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## Role of Facebook in Empowerment of Women

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**Abstract:** *The stereotype thinking considers barrier for women empowerment in India. New media is one the dominant tool for helping and highlighting this issue. It has proved to be a powerful vehicle for bringing women's rights issues to the attention of a wider public, galvanising action on the streets of cities around the world and encouraging policy makers to step up commitments to gender equality. This paper focuses on how social media – Facebook and women empowerment campaigns are creating awareness among the public and bringing the issues in larger level for discussion. Also try to find out effect of these campaigns among actual people needed.*

### 1. INTRODUCTION

According to Nicole B Ellison, in his paper "Social Network Sites: Definition, History, and Scholarship" (Journal of Computer Mediated Communication, 17 December 2017), social media can be defined as, "Web-based services that allow individuals to (1) construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, (2) articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and (3) view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system." He writes, "the first recognizable social network site launched in 1997, SixDegrees.com allowed users to create profiles, list their Friends and, beginning in 1998, surf the Friends lists." In his opinion, it was with the introduction of Myspace, in 2004, that social networking sites became mainstream.

Social Media has swiftly and widely spread ideologies and shed light on various issues not covered under main stream media. Social media has proven to be a powerful vehicle in terms of raising awareness and mobilising campaigns on a variety of issues. Social media has become the face for many incidents and has become a voice of people. As we know that people have started sharing, tweeting, #hastaging their views, rage and demand for justice through social media. Social media acted as platforms for empowering women and justice and to allow everyone to share their voice not only in India, but also at a global level.

The use of social networking sites like Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn has become one of popular ways of socializing. Among that facebook and whatsapp are been used widely by large number of population for sharing and updating the incidents. Facebook has become the fastest media that helps people from round the world to participate and show their concern and sympathy towards such incidents. Governments across the world had to take action against such incidents when everywhere people condemned such happenings.

Professor V P Gupta, Director, Rau's IAS Study Circle, New Delhi, in his article, "Essay on Women Empowerment in India", writes, "Women Empowerment itself elaborates that Social Rights, Political Rights, Economic stability, judicial strength and all other rights should be equal to women. There should be no discrimination between men and women. Women should know there fundamental and social rights that they are born with."

The term empowerment conveys strengthening the physical powers as well as mental powers to the ladies in need. This conferment of power does mean giving due strength time to time and encouragement to the women community in all fields of life.

To safeguard the interests and to achieve betterment all over the light giving protection is very essential and important. May be it is social or political or moral or otherwise. In this context, empowerment of women really means safeguarding personal interests by giving due attention from non-social elements and to see that betterment is achieved for the women in all possible ways by attacking all anti- social elements which are harmonious to the women community. As we know many crimes are being committed upon the women. Facebook as a social media provides information in all the ways by giving timely information and methods of remedies to face the challenges posted by anti social elements.

## 2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Dalida, a full time Communication Strategist at the Swedish Institute, has written an article on on “**Al Gore Rhythm**”, an online magazine, “Social Media and Women Empowerment”. He speaks about the Social Media Revolution and Social Networking, in reference to Women Empowerment. By citing a report by the OECD Development Centre, he speaks about “hashtag activism”, and how it has helped bring forth women’s issues to the forefront. In his article, he includes the example of Emma Watson’s speech to the UN- “I’m a Feminist” going viral on social media.

**Mira Daher**, of the Lebanese American University, has done a project on “Women Empowerment through Technology and Social Media”, in 2012. Her project focuses on the rise of women and digital activism in the Arab world, women advancement through the “blogosphere”, photography and the advancement of women’s status, and women and the social media reality in Lebanon. Her project further aims at teaching young women how to master tools of social media to expand empowerment of women through it.

**Farid Shirazi**, of Institute for Innovation and Technology Management, Ted Rogers School of Information Technology Management, Ryerson University, Toronto, Canada, has published a paper titled “Information and Communication Technology and Women Empowerment in Iran”, in the journal “Telematics and Informatics”, (21 February 2011). He writes, “Since the introduction of the Internet in Iran, Iranian women have used this medium not only as a means of accessing and disseminating information but also as the means of voicing their concerns about discriminatory laws and to participate in public discourse. In Iran, the Internet provided a voice to repressed and marginalized groups, particularly young people and educated women. By applying the theory of social action and mobilization, this study finds that women’s digital activities prove to be an effective means of participating in communication discourse and mobilizing the female population of Iran in their struggle for a just and fair society.” He is of the opinion that social networking sites like Facebook and Twitter helped in video sharing, which in turn promoted women’s right activist groups to work towards women empowerment through such social medium.

## 3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To find out the reach and access of social media
- To study out the extent of the usage of the facebook
- To understand the role of facebook and women empowerment Campaign

## 4. HYPOTHESIS

- H1 Facebook plays an important role in creating awareness about women empowerment.

## 5. METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted in Southern Bangalore through survey method by administering the questionnaire between the age group of 20 to 60 years women respondents. The results are tabulated and basic statistics is applied to find out the outcome. The sample chosen were youth who belonged to different backgrounds. Most of the people have access to social media and have facebook accounts. It aims to study the impact of facebook on them and to know whether facebook is effective in women empowerment and creating awareness.

## 6. DATA INTERPRETATION

**Table 1:** Usage of Social Media by respondents:

Response	Percentage wise response of Respondents
No	0
Yes	100
Total	100

The above table represents that almost all the respondents have access to one or the other social media. This shows that the role of internet and social media is growing day by day and has become part of everyday life.

**Table 2:** Modes of Access the social media

Different Kind of Medium for access Social media	Percentage wise Responses
Cyber Centre	10
Desktops at House	45
Smart Phones	45

The above shows that majority of the respondents have accessing the social media either through their smart phones or through desk top in home.

**Table 3:** Kind of Social media used by the respondents

Kind of Social Media	Percentage wise Responses
Blogs	25%
Facebook	75%
Instagram	10%
Twitter	5%
Whats app	90%
Hike	5%
Linked in	10%
Messenger	5%

The above table shows that majority of the respondents are using Whatsapp and other social media also that is 90% and 75% of the respondents are using the facebook and other social media apps as well. As the present study is on the facebook user, the researcher has the maximum responses to find out the result for the study. Compare to other social media app the majority of them have access to facebook and whatsapp.

**Table 4:** Frequency of using facebook by the respondents

Frequency	Percentage wise responses
Everyday	85
Alternative days	10
once in a week	05
Total	100

The above table represents that the majority of the respondents use facebook everyday and have the update of the frequently happening issues.

**Table 5:** Purpose of usage of facebook

Purpose	Percentage wise Response
Entertainment	20
Information purpose	60
Sharing information	20
Time pass	10
Total	100

From the above table the data represents that majority that is 60% of them use facebook for the purpose of getting information and interestingly 20% of them use to share information.

**Table 6:** Heard of Women Empowerment Campaign through Facebook

Response	Percentage Wise Response
Yes	83
No	17
Total	100

The above shows that majority that is 83% of them have come across the campaign related to women empowerment in facebook.

**Table 7: Women Empowerment Campaigns in facebook**

Campaigns	Percentage Wise Response
<b>BBC#100 Women</b>	10
<b>#WeSeeEqual</b>	10
<b>#Boss Women</b>	05
<b>Touch pickle</b>	30
<b>Viva La Re construction</b>	25
<b>#MeToo</b>	68

The above table shows that the respondents are aware of the Women Empowerment Campaign. 68% of the respondents are aware of #MeToo Campaign 30% of them know about Touch Pickle and 25% of the also know about the Viva La Re Construction.

**Table 8: Effect of facebook in Creating Awareness about these Campaigns**

Reasons	Agrees	Strongly Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
<b>Raising Awareness on the Cause</b>	25	45	25	05	0	100
<b>Spreading Information about Issues</b>	35	50	10	05	0	100
<b>Connecting Victims to raise voice</b>	15	20	20	30	15	100
<b>Organizing actions and Managing Activists</b>	27	15	33	15	10	100
<b>Reaches Only Educated Group</b>	45	25	20	10	0	100
<b>Can bring change in the society</b>	55	25	15	05	0	100
<b>Easy Access Platform in bringing down the reputation of the guilty</b>	10	25	45	20	0	100
<b>Authenticity of the Issues</b>	45	0	0	55	0	100

The above table represents that 45% of them strongly agree and 25% agree that facebook is able to create awareness about the issues, but 25% of them are neutral and do not want to comment on these campaign. Majority of the facebook user and respondents have told that it is spreading the information very fast and inputs are instantly able to get. 30% of the respondents have disagreed that actual victims are not getting benefited may be due to either they are not on facebook or not aware that there is platform to use for the justice. 27% of the respondents have agreed that facebook is able to create platform for activists to raise voice for the victims and organize the rally for the cause. 30% of them do not want to comment on this issue. Majority of them agree that is 70% that reaches only to educated as we all know that one should be educated to read the posted information or someone has make them understand. 80% have agreed that facebook is actually bringing change in the society by reaching the wide range of people across the world and bringing them to fight for the cause. As we have come across with the benefit of the facebook, there is misuse of this platform by many people in bringing down the reputation of the person on personal grudge because within in second it reaches large number of population. When asked about the authenticity of the issues posted in the facebook 55% of the respondents disagreed that the content in facebook must be verified as there are no filters. Anybody can post any information. People must be cautious about the information that they read and analyze the content and then form an opinion.

## 7. CONCLUSION

Facebook plays a very important role empowerment of women by giving information about women empowerment and about related issues. It helps to create awareness about various related to women empowerment. But it is reaching only educated group and the credibility of the issues in the social media is not measurable because anybody can comment or post on anyone. But to some extent facebook has been a big platform to raise the voice and discuss the issues which were had social taboo of not discussing in the public.

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