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A Study On Role Of Media In Women Empowerment In India

Dr. Sonia Gupta

Ph.d in Mass Communication, and Specialization in Women Empowerment and Femenism/Independent writer
shonagupta25@gmail.com

Abstract: *This research paper deals with the problems of women in general and focuses on the role of media in women Empowerment. It is an attempt to analyze the status of women by analyzing various indicators like socio, economic and decision making powers. After independence, Government of India took several initiatives, programmes and policies, apart from constitutional and legal safeguards for the empowerment of women in the country. As we know Women's are the wealth of India and they have contributed in almost every field and made country feel proud at every occasion. They are in front, leading the country, making mile stones and source of inspiration for many. However, another reality of Indian society is that there is systematic discrimination and neglect of women's in India, which could be in terms of limited access to education, health and property rights and domestic violence etc. The fear of sexual violence has been a powerful factor in restricting women's behaviour and sense of freedom. The struggle against violence is actually the struggle against the unequal distribution of power both physical and economic between the sexes. Women empowerment in India is still a distant dream. There still exists a wide gap between the goals enunciated in the constitution, legislation, policies, plans, programs and related mechanisms on the one hand and the situational reality of the status of women in India, on the other hand. India is fast developing but women's in India continue to be discriminated. Media is the mirror of society and media reports are reflection of happenings in the society. Communication is extremely important for women's development and mass media play significant role. It is to be noted that growth of women's education and their entry into employment has contributed to the growth of media. Media has immense power to influence the masses and communication and IT revolution has further increased its importance. The study is based on primary and secondary sources. The study concludes by an observation that access to education and employment are only the enabling factors to empowerment, achievement towards the goal, however, depends largely on the attitude of the people towards gender equality.*

Keywords: *Women Empowerment, Social, Economic and Household Decision Factor.*

I. INTRODUCTON

You can tell the condition of a nation by looking at the status of its women.

- Jawaharlal Nehru

The empowerment of women refers to providing the necessary rights and responsibilities to women in order to make them self-reliant.

According to Sen and Batliwala (2000) "Empowerment is the process by which the powerless gain greater control over the circumstances of their lives. It includes both control over resources and over ideology. It leads to a growing intrinsic capability greater self confidence, and an inner transformation of one's consciousness that enables one to overcome external barrier.

Women's are the wealth of India and they have contributed in almost every field and made country feel proud at every occasion. They are in front, leading the country, making mile stones and source of inspiration for many. In politics, Pratibha Patil, Meira Kumar, UPA Chairperson Sonia Gandhi, Mayawati and Sheila Dixit, Nirupama Roy, in socio-cultural field, Medha Patekar, Arundhati Roy, Shobna Narayanan, Lata Mangeskar, Anjolie Ela Menon, Rekha, Meera Nayar and many others, in sports, Sania Mirza, Saina Nehwal are some of the names at the top. Women's are also playing important role in national growth and economic development through corporate houses. They are not only working at grass root level but participating in decision making. Jyoti Naik, President of Lijjat Papad, Kiran Mazumdar, Chairman and Managing Director of Biocon, Naina Lal Kidwai, Deputy CEO of HSBC, Ranjana Kumar, Chairman of NABARD, Ritu Kumar, CEO of Escolife, Priya Paul, Chairman of Apeejay Park Hotels, Indira Nooyi, Chairperson & CEO of Pepsico, Roshani Nadar, CEO of HCL are some of the pioneers in their respective field. At present women's are contributing and participating in every sphere, politics, business, education, science and technology, media, sports, art and culture etc.

However this is the one face of coin and on the other side of coin is the hard truth of the Indian society.

The status of women in India is a sort of a paradox. If on one hand she is at the peak of ladder of success, on the other hand she is mutely suffering the violence afflicted on her by her own family members. As compared with past women in modern times have achieved a lot but in reality they have to still travel a long way. Their path is full of roadblocks. The women have left the secured domain of their home and are now in the battlefield of life, fully armored with their talent. They had proven themselves. But in India they are yet to get their dues. The sex ratio of India shows that the Indian society is still prejudiced against female. There are 933 females per thousand males in India according to the census of 2001, which is much below the world average of 990 females. There are many problems which women in India have to go through daily. These problems have become the part and parcel of life of Indian women and some of them have accepted them as their fate. Women constitute almost 50% of the world's population but India has shown disproportionate sex ratio whereby female's population has been comparatively lower than males. As far as their social status is concerned, they are not treated as equal to men in all the places. In the Western societies, the women have got equal right and status with men in all walks of life. But gender disabilities and discriminations are found in India even today. The paradoxical situation has such that she was sometimes concerned as Goddess and at other times merely as slave. Empowerment through media sources of women unlocks the door for modernization of any society. Participation and control over resources of power are critical indicators.

II. WOMEN'S ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS

The movement to assure women's economic, social, and cultural rights (ESCR) as basic human rights is just emerging in India. The movement aims to locate women's rights within the larger human rights framework, and by doing so moves away from looking at women's issues only within the framework of violence against women and reproductive rights. ESCR attempts to look at the broader issues facing women, namely poverty, housing, unemployment, education, water, food security, trade, etc. While the human rights movement on ESCR is largely contained at the international policy level, there are emerging social movements around the world. In the Indian context, projects like the Programme on Women's Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (PWESCR), for example, is creating linkages between the international human rights movement and the local articulation of women's rights. PWESCR aims to build a women's rights movement in India that creates equality in all spheres of women's lives. By empowering women economically and socially, ESCR provides for a broader discourse on rights that moves women's rights from a victim centered approach to one that cuts across other fundamental human rights issues.

Women's economic opportunity in India is a rapidly changing landscape. Women are increasingly entering the workforce—particularly women professionals—and are creating change, but there remains a large number of invisible women workers in unorganized and volatile sectors. However, organizing at the local level, albeit small, is widespread.

Implementation of national and state level policies lags behind in ensuring that women workers have equal pay and are free from exploitation.

Government Schemes For Women Empowerment

The Government programmes for women development began as early as 1954 in India but the actual participation began only in 1974. At present, the Government of India has over 34 schemes for women operated by different department and ministries.

Some of these are as follows;

1. Rastriya Mahila Kosh (RMK) 1992-1993
2. Mahila Samridhi Yojana (MSY) October, 1993.
3. Indira Mahila Yojana (IMY) 1995.
4. Women Entrepreneur Development programme given top priority in 1997-98.
5. Mahila Samakhya being implemented in about 9000 villages.
6. Swayashidha.
7. Swa Shakti Group.

8. Support to Training and Employment Programme for Women(STEP).
9. Swalamban.
10. Crèches/ Day care centre for the children of working and ailing mother.
11. Hostels for working women.
12. Swadhar.
13. National Mission for Empowerment of Women.
14. Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) (1975),
15. Rajiv Gandhi Scheme for Empowerment of Adolescence Girls (RGSEAG) (2010).
16. The Rajiv Gandhi National Crèche Scheme for Children of Working Mothers.
17. Integrated Child Protection scheme (ICPS) (2009-2010).
18. Dhanalakahmi (2008).
19. Short Stay Homes.
20. Ujjawala (2007).
21. Scheme for Gender Budgeting (XI Plan).
22. Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP).

III. ROLE AND IMPORTANCE OF MEDIA

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. Media is the part of the life, all around, from the shows one watches on television, music on the radio, the books, magazines and newspapers. It educates people about the current issues and influences the public opinion. The common people rely on media to know about happenings in the society. Media has the power to pressurize and criticize the drawbacks of democracy. It is instrumental in bringing about unity among the masses and is backbone of the nation. The reach of media to common people has increased and undoubtedly media has attained the role of a very powerful organ in virtually all spheres of life. The electronic media, particularly television, has become the most influential medium of mass communication in India. Television has a myriad of different goals, which range from entertainment to education. Various confines of education and entertainment are depicted in television. It's often looked at as a babysitter for children. The viewing of television can entertain the young and old alike for great amounts of time. It is helping women to empower themselves by using different tools of media.

IV. RESEARCH PROBLEM

Women's roles in India have been changing and women are now emerging from the past traditions into a new era of freedom and rights. Empowerment of women is one of the most important priorities of the nation. Research highlights the changes which have been taking place in the participation of women in education, training, employment, social participation, health, like that for the past years. In year 2012, a research done by an **international consulting and management firm Booz & Company** ranked India at 115 out of 128 countries and noted that with the second-largest population in the world, India generates 14 per cent of the global talent pool, among which are the 5.5 million women entering India's workforce each year, all overwhelmingly driven to succeed. The list was topped by Australia and followed by three Scandinavian countries — Norway, Sweden and Finland.

Secondary Data shows that Indian women are slow in improving their capabilities when we compare their capabilities and participation in the society with certain countries like Australia, US, Norway, Sweden and Finland etc. . This shows Indian women are still hesitated to undertake challenges in their life and get empowered. So Measure the extent of empowerment, the Indian women achieved so far through the opportunities available to them will be an important milestone in the process of empowerment. Over the last decade, to empower women has been a key piece in the Development agenda. Governments, international organizations, private sector companies, and many other are increasingly paying attention to the importance of creating employment and other growth opportunities for women. While there is a growing focus on the implementation of active labor market programs for women, there is still a lack of information around "what works" "Along with female feticide and infanticide, acid attacks, rape, and sexual harassment, honour killings are both the symptoms of and catalysts for women's disempowerment.

V. THE RELEVANT QUESTIONS OF THE STUDY

- 1) Do women in India participate in taking decisions in home?
- 2) Do women in India take economic decisions in their life?
- 3) Do women in India have freedom of mobility in society?
- 4) How to improve the empowerment of women in India?
- 5) What is the impact of Media and IT on the Women Empowerment.

VI. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The main objective of the study is to measure role of Media women empowerment in India. In this study the particular aspects or dimensions of women empowerment are taken by me is Economic empowerment, Household Empowerment and Social empowerment.

The specific Objectives of the Study are as Follows

1. To identify the household decision making ability of women in India.
2. To assess the economic decision making capability of women in India
3. To evaluate the social freedom of women in India.
4. To give recommendation and suggestions to boost women empowerment in India.

VII. VARIABLES OF THE STUDY

In general, there are two types of variables; First the independent variable: is the variable that is varied or manipulated by the researcher. The other type is dependent variable, which is the value, or the —output of the function. There are many independent variables in this study that are grouped according to the factors that affect women empowerment. A preliminary study was made in this regard that helped us to extract some variables that affect women empowerment in India. We are going to take study on women empowerment in mainly in two ways: Qualitative study and Quantitative. The dependent variable in this aspect is women empowerment. While the independent variables for Quantitative study are: Income, Education, Employment, Media exposure and Acquisition of assets. However, several other variables also contribute to women empowerment so we have also done a perception analysis study using the variable like knowledge of legal rights, Political rights and land ownership.

VIII. METHODOLOGY

This research is qualitative in nature but quantitative methodology also has been chosen. This section we discuss the data sources and statistical analysis which we are going to use. In this study we used two types of data primary and secondary data.

First, primary data will be collected using survey questionnaires to be distributed to the women from the different states of India: like Himachal, Haryana, Bihar, U.P. The household survey is based on convenience sampling technique with a structured questionnaire. Also, structured interview will be prepared to interview some selected women in this region. The secondary data will be collected from the organizations as well as publications such as journals, newspapers, magazines, books, Internet, and from other studies taken up by government or other independent organizations.

IX. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

VARIABLES	FREQUENCY(%)
Respondents Age	
<input type="checkbox"/> 20 – 30	70.5
<input type="checkbox"/> 30 – 40	20.3
<input type="checkbox"/> 40 – 50	10.1
Educational Qualification	
<input type="checkbox"/> None	1

<input type="checkbox"/> Primary <input type="checkbox"/> Secondary <input type="checkbox"/> Diploma / degree	2 39.6 57.4
Marital Status <input type="checkbox"/> Single <input type="checkbox"/> Married <input type="checkbox"/> Divorced <input type="checkbox"/> Widowed	20 77 1 2
Work Status <input type="checkbox"/> Student <input type="checkbox"/> Employed <input type="checkbox"/> Unemployed <input type="checkbox"/> Doing business	8.4 52.6 23.7 15.2
Husband shares household work <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	85.4 15.6
Income level per month <input type="checkbox"/> Less than 5000 <input type="checkbox"/> 5000 – 10,000 <input type="checkbox"/> 10,000 – 20,000 <input type="checkbox"/> More than 20,000	3 29.3 42 25.7
Acquisition of Assets <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	79.7 20.3
<input type="checkbox"/> Land <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	70 30
Age of your husband compared to your age <input type="checkbox"/> Younger than <input type="checkbox"/> Same age <input type="checkbox"/> 1-3 year older <input type="checkbox"/> 3-6 year older <input type="checkbox"/> More older than your age	2 40.7 35.7 18.3 3.3
Type of saving account <input type="checkbox"/> Joint <input type="checkbox"/> Independent <input type="checkbox"/> No account	5 94 1

Media Exposure	
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	78.7
<input type="checkbox"/> No	22.3
Mobile Facility	
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	92
<input type="checkbox"/> No	8
Internet Knowledge	
<input type="checkbox"/> YES	57
<input type="checkbox"/> No	43
TV	
SERIALS/MOVIES/NEWS	
<input type="checkbox"/> YES	87
<input type="checkbox"/> No	13
NEWS	
<input type="checkbox"/> YES	54
<input type="checkbox"/> No	46

My primary research in the form of survey, the total distributed questionnaires were 60 for the women of these five states of India (States like Himachal –15% ,UP-28%,Bihar-24%, Haryana-14% ,Orissa -19%). In my research I consider many variables that can or could make an impact on the women empowerment generally. The main variables we considered are: income, education, and work status, acquisition of assets and media exposure.

It shows (Appendix Table.1) that most of the respondents are at the age group of 20-30 which represent 70.5 percent of the total and majority of respondents were married which represent about 99.3 percent of the total respondents. It shows the considerable numbers of respondents are matured enough to take their own decisions. The majority of the respondent and their husband are in the same age group (40.7 percent) or one or two years elder than the respondent (38.7 percent). From the sample we can see that 94 percent of the respondents have an independent bank account. It shows that about 85.4 percent of the respondents reacted ‘Yes’ to the question that their husband shares household work and 15.6 percent of respondent said ‘No’ to the above question. The table (Appendix . Table.1) shows that almost 42 percent of the respondents are in the income brackets of rupees 20,000 per month and 25.7 percent of the respondent are in range of more than 20,000 and 3 percent of the total respondents had fall on the very low income brackets. The table shows that women’s educational qualification is good with 57.4 percent of the total respondents are having diploma or degree qualification while it is really a good sign that very few only have less education (1percent). A very small percentage of respondents are not having any formal schooling. Previously ,in India number of women get education was very less but from the data we can understand that the trend is changed and most of our respondents have high qualifications because education is consider as a right for women in India. Then, distribution of respondents’ work status, the table shows that most of the respondents are (52 percent) are employed, and only 23.7 percent are unemployed 8.4 percent of the respondents are students while 15 percent are having own business. Furthermore, as we know the women have the right to own assets in India so I tried to focus on own land and houses as an assets in my study. The table (Appendix.Table.1) show that 79.7 percent of the respondents are having own house and 20.3 percent of them are not having own houses. On the same time 70 percent of women have own land and 30 percent of them are not having own land. Also, the media exposure is a good signal that can show people’s proximity towards the societal happenings. The table shows that only 78.7 percent of the respondents are having exposure to media and 22.3 percent of them were not exposed to the same. This result shows that majority of women in India are interested in media and are very much influenced by the entertainment media.

In this study I tried to understand women empowerment in these ways; by the Analysis of women empowerment using the main empowerment aspects like socio,economic,political,household and media expose which really affect them and by the perceptual analysis.

Analysis of Women Empowerment

Women’s empowerment is multidimensional and it is very difficult to measure. It comprises the entire complex of interactions, roles, rights and statuses that surround being male versus being female in a given society or culture (Mason, 1997). However, in our study we have tried to measure women’s empowerment in the domestic sphere by taking survey and tried to show the result by using the charts. The particular aspects or dimensions of empowerment we take are:

- a). **Women’s economic decision-making power (Economic Empowerment),**
- b) **Their household decision-making power (Household Empowerment),**
- c) **Their physical freedom of movement (Social Empowerment),**
- d) **Women’s Perception on their rights,**
- e) **And also tried to know how they are influenced by the Media and technology.**

The study have framed the Household Empowerment, Social Empowerment and Economic Empowerment and using the collective response of survey. we can see in the,

Figure 1, that most of the respondents have high empowerment in final say on their health care and decision on employing servants in home 85percent and 90percent respectively, which shows the high percentage rate of the empowered women.

The Figure 2, shows that in social aspect some respondent are not empowered because cultural factors also have some impact on social empowerment .They don’t feel safe alone outside the home.

The Figure 3, shows that in the economic empowerment sphere most of the respondents are empowered nicely .It shows that women in India are empowered and their empowerment percentage indicates a medium level of empowerment.

The Figure 4, shows that women in India have a more than average level of understanding about their legal and political rights which is a good sign but needs more improvement.

The Figure 5, shows the high percentage of influence of Media and technology. This is an indication that women are very much aware of the variables which can lead them towards empowerment.

If we make a comparison between the dimensional empowerment indices with total empowerment index, we can find that household empowerment and Media’s exposer is high in India while economic empowerment is less than these two variables. The social empowerment and knowledge of rights shows the less empowered percentage than the household and economic empowerment. The total empowerment index is affected by the performance of these five indices.

FIGURE1: HOUSEHOLD EMPOWERMENT

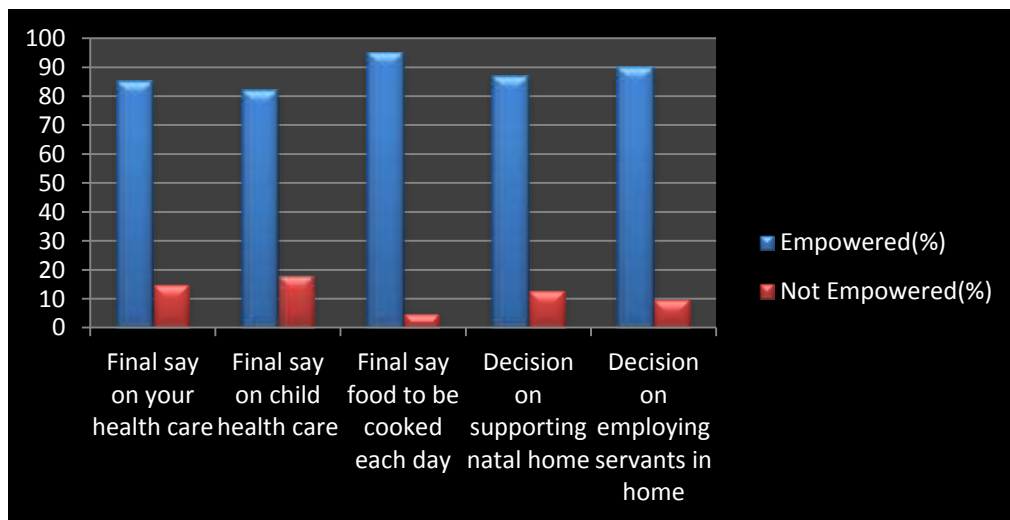


FIGURE2: SOCIAL EMPOWERMENT

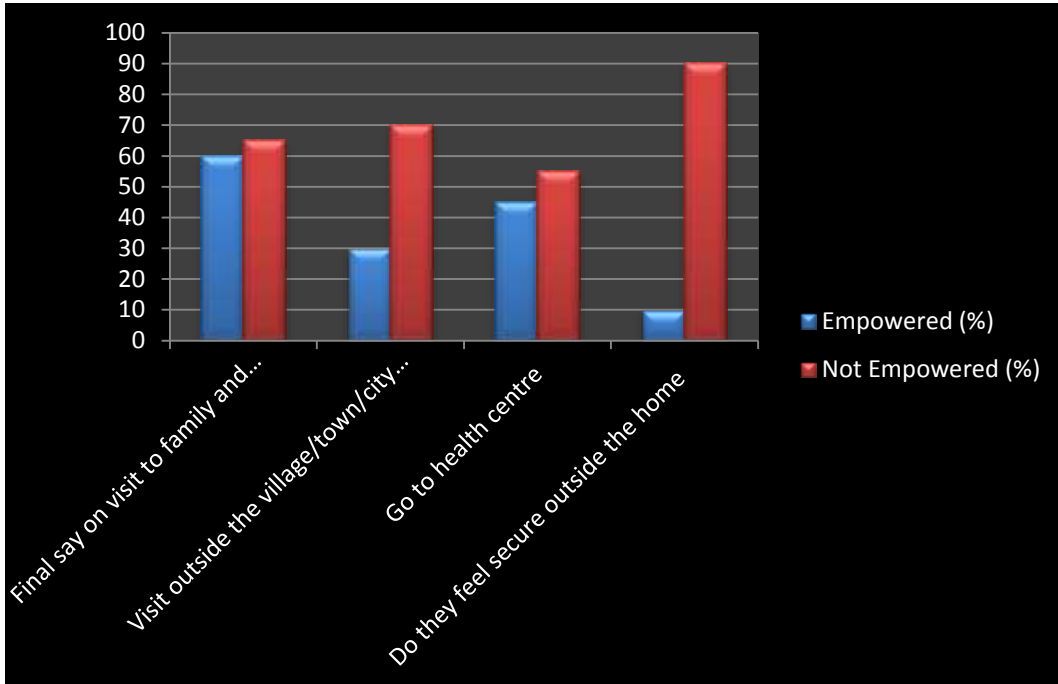


Figure 3: ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

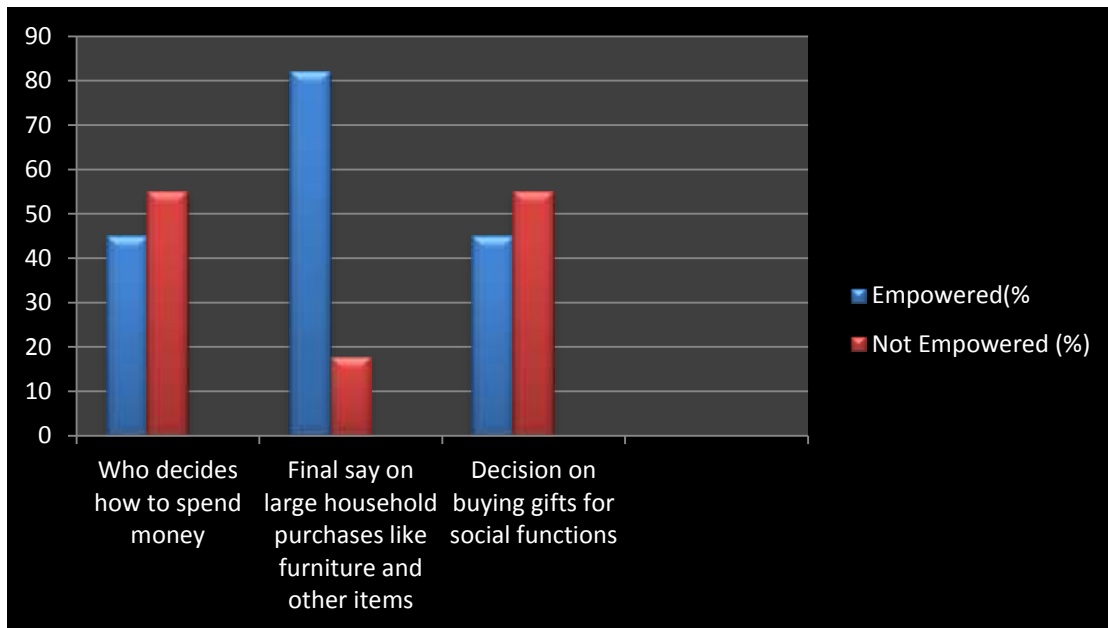


FIGURE 4: WOMEN'S PERCEPTION ON THEIR RIGHTS

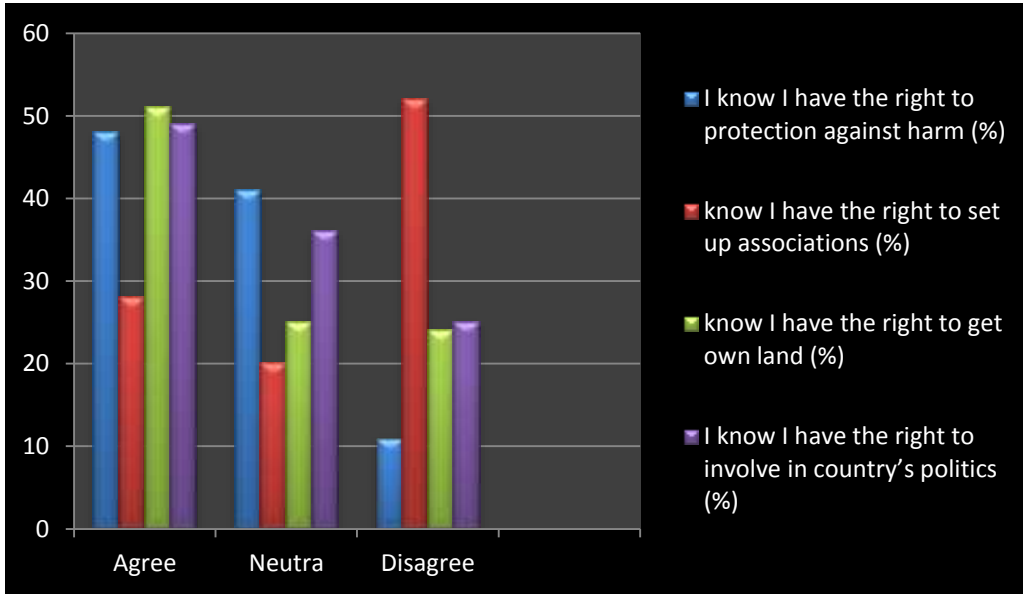
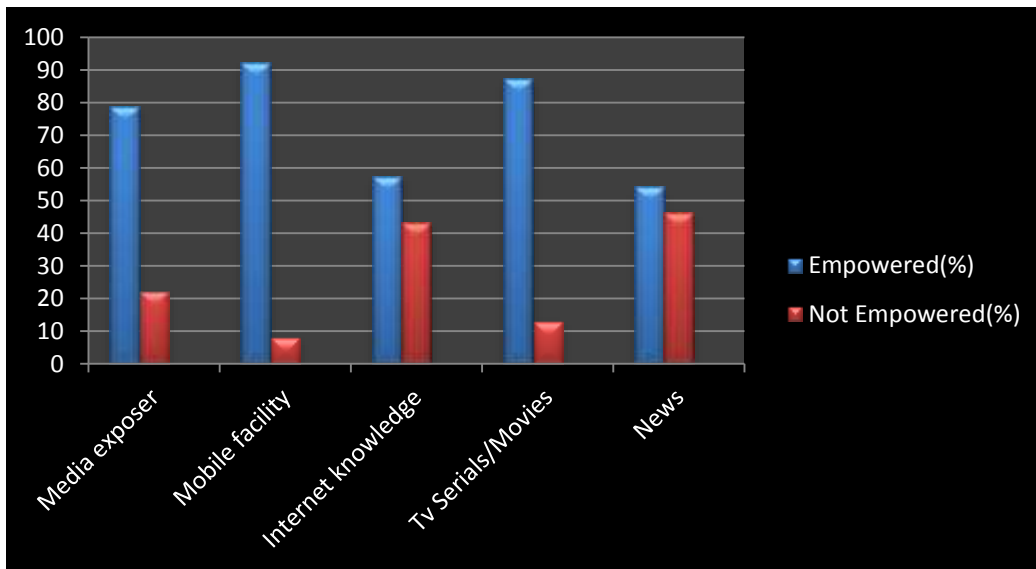


Figure 5: INFLUENCE OF MEDIA AND TECHNOLOGY



X. CONCLUSION

Women, in Indian society, are traditionally expected to confine themselves to domestic environs and play a passive role as daughters, daughters-in law, wives and mothers. Woman's perceived interests linked to domesticity may adversely affect her empowerment outcomes (Aggarwal 1997; Kabeer 1999; Sen 2006). I found from the women empowerment survey that the women in India are empowered but still her interest towards domesticity affects her empowerment otherwise women would have been more empowered. In fact social power plays an important role in generating/sustaining inequalities between men and women, which plays an important role in generating and sustaining gender inequalities. Also, the hypotheses I have tested have a positive significant relation between dependent variable and independent variables. Only the less percentage of social empowerment and the knowledge of their rights shows that the women in India are still not feel secure outside. Though the status of women in India, both historically and socially, has been one of the respect and reverence, but the hard truth is that even today, they are struggling for their own identity, shouting for diffusion of their voices and fighting for their own esteem. Every day, they cross among the fears and fraught for individuality. Despite the constitutional guarantee of equality of sexes, rampant discrimination and exploitation of women in India continues. The incidence of bride-burning, woman battering, molestation and ill-treatment of women are on increase. It is high time now that women should get a respectable and dignified position in the Indian society. Awareness in the women as well as society should be created and their equal rights should be effectively implemented. Crimes against women should be made punishable and a research should be done on every crime which comes to the light.

Study also shows that women have a more than average level of understanding about their legal and political rights but the positive result of Media awareness is a good indication which can lead them towards empowerment. Media organisations, whether in print, audio visual, radio or web have to be more accountable to the general public. It should be monitored that professional integrity and ethical standards are not sacrificed for sensational practices. The freedom of press in the country is a blessing for the people.

The government and non-government agencies can work on towards enhancing the women's traits and capabilities. Participation in seminars and lectures and encouragement for taking waged employment would help or strengthen the role of women in decision making.

Based on research findings I came with certain recommendations

It is now, very clear that in addition to the tools of empowerment, some other qualities also are to be acquired by women to become truly empowered:

- a.) These qualities include, awareness about risks prevailing at home, in work places and while travelling and staying outside home.
- b.) Economic self-sufficiency is necessary, though it is not a sufficient condition for empowerment of women.
- c.) Public policies are extremely important to strengthen the legal institutions that guarantee equal rights and opportunities to women.
- d.) They should have political and legal and economic and health awareness.
- e.) They should have knowledge about support groups.
- f.) They should have the positive attitude towards life. Under any adverse circumstance they should not lose courage and confidence and try to end their life.
- g.) They should have a strong will power to succeed in life. In short, the inner strength of women has to be built.
- h.) In the era of globalization and with revolution in means of communication and information technology, the media role has become more crucial for women empowerment in India. The Indian media now must focus on women issues in a decisive way as their role is detrimental for the women empowerment in India.
- i.) It is essential that media should devote a good percentage of their programmes to create awareness among women and the society at large, give information about women's rights and machineries to approach for their all round development .
- j.) They should set goals for their future and strive to achieve them with courage and conviction. Much developmental news should be aired through the medium of radio and tv.
- k.) Men should also be involved in the women empowerment process.

Programmes to strengthen women development should be enforced and news adversely affecting their development should be censored or banned. Thus, the distant dream of women empowerment in India can be realized with the support of media, government and NGOs. **As Swami Vivekananda rightly said that “The nation which doesn't respect women will never become great.....”. Therefore, in pursuit of making India a great nation, media should work towards giving women their much deserved status.**

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