

**RURAL WOMEN EMPOWERMENT THROUGH MEDIA:  
A CASE STUDY IN ANANTHAPURAMU DISTRICT OF ANDHRA PRADESH**

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**Introduction**

Women empowerment its meaning to make women powerful socially, economically and politically. Today women are not helpless creature. She has been empowered through the media such as Radio, Mobile Phone, Land Phone, Television and Computer. Their empowerment of women has brought about social, economic and political. Information and Communication Technologies have been potential to give a major boost to the social, economic and political empowerment of women and the promotion of gender equality.

Women's empowerment in India is greatly reliant on many dissimilar variables that include environmental location (urban/rural), educational status, social status (caste and class), and age. Policies on women's empowerment exist at the national, state and local (Panchayat) levels in many sectors, including health, education, economic opportunities, gender-based violence, and political participation. On the other hand, there are momentous gaps between policy advancements and actual practice at the community level. One key factor for the gap in implementation of laws and policies to address discrimination, economic disadvantages, and violence against women at the community level is the largely patriarchal structure that governs the community and households in much of India. As such, Women and girls have constrained mobility, access to education, access to health facilities, and lower decision-making power, and experience higher rates of violence. Political participation is also hindered at the Panchayat (local governing bodies) level

and at the state and national levels, despite existing reservations for women. Rural women, as opposed to women in urban settings, face inequality at much higher rates, and in all spheres of life. Urban women and urban educated women enjoy relatively higher access to economic opportunities, health and education, and experience less domestic violence. Women (both urban and rural) who have some level of education have higher decision-making power in the household and the community. Furthermore, the level of women's education also has a direct implication on maternal mortality rates, and nutrition and health indicators among children.

**Review of Literature**

It is settled fact in literature that a very important mission of teaching social studies and other related fields is not only to stimulate desired social behaviour to the learner, but equally. To facilitate social change and development. The use of appropriate tools of instructions, such as electronic media, speeds up the accomplishment of these objectives. Perhaps, this is the point underscoring the argument of Koert (2000) that "dialogue" or information exchange through electronic media will have to play a role of increasing importance in development, whereby networked media are in that way to facilitate rural networking and social change. M.A. Ansari (1999) has reported that "one of the greatest hardships endured by the poor, and by many others, who live in the poorest countries, is their sense of isolation. The new communication

technologies promise to reduce that sense of isolation and to open access to knowledge in ways unimaginable not long ago “Electronic media being an essential catalyst assists social education in achieving such globalization ends. They are not only content providers, but also facilitators and stimulators of social change (Koert, 2000).

Much earlier (in the 1960’s), Schramm (1964) submitted that the only way of developing economics could rapidly and effectively speed the flow of information, offer education where it had never been offered before, and teach literacy and technical skills very widely was to make full use of modern communication, which electronic media represents.

Globally, there is an increasing body of evidence that shows how the rapid proliferation of ICTs is contributing positively to women’s socio-economic empowerment (Aitkin, 1998, Melhem and Tandon 2009). A range of ICT models have been used to support the empowerment of women all over the world and there is evidence to show that ICTs have improved women’s access to information, provided new employment, created new class of women entrepreneurs and improved their access to government (Beondon, 2005). The specific uses of ICTs are the followings: (a) empowering women to access knowledge and information; (b) offering better decision support, (c) improved access to market information and services, creation of new employment, (d) facing HIV/AIDS crisis; (e) and developing entrepreneurship (Pade et al, 2005).

Notwithstanding, Chandragowda, M.J. (2010) 8 insisted that radio remains the most used electronic mass medium in rural areas of less – developed countries (LDCs). He also corroborated this position in its belief that the presence relatively large geographical areas is a sine qua non for development.

In this paper an attempt to show how radio and TV help the rural women to change their socio-economic outlook in the sample villages of Ananthapuramu District.

### Objectives

- To study Rural women’s empowerment through media.
- To understand the nature and scope of various women-oriented media programmes.
- To study the impact of media on women’s empowerment.

### Hypothesis

- Media helps Rural Women to become empowerment.
- Media helps illiterate rural women to became powerful women.

### Methodology

Anantapuramu District in identified for the purpose of study. It is purely on empirical study based on primary and secondary data were collected from 150 Rural Women from RUDSETI (Rural Development Self Employment Training Institute) relating to five villages in Ananthapuramu District. Secondary data collected from different journals, periodicals, magazines and Daily News Papers.

### Observations

A total of 150 respondents in the five villages were taken for study (1) Kuderu, (2) Rachanapalli (3) Kammur, (4) Akuthotapalli and (5) Chiyyedu. Educaitional attainment among the respondents is not at all satisfactory. 50 women are illiterate while the rest have passed elementary education. The respondents are in the age group of 30-50 years. 60 of them belongs to nuclear family while the others from Joint families. Among 150 women. All of them have T.V. and 90 of them Radio set and 60 of them

have BSNL, Airtel and Voda phones of their own.

### **Empowerment through ICT**

ICTs generally refer to an expanding assembly of technologies that are used to handle information and aid communication. These include hardware, software, media for collection, storage, processing, transmission and presentation of information in any format (i.e., voice, data, text and image), computers, the Internet, CD-ROMs, email, telephone, radio, television, video, digital cameras etc. While radio, television and print media were primarily used to perform these tasks earlier, with the advent of the new ICTs, these have now been considered as traditional ICTs, however, many of these traditional ICTs are effective than web-based solutions, as they can resolve issues such as language, literacy or access to the Internet.

The new ICTs are commonly referred to as evolving applications or technologies that rely on the Internet, telecommunication networks, mobile phones, personal computers and databases. These new ICTs have the potential of getting vast amounts of information to rural populations in a more timely, comprehensive, cost-effective and interactive manner. With new applications emerging and the costs of owning and accessing technologies reducing, the world is witnessing a growing convergence in the technologies of broadcasting, communication and information.

On the other hand, empowerment is a multi-dimensional social process that helps people gain control over their own lives. Women empowerment generally refers to the process by which women enhance their power to take control over decisions that shape their lives, including in relation to access to resources, participation in decision making and control over distribution of benefits. Women's

empowerment has given 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.

There has been a lot of interest during the last two decades in realizing the potential of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) for achieving socio-economic development. This resulted in experimentation with various ICTs and its applications in areas such as agriculture, health, governance, financial services, education and employment. Many of these initiatives clearly reveal the huge potential of ICTs in improving efficiency and effectiveness of reaching rural communities with relevant information. Though these initiatives have also benefited rural women by way of access to new information and new employment opportunities, studies have shown that women still face a number of constraints and they have not fully benefited from the potential of ICTs. Out of the different ICTs, only Radio and Television are found to have an agenda and a mechanism for addressing the relevant information needs of rural women.

### **Role of Radio**

On February 14, 1922 the first regular broadcast in Britain began from 2 MT in the village of Writtle in Essex. It was so successful that in May 1922 the first London Station using the call sign 2LO began broadcasting from London. This came into being as the B.B.C. British Broadcasting Corporation.

With the development of the triode valve, the radio industry began to spread into all kinds of applications which we now call electronics. The principle of wireless

transmission found its applications in communications of all kinds related to both war and peace. Radio Transmission ushered in an age of wireless communication and broadcasting activity moved beyond the area of entertainment. A vast variety of programs have come to be included in the daily transmissions that the radio has now established itself as a new medium of communication art calling for specialized approach in program productions. What range has you now in radio production radio plays, music, educational radio, entertainment and news? Radio corporations have come to be set up all over the world to explore the full possibility of the medium. Artists, script writers in a vast range of program production have appeared on the scene. During the days of the British, radio stations were established in our country. Today, all India Radio has a vast countrywide network of radio stations equipped with high, medium and low power capacity covering the entire nation. Radio transmission in our country is under the supervision of a separate ministry. The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting.

The Government of India established a network of All India Radio Stations across the country to broadcast programmes in all regional languages. Now the All India Radio Stations existed 231 in its network which visually covers the entire country in terms of both population and geographical area. The Akasavani Radio of Ananthapuramu district of Andhra Pradesh started on May 25, 1991 on 101.7 Hertz M.F. The Akasavani Radio of Ananthapuramu District help the Rural Women improving knowledge on Agriculture programmes. Gynecology programmes, legal programmes and entertainment programmes.

### **Agriculture programmes**

In Study area half of the women participating in agriculture and its affiliated sectors. The Akasavani Radio is broad

casting the agriculture programmes by the agriculture, Scientists.

Since 1991, the Akasavani Radio had been broadcasted by the name of Hints to farmers (Sedyapu Suddulu). The Radio not only provide the information about agriculture but also creating the awareness among rural women. The agriculture Scientists through the Radio advising the rural women that how to use the fertilizers, how to remove the pesticides, marketing, products, daily commodities marketing and other eatables and crop harvesting and how to cultivate the land.

The All India Radio is interacting with the Rural Women weekly twice through the phoning programmes regarding agriculture cultivation.

### **Gynecology programmes**

Akasavani Radio is broad casting the Gynec problems by the famous Gynecologists in study area. Now a days, Gynec problems are common to all women from puberty to old age and related ostero problems. The radio messages are influencing women in achieving better health. Since long years, the Radio broadcasted and interacted with the rural women to clear of their doubts through the phoning programmes. Thousands of times the Gynecologists express through the Radio the precautions to be taken to prevent the malnutrition to avoid ill-health during young ages. Weakly twice the Akasavani Radio interacting phone-in-programmes with rural women through the Gynecologist and other specialist doctors.

### **Legal programmes**

The Akasavani Radio broadcasting the Legal programmes weekly twice by the Senior Advocates or Magistrate or District Judge. The live programmes pertaining to legal problems faced by Rural Women are beneficial to the women to know their

position and their rights over the property disputes, maintenance, Guardian ship and matrimonial disputes. The recent amendments made by State and Central Government over the rights in ancestors' properties of a female changed the economical condition of Rural Women more particularly.

### **Government programmes**

The All India Radio striving to make empowerment of Rural Women through the advertisement of welfare programmes regarding Jandhan Yozana, Digital India, Swatcha Bharath, Skill India, Mankibath, Bheema Yojana and Nirmal Bharat.

### **Pinakini Programmes**

These programmes broadcasting to bring the awareness rural women socially, economically empowerment through the entertainments, classical music, light songs, Folk songs etc, Weekly thrice interacting the rural women phone-in-programmes.

Commercial Advertisers also broadcasting and to make the women powerful socially and economically. During the elections, the rural women canvassed the votes through the Radio in the study area.

### **Role of Television**

“Sapthagiri Doordarshan, Andhra Pradesh, Yadagiri (Telangana), Chandana (Karnataka) “the Government television has been playing an important role in communicating rural and agricultural news and information to rural communities. It telecasts programmes on agriculture, rural development, women, children, family

welfare, adult education, youth, civic sense and public awareness, science and technology and telecasts special programmes during natural calamities such as flood, earth quake, epidemics etc., research inputs, quizzes, crop seminars and a live phone-in programmes. It covers various aspects of agriculture and related activities such as horticulture, animal husbandry, dairy and rural life. The narrow casting Kendra's produce locally relevant programmes in local language and dialect and these programmes are telecasted 5 days a week. Doordarshan's popular health magazine programme – ‘Sapthagiri’ – funded by the Health and Family Welfare Ministry has been successful in creating health awareness about malaria, tuberculosis, reproductive health issues, tobacco and alcohol use, sanitation and hygiene, and HIV/AIDS.

### **Conclusion**

Radio and Television are disseminating information and knowledge on agriculture, health regarding Gynec problems and malnutrition legal problems between men women many rural women are benefiting the potential of ICT. Radio and Television would still remain critical for disseminating a wide range of information to rural communities in India in the years to come. Radio and Television also support distance education and employment programmes to a very large extent. Rural women need financial, technical and managerial support to effectively utilize this opportunity ICT's can also contribute significant gains in efficiency and effectiveness in rural women enterprises.

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