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## RESEARCH ARTICLE

### A STUDY ON ROLE OF GOVERNMENT POLICIES FOR WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

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#### ABSTRACT

Women Empowerment is a significant topic of discussion, mainly in underdeveloped and developing nations. They have lately realized that the development that they aspire cannot be achieved unless we achieve gender equality by empowering their women. The economic empowerment of women refers to their right to control the economic decisions, income, assets and other equivalents; improving their economic as well as social status. Women Empowerment means promoting women in their social and economic development, providing them equal opportunities of employment, education, economical development and allowing them to socialize; the freedoms and rights that were denied before. It is process which empowers women to know that they too can achieve their aspirations as the men of the society and help them do that. The essential factors for empowerment are:(1) Education: Education gives one the ability to think wisely and take thoughtful decisions.(2) Gender Discrimination: A society which discriminates between the 2 genders can never be empowered.3) Discrimination based on caste, creed, religion etc. Empowerment of women, particularly rural women has become an important issue in the strategies of balanced development with social justice. Economic empowerment results in women's ability to influence or make a right decision, increase self-confidence better status and role in household etc. They understand and believe in the company vision and generate ideas directly aimed at improving products and services. Empowered employees have increased self-confidence, are keen to develop their own skills and also to find ways to make use of those skills to the company's benefit. In this way The Govt has initiated so many Policies for Women Empowerment. The Study is Purely Theoretical. The Study is based on secondary data sources. The necessary information about the Role of Government Policies for Women Empowerment and its various components are collected from Books, Journals, Internet Source or related topic. The Researcher study about the Role of Government Policies for Women Empowerment the Research Work includes I. Introduction II. Methodology III. Women Specific Policies in India. IV Conclusion.etc

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#### INTRODUCTION

Women's empowerment is a global issue in determining the status of women and discussion on women's right is at the forefront of formal and informal campaigns worldwide 2001 is declared as women's empowerment year by our country. Empowerment is a multidimensional process, which enables to realize their full identity power and potentialities, capabilities and competencies of one's rights and opportunities for development in all spheres of life. Thus, it is the process of acquiring the ability to make strategic life choices in the context where this ability has previously been defined.

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The core elements of empowerment have been defined as agency (the ability to define one's goals and act upon them), awareness of gendered power structures, self – esteem and self – confidence (Kabeer 2001). According to Moser (1989) empowerment is the capacity of women to increase their self – reliance and internal strength. This is identified as the right to determine choices in life and to influence in direction of change through the ability to gain control over material and non – material resources. In the words of clothes but CK and Stuart (1992) we need not "empowerment women but "power man". According to Pillai (1995) "Empowerment is an active multi dimensional process which enables women to realize their full identity and powers in all spheres of life. Hoshemi (1996) developed five indicators to measure women's empowerment: mobility, economic security, ability to make larger purchases, realize freedom from domination within the

family and political and legal awareness and involvement in political campaigning and protests with this in mind. An attempt is made in the following situation to measure empowerment of women respondents. As we know very well that the status of women in ancient time was as same as the men. During the mediaeval period, it goes to low points. In modern time women have held the high position from Prime Minister to astronauts as Razia Begum, Kalpana Chawla, Kiran Bedi, Indra Gandhi, Mary Kombucha and Saina Mirza etc.

It is said that women are the backbone of any society, so we should develop them from the beginning. But the question arises: Are women become really strong? And | long term struggle has ended? Many programmes have been implemented and run by the government such as International Women's Day, Mother's Day etc. in order to bring awareness in the society about the true rights and value of the woman in the development of the nation. Women need to be progressed in the numbers of the sphere. Women Empowerment refers to increase and improve the social, economic, political and legal strength of the women, to ensure equal-right to women, and to make them confident enough to claim their rights. Empowerment of women would mean encouraging women to be self-reliant, independent, have positive self-esteem, generate confidence to face any difficult situation and invite active participation in various socio-political development endeavours.

The growing conscience is to accept women as individuals capable of making rational and educated decision about them as well as the society, increasing and improving the economic, political and legal strength of the women, to ensure equal-right as men, achieve internationally agreed goals for development and sustainability, and improve the quality of life for their families and communities. Discrimination against women is rampant all over the world even in this 21st century. Patriarchal societies in most countries are adept at exploitation as well as victimisation of women. Crimes directed specifically against women are reported from all over the world. There still remain questions about the acceptance of women empowerment is the most advanced of countries, while developing nations and nations under political duress are far from achieving the desired status. The position and status of women all over the world has raised incredibly in the 20th century. A long struggle going back over a century has brought women the property rights, voting rights, inequality in civil rights before the law in matters of marriage and employment. In addition to the above rights, in India, the customs of purdaha (vile system), female infanticide, child marriage, sati pratha, dowry system and the state of permanent widowhood were either totally removed or checked to an appreciable extent after independence through legislative measures. Apart from these many welfare schemes for women and child like Beti Bachao Beti Padhao Scheme, Ujjawlala, ICDS, Kishori Shakhati Yojana etc., have been launched by the Indian government. In view of the above, it may be expected that with a strong determination, commitment, and involvement of people and organisations with philanthropic motive and a rational outlook, the problem that women faced, can be solved and hurdled be overcome for promoting national rejuvenation and development. The concept of Women's empowerment has become a significant topic of discussion in development and economies. Women empowerment is empowering the women to take their own decision for their personal dependent. Empowerment of women helps them to take their own decision

by breaking all personal limitations of society and family. Women empowerment also refers to the creation of an environment of women where they can make a decision of their own for their personal benefits as well as for society. It is to bring equality in the society for both male and female in all areas; by increasing and improving the social economic and political and legal strength of the women. It is also necessary to ensure equal right to women and to make them confident to claim their rights, such as free live their life with a sense of self-worth, respect and dignity. They should be given complete control of their life, both within and outside their home and workplace. They should also be given the right to take their own decisions and also to make their own choices. It is very important to give them equal rights to participate in social, religious and public activities. Women should be given the equal social state in society by giving them equal rights for social and economic justice. Every woman should be given an equal opportunity for education and they should also get an equal employment opportunity without any gender bias. It is very important to provide them with a safe and comfortable working environment.

Women empowerment is very pecessary to make the bright future of the family, society and country. Women are as talented as men. Previously women were not allowed higher education like men and hence their talent was wasted. But nowadays women are allowed to go for their higher studies and it encourages them to show their capabilities which will not only benefit them but also the whole world at large. The main advantage of women empowerment is that there will be an overall development of the society. The money that women earn does not help them and their family but it also helps society to develop. Women empowerment leads to a decrease in domestic violence. Uneducated women are at high risk for domestic violence than an educated woman. In order to make the country a fully developed country, women empowerment is one of the essential too to get the goal to develop. Government also takes and initiated so many Policies for Empowerment of women.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The Study is Purely Theoretical. The Study is based on secondary data sources. The necessary information about the Government Women Policies and its various components are collected from Books, Journals, Internet Source or related topic. The Researcher study about the Women Government Policies in India.

### **Government Women Policies**

**National Policy for Women Empowerment (2001):** The goal of the National Policy for Women Empowerment (2001) is to bring about the advancement, development and empowerment of women. Specifically, the objectives of this Policy include

- Creating an environment through positive economic and social policies for full development of women to enable them to realize their full potential
- 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
- Equal access to participation and decision making of women in social, political and economic life of the nation

- 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.
- Strengthening legal systems aimed at elimination of all forms of discrimination against women
- Changing societal attitudes and community practices by active participation and involvement of both men and women.
- Mainstreaming a gender perspective in the development process.
- Elimination of discrimination and all forms of violence against women and the girl child; and
- Building and strengthening partnerships with civil society, particularly women's organizations.

Therefore, National Policy for Empowerment of Women (2001) made concrete suggestions towards the introduction of a gender perspective in the budgeting process. Specifically, it promised.

- Developing "Gender Development Indices" (GDI), by networking with specialized agencies.
- Undertaking "Gender auditing and development of evaluation mechanisms"
- Undertaking the collection of "Gender-disaggregated data" by all primary data collecting agencies of the Central and State Governments as well as research and academic institutions in the Public and Private Sectors.

Women's risk of premature death and disability is highest during their reproductive years. Maternal mortality is not merely a health disadvantage; it is a matter of social injustice. Low social and economic status of girls and women limits their access to education, good nutrition, as well as money to pay for health care and family planning services. Empowering women and enhancing their employment opportunities and participation of women in the paid work force. Since 33 per cent of elected panchayat seats are reserved for women (73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments Act, 1992), representative committees of the panchayats (headed by an elected woman panchayat member) should be formed to promote a gender sensitive, multi-sectoral agenda for population stabilisation, that will "think, plan and act locally, and support nationally". Under-nutrition and micronutrient deficiency goes beyond mere food entitlements to woman's well-being. To the extent that women are over-represented among the poor, interventions for improving women's health and nutrition are critical for poverty reduction. The Ministry of Women and Child Development is the nodal agency for all matters pertaining to welfare, development and empowerment of women. It has evolved schemes and programmes for their benefit. These schemes are spread across a very wide spectrum such as women's need for shelter, security, safety, legal aid, justice, information, maternal health, food, nutrition etc., as well as their need for economic sustenance through skill development, education and access to credit and marketing. Various schemes of the Ministry are like Swashakti, Swayamsidha, STEP and Swawlamban enable economic empowerment. Working Women Hostels and Creches provide support services. Swadhar and Short Stay Homes provide protection and rehabilitation to women in difficult circumstances. The Ministry also supports autonomous bodies like National Commission, Central Social Welfare Board and Rashtriya

Mahila Kosh which work for the welfare and development of women. Economic sustenance of women through skill development, education and access to credit and marketing is also one of the areas where the Ministry has special focus. However, we are still far behind in achieving the equality and justice which the Preamble of our Constitution talks about. The real problem lies in the patriarchal and male-dominated system of our society which considers women as subordinate to men and creates different types of methods to subjugate them. The need of us is to educate and sensitize male members of the society regarding women issues and try to inculcate a feeling of togetherness and equality among them so that they would stop their discriminatory practices towards the fairer sex. For this to happen apart from Government, the efforts are needed from various NGOs and from enlightened citizens of the country. And first of all efforts should begin from our homes where we must empower female members of our family by providing them equal opportunities of education, health, nutrition and decision making without any discrimination.

**National Nutrition Policy (1993):** Till the end of the IV Plan, India's main emphasis was on the aggregate growth of the economy and reliance was placed on the percolation effects of growth. In the face of continuing poverty and malnutrition, an alternative strategy of development comprising a frontal attack on poverty, unemployment and malnutrition became a national priority from the beginning of the Fifth Plan. This shift in strategy has given rise to a number of interventions to increase the purchasing power of the poor, to improve the provision of basic services to the poor and to devise a security system through which the most vulnerable sections of the poor (viz. women and children) can be protected.

**National Health Policy (2002):** A National Health Policy was last formulated in 1983, and since then there have been marked changes in the determinant factors relating to the health sector. Access to, and benefits from, the public health system have been very uneven between the better-endowed and the more vulnerable sections of society. It has been mentioned in the policy document that this is particularly true for women, children and the socially disadvantaged sections of society.

**The National Environment Policy (2006):** The policy recognises that a diverse developing society such as ours provides numerous challenges in the economic, social, political, cultural, and environmental arenas. All of these coalesce in the dominant imperative of alleviation of mass poverty, reckoned in the multiple dimensions of livelihood security, health care, education, empowerment of the disadvantaged, and elimination of gender disparities. The National Environment Policy seeks to extend the coverage, and fill in gaps that still exist, in light of present knowledge and accumulated experience. It does not displace, but builds on the earlier policies.

**The National Policy on Education (1986):** The National Policy on Education (NPE), 1986, as modified in 1992, emphasises three aspects in relation to elementary education

- Universal access and enrolment,
- Universal retention of children up to 14 years of age, and
- A substantial improvement in the quality of education to enable all children to achieve essential levels of learning.

**National Population Policy (2000):** In the new millennium, nations are judged by the well-being of their peoples; by levels of health, nutrition and education; by the civil and political liberties enjoyed by their citizens; by the protection guaranteed to children and by provisions made for the vulnerable and the disadvantaged. Women in India constitute about 496 million (2001 census) representing 48 per cent of the total population. Such a high per cent of valuable human resource face disparities in access to and control over resources and constitute as one the most vulnerable and marginalized. The Population Policy 2000 recognised the plight of women and prescribed indicative suggestions to resolve these concerns.

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- Empowering women and enhancing their employment opportunities and participation of women in the paid work force
- Since 33 per cent of elected panchayat seats are reserved for women (73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments Act, 1992), representative committees of the panchayats (headed by an elected woman panchayat member) should be formed to promote a gender sensitive, multi-sectoral agenda for population stabilisation, that will "think, plan and act locally, and support nationally"
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### **National Policy for Women (2016)**

The Salient features of the policy are as follows, Nearly a decade and half has passed since the National Policy for Empowerment of Women, 2001 was formulated. Since then significant strides in global technology and information systems have placed the Indian economy on a trajectory of higher growth impacting the general populace and women in particular in unique and different ways. The discourse on women's empowerment has been gradually evolving over the last few decades, wherein paradigm shifts have occurred –from seeing women as mere recipients of welfare benefits to mainstreaming gender concerns and engaging them in the development process of the country.

These changes have brought forth fresh opportunities and possibilities for women's empowerment while at the same time presenting new and emerging challenges which along with persisting socio-economic problems continue to hinder gender equality and holistic empowerment of women. The policy aims to create sustainable socio-economic, political empowerment of women to claim their rights and entitlements, control over resources and formulation of strategic choices in realisation of the principles of gender equality and justice. The policy envisions a society in which, women attain their full potential and are able to participate as equal partners in all spheres of life. It also emphasizes the role of an effective framework to enable the process of developing policies, programmes and practices which will ensure equal rights and opportunities for women.

The broad objective of the policy is to create a conducive socio-cultural, economic and political environment to enable women enjoy de jure and de facto fundamental rights and realize their full potential.

### **Priorities**

**Health including food security and nutrition:** Focus on recognizing women's reproductive rights, shift of family planning focus also to males, addressing health issues in a life cycle continuum such as psychological and general well-being, health care challenges related to nutrition/ hygiene of adolescents, geriatric health care, expansion of health insurance schemes and addressing the intergenerational cycle of under-nutrition.

**Education:** Improve access to pre-primary education, enrolment and retention of adolescent girls, implement innovative transportation models for better schooling outcomes, advocate gender champions and address disparities with regard to ICTs.

**Economy:** Raising visibility, engendering macro-economic policies and trade agreements, generate gender-disaggregated land ownership database, skill development and training for women, entrepreneurial development, review of labour laws and policies, equal employment opportunities with appropriate benefits related to maternity and child care services, address technological needs of women.

**Governance and Decision Making:** Increasing women's participation in the political arena, administration, civil services and corporate boardrooms,

**Violence Against Women:** Address all forms of violence against women through a life cycle approach, Legislations affecting /relating to women will be reviewed/harmonized to enhance effectiveness, Improve Child Sex Ratio (CSR), strict implementation of advisories, guidelines, Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) and protocols, prevention of trafficking at source, transit and destination areas for effective monitoring of the networks.

**Enabling Environment:** Gender perspective in housing and infrastructure, ensuring safe drinking water and sanitation, gender parity in the mass media & sports, concerted efforts towards strengthening social security and support services for all women especially the vulnerable, marginalized, migrant and single women.

**Environment and Climate Change:** addressing gender concerns during distress migration and displacement in times of natural calamities due to climate change and environmental degradation. Promotion of environmental friendly, renewable, non-conventional energy, green energy sources for women in rural households. The policy also describes emerging issues such as making cyber spaces safe place for women, redistribution of gender roles, for reducing unpaid care work, review of personal and customary laws in accordance with the Constitutional provisions, Review of criminalization of marital rape within the framework women's human rights etc. relevant in the developmental paradigms. Operational strategies laid down in the policy provide a framework for implementation of legislations and strengthening of existing institutional mechanisms through action plan, effective gender institutional

architecture. Advocacy and Stakeholder Partnerships, Inter-Sectoral Convergence, Gender Budgeting and generation of gender disaggregated data have also been given due focus.

**Operational strategies:** Create an enabling environment through continued and additional initiatives:

- **Enabling safety and security of women** – with initiatives such as One Stop Centres, Women Helpline, Mahila Police Volunteers, Reservation of women in police force, creating immediate response mechanism through panic buttons in mobiles, public and private transport, surveillance mechanisms in public places.
- **Creating eco-systems to encourage entrepreneurship amongst women** – through platforms like Mahila E-Haat, dedicated theme based exhibitions, focussed skill training, mentoring through Women Entrepreneurship Council, availability of easy & affordable credit and financial inclusion.
- **Training and capacity building of all stakeholders** including youth through Gender Champion initiative, frontline workers, women sarpanches and all officials dealing with policy and delivery systems impacting women.
- **Facilitating women in workplace** – through gender friendly work place, flexi timings, increased maternity leave, provision of child care / creches at workplace, life cycle health care facilities

### Conclusion

Empowering the women to take the important decisions for their personal development is called women empowerment. It is to make the women independent in all aspects of life be it mind, thoughts and making the right decisions without the societal and family restrictions. Empowering women is to bring equality in the social order in which men and women are both equals in all areas.

For a country to have a bright future, society and family to flourish, women empowerment is essential. In ancient India women weren't treated the same way the men were, so in order for the country to develop, women must be given equal status as men. The goal of the policy is to bring about the advancement, development and empowerment of women. Elimination of discrimination and all forms of violence against woman and the girl children. Women empowerment is the key to strengthen their participation in the decision-making which is the most important key to socio-economic development. According to the data of research, it has been noted that empowering women acts as a potential which accelerates the economic growth and continue development. Thus Government policies are very usefull for women empowerment. National Policy for Women Empowerment (2001) and National Policy for Women (2016) are very essential Policies for Women Empowerment.

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