

The Media's Contribution to Women's Empowerment

Pooran Singh

SOMC, Sanskriti University, Mathura, Uttar Pradesh, India

Email Id- registrar@sanskriti.edu.in

ABSTRACT: *The prevention of all kinds of discrimination against women is the responsibility of governments, educational institutions, and non-governmental groups. Aside from all of these, the mass media has a significant role to play in this problem because the media has such a significant impact on the distribution and interpretation of a great deal of information, innovation, and news. The media has become an important aspect of our lives in recent years. The mainstream media helps almost everyone. Actually, announcing our views and objectives for strengthening women's economies is a huge power. Why don't we discuss media initiatives to support women's economic empowerment? What role does the media play in establishing and reinforcing women's social roles? How can we use the media to promote gender equality and economic empowerment for women? What can be done to increase women's visibility and influence in the media decision-making process? The media's strong and beneficial influence in women's empowerment and gender equality has been studied and recognized in this article.*

KEYWORDS: *Economic Empowerment, Education, Mass Media, Women empowerment, Women socialization.*

1. INTRODUCTION

The media is regarded as society's most essential instrument in contemporary times since it has the ability to reach a huge audience via mass communication and have an effect anywhere it may reach, which has now grown far and wide [1], [2]. Social media, with its constantly updated applications and networking, is an unavoidable source of public influence. By concentrating on the neglect and marginalization of women's positions in society, the media has been helpful, albeit not to the extent intended, in helping the fight for women's liberation. Women's growth requires a lot of communication, and the media plays a big part in it. It is worth noting that the advancement of women's education and their entrance into the media industry via employment has aided the development of the industry. If the media may be a strong tool for change, it can also be a tremendous one for tyranny. It is without a doubt the most widely used media for advocating for gender equality and women's rights. However, stereotypical views of women and their responsibilities in society may be reinforced by the media. Women's contributions to society have always been eclipsed by reports of their suffering and crimes [3]. In a changing world, it is critical that the print and electronic media provide a fair image of women's varied lives and contributions to society. Because the media has such a large impact on individuals, it should exercise more caution while reporting and disseminating news. Media portrayals of women that are disparaging to their image are evidence of a lack of gender sensitivity, and it has been suggested that they be held responsible for such representations of women. As a result of these incidents, the National Commission for Women recommended that the Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition Act) 1986 be amended.

In 2012, the government adopted changes to the indecent representation of Women (Prohibition) Act, 1986, in order to enhance the legal apparatus safeguarding women's dignity [4]. The goal was to incorporate new technologies such as MMS and electronic media, as well as those that were previously excluded from the Act, such as posters and TV serials that promote gender stereotypes [5], [6]. It is critical to promote a balanced and non-stereotypical depiction of women in the media in order to utilize it in a constructive manner while avoiding the negative consequences of any such medium. In most cultures, women's understanding of media, as well as their access to and influence over different kinds of traditional and contemporary media, is still restricted. Women are becoming more empowered as a result of their increased involvement and access to self-expression and decision-making via the media and new communication technology. The media's strong and beneficial role in women's empowerment and gender equality should be encouraged and explored further. Figure 1 presenting the levels of literacy between the males and females in rural and urban regions.

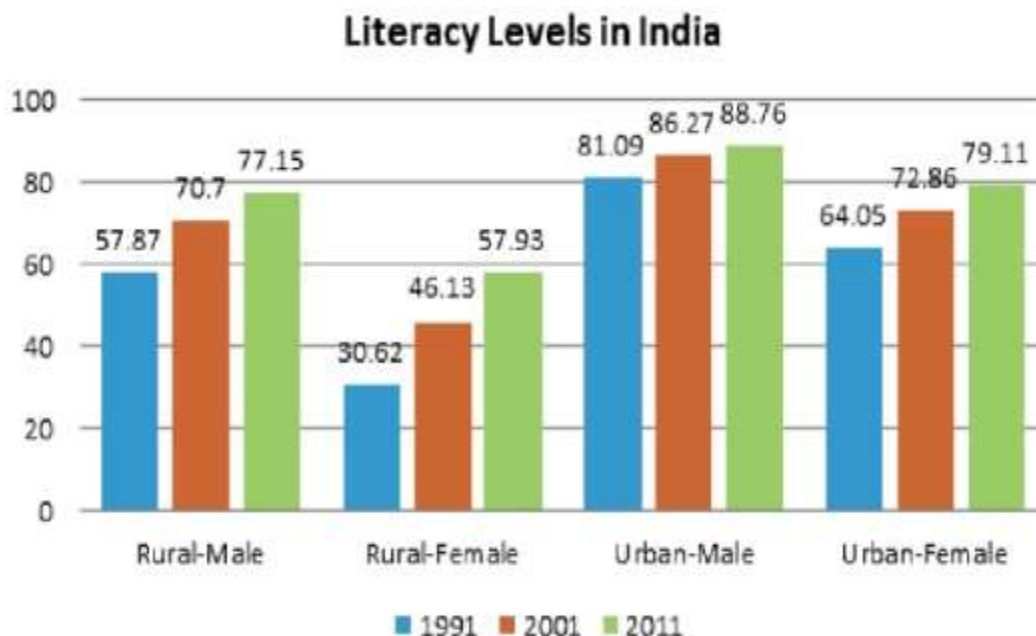


Figure 1: Illustrates the literacy levels in India [7].

2. DISCUSSION

2.1. Women and the Media Objective:

- To broaden women's involvement and access to expression and decision-making in and via the media and new communication technologies.
- To encourage the media to depict women in a more balanced and non-stereotypical manner.

Advances in information technology have enabled a worldwide communications network that spans national borders and has an effect on public policy, private views, and behaviour, particularly among children and young people, during the last decade [8], [9]. Everywhere, the media has the capacity to make a much bigger contribution to women's development.

Women are pursuing jobs in the communications industry in greater numbers, but few have reached decision-making positions or served on governing boards and organizations that affect media policy. The inability to remove gender-based stereotyping seen in public and private local, national, and worldwide media organizations demonstrates a lack of gender sensitivity in the media.

The continuous presentation of negative and demeaning images of women in electronic, print, visual, and aural media communications must stop. In most nations, print and electronic media do not provide a fair image of women's varied lives and contributions to society in a changing world. Furthermore, aggressive and demeaning media goods, as well as pornographic media products, have a detrimental impact on women's involvement in society. Women's conventional roles may be reinforced via programming, which can be as restrictive. The global tendency toward materialism has produced an environment in which advertising and commercial messaging often depict women as consumers and improperly target girls and women of all ages.

Enhancing women's abilities, knowledge, and access to information technology should empower them. This will improve their capacity to fight bad representations of women across the world and to confront instances of power abuse in a growing business. Media self-regulatory systems must be established and reinforced, as well as measures to remove gender bias in programming. Most women, particularly in poor countries, are unable to successfully access the rapidly growing electronic information highways and, as a result, are unable to create networks that will supply them with alternate information sources. In order to fully participate in the evolution and effect of new technologies, women must be engaged in decision-making surrounding their development.

Governments and other actors should adopt an active and visible strategy of mainstreaming a gender perspective in policies and programs in order to address the problem of media mobilization [10], [11].

2.2. Actions To Be Taken By Governments:

- Encourage study into all elements of women and the media in order to identify areas that need attention and action, as well as a review of current media regulations to include a gender perspective.
- Promote and guarantee women's equitable access to all sectors and levels of the media by supporting women's education, training, and employment.
- Strive for gender parity in the appointment of women and men to all advisory, managerial, regulatory, and monitoring organizations, including those associated with the private, public, and state media.
- Encourage women to participate fully and equally in all aspects of the media, including management, programming, education, training, and research.
- Encourage and recognize women's media networks, including electronic networks and other new technologies of communication, as a means of disseminating information and exchanging viewpoints, including at the international level, and support women's groups involved in all aspects of media work and communication systems in this regard.
- Encourage these bodies to expand the number of programs for and by women, to the extent that this is compatible with their right to free expression, in order to ensure that women's needs and concerns are adequately handled.
- Ensure media freedom and subsequent protection within the framework of national law, and promote constructive media participation in development and social problems, compatible with freedom of speech.
- Within the scope of national legislation, encourage and offer the means or incentives for the innovative use of programs in national media for the transmission of information on different cultural forms of indigenous peoples and the development of social and educational concerns in this respect.

2.3. By National and International Media Systems:

Develop regulatory structures, including voluntary ones that encourage balanced and varied representations of women in the media and worldwide communication networks, as well as greater involvement by women and men in production and decision-making, in accordance with freedom of speech.

2.4. By Governments, as Appropriate or National Machinery for the Advancement of Women:

- Promote the use of communication methods, such as new technologies, to increase women's involvement in democratic processes.
- Promote the creation of educational and training programs for women in order to generate material for the mass media, including experimental financing and the use of new communication, cybernetics, space, and satellite technologies, whether public or private.
- Encourage women to participate in the creation of professional standards and codes of behaviour, as well as other relevant self-regulatory mechanisms, to ensure that women are shown in the media in a balanced and non-stereotypical manner.
- Assist in the development of a list of female media specialists.

2.5. By Non-Governmental Organizations and Media Professional Associations:

- Teach women to utilize information technology and the media more effectively, especially at the international level.
- Encourage the formation of media watchdog organizations that may monitor and interact with the media to ensure that women's interests and concerns are adequately represented.

- Encourage the media industry, as well as education and media training institutions, to create traditional, indigenous, and other ethnic forms of media that reflect their cultures, such as story-telling, drama, poetry, and song, in appropriate languages, and to use these forms of communication to disseminate information on development and social issues.
- Establish networks among non-governmental organizations, women's organizations, and professional media organizations, as well as develop information programs for them, in order to recognize the unique needs of women in the media and to facilitate increased participation of women in communication, particularly at the international level, in support of South-South and North-South dialogue among and between them.
- Objective-2: Encourage the media to depict women in a more fair and non-stereotypical way.

2.6. Actions to be Taken By Governments and International Organizations, to the Extent Consistent with Freedom of Expression:

- Encourage the media and advertising firms to create special programs to promote the Platform for Action.
- Encourage research and the implementation of an information, education, and communication strategy that promotes a balanced depiction of women and girls in their many roles.
- Encourage the media to portray women as creative human beings, important players and contributors to and benefactors of the development process, rather than as lesser people who are exploited as sexual objects and commodities.
- Promote media workers, especially media owners and managers, to get gender-sensitive training in order to encourage the development and use of non-stereotypical, balanced, and varied representations of women in the media.
- Take or implement effective measures, such as proper legislation against pornography and media projections of violence against women and children.
- Promote the idea that media portrayals of sexist tropes are gender discriminating, demeaning, and insulting.

2.7. By the Mass Media and Advertising Organizations:

- Establish professional standards and codes of behavior that handle violent, demeaning, or pornographic content about women in the media, including advertising, while respecting freedom of speech.
- Develop professional standards and codes of behavior, as well as other kinds of self-regulation that are compatible with freedom of speech and encourage the portrayal of non-stereotypical images of women.
- Increase women's involvement in media decision-making at all levels. The media, non-governmental groups, and the business sector, in cooperation with national machinery for women's development, where appropriate.
- Take a gendered approach to all problems that affect communities, customers, and civil society.
- Create and/or disseminate media materials about women leaders, as role models for young women, as leaders who bring a variety of life experiences to their positions of leadership, including but not limited to their experiences balancing work and family responsibilities, as mothers, as professionals, as managers, and as entrepreneurs.
- Promote gender equality and non-stereotypical gender roles of women and men within the family via media campaigns that distribute information targeted at ending spousal and child abuse, as well as all kinds of violence against women, including domestic violence.

- Encourage the creation of alternative media and the use of all forms of communication to convey information to and about women and their issues, where appropriate.
- Organize large-scale campaigns to distribute information about and raise awareness of women's human rights, using public and private educational programs.
- Create methods and educate specialists in the use of gender analysis in media programs.

2.8. Suggestions & Recommendations:

Women have a lot of potential in the media for empowerment, but they don't utilize it nearly as often as males do. The media has played a significant influence in women's empowerment. No other industry has done a better job of exposing the horrors that women confront and empowering women than the media.

The following are the major topics on which urban educated women need information:

- Art and Entertainment, Music videos and films.
- Beauty and Fashion, Hair care, Health & Lifestyle, Apparel and accessories Matrimonial ads.
- Career advancement facilities.
- Educational opportunities.
- Employment/Job Prospects in India and Abroad.
- Research and Information.
- Social Support system for working women.

The following subjects are of particular interest to urban lower middle-class women:

- Dowry system, other legal rights like self help, violence etc.
- Educational facilities at their doorstep.
- Employment /Job Prospects in India /self locality.
- Inexpensive childcare & Healthcare.
- Information about NGO's.
- Legal provisions against Sexual harassment, Domestic Violence and Social injustice.

3. CONCLUSION

The role of the media is critical in accelerating women's empowerment, which leads to economic empowerment. However, the mass media, like all social media, are a good and practical means of increasing, through the dissemination of healthy concepts of being a woman, of what is the role of women in modern society, of good examples that women provide us every day, of the results they have achieved and continue to reach out to women in many fields of economics and beyond, the social consideration of women, giving to women. With the execution of media campaigns, the mass media may potentially make a significant contribution to the spread of the idea of gender equality. People will be drawn back into daily life if they witness men and women transcend their differences in the media. The mass media has always subconsciously impacted and altered society's thinking and conduct. Despite improper portrayal of women, the media should concentrate on success stories of established, successful, and famous women. Its systems for gender checks and balances need to be improved as a key agent of socialization molding gender roles. Women should be represented in the media in a respectable and dignified manner, and the media should encourage respect and dignity for women while avoiding negative portrayals of women.

Media workers should be educated on gender problems, and a system of incentives may be established for those who can represent women in a favourable light. Those who violate the rules should also face severe

consequences. Women must be shown in new and creative ways in the media, depending on Indian culture and society. To combat this threat, a strong legislative effort combined with widespread societal knowledge of morals and ethics is required, so that women are not seen as commodities but as individuals with rights and dignity.

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