



## Media and Promotion of Gender Equality

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**Abstract**— *The present research paper, while exploring the plight of women in Patriarchal Society, highlights the role of media in the promotion of gender equality. It discusses why woman becomes a sacrificial and submissive being. It reveals how media promotes the issues of higher education and personality development of woman which are ignored by the patriarchal society. In the paper an attempt has been made to bring out the significance of media in eradicating gender bias prevailing in the society.*

**Keywords**— *Patriarchal Society, Traditional Oriented Attitude, Gender Inequality.*

In the present era media is considered as one of the most important tools for the advancement and development of the nation as it has its reach to almost all people through print, internet, radio, television and cinema. The modern world is oriented by mass media as it plays a significant role in the dissemination and interpretation of a lot of knowledge, innovation and news. Through it we can announce our thoughts and goals in the interest of the nation. So it shapes public opinion by creating awareness in them about their rights and duties. Mass media is a tool to social change. In today's world electronic media plays a vital role in changing the tradition-oriented attitude of the people to a great extent.

Middle class Indian society is marked by gender inequality where woman is placed at the secondary status to her male counterpart. She is proffered all the constitutional rights since the beginning but the hackneyed traditions of the orthodox society prevents her to enjoy these rights. In the male-controlled culture she is maltreated and marginalized. Male chauvinism wraps her in a web of miseries. She is entangled in the mess of patriarchal ideology to the extent to which there is complete annihilation of the self. Being deprived of autonomy and individuality she cannot contribute to the development of the society. In such a scenario, it becomes a concern for the social reformers, scholars, writers, government and media as gender inequality is a hurdle in the advancement of the nation. Media plays a vital role in the promotion of gender equality.

Lack of knowledge and communication skills promotes inequality in a society. The patriarchal system denies self-

assertion to woman. In childhood, during the process of upbringing and socialization, she is taught to be a submissive and docile creature. She is made aware of her role of the sacrificial wife and mother who has no voice. M. Lakshmi pathi Raju, a sociologist aptly remarks:

It is through socialization that men and women come to know about their gender roles that is "feminine role" and "masculine role". Sex roles are not inborn, but learnt. Sex roles are learnt in the course of the socialization process like any other role. The basic pattern of behaviour expected of the sexes are learnt in the family environment very early in life.

It is quite evident that when a girl child is trained only in the light of the gender roles to be played in the patriarchal society, her communication skills are hampered. Being a female, the orthodox society doesn't allow her to deal with the outside world, so her communication skills remain underdeveloped. She cannot assert her aspirations and dreams throughout her life, but tolerates every affliction silently. In the lack of such skills her leadership qualities remain underdeveloped, consequently promoting gender bias. In this context Debbie Churgai justly says:

In most professional settings, leadership and confidence are highly valued traits for top level positions. Based on gender alone, males may be viewed as assertive and self-reliant while females can be seen as less competent compared to males for leadership roles. This is one reason that females can often be automatically viewed as a less desirable candidate when applying for certain positions.

In such circumstances, media plays a great role in inculcating in her communication skills and enhancing her knowledge. When she watches television or listens to radio she learns to communicate and becomes able to assert her rights, dreams and choices. With proper communication skills she can play leadership roles in the society, subsequently promoting gender equality. Moreover, through media she receives knowledge that makes her aware of her rights that leads to the eradication of gender bias.

Higher education is significant for promoting gender equality for a society. In the male-dominated society, higher education for a girl child is discouraged because woman is supposed to be a perfect home-maker, an ideal mother and a sacrificial wife, so her training for household chores gets more preference. In the lack of higher education she doesn't develop rationality in her character, and cannot be self-reliant. Kaushik comments:

Her education and professional attainments are underdeveloped, her ambitions and aspirations are curbed or trimmed and she is thought to play a role to in-laws in general and to the husband in particular with self-sacrifice. Her physical and intellectual potentialities are thus subordinated and subjected to her assigned domestic roles and duties (167).

In such circumstances, females, while staying at home, can get higher education through distance mode of learning or privately. Internet through mobile phones, laptops, PCs, tablets etc. become helpful in providing study materials, and transmitting views and opinions. Ritesh Chugh mentions:

For learning and teaching, social media is used in a variety of different contexts- language learning, writing development, social media provides a unique stage for interaction amongst students and teachers. Studies have indicated that the use of social media in higher education has enhanced learning, increased participation and engagement, improved content dissemination and improved pedagogy and information sharing.

In the male-centred society no attention is given to the personality development of girl child as she is not considered as an autonomous being. The oppressive environment moulds her into a disciplined and docile creature that suits the needs of the patriarchal society. N. Sharda Iyer points out that "her personality is determined by her family upbringing and socialization in childhood" (205). The religious practices and social institutions play a significant role in the process of the rearing. According to Mannu, "In childhood a woman must be subjected to her father, in youth to her husband and when her lord is dead, to her sons. A woman must never be independent (qtd. in "Socio-economic" 3). The family doesn't create a

conducive world for the upliftment of the daughter through education, self-determination and economic independence, ultimately distorting her personality.

Electronic media has a great significance in the personality development of women. There are so many serials being telecast on television that challenge the conservative ideology of the patriarchal society. Many serials on T.V. channels present the picture of women in a manner in which she plays a significant role in the advancement and development of the country. These female characters become a prototype of liberty and modernity. In the serial "Maddam Sir" on the channel SAB TV, the central female character, who is a police officer, emerges out as a developed personality who breaks the hackneyed tradition of the male-dominated society. Such female characters motivate women for self-empowerment. Now day's women want to be an officer, doctor, teacher and pilot. Different TV channels organise debates or special talks on women empowerment. In these discussions, stress is laid on Women Empowerment through education and personality development. The crux of such talks is to provide higher education to girls so that they may get knowledge which is a liberative phenomenon. Higher education and knowledge lead to personality development and economic independence. These are the issues which have been raised by the feminist writers like Mary Wollstonecraft and Simone de Beauvoir on watching such programmes on television, women become more and more progressive, bold, assertive and action oriented. The T.V. Channels broadcast speeches delivered by empowered women like Kiran Bedi and Malala who focus on Gender Equality. They assert that women should be treated at par with their male counterpart. Her upbringing and socialization should be same as that of a boy child. Such programmes create awareness among women for carving their own identity. When they watch such programmes they come to know about the reality and bring up their children with same nurturing patterns. In view of the above discussion, it is evidently clear that electronic media is playing a significant and praiseworthy role in having far reaching positive results in bringing gender equality in the society. It has proved an effective tool for the purpose of woman emancipation, resultantly fulfilling the dreams of various feminists and writers to some extent by way of addressing the issues raised by them.

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