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## Women Empowerment in Rural Society: A Sociological Study in Karnataka

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### Abstract

Nation building is no longer possible without the contributions of women. Women's participation in national development can be bolstered through empowerment. Few factors must be taken into consideration when measuring rural women's empowerment. Women have the same rights and interests as males when it comes to development outcomes. As a result, it is critical that women gain their full potential. In rural communities, women's educational attainment appears to be the key to realising their full potential. The economic independence of these rural women must be assured through employment in order to prepare the route for their enforcement, as they are unable to get higher education. A number of factors contribute to the under-representation of women in rural areas. The various government and non-government organizations attempts to empower women have generated varying degrees of success. The study, highlights few factors which could influence the success of the rural women's empowerment. Modern-day values such as self-reliance, hard work, openness, and accountability must be instilled as part of this empowerment effort. The present study reveals that high economic growth and long-term development will ensure the women empowerment in rural society.

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### Keywords:

Education,  
Empowerment,  
Gender Discrimination,  
Rural Development,  
Women.

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### 1. Introduction:

In contemporary society choosing a career, for rural women is a challenge. Many of the barriers to women's equality and self-determination are rooted in long-held cultural beliefs. Empowerment is one of the most successful strategies developments of ruralwomen. As a means of overcoming dependency and coming face to face with mechanisms that promote women's oppression, the focus is on collective action. It is crucial to note that the World Conferences and their discussions on women have played a significant influence in developing policies for third-world countries. There have also been a number of new initiatives and institutions formed by the Indian government for this goal. In addition, 'gender budgeting and gender auditing' are other efforts to mainstream gender concerns in development. Rural women's lives have improved greatly as a result of these efforts.

### 2. Review Of Literature

Duflo (2019) observes in detail, Women's economic and environmental well-being is directly impacted by their increased political and social clout. He sees a slew of advantages to empowering women. As a result, it boosts the self-esteem and independence of women on all levels: the individual, family, society, and country. It also eliminates gender discrimination at the society and country levels. Finally, it helps build a strong economic and sustainable development foundation at the national level. Entrepreneurship is a major contributor to women's economic independence. Entrepreneurial success for women depends on a combination of traits including self-assurance, intellectual sharpness, and mental agility. Nethravathi [2017] since breaking out of the historically, women have been more involved in the lives of their families, communities, and nations than they ever have been inside the four walls of their homes. As a result, they've been able to get a foothold in the corporate world. Reddy [2017] Women's liberation activists applaud the accomplishments of these businesswomen. To begin the process of women's liberation,

these entrepreneurs not only work for themselves but also assist other women in achieving financial independence. Those who seek their counsel on how to live a more fulfilling life will find it. Ayyappadas [2016] illustrates the challenges faced by female company owners. The most severe of these concerns is the overrepresentation of men in marketing. As a result, rural women are the most vulnerable to the effects of climate change. However, they are offered numerous chances to show off their skills, but they are not given the chance. In addition to the difficulties of making solid business decisions, there is a lack of relevant training programs for female entrepreneurs. According to Manisha and Frehama [2014] when women are empowered, gender equality is reached globally, not just in a single country. It is a given that the national economy will continue to increase as a result of the increasing frequency and scale of modern technology-based entrepreneurial engagement. To demonstrate a point, examples from more developed countries can be used.

### **3. Life Of Rural Women:**

In India, there are many inconsistencies. When it comes to starting a new profession, women are respected as deities, and their blessings are essential to do so. However, the number of crimes against women and girls in India is on the rise. People who commit these atrocities often know their victims, which make it even more terrible. It's likely that your loved ones, neighbours, or friends are the culprits. This rising distrust could have a significant impact on the Indian social structure. In rural India, few women own land or any other productive assets. As a result, the ability of financial institutions to lend is hindered. The vast majority of farm employees are female. The most popular sort of work was manual labour. The work of men is carried out by machines. The rural Indian economy relies heavily on the work of women, who make up the bulk of agricultural workers in India. They are the pillars of rural life in the heartland of the United States. Throughout their life, rural women are required to look after their younger siblings, cook for the family, do laundry, and take care of the family's livestock. These young people are frequently married off at an early age. To be a slave, facelessness, and anonymity are Indian women's lot in life.

Women in rural areas were found to be the least likely to take part in social programmes. There was still a lack of understanding of human rights and social issues. It is envisaged that the groups will allow women to discuss their issues, solutions, and aspirations with each other, rather than limiting themselves to the conduct of official meetings and activities. It was observed that in many cases, members believed that the group meetings were ineffective at empowering them from a social perspective. For example, many members admitted that they never broached the subject of dowry, drunkenness, or other vices inside the group, despite the fact that they thought these topics left an everlasting effect on their lives. The group activities were found to be successful at low levels in domains that were directly linked to such activities - the ability to organise activities, group cohesiveness, interactions, and public speaking, for instance. This reveals that social empowerment is an area in which these organisations and their activities fail to adequately address. Participation in social programmes was noted to be poor among members. Several people had been reported to have been involved in multiple groups.

For women's rights to be strengthened and their ability to take charge of their own lives and exercise influence in society to be fully realised, economic equality for women must be achieved. It's all about establishing cultures where everyone has a fair shot. Discrimination and persistent gender inequities continue to be a problem for women. The ethnicity or caste of some women results in numerous forms of discrimination and exclusion. An economic empowerment is a person's capacity for participation and profit from economic growth processes in ways that acknowledges and respects their contributions, and that allow for a more equitable distribution of the advantages of growth.

Increased access to economic resources and opportunities, including jobs, property and other productive assets as well as training and market information for women is a key component of economic empowerment.

Participation, knowledge and understanding, raising voices, freedom of movement and respect for women's rights are some of the components of women's empowerment. Developing leadership characteristics is also a component. The ability to make and influence the implementation of decisions is a key component of a family's decision-making authority. People who have access to and control over credit are able to use that access and control to shift their income levels. The term "participation" refers to the economic contributions made by women and the financial decisions they make. Participants in economic activities and financial decisions are those who respond to this study. A person's level of consciousness can be gauged by how much they know and how much their attitude has shifted as a result of that knowledge. It indicates that he is able to freely communicate his thoughts and ideas in the presence of his family members and other members of the group. Having the ability to move freely is a fundamental right (the ability to visit the local market or go out with confidence). Rural settings restrict the physical mobility of women by placing restrictions on the amount of space available to them outside the home. Their family respects them because they value them. He can use his voice to speak out against injustice. Traditionally, women in patriarchal societies have been subordinated to their husbands and other male family members in the household. Respondents have the option of speaking out against social injustice. In other words, a woman who is considered empowered has the ability to access credit, participate in financial decision-making, and contribute to economic activities. She also has the knowledge and awareness, confidence, and independence to raise her voice and move up in the social hierarchy as a result of these attributes. To begin with, the low participation rate of women in the workforce is a result of women's perceived roles in the home; second, the connection between these perceptions and the measurement, definition or definition of women's work; and third is that most women's jobs are seasonal and part-time. When it comes to how women's work is perceived, the ideal ideology always places it in the context of housework. Due to the fact that much of the work done by women, especially in rural regions, revolves around the home, it is difficult to categorise them as belonging to the market or the non-market, or as being productive or reproductive.

It is assumed that empowering women through their engagement in the workforce is essential; however, this does not always lead to an increase in the status of women. A woman's participation in the development process doesn't necessarily empower her. Women must be seen as active participants in the process, not merely as objects to be controlled. Additionally, the causes and institutions that surround and impose on women cannot be empowered by this technique. It is not only a practical necessity to improve women's conditions, but also a strategic necessity, to fight for women's positions, especially those that have been represented in their social structures, which are often hegemonic by the position of men. Social justice demands that the stereotypes of weak women be dispelled, and the best way to do this is to pay attention to the optimal development of women's human resources and ensure that they are treated fairly in society as a whole. With its evolution, two "gender mainstreaming" tactics have been criticized above, which involve playing with organisations and institutions or countries to hasten the push to empower women.

#### **4. Objectives Of the Study:**

The present paper is an attempt to understand the socio- economic background of the rural women and to study the women empowerment in Karnataka.

## 5. Methodology:

The study is based on both primary and secondary data. The results of this study were drawn from 100 respondents by using random sampling method in Raichur District, Karnataka. The data is analyzed by using SPSS software.

## 6. Results and Discussions:

Remarkably, rural women's dilemma remains a serious obstacle to their upward mobility, especially when it comes to socioeconomic status, even after seven decades of self-determination.

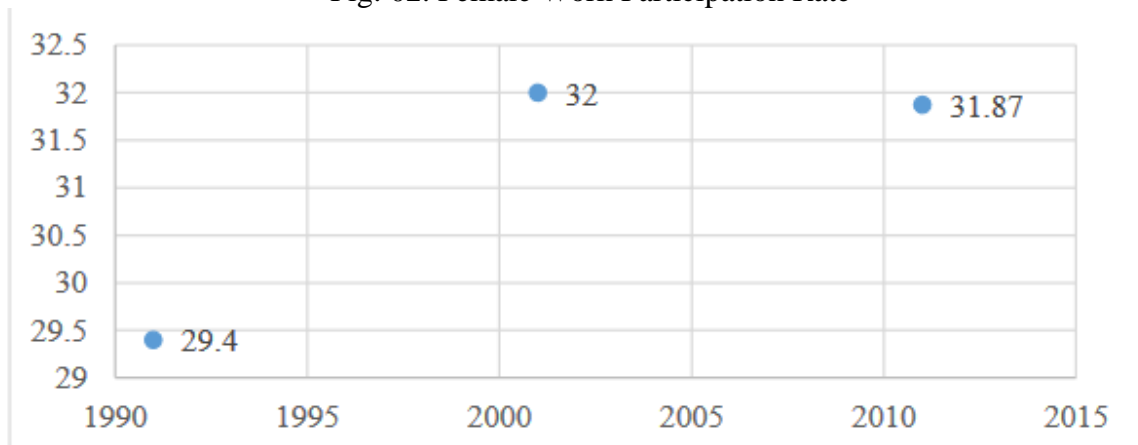
Fig: 01: Women Population in Karnataka State



Source: Census of India-Karnataka

The figure 01 data say that total population of Karnataka as per 2011 census is 61,095,297 of which male and female are 30,966,657 and 30,128,640 respectively. The total population growth in this decade was 15.60 percent while in previous decade it was 17.25 percent. The population of Karnataka forms 5.05 percent of India in 2011. There are about 1 crore households in the state and an average 5 persons live in every family. The majority of the population, nearly 61% (about 4 crore) live in rural Karnataka and 39% (about 2 crore) population live in the urban Karnataka.

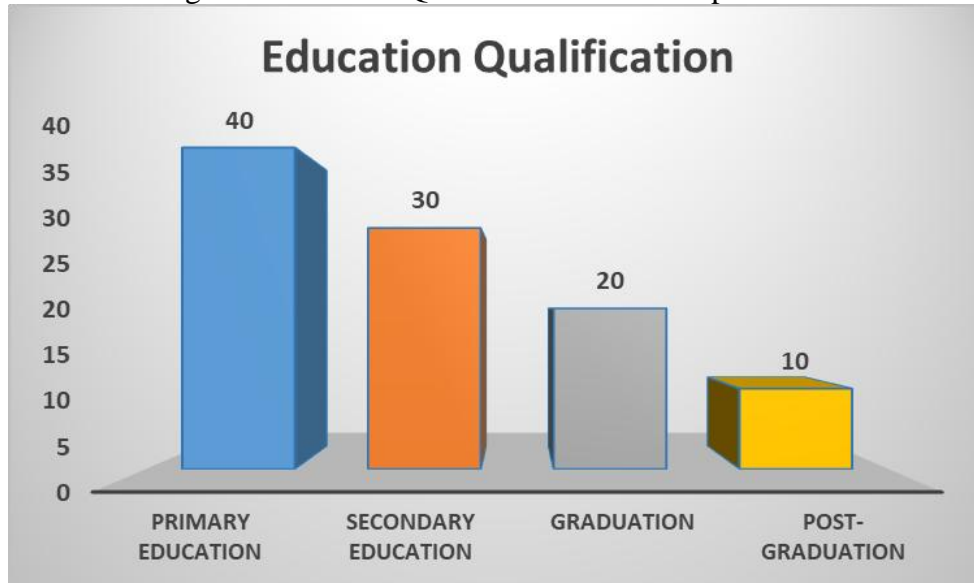
Fig: 02. Female Work Participation Rate



The above data reveals that 59.00 per cent of the total Male population and 31.87 per cent of the total Female population are workers. It shows that women employment is increased from 1991 to 2011 which support for achieve empowerment, because women's increasing employment is influenced by their changing demographic profile.

The study reveals that majority of the women are from rural background and few of them commute to nearby work places daily. Majority of the respondents are from Hindu religion followed by Muslim and Christian. The sample highlights that majority of them come from lower caste.

Fig: 03: Education Qualification of the Respondents



The above figure illustrates the education qualification of the respondents. The data clearly reveals that only ten percent of the respondents have qualified post-graduation, twenty percent of them have achieved graduation, thirty percent have completed secondary education and forty percent of the respondent have completed their primary education. The data reveals that women perceiving higher education is less.

Table 01: Occupation of the Respondents

Occupation	Frequency	Percent
Agricultural Labor	42	42
Domestic Worker	38	38
Construction Labor	20	20
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

The above data reveals that 42 percent of the total sample size work as agricultural labor, 38 percent work as domestic worker and the remaining 20 percent work as construction labor. The data signifies that the women are working in the unorganized sector without any type of wage fixation. It shows that women are able to come out and work and it signifies the women empowerment in the rural areas.

Table 02: Monthly Income of the Respondents

Occupation	Frequency	Percent
Upto Rs. 5000	51	51
Rs. 5001 to Rs. 10000	39	39
Rs. 10001 & Above	10	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

Only 10 percent of the total women employees from various occupational background earn Rs. 10001 and above every month, 39 percent earn Rs. 5001 to Rs. 10000, more than half of the sample respondents earn income up to Rs. 5000 per month. The data reveals that there is no proper wage fixation for any jobs performed by the women employees. Income of the women has really supported to run the family and provide the better education and lifestyle for their siblings which also signifies the women empowerment especially in the rural areas.

Table 03: Membership of the Respondents in Various Government Schemes

Occupation	Frequency	Percent
YES	28	28
NO	62	62
Don't Know	10	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

The above table 03 data reveals that majority (68 percent) of the sample respondents are not the members of any government schemes which are present in the state of Karnataka, only 28 percent of the respondents are members of various government schemes available for the rural women and 10 percent of the sample respondents are not aware about any of the government schemes. The data signifies that the schemes for the women especially in the rural areas need more awareness through the various stakeholders of the government for better women empowerment of the rural women in Karnataka.

Cent percent of the sample respondents are married and the data reveals that minimum 18 years has completed to get married. The data signifies that majority of the sample are from nuclear family and four to five members are present. In the understanding of the decision making in the family, still it can be seen that the patriarchal setup has not changed. But few respondents have revealed that they are also part of the decision making in the family which highlights the increase in the social status of the rural women in Karnataka. It's amazing and alarming that the metropolitan culture of promoting and supporting the nuclear family has spread to rural communities.

Since time immemorial, India has been a patriarchal society. The kitchen and the bedroom were traditionally reserved for women in homes where men were expected to make the majority of the revenue. Women in rural areas have been enslaved for generations, prohibiting them from making their own judgments, let alone those of others. Although they may be directly touched by the events taking place around them, most rural women have chosen or been forced to become mute bystanders. Family and community events need to be made more accessible for everyone before they can truly be enjoyed by everyone. There aren't many options for rural women today other than what they wear. The men of the family are in charge of everything else, including the education, employment, and marriage of the children. The rural woman is nonetheless submissive to her male counterpart in terms of power and authority.

## 7. Conclusion:

Clearly, progress towards women's empowerment is on the correct track, as evidenced by the study's findings. Rural women's oppression, marginalisation, and subjection can all be traced back to a lack of literacy. In both rural and urban areas, women's economic independence is the key to their own empowerment, according to previous studies and the personal experiences of city people. Since women need to be educated so they may get a good career and support themselves, this is a must. Because of the right to free and compulsory education in India's constitution for children up to the age of 14, it is possible for the government to educate women. When people read, they can expand their horizons without fear or restraint since it strengthens their mind. Educating rural women, in particular, is a priority for nongovernmental organisations (NGO) and the federal government. As a result, women's long-suppressed abilities would be given a boost, elevating them to a position of honor and symbolizing the true meaning of empowerment.

"Women's empowerment," by its most basic definition, is the removal of long-standing limits on women's lives imposed by society, the family, and even our own cultural norms. A deeper significance, though, can be found in it. A bit more digging reveals various benefits of women's empowerment. First and foremost, it affects women's previously forbidden freedom to think, talk, and act. Women, on the other hand, tend to be less

egocentric and self-centered in their thinking and behaviour. As a result, she makes excellent use of her newfound independence by trying to better the lives of her own family, the town, and the country as a whole. Equality can only be achieved by making sure that women's rights are supported in a way that helps them reach their full potential.

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