

ROLE OF MEDIA IN WOMEN'S DEVELOPMENT AND ADVANCEMENT

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ABSTRACT

The woman who follows the crowd will usually go no further than the crowd. The woman who walks alone is likely to find herself in places no one has ever been before.

-Albert Einstein.

Media is a means of communication between people through magazines, television, internet, government officials, community workers and a lot more. Media and women development go hand in hand. The status of women in India has changed a lot from past to present. Women are making their space and presence in almost all sectors of our society. Women are getting equal rights as men do through gender sensitization and gender equality. Media plays an important role as it communicates information from government officials to general public. There are various legal provisions for women empowerment along with conventions regarding women. Along with all the positive participation of women in all sectors, there are also some negative sides, just as a coin has two faces. Since innumerable times women have been considered lower than males. Right from their birth they are being taught about their role in society as caretakers of the house and family. Those women who go out to work are being treated as objects and they are paid lesser than males. So there is a wage discrimination between men and women. We as responsible citizens of our country need to raise a voice against this. As all individuals are equal, women should also have equal share in all aspects be it financially, politically, or any other area with equal rights. Media play an important role in removing the veil from the position of women in our country. Media give only a limited coverage to role of women and crimes happening against them. Media does not usually present the women empowerment unless a major crime or incident happens involving women. The actual reality is almost subdued and the truth is presented in a very different manner which is far away from the actual happening.

KEYWORDS: Media, women empowerment.

INTRODUCTION

Women development and advancement refers to the participation of women in almost all spheres, be it education, politics, science or media. Women have trodden the path of all aspects with their courage, patience and hard work. Today women have reached almost all peaks of life and are moving equally to men. Besides the violence and exploitation occurring to women, they have not lost hope. The women are still going forward and taking each step as the setting stone in their lives.

Media is one of the ways of communication by which women atrocities are coming to light in our society. With the impact of media many women are getting inspired and a hope has been risen among them that even they can live their lives on their own ways. Today women need not be dependent on anyone. With the

knowledge about their rights and duties, the women need not be dependent on anyone. Media plays a major role here in order to spread awareness among women .

Women empowerment aims at making women independent and come on equal terms with men where they can fight for their rights and no atrocity occurs on them. There should be a balance between man and women so that we can live in peaceful and justified manner. Women need not be a burden on anyone.

- Ray, Justice G.N., studied about the wage discrimination ,gender inequality and media's role in empowerment of women. The paper was based on the saying that world can progress only if the condition of women is improved.
- Kumari, Archana and Joshi, Himani (2015), in their paper "gender stereotyped portrayal of women in the media: perception and impact on adolescent" studied about how media can play an important role in bringing social uniformity and equality and its effect on future generations.
- Patowary, Himashree (2014), in their paper "portrayal of women in Indian mass media: an investigation" discussed about the women's participation ,performance and portrayal as important areas of study in modern times.
- Choudhury, Payal Sen (2011), in their paper "media in development communication" studied about how media plays an important role in communication of knowledge to all people and provide a platform for people to express their views.
- Meena Devi, Longjam, in their paper "empowering women through alternative media" discussed about how alternative media like community radio also provides one of the ways of promoting democratic values amongst women.
- D.G, Sri Hanumantappa (2014), in their paper on "constriction of women rights in the historical and current context of india" discussed about the women's rights and how their rights are violated.
- Varma ,Seema and Yunus, Saba (2015) in their paper "legal provisions for women empowerment in India" discussed about women's present and past status along with the laws related to women in brief.
- Begum, Rasida (2014) in their paper "violation of women rights in India" discussed about various crimes and violations against women and the acts and provisions by which women can be protected.
- Devani, Raghuvir K, in their paper "an analysis- rights of women under the Indian Constitution" studied gender justice and international measures for gender justice.

STATUS OF WOMEN IN INDIA: HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

In past women's status in India was confined within the four walls of home. They mainly played their role as a wife and mother.

In the early Vedic period women enjoyed equal right to any type of education but in the later vedic period they were educated according to their varnas. The women of shudra class were totally deprived of the right to higher education. There were no separate gurukuls for them so as a result girls of common families could not receive higher education.

In the early stage of Buddhist period women were not allowed in maths and vihars but later on , Lord Buddha at the request of his step mother Mahaprajapati and allowed them to join Sanghs but still the women education deteriorated further.

In muslim period girls and boys both were provided education in makhtabs ,the centres of primary education but girls were not allowed to enter madarsas which were centres of higher education. So the women education deteriorated further as even common family girls were not provided education.

The present status of women is much more an independent status. Women know their legal provisions and are completely aware of them which help them to live a peaceful life.

NEED OF WOMEN DEVELOPMENT

As Malala said, "extremists have shown what frightens them the most, the girl with a book"

Women development not only leads to the advancement of women but also the advancement of the whole country. Just like a woman takes care of the whole family in the same manner the country should also pay their attention to women advancement and development.

A women development can take place through vocational training, awareness programmes, debates and discussions.

Media will play a major role through newspapers, television programmes, radio, and in this 21st century the internet and technology. Social networking sites also contribute a lot.

This results in the awakening of women who were earlier confined to four walls of kitchen, and remove the gender gap in future generations.

SCHEMES FOR WOMEN DEVELOPMENT

- Ministry of women and child development vision is to empower women to live with dignity and contribute to making our country free from violence and discrimination.
- Beti bachao beti padao schemes aims at ensuring survival and protection of the girl child. It also aims at empowerment of girl child.
- UJJAWALA: a comprehensive scheme for prevention of trafficking and rescue ,rehabilitation and reintegration of victims of trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation .

ROLE OF MEDIA IN DEVELOPMENT OF WOMEN

TELEVISION

Television in India was introduced in the year 1959. With time television gained a lot of popularity not only in cities but also in villages and backward areas. Today after 50 years of television the broadcasters are still showing programmes related to social responsibility and various talk shows on recent issues. There are women journalists and women actresses that take a large part of this media. Women have also attained a suitable position in this field imparting knowledge and awareness to other women.

NEWSPAPER

Newspaper also plays a huge role in changing the views of people and moving their hearts. The Press Information Bureau constantly keeps a look on the publications. Positive and negative aspects both are published through the newspaper. Sometimes the information is presented in a very distorted manner which is the main drawback of this communication.

Objectionable images of women actresses are often published which may disturb the views of some people.

RADIO

The main aim of radio was to reach to a large number of people . It bridges the gap between different sections of people. It gives information in a short and precise manner.

WOMEN EDUCATION

One of the prominent aspect for women is their education. Majority of women remain illiterate in our country due to old thoughts and views. Men are considered superior to women and hence women is not given education as they are regarded as to remain within houses and maintain it. But in today's scenario the thought process of both men and women has changed. Women are getting education through almost every part of media be it be internet, television, radio or their schools. In farflung areas where there is no possibility of an institution, women are getting education through distance programmes with the help of world wide web internet media services.

HEALTH AND HYGIENE FOR WOMEN

Earlier there was not much development in medicine. But nowadays there has been explosion of medical treatments for each and every disease. Women can easily get the information regarding their health on internet and through various other media like magazines. Women work day and night and they have the full right to lead a healthy life.

POSITIVE ASPECTS

CASE STUDY

The 2012 Delhi gang rape resulted in the death of a physiotherapy intern. The media played an important role in bringing justice to this incident. India's daughter, a documentary film directed and produced by Leslee Udwin describing the incident. But later its broadcast was blocked. A lot of controversy occurred both in India and worldwide.

Laxmi Agarwal is one of the survivors of acid attack. But the incident did not let her to stop living her life. She became more determined and started a social media campaign for such attacks. Her work earned her International women of courage award by US First Lady Michelle Obama

Malala Yousafzai is one of the role models for women. She is a Pakistani activist for female education and a nobel laureate. She was injured on 9th October 2012 by a Taliban gunman. She still continues to follow her path for women education. Her efforts and actions are praiseworthy.

NEGATIVE ASPECTS

CASE STUDY

The negative aspect comprises of treating women as an object. Objectionable pictures of women are portrayed on televisions. The negative impact results in sexual assaults of young girls. The women is projected as so lean and thin figures because of which other women desire to become like them. And that takes a toll on their bodies as they fatigue themselves to become like one. This leads to call of nutritional deficiencies in them.

Disney figures are so attractive that every woman wants to become like one. But the question is, is it natural?

Today in this era of informational and communication technology, everything is possible. Digital retouching of the photos of women are prepared and presented on social media sites and magazines. These flawless

pictures are used by cosmetic industries for the increased sale of their products. Though harmful, women still prefer to use such cosmetics just to become flawless.

EXPLOITATION OF WOMEN IN MEDIA

- **INTERNET:** In this 21st century the roots of information and communication technology has spread everywhere in our society. Along with its positive side there are some dark shades also. When we discuss about exploitation of women and internet we come across so many incidents of trafficking and violence against women. They are not only threatened but also misguided into various ways by luring them financially. Cyberstalking is one of the latest ways of exploitation of women through internet. Cyber laws has been set up in order to curb such incidents.

- **TELEVISION :** Beauty is in the eye of the beholder. Does this hold true in present generation? Women and young girls are on the race to look thinner and beautiful in this era. They even go to the extent of fatiguing their body just to look more and more thinner which is against nature. It is this competition where the girls get attracted and major part is played by the television. On television fashion shows, daily soaps present women in unnatural ways which catches the public attention. It is for this public attention that girls want which may eventually lead to adverse effects for their future lives. They are even not afraid to undergo plastic surgeries for the effect of public attention.

- **NEWSPAPER:** Newspaper is one of the major ways of communicating information to each and every individual. Sometimes the information is presented in such a manner that instead of sensitizing population towards the incident, they actually just want to make headlines to let their newspapers sale increase through public attention. Information would be presented in a distorted manner and actually magnified though in reality it must not be so. Rape incidents, kidnapping, trafficking, and even objectionable pictures of women are published to gain more financially than awareness.

LEGAL PROVISIONS FOR WOMEN

During the British Raj, many reformers such as Ram Mohan Roy, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar and Jyotirao Phule fought for women to give them a better status in society. The All India Women's Education Conference was held in Pune in 1927. In 1929, the Child Marriage Restraint Act was passed making the minimum age for the marriage of women as 14.

Laws related to women are grouped under two categories

A). Indian Penal Code.

B). Special laws.

INDIAN PENAL CODE

Rape (sec.376 IPC): A rapist is liable for imprisonment for not less than seven years and it may also increase to life imprisonment.

Kidnapping and Abduction for different purposes(sec.363-373): Person is punished for imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to 10 years and may also include fine.

Homicide for dowry, dowry deaths or their attempts(sec.302/304-B IPC): If the death of women occurs due to burns or injury within seven years of marriage and shown that she was subjected to harassment in connection to dowry then such death is called "dowry death". The person responsible for dowry death is punished with imprisonment of not less than seven years and may extend to imprisonment for life.

Torture, both mental and physical(sec.498-A IPC): Husband or relative of husband treating women with cruelty is given punishment of imprisonment which can extend to three years and may also include fine.

Molestation(sec.354 IPC): Whoever uses criminal force to any women to outrage her modesty is punished with an imprisonment of five years and include fine also.

*Sexual Harassment(sec.509 IPC):*Whoever makes an attempt to insult the modesty of women or makes any kind of sound or gesture which intrudes the privacy of women is punished with imprisonment of three years.

SPECIAL LAWS

- The Dowry Prohibition Act 1961
- The immoral traffic(suppression) act (SITA) 1956
- The protection of women from domestic violence act 2005
- The sexual harassment of women at workplace (prevention ,prohibition and redressal) act 2013
- The family courts act 1954
- The special marriage act 1954
- The marriage laws(amendment) bill 2010
- The maternity benefit act 1961(amended in 1995)
- The medical termination of pregnancy (MTP)act
- The equal remuneration act 1976

SPECIAL INITIATIVES FOR WOMEN

- National commission for women: In January 1992, the Government set up this body with a specific purpose to study and monitor all matters and issues related to the constitutional and legal safeguards for women.
- Reservation for women in local self-government: The 73rd constitution amendment acts passed in 1992 by Parliament ensure one-third of the total seats for women in all offices whether in rural or urban areas.
- National policy for the empowerment of women,2001: The department of women and child development in the Ministry of human resource development has prepared a “National policy for the empowerment of women” in the year 2001. The main purpose of this policy is to bring about the advancement, development and empowerment of women.
- The national plan of action for the girl child(1991-2000): The plan of action iss to ensure survival and development of girl child .National policy for children-2013 was adopted by the Government of India on 26th April 2013.

FOLLOWING ARE THE POINTS TO CONSIDER

- Media is playing a major role in creating awareness among women about their present situation in country.
- Media is updating the knowledge of women for their betterment.
- To some extent, radio and television are considered as means of entertainment rather than giving information.
- Sometimes women are not allowed to use media in society. They are overburdened by the house work.
- Television has brought down the dignity of women by portraying them in unusual acts.

SOME OF THE SUGGESTIONS

- In order to make media women friendly we need to raise up topics like women empowerment.

- Debates and discussions can take place on appropriate television channels to attract women to gain knowledge.
- Magazines and pamphlets can be distributed free of cost in areas where media cannot go. This will result in bringing awareness to areas like villages and backward areas.
- To look into the interests of women in all sectors of life ;be it personally or professionally.
- To curb the unrespectful portrayal of women in media or television.
- The medical and nutritional facilities should be provided to women in an efficient way.

CONCLUSION

“There is no tool for development more effective than the empowerment of women”

- Kofi Annan.

Women are the pillars of our society. They not only perform the duties of home but also the duties of being a responsible citizen . Given a chance they can touch the sky and also lead to the development of nation. Taking an example of Kiran Bedi who is India’s first woman to join officer ranks of the Indian Police service. Kiran Bedi is of the opinion that “as long as women continues to be in a position of receiving rather than giving ,they shall continue to bear injustice”. So its time for women to come forward and speak up for their rights so that no one can take their advantage . We need to take steps in this direction as a women development is the development of whole Nation.

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