

Traditional Haat As A Tool For Economic Empowerment Of Rural Women And Role Of Mass Media- A Case Study Of Abu Market Of Ganesguri, Dispur (Assam).

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ABSTRACT: Mass Media plays a pivotal role in development. The advent of network technology establishes knowledge base society. Access to communication provides support to manage livelihood of rural people. The road connectivity is one of the most important aspects for rural area to improve the economic status as well as life style of the rural women. A suitable market place, good environment and gender discrimination is most important factors for empowering rural women. The women contribution in livelihood of rural people is remarkable. The women of Assam especially tribal women have an inborn talent and skills in making textile. They are skilled weaver. Everyday a large number of women vegetable seller come from the rural areas to Abu Market of Dispur Ganesguri to sell vegetables and other indigenous products on the footpath. When we talk about economic empowerment of both rural and urban women, the available resource is a most important factor. We know that climate of Assam is suitable to produce agricultural products. Every day a large number of women use to come Guwahati especially at Abu market of Dispur , Ganesguri to sell their agro based products. These indigenous products have got good demand. Almost every festivals we use ethnic foods and we have the rituals to use and consume the ethnic stuffs. The study will focus how traditional *haat* can use as tool for livelihood of rural women with the support of mass media.

Keywords: Mass Media, Traditional *Haat*, livelihood and economic empowerment

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I. INTRODUCTION

A female human has got inborn advantages of giving birth of new one which the man does not have. Moreover, in the population chart of world, the women covered more than 50 per cent stake. The importance or need of women empowerment will arise when we find any discrimination or threat on women in the society, so it is very important to study the status and right of women to give her a respectable position in the society. The status of women in India has been changing according to time and trends. The Rig Vedic Society, women were enjoyed freedom in selecting their life partner but separation or divorce was not permissible or allowed to women. Women had no direct share in her husband's property; A widow mother had some rights. Although women had equal right in social and religious field but had limited rights in economic field. According to Manu a wife, a son and a slave, these three are declared to have no property, whatever wealth they earn is for their owner or whom they belong. The economic status of women in Buddhist and the *Bhakti* movement also remained unchanged. After Independence , the constitution of India has given equal right to both man and women but age long culture and tradition is one of the major obstacle of gender equality and equity .The first right always goes to man in our society. The mindset of people towards women has to be changed to empower women folk as a whole. The issue is not restrict as a social, its overall impact highly affects on development of any nation. The fourth pillar of democracy, the Mass media has to play a vital role in this process of empowering women especially rural women unless the schemes and related funds, these all will go in vain. The study will focus on role of television to empower the Rural women especially the

1.2 PRESENT STATUS OF WOMEN IN INDIA

Our constitution of India has given equal right to both men and women. After 70 years of Independence if we look at the status of women in India, we have noticed that one section of women are empowered and they enjoyed equal access to health , education, jobs and leisure and other section of women still struggling for their basic needs. According to a global study conducted by Thomson Reuters, India is the "fourth most dangerous country" in the world of women. The exploitation and discrimination is still a matter of great concern when we speak about women empowerment. The crime against women increases in every second of time. Child

trafficking, sexual harassment, dowry. Child marriage, domestic violence, female feticide and infanticide, prostitution, eve-teasing, pornography. The maternal mortality rate is still high in India. The decision making power is not in the hand of women. Although she has her own uterus, but have no power to take decision whether she could give birth. They need permission from their men to visit their parents and relatives. The participation in politics is low and thirty three per cent reservation bill is still pending to become an act. We have not seen any women and Children's separate S hospital where only women and children can be treated and can ask 24 hours medical help. As per the latest National Family Health Survey report, Assam's maternal mortality rate (MMR) at 300 per one lakh live births surpasses the national average of 167 by a long stretch which leads as highest in the country for ten successive years.

1.3 Economic Empowerment:

Empowerment is the process that makes women to gain access to and control of material, intellectual, human resources and also makes women to decide first to tackle any kind of issues independently. Women play an important role in the development process. If the women folk are not included in this process, it would be very difficult to achieve total development. The problem of rural and urban women are not same in India. The economy of rural women of India basically comes from agriculture, animal husbandry, forestry and waving where women are the main labor force working in the above mentioned field besides doing all household works. Urban economy based on Industry where modern women facing great challenges with the global culture along with traditional one. So, the term Economic empowerment can define as giving the equal right and opportunities to women to control the both finance and access which will help them take decisions for their own lives and also give them an identity in the society.

1.4 EMPOWERING WOMEN FOLK IN ASSAM :

Defining the women empowerment is very difficult in India because different communities in this large country have a long history of injustice and discrimination towards women as a whole. The culture and tradition of each and every part of India is also a factor where men have the first right to all the resources and when we talk about empowering women it means women have to take that right from the men that they have been using for a long period of time. The efforts to empower women began with the struggle for India's independence movement. A number of policies and schemes have been formulated to empowering women in India. In Assam scheme and policies has been introducing by Panchayat and rural development are Swarnajyanti Gram swarozgar yojana, Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak yojana 1.5 Employment Assurance Scheme, Rural Housing, Jwahar gram samridhi yojana, Wasteland development and project Golden Thread and The integrated Child Development Services Scheme (ICDS).

The movement for empowerment of women has been started in Assam with the Freedom struggle of India when the women attended Assam Sahitya Sabha Session under the leadership of Chandraprabha Saikiani and formed The Asom Mahila Samiti in the year 1926. There are also a good number of government agencies, non-government organizations (NGOs) and self help groups working together in different parts of the Assam to improve the status of women.'

1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY :

As a fourth pillar of democracy, the mass media plays a significant role in development. Television, which is an audio visual medium, can use as a tool to educate the masses especially in rural area. It can also be used to form public opinion in democratic society and can make difference by changing attitude towards women and to generate any kind of social campaign in rural area. Although the access of Television is restricted to its availability of rural electrification, watching the television programme such as news, shop opera and various developmental programs. Community program etc. can improve the social life of women. This medium can also be used as a tool to educate and inform the women and common masses against wage discrimination, crime against women, political representation and participation. Over and above, education is an important skill for women and the television can plays a pivotal role to impart non formal education to rural women which will help them to raise their voice in democratic way and can help to make own decision. Apart from these, the importance of mass media to create a knowledge based society and to form a strong public opinion is inevitable in democratic set-up.

1.7 STATUS OF TELEVISION IN ASSAM :

Television had come to Assam in 1982 at the time of Asian Games. The Doordarshan Kendra Guwahati started its programme from Panbazar, Guwahati. Primarily it was telecast only news and programme that was telecast from Delhi. Later, it has its own set-up in R.G. Baruah Road, Guwahati. At present in Assam seven regional Satellite Channels which are used as paid channel by viewer along with all most 800 plus

satellite TV which was operated by Different Disk provider. Besides DTH which is operated by installation of one time set-up box.

1.8 ROLE OF MASS MEDIA EMPOWERING RURAL WOMEN IN ASSAM :

The use of mass media such as Radio, Television, News paper, Cinema and internet can help to fulfill a variety of development activity. The function of mass media is to educate, inform, entertain, watch dogging and marketing. Among all, Radio and Television is most powerful medium to generate any kind of development project. Education and information plays a vital role in women's development. The study shows how television is an important tool for rural women to improve their lifestyle and to form strong public opinion on various women's issues right form Witch hunting, women's legal right, discrimination in work place, skill training and sexual abuse. It is the prime duty of mass media to give the product to people especially to women according to their need and also to guide them to raise their voice against any kind of issues which is related to empowerment of rural women. Apart from all, to safeguard the democracy is a prime duty and responsibility of mass media and when we talk about the economic empowerment of women there should not be any discrepancies between men and women.

II. ABU MARKET OF GANESHGURI

The term "Abu" means grandma , where goods are selling by female and it also carry a message of" indigenous product's market of ethnic essence ". The capital of Assam shifted from Meghalaya to Dispur , Guwahati in 1972 and since then the place named Ganeshguri became a major hub of Dispur area of Guwahati. The name Ganeshguri derived from a Ganesh Mandir which has been situated at Dispur area. Earlier the structure of the mandir or temple was only a Ganesh idol crafted on the rock and there was no permanent structure of the said temple. The temple was situated near the centre of three lanes and there by the place or area is called Ganeshguri. Guri means "centre". The people basically the Tribal woman of Guwahati and nearby area such as Lokhora, Khanapara,Hengrabari and Basistha used to come to sell vegetables, ethnic goods, crafts, indigenous foods on roadside place and foot path at Ganeshguri area since1972. Earlier there was specific and separate place for these women in Ganeshguri and their products has been highly demanded as every occasion, festivals people using and consuming ethnic food or goods. At present due to expansion of road and footpath. The women of the market scattered in three/ four places of Ganeshguri area and some of the women seller went off from this place to search new place to sell their product. The improvement of road transport in Assam gives the opportunity to the women of rural area of Assam to sell their product in Abu Market. The rural women of Jagiroad, Sonapur , Digaru and many villages of Morigaon District of middle Assam use to come daily basis in Abu Market to sell their products. They are also facing problem for space to sell their products as there is no specific place for them and due to this sometime they have to sell their product in throughway prices to some local whole seller and vendors.

It is very important to study the present status of Abu market to make women empowered financially especially ST/SC community by selling their agro and home made products to make them self sufficient . The mass media can plays a significant role to form strong public opinion and make aware them to build a permanent market place for the women which called "Abu" . It can also be used as a tool for non-formal education by providing education, information as well as entertainment to rural women.

2.1 OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY :

1. To study the role of Television to empower the rural women of Abu Market.
2. To find out the media habit of women of Abu Market.
3. To find out the Television is an important tool to change the life style of rural women as well as women of Abu Market.
4. To find out the Educational TV is a successful medium to impart non formal education to rural women.
5. To find out how media can plays a vital role to protect and preserve the traditional haat or market.

2.2 METHODOLOGY:

The study was undertaken in order to collect primary data on the role of mass media to empower the rural women of Abu Market with special reference to Television. To collect appropriate data the researcher was chosen survey method on a sample population of 100 people falling in the age group of 20-60 years who are basically use to come to sell and buy the products in "Abu Market". Personal observation was also chosen as a method to record the actual data.

III. ANALYSIS OF DATA :

a. Use of Mass Media such as Television can help fulfill a variety of development issues and aim :

Response to the question, Do you feel that mass media can help the Rural women to change the life style if so which medium is effective tool for education ,information and entertainment:

The impact of television is higher than the other medium of communication, 75% of the respondent said they are regular viewer of television. The main attraction of is Its presentation with visual aids and promptness. 20% respondent says they prefer to listen radio because of easy to access and reach. The rest 5% respondent prefer to read books or magazine and news paper in regular basis for elaborate information in all subject and can use according to own schedule. The awareness publicity and advertisement on various govt's schemes which have been telecast in doordarshan and local private channel makes aware to the respondent on developmental projects and schemes.

2. The habit of using mass media is according to access of particular media : Response to the question, which media do you access as household and why ?

40% respondent says they are preferring television as household where 50% respondent says they prefer Radio as household because of electrification. The electrification is main issue of accessing Television in rural area . The rural people prefer to access Radio set as household due to its reach and easy to access , moreover the use of set is quite personal and can go anywhere with the user. 2% says they prefer News paper and magazine as household. The reach of the media is very important for consumer or reader , the radio and television reaches fast to viewer or listener than print media and while 2% respondent says mobile internet .

Television is an important tool to empower the rural woman especially socio-economic empowerment:

3. Response to question, which programme do you like to watch in television and why ?

60% of the respondent says that they like to watch entertainment programme in Television 30% respondent says they like to watch news and developmental programme given by Doordarshan namely Gramin Bharat and Krishi Darshan and health programme.

4. Television especially the Educational Television is a suitable tool to impart non-formal education to rural women. Response to the question, Education is an essential tool for economic empowerment .If yes, does Television provides value and need based education according to need of different communities with regional value:

Need based education 40 % says yes, 50% says No Rest 10% says they cannot say what they need whatever television provides them they enjoy to watch .The pattern of development is depend on the available resource of particular region so the need of the people is differ from one region to another and also differ from one community to other one.

Value based Education 60% says No 35% says Yes , Rest 5% says can't say.

Value is judge with quality of education provides by the mass media to the target group.

5. The gap between rural and urban can reduce by transnational Television: Response to the question, Satellite Television can reduce the gap of rural and urban. Do you agree?

80% of the respondent says yes . The information they get are crossing transnational boundaries . They can update the information and can gather knowledge in various topic .Rest 20% says they do not have any idea about the topic but says they like to watch various programme of across the world.

6. Political participation is key issues to empower the women:

Response to the question: Does awareness programme which have been telecast in Television form strong public opinion to participate in parliamentary politics ?

Political empowerment is another important issue in women's development. Right from form of government either casting vote or participate as a representative in democratic set-up. Village penchant to parliament the representation of women is gradually increasing. Television can guide and help to form opinion on participation of women in parliamentary democracy. Large number of women seller of Abu Market have opined that mass media especially television has played major role in political decision making and participation in politics either by casting vote or an active membership of political parties. 60 % says yes, television can form strong public opinion 30% says No and rest 10% says can't say.

7. Mobile Internet connectivity is very important to access communication: Response to the question: Have you got internet connectivity in your mobile phone? If "No" Give the reason and if "yes" what kind of activity you usually doing in mobile internet?

30% says Facebook and rest 50% says Movie and video and 20% says surfing news and photos. The respondent like to connect their mobile phones into internet as it is personal and they could view the site anywhere according to their wish and over and above the network connectivity is also cheap if they compare to cable and disc connectivity. Technology is most important issue in development communication. Mobile internet is an effective medium of communication if there are good connectivity and affordable recharge plan.

8. Mass media can plays an important role to protect and preserve the traditional market and can work as a powerful medium for public opinion. Response to the question: Permanent market or specific place for women

at Ganeshguri can give a platform to rural women to make them financially independent. Do you feel that mass media especially television can rise your voice for a permanent “ Abu Market” if Yes which media will be most effective for public opinion?

50 % respondent says they prefer television as a mediator and vehicle of communication to raise their voice. 40 % says Radio and rest 10 says news paper. The available resources found in particular area can give the economic empowerment to the rural women.

IV. CONCLUSION :

Since the independence, the mass media is used as a tool for development by the Government and other welfare agencies. The role of mass media in empowering women especially rural women is very much important in India. Mass media can safeguard the democracy by accessing resources, education and information for their development. And also can assist the rural women to expose and empower with available resources. There is a good potentiality of rural women to empower themselves in selling their agro products in Abu Market. Looking at the growing trends of shopping malls ,to preserve and protect the traditional and ethnic market or *haat* is very much important to support the rural women for their livelihood . There is a need for a specific permanent space in Ganeshguri area for Abu Market and mass media can support them to form public opinion to get their right as well as expose them either educating or establishing bridge with the government.

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