

WOMEN EMPOWERMENT AND WELLNESS

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ABSTRACT

This chapter deals with a burning issue which every government coins in their list of agendas to make their place safer and secure with the coming elections, but there are very few who actually follow the path they promise and work on it.

The Yogi government is one of the few or we can say one of the rare governments who is taking their promise into practice by focusing on the empowerment and wellness of the women in the state. Not only this, we can also witness the changing graph of women safety and awareness towards their rights and laws.

Empowerment and wellness of women has been a major concern of Yogi government after viewing the condition of the gender in the state from last many years. Empowerment and wellness is essentially the process of upliftment of economic, social and political status of women, the traditionally underprivileged ones in the society.

Present government made sure to guard them against all forms of violence. This chapter reviews the literature on the empowerment as well as the core wellness of the women in the state.

Keywords: Empowerment, Wellness, Safety, Underprivileged, Violence.

Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh, Yogi Adityanath ji stated:

**नास्ति मातृसमा छाया नास्ति मातृसमा गति,
नास्ति मातृसमं त्राणं नास्ति मातृसमा प्रया ।।**

Which means “There is no shade like a mother, no resort like a mother, no security like a mother, no water house like a mother.”

He said that when the BJP government came into power in 2017, there were many

challenges in front of the state government. Being the largest state in terms of population, there was a lot to do to ensure everyone in the state gets the benefit of the central and state-sponsored schemes.

Social security, financial stability and empowerment of women have been top on Yogi government 2.0 agenda. The state government has passed the Code of Criminal Procedure (Uttar Pradesh Amendment) Bill, 2022 to end the provision of anticipatory bail in cases of heinous crime against women and children. With the amendment, the

accused will not get anticipatory bail in cases of rape, cases under Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act and a few more offences. The amendment had been brought in pursuance of a zero-tolerance policy toward crimes against women and children and to ensure prompt collection of biological evidence in sexual offences, to prevent such biological evidence from being annihilated, to minimize the possibility of destruction of relevant evidence and to restrain the accused from causing fear or coercion to the victims/ witnesses. The government was committed to empowering its 'aadhi abaadi (half of the population--that is women)' by providing social security, financial stability and ensuring their independence. The government had been working towards women's physical security, training of women's battalion in the armed constabulary, self-defence courses in senior and senior secondary schools, building on economic empowerment through ODOP, creating meaningful spaces in political decision making and acknowledging

Women officers in bureaucracy. To create a safe atmosphere for women, the Yogi government was establishing three women's PAC battalions for the first time in the state. At the same time, women help desks were set up at all 1584 police stations (including GRP) of the state. In all, 1535 police stations and 10,417 women police beats had been formed where 20,740 women police beat officers had been appointed, he said.

Additionally, all these police stations are equipped with Shakti Mobile for redressal of crime against women. Crime against women and women's empowerment had been major issues on which successive governments and the opposition locked horns in the state. Continuing its thrust on pro-women, pro-rural and pro-poor initiatives, the Yogi Adityanath ji's government has laid special emphasis

on the welfare of women and empowerment of the daughters in Uttar Pradesh.

Understanding the importance of the untapped energy of women in the state, the UP government has worked in a planned and phased manner towards achievement of the goal of women empowerment through the effective implementation of its various women-centric schemes and policies at the grassroots level in the state. Through Mission Shakti, the Yogi government has given a 360 degree umbrella to half the population of the state as now the hard work and dedication of rural women were bearing desired results with the females of the state coming to the front and leading by example in various spheres of development. Under Mission Shakti, the government is not only working to ensure their safety, dignity and empowerment but also has been roping various measures to make them aware of their rights. Women and daughters in the state are being made aware through various programmes held every month by the Women Welfare department.

Launching the second phase of 'Mission Shakti' – a campaign on women safety – on the occasion of International Women's Day, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said that "empowered women make the state powerful". He also honored 15 women from various fields.

According to the chief minister of the state Yogi Adityanath "There is a lack of awareness regarding crimes against women, and therefore, the government has begun the expansion of women helpline to all 75 districts from just four districts. Helpline number 181 has also been integrated with others to make it more effective. Our government is also working on taking the 'Safe City' project to provide a fear-free environment to women,".

Women's Day: Who is the precedent for women Aarti Rana of Tharu, whom CM Yogi will give special honor.

Aarti has been given a place by the UP government among four special women, who will be honored by CM Yogi in Lucknow today (CM Yogi Honored In Lucknow). To make the women of the tribal tribes. Tharu independent, Aarti formed a group of all women of Gobraula village after taking handicraft training and trained them too. Due to Aarti, thousands of such women have got employment today, who were earlier dependent on others. Many women associated with Aarti Rana are working in groups, while many women are earning employment by working at their home. Impressed by Aarti Rana's Healthy Craft Art, Yogi Sarkar has chosen her among four women who will be honored in Lucknow. Aarti Rana gifted a hat to CM Yogi, who arrived at the exhibition. Aarti says that it is a matter of great pride for her and all the women of her district that she is going to meet on the occasion of Women's Day. Along with this, he hoped that the government will take more special steps in the interest of Tharu women. Among the four women whom CM Yogi Adityanath will honor today on the occasion of Women's Day, Aarti Rana of Lakhimpur Kheri is also include

Women make up not only more than half of the world's population but also half of its potential. Thus, it is not practical that their voices go unheard at the highest levels of decision making. It is not beneficial to limit the success of half the population, as there are no limits to their dreams. There should be no obstacles to their achievements and no ceilings waiting to be shattered. The time has come for increasing awareness about the fact that better societies can be created by empowering women. If men support women and give them some confidence, women can do everything in life.

Realizing the same, the Yogi government in Uttar Pradesh has come out to financially support women in the state as they need motivation for all-round growth, development and prosperity. Understanding the importance of the untapped energy of women in his state, the Yogi government decided to appoint female banking agents in 58,000 Gram Panchayats, also known as Banking Sakhis. These women are associated with women's self help

groups in villages and the banks. The Yogi government also implemented various schemes for the safety, security and economic upliftment of women, like the Bhagya Laxmi Yojna, in which a development bond of Rs. 50,000 will be given at the birth of a daughter in every poor family. Widows are being helped under the Rani Laxmi Bai Women and Child Honour fund. The state government also increased the legal aid provided to women from Rs. 2,500 to Rs. 10,000. Recently, the Uttar Pradesh government successfully launched the Mission Shakti Programme with the hope of providing respect and safety to every woman in Uttar Pradesh.

Yogi Adityanath, being a sanyasi, strongly believes in "Yatra naryastu pujiyante ramante tatra Devata, yatra itaastu na pujiyante sarvaastatrafalaah kriyaah", which means that where women are honored, divinity blossoms, and where women are dishonored, all action, no matter how noble it may be, remains unfruitful. CM Yogi is trying to send a strong message that, as per Hindu culture, those

who hurt the self respect and dignity of women, will be punished by his government. In the incidents of 'Love Jihad', marriages are done with the sole objective of religious conversion, so, how can this be acceptable? His government is trying hard to resolve women's issues at the grassroots level, whether it is the matter of safety and security, girls' education, financial assistance for women or encouraging women entrepreneurs. To counter crime against women, the state government is also establishing 218 fast-track courts, out of which, 74 courts will be related to the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO Act).

Fighting against the odds in a male-dominated society, women have made important contributions as business women, entrepreneurs

and officers. It has been estimated that, in agriculture, if women farmers have the same access to tools and credit as men do, the agricultural output in 34 developing countries would rise to an estimated average which can reduce the number of hungry people by around 150 million. Poverty and employment issues can also not be adequately addressed with only half of the population positively and actively engaged. Therefore, engaging women as a driving force for bringing positive change and eliminating poverty from the country is also a focus area. Enhancing the skills of women can directly reduce their economic dependence on their families, which in turn can increase their decision making power regarding productive expenditure and family matters.

Addressing the joint session of legislators of BJP and its allies, Yogi said it would be for the first time in the history of the country that 47 women members of the legislative assembly and 6 women members of the legislative council would put forth their views on issues. He also asked parliamentary affairs minister Suresh Khanna to make a woman member the presiding officer in both the houses to make the day special. The CM requested women members to speak about the Mission Shakti programme which is being run by the state government for the safety, respect and self-reliance of women. Yogi said a public representative should keep some fundamental things in mind to become a mass leader

The Yogi government is also working towards making reflective programmes on gender equality, challenging the traditional dynamics which dictate the duties of the woman as a 'caregiver' and man as a 'bread-earner'. Care responsibilities are often a barrier for women in realizing their workforce participation aspirations. Therefore, programs to boost female employment without any arrangement for reducing their care responsibilities will only increase their burdens. Recently, the CM decided to check the situation himself and made random visits to different districts to check the authenticity of welfare schemes beyond files and data presented by

the district administration. This was certainly a practical approach for checking the authenticity of data as well as generating confidence among the general public and connecting directly with people of the state. When more women work, economies grow. Education, upskilling and reskilling over the course of one's life—especially to keep pace with today's rapid technological and digital transformations which affect jobs—are critical for women of all ages, with regard to their income generation opportunities and participation in the formal labor market, and their well being in general too. To boost growth and development in the state,

the state government's intention to remove gender inequality is clear. Policymakers of the state are now focusing their actions on five clear priorities: Reducing the excess mortality of girls and women, eliminating the remaining gender disadvantages in education, increasing women's access to economic opportunity and thus earnings and productivity, giving women an equal voice in households and societies, and limiting the transmission of gender inequality across generations. Much still remains to be done, but Uttar Pradesh has already changed by finally recognising that gender equality is good for both women and men. More people have now

realized that there are many economic and other benefits of closing gender gaps. And if we want to bring change for all-round growth and prosperity then we must understand, as Dolores Huerta had said, "Every moment is an organizing opportunity, every person is a potential activist and every minute is a chance to change the world for betterment."

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said that reserving a day for women legislators to speak in both the houses of UP legislature during the forthcoming monsoon session signified women empowerment.

CM Yogi Adityanath said worshipping and respecting women is the tradition of Gorakshpeeth and it has been working for women empowerment. "Worshipping and respecting women is the tradition of Gorakshpeeth. The Maharana Pratap Shiksha Parishad (MPSP), founded in 1932, is playing a vital role in the education and empowerment of women," the CM said. According to a government spokesman, Gorakshpeeth not only follows its tradition of 'Matrishkati' (women power) but is also focused on women education and empowerment. Carrying forward the same tradition, Yogi dedicated one day of the monsoon session of the state Assembly for women, he said, adding that the Speaker for the day was also a woman. "Under the Sanatan tradition and culture, two festivals of Navratri in a year are dedicated to goddess Durga and both are very special for Gorakshpeeth. On the first day of Navaratra, a 'kalash' is installed at the first floor of the temple and nine forms of the deity are worshipped during the nine-day festival. On the last day of Navratri, the Peethadhishwar (Yogi Adityanath) performs 'kanya puja' by washing the feet of girls, offering them lunch and giving them gifts.

The state government has taken several measures to bolster the education of children which is a key step towards creating balance in the society. 1 crore 80 lakh students have been enrolled in schools in the state under the 'School Chalo Abhiyan'. With the support of the public, 91,000 schools out of around one and a half lakh have been refurbished in Uttar Pradesh. It is seen that the state government has also envisioned plans and schemes for women's

empowerment like the Kanya Sumangala Yojana and increasing the financial aid for community marriage programmes for poor women. Under the Kanya Sumangala Yojana, an amount of Rs 15,000 will be deposited at the time of a girl child's birth. Under the community marriage scheme, our government has increased the support amount to poor girls for marriage from Rs 35,000 to Rs 50,000. Just after BJP's massive victory this year, even before taking the

oath of office, his government floated the 'Request for Proposal' (RFP) for engaging a leading consulting organization for helping the state for their target of a \$1 trillion economy. And within three months, a contract was awarded to one of the top four global consulting companies. So far, more than 13.67 lakh girls have benefitted in the state from 'Kanya Sumangala'. Under the Chief Minister's Mass Marriage Scheme, the government has so far got 1,91,686 daughters of economically weaker families married in Uttar Pradesh. The purpose of deployment of Banking Sakhi in 58,000 gram panchayats is to strengthen daughters and women. The Chief Minister's initiative is helping around 48,000 women to do financial transactions worth Rs 5,451 crore and earn more than Rs 14.15 crore by 2020. Women's Self-Help Groups (WSHG) members in the form of Bijli Sakhis have so far completed collection of electricity bills of more than Rs 173.5 crore and have successfully earned a commission of Rs 2.39 crore. To create a safe environment for daughters and women, the Yogi government is setting up three women PAC battalions for the first time in the state. At the same time, women help desks have been set up in all 1,584 police stations (including GRP) of the state, and 10,417 women police beats have been constituted.

The Yogi government has taken evident steps while building the foundation towards the women empowerment and wellness and by following the three dimensional model the success rate of their policies and approach towards the women empowerment and wellness are very high. This model states that :

Three Dimensional Model Women empowerment is considered as a process that takes place over time, making women agents who formulate choices, control resources and make strategic life choices. This model emphasized on the strategic life choices (choice of livelihood, marital decision and child bearing decision) which are considered as first-order choices and how these impact second-order choice (inculcating values in children, daily household decision making and

managing well being of the family) that are less consequential.

Figure: Three Dimensional Model by Kabeer

Resources (pre-conditions) -----Agency (process) -----Achievements (outcomes) ----->

(Source: Kabeer, 1999)

The researcher emphasized having access to resources (material, human and social in form) is an obligatory pre-condition of empowerment as resources increase the ability to exercise choice. Kabeer emphasized that merely having access to resources is not sufficient; women must also have the ability to identify and utilize the resources. As per Kabeer, empowerment is both an end and a means to an end for example one status is attaining education another status is acquiring gainful employment and a further step to it could be control over decision making related to self or family is the outcome of empowerment. Thus attaining education can be an end or it can also be a means to an end but the final outcome of empowerment is having the capabilities of achievement.

Uttar Pradesh is the most populous state in India and is home to a large population of women. The state government has implemented several initiatives to empower women and promote their health and wellness. These include programs to improve access to education and healthcare, increase participation in the workforce, and promote gender equality.

Some specific examples of initiatives that have been implemented in Uttar Pradesh include: The Chief Minister's Beti Bachao Beti Padhao Yojana, which aims to improve the child sex ratio and promote the education of girls.

The Chief Minister's Kanya Sumangala Yojana, which provides financial assistance for the education and marriage of girls from economically weaker families.

The Matritva Aashwasan Yojana, which provides financial assistance to pregnant and

lactating women to improve maternal health and nutrition.

The One Stop Center, which provides a range of services, including medical aid, police assistance, and legal aid, to women who have been victims of violence.

These are few examples but there are many more policies and schemes aimed at empowering women and promoting their health and wellness in Uttar Pradesh. However, the actual impact of these schemes vary from region to region and there is need for better implementation and monitoring of these policies.

The government of Uttar Pradesh, headed by Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, has implemented several initiatives to improve women's safety and security in the state. These include measures to increase the presence of law enforcement personnel, improve emergency response times, and increase access to justice for women who have been victims of violence.

Some specific examples of initiatives that have been implemented by the government include:

The Anti-Romeo Squads, which are teams of police officers that are tasked with preventing harassment and sexual assault against women in public spaces.

The 1090 Women's Powerline, which is a dedicated helpline for women to report incidents of violence and seek assistance.

The establishment of fast-track courts to hear cases of crimes against women and expedite the legal process.

The launch of the "Suraksha" app, which allows women to quickly contact the police in case of an emergency.

The launch of an initiative called "Mission Shakti" in 2019 that aims to strengthen law and order and empower women and girls in the state.

However, the actual effectiveness of these measures in improving women's safety and security in the state is a topic of debate and criticism, with many pointing out that the women in UP are still facing discrimination and violence despite the above measures, and more needs to be done to implement and monitor these policies.

There are several special cases or marginalized groups of women in Uttar Pradesh that have unique needs and challenges when it comes to empowerment and wellness. Some examples include:

Dalit women: Dalit women in Uttar Pradesh face discrimination and violence not just because of their gender but also because of their caste. They often face social and economic exclusion, and have limited access to education, healthcare, and economic opportunities. In order to empower them, special programs and policies that take into account their specific needs and challenges are needed.

Muslim women: Muslim women in Uttar Pradesh also face discrimination and marginalization because of their religion, in addition to facing issues common to all women. They often have limited access to education and healthcare, and may face additional barriers when it comes to accessing justice and social services.

Tribal women: The tribal women of Uttar Pradesh are among the most marginalized and disadvantaged groups in the state. They often live in remote and inaccessible areas, and have limited access to education, healthcare, and economic opportunities. They also face discrimination and violence, and are often denied their rights to land and other resources.

Women with disabilities: Women with disabilities in Uttar Pradesh face a double burden of discrimination and marginalization because of both their gender and their disability. They often have limited access to education, healthcare, and economic opportunities, and are at a higher risk of violence and abuse.

Empowering these marginalized groups of women requires a tailored approach, focusing on

their unique challenges and providing them with the necessary resources and support to overcome them.

The government of Uttar Pradesh, headed by Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, has implemented several initiatives to empower women in the state. However, the specific model of women empowerment promoted by the government is not clear and it may vary according to the policies and schemes that have been implemented.

It is important to note that the State Government's policies and schemes for women empowerment can be affected by the broader political and social context in the state. There are criticisms that the government's approach has not been inclusive, and not tailored to the specific needs and challenges faced by marginalized groups of women, such as Dalit, Muslim, tribal and women with disabilities.

The State Government policies such as Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao, Kanya Sumangala and Matritva Aashwasan Yojana are examples of schemes that aim to improve the life of women and girls through education, health and financial aid. However, their implementation and impact varies, and more needs to be done in terms of ensuring that these schemes reach the intended recipients and that they are effective in improving the lives of women in Uttar Pradesh. It's difficult to provide a clear picture of the model of women empowerment in Yogi's government of UP without more detailed information about the specific policies and programs that have been implemented and their effectiveness. The government's track record in implementing policies and schemes is an important factor to consider when evaluating their approach to women empowerment.

Women empowerment is not just about gender equality and gender justice. It also means more jobs, equal opportunities for growth and entrepreneurship, higher safety, protection of the girl child, and most importantly just "letting women be". Whether it is by providing free cooking gas via the famous "PM Ujjwala Yojana", or financial inclusion, or enabling women to leverage

technology, a slew of schemes have been launched in recent years to empower women on the path of self-reliance.

To cut a long story short, on every conceivable parameter, girls in Uttar Pradesh are far safer today than they were, a few years back. Unlike fake liberals, the Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath ji is truly a progressive statesman with a liberated mindset -- a modern, sensitive, thinking leader, who has uplifted scores of women by strengthening policy making tools, to deliver where it matters the most.

Speaking of safety as an opinionated, ambitious, and strong-willed woman in Yogi's state, case studies show that they feel safe, secure, confident, free, empowered, and proud of being who they are. Women have never been made to feel subaltern because of their gender or the choices they have made. Women towards empowerment in the country have an unshakeable faith in Yogi's political ideology. Women across the country have a notion that they have always been treated with dignity and as equals, in Yogi's "New UP". They have never felt discriminated against, simply for being the fiercely independent women that they are.

After Yogi took charge in May 2014 with a sweeping electoral victory, things have improved dramatically, more so for women. The credit for this remarkable change on the ground and in global perception belongs to Yogi. They say, "Behind every successful woman is a tribe of other successful women, who have her back". Well, in the case of Uttar Pradesh, every law-abiding woman, successful or otherwise, knows she has the unflinching support of Chief Minister Yogi ji to ensure women get their due. Chief Minister Yogi ji, who is strikingly sure-footed, confident of who he is, where he came from and what he aspires to be, empowering along with him millions of women so that they "do not forget who they are, in order to get what they deserve".

TARGET: 1 TRILLION \$ ECONOMY

Empowering women is considered as a key driver of economic growth and development, and many governments around the world have implemented policies and programs aimed at empowering women in order to boost their economies. In the case of Uttar Pradesh, the government's policies and programs aimed at empowering women could potentially play a role in contributing to the goal of reaching a 1 trillion dollar economy.

One key way in which women's empowerment policies can contribute to economic growth is by increasing the participation of women in the workforce. When women have access to education and training, and are able to find decent work, they are more likely to participate in the labor force, and can contribute to economic growth through their increased productivity and earnings.

Another way in which women's empowerment policies can contribute to economic growth is by improving their health and well-being. When women have access to healthcare and nutrition, they are more likely to be able to care for their families and communities, and can contribute to economic growth through their increased productivity and reduced healthcare costs.

Additionally, policies that aim to improve the education and health of girls and women have long-term positive impacts on their economic empowerment and also on the economic growth of the state by reducing poverty and increasing productivity.

It is important to note that while women's empowerment policies can be an important part of contributing to the goal of reaching a 1 trillion dollar economy, it is not the only solution and must be

implemented alongside other economic policies and programs to boost economic growth and development.

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