

# What is Social Empowerment?

Social Empowerment means all the sections of society in India, have equal control over their lives, are able to take important decisions in their lives and have equal opportunities. Without empowering all sections of society equally, a nation can never have a good growth trajectory. The government has been trying to empower different sections of our society by adopting a multi pronged strategy.

## Social Empowerment - Women Empowerment

In the words of the current Prime Minister “empowering women means empowering the entire family.” In a country like India, a girl child faces challenges right from the time of her birth or one can say a girl child has to fight even for her birth. Hence the Government of India has given big focus on empowering women through various government sponsored schemes. Some of the important schemes are mentioned below.

### **Beti Bachao Beti Padhao -**

Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao (BBBP) scheme was launched on 22 January 2015 by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. It aims to address the issue of the declining child sex ratio image (CSR) and is a national initiative jointly run by the Ministry of Women and Child Development, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and the Ministry of Human Resource Development. It initially focused multi-sector action in 100 districts throughout the country where there was a low CSR.

### **Pradhan Mantri Vandana Yojana**

It is a maternity benefit program run by the Government of India. It was introduced in 2017 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 the first live birth. It provides a partial wage compensation to women for wage-loss during childbirth and childcare and to provide conditions for safe delivery and good nutrition and feeding practices.

### **Sukanya Samridhi Yojana**

It is a Government of India backed saving scheme targeted at the parents of girl children. The scheme encourages parents to build a fund for the future education and marriage expenses for their female child. The scheme was launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on 22 January 2015 as a part of the Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao campaign. The scheme currently provides high interest rates and tax benefits. The account can be opened at any India Post office or branch of authorised commercial banks.

## Social Empowerment - Poor and Marginalized Sections

Marginalized sections of society are people belonging to Scheduled Castes (SC), Scheduled Tribes (ST), and Other Backward Classes (OBC). For poor and marginalized sections, empowerment means access to basic education, livelihood, and equal opportunities for growth. Some of the Government measures to address this section of society are mentioned below.

### **Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana**

It is a financial inclusion program of the Government of India open to Indian citizens (minors of age 10 and older can also open an account with a guardian to manage it), that aims to expand affordable access to financial services such as bank accounts, remittances, credit, insurance and pensions. This financial inclusion campaign was launched on 28 August 2014. Under this scheme 15 million bank accounts were opened on inauguration day.

### **Pradhan Mantri MUDRA Yojana**

Any Indian Citizen who has a business plan for a non-farm sector income generating activity such as manufacturing, processing, trading or service sector and whose credit need is less than Rs 10 lakh can approach either a Bank, MFI, or NBFC for availing of Micro Units Development & Refinance Agency Ltd. (MUDRA) loans under Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana (PMMY).

### **Skill India**

Skill India campaign was launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on 15 July 2015 to train over 40 crore people in India in different skills by 2022. It is managed by the National Skills Development Corporation of India. United Kingdom (U.K), Japan, Oracle have collaborated with India for Skill India Programme. One of the prominent initiatives under it is **Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY)**. The aim of the PMKVY scheme is to encourage aptitude towards employable skills and to increase working efficiency of probable and existing daily wage earners, by giving monetary awards and rewards and by providing quality training to them. The scheme has a target to train 1 crore Indian youth from 2016-20.

### **Scholarship Schemes for Education**

To meet its goal of educational empowerment of the SC population, a large portion of the budget of the Department of Social Justice and Empowerment is directed to scholarships and there has been a considerable success in its distribution within the target group. **Post-Matric Scholarship (PMS – SC) for SC students** has been in **operation since 1944** and is the single largest intervention by the Government of India for the educational empowerment of scheduled caste students. It covers approximately 55 lakh students per year, studying at the post matriculation or post-secondary stage, right up to PhD. It has had positive outcomes on literacy

levels of the target groups, on dropout rates participation in higher education, and finally in achievement of excellence and building human capital for the service of the nation. Other scholarship schemes for SC students are the Pre-Matric Scholarship, Top Class Education Scheme for studying in premier educational institutions and the National Fellowship Scheme run in conjunction with UGC.

### **Pradhan Mantri Adarsh Gram Yojana (PMAGY)**

It focuses on integrated development of SC majority villages. The programme is being taken up in villages which have more than 50% SC population.

## **Social Empowerment - Senior Citizens**

Many senior citizens feel neglected and unwanted in the twilight years of their life. Government has taken measures to enable them to lead a respectable life with economic self sufficiency. Some of the schemes for senior citizens are listed below.

### **Atal Pension Yojana**

It is a government-backed pension scheme in India, primarily targeted at the unorganised sector. All subscribing workers below the age of 40 are eligible for pension of up to ₹5,000 per month on attainment of 60 years of age.

### **Rashtriya Vayoshri Yojana**

It is a scheme for providing Physical Aids and Assisted-living Devices for Senior citizens belonging to BPL category. This is a Scheme, fully funded by the Central Government. The expenditure for implementation of the scheme will be met from the "Senior Citizens' Welfare Fund". The Scheme will be implemented through the sole implementing agency - Artificial Limbs Manufacturing Corporation (ALIMCO), a PSU under the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment.

### **Pradhan Mantri Vaya Vandana Yojana**

This is a pension scheme for senior citizens. This to enable old age income security and welfare of Senior Citizens.

## **Social Empowerment - Disabled Group**

For the differently abled, their disability often makes them feel that they are a burden on society. Their requirements for empowerment are very different thereby requiring programmes customized to suit their needs. Some of the schemes to help them lead quality life are mentioned below.

1. Deendayal Disabled Rehabilitation schemes
2. Accessible India campaign

## **Social Empowerment - Scheduled Tribes**

National mainstream policies and compulsions result in the tribal communities feeling either isolated from the mainstream or losing their identity. Government has taken initiatives to handle the issues faced by the Scheduled Tribes which are listed below.

1. Forest Rights Act
2. Minimum Support Price (MSP) for Minor Forest Produce.
3. Schemes for Vocational Training