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## “A Study On Role Of Media In Women’s Empowerment”

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### , Abstract:

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 wage discrimination between men and women. 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. 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.

**Key Words:** Media, women Empowerment, Education, Gender inequality.

## Introduction:

**“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.**

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 quality of life of women but it has also deep ramifications in social, economic and political scenario 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. It sounds intriguing how from a highly dignified position in India's mythic history, the woman in India has been relegated to a secondary position.

The vested interests of the ruling elite and the male lobby influenced by alien cultures legitimized woman as an individual of little consequence. It would be a sad commentary on the subordinate role of women in India when woman is ideally viewed as Shakti (Power), the origin of power itself but in reality found as helpless, hapless woman without any identity except that of a wife, or the mother who has very little voice in decision making and has very little by way of her own basic choice. Although discrimination against and exploitation of women are global phenomena, their consequences are more tragic in the some parts of the globe particularly in under developed countries where, ignorance, deprivation of the basic necessities of life, and the ever-growing pressure of transition from tradition to modernity- all combine to aggravate the inequalities that women suffer to a point at which their existence is reduced to a continuous battle for survival. Improving the status of women is regarded as the key to narrowing the gender gap and achieving a better quality of life.

## Review of literature:

**Ray (2008)** stated in his research study that media is very useful tool for the purpose of training and education. He found that media is used for transmitting information to people at large scale, a way of bringing changes in behavior and thinking styles of society.

**In a blog, The new media and the global women's empowerment movement (2011) by Jammie Victory Abdulai**, he said that the new media is the fact that anyone can be part of the global information sharing process by anyone, anywhere in the form of any article and information on social platforms.

**According to Asif (2013)**, the development of society can be improved if women are empowered. Role of media is important to empower women because it gives self-reliance and there is a visible effect of media on every sphere of life.

**Subhash (2015)** concluded in her study “Impact of Mass Media on Women: A Sociological Study of Gulbarga District” that impact of mass media on women has enabled their empowerment, but still there are many suggestions given by women to restrict crime related programmes, improvement of learning and knowledge, equal status of women, gender equality etc. Hence the media should take into the suggestions of women and improve their programmes, telecasts, circulations, knowledge and information.

**Narayana and Ahamad (2016)** revealed in their study that Media have a great potential for the empowerment of women, however the overall use of this media by women is very low. It also suggested that the powerful and positive role that the media can play in the empowerment of women and gender equality should be supported and further explored. They also found that how media can increase the participation and access of women to expression and decision-making.

### Women Empowerment:

Women's empowerment has become a significant topic of discussion in development and economics. Economic empowerment allows women to control and benefit from resources, assets, and income. It also aids the ability to manage risk and improve women's well-being. It can result in approaches to support trivialized genders in a particular political or social context. While often interchangeably used, the more comprehensive concept of gender empowerment concerns people of any gender, stressing the distinction between biological and gender as a role. Women empowerment helps boost women's status through literacy, education, training and awareness creation. Furthermore, women's empowerment refers to women's ability to make strategic life choices that were previously denied them.

Nations, businesses, communities and groups may benefit from implementing programs and policies that adopt the notion of female empowerment. Women's empowerment enhances the quality and the quantity of human resources available for development. Empowerment is one of the main procedural concerns when addressing human rights and development.

Women's empowerment is key to economic and social outcomes. Benefits from projects that empower women are higher than those that just mainstream gender. More than half of bilateral finance for agriculture and rural development already mainstreams gender, but only 6 percent treats gender as fundamental. If half of small-scale producers benefited from development interventions that focused on empowering women, it would significantly raise the incomes of an additional 58 million people and increase the resilience of an additional 235 million people.

According to the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), increasing women's empowerment is essential for women's well-being and has a positive impact on agricultural production, food security, diets and child nutrition.

### Educational status of women in India:

Education is one of the most significant means for empowering an individual or community in general, and women and girls in particular. Level of educational attainment and literacy rate are indicators of general development of any society. Gender equality and empowerment of women are indispensable for achieving prosperity and sustainable development. Since Independence, India has adopted many different paths and strategies for national, social, economic and political development. The overall situation and status of women also has improved.

**Table 1: Literacy Rate of India (Census 2011)**

Censes Year	Total population (percentage)	Males (percentage)	Females (percentage)
1951	18.3	27.2	8.9
1961	28.3	40.4	15.4
1971	34.5	46.0	22.0
1981	43.6	56.4	29.8
1991	52.2	64.1	39.8
2001	64.8	75.3	53.7
2011	74.00	80.9	64.6

Table 1 indicates that statistics regarding general rate of literacy in all the states in India along with a break up of rate of literacy among males and females. As per the 2011 Census, the total literacy rate in India stands at 74.00 per cent and the rate of literacy among women is 65.46 per cent. The percentage of female literacy in the country was 54.16 per cent in 2001. The literacy rate in the country has increased from 18.33 per cent in 1951 to 74.00 per cent as per 2011 census. The female literacy rate has also increased from 8.86 per cent in 1951 to 65.46 per cent in 2011. Female literacy rate during the period 1991-2001 increased by 14.87 per cent whereas male literacy rate rose by 11.72 per cent. The increase in female literacy rate was 3.15 per cent more compared to male literacy rate.

## Gender Inequality in India:

Gender bias is an inherent characteristic of a patriarchal society. As of now most of the societies of the world are based on patriarchy. It is a form that demeans women in a variety of ways. Since times immemorial, a girl child has been considered as an unwanted entity and a burden that the parents would not mind doing away with. Discrimination against women begins even before her birth. Any denial of equality, gender and opportunity on the basis of gender is gender discrimination. The male dominant society of India makes its women habitual of this discrimination. As a result, most women fail to understand their own rights and freedom.

India ranks 141st out of 142 nations and 2062 districts in the world that are categorized as gender critical when it comes to health and survival of women as compared to men. As a whole the country ranks 127th on gender inequality index and 114th on gender gap in the world (Global gender gap report, 2015). Gender economists call this phenomenon, disempowerment of women. The report finds declining sex ratio to be the most worrying issues giving rise to gender inequality. The decline has been shocking—in 1987-88, the sex ratio was 927 where as it fell to 914 in 2014.

Discrimination against females starts with their birth and continues through their lives. The gruesome evils of female feticides and infanticide prove how brutal the world could be to women. An unborn girl child is aborted with the help of sex determination techniques. The data shows that despite the law in place viz Prenatal Diagnostic Techniques (Regulation and Prevention of Misuse) Act, 1994 sex selective abortion is still on the rise. A girl child who is born is seen as a burden on her parents or family and not given equal treatment as boys of the same family ever since birth. She is not given proper nutritious food in some cases. As she grows, she is either denied of right to education and in some cases her education is limited to elementary level. Her health and well-being is not given due attention and concern. She is married at an early age and this puts an end to any possibilities of growth and a good life in most cases. The discrimination doesn't end here but continues with the expectations of giving birth to a boy. The vicious cycle of female discrimination starts here. Almost all women face some incidents of eve teasing, some are unfortunate to be assaulted sexually and raped.

According to 2011 census, the female literacy rate was 65.46% compared to 82.14% for males. The underlying thought that is that educating women is of no value as they will only serve their husbands and family in future. It makes the parents unwilling to spend on girl's education. Women are not able to enjoy equal status in society as men and have very little say or authority. The grant of equal rights by the Constitution does not bring any significant change in their position and respect in the society.

## Conclusion:

Empowerment of girls and women is essential for achieving sustainable development. The new strategies and initiatives must include various tools of social empowerment of women such as right and access to education, health care, adequate nutrition, right to property and access to equal opportunities, legal and institutional mechanism to help women in need, access to media and finally dispute redressed mechanism. Socio-cultural practices that work as barriers to empowerment of women and girls need to be removed at the earliest.

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