



Role Of Social Media In Women Empowerment: A Case Study In Tamulpur Community Development (CD) Block Of Tamulpur District, Assam

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Abstract:

The sources of transmitting information to audience at large and staying informed through online platforms is termed as social media. Websites and applications that facilitate communication, community based input, interaction, content sharing and collaboration connote the Social media platform. It is found instrumental to disseminate information and influence public opinion on a large scale, shaping cultural norms, political discourse and individual and mass behaviours including increase in women's awareness and flexibility of works. It can play a significant role in promoting women's empowerment by raising awareness about gender gap issues and showcasing effectiveness of women in socio economic transition of the society. Women's empowerment through the movement of women Self Help Groups has also been getting impetus through rapid growth of the array of mass media. Women are being empowered by their involvement in and access to Self Help Group; and self-expression as well as decision-making that are exposed and influenced by social media platform. This paper seeks to enquire how the women SHG members use social media platform and to search how they are being benefitted and empowered. On the basis of quantitative and qualitative assessment through a case study in this paper discourses the role of mass media in women empowerment. The findings asserted that women SHG members are getting impetus for social and economic empowerment.

Keywords: Mass media, online platforms, women empowerment, literacy, quality of life, etc.

Introduction:

Almost every person of the society is presently accustomed to the use of social media in day to day life either for entertainment or for other purpose. The array of social media has been integrated to serve as primary tool for staying connected with friends and family, enabled access to news and information, facilitated sharing personal updates, engaging with business and communities. Social media refers to online platforms and applications allowing the users to connect, share information, ideas and contents with each other through various forms of communications like texts, photos, videos, and so on. Virtually people can interact and engage with one another through Facebook, YouTube, Vlogs, Instagram, Twitter, Whatsapp, Linkedin, Snapchat, etc. Every user of social media can acquire any kind of authentic knowledge and information from a surprising page of Google search. Social media has been evidenced to be influential for awakening women covering all spheres of their life- controlling population, spread literacy, improving quality of life, **Chaturvedi and Gaur, (2014)**.

In fact, women empowerment is essential issue not only for establishment, inclusiveness and social justice but also for the development of the country as a whole. Curtailing the domestic work load traditionally borne by women over the history and raising their involvement in economic activities would ensure both women human rights and participatory development approach. The mass media platform exposes the real facts happening in our society exhibiting both positive and negative impacts. Mass media has innumerable positive impacts particularly for individual betterment of women and for enhancing women's participatory approach for the development of the society as a whole. Mass media has been seen as useful tools for highlighting women rights, displaying training and educations, various women's success stories, women's participation in economic activity, and consciousness about health care etc. As a part of life in present day society, mass media educate people about the present issues, and influence the public opinion in addition to various entertainments. Presently, mass media is popularly used for transmitting information to people at large scale, a way bringing changes in behaviours, thinking style of the society and encourage the deprived section i.e., women in various economic activities. The women involved in SHG activities are being used social media platform massively which are seen to help them to stay informed and group communications about various activities and demonstrations. An in-depth insight into the use of social media platform for quality improvement of life of the members of women SHGs is felt necessary. Therefore, looking women empowerment in relation to the use of mass media is considered pertinent to assess in grassroots of rural Assam. Therefore, observing the positive impact of social media for the empowerment of women, **Dixit, (2020)**, highlighted that social media has implicative role for changes in their status of social life, mental wellbeing, proper self concept, self-esteem, decision making and uses of technology.

The above perspectives necessitate a look into the issue how the womenfolk associated with women SHGs are being empowered in rural sector with the use of social media platforms. Further, it seeks to assess how they are being influenced by mass media in changing their life style and to unearth the ground realities in a micro level, revolving around the main issue of 'role of mass media in women empowerment', in

relation to the members of Women SHGs. Therefore, 'Role of Mass Media in Women Empowerment: A Case Study in Tamulpur Community Development Block of Tamulpur District, Assam' is chosen and to induct it to the selected members of women SHGs. The present study selects the following specific objectives.

Specific Objectives:

1. To identify the sources of mass media used by the women SHG members,
2. To enlist influences and benefits of mass media on the users and
3. To assess the extent of women empowerment in relation to their achievements.

To achieve the above objectives, the present study selects the following methodology.

Methodology of the Study:

The above objectives suggest that it is an evaluative type of research. So, the study was based on both secondary and primary information as it plans to assess qualitatively and quantitatively the role of mass media in women empowerment for SHG members. The secondary information were gathered from various published sources such as journals, bulletins, reports of various government agencies, books, and magazines, etc.

A purposive random sampling technique was chosen to collect primary data. A case study comprising of three phases- (i) Purposeful selection of study area, (ii) Random selection of sample units, Tamulpur Community Development (CD) Block of Tamulpur District of Assam was selected purposively in the first phase of the survey. (iii) Collection of required information using standard questionnaire schedule. It is justified to select the said block from one of the backward districts of Assam. A total of 78 numbers of women SHGs were chosen randomly from among 2400 registered women SHGs in the block followed by a random selection of 234 women members in the second phase of the survey. Using pre tested questionnaire schedule and applying Rural Participatory Appraisal (RPA) method the required information were gathered in the third phase of the survey. The RPA meetings among the members were held thrice during March-April, 2025 according to the conveniences of clusters of selected women SHGs. Finally, simple statistical tools such as rates, ratios and table used to reach the results.

Literature Review:

A plethora of literature is available in respect to the use of social media and their impacts on society. Few of the literature having resemblance to the issue of social media and women empowerment have been summed up below.

Kumari (2020), held that with the help and support of social media tools and applications such as Blog, Vlog, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc. women are being empowered with achieving education, entertainment, self-decision making, technology updates and financial empowerment. The author cited various You Tube channels, internet pages, cyber literacy foundations, etc., that are functioning in India for

the programs for women empowerment, promote digital literacy and awareness about cybercrimes. Hence, the author remarked that social media is one of the most powerful tools by dint of which women can start new companies, ventures of start-up as they can contact and converse with customers and consumers directly. Social media further has been enhancing its efficiency combined with Artificial Intelligence (AI). It helps social networking to deliver better experiences and helps users target the direction. **Sadiku et al, (2021)**, focused on Artificial Intelligences in social media and highlighted that AI has been key component of the popular social media networks having benefits like – increased audience engagement, greater efficiency, smarter advertising, refined content targeting, increased security and cost reduction, etc. The study concluded that the combination of AI and social media are proving to be greatly beneficial for business. **Singh (2024)**, on social media and women empowerment highlighted that women have entered to the age of era of social media and they have abled amplifying voices, building communities, advocacy and activism, access to information, challenging stereotypes, economic opportunities, etc. Highlighting various indicators of women empowerment **Patil, (2024)**, concluded that with the social media platform enabled women to aware of various tools of social empowerment like access to education, health care, adequate nutrition, right of property, equal opportunities, etc. **Premlata and Jukariya, (2018)**, and **Sing, (2018)**, visualized social media to have huge potential for empowerment of women as they present incredible chances for women to forge for community building for genuine connection through online organizations, strengthen bonds by joining groups that share values, aspiration, etc., and for spread of awareness for a better life. **Selvarani and Ramyadevi, (2024)**, conceived a significant opportunity for enhancing the socioeconomic empowerment of women, particularly in developing regions. The study set a conceptual framework highlighting the potential benefits, challenges and future directions of digitally-ended SHGs, focusing on aspects such as financial inclusion, social networking, capacity building and governance. The study urged upon SHGs digitalization for enabling members' digital literacy and capacity building, financial inclusion and empowerment, social networking and collective action, governance and transparency, etc.

Above discussion revealed that social media platform acts as a tool for women empowerment that gives boost to the main indicators of empowerment. The indicators of women empowerment such as women literacy along with access to information, aspects to self-decision making, technology updates, group communications, demonstration of various economic activities, etc. are positively influenced by social media platforms.

Status of SHG members and the pages of social media they use:

The related aspects which can facilitate the use of social media platform are associated with the socioeconomic status and the devices and applications used by the women SHG members. The following table (Table-1) shows the social status of the selected members of SHGs with the use of media sources.

Table-1

Social Status of SHG Members using Social Network Platform (Total sample SHG members 234 from 78 sample SHGs)

SI No	Aspects Description		No. of sample member
1	Age Structure	18-45	135 (57.69)
		46-60	99 (42.31)
2	Educational Attainment	Illiterate	Nil
		Upto class X	152 (64.95)
		Class X- Graduation	77 (32.91)
		Above Graduation	05 (2.13)
3	Networking Device Used	Lap top	03 (1.28)
		Desktop	05 (2.14)
		Tablets	04 (1.70)
		Smart Phones	58 (24.78)
		Visit Net café	164 (70.08)
4	Networking Applications Used	Various Web Pages	11(4.70)
		Face book	106(45.29)
		Whats- app	95(40.59)
		Instagram	7(2.99)
		*Others	15(6.41)

Source: Field data (Period 2023-24)

The figures in the brackets indicate percentage of the total.

Table-1 shows that more than half (57.69 per cent) of the sample respondents is under the age of 18-45 years and they are involved in SHG activities indicating more young women participation but majority i.e., about 65 per cent of them has achieved educational level only upto 10th standard. Among the members of women SHGs about 32.91 per cent has achieved graduate level, whereas, only about 2 per cent members qualified as Post Graduates. However, it is seen in the table that 24.78 per cent of the women members

prefer to use mostly smart phone and 70.08 percent women members prefer to use mostly to visit net café to execute the internet related task.

Page and Application of Social Network Used by SHG Members:

The websites and applications that are used by the selected women members to connect, communicate, share information and form groups for their socio-economic benefits. These directions of internet based social network have assigned to the following individual profiles or accounts as shown in the tabular form (Table-2).

Table-2
Page and application of social network used by SHG members. (Sample-234)

Sl. No.	Name of apps	No of members actively involved	Objectives of use
1	WhatsApp	198(84.62)	Group sharing, being informed and interaction
2	Face book	193(82.48)	Gathering information and advertising
3	Blogs & Short Reels	181(77.35)	Information and entertainment
4	YouTube	201(85.89)	Information and entertainment
5	Instagram	76(32.48)	Sharing information
6	Twitter	63(26.92)	Gathering information
7	Snapchats	141(60.25)	Sharing photos and videos of activities
8	Linkedin	00	NA

Source: Field Data (Period 2023-24)

Figure in the brackets indicate per cent.

Table-2 above shows objective based use of web portals by the selected sample women SHG members. Majority, i.e., 84.62 percent and 82.48 percent is seen to use whatsapp and face book respectively for merely similar objectives of Group sharing and to remain informed. About 77.35 percent, 85.89 percent, 32.48 percent, 26.92 per cent and 60.25 per cent of the sample members are found to use other portals respectively. However, none of the sample members has been found to use LinkedIn.

Women Empowerment and Social Media:

The above directions of use of social media platform influenced the active women SHG members towards the broad social and economic objectives such as controlling population, spread literacy, improving quality of life, technology update, health awareness , financial literacy, bonding groups and social mobility etc, that are reflected on their social and economic behaviours. The percentage response of the women SHG members towards such holistic objectives are highlighted in table 3.

Table-3**Positive Responses of Members to the Broad Objectives.****(Sample-234)**

Sl No	Broad Social Economic Objectives	Positive response of women SHG Member	Percentage
1	Controlling Population	234	100
2	Spread literacy	234	100
3	Improving quality of life	222	94.87
4	Financial literacy	218	93.16
5	Technology update	212	90.59
6	Health awareness	215	91.88
7	Bonding in groups	229	97.86

Source: Field Data (Period 2023-24)

Figure in the brackets indicate per cent.

Table-3 shows that all the respondents have positive response regarding controlling population and spread literacy. However, it is seen in the above table that in case of social economic objectives, such as improving quality of life, financial literacy, technology update, health awareness and bonding in groups, the responses from the women SHG members are above 90 percent.

Impact of involvement of women SHG members in social media platform are seen in their achievements in respect to socio-economic life. Table 4 reflects the achievement of women SHG members using social media platform in different fields of social life.

Table-4**Achievement of Members in Respect to Various Socio-economic Aspects (Sample-234)**

Sl No	Socio-economic Aspects	Number of Members Response
1	Participation in Public Places	229(97.86)
2	Participation in Group Formation	230(98.29)
3	Problem Sharing among members	230(98.29)
4	Ability to Make Decision	228(97.44)
5	Financial Literacy	227(97)
6	Increase in Saving Habits	234(100)
7	Financially Included	234(100)
8	Ability to Problem Identification	230(98.29)
9	Management Capacity	231(98.72)
10	Leadership Ability	225(96.15)
11	Digital Literacy	211(90.17)

12	Update Morally	224(95.73)
13	Inclination to social security	227(97)
14	Health Awareness	215(91.88)
15	Social Awareness	228(97.44)
16	Political Awareness	227(97)
17	Decision Making Ability in Family Planning	231(98.72)
18	Educational Awareness	230(98.29)

Source: Field Data (Period 2023-24)

Figure in the brackets indicate per cent.

Table-4 shows that the members are socially mobilized after their involvement in activities of women SHG and they achieved social identities as SHG activists. Involvement in SHGs enabled more than 97 per cent women members to take part in public gatherings instead of remaining within the household boundary and simultaneously they can take part in group formation, problem sharing and decision making of their own. After entering into SHGs, 100 per cent women members got minimum financial literacy and they have been included in financial system through various financial institutions. Financial literacy refers to the ability to understand and effectively use various financial skills, including personal financial management, budgeting and investing, and the financial system is termed as a set of institutions such as banks, insurance companies and stock exchanges that permit the exchange of funds. As reflected in the above table, the percentage of achievement of members in respect to social and economic aspects is more than 93 percent except digital literacy which is at about 90.17 percent. The findings indicate that the advent of women SHG as well as the social media platform have revealed as boon for women empowerment.

The levels of achievement as seen in table-4 have the following implications.

1. The women SHG members are at the end of isolation associated only with domestic involvement and they have been at fetching positive connections to the society in greater scale for improved social life.
2. Women SHG members have been enabled to sustain flexible and creative life having high levels of positive emotion that foster their mental well-being.
3. They now can grow self concept for better life that incentivize to acquire their own identity with their involvement in productive sectors. Thereby, an attribute of self esteem has been grown to their minds.
4. Since social media provides a cognitive way for selection of beliefs and course of actions among several alternative possibilities, women members' decision making process is enriched.
5. Use of social media platform involves computer literacy which is associated with education of women. Therefore, the use of social media helps in educating individually as well as their families.

In respect to personality development with morality, the members of women SHGs are seen to achieve social and educational consciousness, thereby; most of the member's ability in all socio economic

aspects has been developed as seen in the above table. The findings imply that rural women can be socially and economically empowered with their involvement in SHGs and their mobility can be increased with the aids of social media platform.

The results eschewed above assert that the use of social media by the women SHG members have positive impact on empowering the women folk in rural area.

Concluding Remark and Suggestion:

The massive use of social media by the women members of SHG in particular has been found to influence them not only for group forming and sharing but also bringing forth the changes in their life style with enormous opportunities. Social media platform has been founded mostly as a common weapon for updating of SHG women members and it revealed as effective mobilize for empowerment. Despite immense positive impact of social media in women empowerment, fraudulences cyber crimes, and other online crimes are detrimental to the uses of social media. Further, challenges like privacy and security concern, mental health impacts- such as anxiety and depression, and the potential of addiction, etc., are inherent to the use of social media platform.

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