

Impact of Sabooj Sathi Scheme on School-Going Adolescents of Different Socio-Economic Status: A Study in Purba Bardhaman District

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Abstract

Socio-economic status plays a significant role on students' academic success, involvement in extracurricular activities and attachment with education. The National Education Policies of India make several recommendations and policies for improvement of education system and students access to education. The NEP 2020 recommends to provide scholarships and incentives, Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) programs, giving bicycles to students for smooth transportation etc. 'Sabooj Sathi' is a bicycle distribution scheme to the secondary level school going students of West Bengal. To have the actual information about importance of Sabooj Sathi Scheme on school-going learners of Purba Bardhaman the present study was carried out through the descriptive survey method. In this descriptive survey data was collected by administering *Socio-Economic Status Scale* by Sunil Kumar Upadhyay and a questionnaire on Sabooj Sathi Scheme prepared by researcher on randomly selected 200 school-going adolescents from different secondary and higher secondary level schools of Purba Bardhaman district of West Bengal. The study was undertaken through descriptive analysis. Result showed that Sabooj Sathi Scheme put differential impact on the adolescents coming from different socio-economic status of the society. Receiver of Sabooj Sathi scheme come from low socio-economic status was highly affected rather than the high socio-economic status students.

Keywords: Socio-Economic Status. Sabooj Sathi Scheme, School-Going Adolescents,

1. Introduction

The New Education Policy (**NEP 2020**) of India recommends more financial assistance and scholarships to socio-economically disadvantaged students. To ensure that outstanding students enter the teaching profession - especially from rural areas, there have been various successful policies and schemes such as targeted scholarships, conditional cash transfers to incentivize parents to send their children to school, providing bicycles for transport, etc., that have significantly increased participation of SEDGs in the schooling system in certain areas. These successful policies and schemes must be significantly strengthened across the country. To facilitate learning for all students, with special emphasis on Socio-Economically Disadvantaged Groups (SEMGs), the scope of school education will be broadened to facilitate multiple pathways to learning involving both formal and non-formal education modes.

Socio-economic status refers to the position of any person in comparison to others in terms of social and economic values like respect, money, property, power, prestige, education etc. Socio-economic status has been made with combination two words i.e. socio and economic. It means that there are two types of statuses viz. social and economic status. Socio-economic status refers to the position that an individual and family with reference to prevailing average standards, cultural possession and participation in group activity of community **Chaudhari et.al. (1998)**. According to **Taneja (1998)**, it refers to a persons' position in any given group, society or culture. Social status is an indication of one's position of respect, prestige and influence in the society (**MacIver and page, 1937, Cole and Montgomery, 1959, Rogers 1962**) apart from his personal attributes (**MacIver and page, 1937**) which may either inhibit or enhance an individual's access to sources of information and his willingness to deviate from group norms (**Rogers, 1962**) and many even vary with the group (**Cole and Montgomery, 1959**) The Economic status is generally used for the word economic for the motives involving earning a livelihood, the accumulation of wealth (**Driver, 1964**). According to **Chandra (2014)** a family's socioeconomic status is based on family income, parental education level, parental occupation, and social status in the community (such as contacts within the community, group associations, and the community's

perception of the family. According to **Parson, Stephanie and Deborah (2001)** Socio-economic Status (SES) is the term used to distinguish between people's relative position in the society in terms of family income, political power, educational background and occupational prestige. **Saifi and Mehmood (2011)** define, SES is a combined measure of an individual or family's economic and social position relative to others based on income, education and occupation. **Tiwari (2014)** stated that Socio-economic status is the position that an individual or family occupies related to culture, possession, effective income material possessions and participation in group activities of the community. It is an indicative of both the social and economic level of an individual in a group. Social status is the position on a scale of social prestige. Economic status depends upon the income of the family. It can be divided into different categories as - high, medium and low. **Bhat, Joshi and Wani (2016)** stated Socioeconomic status is the blend of economic and sociological measures of an individual work experience and the economic and social position of an individual or family in connection to others on the premise of income, educational level and occupational status.

1.1 Sabooj Sathi Scheme

Free distribution of bicycles to sections of high school students has been one of the most popular inclusions in public actions in several of the Indian states. The Government of West Bengal in 2015, nevertheless, joined the bicycle distribution programme called Sabooj Sathi, literally meaning the green companion, that aimed to distribute bicycles among all students of standard 9 through 12 studying at the government or government aided secondary and higher secondary school. The nodal agency of the scheme, the Department of Backward Classes Welfare. The declared goal of the scheme, Sabooj Sathi, was to enhance access to education, increase retention and ensure transition to secondary and higher secondary level, and eventually clear the road for higher education by reducing the cost of schooling. It attached special importance to address the issue of drop out at secondary and higher secondary levels. Following the announcement of the scheme in the budget speech 2015-16 of the Finance Minister, Government of West Bengal, to distribute 40,00,000 bicycles to all students of standard 9 to 12 in all districts except Kolkata and Darjeeling¹⁷, a task force was formed to develop the framework

of the scheme and oversee its implementation. The Backward Classes Welfare Department (BCWD), Government of West Bengal was entrusted to implement the scheme.

1.2 Objective of the Study

The objective of the study was to ascertain the effect of Sabooj Sathi Scheme on school-going students of different socio-economic status of Purba Bardhaman district in West Bengal.

2. Methods

The present study was carried out through descriptive survey method within ex-post-facto research design. The details regarding sample, tool, procedure of data collection and statistical technique are hereunder.

2.1 Sample

For the sake of the research the respondents of the study were randomly selected from five (5) schools of Purba Bardhaman district of West Bengal, India. 200 secondary level students as well as Sabooj Sathi Scheme beneficiaries were selected for the study.

2.2 Tool Used

Following tool were used in this study for collection of data.

2.2.1 Socio-Economic Status Scale-SESS (S.K. Upadhyay, 2019)

In the current investigation, the Socio-Economic Status Scale (SESS), (S.K. Upadhyay, 2019), served as the research instrument. This meticulously developed scale is tailored to assess the Socio-Economic Status of students dwelling in both rural and urban locales. Comprising a comprehensive set of 31 items distributed across five distinct domains—namely, a) Personal information, b) Family, c) Education, d) Income, and e) Others (encompassing Cultural and Material Possessions)—respondents provided their input, with the subsequent scoring executed in accordance with the designated scoring key.

2.2.2 To gauge students' attitude towards Sabooj Sathi Scheme a *questionnaire* was developed by the researcher based on established procedures in the literature and consultations with the educationist. This questionnaire encompasses 20 items. Respondents provide ratings on a five-point scale, ranging from

“Strongly Disagree” (1) to “Strongly Agree” (5) for each item.

1.3 Data Collection

The heads of the institutes were contracted for his/her permission to allow collecting the data. The relevant data were collected by administering the above-mentioned tools on the subjects under study in accordance with the directions provided in the manual of the tool.

1.4 Analysis of the collected data

The results of the study were extracted in descriptive analysis were done with the help of SPSS 20.0 software.

2 Results

Classification of Socio-Economic Status of female Sabooj Sathi beneficiaries.

Table: 3.1 Socio-Economic Status

Category	Raw Score	No of Students
High SES	77 and above	20
Above Average SES	67 to 76	44
Average SES	54 to 66	0
Below Average SES	44 to 53	100
Low SES	43 or below	36
Total		200

The data was gathered through the administration of the Socio-Economic Status Scale-SESS (2019) devised by S.K. Upadhyay. This scale ranges from a minimum score of 13 to a maximum of 107. SES, in this context, refers to the societal standing that an individual and their family hold based on factors such as education, income, material and cultural possessions, and engagement in social activities. The researcher deliberately chose 136 participants from below average and low SES and another 64 from high and above average SES backgrounds.

Table 3.2: Result based on attitude towards Sabooj Sathi Scheme

Attitude towards Sabooj Sathi Scheme	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
	200	1	5	4.23	1.15

Table 3.2 Displays scores for the overall attitude towards Sabooj Sathi Scheme of school-going adolescents. The scores ranged from 2 to 5, with a minimum score of 2, maximum score of 5. The mean and standard deviation for this distribution were 4.23 and 1.15, respectively.

Table 3.3: Result based on attitude towards Sabooj Sathi Scheme of different SES

Attitude towards Sabooj Sathi Scheme	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	Sig.
LSES	136	1	5	94.89	62.83	13.94	S
HSES	64	1	5	18.32	2		

Table 3.3 indicates that there was significant difference between the two groups, namely Low Socio-Economic Status (LSES) and High Socio-Economic Status (HSES), in terms of scores of the two groups.

2 Discussions of Findings

Table 3.2 displays descriptive statistics for scores on various items of attitude towards Sabooj Sathi Scheme beneficiary students of different socio-economic status as a whole.

The average score for all students was 4.23. This indicates that these students had positive attitude compared to the average, as their mean scores exceeded the midpoint of 2.5.

Table 3.3 showed that there was significant difference between the two groups, namely Low Socio-Economic Status (LSES) and High Socio-Economic Status (HSES), across all items of

the attitude towards Sabooj Sathi scheme. The mean value for the students in the LSES group was 94.89, while for the HSES group, it was 18.32. The first value was significantly higher than the second, suggesting that, in terms of attitude towards Sabooj Sathi scheme was positive among LSES group than from the HSES group.

3 Conclusion

The overall average scores of school-going adolescents in the Sabooj Sathi Scheme were 4.23 for both groups i.e Low Socio-Economic Status (LSES) and High Socio-Economic Status (HSES). This indicates that students have positive impact of Sabooj Sathi scheme. The mean scores of the two group indicate that there is significant difference in the attitude towards Sabooj Sathi Scheme between the two groups. It's worth noting that LSES learners often come from economically disadvantaged backgrounds. The provision of bicycles through the Sabooj Sathi Scheme seems to have had a positive impact on the LSES learners.

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Women Empowerment in India: Issues and Challenges

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Abstract:

Empowerment refers people having power and properly controls their lives. Women empowerment refers to increasing the women economical, social and educational rights, without any kind of discrimination based on gender, class, religion or social status. Women's empowerment in India is heavily dependent on many different variables that include geographical location, educational status, social status and age. Constraints in women empowerment are lack of education, traditional view limit participation, financial problem, family responsibilities, low mobility, and low mobility of bear risk, low social status and conflicts among women's groups. Way to empower women is changes in women's mobility and social interaction, labour patterns, access to and control over resources and control over decision-making.

One of the main advantages of women empowerment is equal access to participations and decision at all level, they are the back bone our society. That it allows women to customize their education to their needs and interests. For example, women are the back bone of the family and bedrock of a nation. They bring life into the world. They sense the cries of an infant. Their instincts are to care for the old, the sick and those in need.

Another advantage of women empowerment is that it encourages next generation will be empowered. They will be empowered she will not be a burden on anyone. Empower in rights and fundamental freedom to upgrade their skills and knowledge. This can be especially valuable in a rapidly changing job market,

where workers need to constantly upskill to remain competitive.

However, there are also some potential drawbacks women empowerment. One concern is that it may dilute the value of degrees by allowing women to make settle for a passive role. To evaluate the effectiveness of the women empowering system, it will be important to monitor its implementation and assess its impact on social, political education economical, and the job market.

Overall, women empowerment has the potential to increase flexibility and encourage lifelong potential in the Indian socio-economy system. However, it will be important to carefully monitor its implementation and address any challenges that arise to ensure that it delivers on its promise of providing high-quality empowerment for all.

Keyword: women empowerment, education, challenges

Introduction: Empowering women is big responsibility, but it's also vital for gender equality. Women empowerment refers to increasing the women's economical, social and educational rights, without any kind of discrimination based on gender, class, religion or social status. Women's empowerment in India is heavily dependent on many different variables that include geographical location, educational status, social status and age. Political empowerment, economic development, and social upliftment of women are necessary and desirable to fight myriad forms of patriarchal domination, and discrimination at every stage. In fact, women's empowerment is central to the achievement of the triple goals of equality, development and social justice, and for that political participation is needed.

Aspects of empowerment:

The World Bank says, „Empowerment is the process of increasing the capacity of individuals or groups to make choices and to transform those choices into desired actions and outcomes“. It requires a long -term process in which all cultural, social, political and economic norms undergo fundamental change. It must exercise full participation in the decision making process in all walks of life and full participation with men in all walks of life. Equal relationships between women and men in matters of sexual relations and reproduction including full respect for the

integrity of the person, require mutual respect, consent and shared responsibility for life style behaviour and its consequences. The various aspects of women empowerment are

- Freedom to spend own education.
- Recognition of ability.
- Freedom in mobility.
- Ability to acquire skills.
- Self confidence
- Decision making
- Freedom in social involvement
- Access to information sources
- Ownership of assets
- Freedom to spend own income
- Ability to make positive change

Background of the Study: During the Vedic period women were treated equally. However, during the medieval period, women were considered inferior and mistreated. An Indian woman had four fold statuses. There was daughter, wife, home-maker and mother. But in modern times, women status has change. Abuse and violence against women are present in every society for a long-time when trying to get through the boundaries of culture, class, age, and education. They are actively participating in social, economic and political activities. The progressive social movement, government policies and a historically conducive climate are associated with the women"s contribution to the development of the health and education sector. Many prophets of women,,s emancipation have come and gone, but discrimination against women and violation of human values still persists. Gender issue is basically one that affects women directly or indirectly. Gender discrimination, these are lack of women education, female infanticide, financial constraint, dowry, low mobility, low need for achievement, marriage in same caste and child marriage, social status, family responsibility. Women are deprived of decision making power, freedom of movement, access to education, assess to employment, and exposure to media.

Objectives of the Study:

- i. To identify the necessary ways of women empowerment.
- ii. To know the relevant laws related to women empowerment
- iii. To examine different government schemes evolved.

Research Methodology:

This research paper is theoretical in nature. In this paper and attempt has been made to investigate the necessity of women empowerment and laws related to women empowerment as well as to analyze the importance of providing high-quality empowerment for all. The data used in it is purely from secondary sources according to the need of this study.

Importance of women Empowerment: As such empowering women in India through equal opportunities would allow them to contribute to the economy as productive citizens. Empowering women is essential to the health and social development of families, communities and countries.

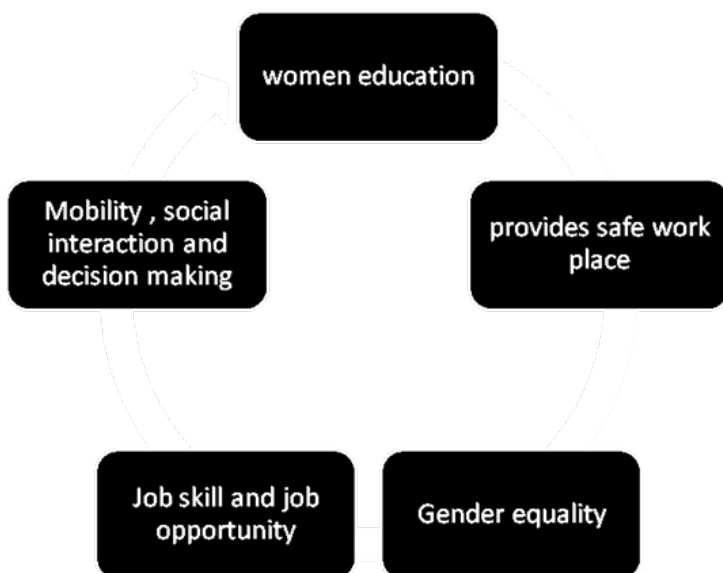
- **Social justice:** Women empowerment is all about making women both socially and financially independent.
- **Decision maker:** It is the process in which women make their own independent decisions.
- **Good leadership:** It leads to decrease in domestic violence
- **Stop corruption:** It helps women to know their rights and duties and it can stop corruption
- **Equal Opportunity:** A large number of women around the world are unemployed. The world economies suffer a lot because of unequal opportunities for women at work places.
- **Efficient:** Women are equally competent
- **Equity:** Women are as talented as men.
- **Health and Well-being:** Women's empowerment is also important for promoting health and well-being. When women have access to education and healthcare, they can better take care of themselves and their families.

Way of achievement of Empower Women:

Women empowerment would result in better developed society. Women can be empowered as well as men; the world would surely be a better place to live. Women's education can provide their right and be able to protect themselves better. Society should be changed by decreasing the gender inequality in the society. Women can be empowered through the creation of a safe working environment. However, it will be important to carefully monitor its implementation and address any challenges that arise to ensure that it delivers on its promise of providing high-quality empowerment for all. There are several ways to empower women.

Women Empowerment

- To provide proper education for social justices.
- Gender equality.
- Provide proper and safety work palace.
- Job opportunity.
- Interpretations and mobility



Laws Related women Empowerment

In this views era our constitution takes a great role to empower the women by so many symbolic laws .As India as a nation believes on gender equality, laws are created for the women empowerment. From donatives violence, child marriage to dowry prohibition, maternity benefit such kind of laws secure the rights of women and properly provides socio- economic benefit.

A. Legal Provisions

(1) The Crimes Identified Under the Indian Penal Code (IPC):

1. Rape (Sec.376 IPC)
2. Kidnapping & Abduction for different purposes (Sec. 363-373)
3. Homicide for Dowry, Dowry Deaths or their attempts (Sec. 302/304-B IPC)
4. Torture, both mental and physical (Sec. 498-A IPC)
5. Molestation (Sec. 354 IPC)
6. Sexual Harassment (Sec. 509 IPC)
7. Importation of girls (up to 21 years of age)

2) The Crimes identified under the Special Laws (SLL)

Some acts which have special provisions to safeguard women and their interests are:

- The Special Marriage Act, 1954
- The Hindu Marriage Act, 1955
- The Maternity Benefit Act, 1961 (Amended in 1995)
- Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961
- The Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act, 1971
- The Equal Remuneration Act, 1976
- The Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006
- The Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 1983
- Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act, 1986

- Commission of Sati (Prevention) Act, 1987
- The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005

B. Constitutional Provisions:

(Article 14) Equality before law for women.

The State shall not deny to any person equality before the law or the equal protection of the laws within the territory of India.

2. **(Article 15)** Prohibition of discrimination on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth.

(Article 15(1)) The State shall not discrimination against any citizen on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, or place of birth or any of them.

(Article 15(3)) The State to make any special provision in favour of women and children.

3. **(Article 16)** Equality of opportunity in matters of public employment.

(Article 16(1)) There shall be equality of opportunity for all citizens in matters relating to employment or appointment to any office under the state.

4. **(Article 19)** Freedom Of Speech And Expression

(Article 19(1)(a)) states that, all citizens shall have the right to freedom of speech and expression.

5. **(Article 21)** Protection of life and personal liberty.

No person shall be deprived of his life or personal liberty except according to procedure established by law.

6. **(Article 39)** Directive Principles of State Policy

(Article 39(a)) The State to direct its policy towards securing for men and women equally the right to an adequate means of livelihood.

(Article 39(d)) directs the state to secure equal pay for equal work for both men and women.

7. **(Article 39 A)** To promote justice, on a basis of equal opportunity and to provide free legal aid by suitable legislation or scheme or in any other way to ensure that opportunities for securing justice are not denied to any citizen by reason of economic or other disabilities.

8. **Article 42** of the Constitution incorporates a very important provision for the benefit of women. It directs the State to make provision for securing just and humane conditions of work and for maternity relief.

9. **(Article 51(A) (e))** is related to women. It states that;

It shall be the duty of every citizen of India to promote harmony and the spirit of common brotherhood amongst all the people of India transcending religion, linguistic, regional or sectional diversities; to renounce practices derogatory to the dignity of women.

10. Article 243 D: Reservation of seats.

(Article 243 D(1)) Seats shall be reserved for –

- (a) The Scheduled Castes; and
- (b) The Scheduled Tribes,

(Article 243 D(2)) Not less than one-third of the total number of seats reserved under clause (1) shall be reserved for women belonging to the Scheduled Castes or, as the case may be, the Scheduled tribes .

(Article 243 D(3)) Not less than one-third (including the number of seats reserved for women belonging to the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes) of the total number of seats to be filled by direct election in every Panchayat to be reserved for women and such seats to be allotted by rotation to different constituencies in a Panchayat.

(Article 243 D (4)) Not less than one- third of the total number of offices of Chairpersons in the Panchayat at each level to be reserved for women.

SCHEMES /PROGRAMMES FOR EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN:

Central Government scheme:

The Ministry of Women and Child Development is implementing various schemes/ programmes to bring women into the mainstream of all the sectors in the country in order to empower them. The details are as under:

» **One Stop Centre and Universalization of Women Helplines:**

Ministry of WCD is administering two schemes from Nirbhaya Fund namely One Stop Centre and Universalization of Women Helplines. The One Stop Centres (OSCs), popularly known as Sakhi Centres, aim to facilitate women affected by violence (including domestic violence) with a range of integrated services under one roof such as Police facilitation, medical aid, providing legal aid and legal counselling, psycho-social counselling, temporary shelter etc.

» **Swadhar Greh Scheme:** The Swadhar Greh Scheme is being implemented as a Centrally Sponsored Scheme for women who are victims of difficult circumstances in need of institutional support for rehabilitation so that they could lead their life with dignity.

» **Ujjawala Scheme:** The Ujjawala Scheme is being implemented as a Centrally Sponsored Scheme for Prevention of trafficking and for Rescue, Rehabilitation, Reintegration and Repatriation of victims of trafficking for commercial sexual exploitation.

» **Working Women Hostel:** Working Women Hostel Scheme is implemented by the Government with the objective to provide safe and conveniently located accommodation for working women, with day care facility for their children, wherever possible, in urban, semi urban, or even rural areas where employment opportunity for women exist.

» **Beti Bachao Beti Padhao(BBBP) :** Beti Bachao Beti Padhao(BBBP) Scheme was launched on 22nd January 2015 with an aim to address declining Child Sex Ratio (CSR) and related issues of empowerment of girls and women over a life cycle continuum. The objectives of the scheme are, to prevent gender biased sex selective elimination, to ensure survival and protection of the girl child and to ensure education and participation of the girl child.

» **Mahila Shakti Kendra (MSK):** The Mahila Shakti Kendra (MSK) Scheme was approved in November, 2017 as a centrally sponsored scheme to empower rural women through community participation. The aims to facilitate inter- sectoral convergence of schemes and programs meant for women. The scheme is implemented through State Governments and UT Administrations with a cost sharing ratio of 60:40 between Centre and States except for North East & Special Category

States where the funding ratio is 90:10. For Union Territories 100% central funding is provided.

» **Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY):** Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY) is a Centrally Sponsored Conditional Cash Transfer Scheme, for implementation across the country with effect from 01.01.2017. The maternity benefit under PMMVY is available to all Pregnant Women & Lactating Mothers (PW&LM), excluding PW&LM who are in regular employment with the Central Government or the State Governments or Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs) or those who are in receipt of similar benefits under any law for the time being in force, for first living child of family.

State govt. scheme:

- Lakshmir Bhandar Prakalpa
- Rupashree Prakalpa
- Integrated Child Protection Scheme
- Integrated Child Development Service
- Integrated Rehabilitation Centre for Addicts (IRCA)
- Scholarship for Students
- Assistance To Disabled Persons for Purchase
- The National Award For The Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities
- Special Security Schemes Kolkata and Adjoining Areas Only
- Rajiv Gandhi Scheme for Empowerment of Adolescent Girl (RGSEAG)
- Integrated Programme for Older Persons (IPOP)
- Kanyashree Prakalpa
- Deen Dayal Rehabilitation Scheme (DDRS)
- District Disability Rehabilitation Centre (DDRC)
- The SABLA scheme
- Indira Gandhi Matritva Sahyog Yojana
- women-centric schemes since
- The State Resource Centre for Women (SRCW)
- Swawalmban Special and
- MuktiAlo

Women's role in Society: The modern women has started caring for health, figure, cultural, needs and interest, academic pursuits, social intercourse, religious activities, recreational needs etc. women are known to be the symbol of spirituality, strength, love, sacrifice and courage. The role of women in today's world is changing significantly. The progress achieved in this direction so far is not that significant and sufficient. The mindset of men has to be changed, women are also has given priority in all aspects equal to the men at all levels of decision making.

Conclusion: Our union cabinet led by prime minister has approved the women's reservation bill, 2023 to provide reservations for women in parliament and state assemblies. No doubt, the government of India has many weapons too tight for women empowerment. The women play a strategic role in the society and the economy. Overall, women empowerment has the potential to increase flexibility and encourage lifelong potential in the Indian socio-economy system. However, it will be important to carefully monitor its implementation and address any challenges that arise to ensure that it delivers on its promise of providing high-quality empower for all.

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