

# Free research paper on what is oppression

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## **Discussion Of Oppressed Female Issues & Solutions**

The following paper is based on the short story “ The Yellow Wallpaper” by Charlotte Perkins Gilman that depicts the life of a normal couple and is narrated by an oppressed wife who accepts every decision made by her husband or other male family members but with despair.

This paper will briefly discuss the concept of being submissive among women as characterized in the story and then discuss the issues behind this feeling in real life. The paper will also discuss some techniques to help such women get over their oppression.

Oppression is defined as the continual exercise of power and authority over others in an unjust way that keeps the suppressed person (group) in mental stress and breaks their spirit preventing them from self-actualization. The suppressed people are often left with feelings of inferiority and contradict

their own feelings.

A large percentage of women are target of oppression from their husbands and other male family members, the controlling behavior of the male members is not limited to third world countries or lower income groups in fact regardless of the social and economic class, suppressed women with little or no decision power related to their life is a common phenomenon that is usually not even seen as a crime.

### **Portrayal of Oppression in “ the Yellow Wallpaper”**

The narrator of the story “ the yellow wallpaper” is a suppressed woman who agrees to every decision made by her husband though she does not agree with it. The writer has done a great job in characterizing and portraying the feelings of being suppressed and continually degraded through verbal comments to make her feel inferior to her husband.

The narrator expresses her complex of being inferior in the first line of the story when she mentions her surprise that ordinary people like herself and her husband have managed to get a home. The sentence gives some clues about how little the narrator thinks about herself that not even her name is mentioned. Throughout the story the narrator expresses her despair and dislikes for different decisions her husband is taking in the new house such as choosing the room for her that she does not like at all and the decisions for her life that is not allowing to do something she enjoys a lot (writing). The story shows that every time she expresses her disagreement with her husband he denies her by reminding that he is a doctor and for sure knows more than her. The repetitive devaluation of her feelings by her husband takes her to appoint that she is obsessively against a mere wall paper in the

room. The narrator believes that if she takes it off she will set the woman free that has been trapped by that wall paper.

## **Oppression In real world**

In the modern world today, there are various examples of oppression against women in families, in education as well as in workplace where a significant pay gap according to gender roles is reported to be about 30%. Though work related oppression is a major topic of discussion the emotional abuse by partners and other dominating male family members is also a concern. Most of the cultures, portray male as the chief decision maker and the controller in any household environment. In most of the cultures globally, dominance and authority is associated with masculinity and women are taught to be submissive and flexible that even makes them more susceptible to domestic violence.

The portrayal of control and authority from men is a psychological need to gain power over others and to create a subordinate group. Men enjoy the pleasure of being the dominant and feel accomplished with their control over situations. It is often observed that men who do not have much power in the workplace or in other social setting assert more dominance in their homes and are more prone to engage in domestic violence.

## **Helping Oppressed women**

Though changing a social norm may takes years there are still various ways an oppressed woman can be helped by others in better position. It is often seen and also portrayed through the story, " the yellow wall paper" the women in constant oppression develop a sense of devalue for her own

feelings and decisions. Such woman will consider her rights meager and her decisions wrong. The most important aspect for helping them is to give her self-actualization a realization that her decisions could be as right as anyone else's. It is important for everyone to do according to their decisions and experience the consequences as that is considered the learning curve. To enhance self confidence among oppressed woman, it is important to encourage them to take decisions for their life that may or may not be successful but that could bring back the power of critical thinking and examining a situation.

In a very interesting book "Half the Sky" by Nicholas Kristof and Sheryl WuDunn, the various ways women are oppressed around the world from human trafficking to genital mutilation and honor killings. The book has discussed these ways of oppression through real life stories from woman who had been in that situations but find the courage to escape that situation and made the best of that opportunity. The book initiated a campaign to help such women combat their situations through various means. Focus groups and regional campaigns can be a good source of counselling for these woman. Though lack of financial resources and income shortage can be a reason for oppression from the bread earner and a mean of income for the woman can give her a way to support herself. However, psychology experts believe that oppression exposes a weakness in the woman too that encourages the men around her to take control of her life. To assist woman in such situations it is more important to counsel them to develop mental strength and to make them respect and realize their rights as part of the family. Oppression usually makes woman feeling inferior, this complex of

inferiority makes them more prone to submissively accepting the authority. It is also a responsibility of educational institutes to identify symptoms of inferiority complex among young girls and counsel them to feel good and appreciative about herself.

It is a known fact that oppression is a key cause of several other social crimes such as human trafficking, prostitution, suicides and drugs. The psychological disorders such as depression, anxiety and obsessive disorders are a direct cause of continual oppression. The self-defeating feeling such people develop make them obsessed with anything that they feel can liberate them. The same psychological disorder is portrayed in the story as the narrator becomes obsessed with a wallpaper as she thinks that the wall paper has trapped an imaginary woman and by liberating her she feels the accomplishment of freeing herself from the constant pressure of her husband. It is often seen that oppressed people develop a negative personality over time if not helped earlier. Thus campaigns like Half Sky where oppressed woman can see and relate to other victims in similar situations as hers, who changed and took control of their lives and were finally liberated from the suppressed environment.

## **Conclusion**

Oppression is a common trauma in our society and is overlooked mostly as there is no clear definition of the condition. Most of the households experience oppression from the main earners of the family towards the women who have to be submissive to the male family member, though there are implicit roles for women too that she fulfills with or without working outside are usually taken for granted, the continual portrayal of authority

usually leaves the victims in an inferiority complex. Woman empowerment is the key to helping these woman, counseling them to realize how important their role is in making a home and an appreciation for her feelings and rights as being equally important as that of her male members. Appreciation, encouragement and a free will to make decisions for herself can help women in oppressed environment become well in expressing her feelings.

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