



Vidhyayana - ISSN 2454-8596

An International Multidisciplinary Peer-Reviewed E-Journal

www.j.vidhyayanaejournal.org

Indexed in: ROAD & Google Scholar

A Study on Organizations working for Betterment of Women in Rajkot City

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Abstract:

With the change in time, women started getting aware regarding their rights and education. But along with this, incidents of abuse and injustice started to increase. Therefore, the government took various steps towards protection of women, protection regarding their rights, to provide them justice, and aware them. Under these steps, government formed new laws, carried out amendment in old laws and reformed them, formed various policies for their betterment and protection which helped and guided them.

So, here, the researcher studied various organizations which work for the betterment and protection of women established by Gujarat Government, Central Government as well as at local level. The researcher visited such organizations and collected information from authentic authorities of those organizations regarding the working method of the organizations and their role in uplifting of women.

Key words: upliftment, women, organization

Introduction:

While studying the history of India, the struggle of women is unimaginable before independence. To kill a girl child on her birth, the practice of dowry, the practice of widow burning, child marriage, and hesitation in the remarriage of widow, parda system, polygamy, etc. were common practices observed in old India which were bravely fought by women of India.

Many decisions had been taken during

- British East India Company Rule (1757-1857) and
- British Raj (Rule) (1858-1947) like
 - Bengal Sati Regulation (1829)
 - Hindu Widows Remarriage Act (1856)
 - Female Infanticide Prevention Act (1870)

The right to freedom and independence was given to the women under 'Equality, Dignity, and Discrimination' with the reference of the Constitution of India.

Further, the important workings for women awakening were taken place during the British rule and in those workings. Individuals like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, Jyotirao Phule, Swami Dayanand Saraswati, Sahjanand Swami, Mahatma Gandhi, etc. remained on the front including some organizations like;

- Prathna Samaj (1867)
- Arya Samaj (1875)
- Theosophical Society (1879)

Women played a major role in the struggle for freedom from colonial rule and 1917, the first all-Indian Delegation of Women met the Secretary of State to demand women's political rights. Independent India gave women their due by enshrining in the Constitution the right of equality for women. However, despite the Constitution of India guaranteeing women equal rights, eliminating barriers to their advancement, and promoting equal opportunities, yet sadly enough there still prevailed a patriarchal mindset, especially with women in menial jobs who were commonly meted unjust treatment.



Thus, it can be said that women independence started during British Rule where they were supported by British officers and Indian politicians, and other organizations.

After getting independence, the women moved ahead in various fields like education, art, and culture, sports, legal sector, politics, research area, media, service sector, traveling sector, social sector, etc, and also succeeded. But as women started working and started to move out of their homes, there raised a need for their security. But some women were not even safe in their homes. So the Government of India started to form new laws for the protection of women from their domestic violence, social, financial, political abuse, and harassment at workplace and reframed and corrected existing laws wherever required such as;

- The Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act-1956
- Dowry Prohibition Act (1961), amendment in 1984
- Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act-1971
- Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act-1986
- Domestic Violence Act-2005
- The Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act (POCSO)-2012 for protection of children of age less than 18 years
- Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act-2013

Apart from the above-mentioned laws, women were benefitted from appropriate working hours, equal wages, maternity leaves, an equal part in the father's property, etc.

Thus, these rights opened doors for women for their development and as a result, a woman spending her life between four walls, got the sky to fly high. But, as good things are accompanied by bad things, women started facing sexual harassment and such incidents are increasing day by day. Women started facing eve-teasing, sexual harassment at their workplaces, harassed on roads, streets, public places, etc., and being a victim of domestic violence in their homes. All these types of harassment have equal impact on a woman's mind and every type of harassment is equally responsible for damaging a woman's dignity and self-respect and all are considered as violence against a woman.

Hence, various programs for women welfare and betterment were started by British East India Company and today Central, State as well as local government are taking their steps forward by establishing organizations which work for women betterment. The researcher visited such organizations and studied their role in women welfare and betterment.

They must know about certain organizations which can help them because these organizations not only works for the women but also shares information regarding the laws in such matters. The researcher also tried to study the role of such organizations when a woman complains about her harassment and injustice. As result, the researcher visited every such organization and collected information regarding their working method, and their role in any such case. The researcher received good support and sufficient information from them. Researcher visited and collected information from:

- Internal Complain Committee (ICC) (Saurashtra University, Rajkot)
- Ojaswini Foundation (NGO)
- Ministry of Women and Child Development
- Nari Sanrakshan Gruh
- Sakhi One Stop Centre
- Shri Lohana Vikas Gruh
- Mahila Police Station



- Police Station Base Support Centre (PBSC)
- 181 Abhayam Helpline

Objectives:

To collect the information and study the role of various organizations who work for betterment, upliftment, justice and awareness of women.

Review of Literature:

- According to the **Ministry of Women and Child Development (MWCD) (2013)**
 - Formulate and widely disseminate an internal policy or chapter or resolution or declaration for prohibition, prevention, and redressal of SH at the workplace intended to promote gender-sensitive safe space and remove underlying factors that contribute towards a hostile work environment against women;
 - Carry out orientation programs and seminars for the members of the ICC;
 - Carry out employee's awareness programs and create a forum for dialogues which may involve Panchayati Raj Institutions, Gram Sabha, Women's groups, Mother's Committee, Adolescent Group, urban local bodies, and any other bodies as may be considered necessary;
 - Conduct capacity building and skill-building programs for the members of the ICC;
 - Declare the names and contact details of all the members of the ICC;
 - Use modules developed by the State Government to conduct workshops and awareness programs for sensitizing the employees with the provisions of the Act.
- According to **the Ministry of Law and Justice (2013)**, the protection against sexual harassment and the right to work with dignity are universally recognized human rights by international conventions and instruments such as the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women, which has been rectified on the June 25, 1993, by the Government of India. And whereas it is expedient to make provisions for giving effect to the said convention for protection of women against sexual harassment.
- According to **Ranpara, J.B., and Samani, V.S. (2019)** Though such incidents like rapes, gang rapes, sexual harassment affect their personal and professional life as opined by the faculties and the data of Mahila Police Station and ICC of Saurashtra University showed contradiction. Also, the agencies supposed to be filing complaints against sexual harassment receive very few complaints. Apart from enacting strict laws against sexual harassment, the government and society need to act in the direction of stopping such condemnable incidents.
- According to **Sarpotdar, A. (2017)**, she said that "low or no reporting speaks volumes about the gender sensitivity of a particular organization." "Further, women may not know where to go to report harassment or it could be that the cases may not have been dealt with sincerely. Often, women go to committees believing them to be independent and find that they are puppets in the hands of their superiors."

Materials and Methods:

The researcher collected information from various organizations that work for the betterment of women including providing protection and awareness by conducting seminars and programs regarding harassment,



violence and injustice. In total 09 such organizations provided information to the researcher from which some information was obtained by the researcher who visited them. The method of collection of information used by the researcher for organizations was the interview method.

Result and Discussion:

• Internal Complain Committee (ICC) Saurashtra University :

The ICC working in Saurashtra University was established in 2002. To date, sixth female teachers have served as chairperson of this cell. As per the verbal information given by chairperson a total of 11 cases were filed from 2009 to 2020 from which there were no steps taken in 7 cases because of an absence of evidence, a police complaint was filed in 1 case and 2 accused professors were suspended and 1 accused professor was dismissed.

Apart from this, the posters of ICC are hanged in every department, main building, and campus of the university so that every girl student can know about the cell. There is a link available on the Website of Saurashtra University regarding the complaint box which accepts any type of complaints from the students. Every department is comprised of a suggestion/complaint box.

• Ojaswini Foundation (NGO):

Hemalben Dave is running this NGO since last four years. The main aim of this NGO is to relate to various caste associations, educational institutions, and creating awareness regarding health by conducting seminars and carrying out counseling sessions. Under the health awareness seminars, this NGO explains and gives information regarding sex education to children, their parents, and their teachers. According to her:

- The major reason for school dropout in villages is sexual harassment.
- The major reason for sexual harassment in children is the lack of sex education. Also, the hormonal changes in children, sometimes lead them to enjoy rather than opposing the harassment. But later on, when the child is grown into an adult, he/she realizes that the act was wrong and was actually an act of abuse or harassment.
- Approximately at the age of 9, there is an onset of hormonal changes in an individual and if the children get sex education from either their parents or teachers then the chances of their sexual harassment might decrease.
- Many women who are about to get engaged or are engaged or newly married women experience difficulty in sexual relationship with their husband after their harassment or abuse in childhood.
- Also, parents and teachers are asked to keep an eye on the activity of the child especially during the age when they are going to have hormonal changes and talk to them freely, and thus, their chances of being sexually abused can be avoided.

• Ministry of Women and Child Development:

The Ministry of Women and Child Development office located in Rajkot promotes Sakhi One Stop Centre, Nari Sanrakshan Gruh, Lohana Stree Vikas Gruh, 181 Abhayam Helpline, etc. and implements the programs made by the government for the protection of women and children.

This department along with various organizations, not only helps the women who are a victim of sexual harassment at their respective workplace but also help women who are a victim of domestic violence, women who are a victim of violence, emotional exploitation, cybercrime or any other type of violence by providing them mental and physical treatment, counselling sessions, judicial help and providing them a shelter.



This department organizes various seminars at schools and colleges and aware the students regarding different government programs and related organizations and their working methods and patterns. The researcher visited various organizations and collected sufficient information.

- **Nari Sanrakshan Gruh:**

This organization helps women who are victims of any kind of violence, exploitation, or injustice and provides them short-term or long-term shelter. Any woman who does not have any home, or there is no one to provide a shelter to her, a woman who does not want to stay with her husband, boyfriend, parents, or children can come and get shelter over here by herself or through any relative, any responsible citizen, police, railway police, Mahila police station, 181 Abhayam, through Sakhi One Stop Centre or through Court.

Here every woman gets a clean environment to stay, appropriate treatment, counseling sessions, and other help. All their necessities are provided by the organization.

- **Sakhi One Stop Centre:**

After the highly defamed Nirbhaya case of Delhi came into the spotlight and after the recommendation of Verma Commission, the Government of India decided to start such an organization in 155 districts where the victim woman can get all the necessary help from one place within the first decade of the incident. And that organization was named 'Sakhi One Stop Centre'. The centers were first established in Rajkot, Sabarkantha, and Bhuj in Gujarat within the first decade. The center in Rajkot was established in September 2017. This State Government granted organization provides judicial help, police help, medical help, counseling sessions, and temporary shelter for the first five days at the center, and for the long term, shelter is provided to the victim at Nari Sanrakshan Gruh. Here, the organization supports women who are victims of physical abuse, sexual harassment, domestic violence, forced prostitution, acid attack, mental or emotional abuse.

This is a 24-hour running organization and it keeps the identity of the complainer hidden.

- **Shri Lohana StreeVikas Gruh:**

The trust runs from the grants which were granted by the Lohana caste's fund and Government. This organization also provides shelter to the women who are victims of sexual harassment, any type of injustice or any type of violence. A woman can get shelter and help in the manner similar to that for help from the Nari SanrakshanGruh. This organization also provides medical treatment, counselling sessions and appropriate advices. This organization has its own ICC from which not a single complaint is filed.

- **Mahila Police Station:**

A woman who is a victim of exploitation, abuse, violence, injustice, eve-teasing, or cybercrime can appeal or file a complaint here. 24-hour working this Police Station keeps the identity of the woman hidden. As soon as the complaint is filed, the accused is called and is allowed to put forth his defense, then both parties are called for counseling sessions or conversation, and attempts are made to solve them peacefully, if possible. The main thing about this Police Station is the outcome is mostly in favor of the woman. If the case does not get solved then the case is transferred to the respective Police Station of the area and a FIR is filed. Even in the cases of sexual harassment, the case is transferred to the respective Police Station of that area. According to PSI Chudasama, in 80% of cases, the woman is lying but even then the Police Station works in such a way that the woman does not feel that she didn't get justice. In this Police Station, only an appeal or



complaint is accepted and a FIR is not filed. There is no lock-up in the Police Station but there are rooms for children to stay and play.

During this visit, PSI Chudasama also shared information regarding the recent launch of 'Surakshita' mobile application. Easy to use and download from Google Play Store, this application provides all the necessary information and instructions about a woman's safety in English as well as in Gujarati.

- **Police Station Base Support Centre (PBSC):**

Working under Ministry of Women and Child Development of Gujarat and Gender Resource Centre, the main aim of this organization is to allow the victim woman to take decision by herself in cases like gender biasness, female foeticide, domestic violence and social inequality. Here the woman receives proper guidance, counselling sessions and judicial help and freedom to take appropriate decision. This organization also keeps the victim woman's identity hidden and provides all the facilities free of cost. This organization joins hands with other organizations which are working for betterment of woman.

- **181 Abhayam Helpline:**

Under the Ministry of Women and Child Development of Gujarat, 181 Abhayam Helpline number was started on March 8, 2015, on the day of International Women's Day, and from March 8, 2018, 181 Abhayam Helpline Mobile Application was launched.

Just like PBSC, Mahila Police Station and Sakhi One Stop Centre, 181 Abhayam Helpline supports, guides and help women who are victim of any type of exploitation, injustice, and violence. But most importantly, this organization helps a woman on site. And that is why 181 Abhayam also has a van which is always found ready at Mahila Police Station. This van is ready with a primary treatment kit, food, and water along with a trained staff. This van also does a regular patrolling around the schools, colleges, and universities and thus, can assure their safety.

This organization also coordinates with other organizations that work for the betterment of women by providing them necessary guidance, support, help, counseling, and shelter.

Conclusion:

There are many government and non government bodies which establish organizations which work for women welfare and upliftment. But due to lack of proper campaigning and advertisement, such organizations failed to aware women regarding their rights, help them and aware them.

So, the researcher visited various government and non government organizations which works for women betterment and welfare to study their role and function in creating awareness.

Acknowledgement:

- Dr. V.S.Samani, Research Guide, HOD & Asso, Prof, M.V.M. Science & Home Science College, Rajkot
- Dr. K.J. Ganatra, Principal, M.V.M. Science & Home Science College, Rajkot
- Dr. B.M. Vaid, Asso, Prof, M.V.M. Science & Home Science College, Rajkot
- Dr. M.N.Jivani, Professor, Department of Electronics, Saurashtra University, Rajkot
- Authorities of all the organizations mentioned in this research paper.
- Ms. Nishtha Ranpara, Christ College, Rajkot



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