

# Study On Place of Women in the Indian Society and Views of College Girls a Case Study

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**Abstract -** We tried to explore the college girls' perceptions of their gender being considered as 'weaker sex' in the contemporary India society. As many as 80 per cent indeed believed that they are still the weaker sex, although 89.25 per cent of the respondents believed that the modern Indian women are equally capable, efficient and committed to take up any, skilled job in any walk of life. A vast majority of the respondents (about 70 per cent) believe that despite all the loud propaganda about the women's uplift and progress in India, our women, by and large, are not getting their due recognition and fair treatment from the Indian state and the society. They (as many as 73 per cent respondents) believed that due to their lack of knowledge about the legal provisions for their protection and upholding their dignity as human being, they are still being subjected to injustices and are suffering from helplessness and alienation. The fact that although the bill for reservation of seats for women in the Parliament was passed in the 13th Lok Sabha, it is not likely to be effective as some political parties are putting spanner in the wheel in the name of reservations for OBCs and other separately.

**Key words;** perceptions, equally capable, efficient, committed.

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## INTRODUCTION

The Indian society is an old society having a history of over 7000 years of culture and intermixing of many races, religions and cultures. It is a plural society which carries the identity of the cultural traits of the various religions and cultures intact and at the same time the features of a rich composite culture and a fairly strong national consciousness and unity. The Indian society has old, rigid and varied cultural traditions, customs, folkways and practices of the different cultures as well as the changing, modernising values as a consequence of the process of acculturation with the western society and culture and global contacts due to the advancements in knowledge, Information technology and global economic and cultural contacts in recent decades.

While a lot of value change is fast taking place in our basically traditional and now modernising and futurising Indian society, it is a sociological fact that there are still so many cultural continuities from our ancient and medieval past and also there are several cultural discontinuities both for the good and the bad of us today. Patriarchy has since the ancient history of India been the most dominating theme of our society and culture till today; the Indian women — whether they are Hindu women, Muslim women, Sikh women or Christian women in India have always been under the

subjugation of the males and the traditions and have till late been victims of exploitation, backwardness, illiteracy and all sorts of discriminations and cultural, economic and political handicaps. They have been deprived of their inherent dignity as human beings and of human rights all through the past several milleni. 'Women's Rights', 'Women's Empowerment', 'Women's liberation' and 'Women's Emancipation', 'Alternate Sex' etc. are very recent concepts which have sprung up in the Indian society during the last two decades of the 20th Century. Despite all spirited talk of these radical concepts in our traditional country in recent years, most of the Indian girls are still discriminated against in education and other matters, most of the women are still exploited and deprived of their legitimate rights and suffer from all kind of injustices and indignities as we have seen in the review of the writings and researches on Indian women present study.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The Indian state and the Indian society legitimately expect that higher education being imparted in colleges and universities and professional and vocational education institutions should act as an effective instrument of social change and enlightenment for the Indian women, their values should change for the better, they should modernise and also be able to face the future demands of the 21st Century bravely and

efficiently.

It is in this specific context of our society and that too at the cross-roads of the present and future that we have tried to discover what the actual feelings, beliefs, values, opinions, fears and hopes and over-all genuine perceptions of the colleges girls of the year 1999 who will spend all the rest of lives in the new millenium, are. How far have they already changed in their knowledge, self-esteem, perceptions, hopes and fears, and what is now going on in their minds and conscience?

## MATERIAL AND METHOD

We have tried to ascertain them by asking and motivating them to express incognito and in complete freedom.

The following Table records the value-perceptions of our college girls in the sample about the status of women in the contemporary Indian society.

Table: 2 PLACE OF WOMEN IN THE CONTEMPORARY INDIAN SOCIETY

(n = 400)

S. No.	Value Statements	Agree	Disagree	No reply/ Uncertain
1.	Women in the Indian society have even now an inferior status.	256 64%	121 30.25%	23 5.75%
2.	Even today most of the Indian women are being discriminated against by their parents in comparison to their brothers.	264 66%	108 27%	28 7%
3.	Even today most of the Indian women are being denied their rights in the society.	288 72%	85 21.25%	27 6.75%
4.	Even today most of the employers are not treating their women employees at par with men employees.	228 57%	110 27.5%	62 15.5%
5.	There must be 33% reservation for Women in our Parliament, State Legislatures, Municipalities and Panchayati Raj Bodies.	268 67%	94 23.5%	37 9.25%
6.	I believe that the demand for 33 of seats in the Parliament is not justified, as it will benefit only the women of upper castes, affluent families and those connected with politicians -it will not benefit the women of SC, ST and OBC and other under-privileged groups.	151 37.75%	182 45.5%	67 16.75%
7.	I believe that there must be the same 33% reservations for women in all jobs in Central, State and semi-government institutions and offices.	239 59.75%	127 31.75%	34 8.5%
8.	I believe that at least 33% seats in all colleges and vocational and professional courses should be reserved for women students.	206 51.5%	167 41.75%	27 6.75%
9.	I believe that now the Indian women are equally capable, efficient and committed to take up any skilled job in any walk of life.	357 89.25%	39 9.75%	4 1%
10.	I believe that Indian women are now no more the 'weaker sex' as they used to be considered earlier.	318 79.5%	54 13.5%	28 7%
11.	I believe that inspite of all the loud propaganda about the women's upliftment and progress in India, our women, by and are not getting due recognition and large, fair treatment from the Indian state and society.	277 69.25%	69 17.25%	54 13.5%
12.	Due to lack of their knowledge of the legal provisions for the protection of women's rights, most of the Indianwomen are not getting justice and all the necessary help from government, police and courts.	292 73%	60 15%	38 9.5%

It is clear from the above Table that a majority of the respondents think that the women in India even today (in 2010) have an inferior status; as many as 64 per cent have held this. Sixty-six per cent of the respondents have said that even today most of the Indian females — girls as well women — are discriminated against by their parents in comparison to their brothers. Similarly, 72 per cent of them feel that the Indian women are still being denied their rights in our society, despite all talks of women's rights being heard throughout the length and breadth of India. As many as 57 per cent of the respondents have held that even today most of the employers do not treat their women at par with the male employees; perhaps they have said so on the basis of their personal knowledge gained from their female relations, friend or others. But 27.5 per cent did not think so, and 15.5 per cent did not comment on this point. It may be noted that 30 per cent respondents did not think that the Indian women have even now an inferior and miserable plight as it has all along been in the last so many thousands years of our history.

Women activists and women politicians have for some years been agitating for getting 33 per cent reservations for women in the Indian Parliament and Legislatures. As many as 67 per cent of our respondents agree to this demand, but 23.5 per cent of the respondents did not agree to it and 9.25 did not express any view on this crucial matter, may be due to lack of their understanding of the implications there-of.

As many as 37.78 per cent of the respondents feared that the demand of 33 per cent of seats in the Parliament if materialised would benefit only the women of the upper castes, affluent families and those connected with politicians as close relations and those having illicit relations with them; it will certainly not benefit the women of the SC, ST and OBCs and other under-privileged groups. On the other hand, more percentage of our respondents —45 per cent - did not have such an apprehension. It may be noted that 15.75 per cent did not hold either of these views. The majority of the respondents (59.75 per cent) believed that there must be the same sort of 33 per cent reservation for women in all jobs under the Central and State governments and semi-government and Local Bodies. A little less than one-third of the respondents (30.75) did not subscribe to this view, probably because they thought that it was impracticable and fraught with explosive consequences in the predominantly male- dominated society and politics when even in the Indian Parliament in 1999 there are less than 9 per cent women Members.

These responses of our respondents show-that have realistic assessment of the existing social status of our

women, and this is a good omen that these college girls have such realistic and sociologically correct assessment.

We tried to further to probe into the matter and ascertain the values of the college girls on the closely related question of the Indian Women's empowerment and emancipation which is being so vigorously talked about in the political economic and social spheres of our nation these days.

POLITICAL VALUES OF COLLEGE GIRLS (n=400)

S. No.	Value Statements	Agree	Disagree	No reply Uncertain
1.	I believe that students, and particularly girl students, must avoid entering politics and contacting political parties and corrupt politicians.	134 33.5%	227 56.75%	39 9.75%
2.	I believe that our students must indeed participate in politics to gain citizenship training and to push out illiterate, semiliterate and unprincipled politicians and save the nation.	321 80.25%	45 11.25%	34 8.5%
3.	I believe that almost all politicians in today's India are self-seeking and mainly after grabbing power, positions of influence, illicit economic gains and exploiting the country.	341 85.25%	34 8.5%	25 1.25%
4.	I believe that all those who go in for politics do not in reality have the ideal of serving the Indian masses in their minds and hearts.	272 68%	73 18.25%	55 13.75%
5.	I believe that the Indian voters themselves are responsible for our corrupt political leaders, for the "people get the leaders they deserve".	255 63.75%	111 27.75%	34 8.5%
6.	I believe that Indian politics has become more and more criminalized in the 1990s and this process is increasing fast.	343 85.75%	16 4%	41 10.25%
7.	I believe that almost all the accused in the Havula Scandal, and so many other corrupt politicians have not yet been sent to jails, only shows that our law enforcing and judicial institutions are really unable to root out corruption, which is the dominant feature of the modern Indian polity.	331 82.75%	16 4%	53 13.25%
8.	I believe that politics without principles is not only improper but dangerous.	368 92%	6 1.5%	26 6.5%
9.	I believe that the era of coalition governments in India in the 1990s has made the central government weak, ineffective and instable.	262 65.5%	38 9.5%	100 25%
10.	I believe that President's Narayan's reported suggestions to the Chief Justice of India to consider giving due representation to SC, ST and other Backward Classes in appointment of judges to Supreme Court was proper.	99 24.75%	187 46.75%	114 28.5%
11.	I think merit alone should be the criteria for appointment of judges in the High Court and Supreme Court and reservations will bring down the credibility of the judiciary.	281 70.25%	45 11.25%	34 8.5%

Let us try to analyse the above data on the political values and opinions of the college girls in Haryana on the crucially important political issues of contemporary India:

1. The belief that students, and particularly girl students, must avoid entering politics and contacting political parties and corrupt politicians was held by 33.5 per cent girls, whereas 56.75 per cent of the respondents did not hold this belief. They did not see

any such harm in involving themselves with political parties and politicians.

2. It is very interesting to note that the majority of the girls believed that Indian students must indeed participate in politics to get citizenship training and push out illiterate and semi-literates, unprincipled politicians and save the nation. Only 11.25 per cent of the respondents disagreed with this value statement.

3. It is surprising to discover that 85.25 per cent college girls in our sample agreed that almost all politicians in today's India are self-seeking and mainly after grabbing power, positions of influence, illicit economic gains and exploiting the country. Only 8.5 per cent respondents did not have this view.

4. The value statement that all those who go in for politics do not in reality have the ideals of serving the Indian masses in their minds and hearts was approved by as many 68 per cent of the respondents; 18.25 per cent disagreed with it, while 13.75 per cent did not react.

5. The belief that the Indian voters themselves are responsible for our corrupt political leaders for the "people get the leaders they deserve", was held by about 63.75 per cent respondents, while a little more than one fourth (27.75 per cent) did not subscribe to this view and 8.5 per cent chose not to comment either way.

6. The belief that Indian politics has become more and more criminalized in the 1990s and this trend is increasing fast has been held by 85.75 per cent of the respondents.

7. The respondents were asked to react to this statement: 'The fact that almost all the accused in the Hawala and so many other scandals have been freed and corrupt politicians (like Sukh Ram, P. V. Narasimha Rao and the host of others) have not yet been sent to jail only shows that our law-enforcing and judicial institutions are really unable to root out corruption, which has become the dominant feature of modern Indian politics. As many as 82, 75 per cent of the respondents agreed with this statement, only 4 per cent respondents disagreed with it, and 13.25 per cent abstained from recording their views. This clearly shows that the majority of the respondents felt deeply frustrated with the judiciary's incapability to curb the crimes and corruption in present day life.

8. As many 92 per cent of the respondents held the view that politics without principles is not only improper but dangerous for India.

9. As many as 65.5 per cent of the respondents accepted the view that the era of coalition governments in India in the 1990s has made the Central Government weak, ineffective and instable, while 9.5 per cent respondents did not, subscribe to this view.

## CONCLUSION

That the President Naraynan's reported suggestion to the Chief Justice of India in 1998 to consider giving due representation to SC, ST and other Backward Classes in appointment of judges to Supreme Court was proper, only 24.75 per cent respondents agreed with it while the majority (46.75 per cent) disagreed with it. As many as 28.5 per cent respondents did not give reply. This shows that the majority of the college girls believed that the President's recommendation to the chief Justice of India in favour of the SC, ST and OBCs was improper. Merit alone should be the criterion for appointment of judges in the High Courts and Supreme Court and reservations will bring down the credibility of the judiciary. As many as 72.5 per cent of the respondents agreed with this value statement, whereas 11.2 per cent disagreed with it and 12.5 per cent did not express their view.

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