

## CASE STUDY

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**ABSTRACT:** Many writers describe empowerment as a process as opposed to a condition or state of being which is being a key feature of empowerment emphasized by many researchers. As a process empowerment becomes difficult to be measured by standard tools available to social scientists. As case study helps in bringing us to understand a complex issue or object and can extend experience or add strength to what is already known through previous research. Case studies also emphasized on detailed contextual analysis of a limited number of events or conditions and their relationships. Researcher had made use of this qualitative research method to examine contemporary real-life situations.

### I. INTRODUCTION

Critics of the case study method believe that the study of a small number of cases can offer no grounds for establishing reliability or generality of findings. Others feel that the intense exposure to study of the case biases the findings. Some dismiss case study research as useful only as an exploratory tool. Yet researcher has used the case study research method with success in carefully planned and crafted studies of real-life situations, issues, and problems. Here researcher selected the sample on the basis of their willingness to participate in the interview as well as those who were unique in some way or the other. Researcher has carefully observed and interviewed the Other Backward Castes women to identify the causal factors associated with their experiences.

### II. MY FIRST ENCOUNTER WITH SUMITA

Sunita Pal is a highly educated woman belonging to the other backward community. It was the month of the August, I was standing out of the education department as I went there to visit education department for my research purposes. I was waiting somebody to know about the courses of the department. There suddenly a girl came next to me and said excuse me "where is education department", I turned towards her and said you are standing in the education department then she asked me, "do you know where is M.Ed counseling going on" I said you have come for M.Ed. counseling she said "yes". This was the first day of my meeting with Sunita Pal on that day we did not talk much as both of us were busy with our work. This was first meeting with Sunita Pal but in little time we establish a good rapport she asked my details like my name she even asked my mobile number as to keep in touch. This was first meeting with Sunita Pal but in little time we establish a good rapport she asked my details like my name she even asked my mobile number as to keep in touch On our first meeting I was not at all aware that she belonged to backward caste community. Well on this note we left for our homes.

### III. FAMILY BACKGROUND

Our relationship established and we were friends and started talking from the very next day. I came to know that her economic condition was not very good as her father was not in a permanent job he used to take private tuitions at home. Her mother was a housewife. Her grandmother used to live with them and she also helps in supporting her family by giving her pension to her father. She has also one brother who is studying in class 12. When I become familiar with her family condition I had sympathy with her and now I can even understand that why on the day of counseling she was not carrying any personal number. Though her family condition was not very good still she is studying, so I was little surprised because for M.Ed you need to be a graduate as well as you have to have B.Ed degree also. Her educational qualification was good despite of coming from the lower class family. Her family especially her father was very supportive regarding her studies.

### IV. REVELATION OF SUNITA PAL OF BEING A OTHER BACKWARD CASTE WOMAN

I remember the day when she invited me to her house as on that day we worked late in the Department of Education and was very tired I asked Sunita to accompany me to the canteen she said "ok let me wind up my work". we went to the canteen to have a cup of tea but it was our bad luck canteen was closed. As I was having a

strong desire to have tea therefore, Sunita asked me " *if you do not mind then you can come to my house it's very near to University*" I said you live nearby she said "yes" and you can meet my father and have a cup of tea also with us, if you don't mind". I said why would I mind its great idea let's move. After saying this we left for Sunita's house as I entered her street the condition of street was very pathetic it was very narrow I and Sunita walked towards her house. I entered in her drawing room I was little surprise it was so small that only two person can accommodate in that room. She offered me the chair and went inside to bring water for me. she again emphasized you will take tea, I said 'yes' why are you asking same question I came to your house to have tea she said ok you don't have problem in having tea with me I said no why would I have problem in having tea with you. I was seeing her expression to be changed while asking this question and she was very hesitant in offering me tea at home I thought there must be some reason why Sunita is asking same question so many times then I compelled her to tell me the reason of being so apprehensive in serving tea to me. "She said you must be knowing" I said what I must be knowing than with little anger I asked her talk to me clearly I am your friend. She replied "I belong to Backward Caste". I took a pause and said so what don't we have lunch together in college then why would I have problem in having tea with you. As I was talking to her I was even able to read her changing expression all the time. Her expression clearly reveals the feeling of shame rather than pride in asserting her identity as Other Backward Caste. Today also in cities Backward Class feel in revealing their identity as the concept of impurity and backward mutually reinforce each other The deep-rooted historical axis of purity and pollution runs at the heart of every backward class in which backward castes identity has been construed, constituted and reinforced over generations, determining all facets of Other Backward Class life. I also told her that I am working on Other Backward Castes women I would appreciate if she allows me to take her as a sample. She willingly gave me the acceptance for becoming my sample for the study.

## V. SHOULDERING HER FAMILY RESPONSIBILITY

My visit to Sunita Pal house gave a strong foundation to my friendship we became very good friends. As the time passed away the day of submission of my thesis was coming nearer day by day and because of this I was very much busy in completion of my work when a sudden news broke to me, as one of my friend called me and gave the news that Sunita Pal father passed away last night because of heart attack. For seconds, I was in a state of shock but somehow I managed and went to the college. I with all my friends went to her house. She was sitting quiet and calm it was very hard time for Sunita as her father was the only earning member of family. There was no one after him to take the responsibility of the whole family Sunita was the eldest one in the family and they were also not living in a joint family therefore, all the responsibility of whole family came on her shoulder. But as she was doing Med her first priority was to complete that first and it was almost on the stage of completion. Her maternal uncle was being quiet supportive during these day with the help of friends and teacher she could able to complete her M.Ed successfully. Soon after completion her first worry was to find a job as she had to support her family. Despite of having good qualifica. tion she had to face a lot of difficulty in getting job I thought she might have got job well. I was correct she got a job in a self financed degree college to teach B.A. education but they were paying her only Rs 8000/-. The amount was not sufficient to support her family therefore, she told me that she started taking tuition classes at homes. I thought she was talking of her home but she cleared "no, not at my home" then I asked her at children home she said 'yes" I asked her how do you go she told me "I have barrowed a bicycle I go by bicycle to take tuition". This statement was quiet shocking as well as painful for me as I felt really very bad for her but there was also a sign of relief as her education has helped her to support her family. The situation may have been worse if she remained uneducated.

## VI. SUNITA PAL EDUCATIONAL JOURNEY

Education has played a significant role in Sunita's life. Despite of so many obstacles in her life its only education which has given her access to various opportunities as well as economic stability. In Sunita condition it's only her education which will help her to improve her living condition. Today she realized the importance of education. She said "*when I was small I was not interested in studies but my father motivated me for my studies he wanted me to have good education and because of his motivation I am standing here*". As she was telling me her eyes filled with tears I consoled her and said everything will be fine don't worry. She said , '*It's never been fine for me when my father was alive our economic condition was very bad but somehow I managed my expenses as I used to get scholarship but to claim scholarship was very difficult still my father used to run for all these things now who will run for me*".

As her condition was not so good and many times these government. Schemes like scholarship for Other Backward Classes students also makes the condition worse and fill the person with the feeling of frustation.It's not that government is not doing anything for backward student there are various measures taken by the government like scholarship and reservation to include them in mainstream of education but the process of availing all these facilities like long delay in dispatching the scholarship make things more difficult for these

marginalized people. No doubt one of the government policy i.e. reservation policies has really helped her in completing her education and even this policy has helped her in gaining employment. As she told me that *"the management was interested to take me because I belong to Schedule caste"*. She was working in a self finance college and because of the policy of government that they have reserved seat for OBC, the college management preferred her to keep her as a faculty. So that they can show that they have a OBC faculty. This is not only with Sunita but it is seen that many of educated Backward Castes have been joining government /organized sector jobs was facilitate through reservation and affirmative action policies fr Thus, the policy can be considered just as an inclusive one that ensures social representation in education and employment.

## VII. PERCEPTION OF SUNITA PAL ON DISCRIMINATORY PRACTICES AT WORK PLACE

It's been now six months she has joined the college and everything was going fine. We were regularly in touch on phone as well as we also used to meet in department as we both were working on our Ph.D synopsis. She always used to talk about her college and even appreciated her principal for his supportive nature. During our conversation I had mentioned my wish to join her college. She assured me that whenever there will be vacancy she will informed me. I remember it was the month of May we met in the department she told me that there is vacancy in B.Ed department and she also gave me the news that she has also shifted to the B.Ed Department. We both were happy as we again had an opportunity to work together. She said to me *"you apply for the post I know you will get the job"* I said why she said your surname is *"Rizvi, they will keep you"* I said why it's the only thing which they see and I fits so how did you manage to get job there. She said no *"it's not that they only see Rizvi but yes they prefer because that college is of Muslim manager is also muslim, principal is also muslim, now they will prefer muslim's in faculty also"*. After saying these words she smiled and *"don't mind my words but it is true."* I joined college in the month of July we used to sit in office of the principal as there was no separate faculty room for the B.A staff initially we both sit with B.A staff. As B.Ed session starts late therefore I was given B.A education classes. I and Sunita shared the education paper. I feel very uncomfortable to sit in principal office.

In fact I shared my feeling of uncomfortableness with Sunita, she also shared her feeling of uncomfortableness with me. I thought we both were uncomfortable but my uncomfortableness was different from that of Sunita. She said *"have you ever watched the behavior of principal towards me"* I said yes again she repeated *"don't you noticed something"* I said what, I didn't find anything unusual. She again said *"don't you see he is rude to me,"* for a while I was in a state of surprise because the principal was very good to me and I never observed anything negative at least from my side. She said *"understanding these things you have to take birth again as a backward then only you can understand my situation"*. In order to make her normal I said my situation is also not very different from you I also belong to OBC. She said *"yes you do but here your situation is different may be your situation would also been worse if this college belong to the Brahmins which you must have experienced at any point in your life"*. Sunita's experience is not hypothetical it is true somewhere I also agree with her but I don't accept in front of her so that she don't feel bad but that doesn't change the reality. Sunita has to face double discrimination that is of gender as well as of castes. It can be seen that highly educated people also discriminate on the basis of caste as principal of the college was a highly educated and respectable person of the society but he also discriminated Sunita on the basis of caste.

### **Discrimination faced by Sunita by Forward caste women**

This experience of caste discrimination was at her work place but her experience was also very bitter regarding the behavior of society towards her. Her bitter experience of the behavior of principal towards her, led me recall one of the incidences narrated to attitudes of people remained same. People always assess her ability and capability as a backward woman rather a woman. Here we can see her struggle with her class, caste and gender identity, and how her education played a role in dealing with all the three kinds of oppression.

## VIII. RESEARCHER REFLECTION

Sunita Pal comes from a lower class family whose economic condition is not so good but still she managed somehow and completed her education in fact she is highly educated. The credit of her education goes to her father encouragement and motivation but if I say that this credit also goes to the government policies then it will also not be wrong. The reservation policy as well as scholarship has really helped Sunita in access of education and employment. If these two policies would not be there then she would not have been able to complete her education and also would not be able to go so far in this field because her family economic condition was not at all good. But does this education plays any role in enhancing her self confidence and self esteem Her experiences clearly depicts the picture of struggle for life and we can also see that how education has transform her life because it was the only education which has helped her in shouldering her family responsibilities as well as her own responsibility. As education plays an important role in bringing out social

change hence there is an urgent need to transform the society and bring changes in the attitude of people towards this section.

### **IX. MAJOR OUTCOMES OF THE STUDY**

1. Most of the Other Backward Class parents do not send their daughters to school although they are entitled to get free education up to grade five. Generally only boys are sent to school and daughters are kept busy by engaging them in household chores and carrying their siblings.
  2. It was also found that apart from the scholarship scheme welfare schemes Launched by the government for backward women like Lohiya Balika Garib Ashirwad Yojna, Savitri Bai Phule Ballika Shiksha Madad Yojna were launched in the Hardoi District. But they were not at all aware of those schemes.
- Poverty was found to be the major factor for access of education reported by the rural backward women as well as men.
  - The health and nutritional status of the respondents were very poor. Frequent pregnancies and abortions have further made them very weak. They are least aware of the methods of keeping good health and hygiene. Their daily diet is mainly the leftover of the family meals-inadequate in quantity and quality. Thus, their health is perpetually poor resulting in premature death in many cases.
  - Early marriage, early child birth, high fertility rate, higher of illness frequencies are some of the problems faced by Backward class women in study area.
  - Other Backward Castes women covered under the study in rural area are often employed in agricultural farms owned by higher caste feudal landlords during tilling, sowing, irrigating, cutting and harvesting seasons, and are on their mercy for their bread. They are paid far less wages than prescribed by the rules and have to work for longer hours. In such cases, they are given only some food and cloths. They do not even know how to seek legal help and redressed to overcome their bonded status.
  - Highly educated other backward castes women were found to be employed but it was found in most cases that authority of their money was in the hands of the male partners. They just earn but regarding their money expenditure and investment again they are dependent upon the men of their family. Therefore, again a question arises that whether financial independence of these women does contribute to the empowerment of women.
  - Nearly all the backward castes gram pradhans were illiterate with very poor understanding and knowledge of the Gram Panchayat manuals, their rights and responsibilities, poverty alleviation and employment generating schemes which are currently operational in the rural areas. They are even unaware of the major sources of revenue of the Gram Panchayats.
  - Some of the other backward castes women Gram Pradhans were dummy Gram Pradhans in the sense that either they avoid participating in the meetings of the Gram Sabha altogether or simply sit through the meetings of the Gram Panchayat without any active participation in the deliberations whatsoever.
  - Almost all of the women Gram pradhans were of the view that lack of education, male dominance, degraded social status, family workload, immobility and ignorance of rules and regulations etc are serious impediments in their performance.

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