

Navigating Paths to Progress an Analysis on Women's Perspectives with Reference to Empowerment

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ABSTRACT

Women Empowerment and economic development are correlated as the majority of Indian population consists of women. From government initiatives to grassroots movements, a collective energy is rising to break down barriers and ensure women's voices are heard and their potential unleashed. However, the facts and figures show less participation of women and less utilization of the opportunities. This points to the flaws in basic empowerment steps at family level. Thus, researchers intended to study the women's perception towards women empowerment using the questions on five important factors – i.e. Financial, Economic, Social, Family and Political. The results indicate that there is more dependency on the family, irrespective of demographics. Hence, the empowerment should start from the family. It is the collective change at roots by giving social, political and economic strength to ensure equal rights to the women.

Keywords: Women Empowerment, Financial Indicators, Economic Indicators, Social Indicators, Political Indicators, Family support, Women's Perception

INTRODUCTION

"Empowering women economically is a key driver of global prosperity. A nation cannot progress if half of its people are excluded". (Greening MP 2016)

Women make up 40% of the workforce globally, and their share of senior executive positions in businesses has been steadily rising. Nonetheless, there is a disparity in the representation of women in leadership roles; for example, just 4.8% of Fortune 500 CEOs and 16.9% of board members are female. India ranks 148th out of 227 countries with a meagre 11.8% representation of women in parliament, that is only 64 women MPs in the 542-member Lok Sabha and 27 women representatives in the 245-member Rajya Sabha. The average number of women in parliament worldwide is 22.4%, however this is still far lower than the 50% mark. (Report 2017)

According to Mokta (2014), empowerment is the process of assisting individuals in taking charge of the things that influence their lives. Koko (1992) defined women empowerment as "By equipping women with knowledge, skills, and resources, we empower them to lead, advocate, and shape their own destinies".

1.1 OBJECTIVES

- To project the significance of women empowerment
- To highlight and interpret women's empowerment at the basic level

- To analyse women's awareness of women's empowerment

1.2 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Primary Information: Through social media, researchers circulated a 26-point questionnaire using google form. The participants in the survey were a diverse group of women from various backgrounds and experiences

Secondary Information: In order to get a thorough knowledge of the topic under study, the researchers reviewed a number of books, journals, periodicals, and reports.

Sampling Technique: The research utilized a random sampling method through an e-questionnaire distributed via social media platforms.

Size of the sample: 150 respondents

Scope of the research: While the questionnaire of the study aimed to reach a diverse demographic, its distribution exclusively on social media resulted in a sample of 150 women participants.

Statistical Techniques for analysing Data: To ensure data accuracy and consistency, researchers implemented rigorous validation measures within the Google Forms questionnaire itself, minimizing potential errors during data entry.

Researchers leveraged the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) to conduct comprehensive statistical analyses of the collected responses.

The key characteristics of the data were summarized using descriptive statistics, i.e., mean and standard deviation. The Mann-Whitney U Test and Kruskal Wallis H Test i.e., non-parametric tests, were utilized for examining differences between groups, as they are robust to potential deviations from normality in the data distribution. Pearson's correlation coefficient, was applied to assess the direction and intensity of the correlations between different variables.

1.3 Test for Data Reliability: Using Cronbach's Alpha, the data Reliability (150 items; $\alpha = 0.742$) was determined. To evaluate the degree of agreement among the respondents, the data is additionally examined using Kendall's Coefficient of Concordance. The test result, $W=0.571$, indicates that the respondents' opinions are normally distributed ($W = 1$ indicates perfect agreement; $W = 0$ indicates no agreement).

1.4 HYPOTHESES

H1: *The type of family and women's empowerment are not directly correlated*

H2: *Compared to single women, married women are more empowered.*

H3: *Age groups and women empowerment are not explicitly related*

H4: *There is no variation in women's empowerment across various work types.*

H5: *Varied fields have varied levels of women's empowerment.*

RESEARCH NEED

The prevailing social notion is that women's empowerment makes it easier for them to compete with males. But until women believe they are on par with men, they will not be on equal footing. This study dives into the multifaceted experience of women's empowerment, exploring their self-perceptions of power across financial, economic, social, family, and political spheres.

1.5 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

While this study provides valuable insights into basic-level women's empowerment perceptions, it's crucial to acknowledge its inherent limitations.

- The social media distribution restricts the sample to women with online access, potentially excluding diverse demographics offline.
- Focusing on foundational aspects of empowerment offers a starting point, but future research could delve deeper into specific domains.
- Women's empowerment is a continuously evolving concept, and responses captured today may not fully reflect future perspectives.

1.6 REVIEW OF LITERATURE

For an understanding of the earlier research, the writers studied the literature. During the review, the following primary factors were noticed namely, political, social, family-related, and economic.

Tanusree (2013) conducted an analysis of women's conditions in several regions of India, concluding that these conditions are poor. She describes how the girls are struggling with a number of issues, one of which is malnourishment. Because of corruption and a lack of information, women are not benefiting from government projects.

Alm and Johansson (2011) conducted an investigation to determine the cause of women's lower engagement in Maldivian resort activities. They discovered that 51% of men and only 3% of women participated. **Women's underrepresentation in the resort industry stems from a complex web of historical and cultural influences, societal expectations, and geographical limitations.**

According to Hazarika's (2011) literacy rate is one of the main factors contributing to the disparity in women's empowerment. The percentage of men who are literate is 76%, compared to just 54% for women in India. The author also believes that empowering women requires a strong emphasis on education.

1.7 EMPOWERMENT

In 'Pedagogy of the Oppressed,' Freire (1996) argued that true empowerment entails a critical consciousness and collective action, ultimately leading to a just redistribution of power." Rowland (1997) talks about various forms of power, including "power over," or "the power to control someone". "Power" means "productive power" "Participation," which represents the "power of the group," and finally, "power from within," which is the "eternal power of the soul". "Empowerment is the bridge that connects individual potential to societal transformation.". Mamatha (2018).

IMPORTANCE OF EMPOWERING WOMEN

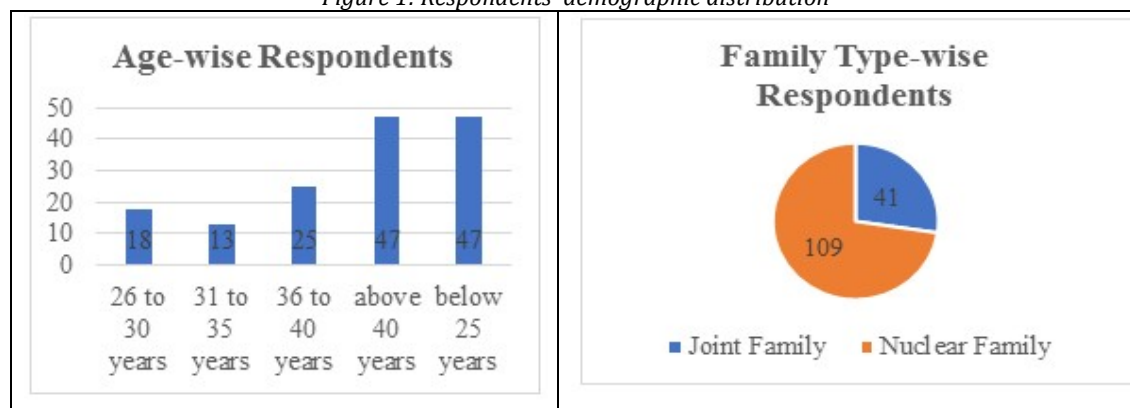
Educating women and the public at large about women's rights, opportunities, and power is a key component in women's empowerment. Women are empowered to make their own decisions rather than acquiescing to the whims of their male partners. Women's empowerment strives to promote women's participation in the political, social, religious, and economic spheres in order to accomplish this.

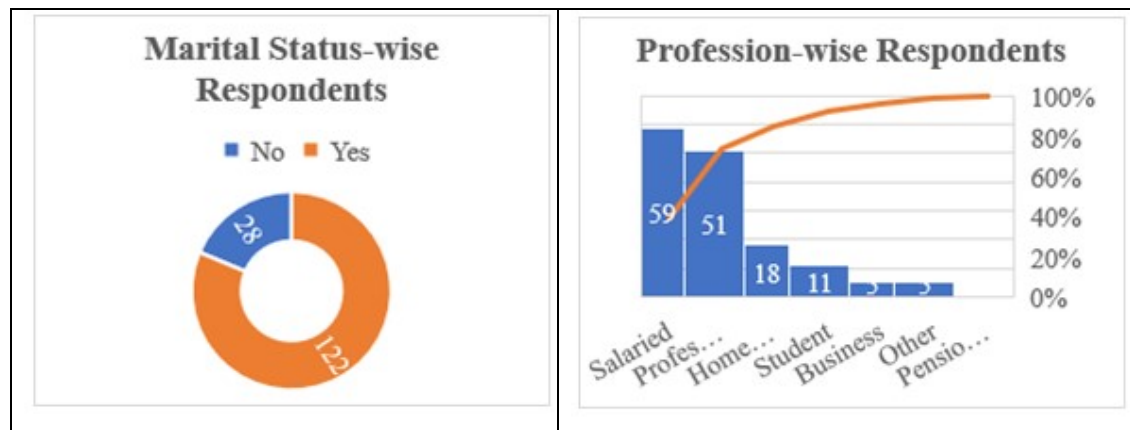
Beyond individual growth, Kabeer (2003) argues that women's empowerment necessitates dismantling social systems that systematically disempower women and reconstructing them for greater gender equality.

OUTCOME OF RESEARCH

To ascertain the relative importance of each category in the overall data, the information gathered via the online survey form was categorized according to certain demographic factors.

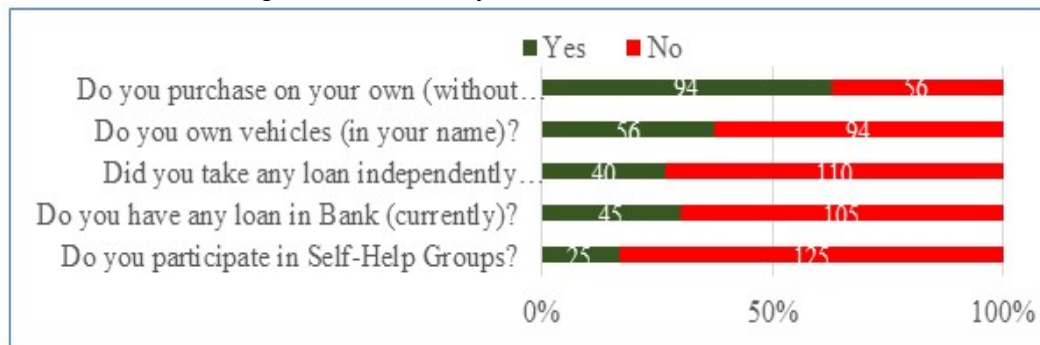
Figure 1: Respondents' demographic distribution





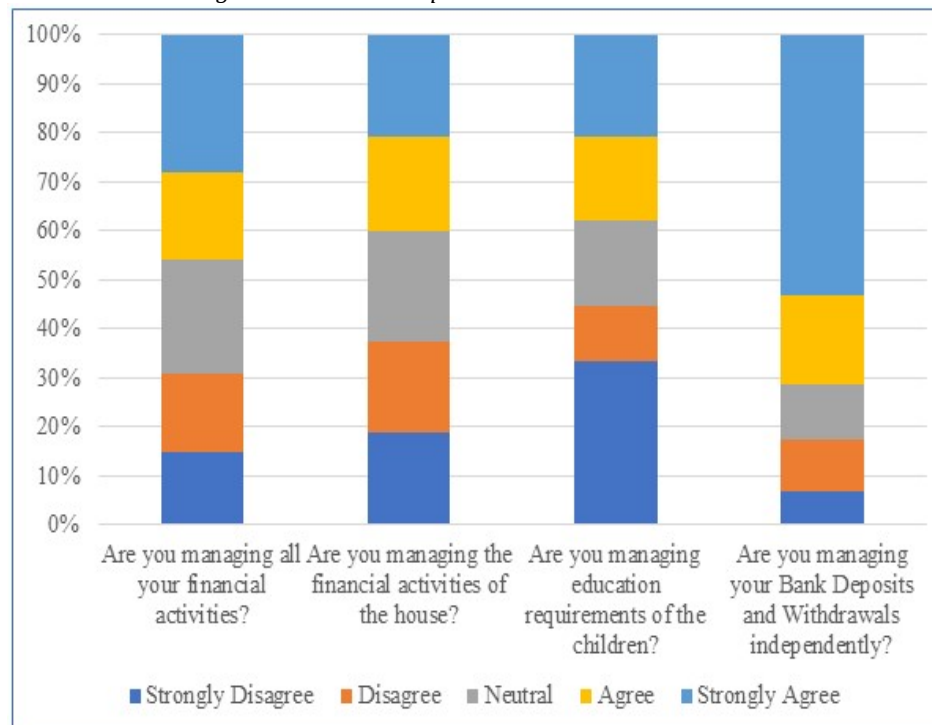
Source: Authors' calculation from the data collected

Figure 2: Women's Empowerment Economic Indicators



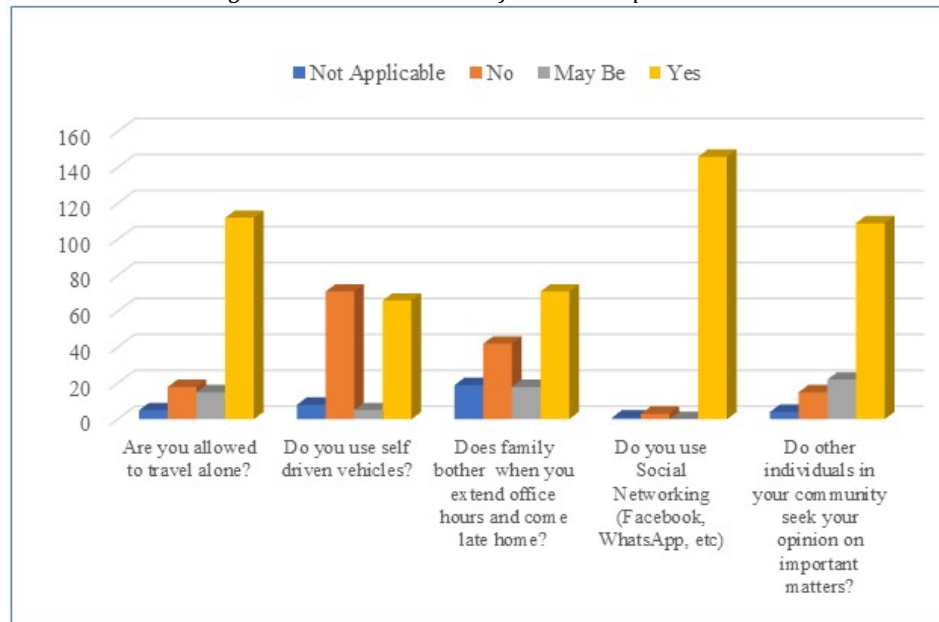
Source: Authors' calculation from the data collected

Figure 3: Women's Empowerment Financial Indicators



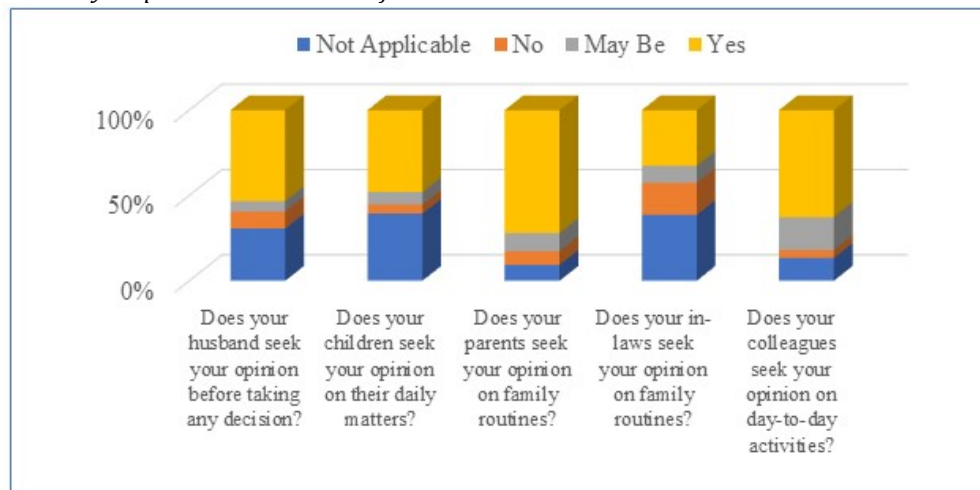
Source: Authors' calculation from the data collected

Figure 1: Social Indicators of Women Empowerment



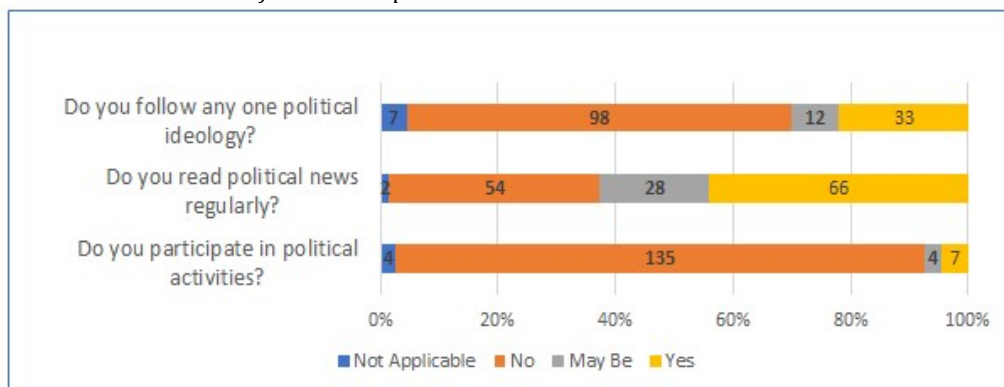
Source: Authors' calculation from the data collected

Figure 5: Family Empowerment Indicators for Women



Source: Authors' calculation from the data collected

Figure 2: Political Indicators of Women Empowerment



Source: Authors' calculation from the data collected

HYPOTHESES EVALUATING

Hypotheses were tested and concluded upon using statistical analysis of the data.

Hypothesis 1:

H₀: The type of family and women's empowerment are not directly correlated

H₁: The type of family and women's empowerment are directly correlated

In the Mann-Whitney U Test analysis, the family type is the independent variable and each question is the dependent variable. The information in Table 1 displays the test's outcome.

Given that Column "H1" values exceed 0.05, the null hypothesis is maintained.

Table 1: Outcome of Statistical Analysis for H1 to H4

Parameters	Value of significance			
	H1	H2	H3	H4
Are all of your financial affairs under control?	0.423	0.004 #	0.159	0.001 #
Are you in charge of the household's finances?	0.801	< 0.001 #	0.002 #	0.009 #
Are you in charge of the kids' schooling requirements?	0.098	< 0.001 #	< 0.001 #	0.229
Do you handle your bank withdrawals and deposits on your own?	0.993	0.713	0.615	0.004 #
Are you a member of any self-help groups?	0.683	0.217	0.742	0.185
Do you currently have any bank loans?	0.604	0.024 #	0.047 #	0.609
Have you borrowed any loans on your own, without your husband's help?	0.700	0.013 #	0.020 #	0.006 #
Are you the owner of any vehicle?	0.384	0.096	< 0.001 #	0.074
Do you make purchases on your own, without your husband's assistance?	0.798	0.134	0.023 #	0.001 #
Can you travel by yourself?	0.105	0.150	0.011	0.171
Do you drive autonomous cars?	0.113	0.296	0.21	0.004 #
When you stay late at work and arrive home late, does your family find it bothersome?	0.534	0.630	0.900	0.006 #
Do you utilize social media sites like Facebook, WhatsApp, and so on?	0.934	0.716	0.101	0.967
Do others in your community ask you for your opinion on significant issues?	0.775	0.201	0.979	0.118
Does your spouse consult you before making decisions?	0.589	< 0.001 #	< 0.001 #	< 0.001 #
Do your kids ask you for advice on things they need to do every day?	0.092	< 0.001 #	< 0.001 #	0.001 #
Do your parents ask for your input on daily family rituals?	0.575	0.303	0.013	0.051
Do your in-laws ask you about family traditions?	0.351	< 0.001 #	< 0.001 #	0.010 #
Do your coworkers ask for your input on routine matters?	0.615	0.794	0.761	< 0.001 #
Are you involved in any political activities?	0.444	0.448	0.851	0.097
Do you frequently read the political news?	0.863	0.047 #	0.111	0.002 #
Do you adhere to a certain political ideology?	0.403	0.755	0.983	0.367

Source: Authors' calculation from the data collected

Hypothesis 2:

H₀: Compared to single women, married women are more empowered.

H₁: Compared to single women, married women have either less or equal empowerment.

Since the Marital Status study only included two parameters, the Mann-Whitney U Test is run, and the results are shown in Table 1 above. The results don't always match. In terms of family, finances, and the economy, the alternative hypothesis is accepted and the null hypothesis is rejected; in terms of social and political issues, the null hypothesis is retained.

Hypothesis 3:

H₀: Age groups and women empowerment are not explicitly related.

H₁: The age groups and women's empowerment are directly related.

Age Groups and Women Empowerment was the example where the Kruskal Wallis Test was used to analyze the hypothesis. The results are displayed in Table 1 above. Regarding the financial, economic, and social

aspects, it is clear that the alternative hypothesis is accepted and the null hypothesis is rejected. However, in the instance of the social and political components, the null hypothesis is maintained.

Hypothesis 4:

H0: There is no variation in women's empowerment across various work types.

H1: The degree of women's empowerment varies depending on their type of work.

Table 1 above presents the results of the Kruskal Wallis Test, which was used to investigate how women's empowerment differed among different employment types. It has been observed that women working in different sectors exhibit varying degrees of female empowerment. Consequently, the null hypothesis is disproved and the alternative hypothesis is accepted.

Hypothesis 5:

H0: Varied fields have varied levels of women's empowerment.

H1: Women's empowerment is consistent across all fields.

To analyze equality, statistics such as the mean, standard deviation, correlation, and link between women's empowerment in different professions are employed.

Table 2: A comparative look at women's empowerment across several groups

Factor/s	Mean	Standard Deviation	Details of Test	Social Empowerment	Financial Empowerment	Economic Empowerment	Family Empowerment	Political Empowerment
Social Empowerment	3.493	0.443	Pearson's Correlation	1	0.125	0.261**	0.349**	0.146
			Sig. (2-tailed)		0.127	0.001	0.000	0.075
Financial Empowerment	3.307	1.032	Pearson's Correlation	.125	1	.385**	.258**	.084
			Sig. (2-tailed)	.127		.000	.001	.304
Economic Empowerment	3.341	0.262	Pearson's Correlation	.261**	.385**	1	.406**	.143
			Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.000		.000	.080
Family Empowerment	2.905	0.792	Pearson's Correlation	.349**	.258**	.406**	1	.300**
			Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.001	.000		.000
Political Empowerment	3.076	0.436	Pearson's Correlation	.146	.084	.143	.300**	1
			Sig. (2-tailed)	.075	.304	.080	.000	

**. At the 2-tailed 0.01 significance level, there is a correlation.

Source: Authors' calculation from the data collected

The mean values of the various Women Empowerment groups are displayed in the above table. Family empowerment has the lowest mean among the groupings, whereas social and economic empowerment has the highest mean. In addition, compared to other categories, Financial Empowerment has a higher deviation.

When the Family and Economic Groups are combined with the other Groups, a statistical link is noted. With the insignificant correlation value in Table 2 above, other combinations, however, do not correlate with each other. The null value is therefore kept.

1.8 CONCLUSION

Women's empowerment goes far beyond checkmark programs and trendy hashtags. It's a revolution ignited not just from the outside, but from the fires within each woman herself. It's about dismantling internalized limitations and rewriting the narratives we tell ourselves about who we can be and what we can achieve.

Shifting women's participation starts with shifting our perspectives. Instead of waiting for opportunities to fall like ripe fruit, we must cultivate the audacity to climb the tree and pluck them ourselves. This means

embracing a "can-do" attitude, replacing self-doubt with the unwavering belief in our own capabilities. It's about dismantling the invisible walls society erects around our dreams and saying, "Not today, not anymore."

Ultimately, women's empowerment is a symphony of individual actions and collective will. It's about nurturing a generation of women who see possibility where others see obstacles, who redefine success on their own terms, and who refuse to be confined by the limiting narratives of the past. Let's stop waiting for the world to change – let's be the change, one empowered step at a time.

The true revolution lies not in external programs, but in the fire ignited within each woman's heart. Let's fan those flames, watch them rise, and illuminate a future where women not only participate, but lead, create, and redefine the very meaning of what it means to thrive.

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