

WOMEN AND CHILD WELFARE SCHEMES IN INDIA AND HOW MEDIA CAN PROMOTE OUTREACH

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Abstract

With the government today, coming with so many programmes, policies and schemes for Women and Children, the role of Media becomes foremost important in educating people and making them aware about these latest schemes, policies and developments, so that the underprivileged sections which are in dire need of help can be benefitted through these schemes. The biggest drawback or failure in the functioning of any government policy/scheme is usually that, the schemes and policies are made keeping target sections in mind, but they ultimately don't reach them because of lack of awareness and promotion in Media. Hence media can really prove itself to be a leading source and primary medium for educating people about all these latest developments and can connect people from even the most backward and unknown districts with the mainstream governance and administration by generating enough awareness. The Media should highlight the loopholes within our system and must report the flaws and areas where stringent steps need to be taken to reach out to appalled sections. All the branches of media whether Print, Electronic or Digital can work for this cause by creating awareness about circumstances wherein there can be violence against women and children, highlighting the regions with high infant & maternal mortality rates, promoting talks on gender equality especially in backward and rural areas, exposing the rackets of child labour & trafficking and emphasizing on matters related to child abuse in our society.

The government has initiated some really good schemes for Women and Child Welfare. But more than schemes and laws, social discussions, debate, promotion and awareness are the areas which need to be addressed to deal with concerned problems. The day, when these schemes and programmes will reach each and every corner of our country, then our developing country will emerge as a developed and prosperous nation. The government has made many schemes for women and child development, but people in rural and backward areas know only about two or three such schemes out of all. Therefore, there is an immense need to promote outreach. There has to be an openness to change and willingness to educate not just women but even men to make sure that the society is ready to embrace equal rights and opportunities for both men and women. The need of hour is to educate, aware and sensitize the society regarding women and child issues.

Key Words: Child Welfare Schemes

INTRODUCTION

Upliftment of marginalized and underprivileged sections of Women and Children has always been one of the biggest concerns for any developing nation or economy. Any developing country can't prosper if the basic needs of a large section of Women and Children are not met sufficiently, meeting the adequate standards. Hence it is extremely crucial for any government to strengthen the position of these sections in society and to ensure their empowerment. Keeping this objective in mind, The Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India, came into existence as a separate Ministry with effect from 30th January, 2006 with the nodal responsibility to advance the rights and concerns of women and children, who together constitute 68% of the country's population, as per 2011 Census. The Ministry was constituted with the prime intention of addressing gaps in State action for women and children and for promoting inter-ministerial and inter-sectoral convergence to create gender equitable and child-centered legislation, policies and programmes. Another remarkable turning point came in 2014, when The Ministry of Women and Child Development was promoted/upgraded to Cabinet rank and Smt Maneka Sanjay Gandhi was appointed as the first Cabinet rank Minister.

The Ministry today has 6 autonomous organisations namely:

- National Institute of Public Cooperation and Child Development (NIPCCD)

- National Commission for Women (NCW)
- National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR)
- Central Adoption Resource Agency (CARA)
- Central Social Welfare Board (CSWB)
- Rashtriya Mahila Kosh (RMK)

With the government today, coming with so many programmes, policies and schemes for Women and Children, the role of Media becomes foremost important in educating people and making them aware about these latest schemes, policies and developments, so that the underprivileged sections which are in dire need of help can be benefitted through these schemes. The biggest drawback or failure in the functioning of any government policy/scheme is usually that, the schemes and policies are made keeping target sections in mind, but they ultimately don't reach them because of lack of awareness and promotion in Media. Hence media can really prove itself to be a principal source and prime medium for educating people about all these latest developments and can connect people from even the most backward and unknown districts with the mainstream governance and administration by creating enough awareness.

Women can take advantage of State and Central government schemes to seek employment and take forward their entrepreneurship ventures, if they are aware about such programmes. For holistic development of the child, the

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Received: October, 25 2017 | Accepted: November, 15 2017 | Published Online: December, 28 2017

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Conflict of interest: None declared | Source of funding: Nil

Ministry has been for long implementing the world's largest outreach programme of Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) providing a package of services comprising supplementary nutrition, immunization, health check-up, referral services, pre-school non-formal education etc. But still today our country is facing the grave problem of malnutrition in kids and new-born infants, which demonstrates the fact that inspite of all the hard efforts, the scheme is not being able to reach every corner/district of the country and that is why so many infants and young kids are still coping with malnutrition. The Media can work to highlight such loopholes within the system and should report the flaws and areas where the stringent steps need to be taken to reach out to appalled sections. All the branches of media whether Print, Electronic or Digital can work for this cause by creating awareness about circumstances wherein there can be violence against women and children, highlighting the areas with high infant & maternal mortality rates, promoting talks on gender equality especially in backward and rural areas, exposing the rackets of child labour & trafficking, emphasizing on matters related to child abuse, organizing campaigns on violence against women and children with the cooperation of other women's and child's rights organizations to sensitize our society.

National Policy For Women 2016

The discourse on women empowerment has gradually evolved over the last few decades, from seeing women as mere recipients of welfare benefits to mainstreaming gender concerns and engaging them in the development process of the country. The Policy has been prepared keeping in view the socio-economic changes that have occurred since the last policy formulation in 2001. These changes have brought forth fresh opportunities and possibilities for women empowerment. While many progressive laws, policies, programmes and schemes have been implemented for women since then, persisting socio-economic problems continue to hinder gender equality. National Policy for Women 2016 prescribes the operational strategies for implementation of the policy. These include, framing of Action Plans at the national, State and local level; strengthening gender institutional architecture, enacting new legislations and reviewing/ harmonizing legislations, engaging with stakeholders for advocacy and awareness generation, strengthening institutionalization of gender budgeting and creating an effective gender based data base.

National Mission for Empowerment of Women (NMEW)

The National Mission for Empowerment of Women was established during the financial year 2011-2012, it was considered a centrally sponsored scheme in April 2011. The main aim was to bring convergence of efforts through inter-sectoral coordination amongst different ministries and programmes, with Ministry of Women and Child Development (MWCD) as the center for achieving holistic wellbeing and empowerment of women. During the 12th plan period (revised NMEW Scheme) the centrally sponsored schemes were restructured and were followed by the NMEW, getting approved for the continuation as a sub-scheme under the Umbrella Scheme, for the protection, well-fare, wellbeing and development of women.

The main reason for the NMEW scheme to get revised was to achieve the aim of holistic empowerment of women through the coming together of schemes and programmes of different Ministries/Departments of Government of India as well as the

State Governments. The national level experts and advisors are engaged in the following areas:

- Poverty alleviation/economic empowerment,
- Health and nutrition,
- Gender budgeting and Gender mainstreaming,
- Gender rights, gender based violence and law enforcement,
- Empowerment of vulnerable and marginalized groups,
- Social empowerment and education;
- Media and advocacy
- Information technology

National Commission for Women (NCW)

The National Commission for Women (NCW) was constituted on 31st January, 1992 as a statutory body at the National level under the National Commission for Women Act, 1990, to safeguard and promote the rights and interests of women. It has a wide mandate covering almost all aspects of women's development. The Commission investigates and examines the legal safeguards provided for women under the Constitution and recommends government to take measures for thereof effective implementation. The Commission also reviews the existing provisions of the Constitution and other laws affecting women and recommends amendments to meet any inadequacies or shortcomings in such laws from time to time. It looks into complaints and takes cognizance on matters relating to deprivation of women's rights and takes up issues with appropriate authorities. The commission is also empowered to participate and advises in the planning process for socio-economic development of women, inspects jails, remand / shelter homes etc. where women are kept under custody and seeks remedial action wherever necessary. In keeping with its mandate, the Commission initiated various steps to improve the status of women and worked for their empowerment during the year 2016. Representatives of the Commission have visited various parts of the country to attend meetings / seminars / workshops / legal awareness programmes etc. organized by the Commission and in collaboration with State Women Commissions, NGOs and other organizations. These visits have been made to gain firsthand knowledge about the problems faced by women in various parts of the country in order to suggest remedial measures and to take up the issues with the concerned authorities. Steps have also been taken to investigate various cases of atrocities committed against women. Publicity is made through print advertisements, audio/ video recordings etc. to disseminate messages to create awareness on women empowerment and other women related laws and issues.

Use of Media By Ncw For Spreading Awareness

To increase Public Awareness regarding laws and schemes relating to women, following activities were undertaken by the Commission:

NCW telecast 60 second audio/video spots on domestic violence, sexual harassment and NRI marriage channels to create mass awareness on these issues as per the following

1. On private FM channels Pan India with many regional languages under 30 days publicity campaign in the month of October to November 2016.

2. On AIR/ FM channels Pan India with many regional languages under 15 days publicity campaign in the month of December/ January, 2016-17.
3. On National Network DD-1, DD-News of Doordarshan and North East channels of Doordarshan under 15 days publicity campaign in the month of November, 2016.
4. On private TV channels Pan India with many regional languages under 21 days publicity campaign in the month of December/ January, 2016-17.

Print Advertisements

1. The Commission released an advertisement on general awareness about NCW through DAVP in all leading newspapers of the country on August, 2016.
2. Press Conferences were conducted and press releases issued on various occasions to inform and update the media on women related laws and issues. The Commission organized press conferences on the issues of surrogacy, capacity building of women police Officers, issues and challenges faced by women with disabilities etc.

The functioning of the NCW is mainly divided into following six cells

1. Complaints and Investigation Cell
2. Policy, Programme Monitoring, Research and Coordination Cell (PPMRCC)
3. Legal Cell
4. Non-Resident Indian Cell
5. North East Cell
6. Public Relations Cell

Rashtriya Mahila Kosh (RMK)

The National Credit Fund for Women known as Rashtriya Mahila Kosh (RMK) was set up by the Government of India in 1993 as a national level organization under the Ministry of Women and Child Development, initially with a corpus of Rs. 31 crore in 1993 to meet the credit needs of poor and asset less women in the informal sector. To bring about the socio-economic upliftment of poor women, RMK provides micro-finance services to the needy and poor women in the informal sector through a client friendly manner without collateral security and third party guarantee. Loans are granted for Income Generating Activities (IGA), housing, micro-enterprises, family needs, etc. RMK has also taken a number of promotional measures to popularize the concept of women empowerment by way of micro financing, thrift and credit, capacity building and marketing linkages through SHGs format. Credit is provided to the poor women beneficiaries through Intermediary Micro financing Organizations (IMOs) working at grass root level such as NGOs, Women Federations, Cooperatives etc. by following a client friendly simple procedure.

Welfare Schemes For Women

The empowerment of women is fundamental for the progress of any country. The Constitution of India conveys a powerful mandate for equality and rights of women as citizens in its Preamble, Fundamental Rights and Duties and also provides for specific provisions for affirmative action. India is also signatory to a number of International Conventions, primarily

the Convention on Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), and has recently endorsed the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which will further change the course of development by addressing key challenges including gender equity.

The Government of India is leading a number of schemes and programmes to improve the status of women as equal partners and active agents of change in the social, economic, cultural and political progress of the country, but sadly due to lack of public awareness and media coverage of such drives, the schemes are not being able to reach the target sections. The people in media as well as well-informed/educated citizens of the country are themselves not fully aware of all the schemes and programmes being run by the government for rural and backward sections of women in the society. Both the print and electronic media can play an instrumental role in effective implementation of government welfare schemes and other activities. A journalist should be well aware of welfare schemes and government programmes so that he or she can report anomalies effectively which will ultimately help public at large.

Today the government has itself started using digital media as a platform to crowdsource ideas from public and has got impressive results. Elated over first of its kind experiment of crowdsourcing ideas to promote various welfare schemes, the government has decided to initiate such social media drives frequently. NR Vishwanath, head of social media cell of the Information and Broadcasting Ministry, told MAIL TODAY recently that "We will use the ideas and content generated through the contests to publicise various schemes. More such drives will be organised in the future as the experiment was successful". The innovative approach to crowdsource ideas from the people has provided the government an opportunity to understand the people's perspective on such programmes. Such efforts from both the sides need to be appreciated and promoted so that more and more people can connect and work with the government for successful implementation of such schemes.

Here is the brief introduction and information about all the major schemes/programmes being run by government for the target sections, to give you an insight for conducting further research. All the 3 branches of media (Print, Electronic & Digital) can play a prudent role in promotion/creating awareness about such schemes.

Maternity Benefit Programme (MBP)

Maternity Benefit Programme (MBP) is a Centrally Sponsored Conditional Cash Transfer Scheme for pregnant women and lactating mothers introduced in October, 2010 in 53 selected districts on pilot basis using the platform of ICDS. In the Scheme, pregnant women and lactating mothers who are 19 years and above, for first two live births, are paid Rs.6,000/- in two installments upon fulfilling specific health and nutrition conditions. As per the schematic norms, cash benefit is provided in the bank/post office accounts of the beneficiaries by the State Governments/UT Administrations, where in distributing maternity benefit in cash/cheque is not permissible.

Swadhar Greh

Swadhar - A Scheme for Women in Difficult Circumstances was launched by the Ministry to provide primary need of

shelter, food, clothing and care to the marginalized women/girls living in difficult circumstances who are without any social and economic support. The Swadhar Greh Scheme benefits the women of or above 18 years of age. To arrange for specific clinical, legal and other support for females in need; and providing helpline or other facilities to such women in distress, Swadhar-Grehs have been set up. The Swadhar-Greh provide emotional support and counselling to rehabilitate them socially and economically through education, awareness etc. At present more than 300 Swadhar Homes are functioning across the country. And very recently on 22nd Nov 2017, Indian Cabinet has approved the proposal to set up additional 208 new Swadhar-Grehs all over the country.

Support to Training and Employment Programme (STEP)

Support to Training and Employment Programme (STEP) is a Central Sector Scheme which aims to provide skills that give employability to women and provide competencies and skills that enable women to become self-employed/entrepreneurs. MWCD, through its STEP Programme, has been addressing special situation of poor women or women in remote areas who are not in a position to move out of their immediate surroundings and go to a formal skill centre to acquire training. Training is provided to women in traditional trades which are largely in the informal sector including Agriculture, Horticulture, Food processing, Handlooms, Traditional crafts like embroidery, zari, handicrafts, Gems & Jewellery, Hospitality etc. The programme strives to build upon the traditional knowledge of women and convert it into sustainable livelihood capacitation. The scheme is intended to benefit women who are in the age group of 16 years and above.

Working Women Hostel (WWH)

Under the Scheme of Working Women Hostel financial assistance is provided for construction/ running of Hostel in rented premises for those working women who may be single, widowed, divorced, separated, married but whose husband or immediate family does not reside in the same area and for those women who are under training for job. Provision of day care centre for children of the inmates of the Hostel is an important aspect of the scheme. The objective of the scheme is to promote availability of safe and conveniently located accommodation for working women in urban, semi urban, or rural areas. Most Recently, Govt. of India approved setting up 190 new Working Women Hostels in the country in a cabinet meeting on 22nd Nov, 2017.

Ujjawala

'Ujjawala' a comprehensive scheme to combat trafficking, was launched by the Ministry on 4th December, 2007 and is being implemented mainly through NGOs. The Scheme has five components-Prevention, Rescue, Rehabilitation, Re-Integration and Repatriation of trafficked victims for commercial sexual exploitation and any other issues to be taken up from time to time.

The main objectives of the scheme are

- To prevent trafficking of women and children for commercial sexual exploitation through social mobilization and involvement of local communities, awareness generation programmes and by generating public discourse.

- To facilitate rescue of victims from the place of their exploitation and place them in safe custody.
- To provide rehabilitation services both immediate and long-term to the victims by providing basic amenities/needs such as shelter, food, clothing, medical treatment including counselling, legal aid, guidance and vocational training.
- To facilitate reintegration of the victims into their family and society.
- To facilitate repatriation of cross-border victims to their country of origin.

One Stop Centres

The Ministry approved Scheme for setting up 'One Stop Centre' to support women affected by violence, on 4th March 2015. The scheme aimed to facilitate access to an integrated range of services including medical aid, police assistance, legal aid/case management, psychosocial counselling, and temporary support services to women affected by violence. To give a new boost to fighting violence against women, Union Cabinet in November 2017 gave nod for setting up 150 new One Stop Centres.

Sabla

A comprehensive scheme for the holistic development of adolescent girls called-'SABLA', is being implemented in 205 selected districts across the country, using the ICDS platform. SABLA aims at an all-round development of adolescent girls of 11-18 years by making them self-reliant by facilitating access to learning, health and nutrition through various interventions such as health, hygiene, nutrition, education, vocational training etc. SABLA promotes awareness about Adolescent Reproductive and Sexual Health among females in the given age group.

MAHILA-E-HAAT

The Ministry of Women & Child Development launched "Mahila E-Haat" a bilingual portal on 7th March, 2016. This is a unique direct online marketing platform leveraging technology for supporting women entrepreneurs/SHGs/NGOs for showcasing the products / services which are made/manufactured/ undertaken by them. It is an initiative for meeting aspirations and needs of women. This was done keeping in mind that digital media is a critical component for business efficiency and thus it should be made available to the majority of Indian women entrepreneurs.

Since its launch over 17 lakhs visitors / hits have been received by the Mahila-E-Haat Portal. Women entrepreneurs/SHGs/NGOs from all states are showcasing products/services across 18 categories viz., Clothing (Men, Women & Children), Bags, Fashion Accessories/Jewellery, Decorative and gift items, Home Décor, Carpets / Rugs, Baskets, Linen/ Cushion Covers, Boxes, Pottery, Grocery & Staples / Organic, Natural Products, Industrial Products, Educational Aids and Miscellaneous.

Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana

The Centre's flagship scheme to provide LPG connections to below-poverty-line households. A survey undertaken by financial consulting firm MicroSave in 12 districts of eastern, central and western Uttar Pradesh, revealed that nearly all of the beneficiaries of the scheme switched to cooking on gas as soon as the LPG cylinders were made available. The

survey also revealed that women found their houses to be cleaner now, in the absence of smoke emissions that would earlier come with using biomass and firewood, staining their utensils and roofs with soot. The lack of smoke had also reduced health problems in women, such as burning sensation in the eyes, coughing and even headaches. The harmful smoke from the firewood, use to result in Asthama, Lung Cancer and breathing problems in women due to incomplete combustion of firewood, but now with the use of LPG cylinders as a medium of clean fuel, they no longer face such problems.

Mahila Shakti Kendra (MSK)

For facilitating opportunities of skill development, employment, digital literacy, health and nutrition, Govt. of India has planned to set up Mahila Shakti Kendra (MSK). 115 most backward districts are proposed to be reached with 920 MSKs. More than 3 lakh student volunteers from local colleges will be involved in this process of community engagement. The outcome based activities of student volunteers will be monitored through web based system.

Recognition For Women

Nari Shakti Puruskar: Every year MWCD celebrates 8th March as International Women's Day. On this day, MWCD felicitates eminent women, organizations/ institutions with National Awards called the Nari Shakti Puruskar. Individual women, organisations/ institutions are recognized for their exceptional contribution towards empowerment of women. Hence the Ministry is not just making policies for women but is also applauding the efforts of those women who are working relentlessly for the noble cause of women empowerment and upliftment of marginalized women in the society.

National Plan of Action for Children 2016

The National Plan of Action for Children (NPAC), 2016 is based on the principles embedded in the National Policy for Children 2013. The Action Plan has four key priority areas; survival, health and nutrition; education and development; protection and participation. The NPAC seeks to ensure convergence of ongoing programmes and initiation of new programmes so as to focus on objectives through well-defined strategies and activities to achieve desired level of outcome for children. The plan gives due attention to the inter-relatedness of deprivations and needs, and proposes measures to address each of them, while ensuring that all children from all strata develop to their full potential in a holistic manner.

As the children's vulnerabilities are multi-layered are inter-connected; it takes a multi-sectoral approach and focus on convergence and coordination between all stakeholders, i.e.; relevant Ministries, State/UTs Governments, Welfare Society Organizations, Media, Business houses and Children themselves. It takes into account the Sustainable Development Goals and proposes a roadmap to achieve SDGs for children. The NPAC 2016 was released on 24th Jan 2017 on the occasion of National Girl Child Day.

National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR)

The National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR), a statutory body, was set up in March 2007 under the Commission for Protection of Child Rights Act, 2005, an Act of Parliament (December, 2005). The Commission's

mandate is to ensure that all Laws, Policies, Programmes and Administrative Mechanisms are in consonance with the Child Rights perspective as enshrined in the Constitution of India and also the UN Convention on the Child Rights.

The Commission has been mandated to perform all or any of the following functions: Under Section 13(1) of the CPCRA Act, 2005

1. Examine and review the safeguards provided by or under any law for the time being in force for the protection of child rights and recommend measures for their effective implementation;
2. Present to the Central Government, annually and at such other intervals, reports upon the working of those safeguards;
3. Inquire into violation of child rights and recommend initiation of proceedings in such cases;
4. Examine all factors that inhibit the enjoyment of rights of children affected by terrorism, communal violence, riots, natural disaster, domestic violence, HIV/ AIDS, trafficking, maltreatment, torture and exploitation, pornography & prostitution and recommend appropriate remedial measures;
5. Look into the matters relating to children in need of special care and protection including children in distress, marginalized and disadvantaged children, children in conflict with law, juveniles, children without family and children of prisoners and recommend appropriate remedial measures for them;
6. Study treaties and other international instruments and undertake periodical review of existing policies, programmes and other activities on child rights and make recommendations for their effective implementation;
7. Undertake and promote research in the field of child rights;
8. Spread child rights literacy among various sections of the society and promote awareness of the safeguards available for protection of these rights through publications, the media, seminars etc.;
9. Inspect any juvenile custodial home, or any other place of residence or institution meant for children, under the control of the Central Government or any State Government where children are detained or lodged for the purpose of treatment, reformation or protection and take up with these authorities for remedial action, if found necessary.
10. Inquire into complaints and take notice of matters relating to - a) deprivation and violation of child rights; b) non-implementation of laws providing protection and development of children; c) non-compliance of policy decisions, guidelines or instructions issued for child welfare.

Integrated Child Protection Scheme (ICPS)

The Ministry is implementing a Centrally Sponsored Scheme i.e. ICPS since 2009-10 through the State Government/UT Administrations on predefined cost sharing financial pattern. The objectives of the Scheme are to contribute to the improvement in the well being of children in difficult circumstances, as well as reduction of vulnerabilities to situation and actions that leads to abuse, neglect, exploitation, abandonment and separation of children from parent. For effective implementation of the Scheme across the

country, the scheme envisage a three tier service delivery structure at National, State and District level by setting up Central Project Support Unit, State Child Protection Societies (SCPS), State Adoption Resource Agencies (SARA) and District Child Protection Units (DCPU) respectively. The Scheme provides financial support to State Governments/UT Administrations for running services for children either by themselves or through suitable NGOs. These services include (a) Homes for various children; (b) Outreach services through Childline; (c) Open Shelters for children in need of care and protection in Urban and Semi Urban Areas; (d) Family Based Non-Institutional Care through Sponsorship, Foster Care and Adoptions.

National Institute of Public Cooperation and Child Development (NIPCD)

The National Institute of Public Cooperation and Child Development, popularly known as NIPCCD, is a premier organization devoted to promotion of voluntary action, research, training and documentation in the overall domain of child development. The current thrust areas of the Institute relating to child development are maternal and child health/nutrition, early childhood care and education, childhood disabilities, positive mental health in children and child care support services. The Institute is also focussing on gender planning and mainstreaming, gender-budgeting, economic and political empowerment of women, prevention of sexual harassment at work place, prevention of gender-related violence such as female foeticide, female infanticide, trafficking of women and children, child marriage, etc. The main aim of NIPCCD is to be seen as an Institute of global repute in child rights, child protection and child development by developing partnerships and linkages with National and International agencies and making its training and research activities relevant to the needs of its varying client groups.

Child Welfare Schemes In India

Just like Women Welfare Schemes, there are many Child Welfare Schemes also being run by the Government, targeting young children in dire need. These schemes also need to be promoted vigorously so that young children which are the future of our country can be saved from exploitation, abuse, child labour, malnutrition, immoral trafficking and all other hardships.

Here are the major flagship programmes being run by the Government, that we all must know for the welfare of children in our country:

ICDS

The Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) Scheme is one of the flagship programmes of the Government of India having the objectives of:

- *Improving the nutritional and health status of children in the age-group of 0-6 years.*
- *Laying the foundation for proper psychological, physical and social development of the child.*
- *Reducing the incidence of mortality, morbidity, malnutrition and school dropouts among children.*
- *Achieving effective co-ordination of policy and implementation amongst the various departments to promote child development.*

- *Enhancing the capability of the mother to look after the normal health and nutritional needs of the child through proper nutrition and health education.*
- The beneficiaries under the Scheme are children in the age group of 0-6 years, pregnant women and lactating mothers. 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. The ICDS Scheme offers a package of six services namely :
 - Supplementary Nutrition
 - Pre-school non-formal education
 - Nutrition & health education
 - Immunization
 - Health check-up and
 - Referral services

The main area of study in ICDS during my research was understanding various components of services under ICDS and their impact. Analysis of a model Anganwadi for an urban or rural setting. Performance appraisal of ICDS functionaries, public cooperation and awareness about ICDS.

Kishori Shakti Yojana (KSY)

The objective of the Scheme was to improve the nutritional and health status of girls in the age group of 11-18 years as well as to equip them to improve and upgrade their home-based and vocational skills; to promote their overall development including awareness about their health, personal hygiene, nutrition, family welfare and management. KSY is designed to respond to state specific situation and needs. It provides a basket of programmatic options to the States/UTs, to selectively intervene on area specific needs/ requirements.

National Nutrition Mission (NNM)

To reign in the high malnutrition rate among children, the Union Cabinet in Nov 2017 approved setting up of the National Nutrition Mission (NNM) to track if supplementary nutrition meant for pregnant and lactating mothers and children upto six years is being delivered to them. India continues to have one of the highest percentages of malnourished children-42% in the world. The government has approved Rs 9,046 crore for the mission for a three year period. Over 10 crore estimated people will benefit from the programme. The National Nutrition Mission will monitor, supervise, fix targets and guide the nutrition related interventions across ministries. Surveillance of benefits will be done through Information and Communication Technology-based (ICT) real time monitoring systems. The NNM will monitor various schemes contributing towards addressing malnutrition. Every year, the mission will target reduction of stunting, under-nutrition, anemia (among young children, women, adolescents) and reduce low birth weight.

Beti Bachao Beti Padhao Scheme (BBBP)

Government of India introduced Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao (BBBP) programme to address the issue of decline in Child Sex Ratio in 100 gender critical districts. The Overall Goal of the Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao (BBBP) Scheme is to Celebrate the Girl Child & Enable her Education. BBBP is one of the most popular schemes of the government which was applauded and gained huge Media attention not just in India but all over the world.

The objectives of the Scheme are as under:

- Prevent gender biased sex selective elimination
- Ensure survival & protection of the girl child
- Ensure education of the girl child

The Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP) initiative has two major components

1. Mass Communication Campaign.
2. Multi-sectoral action in 100 selected districts.

Mass Communication Campaign on Beti Bachao Beti Padhao

The campaign aims at ensuring that girls are born, nurtured and educated without discrimination to become empowered citizens of this country. The Campaign interlinks National, State and District level interventions with community level action in 100 districts, bringing together different stakeholders for accelerated impact.

Multi-Sectoral interventions in 100 Gender Critical Districts covering all States/UTs

Coordinated & convergent efforts are undertaken in close coordination with MoHFW and MoHRD to ensure survival, protection and education of the girl child. The District Collectors/Deputy Commissioners (DCs) lead and coordinate actions of all departments for implementation of BBBP at the District level. Multi-sectoral interventions include: Collaboration of Ministry of Women and Child Development (MoWCD), Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) and Human Resource Development (MoHRD).

National Child Award for Exceptional Achievement

Apart from schemes for child welfare the government also encourages the young children and appreciates them for their achievements and efforts in respective fields. The National Child Award was instituted in 1996 to give recognition to children with exceptional abilities who have outstanding achievements in various fields. These awards are given for outstanding achievements in the fields including (i) Innovation in any field including design, (ii) Scholastic achievements (iii) Sports, (iv) Arts, (v) Culture, (vi) Social Service, (vii) Music, (viii) Any other field which deserve recognition as per the decision of the Central Selection Committee. Children from the age group of 5-18 years are eligible for this honour. Similarly, National Award for Child Welfare is another award, instituted in 1979 to honour five institutions and three individuals for their outstanding performance in the field of Child Welfare.

Central Social Welfare Board (CSWB)

The Central Social Welfare Board (CSWB) was set up by a Resolution of Government of India on 12th August, 1953 with the objective of promoting social and economic welfare activities and implementing welfare programmes for women & children through voluntary organizations. The aim of the board is to support voluntary organizations financially and technically for socio-economic empowerment of women and nurture of children; to create enabling environment of empowered women to live with dignity and participate as equal partners in development. In order to give it a legal status, the Board was registered as a charitable company in 1969. The State Social Welfare Boards were set up in 1954 to work together with Central Social Welfare Board in implementing programmes of the Board across the country. The Board is functioning as an interface between government

and the voluntary sector. The Board has a long experience of almost six decades and a countrywide infrastructure to monitor implementation of programmes and has a network of approximately 6000 voluntary organizations.

Central Adoption Resource Authority (CARA)

Central Adoption Resource Authority (CARA), earlier an autonomous agency, has now become a Statutory Body as per the provisions under Section 68 of the Juvenile Justice (Care & Protection of Children) Act, 2015. CARA has framed the Adoption Regulations, 2017, as mandated under section 68 (c) of JJ Act, 2015 which are effective from 16th January, 2017 and have replaced the Adoption Guidelines, 2015. The Adoption Regulations have been framed keeping in mind the issues and challenges faced by CARA and other stake holders including the Adoption Agencies & Prospective Adoptive Parents (PAPs). This has strengthened adoption program in the country by streamlining the adoption process. Transparency, early deinstitutionalization of children, informed choice for the parents, ethical practices and strictly defined timelines in the adoption process are the salient aspects of the Adoption Regulations. The mission of CARA is to ensure best interest of children; citizen centric approach enabling Prospective Adoptive Parents (PAPs) to take informed decision; online registration, referral (based on seniority), better reservation & matching system. The new Child Adoption Resource Information & Guidance System (CARINGS) has leveraged technology for bringing greater transparency in the adoption process and has also minimized delay in the adoption process, through e-governance.

Digital Media – A New Revolutionary Channel

Digital Media has become a powerful marketing tool today which allows individuals, institutions and organizations to interact with one another, build relationships and communities online. That interaction can be more personal to users than traditional methods of outbound marketing and advertising. Social networking sites act as word of mouth or more precisely, e-word of mouth. The Internet's ability to reach billions across the globe in seconds has given online word of mouth a very powerful voice in today's digital world. Unlike traditional research methods such as surveys, focus groups and data mining which are very time-consuming and costly, and take weeks or even months to analyze, governments today use social media to obtain 'live' or "real time" information/reaction about public discourse and viewpoints on government policies. This is highly beneficial and least expensive medium of communication in this dynamic and fast-paced world. Social media can act as a communication channel by targeting very specific sections/districts with the help of social media influencers and popular social media personalities. Traditional media such as Print, TV News/Shows are limited to 'one-way interaction' with people and only specific information is given with limited mechanisms for obtaining a feedback. Media sources such as newspapers are also very slow and outdated in process for obtaining feedbacks. On the other hand, social media is very quick, participative and open platform, as people are able to instantly share their reviews, ideas and opinions.

Of the top 10 factors today that correlate with a strong Google organic search, seven are social media dependent. This means that if any Ministry/Organisation/Government is less or non-active on social media, they tend to show up less

on Google searches. Therefore, Twitter, Facebook, Youtube and Google+ have today emerged as leading platforms for all the global leaders and thinkers. All the Government Ministries/Organizations are highly active on these platforms. The way government is highly active on social media, replying to people's queries, hearing their complaints and grievances, updating them about new policies, schemes and events of the ministries, people today find themselves more empowered, well connected and aware about the functioning of our governments and ministries.

Nobody can deny the fact that social media is the ultimate king in today's digital world. With all leading news channels, portals, news papers and ministries coming with their own 'Apps', it suggests that the range of social media has become so wide that everybody is realizing the need to modernize and update themselves by connecting with the people through these Apps. The way today TV News Debates, Prime-Time shows are following this #Hashtag culture as a medium for connecting with their viewers to trend globally on social media apps, this denotes that nothing is a bigger marketing channel today than Social Media.

Recently in October 2017, an online social media campaign against sexual assault and harassment with the #hashtag #MeeToo or "MeeToo-Campaign" took the world by storm when Hollywood Actress Alyssa Milano encouraged women to share their personal stories of sexual violence and harassment using this hashtag. To witness a global community of female solidarity take place online was empowering and goosepimple-inducing. The campaign took off because it was real. It was not just about glamorous women and Hollywood stars, it was about every ordinary woman like your sister's teenage mate, your co-worker, your best friend and so on. Two simple words: "me too", provided a clarion call for millions of women to come forward without fear over social media to identify themselves as victims of sexual violence or assault. So much was the global impact of this campaign that TIME Magazine named this social movement aimed at raising awareness about sexual harassment and assault as The Most Influential "Person" in 2017. *Time* Editor-in-Chief, Edward Felsenthal told NBC News that "This is the fastest moving social change we've seen in decades and it began with individual acts of courage by hundreds of women – and some men, too – who came forward to tell their own stories," he hailed them as "the silence breakers." It should be noted that just two simple words brought such a huge wave of awareness across the globe.

CONCLUSION

The government has initiated some really good schemes for Women and Child Welfare. But more than schemes and more than laws, social discussions, debate, promotion and awareness are the areas which need to be addressed to deal with concerned problems. The day, when these schemes and programmes will reach each and every corner of our country, then our developing country will emerge as a developed and prosperous nation. The government has made many schemes for child development and empowerment of women, but women in rural and backward areas know only about two or three such schemes out of all. Therefore, awareness drives by student volunteers need to be encouraged by the government, where they must go to villages as a part of recreational program and should educate people about all these schemes and programmes.

There is an immense need to promote the outreach of such schemes and Media can play the most instrumental role in this.

The role of media is also crucial on the issue of violence against women, both in terms of how media cover the issue, and how media may be used as a tool to help activists and governments, raise awareness and implement programs on this issue. News coverage of violence against women has often been sensational, exploitative, and lacking in serious analysis. Women issues like trafficking, prostitution and rape come on the news channels just to create sensation. Media therefore has an utmost responsibility to report judiciously and sensitively on such issues regarding women. The networks of NGOs, advocating for women's cause, should try to include media in their network. The women's advocacy NGOs, networks alliances should maintain transparency in their organizational structure, financial source and activities. They should feel free to provide information about their organizations and activities. The media should be conscious to present women in their right perspective. The persons working in the media should be trained and made conscious as well as sensitive about gender issues and women rights. Media should develop story lines and programs that promote healthy attitude towards women, masculinity, relationships and feminism. Media should provide fair and full coverage to women in politics, sports, business, health, and education.

It can thus now be concluded that women in India, through their own unrelenting efforts and with the help of Constitutional and other legal provisions and also with the aid of Government's various welfare schemes, are trying to find their own place. And it is a heartening sign that their participation in government as well as in private sector, in socio-political activities of the nation and also at the highest decision making bodies is improving day by day. But it is extremely important to identify, understand and eradicate the patriarchal practices against women existing in our society. There has to be openness to change and willingness to educate not just women but even men to make sure that the society is ready to embrace equal rights and opportunities for both men and women. The need of hour is to educate, aware and sensitize the society regarding women and child issues and to inculcate a feeling of togetherness among whole community.

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