

# Affirmative Action for Women in India

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# ROAD TO WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

- Protection of girl child
- Opportunities for entrepreneurship
- Increased safety
- More jobs
- Access to education
- Stop discrimination

**IT REQUIRES AFFIRMATIVE ACTIONS FOR WOMEN**

# INTRODUCTION

- Affirmative action is a policy in which an individual's colour, race, sex, religion or national origin are taken into account to increase opportunities provided to an underrepresented part of society.
- Affirmation action policies in India are operative in three main spheres, namely appointment and promotion in government services, admission to public education institutions and seats in the legislature.
- The purpose of affirmative action is to establish fair access to employment opportunities to create a workforce that reflect the demography of the qualified available workforce in the relevant job market.
- Affirmative action policies and programs are tools whereby additional efforts are made to recruit, hire and promote qualified women, minorities and individuals with disabilities.

# UNDERSTANDING AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

- Affirmative action has been at the heart of public policies aimed at upliftment of the socially disadvantaged in India
- Affirmative action incorporates some features from the two distinct British concepts of 'positive discrimination' and 'positive action'
- It is a set of policies that support members of disadvantaged groups that may have suffered discrimination in the past or future in areas of education, employment or 'housing'.

# STATUS OF WOMEN IN INDIA

- Married Women by Eighteen Years of Age - 27%
- Violence against women by intimate partners - 28%
- Share of graduates in Science, Technology, engineering etc. at post secondary level - 27.7%
- At secondary level - 43.9%
- Female share of employment in senior/middle management - 13%

**Source: United Nations Human Development Report 2019**

- 26 crimes against women every hour

***Source : National Crime Report Bureau 2005-2014***

- Dowry deaths-a woman killed every hour

***Source : The Telegraph 2013***

- Lowest literacy rate in Asia
- Every 100 girls in rural India only single one reaches class 12
- Indian men earn 25% more than women in same kind of work.

***Source: female-rights.com/OXFAM***

**Therefore Gender Disparities in India need affirmative action**

# NEED FOR AFFIRMATIVE ACTION FOR WOMEN

- Among the disadvantaged segments of people in the country, the most disadvantaged group is constituted by women.
- They suffer from all sorts of social, economic and political marginalisation in India.
- They face challenges almost throughout their life right from their birth.
- In such a situation, the need for affirmative action for women becomes quite obvious.

# NATURE OF AFFIRMATIVE ACTION FOR WOMEN

- The problems and challenges faced by women are complex and multifarious.
- Hence, the nature of affirmative action for them has also been quite complex.
- Such affirmative actions are mainly two fold.
- Primarily, affirmative action for women consists of economic aspects such as health and education.
- At another level, affirmative action has also been envisaged for them in the realm of politics and public life.

**INDIAN GOVERNMENT POLICIES AFFIRMATIVE ACTION FOR WOMEN ARE FOLLOWS:-**

# BETI BACHAO, BETI PADHAO

The decline in the CSR is a major indicator of women disempowerment. CSR reflects both, pre-birth discrimination manifested through gender biased sex selection, and post birth discrimination against girls. Social construct discriminating against girls on the one hand, easy availability, affordability and subsequent misuse of diagnostic tools on the other hand, have been critical in increasing Sex Selective Elimination of girls leading to low Child Sex Ratio. It is the flagship scheme for prevention of deaths of girl child at the time of birth or even before birth.

The objectives of the Scheme are:

- ❖ Prevention of gender based sex selective elimination.
- ❖ Ensuring survival & protection of the girl child.
- ❖ Ensuring education and participation of the girl child.

# SUKANYA SAMRIDDHI YOJNA

The scheme encourages parents to build a fund for the future education and marriage expenses for their female child. Between birth of girl child till age of 10, account can be opened by a Parent or guardian in Post offices/ Commercial banks. Sukanya Samriddhi Yojna is a Government of India backed saving scheme targeted at the parents of girl children.

The objectives of the Scheme are:

- ❖ It helps change the mindset that a girl is a burden on the family.
- ❖ It makes parents and guardians aware of the benefits of planning ahead for the girl.
- ❖ Investment in the account can be claimed for tax deduction under section 80C by the parents or guardians.
- ❖ Investment earned on the deposit is tax free.
- ❖ It Contributes to the economic strength the family through government support for scheme

# ONE STOP CENTRE SCHEME

Gender Based Violence (GBV) is a global health, human rights and development issue that transcends geography, class, culture, age, race and religion to affect every community and country in every corner of the world. This scheme has been initiated to stop gender based violence in society.

- One Stop Centres (OSCs) are intended to support women affected by violence, in private and public spaces, within the family, community and at the workplace.
- Under this Scheme, in the first phase, one OSC envisaged to be established in each State/UT to facilitate access to an integrated range of services including medical, legal, and psychological support.

The objectives of the Scheme are:

- ❖ To provide integrated support and assistance to women affected by violence, both in private and public spaces under one roof.
- ❖ To facilitate immediate, emergency and non-emergency access to a range of services including medical, legal, psychological and counselling support under one roof to fight against any forms of violence against women.

# WOMEN HELPLINE SCHEME

The Scheme of Universalisation of Women Helpline is intended to provide 24 hours immediate and emergency response to women affected by violence through referral (linking with appropriate authority such as police, One Stop Centre, hospital) and information about women related government schemes programs across the country through a single uniform number.

The objectives of the Scheme are:

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

# SCHEME FOR PREVENTION OF TRAFFICKING AND RESCUE, REHABILITATION AND RE-INTEGRATION OF VICTIMS OF TRAFFICKING AND COMMERCIAL SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

The problem of trafficking of women and children for commercial sexual exploitation is especially challenging due to its myriad complexities and variation. Poverty, low status of women, lack of a protective environment etc. are some of the causes for trafficking.

The objectives of the Scheme are:

- To prevent trafficking of women and children for commercial sexual exploitation through social mobilization and involvement of local communities, awareness generation programmes, generate public discourse through training, workshops/seminars and such events and any other innovative activity.
- To facilitate rescue of victims from the place of their exploitation and place them in safe custody.
- To provide rehabilitation services both immediate and long-term to the victims by providing basic amenities/needs such as shelter, food, clothing, medical treatment including counselling, legal aid and guidance and vocational training.
- To facilitate reintegration of the victims into the family and society at large
- To facilitate repatriation of cross-border victims to their country of origin.

# SWADHAR GREH: A SCHEME FOR WOMEN IN DIFFICULT CIRCUMSTANCES

The Government of India has had various schemes to provide shelter for women in need. Recognizing the need for transitional shelter, the Swadhar Greh Scheme is provide temporary accommodation, maintenance and rehabilitative services to women and girls rendered homeless due to a range of difficult circumstances.

The objectives of the Scheme are:

- ❖ To cater to the primary need of shelter, food, clothing, medical treatment and care of women in distress and those who are without any social and economic support.
- ❖ To enable them to regain their emotional strength that gets hampered due to their encounter with unfortunate circumstances.
- ❖ To provide them with legal aid and guidance to enable them to take steps for their readjustment in family/society.
- ❖ To rehabilitate them economically and emotionally.
- ❖ To act as a support system that understands and meets various requirements of women in distress.
- ❖ To enable them to start their life afresh with dignity and conviction.

# WORKING WOMEN HOSTEL

The Government of India being concerned about the difficulties faced by such working women, introduced a scheme in 1972-73 of grant-in-aid for construction of new/ expansion of existing buildings for providing hostel facilities to working women in cities, smaller towns and also in rural areas where employment opportunities for women exist.

The objectives of the Scheme are:

- ❖ 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 scheme is assisting projects for construction of new hostel buildings, expansion of existing hostel buildings and hostel buildings in rented premises.

- ❖ 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., subject to norms prescribed under the scheme.
- ❖ While the projects assisted under this scheme are meant for working women, women under training for job may also be accommodated in such hostels subject to the condition that taken together, such trainees should not occupy more than 30% of the total capacity the hostel and they may be accommodated in the hostels only when adequate numbers of working women are not available.
- ❖ Children of working women, up to the age of 18 years for girls and up to the age of 5 years for boys may be accommodated in such hostels with their mothers.

# SUPPORT TO TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMME FOR WOMEN (STEP)

The STEP Programme a 100% Central Sector Scheme is under implementation since 1986- 87. The programme strives to build upon the traditional knowledge of women and convert it into sustainable livelihood capacitation. STEP Guidelines 2014 are revised on the basis of learning of the rigorous process of scrutiny of thousands of proposals that were received in response to the 2014 Guidelines as well as the Gazette notification issued by the Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship and NITI Aayog's Guidelines for implementation of Centrally Sponsored Schemes/Central Sector Schemes through NGOs.

The objectives of the Scheme are:

- ❖ To provide skills that give employability to women.
- ❖ Training is provided to poor and marginalized women in traditional trades which are largely in the informal sector.
- ❖ To provide competencies and skills that enable women to become self-employed/entrepreneurs.

# MAHILA E-HAAT AND MAHILA SHAKTI KENDRAS (MSK)

A new sub-scheme namely Mahila Shakti Kendra (MSK) under the Umbrella Scheme Pradhan Mantri Mahila Shashaktikaran Yojana (PMMSY) was approved for implementation during 2017-18 upto 2019-20.

The objectives of the Scheme are:

- ❖ To provide "one stop convergent support services for empowering rural women with opportunities for skill development, employment, digital literacy, health and nutrition".
- ❖ National level (domain based knowledge support) and State level (State Resource Centre for Women) structures will provide technical support to the respective governments on issues related to women, the District and Block level Centres will provide support to MSK.
- ❖ 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. Student volunteers will encourage the spirit of voluntary community service and gender equality.
- ❖ These student volunteers will serve as "agents of change" and have a lasting impact on their communities and the nation.

# MAHILA POLICE VOLUNTEERS

Gender-Based Violence (GBV), faced by women both in public and private spaces, including domestic violence, sexual assault, rape, voyeurism, stalking etc is a major threat to women equality and empowerment. A gender responsive police service requires specific training, increased presence of female personnel and community outreach to integrate gender issues into policies, protocols and operational procedures

The objectives of the Scheme are:

- ❖ An MPV will serve as a public-police interface in order to fight crime against women.
- ❖ The broad mandate of MPVs is to report incidences of violence against women such as domestic violence, child marriage, dowry harassment and violence faced by women in public spaces.
- ❖ She will act as a role model for the community.

# NIRBHAYA SCHEME

Violence and abuse against women and girls is frequent on streets, in public transportation and in other public places. Such occurrences restrict women's right to mobility, discouraging their freedom to walk freely and move in public spaces of their choice.

The Nirbhaya Fund should have the following features:

- ❖ Direct impact on safety and security concerns of women
- ❖ Optimum use of existing infrastructure
- ❖ Innovative use of technology
- ❖ No duplication of existing government schemes/programmes
- ❖ Provision for real time intervention as far as possible. e.g. in case of CCTVs for women's safety, there should be real-time monitoring of footage and quick response, rather than just a recording of events for evidence after the incident has occurred
- ❖ Strict privacy and confidentiality of women's identity and information. e.g. placement of CCTVs so as to not compromise women's privacy, protection of video data collected etc.
- ❖ Defined role of all stakeholders

# CONCLUSION

- When women are empowered the whole world is empowered
- India is in rise and getting rightful place in the world
- Govt policies did bring better status of women at present
- Need life cycle approach
- Need change in mind set
- Need women led development approach
- Armed forces opened doors to women
- Women can be identified with excellence in every field

**STILL REQUIRES AFFIRMATIVE ACTIONS FOR WOMEN IN INDIA**



*Thank You*