

## Role in Media in Empowerment of Women with Special Reference to Stree Shakthi: A Study in Karnataka

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### Introduction:

Development has been one of the major components of the knowledge system in the social sciences. Development is approached in a variety of ways by modern thinkers across disciplines. Scholars, Economists, Statesman, International Agencies such as UN are concerned with the problems afflicting the humanity. Many countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America, middle east have been grouped as under developed countries. Most of the newly liberated nations are gearing up to meet the standards of developed countries. Economists and world leaders are grappled with the developmental realities around the world. The over nious task of eradicating poverty, disease, mal nutrition, illiteracy, pollution is on the main agenda of the newly liberated states. With the establishment of UN, the economic development of member states received a greater momentum.

The emergence of US as a focal power soon after the end of second world was resulted in the need for development of war torn Europe on priority basis. The influence of Soviet Union in the world affairs made US and other capitalists' countries to address the issues pertaining to the development of poorer counties of the world. Most developed countries of the world found it convenient to explore economic solution to political conflicts and strategic hegemonies witnessed the ideological division of the world throughout the 20th century. The communist doctrine of Soviet Union and its growing popularity appeared as a new danger to the new world. The American and other West European capitalist countries opposition to communism were essentially driven by ideology.

American intellectuals were advancing a new theory for the third world nations in order to promote their capitalistic ideas and strategic interests and also a political doctrine to strengthen a geo political, democratic order and the establishment of a human right ideology free from communist influence.

American private institutions and the generous economic assistance from the US government encouraged scholars to find new answers to alleviate the poverty

of the world. As a sequel to this a new area of study as a branch of modern economics, modernization and development caught the international attention. The disparity between developed and underdeveloped countries, rich and poor of the world, economic hiatus between North and South, cultural division across East and West old and the new, became a new reality in the 20th century. The Western and European countries turned out to be a role model to emulate for the rest of the world in order to attain economic prosperity and standard of living and lead a quality life.

**Emergence of Development Communication:** Development communication is a latest idea to receive international acclaim. A number of UN sponsored agencies and development organizations who are interested in the spread of education and literacy in accomplishing development goal.

Mass Media were seen as harbingers of non-formal education and development multiples in many Apro – Asian countries. Development communication received a wider recognition and a new weapon of socio economic development of the third world countries after second world war. The US leadership promoted the post world war global economic to check the spread of communist doctrine. US dominated world economy and the success of German and Japanese growth model was seen as a check mate to the socialist growth model. A few social scientists from US, a few psychologies and communication scholars from Europe advanced the case for exploiting mass media for advancing social change and economic development.

Development communication as a concept was defined by Prof. Nora. C Quebral 'As a process of transmitting and communicating new knowledge for t he development of rural environment and rural people'. (R. Barker, 2001).

The theoretical back drop of communication and development was first visualized by Daniel Lerner in the middle Eastern context (Daniel Lerner, 1958).

Lucian Pye, a distinguished political communicator theorized the political implications of the development

process (L. Pye, 1963).

Wilbur Schramm the distinguished communication scholar attempted a scientific analysis on the role of communication in development process. (W.S. Schramm, 1965).

### **Empowerment:**

The concept of empowerment is analogous to the theory of development. Empowerment is one of the new idioms not only for development discipline but also gender justice as well. Empowerment is broadly used as a process by which people will have total control over those factors which affect their lives.

Empowerment has special significance in the gender studies. More so in the context of economic empowerment of women. The overall growth of women as members of the society who are politically active, economically productive and self reliant, who are capable of realizing their ambitions.

Most development communication thinkers have assigned greater importance to empowerment as a means of developing women talk b8y enabling them to acquire knowledge, power and experience.

Review of Literature: Ila Joshi's 'Communication strategies of NGO's for Women Development' throws light on Role of Voluntary Organizations, Print media, computers, television, radio and telephone for development of women.

Kiran Prasad in her work 'Women Media and Society: Recasting Communication Policy' focus on the role of media in progress of women and assist them in their march for a better quality of life.

'Women's Empowerment and Mass Media: The Kerala's experience is a study conducted by P.s. Geetha Kutty which inquires into the concepts and approaches for women empowerment.

Manisha Joshis 'Communication and Women's Empowerment in Uttaranchal' is a study which deals with the analysis of secondary status of women.

Prof. P. Leela in her study 'Globalization and Empowerment of Women' stresses on the importance of globalization in accelerating the economic development and reduction of poverty'.

K. Seethalakshmi is her study 'The Perceptions of DWCRA Beneficiaries: A case study 'reveals that a vast majority of the beneficiaries considered that the DWCRA program had a positive effect on their lives

and the beneficiaries were satisfied with the program. 'Empowerment of Women of four different occupational categories' is a study done by Everett. J. and Savara. The study throws light on the role of employed women in the decision making process. Economic empowerment of women plays a major role in effective participation of women.

A study by Srinivas R. Melkote on 'Case Study of T and V projects in gap in development highlights that communication is resource in development. It must be tailored to the wants, needs and problems of the recipients of that communication.

Role of Media in Women Development: Women form an important segment of human population. The development of women is closely linked to the development of population. Historically it has been observed that women have been subjected to exploitation by the society. Throughout the world women have been struggling to establish their supremacy in the social hierarchy and family structure.

Indian society is highly sensitive to women empowerment process. Women who constitute 50 percent of the world population do not share equal opportunities therefore, their status is very pathetic.

Gender problem includes lack of facilities such as provision of equal rights, equal opportunities, unemployed and equal responsibilities, social political empowerment and above all a life full of gender dignity.

Women empowerment has been truly a global effort. Various international bodies are in the forefront to globally improve the standards of living conditions of women. International economic organization such as IMF, world bank and various UN bodies have initiated number of projects as part of the development of various developing nations across the globe.

Both Central and State governments have developed a holistic approach to the advancement of Indian Women and also crucial plans and programmes for the all round progress of Indian Women. The ministry of Rural Development, Health, Education, HRD and other government departments have a number of programmes aimed at the development of women.

A series of important programme have been launched by Central Government it includes Mahila Kalyan pro-

grammes, Nari Seva Sadan, working women's hostel, Marriage Grant, Community Centre, Mahila Vikas Nigam, Widow pension, Indira Mahila Yojana, Swarnajayanthi Gram Swarozgar Yojana, Indira Awaz Yojana (IAY), etc.,

Karnataka State Government has been in the forefront of women empowerment among the Indian states. The Women and Child Welfare department has various women empowerment programmes like Karmani Project, Udyogini Programme, Marketing Assistance Scheme, Women Training Programme, Devadasi Rehabilitation Programme, Lambani Kasuti Programme, Santhwana, Jaagruthi, Swashakthi etc.,

**Stree Shakthi:** Stree Shakthi (Women Empowerment), a highly successful and a popular programme for women empowerment sponsored by government of Karnataka.

Stree Shakthi was conceived originally to help women realize their aspirations. The target group was members of self help groups especially women living below the poverty line, landless agricultural laborers, women belonging to SC/ST community women belonging to families with alcoholics, drug addicts etc., It is implemented throughout the state in all the villages of about 175 taluks, to benefit about 20 lakh women who belong to one lakh self help groups.

#### **The main objectives of Stree Shakthi:**

1. To improve the status of rural women economically.
2. To Strengthen financial and social status of women.
3. Increase Income of poor women.
4. Eradication of poverty
5. Create financial stability.

**The Present Study:** The present study is an academic examination of the relationship between Stree Shakthi, a women empowerment project and mass media.

#### **OBJECTIVES:**

1. To Study the impact of Stree Shakthi programme on the empowerment of rural women.
2. To study the cognitive level of the beneficiaries of Stree Shakthi projects in respect of communication, media channels, access and utility.
3. To examine the cognitive level of the Stree Shakthi beneficiaries concerning the context and information aspect of the programme.
4. To analyze the efficacy of the communication strat-

egy adopted in the Stree Shakthi program implementation.

5. To evaluate the benefits derived by target groups in terms of socio economics outputs and knowledge and attitudinal outputs.

#### **RESEARCH DESIGN:**

The present study has been designed in order to collect data to validate the limited effects theoretical postulates in the context of women empowerment programmes namely Stree Shakthi.

The study has been designed around what role media could possibly have on the success or otherwise in an empowerment project.

The design has been tailored to seek the answers for the study objectives. Therefore, a survey research has been chosen as a method to collect data. The study has been constructed as ex-post facto research design within survey method. Ex-post facto is a systematic, empirical enquiry in which dependent variables have not been directly manipulated.

#### **SAMPLING PROCEEDURE:**

Random Sampling Procedure was used for the selection of the respondents. A stratified random procedure was used in the selection of districts. Out of 27 districts four districts were chosen. Kolar, moderately developed, Mandya highly developed, Gulbarga and Dharwad a comparatively less developed were chosen for study.

#### **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION:**

The study 'Role of Media in Empowerment of Women with special reference to Stree Shakthi – A Study in Karnataka' has been conducted by following post facto research method. The empirical data was collected based upon the interview schedule. The data has been collected from 8 villages (two villages from each district) of 4 districts namely Kolar, Mandya, Dharwad and Gulbarga.

The interview schedule consisting of 47 items administered to 500 respondents generated basic data.

**Table 1.1:** Demographic profile of the respondents:

Indicators	Total	Percentage
Age		
18 – 20	24	4.80
21 – 40	336	67.20
41 and above	140	28.00

**Educational level**

Illiterate	---	---
Primary School	110	22
Middle School	48	9.6
High School	48	9.6
PUC	83	16.6
Graduation	14	2 – 8

**Marital Status**

Unmarried	32	6.40
Married	412	82.40
Divorced	7	1.40
Separated	8	1.60
Widow	41	8.20

**Family Occupation**

Agriculture	187	37.40
Landless agriculture	71	14.20
Laborers	0	0
Wage laborers	125	25.00
House wife	88	17.60
Any other	29	5.80

**Table 1.1** reveals the following information:

**Age:** 67/2% of the respondents belong to the age group of 21 – 40, about 28% belong to above 41 age group. Only 48% belong to the age group of 18 – 20. Therefore, women category are more in number.

**Education:** The present study has revealed that the level of education is quite promising as more than 60% of the respondents are literate and educated across the state.

**Marital Status:** 82/40% of respondents are married only about 6.4% were unmarried. Only about 6/4% was unmarried. It is very interesting that educated and married women have taken Stree Shakthi as an important empowerment tool.

**Occupation:** Most of the respondents belong to agriculture as their family occupation (37/4)%. About 25% are wage earning laborers followed by housewives (17.6%). 14.20% of them are landless agriculture workers. A large segment of women belong to the working class.

**Table: 1.2:** Socio – Economic Profile of the Respondents.

Profile	No's	Percentage
<b>Religion</b>	---	---
Hindu	474	94.80
Muslim	16	3.20
Christian	3	0.60
Any other	7	1.40

Indicators	Total	Percentage
<b>Caste</b>		
SC	154	30.80
ST	81	16.20
OBC	139	27.80
Others	126	25.20

No. of children		
0	65	13.00
1	62	12.40
2	134	26.80
3	105	21.00
4	67	13.40
5	36	7.20
6	18	3.60
7	9	1.80
8	2	0.40
9	1	0.20
10	1	0.20

Family Income		
Less than 1000	86	17.20
1000 -2000	185	37.0
2000 – 3000	147	29.4
3000 – 4000	42	8.4
4000 – 5000	29	5.8
5000 and above	11	2.2
Total	500	100

**Religion:** It is an important sociological characteristics required for any analysis. True to the National profile majority of the population in the rural parts of Karnataka are Hindus (94.8%) while Muslims constitute only 3.2%, Christians accounted for only 0.60% while 1.40% belonged to other faiths.

**Caste:** Caste wise, scheduled caste, population have taken up Stree Shakthi programmes in a bigger way, 30.80% of the population belong to SC followed by OBC's 27.80%, ST 16y.20% while 25.20% belong to other communities.



**Socio Economic Profile:** Socio Economic profile has revealed that a large percentage of the respondents belong to SC (74%) who are socially disadvantaged are naturally attracted to empowerment programme in a way they are the target beneficiaries.

**Number of Children:** Majority of the respondents 26.8% of the married women have 2 children and about 21% had 3 children, about 13.40% had 4 children, 12.40% have one child.

**Family Income:** Income is an important demographic variable in any study. Family income reveals the economic status of Stree Shakthi stake holders.

**Table 1.3:** Media Exposure: Print / Electronic / New Media

Time Spent	No's	Percentage
<b>News paper</b>		
15 minutes	105	21.0
30 minutes	64	12.8
60 minutes	18	3.6
61 minutes and above	7	1.4
Total	194	38.8
Never Read	306	61.2

#### Magazine

15 minutes	30	6.0
30 minutes	12	2.4
60 minutes	2	0.4
61 minutes and above	3	0.6
Total	47	9.4
Never read	453	90.6

#### Radio

15 minutes	42	8.4
30 minutes	72	14.4
60 minutes	97	19.4
61 minutes and above	103	20.6
Total	314	62.8
Never read	1.86	37.2

Time Spent	No's	Percentage
<b>Television</b>		
15 minutes	28	5.6
30 minutes	56	11.2
60 minutes	93	18.6
61 minutes and above	275	55.0
Total	452	90.4
Never Read	48	9.6

The study revealed that more than 61% of the respondents do not read the news paper in the study area. More than 90% of the respondents never read a magazine. It may be presumed that illiteracy and the economic considerations may be responsible for the poor readership of the newspaper and magazines.

Television and Radio have better viewer ship and listener ship. About 62.8% of the respondents listen to radio and about 37.2% never listen to radio.

More than 90% of the respondents view television and only about 9.5% do not view television.

The present study reveals that television is watched more regularly in spite of their low income, rural background and less educational back ground. Television is the most popular mass media by claiming maximum viewer ship.

Even district wise television has the maximum viewership in all the four districts.

**Table 1.4:** Sources of Information on Stree Shakthi Programmes:

Source	Mandya		Kolar		Gul-barga		Dhar-wad		Total	
News paper	2	1.6	15	12.0	14	11.2	85	68.0	116	23.2
Magazine	0	0.0	2	1.6	0	0.0	31	24.8	33	6.6
Radio	47	37.6	30	24.0	20	16.0	94	75.2	191	38.2
Television	87	69.6	65	52.0	54	43.2	103	82.4	309	61.8
Telephone	17	13.6	4	3.2	6	4.8	14	11.2	41	8.2
Internet	0	0.0	4	3.2	2	1.6	3	2.4	9	1.8
Agana-wadi	120	96.0	110	88.0	94	75.2	109	87.2	433	86.5
Govt. org.	32	25.6	41	32.8	39	31.2	11	8.8	123	24.6
NGO's	17	13.6	26	20.8	46	36.8	13	10.4	102	20.4

Table 1.4 reveals that Anganawadi workers and organization have been most important source of information on Stree Shakthi source programme. About 86.6% of the respondents have indicated that they consider Anganawadi as the best source of information on Stree Shakthi followed by Government organizations and NGO's.

Among Mass Media Television was been a popular source of information for about 61.8% of the respondents followed by Radio 38.2% and news paper 23.2% of the respondents.

**Table 1.5:** Respondents Assessment on the role of mass media in the success of Stree Shakthi programme.

Types of Media	Excel-lent		Moder-ate		To some extent		Do not know		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Print (NP/ Mag.)	29	2.9	96	9.6	91	9.1	784	78.4	1000	1
Ele. media (Radio / TV)	237	23.7	176	17.6	221	22.1	366	36.6	1000	100
New media (Tel / Inter-net)	23	2.3	26	2.6	22	2.2	929	92.9	1000	100
(An-ganawa-di/ Govt. Org/ NGO's	380	25.5	306	20.4	188	12.5	926	41.7	1500	100

The study has focused its attention to evaluate whether mass media have played any major role in the success of Stree Shakthi programme in the Karnataka State. Interpersonal channels are successful in comparison to mass media. Anganawadi workers have been rated as excellent.

Among mass media television has been assessed as excellent by 27.2% of the respondents followed by Radio (20.2%)

Broadcast media are more effective than the print media in the success of Stree Shakthi programme.

But the interpersonal media have played much greater role than mass media.

### MAJOR FINDINGS:

1. Stree Shakthi has attracted slightly older age group of participants.
2. Above 60% of the respondents are educated.
3. Majority of the respondents come from agricultural background.
4. Majority of the respondents have income less than 3000 / month.
5. About 63.8% of respondents are exposed to television.
6. Television is the most widely owned, accessed and used.
7. 90% of the respondents own television, 64% radio, 36% telephone
8. Role of SHG's in empowerment process is remarkable
9. Interpersonal channels are rated as important source of Information (22.6%) and Television (33.4%)
10. Electronic media are more effective than print me-

dia in success or Stree Shakthi programme

11. Interpersonal media have played a more effective role than mass media.

### CONCLUSION:

Mass Communication has played a major role in the development of our country. Communication has played a very major role in making Stree Shakthi truly an empowerment project. Mass media have made inroads into the lives of women. It is the interpersonal media which have contributed for the qualitative changes in the lives of rural women. The role of mass media is comparatively negligible with the exception of television. However, the empirical data has revealed the significant role played by mass media in securing economic progress, social empowerment and political power. mass media have become part of the lives of rural women even though mass media particularly television is being used predominantly for entertainment purpose.

The present study supports that mass media can play a very vital and effective role in realizing socio – economic objectives and goals.

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