Awareness of government schemes among women in a slum area : a survey - based study

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Abstract:

Women's empowerment is crucial for social development, and various government schemes support women in education, health, and livelihood. However, these schemes are effective only when women are aware of them. This study examines awareness of selected schemes — *Manodhairya Yojana, Mahila Samruddhi Yojana, Punyashlok Ahilyadevi Holkar Mahila Startup Yojana, Lek Ladki Yojana, E-Pink Rickshaw Scheme,* and *Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana* — among 120 women in a slum area.

Data were collected through a structured questionnaire and face-to-face interviews and analyzed using the percentage method. The results show that 55% of women were aware of the *Lek Ladki Yojana*, while awareness of other schemes ranged from 6% to 26%. The findings highlight the need for stronger community-level awareness through self-help groups, anganwadi workers, and local outreach programs to improve women's access to welfare schemes.

Keywords: Government schemes, Woman empowerment, Education

Introduction:

Women play a vital role in the development of society and the economy. Improving the status of women is not only a matter of ensuring equal rights but is also essential for the overall progress of a nation. The development of women depends on several factors such as locality, social background, age, education, and access to resources. Despite constitutional safeguards and continuous efforts, many women in India still face inequality in education, employment, decision-making, and social, economic, and political participation.

Recognizing these challenges, the Government of India and state governments have introduced various schemes and policies aimed at the empowerment and welfare of women and the girl child. These schemes focus on education, maternal and child health, financial assistance, skill development, entrepreneurship, and psychological support. Prominent schemes such as Manodhairya Yojana, Mahila Samruddhi Yojana, Punyashlok Ahilyadevi Holkar Mahila Startup Yojana, Lek Ladki Yojana, E-Pink Rickshaw Scheme, and Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana are designed to enhance the social and economic status of women.

However, the effectiveness of these schemes largely depends on the level of awareness among the intended beneficiaries. Women residing in rural and underdeveloped areas, including urban slums, often remain unaware of these initiatives or face difficulties in accessing them. Although the government continues to implement welfare measures, the gap between policy formulation and ground-level awareness persists. The present study seeks to assess the level of awareness among women in a slum area regarding selected government schemes.

Methodology :

It was a descriptive survey research design, and primary data was used. Interviews were conducted with structured questionnaire to understand the general awareness and perceptions about government schemes. Experiences from these interactions contributed to developing an appropriate and context-specific questionnaire. Following the questionnaire, brief information about all the selected government schemes in simple language was provided to the respondents to ensure that the participants became aware of the purpose, benefits, and eligibility of each scheme. A sample of 120 women respondents was drawn from the selected slum area using a convenient sampling method. The tools contained 50 items, including two sections. The first section consisted of 10 questions regarding personal data and socio-demographic characteristics like age, education, marital status, occupation, etc. Section II consisted of 40 questions that focused on the awareness and knowledge about the selected government schemes.

Data collection was through face-to-face interviews, which were necessary to take care of the fluctuating literacy levels. Ethical issues were upheld through assurances of confidentiality and informed consent. Data collected were coded, tabulated, and then analyzed using percentage analysis. Results were presented by using tables and graphical representations.

Result:

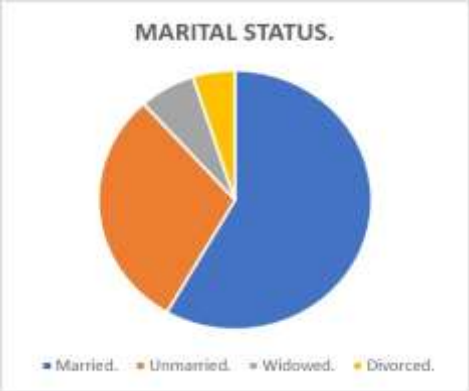
1. **EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATION :**

   The findings reveal that 34.17% of the respondents were highly educated, 33.33% had completed education up to the 10th standard, 22.50% up to the 12th standard, and 10% were uneducated. Despite relatively higher educational attainment, awareness regarding government schemes remained low among many respondents.

Graph 1.1 Educational Qualifications.

2. MARITAL STATUS :

The data show that 58.33% of the respondents were married, 30.00% were unmarried, 6.67% were widowed, and 5.00% were divorced. The dominance of married women indicates that most respondents bear family and household responsibilities, making awareness of welfare schemes particularly important. The presence of widowed and divorced women, though smaller, highlights the need for targeted support, as these groups are often more vulnerable and depend more on government assistance.



Graph 1.2 Marital Status Graph.

3. AWARENESS OF GOVERNMENT SCHEMES :

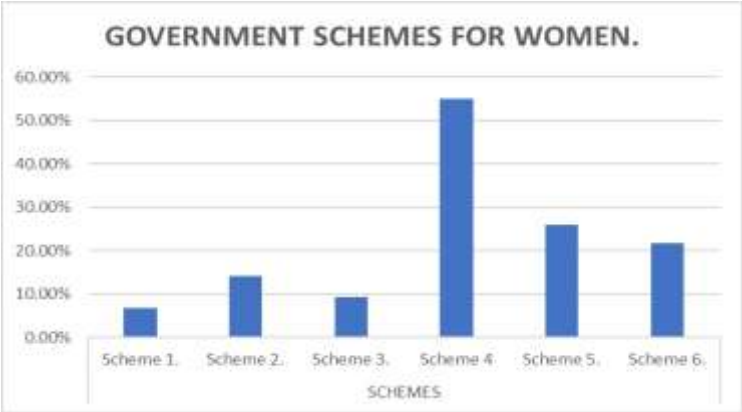
The analysis reveals considerable variation in awareness across the selected government schemes. *Lek Ladki Yojana* recorded the highest level of awareness (55.00%), indicating that education-related schemes receive relatively better visibility and outreach at the community level. This may be due to school-based communication, local campaigns, and

direct interaction with families. The *E-Pink Rickshaw Scheme* (25.89%) and *Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana* (21.67%) showed moderate awareness, suggesting partial reach through health workers, media, and local networks.

SCHEME	AWARE	NOT AWARE	AWARE PERCENTILE.
MANODHAIRYA YOJANA	8	38	6.67%
MAHILA SAMRUDDHI YOJNA	17	103	14.17%
PUNYASHLOK AHILYADEVI HOLKAR MAHILA STARTUP YOJANA	11	36	9.17%
LEK LADKI YOJNA	66	54	55.00%
E-PINK RICKSAHW	31	89	25.00%
PRADHAN MANTRI MATRU VANDANA YOJANA	26	44	21.67%

TABLE 1.1 Government Schemes Awareness Data.

Awareness of *Manodhairya Yojana* (6.67%), *Mahila Samruddhi Yojana* (14.17%), and *Punyashlok Ahilyadevi Holkar Mahila Startup Yojana* (9.17%) was notably low. These schemes relate to protection, financial inclusion, and entrepreneurship, which require more targeted communication and guidance. The low awareness indicates gaps in dissemination, especially among vulnerable women who could benefit the most from such initiatives.



Graph 1.3 Government Schemes Awareness Data.

Scheme 1:- MANODHAIRYA YOJANA.	**Scheme 4:-** LEK LADKI YOJANA.
Scheme 2:- MAHILA SAMRUDDHI YOJANA.	**Scheme 5:-** E-PINK RICKSAHW.
Scheme3:-PUNYASHLOK AHILYADEVI HOLKAR MAHILA STARTUP YOJANA .	**Scheme 6:-** PRADHAN MANTRI MATRU VANDANA YOJANA.

Discussion:

The findings indicate a significant disparity in awareness levels among women regarding government schemes. Education and livelihood-oriented schemes showed relatively higher visibility, while welfare, protection, financial and entrepreneurship schemes remained largely unknown. This suggests gaps in communication, outreach, and grassroots-level dissemination. Even among educated women, awareness was limited, highlighting that education alone does not guarantee access to information about welfare initiatives.

Conclusion:

The study concludes that awareness of government schemes among women in the slum area remains inadequate, particularly for schemes related to social security, protection, and entrepreneurship. Although *Lek Ladki Yojana* has achieved higher visibility, several important initiatives such as *Manodhairya Yojana* and *Mahila Samruddhi Yojana* have not effectively reached their intended beneficiaries.

There is an urgent need for strengthened awareness programs, improved dissemination strategies, and active involvement of grassroots institutions such as self-help groups, local governance bodies, ngos, and social workers. Communication in regional languages, community meetings, and the use of digital platforms can enhance outreach. Increasing awareness is essential for ensuring effective utilization of government schemes and for promoting the social and economic empowerment of women.

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