

# Measures for Women's Empowerment

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## I. INTRODUCTION

India attained freedom from British rule on 15<sup>th</sup> August 1947. India was declared a sovereign Democratic Republic on 26<sup>th</sup> 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 public morality.

### 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.
Ninth Five Year Plan (1997-2002)	The Ninth Five Year Plan envisaged : 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.
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## 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

- ◆ 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 (1)]
  - 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)
- 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
- Balika Samridhi Yojana (BSY)
- National Programme for Adolescent Girls (Kishori Shakti Yojana)
- Homes for Infants and Young Children for Promotion of In-Country Adoption
- Scheme for Street Children
- Scheme for Welfare of Working Children and 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

### **Central Social Welfare Board (CSWB)**

- General Grant-in-Aid for Voluntary Organisations in the field of Women and Child Development
- 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
- Family Counselling Centres (FCC)
- Mahila Mandal Programme (MMP)
- Short Stay Homes for Women and Girls (SSH)
- Socio-Economic Programme (SEP)
- Working Women's Hostels (WWH)

### **Other Schemes**

- > Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS)
- > The Swa-Shakti Project, a scheme for Rural Women's Development and Empowerment
- > Swayamsidha, an Integrated Scheme for Women's Empowerment
- > Swadhar, Scheme for Women in Difficult Circumstances
- > Rashtriya Mahila Kosh (Credit for Women)
- > Scheme for Rescue of Victims of Trafficking
- > Priyadarshini

### **Department of Education, Ministry of Human Resource Development**

- > Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA)
- > Prarambhik Shiksha Kosh (PSK)
- > District Primary Education Programme (DPEP)
- > National Programme for Education of Girls at Elementary Level (NPEGEL)
- > Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGBV)

- > Kendriya Vidyalayas (KV)
- > Navodaya Vidyalayas (NV)
- > Mid-Day Meal Scheme (MDM)
- > National Institute of Open Schooling
- > Integrated Education for the Disabled Children (IEDC)
- > Focus on Minority Areas
- > National Literacy Mission (NLM)
- > Jan Shiksha Sansthan (JSS)
- > Mahila Samakhyas : Education for Women's Equality

### **Ministry of Rural Development**

- ❖ Swarnjayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY)
- ❖ Sampurna Grameen Rozgar Yojana (SGRY)
- ❖ National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP) and Annapurna
- ❖ National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA)
- ❖ National Food for Work Programme (NFWP)
- ❖ Cash Component for Food for Work Programme
- ❖ Foodgrains Component
- ❖ 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 Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation**

- The Swarna Jayanti Shahari Rozgar Yojana (SJSRY)
- Jawahar Lal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission
- Low Cost Sanitation Programme
- Valmiki Ambedkar Awas Yojana (VAMBAY)

### **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 to provide Social Defence Services
- ❖ 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**

- > Book Bank Scheme for Scheduled Tribe Students
- > Coaching and Allied Scheme for Scheduled Tribes
- > 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
- > Scheme of Ashram Schools

- > 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
- > Village Grain Banks Scheme, Protection of Tribals from Starvation
- > Vocational Training in Tribal Areas

#### **Ministry of Small Scale Industry**

Trade Related Entrepreneurship Assistance and Development for Women Scheme (TREAD)

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

Science and Technology Programmes for Socio Economic Development

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

- ❖ Reproductive and Child Health Programme (Maternal Health and Child Health)
- ❖ National Rural Health Mission
- ❖ 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 NCDC for Co-operatives Development

#### **Ministry of Labour**

- Improvement in Working Conditions of Child and Women Labour
- Vocational Training for Women
- 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 for Unorganised Sector Workers
- Rehabilitation of Bonded Labour

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

- Grants-in-Aid to Maulana Azad Education Foundation
- Coaching and Allied Scheme for Minorities
- Pre-Matric Scholarship for Minorities
- Post -Matric Scholarship for Minorities
- Multi Sectoral Development Programme for Minorities in Selected Minority Concentration Districts
- National Minorities Development Financial Corporation

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

- ❖ Village Grain Banks
- ❖ Strengthening of Public Distribution System
- ❖ Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS)
- ❖ Antyodaya Anna Yojana (Foodgrains for Poor)
- ❖ Mid-Day Meal Scheme (Implemented by Department of Education)
- ❖ Wheat Based Nutrition Programme (WBNP) (Implemented by Ministry of Women and Child Development under ICDS Scheme)
- ❖ Supply of Foodgrains to Hostels/Welfare Institutions (5% of BPL Allocation)
- ❖ Supply of Foodgrains for SC/ST/OBC Hostels
- ❖ Nutritional Programme for Adolescent Girls (NPAG) (Implemented by Ministry of Women and Child Development)

#### **Ministry of Environment and Forests**

- > Tree Pattas
- > Joint Forest Management

#### **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
- ✓ 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
- Study the causes and consequences of violence against women and the effectiveness of preventive measures
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- ■ 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

## Women's Empowerment

- The National Policy for the Empowerment of Women with the objective of bringing about advancement, 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, 67,971 Women's Self Help Groups have been formed, covering a total of 989,485 beneficiaries.
- Swa-Shakti Project, a World Bank and International Fund for Agricultural Development (I FAD) supported Project, was implemented in 57 districts of 9 States namely Haryana, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka, Uttat Pradesh and Uttarakhand. With partnership of 218 NGOs, 17,647 women's Self Help Groups have been formed benefiting 244,000 women.
- 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 655,222 women have been covered under 138 projects till 2003. In 2004-05, 15,900 women and in 2005-06 19,200 women benefited under the programme. So far women in dairying sector have received maximum support keeping in view the nature of demands. This is followed by handlooms, handicrafts, sericulture, piggy and poultry.

## Working Women's Hostels

914 Working Women's Hostels have been sanctioned benefiting 56,214 women, with 329 having Day Care Centres, benefiting 8681 children in 2004.

## Legislative Reforms

Comprehensive review of legislation affecting women has been undertaken by Sub-Groups 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

**Source:** United Nations Development Programme. (2001).  
Human Development Report 2001. New York: Oxford  
University Press. P. 232.

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