

Women Education and Right: In the Light of Different Scheme and Programme

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Abstract: *We are in the midst of a great revolution in the history of women. In everywhere, the voice of women is increasingly heard in parliament, courts and the streets. While common in the west had to fight for over a century to get some of their basic rights, like the right to vote, the Constitution of India gave women equal rights with men from the beginning. Unfortunately, women in this country are mostly unaware of their rights because of illiteracy and the oppressive traditions.*

Keywords: Women Education, Educational Rights, Educational Schemes

1. Introduction

Women education is essential for the development of a nation. This is mainly because women are involved in all sorts of activities both at a regional level and at the community level such as child learning and household choose etc. Hence, it is very important to provide quality education to women to help them contribute to the development of the nation in a meaningful way. Various studies show that women's education is very important in order to improve the socio-economic position of their families. It is the inequality in access to education for female students that prevents them from obtaining the essential education necessary for their well being and their families' development.

2. Different Rights of Women

(1) Constitutional Provision :

The Constitution of India not only gives equality of women, but also empowers the state to adopt measures in favour of women for neutralizing the socio-economic, educational and political disadvantages faced by them. Fundamental Rights, among others, ensures equality before law.

Article 39 : The state shall in particular direct its policy towards securing that the citizens, men and women equally, have the right to an adequate and control of the material resources of the community are so distributed as best to subserve the common good.

Article 51(A) : Fundamental duties, it shall be the duty of every citizen of India to abide by the Constitution.

(2) Legislative Provision

The crimes, which are directed specifically against women are characterized as 'crime against women', which are classified under two categories :The crimes identified under the Indian Penal Code – like rape, kidnapping or abduction for different purposes, homicides for dowry deaths or their attempts mental and physical torture, molestation, sexual harassment and importantation of girls etc.

Some of the Constitutional Articles related to upliftment of women:

Article 15(3): The state to special provision in favour of women.

Article 16: Equally of opportunity for all citizens in matter relating to employment or appointment to any offence under state.

Article 339(a): State policies towards securing for men and women equality the right to an adequate means of livelihood.

Article 39(d): Equal pay for both men and women.

Article 42: The state to make provision for securing just and human condition of work and maternity relief.

Article 243D (3): Not less than one-third of the total number of seats to be filled by direct election in every panchayat to be reserved for women.

3. Special Initiatives for Women

3.1 Women Development and Social Welfare

The Department of Women Development and Social Welfare works towards the protection, equity and inclusion of populations that have been historically oppressed, neglected or excluded from development because of their gender, age, disability or situation. This includes women, senior citizens and other marginalized populations such as persons with disabilities, transgender persons, homeless persons and persons with drug / alcohol addiction.

The Department of Women Development and Social Welfare has the following offices: Directorate of Social Welfare, West Bengal Social Welfare Board, and Office of the Controller for Vagrancy, Office of Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities, West Bengal Commission for Women, West Bengal Women Development Undertaking and the Transgender Development Board.

The Department's work has evolved along with the evolution of women's rights. With a strong foundation laid by women specific laws, policies and schemes at the national and state level, the department is concentrating its energies on a critical demographic sector – adolescent girls. Kanyashree Prakalpa, the state's flagship social protection scheme for adolescent girls was launched in 2013. The Scheme's

objectives are to enhance the status of vulnerable girls between the ages of 13 and 19 through prevention of child marriage and promotion of education, financial inclusion and social inclusion, thereby ensuring that they complete the developmental tasks of adolescence in safety and wellbeing.

Kanyashree Prakalpa is a model of good governance: its convergent operational platform, multi-layered monitoring mechanisms and end-to-end IT enablement (wbkanyashree.gov.in) promote citizen-centric services, efficient-service delivery, transparency and accountability. It has been nationally and internationally recognized as a good practice, and has received several prestigious awards.

While the West Bengal Women Development Undertaking has been implementing women-centric schemes since 1993, the State Mission Authority, formed under the National Mission of Empowerment of Women, is a more recent development. The Mission Authority is chaired by the Hon'ble Chief Minister of the State. Ministers of 21 key departments are members, and the Minister of the Women Development & Social Welfare Department is member-convenor. The State Resource Centre for Women (SRCW) was established in 2012 to provide technical support to the Authority. Its primary task is to strengthen inter-sectoral convergence and facilitate the process of coordinating all the women development and socio economic development programmes across the departments.

Although the central government's Swawalamban provides vocational training to socially marginalized women and transgender persons, at the Chief Minister's instance, the Department has designed and implements Swawalamban Special and MuktiAlo, which specifically supports those forced into commercial sex work and their children into alternative livelihoods.

While the state's women form the major proportion of population served by the Department, the rights of certain smaller populations are also the focus of the department. For homeless and destitute persons, the Directorate of Vagrancy runs 11 Vagrancy homes in various districts under the Bengal Vagrancy Act, and 45 shelters under the Shelter for Urban Homeless Scheme, a state sponsored scheme, in Kolkata, Howrah and Asansol Municipal areas. Apart from shelter and health services, inmates are provided vocational training so that they may return to living in society. Support and rehabilitation for drug addiction is provided through homes that are run by NGOs.

Social security is extended through Old Age Pensions, Widow Pensions and Disability Pensions. Apart from pensions, senior citizens in need can avail of shelter at various government homes. Under the West Bengal Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Rules, 2008, runs tribunals that hear cases of senior citizens who face harassment and eviction by their families.

The Commissioner of Disabilities works to ensure the rights of disabled persons of West Bengal, and monitors infringements and denial of their rights. The office of the Commissioner of Disabilities also implements several schemes and grants supporting rehabilitation, prosthetic aids, and scholarships and presides over awareness and advocacy

events for disabled persons. The Department's "Little Star" Scheme provides medical, transport and housing facilities and other support such as bank loans to short-statured persons.

A major step forward has been the establishment of The West Bengal Transgender Development Board which was constituted in July 2015 with the objective of improving the status of the highly marginalized and vulnerable transgender who are lagging behind on human development indices, especially education and employment. A State Coordination Committee has been constituted with members of several departments so that the challenges faced by the community – education, security, medical access, rehabilitation and welfare can be expedited. Mass awareness messages have already been broadcast over the radio, and the Commissioner of Kolkata Police has been requested to recruit transgender persons into the Civic Police Force.

3.2 Child Development

The Constitution of India guarantees Fundamental Rights to all children in the country, and the Department of Child Development, Government of West Bengal is committed to ensuring that West Bengal's 2.99 crore citizens under the age of 18 (Census 2011) live healthy, safe childhoods that become strong foundations for dignified and productive adult lives. The Department's work is guided by the National Policy for Children 2013, and its responsibilities are to take affirmative measures – legislative, policy or otherwise – to promote and safeguard the right of all children to live and grow with equity, dignity, security and freedom.

In December 2014, the Department launched **State Action Plan for Children 2014-2018 (SPAC)**, West Bengal being the first state in India to launch such a plan. The SPAC uses a child-rights framework to comprehensively map the responsibilities of key government departments that are tasked with affirmative action for children. These responsibilities are operationalized through the implementation of central and state government schemes, as well as specific actions taking into account West Bengal's local needs and critical issues.

SPAC is target-oriented; it has 54 monitoring indicators closely aligned with India's national agenda for children and the country's commitments to the Sustainable Development Goals (Agenda 2030). These targets are closely monitored through high-level bi-annual meetings chaired by the Chief Secretary of the state. Similar District Plans of Action (2014-18) have been launched in Malda and Purulia. UNICEF's West Bengal Office has been a key technical partner in the SPAC process.

The development of a SPAC portal is currently underway; the portal will be an integrated virtual space for all stakeholders for convergent monitoring of data from grassroots to state level, the dissemination of information as well as a space for conducting policy dialogue on the issues of children's rights.

The Department has been performing various activities through itself and Integrated Child Development Scheme

(ICDS) Directorate, Directorate of Child Rights and Trafficking and Directorate of Integrated Child Protection Scheme (ICPS) Directorate.

One of the Department's key responsibilities is the management of the **Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) scheme**, India's flagship scheme addressing the nutritional and developmental needs of children below six years, as well as the nutritional requirement of pregnant and lactating women. Within the core package of services mandated by the scheme's design, the Department has introduced several measures to enhance services and to give impetus to the special nutritional and developmental needs of mothers and children in West Bengal.

The SABLA scheme works for **improved health and nutritional status of adolescent girls** in 7 districts in West Bengal, with a special focus on adolescent anemia. The Scheme also equips them with life-skills education and vocational skill sets, and provides them with relevant knowledge, awareness and information. SABLA and Kanyashree Prakalpa, the state's flagship scheme for adolescent girls, implemented by the Department of Women Development, work in tandem – while out-of-school girls are encouraged to return to school and are assisted through the Kanyashree benefits, girls already in education and receiving Kanyashree are brought under the SABLA scheme.

To improve **health and nutrition status of vulnerable and socially backward families**, pregnant and lactating women receive cash through Indira Gandhi Matritva Sahyog Yojana, a conditional cash transfer scheme in the districts of Bankura, Jalpaiguri and Alipurduar.

Child protection is a core mandate of the Department of Child Development, and the Department implements the Integrated Child Protection Scheme under the aegis of the Directorate of Child Rights and Trafficking. The State Child Protection Society (SCPS), West Bengal was established in 2010, and the scheme is being implemented in 20 districts through District Child Protection Units (DCPU). All mandated structures (CWC & JJB) and statutory bodies (WBCPCR) have been established, and the state is continually expanding its institutional and non-institutional care for children under the various bodies (J.J. Homes etc, open Shelters) mandated under ICPS. In addition, the West Bengal Government's Cottage Scheme continues to run shelters for destitute children, where apart from food, clothing and medical care, children are provided education and vocational training.

One of West Bengal's critical concerns is human trafficking, and the Department of Child Development is the nodal department for the effective **prevention, protection and prosecution for all forms of trafficking and exploitation in women and children** in the state. The Department chairs the State Advisory Committee on Combating Trafficking for Commercial sexual exploitation, as well as the State Task Force on Prevention of Trafficking of Children and Women. It has undertaken several important initiatives over the last few years to ensure inter-state and international cooperation

and coordination in combating human trafficking in women and children. These initiatives include developing cross-state and cross-country operational guidelines, a state plan of action to combat trafficking, MOUs with major destination states, and continual capacity building of state and district stakeholders on the child rights, missing children and trafficked persons. Information management and data collection is effected through several databases. The Track Child portal provides a central interface for all stakeholders dealing with the cases of missing and recovered children.

3.3 West Bengal Government Schemes for Women and Child

Department of Women Development and Social Welfare & Child Development, West Bengal is implementing various schemes, programmes, social welfare schemes, Health and Nutrition, scholarship for women empowerment, Girl Child pregnant women, mothers, ward members, Anganwadi Workers, Women Health Volunteers, the women living in the rural & tribal areas, ex-servicemen, physically handicapped, nursing women, Lactating mother, widows/destitute, Old age women, women self-help group (SHG), Women Entrepreneurs and Adolescent Girls'.

Also special assistance is given to the women and child belonging to Scheduled Caste (SC) and Scheduled Tribe (ST), Other Backward Classes (OBC), Socially and Educationally Backward Classes (SEBC) Minority Category and below poverty line (BPL).

It gives assistance in the form of:

- 1) Subsidy on the loans
- 2) Education, Training
- 3) Financial assistance/Cash
- 4) Scholarship
- 5) Nutrition
- 6) self employment
- 7) And others much more etc.

The schemes has been initiated in order to:

- 1) To encourage Women Empowerment
- 2) To promote development and empowerment, gender equality and gender justice of women
- 3) To ensure women's social, economic and political empowerment, fulfillment of their rights, promoting their participation and leadership
- 4) To protect Women from Domestic Violence
- 5) For child development, empowerment and protection
- 6) To the Child Sex Ratio, Child Care

Women's empowerment in West Bengal: 10 major initiatives in the last five years

In its first five-year term, the West Bengal Government has brought about many major initiatives for women in West Bengal.

As a result, women all over the State have benefitted immensely.

Here are ten major initiatives for women:

Kanyashree Scheme: Kanyashree is the State's flagship project for the girl child. More than 30 lakh girls have been

enrolled under the scheme, which has garnered international as well as national recognitions.

Education: For the first time, under the West Bengal administration, a university for women has been set in Diamond Harbour. A state women's college for minorities is coming up in Ekbalpore, Kolkata. Twenty-one hostels for women have been constructed in various polytechnics across the State. Through the State Government's SabujSathi Scheme, wherein bicycles are given to school children in rural areas, thousands of girls, too have benefitted. Besides, over 8,000 girl students studying in Class IX in the Sundarbans region have been given bicycles over the last five years. Around 40 Womens' Corners have been opened in different Government and Government-sponsored libraries to increase access to women readers.

Swabalamban Scheme: Through the Swabalamban Scheme, training is given on a wide range of livelihood activities, e.g., zari craft, handloom weaving, beautician courses, community health, readymade garment-making, wood carving, etc. Recently, as a part of this scheme, the State Government has launched an acting project for sex workers, meant to make them self-sufficient by giving them acting lessons and making them employable in the entertainment industry.

Muktir Alo: Muktir Alo is a comprehensive scheme for the rehabilitation of sex workers. It provides them with opportunities for leading a life with dignity by providing them alternative career opportunities, and also gives protection to victims of sex trafficking.

Maternity Leave: For the benefit of women, maternity leave for State Government employees has been extended. 'Maternity and Child Care Leave,' as it is called, can now be taken for a total period of two years, in stages.

Kolkata Safest City for Women: Kolkata is one of the safest metros in India for women. According to the latest report of the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), Kolkata is the safest city in Kolkata in terms of crimes against women. The India Today Best City Awards 2014 awarded Kolkata the award for the best city in the category of crime and safety. Kolkata Police offers martial arts training to schoolgirls, under Project Sukanya, to make them self-reliant when it comes to defending themselves.

Police Stations Run by Women: The West Bengal Government has adopted a 'zero tolerance' approach towards crime against women. The Government is setting up police stations run exclusively by women police officers. As of now, the Government has set up 30 Women Police Stations, as these are termed.

Anti-Trafficking Units: The State Government has set up dedicated Anti-Human Trafficking Units and Special Juvenile Police units in each district.

Employment: More than 27,000 self-help groups have been formed over the last five years, which have over 16 lakh women members. Financial assistance to the tune of Rs 200.07 lakh has been sanctioned for development of

women's cooperative societies. The State has also created employment opportunities, including many for women, through skill development in various sectors. The Biswa Bangla initiative by Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee has also opened up a lot of employment opportunities for women. A lot of the handicraft workers in the rural areas are women, who are earning a decent livelihood. Women's participation in MGNREGS, in which the State has achieved unique milestones, has increased to 41%, which is all-time high in the State.

4. Hostels for Working Women

To sort out the accommodation issues of working women, hostels have been constructed. A 40-bedded hostel, Ananya, has been set up in Durgapur and another 44-bedded one, named Swayangsiddha, in Salt Lake, Kolkata. Seven more are in different phases of construction all over the State.

The Central Government and State Governments have come up with several schemes for the empowerment and welfare of women in India. The Central Government is running about 147 schemes for women in the country which cater to the different needs of women in the society. These include schemes for women of all age groups, from all societies or social and economic classes.

Other than Central Government's 147 welfare schemes for women empowerment, the state governments are also running about 195 schemes (combined) in their respective state. The schemes are mainly being run to empower women in every field including education, healthcare, self-employment and others.

The prime goals of all the central and state government schemes for women is to provide them protection, better health facilities, enough education to make them employable and to make them financially strong. Here we bring you the list of all those major schemes being run by all state governments and central government in the country.

5. Conclusion

The above mentioned scheme and programmes are very lawful but its implementation and applications also totally depend upon awareness of society we conclude that our awareness and painstaking effort is very essential to implement this programmes and schemes women empowerment is dependent upon women right, education and justices. Social equity and equal opportunity depend upon women education and right.

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