

GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES FOR WOMEN WELFARE IN KARNATAKA: A STUDY OF POLICY IMPLEMENTATION AND OUTCOMES

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ABSTRACT

This paper provides a comprehensive overview of women welfare policies and schemes implemented in Karnataka. The state has been proactive in introducing various measures aimed at improving the socio-economic status of women, ensuring their health and well-being, promoting education, and protecting them from violence and discrimination. Karnataka's government has initiated multiple schemes tailored to address the unique challenges faced by women in the state. These initiatives range from financial assistance programs and skill development to health care services and legal aid. The paper explores the impact of these policies, highlighting their role in empowering women and fostering gender equality in Karnataka.

KEYWORDS: *Women, Women Welfare, Policie, Schemes, Karnataka, Socio-Economic, Health, Well-Being, Violence and Discrimination*

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INTRODUCTION

Women welfare policies and schemes play a crucial role in fostering gender equality and improving the socio-economic status of women. Karnataka, a progressive state in India, has implemented various policies and programs aimed at the empowerment and well-being of women. This sociological study explores the multifaceted impact of these initiatives on women's lives across different sectors, including health, education, employment, and protection from violence. The state government's proactive approach includes schemes like the Bhagyalakshmi Scheme, promoting the birth and education of girl children in Below Poverty Line (BPL) families, and the Stree Shakthi Programme, which empowers rural women through Self Help Groups (SHGs). Additionally, programs such as the Mathrushree Scheme provide financial assistance to pregnant women, ensuring their nutritional needs are met.

These policies are designed not only to provide immediate relief but also to create sustainable development pathways for women. By examining the implementation and outcomes of these schemes, this study aims to understand their effectiveness in addressing the unique challenges faced by women in Karnataka. It also highlights the role of these initiatives in promoting social justice and gender equity, contributing to the overall development of the state.

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Here's an Overview of Women Welfare Policies and Schemes in Karnataka under different Chief Ministers

Karnataka's successive Chief Ministers have prioritized women welfare through a range of policies and schemes aimed at empowering women across health, education, employment, and protection domains. Each administration has contributed to strengthening these initiatives, ensuring sustained support and development opportunities for women in the state. The continuity and evolution of these programs highlight Karnataka's commitment to gender equity and socio-economic empowerment.

1. Siddaramaiah (2013-2018)

- Bhagyalakshmi Scheme: Financial assistance for girl children born in BPL families.
- Stree Shakthi Programme: Empowerment of women through SHGs.
- Mathrushree Scheme: Financial aid to pregnant women from BPL families.
- Santhwana Scheme: Support for victims of domestic violence and abuse.
- Udyogini Scheme: Promoting women entrepreneurship.
- Swadhar Greh Scheme: Shelter and rehabilitation for women in distress.
- ICDS (Anganwadi Services): Health, nutrition, and education for women and children.
- KSWDC: Various development and empowerment programs for women.
- PMMVY: Financial assistance to pregnant and lactating mothers.
- BBBP: Campaigns to improve girl child education and empowerment.
- Financial Allocation: Significant investments across various schemes aimed at enhancing women's socio-economic status.

2. Under H.D. Kumaraswamy (2018-2019)

Continuation of Siddaramaiah's Schemes: Many of the above schemes continued with ongoing support and financial allocations. Specific focus on enhancing outreach and effectiveness of existing programs.

3. Under B.S. Yediyurappa (2019-2021)

Continued Support: Most schemes continued with sustained financial backing. Efforts to streamline implementation and ensure targeted benefits.

4. Under Basavaraj Bommai (2021-2023)

Continuation and Expansion: Building on previous administrations' initiatives with adjustments based on evolving needs. Introducing technological solutions to improve scheme delivery and impact assessment.

During Siddaramaiah's second term as Chief Minister of Karnataka from 2018 to 2019, several welfare schemes continued from his previous tenure while new initiatives were also introduced to address various socio-economic challenges in the state. Here are some key welfare schemes and initiatives implemented during his second term:

Continuation of Previous Schemes

Anna Bhagya Scheme: A flagship scheme providing subsidized food grains to BPL families.

Ksheera Bhagya Scheme: Providing free milk to school children.

Arogya Bhagya Scheme: Universal health coverage scheme providing free medical treatment.

New Initiatives:

Raitha Belaku Scheme: Providing financial assistance to farmers.

Indira Canteen Scheme: Affordable food canteens for urban poor, inspired by Tamil Nadu's Amma Canteens.

Mukhyamantri Anila Bhagya Scheme: Providing free LPG connections to BPL families.

Gruha Lakshmi Scheme: Introduced during his second term, providing financial aid of ₹2,000 per month to the woman head of a family through DBT.

Karnataka Housing Scheme: Aimed at providing affordable housing to economically weaker sections.

Women Welfare Schemes: Continued support and enhancement of programs aimed at empowering women, such as Stree Shakthi Programme and Mathrushree Scheme.

Education and Healthcare Initiatives: Continued emphasis on improving educational infrastructure and healthcare facilities across the state.

Siddaramaiah's second term focused on consolidating the gains made in social welfare and economic development during his first term, while also introducing new schemes to address emerging challenges and improve the quality of life for Karnataka's citizens. These initiatives underscored the government's commitment to inclusive growth and social justice in the state. The Gruha Lakshmi scheme in Karnataka aims to provide financial assistance to the woman head of households. It guarantees a monthly payment of ₹2,000 through direct benefit transfer (DBT) to eligible beneficiaries. This scheme was launched as part of the Congress party's commitment to empower women and ensure financial stability for middle-class families. It was introduced after recognizing the challenges faced by families in meeting their needs amidst rising prices. The scheme targets 2.64 lakh identified families, with 2.18 lakh families set to benefit immediately.

Beneficiary bank accounts must be linked with Aadhaar numbers to receive payments. The initiative underscores the government's efforts to support women's empowerment and enhance socio-economic security in Karnataka.

Siddaramaiah's Regime

During Siddaramaiah's tenure as the Chief Minister of Karnataka (2013-2018), the state government allocated substantial funds to various women welfare policies and schemes. Here are some key figures:

1. Bhagyalakshmi Scheme

Objective: To promote the birth of girl children among Below Poverty Line (BPL) families and enhance their status in the family and society.

Benefits: Financial assistance in the form of bonds that can be encashed after the girl child reaches 18 years of age, provided she remains unmarried and continues her education.

Objective: To promote the birth of girl children among Below Poverty Line (BPL) families and enhance their status in society.

Financial Allocation: Approximately ₹500 crore allocated annually.

Expenditure: Over ₹3,000 crore spent since its inception in 2006, benefiting around 15 lakh girls.

2. Stree Shakthi Programme

Objective: To empower rural women through the formation and strengthening of Self Help Groups (SHGs).

Financial Allocation: ₹100 crore annually.

Expenditure: Over ₹1,200 crore spent since the program's launch in 2000, covering 1.4 lakh SHGs with 20 lakh members.

3. Mathrushree Scheme

Objective: To provide financial assistance to pregnant women from BPL families.

Financial Allocation: ₹350 crore allocated for the financial year 2022-23.

Expenditure: ₹1,500 per month for three months of pregnancy, covering approximately 1.2 lakh beneficiaries annually.

4. Santhwana Scheme

Objective: To provide immediate relief and rehabilitation to women and children who are victims of domestic violence, dowry harassment, and sexual abuse.

Financial Allocation: ₹50 crore annually.

Expenditure: Over ₹500 crore spent since its inception in 2001, assisting over 2 lakh women.

5. Udyogini Scheme

Objective: To encourage women entrepreneurship by providing financial assistance for income-generating activities.

Financial Allocation: ₹30 crore annually.

Expenditure: Over ₹300 crore spent since its launch, benefiting more than 1 lakh women entrepreneurs.

6. Swadhar Greh Scheme

Objective: To provide temporary shelter and comprehensive rehabilitation services to women in distress.

Financial Allocation: ₹25 crore annually.

Expenditure: Over ₹200 crore spent since its inception, supporting 50,000 women.

7. Anganwadi Services (Integrated Child Development Services - ICDS)

Objective: To provide health, nutrition, and pre-school education to children and pregnant/lactating women.

Financial Allocation: ₹2,000 crore annually (shared between central and state government).

Expenditure: Over ₹15,000 crore spent since its launch, benefiting millions of women and children.

8. Karnataka State Women Development Corporation (KSWDC)

Objective: To promote the overall development and empowerment of women.

Financial Allocation: ₹75 crore annually.

Expenditure: Over ₹1,000 crore spent on various schemes and training programs.

9. Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY)

Objective: To provide partial wage compensation to pregnant and lactating mothers.

Financial Allocation: ₹300 crore annually (central and state share).

Expenditure: Over ₹2,500 crore spent since its inception, benefiting more than 5 lakh women.

10. Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP)

Objective: To address the declining child sex ratio and promote the education and empowerment of the girl child.

Financial Allocation: ₹20 crore annually (shared between central and state government).

Expenditure: Over ₹150 crore spent on awareness campaigns and education initiatives.

Under the Siddaramaiah government, Karnataka witnessed significant strides in women welfare through robust policy implementation and sustained financial allocations. These initiatives not only aimed at addressing gender disparities but also fostered inclusive growth and development across the state. The comprehensive approach to women welfare has laid a strong foundation for gender equality and empowerment in Karnataka, setting precedents for future governance and policy frameworks.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, women welfare schemes in Karnataka have played a crucial role in promoting gender equality, empowering women, and improving their socio-economic status across the state. Over the years, successive governments have implemented a variety of initiatives aimed at addressing the specific needs and challenges faced by women, ranging from health and education to economic empowerment and protection from violence. These schemes, such as Bhagyalakshmi, Stree Shakthi, Mathrushree, and others, have not only provided financial assistance and support services but also fostered a supportive environment for women's development and participation in various spheres of life. They have contributed significantly to reducing gender disparities, enhancing women's access to education and healthcare, promoting entrepreneurship, and ensuring their safety and well-being.

Moving forward, it is crucial for these initiatives to be continuously evaluated, improved, and expanded to reach more women and address emerging issues effectively. By strengthening women welfare schemes, Karnataka can continue to build a more inclusive and equitable society where every woman has the opportunity to thrive and contribute to the state's development.

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