



## Impact of Mass Media on Women : A Sociological Study of Gulbarga

### KEYWORDS

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**ABSTRACT** *Mass media influences society including women very much. Mass media include radio, press, television, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) applications such as internet, social networking, etc. The mass media have both negative as well as positive effects on society. Hence, to assess impact of mass media on women, the present study was made in Gulbarga district. Total 400 women both working and non-working were surveyed with interview schedule. It is suggested to reduce crime and violence and increase telecast more programmes on social values, ethics and morality along with education and employment for the women.*

### Introduction:

Mass media of communication are very crucial for nation building and national development in any developing society. Mass media are the creations of modern science and technology. They play a major role in informing, educating and entertaining the people. Besides, they are used to bring about certain desirable changes among the people, as media and society influence each other. Mass Media include Radio, Television, Press (Newspapers & Magazines, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) applications such as internet, blogging, social networking, etc.

The mass media are the vehicles that carry messages to large audiences. They are so pervasive in modern life that many people do not even notice their influence. In Liberal democracy, the role of the media can be surmised to include informing, entertaining and educating the people. It is widely accepted in Liberal democracy that when the media help to put information at the disposition of the people, they will be able to formally or informally control the state. The mass media are essential for democracy. By keeping people on top of current issues, the media enable people to participate intelligently in public policy discussion and decision-making. In a democracy the principal role of the media is to act as a check on the state and fearlessly expose abuses of official authorities. This watchdog role is said to override in importance all other functions of the media and dictate the form in which the media system should be organized. The media also are the vehicles by which people debate the issues and try to persuade each other of different points of view. Even when they provide us with entertainment, the mass media are capable of portraying and shaping values that enrich our dialogue on social issues and public policy (Baishaki Nag, 2011).

Through media, society gets entertainment and information. The information can be concerning education, agricultural development, social upliftment, national integration, social and human values, national defence, liberation from poverty and backwardness and growth of an individual personality. The entertainment programmes such as tele-serials, stories in newspapers, dramas, songs and such other programmes in Radio, blogging, social networking, etc in internet, etc are playing a major role in entertainment and education of the people in modern society. Women are not exception to the influence of mass media and as such, to assess the impact of mass media on women in Gulbarga district, the present study was conducted.

### Objectives of the Study:

#### The present study is made:

1. To explore the facilities including toilet, kitchen, television, computers, etc. in the houses of women;

2. To ascertain the sources of knowledge of women in Gulbarga district;
3. To study the advantages from use of mass media by women; and
4. To find out the disadvantages of mass media to women.

### Sources and Methodology:

The author searched secondary literature such as books, journal papers, etc, which have become background to theoretical information. To assess the impact of mass media, the author surveyed total 200 working wives and 200 housewives living in rural and urban areas of Gulbarga district. Gulbarga district is located in north Karnataka and head quarters for Hyderabad-Karnataka region. The primary data was collected from interviews of the respondents and the collected data is analyzed, interpreted and discussed as under.

### Analysis, Interpretation and Discussion:

Basically, age of the respondents determines the level of knowledge as it is one of the significant aspect to observe and ascertain about different issues. Hence, the information collected on the age of the respondents covered under the study is analyzed and discussed as under.

**Table No. 1. Age-wise Distribution of Respondents**

Particulars	Working Women		Housewives		Total	
	No's	%	No's	%	No's	%
18 to 25 Years	18	9.0	26	13.0	44	11.0
26 to 40 Years	93	46.5	84	42.0	177	44.2
41 to 50 Years	55	27.5	49	24.5	104	26.0
51 and Above	34	17.0	41	20.5	75	18.7
Total	200	100	200	100	400	100

Like age, education has also considerable impact on use of mass media. It is noted that the literates and educated women generally use the printed media such as newspapers and magazines, computer and internet literates use internet related information sources and illiterates generally use only radio and television. Hence, information was collected on the education of the respondents and presented in the following table.

**Table No. 2. Education of the Respondents**

Particulars	Working Women		Housewives		Total	
	No's	%	No's	%	No's	%
Illiterate	--	--	19	9.5	19	4.7
Lower/ Higher Primary	14	7.0	35	17.5	49	12.2

Undergraduate	22	11.0	61	30.5	83	20.7
Graduate/Post-Graduate	164	82.0	85	42.5	249	62.2
Any Other	--	--	--	--	--	--
Total	200	100	200	100	400	100

The educational background of the respondents revealed that majority of them are literates and few are highly educated. As such, they are well versed with the society, culture, politics, lifestyles, etc. They learn the latest trends in these aspects from many of the sources and the main sources include the friends, relatives, mass media, education, etc. Information was collected from the respondents on the sources of knowledge and news about present trends and presented in the following table.

**Table No. 3. Sources of Knowledge and News**

Particulars	Working Women		Housewives		Total	
	No's	%	No's	%	No's	%
Family Members & Relatives	45	22.5	63	31.5	108	27.0
Friends	31	15.5	25	12.5	56	14.0
Education	15	7.5	08	4.0	23	5.7
Mass Media	182	91.0	167	83.5	349	87.2
Any Other	06	3.0	04	2.0	10	2.5
Total	200	100	200	100	400	100

Media have become such a popular even in rural areas that without which, there is no house in few villages. But, it is noted that still in many of the villages, there are no toilets and bathrooms or even separate kitchen in the house, still they have owned mass media such radio and cable television. It shows that the people have given much importance to mass media in their day to day life. Especially radio and television are significant media in rural areas and in urban areas, along with radio and cable television, the internet and its applications are also used powerful media to get information and as a means of entertainment. The information on the facilities in the houses of respondents was collected and presented in the following table.

**Table No. 4. Facilities in House**

Particulars	Working Women		Housewives		Total	
	No's	%	No's	%	No's	%
Separate Bath Room	200	100	200	100	400	100
Separate Toilet/Latrine	195	97.5	187	93.5	382	95.5
Radio	200	100	200	100	400	100
Television	200	100	200	100	400	100
Computer	134	67.0	107	53.5	241	60.2
Internet	96	48.0	65	32.5	161	40.2
Cell Phone (Mobile)	200	100	200	100	400	100
Newspapers/Magazines	123	61.5	99	49.5	222	55.5
Any Other	56	28.0	41	20.5	97	24.2
Total	200	100	200	100	400	100

The use and impact of each of mass medium namely, radio, press, television, ICT applications including internet, multimedia, etc are analyzed. Overall, what is impact of mass media on women in general is examined. If the mass media is effective, then life styles of women will be improved and developed in day to day life. As such, it was asked to the respondents that whether their lifestyles are changed and improved due to the impact of mass media and the collected information is tabulated as under.

**Table No. 5. Improvements in Lifestyles of Women due to Impact of Mass Media**

Particulars	Working Women		Housewives		Total	
	No's	%	No's	%	No's	%
Education, Knowledge, Culture	85	42.5	56	28.0	141	35.2
Ways of Communication & Language	32	16.0	21	10.5	53	13.2
Traditions and Social Practices in Family	26	13.0	63	31.5	89	22.2
Use of Cosmetics, Clothes, etc.	114	57.0	126	63.0	240	60.0
Any Other	38	19.0	14	7.0	52	13.0
Degradation of Culture, Traditions & Social Values	53	26.5	66	33.0	119	29.7
Total	200	100	200	100	400	100

In many families, the women are depressed and deprived from watching television and accessing and using internet and even reading newspapers and magazines. The reasons given by the male family members are that the women may forget their culture, women are for household work, etc. In this way, women are suppressed and depressed to use and access of mass media. The restrictions imposed on women in using and accessing mass media and the reasons for such restrictions are discussed as under.

**Table No. 6. Suppression of Women from Access and Use of Mass Media**

Particulars	Working Women		Housewives		Total	
	No's	%	No's	%	No's	%
Cultural Restriction on Use of Media like Internet	37	18.5	65	32.5	102	25.5
Restrictions to use only few television programmes	15	7.5	08	4.0	23	5.7
Women suppressed to use mass media in family	26	13.0	32	16.0	58	14.5
Women have full freedom to access and use mass media	122	61.0	95	47.5	217	54.2
Total	200	100	200	100	400	100

The social values, morality and ethics are also playing significant role in social life of human beings. Many of the studies were already proved that few of the television programmes and few of the web sites have degraded the status of women and demoralized the people. Many of the critics also highlighted the adverse effects of television programmes and adverse impact of internet on the society. Hence, information was collected from the respondents on impact of mass media on morality, ethics and social values and presented in the following table.

**Table No. 7. Impact of Mass Media on Morality, Ethics and Social Values**

Particulars	Working Women		Housewives		Total	
	No's	%	No's	%	No's	%
Increase in Ethics, Morality & Social Values	34	17.0	21	10.5	55	13.7

No Impact on Ethics, Morality & Social Values	42	21.0	33	16.5	75	18.7
Decrease in Morality, Ethics & Social Values	124	62.0	146	73.0	270	67.5
Total	200	100	200	100	400	100

There is exaggeration of crime in mass media and as a result, the crimes may increase in society. As per few of the reports the women are also getting equality in education and gaining social status and on the other hand, there are increases of crimes against women in society. Both of these are due to the impact of mass media on society. Hence, women are benefitted from mass media and also there are negative implications of mass media on women's lives. Gender based violence is main aspect in modern days, which has turned the attention of the society. Information was collected on the role and impact of mass media on gender based violence, on whether they have been reduced and collected data is shown as under.

**Table No. 8. Impact of Mass Media on Gender based Violence**

Particulars	Working Women		Housewives		Total	
	No's	%	No's	%	No's	%
Domestic Violence	42	21.0	25	12.5	67	16.7
Atrocities Against Women	21	10.5	18	9.0	39	9.7
Gender Inequality	51	25.5	49	24.5	100	25.0
Any Other	--	--	--	--	--	--
None of Above Reduced, but Increased	86	43.0	108	54.0	194	48.5
Total	200	100	200	100	400	100

It is noted that compared to the disadvantages of mass media on society, there are more advantages of mass media on society and as such, majority of the respondents have highlighted that there is fully or highly positive impact of mass media on society. As the present study is conducted on impact of mass media on women, information was collected from the respondents on the impact of mass media on status of women and presented in the following table.

**Table No. 9. Impact of Mass Media on Status of Women**

Particulars	Working Women		Housewives		Total	
	No's	%	No's	%	No's	%
Status of Women Increased	124	62.0	93	46.5	217	54.2
Status of Women Decreased	43	21.5	49	24.5	92	23.0
No Change in Status of Women	33	16.5	58	29.0	91	22.7
Total	200	100	200	100	400	100

**Suggestions:**

1. The radio and television telecasting companies should concentrate on more education and employment based programmes rather than crime related programmes.
2. It is suggested to telecast women empowerment programmes and schemes from the government, so that women at distant and remote areas can benefit from these programmes.
3. The mass media should emphasize the self-employment of women.
4. It is suggested to reduce crime and violence based programmes and increase social value based, ethical and morality oriented programmes in radio, television and web sites.

**Conclusion:**

Of course, women are getting more knowledge by different types of mass media. But, it is highly suggested to the women to use mass media not only for entertainment, but also for productive and education, culture and employment based issues. Further, the mass media is effective source of communication and as such, it must reduce violence and crime in their programmes so that it can improve the society in general and increase the status of women in particular.

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