UNIT 7 : SOCIAL POLICIES AND SPECIAL PRIVILEGES FOR WOMEN AND CHILDREN

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7.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

After going through this unit, you will be able to-

- learn about the Ministry of Tribal affairs, its mandate and various schemes and policies implemented by the Government of India through Ministry of Tribal Affairs for the development, empowerment, and Protection of Rights of the Tribal Population.
- learn how Ministry of Women and Child Development came into inception,
- understand various schemes for Women empowerment and Childcare
- explain the development initiatives taken by the Government of India and its impact and outreach across India through its development programmes and policy implementations.

7.2 INTRODUCTION :

For centuries women in India were suffering due to discrimination, exploitation and exposed to various kinds of harassment at different levels.

Women constitute 48.52%[1] of the total population of the country and therefore it becomes crucial that the development of the country make women as the nucleus to any major policy planning. It is essential because empowerment and autonomy of women will bring improvement to their political, social, economic and health status. After Independence, the policy planners envisaged various constitutional provisions to protect the interest of women and has undertaken various socio-economic development measures for their upliftment. Over the years, experiences have shown that the development programmes were most effective when simultaneous steps were taken to improve the status of women in society. Let us now delve deeper into the policies which were implemented in the post Independence periodthat led to the inception of the ministry of Women and Child Development for empowering women in India.

7.3 WOMEN IN INDIAN ECONOMY :

Attention for the development of women in India received its attention from the government since the First Five year plan (1951-56). At the beginning of the planningphase, issues of women were clubbed with the welfare of the disadvantaged group like disable, destitute and aged. From first to fifth five year plan (1951 to 1979) followed a similar pattern of focus with addition to priorities like womens' education, and measures to improve maternal and child health services. In the sixth five year plan (1980-85), a shift from 'Welfare' planning to 'development' of womenapproach was taken up. The plan adopted a multi-disciplinary approach with an emphasis on health, education, and employment.

The seventh five year plan (1985-90) stressed on raising their economic and social status to bring women population into mainstream national development. The eighth five year plan (1992-97) ensured that the benefits of development to women flowed from other development sectors to ensure that women should be equal partners and participants in the development process.

The ninth five year plan (1997-2002) made two important changes in the strategy of development for women. First, 'Empowerment of Women';its aim was to create an enabling environment where women can freely exercise their rights both within and outside the home as equal partners with men. The second was convergences of existing services available in both women-specific and women related sectors. The tenth five year plan (2002-2007) target was to set certain monitorable targets for women. It focused on organizing women into Self-Help Groups (SHGs) for income generation activities and also facilitated access to services such as literacy, health, non-formal education, water supply, etc. Women's Component Plan (WCP) ensured that 30% of funds/benefits were earmarked for women under the various schemes of different ministries/departments.

In the previous plans, there were consistent efforts to bridge the gender gap and provide an environment for women to become economically, politically and socially free and empowered. In a unique move ineleventh five year plan (2007-12) a committee of "feminist" economists was constituted to ensure gender sensitive allocation of public resources apart from identifying significant trends for women in the economy and suggesting policy measures to integrate women into the growth agenda. In the twelfth five year plan (2012-2017)the Planning Commission pushed for special dispensation for the single woman and encourages women to actively participate in the field of agriculture and animal husbandry in addition to health, education, urbanization, and governance.

7.3.1 MINISTRY OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT :

The Ministry of Women and Child Development came into existence as a separate ministry from 30th of January, 2006[2]. Previously, since 1985 the ministry was known as the Department of Women and Child Development under the Ministry of Human Resources Development, Government of India.

The ministry was constituted with the prime intention of addressing the gaps in the national-state action plan for women and children development initiatives and promoting inter-Ministerial and inter-sectoral convergence to create gender equitability and child-centered legislation policies and programmes.

The Vision of the Ministry is to empower women to live with dignity and contributing as equal partners in development in an environment free from violence and discrimination. And, well-nurtured children with full opportunities for growth and development in a safe and protective environment.

The Mission of the ministry is to promote social and economic empowerment of women through cross-cutting policies and programmes, mainstreaming gender concerns, creating awareness about rights and facilitating institutional and legislative support. Secondly, ensuring development care and protection of children, spreading awareness about their rights and facilitating access to learning, nutrition, institutional and legislative support for enabling them to grow and develop to their full potential.

7.3.2.SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SCHEMES FOR WOMEN:

The following schemes are being implemented by the Ministry for the social and economic development of women.

i) **BetiBachao, Beti Padhao:**The campaign was launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on 22nd January 2015 from Panipat, Haryana on the occasion of International Day of the Girl Child. It aims to address the issue of the declining child sex ratio. This is a national initiative jointly run by the Ministry of Women and Child Development, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and the Ministry of Human Resource Development.

The main objective of the campaign was to-

i) To prevent gender biased sex selective elimination.

ii) To ensure survival and protection of the girl child.

iii) To ensure the education of the girl child.

The main reason to start this initiative was because ofdownward increasing skewed female to male ratio in India. States like Haryana (861), Punjab (876), Jammu & Kashmir (892), Uttar Pradesh (898), and Bihar (919) was showing the lowest female to male ratio in per 1000 births in the census of India 2001. This was happening because of Sex-selective abortion or female foeticide.

To sensitize the Indian population large scale sustained mobilization and communication campaign was rolled out to create equal value for the girl child and promote her education.

ii) One-Stop Centres (OSCs): These centersare intended to support women affected by violence, in private and public spaces, within family, community or at work place. Aggrieved women facing any kind of violence due to attempted sexual harassment, sexual assault, domestic violence, trafficking, honor-related crimes, acid attacks or witch-hunting will be provided with specialized services.

The Ministry of Women and Child Development started implementing the OSC scheme since 1st April 2015. Under this scheme, it has been envisaged that OSCs would be set up across the country in a phase wise manner (2017-18, 2018-19 and 2019-20). The Govt.of India has set up a dedicated fund called the "Nirbhaya Fund" to establish the OSCs with enhanced safety and security provisions.

The main objectives of the schemes are:

i) To provide integrated support and assistance to women affected by violence, both in private and public spaces under one roof.

ii) 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 form of violence against women.

iii) WOMEN HELPLINE SCHEME: This scheme is intended to provide 24 hours immediate and emergency response to women affected by violence and information about women related government schemes/programmes across the country through a single uniform

number. The Women Helpline (WHL) is/will be integrated with the One-Stop Centre Scheme (OSCs) in every state. The scheme was launched on 1st of April 2015 along with the One-Stop Centre. The Department of Telecommunication has allocated code 181 to all states/Union Territories to use it as the Women Helpline number.

The main objectives of the scheme are:

i) To provide toll-free, 24 hours telecom service to women affected by violence seeking support and information.

ii) To facilitate crisis and non-crisis intervention through referral to the appropriate agencies such as police/hospitals/ ambulance service/ District Legal Service Authority (DLSA)/ Protection Officer (PO)/ OSC.

iii) To provide information about the appropriate support services, government schemes and programmes available to the woman affected by violence, and location-based information to a particular woman residing or employed in a certain area.

iv) SWADHAR GREH: The scheme was launched by the Ministry of Women and Child Development in 2002 for the rehabilitation of women in difficult circumstances. Under the scheme women in need of institutional support for rehabilitation to lead their life with dignity. They are provided shelter, food, clothing, health care as well as economic and social security.

Under the scheme, SwadhaarGrehwill be set up in every district with a capacity of thirty women at a time. The primary objectives of the schemes are:

i) To cater to the primary needs of shelter, food, clothing, medicinal treatment and care of the women in distress and who are without any social and economic support.

ii) To enable them to regain their emotional strength that was hampered due to their encounter with unfortunate circumstances.

iii) To provide them with legal aid and guidance to enable them to take steps for their readjustment in family/society and rehabilitate them economically and emotionally.

v) **WORKING WOMEN HOSTEL:** With more women leaving their homes in search of employment in big cities as well as urban and rural industrial clusters, they face the difficulty of finding safe and conveniently located accommodation.

The objective of the scheme is to promote availability of safe and conveniently located accommodation for working women with day-care facility for their children in urban, semi-urban or rural areas where employment opportunities for women exist. The working women hostel project will be made available to all working women without any distinction with respect to caste, religion, marital status, etc. The Working Women Hostel scheme makes the provision for girls'upto age 18 years and boys upto age 5 years to accompany working mothers and can avail services of the Day Care Centre as provided under the scheme.

vi) **Support to Training and Employment Programme for Women (STEP):** The Support to Training & Employment Programme for Women (STEP) was launched as a Central Sector Scheme in 1986-87. STEP aims to make a significant impact on women by upgrading their skills for self and wage employment. Through the scheme it aims to mobilize women in viable groups, improving their skills, arranging for productive assets/access to wage employment, creating backward and forward linkage, improving and arranging for support services, providing access to credit, awareness generation, gender sensitization, nutrition education, sensitization of project functionaries to name a few. The ultimate aim of the scheme is to develop women groups to thrive on a self- sustaining basis in the market place with minimal government support and intervention after the project period is over.

The main objectives of the schemes are:

i) Mobilizing women in small viable groups and making facilities available through training access to credit and other inputs.

ii) Enabling groups of women to take up employment-cum-income generation programmes of their own, or to access wage employment.

iii) Provide support services for further improving and employment conditions of women and access to health care, literacy, legal literacy, and other related information.

vii) MAHILA E-HAAT: This is a unique direct online marketing platform for supporting women entrepreneurs/SHGs/NGOs for showcasing the products/services which are made and manufactured by women enterprises. The Ministry of Women & Child Development launched "Mahila E-Haat" a bilingual portal on 7th of March, 2016. This initiative plays a critical component for business efficiency and making it easy access to the majority of women entrepreneurs/SHGs/NGOs.

The main objectives of this online marketing platform are:

i) Facilitating direct contact between the vendors and buyers.

ii) Women entrepreneurs/SHGs/NGOs can showcase their services and products directly that will strengthen their services and outreach.

iii) The Mahila E-Haat directly supports the "Make in India" campaign through the online marketing platform.

viii) MAHILA POLICE VOLUNTEERS (MPVs): Gender-Based Violence (GBV), faced by women both in public and private spaces, including domestic violence, sexual assault, rape, stalking,etc is a major threat to women equality and empowerment. In order to protect and increase focused community outreach, Government of India envisages engagements/ nomination of Mahila Police Volunteers (MPVs) in all States and Union Territories to act as a link between police and the community and facilitate women in distress.

The main objectives of MPV are:

i) An MPV will serve as a public interface in order to fight crime against women.

ii) MPVs will report incidences of violence against women such as domestic violence, child marriage, dowry harassment and violence faced by women in public spaces.

iii) An MPV is an honorary position.

ix) MAHILA SHAKTI KENDRA: Mahila Shakti Kendra is 'one-stop convergent support services' for empowering rural women with

opportunities for skill development, employment, digital literacy, health and nutrition'. The scheme will provide an interface for rural women to approach the government for availing their entitlements and for empowering them through awareness generation, training and capacity building programmes. The scheme was approved for implementation during 2017-18 financial years. There will be student volunteers to encourage the spirit of voluntary community service and gender equality.

The main objectives are:

i) The MSK envisaged working at various levels. National Level – Knowledge support and at the state level – will provide technical support to the respective governments on issues related to women. The district and block-level centers will provide support to MSK and give a foothold to women empowerment schemes.

ii) Through community engagement student volunteers will be encouraged and will play an instrumental role in awareness generation regarding various government schemes/programmes as well as social issues that have an impact on the lives of women.

x) NARI SHAKTI PURASKAR: Nari Shakti Puraskaris the highest civilian honour for women in the Republic of India. Every year on the occasion of International Women's DayNari Shakti Puraskaris awarded. The coveted award is conferred to exceptional Women and Institutions who have been working towards the cause of Women Empowerment.

7.4 INTEGRATED CHILD PROTECTION SCHEME (ICPS):

The ICPS is a governmental program implemented by the govt of India to help secure the safety of children, with a special emphasis on children in need of care and protection, juveniles in conflict or contact with the law and other vulnerable children. The primary purpose of ICPS is to create a central structure to provide insight and standardization for pre-existing and evolving child protection schemes in India.

In 2009 the ICPS was implemented. It was administered at the state level by state child protection societies, among other institutions.

The flagship programmes under ICPS are explained below:

i) INTEGRATED CHILD DEVELOPMENT SERVICES (ICDS): The ICDS Scheme was launched on 2nd October 1975 and is one of the flagship programmes of the government of India and represents one of the world's largest and unique programmes for early childhood care and development. ICDS commits to children and nursing mothers and providing pre-school non-formal education and aims in breaking the vicious cycle of malnutrition, morbidity, reduced learning capacity, and mortality.

The biggest beneficiaries of the ICDS scheme are children in the age group of 0-6 years, pregnant and lactating mothers. Objectives of the scheme are:

i) To improve the nutritional and health status of children in the age group 0-6 years.

ii) To lay the foundation for proper psychological, physical and social development of the child.

iii) To reduce the incidence of mortality, morbidity, malnutrition and school dropout.

iv) To achieve effective co-ordination of policy and implementation amongst the various departments to promote child development.

v) To enhance the capability of the mother to look after the normal health and nutritional needs of the child through proper nutrition and health education.

ii) NATIONAL CRECHE SCHEME: With growing employment opportunities more and more women are working within and outside their homes. At the same time, they face the challenges of providing quality care and protection for their children because of rapid increase in nuclear families and migration of extended family members. It became necessary to provide support to the young children quality and substitute care and other services while the mothers are at work.

The National Creche Scheme aims at providing a safe place for mothers to leave their children while they are at work and where children are provideda stimulating environment for their holistic development.

The objectives of the National Creche Scheme are:

i) To provide day-care facilities for children (6 months to 6 years) of working mothers in the community.

ii) To improve nutrition and health status of children.

iii) To promote physical, cognitive, social and emotional development of children.

iv) To educate and empower parents/caregivers for better childcare.

iii) SCHEME FOR ADOLESCENT GIRLS (SAG): SAG was devised in the year 2010 using the ICDS infrastructure with an aim at breaking the inter-generational life cycle of nutritional and gender disadvantage for girls by providing a supportive environment for self-development of adolescent girls. The SAG focuses on **out of school** adolescent girls in the age group of 11-14 years. The Scheme for Adolescent Girls (SAG)was implemented using the platform of Anganwadi Services under the umbrella of ICDS through Anganwadi Centres (AWCs).

The key objectives of the schemes are:

i) Enable Adolescent Girls for self-development and empowerment.

ii) Improve their nutrition and health status.

iii) Support out of school Adolescent girls to successfully undergothe transition phase and go back to formal schooling or bridge learning/ skill training.

iv) Upgrade their home-based and life skills.

v) Provide information/guidance about existing public services such as Primary Health Centers, Rural Hospitals/CHCs, Post Office, Bank, Police Station, etc.

iv) INTEGRATED CHILD PROTECTION SCHEME (ICPS): The 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 was proposed in 2006 and implemented in 2009. The ICPS is administered at the state level by State Protection Committees and societies and at the district level by Child Protection societies among other institutions.

The primary objectives of ICPS are:

i) ICPS together brings multiple existing child protection schemes of the Ministry under one comprehensive umbrella and integrates additional interventions for protecting children and preventing harm.

ii) ICPS institutionalize essential services and strengthen structures, enhance capacities at all level, create database and knowledge base for child protection services, strengthen child protection at family and community level to ensure appropriate inter-sectoral response at all level.

iii) ICPS aims to set up a child protection data management system to formulate and implement effective intervention strategies and monitor their outcomes.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS:

Q1. What was the main objective of creating the Ministry of Women and Child Development in 2006?

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Q2. What was the name of the fund to establish One Stop Centres?

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Q3. When was STEP launched and the main aims of the program?

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Q4. Why was the Mahila Police Volunteers programme launched?

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7.5 LET US SUM UP

- Development of women in India received its attention from the government since the First 5-year plan (1951-56).
- In the 6th 5-year plan (1980-85), a shift from 'Welfare' planning to 'development' of women was taken up.
- The 9th 5-year plan (1997-2002) made two important changes in the strategy of development of women. First, 'Empowerment of Women', its aim was to create an enabling environment where women could freely exercise their rights both within and outside the home as equal partners with men. The second was convergence of existing services available in both women-specific and women related sectors.
- 10th 5-year plan (2002-2007) focused on organizing women into Self-Help Groups (SHGs) for income generation activities started.
- In the 12th 5-year plan (2012-2017) the Planning Commission pushed for special dispensation for the single woman and encourages women in participation in the field of agriculture and animal husbandry in addition to health, education, urbanization, and governance.
- The Ministry of Women and Child Development came into existence as a separate ministry from 30th of January, 2006.
- BetiBachao, BetiPadhaocampaign was launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on 22nd January 2015 from Panipat, Haryana on the occasion of International Day of the Girl Child.
- The Ministry of Women and Child Development started implementing the One-Stop Centres (OSC) scheme since 1st April 2015.
- The Women Helpline Scheme was launched on 1st of April 2015 along with One-Stop Centre.
- The Ministry of Women & Child Development launched "Mahila E-Haat" a bilingual portal on 7th of March, 2016. The platform was launched to play an important role for women entrepreneurs.

- Mahila Shakti Kendra is 'one-stop convergent support services' for empowering rural women with opportunities for skill development, employment, digital literacy, health, and nutrition'.
- Nari Shakti Puraskar is the highest civilian honour for women in the Republic of India. Every year on the 8th of March on the occasion of International Women's Day is it conferred.
- The ICDS Scheme was launched on 2nd October 1975, it is one of the world's largest and unique programmes for early childhood care and development.
- The Integrated Child Protection Scheme (ICPS)was proposed and implemented in 2009. The ICPS is administered at the state level by State Protection Committees and societies and at the district level by Child Protection societies among other institutions.



7.6 FURTHER READING

1) Rao. M. Koteswara, (2005) "Empowerment of Women in India"; Discovery Publishing House, New Delhi.

2) Chopra. G, (2015) "Child Rights in India: Challenges and Social Action"; Springer, New Delhi.



7.7 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Answer to Q1.

The ministry was constituted with the prime intention of addressing gaps in national-state action for women and children development initiatives and promoting inter-Ministerial and inter-sectoral convergence to create gender equitability and child-centered legislation, policies, and programmes.

Answer to Q2.

The GoI has set up a dedicated fund called the “Nirbhaya Fund” to establish the One-Stop Centres with enhanced safety and security provisions.

Answer to Q3.

The Support to Training & Employment Programme for Women (STEP) was launched as a Central Sector Scheme in 1986-87. STEP aims to make a significant impact on women by upgrading skills for self and wage employment.

Answer to Q4.

Women face Gender-Based Violence (GBV) both in public and private spaces, including domestic violence, sexual assault, rape, stalking,etc is a major threat to women equality and empowerment. In order to protect and increase focused community outreach, Government of India envisages engagements/ nomination of Mahila Police Volunteers (MPVs) in all States and Union Territories



7.8 MODEL QUESTIONS

A) Short Question (Answer within 150 words)

Q1. When did the Ministry of Women and Child Development come into existence and mention their Vision and Mission?

Q2. Name the schemes implemented by GOI focusing on Women Security and Protection and write a brief note on each of the schemes.

Q3. Name the schemes implemented by GOI focusing on Women Entrepreneurship and write a brief note on each of the schemes.

B) Long Questions (Answer within 300-500 words)

Q. What was the main objective of the Integrated Child Protection Scheme (ICPS) implemented by the Government of India and discuss the various schemes launched under the ICPS.

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