



MEDIA AND WOMEN EMPOWERMENT IN INDIA

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ABSTRACT

Media is considered to be the most important tool of society in the modern times as it has the power to reach out to be a large audience by mass communication. The empowerment of women is much needed for the social and economic growth of any society. They are the creators, teachers and developers of any human generation. The social ill treatment and the negligence of economic decision powers to them in such small areas of the country especially, directly fall out for this research subject. While on the other hand media being the fourth pillar of our democracy has certain duties to follow in the betterment of society. It can play the role efficiently in transmitting information to society in empowering women by educating the society about their stand and worth. A number of studies have been reviewed to Increase the participation of women in decision-making through the media and to promote a decent and balanced portrayal of women in the media. Women empowerment is very essential for the development of the country and it could not be denied that women have capacity to change the destiny of a country. Women are offering their services in two fields, on domestic and economic front. It needs recognition that for the socio-economic development women participation is mandatory and they have ability to mold the nation's fortune. The social and economic empowerment could not be achieved without mass media in the era of technology. Media is often considered as the 4th pillar of the society and democratic medium of information. The role of media has become very important in shaping present days society. Media is the part of the life, all around, from the shows one watches on television, music on the radio, the books, magazines and newspapers. It educates people about the current issues and influences the public opinion. The common people rely on media to know about happenings in the society. Media has the power to pressurize and criticize the drawbacks of democracy. It is instrumental in bringing about unity among the masses and is backbone of the nation.

KEYWORDS: *media, women, empowerment, society, economic, education, nation, participation*

INTRODUCTION

Communication is extremely important for women's development and mass media play significant role. It is to be noted that growth of women's education and their entry into employment have contributed to the growth of media. In all spheres of life whether for controlling population growth, spread of literacy or improving quality of life for vast masses, women have crucial role to play. However, women can be expected to play this role when they become conscious of their strength and are not deliberately marginalised by male domination. In this context, media has an important role to play – to create awakening in women to achieve their potential as the prime movers of change in society. In today's world, print and electronic media play a vital role in effectively conveying message that needs to be conveyed. By and large the media scene in India is that media does not address serious issues about exploitation and inequal treatment to women in different spheres but is keen in reporting sex related incidents by way of sensationalizing news of atrocities on women. Thus instead of highlighting the exploitation of woman they end up becoming one of the

reasons in increase of violence as their coverage more often than not tend to glorify the crime against women. It is true that media has brought to light, as never before, certain misdemeanours against women but in a very subtle manner it also perpetuated the stereotyped image of woman as a householder and an inconsequential entity in the traditional value system. Generally, women's problems never figure on the front page of a newspaper unless it is a gruesome murder or a case of rape. Newspapers even on women's page does not usually address relevant issues for women empowerment but reporting is concerned with beauty tips recipes, fashion syndrome etc.[1,2]

It is unfortunate that there is lack of sensitivity among the newspapers in general to women and their problems. I would like to refer to the Study conducted by the Media Advocacy Group viz. "Violence against Women: Media Coverage and Representation". The Media Advocacy Group made the following recommendations on reporting violence against the women.

- (i) Media needs to take an extended, broader view of crimes against women. It has to be instrumental in



conducting a social audit on factors responsible for increasing crimes, particularly against women and children, including indifferent investigative procedures, miscarriage of justice, and growing social impunity of the perpetrators of crime.

- (ii) It also has to be instrumental in creating an awareness among civil society of the causes and nature of the crime itself, and of the preventive measures. (iii) When treating these issues, media has to be extremely factual and empirical. The study also stated that the only regulation that governs a sensitive reporting on this issue is that the rape victim's name should not be disclosed. Barring this, the study found that everything else is graphically reported. Often the victim's family name and address is cited, making a mockery in the letter and spirit of the regulation. Though much of this violation and malpractice are committed by a small group of publications, others are spurred on to imitate and keep pace with the sensational trend. Therefore, I urge the media to take a serious look on the issue and do self-regulation and self-monitoring with extreme care and caution. Aarushi murder case is another prime example of irresponsible and sensational reporting by the Media. The gruesome murder of a teenage girl for days have been the sound basis of increased TRPs of the News Channels. The media both electronic and print are morally and legally bound to avoid sensationalisation of news relating to victims of crimes. The Press Council of India had already drawn guidelines on the subject and appeals to media to follow them meticulously while reporting atrocities on women/child.

DISCUSSION

Different forms/types of Social media Social Networking Sites :Facebook, Instagram, WeChat, WhatsApp, Skype, SnapChat, Telegram Microblogs and blogs :Twitter, Tumblr, Pinterest, Yammer, Meetme Collaborative projects :Wikipedia and Social Bookmarking Content Communities :YouTube, Daily Motion, Imagr, TikTok and FlickR Virtual game worlds sites :PlayStation VR Worlds The most popular social media sites by GlobalWebIndex, flagship report, 2018 are as follows: Facebook YouTube Facebook Messenger WhatsApp Instagram Twitter LinkedIn Skype Snapchat Pinterest Line Viber WeChat Tumblr —There is no chance of the welfare of the world unless the condition of women is improved. It is not possible for a bird to fly on one wing.

Swami Vivekananda Women Empowerment in a country like India, which is knowledge based society and involves in enhancing the abilities of women and developing their skills to attain the insight and knowledge. Women play a pivotal role in the growth, betterment and development of the society and nation building. Empowering women has become

a debatable topic in the India. It has emerged as an important topic in contemporary time as the concept and process of development will be incomplete without the active participation and full involvement of women. Empowering women is the most important as it aims at inspiring and motivating them to come out from adverse situation be it societal, religious, psychological, economical and fight for their rights for better life. Women empowerment must be social, psychological, financial or economic. Social Media and Women Empowerment Social media have transformed communication extensively at local and global level in the past few decades. There is dramatic increase in the practice and use of social media in few decades in India. Social media is a new tool, weapon or platform for women to discuss, communicate, voice their opinion, organize campaign and online activism. Social media is a rising trend and powerful channel for seeking wider attention of local and global community for the discussion of women's right issues and motivate and encourage the government or policy makers for gender equality. With the help and support of social media tools and applications such as blog, vlog, facebook, twitter, instagram etc women are being empowered by education, entertainment, self decision making, technologically updated and financial empowerment.[3,4]

Me too movement was founded by Tarana Burke in 2006 to help and support survivors such as dark girls and women against violence and discrimination. #MeToo is a movement through social media to share experiences of violence and sexual assault which became prominent by tweet of actress Alyssa Milano of sexual harassment in the film fraternity in 2017. In 2018, #MeToo movement shook India as prominent and renowned journalists, actors, and artists accused of sexual assault and harassment. It has spread across the world irrespective of race, culture, economic, linguistic boundaries etc. Similarly in Japan, #kutoo movement started in 2019 against mandatory wearing of high heels at workplace. In 2018, United Nations theme for the International Day was _Orange the World: #HearMeToo' for the elimination of violence against women.

Yes, that's a pad in my hand and there's nothing to be ashamed. Periods are natural' was the message that went viral on social media such as Twitter and Instagram as many renowned celebrities joined under #PadMan Challenge. Arunachalam Muruganatham, an entrepreneur who is known to prepare low-cost sanitary napkins and also famous as PadMan started the conversation about menstruation on social media and many celebrities from B-Town joined it. During the promotion of bollywood movie Padman, Twinkle Khanna, Columnist & former Actor, posted with the photo of sanitary pad and posted it on social media with message under #PadMan Challenge. Soon many celebrities such as Akshay Kumar, Aamir Khan, Deepika Padukone, Shabana Azmi, Madhuri Dixit, Rajkummar Rao etc started tagging others to take on the challenge to break the taboo related with menstruation.



RESULTS

The most significant and longest social movement continuing is movement for emancipation of women. Though the primary goal for women empowerment is to improve the qualities of life of women but it has also deep ramifications in socio-economic and political scenarios of body polity. The media through its reach to people at large has been instrumental. Though not to the extent desired in supporting the movement for women emancipation by focusing neglect and marginalization of the position of the women in society. A vast majority of Indian women work throughout their lives but the fact in time it is not officially recognized. Statistics on work force shows low regard for women workers. There is no serious underestimation of women's contribution as workers even though when given a chance they have convincingly proved their ability. In such a rapidly changing environment, women in media have a large responsibility is not only changing attitude towards women but also shaping public opinion. With women holding responsible positions in newspaper or electronic media, their competency should extend to a wider area and a range of issues. More importantly, a women journalist is expected to show more sensitivity to issues relating to women and to more meaningful insights and perspectives. Like most professions, in the media too, women have struck out boldly, beating a path, which is both impressive and inspiring. The last few years have been then pouring out into the mainstream, acquiring hitherto unattainable positions and proving their mettle, be it the print or the television media. In short, women have become indispensable in the field. Women's organizations and media groups must play an active role in promoting this change. [5,6] It is heartening that a wide variety of women's media initiatives are making a positive impact. Women have been late comers in media profession owing to social religious taboos which operated as social sciences. The empowerment of women in media assumes critical importance at this juncture of our economic development. Finally the media has the potential to make a far greater contribution to the advancement of women. They can create self-regulatory mechanisms that can help to eliminate misleading and improve gender based programming. Media, which wields image power in a democracy-power which is any expanding and not diminishing needs carrying out a focused attention about women-related issues and the portrayal of women. [7,8] It is perhaps, necessary that the stabilizing force of women must be brought home to the Indian people. The subject women and media is quite relevant in the present day context from platforms the discussions on the subject is being initiated.[9]

Implications

Media is a tool to educate and train people. It comprises newspaper, magazines, television, radio and computer programs. The media is also used for the purpose of teaching and training. This means media that is a popular tool for transmitting information to people at large scale, a way of bringing unconscious changes in behavior of people and a tool of changing thinking styles of society. It has been

sensitized that media and its agencies especially newspaper and television channels are living organisms reborn with each new cycle. It holds a mirror to allow people to see who they are, what they do and why their actions have consequences. It is representative of the whole nation. Media affects our daily life, thinking styles and way of living. Also, media has dominated the society, culture and method of training of people. He views that it is most dominant storyteller now a days. Television programs, movies, music, videos and internet are most popular forms of media in this age. They are playing the role of family and friends. It is indicated that media is a forceful channel of social change. It affects opinions, attitudes and way of dealings of people. This means important issues can be highlighted through media to aware people about the issues. Women are considered deprived section of human society in many parts of the world. Media can be used as a channel to educate people to give rights to women and empower women. Women empowerment means giving rights and power to women to decide about them according to their own wills, work and play role as forceful and respectful person in the society and use their powers independently. The women contribution for the development of society can be improved if they are empowered. Media can give them self reliance. Role of media is important in women empowerment because of visible effects of media on every sphere of life. People reported that with access to internet at homes, women are using it for multiple purposes. It has enabled women to participate in important daily affairs of state that ranges from household work to education, health and governance. Many authors described that mass media has played vital role in women empowerment. It has played important role to convince people of rural areas to educate their girls and allow girls to work. Researchers investigated that media has raised issues of women. It has highlighted rights of women in the society. It has tried to mold opinion of people regarding rights of women. Social workers explored that media is presenting issues in different ways but, media production is in the hands of male and women role in policymaking is limited. This means involvement of women in the media policymaking section is necessary to improve role of media for women empowerment.[10]

CONCLUSIONS

Below are three recommendations drawn from the empowerment Platform and from the discussion:

- “Train women to make greater use of information technology for communication and the media” : Ensuring equal access to and use of new technologies is critical for maximising social media's advocacy role. Training gender advocates on strategic means for organising an online campaign (e.g. use of hashtags, monitoring impact, identifying target audiences and developing strong messaging) could optimise women's social media use.
- “Increase women's capacity to participate in decision making and leadership” : Increasing



female leadership in media organisations as well as in decision-making processes can help the success of online advocacy campaigns focusing on women's rights. Strategic partners can ensure that the policy loop is complete and that advocacy can influence both decision-making processes and public awareness on key women's rights issues.

- Involve a cross-sector of actors, including grassroots women's networks, traditional media and men: Social media campaigns need to build on and collaborate with local women's movements in order to strengthen advocacy efforts. In particular, linking social media with traditional media can scale up campaigns. Moreover, involving men and other nontraditional partners can reinforce messaging and help campaigns attract greater attention both locally and globally.[11]

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