



EMPOWERING RURAL WOMEN: POSITION AND QUALITY LIFE IN KABBENUR VILLAGE OF KARNATAKA

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ABSTRACT

The Kabbenur village is located in Dharwad district of Karnataka with 22 kms distance from Dharwad city. Kabbenur village has its own rural infrastructure with socio-economic environment, education, transport, religion, politics, health scenario etc. On the other side there is rule of dominant caste system which makes people of lower castes and village women undergo discrimination especially in occupation, income, education, politics etc. The village is known for its cattle farming being dairy farming as popular one, Location of Temples and conduct of jatras is found to be most important one. Religion determines the behavior of people where traditionalism ought to be significant aspect. Women being the population with secondary status of different castes and age groups have come out with socio-economic, education and health problems which need to be solved and appropriate measures should be initiated by the government to solve the problems of people in general and women in particular. Researcher has collected information through primary and secondary data. The basic materials for this paper come from the primary data collection method, through the participant observation and interview schedules. The sample has been chosen from the village; by using simple random sampling method 120 respondents were chosen for the present study.

KEYWORDS : Women Empowering, Dominant caste system, Kabbenur, Discrimination.

INTRODUCTION:

The subject of women empowerment has becoming a burning issue all over the world including India since last few decades. Many agencies of United Nations in their reports have revealed that gender issue is to be given utmost priority. It is held that women now can't be asked to wait for any more for equality. Inequalities between men and women and discrimination against women have also been age-old issues all over the world. Thus, women's quest for equality with man is a universal phenomenon.

Women Empowerment refers to the creation of an environment for women where they can make decisions of their own for their personal benefits as well as for the society. It also refers to increasing and improving the social, economic, political and legal strength of the women, to ensure equal-right to women, and to make them confident enough to claim their rights.

Women Empowerment is not only the economic, social, political....strength; it is—allowing women to live, as women. The Kabbenur village is known for its cattle farming being dairy farming as popular one, Location of Temples and conduct of jatras is found to be most important one. Religion determines the behavior of people where traditionalism ought to be significant aspect. Women of the village being the population with secondary status of different castes and age groups have come out with socio-economic, education and health problems which need to be solved and appropriate measures should be initiated by the government to solve the problems of people in general and women in particular.

Highlighting Issues Of Kabbenur Village

- Gender Discrimination and Gender Inequality.
- Rule of Dominant Castes.
- Dominance of Patriarchy.
- Inefficient working of Gram Panchayat.
- Lack of household, sanitation facilities, health, education and transport facilities.

Objectives Of The Study

The Objectives Of The Study Are As Follows:

1. To know and understand the socio-economic background, education, and health status of rural women.
2. To understand the level of women's participation in family matters and politics.
3. To provide awareness among rural women regarding the role of Gram panchayats working for women welfare.

4. To provide awareness among women regarding sanitation and hygiene.
5. To empower rural women to identify themselves and fight for their rights by reporting their problems to the governmental organizations and NGOs.

Methodology Of The Study

The village Kabbenur is located in Dharwad district with 22 kms distance with having its total population of 2354 where women comprise 1159 and men 1195 of its total population. Kabbenur Village has its own rural infrastructure with socio-economic environment, education, transport, religion, politics, health scenario etc. On the other side there is rule of dominant caste system which makes people of lower castes undergo discrimination especially in occupation, income, education, politics etc. The village is known for its cattle farming being dairy farming as popular one, Location of Temples and conduct of jatras is found to be most important one. Religion determines the behavior of people where traditionalism ought to be significant aspect. Women being the population with secondary status of different castes and age groups have come out with socio-eco, education and health problems which need to be solved and appropriate measures should be initiated by the government to solve the problems of people in general and women in particular.

• Universe Of The Study

The present study has been conducted in Kabbenur Village. The total population of Kabbenur Village is 2354 where men comprise of 1,195 and women comprise 1159 of its total population.

• Selection Of Sample

Out of total 1159 women population 120 women have been selected by using simple random sampling method by the researcher in order to know and understand women living conditions, socio-economic status, education level, health problems and political status of rural women.

• Tool Used For Collecting Data

An interview schedule was used by the researcher to interview women belonging to different age groups and castes by visiting household.

DISCUSSION AND RESULTS:

Demographic Profile Of The Respondents

Table No-1: Age Wise Classification Of The Respondents

Age group of Respondents		
Age in Years	No. Of Respondents	Percentage
18-25	30	25
26-35	48	40
36-45	06	05
Above 45	36	30
Total	120	100

The above table reveals the age-wise classification of total 120 respondents. Since majority of the respondents families are found in nuclear type, the majority of the respondent's age was found in between 26 and 35 years. 48 persons between 26 to 35 years age group are participated with highest percentage of 40, the second highest persons participated is above 45 age group numbering 36 with percentage of 30, between 18 to 25 age group 25 percentage are participated. 36 to 45 years age group 06 persons are participated in Interview schedule with percentage of 5.

Table No-2: Marital Status Of The Respondents

Marital Status	No. Of Respondents	Percentage
Married	96	80
Unmarried	06	05
Widow/Divorced	12	10
Separated	06	05
Total	120	100

With regard to marital composition of respondents, 80 percent of the respondents are married. 6(5%) respondents are Unmarried, these all respondents are in below 25 years of age and 11 respondents are widowed, these respondents lost their husbands by diseases and accidental deaths and since their male children are too young to lead family responsibilities these widows are leading their families. One divorced respondent is found in the present study, the main reason for divorce is harassment by husband and husband's family members and this respondent do not want to be burden for their parents so she is leading separate life from husband and parents, with her children. And another 5 percent of the respondents are separated.

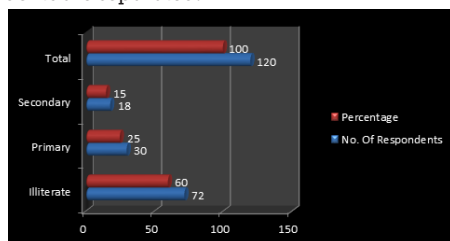


Chart No-1: Educational Status of the Respondents

Education increases people's self confidence and enables them to find better jobs, engage in public debate and make demands on government for health care, social security and other entitlements. Improving education for women helps to improve their levels of health and nutrition, and reduces fertility rates. In particular, education empowers women to make choices that improve their own and their children's health and chances of survival. Education helps to prevent disease, and is an essential element of efforts to reduce malnutrition. Further, education empowers women to make choices that improve their welfare, like marrying later and having fewer children. Crucially, education also helps women to achieve awareness of their human rights and their confidence to assert those rights.

The chart no-1 reveals that a large percentage of respondents are illiterates. Among the respondents most have not crossed primary school level where 25 per cent among the respondents were reported to have primary level of educations. 15 per cent among the respondents has high school education. Though the 60 per cent respondents are illiterate they encouraged

their children to go to schools and colleges with an ambition of seeing well paid jobs.

Table No-3: Religion Of The Respondents

Religion of Respondents	No. Of Respondents	Percentage
Hindu	102	85
Muslim	18	15
Total	120	100

The table no-3 reveals about the religion of the respondents, 85 per cent of the respondents follow Hindu religion and other rest (15%) follows Muslim religion. As concerned to category wise classification of the respondents, 35 per cent of the respondents belong to SC and ST, and another 35 per cent belong to OBC, and Cat-I & GM categories consists each 15 per cent of the total respondents.

Table No-4: Occupation Of The Respondents

Occupation of Respondents	No. Of Respondents	Percentage
Agriculture	60	50
Housewife	30	25
Agriculture Labour	28	23.33
Govt. Job	02	1.67
Total	120	100

Mamtaz Ali Khan (1980) emphasized that, "one of the most important factors which determine the social status of any individual or group of individuals related to the economic conditions. Depressed economic conditions leads to illiteracy, loss of personal freedom and eventually effect the development of the human personality. This is particularly so, in the case of the backward and weaker section..." Table no-4 shows the occupations of the respondents, half of the respondents are engaged in agriculture, one fourth of the respondents are housewives, 23.33 per cent are engaged as agricultural labour and only 1.67 per cent of the respondents that is only one respondent is serving in government job.

Table No-5: Number Of Children Of The Respondents

Number of Children	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1-2	12	10
3-4	54	45
5 and above	48	40
Not Applicable	06	05
Total	120	100

The table no-5 reveals about the number of children of the respondents, 45 per cent of the respondents have 3-4 children, 40 per cent of the respondents have 5 or more than 5 children, and other 5 per cent of the respondents have 1-2 children.

The Major Findings Which Revealed From The Field Data And Discussion Are As Follows:

- 1) All the respondents opined that they do not have the liberty to take decisions at home. It is generally their spouse and in-laws who take decisions in family. In addition to this 40 percent of women's decisions are based on their husband's decision and 60 percent of women's decisions are taken by their in-laws.
- 2) Only 30 percent of women respondents are looking for a job other than agriculture and agricultural labour. 70 percent of women like to do agriculture.
- 3) All women respondents opined that they do household work including child care and old age care and ask permission of husband/in-laws before buying anything.
- 4) Only 10 percent of women respondents underwent family violence remaining 90 percent did not had this problem.
- 5) According to the field work conducted by the researcher it has been revealed that women respondents have many health problems, where reproductive health problems such as infections, irregular menstruation, abortion, pregnancy complications found to be relevant among 40

percent of women, and 60 percent of women are suffering from back pain, cavity problem, head ache, and other communicable diseases.

- 6) Most of the respondents said that they defecate in open during early mornings and late evenings and do not use sanitary napkins which created infections among them. In fact they doesn't have a knowledge about sanitary napkins they still use clothes instead of napkins.
- 7) 80 percent of women respondent said that they visited Primary Healthcare Centers for checkups and treatment during illness, which is 5 kms away from the village. And 20 percent of respondents said that they go for private health care rather than public health care. In fact many elder women said that during their period/time they never saw any doctor in this village. And also, Asha and Anganwadi workers will not visit their household for health checkups regularly. Due to this women have suffered from so many health complications.
- 8) Only five respondent's families have toilet facility at home. The remaining women respondents defecate in open place.

Education And Political Arrangement Of The Respondents In Village

- 9) Sarva Shiksha Abhiyana (2000) aims to bridge social, regional and gender gaps, with the active participation of the community in the management of schools. But in Kabbenur village all respondents said that they have school facility up to primary level where as for secondary and higher education they have to send their children to neighboring city like Dharwad.
- 10) Mid-Day meals are regularly provided to children by the school.
- 11) Drop-out rates of adolescent girls are found increasing in this village because of non-availability of higher schools and colleges.
- 12) Adolescent girls are expected to stay at home was the opinion of 60 percent of respondents, 30 percent of women said that gender discrimination restricts women's mobility and freedom, 10 percent women said that high school fees increased drop-out rates.
- 13) All respondents opined that they vote during gram panchayat elections but they have no benefits from panchayats in solving women's problem.
- 14) No women's organizations are formed. They do not get adequate resources in village.
- 15) None of women respondents are aware of women rights and empowerment.
- 16) Village Politics have been looked after by village heads and decisions are taken by men who are panchayat members.
- 17) 40 percent of respondents said that they need policies and programmes implemented by government and NGOs. 60 percent of women respondents said that there should be improved access to education.

CONCLUSION:

The Kabbenur Village has come out with a lot of problems especially for women. Dominance of caste, family traditions, and religious taboos makes women of this village to have secondary position. Therefore effective implementation of programmes are needed to improve the socio-economic, education, health and living conditions of the village people especially women which is possible by the working of government along with collaboration of NGOs so that Kabbenur village women can utilize these benefits and have a better living. These women should be empowered to face challenges and solve the various problems under the guidance of government and other public organizations who work for women welfare.

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