



## Women development programmes and schemes provided by central and Himachal Pradesh state governments

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### Abstract

Central and State governments have been implementing various schemes and programmes for the welfare and empowerment of women in the area of poverty alleviation, micro-credit, development and employment, science and technology, education, health services, awareness generation, legal literacy and support services. The function of the committee included examining the recommendation of the National Commission for Women, the measures taken by the Union Government 'to secure for women equality; status and dignity in all matters'. Even though there are many development programmes and policies which disclose positively for the development of women in India, millions of girls and women throughout the country suffer from discrimination and deprivation of their human rights based on their gender. Throughout the country women and girls often face discrimination in legal, political, social, economic and cultural settings, to improve position and status of women in the society, the major responsibility lies with the public at large. Voluntary organization and particularly women's associations have to be more alert and vigilant in this case. The Government's programmes are supposed to supplement the effort of public.

**Keywords:** development programmes and schemes, women empowerment, National Commission, women equality, Voluntary organization, women associations

### Introduction

There are various programmes/ schemes for the welfare of women in Himachal Pradesh and various agencies are engaged in this function. On the 8 March 1996, on the occasion of International Women's Day, the parliament passed a resolution to set up a standing committee for the improvement of the status of women in India, and the committee on empowerment of women was constituted in April, 1997. In addition, The Department of Women and Child Development implements a few innovative programmes, which include- 1. Empowering strategies; 2. Employment and Income generation; 3. Welfare and support services; 4. Awareness generation and gender sensitization; and 5. Other enabling measures.

### Development programmes and schemes for women established by central government

These programmes are the development efforts for women. Some of these development programmes and schemes are as given below:

#### Indira Mahila Yojna (IMY)

Launched in 1995-96 aims to empower women through the following:-

(i) Generating awareness amongst women by disseminating information and knowledge; (ii) helping women to achieve economic strength through micro-level income-generating activities; and (iii) establishing convergence of various services such as literacy, health, non-formal education, rural development, water supply, training for capacity building and entrepreneurship. More than 37000 homogeneous women's

groups were set up by the end of 1997. The IMY is a scheme aims at organizing women at grass root level to facilitate their participation in decision making and their empowerment<sup>[1]</sup>.

#### Support for Training and Employment (STEP)

The Programme for Support for Training and Employment (STEP), provides a comprehensive package for up-gradation of skills through training, extension inputs, market linkages etc. in traditional sectors such as agriculture, dairying, handicrafts, handloom, animal husbandry, sericulture and fisheries. Since the inception of STEP in 1987, till date about 491795 women have benefited from 96 projects, in the states of Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Gujarat, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka Kerala, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh Manipur, Nagaland, Orissa, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal.

Efforts are now being made to merge STEP with three other ongoing schemes: i) Norwegian Agency for international development (NORAD), which assists Training cum-production centers that train poor and needy women in the age-group 18-45 years in up-coming non-traditional trades; (ii) socio-economic Programme which provides 'work and wage' to needy women such as destitute, widows, deserted, disabled etc. and (iii) condensed courses of Education and Vocational Training which open up new vistas of employment through continuing education and vocational training for school dropouts, thus bringing out an umbrella scheme of

<sup>1</sup> Srivastva, Sushma, Women Empowerment, Commonwealth Publishers, New Delhi, 2008, p.2.

‘Training and Employment for Women’<sup>[2]</sup>.

### **Development of women and children in rural areas (DWCRA)**

This Programme was launched in 1982-83 to increase rural women’s access to employment, skills, training, credit and other support services, covered 187 districts in 1990-91. The Programme follows a group approach. During seventh five year plan 28000 women groups were formed<sup>[3]</sup>.

### **Mahila Samridhi Yogana (MSY)**

The Mahila Samridhi Yogana launched on 2<sup>nd</sup> October 1993. It is one of the innovative schemes for economic betterment of rural women. It covers wide base of 70 percent of total women population living in villages. The objective of the scheme is to encourage thrift among rural women; under this scheme rural women are encouraged to save by providing direct cash incentives to supplement their individual savings. This scheme would assure them of security in times of need and enable them to exercise greater control over household resources.

### **Indira Awaas Yojana**

It was started as an important component of RLEGP (now under JRY) aiming at the construction of dwelling units, free of cost for the poorest of the poor belonging to SC’s/ST’s and free bonded labourers under IAY, priority is given to widows and unmarried women. IAY houses, in all cases are allotted in the name of the women members of the household or in the joint names of husband and wife.

### **Panchayati Raj**

The Constitution Act, 1992 is the momentous step in the direction of translating this concept into a reality. It provides reservation to women. One-third of the total numbers of seats, both in reserved and unreserved categories will be reserved for women in every panchayat on rotation basis; this act applies to the post of chairperson also. This will give women a greater say in matters of local administration. It is a novel experiment to involve women in their own uplift.

### **National commission for women**

The National Commission for Women setup in 1992 to examine laws and ensure constitutional and other safeguards concerning women, to study and evaluate various economic and social initiatives taken by the Government to scrutinize individual complaints of violation of women’s rights<sup>[4]</sup>.

### **Swayamsidha Scheme**

It was launched in 2000-01 for women’s empowerment based on formation of women into Self-Help Group aiming at holistic empowerment of women through thrift, awareness generation, skill development and economic empowerment<sup>[5]</sup>.

### **Rural Women Development and empowerment Project**

The main objective of the project to launch a Programme which strengthens the processes to promote the social and economic development of women’s rise an environment for social change to improve their equality of life. The project is proposed to be taken up as a Central Plan Scheme for a period of 5 years. International Fund for Agriculture Development (IFAD) and International Development Agency (IDA) will jointly fund the project cost<sup>[6]</sup>.

### **Balika Samridhi Yojana (BSY)**

Originated from an announcement of the Prime Minister on 15 August 1997 promising financial help by the Government for the families to whom a girl child is born and if they are living Below Poverty Line (BPL). Later, scholarships would also be given when the girl child goes to school. To make the Programme more effective, a Group of Ministers reviewed the implementation of the Programme in 1999. Based on their recommendations, the Programme was recast as a Centrally Sponsored Scheme. Accordingly, a Programme of Balika Samridhi Yojana was launched on 2 October 1997 to extend a post-delivery grant of Rs. 500/- for the mother of the Girl child belonging to the BPL Group. These deposits will be paid to the girl child on attaining the age of 18 years and remaining unmarried till then<sup>[7]</sup>. The scheme, under which releases were made by the Department to district level implementing agencies in 1997-98 and 1998-99, will now be implemented as a Centrally Sponsored Scheme and funds will be released to State Governments and Union Territory Administrations for execution of the scheme, largely through the ICDs Integrated Child Development scheme infrastructure<sup>[8]</sup>.

### **Self Help Group (SHGs)**

SHGs movement had been designed to benefit women especially in rural belt, towards providing them social status and identity. A two-day conference of Rural Development Ministers of different states was held at Hyderabad on 23-24 June, 2001 to launch at least one SHGs or self-employment activity in each of the 14 lakh habitations in the country by 2004<sup>[9]</sup>. The Self Help Groups are voluntary association of people formed to achieve both social and economic goals. This movement in India is basically aimed at utilizing the SHG’s as an ‘intermediary’ between the banks and the rural poor to help drastically reduce transaction costs for both the banks and the rural clients<sup>[10]</sup>.

### **Ujjawala**

This scheme aims to prevent trafficking of women and children for commercial sexual exploitation through social mobilization and involvement of local communities, awareness generation Programme generate public discourse through workshops/ seminars and such events and any other innovative activity. It also facilitate rescue of victim from the

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, pp.2-3.

<sup>3</sup> Narasaiah and Sultana, op.cit., p.36.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, pp.41-42.

<sup>5</sup> Muthalagu, K., *Indian Women Development Perspective*, Kurukshetra, A Journal on Rural Development, Vol.56, 2008, p.20.

<sup>6</sup> Tomar, op.cit., pp.168-184.

<sup>7</sup> Srivastava, op.cit., p.9.

<sup>8</sup> Tomar, op.cit., p.176.

<sup>9</sup> Suguna, B., *Empowerment of Rural Women Through Self Help Groups*, Discovery Publishing House, New Delhi, 2006, p.42.

<sup>10</sup> Srivastava, op.cit., p.217.

place of their exploitation and place them in safe custody. It provides rehabilitation services both immediate and long-term to the victim by providing basic amenities/ needs such as shelter, food, clothing medical treatment including counseling, legal aid and guidance and vocational training<sup>[11]</sup>.

#### **Developmental plannings and programmes for women provided by himachal pradesh government**

One of these agencies is Department of Social Justice and Empowerment, which situated in Kalyan Bhawan SDA complex, Kasumpti, Shimla. It was established in 1955, under the name of Department of Welfare, and was later renamed as Department of Social and Women Welfare in 1985 on the direction of Central Government and presently it is named as Department of Social Justice and Empowerment is mainly looking after the interest of socially and economically weaker section of the society, which include women and backward classes. Some of these schemes areas given below:

#### **Under girls attendance scheme**

Under Girls Attendance Scheme girl students having attendance more than 90% is being awarded `2 per month for 10 months. Total 32,907 students were benefitted and `6,58,140 have been spent.

#### **Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGBV)**

In KGBVs girls are being imparted skill education along with normal studies. Regular training imparted to KGBV hostel wardens and each KGBV is monitored by State and District level monitoring team.

#### **Nurturing the spirit of innovation among girl children**

With an aim to empower girls through appropriate inputs in the science, technology and innovation, girls studying in KGBV and LLF Pilot schools were supported and oriented towards research and innovation. Three students of Himachal Pradesh have got the top level amongst 22,946 girls from 279 KGBVs in the country.

#### **Maharishi Balmiki Chhatarvriti Yojna**

The girl students belonging to Balmiki families whose parents are engaged in unclean occupation are being given scholarship under this scheme @ 9,000 per girl student per annum beyond Matric level to college level and for professional courses irrespective of their status (Govt. or Private) situated in H.P. Total 36 girl students have been benefitted under this scheme during the year 2013-14.

#### **Incentive to SC/ST girl students for secondary education**

Under this Centrally Sponsored Scheme SC/ST girl students who take admission in 9th Class after passing Middle Standard Examination from H.P. Board School Examination. The amount of incentive under this scheme is 3,000 and will be given in the shape of a Time Deposit. During the year 2013-14, total 5,563 girl students have been benefitted.

#### **Girls hostel in educationally backward blocks**

The Centrally sponsored Scheme for the construction and running of Girls hostel for students of Secondary and Sr. Secondary Schools; in Educationally Backward block is to strengthen the Boarding and Hostel facilities for Girl Students studying in classes IX to XII. The girls belonging to SC, ST, OBC, minority communities and BPL families shall be benefitted under this scheme. The construction work of 02 girl's hostels i.e. Himgiri (Chamba) and Shillai (Sirmaur) has been completed and construction work of remaining three hostels i.e. Tissa, Mehla and Sach are under process. For the year 2014-15, Project Approval Board, GOI approved `96.56 lakh as escalation cost of two Girls Hostels Tissa, Sach and Recurring grant of 14.85 lakh.

#### **Indira Gandhi national widow pension (IGNWP)**

Indira Gandhi National Widow Pension is being provided to the widows between the age group of 40 to 79 years and belongs to BPL household. During current financial year 2014-15 there is a target of 20,136 pensioners under the above scheme. An amount of ` 603.94 lakh have been spent upto 31.12.2014 against the budget provision of ` 765.17 lakh.

#### **Mukhymantri Bal Udhar Yojna**

With a view to look after the orphans, semi-orphans and destitute children, the department is providing grant-in-aid for running and maintenance of Bal /Balika Ashrams at Sarahan, Suni, Rockwood (Shimla), Durgapur (Shimla), Kullu, Tissa, Bharmaur, Kalpa(2), Shilli (Solan) Bharnal, Dehar (Mandi) and Chamba being run by the voluntary organizations. The department is running Bal/ Balika Ashrams at Pragpur (Kangra) Mashobra, Tuti Kandi, Masli (Shimla), Sundernagar (Mandi) Sujampur (Hamirpur) and Killar (Chamba). In these ashrams the inmates are provided free boarding and lodging facilities up to the age of 18 years and education upto 10+2 standard. Provision for higher education, professional education, career guidance and job oriented vocational training and rehabilitation have been included in the scheme. Total capacity of these Ashrams/Shisu girls to accommodate is 1,150 children. A budget provision of `634.00 lakh for the year 2014-15 has been kept for this scheme and ` 341.69 lakh have been spent upto December, 2014<sup>[12]</sup>.

Thinking on development has shifted repeatedly over the past forty years. So has thinking on women in development. This shift in thinking coincides with a growing concern about the lack of progress observed in improving the quality of life for women viz a viz men over the past few decades. This leads one to suggest that the past shifts in development thinking have not been of much help to women. Women around the world share a common condition; they are not full and equal participants in public policy choices that affect their lives. Nowhere is the gap between de jure and de facto equality among men and women greater than in the area of decision making. The top decision making position remain largely male dominated spheres where women have little influence.

The lack of women's participation in political decision making has important consequences. It deprives women of

<sup>11</sup> [Http://www.Lowctopus.Com/academic/Schemes-strategies-forwomen-empowerment-India/](http://www.Lowctopus.Com/academic/Schemes-strategies-forwomen-empowerment-India/)

<sup>12</sup> Economic Survey, Economics and Statistics Department of Himachal Pradesh, 2014-15, pp.114-119.

important rights and responsibilities as citizens, and excludes their perspectives and interests from policy making and decision making. Their voices are missing from key decisions on national budgets and setting of government priorities. Their skills and viewpoint often remain unheard or ignored. To truly understand what women empowerment is, there needs to be a sea-change in the mind-set of the people in the country. Not just the women themselves, but the men have to wake up to a world that is moving towards equality and equity. It is better that this is embraced earlier rather than later, for our own good. There are many schemes, many programs for the purpose of women empowerment at every stage of administration, but the need of a good system and agencies for the implementation of these policies and programs. And if government can build up that system, and can implement these programs and the goal of women empowerment, then it can be achieved very easily.

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