

## A WOMAN'S EMANCIPATION: AN IMMUTABLE CHANGE?

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### **Abstract**

India, a land of rich tradition and culture has confronted with an age long plight and struggle for her freedom and surely has come over a long way since 1947. A lot has changed yet but as it's said that there's always a room for improvement, however still a lot more needs to be modified and transformed. So in my research paper, I'll delve in to the factors that are responsible for this unchanged change and this is all about a down trodden section of our society which we all know as women. The news pertaining sexual abuse, domestic violence, less number of women representatives in all the arenas of our society so on and so forth has compelled me to conduct a research on the 'How emancipation of women is hindered even after a long span of time of our independence'. Though we come across literature on women's pathetic condition in abundance in books and internet yet out of the blue several tales of women's progress also keep astounding us all. From GDP of India to the internet connectivity even in the remotes, from advent of MNCs to increasing employability; everything has got a drastic augmentation. All this show that we're in a win-win situation but despite having changed so much how still we're grappling with the issues related to women and their existence? My research is a primary work.

**Key Words:** downtrodden, women, emancipation, pathetic, astounding

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**Objective:**

Gender study especially issues pertaining women always attract me and this encouraged me to reach out to the rural women who feel themselves often neglected and aloof. So objective of my research includes: I conducted a survey on women of a village which is mere 17-18 Kilometers from Lucknow, the capital of Uttar Pradesh. I talked to 100 women between the ages of 35-40 years. To analyse issues like right to making decision, education and girl child upbringing.

- 1) To study their knowledge about government schemes and policies to have claimed for their betterment.
- 2) How empowered the women of rural areas feel they are
- 3) Their interest in village level politics
- 4) The thing they wish to change about themselves.

**Research Methodology:**

My research paper is a quantitative research which is based on the study of women of a village called Bijour , only 8-9 kilometers from the Lucknow the capital city of Uttar Pradesh. I interviewed almost 100 women from this village who were mainly from lower middle class of the society. They were provided with a form consisting 21 questions regarding their caste, religion, education/qualification, their wish to study further, their marital affair, type of family etc and they answered all the questions enthusiastically.

**“That no society can progress with men alone. In such a society, there can be only arrested or stunted development. When women are neglected and they are denied economic and social opportunities for growth and development, there could be only stagnation in their lives.”**

**-Swami Vivekanand**

In the present scenario Women empowerment has become a global issue. This is the much talked subject in the seminars and conferences as almost all of us realize its importance. Though women’s participation has increased in political, economic and social life and they are successful and have carved a niche. “Empowerment is a multi-dimensional progress, which enables women to realize their full identity and power in all sphere of life” (1) But because of patriarchal society, often they feel offensive as a particular section of society wants them to be dependent on their male counterparts and this frame of mind entails predicament. The purpose of my research paper

is not to present men as perpetrators and women as victims but I wish to cast a light on the severe situation which will aggravate if we're not awake.

This is a well known fact that economic progress of a country is its backbone as it leads to all the other kinds of empowerment. And this economic emancipation is obvious in case of women. A major cause of women's subjugation is because of their dependence on men and sparse job opportunities. The other empowerment is social empowerment which can transform the status of women in the society. Societal norms need to be modified as they don't treat both its members (male and female) with egalitarianism.

The most significant question was their future plans for their daughters, their freedom and participation in decision-making and government schemes as I got very surprising responses that cleared my misconception about rural women.

Tables 1.1: Future Plans for daughters

Future Plans for daughters	Frequency	(%)
Study and find career	65	
Study and get married	15	
Married as soon as possible	10	
Never thought of it	02	
Everything is decided by God	05	
Did not answer	03	
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	

The above table describes the aspiration of the respondents regarding the future of their daughters. So the above list proves that 65 women out of 100 wished or were rather determined to promote their girl children. They vehemently felt that through education, their daughters won't have to be housewives like them. They said unanimously that they don't want their daughters undergo the problems that they experienced in their life. But all of them prioritized marriage of their daughters as they think that married girls are safer in the society since they have security after getting married. Some percentage of those women was not bothered to give a damn to this issue because according to them their husbands or males in their family are entitled to this right not they, the mothers. The outcome was quite satisfactory but the thing that pinched me was their sons were studying in some English medium schools but the daughters in the government

schools. Furthermore they told me that sons are the members of their own clans but daughters will have to leave them after getting married.

Tables 1.2: Aspirants' Education Level

Aspirants' Education Level	
	Literate /Up to Primary
Just literate	35
Up to primary	25
Up to middle	15
Up to secondary	10
Up to graduation/post graduation	05
Never attended school	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>

The educational status of the aspirants was better in the families where members were educated and understood its value, most of such women were originally not from this village as they had settled there after getting marriage. Most of the just literate women had learnt only to sign and were unable to read or write properly. Such women were employed as cooks or maid in some small schools or landowners and the remaining ones were in dilemma as they were neither educated nor did they have job opportunities. The graduate or post graduates who were very few in number were working as *shikshamitra* in some primary or middle schools.

Tables 1.2: They want to study further?

They want to study further?	Frequency	(%)
Yes	40	
Not sure	30	
No	10	
Never thought of it	20	
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	

While discussing about their education, they narrated their stories such as they had to leave their studies because they didn't belong to wealthy families or their parents wanted them to get married at early age so that they could free themselves from their responsibility. 40 out of 100 women who were just literate or primary educated, showed their willingness for further studies.

In this male dominating society educating girls in rural areas is not the priority. They are expected to learn the household chores only which is believed to make them perfect for their life after marriage.

Tables 1.2: Their knowledge about government schemes

Their knowledge about government schemes	Frequency	(%)
Yes	10	
Not sure	30	
No	50	
Never heard about them	10	
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	

There are several plans and schemes of government such as Rajeev Gandhi Scheme of Adolescent Girls, was approved by the government Sabla (through state government /UTs with 100% financial assistance from the government for all inputs other than nutrition provision for which 50% central assistance to states is provided. Aganwadi Centre is the focal point for the delivery of the services.) (2)

For economic Empowerment of women Economic government launched programmes like National Rural Livelihood mission, Smayasidha etc. Self Help Group under the schemes of NABARD, Rashtriya Mahila Kosh, and Financial institutions like NSCFDC/NSKFDC and nationalized banks helps the rural women to credit when they are in need. But when I asked the aspirants about such facilities or schemes for their welfare, they showed their ignorance. They told me that they are given a meager amount and some eatables such as porridge etc at the time of delivery. Even they were flummoxed to hear about such schemes and policies being run by the government for women.

Tables 1.2: Interests in Village Level Politics:

Interests in Village Level Politics	Frequency
Yes	10
Not sure	25
No	50
Not for women	15
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>

On being asked about village level politics, 10% women replied that they know who their sarpanch is but they wouldn't know more than that. 50 % believed that politics don't matter in their life whereas 50% women didn't have any interest in it and 15 % women responded that politics is meant for men only.

Most of the aspirants have no fix wages as they told that their family income is very meager. Only 15% of those women were working as menials or farm labourers and are earning not more than Rs. 1000/ only and almost 85% of aspirants is dependent on their husbands for financial support. The non-working aspirants express their wish to work but their illiteracy contributes discrimination done to them. Apart from this the patriarchal norms also play as an obstacle on their way to success.

Tables 1.2: Decision Making:

Do they have power of decision?

Yes	10
Not sure	30
No	50
Not for women	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>

The above data reveals that only 10% of women are lucky to have power of decision making and for which they show their gratitude towards the male members of their families. 30% of aspirants is bewildered about decision making right as they find nothing wrong with their life since they said since their childhood they saw their mother and grandmothers following the orders of their husbands so if today their husband expect them to follow them; it's like they abide by the norms. 50% of women interviewees said clearly that they are not asked about anything regarding any issue as they are believed to have inferior position. Whereas 10% women found this question futile since they opine that as women they need to in the thresholds and such complex matter must be considered by male members of their families.

### Conclusion:

So at the end we can say that the empowerment of women has become one of the most important concerns of the 21 century not only at the state level but also at the national level. But still the rural women don't have the power of decision making which prevents them to be emancipated. Almost 15 women narrated the story of their physical abuse if they don't follow their husbands,

they can be thrashed. So we can say that the men's attitude towards women must be changed then only they can be emancipated. Government plans and schemes are not adequate, in absence of men's support and co-ordination.

Moreover I feel that though not erudite or highly qualified, these women have sagacity as they wish their daughters could get exposure to all those opportunities that they couldn't avail at their young age. Out of blue, it was a spectacular occurrence for them since for the first time they were asked to express their perception about what they want. So what I feel that in spite of hundreds of government schemes and plans, our rural women are still unaware about their rights and strength and this phenomenon can change only if we stop blame game and everyone take up women empowerment as a challenge which is to be achieved as efforts of government will go vain if schemes and policies don't reach to the nook and corner of remote areas. Not only the men but also the women of our society will have to change their mindset towards themselves and the other women so that the soft nature and endurance of women should not be considered as their weakness but as their strength.

**Reference:**

- 1) [www.google.com](http://www.google.com)
- 2) [www.google.com](http://www.google.com)