



NARI SHAKTI: MYTH AND REALITY

APRIL 2024



"Nari Shakti" was invoked by Prime Minister Narendra Modi amid 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav' in 2022. Since then it has been highlighted as an important plank by the BJP. This report looks at how women have fared over the last decade and outcomes of key women focused initiatives.



VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

“WOMEN'S SECURITY WILL BE GIVEN MORE PRIORITY”

BJP Manifesto, 2019



“India has been shamed by a string of high-profile rapes and sexual attacks on women... Our heads hang in shame when we hear about rapes...Why can't we prevent this?”

Narendra Modi, 2014

“Women's security is UP government's top priority”

CM Yogi Adityanath

REALITY

CRIMES AGAINST WOMEN AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE

HAVE INCREASED IN 10 YEARS OF MODI RULE

The total number of crimes against women increased from **3,37,922** in 2014 to **3,71,503** in 2020*

Number of crimes against women per Lakh of the population increased from **56.3** in 2014 to **66.4** in 2022

2022 saw a grim escalation of crimes against women from 2021 and 2020, with a staggering **4,45,256** cases registered.

51

FIRs every hour

88

women are raped in India every day, on average

While there is a general increase in violence, particularly vulnerable to the right wing misogyny are Muslim women. And the reasons are not hard to find.

2019

BJP MLA Kuldeep Singh Sengar was found guilty in the gang rape of a 17-year-old girl from Unnao, UP. Only after the victim attempted to immolate herself and public pressure mounted, was Sengar taken into custody. The victim's family continued to face harassment until the SC intervened and ordered protection, compensation. The BJP continued to extend support to the MLA who even participated in a rally.

2020

After a Dalit girl was brutally gangraped in Hathras in BJP-ruled Uttar Pradesh by Thakur men, the police not only rejected the rape allegations, but also burnt the victim's body in the dead of night, destroying evidence.

2021

Several Muslim women vocal on social media were horrified to find their profiles being auctioned online - on Bulli Bai and Sulli Deals apps. All six of the radicalised tech-savvy youth accused were arrested in Jan 2022, but **freed on bail** by Jun 2022.

2022

After a prolonged legal battle, the 11 rapists of Bilkis Bano, a pregnant Muslim woman gangraped during the 2002 anti-Muslim riots in Gujarat were convicted and sentenced to life imprisonment. In 2022, the government released them on "good behaviour" grounds, with the release order officially ratified by the Union Home ministry. The released rapists were garlanded and lauded as "good, sanskaari Brahmins" by BJP Godhra MLA₂ C.K. Raulji. The remission was overturned by the SC which deemed the Gujarat government's actions unconstitutional.

*National Crime Records Bureau

REALITY

2023

Olympic and World medal-winning **women wrestlers** protesting in New Delhi were forcibly removed and attacked by police for protesting against outgoing Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) chief and **BJP MP Brij Bhushan Singh**, accused of **sexual harassment**. The issue was trivialised, and no action against the MP. Women and Child Welfare Minister Smriti Irani remained silent on the matter. An FIR was filed only after the Supreme Court's intervention.

After deadly riots broke out between Meitei and Kuki-Zo tribes in Manipur, an incident of a mob of men parading and sexually assaulting three women on 4 May 2023 triggered outrage across the country. An FIR was registered on May 18 and the first arrest and first statement from the PM was issued on July 20, 76 days later! This was one of many

instances of sexual assault during the ongoing violence in the BJP-ruled Northeastern state where justice was delayed or absent.

2024

As shocking as the gang rape of a Spanish tourist by 7 men in Jharkhand was, equally shocking was BJP member and National Commission of Women Chair Rekha Sharma's response to a tweet describing incidents of harassment of women travellers in India. She expressed more concern about the tweets defaming India than about the actual incidents.

The instances of inaction and complicity cut across the government starting from the **Prime Minister who has been a mute spectator** to many of the mentioned atrocities and instances of injustice most prominently at Manipur. **Minister for Women and Child Development, Smriti Irani, has lashed out at victims who publicly speak of sexual violence**, and accused them of defaming the government. Other BJP leaders have **downplayed rape incidents and incidents of sexual violence** in the country, especially when the perpetrator is a BJP legislator or party worker or the victim is a woman from a minority or Dalit community.

REALITY

MARITAL RAPE

27%

women in India suffered physical violence

6.7%

suffered sexual violence at the hand of their husbands.

The Justice JS Verma committee recommended the criminalisation of marital rape since the state of being married does not generate automatic consent to sexual acts.

CEDAW (Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women) to which India is a signatory, prohibits marital rape. Over the past five decades, many countries have criminalised marital rape.

However, the Government of India continues to sidestep the issue of “marital rape” on grounds that it will impact the “holy” institution of marriage. The consent, dignity and security of women have not been given the same consideration.

In 2016, Women and Child Development Minister Maneka Gandhi told Parliament that the concept of marital rape, cannot be suitably applied in the Indian context and criminalising it would strain family ties. In 2022, BJP leader Sushil Modi also claimed that marital rape would be difficult to prove and criminalising it would end the institution of marriage. In 2023, the Union Government, in response to a batch of SC petitions challenging the exception to IPC section 375, continued to evade taking a clear stand on marital rape because of the “social ramifications”.

REALITY

ENSURING WOMEN'S SAFETY AND SECURITY

The **Nirbhaya Fund**, established in 2013 after public outrage over the Nirbhaya rape case, was a key initiative for improving women's safety. However, the fund has been under- and possibly wrongly utilised indicating a lack of leadership, focus and seriousness.

Despite the establishment of fast-track courts, **the conviction rate of crimes against women in 2021 was 26.5% and the pendency rate was 95%.**

From 2014 to 2021, the Ministry of Women and Child Development (**MWCD**) - **the nodal ministry for the Fund - got only 12% of total funds and utilised a mere 30% of that.** Bulk of funds sanctioned to the home ministry, police, railway, roads, etc. were used for infrastructure and other non-women-specific uses.

While schemes have been put into place to strengthen women's safety, indifferent implementation and misogynistic attitudes have undermined their effectiveness. The government's role in absolving culprits further legitimises the increasing violence.

In 2021, only

50%

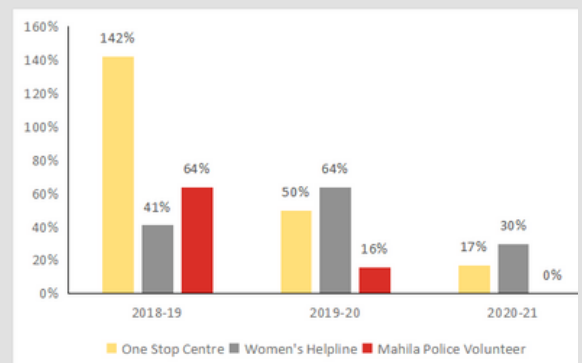
of the

9,764

crores had been released and only

29%

utilised.



WOMEN'S RIGHTS, DIGNITY AND AGENCY

“GOVERNMENT IS COMMITTED TO EMPOWERING WOMEN”

PM Modi, March 8 2024



Has the government actually addressed issues of gender injustice and affirmed women's rights, dignity and agency?

UNIFORM CIVIL CODE

“There cannot be gender equality till a Uniform Civil Code (UCC) is adopted. UCC will bring gender justice to women of all communities.”

BJP Manifesto, 2019

REALITY

An “Egalitarian” Civil Code that prioritises women’s rights over “uniformity” is required. Women’s groups across the country have opposed the UCC as defined, because it divides and targets communities rather than delivering gender justice across and within communities.

In 2018, the 21st Law Commission of India declared “Uniform Civil Code is neither necessary nor desirable at this stage as it would be counter-productive for the harmony of the nation,” and suggested that “reforms in personal laws should be done by amendments and not by replacement.”

Further, by identifying that “discrimination and not difference lies at the root of inequality” it prioritised “gender equality within each religious community, rather than between communities.”

Despite this clear conclusion, the 22nd Law Commission reopened the issue, eliciting views from stakeholders – including “public and religious organisations”, following which Uttarakhand became the first state to introduce the UCC in 2024. The **Uttarakhand UCC is a discriminatory code** that takes away women’s right to cohabit with partners of their choice, making them vulnerable to vigilantism and moral policing, putting them under the increasingly patriarchal control of the State. It also:

leaves Scheduled Tribes (STs) out of its ambit contradicting the claim that UCC is meant for all religions and communities

ignores the inbuilt discrimination within the Hindu Undivided Family (HUF) personal laws

makes no change to property, marital or cohabitation rights to address gender equality

is silent on issues of adoption, guardianship and surrogacy

TRIPLE TALAQ

“The Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Marriage) Act, 2019 makes the practice of triple talaq and nikah halala illegal in India correcting a historic wrong done to Muslim women.”

REALITY

TRIPLE TALAQ

The practice of Triple Talaq was banned and declared unconstitutional by the Supreme Court (Shayara Bano vs Union of India) in 2017 after a long campaign by groups like the Bharatiya Muslim Mahila Andolan (BMMA) for reform within the community.

The 2019 Act only went one step further to criminalise Triple Talaq making it a cognisable and non-bailable offence punishable with three years' jail and a fine. By passing this law, the government appropriated Muslim women's push for reforms within their community with the apparent object of highlighting unjust, misogynistic practices only within the Muslim community.

The fact is that men across communities flout the law, practicing bigamy and abandoning their wives without maintenance or alimony but the same punishment does not apply to them.

NEW CRIMINAL LAWS

The Criminal Law Amendment Act 2018 increased the minimum punishment for rape from seven years to ten years of rigorous imprisonment, extendable to life imprisonment. Rape and gang rape of girls below the age of 12 years carry minimum imprisonment of twenty years, extendable to life imprisonment or death.

The amended Juvenile Justice (Care & Protection of Children) Act, 2015 lowers the trial age from 18 years to 16 years in case of heinous crimes like rape and murder.

Home Minister, Amit Shah claims that the three new criminal laws enacted in 2023 that replace the IPC, CrPc and the Evidence Act have been framed with justice for the victims as the central focus.

REALITY

CERTAINTY OF PUNISHMENT IS A MORE EFFECTIVE DETERRENT THAN SEVERITY OF PUNISHMENT

With conviction rates as low as

26.5%

it is clear that increasing the severity of punishment does little to reduce crime.

There are several problems with pushing for more severe punishment for sexual crimes. It reinforces that women are the embodiment of honour of men who must guard their chastity.

The death penalty goes against the recommendations of the Law Commission and the Justice Verma committee, which showed that it creates no more deterrence than imprisonment for life. The more severe the punishment the less the chances of conviction.

Over the past few years, several high courts have granted bail to rape accused on the condition of marriage with the victim.

The three new criminal laws overlook legal gaps that legitimise this practice and normalise sexual violence within a marriage.

CRIMINALISING INTERFAITH RELATIONSHIPS



Right wing groups claim Muslim men convert Hindu girls under the pretext of love as part of a broader demographic "war" by Muslims against India - something they term as 'Love Jihad'.

Anti-conversion Laws passed in Karnataka, Arunachal Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Rajasthan, Uttarakhand, and Uttar Pradesh are aimed at preventing this so-called Love Jihad.

REALITY

CRIMINALISING INTERFAITH RELATIONSHIPS

The bogey of Love Jihad has been repeatedly used as a political tool to target interfaith relationships between consenting adults. MHA in 2020 admitted in Parliament that 'Love Jihad' is not recognised under the current law. Yet, harassment of interfaith couples continues and the Anti-conversion Law lays suspicion on all conversions and interfaith relationships and encourages vigilantism and (im)moral policing.

It infantilizes adult women, by assuming all adult women in interfaith relationships/marriages are gullible victims of "forced conversions". Instead the Government should consider legislation that criminalises (dis)honour killings that is a far greater threat to the security of women who exercise their right to a partner of their choice across caste and community.

Some of the legislation introduced by this government follows a regressive model of women empowerment that is paternalistic and patriarchal at best and communal and casteist at worst.

India witnessed

530

such killings between 2015 and 2023 with Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand, Maharashtra and Haryana topping the chart.

ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

“IN THE TAPESTRY OF INDIA'S ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION, THE NARRATIVE OF WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT HAS EMERGED AS A COMPELLING THREAD, WEAVING THROUGH THE FABRIC OF PROGRESS AND CHANGE.”

narendramodi.in

REALITY

LABOUR FORCE PARTICIPATION AND WAGES

Women constitute roughly half the population and their economic empowerment greatly benefits the country. What has been the impact of flagship government schemes for economic empowerment of women?

Despite increased economic growth, the gender gap in the labour force persists. India's female labour participation rate (FLPR) dropped from

32%

in 2005 to

19%

in 2021

Roughly

60%

of working women in India aged 15-59 are self-employed. Of these more than half work as “unpaid helpers” and around

45%

work as “own account workers” (operate their own enterprises without hiring any labour). On average, women workers earn much less than men across forms of employment but especially among the self-employed.

Recent increase in FLPR to

37%

appears positive but has largely been attributed by experts to distress work force participation which means more women are part of the labour force but are resorting to lower or

0

income jobs out of economic distress.

Further the higher **LFPR is driven by desperate situation of rural women** rather than any improvement in the economic condition of women. An overwhelming share of women in India are employed in agriculture, a low-productivity, highly precarious enterprise, with **volatile remuneration** and yet **less than 13%** of them **own any land**.

REALITY

MNREGA

Women constitute over

50%

of the MNREGA workforce. Though MNREGA wages are lower than minimum agricultural wages in

17 out of 21

major states, economic difficulty and rising unemployment have led to increased demand for MNREGA work.

Despite this there has been little increase in the scheme's fund allocation. In 2023-24 the Centre allocated only

₹60,000

crore to MNREGA -

33%

lower than the previous year's revised estimate!

Not surprisingly there has been a shortage of work under the scheme along with delay in payments. Though the scheme assures 100 days of work to every rural household, the average employment per household has not crossed

52 days

in the last 10 years. Women are the worst affected.

SPENDING UNDER FLAGSHIP RURAL SCHEMES (₹ crore)

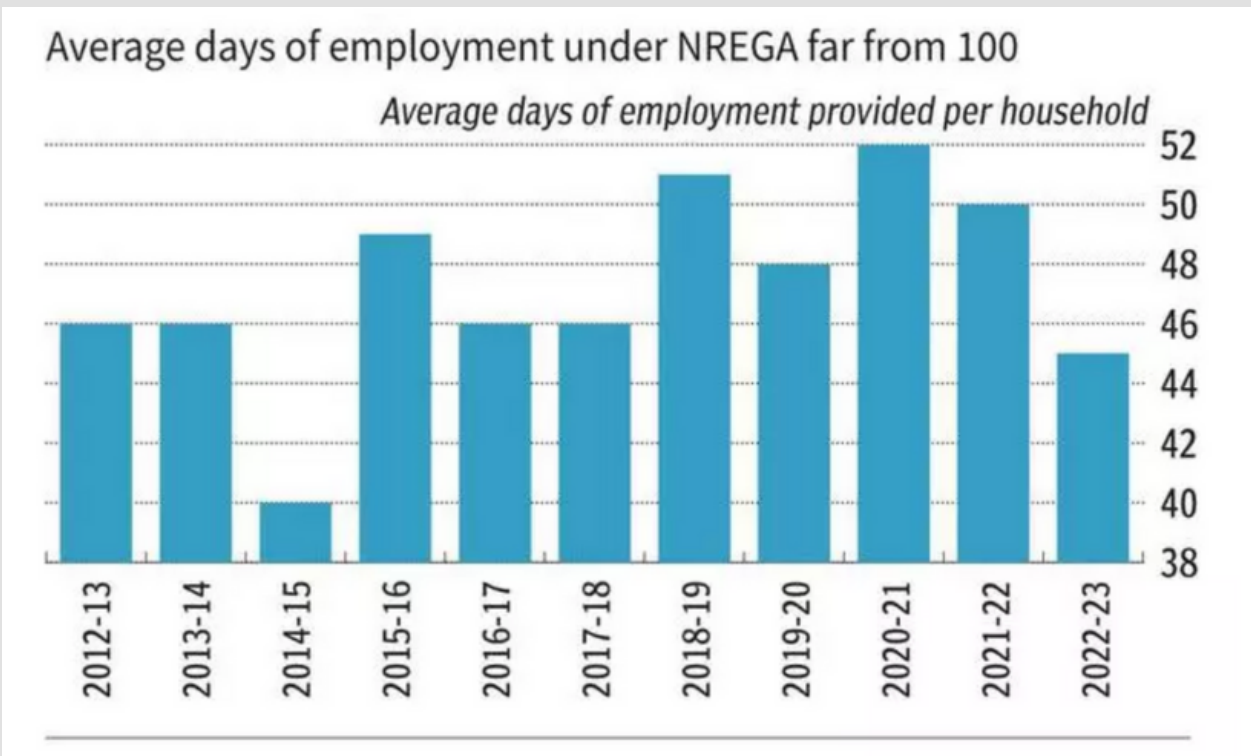
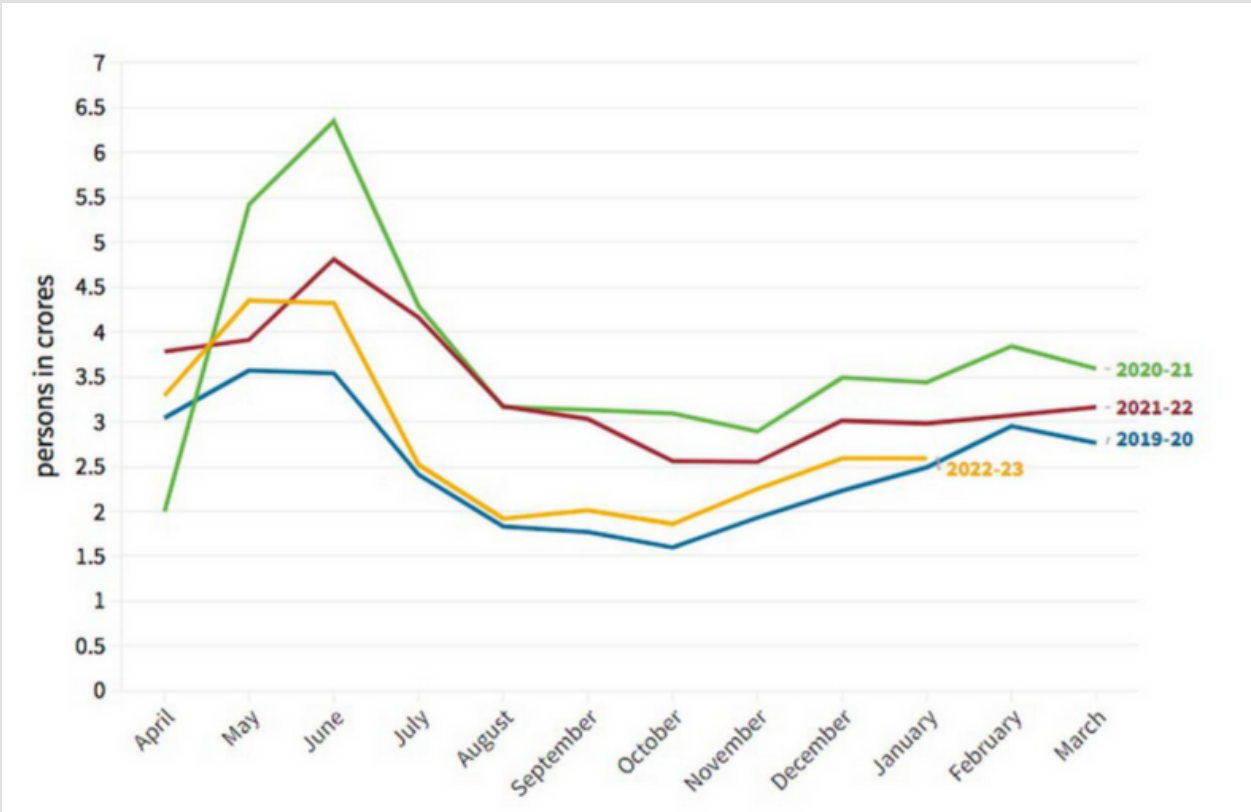
	MGNREGA		PMAY	Jal Jeevan Mission	PM-Kisan
	Outlay	Work done*			
2012-13	30,274.72	230.46	7,868.77	10,489.91	
2013-14	32,994.12	220.37	12,981.65	9,691.29	-
2014-15	32,463.4	166.21	11,096.15	9,190.43	-
2015-16	37,340.71	235.15	11,603.45	4,369.55	-
2016-17	48,214.95	235.65	20,951.69	5,980.02	-
2017-18	55,166.04	233.74	31,163.6	7,037.96	-
2018-19	61,815.09	267.96	25,442.56	5,484.15	1,241.13
2019-20	71,686.7	265.35	24,963.65	10,030.42	48,713.84
2020-21	1,11,169.53	389.09	40,259.84	10,998.22	60,989.9
2021-22	98,467.85	363.24	90,019.91	63,125.7	66,825.11
2022-23**	89,400	290-300@@	77,130.01	55,000	60,000
2023-24@	60,000	NA	79,590.03	70,000	60,000

*In crore person-days employment generated; **Revised Estimates; @Budget Estimates; @@Projected; PMAY and Jal Jeevan Mission were till 2014-15 and 2018-19 called National Rural Drinking Water Programme and Indira Awas Yojana respectively.

REALITY

MNREGA

Figure X and Y caption



PRADHAN MANTRI JAN DHAN YOJANA

“500 million new Jan Dhan accounts opened and 56% of these belong to women. Percentage of households with bank accounts increased from 51% in 2014 to 93% in 2021. This has expanded women’s access to banking services and promoted their financial inclusion in India.”

REALITY

PMJY is a commendable step towards financial inclusion of women but

Only

45%

of the PMJDY accounts had been used for financial transactions.

Roughly

20%

of these accounts are inactive.

Less than

30%

of borrowers from banks were women despite women being account holders.

Women receive only

27%

of their deposit value as credit against 52% for men.

Merely opening of the accounts is not a good metric on scheme effectiveness. Measures that ensure real financial inclusion and widespread use of banking services for all the account holders are required.

NATIONAL RURAL LIVELIHOOD MISSION, PRADHAN MANTRI MUDRA YOJANA

Started in 2011 NRLM aims to reduce poverty and promote sustainable livelihood opportunities through loans to Rural Self Help Groups(SHGs).

Started in 2015, PMMY provides loans to women engaged in non-corporate, non-farming, small and micro enterprise.

NRLM has connected 90 million women to 8.35 million rural SHGs for collateral-free loans. In 8 years, SHGs received Rs 5.5 lakh crore creating a plethora of opportunities.

PMMY sanctioned ₹23.2 lakh crore in 40.82 crore loan accounts from inception to 2023. India's overall microfinance loan portfolio stood at ₹3,76,110 crore, serving 7.1 crore unique borrowers with 13.9 crore loan accounts.

REALITY

NATIONAL RURAL LIVELIHOOD MISSION, PRADHAN MANTRI MUDRA YOJANA

NRLM and PMMY are good initiatives but they constitute a small portion of the microfinance industry which is dominated by private players. India has the largest micro-credit clientele in the world - with more than 85% of its clients women. The unrestricted growth of the Micro Finance Institutions (MFIs) with very little monitoring by the government, despite routine flagging of questionable practices is a serious issue. Women bear the brunt of predatory lending and repayment policies of private MFIs. Also most of these loans go towards consumables and repayment of loans rather than creating sustainable livelihoods.

NRLM has historically received minuscule allocations. In 2020-21 it received only **Rs 9.2K Cr** compared to **Rs 10.1K Cr** for MGNREGS.

SHG members remain mere beneficiaries and have little control over the decision-making process.

Most SHGs remain money lenders rather than vibrant business enablers. If microfinance is not linked to livelihood strategy, it simply draws women into the vortex of indebtedness.

Though women clearly benefited from PMMY, **88% of loans disbursed** in 2021 and **40% of loans disbursed in 2023** were under **INR 50,000** or “small-ticket”.

ASHA AND OTHER GOVERNMENT SCHEME WORKERS

Around 50 lakh women work in various schemes and programs run by central and state governments. What is common to all is that they are defined as 'volunteers' or 'part-time workers' even though they work full time in practice and perform important perennial tasks like delivery of primary health care in villages or taking care of children in anganwadis. The ASHA or community-based female health worker is key to the NRHM aimed at improving the health of the rural poor.

From 2022, more than 6,00,000 ASHA workers from all over the country have been protesting against the lack of protective gloves, PPE kits, masks, delayed payments since the pandemic, absence of insurance coverage, and exploitative working conditions that have pushed them to the brink of poverty.

Currently receiving incentive-based remuneration, they have been demanding that their employment be formalized and regulated to ensure minimum wages, social security and other benefits.

While the schemes mentioned have engendered financial inclusion to some degree this has not translated into economic empowerment. Women's work continues to be devalued and undervalued by casting it as care work, domestic work and voluntary work. Further in the name of financial inclusion, rural and urban poor women have been left with a greater burden of debt without ensuring any sustainable, dignified employment.

SOCIAL EMPOWERMENT

“Sabka Saath Sabka Vikas”

In its 2014 manifesto, the Bharatiya Janata Party stated that women are “Nation Builders” and that the party is “committed to give a high priority to Women’s Empowerment and Welfare”. A number of flagship schemes were introduced towards this end. We look at some of these through the lens of gender.

Swachh Bharat Abhiyan(SBA)

“100 million household toilets have been constructed in rural India since 2014. India was declared Open Defecation-free (ODF) by the PM in 2019.”

REALITY

SWACHH BHARAT ABHIYAN

A focus on rural sanitation, health outcomes and women's safety is a positive. However, a realistic assessment of the scheme's achievements and shortcomings shows that women's safety seems to have been used as window dressing for a scheme that has failed to live up to its laudable goals.

SBA has **failed** to achieve the target of making the country **open defecation free** despite the claim.

Poor quality of toilets

constructed was highlighted by Parliamentary committees in 2017 and 2020

The focus has been on construction of toilets rather than complete solutions including water supply, sewage treatment/infrastructure, behaviour change, maintenance, etc.

The 15th Finance Commission also noted that the scheme only provides financial incentives to construct latrines to households below the poverty line (BPL) and selected households above the poverty line. It highlighted that there are considerable exclusion errors in finding BPL households and recommended the universalisation of the scheme to achieve 100% ODF status.

Water shortage remains one of the major factors behind the disuse of toilets in many villages.

For instance, a 2018 CAG report claimed that

83%

of rural Indian households rely on community water sources

86%

of people who owned toilets in the studied area shared that they call manual scavengers to clean the pit perpetuating a caste based profession that continues to exist.

PRADHAN MANTRI UJJWALA YOJANA (PMUY)

The government launched PMUY to provide clean fuel to every rural household to improve the health of rural women as well as to safeguard the environment. The scheme provides a free LPG cylinder to poor rural women not already having an LPG connection.

“Over 9.59 Crore deposit-free LPG connections distributed to BPL families. LPG coverage went from 62% in 2016 to 105.4% in 2023.”

REALITY

PRADHAN MANTRI UJWALA YOJANA

Though government has distributed LPG cylinders to majority of rural households at a cost of **Rs 80 Lakh crores**, the price of LPG has risen astronomically and fuelled a sharp increase in household expenditure. As a result, the objective of making LPG the primary fuel for a majority of beneficiaries has not been met.

Between 2018 and 2023, LPG cylinder rates increased 82%, reaching ₹903 in Mar 2023. After quietly withdrawing the initial subsidy on LPG several years ago, the government reinstated it at Rs 200 per cylinder in Sep 2023, though this is unlikely to improve adoption at current LPG prices.

PMUY beneficiaries took under 3 refills compared to the Indian average of 6.7 refills.

Only 50% of rural households and 92% of urban households used clean fuel as the primary source of energy for cooking.

CAG audit reports found

- 1.9 lakh cases where LPG connections had been given to men.
- 14 lakh beneficiaries consumed three to 41 cylinders in a month, and nearly 2 lakh beneficiaries had an annual consumption of more than 12 cylinders indicating subsidised cylinders being diverted for commercial purposes.
- There were no parameters to assess outcomes related to the scheme and the government's own health surveys show that more than half of rural India continues to rely on polluting solid fuels.

BETI BACHAO BETI PADHAO (BBBP)

The BBBP scheme launched in 2015 has been lauded as a proactive initiative for dealing with gender-based discrimination against the girl child. The Sex Ratio at Birth rose from 918 in 2014 to 1020 females in 2023 for every 1,000 males. India's position on the global stage vis a vis female education has seen a relatively upward trend since 2018 which can be attributed to government interventions like 'Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao'.

REALITY

BETI BACHAO BETI PADHAO

A 2020 NCAER study to evaluate BBBP programmes in the 161 early-implementation districts found loopholes in the implementation process and identified structural barriers to girls' entry and retention in schools.

From 2017-18 to 2022-23 55.3% of funds remained unutilised and in FY2022-23, a whopping 77%, remained unutilised.

Between 2014 and 2021, 58% of BBBP allocated funds were spent on media advocacy.

A Dec 2021 Parliamentary Committee flagged poor utilisation of funds and suggested that the government focus more on sectoral interventions in education and health than on advertising the scheme.

In 2023, the Sex Ratio was 1037 in rural areas and 985 in urban areas indicating that the practice of sex determination tests continues to be active in urban centres.

In the Global Gender Gap report 2022 prepared by the World Economic Forum **India was placed at 107th rank among 146 countries in female education** which covers literacy and enrolment rates in primary, secondary, and tertiary education.

Nearly 40% of adolescent girls continue to be out of school and almost 65% of this group were engaged in household work.

While the schemes mentioned sound good on paper and have met some initial targets, the publicity and hype around them exceed the actual structural and institutional change brought about in the lives of the “beneficiaries”.

POLITICAL EMPOWERMENT



“Women’s Reservation Bill 2023 or Nari Shakti Vandan Adhinayam demonstrates the BJP’s commitment to ensure the equal participation of women in state legislatures and paves the way for the government’s vision of women-led development.”

REALITY

POLITICAL (DIS)EMPOWERMENT



Though the BJP claims to support fair representation for women in parliament, it has never come close to giving **33% representation to women in local, state, or national level election tickets.**

The Women's Reservation Bill 2023 is intended to cement the BJP's appeal among women voters in subsequent Union and State elections. It will conveniently not come into effect for at least another 5 years till after the forthcoming delimitation exercise making it a postdated cheque that may never be encashed. It also faces challenges related to both horizontal and vertical reservations.

Article 243D of the Constitution provides for reservation of seats in Panchayats for women. Unfortunately, amendments made to the Panchayati Raj Act in BJP ruled states of **Rajasthan and Haryana** in 2015 have **stripped a large number of women of their constitutional right to contest elections.** The Acts prescribe minimum educational qualifications as one of the essential requirements for contesting panchayat elections and disqualify a significant chunk of the female population.

A report by the Association of Democratic Reforms (ADR) revealed that a total of **113 MLAs and 21 MPs have declared cases of crimes against women**, with the Bharatiya Janata Party leading the statistics followed by the Congress party.

Two recent incidents : the personal attacks on opposition MP, Mahua Moitra preceding her debarment from Parliament and the deliberate exclusion of President Draupadi Murmu, from the inauguration of the new Parliament building attended by a galaxy of men - reflect very poorly on the ruling party and their intent to make Parliament an inclusive public space.

The 17th Lok Sabha has only **78 women out of 543 MPs.** Women's representation in the Lok Sabha increased from 5% in the first Lok Sabha to 14.3% in the current Lok Sabha but is still a far cry from representing the women's population.



NARI SHAKTHI: MYTH AND REALITY

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