

RAJASTHAN STATE WOMEN'S COMMISSION & WOMEN RIGHTS

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ABSTRACT

Historical Background

Our constitution was framed in 1948 to ensure equal right for men and women removing all kinds of discriminations based on caste, gender or religion. Government adopted several policies & programmes to ensure women's growth of empowerment. Despite govt's efforts women's conditioned didn't improve because of continued violence against women. Women's low literacy rate also was a crucial factor behind their empowerment. In order to improve women condition govt. brought National Policy for women in 1996 to set up national commission for women & state commission for women.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Our constitution was framed in 1948 to ensure equal right for men and women removing all kinds of discriminations based on caste, gender or religion. Government adopted several policies & programmes to ensure women's growth of empowerment. Despite govt's efforts women's conditioned didn't improve because of continued violence against women. Women's low literacy rate also was a crucial factor behind their empowerment. In order to improve women condition govt. brought National Policy for women in 1996 to set up national commission for women & state commission for women.

1.2. RAJASTHAN STATE WOMEN'S COMMISSION (RSWC)

To bring women into the mainstream, RSWC was established. The RSWC was created through a bill introduced by the state government in state assembly on April 23, 1999. After the bill was passed, the commission was formed on May 15, 1999, through a notification introduced by the state government. According to section 3(2) of the commission Act, the commission consists of a chairperson, four member, of a member secretary, who are appointed by the state government. Among the members, one will be a woman from the scheduled caste or scheduled tribes & another will be from on other backward class.

It's main goal is to help women who are facing difficulties of to bring them into the mainstream of society.

1.3. OBJECTIVES OF RSCW

- To help women who are suffering & provide solutions to their problems.
- To protect the right and interest of women in Rajasthan
- To review existing laws & suggest change to ensure women get justice.
- To recommended new law that improve women's safety of right.
- To advice the Rajasthan Government on policies related to women.

1.4. POWERS OF THE RAJASTHAN STATE WOMEN'S COMMISSION (RSWC).

The commission has powers similar to civil court, as defined under the code of civil procedure, 1908. These include:

- 1) Calling & questioning witnesses in legal cases.
- 2) Requesting of examining documents related to women's rights.
- 3) Accepting evidences through affidavits.
- 4) Accessing public records from government office.
- 5) Issuing summons for witness examinations.

Additionally the commission is recognized as a civil court and can take action if someone commits offenses like refusing to cooperate or disrupting legal proceedings. If such cases arise, the commission can forward them to a magistrate for further action. All proceedings before the commission are considered judicial under Indian Penal Code (IPC) sections 193, 228 & 196 and Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC) Chapter XXVI.

2. FUNCTION OF RSCW

Under the RSWC Act, 1999 the commission has the following responsibilities:

- Investigating complaints of injustice against women & urging the government to take action.
- Ensuring existing laws are followed & suggesting ways to make them stronger.
- Recommending changes in laws to better protect women.
- Stopping discrimination against women in government jobs & public officer.
- Suggesting welfare programs to improve the condition of women of pushing the government to provide equal opportunities.
- Taking action against government officials who do not support women's rights.
- Submitting report to the government with suggestions for improving women's welfare.

The Rajasthan State Women's Commission helps women who face violence, harassment, inequality or mistreatments. Women can submit complaints in writing (by post, fax, email or website) or speak directly to the commission. If a woman is in trouble, she can reach out to the commission for help.

The commission looks into cases such as domestic violence, dowry problems, property disputes, workplace harassment, sexual abuse, and discrimination. Apart from solving complaints, the commission also raises awareness, conducts public meetings, and organizes workshop to educate women about their rights. If needed special investigations teams are also formed to look into cases.

- 1) **Gender Equality Unit:** The gender equality unit focuses on promoting equal rights for women. It works across Rajasthan to spread awareness and support women's empowerment.

The unit conducts training sessions, public discussions and awareness campaigns to help women understand their right and social equality. The goal is to create a society where women are treated fairly and respectfully.

- 2) **Complaint Unit:** Any woman or her family member can file a complaint with the commission. Complaints can be made through post, fax, email, the website, or in person.

Once a complaint is received, a commission takes action to provide quick justice. If needed the commission works with the police and government officials to solve the case.

Steps taken to resolve complaints:

- To family issues, both sides are called for a discussion and efforts are made to resolve disputes peacefully.
- If police investigations are slow, the commission asks them to speed up the process.
- If a police station refuses to file a complaint, the commission takes legal action.
- If a government official delays justice, the commission ensures the case is handled quickly.

3) Personal Hearings:

Many family problems are solved through personal hearings.

If a woman files a family dispute case, both sides are called for a meeting with the commission.

The commission listens to both parties and helps them find a solution.

Many family problems are resolved peacefully and women get quick relief.

Issues like domestic violence, dowry harassment and second marriages are also solved through discussion and mediation

4) Public Hearings:

- **Purpose:** some women are not aware of the women's commission or cannot reach its office. To help them, the commission organizes public meetings at district offices with the local government. These meetings provide quick help to women near their homes.

Public hearings include: The women's commission, district government officials. Women & Child development Department, Local NGO's. The aim is to help women who cannot travel to Jaipur and ensure they get justice in their own districts.

- **Working Process:** The local government informs people about the public hearing in advance. Women register their complaints on the hearing day. Each woman's problem is listened to personally. The officials are directed to take immediate action to solve the issue.

3. SUPPORT SERVICES FOR WOMEN:

The RSCW for women provides various services to help women:

- 1) **24x7 helpline:** A women's helpline was started on August 6, 2012 and later upgraded to CM Helpline 181. It operates 24x7 to quickly resolve women's complaints.
- 2) **Complaints Cell:** The commission helps women by directing police and government officials to take action on their complaints.
- 3) **Public Hearing Cell:** Public hearings are held in all districts of Rajasthan to help women who cannot travel to the commission's office.
- 4) **Gender Awareness Programs:** Seminars and workshops are conducted to educate young people about gender equality.
- 5) **Taking Action on News Reports:** The commission monitors newspapers & TV news for cases of violence against women & takes action.
- 6) **Investigations:** The commission conducts investigations into cases of injustice against women and ensures proper action is taken.
- 7) **Rehabilitation support:** special programs help destitute women rebuild their lives with dignity and independence.
- 8) **Monitoring support:** The commission checks the condition of women's homes, girls' hostels, hospitals and its other facilities & reports to the government for improvements.
- 9) **Online Complaints:** Women can file complaints online through the official website of the Rajasthan State Commission for Women.

- 10) Mahila Salah and Suraksha Kendra (MSSK):** There are 39 MSSK centers across Rajasthan, run by NGOs, to support women in distress.
- 11) Zila Mahila Sahayata Samiti:** Operating since 1997, these committees work in all 33 districts to help women. The Zila Pramukh (District Head) leads them, with the District Collector or Vice-chairperson.
- 12) Mahila Desk in Police Stations:** Every police station in Rajasthan has a Mahila Desk where women can support problems & get help.
- 13) Publication and Reports:** The commission prepares annual reports for the Rajasthan Government suggesting actions for women's welfare.
- 14) Right to Information (RTI):** Anyone can request official information about the commission's work under the RTI Act through the additional SP of the commission.

4. IMPORTANT RULES FOR WOMEN'S RIGHTS:

- 1) Only a female police officer can reach a woman in a criminal case.
- 2) Medical examination of a woman can only be done by a lady doctor.
- 3) A child's birth certificate and school documents must include both mother's and father's name.
- 4) Single women have the right to adopt a child.
- 5) 30% of government jobs & 50% of seats in Panchayati Raj Institutions are reserved for women.

5. WOMEN EMPOWERMENT SCHEMES:

- 1) Women-Led Police Patrols:** In December, 2024, the state introduced special police teams made up of women officers. These teams patrol public places like schools, markets & parks to stop harassment and other crimes against women & children. They wear blue uniforms and use scooters to move around. The program started with 250 teams of plans to grow to 500 teams.
- 2) 'Lakhpati Didi' Program:** In March, the chief minister announced a plan to help over 11 lakhs (1.1 millions) women earn at least Rs. 1 lakh per year. This initiative called 'Lakhpati Didi', focuses on teaching women new skills & supporting them through self-help groups. The goal is to improve their income & make them financially independent.
- 3) Indira Mahila Shakti Udhyan Protsahan Yojana (IMSUPY)** is a scheme by the government to help women start & grow their businesses. It provides financial support, training and guidance so women can become self-reliant. The government understands that when women become self-reliant it benefits not only their families but also the entire society. By giving women opportunities to run business, IMSUPY aims to increase their participation in the economy and improve their overall status. This scheme supports a variety of small businesses including shops, farming, handicrafts & food processing.

6. KEY FEATURES OF IMSUPY

- **Loans for Women:** Women get easy loans to start or expand their business. The government helps by reducing interest rates.
- **Subsidy on loans:** A part of the loan amount is given as a subsidy, meaning women do not have to repay the full amount.
- **Business Training:** Women receive training on how to run or manage business successfully.
- **Support for different business:** The scheme covers small shops, handicrafts, farming, food processing and other small industries.
- **Encouraging Self-Employment:** The goal is to help women earn their own money and support their families. This scheme is a big step towards making women financially strong & independent in Rajasthan. These efforts show Rajasthan's commitment to improving women's safety and financial well-being.

7. WOMEN'S REPRESENTATION

In 2024, Rajasthan made significant efforts to enhance women's participation across various sectors:

- 1) **Politics:** In the 2024 lok sabha elections, over 60% of women voted in Rajasthan's 25 constituencies, surpassing male voter turnout.
- 2) **Government Employment:** The state government increased the reservation for women in Grade-3 teacher position from 30% to 50% aiming to boost female representation in education. Additionally, a 33% reservation for women was approved in the police force to enhance their presence in Law enforcement.
- 3) **Labor force participation:** Despite these initiatives as of early 2023, women constituted only 6.3% of Rajasthan's labor force, highlighting ongoing challenges in achieving gender parity in employment.

8. EMPLOYMENT OF WOMEN AT NIGHT

The Rajasthan government has taken steps to keep women safe when they work at night. There are some important measures:

- 1) **Safe Transport:** Companies must provide safe transport for women working late at night. This helps them reach home safely.
- 2) **Security at workplaces:** Offices, factories, shops must have proper security like CCTV cameras, guards & good lighting.
- 3) **Helpline for women:** Women can call special helpline numbers if they feel unsafe. Police respond quickly to them.
- 4) **Women Police Patrols:** Women police teams patrol busy areas at night to stop crimes and protect working women.
- 5) **Strict Rules for Employees:** Business must follow government rules to keep women safe. If they don't, they can be punished. These steps help women feel safer while working at night.

9. CHALLENGES AND POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

The Rajasthan State Commission for women (RSCW) faces some difficulties in its work, such as:

- 1) **Lack of Awareness:** Many women do not know about their rights or how to report issues to the RSCW.
- 2) **Fear of Society:** Women who speak up about violence may face judgement or discrimination.
- 3) **Limited Resources:** The RSCW may not have enough funds or staff to properly handle complaints & take action.

9.1. SO SOLVE THESE PROBLEMS, SOME IMPROVEMENTS CAN BE MADE

- **Making RSCW Stronger:** The commission should have enough resources of work without interference.
- **Spreading Awareness:** Programs can be organized to inform women about their rights & how to seek help.
- **Reducing social stigma:** Efforts should be made to change people's mindset so women feel safe reporting issues.

10. CONCLUSION

Rajasthan State Women's Commission plays an important role in protecting women's rights of promoting equality. By listening to complaints, suggesting solutions and supporting women's empowerment, it helps create a fair & just society. It provides legal help, support services & awareness programs to ensure women get justice and equal opportunities in society. Despite the challenge, with the right efforts, it can make a big difference in ensuring women's safety & freedom in Rajasthan. However, continuous efforts are needed to bring real change and create a society where women have equal opportunities & respect.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

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