

Social Media And Women Empowerment

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Abstract: Today's era is the era of social media whose presence and active involvement has swiftly and widely spread the ideologies for women empowerment. Social media has become the agent of social change which helped and supported women's empowerment in various aspects such as mobilizing attention of global community towards women's rights and challenges discrimination and stereotypes across the globe. Social media has given platform to discuss issues and challenges of women through blogs, chats, online campaign, online discussion forums, and online communities which is mostly not disseminated or propagated by mainstream media. The paper will focus on how social media is used to empower women and encourage the women entrepreneurs from rural and urban parts of India. Moreover, this paper will discuss how social media became powerful platform for the discussion of women's rights and encouraging government and policy makers to step up commitments and formulate policies for gender equality. The social media has empowered women in manifold such as social, psychological and financial. To ensure the digital safe spaces that assure women can freely access social media, the paper will discuss the positive and negative aspects of social media participation. The paper will discuss about the digital literacy for women as there is virtual gender gap due to lack of literacy, cybercrimes etc. The research undertaken is qualitative.

Index Terms: Cybercrime, Digital Media, Digital Literacy, Empowerment, Rural and Urban India, Social Media, Women,

1 INTRODUCTION:

Social media is a combination of two words such as Social and Media. Social means interacting and communicating information with other people and receiving the feedback and information from them and Media means the vehicle, channel or instrument to disseminate or circulate the information such as TV, newspaper, radio etc. It is an umbrella term for electronic communication in real time. It provides an electronic platform to create, communicate, share, discuss and exchange the information, opinions, thoughts, ideas, experiences, insights and perspectives through different application in real time to the users. It is computer-based and internet-based technology which enabled the virtual interaction and facilitates the dissemination of thoughts, information, entertainment and ideas for personal and professional communities. It is used to interact and communicate with friends, family and widely used in business world as it provides quick and instant communication and feedback. The users are prosumers who create, produce and consumes the content which includes information, audio-visual, photos, documents etc through various web-based software or application. It is a web based platform where users can connect and share the content which engaging, entertaining and informative for the local or global communities. It is an ever-changing and ever-evolving virtual world.

Different forms/types of Social media

- Social Networking Sites :Facebook, Instagram, WeChat, WhatsApp, Skype, SnapChat, Telegram
- Microblogs and blogs :Twitter, Tumblr, Pinterest, Yammer, Meetme
- Collaborative projects :Wikipedia and Social Bookmarking
- Content Communities :YouTube, Daily Motion, Imagr, TikTok and FlickrR
- Virtual game worlds sites :PlayStation VR Worlds

The most popular social media sites by GlobalWebIndex, flagship report, 2018 are as follows:

- Facebook
- YouTube
- Facebook Messenger
- WhatsApp
- Instagram
- Twitter

- LinkedIn
- Skype
- Snapchat
- Pinterest
- Line
- Viber
- WeChat
- Tumblr

"There is no chance of the welfare of the world unless the condition of women is improved. It is not possible for a bird to fly on one wing."- Swami Vivekananda

Women Empowerment in a country like India, which is knowledge based society and involves in enhancing the abilities of women and developing their skills to attain the insight and knowledge. Women play a pivotal role in the growth, betterment and development of the society and nation building. Empowering women has become a debatable topic in the India. It has emerged as an important topic in contemporary time as the concept and process of development will be incomplete without the active participation and full involvement of women. Empowering women is the most important as it aims at inspiring and motivating them to come out from adverse situation be it societal, religious, psychological, economical and fight for their rights for better life. Women empowerment must be social, psychological, financial or economic.

Social Media and Women Empowerment

Social media have transformed communication extensively at local and global level in the past few decades. There is dramatic increase in the practice and use of social media in few decades in India. Social media is a new tool, weapon or platform for women to discuss, communicate, voice their opinion, organize campaign and online activism. Social media is a rising trend and powerful channel for seeking wider attention of local and global community for the discussion of women's right issues and motivate and encourage the government or policy makers for gender equality. With the help and support of social media tools and applications such as blog, vlog, facebook, twitter, instagram etc women are being empowered by education, entertainment, self decision making, technologically updated and financial empowerment.

Social Media and Women Entrepreneurs

Social media is becoming one of the most powerful tools where women can start new companies, venture or start-up as they can contact and converse with customers and consumers directly. Female entrepreneurs can do marketing through social media which is very cost effective and can be easily channelized. Through social media, entrepreneurs can directly communicate and take feedback and suggestions about their online products or services within short durations. The following are the women entrepreneurs who started their business through social media. Aditi Gupta, Co-Founder, Managing Partner at Menstrupedia, friendly guide for healthy periods (<https://www.menstrupedia.com>). She is from small place of Jharkhand and it's her brain child which provides a friendly guide to girls and women to maintain the health and hygiene and stay active and healthy during menstruation. It creates awareness through informative, entertaining and motivating content about periods through different media. Richa Singh, Conceptualizer & Co-Founder at YourDOST: Online Counselling & Emotional Wellness Coach (<https://yourdost.com>). She is from Bhopal and started an online technology platform for online counseling and emotional support for mental wellbeing and emotional wellness. It is unique startup in India which connects people under anonymity with experts to share and discuss emotional issues and mental health. Richa Kar is the woman behind Zivame an online lingerie shopping portal (<https://www.zivame.com>) and considered as one of the most influential woman entrepreneur in the country presently. She is a co-founder of Zivame and it is Bangalore based online startup for women lingerie retailing. She was born in Jamshedpur and from very conventional family. Started in 2011, this portal educates and motivates women about women apparel, active-wear, and intimate wear. Shradha Sharma is the Founder and Chief Editor at Yourstory.com (<https://yourstory.com>), which is an online media platform for start-ups and entrepreneurs. It is India's leading online media technology which has narrated more than 20,000 stories in 12 Indian languages of entrepreneurs which reaches to more than 10 million readers very month. Radhika Ghai Agarwal is the Co-founder and Chief Marketing Officer at India's first and largest online shopping place Shopclues.com which sells technology item to jewelry. It is presently successfully serving in 9000 cities, towns and rural areas of the country.

Sabina Chopra

Yatra.com is the largest and famous online travel portal in India. It was founded by Sabina Chopra in August, 2006.

Hema Subramaniam

Hema Subramaniam is a blogger, author, chef and food consultant. She runs a Home Cooking channel on YouTube in different languages such as Telgu, Tamil and English with 1.02 million subscribers. She started her journey from 2008 by creating videos for HomeCooking show. She also started an introductory online Indian Cooking class on <https://www.21frames.in> to make learners more confident and empowered. She has 5.5 million followers on facebook where she runs Home Cooking blogging. Her cooking show is featured on various channels such as BBC Tamil and Women's Planet.

Chavvi Mittal

Chavvi Mittal is an Indian actor who co-founded Shitty Ideas Trending, the digital content platform with her husband Mohit Hussein. She also runs Being Woman with Chavvi Mittal on YouTube with 43.1k subscribers and facebook with 4.9 million followers. Shitty Ideas Trending with 1.63 million subscribers where they featured unique, witty, humorous and funny videos of married person's relationship.

Famous and Leading Women YouTubers in India

As per the report published on Shethepeople the women's channel on September, 2019 that India has 120 women YouTubers with over one million subscribers in 2019 as YouTube a video sharing website has revealed recently. In 2016, there was only one woman YouTuber with over one million subscribers in India and in 2017, the number of women YouTuber grew to three in number in content creation.

Satya Raghavan, Director, Content Partnerships, YouTube in India has said that Indian female YouTubers are creating content in male –dominated categories such as technology, automobiles, sports, gaming etc. Moreover there content are not limited to lifestyle, humor, culinary or health.

India's Top Women YouTubers

- Nisha Madhulika who is 60 year old and garnered 7.97 million subscribers on her YouTube channel NishaMadhulika #SeeSomethingNew (<https://www.youtube.com/user/NishaMadhulika>) and become sensation among home chefs. Her programme is of vegetarian Indian recipes.
- Kabita's Kitchen simple, easy authentic, (<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCChqsCRFePrP2X897iQkyAA>) a YouTube channel run by Kabita Singh and has 5.92 million subscribers. She focuses on recreating recipes whose ingredients are easily available.
- Shruti Arjun Anand, is another famous YouTuber who runs channel Shruti Arjun Anand, entertainment and beauty ka cocktail (<https://www.youtube.com/user/shrutiarjunanand>) and has 5.88 million subscriber.
- Prajakta Koli runs a YouTube channel MostlySane (<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCvCvYiKSCA1fHKSCOKJyXAJA/featured>) and has 4.42 million subscribers. She makes comedy videos on the observation of daily life. Recently she has received 'The Most Stylish Digital Icon by the Lokmat Most Stylist Awards.

Social media: Hashtag movements to end violence and discrimination against women Social media is a strong platform to discuss and share views, experiences to channelize hashtag movements to stop sexual violence and discrimination against women. It is a new frontier to organize campaign or rally by women's rights activists to come forward and fight for gender equality. Through social media, women across the globe are connected and supporting each other such as lawmakers, politicians, business owners for gender equality. The following are the hashtag movements across the

country and globe for gender equality and stop violence against girls and women.

1. #MeToo movement and #HearMeToo movement

Me too movement was founded by Tarana Burke in 2006 to help and support survivors such as dark girls and women against violence and discrimination. #MeToo is a movement through social media to share experiences of violence and sexual assault which became prominent by tweet of actress Alyssa Milano of sexual harassment in the film *Fraternity* in 2017. In 2018, #MeToo movement shook India as prominent and renowned journalists, actors, and artists accused of sexual assault and harassment. It has spread across the world irrespective of race, culture, economic, linguistic boundaries etc. Similarly in Japan, #kutoo movement started in 2019 against mandatory wearing of high heels at workplace. In 2018, United Nations theme for the International Day was 'Orange the World: #HearMeToo' for the elimination of violence against women.

2. #IShapeMyWorld

On the occasion of International Women's Day, Levi's started a campaign #IShapeMyWorld to celebrate the unstoppable women who shaped their world and broke stereotypical attitude of the society and brought change. It is a new trailblazer to empower women and inspire change. From 2017 to 2019, these ad campaigns have shown the success of women irrespective of the various difficulties that they had faced. In the fifth season of the campaign, it magnificently shown the 21 renowned and prominently women wearing Levi's jeans in a music video titled *Fire Within Me* which inspire and encourage them to embrace their individual identity.

3. #LahuKaLagaan

#LahuKaLagaan means tax on blood. It is a social media campaign by Mumbai based NGO She Says India to exempt 12% tax on sanitary pads in April, 2017. In 2017, Good and Service tax by Government of India placed sanitary napkins under the second lowest tax scale of 12%. The campaign attracts the attention of famous celebrities who such as Aditi Rao Hydari, Cyrus Broacha, Mallika Dua, Vishal Dadlani etc who tweeted on Twitter and asked the then Finance Minister Arun Jaitley to made tax-free sanitary pads. After widespread criticism government declared sanitary napkins tax-free in July, 2018.

4. #PadManChallenge

'Yes, that's a pad in my hand and there's nothing to be ashamed. Periods are natural' was the message that went viral on social media such as Twitter and Instagram as many renowned celebrities joined under #PadMan Challenge. Arunachalam Muruganatham, an entrepreneur who is known to prepare low-cost sanitary napkins and also famous as PadMan started the conversation about menstruation on social media and many celebrities from B-Town joined it. During the promotion of bollywood movie *Padman*, Twinkle Khanna, Columnist & former Actor, posted with the photo of sanitary pad and posted it on social media with message under #PadMan Challenge. Soon many celebrities such as Akshay Kumar, Aamir Khan, Deepika Padukone, Shabana Azmi, Madhuri Dixit, Rajkumar Rao etc started tagging others to take on the challenge to break the taboo related with menstruation.

5. #SelfieWithDaughter

The Selfie With Daughter campaign is the brainchild of Shri. Sunil Jaglan, Sarpanch of Bibipur Village, Haryana of taking the selfies with daughters and posting it on social media for empowering girl child. He launched the mobile app 'Selfie with Daughter' which become a global movement against female and sex selection. It become worldwide revolution after Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi discussed about the selfie with daughter campaign which was mooted by Sunil Jaglan during 'Mann Ki Baat' programme through All India Radio on 28th June, 2015. He urged the parents to promote this campaign as it will give boost to the 'Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao' programme for girl's education and gender equality. World's First Online Museum Selfie With Daughter the Revolution for Girls is an initiative by Selfie With Daughter Foundation (<http://selfiewithdaughter.world>) where proud parents have uploaded 90800 selfies with their daughters.

6. #knowyourLemons

#knowyourLemons is a clever campaign with vision to educate women about breast cancer. It is a brainchild of Corrine Ellsworth Beaumont. She founded a 'Worldwide Breast Cancer' nonprofit organization in 2014 (<https://knowyourlemons.com>). #knowyourlemons: a truly global breast awareness campaign which uses infographics of 12 lemons to teach women about the symptoms of breast cancer and motivate the people to discuss about the condition of it. Its motto is sour fruit, sweet campaign. This campaign is running successfully on instagram with 4,329 followers (<https://www.instagram.com/knowyourlemons>) and on Twitter (<https://twitter.com/knowyourlemons>) with 1,322 followers.

7. #GENERATIONEQUALITY

The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action of 1995 which was legitimized by 189 countries at the Fourth World Conference on Women with the agenda for the human rights of girls and women across the globe. There are 12 areas on which the governments of the 189 countries committed to plan strategies which include economy, human rights, media, violence, girl child, poverty, health, armed conflict, environment etc. In 2020, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action will celebrate its 25th anniversary and the campaign #GenerationEquality: Realizing women's rights for an equal future of UN calls everyone to support through social media and demand equal rights and opportunities for women in every aspects for better and prosperous future.

8. #HEFORSHE

HeForShe is a solidarity movement for women by United Nation which invites men and people of all genders to create a bold, visible and united force for gender equality. #HeForShe is a campaign on social media such as <https://twitter.com/HeforShe>, <https://www.flickr.com/photos/heforshe>, <https://www.instagram.com/heforshe/> asked commitment from people to strive for gender equality and end gender discrimination. It is forum where people can unpack and discuss about various issues such gender stereotypes, gender biasness, discrimination and violence against women, which are damaging and harming all. This movement started in 2014 at United Nations by Ban Ki-moon, UN General Secretary and Emma Watson, Actor and UN Women Global Goodwill

Ambassador and invited men to support the movement to achieve gender equality.

9. #touchthepickle

The Procter & Gamble Company started a campaign #touchthepickle in India to highlight the taboos related with menstruation and provided platform and opportunity to discuss or share stories, experiences or ridicules tales on social media. The campaign started in 2015 with the social advertisement of Whisper Ultra sanitary napkins. In India, there are several myths and taboos related with periods such as 'don't enter the kitchen', 'don't worship', 'don't touch pickle' etc. So to bust these superstitions, the campaign motivated women to give voice and take first step to at least touch the pickle. The campaign got M&M Global Awards, 2015 for best content creation and won the Glass Lion Grand Prix at Cannes International Festival, 2015.

10. #AbLadnaHai and #MuhDikhai

Actors Deepika Padukone and Vikrant Massey through his upcoming movie Chhappak which is drama and biography based on the life of Laxmi Agarwal, an Indian Campaigner with Stop Sale Acid and Acid attack survivor, striving for change with #AbLadnaHai and #MuhDikhai which says let's turn, let's awaken and let's begin. The positive and negative aspects of social media participation Social media provides a digital platform to converse, share, disseminate the feelings, information and experiences and people across the globe is connected digitally. It gives an opportunity to socialize which may create a sense of identity with other community. Women can accomplish companionship with distant friends and family. They can enrich their professional and creative skills through blog writing, Video content on YouTube, stories on Facebook or Instagram etc. There are some negative impact of social media as women are more vulnerable to cyber crime, sexting, trolling, online depression, fraud, Cyberbullying, loss of privacy etc. There are more chances of online harassment, embarrassment, facebook depression, aggressive behaviour, sextortion etc. They are exploited through social media as they lose their privacy because most of the time they are not able to differentiate between online friends or real friends. Online frauds in terms of finances are very prominent. So to combat the problems related to digital world, there should be Digital Literacy programme to educate and empower the women for online safety. The following are the initiatives for digital literacy:

- **# Be Safe- Shitty Ideas Trending**
Recently SIT, a YouTube channel by Chavvi Mittal and Mohit Hussien launches #Be Safe to aware and educate the people about online safety as a lot can change by a simple click. #Be Safe video for online safety is dedicated to every internet users in today's age and time. It addresses the growing concern about online safety and literacy for internet users.
- **Internet Saathi**
Internet Saathi: Bridging the online gender divide in rural India (<https://internetsaathiindia.org/>). Google India and Tata Trusts took initiative in 2015 as partners to improve digital literacy among women especially rural community. In 2015, 1 out of 10 internet users was women in rural India. They named the program as Internet Saathi which is based on 'train the trainer' concept. The program gave access

to online world to rural women through which they can disseminate the knowledge and information to all. 'Saathis' are the one who can train the other people of the village and can pass on the knowledge to other communities. Women are provided smart phones with internet facilities and are becoming ambassadors of digital literacy program in their specific places. As of April, 2019 report, under this program, 28 million women learnt about internet across 289,000 villages and 81,500 Internet Saathis have helped in achieving this.

- 'Digital Literacy Programme' for college and university students is program by the National Commission for Women in collaboration with the Facebook and a civil society organization based in Ranchi, Cyber Literacy Foundation. The programme empower and promote digital literacy especially for women which include awareness about cybercrimes, safe use of internet, social platforms etc.

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