumulative socio-economic, educational and political disadvantages faced by them.

### Advancement of Women through Five Year Plans

There has been a progressive increase in the plan outlays over the last six decades of planned development to meet the needs of women and children. The outlay of Rs. 4 crores in the First Plan (1951-56) has increased to Rs. 7,810.42 crores in the Ninth Five Year Plan, and Rs. 13,780 crores in the Tenth Five Year Plan. There has been a shift from "welfare" oriented approach in the First Five Year Plan to "development" and "empowerment" of women in the consecutive Five Year Plans.

### Perspectives on Advancement of Women through Five Year Plans

First Five Year Plan (1951-56)	It was mainly welfare oriented as far as women's issues were concerned. The Central Social Welfare Board (CSWB) undertook a number of welfare measures through the voluntary sector. The programmes for women were implemented through the National Extension Service Programmes through Community Development Blocks.
Second Five Year Plan(1956-61)	Efforts were geared to organise "Mahila Mandals" (women's groups) at grass-roots levels to ensure better implementation of welfare schemes.
Third, Fourth, Fifth and other Interim Plans (1961-74)	They accorded high priority to women's education. Measures to improve maternal and child health services, and supplementary feeding for children, nursing and expectant mothers were also introduced.
Sixth Five Year Plan (1980-85)	This is regarded as a landmark in women's development. The Plan adopted a multidisciplinary approach with a three-pronged thrust on health, education and employment of women.
Seventh Five Year Plan(1985-90)	Development programmes for women were continued, with the objective of raising their economic and social status and bring them into the mainstream of national development. A very significant step therein was to identify and promote "beneficiary-oriented programmes" which extended direct benefits to women.
Eighth Five Year Plan(1992-97)	It attempted to ensure that the benefits of development from different sectors did not bypass women. Special programmes were implemented to complement the general development programmes. The flow of benefits to women in the three core sectors of education, health and employment were monitored vigilantly. Women were enabled to function as equal partners and participants in the developmental process with reservation in the membership of local bodies. This approach of the Eighth Plan marks a definite shift from 'development' to empowerment' of women.

#### WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT: GOVERNMENT'S INITIATIVES

Ninth Five Year Plan(1997-2002)	<b>The Ninth Five Year Plan envisaged :</b> a) Empowerment of women and socially disadvantaged groups such as Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Other Backward Classes and Minorities as agents of socio-economic change and development. b) Promoting and developing people's participatory institutions like Panchayati Raj institutions, cooperatives and self-help groups. c) Strengthening efforts to build self-reliance. d) The convergence of services from different sectors. e) A women's component plan at the Central and State levels.
Tenth Five Year Plan(2002-2007)	The Tenth Five Year Plan was formulated to ensure requisite access of women to information, resources and services, and advance gender equality goals.
Eleventh Five Year Plan(2007-2012)	The Eleventh Five Year Plan proposes to undertake special measures for gender empowerment and equity. The Ministry of Women and Child Development would make synergistic use of gender budget and gender mainstreaming process.

Source: India, Planning Commission. (2002). Five Year Plans. New Delhi.

International Policies and India's Constitutional Provisions, Policies and Programmes for Women

#### UN Human Rights Instruments

Universal Declaration of Human Rights - adopted in 1948  
International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights - adopted in 1966 / entered into force in 1976, monitored by the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR)  
International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination - adopted in 1965 / entered into force in 1969, monitored by the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD)  
Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women - adopted in 1979 / entered into force in 1981, monitored by the Committee on CEDAW  
Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment - adopted in 1984 / entered into force in 1987, monitored by Committee Against Torture (CAT)  
Convention on the Rights of the Child - adopted in 1989 / entered into force in 1990, monitored by the Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC)

#### Commitments at UN Conferences

World Conference on Education for All (1990) Jomtien  
UN Conference on Environment and Development (1992) Rio de Janeiro  
Second UN World Conference on Human Rights (1993) Vienna  
International Conference on Population and Development (1994) Cairo  
World Summit on Social Development (1995) Copenhagen  
Fourth World Conference on Women (1995) Beijing  
Second UN Conference on Human Settlements (1996) Istanbul  
World Food Summit (1997) Rome  
Education for All Dakar Framework (2000) Dakar

#### Constitution of India Guarantees (Central Statistical Organisation.2002)

Equality Before Law for Women (Article 14)  
The State not to discriminate against any citizen on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth or any of them [Article 15 (I)]

#### WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT: GOVERNMENT'S INITIATIVES

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The State to make any special provision in favour of women and children [Article 15 (3)]  
Equality of opportunity for all citizens in matters relating to employment or appointment to any office under the State (Article 16)  
The State to direct its policy towards securing for men and women equally the right to an adequate means of livelihood [Article 39 (a)]; and equal pay for equal work for both men and women [Article 39 (d)]  
To promote justice, on a basis of equal opportunity and to provide free legal aid by suitable legislation or scheme or in any other way to ensure that opportunities for securing justice are not denied to any citizen by reason of economic or other disabilities [Article 39A)  
The State to make provision for securing just and humane conditions of work and for maternity relief (Article 42)  
The State to promote with special care the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people and to protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation (Article 46)  
The State to raise the level of nutrition and the standard of living of its people and the improvement of Public Health (Article 47)  
To promote harmony and the spirit of common brotherhood amongst all the people of India and to renounce practices derogatory to the dignity of women [Article 51(A)(e)]  
Not less than one-third (including the number of seats reserved for women belonging to the scheduled castes and the scheduled tribes) of the total number of seats to be filled by direct election in every panchayat to be reserved for women and such seats to be allotted by rotation to different constituencies in a panchayat [Article 243 D (3)]  
Not less than one-third of the total number of offices of chairpersons in the panchayats at each level to be reserved for women [Article 243 D (4)]  
Not less than one-third (including the number of seats reserved for women belonging to the scheduled castes and the scheduled tribes) of the total number of seats to be filled by direct election in every municipality to be reserved for women and such seats to be allotted by rotation to different constituencies in a municipality [Article 243 T (3)]  
Reservation of offices of chairpersons in municipalities for the scheduled castes, the scheduled tribes and women in such manner as the legislature of a State may by law provide [Article 243 T (4)]  
Source: India, Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, Central Statistical Organisation. (2002). Women and Men in India 2001. New Delhi. p. v-vi.

#### SCHEMES FOR ASSISTANCE Ministry of Women and Child development

Support to Training and Employment Programme (STEP)  
Rajiv Gandhi Scheme for Empowerment of Adolescent Girls (RGSEAG)  
Swawlamban, erstwhile Setting up of Employment and Income Generating Training- cum-Production Units for Women (NORAD)  
Construction/Expansion of Hostel Building for Working Women with a Day Care Centre (WWH)  
Balika Samridhhi Yojana (BSY)  
National Programme for Adolescent Girls (Kishori Shakti Yojana)  
Shishu Greh Scheme (Erstwhile - Homes for Infants and Young Children for Promotion of In-Country Adoption)  
Integrated Scheme for Street Children  
Scheme for Welfare of Working Children in Need of Care and Protection  
Prevention and Control of Juvenile Maladjustment  
Integrated Child Protection Scheme (ICPS)  
Conditional Cash Transfer Scheme for the Girl Child with Insurance Cover  
General Grant-in-Aid for Voluntary Organisations in the Field of Women and Child Development  
National Mission of Empowerment of Women  
Scheme for Leadership Development of Minority Women  
Conditional Maternity Benefit Scheme  
Other Programmes (Relief to and Rehabilitation of Rape Victims)  
Education Scheme, Food and Nutrition Board (FNB)  
Ujjawala, Scheme for Combating Trafficking  
Nutrition Programme for Adolescent Girls (NPAG)  
Wheat Based Nutrition Programme  
Anganwadi Karyakati Bima Yojana

## WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT: GOVERNMENT'S INITIATIVES

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### Central Social Welfare Board (CSWB)

General Grant-in-Aid for Voluntary Organisations in the field of Women and Child Development  
Care and Protection for Those on the Margins of Society  
Awareness Generation Programme (AGP)  
Condensed Courses of Education for Women and Vocational Training (CCE & VT)  
Rajiv Gandhi National Creche Scheme for the Children of Working Mothers 1994  
Integrated Scheme for Women Empowerment  
Family Counselling Centres (FCC)  
Mahila Mandal Programme (MMP)  
Short Stay Homes for Women and Girls (SSH)  
Socio-Economic Programme (SEP)

### Other Schemes

Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS)  
The Swa-Shakti Project, a scheme for Rural Women's Development and Empowerment  
Swadhar, Scheme for Women in Difficult Circumstances  
Rashtriya Mahila Kosh (Credit for Women)  
Scheme for Rescue of Victims of Trafficking  
Priyadarshini, Women's Empowerment and Livelihood Programme in the Mid Gangetic Plains  
Innovative Work on Women and Children  
Scheme for Relief to and Rehabilitation of Victims of Rape  
Ministry of Human Resource Development, Department of Education  
Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA)  
District Primary Education Programme (DPEP)  
National Programme of Mid Day Meals in Schools  
The Scheme for Providing Quality Education in Madrassas  
Scheme for Infrastructure Development in Minority Institutions  
Prarambhik Shiksha Kosh (PSK)  
Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA)  
Integrated Education for Disabled Children (IEDC)  
Inclusive Education for Disabled at Secondary School (IEDSS)  
Scheme of Vocationalisation of Education +2 Level  
Scheme for Universal Access and Quality at the Secondary Stage (SUCCESS)  
National Scheme for Incentive to Girls for Secondary Education (SUCCESS)  
National Means - cum - Merit Scholarship Scheme (NMMS)  
Scheme for Construction and Running of Girls Hostel for Students of Secondary and Higher Secondary Schools  
Adult Education and Skill Development Scheme  
Development of Women's Studies in Universities and Colleges  
Schemes for Promotion of Higher Education for SC/ST/Minorities/OBC  
Post Graduate Scholarships for Students belonging to SC/ST/Minorities/OBC  
Post Doctoral Fellowship for Women  
District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) for Special Groups  
National Programme for Education of Girls at Elementary Level (NPEGEL)  
Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGBV)  
Kendriya Vidyalayas (KV)  
Navodaya Vidyalayas (NV)  
National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS)  
Focus on Minority Areas  
National Literacy Mission (NLM)  
Jan Shikshan Sansthan (JSS)  
Mahila Samakhyas : Education for Women's Equality

### Ministry of Rural Development

Swarnjayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY)  
Sampoorna Grameen Rozgar Yojana (SGRY), including Food Grains Component

#### **WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT: GOVERNMENT'S INITIATIVES**

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Assistance for Rural Employment Guarantee Schemes  
National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP)  
National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA)  
National Food for Work Programme (NFWP)  
National Common Minimum Programme (NCMP)  
Central Rural Sanitation Programme (CRSP)  
Cash Component for Food for Work Programme  
Indira Awaas Yojana (IAY)  
Accelerated Rural Water Supply Programme (ARWSP)  
Rural Sanitation  
Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY)  
Provision of Urban Amenities in Rural Areas (PURA)

#### **Ministry of Urban Development**

Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM)  
Water Supply and Sanitation  
Housing

#### **Ministry of Textiles**

Handloom Weavers Comprehensive Welfare Scheme  
Handicraft Artisans Comprehensive Welfare Scheme

#### **Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation**

The Swarna Jayanti Shahari Rozgar Yojana (SJSRY)  
Jawahar Lal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM)  
Interest Subsidy Schemes for Housing for Urban Poor (ISSHU)  
Integrated Low Cost Sanitation Programme  
UNDP Assistance for National Strategy for Urban Poor  
Valmiki Ambedkar Awas Yojana (VAMBAY)  
Other Housing Schemes

#### **Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment**

Book Banks for Scheduled Caste Students  
Hostels for OBC Boys and Girls  
Hostels for Scheduled Caste Girls and Boys  
Scheme of Pre-Matric Scholarship to the Children of Scheduled Castes and OBCs  
Post Matric Scholarship to Students belonging to Scheduled Castes and OBCs  
Scheme of Assistance to Voluntary Organisations for Welfare of Scheduled Castes  
Scheme of Pre-examination Coaching for Weaker Sections based on Economic Criteria  
Aids and Appliances for the Handicapped  
Schemes for Implementation of Persons with Disability Act  
Education Work for Prohibition and Drug Abuse Prevention

#### **Ministry of Tribal Affairs**

Schemes for Pre-Matric Scholarship (PMS), Book Bank and Upgradation of Merit of ST Students  
Scheme of Top Class Education for Scheduled Tribe Students  
Coaching and Allied Scheme for Scheduled Tribes  
Scheme for Construction of Hostels for Scheduled Tribe Girls and Boys  
Educational Complex in Low Literacy Pockets for Development of Women's Literacy in Tribal Areas  
Post Matric Scholarship for Scheduled Tribes Students  
Scheme for the Development of Primitive Tribal Groups  
Ashram Schools in Tribal Sub-Plan Area  
ACA for Educational Development of Tribal Children in Schedule-V areas and Naxal- affected areas  
National/State ST Finance and Development Corporations

#### **WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT: GOVERNMENT'S INITIATIVES**

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Scheme of Assistance to State Scheduled Tribes Finance and Development Corporation (STFDCs)  
Scheme of Grant-In-Aid to Voluntary Organisations Working for Welfare of the Scheduled Tribes  
National Overseas Scholarship Scheme  
Village Grain Banks Scheme for Protection of Tribals from Starvation  
Vocational Training in Tribal Areas

#### **Ministry of Science and Technology**

Science and Technology Programmes for Socio - Economic Development  
Science and Technology Application Programme  
Tribal Sub-Plan and Scheduled Castes Sub-Plan for Development of Scheduled Caste Population  
National Science and Technology Entrepreneurship Development

#### **Ministry of Health and Family Welfare**

Reproductive and Child Health Programme (Maternal Health and Child Health)  
National Rural Health Mission (NRHM)  
National Urban Health Mission (NUHM)  
Pradhan Mantri Gramodaya Yojana for Primary Health Sector  
Universal Immunization Programme  
Pulse Polio Immunization Programme  
Prophylaxis Programme to Prevent Blindness due to Vitamin A Deficiency  
Prophylaxis Programme to Prevent Anaemia due to Iron Deficiency  
Prophylaxis Programme to Prevent Iodine Deficiency Disorders (Goitre)  
Janani Suraksha Yojana (National Maternity Benefit Scheme)  
National Mental Health Programme  
Rashtriya Arogya Nidhi (Financial Assistance to BPL Patients)  
National AIDS Control Programme  
National Diseases Control Programmes (TB, Leprosy, Malaria, etc.)

#### **Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperation**

Assistance to National Cooperative Development Corporation (NCDC) for Cooperative Development  
Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (RKVY)

#### **Ministry of Labour & Employment**

Labour Welfare Schemes  
Improvement in Working Conditions of Child and Women Labour  
Vocational Training for Women  
Beedi Workers Welfare Fund  
Cine Workers Welfare Fund  
Employees Pension Scheme  
Family Pension cum Life Insurance Scheme for Plantation Workers in Assam, Deposit link Insurance  
Scheme for Tea Plantation Workers in Assam  
Rajiv Gandhi Shramik Kalyan Yojana  
Diversification and Extension of Vocational Training Programmes for Women  
Establishment of Regional Vocational Training Institutes (RVTI)  
Establishment of Placement Cells and Conducting Training Needs Assessment  
Grants-in-Aid for State Governments for Establishing Women Industrial Training Institutes (ITI)  
Social Security (Health Insurance) for Unorganised Sector Workers  
Rehabilitation of Bonded Labour

#### **Ministry of Minority Affairs**

Grants-in-Aid to Maulana Azad Education Foundation  
Free Coaching and Allied Scheme for Minorities  
Pre-Matric Scholarship for Minorities  
Post Matric Scholarship for Minorities

#### **WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT: GOVERNMENT'S INITIATIVES**

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Merit - cum - Means Scholarships for Professional and Technical Courses of Undergraduate and Post Graduate Level  
Multi - Sectoral Development Programme for Minorities in Selected Minority Concentration Districts  
National Fellowship for Students for the Minorities Communities  
Schemes for Leadership Development of Minority Women  
Grants-in-Aid to Wakf  
National Minority Development and Finance Corporation

#### **Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution, Department of Food and Public Distribution**

Village Grain Bank Scheme  
Evaluation, Monitoring & Research in Food Grain Management and Strengthening of Public Distribution System  
Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS)  
Antyodaya Anna Yojana  
Mid-Day Meal Scheme (Implemented by Ministry of Human Resource Development)  
Wheat Based Nutrition Programme (WBNP) (Implemented by Ministry of Women and Child

#### **Development under ICDS Scheme)**

Annapurna Scheme (Implemented by Ministry of Rural Development)  
Emergency Feeding Programme (EFP)  
Schemes for Supply of Foodgrains to Hostels/Welfare Institutions (5% of BPL Allocation)  
Schemes for Supply of Foodgrains for SC/ST/OBC Hostels  
Nutritional Programme for Adolescent Girls (NPAG) (Implemented by Ministry of Women and Child Development)

#### **Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises**

Credit Support Programme  
Rajiv Gandhi Udyami Mitra Yojana  
Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme  
Workshed Scheme for Khadi Artisans

#### **Ministry of Law and Justice**

Fast Tracks Courts  
Assistance to State Governments for Establishing and Operating Gram Nyayalayas

#### **Policy Documents**

National Commission for Self Employed Women and Women in the Informal Sector: Shram Shakti Report 1988  
Committee on Status of Women in India - CSWI - Towards Equality 1975  
National Child Labour Policy 1987  
National AIDS Control Policy 2002  
National Commission on Women Act 1990  
National Health Policy 2002  
National Nutrition Policy 1993  
National Perspective Plan 1988  
National Plan for Action 1976  
National Plan of Action for the Girl Child (1992-2000) - 1992  
National Policy for the Empowerment of Women 2001  
National Policy on Education 1986  
National Population Policy 2000  
Report of National Expert Committee on Women Prisoners 1987  
National Charter for Children 2004  
National Plan of Action for Children 2005

## WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT: GOVERNMENT'S INITIATIVES

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Protocol for Pre-Rescue, Rescue and Post-Rescue Operations of Child Victims of Trafficking

### International Documents

Beijing Declaration - Platform for Action  
Declaration of Mexico Plan  
Nairobi Forward Looking Strategies  
United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (UN CEDAW)

### The Objectives of the National Policy for Empowerment of Women include

- (i) Creating an environment through positive economic and social policies for full development of women to enable them to realize their full potential
- (ii) 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
- (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 health care, 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 active participation and involvement of both men and women
- (vii) Mainstreaming a gender perspective in the development process
- (viii) Elimination of discrimination and all forms of violence against women and the girl child; and
- (ix) Building and strengthening partnerships with civil society, particularly women's organizations

### Critical Areas of Concern

#### A. Women and Poverty

**Strategic Objective:** Review, adopt and maintain macroeconomic policies and development strategies that address the needs and efforts of women in poverty

Revise laws and administrative practices to ensure women's equal rights and access to economic resources.

Provide women with access to savings and credit mechanisms and institutions.

#### B. Education and Training of Women

Ensure equal access to education  
Eradicate illiteracy among women  
Improve women's access to vocational training, science and technology, and continuing education  
Develop non-discriminatory education and training  
Allocate sufficient resources for and monitor the implementation of educational reforms  
Promote lifelong education and training for girls and women

#### C. Women and Health

Increase women's access throughout the life cycle to appropriate, affordable and quality health care, information and related services  
Strengthen preventive programmes that promote women's health  
Undertake gender-sensitive initiatives that address sexually transmitted diseases, HIV/AIDS, and sexual and reproductive health issues  
Increase resources and monitor follow-up for women's health

#### D. Violence against Women

Take integrated measures to prevent and eliminate violence against women

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## WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT: GOVERNMENT'S INITIATIVES

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Study the causes and consequences of violence against women and the effectiveness of preventive measures  
Eliminate trafficking in women and assist victims of prostitution and trafficking

### **E. Women and Armed Conflict**

Increase the participation of women in conflict resolution at decision-making levels and protect women living in situations of armed and other conflicts or under foreign occupation  
Reduce excessive military expenditures and control the availability of armaments  
Promote nonviolent forms of conflict resolution and reduce the incidence of human rights abuse in conflict situations  
Promote women's contribution to fostering a culture of peace  
Provide protection, assistance and training to refugee women, other displaced women in need of international protection and internally displaced women  
Provide assistance to women of the colonies and non-self governing territories

### **F. Women and Economy**

Promote women's economic rights and independence, including access to employment, appropriate working conditions and control over economic resources  
Facilitate women's equal access to resources, employment, markets and trade  
Provide business services, training and access to markets, information and technology, particularly to low income women  
Strengthen women's economic capacity and commercial networks  
Eliminate occupational segregation and all forms of employment discrimination  
Promote harmonization of work and family responsibilities for women

### **G. Women in Power and Decision-making**

Take measures to ensure women's equal access to and full participation in power structures and decision-making  
Increase women's capacity to participate in decision-making and leadership

### **H. Institutional Mechanisms for the Advancement of Women**

Create or strengthen national machineries and other government bodies  
Integrate gender perspectives in legislation, public policies, programmes and projects  
Generate and disseminate gender-disaggregated data and information for planning and evaluation

### **I. Human Rights of Women**

Promote and protect the human rights of women, through the full implementation of all human rights instruments, especially the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women  
Ensure equality and non-discrimination under the law and in practice  
Achieve legal literacy

### **J. Women and the Media**

Increase the participation and access of women to expression and decision-making in and through the media and new technologies of communication  
Promote a balanced and non-stereotyped portrayal of women in the media  
K. Women and the Environment  
Involve women actively in environmental decision-making at all levels  
Integrate gender concerns and perspective in policies and programmes for sustainable development  
Strengthen or establish mechanism at the national, regional and international levels to assess the impact of development and environmental policies on women

### **Women's Empowerment**

The National Policy for the Empowerment of Women with the objective of bringing about advancement,

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## WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT: GOVERNMENT'S INITIATIVES

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development and empowerment of women in all walks of life has been formulated  
Stree Shakti Puraskars to honour and recognize the achievement and contribution of individual women and institutions who have done outstanding work in the social sector have been instituted  
Guidelines for operationalisation of District Level Committees on Violence against Women and Helplines for women in distress have been issued  
A National level Committee to monitor Supreme Court's Guidelines on prevention of sexual harassment of women at workplace has been set up.  
A National Resource Centre for Women (NRCW) Portal has been set up to inform and empower women, and lodge complaints of women's rights violations on-line.  
Gender Budget analysis of various Ministries spending was undertaken to assess the utilization of funds for women.

### Programmes for Women

Swawlamban, the erstwhile Training-cum-Employment Programme for Women provides skill training to women to facilitate their employment or self-employment on a sustained basis in traditional and non-traditional trades. Till December 2002, 902 projects including 262 continuing projects benefiting 58,458 women were sanctioned. With effect from 1.4.2006, Swawlamban is being transferred to the States. During 2005-06, 7660 beneficiaries availed benefits under the scheme.

The Department has initiated the gender budgeting exercise to assess the impact and outcome of Government spending on Women. Gender Budget Cells have been set up in 9 Departments/Ministries namely, Health, Family Welfare, Elementary Education and Literacy, Labour and Employment, Rural Development, Social Justice and Empowerment, Tribal Affairs, Urban Employment and Poverty Alleviation and Small Scale Industries.

Measures have been initiated for preparing Gender Development Index for the States and Districts.

Swayamsiddha, an integrated scheme for women's empowerment, is based on the formation of women into Self Help Groups (SHGs) and aims at the holistic empowerment of women through awareness generation, economic empowerment and convergence of various schemes. Against the target of 65,000 SHGs, 69,803 Women's Self Help Groups have been formed, covering a total of 1.002 million beneficiaries till 2008. The scheme ended on 31.03.2008.

Support and Training for Employment Programme (STEP) provides updated skills and new knowledge to poor and asset-less women in traditional occupations for enhancing their productivity and income generation. A package of services such as training, extension, infrastructure, market linkages, etc. is provided besides linkage with credit for transfer of assets. Since its inception in 1987, about 0.8 million women have been covered under various projects till 2008-09. Since 2005-06, each year between 31,000 to 40,000 women benefit under STEP. So far women in dairying sector have received maximum support keeping in view the nature of demands. This is followed by handlooms, handicrafts, sericulture, piggery and poultry.

### Working Women's Hostels

876 Working Women's Hostels have been sanctioned benefiting 63,989 women, with 321 having Day Care Centres, benefiting 8442 children in 2009.

### Legislative Reforms

Comprehensive review of legislation affecting women has been undertaken by SubGroups formed under the Task Force on Women and Children.

### Status of Major International Human Rights Instruments

International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination 1965

International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights 1966

International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights 1966

Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women 1979

Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989

Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment 1984

Ratification, accession or succession

Signature not yet followed by ratification

## 2. Demography and Vital Statistics

The population of the world crossed 6 billion in 1999, and India's population crossed 1 billion in 2000. In 2011, India's population is expected to be around 1.2 billion. Some indicators on the quality of life in Asian countries, including India have improved over the years such as life expectancy, literacy and infant mortality, while others have remained static or deteriorated such as environmental sanitation and environmental degradation. International comparisons on a few of the indicators of human development for Asian countries and indicators for different states in India are given in the tables below.

**Table 1: Indicators of Human Development for SAARC Countries 2008**

Country	Life Expectancy at Birth (Years)	IMR (per thousand live births)	Adult Literacy Rate (%) (age 15 years & above) <sup>b</sup>
<b>India</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>66</b>
Kerala State		12*	90.92\$
Bangladesh	64	47	54
Bhutan	66	56	56
China	73	19	93
Indonesia	70	25	91
Malaysia	74	10	92
Maldives	68	26	97
Nepal	64	43	57
Pakistan	65	73	55
Philippines	72	23	93
Srilanka	72	17	92
Thailand	70	6	94

Notes: Literacy Rate for Kerala is for 7 years and above b: Data refer to estimates for the period 2000-2007. Source: United Nations Children's Fund. (2009). The State of the World's Children 2009: Maternal and Newborn Health. New York: UNICEF. p. 118-121. \* India, Registrar General, Vital Statistics Division. (2009). Sample Registration System Bulletin April 2009. New Delhi. p. 5 \$ India, Registrar General and Census Commissioner. (2001). Provisional Population Totals: Paper 1 of 2001: Census of India 2001. New Delhi. p. 143.

Variations in Human Development Indicators over time such as birth rates, death rates, infant mortality rates, expectation of life at birth and literacy in India are given in Table 2.

WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT: GOVERNMENT'S INITIATIVES

Table 2: Basic Indicators of Human Development, 1951- 2008

Year	Life Expectancy at Birth (years)@	Literacy Rate (percent)	Birth Rate (per thousand)	Death Rate (per thousand)	IMR (per 1000 live births)
1951	32.1	18.3	39.9	27.4	146
1961	41.3	28.3	41.7	22.8	146
1971	45.6	34.5	36.9	14.9	129
1981	50.4	43.6	33.9	12.5	110
1991	59.4	52.2	29.5	9.8	80
1996	62.4	NA	27.5	9.0	72
1997	NA	62.0*	27.2	8.9	71
1998\$	NA	NA	26.4	9.0	72
1999\$	NA	NA	26.1	8.7	70
2000	NA	NA	\$ 25.8	\$ 8.5	\$ 68
2001		# 65.38	\$ 25.4	\$ 8.4	\$ 66
2001-06	Male 63.87				
	Female 66.91				
2002			\$ 25.0	\$ 8.1	\$ 63
2005			23.8	7.6	58
2008	64		22.8	7.4	53

NA: Not Available \* Provisional

Notes: Office of the Registrar General of India, Sample Registration System, NSSO Surveys, and Census 2001.

Source: India, Ministry of Finance, Economic Division. (2000) Economic Survey 1999-2000. New Delhi. p.167.

\$ India, Registrar General, Vital Statistics Division. (2009). Sample Registration System Bulletins October 2006-2008. New Delhi. p. 1.

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@ National Commission for Women. (2004). A Study of the Implementation of Current Policies, Programmes and Schemes for Women and Girls in India: A Comparative Study: Volume 1. New Delhi. p.49.

Some indicators depicting the progress in the situation of Indian women are given in Table 3.

Table 3: Progress of Indian Women, 2008

Development Indicators	Women	Men	Total	Women	Men	Total
<b>* Demography</b>						
- Population (in million in 1971 & 2001)	264.1	284.0	548.1	495.7	531.2	1027.1
- Decennial Growth (1971 & 2001)	24.9	24.4	24.6	21.7	20.9	21.34
<b>* Vital Statistics</b>						
- Sex Ratio (1971 & 2001)	930	-	-	933	-	-
- Expectation of Life at Birth (1971 & 2001-06)	50.2	50.5	50.9	66.91	63.87	-
- Mean Age at Marriage (1971 & 1991)	17.2	22.4	-	19.3	23.9	-
<b>* Health and Family Welfare</b>						
- Birth Rate (1971 & 2008)	-	-	36.9	-	-	22.8
- Death Rate (1970 & 2008)	15.6	15.8	15.7	6.8	8.0	7.4
- IMR(1978 & 2008) Per 1000 live births	131	123	127	55	52	53
- Child Death Rate (2007) (0-4 yr) (2007) (5-14 yrs)	-	-	-	16.9 1.2	15.2 1.1	16.0 1.2
- Maternal Mortality Rate (1980 & 2006)	468	-	-	254	-	-
<b>* Literacy and Education</b>						
- Literacy Rates (1971 & 2001)	7.9	24.9	16.7	54.28	75.96	65.38
- Gross Enrolment Ratio (90-91 & 2006-07) (%)						
Classes I-V	85.5	113.9	100.1	107.8	114.4	111.2
Classes VI-VIII	47.8	76.6	62.1	69.5	77.4	73.6
- Drop-out Rate (1990-91 & 2006-07) (%)						
Classes I-V	46	40.1	42.6	26.6	24.4	25.4
Classes I-VIII	-	-	-	45.3	46.6	46.0

**WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT: GOVERNMENT'S INITIATIVES**

<b>* Work and Employment</b>						
- Work Participation Rate (1971 & 2001) (%)	14.2	52.8	34.3	25.68	51.93	39.26
- Organised Sector (No. in lakhs in 1971 & 2006)	19.3 (11%)	155.6	174.9	51.21 (19%)	218.72	269.93
- Public Sector (No. in lakhs in 1971 & 2006)	8.6(8%)	98.7	107.3	30.03 (16.51%)	151.85	181.88
<b>* Decision Making</b>						
<b>- Administrative</b>						
IAS (2002 & 2006)	535 (10.4%)	4624	5159	571 (11.9%)	4219	4790
IPS (2005 & 2006)	142 (4.4%)	3056	3198	150 (4.7%)	3059	3209
<b>- Political</b>						
PRIs (No. in lakhs in 1997 & 2009)	8.14 (31.3%)	17.84	25.98	10.38 (36.83)	17.79	28.18
Legislative Assemblies (No. in 1985 & 2000)	141 (5.1%)	2632	2773	229 (5.6%)	3838	4067
Parliament (No. in 1989 & 2009)	47 (61%)	721	768	80 (10.12%)	710	790

Notes: @ Refers to 1995 in respect of only 9 States viz. Gujarat, Haryana, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Punjab, Rajasthan, Tripura and West Bengal.

Figure in parentheses indicate the percentage in the total and year of the data in respective columns. Data from Planning Commission.

Source: India, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Department of Women and Child Development. (2001). Working Group on Empowerment of Women: Tenth Plan (2002-07): Report. New Delhi. p.43.

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**SUMMARY -**

The paper has highlighted various initiatives taken by the government of India for women's empowerment. A brief review of various five year plans is highlighted. Welfare oriented approach was adopted in first five year plan to protect the women's rights and to provide social security for women. In second five year plan emphasis has given on organizing women folk and their collective action. The third, fourth and fifth five year plan, women's education was the key program of almost all developmental policies. The paradigm shift has been observed in sixth five year plan in which interdisciplinary approach was adopted with three pronged thrust on health education and empowerment of the women. The development program of women was continued in seventh plan with the new approach 'beneficiary oriented program'. In eight five year plan sectorial development was emphasized with a view to make more efficient and empowered for their contribution in developmental process. In ninth five year plan empowerment of socially disadvantaged group was the key area. Promoting and developing women's participatory institution and strengthening the effort to built self reliance was the focused effort. Access to the information, employment opportunity and financial resources was the core area for development. The paper has also highlighted the various schemes related to empowerment of women. The efforts made by ministry of women and child development, central social welfare board, human resource ministry, rural and urban development ministry etc are also given in this paper.

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