

THE MEASURES OF GOVERNMENT TO ENHANCE THE SOCIAL STATUS OF WOMEN

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Now the position of subordination of women by men is gradually dissuading due to their education and enhanced the power, ability and authority which they had gained due to their earnings from some job or other. Her financial and economic contribution to the family to encourages her to make all the other members of her family to adhere to her decisions in family matters. Her improved financial and economic status compels to reveal herself as a lady to be identified in the social life. The member of women who are professionally trained and educated fit themselves to incorporate in traditional as well as non-traditional jobs. The women belonging to middle class income group also have entered into the labour force nowadays. Today the women's employment is treated as a symbol of social status. Nowdays, the women chose jobs of their liking with responsibility and better salary. Even without minding job security and even promotion they prefer to seek a job without many responsibilities. They even ask for jobs which are not strenuous. Even now for family reasons they want to remain in the small job in their own native place. They found it difficult to travel and work in distant places mainly due to their unavoidable family circumstances and responsibilities. Their bodily conditions are not favourable for such aspects. The working women are always assertive, job conscious and aggressive. So it is now easy for them to manage situations and any circumstances effectively. They take prompt and appropriate decisions in making investments or purchases or dealing with financial decisions. They were conscious in dealing with financial matters and devote on savings. Thus they maintain an economic standard.

In promoting the human resources the women played a significant role. The Women and Child Welfare Branch of the Human Resources Ministry has enabled women to improve their potentials and capabilities in helping the society by their own merits. The National Institute of Public Co-operative and Child Development (NIPCCD), Rashtriya Mahila Kosh (RMK) Central Social Welfare Board (CSWB), National Commission for Women (NCW). etc. are the steps introduced by the Central Government of India exclusively for women. They assist not only the promotion of women but also encourages them to involve themselves in the nation building activities in addition to their personal uplift along with following schemes.

In 1975 itself the Vocational Training Programme was launched by the Government of India to divert the energies of women in gaining self employment and to enrich their own social and economic status. This measure was beneficial to destitutes, widows, physically handicapped women etc. in self employment activities such as maintaining poultry, cattle breeding etc. Importance was also assigned to involve in village industries, cottage

industries, sewing etc. Such circumstances prompted the promotion of institutions suitable for the environments for the uplift of women and to allow them to serve the society. In 1987 some developed concerns were selected to give training to women in different jobs. Such aspects instilled confidence in the minds of women to get away from unwanted traditions and customs and to adopt modernism. As they were even allowed to understand themselves it widened the opportunity to them to serve the society. The Rashtriya Mahila Kosh scheme launched in 1993 by the Central Government offered financial assistance to women through the grant of loans. This scheme was expanded by the Baliga Samirithi Yojana started on 2, October 1997. In 1998 the SWA - Sakthi project was launched. By that Self Help Groups to the tune of nearly 2000 were introduced. Each group having 15 to 20 members works to the empowerment of women by starting productive work to enrich their economic pursuits. They are paid loans by Scheduled banks. By that they gain the habit of savings also. The entire groups are a beneficiary in achieving a developed life standard.

The contribution of education to make the women to serve the society also must be noticed. Due to their developed studies and promoted wisdom and knowledge they approach problems of women and serve the society by practical experiences and connect polity, society and economy in an effective. Thus the multidimensional approach had enhanced the qualities and status of women. The mingling of women through self help groups to widen their scope of development. The recovery projects undertaken by various educational institutions such as Mother Teresa University, Kodaikanal etc. assisted the women's empowerment programme and uplift movement. From the early 1980s the fall in the fertility rate has assisted the families with had caused family promotions. The concept of abortion is also treated now as an essential factor to negotiate themselves with their work places and to solve different social issues and with all boldness. Such facts also encouraged them to work more for meeting out their socio-economic problems and gender discrimination on the part of the labour side. So the concept of equality has gained greater impetus nowadays. The avoidance of frequent child birth has enabled them to move towards progress.

The facilities offered to women workers in getting welfare benefits and social legitimacy in Tamil Nadu were introduced by the Tamil Nadu Construction Union, which was started in 1985. It helped women to become members in the labour unions along with men mainly to claim their privileges and rights. Such facts too favoured their further development for the better future. The Madras Welfare Board constituted during February 2000 acknowledged the work status of women and provided more opportunities for the unorganised sector workers to identify their social legitimacy with their status in the social hierarchy. It was also a motivation for women to estimate the need and requirement of the services of women by the society. The women agricultural labourers in the Tamil Nadu were less than 1% in all the districts.

While agriculture, as an unit, is under the organised sector, the non-agricultural sector comprises of unorganised activities. The women who were included in the subsidiary categories were engaged only to execute unskilled activities. In the rural areas more

uneducated women are employed in agricultural activities alone which were mostly informal. The women workers were appointed through contractors and their status of employment was either temporary or casual. Thus without minding the way of appointment they seek jobs. Their wages, employment conditions were all negotiated by the contractors only. In the tanning industry the Chuckliyar women were employed for carrying out the initial processing works such as cleaning the sludge, removal of wastage. They were also employed in dyeing and drying of skins. The women were employed in scavengers' jobs also. The dehumanising working conditions, sexual exploitation of women labourers both in formal and informal sectors in the rural centres were detrimental to women. They had to work amidst many atrocities. Since women were belonging to the undifferentiated homogenous category the concept of discriminating women on the basis of gender relations is removed now. This is only a slow and gradual process. But had yielded fruit.

The Girl Child Protection Scheme was introduced in Tamil Nadu in 1992 and it executed its duties for a decade upto 2002. It was to eradicate the evil of daughter elimination. The Cradle Baby System is also a part of it. This daughter elimination programme gained popularity in Tamil Nadu in 1980s. This laudable scheme offered scope for women to be more confident of themselves and their future. They began to think of the progressive measures by setting aside their negative approaches. The assistance offered to the needy too is impressive and beneficial.

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