UNIT 12: WELFARE POLICIES FOR WOMEN IN INDIA

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12.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit you will be able to :

- know the reasons for the need to give special attention to the women
- know different policies adopted by government to uplift the status of women
- know the special Provisions made for the women of our society

12.2 INTRODUCTION

Over the years, many sociologists have devoted time to study the quality of change in the status of women in our society. Some emphasizes the prevalent inequality and discrimination suffered by women whereas other referred to the various rights enjoyed by women. In this unit we will discuss about various welfare polices undertaken by the government of Indian for the woman.

12.3 ENACTMENT OF SOCIAL LEGISLATION AFTER INDEPENDENCE:

To eradicate poverty and reduce gender discrimination, the governments have been implementing various schemes and programmes towards women development and empowerment of women. Self Help Group(SHG) movement, one among such programmes which has been proved successful in fulfilling its objectives. However, it is felt that the other schemes and programmes do have their prominent part in the process of women development and empowerment and which are being successfully implemented.

After attaining independence, the Government of India, initially decided to pave a path to bring about social change based on three major areas, viz., constitutional and legal reforms, planned development based on mixed economy and state support to social welfare activities. All these three policies were expected to create a democratic, just and prosperous society. All these three steps have their impact on the status of women. The constitution of India has given special attention to the needs of women

to enable them to exercise their rights on equal footing with men and participate in national development (Article 14). It aims at creation of an entirely new social order where, all citizens are given equal opportunities for growth and development and that no discrimination takes place on the basis of race, religion, caste, sex, etc.(Article 15),

Planned development was considered to be the most efficient way for solving the numerous problems of poverty which had caused variousimbalances and discriminations among vast numbers of people. The policy measures had serious implications for Indian women.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q1. Which article emphasizes the right to quality?

Q2. Which article prohibits any form of discrimination?

12.4 SCHEMES FOR ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

12.4.1 Swa-Shakti Project

The launch of the Swa-Shakti Project (earlier known as the Rural Women's Development and Empowerment Project) in April 1999 marked a new beginning in the shaping and strengthening of women's self-help groups.With Swa-Shakti, economic empowerment was holistically combined with education, training, and support from other institutions to render a comprehensive strategy for empowering women. The Project aimed at enhancing women's access to resources for better quality of life through use of literacy and confidence enhancement, and increasing their control over their income through involvement in skill development and income-generating activities. This marked a paradigm shift from welfare to empowerment; energising women from being passive receipts of benefits to participants in schemes, and further to being the initiators and leaders in the Project.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q3. When was the Swa-Shakti Project launched?

Q4. What is the ultimate aim of the Swa-Shakti project?

Q5. How does the project fulfills its aim of empowering women?

12.4.2 Swayamsiddha

Swayamsiddha Scheme launched by Ministry of Women and Child Development of Government of India is another remarkable work by central government in achieving the women empowerment. It is an integrated women empowerment programme (IWEP) initiated in 2001 by merging Mahila Samriddhi Yojana and recasting Indira Mahila Yojana (IMY was the first Self Help Group based women's empowerment programme of Ministry of WCD launched in 1995-96) and including other sectoral programmes meant for women empowerment. Under the scheme special interest was given to self-help groups (SHG), and even Swayamsiddha itself means helping one self. With the SHGs government wants women to be enough self-sufficient so that she could overcome her own problem. But due to poor conditions, family responsibility or due to some other factors women leave their education. The main objective of the scheme was to empower women by educating them and bringing them into mainstream so that complete family progress could be ensured as "when a man gets educated it's only he who gets education, but when a women gets educated its complete family who is educated". Also the scheme encourage. These women to become an entrepreneur when minimum of 10-15 women wanted to start their own business. SHG women do income generating activities such as food preservation, dairy farming, vermin compost, cutting andtailoring, embroidery, kitchen gardening , beauty parlous etc.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q6. What is the meaning of Swayamsiddha?

Q7. When was the Syamsiddha Scheme initiated?

Q8. What is the main focus of the scheme?

Q9. Does the scheme limited only to providing education to women?

Q10. What kind of work do these women do for income generation?

12.4.3 Support to Training and Employment Programme (STEP)

The Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India since 1986-87 has been administering Support to Training and Employment Programme for women. The STEP Scheme aims to provide skills that give employability to women and to provide competencies and skill that enable women to become self-employed/entrepreneurs. The Scheme was intended to benefit women who are in the age group of 16 years and above across the country. The grant under the Scheme is given to an institution/ organization including NGOs directly and not to the States/ UTs. The assistance under STEP Scheme is available in any sector for imparting skills related to employability and entrepreneurships. Come of the sectors are Agriculture, Horticulture, Food Processing, Handlooms, Tailoring, Stitching, Embroidery, Zari etc, Handicrafts, Computer & IT enable services along with soft skills and skills for the work place such as spoken English, Travel & Tourism, Hospitality etc.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q11. When was the Support to Training and Employment Programme (STEP) scheme for women started?

Q12. What is the main purpose of STEP?

Q13. Which age group women gets the benefit of the STEP scheme?

12.4.4 Swadhar Scheme

A Scheme for Women in Difficult Circumstances was launched by the Department of Women and Child Development in 2001- 02. Women in difficult circumstances here refers to the women who are deserted, victims of domestic violence, survivors of natural disaster, affected by HIV/AIDS, prisoners released from jail, rescued from trafficking, runaway from brothels but without any social and economic support. The implementing agencies are mainly NGOs. At present 129 shelter homes are functioning in the country. Women affected by domestic violence could stay up to one year. For other categories of women, the maximum period of stay could be up to 3 years. The older women above the 55 years of age may be accommodated for maximum period of 5 years after which they will have to shift to old age homes or similar institutions.

The scheme through the provisions of shelter, food, clothing, counseling, training, clinical and legal aid, help line etc aims to rehabilitate such women.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q14. When was the Swadhar Scheme launched?

Q15. Which department has launched the Swadhar scheme?

Q16. What kind of women gets the benefit of the Swadhar Scheme?

Q17. What does the term women in difficult circumstances refers to in Swadhar scheme?

Q18. What is the ultimate purpose of the Swadhar scheme?

12.4.5 Central Victim Compensation Fund Scheme (CVCF)

The compensation part of the rehabilitation of victims of violence including rape is governed by provision of Section 357A of the Code of Criminal Procedure which states that every State Government in co-ordination with the Central Government shall prepare a scheme for providing

funds for the purpose of compensation to the victim of crime including rape. 24 States & 7 UTs have formulated the Victim Compensation Scheme. As per section 326 A of the IPC, Criminal Law Amendment Act 2013 apart from making punishment stringent, for acid attack, it provides for just and reasonable compensation to meet the medical expenses of the victim and this shall be paid to victim. The amendment also directs that all the hospitals, public or private, to provide free medical treatment to all victims of acid attack and rape under the Legal Service Authority Act 1987.

Key Objectives of Scheme

- To support and supplement the existing Victim Compensation Schemes notified by States/UT Administrations.
- To reduce disparity in quantum of compensation amount notified by different States/ UTs for victims of similar crimes.
- To encourage States/UTs to effectively implement the Victim Compensation Schemes (VCS) notified by them under the provisions of section 357A of Cr.P.C. and continue financial support to victims of various crimes especially sexual offences including rape, acid attacks, crime against children, human trafficking etc.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q19. What is the main idea behind CVCF?

Q20. Which section of Code of Criminal Procedure (Cr, P.C) governs the CVCF scheme?

Q21. What special amendment is done under Criminal Law Amendment Act 2013?

12.4.6 Rashtriya Mahila Kosh or the National Credit Fund for women

Rashtriya Mahila Kosh (RMK) was established by the Government of India in March, 1993 as an autonomous body under the Ministry of Women & Child Development. It was registered under the Societies Registration Act 1860. The aims and objectives of the Kosh are to undertake activities for the promotion of credit as an instrument of socio-economic change, to

promote and support the expansion of entrepreneurship skills among women, to promote and support grass root level societies and organizations and other participatory structures for providing for women effective access to decision making.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q22. When was Rashtriya Mahila Kosh (RMK) established by the Government of India?

Q23. What was the main goal of the Kosh?

12.4.7 Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY)

Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana was initiated by Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas, government of India on May 1st, 2016 in Ballia, Uttar Pradesh to safeguard the health of women & children by providing them with a clean cooking fuel - LPG, so that they don't have to compromise their health in smoky kitchens or wander in unsafe areas collecting firewood.

India is home to more than 24 Crore households out of which about 10 Crore households are still deprived of LPG as cooking fuel and have to rely on firewood, coal, dung - cakes etc. as primary source of cooking. The smoke from burning such fuels not only causes pollution but adversely affect the health of women and children causing several respiratory dirorders. The connections are issued in the name of women of the households to ensure their empowerment.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q24. When was the Pradhan Mantrti Ujjwala Yojana initiated?

Q25. What is the main focus of the PMUY?

Q26. Which commodity is distributed under PMUY?

Q27. How does the PMUY empower women?

12.4.8 Ujjawala Scheme

It is a Comprehensive Scheme for Prevention of Trafficking and Rescue, Rehabilitation and Re-integration of Victims of Trafficking for Commercial Sexual Exploitation which came into effect on 1st April, 2016. It is women and children who are vulnerable as well as victim of trafficking for Commercial Sexual Exploitation so in order to prevent trafficking of women and children for commercial sexual exploitation this scheme provides awareness through programs, workshops, seminars and various other activities. It aims to facilitate rescue of victims from the place of their exploitation and place them in safe custody with the provisions of basic amenities/needs such as shelter, food, clothing, medical treatment, counseling, legal aid and guidance and vocational training. This scheme also tries to reintegrate victims into their family and society. The implementing agencies for this scheme can be the Social Welfare/Women and Child Welfare Department of State Government, Women's Development Corporations, Women's Development Centers, Urban Local Bodies, reputed Public/Private Trust or Voluntary Organizations.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q28. What are the concerns of the Ujjawala Scheme?

Q29. Who are most vulnerable to trafficking?

Q30. How does the Ujjawala Scheme support the victims of trafficking and sexual exploitation?

12.4.9 Janani Suraksha Yojana(JSY)

Janani Suraksha Yojana is a goverment sponsored scheme launched on 12 April 2005 aimed at reducing maternal and infant mortality rates and increasing institutional deliveries in below poverty line (BPL) families. This is a safe motherhood intervention under the National Rural Health Mission (NRHM).The scheme covers all pregnant women belonging to households below the poverty line, Who are 19 years of age and up to

two live births. It provides assistance in form of cash and integrate it with antenatal care during pregnancy period, institutional care during delivery as well as post-delivery care. This is provided by field level health workers called Accredited Female Health Activist (ASHA) through a system of coordinated care and health centres.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q31. When was JSY launched?

Q32. Why was the JSY scheme launched?

Q33. Who is an infant?

12.4.10 Beti Bachao Beti Padhao Scheme

Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP) scheme was started on January 22, 2015 as a joint initiative of the Ministry of Women and Child Development, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and Ministry of Human Resource to empower girl child. It was initiated in 100 districts with the lowest sex ratio according to census 2011.

Aims and Objectives of the Scheme:

The aim of Beti Bachao Beti Padhao scheme is to arrest the decline in girl child sex ratio, to celebrate the birth of a girl, to prevent the violation of the interests of girls as a result of outdated and conservative thoughts and promote women's empowerment in order to improve the women status in the country.This plan was launched for the following objectives for girls' education and welfare:

- To stop the discrimination of the girl child and practice of sex determination test
- To ensure the survival and protection of girls
- To ensure the participation of girls in education and other areas

12.4.11 Mahila E-Haat

Mahila E-Haat is a direct online marketing platform for women entrepreneurs. It was launched on 7 march 2016 as a joint initiative of Ministry

of Women and Child Development(WCD) and Rashtriya Mahila Kosh(RMK) for meeting aspirations and needs of women entrepreneurs.

It provides direct interaction between seller and buyer with no commission charged.It aims at the inclusion of women entrepreneurs in the economy by providing continued sustenance and support to their creativity.Mahila e Haat acts as a catalyst by providing a web based marketing platform to the women entrepreneurs to directly sell to the buyers Vendors are expected to submit the details about themselves and the product online or through e-mail. She can receive the payment directly but has to maintain details of transaction through portal and furnish report to RMK.

Products manufactured by women include clothing,bags,fashion accessories,decorative and gift items,home décor,carpets/rugs/foot mats, baskets etc.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q34. What is the goal of Beto Bachao Beti Padhao Scheme ?

Q35. What kinds of women are benefitted from the Mahila E-Haat?

Q36. Is this scheme different from other schemes? If yes, explain how?

Q37. What kind of products are produced and sold by women?

12.5 SUPPORT SERVICES

12.5.1 Working Women Hostels

It is a Scheme by Ministry of Women and Child Development to provide Safe and affordable accommodation to working women. 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, wherever possible, in urban, semi urban, or even rural areas where employment opportunity for women exist. The working women's hostel projects being assisted under this scheme shall be made available to all

working women without any distinction with respect to caste, religion, marital status etc.but, subject to the norms prescribed under the scheme.

12.5.2 Crèche's or Daycare

A crèche, daycare or nursery is a childcare centre where babies, toddlers, and young children are cared for in a safe and stimulating surrounding. Crèches mostly cater to the children of parents with full-time or part-time jobs. With the increase in the number of nuclear families and working parents, crèches and daycare centres is being used by many parents. I may Indian families women do not work because they are required to take care of their children as per the Indian norms. So, Crèches are a big relief to these women who are efficient and willing to work.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q38. Name any support service by government.

Q39. What is the main objective behind working women hostels?

Q40. What is the main idea behind creche's?

12.6 CONSTITUTIONAL PROVISIONS:

Important Amendments

The 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendment Acts of 1993 ensure reservation of 1/3 of seats for women in all elected offices of local bodies, in rural and urban areas. In the rural areas, women have thus been brought to the centre-stage in the nation's efforts to strengthen democratic institutions.

Other Acts serve to protect the interest of women are:

- Dowry Prohibition Act 1961
- The Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act, 1971
- Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act,1986
- Commission of Sati (Prevention) Act, 1987
- The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act 2013

- The Protection of women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005
- Hindu Succession Act, 1956



12.7 LET US SUM UP

- Discrimination against women starts at birth. Gender lines are drawn early, and exclusions for women continue throughout adulthood.
- The constant messages may lead to a false belief that women do not belong in the corporate world. Young girls may be brought up to believe that they are only suited for certain professions or, in some cases, only to serve as wives and mothers.
- Government and many self help groups(SHG's) realised the gravity of the problems faced by women and put a step towards their empowerment and to help them use their full potential.
- Swa-Shakti project and Swayamsiddha scheme strengthens the women self help groups by enhancing their access to resources for better quality of life and encourage women to become entrepreneur.
- The STEP Scheme provide skills that give employability to women and to provide competencies and skill that enable women to become self-employed/entrepreneurs.
- Swadhar Scheme for Women in Difficult Circumstances (victims of domestic violence, rape, survivors of natural disaster etc) was launched by the Department of Women and Child Development to provide social and economic support.
- Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana empowers poor women by issuing LPG cylinders in her name.
- Women who are victims of any sort of violence, rape, acid attack, trafficking etc are provided support as well as free hospital treatment under the Central Victim Compensation Fund Scheme (CVCF).