

Report 2023–2024: Women’s Rights Awareness in Uttar Pradesh

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1. Introduction

This report provides a comprehensive overview of women’s rights awareness and empowerment initiatives undertaken in Uttar Pradesh during the fiscal year 2023–2024. It examines the multifaceted efforts by the state government, particularly through programs like Mission Shakti, to enhance the safety, dignity, and self-reliance of women across the state. The report also highlights key government schemes, economic empowerment initiatives, and the challenges that persist in ensuring widespread awareness and effective implementation of women’s rights. The analysis aims to present a clear picture of the progress made and areas requiring further attention in Uttar Pradesh’s journey towards gender justice.

2. Mission Shakti: A Catalyst for Change

Mission Shakti, a flagship program of the Uttar Pradesh government, has been instrumental in driving women’s empowerment and safety initiatives. The program, particularly its Phase 4 and Phase 5 iterations, has focused on ensuring the “safety, dignity, and self-reliance” of women [1]. While Phase 5.0 was officially launched in October 2024, significant planning and awareness activities related to its objectives were undertaken throughout 2023-2024 [2].

A key agenda of Mission Shakti Phase 5.0 is the establishment of a dedicated health helpline for women, known as the ‘Mahila Swasthya Line,’ modeled after the existing 1090 helpline [3]. This initiative aims to provide accessible healthcare assistance, especially to women in rural areas who often face barriers to accessing medical services due to social stigma or lack of direct access. Beyond helplines, Mission Shakti

has actively promoted awareness programs on critical issues such as menstrual hygiene, climate change, and legal rights [4]. Furthermore, the program has equipped over 10 lakh girls with self-defense training, fostering a sense of security and confidence among young women [5].

3. Economic Empowerment and Labour Force Participation

Economic empowerment is a cornerstone of women's rights, and Uttar Pradesh has made notable progress in this area. The Female Labour Force Participation Rate (FLFPR) in the state has seen a remarkable increase, rising to 36% in 2023-24 from a mere 14% in 2017-18 [6]. This significant growth is a testament to the government's initiatives aimed at integrating women into the workforce.

To further measure and boost women's economic empowerment, Uttar Pradesh launched the Women's Economic Empowerment (WEE) Index. This index is supported by eight women-centric schemes implemented between 2017 and 2024, reflecting a strategic approach to fostering economic independence [7]. Additionally, efforts are underway to provide women entrepreneurs with access to essential knowledge and skills, thereby encouraging their participation in various economic sectors [8].

4. Key Government Schemes (2023-2024)

Several government schemes have been pivotal in promoting women's welfare and rights during the 2023-2024 period:

- **Mukhyamanti Kanya Sumangala Yojana:** This scheme provides financial assistance to girls from birth through to their graduation, supporting their education and overall development [9].
- **Marriage Grant Scheme:** For the fiscal year 2024-25, an allocation of ₹200 crore was made, benefiting 58,594 women by December 2024, facilitating their marriages and promoting social security [10].
- **Rani Lakshmibai Children and Women Welfare Fund:** This fund is dedicated to providing support for victims of violence, ensuring they receive necessary assistance and rehabilitation [11].

These schemes, alongside others, collectively aim to create a supportive environment for women, addressing various aspects of their lives from education and financial security to protection against violence.

5. Safety and Legal Awareness

Ensuring the safety of women and raising their legal awareness are critical components of women's rights initiatives in Uttar Pradesh. The state has established a robust network of helplines to provide immediate assistance and support:

- **CM Helpline (1076)**
- **Women Power Line (WPL) (1090)**
- **Women Helpline (181)**
- **Police Emergency Service (112)**
- **Cyber Helpline (1930) [12]**

In addition to these helplines, initiatives like 'Pink Booths' and 'Pink Patrols' have been introduced to enhance police presence and responsiveness in areas frequented by women, thereby deterring crime and instilling a sense of security. The State Commission for Women regularly organizes legal awareness camps, educating women about their rights and available legal recourses, which is crucial for empowering them to seek justice and protect themselves.

6. Challenges

Despite the significant strides made, several challenges continue to impede the full realization of women's rights awareness in Uttar Pradesh:

- **Bridging the Awareness Gap in Rural Areas:** While urban areas may have better access to information, a considerable portion of the rural population, particularly women, remains unaware of their rights and the schemes designed for their benefit. Effective outreach strategies are needed to penetrate these remote areas.
- **Social Stigma:** Social stigma associated with reporting violence or seeking assistance for health and legal issues continues to be a major barrier. This often

prevents women from coming forward and utilizing the available support systems.

- **Effective Implementation at Grassroots Level:** Ensuring that policies and schemes are effectively implemented at the grassroots level, reaching the intended beneficiaries without bureaucratic hurdles, remains a persistent challenge.

Addressing these challenges requires sustained effort, innovative strategies, and continued collaboration between government agencies, NGOs, and local communities.

7. References

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