

ENHANCING WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT: REFLECTIONS FROM JAMMU AND KASHMIR

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ABSTRACT

Women with skill have lot of scope for jobs in factories and industries but are not duly represented because of their lack of control over resources. Therefore to bring women into mainstream economic activities has now become a global concern. Even Millennium Development Goals [2000 - 2015], in its goal no. 2 and 3 aims at empowerment of women in all these spheres of life, be that Political, social, economic, legal and psychological. History of the Jammu and Kashmir reveals only few women from state have entered Parliament of India, This is obviously a matter of grave concern, that in a state with more than crores of female electorate, still their presence in the power corridors of Jammu and Kashmir State remains almost negligible. In this troubled state with more than two decades of disturbance, female folk are hardly accommodated even at the soft higher political posts.

The present paper would focus on the programmes initiated by state and centre government in state of Jammu and Kashmir for empowering women through various capacity building programmes. apart from this we will also focus on the challenges to empowerment of women in state concerned.

KEYWORDS: Political, Social, Economic, Legal and Psychological, Female Electorate

INTRODUCTION

If society will not admit of woman's free development, then society must be remodeled."

Elizabeth Blackwell (1821-1910),

Undoubtedly Women are important partners in economy of nation¹, so for overall development and growth of economy women empowerment is necessary. Women Empowerment is of important Concerns of 21st century at every level be that national or international. This target can be achieved only when society at large will take steps combinedly, to eradicate this menace.

The Constitution of india prohibits discrimination on basis of sex in all areas of legal rights². It guarantees equality (Article 14³), non discrimination by the State (Article 15(1)), equality of opportunity (Article 16), and equal pay for equal work (Article 39(d)). In addition to this special provisions made by the State in favour of women and children

¹ [Http://Www.Jandkplanning.Com/Images/Economic_Survey/37-Womenempcd.Pdf](http://Www.Jandkplanning.Com/Images/Economic_Survey/37-Womenempcd.Pdf)

² [Http://Www.Ijhssi.Org/Papers/V2\(11\)/Version-3/J021103045053.Pdf](http://Www.Ijhssi.Org/Papers/V2(11)/Version-3/J021103045053.Pdf)

³ Article 14 In The Constitution Of India 1949 Provides That The State Shall Not Deny To Any Person Equality Before The Law Or The Equal Protection Of The Laws Within The Territory Of India Prohibition Of Discrimination On Grounds Of Religion, Race, Caste, Sex Or Place Of Birth

(Article 15(3)), renounces practices derogatory to the dignity of women (Article 51(A) (e)⁴), and (Article 42) allows for provisions to be made by the State for securing just and humane conditions of work and for maternity relief.

Thus we can say our laws, developmental policies, plans and programmes have aimed at upliftment of women within the democratic frame-work, in this regard Fifth Five Year Plan (1974-78) had showed concern it represents women's from welfare to developmental background. The 73rd and 74th Amendments (1993)⁵ ushered era for women empowerment in real sense by providing reservation of seats in the local bodies of panchayats and municipalities⁶ where they can participate in decision making in reality which upto the time was a distant dream⁷. New Plans are being formulated to give emphasis on women related schemes/ programmes where encouragement is given to women to participate effectively in the developmental process.

Present Status of Women in J&K - A Brief Overview

As revealed by Census 2011 that Female population of J&K State come down from 47.15% of the total population in 2001 to 46.88% (prov.)⁸. Total population of Jammu and Kashmir is 12,548,926 of which male and female are 6,665,561 and 5,883,365 respectively indicating a reduced sex ratio of 883⁹. The corresponding figures of male and

⁴ 'Fundamental Duties' Was Not A Part Of The Original Constitution. These Were Added To The Constitution Much Later By The 42nd Amendment In 1976. They Were Added On The Recommendations Of The Swaran Singh Committee. There Were Ten Fundamental Duties At The Time Of Incorporation But The Eleventh Was Inserted By The 86th Amendment In 2002. The Idea Behind Incorporation Of Fundamental Duties Was To Remind The Citizens Of The Country That They Have Certain Obligations Towards The Country And Society. For More Details Visit [Http://Www.iloveindia.Com/Constitution-Of-India/Fundamental-Duties.html](http://www.iloveindia.com/Constitution-Of-India/Fundamental-Duties.html)

⁵ Article 243G And Clause (A) Of Article 243W As Inserted By The 73rd And 74th Amendments Of The Constitution, Inter-Alia, Provide The New Constitutional Context For Planning In The Panchayats And The Municipalities In India. These Articles In The Respective Cases, Lay Emphasis On : The Preparation Of Plans For Economic Development And Social Justice (Article 243G And Article 243W, For Implementation Of Schemes For Economic Development And Social Justice (Article 243G) As May Be Entrusted To Them Including Those In Relation To Most Of The Matters Listed In The Eleventh Schedule, And, For The Performance Of Functions And Implementation Of Schemes (Article 243W) As May Be Entrusted To Them Including Those In Relation To Matterslisted In The Twelfth Schedule.

⁶ [Http://Www.jandkplanning.Com/Images/Economic_Survey/37-Womenempcd.Pdf](http://www.jandkplanning.com/Images/Economic_Survey/37-Womenempcd.Pdf)

⁷ Aruna Goel (2009), Women Empowerment Myth Or Reality, Deep And Deep Publications, New Delhi. ISBN 978-81-8450-182-7.

⁸ Check Jammu & Kashmir Profile On

[Http://Censusindia.Gov.In/2011census/Censusinfodashboard/Stock/Profiles/En/IND001_Jammu%20&%20Kashmir.Pdf](http://Censusindia.Gov.In/2011census/Censusinfodashboard/Stock/Profiles/En/IND001_Jammu%20&%20Kashmir.Pdf)

⁹ In The Population Census Of 2011 It Was Revealed That The Population Ratio In India 2011 Is 940 Females Per 1000 Of Males. The Sex Ratio 2011 Shows An Upward Trend From The Census 2001 Data. Census 2001 Revealed That There Were 933 Females To That Of 1000 Males. Since Decades India Has Seen A Decrease In The Sex Ratio 2011, But Since

female as per Census 2001 were 5,360,926 and 4,782,774 respectively indicating sex ratio of 892¹⁰.

Comparative Position of Sex Wise Population of All India and J&K during 2001 and 2011 Census ¹¹				
	All India		J&K	
	2001	2011(Prov)	2001	2011(Prov)
Population	1,02,87,37,436	1,21,01,93,422	1,01,43,700	1,25,48,926
Males	53,22,23,090	62,37,24,248	53,60,926	66,65,561
Females	49,65,14,346	58,64,69,174	47,82,774	58,83,365
Child Population (0 to 6yrs)	16,38,37,395	15,87,89,287	14,85,803	20,08,642
Male	8,50,08,267	8,29,52,135	7,65,394	10,80,662
Female	7,88,29,128	7,58,37,152	7,20,409	9,27,980
Child Sex Ratio	927	914*	941	859

**The Child Sex Ratio at All India level (914) is lowest reordered since independence.*

As revealed by 2011 census Jammu and Kashmir ranks 3rd in declined sex-ratio i.e 883 which is a matter of great concern and needs to be addressed on priority. The following Table sheds light on percentage change in the sex ratio over the period.

Comparison of Sex Ratio in India and J&K¹²

	2001Census	2011(Prov)	Percentage change
India	933	940	0.75
J&K	892	883	-1.01

Employment Status of Women in J&K

Women constitute half of the world population, accomplish about two thirds of the work hours and receive only one tenth of the world income¹³. If we can strengthen self-employment of women, then their economic independence can become truth. As per census 2001, Work participation rate amongst females in Jammu and Kashmir is 22.45¹⁴. sectoral breakdown of women workers reveals that 10% workers in the household industry, .56% women are cultivators and 5% are agricultural labourers.

The Last Two Of The Decades There Has Been In Slight Increase In The Sex Ratio, Source [Http://Www.Census2011.Co.In/sexratio.php](http://www.census2011.co.in/sexratio.php)

¹⁰ Dr. G.Q.Mir(2001). Women Workers And The Law (Valley Book House) ISBN 81-88592-10-5.

¹¹ [Http://Www.Jandkplanning.Com/Images/Economic_Survey/37-Womenempcd.Pdf](http://www.jandkplanning.com/images/Economic_Survey/37-Womenempcd.Pdf)

¹² J&K Social Welfare Department, Available At [Http://:Www.Jk.Nic.In](http://www.jk.nic.in)

¹³ Reported By Fifty-Seventh Session Of The Commission On The Status Of Women That Took Place At United Nations Headquarters In New York From 4 To 15 March 2013. Site Visited [Http://Www.Un.Org/Womenwatch/Daw/Csw/57sess.Htm](http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/57sess.htm)

¹⁴ Ibid

Total Population	101.44 Lakhs
Total Women population	47.83 Lakhs
Rate of Participation of women in workforce	22.45 %
Rate of Participation of men in workforce	50 %
Total Cultivators	15.91 lakh
Female Cultivators	6.05 lakhs
Total Agricultural Labourers	2.46 lakhs
Female Agricultural Labourers	0.57 Lakhs

Occupational Status of Women in Jammu and Kashmir (Census 2001)

Economic Empowerment of Women

Despite the fact that in these past 25 years of protracted violence the state has witnessed 68000 violent incidents¹⁵, Women suffered the most in this violence; they lost their spouse, son, father, mother, sister, brother and other dear ones but their will and strength remained intact. During the last two decades women in Jammu and Kashmir have suffered badly, economic empowerment is magic wind to bring women in distress to main stream. In this regard various programmes Government has been implemented which support women to take up new ventures and start self employment, through following departments/organizations, (1) State Women Development Corporation and (2) Social Welfare Department as explained herein under in year 1991 the Jammu and Kashmir State Women Development Corporation came into existence as a channelizing agency for implementation of the schemes for social and economic upliftment of the women living below the poverty line. Few of the JKWDC schemes which are benefitting women are:

Empowering Skilled Young Women Scheme (ESW)

ESW that forms a part of Sher-i-Kashmir Employment and Welfare Programme was launched by J&K State Women Development Corporation in year 2010, on International Women's Day i.e; 8th march. From different districts of the state Women entrepreneurs establish gainful income generating units at 6% interest rate on select trades of boutique, readymade garments, fashion designing, cosmetic Shop, aromatic Medicinal Plants DTP, Mushroom Cultivation and Medical Health Care etc.

Source of loan for The J&K Women Development Corporation is National Handicapped Finance & Development Corporation (NHFDC) National Minorities Development and Finance Corporation (NMDFC). Besides, there are schemes financed by National Backward Classes Finance and Development Corporation (NBCFDC) and under which loans are advanced to females of backward classes for setting up of their income generating units and handicapped respectively. Here initiatives are taken to bring women under micro credit net to display & sell their products in exhibition-cum-melas organized by the State Women Development Corporation, both inside and outside the State. Which in return provide ample opportunities to women to sell their products¹⁶.

¹⁵ Bashir A. Dabla, Sandeep Nayak, Khurshid-Ul-Islam, "Gender Discrimination In The Kashmir Valley", (New Delhi: Gyan Publishing House, 2000)

¹⁶ [Http://Www.Borjournals.Com/Research_Papers/Ap_2013/1245M.Pdf](http://Www.Borjournals.Com/Research_Papers/Ap_2013/1245M.Pdf)

Swayam Sidha¹⁷

Framing Self Help Groups is the main aim of this scheme, here in this scheme centre government provides 100% grant in aids. We can also say that Swayam Sidha as integrated programme for women empowerment envisages execution of composite and integrated projects for women's empowerment which is in a way advanced version of Indira Mahila Yojana (IMY). For implementation of this scheme in J&K, State Women Development Corporation is the nodal agency.

J &K Social Welfare Department¹⁸

Schemes for development of women like "Development of Vocational Skills", "Lady Vocational Training Centres" are implemented by J&K Social Welfare Department. Here trainings to females in the age group of 15 to 35 years are imparted in craft manufacture. At present 150 Social Welfare Centres are engaged in imparting training to women folk with 25 inmates each centre providing training for 11 months with a stipend @ `100/- per month. four ladies vocational trainings centres one in each division at Jammu, Srinagar, Kargil and Leh are established, imparting advanced trainings in various crafts, stenography. A new paradigm of women development in state started with the centrally sponsored initiatives. The major initiatives taken therein are briefly discussed as under:

'Indira Gandhi Matritiva Sahyog Yojana (IGMSY)

In two districts viz, Anantnag and Kathua scheme of Indira Gandhi Matritiva Sahyog Yojana (IGMSY¹⁹) have been introduced with aim of better health status of women (pregnant and lactating) & infants. To make this programme successful Rs. 4000/- is being provided to beneficiaries for first live two births.

Rajiv Gandhi Scheme for Empowerment of Adolescent Girls (SABLA)

Initially only five districts of the state were covered under this scheme viz, Anantnag, Kupwara, Leh, Jammu & Kathua.²⁰ This scheme aims at imparting to adolescent girls formal and non formal education for improving their health & nutrition status, up-grade their skills & enhance their educational status.

An excellent effort by state for controlling dropout rate of girl students in higher secondary schools is 'Beti Anmol' scheme which serves as means for enhancing their employment prospects. Under this programme a fixed deposit of Rs. 5000 for girl students of BPL families in all educationally backward blocks on enrollment in 11th class to be encashed on passing 12th class examination

¹⁷ Swayamsidha Scheme Was Launched In The Year 2001 Dedicated To Women's Empowerment For Details See [Http://Www.Wcdhry.Gov.In/SWAYAMSIDHA_F.Htm](http://www.wcdhry.gov.in/SWAYAMSIDHA_F.Htm)

¹⁸ More Details Available At [Http://Jksocialwelfare.Nic.In/](http://jksocialwelfare.nic.in/)

¹⁹ The Indira Gandhi Matritva Sahyog Yojana (IGMSY) Is A Maternity Benefit Program Run By The Government Of India. It Was Introduced In 2010 And Is Implemented By The Ministry Of Women And Child Development. It Is A Conditional Cash Transfer Scheme For Pregnant And Lactating Women Of 19 Years Of Age Or Above For First Two Live Births

²⁰ For More Details Visit [Http://Wcd.Nic.In/Schemes/SABLA-Guidelines141210.Pdf](http://wcd.nic.in/Schemes/SABLA-Guidelines141210.Pdf)

National Programme for Education of Girls at Elementary Education (NPEGEL²¹)

This scheme provided incentives like stationery, books, uniforms etc to the girl student, so as to reduce gender disparities in education, number of women ITIs and Women Wings in the existing ITIs have been established under Prime Ministers Reconstructions Programme (PMRP).

Challenges to Women Empowerment in Jammu and Kashmir

In a disturbed state like Jammu and Kashmir where turmoil prevails from more than two decades large section consists of widows and half-widows, resulting in challengeous life for women which is very tough to strive. These difficulties can be grouped into following:

- Violence against Women
- Lack of decision-making authority
- Lack of participation in political affairs
- Poor and low status of women
- Lack of education
- Lack of awareness
- Inadequate & unorganized health care delivery system
- Under/unemployment leading to poverty

CONCLUSIONS

In the light of above discussion it becomes clear that the women education in India has considerably increased but literacy rate in Jammu and Kashmir has remained unsatisfactory. The low literacy rates of the women folk is gnawing and snaring at the policy programmes launched in the state where focus has been the gender (female), similarly the women's participation in work force as compared to men is very still very nacent. The state has also passed number of schemes for overall development of women be that political, social, economical. Hopefully in future these schemes will help women to regain their lost status and work with equality and dignity. It will be a major step in achieving gender equality.

²¹ The Government Has Approved A New Programme Called 'National Programme For Education Of Girls At Elementary Level (NPEGEL)' As An Amendment To The Scheme Of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) For Providing Additional Components For Education Of Girls At Elementary Level. The NPEGEL Will Form Part Of SSA And Will Be Implemented Under The Umbrella Of SSA But With A Distinct Identity.