

PERCEPTIONS OF EDUCATED WOMEN ABOUT THE ROLE OF MEDIA IN WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

Dr. Nasreen Akhter, PhD in Education

Department of Education, The Islamia University of Bahawalpur, Pakistan

Farrukh Naheed

M.Phil Scholar, Department of Education,
The Islamia University of Bahawalpur, Pakistan

Abstract

Women especially in under developing countries are not empowered in most of fields of life. They depend on male members in a number of ways. No doubt, education and training of society is best tool to empower women. Media can play positive role to promote awareness to empower women in society. This paper aims to evaluate role of media and find out measures to improve its role to empower women in Pakistan. This was a survey study based on data collected from four hundred and ninety nine literate female. A questionnaire was used as tool of study. It concluded that majority of women rarely or never used media. The women who used media felt that they got positive impact on their status. Regarding the frequency to use media, positive relationship between use of media and women empowerment score was explored. Critical analysis of role of media in views of women helped to conclude that it has played some positive roles to educate women regarding women empowerment but needs some improvements. It is highlighting women violence cases, giving awareness to women to adopt impressive life styles. Moreover, it is promoting social awareness among women and educating them about their rights, responsibilities and problems in society. But, it is playing weak role in professional development of women. It is not educating them to generate their income, techniques to get equal status in society. It has suggested writers to write literature to educate people about the benefits of women empowerment to society, family and men and aware people about techniques to raise status of women in society by empowering them.

Keywords: Media, women empowerment, women studies, education

Introduction

Women empowerment is an important issue of women living in developing and under developing countries. Majority of women are literate or low educated. They depend on their male family members to fulfil their needs. As result of this dependency, they are bound to follow decisions of male family members. They are not allowed to live life according to their wills. Most of educated women also depend on male members to get permission to use their authorities even in domestic matters.

Empowerment means power of authority to do something. This also means to take control over the life and do independent decisions. Gender equality, independence, awareness, good educational status, employment, proper health and control over resources needed for the life are basic needs of women empowerment. Unless having awareness about the rights and responsibilities, women empowerment is impossible. Women empowerment is a source of development of not only women but also of the families, nations and countries. It is one of the need and rights of women to bring positive changes in society.

Role of media in every field of life is vital now a day. It has significant role to promote awareness among people about every field of life. It is a tool to communicate intended information to people within short period. It is an unconscious way of bringing changes in attitudes of people. It is also a rapid source of educating people to bring required changes in their behaviors. It is popular among people as a mean of entertainment, information and education. Governments and other organizations take benefits to use media by using it for their own purposes. It silently affects the behavior of people.

Media is a channel to express the opinion to others. Print, broadcast and telecast media are three main kinds serving for education. Radio, television, newspaper, internet, books, journals etc. are different forms of media. Women mostly spend leisure time by watching television, listening programs of their interest on radio and reading newspaper to get information or reading journals or books to pass their time. Media is a channel to transfer social values to people. It is good source of informal education. Media writers can help people to aware them about their problems, reasons of their problems and suggestions to get solutions about their problems. Women empowerment is a solution of most of problems of women and their families. It can be best source to promote education and power to think independently through promoting awareness from their rights and roles in society. Media can play its role to aware people about the techniques to empower women and take their contribution in social development of the society.

Statement of the Problem

The present study was an attempt to analyze the role of media in women empowerment in Pakistan. It has analyzed attitude of women to use media. It has evaluated impact of use of media on women empowerment. It has highlighted some impacts of media on women empowerment to suggest measures to policy makers and society to use it for educating people about the women empowerment.

Objectives of the study

This study aimed to achieve following objectives.

1. Study the trend to use media by educated women in Pakistan.
2. Evaluate impact of use of media in women empowerment.
3. Analyze role of media in educating women about their empowerment.
4. Suggest measures to improve role of media for women empowerment.

Significance of the Study

1. This study is helpful to understand the trend of use of media by women in the country. It is most important for women to understand that media is just not a source of entertainment. It is a source of education, women development and women empowerment.
2. This study is also helpful to evaluate role of media by its strengths and weaknesses. Policy makers, writers and government can get guidelines to analyze their efforts to improve society by promoting the concept of gender equality and women empowerment. They can improve their efforts in the light of results of this study.
3. The present study is an addition of literature in the field of education, educational media, gender studies and women empowerment. It is supportive to promote the concept of development of society by taking women contribution.
4. The study is most important for educationists to consider their role to promote concept of women empowerment through education.

Review of Related Literature

Media is a tool to educate and train people. It comprises newspaper, magazines, television, radio and computer programs. Ray (2008) views that media is also used for the purpose of teaching and training. This means media that is a popular tool for transmitting information to people at large scale, a way of bringing unconscious changes in behavior of people and a tool of changing thinking styles of society. Aram, Arul and Jaya (2004) sensitized that media and its agencies especially newspaper and television

channels are living organism reborn with each new cycles. It holds a mirror to allow people to see who they are, what they do and why their actions have consequences. It is representative of the whole nation.

Media affects our daily life, thinking styles and way of living. According to Bala (2002) media has dominated the society, culture and method of training of people. He views that it is most dominant storyteller now a days. Television programs, movies, music, videos and internet are most popular forms of media in this age. They are playing the role of family and friends.

Uma (2004) indicated that media is a forceful channel of social change. It affects opinions, attitudes and way of dealings of people. This means important issues can be highlighted through media to aware people about the issues. Women are considered deprived section of human society in many parts of the world. Media can be used as a channel to educate people to give rights to women and empower women. Women empowerment means giving rights and power to women to decide about them according to their own wills, work and play role as forceful and respectful person in the society and use their powers independently.

According to Asif (2013), women contribution for the development of society can be improved if they are empowered. Media can give them self-reliance. Role of media is important in women empowerment because of visible effects of media on every sphere of life.

Khan and Moin (2013) reported that with access to internet at homes, women are using it for multiple purposes. It has enabled women to participate in important daily affairs of state that ranges from household work to education, health and governance. Moghadam (2007) described that mass media has played vital role in women empowerment. It has played important role to convince people of rural areas to educate their girls and allow girls to work. Narayan (2002) investigated that media has raised issues of women. It has highlighted rights of women in the society. It has tried to mold opinion of people regarding rights of women. Gupta and Dayal (1996) explored that media is presenting issues in different ways but, media production is in the hands of male and women role in policymaking is limited. This means involvement of women in the media policymaking section is necessary to improve role of media for women empowerment.

Procedure of the study

This study was completed following the procedure of survey technique. Research tool of the study was a questionnaire that included different close-ended items on Likert Scale. The items were regarding types of media, positive and negative uses of media and women empowerment scale. Validity of tool was determined through expert opinion method while

reliability of tool was determined computing Cronbach alpha value that was 0.915. To analyze data, percentage of frequencies, mean scores, standard deviation, t values and f values were computed.

Detail about the respondents

Six hundred and fifty women were randomly selected as sample of the study from four districts of Punjab. As, sample of study was choosed from four districts of the Punjab province of Pakistan, efforts were made to give equal representation to each district.

Figure 1 explains that 25% of the sample was taken from each district.

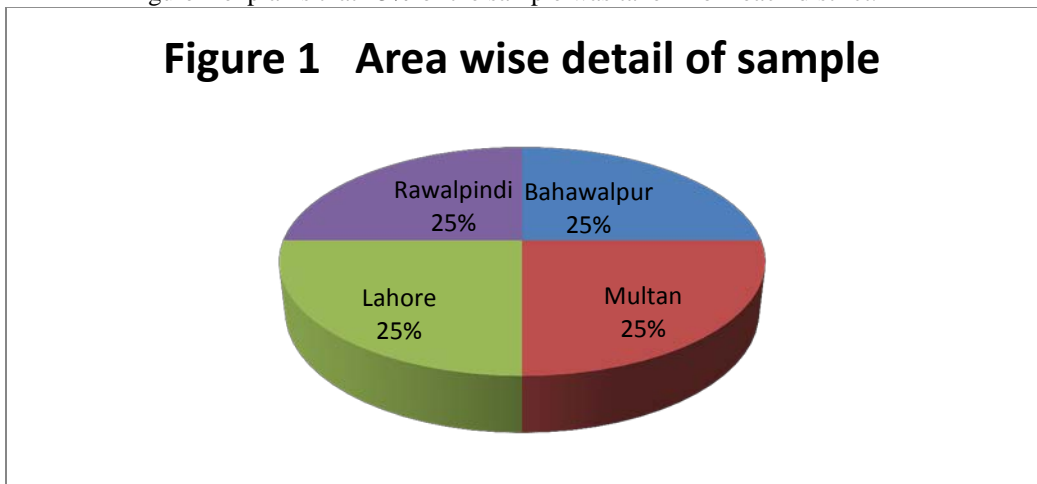
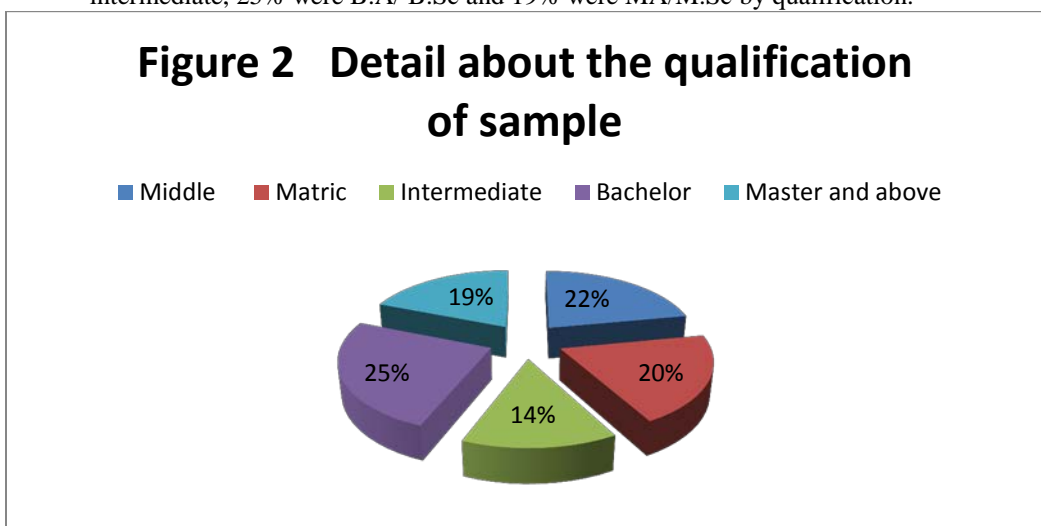


Figure 2 gives description of sample according to their qualification. According to the figure, 22% women were middle, 20% were matric, 14% were intermediate, 25% were B.A/ B.Sc and 19% were MA/M.Sc by qualification.



Results and interpretation

Out of totally delivered four hundred and ninety nine women returned the questionnaire. So, collected data was analyzed and results were drawn. Keeping in mind objectives of the study, results were arranged and divided into sections.

Trend to use media among women in Pakistan

Table: 1 shows trend to use media among women in Pakistan. According to data represented in the table, newspaper reading is most frequent in use of majority of women who use media (Mean=2.87). Television watching is on the second rank (mean=2.72). Magazine reading and book reading are equally on the 3rd rank (mean=2.57). It also identifies that radio listening, use of internet and drama and movie watching are less popular among women (mean=1.94, 2.04 and 2.25 respectively) than TV watching, magazine reading and book reading. Overall, only 45% of women use different kinds of media on daily or weekly basis.

Table 1 Trend to use types of media by women

Media Form	Frequency of using media in percentage				Mean score	S.D
	Daily	Weekly	Rarely	Never		
Radio Listening	05	23	33	39	1.94	0.90
TV watching	31	32	16	21	2.72**	1.12
Internet	10	16	42	32	2.04	0.93
News Paper Reading	41	20	24	15	2.87*	1.10
Magazine Reading	10	44	38	08	2.57***	0.78
Book Reading	24	27	30	18	2.57***	1.05
Movie/ Drama watching	20	13	40	27	2.25	1.06
Average	20	25	32	23	2.42	
	45		55			

Impact of frequency of use of media on women empowerment

Table: 2 explains the impact of frequency of use of media on women empowerment. According to data represented in the table, mean score of women empowerment of those who rarely used the media was lowest than all (15). Mean score of those women who used media commonly was in the middle (17). Mean score of women who used media extensively was highest than all (23). This shows that mean score of women empowerment increases as well as frequency of use of media increases. Results of ANOVA analysis (F= 131.001, P= 0.001) shows significant mean difference between all three groups showed in the table 2.

Table:2 Frequency of use of media and women empowerment

Frequency of use of media	N	Percentage	Mean score of women empowerment	ANOVA Results	
				F Value	Significance
Rarely Used	56	11	15	131.001	.001
Commonly used	328	66	17		
Extensively used	115	23	23		

Impact of use of different types of media on women Empowerment

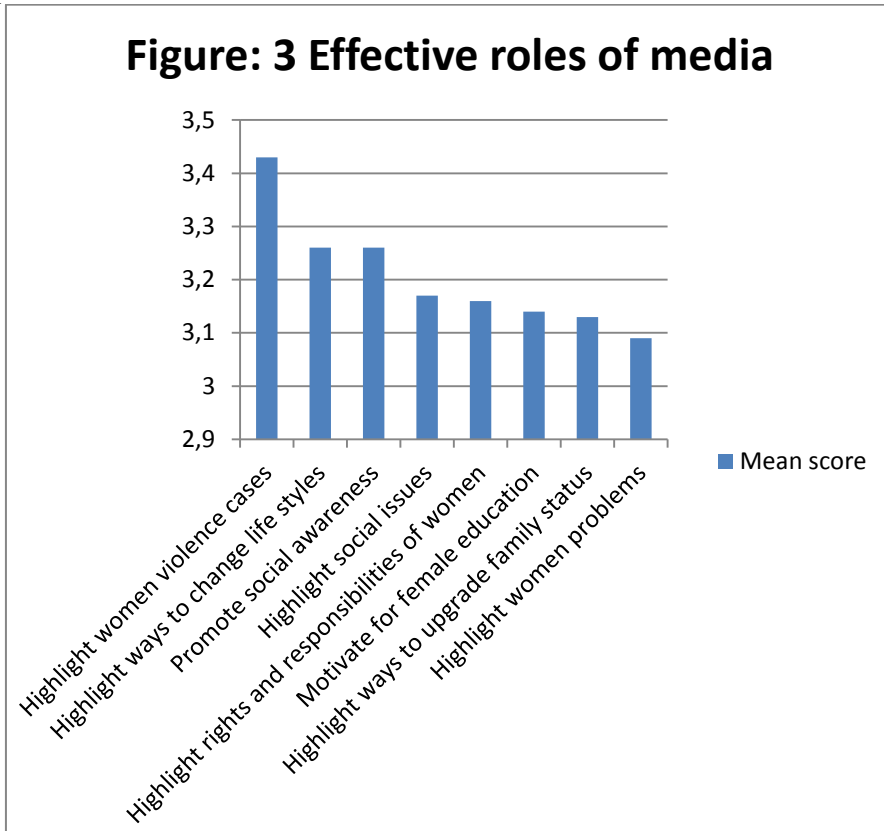
Table: 3 identifies impact of use of different type of media on women empowerment. According to data, mean score of women empowerment always goes up whenever women use media on daily or weekly basis. Moreover, it identifies that internet is most effective to improve women empowerment. Mean score of women empowerment of women who used internet on daily basis was 22 (first rank in order of use). Mean score of women empowerment who listened radio was 21 (second rank in order of use). Mean score of women empowerment who were habitual to read different books was 20 (third rank in order of use). This explains that internet, radio and books are most effective to improve women empowerment. On the other hand, mean score of women empowerment of those women who read newspaper, watched TV and read magazines was lowest (19). This means literature published through magazines, programs telecasted through television and newspaper materials are not helping women to create awareness among women to improve their empowerment status.

Table:3 Impact of type of media and women empowerment

Type of media	Frequency of use of media in percentage			Mean score of Women empowerment	S.D	T Test Results	
	Frequency	N	%			t Value	Sig.(2 tailed)
	Never or rarely	186	37	17	3.24		
Radio Listening	Daily or weekly	190	38	21**	4.87	9.39	.000
	Never or rarely	309	62	17	2.99		
Internet	Daily or weekly	131	26	22*	4.54	12.12	.000
	Never or rarely	368	74	17	3.11		
Read News Paper	Daily or weekly	306	61	19	4.68	4.49	.000
	Never or rarely	193	39	17	3.11		
Read Magazines	Daily or weekly	270	54	19	4.80	3.04	.002
	Never or rarely	229	46	18	3.31		
Book Reading	Daily or weekly	256	51	20***	4.65	9.47	.000
	Never or rarely	243	49	17	2.88		
Film Watching	Daily or weekly	165	33	21**	4.41	12.20	.000
	Never or rarely	334	67	17	3.12		

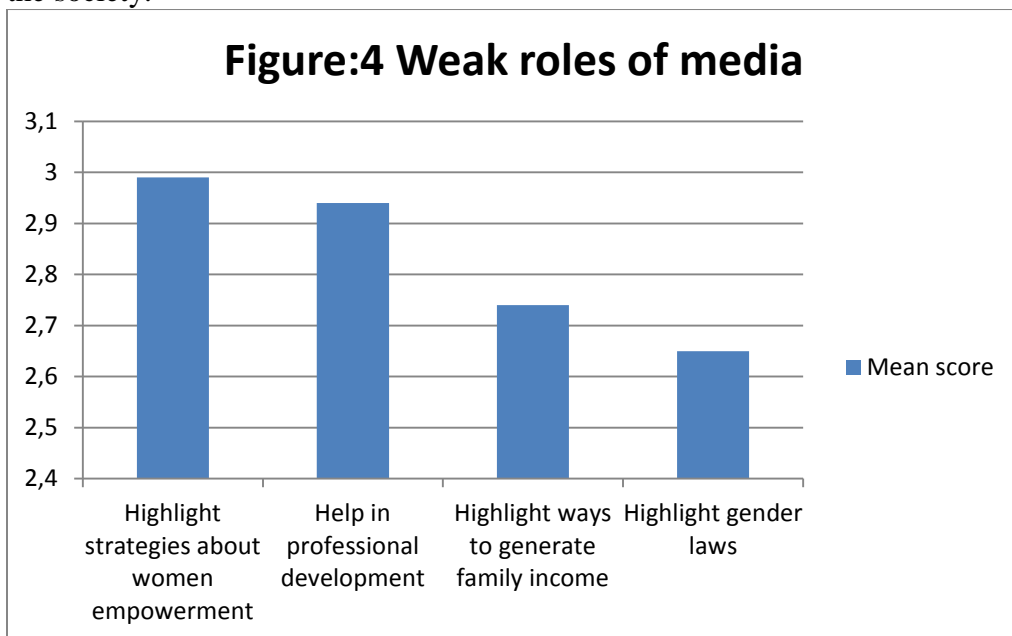
Good features of media for women empowerment

When women were asked to rate role of media on five point likert scale (1=Strongly disagreed, 2= Disagreed, 3= Undecided, 4=Agreed, 5= Strongly agreed), they rated different features of media that were helpful to understand role of media in women empowerment. It shows that mean score of statements represented in figure 3 was above three that shows women’ agreement to the statements. This helps to point out that media is playing its effective role to highlight women violence cases (mean=3.43). It is helping women to change life style according to needs of the age (mean=3.26). It is promoting social awareness among women (mean=3.26). It is giving awareness to women about their rights and responsibilities (mean=3.16). It is helping to highlight importance of education to women (mean=3.14). Women admitted that media is helping women to learn ways to upgrade their family status (mean=3.13) and highlight problems of women in society (mean=3.09). This means media is working to achieve a number of benefits to improve status of women in Pakistan. It is working to educate and empower women in Pakistan.



Weak features of media for women empowerment

Mean score of statements showed in figure 4 were below three. This shows women disagreement to the statements. It explains that media is not playing well to highlight effective strategies to women to empower themselves (mean=2.99). It is playing weak role in professional development of women (mean=2.94). It is not helpful to highlight the ways to generate family income (mean=2.74). It is not successfully educating women to highlight gender laws (2.65) that are necessary to give equal status to women in Pakistan and improve women to plan a balanced and independent life in the society.



Conclusion

1. Frequency of use of media had strong relationship with the women empowerment score. Women empowerment status improved as well as frequency of use of media increases by women.
2. Internet, radio and books were most effective forms of media to improve women empowerment but internet and radio were less popularly used by the women in Pakistan. Newspaper reading, TV watching, book reading and magazine reading were popularly used by the women.
3. Literature published through magazines, programs telecasted on television and newspaper materials were helpful for women to improve their empowerment status. They highlighted importance of education for women. They published women violence cases, women

problems, rights and responsibilities and motivated women to adopt demanding life styles.

4. Media did not aware women about gender laws, strategies to improve women status and strategies to raise their income. It did not aware women about the women professional development plans and programs in the country.

Discussion

Media ia a tool of transmitting the point of view of agencies to people. It is a direct way to examine the right of freedom of views and expressions of writers (WACC, 2010). It reveals social and cultural attitude of society to people (UNESCO, 2012). It depicts what society thinks and what people do. In general, media is used as a tool to bring changes in society. By showing events ocured in different parts of the world, media writers inform people about the current situations about different topics of life. It prepares people to be able to deal the situations by learning how to deal different situations to overcome the problems of life. In reality, true and dedicated media writers prepare nation to go towards the happy paths of life. Media aims to aware people to learn the ways to empower themselves and the society.

Critical review of the status of women in society depicts that women of the world are not living in ideal situation. They are low educated and less empowered than men. They are given less respects and considered inferior to men. In most of parts of the world, women depend on men in most of the fields of life. They do household work and work for the survival of family just for their happiness. Their work is not considered important nor paid by any one. This situation increases stress among women and make them less confident about their abilities and capabilities.

Review of reasons of women low status and less empowerment in society explains that in most parts of the world, customs, mindset of society, lack of religious knowledge, discriminatory legislation (Awan, 2012) and gender discrimination (Alam, 2010) are main reasons of women less empowerment. This results in the form of women low status in society. To deal the situation, women needs to be confident that they are equal to men. They can do what they want to do. They needs to review their status and think the ways to improve themselves. Media is like a lamp in this situation. If media gives confident picture of life of women, it can show a way of hope to women. It can educate them the ways of women empowerment. Luckily, conclusion (1) of this study has given a clue that media is trying to empower women. Women having access to media, are getting awarness to empower themselves. Frequency of use of media impacts the empowerment status of women. This is appreciating for persons involved in media that they are

working hard to educate women to empower themselves. The forms indicated in conclusion: 2, highlights that internet, radio and books are the best sources to promote awareness about the women empowerment in Pakistan but internet and radio are not used by majority of women. Probably, women in Pakistan have less access to the internet facility. Lack of devices like as computer, cost of technology and no skill to use the information technology devices can also be a reasons of less use of internet by the women. This suggests planners to review the situation and think ways to enable women to learn ways to empower themselves by using different forms of media. Conclusion 4 of the study has indicated some aspects that media writers need to review while evaluating their role. No doubt, different forms of media like as television, radio, internet, magazines and newspapers are showing pictures of women problems but still need serious attention to advertise ways to empower fruitful ways of women empowerment. The situation calls agencies, NGOs and women welfare organizations to advertise such plans that can help women to improve their socio economic status as well as informing various plans of agencies to train women in different fields of life and raise their respect in society.

Recommendations

1. As frequency of use of media is related to women empowerment so, women in Pakistan may use different forms of media to learn ways to empower themselves.
2. Women may utilized all forms of media especially radio and internet to learn about the women empowerment programs.
3. Media may introduce gender laws through different programs and educate strategies to women to improve their status in society.

Further Research

1. A study on the same topic may be conducted at large scale including sample from all provinces of Pakistan
2. This study was conducted involving educated women and used questionnaire for data collection. It did not represent role of media in the lives of uneducated women. A further study involving uneducated women collecting data through interview may be conducted in Pakistan.

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