

ROLE OF NGO'S AND OTHER AGENCIES (GOVERNMENT AND NON GOVERNMENT) FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF WOMEN PARTICIPATION

(A CASE STUDY OF SANAKHEMUNDI BLOCK OF ODISHA)

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ABSTRACT

Development of any society requires participation of people from all sections. Allocation of funds is not sufficient for the success of any developmental programme undertaken by government. Rather it largely depends on the active participation of the people. But it is found that people's participation is less particularly in case of women. So the necessity of voluntary and non-governmental organizations is felt to renew the spirit of the people's participation in the developmental process. The voluntary organizations play very vital role in creating awareness, educating, motivating and enlightening the people in socio-economic and political field. Here the researcher has made a brief attempt to analyze the role of NGOs, Women Self Help Groups (WSHGs) and Governmental Agencies in the Sanakhemundi Block of Odisha and their role actualization in the process of development of women and their participation.

KEYWORDS: Women participation, NGOs, WSHGs, Govt. agencies

PROFILE OF SANKHEMUNDI BLOCK

India is the second most populous nation and seventh largest country of the world having 439 districts. Odisha is a state of India having 30 districts and Ganjam is one of the southern district of Odisha. The district Ganjam comprises of 3 Sub-Divisions, namely Berhampur, Chatrapur and Bhanjanagar. The Berhampur Sub-Division at present consists of 6 Blocks viz- Chikiti, Digapahandi, Kukudakhandi, Patrapur, Rangeilunda and Sanakhemundi.

The Sanakhemundi Block started functioning with effect from 1st October 1960. This Block consists of 21 Gram Panchayats viz- Adapada, Chhanameri, Chudungapur, Dayanidhipur, Dengadi, Errendra, Gangapur, Goutami, Jiura, Konkorada, Kaudia, Khallingi, Moulabhanja, Pattapur, Pattiguda, Podamari, P. Ramachandrapur, Sahaspur, S. Gopalpur, Singipur and T. Gobindapur.

Generally the people of Sanakhemundi Block belong to non-tribal community. Some tribals are living only in limited Gram Panchayats of the Sanakhemundi Block like S.Gopalpur, T. Gobindapur, Podamari and

Gangapur. The Sanakhemundi Block has 162 revenue villages. The village Pattapur is the Block Headquarters situated 64 kilometers away from Chatrapur, the District Headquarters.

The geographical area of this Block is 22,677 Hects., with a population of 1,63,065 according to 2011 census. The people of this Block are mostly rural and are unable to enjoy the benefits of urbanization. Agriculture is the main occupation of the people of Sanakhemundi Block. The total number of farm family of this Block is 31022.

Most of the areas of Sanakhemundi Block are plain area. Some parts of the Block like T. Gobindapur and Taptapani come under forest area. Taptapani Ghat whose length is about 4 kms. belongs to this Block. Godahada river flows through this Block joins the Rusikulya river down Hinjili.

ROLE OF NGO'S

Non-government organizations are developed primarily at the grass root level to protect and rescue the poor innocent people by providing them socio-economic and educational

services. They are basically philanthropic in nature catering to the needs of modern complex administration where the governmental machinery fails to provide the basic minimum services to the people of rural and remote areas. In the course of time they are considered as part and parcel of governmental machinery in redressing the benefits of various plans and programmes implemented by the government. The NGOs have two important traits. The first is that, it is the result of voluntary effort which, through motivated by different factors, is spontaneous in nature. The second is that, it is initiated and governed by its own members on democratic principles without external control; it has definite aims and objectives and plans for fulfilling these objectives, it is known and accepted in the community in which it operates.

The essence of the NGOs lies in their freedom from government control and red tapism, their promptness and innovativeness, their fighting spirit and motivation for social service and justice to the deprived sections of the society. They are instrumental in initiating, stimulating and accelerating the process of change in the tradition bound rural societies.

The objectives of the NGOs are,

- promotion and development of weaker and neglected sections of the society,
- to improve the conditions of Dalits, Adivasis and women,
- to provide supportive services like education, income generation in the tribal and backward areas and
- to eradicate poverty, illiteracy, ill health, social dogmas and blind beliefs.

In the Sanakhemundi Block the NGOs play a significant role in creating awareness, educating, motivating, encouraging and enlightening the most deprived sections of the society i.e. women. There are mainly three important voluntary organizations like MSYS (Mandoduri Swechhasebi Yubak Sangha), VARASA (Voluntary Association for Rural Action and Social Awareness) and SAHAYA who have done pioneer work for socio-economic development of the women in the study block.

1. Mandoduri Swechhasebi Yubak Sangha (MSYS):-

It is a non-government, non-political, non-profit making organization engaged in the field of social development. It

started functioning in 1998 at Dengausta (Chhanameri Gram Panchayat) of Sanakhemundi Block. Formally it is registered under S.R. Act of XXI of 1860 bearing registration 6205-214 of 2000-2001 on 12th January, 2000. It is also registered under the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA), 1976 bearing the registration number 104910170.

The organization is formed with a wider concept of holistic and realistic development approach. To refine and reform the social standard of living of the poor and very poor and ensure peoples participation in development process is the mission of the MSYS. It has put its sincere effort to provide effective service to the people at a large for whom it is dedicated since its inception. The people associated with the organization have discharged their responsibilities independently acting as intermediary link with the Governing Body at the apex and the people at the grass-root level. MSYS has been actively involved with the never ending problems of the people and trying to evolve strategies for the development of the un-privileged, under privileged and exploited masses of the society. It gives equal emphasis on protection and promotion of environment, health, education of children, women empowerment and above all youth development through its activities.

The fundamental objective of MSYS is to make emphasis on community development through participating approach and provide sustainable income guarantee through various vocational and professional programmes which will lead to a healthy family life.

WOMEN ISSUES

Women play a major role in the household economy of each household. Especially in the backward families women are engaged in wage earning activities and collection and sale of different forest products. Most of the women do not have capital to take up self-employment activity at household level because of lack of skill and finance. Now the situation demands for women empowerment to improve the economic condition of the families, which can play a vital role for avoiding women exploitation.

Siali Plate Project-

Looking at the demand of Siali Plate in the local market and outside, the MSYS is successfully running a Siali Plate making unit at Podamari with an aim to provide

employment opportunity to the women in need. It has own stitching and pressing machines for this purpose and the centre provides income to 50 nos. of women of five SHGs.

Training to SHGs-

MSYS, through its programmes has focused the women SHGs. It unites the women by forming SHGs. This year 30 such women were imparted training on tailoring for six months. Now they have started their work after completion of the training and adding handsomely to their family income.

Handicraft Training Programme:-

The MSYS has successfully organized handicraft training programme on appliqué work for adolescent girls and young women group at Dengausta. This year total 25 women and 10 adolescent girls were imparted training on appliqué work.

Creache: -

Realizing the need of working and ailing mothers who cannot take proper care of their children, a creache is run by MSYS for children within the age group of 3-6 years at Dengausta of Chhanameri GP under Sanakhemundi Block since 2005-06. This year 25 children (09 boys and 16 girls) are provided with food, education and regular health check up.

2. Voluntary Association for Rural Action and Social Awareness (VARASA):

VARASA is another NGO founded by Sri Gobinda Panda, a Rtd. Professor. It started functioning in 1990 at Sheragada. Now it performs various activities both in Sheragada and Sanakhemundi Block. It is a voluntary, philanthropic and charitable organization having social service as its basic aim. It was officially registered in 1996 under the Societies Registration Act (XXI of 1860) as a voluntary organization for the welfare particularly of tribal's.

For the welfare of the tribals this NGO is exercising many activities in health, sanitation and education. It also provides supportive services like bank linkage, income generation, youth leadership etc.

Besides, VARASA plays a prominent role for empowerment of women in Sanakhemundi Block. It works

closely with women to enhance their social, economical and political dignity.

Steps taken by VARASA for women empowerment:-

1. Promoting women self help groups to foster mutual help, regular savings and credit business.
2. Promote livelihood by involving SHGs, so that women can have a better stay in investment plan and control over outcomes.
 3. Linking groups to cluster level bodies to enhance cross learning and enhance collective bargain power of the women.
 4. Mainstreaming to influence the existing service systems in favour of women.
 5. Providing facilities for health care of women and making them conscious about various diseases.
 6. Imparting training and orientation to have vision for growth and foster leadership ability.
 7. Imparting training in agriculture practices, goat rearing and cattle health care.
 8. Imparting training in making Talari and Basket in bamboo and tailoring for income generation.
 9. Conducting programmes to eradicate women illiteracy and blind beliefs.
 10. Making consciousness to the women about various schemes of government like equal wage for both man and woman, MGNRGS, Food Security Act, Old Age Pension, 50% reservation in Panchayati Raj institutions, FRA (Forest Right Act) etc.
 11. Developing political awareness among women by which they can freely participate in village level politics.
 12. Making them practice how to keep link with government offices and officials.

SAHAYA:

It is also an another voluntary organization of this locality involved in rural development. It is founded by Sri Prafulla Kumar Mohanty who is a prominent social worker and the present Secretary of this organization. It started functioning in 1998 and registered in 2002 under the Societies Registration Act (XXI of 1860) as a voluntary organization.

The present day-to-day activities of this organization include:-

- (a) Educational activities

- (b) Economic activities
- (c) Child welfare activities
- (d) Promoting vocational units
- (e) Promoting social units
- (f) Conducting sanitation programmes.
- (g) Conducting programmes like horticulture, fishery, agriculture etc.
- (h) Conducting forest and environment programmes
- (i) Empowerment of women and
- (j) Other connected programmes

ACHIVEMENT IN WOMEN DEVELOPMENT

The activities taken by SAHAYA for women development are as follows.

1. In order to bring awareness among the women, health education, cleanliness, drinking water, causes of various diseases, family planning, immunization of children etc. are imparted by SAHAYA.

2. Illiteracy is an impediment against women development. So in order to remove illiteracy, SAHAYA has actively involved itself in the total literacy programme.

3. Organizing women Self Help Groups is also another achievement of SAHAYA. Due to the formation and strengthening of women Self Help Groups, women have acquired their status and respect instead of suppression and negligence. The income generating activities, savings etc. have enhanced the capacity and the self dignity of women.

4. SAHAYA has also taken some awareness activities for women regarding different governmental schemes like MGNREGS, BRDF, Food Security Act, reservation facilities in Panchayati Raj institutions etc.

5. In order to make self-independent to the women the NGO has also imparted vocational training like making of basket, leaf plate etc. by bamboo and tailoring.

The role of the above three voluntary organizations of the study Block in creating awareness among the people cannot be minimized. They have played a very significant role in socio-economic, health, education and political development of the weaker sections in general and women in particular.

ROLE OF WOMEN SELF HELP GROUPS

In recent years, the empowerment of women has been recognized as the central issue in determining the status of women. Women empowerment means all round

development including their physical, social, political and economical development. Of all these facets of women's development, economic empowerment is of utmost significance in order to achieve a lasting and sustainable development of society. The majority of Indian women residing in rural areas and the poverty of women continue to remain a constant factor and they lead a life as a second class citizen. An individual woman cannot solve the problem of their powerlessness. The solution to overcome women's poverty can only come from steps taken by women's groups and such other organizations. (Manimekali:2004,p7)

Self-Help Groups are the informal voluntary organizations which disburse micro credit to the members and facilitate them to enter into entrepreneurial activities. Hence they move towards economic independence. The ultimate objective is to empower women in rural area, which would lead to benefits at two levels. One direct benefit is to the individual women and women's groups and the second is development benefits for families and communities as a whole. "When a woman moves forward the family moves, the village moves and the nation moves".(Naidu:2006,p30)

The emergence of women's groups has been the single most important achievement of our time. Women as a group can establish their identity and face the challenges in every walk of life. It helps to enrich their quality life and involvement in decision making process at all levels, particularly those decisions which are related to their lives and families. By the help of group they also participate in the social and community development process. Empowerment aims at giving power to women to take their own decisions and to be master of their own destiny. Women empowerment can be a real one when it starts from her home and a nation never prosper if it does not provide due regards and respect to its womenfolk. "In order to awaken the people it is the women who have to be awakened, once she is on move, the family moves, the village moves, the nation moves".(Ramaya:2006,p39)

The concept of self help groups serves to underline the principle "for the people, of the people and by the people". The origin of SHG is from the brainchild of German Bank of Bangladesh, which was founded by the Prof. Mohammed Yunus of Chittagong University in the

year 1975. This was exclusively established for the poor.(Murugan & Dharmalingam:2006)

The concept of "Self- Help Groups" is of recent origin. They play a major role in poverty alleviation in rural India. A growing number of poor people mostly women in various parts of India voluntarily join SHGs as member. They do not only engage themselves in saving and credit which are commonly believed to be the function of the SHGs but also in some other more socially and economically desirable activities like income generation, environment conservation, literacy, child care and nutrition etc. The SHG system is designed so as to be effective in empowering the women. Economic and social empowerment of women is one of the basic requirements for their emancipation. Only when women participate freely in economic activities, particularly outside home, they can acquire control over circumstance to increase their capabilities. SHGs are appropriate forums for this purpose.

A SHG is a small, autonomous, informal and non-political group of people living near each other and sharing common concerns whose member have a common perception of need and importance towards collective action. They voluntarily work jointly for their economic, social and personal development". The SHGs, voluntarily formed by women save whatever amount they can earn every month and mutually agree to contribute to a common fund to meet their productive and emergent credit needs. These groups are linked to the banks once their activities are stabilized. Besides focusing on entrepreneurial development of the beneficiaries, the SHGs undertake the responsibility of delivering non-credit services such as literacy, health and environmental issues".(ISTR Report, Jul 2004)

Each Self-Help Group consists of 10-20 members. The members of SHGs meet once or twice a month. There is President, a Secretary and a Treasurer in each SHG. The term of office bearers is on rotation basis, normally one year. All the groups maintain the records such as membership register, minutes book, cash book, saving ledger and the loan ledger. They prepare action plans after a detailed discussion.(Nayar & Razam:2005) Every member of the group gets an opportunity to put forth her views and to participate in decision making. SHGs emphasize face to face social interactions and assumption of personal responsibility by members. It is obvious that

collective work, leadership with fixed tenure, mutual trust and cooperative philosophy would be the driving force for SHGs.

KEY FEATURES

- i) SHGs formed not only for sake of savings and credit purposes but also they engaged in a range of activities on social issues.
- ii) Motivation for the group formation and the profile of the leader is a major determinant of the strength of the group.
- iii) Women as a group can establish their identity and face the challenges in social system.

CHARACTERISTICS

- (a) Small homogenous group
- (b) Common / identical interest
- (c) Voluntary in nature
- (d) Group solidarity and mutual self-help
- (e) Mutual discussion and rotation of leadership
- (f) Participating in nature
- (g) Non-political focus

FUCTIONS

- a) Simple documentation
- b) Democracy in operation
- c) Regular meeting
- d) Compulsory saving and built of common fund
- e) Saving and credit management
- f) Raising working capital
- g) Access to market and choices of activities
- h) Commonly agreed rules and system
- i) Community action
- j) Awareness and training
- k) Ensure social justice through local empowerment by group decision making.

The basic objective of SHGs is to develop saving capability among the poorest sections of the society. It was also observed that every poverty alleviation programme initiated by the state had failed in capacity building of the rural masses. In the above context, the concept of SHGs is the most exciting discovery.

The Self-Help Group movement in Odisha began in the early 1990s. In 1992 the NABARD which is the principal agent in rural development in India entered the SHG market and since 1996 there has been a huge boom in

the sector. Among the eastern states of India Odisha has the highest number of SHGs.

MISSION SHAKTI

Government of Odisha launched Self Help Mission titled "Mission Shakti" in the entire state on International Women Day, i.e. 08.03.2001. The Mission envisages strengthening of existing Self-Help Groups and promoting new groups of poor women.

The objectives of the Mission are:-

- a) To facilitate creation of conducive environment through self help act.
- b) To expand the self help movement in Odisha.
- c) To build cluster associations at Block level, federation of clusters at District level and network of a federation at the State level.
- d) To provide institutional capacity building support to strengthen SHG movement.

WOMEN EMPOWERING ACTIVITIES OF SHGs IN SANKHEMUNDI BLOCK

- i) Overcoming the resistance from husband and other members of the family to join the SHGs.
- ii) Women once engaged only in household work are now generating income for their family. This brings improved status and increase in respect within the household.
- iii) Increased participation in decision making within the household to issues that were usually considered outside the domain of woman.
- iv) Feeling fearless, open and self-confidence.
- v) All group members learn to sign their names and some have joined in adult literacy programmes.
- vi) Adopting family planning measures.
- vii) Talking to the male persons in their village, which they were not confident to do before because of cultural reasons.
- viii) They have more information about the government programmes due to their exposure and can apply for them for their own betterment and the benefits of the community.
- ix) They are collecting struggling against direct and indirect barriers to their full social, political and economic participation. Particularly in Adivasi

populated areas, the SHGs are fighting against illiteracy, poverty, superstitions and sale of liquor.

- x) They also create public awareness regarding drinking wine or using other excise goods.
- xi) They create congenial atmosphere for co-operative movement as well as they free from "Zoolum" of the "Sahukar".
- xii) By the help of the SHGs, women in villages are discussing themselves regarding the day-to-day development in social, political, economical, cultural and spiritual fields.
- xiii) The women also discuss their personal and family problems and find a way for solution to their problems through SHGs
- xiv) Awareness about politics and engaged in political participation by way of voting or by standing as a candidate in the local elections.

ROLE OF GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

- (A) **Constitutional provisions:-** It is said that a nation would not forward if the women are left behind. In this context the various provisions of the Indian constitution pertaining to the status of Indian women are summarized below.

Preamble:-

- a) To secure to all its citizens justice social, economic and political.
- b) Liberty of thought, expression, faith, belief and workshop.
- c) Equality of status and opportunity.

Fundamental Rights

1. **Art-14: Equality before law:-** The state shall not deny to any person equality before the law or the equal protection of the laws within the territory of India.
2. **Art-15(1): Right Against Discrimination:-** The state shall not discriminate against any citizen on grounds of religion, race, caste sex and place of birth or any of them.
3. **Art-15(3):-** Nothing in this Article shall prevent the state from making special provisions for women and children.
4. **Art-16(2): Equality of Opportunity:-** No citizen shall on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth be ineligible or discriminate against in respect of any employment or office under the state.

5. **Art-21:** Right to Life and Personal Liberty:- No person shall be deprived of his life or personal liberty except according to procedure established by law.

6. **Art-23:** Right against Exploitation: - The constitution prohibits traffic in human beings and beggar and similar forms of forced labour for protecting women against selling and buying for immoral purposes.

Directive Principles of State Policy:-

Art- 39

1. Certain principles of policy to be followed by the state.

The state shall in particular direct its policy towards securing

(a) that the citizens, men and women equally have the right to an adequate means of livelihood,

(b) that the health and strength of workers, men and women and the tender age of children are not abused.

II. Right to work, to education and to public assistance in some cases.

III. The state shall make provisions for securing human conditions of work and for maternity relief.

B) ODISHA GOVERNMENT'S POLICIES

(1) **State Commission for Women:-** "The State Commission for Women is a statutory body constituted in January 1993 under the State Commission for Women Act, 1993 for protecting and safeguarding the rights and privileges of women, The commission is functioning as an apex body with the following main objectives:

(i) To receive complaints of atrocities against women and to create mass awareness against all types of atrocities including dowry torture and dowry death.

(ii) To establish co-ordination with Human Rights Protection Cell for elimination of torture.

(iii) To involve Non-Govt. Organizations to fight against dowry problems and to rehabilitate destitute and deserted women.

(iv) To impress upon government for solution of women problems.

(v) To ensure compulsory registration of marriage and to provide health care and maternity facilities".(Pattnaik,2005,p65)

2. Odisha State Social Welfare Advisory Board (OSSWAB):

The Odisha State Social welfare Board was set up on 1954 with the task of implementing and monitoring of different programmes of the Central Social Welfare Board. The Board has been working in the state for the development of neglected and marginalized women and children as detailed below:

i) Condensed courses of education for adult women:-

The scheme of condensed courses of education of adult women was started by the Odisha State Social Welfare Advisory Board (OSSWAB) with the objective of extending education and training to needy widows, destitute, deserted and economically backward women so as to enable them to acquire eligibility for suitable employment

ii) Awareness Generation Project for Rural and Poor women:-

This was started with the objective of providing common platform to the women to exchange their experience and ideas for understanding their local problems and gain knowledge and make analysis of the socio – economic conditions based on local situation.

iii) Family Counselling Centres:

The Family Counseling Centres started in 1983 with the objective of providing preventive, curative and rehabilitative services to women who are victims of atrocities, exploitation and maladjustment.

Mahila Vikas Samabaya Nigam:

For the purpose of women welfare a Women Development Corporation (Mahila Vikas Samabaya Nigam) has been set up in the state which is implementing various income generating schemes for self employment and economic rehabilitation of women.

Prevention of Dowry:

The Dowry Prohibition Act, 1991 was enacted by the state Government. Dowry Prohibition Rules, 2000 were framed; the Sub- Divisional Magistrate is appointed as the Dowry Prohibition Officer and an Advisory Board is also appointed to assist the Officer to listen to complaints as per the rules and take appropriate steps in accordance with the provision of the law".

Rehabilitation of Distressed Women:

The objective of the scheme is to identify women in distress and to provide them vocational training in different trades for their economic rehabilitation. They are imparted appropriate training and given financial assistance for their rehabilitation.

Short Stay Home:

For the purpose of rehabilitation of women and girls in difficulty, Government of Odisha has established Short Stay Homes through voluntary organizations.

Working Womens Hostel:

This scheme aims at providing accommodation for working women, unmarried girls, widows, divorcees, separated women and whose husbands are out of the town. The scheme is implemented through voluntary organizations.

State Old Age Pension (SOAP):

The state Old Age Pension Scheme was introduced in the state with effect from April, 1975 for old and destitute persons who are above 60 years of age. The pension is provided by the State Government Rs. 300/- per month and Rs. 500/- who are 80 years and above. Besides, widow pension has been introduced to provide safety net to the helpless widows and the amount of this pension is Rs. 300/- per month and Rs. 500/- who are 80 years and above.

Women Empowerment year:

A year of programme for observance of Women Empowerment Year, 2001 was launched by the Chief Minister Sri Naveen Patnaik.

Self – help Mission:

A Self – Help Mission for empowerment of women was launched in the state in 5th March, 2001, this put the aim and objective of empowering women in result oriented mode. (Orissa Review, Sep 2011)

Biju Pakka Ghara Yojana:

Biju Pakka Ghara Yojana was launched with a view to providing Rs. 75,000/- for construction of dwelling houses to the families below the poverty line and poor. This scheme has been successfully implemented from the beginning and the benefits have reached the women.

Rural Self – Employment Scheme (RSES): The objective of this scheme is to provide employment to the unemployed youth (both men and women) mainly in rural areas. To make self employed to the rural youth vocational training courses are conducted in tailoring, type writing, stenography, T.V. repairing etc.

C) CENTRAL GOVERNMENT'S POLICIES

Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act. (MGNREGA):

It is an Indian labour law and social security measure that aims to guarantee the “right to work”. It aims to enhance livelihood security in rural areas by providing at least 100 days of wage employment in a financial year to every household whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work. Another aim of MGNREGA is to create durable assets such as roads, canals, ponds, wells etc. Apart from providing economic security and creating rural assets, MGNREGA can help in protecting the environment and empowering rural women, reducing rural – urban migration and fostering social equity among others.

National Rural Livelihood Mission:

This scheme focuses on the self- help groups especially on women groups at grass root level. These groups are provided with a revolving fund to take up various income generating activities. Apart from providing capital subsidy at an enhanced rate, it is also proposed to provide interest subsidy to poor households for loans up to Rs. One lakh from banks.

Indira Awas Yojana (IAY):

It was launched in 1995 with a view to providing dwelling houses free of cost to the families below the poverty line, preferably to the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. This scheme has also reached the women beneficiaries.

Swadhar Scheme:

The Swadhar Scheme was launched by the Union Ministry of Women and Child Development in 2002 for rehabilitation of women in difficult circumstances. The scheme provides shelter, food, clothing, and care to the marginalized women/girls who are in need. The beneficiaries include widows deserted by their families and

relatives, women prisoners released from jail and without family support, women survivors of natural disasters, women victims of terrorist / extremist violence etc. The implementing agencies are mainly NGOs.

Indira Gandhi National Old Age Pension Scheme (IGNOAPS):

It is a non – contributory old age pension scheme that covers Indians who are 60 years and above and live below the poverty line. All IGNOAPS beneficiaries (including women) aged 60- 79 receive a monthly pension of Rs. 300. Those 80 years and above receive a monthly pension amount Rs. 500.

Integrated child Development Scheme (ICDS):

The ICDS is an Indian government welfare programme which provides food, preschool education and primary healthcare to children under 6 years of age and their mothers. These services are provided from Anganwadi Centres established mainly in rural areas and staffed with frontline workers. In addition to fighting malnutrition and ill health, the programme is also intended to combat gender inequality by providing girls the same resources as boys.

Kishori Shakti Yojana (KSY):

The Kishori Shakti Yojana is a special programme designed for adolescent girls in the age group of 11 – 18 years under the ICDS programme. It seeks to empower adolescent girls, so as to enable them to take charge of their lives. It is viewed as a holistic initiative for the development of adolescent girls. The broad objectives of the scheme are to improve the nutritional , health and development status of adolescent girls, promote awareness of health, hygiene , nutrition and family care, link them to opportunities for learning life skills going back to school, help them gain a better understanding of their social environment and take initiatives to become productive members of the society.

Swayamsiddha:

Swayamsiddha is a scheme for empowering the Indian women both socially and economically to enable them live with dignity and self – reliance. The scheme lays stress on access to micro- credit and envisages Block and Panchayat level participation among women, cutting across all regional, economic and social groups. Swayamsiddha,

as the name itself suggests, is aimed at making women self – reliant and giving them enough confidence to fend for themselves.

Sukanya Samridhi Yojana (SSY):

The Sukanya Samridhi Yojana launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. It is a small deposit scheme for girl child, as part of the ‘ Beti Bachao Beti Padhao’ campaign, which would fetch an interest rate of 9.1 per cent and provide income tax rebate . “Sukanya Samridhi Account” can be opened at any time from the birth of a girl child till she attains the age of 10 years, with a minimum deposit of Rs. 1000/-. The account can be opened in any Post Office or authorized branches of Commercial Banks. The scheme primarily ensures equitable share to a girl child in resources and saving of a family in which she is generally discriminated as against a male child. The account will remain operative for 21 years from the date of opening of the account or marriage of the girl child after attaining 18 years of age. To meet the requirement of higher education expenses, partial withdrawal of 50% of the balance would be allowed after the girl child has attained 18 years of age.

National Rural Health Mission (NRHM):

NRHM is an initiative undertaken by the government of India to address the health needs of under-served rural areas. It was launched in April 2005 by Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh. The NRHM was initially tasked with addressing the health needs of 18 states including Odisha which have weak public health facilities.

Female Literacy:

On 8th September, 2009 the Prime Minister of India Dr. Manmohan Singh inaugurated Indian Literacy Mission to achieve the target of 11th five year plan period to literate 80 percent women in the country, with an allocation of Rs. 6,500 crores.

Women Empowerment Year:

The Government of India had ushered in the new millennium by declaring the year 2001 as Women’s Empowerment Year, to focus on “Our vision in the new century of a nation where women are equal partners with men”.

Five year Plans for Women Development

The significance of the role of women in development had been recognized by the government of India right from the first five year plan (1951 -1956). However, women in the earlier plans (first five year plan to fifth five year plan) were considered as subjects of 'welfare' and category of disadvantaged groups such as destitute, disabled, aged etc. As a category women had been gained special importance since the sixth five year plan. It is noteworthy that seventh and eighth five year plans have emphasized on ' development' and ' empowerment' respectively. The approach of the ninth five year plan have made an enabling environment where women could freely exercise their rights both within and outside home, as equal partners along with men. In the tenth five year plan various measures had been taken in order to eradication of atrocities against women and girls.

The measures are, (i) to set up women's Police Station, Family Court, Mahila Court, Legal Aid Centre etc. and (ii) to conduct awareness programmes of women's rights, legal literacy etc. With the passage of time, the eleventh and twelfth five year plans have focused on inclusive growth. In other words, 'women' as a category must be included in the developmental process for the country's progress. Moreover, women's inclusion in inclusive growth is only then possible when inclusive democracy turned to be reality not the myth.

Despite implementation of various constitutional provisions and several developmental plans and programmes, the problem of women development and securing a rightful place for them in the society continue to areas of great concern. It is now being increasingly realized to bring the women a part with men to play an equal, active and meaningful role in all spheres of life.

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