

**A UGC SPONSORED MINOR RESEARCH PROJECT ON THE
'MEDIA PROJECTIONS OF WOMEN IN INDIA: IT'S IMPACT ON WOMEN'S STATUS'**

(MRP(H)-752/09-10/KAMA008/UGC-SWRO Bangalore Dated 24-03-2011)

THE EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

Introduction

Media is one of the powerful sources which shape the attitudes and opinions among the people. For this reason, advertisers prefer different means of media to create public opinion, shape attitudes and market the products. It has been observed that the media through its various forms has been involved in creating everlasting public opinion and shaping the attitude of the people. The recent role played by the media in reaching out the masses on the issue of corruption led to a large number of people extending support to Mr Anna Hazare and his team. The role of media is significant in creating social awareness. The media through its various programmes and activities is committed to social change and social development. The media has reached out to all forms of audience in educating, disseminating information and giving entertainment. The media has also done a commendable work in empowering women, educating them and bringing out certain issues related them before the audience for awareness and before the Governments for effective measures. But the same media which has been doing all the good to society and women has been affecting women's welfare, empowerment and progress. The media has been projecting women in the negative way which has resulted in framing the negative images of women.

Indeed, women are exploited in various forms. There is an indecent exposure of women in the media under the pretext of role assignment. Press is to be blamed

here for glorifying certain issues connected to women not with a concern for women, but only for the publicity to increase the readership/viewership with a focus on profits. They often resort to pictorial or audio-visual techniques to highlight certain issues in order to achieve their goals. For example, cases of Kashmira Shah, Carol Gracias and Gauhar Khan, Pooja Chauhan, Monica Bedi, Pooja Bhatt are noteworthy here.

Secondly, when we talk about the empowerment of women and prevention of domestic violence against them, often media is used to re-enforce the traditional role of women by glorifying the role women played in the past at the domestic level. This has considerable impact on the overall development of women in India.

Directly or indirectly, media also campaigns the weakness of women in protecting themselves. The weaknesses of law in providing justice to women in the cases of Aroshi, Manorama (Manipur), Pub Attack case, Mangalore, Pooja Chauhan, Rajkot, which have been given wide publicity has certainly a bearing on the increase or prevention of violence against women. These incidents give green signals to exploit women further. Crimes and issues against women are reported in a very large scale which in turn affects the image women have in India.

Much of women's exploitation can be seen in the area of advertisements. Often the contents in the advertisements and the product advertised for have no relation at all. Women have been projected as the persons craving for passion, luxury, comforts, wealth and power. This has an effect on the status of women. In addition to this, most of the Television serials project women as the villains or as the perpetrators of crime.

The indecent exposure of women in the media has affected women's status and led to consider women as the objects sex, fun and entertainments. In some of the cases media has engulfed the personal matters of women resulting in demeaning their status and putting them into shame. The case of actress Nikita in connection with actor Darshan in Karnataka can be cited here as an example. Hence, women figure prominent today in the media and this has most significance for women in the tradition bound Indian society.

The Research Proposal

The crucial point to be explored here is the relationship between women and media. Is media antagonistic to women? Is it trying to transmit stereotypes existing against them? Is it really trying to ease out the problems connected to women? Are women depicted as empowered, honest, sincere, and administrative in advertisements and television programmes? The answers to these queries are found through this minor research project. The proposed research intended to explore the effects of media negative projections on women's status.

The media projections against women have some grave consequences upon society and on women themselves. This minor research attempts to bring out certain consequences of media trends upon women. The effects of the negative media images of women on women's personality and status are believed to be the following.

1. A negative projection of women in the media has an effect on the status of women. It creates negative attitudes towards women and women become the scapegoat of these forms of projections.

2. Taking undue advantage of women becomes legitimized, be in the family, workplace or in the public.
3. The negative projections of women's images in the media result in the development of negative self-image among women. They don't see themselves as bright, capable and independent to handle the situations. Due to the negative media projections, women are subjected to humiliation and eve teasing. They lose self confidence in life.
4. Media violates women's privacy and their rights. It becomes increasingly more in the media to trespass the personal matters of women. A lot of discussions and gossip about women's affairs in the media has become a day to day event and an entertainment to the masses. Such media projections affect the images of women who have been referred to.

The Research Objective

The prime goal of this research is to explore the impact of media projections of women on Indian Society in general and Indian Women in particular. It has been observed that the media has its role to play in effective socialization and creation of healthy values in mind and in society. The often projected negative role of women and traditionalism imparted may have their serious consequences upon the younger generation and especially in bringing up the children at an early stage. The objective of this study is to:

1. Find out the impact of media projections of women on enhancing women's status in India
2. To learn women's responses to these media projections.

3. To find out changes in the patterns of socialization due to media overtaking.
4. To know the areas of media which have maximum role in projecting negative role of women?
5. To explore the re-enforced stereotypes and prejudices against women.
6. To find appropriate remedies in preventing negative role of women in the media.

The Research Methodology

The proposed minor research on the 'Media Projections of Women in India: It's Impact on Women's Status' is a sponsored and fully funded research project by the Universities Grants Commission, New Delhi through its South Western Regional Office from Bangalore under the reference No: MRP(H)-752/09-10/KAMA008/UGC-SWRO Bangalore dated 24th March, 2011.

A brief Research Methodology of the research carried out is detailed below. The research was carried out according to the plan and design of the research and is completed as per the original plan of the research approved by the UGC South Western Region, Bangalore.

a) The Period of Research

The period of study was proposed to be executed for 18 months as per the UGC Norms for the Minor Research Project. The study executed on the 13th of April, 2010 on receipt of the 1st installment of the Grants from the UGC.

i. Preliminary preparations for implementing the project from 13th April, 2010 to November, 2010.

This period was the most crucial in implementing the project. During this period a survey of literature was carried out. Information related to the theme was obtained from the available documentary sources from the library work.

Related information on the subject and the theme was searched on the net and a few available sources were downloaded from the websites. The related articles were compiled in two book forms for ready reference.

The required and essential reference books worth about Rs 19,750/= were purchased. A literature survey was possible due to the available books and literary sources from the internet. It was possible to prepare the hypothesis that 'the media projection of women has some bearing upon the status of women-positive or negative'. This hypothesis required to be tested and verified through the formal procedure of research.

Primary notes on the project were prepared in consultation with research guides from the neighboring colleges and their advice on the preparation of the interview schedule was sought.

ii. Preparation of the Interview Schedule, Training the Field workers, sample study and data collection from December, 2010 to, April, 2011.

This period included the preparation of the interview schedule. The interview schedule was prepared in consultation with the experts in the research in social sciences. The esteemed professors from the neighboring

colleges were helpful in assisting and giving necessary inputs to prepare the interview schedule. The interview schedule was pre-tested, administered to the respondents over the period of 6 months. The field work carried out during the college holidays and other National Holidays. There were no problems encountered while administering the interview schedule. The respondents were co-operative and rather were happy to supply the information and were delighted to know that there will be a study on the media representation of women and its impact on their status.

iii. Analysis of data and Tabulation from May, 2011 to June, 2011

This period included the Tabulation and analysis of the data. The data obtained from the interview schedules was tabulated and it was represented in form of statistical tables and graphs. The data obtained was sufficient to draw conclusions and make interpretations. The interview schedules were administered to about 302 respondents and 250 responses were considered more valid for the purpose of survey and were processed manually.

iv. Writing the Research Report from July 2011 to September, 2011

The preparations were made to write the research report of the study completed. The Research Report was planned and organized according to the needs of the study. It was planned to include the chapters on the Media as an introduction. The report is also planned to include an analysis of the media in projecting women in its content. The report is also planned to include the chapter on the analysis of data and findings of the study. It included the conclusions drawn from the study, summary of findings and

recommendations. The whole research process is included in the research report in form of a research design.

The research report gives all the details of this research and all the activities carried out in relation to this research.

b) The Geographical Area of Study

The geographical area of the study was restricted to Udupi District of Karnataka State. The respondents for administering the interview schedule were chosen from the three Talukas of Udupi District, namely, Udupi, Kundapur and Karkala. Different places were chosen from these three talukas to contact the respondents for the interview on random basis. Thus the Universe of this research for all the purposes is Udupi District of Karnataka.

c) The Sources of data

A survey of literature was carried out to obtain information on the theme of the research. The introductory information on the media was gathered from different literary sources. The information on Women and Media was procured from various references and documents available in form of published theses, reference books and discussions on the internet in blog sites.

The primary data was gathered from the structured interview schedule. A few open ended questions were also included in the schedule to get detailed information on some issues.

The Structured interview schedule was prepared in accordance with the objectives of the research project and the schedule was pre-tested. The pilot study yielded good results. About 50 interview schedules were administered during this stage and the limitations of the schedule were rectified. The interview schedule was prepared in Kannada and in English to make it easy for the respondents to express themselves in the language which is comfortable for them.

The field work was carried out in different parts of udupi district via accidental sampling technique and about 302 interviews were carried out. The main areas covered were: Kaup, Padubidri, Shirva, Belman, Shankarpura, Mattu , udyavara, Hiriadka, Perampalli, Malpe, Kelarkalabettu, Tenkanidyoor, Bengre, Hoode, Brahmavar, Kolalgiri, Barkur, Sastan, Kokkarne, Saligrama from Udupi Taluk, Tekkatte, Koteshwara, Basrur, Thallur, Gangolli, Haladi Kollur from Kundapur Taluk and Belman, Manchakkal, Bailoor, Nitte, Ajfekar and Kanajar from Karkala Taluk. The response to the interview schedule was quite satisfactory and the information collected was adequate for the study.

The Analysis of Data

The data obtained from the interview schedule was processed manually to obtain the tables and draw inferences. The analysis of the data has revealed the answers to all the research questions which are incorporated in the major findings of the study.

The Research Report

The Research Report is prepared on the basis of the research study which includes all the details related to the whole research process. The research report includes the major chapters related to the survey of literature, an analysis on the current position of media in depicting images of women in the media, identification of the negative portrayal of women's images in the media and consequences of these on the women's status. It also includes the recommendations and suggestions from the respondents.

The introductory chapter in the research report includes the information related to the media and its advantages for society. An analysis and discussion is made in this chapter about the constructive role played by media in creating social awareness and social change. The chapter on the 'Media Projections of Women in India' brings out the relationship between women and media. This chapter is specifying the significance of media for women's empowerment and the role media needs to play in enhancing women's status. It is also discussed about the role played by media in strengthening women's status in society.

A discussion is also included in this chapter about the negative portrayal of women's images in the media. The different sections of the media such as newspapers and magazines, advertisements in print and digital media, Television and Cinema, Billboards and posters and the internet have been analysed in connection with the negative portrayals of women's images in their content. This section of the research report has the negative media images of women projected in different sections of the media. The chapter points out that the women are being depicted as traditional, religious, superstitious, submissive, not resisting ill-

treatment, glamorous, modern with less ethics, crave for wealth and property, competitive with other women, motivators for crimes, sensual, less intelligent when compared with men, falling out for men and objects, involving in extra-marital relations, preference for married men (husbands of others), performing low profiled jobs, meant for housekeeping, hooked around villains etc

The discussion on the effects of negative media projections of women on women's status has revealed that the women have been affected in various ways. The media images affect women individually as well as collectively. It is observed that due to the negative projection of women in the media has affected women's self, position in the family and in the workplace, especially in the public. Women have developed negative self image, experience societal pressure on them, subjected to humiliation and eve teasing and developed a feeling of dependency. The research proposal is included in this chapter.

The succeeding chapter in the research report includes an analysis on the impact of media projections on women's status. This section of the research report has an analysis of the responses of the respondents to the various queries made during the administration of the interview schedule. It includes the major findings from the study.

The subsequent chapter in the research report includes the conclusions and recommendations made from the study. This chapter has given emphasis to the responses given by the respondents to various interview questions. The suggestions are made by the respondents themselves in preventing negative projections of women in the media.

The research report includes the maps, graphs, tables drawn from the responses of the respondents. It contains a list of references and interview schedule in appendixes.

THE MAJOR FINDINGS FROM THE RESEARCH

The findings from the research study are:

1. The women are exclusively dependent on new papers and magazines for information thereby exposing themselves to the negative images found in the print media.
2. The television has become more popular among women for seeking entertainment. The images about women in the television are negative and male supervised. Thus these images constantly indoctrinate women and they cannot see themselves as capable and equal to men.
3. The women have given an opinion on the media for covering the issues related to them. Majority of women have given negative opinion on the media. They have opined that the media is not playing its constructive role and media is not in favour of women.
4. The women have agreed that the media is projecting them as empowered, ideal, authoritarian and successful. Only few have said women are shown as intelligent in the media.
5. With regard to the negative projections, women have pointed out that the media is depicting them basically as sex object followed by falling for men,

money and objects. These images, according to them, demean their status and subject to public humiliation.

6. The content in the television and cinema is considered to be more antagonistic to women when compared to advertisements and print media. Internet, though is more responsible, it has not been identified by the respondents as they are not so exposed to internet or use it for any purposes.
7. The respondents have identified that the media has positive effects on women and women's status. The media has elevated women's status and they have become empowered, self-confident, developed self-respect and self motivated.
8. With regard to negative effects of media projections of women, the respondents' pointed out that the media has been responsible for increasing crimes on women. Media has also been accused by them for developing a negative self-image and they have been looked down by the society.
9. The respondent's stated that they had experienced the negative effects of the media on them or on their status.
10. The respondents also have pointed out that their family members such as maternal uncles, husbands, paternal uncles, elder brothers were in forefront in enforcing media negative projections on them.

11. While attempts being made to enforce negative images on them, a few of the women have resisted and majority of women silently accepted the enforcements.

12. Only a small percentage of women were successful in opposing the media negative projections on them.

13. The knowledge among the respondents on the existence of any Organization, Legal body or any Legislation protecting women from indecent exposure and remedy for the victims is considerably poor.

Conclusions

The following conclusions are made from the study.

1. It is obvious that the women have considered that media is significantly involved in projecting the distorted images of them and demeaning their status.
2. The study concludes that there is significant adverse impact on the status of women due to the negative projections of women's images in the media. Women are directly or indirectly affected due to the negative projections of their images.
3. The media has taken the commercial roots than the social responsibility. Especially the entertainment media is more commercial in its content and is striving to attract the male audience.

4. The impact of media is seen especially on the lower income groups, backward communities, rural women and women with little education. The caste background has also influenced the impact of media on women.
5. The women have suggested various measures to control the media in projecting them in derogatory manner. This needs to be effectively considered by the concerned authorities and media persons.
6. The media is also playing its balanced role in projecting women images and issues related to them. The media, cannot be held totally irresponsible in projecting women in the negative forms.
7. The study concludes that the awareness on law, legal remedies, education and employment are significant for women in protecting themselves from various forms of exploitation and defending themselves from the enforcement of media images on them.

Recommendations and Suggestions

The minor research project on the 'Media Projections of Women in India: Its Impact on Women's Status' is complete and from the analysis of data, the following recommendations and suggestions are made.

1. The study explored the impact of the negative media projections of women on the status of women. The study concluded that the impact is found on women. This area needs to be further explored with a major research project.

2. A strict enforcement of existing legislations is necessary to control the media. The media should be constantly monitored for its content.
3. The media should desist from magnifying issues related to women. The more description of the situations, character assassination of the accused women and the victims should not be done.
4. Identify of the accused women should be protected. The identity of the victims of crime should be kept secret and the law enforcing authorities should ensure that the media doesn't take undue advantage of the issues.
5. The women persons in the media like actors, hosts, narrators, news readers should abstain themselves from projecting negative images of women in the media. They should be the guardians of morality and modesty of women.
6. As the internet takes the significant share of responsibility in violating the modesty of women, cyber laws need to be revised and internet should be monitored by the agencies of the Government. The cases of morphing, illegal uploading of the images and text should be monitored by the Government and its agencies.
7. The print media should be restricted from publishing obscene images and text related to women on their cover pages. The print media should be prevented from giving exciting titles to the news related to women and women celebrities.

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