

Women Welfare Schemes in Tamil Nadu Since Independence

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Abstract

Since Independence, Both Central and State Governments of India have taken a new shape and Social Welfare Programmes are receiving further attention in the Five Year Plans. Through which many schemes were introduced to promote Women Welfare. These schemes provide assistance for Education, Training, Financial assistance, grant loans, Scholarship, Nutrition, self-employment and other facilities. In this regard, the present study entails various steps taken by the government to empower women in all aspects of life, through different schemes started by the Ministry of Women and Child Development and Ministry of Social Welfare under the Government of Tamil Nadu.

Keywords: *women welfare scheme study, central government and state government schemes, benefits of the schemes.*

Introduction

India is a well-known country proving the concept like 'unity is diversity', where people of many religious beliefs are in the Indian society. Women have been given a unique place in every religion which is working as a big screen covering the eyes of people and help in the continuation of many ill customs in opposition to women as a norm since ages. To get the high level aim of women empowerment, it should be endorsed from childhood in each and every family. In India, 108th Constitutional Amendment Bill was accepted to reserve one-third of the seats for women only in the Lok Sabha to make them actively involved in every area. In additional fields also the seats for women have been reserved for their dynamic participation without any limitation and competition. This study sketches the measures taken by the Government both the Centre and Tamil Nadu State Government as well, to empower women, to evade gender discrimination and abuse against women.

Central Government schemes for Women Welfare

A full-fledged department with a Director of women's welfare was established in 1954. (G.O.Ms.No.2563, Public Works Department, 17th August, 1955). Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India was

recognized in 1985 as a separate department from the Ministry of Human Resource Development to give much needed movement to the development of women and children. (Arun Kumar, 2002: 70). In order to cater to the needy women the following schemes were initiated by the Government of India.

- **Working Women Hostel:** It was established in 1972-73 as a temporary shelter for Women and children who are mentally and physically affected by different situations, to support availability of safe and suitably located accommodation.
- **National Creche Scheme:** It includes Day Care Facilities, Early Stimulation for Children and Health Check up Immunisation.
- **Support to Training and Employment Programme for Women:** Launched in 1987. It requests to upgrade the ability of poor and asset less women and offer employment to women in the traditional sectors similar to fisheries, agriculture, dairying, sericulture, handlooms and handicrafts. (Ranjit Kumar samanta 1999: 123)
- **Rashtriya Mahila Kosh:** Setup in 1993. It is intended to meet credit needs of the poor women particularly in the informal sector. To start income generating

activities through dairy, shop-keeping, handicrafts etc. (Arun Kumar 2002: 73).

- **Mahila Samridhhi Yojana:** Launched in 1993. A prime scheme to empower women by raising their economic status. It aspires to support rural women the habit to save and improve their financial assets, distant from enabling them to exercise greater control over their own household resources.
- **Indira Mahila Yojana:** Began in 1995, it generates awareness amongst women by spreading information and knowledge to bring about an attitudinal change and build economic strength by micro level income generating activities.
- **Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya:** Setup in 2004. Opening up residential schools at primary level for girls belonging predominantly to the minority communities. The scheme is being put into practice for Educationally Backward Blocks of the country.
- **Indira Gandhi Matritva Sahyog Yojana:** Made the first move in 2010. It is intended to improve the health and nourishment status of the pregnant, lactating women and infants.
- **Beti Bachao Beti Padhao:** Launched in 2015. The purpose is to create awareness and improve the efficiency of welfare services meant for women. It was introduced to address the issue declining Child Sex Ratio.
- **One Stop Centre Scheme for women:** Commenced in 2015. Render support to women who are distressed by violent behavior, in private and public spaces, within the family, community and at the workplace. This scheme makes easy access to an integrated range of services including medical, legal, and psychological support. The OSC will be integrated with Helpline No. 181 and other existing helplines.
- **Mahila E-haat Scheme:** Open from 2016. It is a straight online marketing platform technology for supporting women entrepreneurs/SHGs/ NGOs for showcasing the products/services which are made/manufactured/ undertaken by them. (The Times of India, 2016).

To improve the condition of women and to empower them, the Government of Tamil Nadu has also launched many welfare schemes as that of the Government of India.

This study elucidates various Schemes which are enlisted below.

Tamil Nadu Government Women Welfare Schemes

Tamil Nadu has put into action a broad range of schemes, programmes, community welfare schemes, Health and Nutrition, scholarship for women empowerment, Girl Child, pregnant women, mothers, ward members, the women from rural & tribal areas, ex-servicemen, physically impaired, nursing women, Lactating mother, widows/destitute, Old age women, women self-help group (SHG), Scheduled Caste (SC) and Scheduled Tribe (ST), Women Entrepreneurs and Adolescent Girls' and Other Backward Classes (OBC), Minority Category and below poverty line (BPL).

It gives assistance in the form of

- Subsidy on the loans
- Education, Training
- Financial assistance/Cash
- Scholarship
- Nutrition
- Self employment

The schemes developed have been initiated in order to:

- To encourage Women Empowerment
- To encourage development and empowerment, gender equality and gender justice of women
- To guarantee women's social, economic and political empowerment, fulfillment of their rights, promoting their participation and leadership
- To protect Women from Domestic Violence
- For child development, empowerment and protection

Sathiyavani Muthu Ammaiyar Ninaivu Supply of Sewing Machine, 1975

This scheme was to strengthen the potential of self employment of socially ignored women and to look after the deserted wives, destitute widows, socially handicapped women and physically handicapped women as measures of self employment and rehabilitation. (G.O.Ms. No.355, Social Welfare Development, 9th May 1975). Age limit is set from 18 to 30 years. Women must have knowledge about tailoring. Their income should not exceed Rs. 24, 000/- per annum.

Dr. Dharmambal Ammaiyar Ninaivu Widow Remarriage Scheme, 1975

The focal point of this scheme was to rehabilitate the widows and to encourage the widow remarriage. (G.O.Ms.No.462.Social Welfare Development, 24th June, 1975). The financial support was progressively improved from Rs.5000/- to Rs.20, 000/- from November 2009. The age limit was set within 20 to 35 years. To avail this scheme, Income ceiling was not fixed.

E.V.R. Maniammaiyar Ninaivu Poor Widow's Daughter's Marriage Assistance Scheme, 1981- 1982

This was started to help the deprived mothers who are widows by providing financial assistance to them. (Tamil Arasu, Chennai, 1999). Initially during the launch, Rs.1000/- was granted and has been enhanced to Rs.20, 000 in the year 2008, to perform the marriage of the poor widows daughters. The criteria to avail this scheme is that the annual income of the receiver should not exceed Rs. 24, 000/-, the age limit was set between 18 to 30 years, and this was applicable to one girl in family. The poor widows under this scheme are the beneficiary. For the 2010-2011 Rs.11 crores has been allotted in the budget for the beneficiaries under this scheme.

Annai Teresa Ninaivu Orphan Girls Marriage Assistance Scheme, 1984- 1985

This scheme was started to support the orphan girls for their marriage. In 1999, it was named as "Annai Therasa Ninaivu marriage assistance scheme". The financial aid was increased from Rs.1000/- to Rs.20, 000/- progressively under this scheme. This scheme was for all the orphan girls between 18 to 30 years of age, their income was to be not exceeding Rs.28, 000/- per annum. The application is to be sent before 45 days of the marriage. From 23.05.2016 Financial Assistance of Rs.50, 000/- for those who completed Graduation or Diploma were provided with 8 grams of 22 ct gold coin. Similarly Rs.25, 000 with 8 grams of 22 ct gold coin for those studied 10th Standard. (State Annual Report, 2016).

Moovalur Ramamirtham Ammaiyar Ninaivu Marriage Assistance Scheme, 1989

This scheme was launched by the then Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu M. Karunanidhi on 3rd June 1989. It was

initiated to help financially deprived parents in getting their daughter's married and to promote the educational status of poor girls. Moovalur Ramamirtham Ammaiyar was a distinguished social reformer who participated in the Anti Hindi agitations in the year 1938. The bride should have educational qualification up to 10th Standard to receive assistance of Rs.25, 000/- or should completed Graduation or Diploma (3Years) to receive assistance of Rs.50, 000/-, (State Annual Report, 2016) the income should not exceed 28, 000/- per annum, and the bride must be a major. This is eligible to only one girl in the family.

Anjugam Ammaiyar Ninaivu Inter-caste Marriage Assistance Scheme, 1989

This was launched to eradicate caste and community feelings based on birth and to encourage inter-caste marriage. If the spouse were belonging to the SC/ST they were given Rs. 20, 000/- and if a person of forward community marries a person belonging to B.C, or M.B.C they were given Rs. 15, 000/-. (State Annual Report, 2016)The age limit was set within 18 to 30 years. Through this, the Inter- caste married couples get benefitted.

Cradle Baby Scheme ,1992

The evil practice of Female Infanticide was prevalent in certain parts of Tamil Nadu. Female infanticide is nothing but killing of the new born girl baby soon after its birth with or without the consent of the mother. It was stated that the female infanticide which had come into focus in the main stream of press in 1986 and later in 1992 was one of the major factors which kept the Infant Mortality Rate (IMR) in a few districts like Dharmapuri, Salem, Namakkal, Theni, Madurai and Dindugal were exceptionally high. The continuation of the female infanticide, the worst evil practice, in Tamil Nadu, impelled Miss J. Jayalalitha, the then Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu (1991-1996) to introduce a new scheme to curb this problem. To counter the menace of the female infanticide, a unique scheme called the Cradle Baby Scheme was started by the Government of Tamil Nadu in 1992.

The Government of Tamil Nadu announced that Rs. 5,000 per child would be deposited in the Fixed Deposit Scheme in a bank in the name of the Director of the Social Welfare Department, Government of Tamil Nadu and the President of the Social Service Centre for the security of

the children, who were taken care under the Cradle Baby Scheme. The Director of Social Welfare Department was permitted to receive the interest once in 6 months for the amount deposited, and to handover the interest to the Social Service Centres to meet the expenses. It was also announced that, if the children were handed over for adoption, the deposit amount and the interest, would be handed over to the Children at their 21st year of age. The official members of the committee were the Director of Social Welfare Department, the Deputy Secretary for Women and Child Welfare and the Director of Social Defence. The Non-Official members were the heads of the Social Welfare Organizations. (The Hindu. Madras. 7th August, 1995.)

Girl Child Protection Scheme, 1992

The then Chief Minister, J. Jayalalitha (1991-1996) announced that a new scheme would be launched on 1st October 1992 to protect the girl child from social harassment. To avail this scheme the Government imposed the following conditions-(The Hindu Madras. 14th July, 1993.)

- The family, which had to join the scheme, was to be beneath the poverty live.
- The yearly income of the family was to be below Rs. 6,400/-.
- One of the parents was to have under gone vasectomy within the age of 35 years.
- The family was to have only two female children and no male child.
- The children who wanted to benefit from the scheme were to be below 3 years at the time of joining the scheme.

Primarily, Rs.2000/- was deposited in the name of the girl child under this scheme. Later, it was increased to Rs. 4,000/- which was deposited in the bank. Instead of giving Rs. 500/- on the first birth of the child, a golden ring of weight 2 grams worth Rs. 800/- was given to the child. The age of the mother of the child was also increased between 35 to 40 years.

Sivagami Ammaiyar Memorial Girl Child Protection Scheme (1996)

In order to raise the position of the girl children in the society and to abolish the practice of female infanticide,

this scheme was created. In remembrance of the then chief minister of Tamil Nadu "Thiru Kamaraj", the scheme was started under his mother's name as Sivagami Ammaiyar ninaivu girl child protection scheme in the year 2006. According to the 2010 senses, 6192 girl children in the State of Tamil Nadu were benefitted. The family which has only one girl child was issued a Fixed Deposit of Rs.22, 200/- in the name of girl child where the family annual income was to be below Rs.50, 000/- and Rs.15, 200/- for each girl child where the family has two girl children only where the family's annual income was below Rs. 12, 000/-. The families were supposed to have only female children and were not allowed to adopt a male child in the future.

The Kavalan App (2018)

The State Police Force has established Kavalan SOS (save our soul) app to extend instant help to people, particularly women in distress. People can utilize the new facility to request police assistance instantly in situations such as emergencies, eve teasing, kidnapping and also during natural disasters. (The Hindu, 2018) The public have to download the app in their mobile phones and their number will get registered after the provision of details such e-mail address, address and details of relatives. They will be given an activation code in the mobile number to complete sign up.

During critical situations, people just need to press the SOS button on the home page. It sends signals to the Tamil Nadu State Police Master Control Room. The control room will receive signals in the next 15 seconds on the place from where the message was received, the topography of the area, nearby landmarks, along with GPS location. The mobile phone camera will automatically send audio and video to the control room.

Conclusion

The Government of India and State Governments particularly the Government of Tamil Nadu have been implementing several programmes in order empower women hood and also to develop the nation. The women in India, through their own efforts and with the aid of Constitutional and other legal provisions and also with the aid of Government's different welfare schemes, are trying to find their own consign under the sun. It is an inspiring sign that their participation in employment- government as

well as private, in socio-political activities of the nation and also their presence at the highest decision making bodies is improving day by day. Women are the most essential members of the society who are serving multitude roles such as being a mother, sister, daughter, wife and a friend. To promote the education of women and to elude gender bias steps taken by providing knowledge and education, by establishing schools and universities even exclusively for women in the state. The learning develops the idea of involvement in government, panchayats, public matters etc for elimination of gender discrimination.

To promote these schemes amongst the public, Pamphlets related to the scheme should be given to the village administrative officers, through it can be distributed to the people. Social media can be used to propagate the benefits of schemes, Voluntary service by educated men and women of the villages can be obtained to help the poor people in sending the applications to receive the benefit of the schemes. Boards explaining the schemes with pictures should be placed permanently at the villages to make the common people to understand regarding these schemes. Thus, the purpose of Social Welfare schemes will be achieved only if the benefits reach the illiterates and downtrodden. As these schemes are for women, they can utilize it properly for their upliftment.

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