



## WOMEN EMPOWERMENT PROGRAMMES IN RURAL KARNATAKA: OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

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**ABSTRACT** Empowerment of women is a socio-economic process which enables women to realize their rights and potentials to assert their equal access to and control over resources (social, political, material, human and intellectual) and factors which affect their lives. Empowerment essentially entails the transformation of the structure or institutions that reinforce and perpetuate gender discrimination. The need of the day is proper execution of the programmes which has been introduced by both central and state governments. The number of programmes has been introduced in Karnataka since 2000. The present paper is an overview of the programmes for women in Karnataka.

**KEYWORDS :** Empowerment, Women, Government, Programmes

### INTRODUCTION

Women contributed in all spheres of life and enjoy a unique position in every society and a country of the world, but women suffer in silence and belong to a class which is in a disadvantaged position an account of several barriers and impediments. Women's empowerment in legal, social, political and economic requires to be enhanced. However, empowerment and equality are based on the gender sensitivity of society towards their problems. The intensification of women's issues and rights movement all over the world are reflected in the form of various conventions passed by the United Nations. Even in India polity has contributed in its own ways to empower women, which includes Human rights, Civil Rights, Political Rights, Legal rights and even constitutional rights. The Indian government has introduced numerous programmes to empower women through which she can take independent decisions and self-dependent. Women empowerment is very necessary to make the bright future of the family, society and the nation.

### OBJECTIVES:

The embodiment of provision affords numerous ambitions for academic research. Accumulating this as a background, an endeavour is made to study the

- Importance of Women Empowerment Programmes
- An overview of the programmes in rural Karnataka for women empowerment.

**The scope of the study:** The scope of the study is only limited to know about women empowerment and understanding the various programmes of rural areas related to women empowerment in Karnataka.

### METHODOLOGY:

The study is totally on secondary data considering the nature of the theme which helps to get an insight into the actual working of the administrative system and to get a feeling of the situation in which the system operates while implementing the same.

**Constitutional Background:** The principle of gender equality is enshrined in the Indian Constitution in its preamble, Fundamental Rights, Fundamental Duties and Directive Principles of State policy. The constitution not only grants equality for women, but also empowers the state to adopt measures of positive discrimination in favour of women. According to the provisions of the constitution of India, it is a legal point to grant equality of women in the society in all spheres of life. The department of women and child development is functioning towards the empowerment of women. Though the respectful status has been given to women in India, till date she is not empowered.

### Meaning:

Empowerment can be viewed as a means of creating a social environment in which one can make decisions and make choices either individually or collectively for social transformation. It is a process by which one can gain control over one's destiny and circumstances of

their own lives. Women's empowerment is very essential for the development of society. According to United Nations Development Fund for women (UNIFEM), the term women's empowerment means: Acquiring knowledge and understanding of gender relations and the ways in which these relations may be changed.

Developing the ability to organize and influence the direction of social change, to create a more just social and economic order, nationally and internationally.

### Definitions of women empowerment:

According to Moser (1989) empowerment is their 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 the 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 enable women to realize their full identity and powers in all spheres of life".

Horsemen (1996) developed five indicators to measure women's empowerment: mobility, economic security, ability to make larger purchases, realize freedom from domination within the family & political & legal awareness & involvement in political campaigning and protests with this in mind. An attempt is made in the following situation to measure empowerment of women respondents:

### The role of women in rural development, food production and poverty eradication:

The UN, observes, women's key role in development, beginning with International Day for Rural Women on 15<sup>th</sup> October, World Food Day on 16<sup>th</sup> October and International Day for the Eradication of Poverty on 17<sup>th</sup> October.

Rural women play a key role in development. They play a catalytic role towards achievement of transformational economic, environmental and social changes required for sustainable development. But limited access to credit, health care and education are among the many challenges they face. These are further aggravated by the global food and economic crises and climate change. Empowering women is essential, not only for the well-being of individuals, families and rural communities, but also for overall economic productivity, given women's large presence in the agricultural workforce worldwide.

UN Women supports the leadership and participation of rural women in shaping laws, policies and programmes on all issues that affect their lives, including improved food and nutrition security, and better rural livelihoods. Training equips them with skills to pursue new livelihoods and adapt technology to their needs.

### 1. Stree Shakthi

With the objective of inculcating the habits of savings, the Stree

Shakthi scheme empowers women economically and socially by organizing them in self-help groups. The women in street Shakthi are imparted training in skill development, legal remedies, and financial empowerment to make themselves independent and self-governed.

### 2. Mathru Poorna:

Under this programme, Pregnant and lactating women in rural areas are to be given nutritious meals to ensure that the daily calorie intake for pregnant women is met. It also aims to reduce child malnutrition and infant mortality rate as the right nutrients in the form of daily meals and iron tablets are to be provided along with gestational weight monitoring for 15 months. This programme helps women in rural who is economically weak.

### 3. Santvana:

The Santvana programme started in 2001-02 as a welfare programme for the women who are subjected to atrocities like domestic violence, dowry, sexual harassment, physical abuse and so on. The programme is designed to provide legal assistance, Support, financial aid and temporary shelter and protection and training, education and other assistance needed to get back to their regular life. The Scheme aims at providing training for these Women to be self-reliant in order to empower them.

### 4. Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act 2005 and Rules 2006:

Protection of women from Domestic Violence Act 2005 and Rules 2006 is being implemented to provide financial relief. Protection, residence order, custody of children, temporary shelter, medical and legal aid through the court. Whenever violence occurs in women within the household.

**5. Gelathi:** The scheme was introduced in the year 2014-15. It aims at providing medical facilities, police assistance, and other facilities in one roof. Legal counsellors, family counsellors will work in this unit to assist the victims.

**6. Stairya Nidhi Yojane:** This aims at providing financial relief to women who have been victims of atrocities and acid attack.

### 7. Dowry Prohibition act (2007-08):

The Dowry system is a social evil in the society and those receiving or giving dowry are punishable under the Act, which is force since 1961 with amendments during 1984 and 86. The State Rules were notified on 31-03-2004. The Director of women and child development is appointed as the chief Dowry prohibition officer vide Notification dated 17-06-2004. The steps will be taken to eradicate the dowry system.

### 8. Special Cell for Eradication of Social Evils (1983-84):

A Special cell has been created in the Directorate of Women and Child Development to create awareness regarding the practice of various social evils such as dowry, child marriage, Domestic violence, atrocities on Women etc. in the society.

### 9. One stop Centre:

The ministry of women and Child Development has intended to establish one stop Centre (Sakhi) to support Women affected by violence. These centres will provide counselling. Medical assistance Legal and police assistance under one proof.

**10. Swadhar Gruha:** During 2015-16 Central Government has merged Swadhar centres and short stay homes and revised the Schemes as Swadhar Gruha, with the objective of empowering women who are in difficult circumstances by providing the food, shelter, clothing, training and education. It is implemented through voluntary organizations, which are registered at least 3years before and have worked in the field of women welfare having good infrastructure. The government of India grant is sanctioned to run shelter Homes, Women's helpline, Counselling centres, Training Centres and Medical Centres., Which are registered at least 3 years before and have worked in the field of women welfare having good infrastructure. The government of India grant is sanctioned to run shelter Homes. Women's helpline, counselling centres. Training Centres and Medical Centres. At present 48 Swadhar, homes are functioning in the State.

### 11. Ujjwala:

Ujjawala, has been formulated by the ministry of women and child development which is a new comprehensive scheme for the prevention

of Trafficking and Rescue, Rehabilitating and Reintegration of victims of trafficking and Commercial Sexual Exploitation.

### Objectives of the Scheme:

1. 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 workshop/seminars and such events and any innovative activity
2. To facilitate the rescue of victims from the place of their exploitation and place them in safe custody
3. To provide rehabilitation services both immediate and long – term for the victims by providing basic amenities/such as shelter, food, clothing, medical treatment including counselling legal aid guidance and vocational training.
4. To facilitate reintegration of the victims into the family and society at large.
5. To facilitate repatriation of cross – border victims to their country of origin.

### Target Group:

- Women and child who are vulnerable to trafficking to commercial sexual exploitation
- Women and child who are victims of trafficking for commercial sexual exploitation.

### Hoysala and Keladi chennamma bravery awards:

Awards are conferred on exceptionally talented children and at district level. Boys are identified under Hoysala award and girls are identified under Keladi chennamma award.

The children each in the field of scholastic, art, culture, innovation, music, social service and sports are being felicitated. Children are identified by a committee headed by the deputy commissioner of the district. The award carries a cash price of Rs. 10, 000/- and a citation.

### The prohibition of child marriage act:

Marriage between a boy under 21 years of age and girl under 18 years of age is considered as child marriage. Male adult marrying a child, a person who performs, conducts, directs or abets any child marriage, parents or guardians or any person in charge of children are punishable for child marriage. An offence punishable under this Act shall be cognizable and non-bailable able.

Anybody who comes to know about the child marriage can complain in writing or through phone calls without disclosing their identity to the following officer's

- Can make free phone call to the child helpline number -1098
- Give complaint to the nearest police station
- Can complaint to PDO, village accountant, school headmasters.
- Tahasilsdhars, taluk panchayath executive officers, CDPO, BEO, PSI,
- DC, SP, CEO of ZP, DDs of WCD.

### CONCLUSION

The programs have been introduced by both central government and state governments to empower the women in rural. Empowerment of women essentially means improving the social, political and economic status of women, especially the traditional underprivileged one. It means creating an environment where women are free from any kind of physical, mental abuse, exploitation, and prejudice that they are most vulnerable section of the society. Recognizing the importance of women in the economic growth of the nation, the Government of India along with state Governments has been taking several efforts since the post-independence period of uplift women from their conditions in general. Attempts were made by the Government to address the issues through employment, empowerment, labour force participation, education, gender equality and entrepreneurship to motivate women to participate in the economic activities. The paper examines the perspectives of women who are getting benefits through various government programmes such as – financial assistance, training facilities, infrastructure and its awareness, motivation, confidence, increase in the rate of women opting for entrepreneurship. Studies have shown that such initiatives are boosting self-confidence, increasing the purchasing power and decision making power, leading to their empowerment.

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