Role of Media in Empowering Women and boosting Women Entrepreneurship in small cities in India

Author(s): Neetu Bhargava, Dr.Yogesh Kumar Gupta
Affiliation: Dept. Mass Communication and Journalism, OPJS University, Churu, Rajasthan-India

Abstract

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. Although the stand of women socially and economically and the scenario of women entrepreneurship are gradually changing in big cities, the small cities still face a challenging environment on this issue at this point of time. The social ill treatment and the negligence of economic decision powers to them in such small areas of the country especially, directly fall out for this research subject. While on the other hand media being the fourth pillar of our democracy has certain duties to follow in the betterment of society. It can play the role efficiently in transmitting information to society in empowering women by educating the society about their stand and worth. It can even awake the inner sense of potential women possess and can turn them to be a better entrepreneur. Moreover, it can even promote it better by inspiring the rest of the society by the stories of successful women entrepreneurship. This article thus conceptually researches the role media plays in empowering women and in boosting women entrepreneurship in the small cities.

Keywords: media, women empowerment, women entrepreneurship, entrepreneur, social and economic development.

Introduction:

Women are generally perceived as the homemakers in the Indian society. They are kept far distant from the matters of economy and commerce and taken for granted with the tag of low level of business sense, professional and economic skills. Women empowerment thus needs a special consideration to make them socially and economically developed. According to United Nation Women Empowerment have five components:

- Women’s sense of self-worth; their right to have and to determine choices; their right to have access to opportunities and resources; their right to have the power to control their own lives, both within and outside the home; and their ability to influence the direction of social change to create a more just social and economic order, nationally and internationally. Thus it can be stated that women empowerment generally refers to improvement of social, economic and legal power of women to make them stand independently and take self-decisions for their personal wellbeing and for the society as well. While on the one hand women empowerment ensures women all round strength it even boost their morale to actively participate in earning and living for themselves and their family. And on the other hand this creates an environment for entrepreneurship too. Women entrepreneurship is a term which generally refers to the act of business ownership and creating business that empowers women economically and increases their economic strength and position in society. The need of the hour is women empowerment and it is a must need tool for the smooth functioning of society. Also the myth that women cannot engage in productive employment needs to be dispelled. They can be encouraged to set up small and medium scale industries on their own initiative. The development of Entrepreneurship in rural women and women of small cities can help them to enhance their personal capabilities, boost confidence, gain control over resources like income and spending and most importantly can make them self-relied and self-determined.

The women being an integral part of our society are not portrayed such that she could relive the stand she deserves. On this note various key points demand utter consideration like Gender inequality, male female gap ratio, crime against women, health and education. The factors can be worked upon if a proper communication system is available to inform and educate the society. Media here works as an integral part of societal communication. Communication works as a great contributor in changing mind-set of people. Moreover exposure to mass media channels like Newspapers, TV, Radio and social media could surely help in gaining knowledge and changing attitudes thus helping women to stand independently at all fronts. Besides it can even motivate women to consider their potential in changing the society at large. This social awakening and women empowerment by media can surely help in the rise of women entrepreneurs too which is a great symbol of economic and social development of any society and country.

Kofi Annan has described it as “There is no tool for development more effective then empowerment of women”. Our government and various NGO’s know the importance and need of women empowerment and entrepreneurship, so for the same cause government with various Self Help Groups and by formulating various promotional policies for women entrepreneurs, is working actively. Media is even playing a determined role to give their helping hand for the biggest societal development. The scenario has however changed a lot in the recent years with more education the women but the lack of proper employment facilities does not cure the problem much. The only solution which rises up in this case is self-employment and so there is a considerable hike observed in the small and medium scale enterprises in the country, and mainly in small cities. Similarly the rural women can be inspired to get engaged in cottage industry structure and set up.

Thus women entrepreneurship and women empowerment are directly related to each other and both definitely lead to social and economic progress of any society. The mass media plays a significant role in society by informing, instructing and educating the society about the issues and problems and even help them by guiding the measures. It is usually observed that people get highly influenced by the issues and content provided or highlighted by media. So it is highly important and considerable as to what should be portrayed by it to the society. Moreover the stories of successful women aired or provided or highlighted by media. So it is highly important and considerable as to what should be portrayed by it to the society. Moreover the stories of successful women aired or highlighted by media. So it is highly important and considerable as to what should be portrayed by it to the society. Moreover the stories of successful women aired or highlighted by media. So it is highly important and considerable as to what should be portrayed by it to the society. Moreover the stories of successful women aired or highlighted by media. So it is highly important and considerable as to what should be portrayed by it to the society. Moreover the stories of successful women aired or highlighted by media. So it is highly important and considerable as to what should be portrayed by it to the society. Moreover the stories of successful women aired or highlighted by media. So it is highly important and considerable as to what should be portrayed by it to the society. Moreover the stories of successful women aired or highlighted by media. So it is highly important and considerable as to what should be portrayed by it to the society. Moreover the stories of successful women aired or highlighted by media. So it is highly important and considerable as to what should be portrayed by it to the society. Moreover the stories of successful women aired or highlighted by media. So it is highly important and considerable as to what should be portrayed by it to the society. Moreover the stories of successful women aired or highlighted by media. So it is highly important and considerable as to what should be portrayed by it to the society. Moreover the stories of successful women aired or highlighted by media. So it is highly important and considerable as to what should be portrayed by it to the society. Moreover the stories of successful women aired or highlighted by media. So it is highly important and considerable as to what should be portrayed by it to the society. Moreover the stories of successful women aired or highlighted by media. So it is highly important and considerable as to what should be portrayed by it to the society. Moreover the stories of successful women aired or highlighted by media. So it is highly important and considerable as to what should be portrayed by it to the society.
challenging role in both the empowerment and entrepreneurship especially in the small cities and rural areas of the country where women still don not enjoy their stand. Such small cities have still not witnessed the transition call from a male dominant society to a more balanced one in terms of education and entrepreneurship.

Objectives of the Study
1. To identify the obstacles in women empowerment.
2. To evaluate the role of media in women empowerment at the grass root level
3. To identify the hindrances in women entrepreneurship in special consideration to small cities.
4. To examine various factors contributing to women entrepreneurship.
5. To study the role of media in women entrepreneurship.

Literature review
1. Patience I. Okiring, “Representation of women in Print Media” the thesis limited its scope to the study of the KANAS CITY STAR newspaper for a period of 5 years and it was revealed that the articles published in the particular newspaper underrepresented the entrepreneur women. It was also revealed from the study that the women were portrayed with a negative image. The overall result stated by the thesis was that women were underrepresented, misrepresented and negatively represented by the newspapers.

2. Priyadarsini Padhi, Anshuman Padhy; “Women Entrepreneurship in India: Present status, Problems and Prospects, IJSRMS, Volume-1, Issue-3, page 72-79. This research paper highlights important aspects of women entrepreneurship and the problems women face being it financial, marketing related, health or family. It even highlight the various steps taken by government after independence for women development and the numerous institutional supports available for women entrepreneurship. It also reveals that besides of the various available support channels for women the benefit is available for only a small segment of women population that is the urban class which constitutes approx. 14% of the total of women population of the country, while the majority of women population which is approx. 30% remains untouched. For the development of women and women entrepreneurship certain measures are even suggested in the paper like educating women creating awareness about entrepreneurship and its benefits to women and society.

3. Guleria, Nancy; “Print Media and Women Empowerment”, here the researcher discussed the pitiful condition and the ill treatment the women undergo with. They even mention the role of print as a powerful one on the women strata due to its high affordability and extensive reach demographically. The article states that the empowerment of women can only be possible with the change of mind set of society. They being the stronger section should never be underestimated on their power and decision taking issues. Moreover, the article even focuses that due to commercialisation of media the image of women portrayed by media is very negative and controversial. But still there are few newspaper media which are battling for women’s rights and freedom but that too it is on the interest of media house. The major conclusive part of the particular research was that the issues of women empowerment were important for the media houses till the time they did not affect the daily circulation while the awareness part was left out in dark. The article suggested certain valuable points to be considered by the print media on the issue of women empowerment. They are:

a. A considerable focus should be put on certain issues like dowry, women education, female foeticide, child marriage, rural women, etc. rather than on the lifestyle and entertainment section of the print version.

b. Women should be represented more sensibly and sophisticatedly.

c. The actions or the repercussions should be strict on publishing the ads or pictures defaming the women image in any manner.

d. There should be formulation of certain laws for women defamation and providing a particular page space to women empowerment issues in the print.

4. Geri Stengel, “Why the Force will be with the Women Entrepreneurs in 2016”, Forbes Magazine, 6 Jan 2016. In this article the writer discusses about the issues women entrepreneur generally deals with, the important one being the financial issue. Like it states that women entrepreneurs start their business with almost less than 50% of the capital than the men. The article even states that since the women are the under tapped force and can rekindle the economic expansion the major forces are acting as catalyst to help them achieve the set goals. The government organisations lowering the interest rates, and creating several economic plans for women entrepreneurs creating a good opportunity for commercialisation. The article even mentions “The 2015 Kauffman Index: Startup Activity”, which states that a new company is started when there is some demand or gap in the marketplace to serve, and women prove to be best in sensing the gap and serving the market with their business. So they adapt to it as a better entrepreneur than the other half of society. Besides the article even mentions that media play a strong role in inspiring women entrepreneurship and guiding them though the way out. It states that women are not just setting up the businesses but they are making headline in Forbes as “Forbes 2015 World’s Most Powerful Women list”, so the media did a great job of inspiring women and awakening the society about women entrepreneurship.

5. JyotsnaSuri, “Stree Shakti: Realizing the Power of Women Entrepreneurship”, Jan 26, 2015. This write up from JyotsnaSuri, President, FICCI and CMD of “The Lalit” is an hugely impressive and inspirational piece of writing to motivate women to stand independently, cultivate leadership and progress for an entrepreneurship. It outlines various top Indian women entrepreneurs and the personal experience of the writer itself. The article even states that women prove a better decision taker and a good entrepreneur at higher profiles as they have the special ability of perfect multitasking. The writer even describes the FICCI project of promotion of women entrepreneurship.

The article discusses the importance and need of women entrepreneurship and women empowerment for the society and nation; it even discusses the role played by Self Help Groups, and various promotional policies formulated by Indian government to boost women entrepreneurship. The article states that SHG’s are more helpful in rural development, community participation and women empowerment. It even suggests that Micro enterprises even work effectively in empowering women in rural India by promoting entrepreneurship. The article concludes that there is a great development in the area of women entrepreneurship in the recent years which has even enhanced women empowerment at a great pace. But it suggests that there is need for proper flow of information about the governmental policies and schemes for women and their upliftment to the society.

It is evident form the above review of literature that a number of studies have already been undertaken on the issue of women empowerment and entrepreneurship. The present study in this respect is an attempt to highlight the role of media in women empowerment and entrepreneurship in small cities in India and how the two factors compositely lead to women development.

Research Methodology

Research design: The nature of the study is exploratory, since it aims to explore and identify the significance of the media in women empowerment and entrepreneurship. It is even descriptive in nature.

Data source: The study is based on secondary data. Extensive study was done on the data collected from books, online journals, magazines, newspapers, online articles, previous studies, national and international journals, reports published by FICCI, NABARD, Census survey of India, online publications of various websites, which focused on women empowerment or women entrepreneurship.

Role of media in women empowerment: For a highly aspiring and a developing nation like India, it is not at all possible to ignore the women strata of society. The woman being an essential part of our society needs to be empowered, to get a better social, economic and political development. Swami Vivekananda clearly stated in this context “There is no chance for the welfare of the world unless the condition of women is improved; It is not possible for a bird to fly on only one wing”. These words clearly outline the importance of this half of our society. Indian being the second largest continent in the world in term of population has a great women force. To address this force the need of mass media is important. Mass media play an important and vital role in educating, informing, and awakening the society. It has the power to alter the mind-set of the people and make them act wisely. The media is considered as the most potent and influential mean in this context as it has the capacity of persuading and moulding opinion. The relationship of the media and the women is important because whatever image women have in our country is influenced by media. It is thus vital, to utilize the media for the improving the status of women and divulging their role in national development. The mass media channels like Radio, TV, Internet, Newspapers (and other print word), play an influential and commendable role in women empowerment. The few can be summed up as:

a. Radio can create a stage for debate and discussion on various women related issues and has a very personal appeal. It can even connect to rural women because here literacy isn’t a barrier. The various women programmes of AIR are such an example of this. The programmes cover a wide range of issue like gender issues, health and nutrition, women empowerment, adult education home management, women entrepreneurship, status and importance of girl child, etc. These programmes aim at creating social awareness about the rights and privileges of women by legal literacy propagation. Many folk forms are even used to communicate with rural audiences.

The other main issues touched by these programmes are women trafficking, female foeticide and infanticide, women security, ban of child labour, maternity benefits, education and employment opportunities, and promotional schemes of government for women and many more.

b. TV again a mass medium has a great sensory appeal. It connects to people emotions as they can relate themselves to what is being shown on the screen. So is highly influential. It was proven from a recent study by Robert Jensen (Brown University) and Emily Oster (University of Chicago) shows that television has a distinctly helpful effect on rural Indian women. Their survey was based on three main objectives that were preference of boy child over girl, autonomy (self-decision power) and attitude towards beating by husband. The results of the effect of these daily soap operas on rural mind-set were purely magical. The women preference for boy child over girl child fell by 12%, the average acceptance of wife beating by women fell by approx. 10% points while the autonomy index jumped substantially too. This showed a miraculous effect of the TV on women. The researcher even referred cable TV as the Empowerment box for the rural India.

The other feather in the cap came with the news of the launch of the TV channel for women and by women only. It is projected to show women related programmes fitness to cookery, self-help series to news. It will surely prove a benchmark in the field of women empowerment.

c. The new age mass media that is Internet besides being a tool of the educative class of the society has a great effect for women empowerment. It provides a platform for the discussion of the most sensitive issues and helps them propagate worldwide. It mainly helps in gender empowerment. Other than this it helps in providing information about any issue, educating women, providing them with new ideas and provides them a platform to even discuss their problems and seek solutions.

d. Last but not the least newspapers and Magazines being the most tradition media is highly trusted and relied by rural people. Although it’s a medium of educated people but local or regional language newspapers help a lot at rural end in creating awareness and educating the society. They are the most reliable medium of
communicating governmental policies and schemes to the varied demographics of society. Moreover, rural people trust newspapers a lot due to their personal and physical appeal, so it proves highly influential at their end in changing their beliefs and attitudes. An example of this being an inspiration piece of write up in The New Indian Express which was titled as “Empowering the Women of India” on 25 January 2014. The article revealed a lot many important things like it stated that just a degree won’t lead to empowerment of women, empowerment is not centred till the economic development but it is highly influenced by spiritual development of women. It also suggested that men should moreover be taught to behave with women rather than just teaching women. It even stressed on developing female centric model of development. The article served as a great piece of inspiration for their readers.

Besides this the launch of the magazine “She” by DB group specially for women of small cities, is again a piece of good work in the context. The magazine will cover all women related issues like marriage, health, career, etc.

**Role of Media in women entrepreneurship:** As stated above the role of media in women empowerment is highly effective and influential, it do inspires women to stand high and independently, and acquire self-realisation and self-determination. The women empowerment somehow helps in cultivating the leadership qualities in women and helps them turn to take economic stands and even turn as entrepreneurs’. Besides empowering the media can educate, and provide women with new ideas and options to execute their creativity and put inner capabilities into force. It aware them of the latest business news and opportunities and can inspire them with the experiences of the other entrepreneurs. Moreover, media can even focus on promotion of cottage, and smallscale industries which generally involve women, their problems, need and solutions to help them, thus help in them in developing the entrepreneurial activity. In the same context V Balasubramanian in his recent interviews during Madras Chamber of Commerce and Industry stated that Media is still not focussing on tiny and small industries. The small manufacturing industries should be supported with funds and be encouraged with new ideas. The smaller vendors should be helped and encouraged to adopt newer technologies and concepts, and media can effectively do it”.

**Conclusion:**
Women are the most integral part of society. They are the vital resource in improving the quality of life. Their involvement in all the developmental activities can lead to country’s overall development. The women population constitutes almost 52% of total population and such a huge power cannot be neglected. It is necessary to empower women so that they should develop a positive self-image, can take self-decisions, be strong socially, spiritually, economically, politically and legally. These overall self-building images of women in society surely help them to proceed and prosper for a sound future. The empowerments also help them to show their leadership capabilities and bring awareness about many issues from all spheres of life and could let them prove themselves a good entrepreneur. On the other hand Women entrepreneurship enhances the status of women in society and family. They are now consulted in every small issue to give their opinion and take decisions and results. They are proving more settled in day to day activities. The rural entrepreneurship is even more significant as it is proving helpful in eradication of poverty, economic crisis, crime against women, as they are helping women to empower. Thus women empowerment and entrepreneurship goes hand in hand. Here for this cause media is proving a very handy and helpful tool by creating proper awareness, education, and imparting information to the women and society at every end. The government is also employing media at a great scale to reach the women for their empowerment and to create women entrepreneurs even from the remote rural areas.

**Recommendation:**
- The media should portray the strong, inspirational positive image of women to develop them build a positive self-image.
- The media should formulate such laws that strict actions should be taken if there is denial of women image in any case.
- The media should put more stress on the issues like dowry, child marriage, female foeticide, rural women, oppression against women, women entrepreneurship and women education.
- Media should concentrate more on the promotion of small and cottage industries to promote women entrepreneurship and empowerment.
- Government should make more such promotional schemes and reach out to the remote rural areas where the women empowerment is the need of the hour.
- Social media should raise discussions and debates about more women related issues so that the problems could be highlighted and resolved at a great scale.
- The crime against women never be undergrounded they should be raised at a higher level and strict actions should be taken to boost their self-confidence and their sense of security.
- Media should provide the women entrepreneurs with the options to assist them economically in their businesses.

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