

Gist of

KURUKSHETRA

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Women Empowerment

**Role of
Women in Agriculture and
Rural Prosperity**

Gender Budgeting

**Nutrition and Health
Related Empowerment
of Women**

ASHAs- The First Port of
Call in India's Villages

**Inclusive Development
and Rural Women**

INCREDIBLE RESULTS

CSE 2018 Results

11 Ranks in Top 50

28 Ranks in Top 100

183 Ranks in the Final List



Rank 11
Pujya Priyadarshni



Rank 16
Dhodmise Trupti Ankush



Rank 21
Rahul Jain



Rank 24
Anuraj Jain

CSE 2017

5 Ranks
in top 50

34 Ranks
in top 100

236 Ranks
in the final list



Rank 3
Sachin Gupta



Rank 6
Koya Sree Harsha



Rank 8
Anubhav Singh



Rank 9
Soumya Sharma



Rank 10
Abhishek Surana

CSE 2016

8 Ranks
in top 50

18 Ranks
in top 100

215 Ranks
in the final list



Rank 2
Anmol Sher
Singh Bedi



Rank 5
Abhilash Mishra



Rank 12
Tejaswi Rana



Rank 30
Prabhash Kumar



Rank 32
Avdhesh Meena

CSE 2015

5 Ranks
in top 50

14 Ranks
in top 100

162 Ranks
in the final list



Rank 20
Vipin Garg



Rank 24
Khumanthem
Diana Devi



Rank 25
Chandra Mohan
Garg



Rank 27
Pulkit Garg



Rank 47
Anshul Agarwal

CSE 2014

6 Ranks
in top 50

12 Ranks
in top 100

83 Ranks
in the final list



Rank 4
Vandana Rao



Rank 5
Suharsha Bhagat



Rank 16
Ananya Das



Rank 23
Anil Dhameliya



Rank 28
Kushaal Yadav



Rank 39
Vivekanand T.S

CSE 2013

5 Ranks
in top 50

62 Ranks
in the final list



Rank 9
Divyanshu Jha



Rank 12
Neha Jain



Rank 23
Prabhav Joshi



Rank 40
Gaurang Rath



Rank 46
Udit Singh

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KURUKSHETRA – MAY 2020 ISSUE

WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

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Chapter 1

Role of Women in Agriculture and Rural Prosperity

Women's role in agriculture:

- Women have been instrumental in agricultural development and rural prosperity. Rural women play a vital role not only in crop planning and cultivation but also in high value activities like horticulture, primary food processing, livestock rearing, fisheries and cottage industries.
- Agricultural sector contributing about 15.5 percent of GDP in India is a female intensive activity. Women pursue multiple farm operations for producing the agricultural crops, rearing animals, and also work for wages in agricultural or other rural enterprises.
- Women are involved in all aspects of agriculture, from crop and seed selection to harvest and post-harvest management, marketing, and processing.
- According to estimates, the agricultural sector employs about 4/5th of all economically active women. Women when compared to men are engaged in much larger numbers in dairying and animal husbandry.
- The contribution of female workers and farmers has been much larger in agriculture and allied activities than the men.
- They also engage themselves in collecting fuel and water, engaging in trade and marketing, caring for family members and maintaining their homes. Though national accounts do not classify many of these activities as economically active employment, they are vital and essential to the well-being of rural households.

Concerns:

Low economic participation:

- The Agriculture Census, 2015–16 has revealed that the share of female operational holders has increased from 12.79 per cent in 2010–11 to 13.87 per cent in 2015–16. In terms of operated area, the share of women increased from 10.36 per cent to 11.57 per cent. This signifies that more and more females are participating in the management and operation of agricultural lands but the absolute number continues to remain very low.
- According to NABARD's estimates women's participation in wages/salaried activities was dismally low. A majority were attending to domestic duties and not engaged in any economic activity. The NABARD's survey indicated a huge gender difference in the engagement and activities for employment in rural areas. While over one-fourth of the males were either self-employed including farmers only one- twentieth (4.8 percent) of women respondents were self- employed. The percentage of males working as regular salaried or wage employees stood at 14 percent as against only 3.2 percent of females.
- The number of women in the total workforce in India is only 27 percent, and almost 20 million women have withdrawn from the workforce during 2005 and 2012.
- Women's contribution to economic activity and development in India stands at about 17–18 percent (World Bank estimates) which is less than half the Global average. India ranks 120th among 131 countries so far as women workforce participation is concerned.
- This implies that a huge population in rural India is still not economically utilised for better output.

Disadvantageous position:

- Although women have been contributing dominantly in the rural labour force, they are marginalised and disadvantaged in wages, land rights and representation in group activities.
- Women have very limited access to productive resources which consequently limits their productivity.
- The jobs in rural areas have been decreasing and not enough rural women have been able to make the

transition to working in urban areas due to factors like lack of skills, low level of connectivity and safety measures for women workers willing to work in the cities.

Significance of women participation:

- Women participation is a must for an inclusive and sustainable economy of a nation. India cannot think of a vibrant economy and prosperous society when 50 percent of the population is not involved fully in the various economic activities.
- Women's economic empowerment is closely connected with poverty reduction as women also tend to invest more of their earnings in their children and communities. Increase in the incomes of women members in the family has increased the access to food and finance, and benefited their families as well as communities.
 - The All India Rural Financial Inclusion Survey 2016–17 indicated that women have equal and very strong financial knowledge and have better positive financial attitude than their male counterparts.
- The estimates suggest the GDP growth in India can be boosted by 1.5 percentage points to achieve nine percent growth per annum by facilitating 50 percent of women joining the workforce in the country.
 - The 2015 report titled "Power of Parity" by renowned consultancy firm Mckinsey states that India could add \$700 billion of additional GDP in 2025, upping the country's annual GDP growth by 1.4 percentage points by bolstering gender parity. About 70 percent of the increase could come from raising India's female labour force participation rate by 10 percentage points.
 - According to IMF research raising women's participation in the workforce to the level of men can boost Indian economy by 27 percent.

Way forward:

Mobilizing the Rural Women:

- There is the need to mobilize women into Self Help groups (SHGs) on the line of the National Rural Livelihood Mission.
 - The National Rural Livelihood Mission of the Ministry of Rural Development has had a considerable impact on the rural development of India by mobilizing women into Self-Help Groups and providing capitalization support to such SHGs.
 - Apart from SHGs, 63 lakh women farmers were also provided support for livelihood interventions.

Role of Financial Institutions:

- The banking and other financial institutions need to proactively reach out to SHGs for financial empowerment. The credit flow for working capital and other resources of the SHGs need to be augmented to make them more vibrant for participating in prosperity of rural India.

Creating an ecosystem for empowerment:

- There is the need to provide an opportunity to poor rural women to have access to skills, markets and business development services.

Skill Development:

- One of the critical gaps that often lowers the employability of women and their efficient and quality output at work place is low skilling levels in women. The Skill India Mission needs to map such requirements and design tailor made hands-on training modules for imparting skills to the willing women workers relevant to the prospective employers.

Business development support:

- Out of box initiatives like subsidised loans for businesses led by women, mentoring entrepreneurs and

providing market access can have a far-reaching impact on women empowerment.

Social and Behavioural Change:

- The developmental interventions will fall short unless the social attitudes don't change.
- The social researches have established that the women tend to drop out in response to family pressures even after completing the skill programmes and consequently getting jobs. Hence, the developmental efforts need to be suitably complemented by changing the social norms around marriages, work and household duties.
- India needs to evolve a social revolution to realise the development potential of the women workforce. The trend of women attending only domestic works will have to be reversed. Globally the societies developed and became prosperous by valuing contributions of girls and women in making societies.

Safety aspects:

- The comfort in commuting and safety while travelling will go a long way for empowering the women workforce in rural areas. The Government needs to work to provide better connectivity.
 - In Tamil Nadu, a safe working environment has been able to encourage women to work in garment manufacturing, far from their village and homes.
 - The availability of safe hostel facilities for their stay has encouraged their parents to allow them to work and stay away from home.

Chapter 2

Gender Budgeting

Introduction:

- Gender budgeting is a policy with a primary goal of re-orienting the allocation of public resources, advocating for an advanced decision-making role for women in important issues, and securing equity in the distribution of resources between men and women.
- Gender budget is not a separate budget for women; rather it is an attempt to establish the budget's gender-specific impact and to translate gender commitments into budgetary commitments.
- Generally, budgeting involves four components: the budgetary allocation of resources to various heads, the actual Government outlays on various heads, an accounting of how resources are utilised for a particular purpose and an evaluation of the effectiveness of the resources utilised in delivering the intended results. Gender budgeting involves looking at all the four components from the point of view of women as beneficiaries.

Significance of gender budgeting:

Gender equity:

- Women in India continue to face disparities in access to and control over resources. These disparities are reflected in indicators of health, nutrition, literacy, educational attainments, skill levels, occupational status among others.
- Gender budgeting helps remedy the disadvantages and discrimination against women and fighting marginalisation and exclusion from economic, political, and constitutional processes.
- The Constitution of India has mandated equality for every citizen of the country as a fundamental right.

Gender budgeting allows the governments to promote equality through fiscal policies.

- Women's economic empowerment plays a crucial role in tackling gender inequality. Gender Budgeting helps identify the needs of women and reprioritize expenditure to meet these needs.
 - An analysis of the scores on GDI (Gender Development Index) and GII (Gender Inequality Index) for different countries show that GII is significantly determined by gender budgeting initiatives, public spending on health and female labour force participation.

Economic growth:

- Apart from the basic principle of promoting equality among citizens, gender equality can benefit the economy through efficiency gains. There is a growing awareness that gender inequality is inefficient and costly to development.
- There are a number of gender-specific barriers which prevent women and girls from gaining access to their rightful share in the flow of public goods and services. Unless these barriers are addressed in the planning and development process, the fruits of economic growth are likely to completely bypass a significant section of the country's population. This, in turn, does not augur well for the future growth of the economy.
 - Currently, the contribution of Indian women to the GDP (17 percent) is far below the global average (37 percent).

Economic efficiency:

- Given the fact that the needs of women and men and girls and boys may be different and that gender Budgeting not only influences expenditure but also revenue policies at national and State government levels, gender Budgeting helps ensure greater efficiency in fiscal policy.
- Gender Budgeting acknowledges the linkages between economic and social policy outcomes.
- The gender budgeting statements allows the government to build up sex-disaggregated or gender relevant data, though more sustained efforts are required to ensure that the data are used to guide effective programmes and policies.

Difference between gender and Sex:

- Gender is the culturally and socially constructed roles, responsibilities, privileges, relations and expectations of women and men, boys and girls. Because these are socially constructed, they can change over time and differ from one place to another.
- Sex is the biological make-up of male and female people. It is what we are born with, and does not change over time, nor differs from place to place.

Gender Budgeting in India:

- The year 2001 proved to be a watershed year with respect to orientation of the budget making process towards gender sensitivity and gender empowerment.
- Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB) was adopted by India in 2005 following which at least 57 government ministries/departments set up Gender Budgeting Cells. Since 2005–06, the Expenditure Division of the Ministry of Finance has been issuing a note on Gender Budgeting as a part of the Budget Circular every year. This GB Statement comprises two parts: Part A and Part B.
 - Part A reflects Women Specific Schemes, i.e. those which have 100 percent allocation for women. Part B reflects Pro-Women Schemes, i.e. those where at least 30 percent of the allocation is for women.
- India has integrated gender budget within the Expenditure Budget and also given instructions to integrate it into the Outcome Budget.

- India has been a leading example of Gender Budgeting in the Asia Pacific region, as acknowledged by the United Nations.
- The 2019 Union Budget speech proposed the constitution of a committee to evaluate 15 years of Gender Budgeting.

A Successful example:

In the Union Budget 2016– 17, the Finance Minister integrated gender budgeting in the energy sector by a policy initiative on care economy, to uplift poor women in the energy ladder to Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) subsidies. This was the first time in the history of the country that the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas implemented a welfare scheme benefiting many women belonging to the poorest households. This is a good example of how a prima facie gender-neutral ministry like the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas can design a policy to address women's needs.

Way forward:

- An analysis conducted by the National Institute of Public Finance and Policy reveals that Gender Budgeting has not translated effectively into policies that impact women despite being a promising fiscal innovation to begin with. There is a need to evaluate the impact of Gender Budgeting in India and take corrective actions.
- Quantum of budgetary allocation for women focused schemes vis-a-vis total budgetary allocation should be increased and at the same time implementation of the policies should be so monitored that the allocated budget is spent strictly under the head it was allocated for.
- There is the need to build capacity at centre and state level for better implementation of gender budget and improvement in fiscal marksmanship.
- There is an ongoing debate in India to integrate gender in formula-based transfers to states from the Finance Commissions, though it has not yet materialised. The Fourteenth Finance Commission of India, which reported in January 2015, integrated “climate change” variables in the formula-based fiscal transfers. Perhaps gender development variables may become the mandate for future Finance Commissions.
- The revenue side of the gender budget should also be strengthened to empower women through innovative taxation policies.
 - Gender Budgeting has both expenditure as well as a revenue aspect. The revenue side of Gender Budgeting is still in the nascent stages. Revenue policies that provide favourable treatment to women may help to improve their paid work efforts, access to land and property, and their ability to accumulate financial savings and investments, as well as enhance their children's access to education and health, and increase their “say” in intra-household decisions.

Quote:

- Swami Vivekananda's quote on the issue of gender equality. Vivekananda said, “It is not possible for a bird to fly on one wing.”, emphasizing the importance of women in the development of a country.

Chapter 3

Nutrition and Health Related Empowerment of Women

Women empowerment is important not only from the perspective of social justice and equality but also as a means

for achieving the various Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) including poverty reduction as well as improving nutrition, health and education of the people at large. Government has accorded top-most priority to tackle malnutrition among women and is making conscientious efforts to address the issue. This article emphasises mainly on nutrition and health related empowerment of women at the family/household-level.

Women's role in health and nutrition:

- Research indicates that women (as mothers/primary caretakers) are likely to influence health and nutrition outcomes of their families, especially the children. Since women are often the primary caregivers, they can influence their children's nutrition indirectly through their own nutrition/health status as well as directly through their childcare practices.
- Researches indicate that various measures of maternal autonomy favourably correlate with optimum infant feeding practices and child-growth outcomes. Further, it has also been reported that maternal autonomy is positively associated with a child's nutritional status, especially for children aged less than three years.
- On the contrary, the disempowered women are more likely to suffer time constraints, poor mental health, and negligible control over household- resources, inferiority complex and inadequate access to information/utilisation of healthcare services.
- Therefore, Women empowerment is crucial for improving nutrition and health related outcomes of the family.
- Women empowerment is increasingly being viewed as a significantly important strategy in reducing maternal and child under-nutrition, which continues to be one of the major health burdens in low- and middle-income nations.

Nutritional and health status of women:

- On the nutrition and health front, data from National Family Health Survey-4 (NFHS-4; 2015–16) indicate that 22.9 percent of the women (15–49 years) are underweight (BMI <18.5 kg/m²) and 53.1 percent (15–49 years) are anaemic and only 21 percent of the pregnant women had complete antenatal care.
- As per the 2015–17 Sample Registration System (SRS) bulletin, the Maternal Mortality Rate (MMR) is 122 per 1,00,000 live births. Further, the Infant Mortality Rate (IMR) is 41 indicating that out of every 1000 live births, 41 infants die before attaining the age of 12 months; and the Under-Five Mortality Rate (U5MR) is 50 deaths per 1000 live births. The above indices are highly dependent on the mother's nutrition and health status.

Challenges:

- Women are at an elevated risk of nutritional deficiencies during all stages of life cycle- right from Antenatal/Postnatal stage (for healthy foetal growth) to the needs of girl child, adolescent girls to post-menopausal/ elderly women.
- Unequal power relations at the household-level render women more susceptible to food insecurity than men. In any crisis situation or when food prices soar, women/girls are often the 'shock absorbers' by consuming less nutritious food in order to support their families.
- Gender discrimination hinders women's access to healthcare due to various reasons like limited financial resources, restricted mobility, etc. Additional burdens imposed by gender disparities within the household/community limit their ability to remain healthy due to burdens like: prolonged household work, unsafe work environments, gender-based violence, inadequate mechanisms for prevention and protection of their rights.

Governmental schemes:

- Several schemes and programmes with direct/indirect interventions for addressing women's health and nutrition related issues are being implemented across the country.
- **Janani Suraksha Yojana (JSY):** A safe motherhood intervention under the National Health Mission (NHM) for curbing maternal and neonatal mortality by promoting institutional deliveries especially among the pregnant women belonging to weaker socio-economic strata (SC, ST, BPL households).
- **National Health Mission (NHM):** A flagship programme of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, NHM addresses malnutrition among women. Its components include: Anaemia Mukh Bharat; organization of Village Health and Nutrition Days as well as Sanitation and Nutrition days (for providing maternal and child health services along with awareness generation on maternal and child care); Iron and Folic Acid (IFA) supplementation; calcium supplementation and promotion of iodized salt consumption.
- Anganwadi Services Scheme under the **Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS)** aims to improve the nutrition/ health status of pregnant women and nursing mothers, thereby lowering the incidence of mortality, morbidity and malnutrition among them. The beneficiaries are provided supplementary nutrition, nutrition and health education, immunisation, health check-up and referral services—all of which collectively help in uplifting their nutrition and health status.
- **Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY)/ Maternity Benefit Programme:** Pregnant women and nursing mothers receive a cash benefit of Rs. 5,000/- in three instalments, on fulfilling the respective conditionalities: early registration of pregnancy, ante-natal check-up, child-birth registration and completion of first cycle of vaccination. The eligible beneficiaries also receive cash incentives under the Janani Suraksha Yojana (JSY). Hence, on an average, a woman gets Rs. 6,000/- for her first living child-birth.
- **Scheme for Adolescent Girls (SAG)** provides services to out-of-school adolescent girls (11–14 years) for their self-development and empowerment; improving nutritional and health status; promoting awareness regarding health, hygiene and nutrition; giving support to out-of-school adolescent girls for successfully transitioning back to formal schooling or bridge learning/skill training and upgrading their home-based life skills
- **POSHAN Abhiyaan** aims to improve nutritional status of adolescent girls, pregnant women and nursing mothers in a time bound manner. Educated, well-nourished and healthy girl child in the times to come will grow into well- nourished adolescent girls and later they will become healthy women and mothers who in turn are expected to bear well-nourished and healthy children. This can help in perpetuating an inter-generational cycle of healthy progeny.

Conclusion:

- Women empowerment in terms of employment activities and decision-making regarding household issues are the most evident factors that can affect the nutrition and health status of their families.
- Women should be empowered enough to consume/provide nutritionally wholesome meals themselves and their family members and they should be able to inculcate healthy dietary habits in their children right from younger ages.
- There is the need for Nutrition education to encourage the consumption of nutritious, safe and healthy diets.
- Empowering women is not only essential for achieving the well-being of family members including children but also for addressing developmental issues of the nation. A well-nourished, healthy and empowered woman is not only an asset to the family but to the society and the nation as a whole.

Chapter 4

ASHAs- The First Port of Call in India's Villages

The Accredited Social Health Activists (ASHA) initiative began under the National Rural Health Mission in 2005. The National Rural Health Mission aims to address the health requirements of rural India. One of the key strategies of the National Rural Health Mission is to provide a community health volunteer to every village with a population of 1000. According to the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, currently there are 9,69,667 ASHAs in India.

Role in healthcare services:

- ASHA workers are expected to spread awareness on health. They are also expected to share knowledge on existing health services and need for timely utilisation of health and family welfare services.
- They have to mobilise the community for local health planning and increased use of health services. The ASHAs are to provide information to the community on determinants of health such as nutrition, basic sanitation and hygienic practices, healthy living and working conditions.
- Empowered with knowledge and a drug-kit to deliver first-contact healthcare, every ASHA is expected to be a fountainhead of community participation in public health programmes in her village.
 - ASHA is provided a drug kit containing a set of drugs/equipment and products that enable her to give basic care to the community. The drug kits mainly contain drugs for minor ailments.
- They counsel women on birth preparedness, importance of safe delivery, breast-feeding and complementary feeding, immunisation, contraception and prevention of common infections including Reproductive Tract Infections/ Sexually Transmitted Infections (RTIs and STIs) and care of the young child from time to time.
- The ASHAs are also involved in promoting universal immunisation and construction of household toilets.

Significance of ASHA workers:

- They form the backbone of primary healthcare in more than seven lakh villages of India. ASHAs are the first port of call for any health-related needs of deprived sections of the population, especially women and children who find it difficult to access health services.
- The ASHA workers have won enormous goodwill and trust of villagers which would enable them to influence the villagers towards healthy practices. The village women take their advice on immunisation, family planning methods and infant feeding practices very seriously.

COVID pandemic:

- These community health workers, who function as a trained frontline workforce, are helping India in its fight against the COVID-19 pandemic.
 - Accredited Social Health Activists, ASHAs, are playing an indispensable role in rural outreach by educating village people on arresting the spread of the Pandemic.
 - ASHA workers have been deputed to spread awareness on prevention of Coronavirus in their areas.
 - They can help in early detection and facilitate proper treatment in hospitals.
- The army of dedicated and friendly health activists in India's villages are taking on the COVID- 19 challenge by empowering people with knowledge

Tidbits:

- The Prime Minister has recently acknowledged the work of an ASHA worker from Odisha for her valuable

work in the service of society. The PM acknowledged the contribution of a determined ASHA worker Jamuna Mani Singh from Balasore district for bravely fighting against malaria in the district.

- Jamuna Mani Singh, from a small and poor village in Orissa called Tendagaon has vowed not to allow a single death due to malaria in her village. Through her dedicated efforts, which included creating awareness about the disease, she has tried her best to avert the impact of malaria. She undertakes door to door visits and the moment she learns of anybody having fever in the village, she reaches their doorstep. She also ensures that all houses in the village use mosquito nets.

Chapter 5

Inclusive Development and Rural Women

Inclusive development:

- Inclusive development can be achieved through growth with equity– social, economic and political.
- Inclusive growth is not automatic and it can only be attained through suitable policy formulation, proactive intervention, effective policy implementation and people's participation in the governance process.

Status of rural women:

- Rural women are key agents for achieving the transformational economic, environmental and social changes required for sustainable development. But limited access to credit, health care and education are among the many challenges they face, which are further aggravated by the global food and economic crises and climate change.
- Empowering them is crucial not only for the well being of individual families and rural communities but also for overall economic productivity given women's large presence in the agricultural workforce worldwide. Handling multiple roles every single day, women are undoubtedly the backbone of any society.

Women empowerment:

- Empowerment of women involves economic opportunity, social equality and personal rights.
- Women's empowerment is a process in which women gain greater share of control over resources – material, human and intellectual such as knowledge, information, ideas and financial resources like money as well as control over decision making in the home, community, society and nation so as to gain "power".

Government Empowerment Programmes for Rural Women:

- The government has initiated the following empowerment programmes for inclusive development for rural women.
- **Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP):** This flagship scheme was launched initially to address the declining Child Sex Ratio but has since broadened its outlook to take under its ambit provisions to motivate higher education for girls and related issues of disempowerment of women on a life- cycle continuum.
- **Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY):** PMMVY beneficiaries would receive a cash incentive of Rs. 6000 during pregnancy and after institutional delivery.
- The **Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana** aims to make cooking gas (LPG) available to women from families that are financially backward.

- **Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Antyodaya Yojana (DAY-NRLM):** It focuses on rural women and aims to achieve universal social mobilization by involving rural women. At least one woman member from each identified poor rural household is to be brought under the Self Help Group (SHG) network in a time bound manner. NRLM would help them graduate out of poverty.
- **Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Grameen Kaushalya Yojana (DDU-GKY)** aims to skill rural youth who are poor and provide them with jobs having regular monthly wages or above the minimum wages. It ensures social inclusion of the candidates by mandatory coverage of socially disadvantaged groups, where one-third of the persons covered should be women.
- **Mahila Kisan Sashaktikaran Pariyojana (MKSP)** aims to improve the present status of women in agriculture and enhance the opportunities for empowerment.
- **Rastriya Mahila Kosh (RMK):** Rastriya Mahila Kosh (RMK), of the Ministry of Women and Child Development, extends micro-credit to women in the informal sector through a client-friendly, collateral-free and hassle-free manner for income generation activities.
- **Mahila Shakti Kendra (MSK):** It is as a sub-scheme under the Umbrella Scheme 'Mission for Protection and Empowerment for Women' to empower rural women through community participation. MSK Scheme is envisaged to provide an interface for rural women to approach the government for availing their entitled benefits and for empowering them through training and capacity building. Community engagement through College Students Volunteers is envisioned in 115 most backward districts as part of the MSK Block level initiatives.
- **National Repository of Information for Women (NARI):** Ministry of Women and Child Development has prepared a portal namely National Repository of Information for Women (NARI) that will provide citizens easy access to information on government schemes and initiatives for women. The portal summarises over 350 government schemes and other important information for the benefit of women.
- **National Nutrition Mission (NNM):** To deal with the problem of malnutrition, the government has set-up the National Nutrition Mission (NNM). The aim is to achieve an improvement in the nutritional status of children of 0–6 years and pregnant and lactating women in a time bound manner, during the three years beginning from 2017–18, with defined targets
- **Mahila Police Volunteers (MPVs)** will prove to be an effective alternative against the local police for women. MPVs were launched in all States and UTs to serve as a public-police interface and facilitate women in distress. The MPVs report incidences of domestic violence, child marriage, dowry harassment, and violence faced by women in public spaces.
- **Mahila e-Haat** is an initiative to economically empower women through financial inclusion. It is a direct online digital marketing platform for women entrepreneurs/SHGs/NGOs.
- **Empowering Elected Women Representative (EWRs):** Ministry of Women and Child Development has launched an extensive training programme with an objective of empowering Elected Women Representatives (EWRs) and help them assume the leadership roles expected of them and guide their villages for a more prosperous future.

Conclusion:

- The goal of inclusive development must involve the health, education and empowerment of women who form almost 50 per cent of the Indian population.
- Government should empower rural women to claim their rights to land, leadership, opportunities and choices, and to participate in shaping laws, policies and programmes. The initiatives should promote equal rights, opportunities and participation so that rural women can make a strong contribution to inclusive sustainable rural development.

- The government programmes promoting women education and skill development should be pursued more vigorously.

Chapter 6

Prioritizing Economic Empowerment of Women

Cross-sectional interventions have been undertaken to break the glass barrier in the economy to make the shift from “women development” to “women-led development”. Women's active economic participation would help not only in their empowerment but would also augment the realization of growth and development potential of India.

Governmental interventions:

- The government has undertaken multifaceted interventions to ensure economic empowerment of women which can be categorised under 4 broad heads of Societal, Educational, Entrepreneurial and Financial Security.

Societal Interventions:

- It is necessary to combat entrenched patriarchy and social norms which create an unequal opportunity structure for women in the economy.

Maternity Benefit (Amendment) Act 2017:

- Government passed an amendment act increasing the duration of paid maternity leave available for women from the existing 12 weeks to 26 weeks.
- It introduced an enabling provision relating to “work from home” for women and also made creche facilities mandatory for every establishment employing 50 or more employees.

National Creche Scheme:

- This scheme is being implemented as a Centrally Sponsored Scheme through States/UTs to provide day care facilities to children (age group of 6 months to 6 years) of working mothers.

SHe Box:

- To facilitate action against any form of sexual harassment at work which would disincentivise women from participating in the economy, Parliament had enacted Protection of Women from Sexual Harassment at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act 2013.
- The Sexual Harassment electronic Box (SHe-Box) is an effort to provide a single window access to every woman for registration of complaint related to sexual harassment.

One Stop Centre:

- It helps establish a single integrated platform across the country to provide holistic support and assistance under one roof to women affected by violence, both in private and public spaces.
- Aggrieved women who are reaching out or have been referred to the One Stop Centre will be provided with requisite specialised services.

Beti Bachao Beti Padhao:

- The decline in the Child Sex Ratio (CSR) defined as number of girls per 1000 of boys between 0–6 years of age, is a major indicator of women disempowerment and CSR reflects both, pre-birth discrimination manifested through gender biased sex selection, and post-birth discrimination against girls.
- The government had announced the Beti Bachao Beti Padhao initiative in 2015. The objective of the initiative is prevention of gender-biased sex selective elimination, ensuring survival and protection of the girl child and ensuring education and participation of the girl child. This is being implemented through a national campaign and focused multi-sectoral action in 100 selected districts low in CSR, covering all states and UTs.

Educational and Skilling Interventions:

- While there has been a general rise in school level enrolment for girls, it is essential to focus on higher education for women. Further along with education, it is essential to ensure that women have the required skill sets to raise their employability.

Pradhan Mantri Vidya Lakshmi Karyakram:

- It is a fully IT-based Student Financial Aid Authority to administer and monitor scholarship as well as educational loan schemes. The portal also provides linkages to National Scholarship Portal.

Post Graduate Indira Gandhi Scholarship for Single Child:

- University Grants Commission has introduced this scheme with an aim to compensate direct costs of girl education especially for girls who happen to be the only girl child in their family. A fellowship of Rs 3100 is available per month under the scheme.

Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY):

- It is a skill certification initiative that aims to train youth in industry-relevant skills to enhance opportunities for livelihood creation and employability. Close to 50 per cent of the candidates enrolled and trained under PMKVY are women.

Mahila Shakti Kendra (MSK) Scheme:

- It has been conceptualised to empower rural women through community participation. By addressing the livelihood needs of women.

Support to Training and Employment Programme for Women (STEP):

- STEP has been envisaged to train women with no access to formal skill training facilities. The programme imparts skills in several sectors such as agriculture, horticulture, food processing, handlooms, traditional crafts like embroidery, travel and tourism, hospitality, computer and IT services.

Entrepreneurial Interventions:

- The Government has actively promoted self-employment of women by ensuring that they become wealth and job creators instead of being job seekers in the economy.
- The programmes have focussed on dealing with challenges such as poor access to funding and markets as well as bolstering the confidence of women to take on entrepreneurial risk.

Pradhan Mantri MUDRA Yojana:

- Under this scheme, the Government has provided credit up to 10 lakh to small entrepreneurs without the need for collateral or a guarantor. Women have made up 70 per cent of the beneficiaries under the scheme.

Stand-Up India:

- This scheme facilitates loans between 10 lakh and 1 crore to at least one schedule caste/schedule tribe member and one woman per bank branch for setting up a greenfield enterprise.

Rashtriya Mahila Kosh (RMK):

- It provides loans to NGO-MFIs termed as Intermediary Organizations (IMO) which in turn lend to Self Help Groups (SHGs) of women. Micro-credit is extended to women in the informal sector without collateral for income generation activities.

Mahila E-Haat:

- It is a website which leverages technology for showcasing products made/ manufactured/sold by women entrepreneurs. It provides access to markets for women entrepreneurs across the country.

Women Entrepreneurship Platform (WEP):

- The platform serves as an aggregator of information resources and services. It aims to offer services under various support areas of incubation, acceleration, entrepreneurship skilling, marketing assistance, funding and financial assistance. It aims to build a conducive entrepreneurial ecosystem for women entrepreneurs.

Financial Security Interventions:

- Given that a high proportion of women function in the informal sector, it is essential to ensure financial social security for them.

- It is a National Mission for Financial Inclusion to ensure access to financial services, namely, Banking/ Savings & Deposit Accounts, Remittance, Credit, Insurance, Pension in an affordable manner. As of February 2020, 53 per cent of the account holders (over 20 crores) are women.

Atal Pension Yojana (APY):

- The scheme envisages a universal social security system for all Indians, specially the poor and the underprivileged by offering guaranteed minimum monthly pension of Rs. 1000 to Rs. 5000 after the age of 60 years.

Chapter 7

Schemes to Uplift Women

- Empowerment of women means equipping them to become economically independent, self-reliant, with a positive self-esteem that enables them to face any difficult situation and facilitates their participation in developmental activities.
- In order to ensure that women could be empowered and given equal opportunities, the government has started various schemes

One Stop Centre Scheme:

- Gender Based Violence (GBV) is a global health, human rights and development issue that transcends geography, class, culture, age, race and religion affecting every community and country in every corner of the world.
- In India, Gender Based Violence has many manifestations; from the more universally prevalent forms of domestic and sexual violence including rape, to harmful practices such as, dowry, honour killings, acid attacks, witch- hunting, sexual harassment, child sexual abuse, trafficking for commercial sexual exploitation, child marriage, sex selective abortion, sati, etc.
- The Ministry of Women and Child Development (MWCD) has formulated a Centrally Sponsored Scheme for setting up One Stop Centre. These Centres have been established across the country to provide integrated support and assistance under one roof to women affected by violence, both in private and public spaces in a phased manner.

UJJAWALA:

- Trafficking of women and children for commercial sexual exploitation is an organised crime that violates basic human rights.
- Poverty, low status of women, lack of a protective environment, etc., are some of the causes for trafficking.
- The Central Scheme “Comprehensive Scheme for Prevention of Trafficking for Rescue, Rehabilitation and Re-Integration of Victims of Trafficking for Commercial Sexual Exploitation- Ujjawala” aims to prevent trafficking and also rescue and rehabilitate the victims.

Nirbhaya Fund:

- Violence and abuse against women and girls is frequent on streets, in public transportation and in other public places.
- Such occurrences restrict women's right to mobility, discouraging their freedom to walk freely and move in public spaces of their choice. Such violence also limits their access to essential services and adversely impacts their health and well being.
- The Government has set up a dedicated fund, Nirbhaya Fund to be utilized for projects specifically designed to improve the safety and security of women. It is a non-lapsable corpus fund being administered by the Department of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance.

Mahila Police Volunteers:

- Gender Based Violence (GBV), faced by women both in public and private spaces, including domestic violence, sexual assault, rape, voyeurism, stalking, etc., is a major threat to women equality and empowerment.
- Women who are victims of violence or harassment may not find it easy to approach the police or other authorities for getting help or support.
- There is the need for an effective alternative for getting help and support.
- In order to increase focused community outreach, the Government of India started the scheme of Mahila Police Volunteers (MPVs) in all States and UTs who will act as a link between police and the community and facilitate women in distress.

Chapter 8

Women Health: Fundamental for a Healthy Nation

Health status of women:

- The Maternal Mortality Rate, which refers to the number of deaths due to complications from pregnancy and childbirth in Indian women, is about 130 per 100,000 live births (2014–2016) as per the latest figures.
- India alone accounts for one-fourth of the world's cervical cancer patients, with estimates that 1 in 53 Indian women are likely to suffer from cervical cancer as compared to 1 in 100 in the developed countries.
- Traditionally, being a patriarchal society, women are always accorded second importance and this leads to them being deprived of proper nutrition.

Areas of Concern Pertaining to Women Health:**Malnutrition:**

- Malnutrition refers to the deficiencies, excesses or imbalances in a person's intake of energy or nutrients.
- A malnourished mother is bound to produce malnourished children and is herself prone to diseases like anaemia, tuberculosis, and pneumonia. It is a major contributor to the high Maternal Mortality Rate and Infant Mortality Rate in India.

Factors responsible for Malnutrition:

- Poor socioeconomic conditions resulting from and leading to poor educational status, early marriage and pregnancy and poor knowledge of birth control measures leading to unplanned pregnancies and patriarchal mindsets contribute to poor nutritional status of women.

Disease burden:

- Given the special health needs of the women, they are susceptible to diseases like Cancer of the cervix, Goiter Mental Health Issues
- Depression is not only the most common of women's mental health problems, but may be more persistent in women than men. Discrimination on the basis of gender and sexual harassment at workplace may lead to serious repercussions in the form of mental health issues like anxiety and depression.

Conclusion:

- The absence of health not only prevents one from contributing positively towards national development but places an additional burden on the healthcare delivery systems.
- A healthy female translates into a healthy family because she is the building block of the home, society and nation.

Chapter 9

Women Empowerment: Milestones and Challenges

- The term women empowerment refers to the process of bringing the women, deprived of socio-economical, political and educational rights and privileges, into mainstream development.
- It also lays emphasis on bringing about holistic paradigm changes in the status of women in order to create an egalitarian society based upon the Constitutional philosophy of equality and social justice for all the people in the republic of India.

Statistics:

- According to the Census 2011, the population of the country is above 121 crore out of which around 48.5 percent are females.

Sex Ratio:

- The sex ratio is 949 females to 1000 males in rural areas vis-à-vis 929 females to 1000 males in the urban areas of the country.
- The sex ratio at birth is highest in Sikkim followed by Andaman and Nicobar Islands. Puducherry, Tamil Nadu and Kerala have better sex ratios while Daman and Diu has an abysmal sex ratio of 618 females to 1000 males. Andhra Pradesh and Rajasthan have the lowest sex ratio across the country.
- The sex ratios are not merely figures showing the proportion of women to that of men in a country but also a reflection on the way of treating and according respect to women in both family and society.

Women and Health:

- The Maternal Mortality Rate, a crucial index to measure the general health condition of women in India, has declined significantly from 254 in 2004–2006 to 130 in 2014–16.
- The life expectancy was 69.3 years for the period 2009–2013 whereas it was 69.6 years for 2010–2014.

Women and Literacy:

- The provision of the government to impart free and compulsory education to the children in the age group of 6–14 years under the Right to Education Act has considerably helped increase the literacy rate in the country.
- The female literacy rate has increased from 53.7 percent in 2001 to 64.6 percent in 2011. The gender gap in the literacy rate has declined.

Women and Economy:

- Women are the mainstay of agrarian economy like that of India and form a major chunk of the unorganized labour force in India.

Women as Lawmakers:

- Women have had increasing representation in the various law-making bodies of the country which emphasizes their increasing influence on the decision-making and policy-making processes of the country. Women's representation has steadily been rising in the Lok Sabha. From being 5% in the first Lok Sabha election of 1951–52, it currently stands at 14% in the 17th Lok Sabha.
- The number of women representatives in the Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) has improved with the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments that introduced the local self-government in the forms of Panchayati Raj and Municipalities in rural and urban areas respectively.
 - The provision of reservation of one- third of the seats for women has helped in increasing the representation of women in Panchayati Raj institutions

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