

# Women Empowerment, Problems and Prospects in Bhaderwah Tehsil

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## Abstract

This paper makes an effort to assess the state of women's empowerment in the villages of Bhaderwah town and to highlight its problems and difficulties. One of the most pressing issues of the 21st century is now the empowerment of women. However, in actuality, women's empowerment remains a fantasy. We see in daily life how many social ills cause women to become victims. Women's empowerment is a crucial tool for increasing women's access to resources and ability to make wise life decisions. Women's empowerment is fundamentally the process of improving the status of traditionally underprivileged women in society on the economic, social, and political fronts. Building a societal and political climate where women can live free from oppression, exploitation, trepidation, discrimination, and the general sense of persecution that comes with being a woman in a historically male-dominated institution is a key component of women empowerment. Nearly half of the world's population is made up of women; however, Present article intends to describe and evaluate with the political participation of women in the selected villages of Bhaderwah and discusses about the role of women in family planning, their mobility and decision-making capability in the selected villages.

**KEYWORDS:** Empowerment, Exploitation, Discrimination, Decision-making.

## 1. Introduction

Women's empowerment (or female empowerment) may be defined in several ways, including accepting women's viewpoints, making an effort to seek them and raising the status of women through education, awareness, literacy, and training. Women's empowerment equips and allows women to make life-determining decisions through the different societal problems. They may have the opportunity to re-define gender roles or other such roles, which allow them more freedom to pursue desired goals.

Women's empowerment has become a significant topic of discussion in development and economics. Economic empowerment allows women to control and benefit from resources, assets, and income. It also aids the ability to manage risk and improve women's well-being. It can result in approaches to support trivialized genders in a particular political or social context. While often interchangeably used, the more comprehensive concept of

gender empowerment concerns people of any gender, stressing the distinction between biological and gender as a role. Women empowerment helps boost women's status through literacy, education, training and

awareness creation. Furthermore, women's empowerment refers to women's ability to make strategic life choices that were previously denied them.

Nations, businesses, communities and groups may benefit from implementing programs and policies that adopt the notion of female empowerment. Women's empowerment enhances the quality and the quantity of human resources available for development. Empowerment is one of the main procedural concerns when addressing human rights and development.

Several principles define women's empowerment, such as, for one to be empowered, one must come from a position of disempowerment. They must acquire empowerment rather than have it given to them by an external party. Other studies have found that empowerment definitions entail people having the capability to make important decisions in their lives while also being able to act on them. Empowerment and disempowerment are relative to each other at a previous time; empowerment is a process rather than a product.

In the last five decades, the concept of women empowerment has undergone a change from welfare-oriented approach to equity approach. It has been understood as the process by which the powerless gain greater control over the circumstances of their lives. Empowerment particularly includes control over resources and ideology. According to Sen and Batliwala (2000) it leads to a growing intrinsic capability - greater self-confidence, and an inner transformation of one's consciousness that enables one to overcome external barrier. This view mainly emphasizes on two important aspects. Firstly, it is a power to achieve desired goals but not a power over others. Secondly, idea of empowerment is more applicable to those who are powerless - whether they are male or female, or group of individuals, class or caste. Though concept of empowerment is not specific to women, yet it is unique in that it cuts across all types of class and caste and also within families and households (Malhotra et al., 2002). Women empowerment is also defined as a change in the context of a woman's life, which enables her increased capacity for leading a fulfilling human life. It gets reflected both in external qualities (viz. health, mobility, education and awareness, status in the family, participation in decision making, and also at the level of material security) and internal qualities (viz. self-awareness and self-confidence) [Human Development in South Asia (2000) as quoted by Mathew (2003)]. UNDP (1990) for the first time introduced the concept of Human Development Index (HDI) that evolved initially as a broader measure of socio-economic progress of a nation but it became popular as a measure of average achievements in human development for both the sexes. Contrary to the general belief that development is gender neutral, statistics show that women lag behind men all over the world including India in almost all aspects of life. It is for this reason that the focus on human development has been to highlight the gender dimension and continuing inequalities confronting women since 1995 (UNDP 1995). The Report noted that without empowering women overall development of human beings is not possible. It further stressed that if development is not engendered, is endangered. To bring out the facts and figures relating to deprivation of women two indices, namely, Gender related Development Index (GDI) and Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM) were introduced. While GDI measures the achievements in the same dimensions and variables as the HDI, it also takes into account inequality in achievement between women and men (Anand and Sen, 1995). The greater the gender disparity in human development, the lower is country's GDI compared to its HDI. The GDI is the HDI adjusted downwards for gender inequality. On the other hand, GEM

indicates whether women are able to actively participate in economic and political life. Theoretically, the index can take values between zero and infinity, with a value of unity reflecting an absolute equality in the respective attainments of males and females. A value higher than unity would imply that females have better attainments than males.

### 1.2 Data Sources and Methodology:

A survey was conducted in the rural areas of Bhabarwa tehsil, to study the status of women empowerment among women. The level of women empowerment was accessed using a structural questionnaire. The details like freedom of mobility, decision-making power, family planning, and political participation, etc. were collected and accessed. The questionnaire was administered on a sample of 3 villages (20 from each village). The present Socio-economic Survey Report is based on both primary as well as secondary data analysis. Since Bhabarwah and its surrounding village has limited literature. Hence a vast literature review has been done on various aspects of women empowerment, women issues and various parameters of women empowerment indicators in mountainous region. The primary survey has been conducted in Thanala, Bheja and Haddal village in the month of November 2022. The prime objectives of conducting the socio-economic survey were to collect the information on decision-making, freedom of mobility, political participation and leadership, family planning, domestic violence, economic security and male involvement in housework. The survey has been conducted through questionnaire through sampling. In the sample survey, 30 households have been surveyed in Thanala village, in Bheja 18 households have been surveyed and in Haddal, 12 households have been surveyed. The secondary data has been also collected through census, Government of India 2011 for all the three villages. The surveyed questionnaire has been tabulated in the lab and proper analysis has been done. The Percentage of absolute number has been also calculated through the percentage method using following given formula

### 1.3 Objectives:

1. To examine the role of women in family planning in the study area.
2. To analyse the freedom of mobility among the women of selected villages.
3. To study the decision-making power of the women of these selected villages of Bhabarwah.
4. To infer the women participation in electoral processes.

### 1.4 Significance of the study:

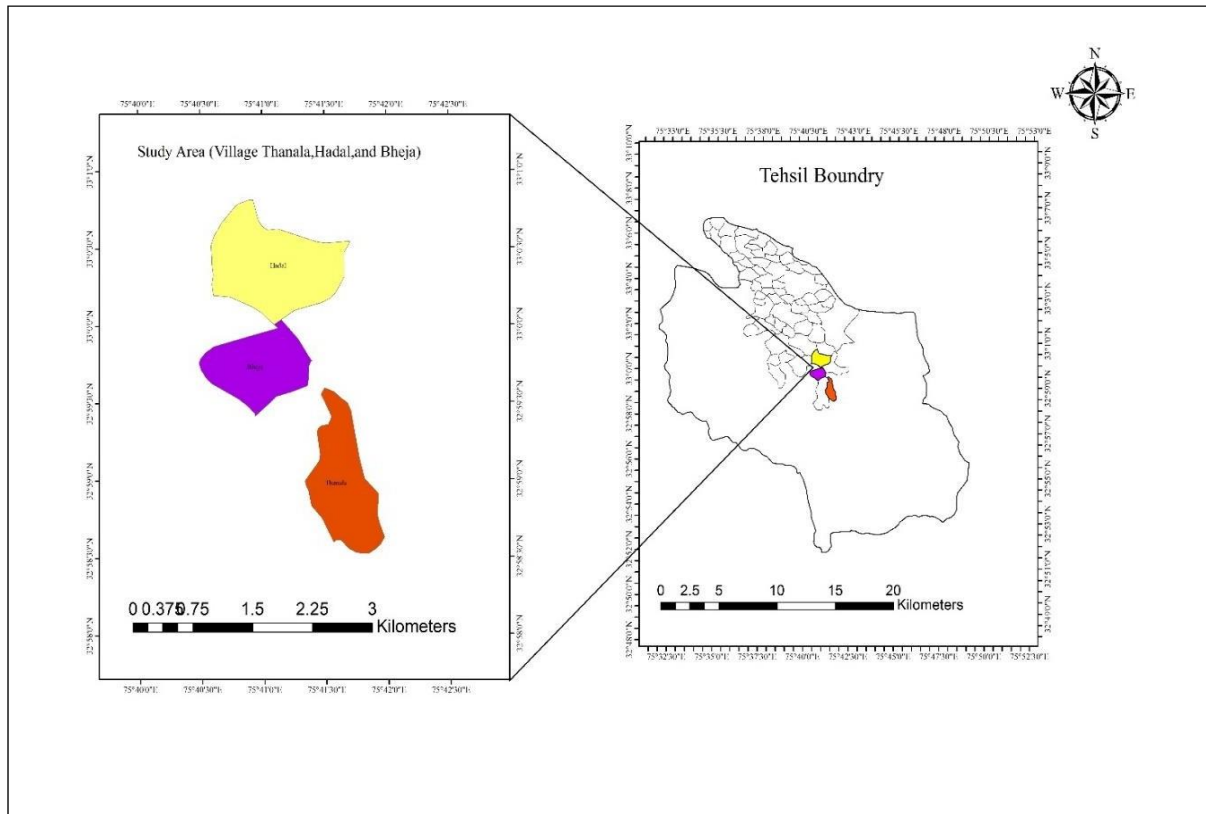
Women Empowerment in Bhabarwah is required to overcome situation of such type and to provide them with their independent role in Bhabarwah society. Empowering Women is an necessary right of women. They should have proportional rights to contribute to society, economics, education and politics.

## 2.1 STUDY AREA

Cradling in the midst of mighty Himalayas, often known as “Chota Kashmir”, and in the south-western side is situated most important Hindu pilgrimage “Kailash Kund”, there lie a beautiful and picturesque town named “Bhabarwah”. It affords beautiful landscape vistas with mesmerizing natural beauty. It is fortified by sky touching mountain peaks which remain grey for most of the year. Bhabarwah town is the tehsil of Doda district in Jammu and Kashmir.

**2.2 Location:**

The valley of Baderwah located between 32°5'N to 34°15'N latitude and 74°30'E to 75°40'E longitude. The altitude of Baderwah is 1613m. This area falls under the Himalayan range of Pir Panjal. The study area lies in Middle Himalayas. This comprises the mountain tract locally known as Pahar. This area is known for its scenic beauty.



**Thanala Village**

Thanala village is located in Baderwah tehsil of Doda district in Jammu & Kashmir, India. It is situated 10km away from sub-district headquarter Baderwah (tehsildar office) and 46km away from district headquarter Doda. As per 2009 stats, Thanala is the gram panchayat of Thanala village. The total geographical area of village is 275.2 hectares. Thanala has a total population of 1,665 people, out of which male population is 858 while female population is 807. Literacy rate of Thanala village is 22.34% out of which 34.15% males and 9.79% females are literate. There are about 277 houses in Thanala village. Pincode of thanala village locality is 182222. Baderwah is nearest town to Thanala for all major economic activities, which is approximately 10km away. Thanala is the last village located on Baderwah-Chambar road in Jammu and Kashmir lacking all basic a model village should have such as potable drinking water, electricity, toilet facilities and healthcare. Ironically villagers not even have road connectivity and they have to walk half an hour to reach their homes.

Sarpanch, Thanala, Sartaz Ahmed said, “we have more than 400 houses in the village, but hardly 100 houses have toilet facilities. High School in the village has more than 300 girls and boys enrolled have no toilet or drinking water facilities, even staff members have to face immense hardships.”

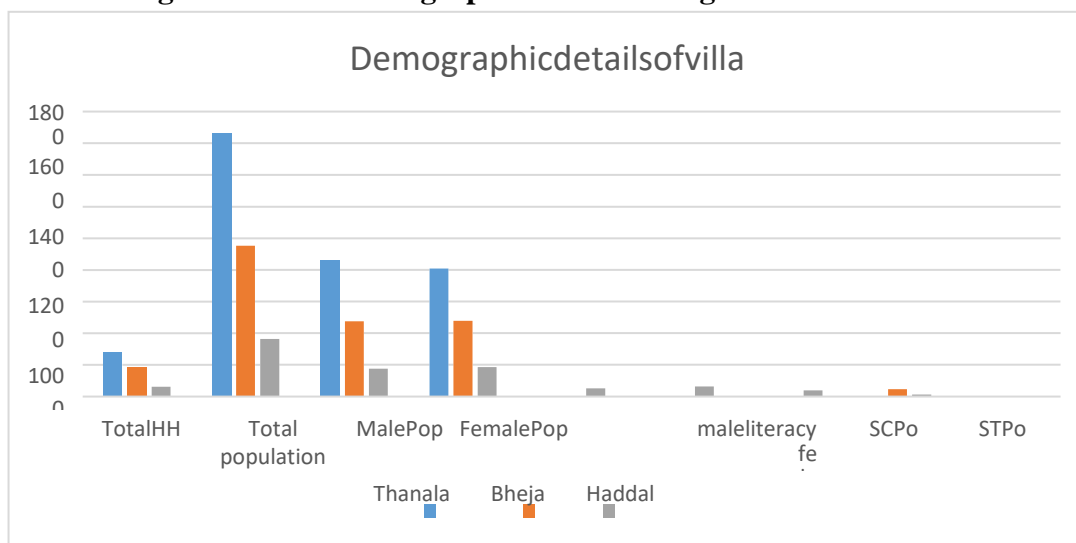
“The supply lines and transformer are decade old, wood poles at most places are damaged, wires passing along trees are a serious threat to lives of people living here because during monsoons trees get uprooted and there is total breakdown of transmission system,” he said. Sartaz said, “due to very low voltage, the students of the area are not able to study properly as they are completely dependent on the light of firewood or kerosene lamps in the night to prepare for their exams.” “The village has more than 40-year-old rusted and damaged water supply lines which need to be replaced, replacement of wooden poles to iron, two new transformers and setting up of a modern dispensary as there is no doctor available at time of need,” he demanded. “On the day it was inaugurated as a model village, we were jubilant and had hoped that place will get all the modern facilities, but after ten years there is nothing on ground, now we feel cheated,” Asgar Ali a local villager said. To aim of stopping migration of people from rural areas to urban hubs, model village concept has failed to take off properly across the length and breadth of State. The so-called model villages do exist on papers but are nowhere on ground.

**Table no. 2.1 Demographic Data of Thanala, Bheja and Haddal village**

Villages	Total HH	Total population	Male pop	Female Pop	Total literacy	Male literacy	Female literacy	SC pop	St pop
Thanala	277	1665	858	807	29.55%	45.43%	12.87%	0.00%	0.00%
Bheja	186	953	475	478	67.70%	85.46%	50.37%	46	3.00%
Haddal	62	363	177	186	51.79	63.84	40.32	13.21	0

Sources: Census of data 2011

**Figno. 2.2 shows demographic details of villages**



**Bheja Village**

Bheja village is located in India and listed under Taluk: Bhaderwah, in the district of Doda, Jammu & Kashmir State. It is located 34 KM towards South from District headquarters Doda, 5 KM from Bhaderwah, 179 KM from State capital Srinagar, Jammu. Bheja Pin code is 182222 and postal head office is Bhaderwah, Sungli (4 KM), Chinote (6 KM), Manthla (7 KM), Dandi (8 KM), Sarna (9 KM) are the nearby Villages to Bheja. Bheja is surrounded by Duggan Tehsil towards South, Thathri Tehsil towards North, Dudu Tehsil towards west, Drabshalla Tehsil towards North. Dalhousie, Chamba, Udampur, Kathua are the nearby Cities to Bheja. Demographics of Bheja Urdu is the Local Language here

**Haddal village**

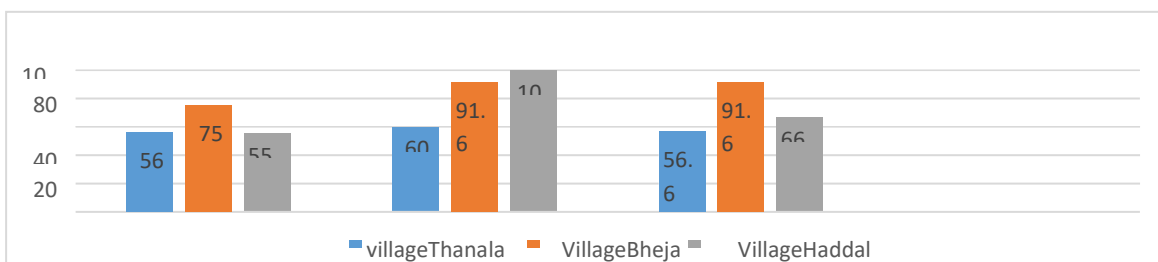
The village Haddal is located in Bhaderwah Tahsil of Doda District in the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir in India. It is governed by Butla Gram Panchayat. It comes under Bhaderwah Community Development Block. The nearest town is Bhaderwah, which is about 8 kilometers away from Haddal

**3.1 FREEDOM OF MOBILITY**

In many parts of the world, women are unable to move freely. Freedom of movement is not only a human right emphasized in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (article 13) but is also an economic imperative. When countries impose legal restrictions on women's ability to move freely, do not provide workplace flexibility for parents with children or fail to protect women from sexual harassment in public places, women's economic empowerment is impaired. Social norms may also limit women's ability to move freely and get a job or start a business.

**Table no. 3.1 Freedom of mobility among women**

Sr.no.	freedom of mobility	village Thanala	village Bheja	village Haddal
1	The respondent who got permission to visit market	56 %	75%	55.5%
2	The respondent who got permission to visit Health Center	60%	91.6%	100%
3	The respondent who got permission to visit friends	56.6%	91.6%	66.6%



Source: Socio economic primary survey 2022

**Figno3.1Showsfreedomofmobilityamongwomenin variousvillages**Source:Socioeconomicprimarysurvey2022

Table and fig no. 3.1 shows the freedom of mobility among women in Thanala, Bheja andHaddal villages. Through the table and figure no 3.1, it can be inferred that Bheja village has75 percent followed by Thanala 56 percent and Haddal has 55.5 percent women needs to takepermission from household head to visit near market. The same table and figure also revealthatHaddalvillagehas100percentfollowedbyBheja91.6percentandThanalahas60percentwomenneeds totakepermissionfromhouseholdheadtovisitthehealthCentreformedicalcheck-ups.ThisstableandfigurealsorevealthatBhejavillagehas91.6percentfollowedbyhaddal 66.6 percent and Thanala has 56.6 percent women needs to take permission from householdhead to visit their friends. Women in these three villages are dominated by male counterpart.Thewomen literacyrateisalso lowin thesevillages becauseof that freedomof mobility

**3.2ECONOMIC SECURITY**

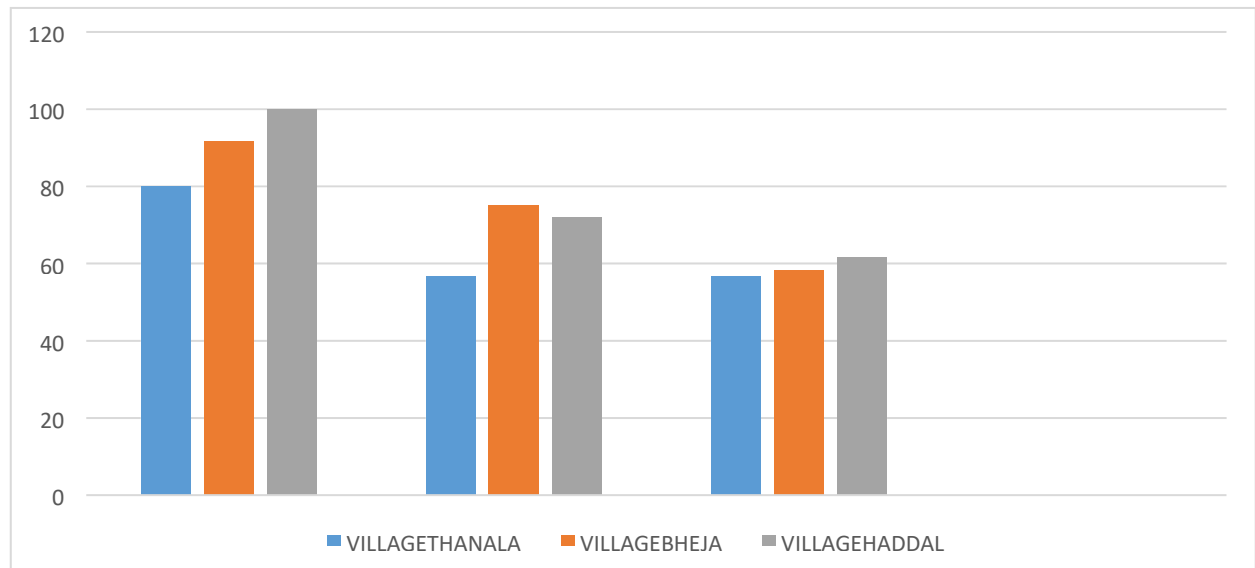
Economicsecurityistheabilitytoconsistentlymeetessentialneedsforoneselfandone’sfamilythroughqualityjobs anddignified,decentwork.Tobeeconomicallysecuremeanshavingastableincomeorenoughresourcesupport anadequatestandardoflivingnow,fortheforeseeablefuture, and during times of economic crises. Across the world, women are far less likely to beeconomicallysecurethanmen.

**Tableno.3.2showseconomicsecurityamongwomen.**

Sr.no.	Economicsecurity	Village Thanala	VillageBheja	VillageHaddal
1.	<b>Therespondentwhohasno sourceof income</b>	80%	91.6%	100%
2.	<b>Therespondentwhoaffordsto purchaseclothes</b>	56.6%	75%	72%
3.	<b>Therespondentwhoaffordsto purchasebeautyproducts</b>	56.6	58.3	61.6

Source:Socioeconomicprimarysurvey2022

**Fig.no.3.2showseconomicsecurityamong women's.**



**Source:Socioeconomicprimarysurvey2022**

Table and figno.3.2 reflect the economic security among women in Thanala, Bheja and Haddal villages. Through the table and figure no 3.2, it can be analyzed that Haddal village has 100 percent followed by Bheja 91.6 percent and Thanala has 80 percent women who have no source of income. This a table and figure also show that Bheja village has 75 percent followed by Haddal 72 percent and Thanala has 56.6 percent women did not afford to purchase their clothes. This also reveal that Haddal village has 61.6 percent followed by Bheja 58.3 percent and Thanala has 56.6 percent women that did not afford to purchase beauty products for their own personal use. All the three villages located in a remote area. The Haddal village is not connected with proper road. People used to travel more than 2km to reach up to road. Besides these it is also found that the villages are located in a hill areas and lacking agriculture land. The education system is also poor and women are underprivileged from modern education.

### 3.3 MALE INVOLVEMENT IN HOUSEWORK

There is growing pressure on men to increase their participation in home life. As more and more women, particularly mothers of young children, enter the labour force, there appears to be a greater need for men to contribute to housework and childcare. This paper draws on intensive interview material with 25 Boston-area families to describe and explain the ambivalence of male responses to this pressure. Because of men's different social support networks, they can obtain little moral support and logistical help in performing tasks around the house. Because men perceive paid employment as their primary contribution to the family, they are reluctant to acknowledge either that they need help in performing this function or have a responsibility to participate in the homemaking function.

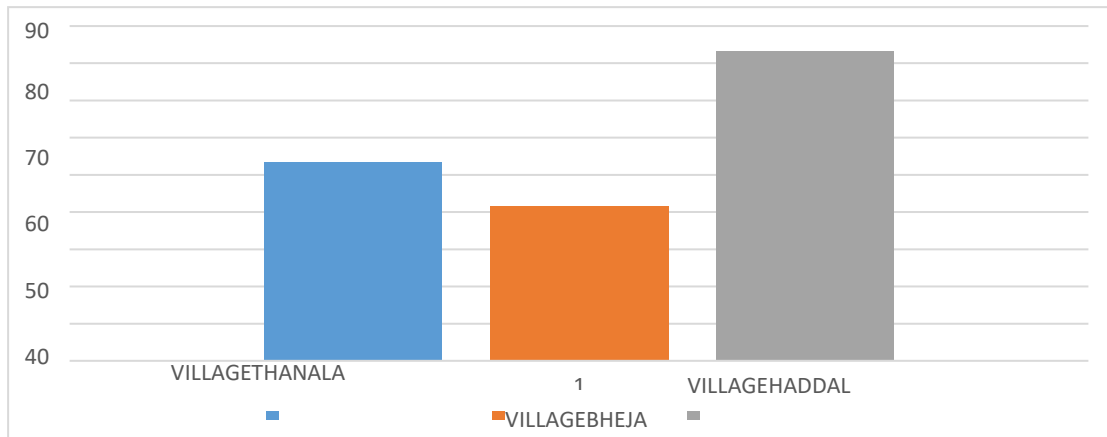


**Tableno.3.3showsmaleinvolvementinhousework**

sr.no.	male involvement in housework	village Thanala	village Bheja	village Haddal
1	The respondent who gothelpfrommaleinhousechores	53.3%	41.6%	83.3%

Source:Socioeconomicprimarysurvey2022

**Fig No. 3.3 shows Male involvement in House Works**



Source:Socioeconomicprimarysurvey2022

Table and fig no. 3.3 shows male involvement in house chores in Thanala, Bheja and Haddal villages. In Haddal 83.3 percent followed by Thanala 53.3 percent and Bheja 41.6 percent women who have got help from their males' counterpart in house chores activities. The primereason for low participations in Bheja and Thanala is due to involvement of male in economicactivitiesoutsidethe village.

### 3.4 DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Domestic abuse, also called "domestic violence" or "intimate partner violence", can be defined as a pattern of behavior in any relationship that is used to gain or maintain power and control over an intimate partner. Abuse is physical, sexual, emotional, economic or psychological actions or threats of actions that influence another person. This includes any behaviors that frighten, intimidate, terrorize, manipulate, hurt, humiliate, blame, injure, or wound someone. Domestic abuse can happen to anyone of any race, age, sexual orientation, religion, or gender. It can occur within a range of relationships including couples who are married, living together or dating. Domestic violence affects people of all socioeconomic backgrounds and education levels. Anyone can be a victim of domestic violence, regardless of age, race, gender, sexual orientation, faith or class. Victims of domestic abuse may also include a child or other relative, or any other household member. Domestic

abuse is typically manifested as a pattern of abusive behaviour toward an intimate partner in a dating or family relationship, where the abuser exerts power and control over the victim. Domestic abuse can be mental, physical, economic or sexual in nature. Incidents are rarely isolated, and usually escalate in frequency and severity. Domestic abuse may culminate in serious physical injury or death.

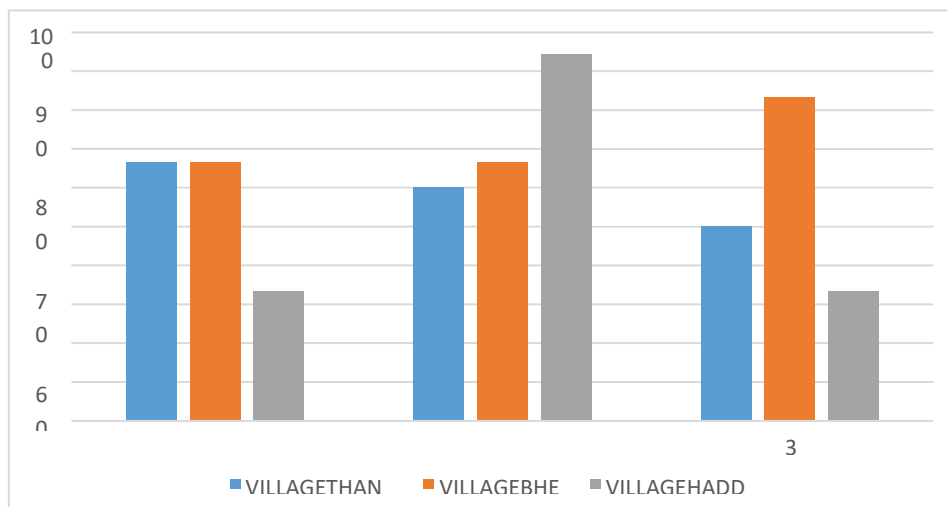
**Table no.3.4 Shows domestic violence**

Sr.no.	domestic violence	village Thanala	village Bheja	village Haddal
1	The respondent never been a victim of domestic violence	56.6%	100%	100%

**Table no.3.5 shows women involvement in decision making**

sr.no.	decision making	village Thanala	village Bheja	village Haddal
1	women feel participated in the household decision	66.6%	66.6%	33.3%
2	women have the freedom to make decision on education	60%	66.6%	94.4%
3	Women have the freedom to make decision about children	50%	83.3%	33.3%

Source: Socioeconomic primary survey 2022



**Figno.3.5 shows women involvement in decision making**

**Source:Socioeconomicprimarysurvey2022**

In table and fig no. 3.5 shows the women involvement in decision making in Thanala, BhejaandHaddalvillages.InBhejaandThanala66.6percentwomenparticipatedindecisionmakingwhileinHaddalonly33.3percentwomentakeinvolvementindecisionmaking.InHaddal94.4percent followed by Bheja 66.6 percent and Thanala 60 percent women have the freedom totakedecisiononeducation.InBheja83.3percentfollowedbyThanala50percentandHaddal 33.3 percent women have the freedom to take decision on children. From the table, it can beconcludedthat women haveenough freedom totakepart in decision.

**3.6 FAMILYPLANNING**

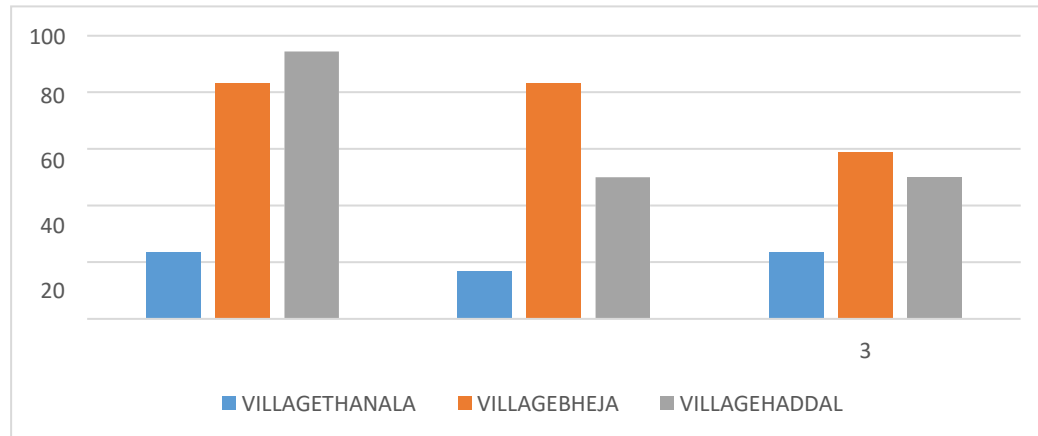
Family planning has undergone a paradigm shift and emerged as one of the interventions toreduce maternal and infant mortalities and morbidities. It is well-established that the stateswith high contraceptive prevalence rate have lower maternal and infant mortalities. Greaterinvestments in family planning can thus help mitigate the impact of high population growthby helping women achieve the desired family size and avoid unintended and mistimedpregnancies. Further, contraceptive use can prevent recourse to induced abortion andeliminate most of these deaths. Studies show that if the current unmet need for familyplanning could be fulfilled over the next 5 years, we can avert 35,000 maternal deaths, 1.2millioninfantdeath,save more thanRs.4450croresandsaveRs.6500crores,ifsafeabortion services are coupled with increased family planning services. This strategic directionistheguidingprinciplein implementation of familyplanningprogrammein future

**Tableno. 3.6showsfamily planning**

s.no.	familyplanning	Village Thanala	villageBheja	villageHaddal
1	The respondent whodidn't usedcontraceptiontoavoidpregnancy	23.3%	83.3%	94.4%
2	Ifyes,thenwhatisthe decisionregarding	16.6%	83.3%	50%
3	Ifno,thenwhatisthereason to avoid Contraceptives	23.3	58.8%	50%

**Source:Socioeconomicprimarysurvey2022**

**Figno.3.6showsfamilyplanning**



**Source:Socioeconomicprimarysurvey2022**

Intableandfigno.3.6showsfamilyplanning. In Haddal94.4percentfollowedbyBheja83.3and Thanala 23.3 percent women did not use any contraceptive to avoid pregnancy. In thesethreevillages, women havetheirown reason which theydidnot reveal.

### 3.7 LEADERSHIPANDPOLITICALPARTICIPATION

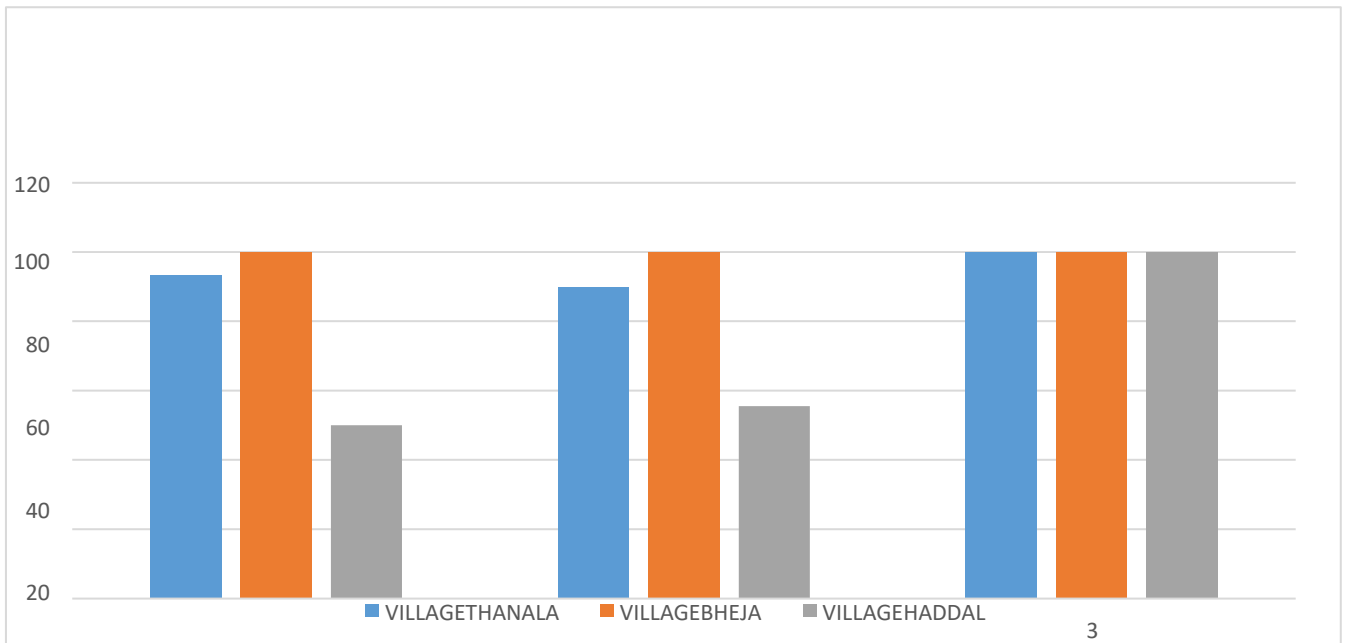
Women's involvement in political parties is tied to the increasing demand for equal rights.The INC held power until the 1990s. As the INC moved away from welfare politics, otherparties arose to challenge the INC using poverty as the center of their agenda. The INCregained power in 2004 with the help of women's participation. The INC has increasedwomen's participation by instituting a 33% quota for women in all levels of the party. In June2009, the INC nominated a woman to become first speaker of Lok Sabha, and also supportedtheelectionof PratibhaPatil,India'sfirstfemale president.Womenwereinvolvedintheearly establishment of the BJP. The BJP has encouraged greater representation of women bydeveloping women's leadership programs, financial assistance for women candidates, andimplementing a 33% reservation for women in party leadership positions. BJP has receivedwomen's support by focusing on issues such as the Uniform Civil Code to extend equal rightsto women and men regardless of religion. They have also spoken out against violence againstIndian women. The CPI has also supported gender inequality issues including addressingissuesofviolencenikitaektallthrough the National FederationofIndianWomen.

**Tableno.3.7showsleadership andpoliticalparticipationofwomen**

Sr.no.	leadershipandpolitical participation	village Thanala	villageBheja	villageHaddal
1	therespondentwhodidnotjoin NGO orany othercharitablegroups	93.3%	100%	50%
2	therespondentwhodid notfeel boldtospeakinginpublic	90%	100%	55.5%
3	therespondentwhodidnot participate in anycampaign /panchayat /MLA	100%	100%	100%

Source:Socioeconomicprimarysurvey2022

**Figno.3.7showsleadershipandpoliticalparticipationofwomen**



Source:Socioeconomicprimarysurvey2022

The table and fig no.3.7 shows leadership and political participation of women. In Bheja 100percent followed by Thanala 93.3percent and Haddal 50percent women did not participate in any NGO or any other charitable groups. Same as in village Bheja 100 percent, Thanala 90percent and in Haddal 55.5 percent women did not feel bold to speaking in public. In all these three villages' 100 percent of women did not join or participate in campaign/ panchayat/MLA. This is due to the fact that most of the women in these villages are illiterate and did not know how to communicate with unknown peoples.

## SUGGESTIONS

Some of the suggestions are mentioned below

1. Governments should give more emphasis on female education to increase empowerment level of women.
2. Governments should be created more opportunity for women empowerment.
3. The Governments should create awareness of women education and availability of support services among the women.
4. The Government and NGO should arrange many awareness programs for women empowerment.
5. More schemes related to women entrepreneurship could be created to empower and uplift the status of women in India.
6. It is also necessary for Governments to invest more money in making the environment favorable and sensitive for girls.

## CONCLUSION

Although we have moved towards women empowerment, there is still a long way ahead. Making women aware of their potential has now become a demand of the times while the governments should adopt measures like health, education, employment, awareness for women etc.

It is necessary to create awareness in society and create public values, which will promote women empowerment. The true meaning of women empowerment will be achieved when gender inequality will be eliminated. We need to give equal opportunities to women for equal pay. Equal respect equal to men. Therefore, we see that in 21st century societies have been accepted women's empowerment for development of the world, women as an active agent for development, participation in and guiding their own development. Women education is essential in the 21st century for women empowerment. Education is an important tool that enables women and girls to participate in decisions that affect their lives and in improving their social status. Women empowerment makes them independent decision makers. By the women empowerment social, political and economic development of a country is possible. So, to develop a country woman should be empowered from all directions. For this the women should be provided more scopes and advantages.

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