

# “The Upliftment in status of Women Empowerment in 20th century-A study of Bundelkhand Region Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh India”

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**ABSTRACT**--*The status of women suffered from huge changes over last few millennia. There has been great declination in the status of women from ancient to medieval period. The Main cause of degradation of status of women was invasion of India by foreign ruler especially Muslims ruler. Muslim along with them brought their culture with them which in turn resulted the downfall in the position of women in the society. Muslim culture at that time has very low perception towards women. They consider women's mere an object or property of father, brother and husband. This thought deprives women's existence as humans. The study of any society is incomplete without the study of role of women in his family, society and nation, equality status of women, Education freedom, and choice of marriage, freedom of practicing their constitutional rights and freedom of fulfilling their duties towards their family, society and nation. India is considered as a nation of Unity in Diversity. In India status of women differ with region. At present we have focus on Bundelkhand region. Bundelkhand region outstretches in two states i.e. Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh. Our objective of study is to investigate the change in status of women since independence to till date, study of different steps taken by constitution in empowerment of women, changes in views of society towards women, change in their socio-economic status from independence.*

**Keywords**--*women empowerment, 20th century, sati pratha.*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Women are important pillar of society. The word empowerment mainly got its importance when it is used for women. The women empowerment means acquiring control of their lives and acquiring the right of participation in decision making which has its effect at home, on society, on government and in international policies. The main problem of women empowerment is only some people has a clear perception of it.

Only by publishing on paper “Women hold up half sky” doesn't uplift the position and dignity of women. But if we have look in past years we can conclude that women have great achievement in all the areas which in turn reduces the gap between male and female but still male is enjoying privilege in access of every facilitation like

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health care, education, physical resources and opportunities of different sector like social, economic ,cultural and political a sphere. We talk about equalities but still we lag behind in equality which can prove by the facts that still everywhere women is assigned some reservation so that they can win this battle of equality. This gender inequality not only hindrance in the growth of any individual but it also effect growth of society as well as nation.

After independence numerous measures were taken by the government of India for raising the status of women and establishing the gender equality. The government programmes stretch from the birth of girl child, to its education, to its marriage, to its pregnancy, to its health care in different stages, to its professional life etc. That means government has touched every single requirement of women for their betterment. After all this facilities, women of some area still are leaving a miserable life. After all achievements of women still male fetus have preference over female fetus .In 2018, the sex ratio is 946 females for every 1000 female. According to past year census we can say sex ratio has gradual increment but still there is difference in numbers which prove that still inequality is prevailing in the thoughts of society.

Our study mainly focuses on particular region that is Bundelkhand region. The Bundelkhand region is basically situated in central India which is a mountain range divided among two states that are Uttar Pradesh (UP) and Madhya Pradesh (MP). MP has largest part of it. The largest city of Bundelkhand region is Jhansi which is considered as major hub for economic, education, cultural and transport. The region covers around 25 towns in both the states.

## **II. OBJECTIVES**

- To study the changes in status women from independence to till date.
- To study different measures taken by the government for women empowerment.
- To study the change in views of society towards women.
- To study the extent to which women enjoy all its constitutional rights.
- Overall study of change in socio-economic status of women.

## **III. LITERATURE REVIEW**

There are studies on development of women but no specific study which covers the Bundelkhand region of both Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh. In the numerous studies it is concluded that education and health are two important factors in the development of women. The Feminism in India is basically divided into three phases:

1. First phase started in the begin of mid -19<sup>th</sup> century when some male European colonists stand against sati pratha (Gangoli, 2007) .
2. Second phase belongs to the period between 1915-Indian Independence .This phase was got start up when Gandhi involve women's movement in Quit India Movement and was supported by all independent women's organization (Kumar, 1997).
3. The Last phase ranges in the period of post-independence which has its main focus area on women's treatment at home after marriage, environment at work place and their right to political parity (Kumar, 1997).

Nineteenth century was an important period for woman as during this period most of the problems related to women are highlighted and different reforms acts are formed to abolish it. After independence Government was at

fast track regarding different evil custom which are practiced by society regarding any women. Women of India now came forward to take part in all activities such politics, media, education, service sector, health sector, art and craft etc.

### ***Need For Women Empowerment***

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru said once “you can tell the condition of nation by looking at the status of its women”. Almost 50 percent of world population is women then why we talk about women empowerment? Why men don't need empowerment and women need it? Biologically also it is proved that female are superior to male than why women require special treatment even though they are not minority.

Answer to all this question is discrimination and domination done by men which women suffered from centuries. Women are always victim to various types of prejudicial treatment and violence of men overall the world. So how can India remain untouched by these practices? India can be considered as a country of traditions, customs and practices. This all traditions, customs and practices can be good and bad and also undergo changes over time. But irony is that at one side we worship female goddesses, we consider our country as mother but on other side Indian are popular for treating women abysmally inside and outside the homes.

India is nation of vivid religion and in every religion women has given respect and special position and viewed with dignity. As the society is male dominant so to maintain their superiority different types of physical and mental ill practices are designed for women who are now become important norms from ages. For example, sati pratha, domestic violence, sexual harassment did at work place and sexual violence, etc. which result in physical and mental stress.

Mayoux (2000) in his study revealed about inter-link between women's empowerment and microfinance. In this paper, analysis of power relation with respect to women empowerment is done. The power relations are:

- **Power within:** facilitating the women for expressing their ambition and policy for change.
- **Power to:** facilitating women to devise required expertise and enabling them with required resources to grab their ambition.
- **Power with:** facilitating women to understand their common interests, to systemize and accomplish it. Extend it to other organization of men and women.
- **Power over:** In power and resources, altering the basic discrimination which slow down women's aspiration and affect their speed to achieve them.

After reviewing effect of all the preexisting approaches of microfinance on women empowerment author concluded there still scope of improvement in the field of integration of different empowerment with micro finance.

Jafferey (1997) revealed that for empowering women politically and economically, it is very important to make women educationally empowered. Only Education is a tool that enable women to enjoy all opportunities that other section of society i.e. men is enjoying either by sharing opportunities otherwise snatch away from them. To flourish women at full extent, education play very important role. Education result in highlighting the hidden values, talent and abilities of women which in turn result in uplifting status women in society.

Mayoux (2001) has suggested a new an approach named “Gender Mainstreaming for Empowerment” .This Strategy is basically suggested for governmental agencies or donors. The main focus of this strategy is providing

equal access to all microfinance services for both male and female. An appropriate and equitable system should be designed for women empowerment through microfinance.

Pandey (2004) revealed in her study that rural women are accountable for world's half of food production. In developing countries, women account for 60-80 percent of food production. As India is developing country here household work and agricultural work comes under women's responsibility. In Bundelkhand society, due to its socio economic condition women plays a significant role in agricultural production. In Bundelkhand society women does multiple tasks like caretaker of family members, collection of fuel, water, fodder, forest products. She also perform work related to crop production actives and animal tending, seed=gathering and conserving it. After so much responsibility bearing, due to several issues poor women empowerment is persisting till now.

Badiger and Huilgal (2004) in their study revel that in farm women participate around 100 percent in animal grazing,82 percent fodder transportation is done by women,80 percent of fodder collection is perform by women, around 92 percent cleaning of cattle shed and other allied activities done by women. For statement related to uneducated women have more working habit regarding farming activities than educated women, 65 per cent men were agreed as against 72 percent women agree ness followed by 58 per cent men and 92 per cent women with ranked 3<sup>rd</sup> agreed about women contributed a much amount larger share of their earning to family maintenance than men.

Srivastva (2010) study reveal that while employment rate of rural women's is increasing over decades but still women is facing discrimination which force them to opt for low paying job even they are highly qualified and are skilled .Higher work participation doesn't mean better outcomes until women are highly educated. Education doesn't increase work participation but they can increase opportunities for women workforce in non-agricultural sector. Autonomy of women is measured in terms of control over mobility, land and their willingness to join self-help groups, which enables them to join job into non-agricultural jobs. The paper argues for policy interventions to increase work opportunities and enhance wages for rural women workers.

Kumar (2008) focused on understanding the nature and level of labour activity in which women is involved in UP districts. Kumar also studied about the extent and nature of education specific and total FWPR in urban and rural areas. Author also studied about different socio economic factors which are responsible for changes in WPR of women across the state. In short, efforts to improve the position of women in Uttar Pradesh must focus on women as economic actors. FWPR (female work participation rates) in Uttar Pradesh and its districts is very low and widely varies among the districts. Author measured real employment status of urban and rural female by the coefficient of equality is also low. He revealed 46.5 percent of variation in FWPR. In determining female participation, economic factors dominate socio-cultural variables. All the variables taken together explain 66.9 percent of variation in FWPR in rural Uttar Pradesh and 87.8 percent of variation in urban Uttar Pradesh. Sex ratio and Schedule caste population has positive impact on female participation rate and literacy rate has negative impact on Rural Female Work Participation Rate.

Narula (2009) concentrated her focus on the study of development of elementary education of Bundelkhand region of U.P. and infer that after all types of initiatives taken by government for achieving UEE (Universal Elementary Education) goal in Bundelkhand region still large differences is observed in field of literacy, sex ratio, access to health benefit, work participation etc.

Gupta (2009) revealed in her study about how the education of mother effect on the immunization of child. According to her girls are more benefited in case of immunization if mother is highly educated.

Udai Bhan Singh and Nripendra Kishore Mishra (2013) in their study facts shows that in Uttar Pradesh women work participation is less as compared to men. The work participation ratio is highly influenced geographical space and socio economic characteristic. WPR is also has influence of caste structure as Hindu SC/ST and Muslim OBC has higher participation. Women of age group 15-59 have higher work participation. Women of eastern and western have low participation. Education too have its effect on WPR as women get more work option after completing 12 years education other than agriculture. Low caste women mainly work as casual labor. Within non-farm sector manufacture, tailoring, grocery shops and other retail trade are most common type's work that women opt for. Around one third of women are recorded to be working as wage worker in nonfarm sector. But wage rate of women is low as compared to men

Irrespective of their sector and skill level. Author after their research suggested that single and aggregative policy cannot be opted or implemented in whole state.

Sarju Narain, Shobhana Gupta and Surat Singh (2015) in their study concluded the role of women is very crucial and significant in development of agriculture but they lag behind as compared to men in interaction and participation in market visit, farmers training and organizational activities. Women are involved in most of the family management activities Thus, Women contribution and competency is more in Agriculture and household activities while the Women Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI) showed disempowered situation. It means, women need specific attention in UP Bundelkhand region regarding domains like production, resource, income & credit and leadership & time for their empowerment.

#### **IV. DATA SOURCES**

Research work is basically based on secondary data extracted from census of India. The area of study is mainly focused on whole Bundelkhand region which stretch out into two states Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh consist of 13 districts viz. Jhansi, Hamirpur, Mahoba, Jalaun, Lalitpur, Banda, Chitrakoot, Datia, Tikamgarh, Chhatarpur, sagar, Panna, Damoh.

##### ***District Wise Analysis of Sex ratio in 20<sup>th</sup> Century***

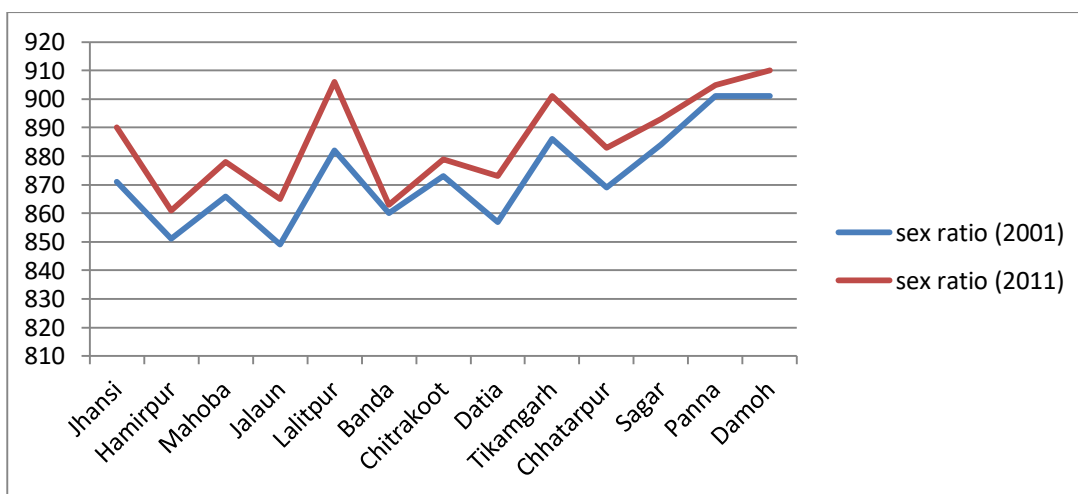
Table 1 revealed the comparison of sex ratio between year 2001 and 2011. The facts shows that still in 20<sup>th</sup> century female per thousand male is still very less. If we look into data we can conclude that in 10 years Gap maximum 2.4% of increment in Lalitpur district whose sex ratio increased from 882 to 906 and minimum increment is in Banda district i.e. only 0.3%, sex ratio increased from 860 to 863. There still long way to go for women to come into equal count to man. Research on status of women revealed that in modern era also preference for a son over daughter runs in rich as well as poor family, educated or illiterate families, in every section of society whether they are general, SC, ST or OBC, in every family independent of religion, in every part of country from North to South and East to West. Daughters are still considering as a economic burden on family (Narula, 2009). They are consider as Money spender as in their marriage parents has to give dowry and sons are consider as Money bringer as they get dowry in their marriage. Women role as Home maker are always neglected. Even in some part

of society they play both the role of Home maker and economic supporter but still they have to suffer from physical harassment. If we look into Bundelkhand region we can find that in all district of Bundelkhand sex ratio is still very less, in some district it doesn't reached till 900.

Dowry costs of daughter results in ill treatment towards them. Families even won't provide them proper food, proper Medicare when require, won't spend much on their livelihood too and ask them to work in younger ages and get married younger to relive from burden and even after marriage also women suffer a lot .The suffering of women doesn't end here .They have to struggle everywhere whether workplace, public place or home. This all are main reason of their suffering

**Table 1:** Comparison of sex ratio in all districts of Bundelkhand in between year 2001 and 2011

	District	2001	2011
1.	Jhansi	871	890
2.	Hamirpur	851	861
3.	Mahoba	866	878
4.	Jalaun	849	865
5.	Lalitpur	882	906
6.	Banda	860	863
7.	Chitrakoot	873	879
8.	Datia	857	873
9.	Tikamgarh	886	901
10.	Chhatarpur	869	883
11.	Sagar	884	893
12.	Panna	901	905
13.	Damoh	901	910



**Figure1:** sex ration

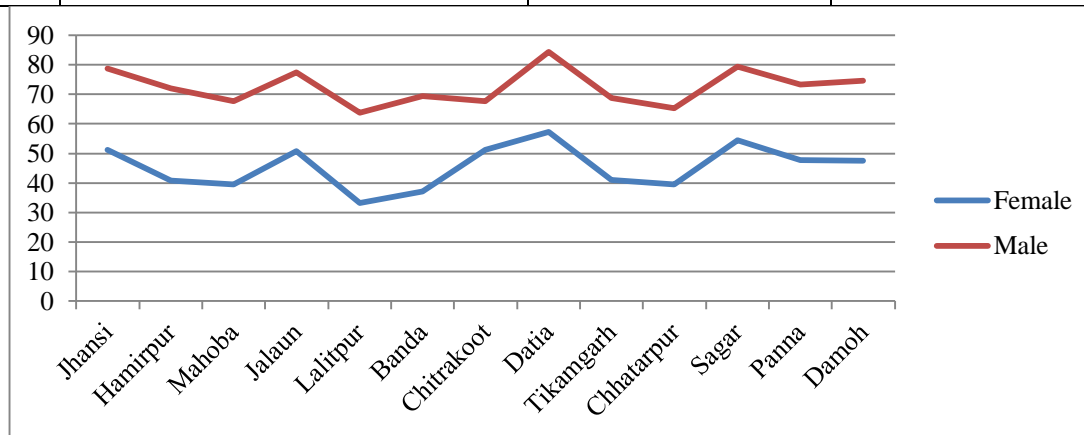
**District wise analysis of Literacy rate in year 2001**

As from table 2 we can see comparison between literacy rate of male and female. Highest male Literacy rate is 79.4 in Chhatarpur district but highest female literacy rate is only 57.2 in Datia district. From the table below it is very clear that in maximum district female literacy rate is not even 50%. The main reason behind low literacy rate is:

- Parent negative attitude for Girl child.
- Poverty
- Lack of basic facilities in schools.
- Lack of Female teacher.
- Male are consider as an earning member of family as well as care taker of family.
- Dowry system.

**Table 1.2:** Comparison of male and female literacy rate in all districts of Bundelkhand in year 2001

	District	Female	Male
1.	Jhansi	51.2	78.76
2.	Hamirpur	40.7	71.9
3.	Mahoba	39.6	67.7
4.	Jalaun	50.7	77.4
5.	Lalitpur	33.3	63.8
6.	Banda	37.1	69.3
7.	Chitrakoot	51.3	67.7
8.	Datia	57.2	84.3
9.	Tikamgarh	41	68.7
10.	Chhatarpur	39.4	65.3
11.	Sagar	54.5	79.4
12.	Panna	47.8	73.3
13.	Damoh	47.5	74.7



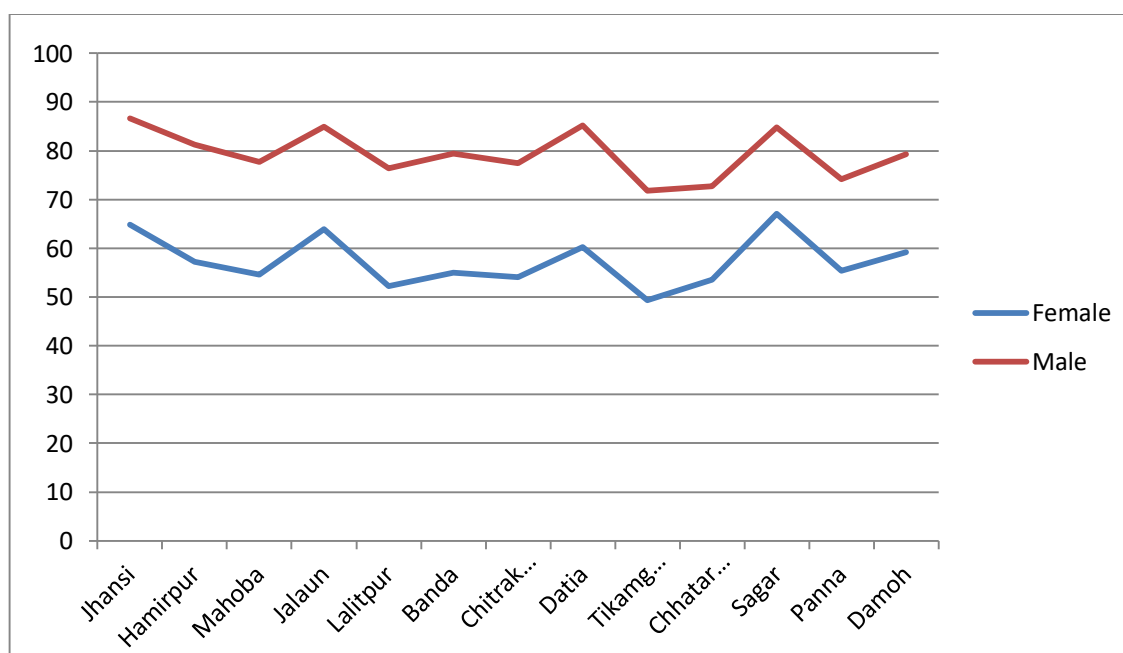
**Figure 2:** Chart of Comparison of male and female literacy rate in all districts of Bundelkhand in year 2001

### ***District Wise Analysis of Literacy Rate 2011***

As time passes society is awakening towards the education of male and female both. From Table 3 it is clear that along with male, female literacy rate is also increased. The male literacy rate has reached to 86.58 which is the highest in Jhansi district but female still lagging behind, there literacy highest literacy rate is 67.02 in Sagar district.

**Table 3:** Comparison of male and female literacy rate in all districts of Bundelkhand in year 2011

	<b>District</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Male</b>
1.	Jhansi	64.88	86.58
2.	Hamirpur	57.19	81.27
3.	Mahoba	54.65	77.72
4.	Jalaun	63.88	84.89
5.	Lalitpur	52.26	76.41
6.	Banda	54.95	79.38
7.	Chitrakoot	54.03	77.42
8.	Datia	60.21	85.18
9.	Tikamgarh	49.4	71.77
10.	Chhatarpur	53.59	72.66
11.	Sagar	67.02	84.85
12.	Panna	55.44	74.14
13.	Damoh	59.22	79.27



**Figure 3:** chart of male, female

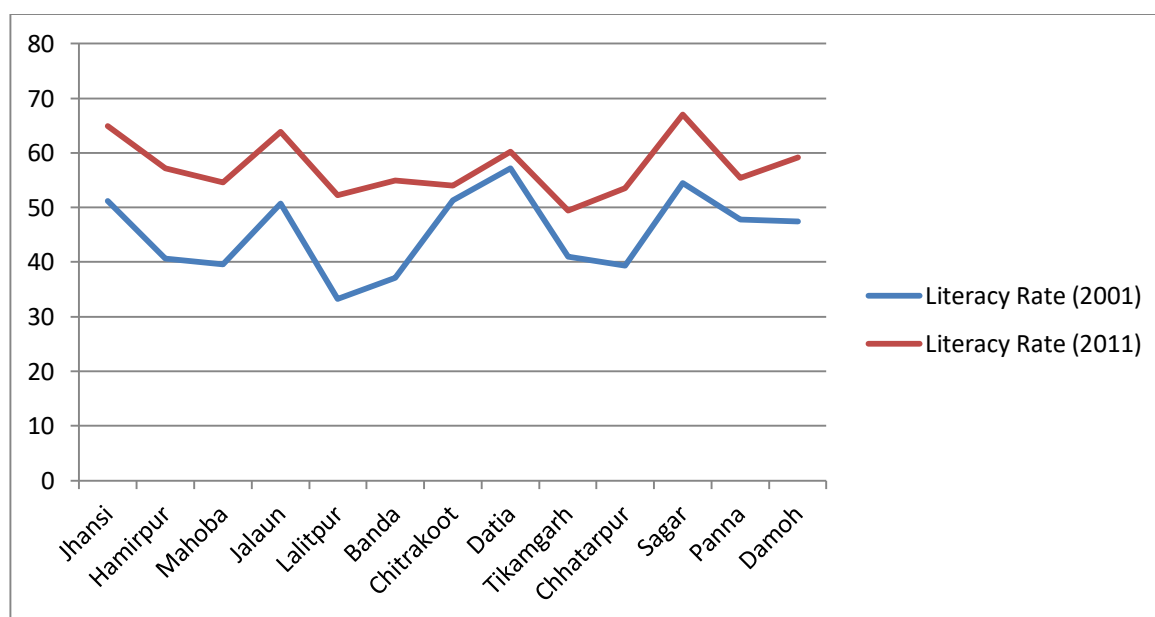


**District wise comparison of female Literacy rate in year 2001 and 2011**

After all efforts by government women literacy rate grew from 45.48% on an average of year 2001 to 57.44% on an average in year 2011. As we can conclude that progress in education sector is around 11.96 % only in 10 years with regard to women i.e. around 1.2% per year. With this rate persist 100% female literacy rate will be achieved until 2050.

**Table 1.4:** Comparison of female literacy rate in all districts of Bundelkhand in year 2001 and 2011

	District	Literacy Rate (2001)	Literacy Rate (2011)
1.	Jhansi	51.2	64.88
2.	Hamirpur	40.7	57.19
3.	Mahoba	39.6	54.65
4.	Jalaun	50.7	63.88
5.	Lalitpur	33.3	52.26
6.	Banda	37.1	54.95
7.	Chitrakoot	51.3	54.03
8.	Datia	57.2	60.21
9.	Tikamgarh	41	49.4
10.	Chhatarpur	39.4	53.59
11.	Sagar	54.5	67.02
12.	Panna	47.8	55.44
13.	Damoh	47.5	59.22



**Figure 4:** literacy rate

## V. WOMEN DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES BY THE GOVERNMENT

Government is taking several initiatives at national and state level for empowering women. Schemes that government are running at national level are:

**I. *Beti Bachao Beti Padho(BBBP)*:** Launched on 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2015 to deal with declining sex ratio and it is joint initiative run by Women and Child development ministry , HRD and Health and family welfare ministry. It was an awareness campaign about importance of women and it comprises of many schemes related to women like health, sanitation, gender parity in education etc.

**II. *Scheme for Adolescent Girls*:** This scheme is designed for adolescent girls of age group of 11-14 year for improving their health and nutritional status. It also focuses on upgrading their skills. Under this scheme Adolescent girls are motivated for going back to formal schools or taking skill training.

**III. *Swadhar Greh*:** This is a home of 1000 beds which is constructed in Vrindavan District for widows so they can have safe place to stay, nutritional food to eat, counseling services and health services are also provided in it. It is named as 'Krishna Kutir'.

**IV. *Ujjwala Scheme*:** Under this scheme PM aims to provide five crore free LPG connection for women below poverty-line. This scheme was launched with the view of improving health condition of women which worsen when they cook on chullas which releases smoke. This scheme has other side also related to safeguarding environment.

**V. *Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY)*:** PMMVY is Maternity Benefit programme that is launched for all pregnant women. Under this scheme conditional cash transfer happen for pregnant women or lactating mother.

**VI. *Rashtriya Mahila Kosh*:** It is a micro finance organization established in 1993. It comes under Ministry of women and Child development .It is establish to cater the need of finance of poor and helpless women for supporting livelihood and other revenue generating activities in very client friendly manner.

**VII. *Mahila E-haat*:** This is first on its kind of online e-marketing platform to provide women entrepreneurs/SHGS/NGOs a place to sell their goods directly. This played very important role social and economic empowerment of women. This Platform provides a direct link between vendors and buyers.

**VIII. *Mahila Shakti Kendra*:** It is one stop center where all support services come together for rural women empowerment with an option for employment, skill development, nutrition, health and digital literacy.

### *Madhya Pradesh Specific Women Empowerment Yojana*

a) **Ladli Laxmi Yojana:** Yojana started in the year 2007 with the aim of improving attitude towards girl child, increasing sex ratio, improving education and health services for girl child, abolishing child marriage, discouraging female infanticide etc.

b) **Usha Kiran Yojana:** Started in year 2008 for implementation of Protection of women from Domestic violence.

c) Nikah yojana/Kanyadan yojana: This yojana was started on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2006 by Shivraj singh Chouhan. Under this yojana needy families are supported in terms of money for marrying off their daughters or widows or divorcee after they completed their age of marriage.

d) Swadhar Scheme: It was started with the aim to cater the basic needs of women surviving in difficult circumstances and providing them skill training to make self-dependent.

## VI. CONCLUSIONS

Women are Foundation of any society but like foundation of building suppressed by building same women is also suppressed under difference of society. They are always considering as low in comparison to man. Government is trying hard and making different scheme for upliftment of women but still success is not at proper rate. Women Empowerment is empowering women overall i.e. from their mind, rights, decisions, thoughts etc. There is a saying the most powerful enemy of women is women itself. This means if all women stand against evils norms made by society and decide not to follow for themselves and for other than no man can force them to do that. Women itself has to waken her inner conscious and start believing that she is powerful and no one can harm her will result in society comprising equality of women not only in thoughts but in count and status.

## VII. DISCUSSIONS

- In the government part, Planning needs to be effective to focus on smaller regions within Bundelkhand. Specific projects and initiatives should be taken for upliftment of women of different region.
- Special efforts should be done to detect and remove gender base opportunities for job and some more efforts should be put forward by government in improving the wage system making gender free.
- Girls' education at the higher level can be guaranteed with its easier access and only with easier access, by opening more senior level school.

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