

## WOMEN WELFARE SYSTEM IN TAMIL NADU

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### ABSTRACT

*In human societies, man has been the traditional bread winner and also the provider of physical security to his family. Thus a woman has been dependent upon man for her livelihood and also for physical protection all through the ages. To protect the rights of the women and develop their confident Tamil Nadu established Women's Welfare Department in 1947 in Madras province, it is a unique organization in more aspects and first of its kind in India. This department implements so many schemes for the upliftment of socially backward group, women and children to enrich the State.*

**Keywords:** Women, Status, Welfare, Tamil Nadu, Schemes,

### 1. INTRODUCTION

In human societies, man has been the traditional bread winner and also the provider of physical security to his family. Thus a woman has been dependent upon man for her livelihood and also for physical protection all through the ages. The Western culture calls a woman by the terms "weaker sex" and "better half". The Indian (Hindu) culture treats woman as Ardhangi (equal partner). On the other hand some of the religious scriptures refer women as abala (helpless). With the deterioration of women's status, some puranas and dharmasatras classified men and women and equated women with (untouchables). One of the couplets of the great Hindi poet Tulsi Das says "Pashu, Nari taden ke adhikare" means cattle, snake, women deserved to be treated alike. Women all through ages have been given a secondary status of importance and on many occasions were least

considered. With the emergence of modern Governments, the policy of welfare was adopted in the promotion of the welfare of women.

## **2. MEANING OF WELFARE**

The very expression of the word welfare is good. It is the state of airing or doing well. The word welfare is also a word with life in it as it is related only to living things. The most important thing welfare is that nothing is expected in return for the services rendered. The Oxford American Dictionary (2010) refers Welfare as the health happiness and fortunes of a person or group or the statutory procedure or social effort designed to promote the basic physical and material wellbeing in need. It is the procedure of right to Education, Housing or Financial support given for this purpose. The term refers to the services oriented to the poor, physically or mentally handicapped, the socially maladjusted i.e., generally the vulnerable groups of the society. The concept of needy and the vulnerable varied from time to time. The term vulnerable has been extended to include Women, Children, Industrial workers and Social Disadvantaged groups. Includes all the areas of health, housing, education, co - operation and mutual aid.

## **3. SOCIAL WELFARE SYSTEM IN INDIA**

Social welfare in India is the concern of both the Central and the State Governments. The subjects falling within this purview of the Centre and the State are indicated in the 7<sup>th</sup> Schedule appended to the Indian Constitution. The main aim of the Government is for the development and welfare of the three most vulnerable sections of society i.e., the Women, the Children and the Handicapped.

## **4. SOCIAL WELFARE SYSTEM IN TAMIL NADU**

The Government of Tamil Nadu has entrusted the subject of women welfare to the Directorate of Social welfare functioning under the supervision of the Social Welfare Department know as the Social Welfare and Nutritious Meal Programme Department (SW & NMP Dept.). The objective of this department is the upliftment of women and children who are economically and socially the weaker sections of the society. The Department is the nodal agency for the upliftment of socially backward group particularly women and children. It coordinates the activities of five Heads of Departments under control viz. Director of Social Welfare, State Commissioner for Disabled, Director of Social Defence, World Bank assisted Integrated Child Development Project-III and Tamil Nadu Corporation for Development of Women Limited to ensure total care of such target groups. It also coordinates with the activities and policies of other departments to ensure holistic care of such target groups.

The Central Government through the Ministry of Women and Child Development and the Central Social Welfare Board also renders its support in the welfare of women in Tamil Nadu. It allocates larger funds on the heads of Social Services. The Tamil Nadu Social Welfare Board as the limb of the CSWB executes Central, State and Centre-State sponsored schemes in Tamil Nadu for the welfare of Women. Apart from the

Government's role, the Non-Governmental Organizations or the Voluntary Organizations put in hand with the Government in the promotion of women welfare in the state of Tamil Nadu.

## **5. WOMEN WELFARE IN TAMIL NADU**

In 1994, the Government of Tamil Nadu had announced 'Visio 2000', a set of forward looking strategies for empowerment of women. The prime objective of such an initiative was to bring women into the mainstream of society and enable them to lobby for their own advancement. Keeping this in view and in order to highlight women's rightful place, the Government of Tamil Nadu has formulated many plans, policies and innovative programmes for the upliftment of women. Most of these programmes are in the field of training, employment, income generation, welfare and supportive services and gender sensitization. All these programmes and schemes of the State Government aim at making women independent and self reliant.

The Government of India through planning commission formulates five-year plans. Special attention to women is envisaged through these plans.

- ❖ The First Plan (1951-56) paved way for the establishment of the Central Social Welfare Board (CSWB) in 1953, to promote welfare activities exclusively for women through a network of Voluntary Organizations In 1954, State Social Welfare Advisory Boards were established in all states to promote women welfare.
- ❖ The Second plan (1956-61) geared to organize Mahila Mandals (Women's groups) at grass root level to ensure better implementation of women welfare schemes.
- ❖ The Third plan (1961-66) laid emphasis on female education, health services and increased the allocations of the funds to the Central social Welfare Board.
- ❖ The Fourth plan (1966-69) emphasized women's education and the promotion of women's welfare within the family by bringing down the birth rate.
- ❖ The Fifth plan (1974-79) initiated a shift on the approach from 'welfare to development' to cope with several problems of the family and women.
- ❖ The Sixth plan (1980-85) included a separate chapter on women and development and extended assistance to women to overcome poverty.
- ❖ The Seventh plan (1985-1990) formulated the 'Support for Empowerment of Women Programme (STEP) to render support to women's employment so as to raise their social and economic status and bringing them to the mainstream of National development. The plan paved the way for the establishment of separate Department of Women and Child Development (DWCD) under the ministry of Human Resource Development and also envisaged the establishment of 'Women Development Corporations' in all Indian States. In 1989, the Tamil Nadu Corporation for Women Development (TNCDW) was established through equity participation on a 50:50 basis between the state and the centre for promoting employment generating activities for women's group and women from the weaker sections.

- ❖ The Eighth plan (1992-97) shifted the emphasis from “women’s development to women’s empowerment”. It emphasized the convergence and integration of services offered by health, employment, education and welfare programmes at grass root levels.
- ❖ The Ninth Plan (1997-2002) made empowerment of women as one of the primary objectives of the plan and directed both the centre and the state governments to adopt a special strategy of ‘Women component Plan’ (WCP) through which not less than 30% of funds flows to women from all the development sectors.
- ❖ The Tenth Plan (2002-2007) had made a major commitment towards women as the agents of socio – economic transformation and gender – Justice and the national policy of empowerment of women was adopted in April 2001. The Department of Women and Child Development (DWCD) was upgraded into a ministry in 2006.
- ❖ The Eleventh Plan (2007-12) recognized that women were not a homogeneous category. Their requirements differ based on their locations within various castes, communities, religious, geographical and development zones. For the first time, in the history of Indian planning women were recognized not only as equal citizens but also as the agents of economic and social growth.

Thus the government has emphasized women’s welfare through planning and has been successful in achieving the goal of improving the socio-economic condition of women.

## 6. Women Welfare Department in Tamil Nadu

The genesis of the Women Welfare Department may be traced to the Women’s Auxiliary Air Raid Precaution corps (WAARPC) started during the Second World War. Band of voluntary workers organized themselves as “Women’s Air Raid Precaution corps” (WARPC) in 1941 during the Second World War for instructing illiterate and ignorant women who lived in the pavements and slums on the safety measures of air raid precautions.

A Journal of the Women’s Air Raid Precaution corps was started in February 1945. In 1945, after the cessation of the war, when the need for schemes for civil defence was over the Government felt that the experience gained by the organizers could be profitably used for constructive social service work among women and children. Hence the Government decided to retain the corps with suitable paid staff in order to undertake new lines of social service amongst women in Madras Presidency. In view of this change the organization was therefore reconstituted and designated with the Change of nomenclature as the “Indian Women civic Corps” (IWCC).

Later in 1947, with the dawn of Independence, Government felt the need for the further expansion of the scope and activities of the IWCC. When the work expanded and it was envisaged to undertake all the different aspects of welfare work relating to women and children, the Government considered it more fitting to bring into being a separate department known as the Women’s Welfare Department. The Women’s Welfare Department established in 1947 in Madras province, was a unique organization in more aspects and first of its kind in India. Probably, it was the first sustained and continuous endeavor in the field of women’s welfare. Its field of service covered the whole of the Madras province.

It aimed through its activities to promote social, cultural, civic and economic welfare of the women and children in the province. To achieve this, the Department combined the missionary zeal of voluntary agency with the drive of state machinery and the resources of other department. The work of the Department comprised educative, preventive and rehabilitation aspect of welfare work. A four-fold programme of citizenship training, adult education, adult literacy and cottage industries was carried out in those community service centers.

In the educational aspect the Department started Training Institutes to provide special training to the field works of the Department at Madras, Gandhigram and Seethanagaram (Andhra). Village works were trained by Kasturiba Trust in Tamil Nadu and Andra Desa at Gandhigram and Seethanagaram respectively and the urban works were trained in Madras. The Department worked in close co-operation with different departments of the Government and local bodies particularly with health, education, food and Firka development departments in their programme for the betterment of women.

In February 1951 one Women's Welfare Officer was posted to each district. Women's Welfare committees later came to be known as Women welfare branches / Mahalir Mandrams / Women's Groups which were established at the District, Block and Village levels guided by the representatives of district Women's Welfare officers. In 1953 the post of Women's Welfare Officer was abolished and the Department was placed in the charge of the Director of Rural Welfare.

From October 1953 to July 1955 there was no separate department for the welfare of women. With the formation of Andhra state on 1<sup>st</sup> October 1953, the Department was reorganized. The post of Director of Rural Welfare (Women) was sanctioned. Again in August 1955 a separate department of women's welfare was formed with the Director of women's welfare as the head of the department. The Director of Women's Welfare, Madras was empowered to exercise the powers delegated to the Deputy Director of Rural Welfare (Women).

A state advisory committee was set up to the Women's Welfare Department in 1956 and it was reconstituted in 1957. From August 1955 to May 1961 the Women's Welfare Department was functioning without any change.

The three main agencies the Women Welfare Department (WWD), the Tamil Nadu Social Welfare Board (TNSWB) and the Community Development Programmes (CDP) dealing with women welfare were integrated into a unified department in 1961. The integrated agencies were named as the Integrated Department of Women Welfare.

The Tamil Nadu Government planned of initiating a separate department for social welfare when other states of India like Maharashtra, Karnataka had an individual department for the social welfare. The Rural Development & Local Administration (RD & LA) Department proposed to agree to the creation of a Statutory Social Welfare Board on the lines of the State Khadi and Village Industries Board to merge the Women Welfare Dept & The Community Development Programme (WWD & CDP) staff in charge of women's and Children's

programme with the Statutory Board. The creation of unified department of Rural Development and Local Administration Department and Social welfare (RD LA & SW Dept.) shall be made only after the setting up of a Statutory State Welfare Board. The RD & LA Department did not agree to transfer the subject of women's welfare to the Home Department.

The Directorate of women's welfare remained under the control of RD & LA Department till 1967. In 1969, the institutions under the control of the former Women's Welfare Department were transferred to the Director of Women's welfare and the nomenclature was changed into Directorate of women's welfare. A full time Director of Women's Welfare was appointed in the year 1970. In 1972 the nomenclature of the Directorate of Women's Welfare was changed to the Directorate of Social welfare. The administration of women welfare continued under the control of Social Welfare Department till 1987 and separate ministries were created for the Adi-Dravida welfare and the Backward Classes Welfare & Social Welfare Department (BCW & SW Dept.). Hence the administration of women welfare was entrusted with the BCW & SW Dept. Monitored by the directorate of Social Welfare. Later by the end of the year 1989 the BCW & SW Dept. was bifurcated into two separate ministries.

On the bifurcation of erstwhile combined Backward Classes Welfare and Nutritious Meal Programme Department, the Social Welfare and Nutritious Meal Programme Department (SW & NMP Dept.) started functioning with a separate identity with effect from 01.01.1990. The administration of the Nutritious Meal Programme was entrusted with the SW & NMP Department.

The SW & NMP Dept. is the nodal department for the upliftment of socially backward group women and children. It coordinates the Activities of five heads of Departments under its control viz. the Directorate of Social Welfare, The Commissionerate of Integrated Child Development Project, the Directorate of Nutritious Meal Programme, the Director of Social Defence and the Commissionerate of Revenue Administration.

The Directorate of Social Welfare functioning under the Department of Social Welfare Implements various women welfare programmes for the cause of women upliftment in Tamil Nadu.

The Women welfare schemes are divided into three categories such as:

- Rehabilitation and Institutional Care Schemes
- Financial Assistance Schemes
- Schemes for Socio-economic Upliftment

## **7. CONCLUSION**

The Women's Welfare Department established in 1947 in Madras province, was a unique organization in more aspects and first of its kind in India. Probably, it was the first sustained and continuous endeavor in the field or women's welfare. In 1990 Govt of Tamilnadu combined Backward Classes Welfare and Nutritious Meal Programme Department, the Social Welfare and Nutritious Meal Programme Department (SW & NMP Dept.)

started functioning with a separate identity. This department implements so many schemes for the upliftment of socially backward group, women and children to enrich the State.

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