



IMPLEMENTATION OF WOMEN WELFARE PROGRAMMES IN TELANGANA – A STUDY OF NALGONDA DISTRICT

¹Rajeshwari Annampatla, ²Prof. Ravinder Kaur

¹Research Scholar (Ph.D), Department of Public Administration, Osmania University,
Hyderabad. (T.S), India.

²Dept. of Public Administration Osmania University, Hyderabad (T.S), India.

ABSTRACT

Women are the most vulnerable group in a major parts of India. The Government of India thus introduced a number of schemes for the welfare of the people and more specifically for the women. But the schemes also do not reach to the appropriate group of people because of lack of awareness and corruption along with a number of other reasons. Gender equality is one of the eight Millennium Development Goals to which world leaders agreed at the Millennium Summit held in New York in the year 2000. In 1995, the Human Development Report quoted that out of 1.3 billion poor people living in developing countries, 70 per cent are women. Poverty among rural women is growing faster than rural men. Over the past two decades, the number of women living in absolute poverty rose by 50 per cent as against 30 per cent for rural men. Women in India constitute 89 per cent of the informal and unrecognised sector, their participation rate is higher in rural areas. Women account for one-third of the labour force of India and 90 per cent of the rural-urban women are unskilled workers. The study has given special emphasis on women development schemes and its implementation.

Key Words: Govt. schemes, Human Development, Women, Welfare.

Introduction:

In 1995, the Human Development Report quoted that out of 1.3 billion poor people living in developing countries, 70 per cent are women. Poverty among rural women is growing faster than rural men. Over the past two decades, the number of women living in

absolute poverty rose by 50 per cent as against 30 per cent for rural men.¹ Women in India constitute 89 per cent of the informal and unrecognised sector, their participation rate is higher in rural areas. Women account for one-third of the labour force of India and 90 per cent of the rural-urban women are unskilled workers.

Gender equality is one of the eight Millennium Development Goals to which world leaders agreed at the Millennium Summit held in New York in the year 2000.² The strength of the nation lies in the strength of the people, especially the women folk. If we want to change, the social face of India, the socio-economic conditions of women must change. Economic growth is not an end in itself. It blooms with the happiness of the dejected, depressed, disadvantageous, deprived sections of the society. In India women, particularly in rural India, belong to this underdeveloped and under-privileged category.

The charter of the United Nations signed in 1945 is the first international agreement that proclaimed gender equality as a fundamental right. Ever since a number of conferences, conventions have been held nationally and internationally, programmes and policies were announced to help women conferring on them human rights which are declared as universal. Despite many proclamations and declarations and time-bound goals women in the contemporary world are still lagging behind development; gender inequality in all fields still persists. India has signed the U.N. convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women. Efforts are being made by the Union as well as State Governments in India as part of public policy to improve the socio-economic conditions of women in general and rural women in particular.

Women Development:

In recent years, empowerment of women has been recognised as a central issue in determining the status of women. Empowerment covers many aspects such as women's control over material and intellectual resources. Empowerment is a process but not an event which challenges traditional power equations and relations. Abolition of gender based discrimination in all institutions and structures of the society and the participation of women in policy and decision-making process in domestic and public levels are few dimensions of women empowerment. The issues taken up by the Human Development Report, 2003, is of immense significance, which speaks of Millennium Development Goals (MDG) that prominently includes empowerment of women. In India, the principle of gender equality is enshrined in the Constitution, in the preamble, fundamental rights and the directive

principles of state policy. The Constitution of India not only grants equality to women but also empowers the state to adopt measures of positive discrimination in favour of women.

Meaning and Significance of Empowerment

Empowerment is a multi-dimensional social process that helps people gain control over their own lives, communities and in their society, by acting on issues that they define as important.³ Empowerment occurs within sociological, psychological and economic spheres and at various levels, such as individual, group and community. Empowerment challenges our assumption about the status quo asymmetrical power relationships and social dynamics. Empowerment of women involves many things - economic opportunity, property rights, political representation, social equality, personal rights and so on. Indian society is a patriarchal system in which women's position within the structure and duties towards the family precede their rights as individuals. The unrealistic way in which women are depicted in literary works and films by male chauvinists, and the misinterpretation of women in epics and scriptures contributed much to the poor self-image, suffering nature, defeatist attitude and lack of assertiveness on the part of women.

Objectives of Empowerment

Empowerment of women is aimed at striving towards acquisition of the following:

1. Higher literacy level and education
2. Better health care for her and her children
3. Equal ownership of productive resources
4. Increased participation in economic and commercial sectors
5. Awareness of their rights
6. Improved standard of living, and
7. Achieve self-reliance, self-confidence and self-respect amongst women.

National Policy for Empowerment of Women

Realising the need to improve the status of women, a national policy for empowerment of women was adopted by the Union Government in 2001 with the ultimate objective of ensuring women their rightful place in the society. The policy

recognised the need to empowering them as agents of socio-economic change and development. The national policy identifies the causes of gender inequality, which are related to the social and economic structure.

The objectives of the national policy for the empowerment of women include:

1. Creating an environment through positive economic and social policies for full development of women to enable them to realise their full potential.
2. The *dejure* and *defacto* enjoyment of all human rights by women on equal basis with men in all spheres - political, economic, social, cultural and civil.
3. Equal access to participation and decision making in social, political and economic life of the nation.
4. Maintaining a gender perspective in the development process.
5. Equal access to healthcare, quality education at all levels, care and vocational guidance, employment and equal remuneration for equal work on par with men.
6. Strengthening of the legal system, aims at elimination of all forms of discrimination against women.
7. Changing social attitudes and community practices by active participation and involvement of both men and women.
8. Elimination of discrimination and all forms of violence against women and girl child, and
9. Building and strengthening partnerships with civil society particularly women's organisations.

All round development of women has been one of the focal points of planning process in India. From the Fifth Five Year Plan (1974-78) onwards, there has been a marked shift in the approach to women's issues from welfare to development goals. The Tenth Five Year Plan (2002-07) empowered women through translating the national policy for empowerment of women into action and ensuring 'Survival, Protections and Development, of women and children through 'Rights Based Approach'.

2001 – The Year of Women Empowerment

Government of India had declared the year 2001 as the year of Women Empowerment. The purpose of the declaration was:

1. To create and raise large-scale awareness of women's issues with active participation and involvement of all men and women.
2. To initiate and accelerate action to improve access and control of resources by women; and
3. To create enabling environment to enhance self-confidence and autonomy of women.

High Level Committee

In a unique move Government of India constituted a committee of "Feminist" economists to ensure gender sensitive allocation of public resources in the 11th Five Year Plan - a step to promote gender equality and more inclusive growth.⁴The high level committee is expected to streamline the process of gender budgeting in the Eleventh Plan and also to suggest norms and guidelines to incorporate a gender perspective while formulating programmes for all sectors of the economy. India, being a signatory to the U.N. Convention has initiated several measures "including legislation, to ensure full development and advancement of women for the purpose of guaranteeing them the exercise and enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms on the basis of equality with men". The women specific programmes are showing positive result in empowering women.

Rural Development and Women Empowerment

Since a majority of women who are below the poverty line, live in villages, there is a close linkage between rural development and empowerment of women. The question that needs to be answered is that in a country where men control the destiny of women how is it possible to empower women? It is realised that mobilising women to take up entrepreneurial and cottage industry activities can ensure economic changes.⁵Through entrepreneurship a woman can, not only generate income for herself but also provide employment to other women in the locality. Though farm work is a major activity for rural women they remain invisible in statistics. They remain unreached and unattended in planned development. They have no access or control over physical resources.⁶Rural Indian women are extensively involved in agricultural activities. But the nature and extent of their involvement differs with the variations in agro-production systems. The mode of female participation in agricultural work varies with the land owning status of farm households. Their roles range from managers to agricultural labourers.

Organisation of Welfare for Women in Nalgonda

In Nalgonda, there is Department of Welfare for Women, which is headed by a cabinet minister. He/she is assisted by commissioner -cum-secretary, who is the administrative head of department. Commissioner -cum-Secretary advises the welfare minister in policy formulation of women welfare. He/she is assisted by Joint Secretaries, Deputy Secretaries. Under secretaries and other staff. Implementation of the policies for welfare of women is responsibility of the Directorate. At the Directorate level, Director is responsible for execution of the policy.

The Director is the overall in-charge of the field staff. He/she is assisted by joint director, deputy directors, welfare officers and other staff. There is one joint director who reports directly to the director. Another staff comprises of Deputy Directors, Asstt. Director, Chief Accounts Officer, Senior Accounts Officer, Accounts Officer, Accountant Research Officer, Asstt. Research Officer, Statistical Officer, Statistical Asstt.Superintendent, Section Officer, Chief Asstt., Assistant and other staff. This directorate is responsible for implementation of various schemes for the welfare of women. Efforts are being made for economic, educational and social upliftment of the women.

The Directorate is divided in eight divisions.

1. Administrative Division
2. Account and Budget Branch
3. Research Division
4. Employment Division
5. Programme Division
6. Planning Division
7. Women Welfare Division
8. Training Division

District Level Administration for Women Welfare

At the district level administration the department of social welfare is responsible to the actual implementation of schemes take place at the field level. The success of these schemes depend upon the understanding, commitment and concern for the women welfare. At the District level implementation of Special Component Plan (SCP) is supported by Special Central Assistance and augmented by Social Welfare department. District is considered an important unit of administration for the planning, decision making and implementation of a programme. Field level organisation comprises of District

administration. There are 10 districts, social welfare offices in Telangana. Each District Social Welfare office is headed by a District Social Welfare Officer. He/She is responsible for overall supervision on welfare schemes in his district. He/she is assisted by Deputy Superintendent, Assistant and other staff. At tehsil level there is Tehsil Welfare Officer who looks after implementation of schemes for welfare of women. Social workers are also appointed by District Welfare office. This office works as a central point for successful execution of the schemes meant for socio-economic upliftment of these target groups. The information in regard to these schemes can be obtained from this office. At tehsil level, Tehsil Welfare officer looks after the implementation of women welfare schemes for women in his/her area.

Block Development Officer (B.D.O.) is a permanent executive of state government and responsible for overall development of the block. Hence, he/she looks after the implementation of women welfare schemes⁷. The District Administration is responsible for execution of women welfare schemes in their respective districts. The government of Haryana decided to set-up the women welfare development programmes i.e. State Government Schemes. These schemes are prepared and run with the state funds alone. These are formulated by state government according to the specific needs of women. Various centrally sponsored schemes are executed for women welfare through out the country.

Women Welfare Schemes in Nalgonda

The Department of Women & Child Development, Nalgonda district is running various types of schemes/services. The detail of these schemes is as follows.

Old Age Pension Scheme

This is a State scheme under which old persons of Haryana domicile, in the age group of 60 years and above are given Old Age Pension @ 500/- per month as per eligibility criteria laid down in the rules of the scheme.

Widow Pension Scheme

This is a State scheme under which destitute or deserted women and widow of 18 years of age or above is given pension 500/- per month as per eligibility criteria laid down in the rules of the scheme.

Disability Pension Scheme

This is a State scheme under which handicapped person of Haryana domicile with a

minimum 70% disability and are 18 years of age and above, are given pension @ 500/- per month and @ 750/- per month to 100% disabled persons as per eligibility criteria laid down in the rules of the scheme. The present government had started the scheme with a view to check the declining sex ratio. The scheme is being implemented to create positive attitude in favour of second daughter in a family. Under the scheme, Rs 5,000 per year per family is being given on the birth of second daughter for five years. On maturity, Rs. one lakh at current rate of interest would be paid after the second daughter attains the age of 18 years through Life Insurance Corporation.

Balika Suraksha Yojana:

In 2005, on the occasion of the birth anniversary of the late Prime Minister Shri Rajiv Gandhi, the scheme was initiated covering the entire state (137 ICDS Blocks in 20 Districts). The scheme aims to combat the menace of female feticide, restore a balanced demographic sex ratio, facilitate the birth of more girl children and meet the felt needs of women and girl children. The scheme is being implemented through the Women and Child Development Department. In order to facilitate the birth of more girl children, it was felt that where a second girl child is born, substantial incentives should be provided to families for a period of 5 to 10 years. According to many demographic and social studies, the second girl fetus is more vulnerable to elimination as compared to the first pregnancy/ baby born to the couple in their active reproductive age. It was decided that in the first stage, the scheme would be implemented for a period of five years and depending on its success it would be reviewed for an extension of another five years or beyond.

Kalyana Lakshmi /Shaadi Mubarak:

To alleviate financial distress of SC / ST and minority families, Government decided to sanction of one time financial assistance of rs. 51,000 at the time of marriage for bride who are residents of Telangana State. Accordingly, Kalyana Lakshmi and Shaadi Mubarak schemes have been introduced with effect from October, 2nd, 2014 for unmarried girls, who have completed 18 years of age at the time of marriage and whose parental income does not exceed Rs. 2 lakh per annum. Rs. 47 crore and Rs. 32 crore disbursed to 9,368 SC and 6483 ST brides respectively. Another Rs. 50 crore was distributed to 10533 brides from minority sections.

ArogyaLaxmi

For the first time, the sixth five year plan document has included a separate chapter on “Women and Development” which incorporates in it, broad guidelines, directions and the strategies for adoption in regard to the planned and phased development for women in various fields like education, health and nutrition. The new 20-point programme announced by the Prime Minister on January 14, 1982 call for acceleration of programmes of welfare for women nutrition programme for pregnant women, nursing mothers specially in tribal, hilly and backward areas. The steering committee setup by state governments are drawing up new plans and programs for the welfare of women. It gives a new meaning to women’s welfare programme.⁸

Child women welfare programme of Telangana Government provides one nutritious meal every day to pregnant and lactating women and children below the age of six through Anganwadicentres. The scheme was launched officially on January 1, 2015 by Honourable Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao. For the women 200 ml of milk for 25 days a month and one egg each day will be given with meal. Children, aged between seven months and three years are provided with 16 eggs a month in addition to a 2.5 kg food packet. For children aged between 3 and six years, one egg a day in addition to rice, dal, vegetables and snacks is supplied. A total 18,96,844 lactating mothers, 5,18,215 infants and 21,58,479 pregnant women were covered under the scheme expending Rs. 627.96 crore in the past year. The quantity of food items supplied under the scheme has also been increased across all the categories.

The spectrums of their roles are detailed below:

1. Food Security

In India, food security as a national objective was placed on the policy agenda much earlier than in other developed/developing countries. Women’s key role in the production of major grains and minor millets illustrates their invaluable contribution to food security.

Empowering Strategies

Indira Mahila Yojana (IMY), Mahila Samridhi Yojana (MSY), the Rural Women’s Development and Empowerment Project (RWDEP) now called Swa-Shakti project and Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas (DWCRA).

Employment and Income Generation

Training of Rural Youth for Self-Employment (TRYSEM), Swayamsidha,

Swalamban, Support for Training and Empowerment Programme (STEP), Norwegian Agency for International Development (NORAD), Socio-economic Programme (SEP), condensed courses of Education and Vocational Training Programme (EVTP), SwarnaJayanthi Gram SwarojgarYojana (SGSY), SwarnaJayantiShahariRozgarYojana (SJSRY), Urban Self-employment Programme (USEP), Development of Women and Children in Urban Areas (DWCUA), JawaharRozgarYojana (JRY), Trade Related Entrepreneurship Assistance and Development (TRED), National Rural Health Mission (NRHM) and National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGS).

Upliftment of Women and Children in Rural Areas

Empowerment of women became necessary as they constitute more than 50 per cent of Indian population. They play a vital role in the socio-economic transformation of India. Under successive Five Year Plans several measures have been initiated to provide employment and training for women. Upliftment of women and children constitutes an integral component of the country's human resource development programmes. Gender focus is given to several of these schemes. For example, under Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP), 40 per cent of the beneficiaries have to be drawn from women. Similarly, 30 per cent of employment generation under JRY is meant for women. First time, a programme, i.e., Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas (DWCRA) exclusively for women was started in the year 1983.⁹ The DWCRA scheme now covers 450 districts of the country with UNICEF assistance.

Indira KranthiPatham (IKP)

World Bank assisted Andhra Pradesh District Poverty Initiatives Project and Andhra Pradesh Rural Poverty Reduction Project, together called Indira KranthiPatham, is one of the biggest community driven poverty reduction programmes in the country. The programme is focusing on the formation, development and strengthening of the organisation of the poor, expansion of asset base and skill base of the poor, particularly the poorest by providing community Investment Fund CBOs. Indira KranthiPatham demonstrated sustainable approaches to poverty reduction. Indira KranthiPatham (IKP) is a State-wide poverty reduction project to enable the rural poor to improve livelihood and quality of life through their own organisations. It aims to cover all the rural poor households in the State with a special focus on 30 lakh poorest of the poor households, it is implemented by the Society for Elimination of Rural Poverty (SERP), Department of Rural Development, and Government

of Andhra Pradesh.¹⁰ IKP builds in more than a decade long state-wide rural women's self-help movement. The focus is on deepening the process, providing an institutional structure and developing a framework for sustaining it for comprehensive poverty eradication. It is the single largest poverty reduction project in South Asia. IKP works with 4,76,930 Self-Help Groups federated into 28,080 village organisations (VOs). The project mandate is to build strong institutions of the poor and enhance their livelihood opportunities so that the vulnerabilities of the poor are reduced.

Swarnajayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY)

This is a Centrally sponsored scheme funded by the Government of India and the State Government in the ratio of 75 : 25. All the existing schemes up to 1998-99. IRDP, TRYSEM, TOOLKITS, GKY and MWS have been merged in the new scheme called Swarnajayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY). This programme has come into existence w.e.f. 1-4-1999. The objective of the SGSY is to bring poor families above the poverty line by providing them income generating assets through a mix of bank credit and government subsidy. The key elements in this programme are the choice of activity based on local resources and aptitude as well as the skills of Swarozgaris. SGSY focuses on group approach. This would involve organisation of the poor into Self-Help Groups and their capacity building. Efforts are being made to involve women members in each SHG. Besides, exclusive women groups will continue to be formed. At the level of the Mandal, almost all the groups are exclusively women groups, Group activity will be given preference and progressively, majority of the funding will be for Self-Help Groups. The scheme consists of five major components: (1) Infrastructure (2) Training (3) Revolving Fund (4) Group Loan, and (5) Individual loan. For the year 2004-05, an amount of Rs.7,074.62 lakh has been spent covering 2.19 lakh beneficiaries. Credit of Rs.11,534.76 lakhs has been mobilised from banks. During 2005-06, an amount of Rs.7,074.62 lakh is anticipated towards allocation during the financial year for covering a target of 1.86 lakh beneficiaries. An amount of Rs.14,848.49 lakh is proposed towards the credit component from banks

Utilisation of SGSY Resources

In the six APDPIP districts where all mandals are covered under APDPIP, SGSYL resources will be additionally spent under APDPIP. In the remaining districts, the SGSY resources could be utilised only in the mandals not covered under APRPRP. SGSY has the following five major components.

a) Training, b) Infrastructure, c) Revolving fund d) Individual loans e) Group loans

Training

Ten per cent of the total SGSY outlay will be earmarked for training. Common strategy for institutional building, livelihood support and marketing support for strengthening of the SHGs will be followed in all the mandals. The additional expenditure towards capacity building of SHGs over and above 10 per cent of the SGSY outlay could be booked to DPIP / IRPRP account.

Infrastructure - Revolving Fund - Group Loans

The DRDAs will combine the three components such as infrastructure, Revolving Fund and Group Loan into a single package and make it available to the group following the same process followed for providing Community Investment Fund under APDPIP/RPRP. In other words, the SHGs in DPIP/RPRP Mandals and the SHGs in non- DPIP/RPRP Mandals will go through the same process of preparation of micro-credit plan for accessing SGSY fund, just like the way CIF is accessed by the groups in DPIP/RPRP Mandals. However, bank linkage will remain a prerequisite for availing of SGSY subsidy.

Individual Loans

Ten per cent of the total SGSY outlay in each district may go towards individual loans to most vulnerable amongst poorest i.e., persons with disability, commercial sex workers, victims of atrocities and of natural calamities.

Women Self-Help Groups (SHGs)

Self-Help movements through savings have been taken up by about 5.79 lakh women SHGs in Andhra Pradesh covering nearly 74.58 lakh rural poor women. The SHGs are not only resorting to thrift but are also taking small loans out of the corpus available with the group. An amount of Rs.2,385.98crore is mobilised as corpus amount among the groups. The State Government has taken several initiatives to extend financial support to these groups which are mentioned hereunder.

Community Investment Fund (CIF)

The CIF provides resources to the poor communities for use as a means to improve their livelihood. This component supports the communities in prioritising livelihood

through micro-credit plans and allocates 50 per cent of the funds to the poorest of the poor. As on July 2008 an amount of Rs.810 crore is given as CIF.

Pavala Vaddi (25 Paisa Interest)

The Government of Andhra Pradesh has decided to give loans with *PavalaVaddi*(0.25 Ps. Interest per month for Rs.100) to all the SHGs. The Government is reimbursing any interest paid by the SHGs over and above three per cent per annum. This interest incentive is paid once in six months to all the SHG members who have an on-time repayments track record. This has made entrepreneurial incentives more viable and has led to better fiscal discipline. An amount of Rs.247.79 crore has been given to all eligible SHGs till July 2008.

Deepam Scheme

Up to March 2004, 20.10 lakh LPG have been distributed. As per the decision taken by the group of Ministers, instructions were issued for grounding 36,273 LPG connections in rural areas for which deposits have already been made in addition to the above, 3.62 lakh LPG connections have been sanctioned for 2004-05.

Gruhini

Under this scheme 19,182 houses (50 per cent of IAY allocation) were allotted during 2004-05 to the rural Self-Help Group women.

Food Security

Food security is the major vulnerability of the poor. Due to droughts, funds, lack of employment / work opportunities in dry land areas, difficulties in accessing sufficient quantities and in the lean periods of agriculture season, many among the rural poor have barely a square meal a day. Since public distribution system accounts for only one-third of a family requirement the poor depend on open market to fill the massive two-thirds gap. The food security credit is a direct intervention to tackle this hunger gap in rural communities.

VOs procure essential commodities in bulk from open market, and supply as credit as per the member's indent at a lower price than the village retail outlets. The amount is repaid by members to SHG and VO in convenient installments, based on the pattern of their earnings, thus enabling food security to the SHG families.

The food security intervention has rice and other commodities of daily usage, like pulses, edible oil, chillies, tamarind, salt, etc., under these programmes 21.88 lakh

families were benefited.

Health and Nutrition

The aim is to improve the health and nutrition among the absolute poor. This programme covers 63 mandals on pilot basis. The focus of the efforts of the SHGs in this area is the pregnant women and the new-born child. About 236 nutrition cum day care centres were started to educate and also provide complete nutrition support to pregnant women.

Accessing Gender Justice

The gender strategy envisages that the poor women are able to access and control over assets, incomes, all services available at village and individual level. Gender programme helps women increase their understanding of family equity issues, decision-making levels, free mobility and necessity of building safe environment. A model social agenda has been evolved to address violence on women in private and public spheres, female infanticide, child marriages, girl child education, prevention of HIV-AIDS, equal wages, trafficking, alcohol consumption etc. The Social Action Committees have established good working relationship with the judiciary and the police.

Diary

Women are managing village level milk collection centres and bulk milk cooling centres. About 1,710 milk prominent centres at village level and 85 bulk cooling centres at Mandal level were setup and are run by SHG women. An additional employment was created for 5,000 rural poor.

Emancipation through Education

Till a few decades ago, many Scheduled Caste women were educationally backward in spite of the facilities for free education. The reasons for the high rate of illiteracy among Scheduled Caste women are many. The following are the main reasons:

- 1) Resistance from the family to send girls to schools. Because a girl as a child labourer can earn something or look after her younger brothers and sisters.
- 2) Fear of insecurity in village due to upper castes domination.
- 3) Lack of physical facilities like accommodation, school, transport and medicare.
- 4) Girls were forced to take care of the siblings when the parents were away at work.

- 5) Girls were forced to do domestic chores which prevent them from attending school.
- 6) Working to earn for the family prevents the girls from attending school.
- 7) Working with parents to earn their livelihood in beedi factories, candle lights or other unorganised sector made them unable to attend school and hence many of them are illiterate.
- 8) Because of the sick and unemployed parents girls were forced to work.
- 9) Many were forced to get married at young age, which stops schooling.
- 10) Social conventions prohibit to pursue the girls education after marriage.
- 11) In some areas, there are complaints from Scheduled Castes women teachers of misbehaviour, blackmail and exploitation by the male staff of high caste people.
- 12) Distance of schools from home.

Coaching and Training Programmes

The coaching programmes conducted by the Government for Scheduled Caste women are beneficial in training many women to compete in the competitive examinations. These programmes also however, do not reach the needy Scheduled Caste women. It is essential that these programmes should be monitored properly and the schemes should reach the most deprived and constantly struggling Scheduled Caste women. Because these women are neglected by socially advanced communities and also by the better-off ones among the Scheduled Castes, improvement of their socio-economic conditions remains still a problem. There should be some natural and scientific basis to pick up the poorest and the most deprived, they should be equipped with facilities.

Pre-Examination Coaching Facilities

There are some pre-examination coaching centres giving training for Scheduled Castes which are doing very good service to train them for vocations, for competitive examinations in medical and engineering courses, railway and bank recruitment, etc.

The following steps are useful for the better implementation of the schemes

Scheduled Caste women:

- 1) Competitive spirit should be instilled in the girls.
- 2) Selection and identification of the talented girls should be done properly.

- 3) Identify the candidate at college level for coaching.
- 4) Result oriented teaching is necessary
- 5) Group discussions, quiz, and seminars to instill confidences among them.
- 6) Teacher : Student ratio should be 1 : 20 or below.
- 7) Monitoring by the teacher after class hours.
- 8) Loan facility

Financial aid

Financial aid for uniforms for girls, charts, examination grant, laboratory and library facilities should be provided to them. Special coaching should be given for meritorious Scheduled Caste girls to compete for IAS and IPS. Hostel facilities for Scheduled Caste girls at all levels of education, starting from primary school up to higher education should be provided. Reservation policy especially for girls should be followed in both admission into and employment as well.

There is an increased awareness in recent years among Scheduled Caste women about their rights and about Government welfare schemes relating to higher education. This should be augmented by information technology, which should reach even to the remote rural Scheduled Caste inhabitants.

Higher education

The University Grants Commission has reserved 17.5 per cent seats in colleges for Scheduled caste students and for Scheduled Tribes 7.5. Also relaxation in marks up to 5 per cent is given to all Scheduled Caste students in admission into various courses. Financial assistance in the form of fellowships scholarships, is given to Scheduled Castes, Rs.3,600 is given per Junior Research Fellow to continue research at the University level. There are special Scheduled Caste / Scheduled Tribe cells in every University for effective implementation of the Government Orders (G.Os.) and to improve the conditions of Scheduled Caste students.

However, these facilities for Scheduled Caste women become more effective if the following steps are undertaken.

1. Communication gap between educational institutions and the social welfare department should be reduced.

2. District-wise computerised data of the male and female Scheduled Caste students serves amply to provide necessary facilities to them.
4. Brochures with details about the various welfare schemes relating to Scheduled Castes should be distributed to them and wide publicity be given.
5. Supply of relevant books to the Scheduled Caste students.
6. Incentive scholarship should be given to deserving and meritorious girls to encourage them for higher courses in education.

Because the girls remain uneducated, they get married very early. Because of the unlimited family, the maintenance burden fell on the young girls which affected their health. They are not able to assist their husbands in family matters. But now the situation is different. The girls manage to plan their family, educate the children and assist husbands in family matters. Empowerment of women can improve their economic conditions. On the whole, their families become socially developed and economically advanced because of the education of the girls.

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