



Available online at: <http://www.advancedscientificjournal.com>  
<http://www.krishmapublication.com>  
*IJMASRI, Vol. 3, issue 1, pp. 607- 610, Oct. -2023*  
<https://doi.org/10.53633/ijmasri>

**INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF MULTIDISCIPLINARY  
ADVANCED SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH AND INNOVATION  
(IJMASRI)**

**ISSN: 2582-9130**

**IBI IMPACT FACTOR 1.5**

**DOI: 10.53633/IJMASRI**

**RESEARCH ARTICLE**

**SOCIAL WELFARE SCHEMES TOWARDS UPLIFTMENT OF WOMEN IN TAMILNADU**

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**Abstract**

Tamil Nadu is witnessed with implementation of series of welfare schemes which have and vibrant significant developments in the position of women. In ancient times women in general enjoyed dignity and due respect in the society. Tamil Nadu stands first in implementing various welfare programmes for the overall development of women and children. Since women and children are significant contributors for the growing economy, the State has been implementing variety of welfare programmes, namely, granting of financial assistance to children and women in difficult circumstances to pursue education, marriage and widow remarriage and also providing healthy and protective environment to them. Education to women is the most powerful instrument of changing their position in the society. Health Programmes for the development of women play a significant role. Health has received low priority in social- sector planning. Provision of Employment Opportunities for Women, In order to release women from their dependent and subordinate status, improve attempts were taken to their employment opportunities priority was given for women's earning power. This department aimed at improving the economic and social condition of women.

**Introduction**

Tamil Nadu is witnessed with implementation of series of welfare schemes which have and vibrant significant developments in the position of women. In ancient times women in general enjoyed dignity and due respect in the society. They served as home makers, literary and spiritual personalities and rulers as well.

**Women Social Upliftment Programmes in Tamil Nadu**

In spite of the enactment of a number of social legislations women lagged behind men in different spheres. In order to improve their social status in the society both the Central and State Government introduced more number of progressive measures. The measures which have been taken contributed a lot for the social empowerment of women. Tamil Nadu stands first in implementing various welfare

607

programmes for the overall development of women and children.

### **Educational Improvement of Women in Tamil Nadu**

Education to women is the most powerful instrument of changing their position in the society. Women are the 'Cradle of Civilization'. They are capable of building such children who may lead the country to the path of progress and prosperity. An educated woman makes the family and the society cultured. Education is an important determining factor in bringing the social and economic improvement of women. Education also brings about reduction in inequalities and also acts as a means to improve their status within the family. The educational system plays a positive interventionist role in the empowerment of women. The density of the nation lies in its manpower of women and men. Due to various historical, cultural and sex – based reasons women have been denied equal access to education all over the world. In order to find a solution, the Women's Emancipation Movement was started.

One of the most important aims of girl's education should be to make the girls aware about their matrimonial aspects. They should be made aware about 'Sarada Act' under which early child marriage of girls and boys of age below 18 years for girls and 21 years for boys is prohibited.

Education for women consist of adult literacy and functional literacy programmes. The central Government as well as planning Commission evolved schemes for enhancing female literacy. Due priorities were given to remove female illiteracy. The relevance of education especially the importance of primary education at least up to the standard V was emphasized in rural areas. These include creation of separate cells in the State Directorate of Education to look after the programmes of girl's education, establishment of polytechnics for girls, construction of staff quarters for women teachers in rural areas and girl's hostels, introduction of condensed educational courses, assistance to voluntary educational organizations working in the field of women's and holding of seminars in different states to discuss problems and programmes of girls education. After independence, it

is only from the beginning of first five – year plan that concerted efforts were taken for accelerating the growth of women's education as a step for raising the status of women. During 1957- 1963, the Tamil Nadu Government under the leadership of Late K.Kamaraj, the then Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, opened several primary and high schools in every nook and corner of Tamil Nadu. As a result of this, education of girls improved considerably. The Government also provided mid-day meals for them. Processed milk was also supplied to the expectant and lactating mothers and children. So health education awareness was given to all the mothers by campaigns, village meetings, group discussions and film shows. The importance of women's role was described to the people in the form of pamphlets. These pamphlets are made in such a way, that helped women very easily to follow the instructions of the doctors for regular check-ups, how to take care of their children and nutritional values of family, maternity cares.

### **Health Programmes**

Health Programmes for the development of women play a significant role. Health has received low priority in social- sector planning. The poor and the under privileged have been suffering from shortage and malnutrition, despite the government's efforts to provide minimum health care. The Government's planned expenditure on Health and Family Welfare has increased from 229 crores in 1984-1985 to 1,938 crores in 1996-1997. The National Programmes of the Social Welfare Department highlighted the concerns of health of the child and the women. The responsibility, execution and supervision of the child and women's welfare programme of the Ministry rests with the Central Social Welfare Board which was set up in 1953. Welfare programmes are jointly financed by the Central and State Governments. The Welfare Extension Programmes' aim was to cover women and children in urban slums, rural and tribal tracts. The Family and Child Welfare Projects were started in 1967. The scheme envisaged the integration of services.

### **Women Co-operative Societies and Service Homes**

New Co-operative societies for women were formed during 1987-1990. Totally there were 75 women Industrial Co-operative Societies in 1990. The Department of Social Welfare runs six service homes. With the aim to educate poor widows, deserted wives and destitute women in the age group of 18-40 years, in helps to write VIII, X and XII examinations. For those who do not wish to pursue education, training is incorporated in various crafts. The residents of the services homes are allowed to stay with two of their children for a maximum period of 3 years in the service home.

### **Women and Employment**

Women form an important part of the Indian work force. Women's employment is one of the most important indicators of the general development of a country. Women are also employed in large numbers in plantations, factories and mills. A women's Vocational Training Programme was launched in 1977 under the Director General of Employment and Training. The Programme aims at improving employability of women in wage or self-employment through skill training and development.

### **Employment and Training**

All efforts are being made to improve women's employment and training opportunities for their economic rehabilitation through a number of programmes. These programmes are: The socio – economic programme of the Central Welfare Board was started in 1958 to improve the economic condition of poor and needy women by providing them a source of employment and income. Another centrally sponsored scheme was set up for the rehabilitation of women in distress and it was launched by the Union Government in 1977 – 1978. Under the scheme, the Government extends financial assistance to voluntary organizations.

### **Provision of Employment Opportunities for Women**

In order to release women from their dependent and subordinate status, improve attempts were taken to

their employment opportunities priority was given for women's earning power. According to Periyar E.V.R "All women, trust be educated and hold high and responsible position... women with proper qualification and competence should not give up their jobs after marriage and ruin their lives So the government realised that economic independence was a potent tool for emancipation of women. Based on the State Government provided employment opportunities for women.

### **Thirty Percent Reservation in Jobs**

In order to enhance the status of women, the Government of Tamil Nadu reserved 30 percent of the posts for women in Government offices, Government undertakings and Local Bodies. The usual communal rotation was followed in the appointments. Tamil Nadu is the first state which provided reservation for women in employment. It was a laudable measure taken for the welfare of women.

### **Ministry of Social and Women's Welfare**

The Ministry of Social Welfare came into being in August 1979 and was renamed as Ministry of Social and Women's Welfare in 1984. Since June 1964, with the Department of Social Security with subjects related to social welfare, pooled together from different Ministries like Education, Home Affairs, Health Labour, Commerce and Industry. The Department of Social Welfare was set up to provide required impetus for the holistic Development of Women and Children in the State of Tamil Nadu. The Department's primary object is to formulate plans, policies and programmes for the welfare of women and children, implement innovative programme in areas of welfare and support services for the destitute women and children and elderly citizens.

### **Functions**

The main functions of the Ministry are: to promote, develop and implement welfare services, preventive, rehabilitative and curative for the physically and the mentally handicapped women and children who come from weaker sections of the society; to formulate policies, draft legislation and

assist voluntary organizations in the field of social welfare; and to function as the nodal Ministry for the activities of the United Nations Children's Fund in India.

### **Organization and Structure**

The Ministry is headed by a Minister of State who is assisted by a Deputy Minister. A Secretary to the Government of India heads the secretariat who is assisted by three joint secretaries, each in charge of the Bureau of Nutrition and Child Development, Handicapped Welfare and Research and Women's and Social Defence, respectively. The Ministry is assisted in its functions by subordinate offices like the National Institutes for the Physically Handicapped and the National Institute of Social Defence and autonomous bodies like the Central Social Welfare Board and the National Institute of Public Cooperation and Child Development. The activities of the Ministry of Social and Women's Welfare broadly cover welfare and development of children and women, welfare of the physically handicapped and social defence.

### **Dr. Dharmambal Ammaiyar Ninaivu (memorial) Poor Widow Remarriage Assistance Scheme**

This scheme was introduced in 1975-1976, during the period of honourable Chief Minister M.Karunanidhi to encourage the widows to get married and also to uplift the status of those women in society. The couple were provided a cash assistance in the form of National Savings Certificate to the value of Rs.5,000/-

### **E.V.R. Maniammaiya Ninaivu Marriage Assistance Scheme for Daughters of poor Widow**

The financial assistance of Rs.5,000/- was provided to one daughter of the widow, whose family income should not exceed Rs.12,000/- per annum. To alleviate the suffering of these widows, an assistance of Rs.15,000/- is sanctioned for the marriage of

daughters of poor widows, in the name of EVR Maniammaiya. Under this scheme, the daughters of poor widows in the age group of 18 to 30 years and whose annual income is Rs. 12,000/- are provided financial assistance for their marriage.

### **Conclusion**

The Ministry of Social Welfare came into being in August 1979 and was renamed as Ministry of Social and Women's Welfare in 1984. Since June 1964, with the Department of Social Security with subjects related to social welfare, pooled together from different Ministries like Education, Home Affairs, Health Labour, Commerce and Industry. The Department of Social Welfare was set up to provide required impetus for the holistic Development of Women and Children in the State of Tamil Nadu. The Tamil Nadu Government also provides financial help to the poor women during their marriage, confinement and after delivery. It also announced economic support to the poor women farmer in the rural areas.

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