



A Study of the Role of West Bengal Government in Women Empowerment

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Abstract: *Women Empowerment can be defined to promote women's sense of self-worth, their ability to determine their own choices and their right influence Social changes for themselves and others Empower of women is a process aimed at changing the, nature a direction of Systematic forces, which marginalize women in Society women empowerment has gained momentum only after 90s. Since independence a Lot of Schemes were also undertake to empowerment the female Community. As against this backdrop the task of women empowerment has become a vital agenda in the development of all countries. This paper discusses the women empowerment in West Bengal and role of West Bengal by analyzing gender gap with respect to sex ratio, health, education, voice in decision making in household governing bodies, and women social political and financial inclusion. Women empowerment schemes has been analyzed on the basis of the secondary data, collected from Government and non-government sources. Delineating the essential issue to women empowerment in West Bengal, this study highlights the challenges before the state to reach into that destination.*

Keywords: *Woman Empowerment, Gender Gap, Government schemes.*

1. Introduction:

Woman empowerment refers to making women powerful to make them capable of deciding for themselves. Women have suffered a lot thought that year. At the hands of men. Women have always been considered weaker then men in society. The importance of a woman can be learned as the ability to become a source of cell independence.. Woman employment can be define as the process by which woman can gain control over the factors which Greatly affected the life and Well bing. improves the quality of life of the people and an empowered woman is likely to have access to all these things. As the time evolved women realized their power it made them aware of their own place of society.

2. Objective of the Study:

The primary objective of empowerment of women is to create more equitable and participatory structures in which women can gain control over their lives

To know how to organise entertaining and educational activities for development. Present paper is expected to deal with the concept Of awareness of women to make them Conscious.

To know ensure equal right to women to make them confident freely live their Life with self-respect and self dignity. To know the position of West Bengal women empowerment status . To know The w .b government activities in woman empowerment and impact of social political and economic factors

3. Methods.

The present work is mainly based on secondary data collected from different government and non government sources. Textual methods will also be followed in some cases to represent the data relevant for discussing state and also the country as well in respect of gender (women) empowerment.

4. Literature Review.

The literature on the concept of women empowerment provides various definitions of empowerment. Kabeer Naila (Kabeer 2001) defines empowerment as the process by which inna Rural Health, Women people who have been previously denied the ability to make important choices regarding life attain such ability. Empowerment can be regarded as the capacity based on education and skills development for the improvement of the quality of life. (Sen 1990).

UNDP's report (UNDP 2013) relates wellbeing to not only income, education and health but agency and empowerment and subjective well being. The report analyses gender differences in three key areas' capabilities, livelihood and agency and concludes that these three are interrelated. progress or regress in one dimension have substantial impact in another dimensions.

Gender inequality in different dimensions acts as an impediment towards gender(women) empowerment. Unequal treatment in the division of food, access to health care, lesser opportunities for getting outside work and paid employment, increases the vulnerability of women, as mentioned by Dreze and Sen (Dreze and Sen 1990). They also site that gender inequality (Dreze and Sen 1995) with respect to female male ratio, elementary education, labour force participation asset ownership is relegating the women's position to a subsidiary position in Indian society. They conclude that factors mainly expansion of female education and more female inclusion in paid employment can substantially reduce anti female bias by giving more voice and agency within the family (Dreze and Sen 1995). Indian women's relative vulnerability with respect to empowerment originates from patriarchal nature of Indian society, restricted work opportunities, limited mobility and low level of social, political and economic participation (Hashemi, Schuler, & Riley, 1996; Kantor 2003).

Women's autonomy and gender equity plays an important role for women to take fertility decision and health and development of children (Bloom et al 2001, shroff et al 2009). The ability to have children determines the social status of Indian women (Mehta and Kapadia 2008). Rocca et al. (2009) observed that empowered women in south India with active participation in social groups and employment opportunities are more likely to face domestic violence.

5. Women Empowerment: Indian Scenario.

5.1 Background:

Gender discrimination between men and women has a deep root in Indian society. The society isolation the female person from different side exceedingly low labour force, participation rates, gender disparity in literacy rates, highly restricted female property rights, widespread neglect of female children, strong male preference in fertility decisions, forced abortion of female foetus, drastic separation of married women from her natural family, characterise a great part of the Indian society for centuries. Host of measures have been undertaken in independent India for the improvement of the condition of women.

6. Women Empowerment Measures in India

The Indian Government develop for women empowerment accept some lot of schemes Indira Mahila Yojana, ICDS, National health rural Mission, SarvaSiksha Abhijan, JananiSuraksha Yojana, Integrated Child protection scheme, Swadhar a scheme for women in difficult circumstances, Ujjawala-A Scheme for Prevention of Trafficking and Rescue, Rehabilitation and Reintegration, IGMSY, Sabala, Indira Awasyojana, Swayam Siddha, Mahatma Gandhi employment Guarantee act/scheme (MGNREGA/MGNREGS), NMEM (National Mission for the empowerment of women, 2010) etc (Sarkar sreemanta, 2016). Recently government of India launched “betibachaobetipadhao” and “SukanyaSamridhi Yojana’ for the expansion of women empowerment across the country.

6.1 Women Empowerment: Indian position.

The programmes and policies, campaign and slogans, schemes and actions have achieving the gole gender equality. Looking at different dimensions of women empowerment we see that Indian position is still not satisfactory.

6.1.1 Sex Ratio: In India number of females per thousand males was 943 in 2011, 933 in 2001, 927 in 1991, and 934 in 1981 and 941 in 1961. Today female ratio is highest after 1961. Within this happy atmosphere the most unpleasant fact is that the child sex ratio (0-6 years) has declined from 927 in 2001 to 919 in 2011(Census of India 2011).

6.1.2 Labour force participation: Labour force participation is the proportion of population aged 15 and above that is economically active: all people who supply labour for the production of goods and services during a specified period of time. The World Bankdata suggests that from 2000 to 2013 gender disparity in respect of labour force participation rate has increased.

6.1.3 Health: 2011 census data reveals that gender disparity with respect to the literacy rate has increased in comparison to the previous census. The same picture is observed in selected health indicators too. Infant mortality rate for male and female was 39 and 42 in 2013. Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR) was 167 per 100000 live births in 2011-13, and maternal mortality rate was 11.7, the figures are quite high but not ment of Women in India: Issues and Riculture issues and challenges, 51 der Hoeven, R., Sen, B., & Ahmed, M. (2013). Humanity loping countries. UNDP.-autonomy is onflicts. IN TINKER, I.(Ed.) Persistent Inequalities: absurd for a country where almost 20% of the mother does not get proper medical attention at the time of delivery (SRS Bulletin Vol 49 No1). Nomen’s wellness is an important concern because even today, women face discrimination in social culture. According to the World Health Organization, over 800 women die every day in pregnancy and childbirth. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, women and girls encounter new nealth challenges and crises that disrupt their access to health and vital support services.

6.1.4 Education: India can become a developed nation only if women contribute to the best of her capacity and ability which is possible when she is educated and empowered. In 2011 the percentage of educated persons increased to 74.04% of which male percentage was 82.14% and female percentage was 65.46% respectively

6.1.5 Participation in Decision Making: In spite of all efforts to increase women participation in decision making bodies are still quite low. In the 16th Lok Sabha, 12% (64 out of 534) of the total members are women (women and men in india-2016: MOSPI; GOI). Out of the 318 first time elected members of the 16th Lok Sabha, 43 are women (14%). As in 2016, women ministers constituted 12% in Central Council of Ministers (9 out of 75). As in 2016, 9% of the State Assembly members and 5% of the State Council members are women. In 2015, the share of women judges in Supreme Court was 4% (1 out of 26) and it was 10% (54 out of 517) considering all High Courts in India (women and men in india-2016: MOSPI, GOI). National family health survey 3 (NHFS3) reveals a dismal picture of women empowerment in our country.

Only 37 percent of currently married women participate (make the decision alone or jointly with their husband) in making all four decisions. There is no decision for which a majority of currently married women alone are the main decision makers. This in no way present the respectable position of women in Indian society.

6.1.6 Domestic Violence: NHFS 3data reveals that more than a third (34 percent) of women age 15-49 have experienced physical violence, and 9 percent have experienced sexual violence. In all, 35 percent of women age 15-49 in India have experienced physical or sexual violence. Thirty- seven percent of ever-married women have experienced spousal physical or sexual violence and 16 percent have experienced spousal emotional violence. Spousal violence, if it occurs, starts early in marriage: 62 percent of ever-married women who report having experienced spousal physical or sexual violence started experiencing such violence within two years of marriage. This horrifying picture is really shameful for a country which seeks to and speaks to ensure women advancement in the society for a long period of time.

6.1.7 Gender gap and Gender inequality:

As per the Global gender gap index (GGGI2014), prepared by world economic forum, shows that India with a score of 6455 ranks 114 out of 142 countries stands much behind the countries like Srilanka China. In the Gender inequality index (GII) 2013 India ranks 127 in the world, not a very satisfactory position (The Global Gender Gap Report2014).

7. Women Empowerment in West Bengal.

7.1 Background.

Women empowerment has some special significance with respect to west Bengal. With the advent of British rule in India the European enlighten of the 17th and 18th centuries stormed of this zone much compared to the rest of this country. Vidyasagar, Raja Rammohun Roy, Bethun are Proment role for empowerment of women and also some writer Rabindra Nath Tagore, Sarat Chandra Chattopadhyya social reform for the society for the purpose of women empowerment.

As against this backdrop the question of women empowerment assumes some special significance in this state and leaves the most important question whether we have succeeded in maintaining the momentum started with the advent of the British rule in the country. This article wants to explore the issues that are important in the removal of gender disparity and highlight the challenges needed to be addressed to reach into that destination.

7.2. Women empowerment measures in west Bengal: The West Bengal government centrally accept lot of scheme for the women empowerment. programmes and policies undertaken in India since independence are equally applicable for west Bengal too.

7.2.1 STEP (aims to increase the Self- reliance and autonomy of women by enhancing their productivity through training for skill upgradation with a purpose to enable them to take up income generating activities), Swayamsiddha, (scheme to develop empowered women who will demand their rights from family, community and government, have increased access to, and control over, material, social and political resources, have enhanced awareness and improved skills, and be able to raise issues of common concern through mobilisation and networking.), construction /expansion of hostel building with a day care centre,

7.2.2 Swadhar: (targets widows deserted by their families, women prisoners released from jails and without family support, women survivors of natural disasters, rescued trafficked women/girls, women victims of terrorist attacks, mentally challenged women and women with HIV/AIDS.), Rajiv Gandhi Scheme for Empowerment of Adolescent Girls (RGSEAG) - Sabla (Provides health check-up, nutrition and health

education, counselling/guidance on family welfare and childcare, vocational training under National Skill Development programme (NSDP), life skill education, accessing public services, etc).

7.1.3 EDUCATION: For the first time, under the Trinamool Congress administration, a university for women has been set in Diamond Harbour. A state women's college for minorities is coming up in Ekbalpore, Kolkata. Twenty-one hostels for women have been constructed in various polytechnics across the State. Through the State Government's Sabuj Sathi Scheme, wherein bicycles are given to school children in rural areas, thousands of girls, too have benefitted. Besides, over 8,000 girl students studying in Class IX in the Sundarbans region have been given bicycles over the last five years. Around 40 Womens' Corners have been opened in different Government and Government-sponsored libraries to increase access to women readers

7.1.4 SWABALAMBAN SCHEME: Through the Swabalamban Scheme, training is given on a wide range of livelihood activities, eg, zari craft, handloom weaving, beautician courses, community health, readymade garment-making, wood carving, etc. Recently, as a part of this scheme, the State Government has launched an acting project for sex workers, meant to make them self-sufficient by giving them acting lessons and making them employable in the entertainment industry.

7.1.5 MUKTIR ALO: Muktir Alo is a comprehensive scheme for the rehabilitation of sex workers. It provides them with opportunities for leading a life with dignity by providing them alternative career opportunities, and also gives protection to victims of sex trafficking

7.1.6 MATERNITY LEAVE: For the benefit of women, maternity leave for State Government employees has been extended. 'Maternity and Child Care Leave as it is called, can now be taken for a total period of two years, in stages.

7.1.7 KOLKATA SAFEST CITY FOR WOMEN: Kolkata is one of the safest metros in India for women. According to the latest report of the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), Kolkata is the safest city in Kolkata in terms of crimes against women. The India Today Best City Awards 2014 awarded Kolkata the award for the best city in the category of crime and safety. Kolkata Police offers martial arts training to schoolgirls, under Project Sukanya, to make them self-reliant when it comes to defending themselves.

7.1.8 POLICE STATIONS RUN BY WOMEN: The West Bengal Government has adopted a 'zero tolerance' approach towards crime against women. The Government is setting up police stations run exclusively by women police officers. As of now, the Government has set up 30 Women Police Stations, as these are termed ANTI-TRAFFICKING UNITS: The State Government has set up dedicated Anti-Human Trafficking Units and Special Juvenile Police units in each district

7.1.9 EMPLOYMENT: More than 27,000 self-help groups have been formed over the last five years, which have over 16 lakh women members. Financial assistance to the tune of Rs 200.07 lakh has been sanctioned for development of women's cooperative societies. The State has also created employment opportunities, including many for women, through skill development in various sectors. The Biswa Bangla initiative by Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee has also opened up a lot of employment opportunities for women. A lot of the handicraft workers in the rural areas are women, who are earning a decent livelihood, Women's participation in MGNREGS, in which the State has achieved unique milestones, has increased to 47%, which is all-time high in the State Conclusion, we can say that Day-by-day.Growing in women employment in west bengal. This employment changes our society and development in all sites in west bangkok or all over the india. But nowadays the government of wishmen were so many steps for the purpose of the woman Is empowerment. I hope this steps will be Screw the power of women and society will be developed day by day.

7.1.10 Lakshmir Bhandar Scheme : is a flagship program launched by the West Bengal Government in February 2021, to provide financial assistance to women from economically weaker sections of society, for

the empowerment of women in the age group of 25-60 years and enrolled in Laxhmir Bhandar provides ₹ 1000/- every month to women from SC/ST households and 1000/- per month from others. Over 1.5 crore applications were received and processed. The scheme aims to empower women and make them financially independent by providing them with a one-time grant to buy essential goods and services.

Conclusion:

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