

The Steps of Empowerment Among Women Through the Media



Economics

KEYWORDS : women, media, transmission of culture, development process

Dr.Haseena V.A

Assistant professor Post Graduate Department of Economics M.E.S Kalladi College, Mannarkkad, Kerala, India

ABSTRACT

"Women must not accept; she must challenge, she must not be awed by that it has been built up around her she must reverence that woman in her which struggles for expression".

Margaret Sanger

Empowering women aims to inspire women with the courage to break free from the chains of limiting self belief patterns and societal or religious conditioning that have traditionally kept women suppressed and unable to see their true beauty and power. Women are the greatest source of energy to act as vital human resources in improving the quality of life. The country's overall development depends greatly on the inclusion of women in its development process. They have been the transmitters of culture in all societies. The status of women in a society is a true index of its cultural, social, religious and spiritual level. It is one of the most important criteria for estimating with precision the degree of civilization attained by a particular society in various period of its history.

Introduction

In India women comprise 52 percent of its total population and with the advent of 21st Century and its development in various scientific and technological era the status of woman are also changing at a fast pace but we cannot ignore the very existence of a world where woman are discriminated, marginalized and oppressed because of various gender divide issues. Women are vital human resources in improving the quality of life. The country's overall development depends greatly on the inclusion of women in its development process. They have been the transmitters of culture in all societies.

Media has a significant impact on how social and cultural norms relating to women and to gender form and evolve. At the same time, women's image and the role that women play in the media are heavily influenced by existing social and cultural norms. The Council of Europe Conference on Media and the Image of Women examined the relationship of the media to the female images they project, including issues related to stereotyping and sexism; freedom of expression and gender equality; female leadership positions in the media; and the new media as a tool for positive change.

Employment of women in the media

The role of media to the women employment is increasing day by day. Support the return to work of women professionals after parental leave, and encourage work practices that correspond to people's natural life cycles, such as caring for young children.

- provide training with adequate remuneration and social benefits, and provide other forms of support through mentoring systems. Childcare support can alleviate significantly the burden placed on individuals and help them overcome structural hurdles and progress in their careers.
- Provide resources and programmes for the strengthening of women's media literacy in designing, accessing and managing information and content in media technologies.
- Encourage studies of the managerial and decision-making aspects of media organisations to become an integral part of higher education curricula and journalism training programmes.
- Protect journalists from job precariousness and instability and create safe working environments for women.
- The policy of quotas for women in the media remains for some a controversial issue. This is not because opinions are not united in the urgent need to raise the proportion of

women in media and content, but because there is disagreement as to whether such measures would be effective and appropriate.

Various constraining factors of women's empowerment are:

1. Heavy work load of women
2. Isolation of women from each other
3. Illiteracy
4. Traditional views that limit women's participation
5. No funds
6. Internal strife/militarization/wars
7. Disagreements/conflicts among women's groups, unstructured adjustment policies
8. Discriminatory policy environment
9. Negative and sensational coverage of media

In the definition of gender, what defines a woman or a man is much more related to culture and society rather than to their sex, sexuality and personal appearance. In other words, gender is not only naturally given, but also socially constructed. Gender is built on social interactions through the interiorisation of norms and the expectations on individuals' behaviour according to two differentiated patterns for women and men.

The social processes of everyday life are ordered according to these two patterns sociologically defined as 'gender roles'. Gender roles include those behaviours, attitudes, poses that men and women are expected to assume according to the historical period and geographic context they live in. Unlike the essentialist perspective – according to which 'nature' (that is, biological factors such as chromosomal and hormonal differences) is the main cause of differences between male and female behaviour, anti-essentialist positions argue that gender roles are learned during development and reinforced throughout everyday life: 'cultural influences and socialization processes, in this view, are the main determinants of an individual's gender identity and roles'.

Gender stereotyping indicates the process through which gender roles are perpetuated in the socialisation of individuals. It refers to preconceived ideas, whereby males and females are arbitrarily assigned characteristics and roles determined and limited by their sex. Gender stereotyping forces individuals in adhering to a predetermined gender role just because of their sex and regardless of their natural predispositions. It may limit the development of their natural talents and abilities and it may result in a waste of human resources.

Influence of media representations of gender on the audience

There are wide range of space among the audience on such matters of gender uprising. These gender equality has to be given equality and fraternity among the people. Scholars in communication, psychology, sociology, political science, anthropology, and education have carefully considered and studied the issue of media effects on the audience. First of all, it is worth noticing that the very term 'effects' identifies one of the most longstanding models in Communication Research. Developed in the late 1940s, this model characterizes those studies seeking to identify a particular 'effect' that is the result of exposure to a particular type of media content. Such an approach therefore tends to attribute media a great deal of power over audience.

1. The role of the media in shaping gender identities

The existence of identity of women on present context is ruled by many factors. Among these factors the role of media occupies a very good role to play. Most of the time when we count the women, there will be a bundle of women to express their opinions at forefront. But the opportunities are very less. In explaining that what defines a woman or a man is much more related to culture and society rather than to sex, sexuality and personal appearance, gender is defined as a social construct.

2, Media effects on the audience and their repercussions in society at large

The issue of media effects on the audience is also one of the most longstanding theoretical problems in Communication Research. In the realm of TV drama, in recent years, researches have build upon the legacy of Culture. In the realm of advertising, recent studies on the influence of sexist media contents on the audience have shown that the ability to recognize gender-based discrimination or sexist elements in advertising are directly correlated to the respondents' gender awareness and self-esteem. A widespread 'reluctance' to recognise sexism in media content is signalled in the literature and it should be interpreted as alarming, as it shows a low gender-awareness among the audience rather than being the evidence of the individuals' ability to actively negotiate the meanings of media representations.

Conclusion

Women have an important role in Media. The life of women, her employment, her emotions, her contributions and at last all the parts of a women life can be easily depicted through the media. There raised a lot of controversies about the use of media in women life. media influences all sections of society in a major way. The struggle is long and complex as the patriarchal society is very strong. But according to me there is no alternative but to struggle. In this new generation society for the name of publicity many women are beating others to be the winners of publicity.

References

1. Berger, J. *Ways of Seeing*, Harmondsworth: Penguin. 1972.
2. Brooks, Ann. *Postfeminisms: Feminism, Cultural Theory and Cultural Forms*, London. 1997.
3. Curran, J and M. Gurevitch (Eds.). *Mass Media and Society*, London: Edward Arnold. 1991.
4. Denscombe, Martyn. *The Good Research Guide for Small Scale Social Research Projects*,
5. Goodwin, A and Whannel, G (Eds.). *Understanding Television*, London: Routledge. 1992.
6. Hall, S. *Culture, Media, Language*, N.Y: Hutchinsom. 1980.
7. Hollows, Joanne *Feminism, Femininity and Popular Culture*, NY: Manchester University
8. Longjam Meena Devi. "Empowering women through alternative media" *international conference on interplay of economics politics and society for inclusive growth*,
9. Waltz, Mitzi (2005) 'Alternative and Activist Media, Edinburg University Press Joseph, Ammu and Sharma, Kalpana (2006) 'Whose news? The media and omen's issues', Sage publications
10. Joshi, SC (2004) 'Woman empowerment myth and reality' (2004), Akansha publishing house