

**Women Related Policies in India
with Special Reference to
International Conventions and Conferences
On Women : An overview**

By



**Drishti Stree Adhyayan
Prabodhan Kendra
Bharatiya Stree Shakti**



**Women Related Policies in India with Special Reference to
International Conventions and Conferences on Women :
An Overview**

Dr. Maneesha Kothekar
Project Director
Bharatiya Stree Shakti

Varsha Pawar Tawde
Study Co-ordinator
Bharatiya Stree Shakti

Title of Study : Women Related Policies in India with Special Reference to International Conventions and Conferences on Women : An overview

Copyright : Drishti Stree Adhyayan Prabodhan Kendra, Pune
All rights reserved, No part of this book may be reproduced in any manner without written permission.

Address: Drishti Stree Adhyayan Prabodhan Kendra,
Kaushik Ashram, 98, Mitramandal Colony,
Parvati, Pune – 411 009, Maharashtra, India
Phone No. 020- 24423790 (11 a.m. to 5 p.m.)
E-mail-drishti.pune@gmail.com
Website-www.streeadhyayan.org

Publisher : Bharatiya Stree Shakti, India
4, Girish, Kataria Marg,
Mahim, Mumbai 400 016.
Tel.-022-24376441, 022-26654041
Email- bharatiyastreeshakti@gmail.com
Website - www.bharatiyastreeshakti.org

Publication No. : 43 / 2019

Date : 8th November, 2019

Printed at Akshay Enterprises
221, Shah & Nahar Industrial Estate,
Sitaram Jadhav Marg, Lower Parel,
Mumbai - 400 013.

Cover Vaishnavi Graphics

Only for Private Circulation

Introduction

The status of women in India has been in a constant flux. Our ancient texts and religious scriptures extol the virtues of a few women, while history is replete with examples of brave warrior women, administrators and rulers. However, over the centuries various influences, ranging from a patriarchal rendition of these texts to the onslaught of invaders and conquerors, have resulted in the common woman forfeiting her status, dignity and rights within the family as well as in society.

The middle of the 18th century witnessed the dawn of a new era. Ignorance, superstition, ritualism, illiteracy, poverty and oppression were being criticized from all sides. From the mid-18th century till India attained her independence in 1947, several learned men founded organisations and initiated social movements to uplift and educate women.

Raja Ram Mohan Roy (1772-1833) fought for women's rights when India was suffering from harsh society norms and traditions which included the practice of Sati (the burning to death of a widow on her husband's funeral pyre). He was also known as father of Indian Renaissance. Ishwarchandra Vidyasagar, Mahatma Jotiba Phule, Savitribai Phule, Gopal Hari Deshmukh, Pandita Ramabai and Ramabai Ranade, Mahadev Govind Ranade, Periyar T.Y. Ramasamy, Veerasalingam Pantulu, Keshab Chandra Sen and Behramji Malabari were some of the renowned social reformers and activists of the time. Freedom fighters like Sarojini Naidu, Rajkumari Amrit Kaur, Dr. Muthulakshmi Reddy, Lakshmi N. Menon, Annie Besant had set the role model in the said duration.

The present status of women in India is the result of an ever changing national and international scenario, various National and International Women's Movements, United Nations Initiatives, dramatic social upheaval (including World Wars I and II), pre-Independence legislations, Industrial Revolution followed by Globalisation as well as the policies of the Indian government. Passionate and consistent efforts by social reformers, independence movement and the government and non-government organisations in India have also played a direct and crucial role in women's development in India.

Women related issues have been deliberated at different levels and by various fora. The Universal Declaration of Human rights by the United Nations Organization as well as various World Conventions on women have been the guiding light for plans, policies legislations and setting up of bodies like National Commission for Women (NCW) framed by Indian government. In India, the policies are reflected within and implemented through five year economic plans. In order to effectively analyse the impact of World conventions on women, on the policies of the Indian government with regard to women and their rights, the study has been divided into the following chapters taking into consideration the time periods.

1. Pre Independence (18th century till 1947- The Indian social reformers and movements, the emergence of International women's movements and the pre-Independence legislations)
2. Post-Independence(1947 – 1975 that is till the International Women's Year Conference at Mexico)
3. Women's Decade till pre Globalisation (1975 – 1990)
4. Globalisation and the emergence of the idea of Women's Empowerment (1990 – 2005)
5. Post Globalisation (2005-2017 towards Inclusive growth and NITI Aayog Action Plan)

Rationale of the study - The Study examines the provisions in the Indian Constitution with regard to women and the amendments there to, Government policies regarding women and International women conventions/conferences. The present Report reveals the transformation in the approaches of the community towards women. As we have presented the information chronologically, we can see a trajectory evolving in the Government's policies towards women. Major milestones and the '*Indianness*' in the trajectory is highlighted in this report as well.

It needs to be mentioned that various international and national developments are considered simultaneously in each chapter to make the study more comprehensible and compact. This was essential as there has been a co-relation between international and national policies directly or indirectly. This study comprises of own write ups by study group members and in some cases compilations from other sources.

Suggestions : Way to Gender Equality....

- (1) As mentioned in "Towards Equality" report published in 1974, women's education, training including vocational training and employment opportunities need still to be focused in the coming years. As per 68th round of NSSO, only 3.4% women underwent vocational training in mechanical, electrical and electronic engineering trades as compared to 29% of men.
- (2) Social development is inclusive of economic development. It emphasizes on political aspects as well. Therefore, Women's reservation bill giving 33 % reserved seats to women in Parliament and in State assemblies need to be passed.
- (3) Taking into consideration the changing scenario, new Shram Shakti report may be prepared.
- (4) It is observed that "Equal Pay for Equal Work policy" is not implemented in different sectors. Make it mandatory for establishments to implement the policy of Equal pay for equal work.
- (5) Sex ratio is declining in many states and cities. Strict implementation of PCPNDT Act of 1994 is necessary in this context. More awareness programmes to be launched particularly in urban areas.
- (6) India is highest in the Maternal Mortality Rate (17% of the world MMR). Some measures are needed to reduce it further. For example : primary health centers to have qualified doctors, well equipped hospitals needed in rural area, approach road to hospitals and primary health centers to be constructed. Doctors on call facility could be made possible in rural area.
- (7) As number of female headed households is increasing, some schemes are necessary to lower their burden.
- (8) All the Laws relating to women to be strictly implemented.
- (9) Government (NABARD) has taken major steps for financial inclusion through Self Help Groups in the year 1992, but still these groups are facing some difficulties. Special measures are necessary to increase reach and effectiveness. Some of the companies resort to extortion and that should be controlled.

- (20) Women's unpaid work (raising children and taking care of family and care-giving to elderly) should be taken into consideration while calculating GDP. In NITI Aayog's Action Plan (22.3) it is mentioned that, "Evidence-based research shows that women in India tend to be paid less, work in less productive jobs and are overrepresented in unpaid care giving work. Globally, if women spend three times more time on unpaid work than men, in India it is 9.8 times more. If that was assessed for wages, it would add 19.85 lakh crore or USD 300 billion to the GDP. The huge spectrum of women's skilled but unpaid work contributes directly to the economy. Yet it's devaluation by not being accounted for as "work" weakens women's status, leading to their vulnerability.
- (21) It is suggested that Financial literacy programmes for women should be conducted all over India through special scheme.
- (22) Every activity today has a cyber-footprint and more and more women are using social media these days. Cyber-crimes are increasing and women are more vulnerable to these types of crime. There is a need for cyber security and formal and informal awareness and educational workshops should be conducted for women.

- (10) Gender Data and Gender studies are essential in all sectors at different levels and special efforts are needed for gender sensitization as well.
- (11) The Central Government may make it mandatory for all the State governments to implement policy of Gender budget.
- (12) National Policy for Empowerment of Women (2001 and 2016) need to be implemented.
- (13) Women are major contributors to environment and forest. It is suggested that protection of forests and live stock is necessary for sustainable development and empowerment of women as it is their one of the main occupations. (Refer to chart no 10 on page 58 and table No 5, page 75 in annexure 2)
- (14) Observations mentioned in the NITI Aayog Action plan are important and States should take steps to bridge the gaps with reference to Gender Equality in different sectors.
- (15) As mentioned in the Eleventh Plan approach paper there should be a separate chapter on Gender Equality in NITI Aayog Action plan. In the Action Plan document chapter No.22 is "Towards Building a More Inclusive Society" and women's issues are included in it.
- (16) Women's workforce participation rate is declining means they are opting to be out of employment. Considering the seriousness, a Committee may be appointed to find out the reasons behind it and suggest measures to increase the workforce participation rate. Recently at Davos, IMF chief Christian Lagarde, quoting IMF research, said that women's participation in the workforce to the level of men can boost the Indian economy by 27 percent. In NITI Aayog Action Plan (22.2) it is 78only far below of global average (37%) but is also Less than China (41%) and Sub-Saharan Africa (39%). Paradoxically, greater equality in educational attainment and achieved through higher enrolment of girls in schools, has not translated into equal opportunities for women in the labour market."
- (17) Schemes needed to build and strengthen the partnership with civil society particularly women's organizations. (Ref - National Policy for Women 2001 and 2016).
- (18) Gender Inequality Index and Gender Empowerment Index to be measured.
- (19) Women's Wellness and Family Happiness Index to be measured.

- National Perspective Plan (1988)
- Shram Shakti Report of Indian Government (1988)
- The Fourth World Conference for Women held in Beijing, China (1995)
- UN Resolution to eliminate violence against women (1998)
- UN General Assembly's Resolution 55/2 approved the Millennium Declaration (2000)
- National Policy for Women adopted by Indian Government (2001)
- UN's Asian-Pacific Symposium held on integration of gender approaches (2001)
- Ten years after Beijing: review of progress made in gender equality (2005)
- Beijing plus 20 Charter (2015)
- National Policy for Women in India (2016).

It is concluded that initiatives taken at national level had a great impact on women's policies in India. At the same time, International Conferences and Conventions have also contributed in shaping women related government policies in India.

The hypothesis which was put forth for the present study has been accepted.

CHAPTER VII

Conclusions and Suggestions

The present study is based on the Hypothesis that there has been a considerable correlation between International conventions on Women and on women related government policies in India.

It is observed that the status of women in India is the result of rich Indian heritage, philosophy and the passionate efforts of social reformers and activists. Indian freedom struggle boosted the spirit of Indian women along with men to fight for social, national cause. However, present status of women in India is also influenced by the International developments/scenario including conventions and conferences on women.

There has been measurable impact of Charter of United Nations and Statute of the International Court of Justice (San Francisco, 1945). The Universal Declaration of Human rights 1948 as well as various World Conferences and Conventions on women have contributed in shaping plans and policies framed by Indian government. The Constitution of India has taken a firm stand in favour of protecting the dignity and the rights of Indian women. Within the framework of our constitution, our laws, plans and policies, many programmes have aimed at women's advancement in different spheres. In recent years, the empowerment of women has been recognised as the central issue in determining the status of women.

It is a matter of pride that the U N Convention on the Political rights of Women was held in 1952 and the Indian Constitution ensured Political rights to women in 1950 itself.

It may be noted that reports drafted by Indian Government have also contributed significantly in shaping policies relating to women. With reference to women's policies, some important International Conventions and Reports by Indian Government are as follows:

- UN Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women(1967)
- Towards Equality Report of Indian Government (1974)
- The First World Action Plan adopted in Mexico(1975),UN General Assembly proclaims a Women's Decade (1976-1985) UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW-1979)