

Policy Making Guidelines for Uttarakhand Women



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The Report is divided in two parts- first part explains about the role, situation and problems of women in Uttarakhand and second parts provides the suggestions which can be considered in policy making for Women Empowerment.

UTTARAKHAND

Uttarakhand is located in the northern part of India. It being the originating place of many holy rivers and the land of many Tirth Kshetras (pious religious places). It is popularly known as Devbhumi (Land of gods). It finds mention in Vedic Puranas also. The total geographical area of Uttarakhand is 53,483 sq km which is 1.69 per cent of India's total geographical area. As much as 86 per cent of the total area of the state is under mountains and 65 per cent is reported under forest cover. The state is divided into 13 districts of which seven are located in Garhwal Mandal and the other six in Kumaon Mandal. The total population of Uttarakhand is 1,00,86,349 (2011). The sex ratio is 963 women per 1000 males. The density of population is 189 persons per sq km and the overall literacy rate is 79.63 per cent.

Uttarakhand is identified by and well known for its mountainous region, hard and stony rocks, deep valleys, forest, glaciers, rivers, high peaks, fast flowing rivers and rivulets, high land erosion, land slides and scattered human settlements.

From agriculture point of view it is regarded as one of the backward states because only 12.50 per cent of its geographical area is cultivable and 90 per cent of the population in the state is dependent on agriculture and allied sectors. There are lot of problems because of its geographical situation. It being a mountainous region there is lack of level land. Agricultural activities are limited to mountain slopes in the form of terraced farm type cultivation. Habited areas are small and scattered. Rural population is more or less dependent on forests for meeting their requirements.



THE NEED FOR WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

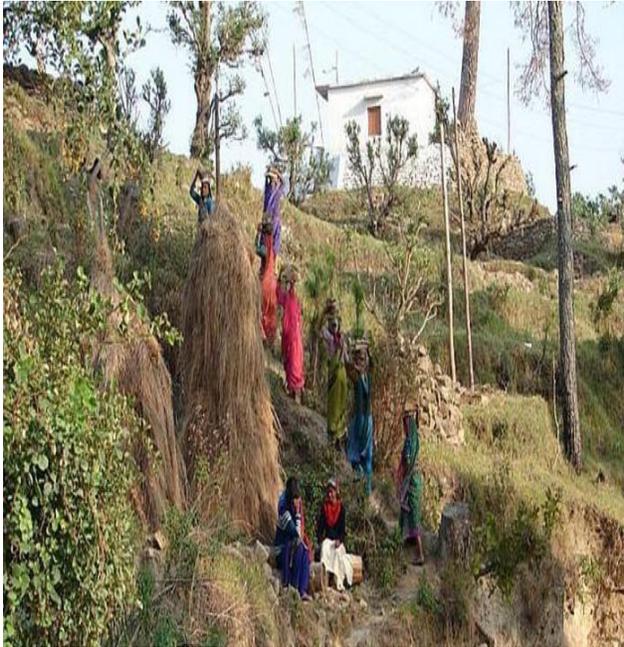
The meaning of women's empowerment is that women are free to take decisions in matters pertaining to their lives and they get appropriate opportunities to develop their capabilities so that they are able to get the positions they deserve and are able to contribute freely and strongly in the social affairs.

Because of dominance of patriarchal systems in the society for centuries there are sexual inequalities which in fact is a matter of shame for any civilized society that half of its population lives with discrimination. The symbol of a healthy society and developed country is that all its citizens should enjoy equal opportunities for development without any discrimination. This type of discrimination is noticed right from the time of the birth of a child. The discrimination in upbringing of the child, health care, education, right to take decisions, right and share in paternal property based on the sex create imbalance in the society. Many great social



reformers of our country noticed the bad outcomes of inequalities in educational, economic and cultural fields and raised their voice against such malpractices. They include Raja Ram Mohan Rai, Ishwarchandra Vidyasagar, Swami Vivekananda, Mahatma Gandhi, Swami dayanand Saraswati, Acharya Binoba Bhave, etc. Since then such efforts are on to make a difference. At present also the government agencies, many non-governmental organisations and many women engaged in social service are working tirelessly to bring about a change in the scenario. Changes are taking place in society because of such efforts but still we have to go a long way. However, meaningful

steps in this direction will prove to be the mile stones.



So far as the situation of rural women in mountainous region of Uttarakhand is concerned they are the pivotal force in agriculture, animal husbandry, family life and culture of the region. They are the backbone of the life of the region. They are full of energy and are source of unlimited power house. They are the mother of many movements like Chipko Andolan for saving trees, movement for prohibition of liquor and are still fighting for equal rights for their development. It is often said that a country can develop only when its women are equally developed and the benefits of woman empowerment is not limited to her or her

family but benefits the entire society. If we carefully notice the life of the people in mountains women are the drivers of mainstream life whether be it meeting the necessities of family, care of children and aged, fetching water, fuel and fodder etc. to keeping in touch with ploughmen and blacksmith for agricultural / horticultural implements, planning for cultivation of crops, plantation of paddy, its look after, harvesting, carrying the harvested crops from farm to household and processing them, preservation of green dried fodder after rainy season for feeding the animals during winters and many other associated activities are performed by women.

After the harvest of kharif crops they engage in the preparation of farm for the cultivation of the next crop in the winter, they carry head loads of homemade cow dung manure to the elevated sloppy farms. Because of their efforts we notice lush green paddy and wheat fields, besides kitchen garden full of vegetable crops like pumpkin, cucumber, and other seasonal varieties climbers come up in the vicinity of houses because of their hard labour and commitment to family life. Such meaningful works reflect their devotion to duty.

They very well cultivate the cultural traditions of the region including rituals associated with birth ceremony, naming ceremony, holi thread ceremony, marriage ceremony, rituals after death, knowledge of fast and festivals, etc. to what types of gifts should be offered to married girls when they visit their parental house. In fact, they are the central point of the life in the region and play vital role in bigger as well as smaller works with finer details. No doubt, whether be it survival of family life, forest, animal husbandry, farm, culture and traditions all depend on them. In a way this is a reflection of empowered and responsible personality of women but despite all this still they continue to be treated as secondary citizens of the society.

Indian constitution is one of the best in the world with provisions of protecting equality to all. According to Hindu Code Bill both males and females (sons and daughters) have equal right in ancestral / hereditary property but this is not in practice. Women are generally denied of their rights to property both in the houses of their parents as well as in-laws. Their names are not mentioned in revenue records and the system of inequality begins from here. Because of this they are unable to get their rightful place in social environment. They lack self-confidence for taking decisions in life and are bound to lead impoverished life. They are also marginalised from taking the advantage of schemes of government and banks.

WOMEN ENGAGED IN AGRICULTURE AND ANIMAL HUSBANDRY

Agriculture farms in the hills are generally located along valleys and river sides region at heights ranging from 300 to 8,000 ft. With the increase in height the terraced type farms become



narrower and accordingly the productivity also differs. Generally, paddy and wheat crops are cultivated along the river side lands. The fields are ploughed by using age old ox-driven wooden plough. The land on heights above such farms are called uparau (Upland). Plough can not be used to plough terraced farms hence hand tools are used for digging such land and pulses, madwa(ragi), etc. are cultivated in these areas. Needless to say all these crops are organic. The produce like gahat, kale bhatt, soyabean, mas (urad) are of high quality. Some of the farmers want to sell their excess produce in the market but there is no infrastructural arrangement for

sale. Several varieties of spices and vegetables are also grown in the hills which include peas, potato, onion, garlic, tomato, ginger, coriander , chilly, rajma, etc. many times farmers are encouraged to promote the cultivation of vegetables but due to lack of proper marketing network and / or processing, value addition, gradually the hopeless women farmers loose interest in cultivating such crops. The cultivation of potato is quite good for income generation but women are taking lesser interest in its cultivation. There was a time when there used to be good production of potato and contractors from Haldwani used to come and carry truckloads of potato from villages to other parts of the country. Better known as



“Pahari potato”, the potato of Uttarakhand was regarded as one of the best in quality and taste. Now, the situation has changed. Prior to creation of Uttarakhand state there used to be two to three potato seed production farms in each district. Potato seed production farms at

Dhanolti and Kandtala in Tehri, Dwari Auraithal in Uttar Kashi, Bharsar and Khaprauli in Paudi, Chir Bitia and Dhamnauli in Rudra prayag, Parsari Koti and Ramri in Chamoli, Munsiri and Dharchula in Pithouragarh, Dunagiri and Jageshwar in Almora, Gagar and Ramgarh in Nainital, etc. were established.



The Foundation Seed for these farms were imported from Kufri in Himachal Pradesh and other places and certified seeds used to be produced and distributed among the local cultivators as per their requirements. The use of certified seeds assured 10 to 20 times more production. It was a good source of economic strengthening of farmers but due to lack of certified seeds the cultivation of potato is now carried out only to a limited extent. Women farmers carry out all the farm activities and processes associated with potato cultivation right from sowing to nurturing, harvesting and carrying head loads of produce to concerned places. Due to lack of seed, the cultivation of potato has suffered severely. Another important problem is small scattered farms of farmers situated at different locations which poses problems in cultivation and monitoring of the fields.

Men folk in mountains have hardly any interest in agriculture and animal husbandry all these activities are carried on by women only. Many institutions have developed agricultural implements and tools by keeping men farmers in mind where as these are the women who actually work in the fields. Even trainings related to agriculture and animal husbandry are imparted to men because they are recognised as farmers hence there is a need for change in this regard to make agriculture and animal husbandry more convenient and women friendly. Women should be given the status of farmers.



Besides, there is a need to save traditional seeds. It reduces the cost of cultivation and is suited to local agro-climatic conditions. Hybrid seeds need to be changed after every two crops. It requires chemical fertilizers and more irrigation which raises the cultivation cost. Earlier agriculture used to be the mainstay of villagers and even those who went out for service used to return to villages after retirement and engaged them in agriculture but gradually the trend has changed and now families are moving away from villages to cities and in the process nearly sixty per cent of villages are prey to outward migration.

Agriculture and animal husbandry are the main professions of women in mountain region but they are not entitled as farmers. Under 'Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan', Hon'ble Prime Minister, Narendra Modi ji has made many declarations for agriculture and animal husbandry in which many work plans are included. Under this Abhiyan government is planning to create 'Pashupalan Infrastructure Vikas Nidhi' which will facilitate development and establishment of Dairying, Dairy processing, value addition, fodder related infrastructure, etc.

For the first time the people who persevere animal husbandry will be given the status of farmers and will be provided Kisan Credit Card. Thus, the economic conditions of villagers will be strengthened with the help of agriculture and animal husbandry. It is proposed to run a campaign for providing Credit Cards to the people persevering animal husbandry.

> The development of agriculture and animal husbandry in the region will open up avenues for new agro-based and animal product-based industries. Rural women will be the owners of such programs because they are the ones who carry out agricultural and animal husbandry related works. They have adequate traditional knowledge and experience of these works. Through these programs agriculture and animal husbandry have to be made easier and economically rewarding.

> Women should be given the status of farmers and Credit Cards.

> The knowledge of such programs should be imparted in detail to women in simple local language and there should be mechanisms to facilitate their access to these programs as well as need-based guidance should also be made available to them.

- > Agriculture and animal husbandry provide raw materials for many industries so it is necessary to promote them.
- > There should be legal provisions to include the name of wife as co-owner in the ancestral property and land in the revenue records at the time of marriage itself.
- > Practically, the main reason of women's tough problem is that the property and land of the family is not in their name. This poses a problem in securing bank loan and can be solved only by adding their name as owners. Women should be provided equal opportunities in new economic arrangements.
- > Aadhar card should be recognised as a valid document for accessing government schemes so that women do not face any documentary burden.

FRUITS PRODUCTION IN MOUNTAIN REGION

The terraced farms along slopes of higher elevations are utilised for the growing of apple, pear, plum, peach, apricot , etc. In mountains there are places like Ramgarh and Chobatia garden from where fruits are transported to cities of Delhi, Mumbai, Surat, etc. for sale. Besides, citrus fruits like malt, orange, lemon, Jamer skinned lemon , etc. are grown in good quantity but due to lack of marketing network do not reach to larger market , so small women-friendly processing units should be established to preserve and process these products. Besides, in some places guava, mango, kiwi and litchi are also being grown. The agro-climatic conditions of fruit gardens are suitable for the cultivation of peas, potato, rajma, etc. also. Here animal husbandry, cultivation of spices, vegetables and pulses go hand in hand. There has not been any serious effort to develop horticulture except some border areas. A large area in Uttarkashi is traditionally under horticulture and vegetable crops. They get seeds and technical guidance from Himachal Pradesh. There is huge potential for micro processing units of fruits and vegetables.



WOMEN ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Despite several odds some women in Uttarakhand have started small and micro enterprises. In addition to self-employment these women have been able to generate employment for other women. According to government statistics district-wise figures are as mentioned below :

Srl no.	District	No. of women entrepreneurs
1.	Udhamsingh Nagar	48
2.	Haridwar	33
3.	Almora	07
4.	Pithoragarh	05
5.	Chamoli	03
6.	Rudraprayag	02
7.	Bageshwar	02
8.	Dehradun	45
9.	Nainital	23
10.	Pouri	06
11.	Champawat	04
12.	Tehri	03
13.	Uttarkashi	02

Source: published in m.jagran.com

As seen in the above table there are comparatively good numbers of women in city (plain) areas but in hills it has to go a long way.

For the development of entrepreneurship a multi-pronged strategy is required and capacity building of women for establishment of new enterprises and running them has to be taken on priority basis.

Firstly, there is requirement of selection of right kind of women who have interest and capability in entrepreneurship has to be done. The second most important aspect is their capacity building through training and make them aware of raw materials, production process, packaging, marketing, etc through detailed practical discussion. The next important step is guidance and hand holding by a successful entrepreneur after the start of the unit. To start with units based on locally available raw materials should be preferred. Often government spends lot of money on such programs but due to lack of proper management and monitoring these programs do not yield desired results.

At present many women are engaged in cottage industries and are successfully earning enough to look after their families but because of their tiny nature these are not included in official



records. Such works include tailoring, knitting, weaving on looms, apain, doll-making, badi making, pickle making, etc. Woollen industry by Shouka women and contribution of women in copper industry are notable works. Many such traditional works in absence of suitable infrastructure and financial support are closing day by day. In mountain areas small processing units of vegetables can be run successfully in clusters by developing agriculture and animal husbandry. Many times when fresh vegetables production is more than demand these additional produce can be dried, processed and preserved by using appropriate technology which can be supplied later in packaged form in off seasons.

Spices industry

In this area coriander, turmeric, garlic, chilly, ginger, etc can be processed in different forms and can be sold in beautiful, protected packaging. Such spices can be supplied in local hotels, marriage parties and even placed for sale at tourist places.



Fruit preservation units

In the fields of horticulture small fruit preservation units can be established. Decentralised units will be helpful for growers in carrying their fruits easily to the units. Normally, good produce is sent to cities but some fruits which are not sold can be processed in such units. There these can be preserved in the form of juice, jam or murabba. There is good production of lemon which can be processed locally for value addition.

Besides, mushroom production and dairying can be taken up successfully by the women in mountain and hill areas but all this can happen provided there are good infrastructure, arrangements for capacity building, technical back up, guidance and marketing network.

Medicinal herbs

Van Panchayat land and waste lands can be utilized for the cultivation of medicinal herbs and plants like amla, harad, bay leaves , cinnamon ,gulbanpsa, etc. With the increase in height of mountain different varieties of medicinal herbs are found.



FOREST, WATER AND WOMEN

Women have close relationship equally with land and forest. They are based on forest for livelihood related activities. For women in mountains going to forest is a regular routine



activity. They have to walk several kilometers for collecting wood for fuel, fodder and dry leaves for bedding for animals. They collect branches of trees for creepers and take animals to forest for grazing. They have travelled widely in the forest and are very well aware of the geography of forests. Due to climate change and illegal cutting of trees forests are now getting farther and farther from the villages. This has increases the misery of women. Around 80 per cent of women in mountains depend on forests. They love forests because they know the utility of forests. Therefore, they are always ready for the conservation of forests and the most important and memorable example is Chipko movement by women for saving the trees. If the responsibility of conservation and promotion of forest is deputed to women they can implement it very efficiently. Similarly the task of enriching Van Panchayats of villages should be given to them. It will be wiser to plant fodder trees and grasses in villages to ensure safety of forests. Waste lands, land of Van Panchayat and bunds of farms should be utilized for growing fodder. This will be doubly beneficial by checking the erosion of soil and enhanced availability of fodder in the vicinity.



The task of protection of forest, promotion and well planned utilization should be deputed to women sangathans. These women should be imparted proper training for protection of forest, theft of trees, checking felling of trees in forest and forest fire controlling mechanisms. Every year large forest areas in Uttarakhand become prey to forest fire but no government has succeeded so far in controlling this problem. The forest fire leads to huge loss of natural resources which directly affects human life. The sources of water dry up and along with big trees thousands of plants, animals, birds and insects are burnt.

Water

The development and conservation of forest is directly linked with water. Trees help in conserving rain water under ground. The source of water supply in Uttarakhand are rivers, gadhere and naulas etc. Due to decrease in forest area these sources have minimized. Now in many villages the water is supplied through pipes by storing water in tanks. Uttarakhand which



used to be the beautiful land of rivers and springs is gradually losing them and the rivers, rivulets, naulas and springs are drying up. Now not in summers but even in winters we see long queue for water. Government has installed hand pipes at different places for making water available but this is not the solution of the problem and the real solution lies in enhancing the source of water.

For enhancing natural sources of water we need to dig trenches, plant more broad leaves trees in catchment areas and conserve rain water. For conserving rain water-Rain water harvesting systems can be installed at homes and water can be used for animals, household works and vegetable farming etc. The conservation of water will enhance the sources of water.



EDUCATION AND HEALTH FACILITIES

The adequate facilities for education and health services are the primary needs of any society. In mountains due to lack of these facilities now people from mountain areas are migrating towards urban areas with families. If we look at the infrastructure of education we find that generally in every gram sabha there is a balwadi and primary school within one kilometre for children above five years of age and junior high school within three to five kilometres.

The facilities of high school and intermediate college should be available within three to five kilometres or for the population of eight thousand and more these facilities should be available. The schools at all these three levels are generally available but the quality of education is not upto the mark. In primary schools as per norms of the government one teacher is appointed for every 25 children and two teachers for children between 26 to 99. One teacher teaches students from first to fifth standard at the same place. Many times schools are closed and teachers are not available for some reasons. These teachers are also engaged in other works of the government and are not available for teaching. Thus the very foundation of education becomes weak. Besides, there is lack of teachers of different subjects particularly science teachers are not available in many schools and as a result of all this many parents are sending their children to private schools. This has increased the burden on women because they have to drop and pick their children till the road where school bus comes. In many cases the women from interior villages have shifted to nearby urban areas and district headquarters and stay with their children in small rented rooms for the sake of good education of their children. They have to manage their agriculture also so they keep making trips to the village also thus they are sandwiched between rural and urban life style. Thus the rural life is totally disturbed and disintegrated.

Many girls drop out after passing 10th or 12th standard due to lack of colleges and hostels within their approach. There are colleges at district headquarters but not sufficient facilities of hostels so if they desire to pursue higher education they have to stay in a rented house. This involves additional expenses as well as security problems hence they drop out. This directly affects the future of young girls.

Adult education

There is need for adult education particularly in this age of digitisation and net banking the women in villages should also be well versed in internet. Provisions for such technical trainings should be made in villages and libraries and reading halls should be established to make them aware.

Health care facilities

In mountain areas work in fields with agricultural tools and often get hurt, suffer from snake bite, fall from trees or slip from height and get injured in addition to problems associated with pregnancy and delivery. In such situation they need strong health care back up.



Health care infrastructure

As per government norms there is a sub-health centre for every five to six thousand population and a primary health centre (PHC) for a population between twenty five and thirty thousand. In a PHC there are two doctors, two nurses, clerk, guard, assistant, field supervisor and a driver with vehicle. A Community Health centre is there for a population between 50,000 and 1,00,000 where as per norms facilities for all kinds of check up, examination, tests and treatment should be available.

District hospital

At every district headquarters there is a district hospital where all kinds of tests and specialised treatment facilities for all types of diseases should be available.

ASHA Workers

There is one ASHA worker in every Gram sabha under the sponsorship of Ministry of health and family welfare, Govt of India for Janani Suraksha yojana. All activities of National Health Mission

are implemented through these workers. The patients calling for ambulance on phone number 108 are also collected by them at the road head and taken to hospital.

Thus, an effort has been made to provide good health care but the real problem is lack of doctors, shortage of facilities for treatment and support staff. The utilisation of these facilities are limited to minor cases and for all major health problems the patients rush towards Delhi which is already crowded with patients from all over the country so they have to face many problems in addition to extra cost. Therefore, all the hospitals should have proper staff – doctors and nurses so that most of the problems are solved at district level and below. Besides, there is need for two big hospitals – one each in Kumaon and Garhwal region with facilities of tests and treatment of all kinds of diseases so that people from Uttarakhand do not have to run to Delhi and face numerous mental and financial problems. Keeping in view the scattered population and difficult terrain in mountains the facilities are not sufficient and trained . Trained mid wives should be available in every village to help women during pregnancy.

WOMEN AND PANCHAYATI RAJ

Panchayati raj system was introduced in our country on Gandhi Jayanti, 2nd October 1959. In the year 1992 through 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act three-tier panchayati Raj system was implemented. In Uttarakhand through a notification on 19 June 2002 the delimitation of



panchayat areas was done and in 2003 elections under new system was held at all the three levels. The main objective of this new panchayati raj system is to enhance active people's participation in governance and development because the participation of socio-economically backward sections, scheduled castes and tribes and women i.e. half of the population was so far almost nil. Under the new system proper provisions were made for the representation of all sections of society and women at all levels. When women were elected in Panjayati Raj in the year 2003 for the first time with 33 % of reservation , they came with new panchayati raj responsibilities along with their usual responsibilities of agriculture and animal husbandry .The society and family felt uneasy in accepting this reality hence these newly elected representatives faced many problems and challenges. Due to lack of knowledge they were unable to check their husbands, sons and in-laws from misusing their positions. However, a few of them faced the challenges successfully and performed well.

These women got enormous help and cooperation from voluntary organisations who regularly continued to organize training workshops, seminars and consultations to make them aware of their roles and responsibilities at all the three levels. This helped greatly in raising their self-confidence, leadership and vision for the development of their areas. Such initiatives for leadership development still continue without any break and women are becoming empowered. The women whose lives were limited to agriculture and animal husbandry are now getting proper knowledge about their Gram sabha, block and district. They are aware and now no body can illegally take away the forest produce, water and stones from their Gram sabha. Their vision as well as socio-political understanding has increased.

Women had to struggle for cooperation from society and the family as for example husbands of women pradhans started functioning in their names and they remained dummy for name sake. Many husbands of women pradhans were found misusing power and were engaged in financial



irregularities. If a woman files her nomination from a general seat the menfolk pressurise her to take back her name. Some times it has also been noticed that when a woman candidate is declared victorious the husband of that woman is garlanded as if he is won the election not his wife. In such a situation where a woman is under the pressure of family and community it is very difficult to forge ahead.

1. It seems there is need for strict regulations to prevent husbands of women pradhans from misuse of power. They should not be entertained in meetings by government officials for any reason.
2. There should be provision for regular training workshops for the empowerment of women elected at different levels.

3. There should be proper awareness generation prior to elections.
4. Training programs should be organised for the capacity building of elected women so that they are aware of their duties and rights at all the three levels of panchayati raj.
5. They should be trained for keeping all the documents safely and intact.
6. At regular intervals workshops should be organised for sharing of experiences and redressal of challenges. Senior government officials should be invited to address these workshops to facilitate integration and inter face with concerned officials.
7. Through media workshops they should be given opportunities for presenting challenges and achievements presented before the society.
8. The most important factor is maintenance of good functional relationship by women representatives with officials at block and district levels so that they are able to perform successfully.

SOCIETY, FAMILY AND SINGLE WOMEN



Single woman means widow, divorced, deserted and unmarried aged women . In general single women are supposed to be weak and are neglected by society as lowly women but the fact is that they are strong women. They are quite good in number in our society and are sensible citizens of our country as well as form a good share of our workforce. Due to ill treatment and discrimination by family and society they feel undesirable. Due to patriarchal system of society they are relegated to the margins. They are successfully struggling alone for their children and dependents.

Their life is full of struggles. They do not get proper support from families, society and government. Therefore, they are deprived of their basic right to dignified life. As per the census of 2011 there are 4,26,201 single women in Uttarakhand. Either after the death or separation from the husband they are deprived of their houses and landed property. They become helpless with their children. They are left with no other option than going back to their parents. Sometimes, even the doors of their parents are also closed for them. If she somehow manages to live there with parents she feels under burden and her entire life becomes a hell. She has to face the problems of looking after children, their education, health care, her own livelihood etc. without having any right to house, land or property. Social evils make her more nervous. On occasions of marriages and religious rituals she is pushed back and her entire life becomes a punishment. There is need for social awareness for removing such social evils.



1. They should have equal right in the land and property of parents and in laws.

2. Single women should be given priority in government housing schemes and other programs.
3. They should be given priority in MNREGA and other schemes of livelihoods.
4. The children of single women should be given financial assistance for higher education.
5. Single women who are desirous of improving their educational level through open schools, regular schools and colleges. They should be given concession in fees.
6. There should be meaningful schemes for strengthening the economic situation of single women for their empowerment so that they are inspired to work willingly for society.
7. They should be facilitated knowledge and process of getting pension.
8. They should be given proper knowledge of laws and fast track courts should be established for solving their problems.

WOMEN'S SECURITY

In Uttarakhand many women are facing the problem of domestic violence. It is believed that every second woman in the state is prey to domestic violence in some way or the other. They are prey to diseases, face lack of treatment, financial problems, emotional and physical exploitation including rape. The violence against women is reflection of sexual discrimination. There are many such issues which start just after the birth in the form of organised discrimination. As per survey of Uttarakhand Women's Commission 54 per cent women have reported that they are mentally exploited by husband and family in some way or the other. The government has taken some steps for women's security such as :

1. Emergency response support system
2. One stop center
3. Swadhar Grah
4. Kishori Grah
5. Domestic violence Act 2005

For proper execution of the above provisions following initiatives are required :

1. Women should be made aware of these facilities being provided by the administration for them by organising camps.
2. Normally women do not report incidents of domestic violence including heinous crimes like rape for the fear of society and husband. In such cases their names should be kept secret and women should be encouraged to report cases of violence against them. For such cases fast track courts should be established for speedy trials and punishment of criminals.
3. Women in Swadhar Garh should be imparted employment related trainings so that they are able to become economically independent.
4. For mentally unsound women there should be provision of counsellor and doctor. They should also be given some sort of skill training.
5. There should be arrangement of education for girls and facility of school bus to drop and pick them from schools.
6. In Bal Niketan younger girls should not be given feeling that they are orphans and should be treated well with affection.
7. Swadhar Grah should have all the women related and health care facilities.
8. Awareness generation programs should be organised to educate about trafficking of children.
9. All important and risky places should have CCTV.
10. There should be arrangement of woman advocates, woman police and fast track courts for speedy justice.

However, the actual security can be ensured by teaching / training self-defence mechanisms like judo, carate etc. and such efforts should be started at family and school level.

WOMEN'S Sangathan AND LEADERSHIP



In rural areas of Uttarakhand there are large number of women's sangathan. These sangathans have done many courageous works also. These sangathans have been engaged in protection of forests near villages, framing of rules for not felling green trees, raising voice to solve the problems of villages, movement against sale and use of liquor, etc. From these movements many strong women leaders have emerged. Government should take initiatives for strengthening women's sangathans. They should be imparted skills of using mobile phone, internet, net banking, accountancy, functional education, and other relevant trainings. After training these organisations can

be utilised as trainers for spreading the skills at grassroot levels for the larger good of women. They can also be deputed the task of assisting the women suffering from domestic violence. Thus, both sangathans and the society will be strengthened. Women are doing lot of work for family, society, forests, conservation of culture and traditional rituals for future generation. They are seeking equal status in family and society for themselves and government should help them by providing training and education. They should be assisted in technical training and finding suitable livelihood so that they are able to strengthen themselves as well as their families.

SUMMARY

When we talk about the empowerment of women we find that they are empowered in performance and in carrying out their responsibilities then the question arises what makes them feel weak? Why she does not get equal rights and power? She has two houses – parent’s house and in law’s house even then why she becomes houseless? For this awareness in society for change in attitude is necessary and this objective cannot be accomplished only by empowering women only. There is need for a revolution in society. Empowerment of just one party normally leads to friction and will harm the society at large.

Along with women there should be efforts for awareness generation among males because society is constituted by both.

When both these constituents of society will develop understanding about each other there will be no need for women to fight for their rights because their family will not create any hindrance in providing them ownership in land and property. Their decisions and works will be respected in family and society. They will lead a life of dignity. Keeping in view the structure of society in future the syllabus of schools should include such lessons so that the society is free of discrimination of any kind .

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SUGGESTIONS FOR POLICY MAKERS

The government should create such policy environment in which women are entitled to equal rights and opportunities in their families, society and working areas and are able to contribute in every aspect of their lives with their complete capacity so that there is a balanced development in our society and country.

The land and property rights

According to the new rules of the constitution men and women (husband and wife) have equal rights in ancestral land and property. The Indian Constitution also grants rights to women in their father's ancestral land and property. However, this is not in practice at grass root level and their name is not included in revenue records. They are deprived of legal rights in land and property. In fact, the foundation of inequality is laid down here only. On the basis of this they are also deprived of equal status in prevailing social environment. The helplessness of their lives starts from here. Due to non-inclusion of their name in land records and property they face problems in accessing government schemes, trainings, bank loans etc. Therefore, there should be a provision to include their name in the ownership of ancestral property and land revenue records with the land holder at the time of the marriage itself.

To reduce the documentary burden women's Aadhar Card should be treated as valid proof for accessing government schemes.

Agriculture and Animal husbandry

About 80 per cent of women in Uttarakhand are engaged in agriculture and animal husbandry and the participation of males in these sectors is almost nil. Due to difficult terrain and geographical conditions these works are hard and laborious. They cultivate crops, vegetables, spices, prepare manure for farms and look after milch animals but even then they do not enjoy the status of farmers. In fact, they really deserve the status of farmer.

Hon'ble Prime Minister has announced many measures for the development of agriculture and animal husbandry. It includes many action plans. For the first time animal rearers are going to get the status of farmers. They will also be provided Kisan Credit Cards (KCC). Rural women are the primary deserving beneficiaries of such schemes and this should be specially kept in mind in the emerging new economy. Women should be given the status of farmers and should be provided KCC. They have traditional knowledge and experience in these areas. Efforts should be made to simplify and strengthen agriculture and animal husbandry. Provision for providing various kinds of modern tools and appropriate training to operate them should be made.

Along with agriculture they should also be provided opportunities in household industry, poultry, fishery, goatry, etc which can increase their incomes many folds.

For various reasons the agricultural land in Uttarakhand is becoming waste land. Women should be imparted technical training for reclaiming such lands for cultivation.

Women should be given knowledge of government schemes in simple language in detail. The selected women should be given guidance for accessing these schemes. Agriculture and animal husbandry are source of raw materials for many industries so these should be promoted in mountain areas.

In villages located on higher elevation besides agriculture, fruit production is also in practice. Women also cultivate rajma, peas, gahat, spices, etc. which do not reach to the market because of interior locations and lack of transport facilities. Similarly, vegetables and pulses also due to lack of marketing facilities do not reach to the market.

Due to menace of wild animals the agricultural activities are shrinking and in such a situation crops like turmeric, ginger, garlic, bay leaves etc may be cultivated which are not damaged by animals. These can be for self use as well as for market to enhance the income. Women should be given implements and training for value addition of these items at home. There should be arrangement of guidance for marketing of agricultural and value added products.

Fruits like apple, peach, pear, etc. are sent to several cities for sale but among them some fruits are in such condition that cannot be send for sale so establishment of processing units in decentralised form will help in processing of such fruits .Rural women can operate such units successfully provided they are trained and oriented properly.

The Horticulture department should organise training programs from time to time to provide the knowledge of new technology and methods of cultivation to the owners of horticulture gardens.

For the sale of agri-products all schemes related to value addition should be given for the marketing purposes. Women and their groups can be linked with e-marketing and local administration can organise exhibitions and haats. Women also need to be given opportunities in areas other than agriculture and animal husbandry by providing adequate training and finance.

It is unfortunate that the new generation is losing interest in agricultural activities hence there is a need for imparting technical knowledge and utility of agriculture in schools.

Entrepreneurship

There is need of multi-level strategy for promoting entrepreneurship. Small units for value addition and packaging of agricultural and animal products, spices, horticultural produce, etc. should be established. Women interested in a particular enterprise should be given proper training in the areas of technical know how, marketing and management. Prior to starting an enterprise availability of raw materials and potentials of marketing should be examined deeply. Successful entrepreneurs should be available for hand holding and guidance.

Presently, women are earning their livelihood through cottage industry. Cottage industries like pickle-making, knitting, weaving on looms, stitching, badi-making should also be included in the list of enterprises. Schemes, equipment and training programmes should also be included for them in Government policy. Women should be given machinery for processing and packaging of spices along with training and finance.

Forest and water

Women are closely related with forests and their life is dependent on them for many vital needs. Women sangathans of the village should be assigned the task of protection, promotion and planned utilisation of forests in their vicinity. They should also be provided training and resources to stop the theft of trees, illegal of trees and fire fighting.

The scarcity of water in villages of mountains is increasing day by day hence there is a need for plantation of broad leaves trees in catchment areas of water sources for the conservation of available water. Besides, every family should have the arrangement of water harvesting so that water is available for household work and animals. This will help women in managing water needs of the family.

Education

The number of children in government schools is decreasing day by day. Various types of resource materials should be used for teaching the children. There should be proper arrangement of play materials. The environment of school should be simple but interesting for children to learn. There should be regular monitoring and mothers of children should be inspired to form an association and take interest in promoting the concept of play and learn.

In schools having provision upto fifth standard have just one teacher for 25 children and children studying from class one to fifth sit together which is quite difficult for one teacher to teach all the students simultaneously so there should be more than one teacher otherwise the very foundation of education is weakened.

In secondary schools many girls drop out just because of long distance from their village. There is also a need for improvement in quality of education. There should be arrangement for teachers of all subjects. In many schools in rural areas science teachers are not available. There should be adequate resources and neat and clean toilets for girl students. More women teachers should be recruited. Women's sangathans should be inspired to monitor and evaluate the environment and management of schools. Such sangathans should be trained for such works. Adolescent girl, children should be encouraged for skill training and upgradation. The distance of colleges for higher education should be minimized and provision of hostels for girls should be made. The Right to Education should be implemented in letter and spirit. There should be trained teachers to utilise the educational instruments and resources effectively. There should be proper environment for teaching and learning.

The institutes of higher learning, colleges and universities are far away hence there is a need for increasing their numbers.

The deteriorating condition of education system in rural areas of Uttarakhand needs to be improved which directly affects the adolescent girls and women of all ages. Many families have migrated towards cities because of this problem.

There is also need for adult education / people's education. There are new rules and regulations, new programs and schemes, etc. which need to be disseminated and explained among common people for their better understanding. There is no unit in rural areas for providing such knowledge hence through adult education technical knowledge, training, life skills, women's rights, government schemes, mobile and digital utilisation etc. may be imparted. There should be arrangement of Reading Room and library also where persons of all ages can utilise these facilities.

Health facilities

There is a need to enhance the capabilities of ASHA and Angawadi workers.

There should be arrangement of well trained nurses who can manage deliveries at home. Their number and facilities should be increased so that they are able to serve the interior villages by managing deliveries at home.

Special camps should be organised for pregnant women and lactating mothers to provide knowledge about health care and nutrition.

Health facilities should be in place for both physical and mental health care. Health insurance should be promoted by the government.

An effort has been made to create health infrastructure but in absence of doctors, supporting staff, resources for testing and treatment this becomes meaningless. In Uttarakhand at least two big hospitals- one in each mandal is required where facilities for testing and treatment of all diseases should be available and there should be a separate wing for the treatment of women and children. In rural areas there should be arrangement of ayurvedic and homoeopathic treatment.

Panchayati raj

There is 50 per cent reservation for women in Panchayati raj but due to discrimination women are still facing lot of problems. Both family and community are not ready to accept this truth. Most of the women representatives are represented by their husbands, father in laws or sons.

There is a need for making strict regulations for women's empowerment so that family members are restricted from misusing their positions. Only women representatives should be allowed participation in official meetings and male members representing them should be refused from entering the meeting halls.

Regular workshops should be organised for leadership development and empowerment of women representatives.

There is also need for awareness generation in society prior to elections. After the elections there should be training programs for the capacity building of elected women representatives so that they are aware of their responsibilities, roles and rights at all the three levels. They should also be trained for keeping all the important documents safely.

From time to time workshops should be organised for sharing the experiences and discussing the challenges faced by them. Senior officials of various government departments should be invited in such workshops for interaction and networking purposes.

These women should be provided opportunities for sharing their achievements and challenges through media workshops.

A good and strong working relationship with officials at district and block level is very important for successful functioning of women representatives.

Attendance of women members should be ensured in Gram Sabha meetings. In general men are informed about the meetings and women are not informed so their issues are not included in the agenda and their problems remain unsolved. Therefore, it is very important to inform women about the venue, date and the time of the meeting of Gram Sabha.

There should be proper arrangement of internet connections because many of the forms for applications, certificates, and income related documents are to be down loaded from internet hence its proper arrangement is necessary.

Single women

There are more than four lakhs single women in Uttarakhand. Special policies, programs and rules need to be framed for them.

The government should ensure availability of housing facilities for them for the social security of these women and their children.

They should be given equal rights in ancestral and in laws property.

They should be given priority in livelihood programs and MNREGA.

The children of single women should be assisted financially for getting higher education.

The single women who are trying to improve their qualifications through open schools, general schools and colleges should be given concessions in fees.

Single women are an easy prey to physical, mental and sexual exploitation even in their parent's and father in laws houses. To check this menace single women should be organised in associations so that they are able to face such problems effectively. Such organisations should be given training in subjects like domestic violence and women's safety.

Awareness generation programs should be organised to dispel social stigma about the single women.

Single women should be given special opportunity in all spheres.

Women's security

Camps should be organised to share knowledge about the various facilities created by the government including emergency app set system, one stop centre, Swadhar Griha, Kishori Griha, domestic violence act 2005, etc.

Generally, women do not report the cases of atrocities against them whereas rape is one of the most heinous crime. Women do not report cases due to fear of insult in society and husbands so in such a situation their names should be kept secret and women should be encouraged to report cases. There should be fast track courts to solve such cases.

In Swadhar Grah women should be given employment oriented trainings so that they become economically self-dependent. There should be provision of counsellors and doctors for the treatment of mentally and physically sick women. There should be arrangement of education for girls and vehicles to drop and **pick** them from schools. Swadhar Grah should have in house facilities for women specific problems and health care.

In Balika Niketan small girls should not feel orphans and they should be treated well with affection.

All these centres should have CCTVs facility. There should also be arrangement of CCTVs in the streets and pathways.

Women should be made aware of human trafficking menace.

There should be provision of women advocates, women police, fast track system to solve the cases in shorter duration.

There should be arrangement of solar light in the streets and pathways because women mostly work outside till late evenings and are often attacked by wild animals. Every year many women become prey to panthers.

However, the real security will be ensured by enhancing self-defence skills among adolescents and women through training them in judo and carate etc. The environment of family and schools should be supportive to enhance their self-confidence.

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