
“IMPACT OF MASS MEDIA ON WOMEN EMPOWERMENT”

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Abstract: *The empowerment of women is being regarded these days as a very important aspect for the development of the country. Empowering women aims to inspire them and persuade them to come out from different adverse conditions, be it societal or religious, that have traditionally kept them suppressed and unable to see their true strength, power and beauty. Empowering women aims to inspire women with the courage to break free from the chains of limiting self belief patterns and societal or religious conditioning that have traditionally kept women suppressed and unable to see their true beauty and power. Mass media plays one of the significant roles in women’s development and its empowerment. Mass Media cater to the needs of a large number of heterogeneous groups of people. Mass Media, unlike other communication forms reach out across section of National Population. Mass Media have the capacity of disseminating information to the masses. Mass Media can assist women in accessing resources for their development by means of exposure, knowledge and information. News and information can enrich the inner strength of women mass media with their coverage can boost self usage, confidence, collective strength. The public opinion is formed indirectly by the Mass Media and the mass media have the power in forming public opinion. The various development paradigms have highlighted that human development is incomplete unless women empowerment is accomplished in any society. Mass Media for Empowerment programs aims to promote gender and youth equality as well as shift locally-determined attitudes and changing behaviours towards women, girls and children that lead to inequalities. The present paper emphasizes on the impact of mass media on women empowerment.*

Keywords: *Empowerment, empowerment of women, mass media, mass media and women empowerment.*

Introduction: Women’s empowerment and the movement toward gender equality is a modern phenomenon that continues to develop around the world. After World War II, international treaties put great focus on human rights; however, as time progressed, it became clear that special attention must be given to women’s rights. Issues such as feminization of extreme poverty and disparities in politics, education, and wealth served as the justification for explicit support and recognition of women’s empowerment. The Beijing Declaration and Platform fraction in 1995 initiated a move to focus on women’s empowerment. Drawing attention to women’s participation in all realms of society, the document addressed gender inequality gaps in pursuit of guaranteeing women’s rights. In 2000, the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) furthered the campaign for women’s rights in areas such as education, health, and poverty. Women’s empowerment, a major goal of many development projects, formed abases to foster growth, reduce poverty, and promote better governance. Numerous government and non-government agencies, including the United Nations, World Bank, U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), Pan-American Health Organization, Freedom House, World Health Organization, and Canadian International Development Agency are leaders in women’s empowerment projects. These agencies use indicators to assess the status of women, evaluate interventions and assess policy options for development. As

indicators are often not standardized across agencies, a survey of existing indicators and an analysis of their efficiency can help streamline efforts to assess women’s empowerment. Empowering women aims to inspire women with the courage to break free from the chains of limiting self belief patterns and societal or religious conditioning that have traditionally kept women suppressed and unable to see their true beauty and power. Mass media plays one of the significant roles in women’s development and its empowerment. Mass Media can create an awakening inspiration to achieve their potential as prime movers of change in society.

Empowerment of women: THE concept of women’s empowerment was introduced at the International Women’s Conference in Nairobi in 1985 where Empowerment was stated to be ‘*a distribution of social power and centre of resources in favour of women*’. Women empowerment is very much necessary in the nation’s growth be it economically, politically or socially. The term ‘**empowerment of women**’ refers to the process of strengthening the hands of women who have been suffering from various disabilities, inequalities and gender discrimination. The term of “empowerment of women” could also be understood as the process of providing equal rights, opportunities, responsibilities and power positions to women so that they are able to play a role on par with men in society. **“Women’s empowerment is defined as the process in which their spiritual, political, social or economic**

status is raised". This also includes the right to raise their level of confidence regarding their own capabilities. The National Policy on Education-NEP (1986) has laid a Programme of Action-POA (1992) for its implementation. This POA spells out the meaning of women empowerment by saying "women become empowered through collective reflection and decision making". The POA has clearly declared the following parameters of empowerment, namely.

- *Building a positive self image and self confidence*
- *Developing ability to think critically*
- *Building up group cohesion and fostering decision making action*
- *Ensuring equal action in order to bring about change in the society.*
- *Encouraging group action in order to bring about change in the society.*
- *Providing the wherewithal for economic independence.*

Impact: According to the Chamber's 21st Century Dictionary, the word "Impact" means "Effect" and "Influence". According to the Oxford Dictionary, the meaning of "Impact" is "Immediate effect" or "Influence". In this study the word "impact" means "Effect" or "Influence".

Empowerment: According to the Oxford Dictionary and Thesaurus the word "Empowerment" means "give power" or "Authorize" or "license". According to the Cambridge International Dictionary, the "Empowerment" means to give (someone) the official legal authority or freedom to do something.

Mass media: Mass media have the capacity to reach to far, wide and diversified audience and cutting across all barriers. Popular mass media such as news papers, magazines, radio, television, cinema and telecommunications represent a symbolic power of social control. The modern world is recognized as information era. ICT and the convergence of media technology are not only an instrument of social control but also an economic resource. The power of media is gauged by its reach to the people. Mass Media mobilize the people and mould the public opinion. They effectively solicit public support and participation for the well being to the society. Mass Media cater to the needs of a large number of heterogeneous groups of people. Mass Media, unlike other communication forms reach out across section of National Population. Mass Media have the capacity of disseminating information to the masses. The Role of Mass Media in political empowerment of women is very crucial in a country like India. Mass Media can assist women in accessing resources for their development by means of exposure, knowledge and information. News and information can enrich the inner strength of women mass media with their coverage can boost self usage, confidence, collective strength. The public opinion is formed indirectly by

the Mass Media and the mass media have the power in forming public opinion. The various development paradigms have highlighted that human development is incomplete unless women empowerment is accomplished in any society. **Media for Empowerment** programs aims to promote gender and youth equality as well as shift locally-determined attitudes and changing behaviours towards women, girls and children that lead to inequalities.

Mass media and women empowerment: Mass Media plays an important and vital role in women's empowerment and its development. Mass Media can create an awakening inspiration to achieve their potential as prime source of change in the society, we live in. With the growing dominance of the Internet, blog, chat, Social sites etc, the use of Mass Media has already begun and consequently, communication is rapidly changing and becoming mobile, interactive, personalized and multi-channel. Internet has served as a vehicle or as a channel to convey information in a useful and easy to understand manner. This extraordinary revolution is affecting the basic structure of societies, and is raising discussions and debates that are profoundly related to women: the rapid transformation of the boundaries between the public and the private spaces, the relationship between the mass media and women's empowerment. Mass Media is considered as an important source in helping the women empowered. It is helping as the important source and access to speak out against the oppression and marginalization of women at the grass root level. The mass media is considered as the most potent and influential meaning this regard as it has the capacity of persuading and melding opinion. The relationship of themes media and the women is important because whatever image women have in our country is influenced by media. It is thus vital, to utilize the media for the improving the status of women in India and divulging their role in national development. There is a need to uncover many factors like Cultural and Social aspects, self decision-making, economic independency, health and sanitation, participation in decision-making, awareness and exercise of rights, political participation and many more issues that can help progressive development of women in the society. For the emancipation of women in every field self decision making, economic independence and creating awareness in them about their rights and responsibilities is very important. The mass media is considered as the most effective and important tool in this regard as it has the power of moulding public opinion. All over the world, the impact of media and new media has been witnessed in recent years, with online platforms becoming increasingly powerful mechanisms for mobilizing popular support. People in India are demanding change, and they are

harnessing the power of modern media to make their voices heard, Media is an important tool that affects all aspects of our life. It can work for the development of women and gender equality. Right information given by media can empower the rural women and protect them from various problems. Various New Mass Media tools such as blogs, face book, social sites and internet are used for empowering the women by education, information, awareness, economic empowerment and self decision making. Internet can be easily used for empowerment of women. As we all know that the relationship of the media and the women is important because whatever image women have in our country is influenced by media. It is thus vital, to utilize the media for improving the status of women and empower them and divulging their role in national development. Keeping this in view, the present papers focused on role of New Media (Internet) in empowerment of women. Mass Media play important roles in society. They report on current events, provide frameworks for interpretation, mobilize citizens with regard to various issues, reproduce predominant culture and society and entertain. As such, the media can be an important factor in the promotion of gender equality, both within the working environment (in terms of employment and promotion of female staff at all levels) and in the representation of women and men (in terms of fair gender portrayal and the use of neutral and non-gender specific language). Women are extensively exposed to the mass media, particularly television and now the Internet, which is allowing them to know of the world around them, their rights and new opportunities. Efforts have been made by incorporating the mass media in educating people regarding various programs that can help in their empowerment. This approach will help integrate women more fully into the economic, political, and social mainstream of independent India. In the following way mass media will help in empowering the women.

- Various mass media campaigns should be organized at the grassroots level through their understandable medium like traditional form of communication which includes puppetry, storytelling, folk arts, folk music and other vernacular mediums.
- By creating a social climate favorable and susceptible to varied women's issues.
- Undertaking different forms of alternative mediums to voice out for the economic independency of women through woman's land rights an effective key to empowerment.
- Introduction of more feminist oriented research to explore and theorized the ways woman have intervened to challenge mainstream media representations of themselves by producing new

forms of media where feminist values tend to be central both the production process and the content of what is produced.

- To promote more grassroots activism alternative media can break the ice between the voice of the poor and the rich.
- Alternative media like woman's community radio should be promoted which effectively nurtures equality, diversity and promotes democratic values amongst women.
- Alternative media with various development and participatory initiatives can help in equipping grassroots women leaders to become voice of change.
- More focus on community mobilization, outreach and mass media through alternative media movement among the grassroots level.
- Such kind of medium which provide a forum of "for the people and by the people" concept gives a new reformation to the developmental concept of society which are hardly acknowledged.
- Various programmes and policies should be made which are alternative initiatives to the lesser known groups.
- Villages, communities should be maximized most in form of various alternative communicational medium like that of folks and traditions to convey effective message since folk media being close to the hearts and minds of the people.
- Using traditional media helps in fostering new ideas and the adjustment to anew or evolving social or political situation.
- Document and generate knowledge on important issues like health, education, and empowerment.
- Represent and share their experiences and their knowledge.
- Provide a platform to speak out about their lives, needs and the issues they face.
- Help them to develop their ideas and creativity.
- Offer means for self-reflection and self-advocacy.
- Improves standard of living.
- Self Confidence and Increases social interaction.
- Enhance awareness and sense of achievement.

Conclusion: A nation that wants to progress cannot afford to ignore capacity building and empowerment of women. Gender sensitivity is the prerequisite that must prevail and be strengthened at all levels. Women's development is now linked with technology. Thus, technological intervention assumes a greater and more vital role, especially when viewed globally. Since, women have limited access to technologies in India However; there are now experiences to show that when women are trained, they show remarkable understanding and control in using technologies effectively. Barriers to engendering knowledge networking process with the inception of ICT and convergence technologies, it is

possible to bring up a significant fraction of women communities in a more symbiotic digital network which focuses on localized information and customized solutions, and works on the theme of Global Technologies for local use. Women, however, are still very much in a minority among the beneficiaries of knowledge networking. Women still

face huge imbalance in the ownership, control and regulation of these new Information technologies, similar to those faced in other areas. Mass Media have a huge potential for the empowerment of women, however the overall use of this media by women is very low. Mass Media has played an important role in empowering the women.

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