

## “Government Schemes: The Challenges of Women Empowering, Women Welfare, Development and Progress are Huge Responsibilities of Indian Government”

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**ABSTRACT:** The present paper is an attempt to analyse the status of women empowerment in India using data from secondary sources. The Indian Government has paid special attention to women's empowerment and very Government policies given attention its commitment to work women's empowerment and welfare. Realising that to make our country a developed country, first of all it is very necessary to empower women by the efforts of men, government, laws and women too. The Government of India initiated so many Schemes for empowerment of Women. Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India has started so many Programmes. Women's empowerment has become a significant topic of discussion in development. Women empowerment is empowering the women to take their own decisions for their personal dependent. Empowering women is to make them independent in all aspects from mind, thought, rights, decisions, etc by leaving all the social and family limitations. It is to bring equality in the society for both male and female in all areas. Women empowerment is very necessary to make the bright future of the family, society and country. Women need fresh and more capable environment so that they can take their own right decisions in every area whether for themselves, family, society or country. In order to make the country fully developed country, women empowerment is an essential tool to get the goal of development. The government and other private institutions are supporting women in the leadership positions in public sector. Leadership of women in the public sector is the key of development in the nation. Representing women in public sector is only the matter of justice however it needs to bring forward all the perspectives to make of women empowerment effective. Women and men both have unique and different experiences so both are important to bring influence into the decision making process. Equalising the rights of women and men in the society improves work quality and thus economic status of the nation. In order to really bring women empowerment in the Indian society, it needs to understand and eliminate the main cause of the ill practices against women which are patriarchal and male dominated system of the society. It needs to be open-minded and change the old mind set against women together with the constitutional and other legal provisions.

**KEY WORDS:** Women Empowerment, Women Welfare, India, Government Schemes, development, progress, equality

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### I. INTRODUCTION

The origin of status of women can be traced to Manu in 200 BC. The women were not allowed to do anything independently even at her home and she could not take any decisions by herself whether its relating to her own self or any other family matters. The higher status enjoyed by women during early Vedic period had slowly started diminishing during the late Vedic period. During, the age of Dharmashtras, the position of women reached an all time low. This period saw the exclusion of women from both economic and religious sphere. During the period of Dharmashtras many ritual started cropping in the Hinduism like- *child marriage was encouraged, widow marriage was look down and the birth of girl child was as a bad luck*. During Medieval India, the *purdah* system which was prevalent among royal families, nobles and merchant class of people prior to the Muslims empire, started to spread to other class of the people also. During the Medieval period, the bad practices increased like – *polygamy, Sati, child marriage, ill treatment of widows*. Women were not given their rights. Women were only pushed by illtreatment. It could easily happen since only male members were taken their advice in relation to framing of laws. Women were denied basic rights as well which were *equal matrimonial rights to property, rights to widows to remarriage, adoption and divorce rights*, etc. Only with the British arrival in India, the position of women saw many changes. Therefore, the 19<sup>th</sup> century is often term as the century of social reform. It is hard to accept this truth when we look back.

India is famous as a great country of many cultures, traditions, religions and geographical characteristics. However, at the same time, India is also known by the sobriquet male chauvinistic nation. The

male chauvinist half of the nation tends to forget that India is referred to as Bharat Mata the mother to every Indian, as well. Traditionally, women have been compelled to play the second fiddle in every sphere, be it in family or public life. Such, in order of things in India in spite of the fact that women nowadays, are no less proficient than men in any field in the society. The violence against women is universal, and some societies have higher rate of violence against women. The need of women empowerment arose because of the gender discrimination and male domination in the Indian society since ancient time. Women are being suppressed by their family members and society for many reasons. The venue of domestic violence is the victim's family environment, where a powerful family member expresses atrocity on a helpless, dependent and powerless family member. Family violence takes place and affects mainly married women, and whether the causes are universal. They have been targeted for many types of violence and discriminatory practices by the male members in the family and society in India and other countries as well.

The United Nations has maintained and strengthened its support for all women. It must show leadership by mainstreaming and prioritizing gender equality in all its work. It must ensure that its efforts are as coherent and effective as possible in support of women's empowerment and in the promotion of women's rights and security. No fair observer can deny the progress achieved in many critical areas throughout quest to empower women to equally enjoy their rights. Through the collective efforts of the United Nations and its Member States, hundreds of millions of women are now free from discrimination and violence; enjoying their right to education; employment and participation. Many women now occupy leadership and decision-making positions. It is engendered design and implementation of policies and budget tracking, with a view to allocating more resources for development programmes supportive of equality and the empowerment of women. Recognizing the pivotal role of national entities entrusted with monitoring and coordinating the rights of women and children. It has been since the historic world conference on women in Beijing, which marked the major progress in the struggle to end multiple types of discrimination against women throughout the world and defined a clear mission to promote women's right. The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Actions serve as an important action plan for women's right, gender equality and female empowerment all over the globe. The international community must turn these principles defined in Beijing into concrete actions and continue encouraging governments and civil society organizations to ensure conditions of real equality for women for all nations.

Empowerment is one, which is widely used but seldom defined. It is an active, multi dimensional process which encompasses several multi reinforcing components that begin with and supported by economic independence. Power is the key word of the term empowerment. Empowerment literally means becoming powerful. Women need to be empowered in order to become strong and ready to take up new challenges for the building up of the family, society and the nation. Infact women empowerment is human empowerment itself. Women Empowerment is a process which helps women to change other women's consciousness through creating awareness. Human development encompasses elements that contribute critical issues of gender and development. The dignity and culture of a society can be detected from the status of women in that society. Empowerment has become the key solution to many social problems. Empowerment of women is empowerment of family/household and in turn development of a nation of a country. Empowerment of women leads to benefit not only to the individual woman and to women groups, but also to the families and community as a whole through collective action for development. Women must define their own needs and goals as well as strategies. A pre-requisite for women's participation in development process is their empowerment. Women must exercise full participation in decision making process in all walks of life and fully participate with men in finding equitable and practical solution to issues both in the family and society. It also declared that human rights of women and girl child are inalienable, integral and invisible parts of universal human Rights.

Women play a great role in the growth and development of the society and making it an advance and modern society. By nature women play their all the roles with great responsibilities and capacity to make a healthy family, solid society, powerful country and reliable world. Women take immense role in everyone's life without them we cannot imagine the success of life. They are the highly responsible for the successful continuation of the life on this planet. They functions variety of significant roles in our society from their birth till the end of the life. She has to take care of herself and family members as wife, daughter, granddaughter, sister, mother, daughter-in-law, mother-in-law, grandmother, etc. Women are an integral part of today's society. They have an active social life. They participate in various social and cultural functions. The women can no more be kept behind the curtains doing only domestic duties. Indian Society continues to be a male dominated society. Women of India continue to live with certain inequalities and exploitations. The constitution of India grants equal fundamental rights to all the citizens. It declares that there is to be no discrimination on the basis of gender. Legally women enjoy equal opportunities for development as are being enjoyed by men. Article 39 of the Constitution of India calls upon the state to provide that adequate means of livelihood to all men and women. Article 51A makes it a duty of every citizen to renounce practices derogatory to the dignity of women. There is to be equal pay for equal work. The state has been also directed to take special steps for

protecting the interests of the weaker sections of society, women and children. The state has passed several laws for ensuring a better protection and development of women. All Five Year Plans have been giving special attentions to the need for securing the objective of empowerment of women.

The makers of our Constitution were concerned for the equality and rights of women and children, and promoting their well-being to ensure a better future for them. This vision is enshrined in constitutional provisions. It is important that the Empowered women mean living with dignity and contributing as equal partners in development in an environment free from violence and discrimination. And it is also important that the well-nurtured children with full opportunities for growth and development in a safe and protective environment. Promoting social and economic empowerment of women through cross-cutting policies and programmes, mainstreaming gender concerns, creating awareness about their rights and facilitating institutional and legislative support for enabling them to realise their human rights and develop to their full potential.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

**Beena Dominic, Dr. C. Amrita Jothi. (2012)** has analyzing the concept, women empowerment by incorporating all divergent views with sufficient logical reasoning. It also explains the problems faced and the possibilities ahead in achieving women empowerment through education. India is famous as a great country of many cultures, traditions, religions and geographical characteristics. However, at the same time, India is also known by the sobriquet male chauvinistic nation. The male chauvinist half of the nation tends to forget that India is referred to as Bharat Mata the mother to every Indian, as well. Traditionally, women have been compelled to play the second fiddle in every sphere, be it in family or public life.

**Dr. V. Anuradha. (2016)** has observe in our day to day life how women become victimized by various social evils. Undoubtedly the father of the nation, Mahatma Gandhi experimented in this field a century ago and he had shown the way for the empowerment of women and the development of the status of women. Gandhi was of the opinion that until and unless women, on the basis of education and knowledge do not find their proper place in social and economic fields, they could not achieve self- respect for themselves. In his lifetime Gandhi inspired Indians to take concrete and practical initiatives regarding women education which will bring them out of these centuries' old conservative customs and rules, which were responsible for their mental and social slavery.

**National Commission for Women, New Delhi (1998)**, has examined the status of women in a complex society like India is not same.

**M. Bhavani Sankara Rao (2011)** has highlighted that health of women members of SHG have certainly taken a turn to better. It clearly shows that health of women members discuss among themselves about health related problems of other members and their children and make them aware of various Government provisions specially meant for them.

**Ram, Usha. (2008)**, has studied the inability of women to have children becomes a cause to subject them to social discrimination and place restrictions on their participation in social events and celebrations. The women who remain childless face many adverse results in the form of divorce/desertion and discrimination.

**Bokil, Milind S. (2003)**, in recent years, the traditional roles of women have undergone some changes due to economic needs, and some efforts were made to bring visibility and mainstream women's contribution to the overall growth and development of society. In the study almost all respondents mentioned that they did not get time for themselves, self-employed women need to be engaged in wider community activity by freeing their energies, which at present are imprisoned in domestic chores and occupational responsibilities. Then alone would their human potential be fully utilized, and be a true indicator of development.

**Premchander, Smita. & Vanguri, Promila. (2007)** the Indian Government has paid special attention to women's empowerment, and both the National Policy for Empowerment of Women (NPEW) 2001, as well as the 10<sup>th</sup> Five Year Plan, illustrate its commitment to women's empowerment and welfare. Given a lack of employment opportunities for women, support for self-employment and women's enterprises came to be recognised as essential for releasing women's economic potential

**Thornhill, Laura. (2004)** has discuss the violence against women is universal, and some societies have higher rate of violence against women.

**Singh and Srivastava (2001)** have talked about in detail the gender equality and women empowerment. They edited 30 well-written essays on diverse dimensions of gender equality and women's situation in India.

**Seth (2001)** presented a comprehensive and analytical account of women's development programmes since India's independence. She began with discussing the historical position of women in Indian society and pointed out the key issues, which have affected women's lives.

**Reddy (2002)** edited a volume on empowerment of women and ecological development in India. The volume highlighted women perspectives, empowerment and ecological context of gender development.

**H. Subrahmanyam (2011)** compares women education in India at present and Past. Author highlighted that there has a good progress in overall enrolment of girl students in schools. The terms empower means to give lawful power or authority to act. It is the process of acquiring some activities of women.

**Swabhimani, Bhubaneswar. (2005)**, women with disabilities are more vulnerable to sexual, physical and emotional abuse.

**Mohammad, Noor & Shahid, Mohammad. (2004)** has analysed the outdoor participation potential of women; the process of women's empowerment; and the interrelationships of women participation, empowerment, gender equality and their functional dependency on age, education, income and caste.

**National Commission for Women, New Delhi. (2002)** Indian Trust for Innovation and Social Change studied a large number of judicial decisions of Supreme and various High Courts; examined the legal provisions available for women; conducted personal interviews with a number of legal experts and other eminent persons; and organized a brainstorming meet to look at policy issues and future plans that could best enhance the role of women's contribution towards sustainable development in the country. It also investigated the challenges that policy makers and the judiciary face on how to improve the status of women. The study examined the merits and demerits of the existing provisions of law and other policies. Enforcement and awareness are not quit there in our society. Women belonging to deprived and poorer sections of Indian society, irrespective of their social strata or region, are by themselves, in no position to solve tough problems.

**Dr. Rashmi Rani Agnihotri, H.R and Dr. Malipatil, K.S. (2017)** women's empowerment has become a significant topic of discussion in development and economics. It can also point to approaches regarding other trivialized genders in a particular political or social context. Empowering women to participate fully in economic life across all sectors is essential to build stronger economies, achieve internationally agreed goals for development and sustainability, and improve the quality of life for women, men, families and communities. Women empowerment can be defined in very simple words that it is making women powerful so that they can take their own decisions regarding their lives and well being in the family and society. It is empowering women to make them able to get their real rights in the society.

**World Bank, New Delhi. (2003)** The World Bank sent a team to evaluate Rural Women's Development and Empowerment Project in January, 2003. In November 2002, the Project supported 17,587 Women's Self Help Groups (SHGs) involving 240,236 women in 7274 villages in 56 districts of 9 states. This represents 10% of all districts and has the potential to scale up and replicate the lessons learnt. Work is done in partnership with the Government and 232 NGOs.

**Doepke M. Tertilt M. (2011)** Does Female Empowerment Promote Economic Development? This study is an empirical analysis suggesting that money in the hands of mothers benefits children. This study developed a series of non cooperative family bargaining models to understand what kind of frictions can give rise to the observed empirical relationship.

**National Commission for Women, New Delhi. (2004)** Even today, there are villages that are 10 km away from a pucca (proper) road, do not have electricity, or a school. Despite the Five Year Plans and major and minor changes in development policy and poverty alleviation strategies adopted since Independence, poverty and hunger still persist. The Economic Survey 2002-03 and the Tenth Plan document emphasized the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and set monitorable targets for eradicating poverty and achieving development. The World Bank and WHO have estimated that in India, 21% of all communicable diseases (11.5% of all diseases) were water related. The incidence of anaemia among pregnant women was estimated to be as high as 88%. A WHO study in six states in India revealed that 40% women reported physical abuse by their partners, and 14% faced severe abuse. The share of women's component of composite public expenditure of Central Government showed a decline from 3.89% in 1995-96 to 2.02% in 2001-02. Women constitute around 50% of the population and they must be part of the budget formulation process. Employment creation programmes must be strengthened. Domestic violence must be treated as a crime and adequate allocations must be made for shelters for women. Access to work, drinking water, drainage and toilets, public infrastructure such as roads, transport facilities, medical facilities, shelter and social security should be given much greater priority in the budget.

**Sharma, Adarsh. (2002)** Gendering the budget is to analyze the budgetary expenditures from a gender perspective. The objective was to enhance fiscal policy making and measures, by providing a mechanism for ascertaining their impacts on women, men, girls and boys. Study analysed involved of public expenditure, and methods of raising revenues; analysis of gender targeted allocations especially programmes targeting women; and a review of equal opportunities, policies and allocations within government services.

**Singamma Sreenivasan Foundation, Women's Information and Resource Centre, Bangalore. (2001)** has studied the National Policy for Women's Empowerment mandates gender audits as an important method of monitoring women's empowerment.

**Institute of Social Studies Trust, Bangalore. (1997)** Health of women has profound implications for the development and well being of a nation. Poverty, health and development are closely interlinked. The

number of women who receive antenatal and post partum care through family welfare programme is still relatively low. A variety of socio-economic factors are responsible for women's lower educational attainment, the need for female labour at home, low expected returns of girls education, and social restrictions.

**Dufllo E. (2011)** Women's Empowerment and Economic Development, National Bureau of Economic Research Cambridge The study argues that the inter relationships of the Empowerment and Development are probably too weak to be self sustaining and that continuous policy commitment to equality for its own sake may be needed to bring about equality between men and women.

**All India Women's Conference, New Delhi. (2006)** Short Stay Homes (SSHs) are residential institutions which provide accommodation, shelter and support services to women in distress who are victims of social discrimination. The study was to devise a model home with adequate support structure to rehabilitate and empower women in distress.

**Purusottam Nayak and Bidisha Mahanta (2009)** have attempted to analyze the status of women empowerment in India. The study reveals that women of India are relatively disempowered and they enjoy somewhat lower status than that of men in spite of many efforts undertaken by government. Gender gap exists regarding access to education and employment. Household decision making power and freedom of movement of women vary considerably with their age, education and employment status. It is found that acceptance of unequal gender norms by women are still prevailing in the society. More than half of the women believe wife beating to be justified for one reason or the other. Fewer women have final say on how to spend their earnings. Control over cash earnings increases with age, education and with place of residence. Women's exposure to media is also less relative to men. Rural women are more prone to domestic violence than that of urban women. A large gender gap exists in political participation too. The study concludes by an observation that access to education and employment are only the enabling factors to empowerment, achievement towards the goal, however, depends largely on the attitude of the people towards gender equality.

### **Objective Of The Study**

The study mainly focuses the following main objectives. They are:

- (a) To bring on light the need of the Women Empowerment;
- (b) To understand the Government's awareness of Women Empowerment in India;
- (c) To analyse the factors influencing the Empowerment of Women;
- (d) To study the Government's Schemes on Women Empowerment, development, progress, equality through the Constitutional provisions;
- (e) To assess the impact of projects on women's access to various development programmes launched by government;
- (f) To review the policies, programmes and projects of central government for development and empowerment of women;
- (g) To know the measures for ensuring women empowerment;

### **III. THE AIMS AND SCOPE OF STUDY**

The aim and scope of this study is to examine the extent to which the status of women is related to awareness, influencing, need of women empowerment, knowledge, development, progress, practice government initiatives and women equality.

### **IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The study is descriptive and analytical in nature. The secondary data pertaining to the study was gathered from the records published by different published books, journals, internet sources, published research papers, magazine and articles.

### **V. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

#### **Women in the International Commitments and conventions and the MDG**

India has 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. India has ratified the convention with two declaratory statements and one reservation. Both the declarations relate to marriage. We have declared that the provisions on marriage and family relations in its Article 16(1) would be ensured in conformity with our policy of non-interference in the personal affairs of any community without its initiative and consent and that while agreeing to the principle of compulsory registration of marriages, failure to get the marriage registered at the same time will not invalidate the marriage. We did not agree to Article 29(1) of the Convention, which establishes compulsory arbitration or adjudication by the International Court of Justice of disputes concerning interpretation. The Mexico Plan of Action (1975), the Nairobi Forward Looking Strategies (1985), the Beijing

Declaration as well as the Platform for Action (1995) and the Outcome Document adopted by the UNGA Session on Gender Equality and Development & Peace for the 21<sup>st</sup> century, titled "Further actions and initiatives to implement the Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action" have been unreservedly endorsed by India for appropriate follow up. The Beijing Platform for Action lays down critical areas of concern for the women, which are listed in the box. The commitments made in the international conventions are as far as possible reflected in the Plan documents and the National Policy for the Empowerment of Women. Eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) have been established in the Millennium Declaration at the General Assembly of the United Nations in the year 2000. These include promoting gender equality and empowerment of women and improving maternal health. Though only these two are explicitly gender specific, gender equality is at the core of achievement of MDGs – from improving health and fighting disease, to reducing poverty and mitigating hunger, to expanding education and lowering child mortality, to increasing access to safe water, and to ensuring environmental sustainability. The major areas of concern for the women of the world are: Women and Poverty; Education and training of women; Women and health; Violence against women; Women in armed conflict; Women and economy; Women in power and decision-making; Institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women; Human rights and women; Women and media; Women and environment; and Girl child.

### **Beijing Platform for Action**

The Fourth World Conference on Women, held in Beijing in 1995 was a landmark event that set the pace for women's empowerment when a Declaration and Platform for Action (BFPA) were adopted. India adopted both without any reservations and identified 12 critical areas of concerns which include Poverty, Education & Training, Health, Violence Against Women, Women in Armed Conflict, Economy, Power & Decision Making, Institutional Mechanism for advancement of Women, Media, Environment, Human Rights of women and girl child. The Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) reviews the progress made by the member countries in these areas. The 52nd Session of CSW was held from 25th February – 7th March 2008. Priority theme was financing for gender equality and empowerment of women.

### **Globalization and women**

With the growing globalization and liberalization of the economy as well as increased privatization of services, women as a whole have been left behind and not been able to partake of the fruits of success. Mainstreaming of women into the new and emerging areas of growth is imperative. This will require training and skill upgradation in emerging trades, encouraging more women to take up vocational training and employment in the boom sectors. This will also require women to migrate to cities and metros for work. Provision of safe housing and other gender friendly facilities at work will need to be provided.

### **Women Empowerment Rights and Support to Women Welfare Organizations**

Women have the right to autonomy, education and job and job shift timings choices. Women have the right and social responsibility to decide whether, how and when to have children and how many to have; no woman can be compelled to bear a male child or prevented from doing so against her will. The special paid leave permissions must also be implemented in private sectors as well. The socio-economic structures and norms that impede women's free exercise of their human rights, including their reproductive rights (such as women's legal status, access to education, decision-making powers, poverty level, choice regarding marriage partners and rights within marriage). It is the human rights, which explicitly recognizes that the women's rights are human rights. In response to this expanded definition of human rights, in March 1994, the United Nations Commission on Human Rights agreed to appoint a Special Rapporteur on violence against women and to integrate the rights of women into the human rights mechanisms of the United Nations. The majority of the world's girls and women remain outside this enlarged vision of human rights due to the pervasive, structural and systemic denial of their liberty at the national and community levels worldwide. The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women, approved in 1979, provides concrete ways to bring these international principles to bear at the national level. The government should take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women by any person, organization or enterprise. In addition, it provides a legal framework for women's empowerment and participation in the development process. It not only guarantees basic human rights and fundamental freedoms, it also lays out policy measures and targets areas of particular concern to women (such as sex roles and stereotyping, affirmative action, trafficking in women, access to health care, education and benefits, and the special needs of rural women). It is important to make efforts to further gender equality and the empowerment of women, that such effort constitutes undue interference in the culture, religion, or traditional practices of a country. Resident coordinators have a special responsibility to address these concerns and to draw distinctions among traditional practices that harm women and girls and deprive them of their universally recognized human rights, such as gender based violence, forced early marriage, and female genital mutilation, and those that are socially valuable and benefit women.

The government and social organizations need to support the women empowerment organizations and inculcate awareness and educating programs, the political participation and leadership of women. In global business organizations the top management eliminates the status and income differentials between men and women. These gender disparities can actually be sharpened or further entrenched. The top management must ensure that the tasks of all staff reflect gender mainstreaming in an appropriate form, and foster similar efforts among colleagues. Instruments to ensure that gender mainstreaming occurs include: the performance appraisal process; the program me review process; gender training for staff; on-going consultation and dialogue with representatives of civil society; and inter-agency workshops on the mainstreaming of key concerns such as gender, the environment, poverty, governance and the like.

### **Different Aspects to Women’s Development**

It is important to understand the various aspects of women empowerment and development.

**Cultural Aspects:** Respect of rights of indigenous and traditional people, Participation in local resource management and Inclusion of indigenous knowledge.

**Legal Aspects:** Awareness of rights, Decentralization, Mainstreaming gender perspectives, Decision making.

**Political Aspects:** Gender justice, elimination of all forms of gender discrimination.

**Economic Aspects:** Poverty Eradication, Microcredit, Women and Economy, Globalization, Women and Agriculture, Women and Industry, and Support services.

**Social Aspects:** Education, Health, Nutrition, Drinking water, Sanitation, Housing and Shelter, and Environment

### **Different Perspectives to Women’s Development**

A large number of social, economic and political factors are found to continue to the development of women in ethnologically diverse, socially complex and tradition-bound societies such as India. Women’s development has come a long way from the earlier welfare orientation. In the welfare approach, women were taken as vulnerable sections of the population, whose situation could be ameliorated through the provision of support services like health, nutrition and child care. Women’s development has been looked at variously from perspectives that have followed the welfare approach. The present approach of empowerment looks at unequal gender and power relations and conscientisation, mobilization, solidarity and collective action, as following table 1 shows:

**Table 1: perspectives of Women Development**

<b>Type of Project goal</b>	<b>Concept of Problem</b>	<b>Concept of Solution</b>	<b>Type of Development Interventions</b>
<b>Welfare</b>	Women’s poverty, women’s special needs, women as a vulnerable groups, women’s lower socio-economic status	Provision of support services of health, nutrition, child care	Build maternity clinics, health clinics, immunization, health education, nutrition education
<b>Economic Self-Reliance</b>	Women as underemployed, unproductive, dependent, lacking in productive skills	Promote self reliance and inter-dependence, provide productive skills, encourage women’s productive enterprises	Income generating projects for women, women’s clubs, soap making, school uniform making etc.
<b>Efficiency</b>	Women as previously overlooked resource in development planning, women as under developed human capital	Identify actual productive roles of women, support women with skills, training and improved technology, invest in previously over looked resource	Integration of women in Development planning, mainstreaming of women’s development, extension advice
<b>Equality</b>	Structure of inequality, discrimination against women in schooling, credit, access to land	Equality of opportunities for women in schooling, access to factors of production	Affirmative action to promote equal opportunity, revise development planning so that women are equal partners and beneficiaries in development process.
<b>Empowerment</b>	Unequal gender power relations, the patriarchy, patriarchal resistance	Conscientisation, mobilization, solidarity, collective action	Grass roots projects, support for women’s collective action, project concerned with democratization and political action

Source: UNICEF

### **Promoting Gender Equality – GOI – UNDP project**

The Ministry signed a Memorandum Of Understanding (MOU) with UNDP in July 2004 for implementation of a project titled “Promoting Gender Equality”. Activities completed so far are as below:

- (a) The process of Engendering of the Eleventh Five Year Plan formulation was taken up by Government of India through National Alliance of Women's Organisation (NAWO) under this Project in collaboration with UNIFEM. The objective of the process (that included five regional consultations and a national consultation) was to reflect on the impact of macro processes and policies on women at the grassroots.
- (b) Training workshops on gender budgeting were conducted under this project for both Central and State government officials.
- (c) Three studies on elderly, disabled and home based workers have been completed to identify options for reducing their vulnerability.
- (d) Conference on time use survey to collect data for systematically quantifying the economic contribution of women in the national economy and to study gender discrimination in the household activities was held.

Following activities are under progress:

- (a) Films on women leaders - Enabling and constraining factors are identified through audio-visual documentation of women leaders in informal positions, especially in poorer and the North Eastern States.
- (b) Preparation of a Women Development Report.
- (c) Study on Gender and Trade in collaboration with UNCTAD.
- (d) Preparation of gender related development index (GDI) and gender empowerment measure (GEM)

### **Convention on Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)**

The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), adopted in 1979, provides a wide-ranging bill of rights for women based on the elimination of discrimination on various grounds. CEDAW includes a number of Articles directly relevant to women's economic empowerment. These include inter alia Article 10 on equal rights to education; Article 11 affording women equal employment, remuneration and protection opportunities regardless of pregnancy, maternity and marital status; Article 13 stipulating women's equal rights to family benefits and financial services; and Article 15 guaranteeing men and women's equality before the law. At the time of writing 189 states have ratified or acceded to CEDAW, meaning its provisions are legally binding in those countries. Implementation is monitored by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, a body of independent experts. State parties to CEDAW report regularly to the Committee, who consider each report and provide concerns and recommendations in the form of 'Concluding Observations'.

India signed the Convention on Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) on 30th July 1980 and ratified it on 9th July 1993 with one reservation and two declaratory statements. The convention obligates the State parties to undertake appropriate legislative and other measures to eliminate discrimination against women and for guaranteeing them the exercise and enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedom on the basis of equality with men. As the implementation of the provisions of CEDAW requires a greater dialogue and convergence among the various ministries responsible for implementing different legal provisions, policies and programmes that work towards women's equality and elimination of discrimination against women, an Inter-Ministerial Committee has been constituted, under the chairpersonship of the Secretary, Ministry of Women & Child Development. India is the second country in the world to have such a Committee for implementation of CEDAW.

### **National Commission for Women**

In pursuance of the National Commission for Women Act, 1990, National Commission for Women (NCW) was constituted on 31st January, 1992 as a statutory body at the National level, to safeguard and promote the rights and interests of women. It has a wide mandate covering almost all aspects of women's development. The Commission investigates and examines the legal safeguards provided for women under the Constitution and other laws and recommends to the Government, measures for their effective implementation. The Commission also reviews the existing provisions of the Constitution and other laws affecting women and recommends amendments to meet any lacunae or inadequacies in such laws; it looks into complaints and takes suo-moto cognizance on matters relating to deprivation of women's rights, etc. The Commission takes up studies/ research on issues of relevance to women, participates and advises in the planning process for socio-economic development of women, evaluates the progress made thereof; inspects jails, remand and shelter homes etc. where women are kept under custody and seeks remedial action wherever necessary. The Commission received a large number of complaints and also took suo-moto cognizance of several cases to provide speedy justice to the victims. Publicity was also made through print advertisements, audio/ video spots etc. to disseminate messages to create awareness on women empowerment and other women related laws and issues. As per NCW Act, the Commission consists of a Chairperson, five Members and a Member Secretary.

### **Special initiatives for Women Empowerment**

**National commission for women empowerment (January 1992):** The Government set- up this statutory body 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.

**Reservation for women empowerment in local self-government:** The 73rd constitutional amendment acts passed in 1992 by parliament ensure one-third of the total seats for women in all elected offices in local bodies whether in rural areas or urban areas.

**The national plan of action for the girl child (1991-2000):** The plan of action is to ensure survival, protection and development of the girl child in order to safeguard the bright future of the girl child.

**National policy for the women empowerment (2001):** The Department of Women and Child Development in the Ministry of Human Resource Development have prepared a “National Policy for the Women Empowerment” in the year 2001. The goal of this policy is to bring about the advancement, development and empowerment of women. The National Policy for Empowerment of Women 2001 has as its goal bringing about advancement, development and empowerment of women in all spheres of life through creation of a more responsive judicial and legal system sensitive to women and mainstreaming a gender perspective in the development process. The strengthening and formation of relevant institutional mechanisms and implementation of international obligations/ commitments and co-operation at the international, regional and sub-regional level was another commitment.

The objectives of National Policies for Women Policy include:

- (a) Creating an environment through positive economic and social policies for full development of women to enable them to realize their full potential.
- (b) 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.
- (c) Equal access to participation and decision making of women in social, political and economic life of the nation.
- (d) 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.
- (e) Strengthening legal systems aimed at elimination of all forms of discrimination against women.
- (f) Changing societal attitudes and community practices by active participation and involvement of both men and women.
- (g) Mainstreaming a gender perspective in the development process.
- (h) Elimination of discrimination and all forms of violence against women and the girl child; and
- (i) Building and strengthening partnerships with civil society, particularly women’s organizations.

### **National Mission for Empowerment of Women**

The National Mission for Empowerment of Women (NMEW) was launched in the year 2010. It is an initiative of the Government of India for holistic empowerment of women by securing convergence of schemes/programmes of different Ministers/Department of Central Government as well as State Governments. The Mission utilises existing structural arrangement of participating Ministries whenever available and partners with Panchayati Raj Institution, CSOs, Central and State Governments/Departments, etc. in implementation of activities. The state level institution consists of the State Mission Authority (SMA) and State Resource Centre for Women (SRCW), which works in co-ordination with NMEW. The SMA under the Chairmanship of the Chief Minister and Ministers of key Departments related to women’s issues besides civil society representatives as members provide direction to the Mission’s activities in the respective States. The State Resource Centre for Women (SRCW) operationalises the activities of the Mission; there are a multitude of agencies that have been designated as SRCWs from Women Development Corporations (WCD) to separate divisions within the WDC or Social Welfare Departments. So, its National Mission for Empowerment of Women (NMEW) is an initiative of the Government of India (GOI) for empowering women holistically. It is conceived as an umbrella mission with a mandate to strengthen inter-sectoral convergence and facilitate the process of coordinating all the women’s welfare and socio economic development programmes across ministries and departments. The salient features of the National Mission for Empowerment of Women (NMEW) are- to ensure economic empowerment of women; to ensure that violence against women is eliminated progressively; to ensure social empowerment of women with emphasis on health and education; to oversee gender mainstreaming of programmes, policies, institutional arrangements and processes of participating Ministries, Institutions and Organizations; to undertake awareness generation as well as advocacy activities to fuel demand for benefits under various schemes and programmes and create, if required, structures at district, tehsil and village level with the involvement of Panchayats for their fulfillment.

### Constitutional provisions for Women in India

Women are as an independent group of the country's total population. The importance of women as an important human resource was recognised by the Constitution of India which not only accorded equality to women but also empowered the State to adopt measures of positive discrimination in their favour. A number of Articles of the Constitution specially reiterated the commitment of the constitution towards the socio economic development of women and upholding their political right and participation in decision making. The framer of the Constitution of India has also given importance the safeguarding of women interest in India, which is incorporated through various Articles. They are as given in the table 2:

**Table 2: Constitutional provisions for Women in India**

Article 14	Men and women to have equal rights and opportunities in the political, economic and social spheres.
Article 15(1)	Prohibits discrimination against any citizen on the grounds of religion, race, caste, sex etc.
Article 15(3)	Special provision enabling the State to make affirmative discriminations in favour of women.
Article 16	Equality of opportunities in matter of public appointments for all citizens.
Article 23(1)	Traffic in human beings and forced labours are prohibited.
Article 39(a)	The State shall direct its policy towards securing all citizens men and women, equally, the right to means of livelihood.
Article 39(d)	Equal pay for equal work for both men and women.
Article 39(e)	The state is required to ensure that the health and strength of women workers are not abused and that they are not forced by economic necessity to enter avocations unsuited to their strength.
Article 42	The State to make provision for ensuring just and humane conditions of work and maternity relief.
Article 51-A(e)	To renounce the practices derogatory to the dignity of women. Drawing the strength from the constitutional commitments, the Government of India has been engaged in the continuous endeavor of concretely translating all the rights, commitments and safe guards incorporated in the Indian Constitution for women from <i>de jure</i> to <i>de facto</i> status.
Article 243-D(3)	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(4)	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-T(3)	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(4)	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

### Legislations and laws for Protection of Women in India

The State enacted several women-specific and women-related legislations to protect women against social discrimination, violence and atrocities and also to prevent social evils like child marriages, dowry, rape, practice of Sati etc. The recently notified Prevention of Domestic Violence Act is a landmark law in acting as a deterrent as well as providing legal recourse to the women who are victims of any form of domestic violence. Apart from these, there are a number of laws which may not be gender specific but still have ramifications on women. Some important acts are which really prevent the atrocities against the Indian Women as follows:

- (a) **Equal Remuneration Act of 1976:** provides for equal pay to men and women for equal work.
- (b) **Hindu Marriage Act of 1955:** amended in 1976 provides the right for girls to repudiate a child marriage before attaining maturity whether the marriage has been consummated or not.
- (c) **The Marriage (Amendment) Act, 2001:** amended the Hindu Marriage Act, Special Marriage Act, Parsi Marriage and Divorce Act, the Code of Criminal Procedure providing for speedy disposal of applications for maintenance; the ceiling limit for claiming maintenance has been deleted and a wide discretion has been given to the Magistrate to award appropriate maintenance.
- (d) **The Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act of 1956:** as amended and renamed in 1986 makes the sexual exploitation of male or female, a cognizable offence. It is being amended to decriminalize the prostitutes and make the laws more stringent against traffickers. An amendment brought in 1984 to the **Dowry Prohibition Act of 1961** made women's subjection to cruelty a cognizable offence. The second amendment brought in 1986 makes the husband or in-laws punishable, if a woman commits suicide within 7 years of her marriage and it has been proved that she has been subjected to cruelty. Also a new criminal offence of 'Dowry Death' has been incorporated in the Indian Penal Code.
- (e) **Child Marriage Restraint Act of 1976:** raises the age for marriage of a girl to 18 years from 15 years and that of a boy to 21 years and makes offences under this Act cognizable.

- (f) **Medical Termination Pregnancy Act of 1971:** legalises abortion by qualified professional on humanitarian or medical grounds. The maximum punishment may go upto life imprisonment. The Act has further been amended specifying the place and persons authorized to perform abortion and provide for penal actions against the unauthorized persons performing abortions.
- (g) **Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act of 1986:** The Act was enacted with the specific objective of prohibiting the indecent representation of women. As per section 2 (c) of the Act indecent representation of women means the depiction in any manner of the figure of a woman, her form or body or any part thereof in such a way as to have the effect of being indecent, or derogatory to, or denigrating, women, or is likely to deprave, corrupt or injure the public morality or morals. It prohibits such representation in any form in any advertisement, publication, writing, painting or in any other manner and also prohibits selling, distribution, circulation of any books, pamphlets, and such other material containing indecent representation of women. The Act prescribes imprisonment which may extend upto 5 years and fine which may extend upto one lakh rupees for those who contravenes the provisions of this Act
- (h) **Commission of Sati (Prevention) Act, 1987:** Sati (Prevention) Act, 1987 is a law enacted by Government of Rajasthan in 1987. It became an Act of the Parliament of India with the enactment of **The Commission of Sati (Prevention) Act, 1987** in 1988. This document contains major provisions of India's 1987 Commission of Sati (Prevention) Act. "Sati" is defined as the voluntary or involuntary burning or burying alive of any woman along with the body of her deceased husband, any other relative, or thing associated with the husband or relative. An attempt to commit sati or to abet such an attempt is punishable with imprisonment or imposition of a fine. Punishment is also to be imposed on any person who glorifies the practice of sati. The Act gives the Collector or District Magistrate the power to prohibit sati and the power to remove temples and other structures erected to glorify sati. The Collector or District Magistrate may also confiscate funds or property acquired for the glorification of sati.
- (i) **The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005:** provides for more effective protection of the rights of women guaranteed under the Constitution who are victims of violence of any kind occurring within the family and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto. It provides for immediate and emergent relief to women in situations of violence of any kind in the home.
- (j) **Sexual Harassment of women at workplace Act, 2013:** was enacted to provide protection against sexual harassment of women at workplace and for the prevention and redressal of complaints of sexual harassment. The sexual harassment results in violation of the Fundamental rights of a women to equality under Article 14 and 15 of the Indian Constitution and her right to life and to live dignity under Article 21 of the Indian Constitution and right to participate any profession or to carry on any occupation, trade or business which includes a right to a safe environment from sexual harassment.

**Some other related women legislations:**

The following various legislations contain several rights and safeguards for women-

- ✓ The Guardians and Wards Act, 1860.
- ✓ Indian Penal Code, 1860.
- ✓ The Christian Marriage Act, 1872.
- ✓ The Indian Evidence Act, 1872.
- ✓ The Married Women's Property Act, 1874.
- ✓ The Workmen's Compensation Act, 1923.
- ✓ The Legal Practitioners (Women) Act, 1923.
- ✓ The Indian Succession Act, 1925.
- ✓ The Child Marriage Restraint Act, 1929.
- ✓ The Payments of Wages Act, 1936.
- ✓ The Muslim Personal Law (Shariat) Application Act, 1937.
- ✓ The Factories Act, 1948.
- ✓ The Minimum Wages Act, 1948.
- ✓ The Employees' State Insurance Act, 1948.
- ✓ The Plantation Labour Act, 1951.
- ✓ The Cinematograph Act, 1952.
- ✓ The Special Marriage Act, 1954.
- ✓ The Hindu Adoptions & Maintenance Act, 1956.
- ✓ The Hindu Minority & Guardianship Act, 1956.
- ✓ The Hindu Succession Act, 1956.
- ✓ The Maternity Benefit Act, 1961.
- ✓ The Beedi & Cigar Workers (Conditions of Employment) Act, 1966.
- ✓ The Foreign Marriage Act, 1969.

- ✓ The Indian Divorce Act, 1969.
- ✓ The Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act, 1971.
- ✓ Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973.
- ✓ The Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, 1976.
- ✓ The Equal Remuneration Act, 1976.
- ✓ The Contract Labour (Regulation & Abolition) Act, 1979.
- ✓ The Inter-State Migrant Workmen (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Act, 1979.
- ✓ The Family Courts Act, 1984.
- ✓ Juvenile Justice Act, 1986.
- ✓ The Child Labour (Prohibition & Regulation) Act, 1986.
- ✓ National Commission for Women Act, 1990.
- ✓ The Infant Milk Substitutes, Feeding Bottles and Infant Foods (Regulation of Production, Supply and Distribution) Act, 1992.
- ✓ The Pre-Natal Diagnostic Technique (Regulation and Prevention of Misuse) Act, 1994.
- ✓ Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 2018

Violence against women (VAW) includes any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life. Violence against women manifests itself in many ways and is one of the most pervasive forms of human rights abuse in the world today. While all women may experience violence, it intersects with other social and identity-based constructs like caste, religion, ethnicity, disability, and sexual orientation to make specific groups vulnerable to different and particular forms of violence. Thus, the nature of the violence and how it manifests itself may differ because of social location. To effectively deal with the problem of violence against women efforts are being made to strengthen the existing legislation through review and amendments and develop institutional mechanisms. The Support Services, in place, to victims of violence are Short Stay Homes, Swadhar , Help lines for women in distress, Legal Literacy and Legal Awareness Camps, earmarking of one Fast Track Court in a district, (where there are two) to deal exclusively with cases of violence against women, constitution of the National Commission for Women (NCW) and State Commissions, increased recruitment of women police officers, establishment of women police cells in police stations and exclusive women police stations and establishment of Rape Crisis Intervention Centres in police districts in some big cities. In addition to these, efforts are being made to sensitize judiciary, police and civil administration.

### **Indian Woman and Legal Rights**

- ✓ **Right to equal pay:** According to provisions under the Equal Remuneration Act, one cannot be discriminated on the basis of sex when it comes to salary or wages.
- ✓ **Right against harassment at work:** The enactment of the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace Act gives you the right to file a complaint against sexual harassment.
- ✓ **Right to anonymity:** Victims of sexual assault have a right to anonymity. To ensure that her privacy is protected, a woman who has been sexually assaulted may record her statement alone before the district magistrate when the case is under trial, or in the presence of a female police officer.
- ✓ **Right against domestic violence:** The act primarily looks to protect a wife, a female live-in partner or a woman living in a household like a mother or a sister from domestic violence at the hands of a husband, male live-in partner or relatives. She or anybody on her behalf can file a complaint.
- ✓ **Right to maternity-related benefits:** Maternity benefits are not merely a privilege of the working woman, they are a right. The Maternity Benefit Act ensures that the new mother does not suffer any loss of earnings following a period of twelve weeks after her delivery, allowing her to rejoin the workforce.
- ✓ **Right against female foeticide:** It is a duty imposed on every citizen of India to allow a woman to experience the most basic of all rights the right to life. The Conception and Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques (Prohibition of Sex Selection) Act (PCPNDT) ensures her right against female foeticide.
- ✓ **Right to free legal aid:** All female rape victims have the right to free legal aid, under the Legal Services Authorities Act. It is mandatory for the Station House Officer (SHO) to inform the Legal Services Authority, who arranges for the lawyer.
- ✓ **Right not to be arrested at night:** A woman cannot be arrested after sunset and before sunrise, except in an exceptional case on the orders of a first class magistrate.
- ✓ **Right to dignity and decency:** In the event that an accused is a woman, any medical examination procedure on her must be performed by or in the presence of another woman.

- ✓ **Right to property:** The Hindu Succession Act allows women and men equal share in inheritance, thereby setting new rules and regulations.

### **Planning Process and Gender Protection**

Women secured a special place in the national plans and planning process primarily with thrusts on health, education and employment. The planning process over the years has evolved from purely welfare oriented approach, to recognizing women's centrality in the development processes and adopting an empowerment approach. This paradigm shift from women's development to women's empowerment ensured that the benefits of development from different sectors do not bypass women and special programmes are implemented to complement the general programmes. The policy to earmark specific percentage of allocations for women in all anti-poverty schemes in rural and urban areas was adopted. The planning process has evolved over the years from purely "welfare" oriented approach where women were regarded as objects of charity to the development programmes and currently to their "empowerment". It was only from the Sixth Five Year Plan onwards that women secured a special niche and space in the national plans and planning process primarily with thrusts on health, education and employment of women.

A paradigm shift occurred in the Eighth Plan where 'empowerment' of women was recognized and accepted as a distinct strategy. A further impetus for sectoral contribution to women's programmes was received with the introduction of the concept of Women's Component Plan in the Ninth Plan whereby identified Ministries were required to indicate the flow of funds to the women's programs and schemes. However the Ninth Plan refrained from making any commitment for achieving any specific goal or target. This was overcome to some extent in the Tenth Plan where for the first time; monitorable targets were set for a few key indicators of human development. The targets include, among other things, reduction in gender gaps in literacy and wage rates and reduction in MMR. The Tenth Five Year Plan (2002-07) called for the three pronged strategy of social empowerment, economic empowerment and providing gender justice to create an enabling environment of positive economic and social policies for women and eliminating all forms of discrimination against them and thus advance gender equality.

Though for the first time, a separate section on Gender Equity was included in the Draft Approach Paper to the 11th Five Year Plan, the paper has given enough focus on women's empowerment issues in the country. The strategy for women is confined to three areas - violence against women, economic empowerment and women's health. There has been attempt to understand that empowerment of women has to be visualized as a holistic integrated approach and in a piece meal manner or as water tight compartments. The Twelfth Plan focuses on women's agency through identified strategies to address the challenges posed by traditional determinants of women empowerment such as economic empowerment, social and physical infrastructure, enabling legislations, women's participation in governance and engendering national policies /programmes.

Over the years there have been efforts made to socially, economically and politically empower women but as a result of the lack of synergy or coordination between these activities, the outcomes could never be completely satisfactory. For example the increasing induction of women representatives into the PRIs should have meant automatic improvement in the lives of rural women, but if it has not happened, it is because the elected women were not educated or literate or even made aware of their rights. Also there are many groups of women who on account of tradition, culture, ethnic, social or religious background are more vulnerable compared to the women in the mainstream sector. These groups need to be specially focused on in the Eleventh Plan. Gender equality, is a constituent of development as well as an instrument of development. No country can be deemed developed if half its population is severely disadvantaged in terms of basic needs, livelihood options, access to knowledge, and political voice. It is an instrument of development because without gender equality other goals of development will also be difficult to achieve, namely the goals of poverty alleviation, economic growth, environmental sustainability etc. A natural corollary of ensuring gender equality is the elimination of gender discrimination. Inequalities between girls and boys in access to schooling or adequate health care prove a very serious disadvantage to women and girls and limit their capacity to participate in the benefits of development.

Gender Budgeting and Gender disaggregated database have been emphasized as the major monitoring tools to examine that the benefits of policies and programmes are reaching those for whom these are intended. Gender budgeting is perceived as a powerful tool not only for tracking allocation of resources for women but also covers implementation issues and outcomes. Ministry of Women and Child Development has been identified as the Nodal Ministry for Gender Budgeting and the Ministry is pursuing vigorously with the Central Ministries/ Departments and State Governments to implement the techniques of gender budgeting. The Ministry has also initiated steps to compile and prepare Gender Development Index and Gender Empowerment Measure for India and States under the GOI- UNDP Project of 'Promoting Gender Equality'. The task of preparation of a gender database for SAARC member countries is being undertaken by SAARC-UNIFEM. In India, the Ministry of Women and Child Development is the nodal agency for the database.

### Planning of Gender Development in India

The Government of India has been planning towards women empowerment and development of their various conditions. The following table 3 shows the result:

**Table 3: planning of Gender Development**

<b>Five Year Plan</b>	<b>Plan Towards Women</b>
First Five Year Plan (1951-56)	Development of women was clubbed with the welfare of the disadvantaged groups like destitute, disabled, aged, etc.
Second to Fifth Five Year Plans (1956-79)	Welfare approach, besides giving priority to women's education, improved maternal and child health services, supplementary feeding for children and expectant and nursing mothers.
Sixth Five Year Plan (1980-85)	Shift in the approach from 'welfare' to 'development' of women. Multi-disciplinary approach with thrust on health, education and employment.
Seventh Five Year Plan (1985-90)	Aimed at raising women's economic and social status and bringing them into the mainstream of national development. The thrust was on generation of both skilled and unskilled employment through proper education and vocational training.
Eighth Five Year Plan (1992-97)	Emphasis on the development of women.
Ninth Five Year Plan (1997-2002)	Attempted 'Empowerment of Women'. The Plan also aimed at 'convergence of existing services' in both women-specific and women-related sectors.
Tenth Five Year Plan (2002-07)	Continues with the strategy of "Empowering Women" as an agent of social change and development through Social Empowerment, Economic Empowerment and Gender Justice.
Eleven Five Year Plan (2007-2012)	Plan has given enough focus on women's empowerment issues in the country. The strategy for women is confined to three areas - violence against women, economic empowerment and women's health.
Twelfth Five Year Plan (2012-2017)	Plan focuses on women's agency through identified strategies to address the challenges posed by traditional determinants of women empowerment such as economic empowerment, social and physical infrastructure, enabling legislations, women's participation in governance and engendering national policies /programmes.

Table 3 shows that the Development of women in the First Five Year Plan (1951- 56) was clubbed with the welfare of disadvantaged group like destitute, disabled, aged, etc. The Second to Fifth Plan (1956-79) continue to reflect the same welfare approach besides giving priority to women's education and launching measures to improve maternal and child health services, supplementary feeding for children, and expectant and nursing mother. Sixth Plan (1980-85) has marked a clear shift in its approach, from welfare to development oriented plans towards women. Seventh Plan (1985-90) aimed at raising women's economic and social status and bringing them into the mainstream of the national development. Eighth Plan (1992-97) focus has on human development with special reference to women. The Ninth Plan (1997-2002) made significant changes in the conceptual strategy of planning for women development. The Tenth Plan (2002-07) continued with its strategy of empowering women as agent of social change and development. Eleventh Five Year Plan (2007-2012) has given enough focus on women's empowerment issues in the country. The strategy for women is confined to three areas - violence against women, economic empowerment and women's health. Twelfth Five Year Plan (2012-2017) focuses on women's agency through identified strategies to address the challenges posed by traditional determinants of women empowerment such as economic empowerment, social and physical infrastructure, enabling legislations, women's participation in governance and engendering national policies /programmes.

### Government of India for Women Empowerment

The Government programmes for women development began as early as 1954 in India but the actual participation began only in 1974. Realizing the supreme importance of development of Women and Children in the country's progress, our forefathers have formulated the country's Constitution with many provisions especially for the cause and the best interest of children and women. Many laws have also been enacted for the protection of women and children. Ever since independence, many programmes are being implemented aiming at their welfare and development in all respects. Ministry of Women & Child Development is "Ensuring overall survival, development, protection and participation of women and children of the country". The Ministry has evolved policies, plans of action, legislations, programmes and schemes for advancement of women and children and has been implementing these with the support of State Governments, other Government agencies and voluntary sector for achieving its mandate. The Ministry of Women & Child Development has 4 autonomous organizations viz. National Institute of Public Cooperation and Child Development (NIPCCD), Rashtriya Mahila Kosh (RMK), Central Social Welfare Board (CSWB) and Central Adoption Resource Agency (CARA) working under its aegis. NIPCCD, RMK and CARA are societies registered under the Societies Registration Act, 1860. CSWB is a charitable company registered under section 25 of the Indian Companies

Act, 1956. These organizations are fully funded by the Government of India and they assist the Ministry in its functions including implementation of programmes/ schemes. The National Commission for Women was constituted as a national apex statutory body in 1992 for protecting and safeguarding the rights of women. As envisaged in the Commission for Protection of Child Rights Act 2005, notified in the Gazette of India on 20th January, 2006 as Act No.4 of 2006, the Government has set up a National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) with effect from 5th March, 2007. Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India have come up with various schemes, programmes, social welfare schemes, Health and Nutrition, scholarship for women empowerment, Girl Child pregnant women, mothers, ward members, Aanganwaadi Workers, Women Health Volunteers, the women living in the rural & tribal areas, ex-servicemen, physically handicapped, nursing women, Lactating mother, widows/destitute, Old age women, women self-help group (SHG), Women Entrepreneurs and Adolescent Girls'. Also, it helps to the women and child belonging to Scheduled Caste (SC) and Scheduled Tribe (ST), Other Backward Classes (OBC), Socially and Educationally Backward Classes (SEBC) Minority Category, below poverty line (BPL) and also for General Category This scheme provides assistance for Education, Training, Financial assistance/Cash, Subsidy on the loans, Scholarship, Nutrition, self-employment and other facilities. The prime goal is for empowerment, development, protection and welfare of Women & Child. The Government of India has various schemes for women operated by different department and ministries in the eyes for women empowerment. Some of these are as follows:

**Family Counselling Centres (FCCs):** The Family Counselling Centre programme was introduced in 1983 due to increasing violence against women specially dowry related cases. The centres provide counselling, referral and rehabilitative services to women and girls who are victims of atrocities, family maladjustments and social ostracism. Through the centres, crisis invention and trauma counselling is also provided in case of natural or manmade disasters. Public opinion on social issues affecting status of women is mobilised through this programme and awareness is created on welfare and development schemes being implemented by the Government.

**Rashtriya Mahila Kosh (RMK):** The Rashtriya Mahila Kosh (RMK) of Ministry of Women and Child Development has in place a unique credit delivery model 'RMK-NGO-SHG-Beneficiaries' and has flexible credit norms, hassle free loans, no collateral and reasonable rate of interest to help women start livelihood activities. Rashtriya Mahila Kosh (RMK) was set up by the government of India in 1993, as a national-level organization to meet the credit needs of poor and asset-less women in the informal sector. Its initial corpus has grown hugely due to prudent credit, investment and recovery management. Its governing board consists of 16 members including government representatives and microfinance specialists. RMK has taken many promotional measures to popularize the concept of microfinance, thrift and credit, formation and stabilization of self-help groups (SHGs) and enterprise development by poor women. RMK extends microfinance through intermediary micro financing organizations (IMOs). Some of its loan schemes include: Loan promotion scheme; Main loan scheme; Revolving fund scheme; Refinance scheme; Repeat loans; Franchisee scheme; Housing loan scheme; Family loan scheme; Working capital term loan.

**Kishori Shakti Yojana (KSY):** Kishori Shakti Yojana (KSY) earlier known as National Programme for Adolescent girls (NPAG) is implemented as a component of ICDS (integrated child development services) in limited number of ICDS projects. The scheme KSY was merged with Sabala or Rajiv Gandhi scheme for empowerment of adolescent girls from March 8, 2011. The objective of KSY is to improve the nutritional, health and development skills of adolescent girls, promote awareness of health, hygiene, nutrition and family care and link them to opportunities for learning life skills, going back to schools, help them gain a better understanding of the social environment and take initiative to become productive members of the society. There are two phases of KSY. In phase I, CDPO and DPOs will be subjected to three days training and orientation to prepare them to act as master trainers to impart training to adolescent girls in their respective projects. A team of professional experts train them in eight different courses. These are: Adolescent Health- This course covers pre-adolescent youths, family life education for youth, adolescent sexuality and stages of development topics, Adolescent Biology-The topic of this course are physical changes, health and nutrition, Marriage-The topic covers in this course is responsible parenthood, Communication skill-The course content of this component is communication skill within the family, Adolescent and Stress- It trains to cope with stress and emotions, intelligence among adolescent, Developing skill-This course covers self awareness, decision making and interpersonal, Protecting adolescent from high risk situations as alcohol/drugs/STI/HIV& AIDS, Legal Rights- Child rights, human trafficking, reproductive rights. This course also covers- a) Nutritional and health status of girls in the age group of 11-18 years, knowledge to help m improve decision making capabilities. b) Health, hygiene, nutrition. c) Family welfare, home management. d) Taking all means to facilitate their marriage only after attaining the age of 18 yrs. and if possible later. e) Better understanding environment related social issues and its

impact on their lives and f) Encourage adolescent girls to various activities to be productive and useful women to the society.

**Mahila Samridhi Yojana (MSY) October 1993:** The Mahila Samridhi Yojana (MSY) was launched on 2<sup>nd</sup> October, 1993 with the objective of empowering the rural women through building thrift habit, self-reliance and confidence. Under this plan, the rural women of 18 years of above age can open their saving account in the rural post office of their own area with a minimum Rs. 4 or its multiplier. The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment Department of Government of India have providing loan to women entrepreneur. Under this scheme Government provides microfinance to women entrepreneur belonging to the target group (backward classes). In order to cater microfinance needs of small entrepreneurs belonging to the target group, the National Backward Classes Finance and Development Corporation (NBCFDC) provided loans through self help group (SHGs) by State Channelising Agency (SCA) under Micro Finance Scheme. Economically homogeneous and affinity group of poor people voluntarily formed Self Help Group to save and to contribute common funds to its members.

**Indira Mahila Yojana (IMY) 1995:** Indira Mahila Yojana (IMY) aims at organizing at the grass-root level to facilitate their participation in decision-making and their empowerment was launched on 20<sup>th</sup> August 1995, to start with, in 200 ICDS blocks. The strength of the scheme lies in the strength of group dynamics. The objectives of the schemes are – convergence of the schemes of every sectoral department; to optimize the utilization of scarce resources in speeding up the process of mainstreaming women in development; awareness generation among the women from rural areas and urban slums; and economic empowerment of women.

**Sabla:** A comprehensive scheme for the holistic development of adolescent girls called-‘SABLA’, is being implemented in 205 selected districts across the country, using the ICDS platform. SABLA aims at an all-round development of adolescent girls of 11-18 years by making them self-reliant by facilitating access to learning, health and nutrition through various interventions such as health, hygiene, nutrition, education, vocational training etc. SABLA promotes awareness about Adolescent Reproductive and Sexual Health among females in the given age group.

**Mahila Samakhya Programme:** Education will be used as an agent of basic change in the status of woman. In order to neutralise the accumulated distortions of the past, there will be a well-conceived edge in favour of women. The National Education System will play a positive, interventionist role in the empowerment of women. It will foster the development of new values through redesigned curricula, textbooks, the training and orientation of teachers, decision-makers and administrators, and the active involvement of educational institutions. This will be an act of faith and social engineering. . .” NPE, 1986 The National Policy on Education, 1986 recognised that the empowerment of women is possibly the most critical pre-condition for the participation of girls and women in the educational process. The Mahila Samakhya programme was launched in 1988 to pursue the objectives of the National Policy on Education, 1986. It recognised that education can be an effective tool for women’s empowerment, the parameters of which are: enhancing self-esteem and self-confidence of women; building a positive image of women by recognizing their contribution to the society, polity and the economy; developing ability to think critically; fostering decision making and action through collective processes; enabling women to make informed choices in areas like education, employment and health (especially reproductive health); ensuring equal participation in developmental processes; providing information, knowledge and skill for economic independence; enhancing access to legal literacy and information relating to their rights and entitlements in society with a view to enhance their participation on an equal footing in all areas.

**Swa-Shakti:** The Swa-Shakti project, which started in the year 1988, aimed at development and empowerment of women (economical), particularly those engaged in “on farm” activities in rural areas, through the formation of dynamic Self Help Groups (SHGs). However, it is a different case that economists and various other Reports have been asking and demanding for off-farm rural employment generation, in order to reduce the pressure on land, particularly in an over-populated developing country like India, which has witnessed disguised unemployment. The Swa-Shakti project is an externally aided one and is implemented in the states of Gujarat, Haryana, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Uttaranchal, Bihar and Chhattisgarh. The project funders are the World Bank and International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). The evaluation of a programme, which is aimed at gender equality and empowerment is essential in the context of the gender mainstreaming of policies and programmes implemented by the different governments as it was one of the objectives stated during the Beijing Women’s Conference held during 1995. Looking at the objectives of the Swa-Shakti project thus becomes pertinent. The objectives of the Swa-Shakti project are: Enhancing

women's access to resources (credit/ loan in a globalized world like ours) for better quality of life through the use of drudgery and time reduction devices, health, literacy and imparting skills for confidence enhancement and increasing women's control over income through involvement in skill development and income-generating activities. In order to evaluate a project one needs to know the targets achieved and missed out (outcome and performance budget is quite useful in this direction). The targets are usually stated in terms of broad indicators. The targets achieved (or missed) by the current project can be briefly stated in the chart above. However, there can be some talk on the limitations of the project in terms of reduction of gender inequalities in income and wages, and women's control over resources and their bargaining both within and outside the family. There exists lack of information regarding women's role-play and overall outcomes. Attempts should be made on research activities including PRA techniques (and also based upon other research attempts/techniques), in order to evaluate such projects.

**Mudra Yojana Scheme for Women:** Launched by the Government of India, the scheme aims to improve the status of women by providing them loans and encouraging them to start new ventures and thereby empowering them by providing a financial security of individual income. Under this scheme, if the loan is approved, the women entrepreneur will be provided with a Mudra card which will function the same way as a credit card however the funds available are limited to 10 per cent of the loan amount granted to you. The loan, which doesn't require any collateral security, can be availed as per 3 schemes: Shishu– Under this, the amount is limited to Rs.50,000/- and can be availed by those businesses that are in their initial stages. Kishor – The loan amount under this scheme ranges between Rs.50,000/- and Rs.5 lakhs and can be availed by those who have a well-established startups, and Tarun – The loan amount under this scheme is Rs.10 lakhs and can be availed by those businesses that are well established but require more funds for expansion purposes.

**Swayamsidha:** Swayamsidha under which women's SHGs have been formed with the objective of all-round development of women, especially socially and economically, by ensuring their direct access to and control over productive resources of the community through a sustained process of mobilization and convergence of all ongoing sectoral programmes and these SHGs are involved in various developmental activities.

**Self-Help Group:** The Self-Help Group [SHG] is considered as a voluntary association of poor people. They are mostly having some socio-economic background. They are involved in solving their common problems through self-help and mutual help. It creates small saving among the members and the amounts are kept with any bank. The SHGs have a membership of 15 to 20 members. A self-help group is also defined as a voluntary group valuing personal interaction and mutual aid as means of altering or ameliorating problems perceived as alterable pressing and personal by most of its members. It is also defined as a group of rural poor generally comprising of small/marginal farmers, land less agricultural labourers, rural artisans, women folk and other micro entrepreneurs who organise themselves to, achieve socio-economic development by raising resource at their level initially and linking with the bank subsequently with the help of NGOs. The implicit objective of SHGs is to combat unjust social relationship by increasing people's participation through their empowerment. The emphasis is also on human resource development. The SHGs are generally of small size. Such small sized SHGs not only ensure active participation, but also promote group dynamics in decision-making and greater transparency. Moreover, separate SHGs for men and women are more conducive for addressing the issues of gender imbalances. Also SHGs frame their own rules and regulations to suit their local conditions. Though the primary objective of micro-finance interventions is to help the poor to surmount poverty, they also assist them to undertake financially viable enterprises, which could be taken up by the banks for commercial lending. SHG in this study is defined as a group of members voluntarily come together to form a group with an objective of empowering economically and socially, contribute savings and thrift, invest the savings in productive enterprises or lend the saving among the group members to more to better stand of bring sustain the habit of savings in future.

**Cent Kalyani Scheme:** It is offered by Central Bank of India, the scheme aims to encourage Women Entrepreneurs to start new project or expand/ modernize their existing unit. The scheme is targeted at new as well as existing women entrepreneurs for her micro/small enterprise (as defined under MSME Act- 2006) .i.e. engaged in manufacturing and service activity for e.g. handloom weaving handicraft, food-processing, and garment making, professionals & self employed women – doctors, chartered accountants, and engineers or trained in art or craft, health / beauty clinics/ dieticians/ fashion designing/ beauty parlors, small business-small lunch/ canteen, mobile restaurant, circulating library/ tailoring/ day crèches for children, tailoring, typing/ std/ Xerox booth etc., transport operators- three wheeler /four wheeler, sectors such as retail trade, education and training institute and self help groups are not eligible for the scheme. The maximum amount that can be granted

under the scheme is Rs. 100 lakhs. The best part of the scheme is that it doesn't require any collateral security or guarantor and charges no processing fees.

**Support to Training and Employment Programme for Women (STEP):** Under Supporting to Training and Employment Programme for Women, which updated skills and new knowledge are provided to poor and asset-less women in the traditional sectors such as Agriculture, Animal Husbandry, Dairying, Fisheries, Handlooms, Handicrafts, Khadi and Village Industries, Sericulture Social Forestry and Wasteland Development for enhancing their productivity and income generation capacity. The STEP scheme was launched as Central Sector Scheme in 1986-87. The scheme aims to make a significant impact on women by upgrading skills for employment on a self-sustainable basis and income generation for marginalised and asset-less rural and urban women especially those in SC/ST household and families below poverty line. The key strategies include training for skill development, mobilizing women in viable groups, arranging for making linkages and access to credit. The scheme also provides for enabling support services in the form of health checkups, child-care, legal & health literacy, elementary education and gender sensitisation. The scheme envisages each project to thrive on a self sustainable basis with minimum governmental support and intervention even after the project period is over.

**Swavalamban Scheme:** Swavalamban Scheme is a co-contributory Pension Scheme, launched in September, 2010 to encourage people from the unorganized sector to voluntarily save for their retirement. The Central Government would contribute a sum of Rs. 1,000 in each National Pension System (NPS) account opened under the Scheme where the subscriber is able to save Rs.1,000/- to Rs.12,000/- during a financial year. The Government's contribution is available upto Financial Year 2016-17. The scheme is for those citizens of India who are not part of any statutory pension/provident scheme. The target beneficiaries of Swavalamban Scheme are co-contributory scheme beneficiaries of State Governments, Aanganwaadi workers, Construction workers, Occupational classes like weavers, fishermen, farmers, dairy workers etc. The Scheme is managed by Pension Fund Regulatory & Development Authority (PFRDA) and financed through budgetary support by way of Grants-in- Aid to PFRDA. The Scheme operates through 62 Aggregators and 71 PoPs. The coverage under this scheme was inadequate due to non-clarity of pension benefits at the age of 60 years. To address this concern, the Government announced a new initiative called Atal Pension Yojana (APY) in the Budget for 2015-16 and was formally launched by the Prime Minister on 9th May 2015 With the introduction of the APY, the enrolment under Swavalamban has been closed and the eligible subscribers under Swavalamban Scheme are being automatically migrated to the Atal Pension Yojana unless they opt out.

**Bharatiya Mahila Bank Business Loan:** For the uninitiated, the Bharatiya Mahila Bank is the first of its kind in the Indian Banking Industry, which was formed with a vision of providing economic empowerment to women. The bank functions as a support system for women entrepreneurs looking to start new businesses in the fields of the retail sector, loan against property, MICRO loans, and SME loans.

**Hostels for working women:** To facilitate the employment of women away from their homes / towns, schemes providing support services for women such as **Working Women Hostels** with day-care centres and independent Crèche Centres are implemented. Crèches facilities for children of working mothers are provided under the aegis of Rajiv Gandhi National Crèche Scheme.

**Swadhar:** The Swadhar Scheme targets women victims of unfortunate circumstances who are in need of institutional support for rehabilitation so that they may lead their life with dignity. The new scheme envisions setting up of one such home in every district. Swadhar Greh aims to provide temporary residential accommodation with provision of food, clothing, medical facilities, vocational and skill upgradation trainings for economic rehabilitation of such women, counseling, awareness generation and behavioural trainings, legal aid, guidance and counseling through telephone. The Swadhar Scheme benefits the important categories of women above 18 years: (i) Women who are deserted and are without any social and economic support; (ii) Women survivors of natural disasters who have been rendered homeless and are without any social and economic support; (iii) Women prisoners released from jail and are without family, social and economic support; (iv) Women victims of domestic violence, family tension or discord, who are made to leave their homes without any means of subsistence and have no special protection from exploitation and/ or facing litigation on account of marital disputes; and (v) Trafficked women/girls rescued or runaways from brothels or other places where they face exploitation and women affected by HIV/AIDS who do not have any social or economic support. However such women/ girls may first seek assistance under Ujjawala Scheme in areas where it is in operation.

**Integrated Child Development Services 1975 (ICDS):** Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) is intended for the early childhood care for holistic development of children below 6 years of age and pregnant and lactating mothers, through a package of six services viz. (i) supplementary nutrition (ii) immunization, (iii) health check-up, (iv) referral services, (v) pre-school and non-formal education and (vi) nutrition and health education. The services of immunization, health check up & referral services are provided through the public health infrastructure i.e. Health Sub Centre, Primary Health Centre & Community Health Centre. The services are provided concurrently so that synergetic and holistic development of children takes place. ICDS Scheme covers rural/ tribal areas and slum population in urban areas. ICDS is an ongoing Centrally sponsored scheme implemented through the State Governments with 100 percent financial assistance from the Central Government for all inputs other than supplementary nutrition for which Central assistance to States is given by the Government of India to the extent of 50% of the actual expenditure incurred by States or 50% of the cost norms, whichever is less.

**Awareness Generation Programme (AGP):** The scheme aim to empower women by providing knowledge on issues ranging from health/nutrition to Constitutional rights by providing information through organizing awareness generation camp and to ensure their participation in development process and decisions-making. The scheme was reformulated in 1986-87. Under the scheme camps are organised throughout the country which provides platform for women to come together to exchange their their experiences and their ideas. Its main aim is to identify the needs of rural and poor women and to increase women's active participation in development and other allied programmes. Issues such as status of women, women and law, women and health, community health and hygiene, technology for women, environment and economy are being taken up in the camps with special focus on local burning issues/problems like female foeticide, domestic violence, trafficking, drug addiction and low sex ratio, etc.

**Rajiv Gandhi Scheme for Empowerment of Adolescence Girls (RGSEAG) (2010):** RGSEAG refers to Rajiv Gandhi Scheme for Empowerment of Adolescent Girls, which was launched in 2010. The scheme is being implemented in 200 districts across the country on pilot basis. This is a centrally sponsored scheme for adolescent girls from 11 to 18 years also known as SABLA. Rajiv Gandhi Scheme for Empowerment of Adolescent Girls - SABLA - would be implemented using the platform of ICDS Scheme through Anganwadi Centers (AWCs). The objectives of the Scheme are – to Enable the AGs for self-development and empowerment, Improve their nutrition and health status, Promote awareness about health, hygiene, nutrition, Adolescent Reproductive and Sexual Health (ARSH) and family and child care, Upgrade their home-based skills, life skills and tie up with National Skill Development Program (NSDP) for vocational skills v. Mainstream out of school AGs into formal/non formal education, Provide information/guidance about existing public services such as PHC, CHC, Post Office, Bank, Police Station, etc.

**Integrated Child Protection scheme (ICPS) (2009-2010):** The Integrated Child Protection Scheme (ICPS) is a centrally sponsored scheme aimed at building a protective environment for children in difficult circumstances, as well as other vulnerable children, through Government-Civil Society Partnership. ICPS brings together multiple existing child protection schemes of the Ministry under one comprehensive umbrella, and integrates additional interventions for protecting children and preventing harm. ICPS, therefore, would institutionalize essential services and strengthen structures, enhance capacities at all levels, create database and knowledge base for child protection services, strengthen child protection at family and community level, ensure appropriate intersectional response at all levels. The scheme would set up a child protection data management system to formulate and implement effective intervention strategies and monitor their outcomes. Regular evaluation of the programmes and structures would be conducted and course correction would be undertaken.

**Dhanalakshmi (2008):** Dhanalakshmi Scheme is A Scheme for conditional Cash Transfer for the Gird Child. The scheme provides for cash transfer to the family of a girl child on fulfilling certain conditionality relating to registration of birth, immunization, enrolment and retention in school till class VIII; and an insurance coverage if the girl remains unmarried till the age of 18.

**Short Stay Homes for Women and Girls:** Short Stay Homes for Women and Girls The Government of India launched a programme in 1969 in the Central Sector called the Short Stay Homes for Women & Girls to protect and rehabilitate those women and girls who are facing social and moral danger due to family problems mental strains, social ostracism, exploitation or other causes. The services extended in these Homes include medical care; case work services; occupational therapy; education- cum- vocational training and recreational facilities. The need for providing Short Stay Homes for Women and Girls has been due to the changing pattern of life, rapid urbanization and industrialization and the resulting migration from rural to urban areas. The breakup of

social institutions like the joint family, contributes considerably in creating problems of adjustment for women and young girls. Cases of marital conflict and emotional disturbance occur. This effort is made to help the women to rehabilitate themselves within a short period of time. These Short Stay Homes have been established by voluntary organizations.

**Condensed Courses of Education for Adult Women (CCE):** This scheme was initiated by CSWB to cater to the needs of adult girls/women who were drop outs from formal schools. The main focus of the scheme is to ensure that contents of the course are need based and modified according to local requirement and simultaneously targeting various stages of educational levels of middle high school and matric/secondary level courses for adult girls/women above the age of 15 year who could not join mainstream education.

**Ujjawala (2007):** A new Central Scheme “Ujjawala”—a Comprehensive Scheme for Prevention of Trafficking, Rescue, Rehabilitation, Re-Integration and Repatriation of Victims of Trafficking and Commercial Sexual Exploitation was launched on 4th December, 2007.

**Rajiv Gandhi National Creche Scheme for children Health Check-up, Food, nutrition:** With rising employment opportunities for women and the growing need to supplement household income, more and more women are entering the job market. With the breaking up of joint family system and the increasing number of nuclear families, working women need help in terms of quality, substitute care for their young children while they are at work. Creche and Day Care Services are not only required by working mothers but also women belonging to poor families, who require support and relief for childcare as they struggle to cope with the burden of activities, within and outside the home. Therefore women need a safe place for their children in their absence. It has become necessary to provide support to the young children in terms of quality, substitute care and other services while the mothers are at work. A crèche is a facility which supports/ make able to parents to leave their children while they are at work and where children are provided the stimulating environment for their holistic development. Creches are developed in such a way that they provide group care to children, usually up to 6 years of age, who need care, guidance and supervision away from their home during the day. The objectives of this scheme are - to provide day-care facilities for children (6 months to 6 years) of working mothers in the community, to improve nutrition and health status of children, to promote physical, cognitive, social and emotional development (Holistic Development) of children, and to educate and empower parents /caregivers for better childcare.

**Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP):** The Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP) is a rural development program of the Government of India launched in financial year 1978 and extended throughout India by 1980. It is a self-employment program intended to raise the income-generation capacity of target groups among the poor, which is found to be highly effective than any other program in India. The target group consists largely of small and marginal farmers, agricultural labourers and rural artisans living below the poverty line. The pattern of subsidy is 25 per cent for small farmers, 33-1/3 per cent for marginal farmers, agricultural labourers and rural artisans and 50 per cent for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes families and physically handicapped persons. The ceiling for subsidy is Rs.6000/- for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes families and the physically handicapped; for others, it is Rs.4000/-in non-DPAP/non-DDP areas and Rs.5000/- in DPAP and DDP areas. Within the target group, there is an assured coverage of 50 per cent for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, 40 per cent for women and 3 per cent for the physically handicapped. Priority in assistance is also given to the families belonging to the assignees of ceiling surplus land, Green Card holders covered under the Family Welfare Programme and also freed bonded labourers. IRDP is a major self-employment programme for poverty alleviation. The objective of IRDP is to provide suitable income-generating assets through a mix of subsidy and credit to below-poverty-line families with a view to bring them above the poverty line. The objective of IRDP is to enable identified rural poor families to cross the poverty line by providing productive assets and inputs to the target groups. The assets, which could be in primary, secondary or tertiary sectors, are provided through financial assistance in the form of subsidy by the government and term credit advanced by financial institutions through this scheme. The program is implemented in all the blocks in the country as a centrally sponsored scheme funded on 50:50 basis by the centre and the state. The scheme has been merged with another scheme named Swarnajayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY) since 01.04 1999. The scheme was introduced because the Government of India realized that the piecemeal efforts in the sphere of rural development had not achieved the targeted objectives. The IRDP was proposed to provide self-employment opportunities to the rural poor through provision of capital subsidy and bank credit so as to help rural poor acquire productive income-generating assets and training to upgrade their skills.

**Training of Rural Youth for Self Employment (TRYSEM):** Training of Rural Youth for Self Employment (TRYSEM) was launched in 1979 as a separate national scheme for training rural youth for self employment. The compel reasons for launching the programme being the huge backlog of unemployment and under employment among the rural youth. Forty youth, both men and women were to be selected in each block and trained in both skill development and entrepreneurship to enable them to become self-employed. It was generating activities in the rural areas and the influx of rural youth to urban areas could curb. Moreover, local needs could also meet with local resources, thereby giving a fillip to rural development. The Objectives of this scheme are: to provide rural youth (18-35 years) from families below the poverty line with training and technical skills to enable them to take up self-employment in agriculture, industry, services and business activities, training is perceived not only in terms of provision of physical skills. But also change in attitude, enhancement of motivation and skills in human relations etc., are also ought to be imparted, self-employment is defined as gainful employment on a full time basis which results in income which is sufficient for the family of the youth cross the poverty line. Situation of employment in which the means of production are owned, hired or taken on lease are taken to be selfemployment situations.

**Prime Minister's Rojgar Yojana (PMRY):** The scheme was launched on the auspicious day of 2nd October, 1993, the birth Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi all over the country. The main objective of the PMRY scheme was to provide easy subsidized financial assistance to educated unemployed youth for starting their own enterprises in manufacturing, business & service and trade sectors. Initially the scheme was aimed at providing self-employment to one million educated unemployed youth in the country by setting up 7 lakh micro enterprises through inducting service and business ventures over a period of 2 ½ years. The scheme was a stupendous success and caught the imagination of the youth. Overwhelmed with the response and ever-increasing need, the Government has decided to make it a permanent scheme and framed modalities & guidelines for its successful implementation and to fulfil the purpose for which it is designed. Salient features of PMRY Scheme: This is a centrally sponsored scheme, the Development Commissioner (Small-Scale Industries) under Ministry of Small Scale, Rural and Agro, Industries Government of India is the apex body for this scheme, the respective Commissioner/Director of Industries implements the scheme at the State level except the four metropolitan cities, with an overall monitoring by the concerned Secretaries of Industries, the implementation agencies at the grass root level are District Industries Centre (DIC) who would be instrumental for the grounding of the units, Small Industries Service Institute(SISI) located in the four Metropolitan cities of Delhi, Kolkata, Mumbai and Chennai are the implementing agencies of this scheme, and the DCSSI has setup a special PMRY division in the headquarters under the able guidance of an IAS officer, DCSSI formulates the rules, regulations and guideline instructions and provides clarifications on all the matters pertaining to PMRY scheme, It has also devised a complete feedback information by the means of getting monthly, quarterly and annual progress reports from all the states to closely monitor the implementation and progress of the scheme.

**Mahila Adhikarita Yojana (MAY):** Under this Yojana loan is provided through State Channelising Agencies (SCAs), Regional Rural Banks (RRBs) and Nationalized Banks to the garget group. Loan under this schemes is provide to Safai Karamchari and Scavenger women and their dependant daughters for projects with maximum project cost upto Rs. 100,000/- for small and petty trade/business and sundry income generating activities.

**Working Women's Forum:** Working Women's Forum is a spontaneous social initiative and was born out of an activist commitment to facilitate upliftment of women by promoting their social and financial independence to fight poverty. The objectives of this forum are: To improve their living and working conditions and create visibility to their various economic roles, To devise an innovative union structure aiming to reach out to large number of women workers at the grassroots within a short time span and ensure their participation at all levels from planning to implementation, To remain women intensive in nature and address the struggles of poor women workers against caste, class and gender oppression in the community and work place, To adopt effective and needs specific programme strategies, in the areas of credit, employment, health, family welfare and support services: and To adopt participatory training strategies towards unionization, conscientisation and empowerment of women workers. To unionize women workers of the Informal sector on trade lines, providing a social platform.

**Poorna Shakti Kendras (PSKs):** The convergence modal are the platform/forum for women to come together, explore their potential and possibilities, raise women's awareness about their contributions to society and their social , economic and political rights, facilitate access to schemes and entitlements and build capabilities for promoting women's participation in decision-making.

**General Grants-in-aid Scheme for Innovative Works on Women and Children:** Under this scheme, project proposal nature related to women and children, are approved for execution by voluntary organisations/institutions, universities and research institutes, including those set up and funded by Central Government/State Governments/Public Sectors Undertakings/Local authorities/Corporations/Institutions. The main project proposals of the scheme are: projects to tackle problem areas which are relatively un-serviced but where need is urgent; projects which fill in essential gaps in existing services and complement them so as to maximize the impact; projects which provide integrated services, where all the components need not be financially supported by one source; project which build capacity of the individual to be self-reliant rather than dependant; project located in backward, rural and tribal areas and urban slums which are poorly serviced by existing services; projects which are community based and render non-institutional services, in certain cases where the nature of the problem so demands institutional programmes are also supported; projects to mobilises public opinion and support to tackle the pressing social problems; projects to tackle problems which requires coverage of more than one state; and projects not covered by any of the existing schemes of the Ministry of Women and Child Development including the Central Social Welfare Board.

**Gender Budgeting Scheme:** Gender budgeting is not an accounting exercise but an ongoing process to ensure that benefits of development reach women as much as men. It entails maintaining a gender perspective at various stages like programme/policy formulations, assessment of needs of target groups, review of existing policies and guidelines, allocation of resources, implementations of programmes, impact assessment, reprioritization of resources, etc. A gender responsive budget is the culmination of this process. Gender budgeting involves dissection of the Government budget to establish its gender-differential impacts and to translate gender commitment into budgetary commitments. It does not seek to create a separate budget but to provide affirmative action to address the specific needs of women. It goes beyond allocation of resources for women, to cover tracking the utilization of allocated resources, impact analysis and beneficiary incidence analysis of public expenditure and policy for a gender perspective.

**Khadi and Village Industries Commission:** The Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) is a statutory body established by an Act of Parliament (No. 61 of 1956, as amended by act no. 12 of 1987 and Act No.10 of 2006). In April 1957, it took over the work of former All India Khadi and Village Industries Board. The KVIC is charged with the planning, promotion, organisation and implementation of programs for the development of Khadi and other village industries in the rural areas in coordination with other agencies engaged in rural development wherever necessary. Its functions also comprise building up of a reserve of raw materials and implements for supply to producers, creation of common service facilities for processing of raw materials as semi-finished goods and provisions of facilities for marketing of KVI products apart from organisation of training of artisans engaged in these industries and encouragement of co-operative efforts amongst them. To promote the sale and marketing of khadi and/or products of village industries or handicrafts, the KVIC may forge linkages with established marketing agencies wherever feasible and necessary. The KVIC is also charged with the responsibility of encouraging and promoting research in the production techniques and equipment employed in the Khadi and Village Industries sector and providing facilities for the study of the problems relating to it, including the use of non-conventional energy and electric power with a view to increasing productivity, eliminating drudgery and otherwise enhancing their competitive capacity and arranging for dissemination of salient results obtained from such research. Further, the KVIC is entrusted with the task of providing financial assistance to institutions and individuals for development and operation of Khadi and village industries and guiding them through supply of designs, prototypes and other technical information. In implementing KVI activities, the KVIC may take such steps as to ensure genuineness of the products and to set standards of quality and ensure that the products of Khadi and village industries do conform to the standards. The broad objectives that the KVIC has set before it are: the social objective of providing employment; the economic objective of producing saleable articles; the wider objective of creating self-reliance amongst the poor and building up of a strong rural community spirit.

**Priyadarshini Yojana:** The Priyadarshini Yojana started off by the Bank of India has been in operating in India, for about twenty years now (launched in 1989) and has been relentlessly helping women who want to stand on their own feet, by helping them with loans at highly attractive rates of interest. This scheme was named thus after the then Prime Minister of India, Mrs. Indira Priyadarshini Gandhi, who was at the helm of affairs when the scheme was launched. This is just one of the women-friendly schemes launched by a nationalised bank, Bank of India. Through this scheme, women who had a dream to start up their own venture and who were brimming with ideas and talent had a chance to convert their dreams into reality by getting financial assistance in Bank of India provided they satisfied few terms and conditions as specified by the bank. Women are considered to be more stable and organised than men, which is why the initiatives or businesses that they start

up have a discipline and are more consistent than the ones started by men. However, the reason why not many women are coming forward to start their own ventures in spite of having immense potential is because of lack of external support in the form of financial assistance, collateral and moral encouragement. Having the necessary funds to start a venture is half the battle won for them. This is where the Priyadarshini Yojana is of great help to women. Launched by the Bank of India, this scheme provides loans to women entrepreneurs without any collateral, provided the loan amount is not too high. Women also get highly subsidised interest rates in these loans and help the women entrepreneurs to grow more independent and successful. Through this Yojana, women who had a dream of starting up a small scale industry benefitted hugely. Under the Bank of India's Priyadarshini Yojana, women were granted collateral-free or surety-free loan for an amount up to 5 lakh INR. However if the loan amount goes beyond this, then the women were required to submit some valid collateral like real estate property, savings deposit in banks and the like. Though small-value loans didn't ask for collateral, they laid out the condition that a part of the money, termed as margin amount, which came up to 10% of the loan, should be borne by the women. This margin amount would be used for their business venture only. Another benefit of this loan was that if women wanted a bigger loan amount, that is, till about 25 lakh INR and if they didn't have the required collateral to provide as a cover for the bank, all they needed to do was to register themselves with a reliable Government-funded and owned trust called CGFT (Credit Guarantee Trust Fund). As the name indicates, this is a fund which guarantees the borrower's credit worthiness to the bank. Women have to pay a meager sum to this trust for registering themselves and once they create an account in the CGFTs for Small and Micro Enterprises, then they can qualify for getting a high amount of loan at very low interest rates and more importantly, without the need for submitting a collateral.

**Scheme on Trade Related Entrepreneurship Assistance and Development (TREAD) for Women:** Women have been among the most disadvantaged and oppressed section of our country with regard to access to and control over resources. Problems faced by them continue to be grave particularly for illiterate & semi literate women of rural and urban areas. In order to alleviate their problems, Govt. Of India launched a scheme entitled "Trade Related Entrepreneurship Assistance and Development" (TREAD) during the 9th plan period. The scheme envisaged economic empowerment of such women through trade related training, information and counseling extension activities related to trades, products, services etc. The Scheme provided for Market Development, financial loans through NGO's who were also provided grant for capacity building. This assistance was to be provided for self-employment ventures by women for pursuing any kind of non-farm activity. Experience has revealed that apart from counseling and training, delivery of credit poses the most serious problem for the poor women. Also there is dearth of information with regard to existing status of women and their common needs for providing necessary support. Therefore, it was considered necessary that if poor women are to be economically empowered, appropriate programmes and schemes are to be designed so as to assist them in all respects. Since such women will not be able to have an easy access to credit, it has also been envisaged that the credit will be made available to applicant woman through NGOs who would be capable of handling funds in an appropriate manner. These NGOs will not only handle the disbursement of such loans needed by women but would also provide them adequate counseling, training and assistance in developing markets. It has, therefore, also been envisaged that a portion of funding be also provided to such NGOs for capacity building. Accordingly the existing scheme has been modified to provide for the following components of assistance.

**Nai Roshni (Scheme for Leadership Development of Minority Women):** The scheme is a new initiative of the Ministry in the area of gender empowerment. The Ministry has started implementation of this scheme from the year 2012-13. The objective of the programme is to empower and instill confidence in women, by providing knowledge, tools and techniques for interacting with Government systems, banks, and intermediaries at all levels so that they are emboldened to move out of the confines of home and community and assume leadership roles and assert their right, collectively and individually, in accessing services, facilities, skills and opportunities besides claiming their due share of development benefits for improving their lives and living conditions.

**National Institute of Public Cooperation and Child Development (NIPCCD):** The National Institute of Public Cooperation and Child Development, popularly known as NIPCCD, is a premier organization devoted to promotion of voluntary action, research, training and documentation in the overall domain of child development. The current thrust areas of the Institute relating to child development are maternal and child health/nutrition, early childhood care and education, childhood disabilities, positive mental health in children and child care support services. The Institute is also focusing on gender planning and mainstreaming, gender-budgeting, economic and political empowerment of women, prevention of sexual harassment at work place, prevention of gender related violence such as female foeticide, female infanticide, trafficking of women and children, child marriage, etc. The main aim of NIPCCD is to be seen as an Institute of global repute in child rights, child

protection and child development by developing partnerships and linkages with National and International agencies and making its training and research activities relevant to the needs of its varying client groups.

**SIDBI Mahila Udyam Nidhi:** SIDBI Mahila Udyam Nidhi is designed to help meet gap in equity in startups by women entrepreneurs. SIDBI or Small Industries Development Bank of India is the principal financial institution for the promotion, financing and development of industry in the small scale sector. The purpose of Mahila Udyam Nidhi is to help women entrepreneurs meeting equity funds requirement will setting up a new business. All existing and new MSME or Tiny Units promoted exclusively by women entrepreneurs or a business consisting of majority of women entrepreneurs are eligible. Mainly the scheme helps women entrepreneurs for setting up new projects in tiny or small scale sector and rehabilitation of viable sick MSME businesses. Existing tiny and small scale business in manufacturing and service sector (except road transport operators) satisfying the investment ceiling (Rs.5 lakhs investment) prescribed for tiny enterprises and under expansion, modernisation, technology upgradation and diversification are also eligible for the scheme. To be eligible for the Mahila Udyam Nidhi scheme, the cost of the project must not exceed Rs.10 lakhs. In such cases, a soft loan limit of upto 25% of the project cost, subject to a maximum of Rs.2.5 lakhs per project is provided for deserving women entrepreneurs. The soft loan would be repayable within 10 years (inclusive of initial moratorium period of not more than five years). However, the period of repayment of soft loan will be co-terminus with that of term loan sanctioned by a scheduled bank.

**Integrated Scheme for Women's Empowerment (ISWE):** The scheme is a point project for North East, designed to address the socio-economic need of the region for empowerment of women and development of children. The main objective of the scheme are: mobilizing community action, converging available services and resources in the area, to address the felt needs of the area, income generation through feasible and sustainable activities for women, and provide support services for health awareness, career counselling centres, vocational training to prevent child trafficking, drug de-addiction.

**Maternity Benefit Programme[erstwhile Indira Gandhi Matritva Sahyog Yojana (IGMSY)]:** Maternity Benefit Programme (MBP) [erstwhile Indira Gandhi Matritva Sahyog Yojana (IGMSY)] is a Centrally Sponsored Conditional Cash Transfer Scheme for pregnant women and lactating mothers introduced in October, 2010 in 53 selected districts on pilot basis using the platform of ICDS. In the Scheme, pregnant women and lactating mothers who are 19 years and above, for first two live births, are paid Rs.6,000/- in two installments upon fulfilling specific health and nutrition conditions. As per the schematic norms, cash benefit is provided in the bank/post office accounts of the beneficiaries by the State Governments/UT Administrations where in distributing maternity benefit in cash/cheque is not permissible. The scheme has an Annual Budget Estimates (BE) of Rs.400 crores. MBP has promoted financial inclusion, among 6 lakh women annually, thereby promoting economic empowerment process.

**National Mission for Empowerment of Women (NMEW) Scheme 2016-17:** National Mission for Empowerment of Women (NMEW) Scheme was approved with a mandate to strengthen inter-sectoral convergence of programmes, policies and schemes for women both at the centre and at the state/UT level. The Scheme is meant to strengthen efforts through inter-sectoral coordination amongst different ministries and programmes with Ministry of Women and Child Development (MWCD) as the nodal Ministry. It also endeavors to facilitate the reach of various services and programmes of the Central and State Governments to the target group of women. Training & capacity building to enhance and strengthen understanding of gender issues and bridge the gap between knowledge and practice is the other focus area of NMEW. NMEW Scheme was approved as a Centrally Sponsored Scheme during the terminal year of the Eleventh plan (2010-11) with 100% central funding. Following restructuring of Centrally Sponsored Schemes in July 2013, the scheme was revised and approved as a subcomponent of the Umbrella Scheme for Protection and Development of Women with a budget of Rs. 225 crore for Twelfth Plan. The major achievements during 2016 may be seen as under: Technical support to MWCD on women centric issues is provided by domain experts who are also engaged in implementation of schemes/programmes like BBBP, One Stop Centre, Women helpline etc. At the national level experts are engaged in the areas of: (i) poverty alleviation economic empowerment, (ii) health and nutrition, (iii) gender budgeting & gender mainstreaming, (iv) gender rights, gender based violence and law enforcement, (v) empowerment of vulnerable and marginalised groups, (vi) social empowerment & education, (vii) media & advocacy and (viii) information technology

**Mahila Police Volunteers (MPVs):** Ministry of Women and Child Development in collaboration with the Ministry of Home Affairs have envisaged engagements of Mahila Police Volunteers (MPVs) in States/ UTs who will act as a link between police and community and facilitate women in distress. Guidelines of Mahila Police

Volunteers have been developed in collaboration with Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPR&D), Ministry of Home Affairs. An MPV will serve as a public police interface in order to fight crimes against women. Home Ministry has given its consent for this scheme in April 2016.

**33% representation of women in police force:** The overall representation of women in police force is low and has become a matter of growing concern with respect to strengthening institutional mechanisms for achieving gender equality and justice. The role of police assume great importance, for a woman affected with violence as police is the primary contact who needs to be sensitive towards issues of women rights and gender justice. Further women working as police officer could be of great help and support to such women. The Ministry of Women and Child Development has taken up the matter vigorously with State Chief Ministers/ Administrators of States/UTs to strengthen gender sensitivity in the police force so as to improve the overall police responsiveness to gender sensitive cases by advising States/UTs to increase the representation of women in the police force. Through a Cabinet decision, the UTs have been mandated to undertake this reservation. Ministry of Home Affairs has also issued an advisory on 04.09.2009 to all State Governments to increase representation of women in police to 33% of the total strength.

**Gender Champions:** In order to move towards a gender just society that treats women equally, the Ministry of Women and Child Development in collaboration with the Ministry of Human Resource Development have Gender Champions as responsible leaders who will facilitate an enabling environment within their schools/colleges/academic institutions where girls are treated with dignity and respect. They will strengthen the potential of young girls and boys to advocate for gender equality and monitor progress towards gender justice.

**Scheme for setting up One Stop Centre:** The Ministry has approved Scheme for setting up One Stop Centre to support women affected by violence on 4th March, 2015. The scheme aims to facilitate access to an integrated range of services including medical aid, police assistance, legal aid/case management, psychosocial counseling, and temporary support services to women affected by violence. One Stop Centres (OSC) is meant to support women affected by violence, in private and public spaces, within the family, community and at the workplace. Women facing physical, sexual, emotional, psychological and economic abuse, irrespective of age, class, caste, education status, marital status, race, and culture will be facilitated with support and redressal. Aggrieved women facing any kind of violence due to attempted sexual harassment, sexual assault, domestic violence, trafficking, honour-related crimes, acid attacks or witch-hunting who have reached out or been referred to the OSC will be provided with specialized services. OSC are set up in each State/UT. This scheme facilitates access to an integrated range of services including medical, legal, and psychological support. The OSC will be integrated with Helpline No. 181 and other existing helplines. Women affected by violence and in need of redressal, services could be referred to OSC through these helplines. The objectives of this scheme are - to provide integrated support and assistance to women affected by violence, both in private and public spaces under one roof; to facilitate immediate, emergency and non-emergency access to a range of services including medical, legal, psychological and counseling support under one roof to fight against any forms of violence against women.

**Indira Gandhi Matritva Sahyog Yojana (IGMSY) for the pregnant and lactating women:** The Indira Gandhi Matritva Sahyog Yojana (IGMSY) is a maternity benefits scheme implemented by the Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India. This scheme is for the pregnant and lactating women of 19 years of age or above for first two live births to contribute to a better enabling environment by providing conditional cash transfer for improved health and nutrition and to also promote health and nutrition seeking behavior in them. It provides partial wage compensation to women for wage-loss during childbirth and childcare and to provide conditions for safe delivery and good nutrition and feeding practices. It provides cash maternity benefit to the women. The pregnant women of 19 years of age and above is entitled to a cash incentive of Rs. 4000 in three installments for first two live births. The objectives of this scheme are - to promoting appropriate practice, care and institutional service utilization during pregnancy, safe delivery and lactation; to encouraging the women to follow (optimal) nutrition and Young Child feeding practices, including early and Exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months; and to providing cash incentives for improved health and nutrition to pregnant and lactating mothers in order to contribute to better enabling environment.

**Universalisation of Women Helpline Scheme:** The Ministry has approved the Scheme for Universalisation of Women Helpline on 19<sup>th</sup> February, 2015 and is being implemented from 1st April, 2015. So far, women help lines have been operational in 18 States/UTs i.e. Arunachal Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Chandigarh, Delhi, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Kerala, Karnataka, Uttarakhand, Mizoram, Jharkhand, Bihar, Punjab, Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Haryana and Nagaland. The remaining are in various stages of

operationalisation. The objectives of the Scheme are - to provide toll-free 24-hours telecom service to women affected by violence seeking support and information, to help crisis and non-crisis intervention through referral to the appropriate agencies such as police/Hospitals/Ambulance services/District Legal Service Authority (DLSA)/Protection Officer (PO)/OSC, and to provide information about the appropriate support services, government schemes and programmes available to the woman affected by violence, in her particular situation within the local area in which she resides or is employed.

**Regulation of Matrimonial Websites:** In view of the increasing number of crimes committed against women on account of information shared on matrimonial websites; it was decided in consultation with Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeITY), Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) and service providers to look into the issue and to put in place a regulatory framework in order to check this misuse. The Ministry has already carried out extensive work for the preparation of the due diligence guidelines for the matrimonial websites and prepared a concept paper detailing the extent of the problem, existing safeguards, existing legal remedies, etc. which has been circulated to stakeholders concerned. Based on extensive stakeholders consultation initiated by the Ministry, an advisory on functioning of Matrimonial Websites was issued by MeITY on 6th June, 2016.

**Panic Button on Mobile Phones:** To provide safety to women in distress situations, it is important to enable them to send out a distress signal to a family member or the police authorities. To achieve the objective, the Ministry of Women and Child Development had taken up the issue of installation of Panic Button on mobile phones as one of the initiatives. Based on extensive stakeholder consultations initiated by the Ministry, the 'Panic Button and Global Positioning System in Mobile Phone Handsets Rules 2016' has been notified by the Department of Telecommunications.

**Initiative to combat Cyber Crime:** The Ministry of Women and Child Development dedicated an e-mail solely to address and resolve the issues of hateful conduct and stalking on social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook etc. with effect from July, 2016. Firstly, the complainant is enquired whether they have filed any FIR or have reported the offense to the concerned social media platform, if not, then the links to do so are provided to the complainant in the mail. Subsequently, in most cases, an autogenerated complaint reference number is sent to the complainant's registered e-mail address by the social media platform, which the complainant is suggested to share with the Ministry for future reference. If the Social Media platform or the Police fail to respond to the complaint within seven days, the Ministry intervenes, asking for an update/ Action Taken Report in the matter with the concerned authorities. This is intended to curtail online abuse against women by addressing every complaint that is received on the e-mail of the Ministry which is forwarded either to the concerned social media platform for the generation of complaint reference number or to Cyber Crime Cell for necessary action. In most cases, the Ministry intercedes in order to expedite the grievance and to resolve the matter of the complainant.

**Revision in Passport Rules:** It was brought to the notice of MWCD that a person cannot obtain his/her passport by providing only the name of his/her mother. The submission of father's name was mandatory in this regard which would have to be published on the passport. An Inter-Ministerial Committee (IMC) having representation from the Ministry of Women and Child Development, Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) and Ministry of Law & Justice was constituted to discuss the said passport rule. The Committee submitted its report with recommendations in this regard. The report was accepted by the Minister, MEA and on the basis of the recommendation made therein changes were made in the passport rules. Now as per the revised rules, name of either parent is sufficient; further a person need not submit her/his marriage/divorce certificates for the process.

**Standard Operating Procedures on NRI Matrimonial Disputes:** Due to increase in Indian diaspora and consequent overseas marriages, women whether residing in India or abroad are facing issues related to desertion, domestic violence, ex-parte divorce and custody of children etc. As the issues involve inter-country jurisdiction, women engaged in such cases face legal hurdles. The Ministry has constituted an Inter-Ministerial Committee having representation from Ministries of External Affairs, Home Affairs, and Law and Justice to look into the matter and develop guideline to streamline the procedure related to NRI matrimonial disputes. Based upon the discussion and deliberations held during IMC, the ministry has prepared Standard Operating Procedures (SoPs) for women involved in NRI matrimonial disputes. These draft SoPs narrate the step wise correct legal recourse to be undertaken by women facing NRI matrimonial disputes to facilitate speedy access to justice. These are also intended to serve as an effective reference manual for court and police officials across the country that are investigating such matrimonial disputes or are representing such women's interest in the court of law.

**Inclusion of Acid Attack as a disability:** MWCD had requested the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment to include acid attack induced damage and disfigurement in the specified list of disabilities as provide under schedule annexed with section 2 (x) of the Right of Persons with Disabilities Bill, 2014 (earlier version). Now, the new Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 notified on 27th December 2016, in the Schedule attached with section 2 (zc) defines 'specified disability' as 'physical disability, intellectual disability, mental illness, disability caused due to neurological or blood disorders, multiple disabilities or any other category as specified by the Central Government. Here, it is relevant to mention that physical disability as specified in the Schedule under the head 'locomotors disability' include "acid attack" as a kind of disability. This move will provide opportunities for acid attack victims to access additional services and entitlements for their benefit.

**Beti Bachao Beti Padhao Scheme:** Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India. Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao (Save girl child, educate girl child) is Central Government Sponsored Scheme by Government of India. The prime goal of this scheme is to generate awareness and improving the efficiency of welfare services meant for women. Also, it aims to celebrate the Girl Child & Enable her Education. The Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao (BBBP) Scheme has been introduced to address the issue declining Child Sex Ratio (CSR). This scheme is being implemented through a national campaign and focused multi-sectoral action in 100 selected districts low in CSR, covering all States and UTs. This scheme is implemented by the joint initiative of Ministry of Women and Child Development, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and Ministry of Human Resource Development. Prime Minister Modi launched the programme on 22 January 2015 from Panipat, Haryana on the occasion of International Day of the Girl Child, Prime Minister Modi, called for the eradication of female foeticide. The objectives of this scheme are - to prevent gender biased sex selective elimination, to ensure survival & protection of the girl child, and to ensure education of the girl child.

**Mahila E-Haat:** The Ministry of Women & Child Development launched "Mahila E-Haat" a bilingual portal on 7th March, 2016. This is a unique direct online marketing platform leveraging technology for supporting women entrepreneurs/SHGs/ NGOs for showcasing the products / services which are made/manufactured/ undertaken by them. It is an initiative for meeting aspirations and needs of women. This was done keeping in mind that digital media is a critical component for business efficiency and thus it should be made available to the majority of Indian women entrepreneurs. Since its launch over 17 lakhs visitors / hits have been received by the Mahila-E-Haat Portal. Women entrepreneurs/SHGs/NGOs from all states are showcasing products/services across 18 categories viz., Clothing (Men, Women & Children), Bags, Fashion Accessories/Jewellery, Decorative and gift items, Home Décor, Carpets / Rugs, Baskets, Linen/ Cushion Covers, Boxes, Pottery, Grocery & Staples / Organic, Natural Products, Industrial Products, Educational Aids and Miscellaneous.

**Stree Shakti Package for Women Entrepreneurs:** There is a lot of focus on promoting women entrepreneurship in India with the government and financial institutions having various schemes. One such scheme promoted by the State Bank of India (SBI) is Stree Shakti Package for Women Entrepreneurs. In this article, we look at the SBI Stree Sakthi Package for women Entrepreneurs in detail. Businesses operated by women entrepreneurs are eligible to receive loan under Stree Shakti Package. For the purpose of identifying "Women Entrepreneurs" businesses, the definition recommended by the MSME Department of India will be applicable. As per definition, a Women Entrepreneur business is "A small scale industrial unit / industry related service or business enterprise managed by one or more women entrepreneurs in proprietary concerns or in which she/they individually or jointly have a share capital of not less than 51% as partners /shareholders/Directors of Private Limited Company/Members of Co-operative Society. Thus, women entrepreneurs or women entrepreneur business in retail trade, manufacturing or services are eligible for the scheme. Also, Women professionals like Doctors, Beauticians, Architects and Chartered Accountants can avail loan under the Stree Shakti package.

**Shadi Shagun Yojna:** This was launched on 6<sup>th</sup> August, 2017 by the Modi Government. Under the scheme all the graduate Muslim girls completing their graduation in any of the streams before their marriage would also be eligible to avail the Shaadi Shagun Yojana benefits. To motivate girls from minority groups to pursue higher education was also under initiative.

**Central Victim Compensation Fund:** Central Victim Compensation Fund has been created under Nirbhaya, which is a corpus fund to support States/UTs for their Victim Compensation Scheme. This is helping ensure adequate and timely support for women survivors of crime and violence.

**Women Helpline Scheme:** This was launched on 6<sup>th</sup> August, 2017 by the Modi Government. The objectives of this scheme are: to provide 24hrs emergency and non-emergency response to women affected by violence including sexual offences and harassment both in public and private sphere, and to provide integrated support and assistance to women affected by violence.

## VI. CONCLUSION

The empowerment of women is fundamental for the progress of any country. The Constitution of India conveys a powerful mandate for equality and rights of women as citizens in its Preamble, Fundamental Rights and Duties and also provides for specific provisions for affirmative action. India is also sign to a number of International Conventions, primarily the Convention on Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), and has recently endorsed the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which will further change the course of development by addressing key challenges including gender equity. The Government of India is leading a number of schemes and programmes to improve the status of women as equal partners and active agents of change in the social, economic, cultural and political progress of the country, but sadly due to lack of public awareness and media coverage of such drives, the schemes are not being able to reach the target sections. The people in media as well as well-informed/educated citizens of the country are themselves not fully aware of all the schemes and programmes being run by the government for rural and backward sections of women in the society. Both the print and electronic media can play an instrumental role in effective implementation of government welfare schemes and other activities. A journalist should be well aware of welfare schemes and government programmes so that he or she can report anomalies effectively which will ultimately help public at large.

The government has initiated some really good schemes for Women Empowerment in the Indian Society. But mere than schemes and more than laws, social discussions, debate, promotion and awareness are the areas which need to be addressed to deal with concerned problems. The day, when these schemes and programmes will reach each and every corner of our country, then our developing country will emerge as a developed and prosperous nation. The government has made many schemes for child development and empowerment of women, but it is also true that women in rural and backward areas they know only about two or three such schemes out of all the government schemes of the country. Therefore, awareness drives by student volunteers, NGOs, social activists, personalities through social campaign, etc. need to be encouraged by the government, where they must go to villages as a part of recreational program and should educate people about all these schemes and programmes.

The government and social organizations need to support the women empowerment organizations and inculcate awareness and educating programs, the political participation and leadership of women. In global business organizations the top management eliminates the status and income differentials between men and women. These gender disparities can actually be sharpened or further entrenched. The top management must ensure that the tasks of all staff reflect gender mainstreaming in an appropriate form, and foster similar efforts among colleagues. Instruments to ensure that gender mainstreaming occurs include: the performance appraisal process; the program me review process; gender training for staff; on-going consultation and dialogue with representatives of civil society; and inter-agency workshops on the mainstreaming of key concerns such as gender, the environment, poverty, governance and the like.

It can be believe that consciousness-raising campaign about the equal participation of women in the public sphere, leadership training and transparent hiring practices are all very important. It must eliminate discriminatory laws and practices and then we can encourage participation at the highest possible level right away and the political parties should commit to achieving gender parity within the leadership and also in the list of candidates that they put up for elections. We must reserve our utmost fervent solidarity for women, who find themselves in situations of subjugation and, in some cases, slavery. We must always say it loud and clear that human rights are universal and gender equality as an expression of those rights is universal as well so women's rights are human rights. No philosophical, political, religious or other reasons can justify the violation of these fundamental ideals and this is the type of globalization that we have to value to the utmost. Women in India, through their own unrelenting efforts and with the help of Constitutional and other legal provisions and also with the aid of Government's various welfare schemes, are trying to find their own place. And it is a heartening sign that their participation in government as well as in private sector, in socio-political activities of the nation and also at the highest decision making bodies is improving day by day. But it is extremely important to identify, understand and eradicate the patriarchal practices against women existing in our society. There has to be openness to change and willingness to educate not just women but even men to make sure that the society is ready to embrace equal rights and opportunities for both men and women. The need of hour is to educate, aware and sensitize the society regarding women and child issues and to inculcate a feeling of togetherness among whole community.

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