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Assessing the Impact of Women Empowerment Initiatives in Tamil Nadu

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Abstract: Globally, women face discrimination and exploitation. In Tamil Nadu, women's roles and social positions are shaped by cultural norms, social structures, and value systems. The Indian Constitution grants equality to women from Scheduled Castes, promoting economic independence and gender budgeting. Women's organizations transform their lives. A study assessed the awareness and benefits of state government schemes on women in Tamil Nadu, finding a significant association between awareness of the schemes and the Schemes of government of Tamil Nadu for women and its beneficiaries. Based on ANOVA, there is no statistically significant variation in the awareness of different schemes, beneficiaries, and government of Tamilnadu schemes across the groups or within the groupings. However, the standard of living for women has significantly improved as a result of various government programmes, incentives, and schemes at the federal and state levels.

Keywords: Women empowerment, Pudhu Vaazhvu Project, Moovalur Ammaiyar Ninaivu Ramamirtham Thirumanya Nidhi Uthavi Thittam, Ninaivu Anjugam Ammaiyar Kalappu Thirumanya Udhavi Nidhi Thittam

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I. INTRODUCTION

India is primed for expansion, with women making up 48.4% of the population (men make up 51.6%). Women also boost the economy. Indian women fight patriarchy and gender inequality. Inclusion of women in the Indian labour market is vital. Even though metropolitan women compete for top commercial positions and decision-making power, rural women still strive for freedom, basic comforts, and equal opportunity. Adult male literacy in India is 80.95%, whereas female literacy is a pitiful 62.84%. In rural India, women often rely on their husbands for financial assistance and lack financial freedom for the bulk of their life. They lack basic formal schooling. In addition, rural Indian women experience more spousal violence and abuse than urban women. In order to achieve the fifth Sustainable Development Goal (SDG 5), which prioritises gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls by 2030, and to strengthen economies in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic, it is imperative that women be given the opportunity to participate in economic and social life across all sectors. This is crucial in India, where social norms and attitudes about women's responsibilities and choices are still strong and domestic violence is high. 29.3% of married women aged 18–49, according to the 2019–21 National Family Health Survey (NFHS-5) and other domestic abuse. In addition to health statistics, the NFHS-5 dataset shows government programmes vital to India's level of living.

India's History of Women's Empowerment

India has a long history of women's empowerment, with social reformers like Swami Vivekananda, Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Acharya Vinobha Bhave, and Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar working tirelessly to elevate women's status. The Indian constitution, which came into effect in 1950, guarantees women's equality, prohibits gender discrimination, and gives the state the authority to implement affirmative action measures. The Maternity Benefit Act of 1961, the Equal Remuneration Act of 1976, and the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention and Protection Act) of 2013 are some specific legislation pertaining to women's rights that the Indian Parliament has approved.

The Indian government introduced a national policy for women's empowerment in 2001, aiming to improve the legal framework and end all forms of discrimination against women. However, gender inequality persists in India's urban and rural areas, and the country still has a long way to go before women can exercise their fundamental rights and live as freely as men.

Various schemes have been implemented by the Union Government to empower women through social, educational, economic, and political interventions. These include the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana, the National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP), Samagra Shiksha, the Scheme of National Overseas Scholarship, Babu Jagjivan Ram Chhatrawas Yojna, and Swacch Vidyalaya Mission. The Ministry of Women and Child Development (MWCD) has taken several initiatives to empower women and girls, including POSHAN Abhiyaan, Anganwadi Services Scheme, Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY), Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP), One Stop Centre (OSC), Universalization of Women Helpline, Child Protection Services Scheme, Scheme for Adolescent Girls (SAG), Swadhar Greh Scheme, Ujjawala Scheme, and Working Women Hostel.

II. LITERATURE SURVEY

Ruchira Sen's (2008) study on empowering girls and women through education examines the implementation strategies of various schemes, including the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), Education Guarantee Scheme, Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas (KGBVs), Mahila Samakhya Programme, Balika Samridhhi Yojana, Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS), and Kishori Shakti Yojana. These schemes aim to address gender gaps in education and promote the empowerment of girls and women through education. The SSA aims to enroll all children in the schooling system by 2003 and complete five years of schooling by 2007, bridging the gap between out-of-school children and mainstream education. The KGBV scheme focuses on providing quality education to girls from disadvantaged backgrounds, improving their educational and socio-economic status, reducing the opportunity cost of girls' education, and increasing the benefits of schooling.

S. Parsuraman and Medha Somaiya (2016) studied the Economic Empowerment of Women Promoting Skills Development in Slum Areas, assessing the implementation of skill development programs for slum women. The study revealed a shift in aspiration for future training among women, with a decrease in demand for traditional trades like beauty care and tailoring. The desire for vocational education was influenced by employment history, with women who had never worked prior to training believing that access to vocational education would improve their social and economic status.

Malipatil K.S. and Rashmi Rani Agnihotri H.R. (2017) highlighted the importance of women's empowerment in India, highlighting the inherent superiority complex, high levels of household duties, and cultural preference for boys over girls in education and a healthy diet. Solutions to women's empowerment include mass communication, awareness of responsibilities, compiling national data, and educating society about gender equality and children's rights.

Neha Kumar et al. (2018) found a clear and positive association between Self-Help Groups (SHGs) membership and political involvement in India. Members of SHGs have a higher probability of having cast ballots in the previous election, trusting the gramme panchayat, and attending the gramme sabha as SHG members. They are more likely to be familiar with various entitlement programmes, such as MGNREGA, AAY, and IAY, suggesting that SHG members may be better able to put their knowledge into practice due to their collective strength or personal empowerment, such as mobility, or by joining the SHG in social audits. The research reveals that being a member of a self-help group (SHG) has a positive impact on social network outcomes, such as knowing other women in their village, engaging in conversations on important topics like nutrition and health, and borrowing money from neighboring villages. SHG members also tend to be more adept and self-assured in interacting with people outside of their home, as seen by the decreased likelihood of them needing permission to attend village events from their husbands or other household members.

The study by the MET Institute highlights the importance of skill and entrepreneurship for empowering women in India, which raises family, economic, financial, and social status. Skill development programs and women's entrepreneurship schemes in India are still underdeveloped, despite the Maharashtra state government and Greater Mumbai Municipal Corporation's plans for women's empowerment and sustainable development.

The study "Achieving Gender Equality through Women Empowerment in India in the Context of Sustainable Development" by Padmaja Tamuli and Kaushik Mishra (2023) aims to call attention to policy makers and encourage them to commit to and strive towards women's empowerment. Gender inequality is one of the biggest obstacles facing India, and it is essential for all Indian children to experience gender discrimination from a young age.

Policymakers must recognize that women cannot empower themselves on their own, and political and socioeconomic liberties are also essential for women to realize their full potential. Women, by nature nurturers, have the power to shape children's perspectives, make decisions at home, and motivate others to uphold morality, societal norms, and best practices. For every civilization to flourish, women's participation in politics is essential. As development projects spread throughout the nation, natural resources are being used more voraciously than before, leading to an increase in the scope and intensity of ecological movements in India since independence. Women have historically had a stronger bond with nature and have been instrumental in environmental conservation in India. Women need to be increasingly inspired to participate in and take leadership roles in both grassroots and policy-making initiatives.

Monika Agarwal and Perminder Jit Kour's study on the impact of Science and Engineering Research Board (SERB) schemes on empowering Indian women in R&D reveals that while women's representation in graduate and postgraduate levels is equal to male candidates, their employment rate in universities and higher educational institutes declines. The government has initiated various schemes, programs, fellowships, and financial grants to support scientific and technological research. The study recommends areas where women researchers should be encouraged to participate and generate solutions for societal problems using science and technology.

Rahul Ramesh Bogam et al (2023) investigated the awareness and utilization of social assistance services among elderly peasants in the Mahabubnagar rural region of Telangana, India. A community-based interventional study conducted from July to December 2022 found that a structured 'TIV intervention' significantly increased awareness and utilization of social assistance schemes. Simple, cost-effective interventions can significantly increase knowledge and utilization of social security services among the elderly.

Rajeshwari M. Shettar's 2015 study on Women Empowerment in India reveals that despite government efforts, women still face challenges such as social evils and unequal gender norms. Access to education, employment, and changes in social structure are key enabling factors for women's empowerment. Ensuring women's health and safety is the first step towards empowerment. Improving women's economic and social status is necessary for women's empowerment.

The Australian Government's report aims to support the 2017 G20 Roadmap for Digitalisation: Policies for a Digital Future, particularly its dimension on supporting the equitable participation of women in the digital economy. It highlights the widening digital gender divide, with hurdles to access, affordability, lack of education, inherent biases, and socio-cultural norms limiting women and girls' ability to benefit from digital transformation opportunities.

To overcome this divide, women need to boost their use of digital tools, raise awareness about education opportunities, and remove obstacles to adult education. Increased

participation in labor markets, including via digital platforms, needs to go hand in hand with job quality, and policies aimed at equipping female workers with more self-organization, management, communication, and advanced numerical skills can help narrow the gender wage gap.

Swarooprani. K (2023) studied the contribution of the Government of India in Women Empowerment, emphasizing the importance of learning and education for women's advancement and empowerment in society. Alternative media can serve as a bridge or platform to break through barriers to vital information and communication, but education is a prerequisite for all people.

III. GOVERNMENT OF TAMILNADU INITIATIVES

Here are various significant initiatives of Govt. of Tamil Nadu

Entrepreneur progress Programme: The cornerstone of progress, particularly for women, is economic empowerment. Without a job, property, education, or skill set, women are considered as consumers rather than creators. The government of Tamil Nadu has established a scheme to teach five lakh women in entrepreneurial skills for self-employment in five years, integrating numerous government departments, with the purpose of rescuing women from the aforementioned circumstances and their cycle of poverty. The Government of Tamil Nadu has announced the commencement of the Entrepreneur Development Programme, a programme aiming to provide women with the entrepreneurial skills essential to create their own enterprises and make money through self-employment, in an effort to empower women economically. The plan also attempts to increase marketing aid and financial linkage. Slum Clearance Board of Tamil Nadu has establishments.

Pudhu Vaazhvu Project: 755 women were helped by this programme, which was implemented in Nagercoil at a cost of Rs. 75 lakhs. This effort is carried out in cooperation with notable non-governmental and community-based. This project, known as "Pudhu Vaazhvu," was started in the state in November 2005 with assistance from the World Bank. After changing its name to "Vazhndhu Kaattuvom" in 2006, the Pudhu Vaazhvu Project (PVP) has now reverted to its original moniker of "Pudhu Vaazhvu." 5.8 lakh families will benefit from the project, which is being carried out in 16 districts at a total expenditure of Rs. 717 crores till September 2014. Now that it has extra funding, the Project is functioning in 10 more Districts for a three-year period ending in September 2014, benefiting 3.8 lakh target poor households with an expenditure of Rs. 950 crores. The project's Community Driven Development (CDD) methodology intends to empower rural impoverished communities the poorest of the poor by supporting powerful Community-Based Organisations (CBOs), which will provide the rural poor a powerful voice.

Tamil Nadu State Women's Commission: The State Commission for Women was founded by the Government on March 19, 1993, with the purpose of safeguarding the welfare of women and concerns relating to their status. The Commission also gives recommendations to the Government for appropriate action. The Commission will now have more jurisdiction and a written constitution thanks to a decision taken by the government. In light of this, the Tamil Nadu State Commission for Women Act, 2008 was passed. This Act became active on 30-17-2018 after being published in the Government Gazette on 2705-2008.

Moovalur Ammaiyar Ninaivu Ramamirtham Thirumanya Nidhi Uthavi Thittam: During the mid-1900s, M. R. Ammaiyar was a well-known social reformer in Tamil Nadu. She participated actively in the Dravida Kazhagam. Under the project, girls from low-income families receive Rs. 20,000 in support at the time of marriage (of families below poverty line). The bride had to have shown up for the 10th grade exam. When it comes to Scheduled Tribes, the bride ought to have completed her fifth-grade education. Income each year shouldn't be greater than Rs. 12,000. The bride ought to have reached her 18th birthday. This programme is only offered to a home with one daughter.

Maniammaiyar Memorial E.V.R. widow Daughter's Matrimony Support Programme: Under the idea, a payment of Rs. 20,000 is given at the time of marriage to poor moms who are widows in order to aid them financially in having their daughters married. Wedlock's whose annual salary does not transcend Rs. 24,000 are eligible for marital support. Daughter must be at least eighteen years old, and only one widow's daughter may be eligible for aid under the plan.

Ninaivu Anjugam Ammaiyar Kalappu Thirumanya Udhavi Nidhi Thittam: The Tamil Nadu government has declared this programme to encourage inter-caste marriages and thereby nurture untouchability among the people. An incentive of Rs. 20,000 is granted for the marriage of a SC or ST to a bride or groom from a different group belonging to a different stratum. The incentive sanction application must be presented within two years of marriage. In Tamilnadu, 265 persons benefited from the project in 2017–18. The Dr. Muthulakshmi Reddy Ninaivu Inter-caste Marriage Assistance Scheme is the new name for the programme. The Tamil Nadu government initiated this plan in 1989, and it was carried out anytime the DMK controlled state authority.

IV. METHODOLOGY AND DATA ANALYSIS

The study employed descriptive analytical tool using a structured questionnaire a data was collected on Awareness about the implementation of various schemes by the central and state government of tamilnadu and beneficiaries of the schemes through the structured questionnaire. Percentage Analysis and ANOVA is Carried out using SPSS to draw meaningful inferences.

[A] **Percentage Analysis:** Percentage analysis gives a glimpse of the data analysis.

Table No:1

| Marital Status | Age | | | | Total |
|----------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------|
| | 20-30 years | 31-40 years | 41-50 years | 51-60 years | |
| Single | 66 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 69 |
| Married | 8 | 14 | 7 | 4 | 33 |
| Divorsed | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Total | 74 | 16 | 8 | 5 | 103 |

Source: Computed

Most of the women participated in the survey are single who are with in the age group of 20-30 years. Majorly college going students. Married group constitute 33 participants of the survey.

Table No:2

| Marital Status | Religion | | | Total |
|----------------|----------|--------|-----------|-------|
| | Hindu | Muslim | Christian | |
| Single | 42 | 18 | 9 | 69 |
| Married | 11 | 21 | 1 | 33 |
| Divorced | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Total | 54 | 39 | 10 | 103 |

Source: Computed

As per the table, most of the participants belongs to hindu community followed by Muslims and Christian.

Table No:3

| Marital Status | Caste | | | | | Total |
|----------------|---------|-----|-----|----|----|-------|
| | General | OBC | MBC | SC | ST | |
| Single | 22 | 17 | 22 | 7 | 1 | 69 |
| Married | 7 | 13 | 10 | 1 | 2 | 33 |
| Divorced | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Total | 30 | 30 | 32 | 8 | 3 | 103 |

Source: Computed

On the basis of caste dynamics almost 32 participants are from Most backward classes out of the 103 participants who are participated in the survey followed by General category 30 and Other backward classes 30 participants.

Table No:4

| Marital Status | Highest Qualification | | | | | Total |
|----------------|-----------------------|------------|----------|---------------|-------------------------|-------|
| | 10th Standard | +2/HSC/PUC | Graduate | Post Graduate | Post Graduate and Above | |
| Single | 3 | 22 | 23 | 18 | 3 | 69 |
| Married | 4 | 3 | 12 | 10 | 4 | 33 |
| Divorced | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Total | 7 | 25 | 35 | 29 | 7 | 103 |

Source: Computed

Almost 35 participants are Graduates followed by 29 are postgraduates and 25 are +2 , 7 are highly qualified with qualification above post graduate and above, another 7 are 10th qualified.

Table No:5

| Marital Status | Are you aware of the Different Schemes, Scholarships, Fellowships available for Women Empowerment? | | | Total |
|----------------|--|----|-------|-------|
| | Yes | No | Maybe | |
| Single | 41 | 10 | 18 | 69 |
| Married | 17 | 7 | 9 | 33 |
| Divorced | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Total | 58 | 18 | 27 | 103 |

Source: Computed

As per the survey Majority of the participants are aware of the Schemes offered by Governments (58), another 18 participants are unaware of the schemes and 27 participants opined that there may be existence of such schemes.

Table No:6

| Marital Status | Mention the Schemes of Govt of Tamilnadu which you are aware of | | | | | | None | Total |
|----------------|--|---|---|---|--|---|------|-------|
| | DR. DHARMAMBAL AMMAIYAR NINAIVU WIDOW REMARRIAGE ASSISTANCE SCHEME | E.V.R. MANIAMMAIYAR NINAIVU MARRIAGE ASSISTANCE SCHEME FOR DAUGHTERS OF POOR WIDOWS | ANNAI THERASA NINAIVU MARRIAGE ASSISTANCE SCHEME FOR ORPHAN GIRLS | DR. MUTHULAKSHMI REDDY NINAIVU INTER-CASTE MARRIAGE ASSISTANCE SCHEME | SATHIYAVANIMUTHU AMMAIYAR NINAIVU FREE SUPPLY OF SEWING MACHINE SCHEME | | | |
| Single | 11 | 16 | 20 | 14 | 5 | 3 | 69 | |
| Married | 7 | 9 | 6 | 6 | 4 | 1 | 33 | |
| Divorced | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | |
| Total | 19 | 25 | 26 | 20 | 9 | 4 | 103 | |

Source: Computed

At the state level ANNAI THERASA NINAIVU MARRIAGE ASSISTANCE SCHEME FOR ORPHAN GIRLS (26) is the most popular scheme in the state of Tamilnadu followed by E.V.R. MANIAMMAIYAR NINAIVU MARRIAGE ASSISTANCE SCHEME FOR DAUGHTERS OF POOR WIDOWS (25) and DR. MUTHULAKSHMI REDDY NINAIVU INTER-CASTE MARRIAGE ASSISTANCE SCHEME.

| Marital Status | Are you the beneficiary of any of the Scheme mentioned below | | | | | | None | Total |
|----------------|--|---|---|---|--|---|------|-------|
| | DR. DHARMAMBAL AMMAIYAR NINAIVU WIDOW REMARRIAGE ASSISTANCE SCHEME | E.V.R. MANIAMMAIYAR NINAIVU MARRIAGE ASSISTANCE SCHEME FOR DAUGHTERS OF POOR WIDOWS | ANNAI THERASA NINAIVU MARRIAGE ASSISTANCE SCHEME FOR ORPHAN GIRLS | DR. MUTHULAKSHMI REDDY NINAIVU INTER-CASTE MARRIAGE ASSISTANCE SCHEME | SATHIYAVANIMUTHU AMMAIYAR NINAIVU FREE SUPPLY OF SEWING MACHINE SCHEME | | | |
| Single | 10 | 25 | 21 | 4 | 2 | 7 | 69 | |
| Married | 2 | 12 | 5 | 2 | 10 | 2 | 33 | |
| Divorced | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | |
| Total | 13 | 37 | 26 | 6 | 12 | 9 | 103 | |

Table No: 7

Source: Computed

As compared the awareness beneficiaries are more of the schemes like their other family members were benefited out the schemes. Where E.V.R. MANIAMMAIYAR NINAIVU MARRIAGE ASSISTANCE SCHEME FOR DAUGHTERS OF POOR WIDOWS is having high number of beneficiaries followed by ANNAI THERASA NINAIVU MARRIAGE ASSISTANCE SCHEME FOR ORPHAN GIRLS. Another 9 participants say they are not benefited out the schemes.

Table No: 8

| Marital Status | Do you agree with the statement 'the schemes of Govt of Tamilnadu has changed your Standard of living' | | | | | Total |
|----------------|--|----------|------------|-------------|----------------------|-------|
| | a) Strongly agree | b) Agree | c) Neutral | d) Disagree | e) Strongly disagree | |
| Single | 8 | 10 | 39 | 9 | 3 | 69 |
| Married | 3 | 5 | 15 | 5 | 5 | 33 |
| Divorced | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Total | 11 | 15 | 54 | 15 | 8 | 103 |

Source: Computed

When it comes to upliftment of women through the State schemes majority of the respondents are neutral (54) in their opinion only 15 participants agree and another 11 are strongly agree, about 23 participants are disagree. Confirming that Central are state Schemes are not up to their level of satisfaction. May be due to lack of awareness of the schemes beneficiaries are less.

D] ANOVA [Analysis of Variance]

H0- There is no significant difference between groups and within the groups of highest qualification, awareness of various schemes, beneficiaries and Awareness of Govt of Tamilnadu schemes and impact on standard of livings.

H1- There is no significant difference between groups and within the groups of highest qualification, awareness of various schemes, beneficiaries and Awareness of Govt of Tamilnadu schemes and impact on standard of livings.

Table No:9

| ANOVA | | | | | | |
|--|----------------|----------------|-----|-------------|-------|------|
| Particulars | | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
| Are you aware of the Different Schemes, Scholarships, Fellowships available for Women Empowerment? | Between Groups | 1.360 | 2 | .680 | .915 | .404 |
| | Within Groups | 74.310 | 100 | .743 | | |
| | Total | 75.670 | 102 | | | |
| Mention the details of Schemes which you are aware of? | Between Groups | 5.918 | 2 | 2.959 | .469 | .627 |
| | Within Groups | 631.577 | 100 | 6.316 | | |
| | Total | 637.495 | 102 | | | |
| Mention the Schemes of Govt of Tamilnadu which you are aware of | Between Groups | 4.440 | 2 | 2.220 | 2.241 | .112 |
| | Within Groups | 99.074 | 100 | .991 | | |
| | Total | 103.515 | 102 | | | |
| Do you agree with the statement 'the schemes of Govt of Tamilnadu has changed your Standard of living' | Between Groups | 12.159 | 2 | 6.079 | 6.503 | .002 |
| | Within Groups | 93.492 | 100 | .935 | | |
| | Total | 105.650 | 102 | | | |

Source: computed

As per the above table, Analysis of variance [ANOVA] is carried out difference between groups and within the groups of the five chosen variables like Highest qualification (P-Value: 0.002), awareness about the various schemes(0.40), scholarship and fellowships towards women empowerment and its beneficiaries(0.32), similarly awareness about the schemes of tamilnadu(0.11) and impact of schemes on standard of livings(0.002). Here it is made us to accept the null and reject to alternative hypothesis in case of awareness about

the various schemes, awareness about the schemes of tamilnadu. Null hypothesis is rejected in case of impact of standard of livings of the women where alternative hypothesis is accepted saying that there is significant impact of other factors which positively influence on women empowerment it may be schemes of Govt of Tamilnadu despite a low level of awareness about schemes. So the state government should take initiatives through communication and visual media to bring awareness about the schemes for women at least at school and colleges there must be awareness on schemes

II. CONCLUSION

The study found that there is correlation exist in between Schemes of Govt of tamilnadu and Beneficiaries of Schemes of tamilnadu it is statistically significant. On the basis of ANOVA, there is no significant difference between groups and within the groups on awareness of various schemes, beneficiaries and Awareness of Govt of Tamilnadu schemes. But there is significant improvement in the standard of livings of women due to schemes and programmes and incentives through various schemes of state government, where there is no proper awareness about the schemes, its eligibility criteria and amount of benefit which they may receive out of the schemes.

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