



# AN EMPIRICAL STUDY TO CHECK THE AWARENESS OF WOMEN EMPOWERMENT SCHEMES AMONG WOMEN FROM SOUTHERN RAJASTHAN

**Dr. Preeti Agarwal**  
**Supervisor**

Assistant Professor  
Department of Business Administration  
Faculty of Commerce  
M.V.S. College, Udaipur (Raj.)

**Aayushi Kothari**  
**Research Scholar**

Department of Business Administration  
Faculty of Commerce  
M.V.S. College, Udaipur (Raj.)

## 1.1 ABSTRACT

**Goal of the study:** The study aims to identify the level of awareness of selected schemes of women empowerment among the women of Southern Rajasthan.

**Key finding:** The core finding of the study is that the level of awareness is not satisfactory. Only 40% of the respondents had an idea of the schemes under the head women empowerment which calls for an immediate awareness campaign to upgrade the women on this front.

**Research Methodology:** The study was carried out in Southern Rajasthan, using a sample of 173 individuals who are women from Southern Rajasthan. Purposive sampling was employed to specifically choose particular data. Yes-No questions were drafted to determine individuals' awareness on the stated topic.

**Practical Implications:** It is essential for the government to implement programs that empower women since these programs assist women in overcoming socio-economic obstacles and realizing their full potential capabilities. In the current context, the study is extremely pertinent because we have addressed a very important issue, which is whether or not the people who are supposed to be beneficiaries are aware of what the government is doing for them, and if they are not, then what should be done to make up for the loss that has

been caused as a result of the failure of the schemes to assist those who are entitled to the benefits that are provided by the schemes?

**Research Limitations:** Keeping research constraints in mind, only selected schemes (4 schemes) have been interrogated for in the present paper, which accords to be the biggest limitation of the present paper. Also, the study has been restricted to Southern Rajasthan, this could have been extended further for the sake of better acceptability of results.

**Keywords:** *Women Empowerment Schemes, Southern Rajasthan*

## 1.2 INTRODUCTION

The concept of women's empowerment is broad and diverse. It relates to several facets of life, including the political, social, and economic spheres. Because of its all-encompassing character, empowerment seems to be beneficial in every aspect of life. It appears that empowerment in all area of life begins at the same time as this procedure. The concept of empowerment may be expressed in a variety of contexts and facets of life. The concept's integration of ideological convictions into its fundamental elements is a crucial component. The idea is predicated on the ideas of skill development promotion, gender equality, and self-assertion. There is a direct correlation between economic development and women's empowerment. The gap between men and women can be considerably reduced with the help of development. Development may be favourably impacted by women's empowerment. The expression has been employed to signify a wide range of ideas and to indicate a variety of results. The concept of women's empowerment stems from the subservient position that women had throughout the patriarchal era, which was marked by negative treatment and a dearth of acknowledgement for their accomplishments. Women must be allowed to make more beneficial contributions to the improvement of society in order to encourage their important participation in the development process. Equality, social justice, and freedom are crucial elements taken into account while promoting women's empowerment within the framework of development goals. Gender equality is recognised by the World Bank (2001) as a developmental goal as well as a means of promoting development, lowering poverty, and enhancing governance.

The government has devised and implemented several programs in order to improve the position of women in society. These programs include the One Stop Center and Universalization of Women Helplines, the Swadhar Greh Scheme, the Ujjawala Scheme, the Working Women Hostel, the Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP) program, the Mahila Shakti Kendra (MSK) program, and the Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY) program. Mission Shakti, also known as the Integrated Women Empowerment Programme, is a mission-oriented umbrella scheme that was recently introduced by the Ministry of Women Affairs. Its primary objective is to enhance the interventions that are designed to ensure the safety, security, and empowerment of women. In addition to strengthening digital infrastructure for efficient last-mile service delivery tracking, it aims to actualise the government's vision for "women-led development" by addressing issues that affect women throughout their life cycles and ensuring their equal participation in nation-building through collaboration among Ministries/Departments and various governance levels, enhanced involvement and support from Panchayats and other local governance entities, and Jan Sahabgita.

Through the present research paper, we aim to seek a view on the level of awareness of selected schemes among the women of Southern Rajasthan.

### 1.3 REVIEW OF LITERATURE

(Bhati & Bhadu, 2023)<sup>i</sup> The research findings indicate that MSMEs in Rajasthan significantly contribute to employment generation, skill enhancement, and the economic empowerment of rural women. Government initiatives, such as the Rajasthan MSME Policy and Cluster Development Programme, have created a supportive environment for MSMEs by improving access to financing and promoting skill development and training for entrepreneurs, especially among rural women.

(Meena & Jain, 2024)<sup>ii</sup> The research conducted on 200 women in Rajasthan identified key barriers to women's entrepreneurship, including financial, marketing, and production constraints. Additionally, societal norms were found to significantly hinder women's progress in entrepreneurship, despite the empowering efforts of Self-Help Groups (SHGs) in rural areas.

(Mishra & Panda, 2023)<sup>iii</sup> The research findings reveal that beneficiaries of MGNREGA in Ladnu block, Rajasthan, have seen improvements in their lifestyles. However, while there are positive impacts on women's participation and asset creation, the study highlights the necessity for the government to enhance awareness, ensure transparency in implementation, provide timely payments, adjust wages for inflation, and integrate various schemes with MGNREGA to fully realize the Act's objectives.

(Nisa, 2023)<sup>iv</sup> In Southern Punjab, Pakistan, women who borrowed achieved higher scores on the Empowerment Index compared to non-borrowers, with women's education, domestic education, societal norms, and media influence being critical determinants.

(Dhumatkar & Bhat, 2024)<sup>v</sup> The research revealed a moderate level of empowerment among women beneficiaries of government financial schemes in Goa. Additionally, it identified a significant correlation between the beneficiaries' education level, their place of residence, and their awareness of the schemes.

(Sharma, 2024)<sup>vi</sup> The research findings indicate that government-sponsored programs in Rajasthan, including PMJDY, Mudra Yojna, MNREGA, and Stand up India KCC, have effectively enabled underprivileged women to open bank accounts and apply for loans. However, it emphasizes that genuine empowerment is achieved when women utilize these funds to create their own income, contributing to their socioeconomic progress in the region.

(Paul & Samal, 2023)<sup>vii</sup> The research findings indicate that tribal women in Dhalbhumgarh, Jharkhand, have limited engagement with rural development programs. While there has been a moderate improvement in their

education, health, and livelihoods, the programs have not significantly reduced gender disparities or enhanced participation in governance.

(Karnavat et al., 2024)<sup>viii</sup> The research findings indicate that women entrepreneurs in Gujarat view Entrepreneurship Development Programs (EDPs) positively, acknowledging their role in imparting essential knowledge and skills. The study underscores the widespread advantages of EDPs for various demographic groups, highlighting their importance in empowering women to thrive in entrepreneurship and foster economic growth and social development.

#### **1.4 RESEARCH QUESTION:**

The key research question that guided the study was:

Q. Do you believe in the schemes run by the Government to uplift women in the country?

Q. Are the women aware of the schemes launched by the Government for their development?

Q. How can Government raise the level of awareness among women regarding the same?

#### **1.5 OBJECTIVES OF STUDY:**

The key objective of the paper was to identify the level of awareness of selected schemes of women empowerment among the women of Southern Rajasthan.

#### **1.6 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:**

##### **1.6.1 Research Objective**

The primary objective of the survey was to identify the level of awareness of selected schemes of women empowerment among the women of Southern Rajasthan.

##### **1.6.2 Research Design**

The study adopts a descriptive research design due to its applicability for cross-sectional studies and for understanding relationships.

##### **1.6.3 Sampling Technique**

The sampling method employed in the thesis was the Purposive Non-Probability Sampling technique, as we selected participants based on their judgment and their characteristics.

##### **1.6.4 Data**

The study was conducted in Southern Rajasthan, using a sample of 173 female respondents. Hence, purposive sampling has been the methodology utilized for data sampling. Yes-No questions were drafted to identify the awareness among the masses concerning women's empowerment.

## 1.7 DATA ANALYSIS

### 1.7.1 Do you believe in the schemes run by the Government to uplift women in the country?

The respondents' reactions were asked on their belief in the government's initiatives aimed at empowering women in the country.

**Table 1: Opinion of the respondents**

	Frequency	%
Strongly Disagree	16	9.25%
Disagree	30	17.34%
Neutral	90	52.02%
Agree	21	12.14%
Strongly Agree	16	9.25%
<b>Total</b>	<b>173</b>	<b>100%</b>

The table above indicates that most respondents had a neutral opinion.

**Table 2: Awareness of Govt Initiatives**

	No		Yes	
	Count	Table N %	Count	Table N %
Beti Bachao Beti Padhao	79	45.66%	94	54.34%
Mahila Shakti Kendra	104	60.12%	69	39.88%
Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana	108	62.43%	65	37.57%
Mission Shakti	101	58.38%	72	41.62%

As depicted in the above table, respondents were not aware for the following Govt initiatives, Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (45.66%), Mahila Shakti Kendra (60.12%), Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (62.43%) and Mission Shakti (58.38%).

**Table 3: Mean Score**

	n	Mean	Std. Deviation
Beti Bachao Beti Padhao	173	0.543	0.5
Mahila Shakti Kendra	173	0.398	0.49
Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana	173	0.375	0.49

	n	Mean	Std. Deviation
Mission Shakti	173	0.416	0.49
<b>Total</b>	<b>692</b>	<b>0.43</b>	<b>0.5</b>

To better understand the data, the mean score was calculated, which exhibited an overall mean score of 0.43 (43%) of the awareness among respondents.

### 1.7.2 Hypothesis Testing

**H<sub>01</sub>: There is no significant difference in the awareness of respondents with reference to women empowerment schemes of the Government.**

**Table 4: ANOVA**

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p
Factor	2.92	3	0.97	4.02	.008
Residual	167.02	688	0.24		
Total	169.94	691			

A one-way variance analysis has shown a significant difference between the categorical variable and the dependent variable  $F = 4.02$ ,  $p = .008$ . Thus, with the available data, the null hypothesis was rejected, and the researcher concludes *that there is a significant difference in the awareness of respondents with reference to women empowerment schemes of the Government.*

### 1.8 FINDINGS AND SUGGESTIONS:

In recent years, the issue of women's empowerment has garnered more attention following the Indian government's implementation of many initiatives aimed at improving the welfare and progress of women in the country. Ensuring that women are informed about these programs and can capitalise on the possibilities they offer remains a significant challenge.

Research indicates that around 43% of Indian women are cognisant of various government initiatives designed to empower them, while the remaining 57% are unaware of such programs. This deficiency in comprehension creates apprehensions, since it may suggest that the intended beneficiaries of the initiatives are not being effectively reached. To foster a more inclusive society that enables women to actively participate in economic and political spheres, as well as make autonomous decisions about their health and well-being, it is essential to challenge traditional norms, initiate educational and awareness campaigns, and transform societal attitudes towards women.

Women's empowerment yields several benefits, including the enhancement of health and well-being, the promotion of gender equality, and the acceleration of economic growth and development. Nonetheless, Indian women continue to confront other significant challenges, including gender-based violence, discrimination, and restricted access to employment and education.

A comprehensive plan is required to tackle these concerns, encompassing the empowerment of women via investments in their health and education, fostering an atmosphere of equality, and enhancing public awareness of existing government initiatives designed to aid them.

The importance of women's empowerment at the local level, particularly via Panchayati Raj Institutions, cannot be overstated. Women may engage in political and economic processes and foster more inclusive development if they are empowered at the local level.

The government can do the following in order to increase women's awareness of these women's empowerment programs:

1. **Planning Awareness sessions in both rural and urban areas:** In order to actively interact with women and address their problems, community outreach initiatives require the organization of community meetings, seminars, and awareness sessions in both rural and urban areas. These events should involve the participation of local leaders, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and self-help groups.
2. **Initiatives for digital literacy:** Encourage women to acquire digital literacy so that they may access information about various programs through government websites, mobile applications, and online platforms, including language-specific options.
3. **Take advantage of mass media efforts:** Conduct widespread awareness campaigns on television, radio, and social media platforms, emphasizing existing schemes, their benefits, and eligibility criteria. These ads should target different demographics and effectively reach remote areas.
4. **Encourage success stories:** In order to motivate others and illustrate the beneficial impact that these programs have had, it is important to highlight the achievements of women who have benefited from government programs.
5. **Integration of the curriculum in schools and colleges:** Incorporate information on women empowerment programs into the curriculum of schools and colleges in order to educate young women about their rights and the support that is available to them.
6. **Established toll-free helplines and information centers:** Create conveniently accessible toll-free helplines and information centers where women may inquire about various programs, eligibility requirements, and application procedures.

7. Campaigns of awareness driven by women: Give women in leadership positions and community volunteers the ability to raise awareness about various programs within their own communities.
8. Targeted messaging for distinct groups: Adapt your messaging to meet the special requirements of various groups of women, such as those living in rural areas, women from minority communities, and women with impairments.
9. Mechanisms for regular updates and feedback: To enhance outreach efforts, it is important to conduct regular reviews of the performance of awareness campaigns and include feedback from beneficiaries.

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