

# WELFARE MEASURES FOR WOMEN EMPOWERMENT IN ALMORA DISTRICT OF UTTARAKHAND

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## Abstract

The women of Uttarakhand have been well recognized as a backbone of the region in terms of the role they have been playing in the development and prosperity and maintaining the social cultural heritage of Uttarakhand for the past generations. But in most of the cases they lack equal treatment, behavior and status as provided to their male counterparts both at household level as well as in local social system. The present study is an attempt to analyze the important schemes/programmes for the welfare and empowerment of women in Almora district of Uttarakhand.

**Keywords:** Women, Welfare Scheme, Satisfaction/ Dissatisfaction

## Introduction

It is ironical that in a state which was created to satisfy the demands of the holistic development of the area and also to bring the people in to the national main stream, the condition and the quality of life of the women of the remote hill areas has not improved at all. Although the women of this hill state do share more or less the same plight being shared by their counterparts in other rural area of India but the magnitude of their drudgery is very high due to the geographical and ecological conditions of this area. The tough and sometimes hostile terrain, adverse weather conditions, rugged mountains, scarcity of cultivable land, paucity of basic facilities like water, electricity, medical, non-availability of fuel, fodder and water near their homes snatches peace, comfort and ease of their life.<sup>1</sup> Therefore, keeping in mind the requirement of the hilly women, the government of Uttarakhand is running various schemes/programmes through different departments of the government to bring about women's empowerment.

## Review of literature

Seema (2013)<sup>2</sup> in her study analyses the efforts of the government for improving the status of women further she identifies the changing role of women from ancient society to modern society.

Hanamantharayya Baragali and Prakash M Badiger (2014)<sup>3</sup> in their paper analyses the various welfare programmes for women empowerment in India.

Chandtima Chatterjee (2015)<sup>4</sup> in his study shows the vulnerable situation of social and legal status of the women in India. He finds that in spite of introducing several schemes by government, India has failed to achieve the desired status in empowering women. He renders some useful suggestions to implement women empowerment programmes properly in order to improve the position of India in world ranking of women empowerment.

Riddhir R. Desai<sup>5</sup> in his research article has focused on the various welfare programmes for women like 'Beti Bachao'(Save Girl Child), 'Kanya Kelavni', (Girls Education) campaign, Mission Mangalam, Nari Adalats, Chiranjivi Yojana, Sukanya Samruddhi Yojana and has found out that some of the welfare schemes are very nice and fruitful for the society in general and for women empowerment in particular.

R.H.Pavithra<sup>6</sup> in his study has analyzed the various welfare schemes for women in India and has suggested suitable measure for effective implementation of such schemes.

Shridevi Sanda<sup>7</sup> in her study has focused on the point that despite introducing so many programmers for women and spending crores of rupees since independence desired positive development has not taken place in the status of women.

## Objectives

The present study was made:

- (1) To assess the welfare programmes for the women.
- (2) To discover the source of information about the specific development programmes in progress for women.
- (3) To find out the level of change in the social, economic, and educational status of hilly women due to the intervention of government and its policies and plans.

## Methodology

The present study was conducted in two block of Almora district of Uttarakhand state i.e., Hawalbagh and Lamgara block. The respondents to this study are the beneficiaries of developmental programmes and policies of the government. A purposive sampling technique was adopted for selecting the sample of 180 women elected from the two blocks. Primary data which was the base of the study was collected by interview schedule. Secondary data was collected from, government documents, and published literature.

### Welfare Schemes for Women and Girls in Uttarakhand

#### 1 Women Empowerment and Child Development

The Department of Women Empowerment and Child Development (DWECD) was established in Uttarakhand with the objective of improving the status of women. Some of the schemes run by the Department of Women's Empowerment and Child Development are as follows:

##### (a) Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS)

This scheme was started in the state of Uttarakhand with the objective of improving the nutritional and health status of children (0-6 years) and pregnant and lactating mothers from disadvantaged sections. To accomplish this aim Department of Women Empowerment and Child Development provides integrated services comprising: supplementary nutrition, immunization, health check-up, referral services, pre-school non-formal education and nutrition & health education.

##### (b) Kishori Shakti Yojana (KSY)

It is a scheme for adolescent girls which focuses on school drop -out girls in the 11-18 age group who belong to the BPL (below poverty line) households. The following scheme also aims to meet the nutrition, health, education, recreation and skill development needs of the adolescent girls.

**(c) Widow Pension**

Under the following scheme, Woman Welfare Department provides Rs.1000 per month for the maintenance of windows and education of their children.

**(d) Old Age Pension Scheme**

The scheme provides financial assistance of Rs. 400 per month to both men and women who are above 60 years of age residing in both rural and urban areas.

**(e) Grant to BPL (Below Poverty Line) Girls for Higher Studies**

Female students who has passed intermediate from BPL (below poverty line) family is provided a onetime grant of Rs.25000 to enable her to pursue her studies.

**(f) Incentive to Person who Marriages with Widows**

Under this scheme, the couple is given Rs. 11000 as a "Puraskar" (award) when a person marries a widow of under 35 years of age.

**(g) Ujjawala**

This scheme has been conceived primarily for the purpose of preventing trafficking on the hand and rescue and rehabilitation of victims on the other.

**2 .Social Welfare Board**

The State Social Welfare Board (CSWB) in Uttarakhand was step up in the year 2003 which receive financial assistance from the Central Government. The various schemes of the Board can be summarised as follows:

- (a)** Hostels for working women
- (b)** Women's Helpline
- (c)** Family Counselling Centres
- (d)** Campaign against female foeticide
- (e)** Vocational training programs
- (f)** Creches
- (g)** Condensed courses for women
- (h)** Short-stay homes for women

**3. Department of Health**

Janani Suraksha Yojana a very important scheme is run by the Department of Health in the state of Uttarakhand to reduce the maternal and infant mortality rates and to increase institutional deliveries in BPL (below poverty line) families. Under the following scheme a pregnant women can be accompanied by a social health worker 'ASHA' (Accredited Social Health Activist) or by the local 'dai' (midwife) and an allowance is paid to this person. It must however be ensured that the cash incentive to the ASHA should not be less than Rs. 200/- per delivery case facilitated by her. This is essential to keep her sustained in the system. Accordingly, cash assistance is to be provided to women from Below Poverty Line (BPL) families, for enabling them to deliver in health institutions. A pregnant woman if delivers her baby in a hospital in the

rural area then she is paid an amount of Rs. 1400 and if she is taken to a hospital in the urban area then she is paid an amount of Rs. 1000.

#### **4. Schemes of Department of Education**

##### **(a) Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (2001)**

The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) or education for all with very ambitious goals was launched in 2001. Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan is an initiative to universalize and improve the quality of elementary education in a mission mode within a clear time frame through decentralized context specific planning and implementation strategy. The programme envisages partnership between the central government, state government, local bodies and the community. The programme aims at community involvement in school interventions through active participation of the panchayati raj institutions, school management committees, village and urban slum level education committees, parent-teacher associations, tribal autonomous district councils and other grass-root level structures engaged in the management of elementary school. Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan aims to provide quality elementary education to all children belonging to the age-group 6-14 years by 2010. Education of girls particularly those belonging to scheduled caste, scheduled tribes and minorities is one of the principal concern of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan. Specific programme with Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (National Programme for Education of Girls at Elementary level (NPEGEL) and Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya) focus exclusively on girls in educationally backward districts.<sup>8</sup>

##### **i. Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE)**

Early Childhood Care and Education is a critical and essential input in freeing girls from sibling care responsibilities, leading to their regular attendance in school and in providing school readiness to pre-school children. The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan works in a convergent model with the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) program to promote pre-school education by providing for training of Anganwadi worker, primary school teachers and health workers for a convergent understanding of preschool and Early Childhood Care and Education.

##### **ii. National Programme for Education of Girls at Elementary level (NPEGEC)**

In July 2003, government of India approved a new programme called “National Programme for Education of Girls at Elementary Level” (NPEGEL) as an amendment to the existing scheme of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, to provide additional educational support for underprivileged /disadvantaged girls at the elementary level. The scheme is implemented in Educationally Backward Blocks (EBBs), where the level of female literacy is below and the gender gap is above, the national average; in blocks of districts with at least 5 percent Scheduled Caste/ scheduled Tribes (SC/ST) population and where SC/ST (Scheduled Caste/ scheduled tribes) female literacy is less than 10 percent; and also in select urban slums.<sup>9</sup>

##### **iii. Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGBV)**

Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya is a scheme launched in July 2004, for setting up residential schools at upper primary level for girls belonging predominantly to SC (scheduled caste), ST (scheduled tribes), OBC (other backward classes) and minority communities. It is being implemented in educationally

backward blocks of the country where female rural literacy is below the national average. The scheme provides for a minimum reservation of 75 per cent of enrolment for girls from families below poverty line.<sup>10</sup>

## 5. Department of Rural Development

### (a) Aajeevika

Aajeevika also known as the Uttarakhand Livelihoods Improvement Project (ULIP) for the Himalayas is being implemented by the Uttarakhand Gramya Vikas Samiti (UGVS), a society registered by the Government of Uttarakhand under the Societies Registration Act, 1860 with support from the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). The project aims to enhance livelihood opportunities for poor households by utilizing the self-help principle and by promoting self-help groups (SHGs) that would build savings, reduce drudgery and create a context from which livelihood projects can be launched. Aajeevika has expanded its activities in 959 villages, 17 Blocks, 5 Districts spread over Garhwal and Kumaun and formed over 3,000 Self Help Groups and initiated demonstrations in seven sub sectors.

### (b) Sampoorna Grameen Rozgar Yojana (Total Rural Employment Scheme)

This scheme has been launched on 25<sup>th</sup> September, 2001 by merging the Employment Assurance Scheme (EAS) and Jawahar Gram Samridhi Yojana (JGSY). JGSY was itself reconstructed from the earlier schemes named Jawahar Rozgar Yojana (JRY) created by merging National Rural Employment Programme (NREP) and Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Programme (RLEGP). Besides other provisions, under Sampoorna Grameen Rozgar Yojana free food grains are offered to States to take up Food for Work Programme (FWP). The objective of the programme is to provide additional wage employment in rural areas as also food security, alongside creation of a durable community, social and economic assets and infrastructure development in these areas.<sup>11</sup> Under Sampoorna Grameen Rozgar Yojana preference is given to agricultural wage earners, non-agricultural unskilled wage-earners, marginal farmers, the persons affected due to calamities, women, members of scheduled castes/scheduled tribes and parents of child labour withdrawn from hazardous occupations. The works taken up under the programme are labour-intensive and the workers are paid minimum wages notified by the states. As per the scheme, a labourer would be entitled to 5 kilogram of food grain as part of wages and the remaining 25 per cent would be paid in cash. The centre and states share the cost of the cash component of the scheme in the ratio of 75:25.

## Results and Discussions

### (1) Socio-Economic Profile

The socio-economic profile is vital to any study as it helps in building a comprehensive and complete picture of the respondents. Several socio-economic factors have been taken into account that gives a good idea about the background of the beneficiaries of developmental programmes and policies of the government under study. The individual profile is derived by looking at factors such as age, educational level, marital status and annual income of the respondents.

Table 1: Socio-Economic Characteristics of Respondents

Variables	Characteristics	Number	Percentage
Age (Years)	Young age (18-30)	52	28.88
	Middle age (31-50)	82	45.55
	Aged and above	46	25.55
Education	Illiterate	69	38.33
	Below Matriculation	57	31.66
	Matriculation and above	42	23.33
	Graduation and above	12	6.66

Occupation	Housewife	46	25.55
	Government jobs	7	3.88
	Daily Labourer	59	32.77
	Agriculture	68	37.77
Marital Status	Married	74	41.11
	Unmarried	106	58.88

Source: Present survey

A perusal of the table reveals that out of total sample of 180 female respondents (28.88 per cent) belonged to young age group, 45.55 percent belonged to middle age group. Only 25.55 percent respondents were from the middle age group. Majority of our female respondents were found to be illiterate (38.33 percent). Majority of the women respondents were engaged in agriculture for their livelihood (37.77 percent). As far the marital status was concerned 58.88 percent members were married while 41.11 percent females were unmarried

## (II) Source of Information

There has to be a channel through which any information is transmitted to the people. To discover the source of information about specific development programmes and schemes currently in progress the respondents were asked a question as to “where they got most of the information from”.

Table 2: Source of Information about Development Programmes

Source of Information	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Gram –Pradhan	32	17.77
Village Meeting-Gram Sabha	39	21.66
Tehsil	13	7.22
Panchayat	28	15.55
Media	19	10.55
Personal discussions	49	27.22
Total Respondents	180	100

Source: Present Survey

The above table shows that a vast majority of respondents (27.22 percent) become aware about the development programmes by personal discussions with each other. 21.66 percent respondents get the information in village meetings of gram sabha, further 17.77 percent get information from gram pradhan, 15.55 percent receive information from panchayat, 10.55 percent respondents rely on media for such information and rest 7.22 percent respondents get information from tehsil. Thus it may be concluded that most of the information disseminates through the informal interaction among the members.

## (III) Respondents benefitted by schemes

Sheer awareness and knowledge alone of the diverse facilities provided by the government will not help the female folks to improve their lot until and unless they actually avail themselves of the same. Accordingly, the following section attempts to learn about the benefits availed by the respondents and the area of benefit. Success of any welfare scheme and programme basically depends on the extent of advantages gained by the people. As a step towards finding out the benefits accrued to the women by the welfare programmes they were asked a simple question “have you been benefitted by the welfare programmes”

Table 3: Have you been benefitted by the welfare programmes

Responses	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	64	35.55
No	116	64.44
Total Respondents	180	100

Source: Present Survey

The government provides ample facilities to the females but it is quite depressing to see that only a small percentage (35.55 percent) of the respondents actually avail themselves of these facilities.

Table 4: Aspect of life benefitted

Aspect of life benefitted	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Social Status	67	37.22
Educational Status	51	28.33
Economic Status	62	34.44
Total Respondents	180	100

Source: Present Survey

A large number of rural respondents claimed improvement in their social status 34.44 percent admitted improvement in their economic status while 28.33 percent claimed improvement in their economic status.

#### (IV) Satisfaction with Government Policy

A developmental programme becomes successful only when the people are satisfied with it. Thus it was very important to find out whether the sample respondents are satisfied or dissatisfied with the development programmes of the government, and if they are dissatisfied efforts were made to find out the main cause of dissatisfaction.

Table 5: Satisfied with the welfare policy of the government

Responses	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Satisfied	72	40.00
Dissatisfied	108	60.00

Source: Present Survey

On being questioned whether the respondents are satisfied with the programmes and policies of the government regarding the upliftment of women 40 percent stated that they were satisfied with the governmental measures to ameliorate the lot of women while 60 percent expressed their dissatisfaction.

Table 6: Cause of Dissatisfaction

Responses	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Lack of proper implementation	58	53.70
Lack of proper publicity	50	46.29
Total Respondents	108	100

Source: Present Survey

53.70 percent respondents criticised the working of the government machinery, they were of the view that the government launches many developmental programmes for their development and there are no limits to the funds available but the greatest problem is at the implementation level and the facilities it provides never reach them because officials in the administration are apathetic and are not sincere in implementing the provisions. 46.29 percent respondents stated that the information of the various welfare schemes is not advertised properly as a result they are not able to get proper knowledge of the schemes.

## Conclusion

Although a number of welfare measures and various governmental schemes have so far been implemented for uplifting the women in the present democratic set-up, yet the present study reveals that these improvement or welfare schemes hardly achieve the purpose. In fact constitutional safeguards and welfare measures are absolutely meaningless unless they are effectively communicated to the person concerned and designed to solve the problem of the community.

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