



THE ROLE OF MEDIA TO IMPEDE EXPLOITATION OF WOMAN

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ABSTRACT

In the Twenty First Century, there has been steady consciousness towards the necessity to empower woman in order to improve their socioeconomic status. Role of Media is vital in empowerment as it has a wide and easy access. It has been involved in empowering woman in India. The present article tries to find out various means for the empowerment of woman, its impact on the socioeconomic status of woman; the factors affecting their improvement. It also tries to identify the challenges to empower the woman. The most used means of accessing information by the woman is mainly radio and television. The media is supposed to be slowly but steadily gaining ground in educating the woman and creating awareness among them of their potentials to do better, to be empowered, and to stand up for their rights and themselves anywhere. Media is considered to be a great source of inspiration to the woman mainly in the rural or less urban parts of the country. The positive aspects of the empowerment of woman provided in the media programmes need to be foregrounded. The present paper places for the consideration of the readers, what are the current issues and problems with regard to the Indian woman and media.

KEYWORDS: Woman, Woman Empowerment, Role of Media, Gendered information, etc.

INTRODUCTION:

The woman's issue one of the utmost significance to the country as a whole and there is dire requirement for a extensive understanding and sympathetic consideration that India cannot develop, as long as woman is left behind as the inferior section of society. Therefore, the progress and development of woman's conditions, position, state, status and image must be defined to be a major objective for media. The portrayal must take note of woman in all facets of her life: as a worker and significant contributions to the survival of her family as well as the national economy: it must

further make an effort to incorporate woman on terms of equality in all sectors of national life and the development process.

Media needs to take an extended, larger view point about the crimes against woman. It has to be influential in conducting a social audit on factors responsible for increasing crimes, particularly against woman and child, including indifferent investigative procedures, miscarriage of justice, and growing social impunity of the perpetrators of crime. It also has to be instrumental in creating awareness amongst the society of the causes and nature of the crime itself, and of the anticipatory methods.

When treating these issues, media has to be extremely realistic and practical. The only parameter that governs a sensitive reporting on this issue is that the victim's name should not be disclosed. The media needs to take a serious look on the issue and must do Self-regulation and Self-monitoring with utmost care and caution. The media both electronic and print are morally and legally bound to avoid sensationalisation of news relating to victims of crimes. Media should follow the ethics meticulously while reporting atrocities on woman/child.

LIMITED COVERAGE IN PRINT MEDIA

Newspapers cover woman's problems drawing the attention of policymakers to issues requiring immediate attention such as the adverse sex ratio, infant and maternal mortality, crime against woman and the effects of poverty on woman and their families. But this coverage is very limited with the rest of the space occupied by cinema actresses, models, recipes, body decoration, fashion and the rich woman and their hobbies.

Many of the woman's magazines are devoted to fashion, glamour, beauty aids, weight reduction, cookery and how to sharpen 'feminine instincts' to keep her husband, children and her in laws happy. There are comparatively fewer articles on career opportunities, health awareness, entrepreneurship, legal aid, counselling services, childcare services and financial management. Importance should be given to development issues of woman.

ROLE IN TELEVISION (VISUAL) MEDIA:

In the television serials woman is the central characters, but they are portrayed largely as tormentors or the victims while the men very often take sideline posters and TV serials which disseminate stereotypes of woman and just seem caught in a web of unfavourable circumstances. Television Culture has portrayed a breed of weak, indecisive man trapped by sexy woman when in reality man also plays an active role in exploiting woman in various ways including subjecting her to physical assault, rape, pushing her into the sex trade and even abandoning her.

It is only desirable that serials should be close to reality and give message to the viewers where and how the society is going wrong. Woman is either being portrayed as Sita (Ramayana) or as (Ramayana) and there seems to be nothing in between the two extreme characters being shown in TV programmes. Divorces, adultery are highlighted frequently in it where characters break the law without aftermath. Negative images or just portraying reality is not enough. In fact, it can often be harmful in some way or the other.

It has been observed that absolute representation of the dark side of life can often lead to indifference anarchy and passivity. This can be easily avoided by portraying the positive aspects or success stories of woman in the area it happens. There is a need to produce programmes that talk about financial independence schemes for woman. Unfortunately, in these kinds of ventures archetypal “womanly jobs” like papad-making, sewing, embroidery, pickles making etc. get the foreground. Importance must be laid on non-conventional skills which can break the myth that woman is suited to certain kinds of jobs only.

The detachment between woman and media not only deprives the woman of her right to information and knowledge but also keeps the woman in the dark regarding the unashamed misuse of the woman and the misrepresentation of the facts. Although the images of woman as reflected by the different mass media in the country are not very different, it will be an interesting exercise to study how these images feed and reinforce the stereotypes. Effective informative communication is one of the most important channels for the growth and development of woman in the unorganized sector, as without information regarding services and benefits available through legislation, government schemes, banks and voluntary organizations, woman can hardly take advantage of them.

Thus the media should take into consideration the following points:

- (i) The media must project the working woman in the unorganized sector as worker and not merely as performing the duties of wife/daughter. They being major earners, they must be projected as producers and not merely consumers.
- (ii) The media should make deliberate attempts to not only project the problems of woman in poverty, but should monitor in such a way that conflicting role models are not depicted, nor derogatory references to their work are made.
- (iii) To improve content and coverage, coordinated efforts for increased interaction between NGO's, woman's social action group, research organizations, institutes of mass communication, and the media personnel should be developed.
- (iv) Issues pertaining to development of woman is never emphasized adequately. Woman is portrayed not for feminine beauty and artistic portrayal but for infusing sex appeal more often.
- (v) It is necessary to have dispassionate in-depth study by social activists and media to ascertain why obscenity has risen so much in media. Unless there is any change in the social perception of woman, it will be difficult to restrain obscenity in media.

ROLE OF WOMAN JOURNALIST IN MEDIA:

In such a rapidly changing environment, woman in media have a large responsibility in not only changing attitude towards woman but also shaping public opinion. With woman holding responsible position in newspapers or electronic media, their proficiency must extend to a wider area and a range of issues. More importantly, a woman journalist is expected to show more sensitivity to woman issues and to more meaningful insights and perspectives.

Like most professions, in the media too, woman has struck out boldly, beating a

path, which is both impressive and inspiring. The last five years have seen them pouring out into the mainstream, acquiring hitherto unattainable positions and proving their mettle, be it the print or the television media. In short, woman has become indispensable in the field. Woman's organizations and media groups must play an active role in promoting this change. It is heartening that a wide variety of woman's media initiatives are making a positive impact on the outlook of the society today.

A significant number of woman journalists are very successful in magazines dealing with various problems of woman and child. With sensitivity and skill for analyzing events in depth, issues such as woman abuse and exploitation, harassment of woman at workplace, female infanticide in rural areas find a prominent place in such magazines. The magazines deal with the issues more in depth compared to newspapers and woman is considered competent to handle such stories.

Journalism is no more a male domain. This new trend has also led to a change in the portrayal of woman in the media in general and newspaper in particular. The risks woman in the media faces; both in the urban and rural areas have also to be seriously considered. It is noticed that more and younger graduates are joining the journalism degree and diploma courses, with an ambition to make a mark in the profession, and quite a good proportion of them are girls.

CONCLUSION:

Thus, the role of media to impede the woman exploitation is significant today. However the media should address its responsibilities with positive approach to the woman issues. The woman herself has a great role to play as a media person and as well as a consumer of the media. If she ascertains her role as a change maker the exploitation could be nearly abolished from the society, and India could develop with certainty.

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