



MEET THE GIRL WHO ALMOST STOPPED HER WEDDING

The wedding procession had already reached the village square at Janauli, a village in Palwal, Haryana. Bharti or 'Bharat' as everyone in the family called her, was being adamant on her wedding day. Her father wanted a son but had five daughters, so Bharti, his eldest became Bharat. She was upset when her fiancé's friend commented that no one would let her study further. "*Janauli mein kab se hone lagi padai?*" (Since when do girls in Janauli study?) he said.

Her father tried to reassure her that he was only acting smart, but Bharti wanted assurance. She demanded to meet her father-in-law. She said the only reason she agreed to get married was that she be allowed to study. She told this to the assembled relatives from the grooms' side and made it clear that if they didn't agree, they could pack their things and go.

Her brother-in-law then came to the rescue. He assured her that she could finish class XII and even study further if she wanted.

Three years on, Bharti has completed class XII and is the most educated person in her entire family. She joined ETASHA's computer and basic internet course and is now digitally literate. The fact that she is educated and knows how to use technology has meant that her opinion counts within the household. "My younger brother-in-law has been asking me for advice on what he should do next. He is not interested in farming. We have been looking for jobs online together," she informs.

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