



The impact of social media on gender perceptions and empowerment

Sakshi Ojha

Research Scholar, Department of Sociology, Iswar Saran Degree College, University of Allahabad, Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh, India

Abstract

Technology innovation and the subsequent increase in reliance on it have had an immediate influence on women's empowerment. Social media has grown into a potent tool for digital media and has helped the world's communication network to expand. Given the on going epidemic, the importance of such internet outlets has doubled. Social media and social policy have become more cautious in recent years. Through blogs, discussion forums, online campaigns, chats, and other platforms, social media has provided women with a place to communicate their issues, viewpoints, and thoughts. This essay emphasises how social media may be used positively to advance women's empowerment in society. It conjointly discusses the excess and cons of the excessive dependence on the social media platforms within the path of women empowerment. This paper is split into five sections. The importance of social media deals with the first part and how different social media platforms have become so prominent over the last few years. The second sections deals with the which means and idea of women empowerment. The third section analyses however social media has compact the lives of the women and how it has become a tool of women empowerment. The fourth section covers the disadvantage faced by these social media and platforms and what steps needed to be taken to block these Issues. The last section concludes the theoretical findings of this paper.

Keywords: Social media, women's empowerment, media tools

Introduction

Over the past few decades, social media has significantly changed communication on a local and international scale. In the last two decades, social media use and practise have dramatically increased in India. Women now have a new tool, weapon, or platform in social media to discuss issues, communicate, express their opinions, plan campaigns, and engage in online activism. Social media is a growing trend and an effective way to get the local and international audience to pay more attention to women's rights concerns and to inspire and urge policymakers to support gender equality in the government. Social media platforms including blogs, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and others have enabled women to make more informed decisions about their education, entertainment, and financial status. The simplicity of creating an account on social media and its ability to reach millions of people at virtually no cost or very little are the key reasons why it has grown in importance. For women, it has evolved into a platform for self-expression. Women now have greater social, psychological, and financial power as a result. Kadeswaran, Brindha & Jayaseelan, (2020) [6] It has improved women's involvement in the political, social, and cultural spheres. It has aided in the women's capacity-building, which has subsequently promoted their involvement in the decision-making processes. The female beliefs now have a new forum thanks to social media. The advancements in technology have brought women's challenges to the forefront. It now serves as a resource for women that connects them with outside world.

Women's hashtag activism has aided in raising awareness of issues that affect them. *Manal-al-Sharif*, who shared a video of herself driving in 2011 is one well-known case. She brought attention to the fact that millions of girls worldwide, including those in Saudi Arabia, are denied the opportunity

to drive by sharing this video on Facebook and YouTube. This resulted in a global #Women2Drive Movement that went viral, and in 2018 Saudi Arabia granted women the freedom to drive as a result of its influence. Singh (2017) [10] An other notable instance is the 2012 Delhi gangrape, in which activists' agitation across many social media platforms forced the authorities to act decisively and quickly modify the legislation. 2014 saw in order to establish gender equality and put an end to all forms of gender discrimination, the United Nations supported the #HeforShe Movement by asking men and people of other genders to stand with women. The #knowyourLemons Campaign was also launched in 2014 to raise women's awareness of breast cancer. The Mumbai-based NGO She Says India launched the #Lahu Ka Lagaan Campaign in 2017 to get rid of the Goods and Services Tax on sanitary pads. They were successful in 2018 when the government decided to remove the tax off sanitary napkins. The #MeToo Movement acquired international traction in 2017–18 as a result of high-profile individuals being accused of sexual assault and harassment. Due of the relatively low startup costs associated with social networking sites, a growing number of women are now entrepreneurs. Numerous such businesses flourished during. The #Time Is Now for world leaders to commit to making gender equality a reality for everyone, everywhere. We can also use #Selfie With Daughter as an example. The Selfie With Daughter initiative was started by Shri. Sunil Jaglan, the sarpanch of Bibipur Village, Haryana. Its goal is to empower girls by encouraging them to take photographs with their daughters and share them on social media. He introduced the smartphone app "Selfie with Daughter," which sparked a global campaign against the choice of women and sexes. Following Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's discussion of the selfie with daughter campaign, which was suggested

by Sunil Jaglan on June 28, 2015, on the "Mann Ki Baat" show on All India Radio, the movement became a global revolution. He asked parents to spread the word about this campaign since it will support the education project for girls and gender equality known as "Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao."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. Dewi, A.S. (2020) [4].

Statement of problem

Description of the Issue The purpose of the research is to examine how women perceive and experience empowerment through social media. Thus, I have made an effort to comprehend these women's perspectives and experiences from their perspective. This study try to see that how various aspects of women's empowerment were impacted by social media and to identify which social media platforms were more appealing to women than others.

Objective

1. To research how social media affects women's empowerment
2. To understand how social media can be used wisely to empower women in a conservative cultured society like India.
3. To enquire the pros and cons on women- social media participation.
4. Review successful social media initiatives, analyse existing hurdles, and make ideas on how to use social

media to successfully widen the scope of action on women's rights and gender equality

Methodology

The government of India and some institutions released books, general research papers, and reports, from which secondary data has been gathered.

Result and discussion

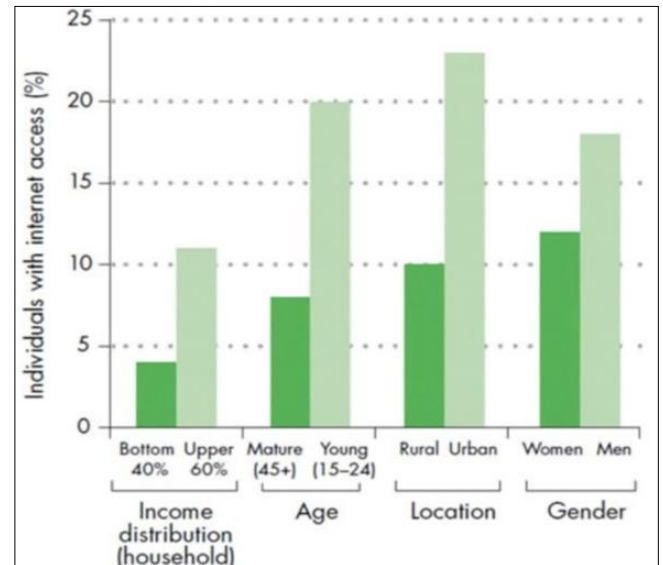


Fig 1: Represents individuals with internet access in a different scen

Table 1: Some major laws that deals with cyber crime with respect to women

S. No.	Cyber crimes	Laws/Section	Description
1.	Cyberbullying	IPC, 1860 IT Act,2000 And IPC	Cyber bullying means the use of electronic or communication devices like computers, mobile phones, social media platforms etc., for posting hurtful words, derogatory comments, fake information, threats etc.
2	Cyber stalking	354A 354D IPC	Cyber stalking involves anonymously following the victims' movement across the internet for harassing in platforms frequently visited by them and bombarding them with emails, messages etc.
3	Online sexual harassment	Act,2013, Cr PC 1973 Indian Evidence Act	This is unwanted sexual behaviour online it can make a person feel threatened, exploited, humiliated, upset, sexualized or discriminated against.
4	Fake profile creation	Section 354A (sexual harassment) Section 354D (stalking) Sections 499 and 500 (defamation and punishment for defamation) Section 507 Section 509	Fake profiles are often created for sullyng victims' reputation. If the creation of such profiles is accompanied by the uploading of vulgar or obscene photos of the victim,
5	Obscenity	Section 67,67A and 67B IT Act. Section 67B OF IT Act(Child Pornography) Section 292 and 294 of IPC	Digital transmission of materials that are obscene, sexually explicit etc
6	Privacy breach	Section 66E of IT act Section 509 of the IPC	Who intentionally captures, publishes or transmits images of a private area without consent. Activities insulting the modesty or breaching the privacy of a woman

Table 2: Social media and women empowerment from 1880 to till now

S. No.	Protest	Purpose	Description
1	#MeToo	Disclose sexual assault	The #MeToo campaign was started by Tarana Burke to give girls who had gone through similar things a safe place to connect with one another. Actress Alyssa Milano's 2017 tweet set off a worldwide chain reaction of women who had previously kept quiet about their experiences with sexual assault. Since then, the #MeToo movement has expanded globally, bridging racial, economic, and other divides.

2	#Times Up	To break the silence around sexual harassment, end gender discrimination, gender equality.	movement was born in 2018 using the loudest voices in service of the most marginalized, and creating unity to break the silence around sexual harassment, end gender discrimination and fight for gender equality.
3	#HeForShe	Gender equality, Gender discrimination	In 2014, Actress and UN Women Goodwill Ambassador, Emma Watson invited men to join the movement for gender equality by taking part in the #HeForShe campaign. Since the launch, men and women around the world have used #HeForShe to declare their commitment to end gender discrimination and to invite others to join the movement Z
4	#Selfi With Doughter	To save girl child	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
5	#Bring Back Our Girls	Human rights abuses, kidnappings and killings, as well as action for safety and security, healthcare and economic reform.	In April 2014, 276 teenage girls in Chibok, Borno State, Nigeria were abducted from their school hostel by the terrorist group, Boko Haram. Parents and community members took to social media, sparking outrage around the world and creating the hashtag #BringBackOurGirls. While more than 100 of the kidnapped girls have been found or released, many remain missing. Bring Back Our Girls has become a lasting movement in Nigeria.
6	#Every day Sexism	Encourage women to share their stories of sexism, and expose the stark reality	In spring 2012, author Laura Bates set up a website called “The Everyday Sexism Project” to catalogue instances of sexism that women experience on a daily basis. The aim of the project was to encourage women to share their stories of sexism, no matter how minor they may seem, and expose the stark reality to the world that sexism is very much alive and widespread, and mostly so normalized within our societies that we don’t even protest most of the time. When the project became a hashtag, the conversation became global and unstoppable.
7	#Like A Girl	Against gender stereotype	campaign sought to curb gender stereotyping and increase confidence among women and girls.
8	#Genration Equality	For women’s rights	campaign was launched in 2020 during the 25th anniversary of The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action of 1995. The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action of 1995 was ratified by 189 countries for furthering women’s rights.
9	#Delhi Gangrape	Sexual assault and funding for women’s safty	This campaign that came response to the Nirbhaya case brought to spotlight tha scale of gender violence in India and supported the public protest. This led to the government introducing stringent punishments for sexual assaults. It also resulted in more women reporting rape cases.
10	#Women Should	To reveal the widespread prevalence of sexism and discrimination against women	A series of ads, developed as a creative idea for UN Women by Mamac Ogilvy & Mather Dubai in 2013, used genuine Google searches to reveal the widespread prevalence of sexism and discrimination against women. Based on searches dated 9 March, 2013, the ads exposed negative sentiments ranging from stereotyping as well as outright denial of women’s rights.
11	#Pad Man Challenge	To break the taboo related with manstruaton	#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.
12	#Why I Stayed	Get rid from domestic violence and toxic relationships	Beverly Gooden wanted to explain in November 2014 when she shared her story of domestic violence with #WhyIStayed, in reaction to people who were questioning why women don’t “just leave” if they are survivors of domestic abuse.

Types of women empowerment supported by social media

Table 3: According to *Makamba*, Women Empowerment can have six components

Cognitive empowerment	women are understanding of their conditions of subordination and the causes of such conditions at both micro and macro levels of society. It involves acquiring new knowledge to create a different understanding of gender relations as well as destroying old beliefs that structure powerful gender ideologies”.
Psychological empowerment	would include the “development of feelings that women can act upon to improve their condition. This means formation of the belief that they can succeed in change efforts.”
Economic empowerment	would include the “requires that women can be able to engage in a productive activity that will allow them some degree of autonomy, no matter how small and hard to obtain at the beginning”.
Social empowerment	is a “process to change the distribution of power in interpersonal relations among different people, cultures, activities of the society”. In past awareness regarding the society is unknown to the women but present scenario reveals completely different pictures and knows they are equally participating in pictures and knows they are equally participating in all activities of the society
Political empowerment	would encompass the “ability to organize and mobilize for change and democracy. Consequently, an empowerment process must involve not only individual awareness but collective awareness and collective

	action. The notion of collective action is
Legal empowerment	Legal Empowerment is legal protection needed for the women in terms of health, harassments, superstitions, cultural barriers and protection. Make the women aware of the civil rights, exercising the legal rights exercising the legal rights necessary, preparing and canvassing the documents regarding the legal freedom for women, providing good literary programmes regarding the legal empowerment, etc.

Table 4: Major government initiative to prevent cyber crime

S. No.	Central/State Govt, Initiative	Description
1	Cyber Crime Portal	launched in 2018 to enable citizens to report obscene contents.
2	Cyber Police Station	It was set up in each state for reporting and investigating cybercrime cases.
3.	Cyber Crime Cell	It was set up in each state for reporting and investigating cybercrime cases.
4	Cyber Forensics Training Labs	It was constituted in the north-eastern states and cities like Mumbai, Pune, Kolkata and Bengaluru for training state police personnel and judiciary in detecting cyber crimes and collecting, preserving and seizing electronic evidence.
5	National critical information infrastructure l	safeguard critical information relevant to national security, economic development, and public health, India has established the National Critical Information Infrastructure Protection Center. Information Technology (IT) Act, 2000, Section 70A, amended this provision.
6	Cyber Swachhta Kendra	New Delhi hosted the 12th India Security Summit on the 28th of August, 2019 under the theme "Towards New National Cyber Security Strategy". Several topics were discussed at the conference, such as protecting critical national infrastructure and addressing emerging cyber threats.
7	Cyber safe Movement	Initiated by Maharashtra cyber Police, It was a week-long campaign aimed at creating awareness about cybercrimes Targeting women and children.
8	Cyber Surakshya	It is three month long cyber campaign launched in Panjab last year on occasion of Universal Children's day (nov 20) Goal was to ensure privacy in Online Platforms and protect against online stalkers as well as the information regarding the legal remedies.
9	CybHeR	It is an online awareness campaign initiated by the Telangana Police for women and children.it emphasized on the threats within the cyberspace.

Table 5: Top 5 Person influencing women's empowerment through social media in the current scenario

S.No.	Field	Popular personality	Description
1	Anupriya kapur	Women's mental health as well as physical health	She is single Mom, a runner, a mommy blogger and a postpartum depression survivor. She is co-founder of Imbue natural-intimate hygiene care for women. She has inspires millions of women around the world to concentrate on their mental and physical health. She has also earned the title of 'Mom on the Run'
2	Dr. Trinetra haldar gummaraju	Imparts wisdom on gender, sexuality, queerphobia, bullying mental health and feminism.	Trinetra is India's first transwoman doctor She is a medical student, activist, and artist. The 23-year-old popular Vlogger has been grabbing eyeballs by documenting her transition journey on her YouTube channel 'The Trinetra Method'. Trinetra imparts wisdom on multiple topics like gender, sexuality, queerphobia, bullying, mental health and feminism.
3	Nisha madhulika	Indian chef, restaurant consultant	Nisha Madhulika started cooking at an early age. Nisha was struggling with empty nest syndrome. Nisha started a blog, writing on how to cook Indian vegetarian recipes in 2007 which led to her popularity. In 2011, she launched a food and recipe YouTube channel. By 2011, she had written over 100 cooking recipes on her blog. Now her following is 13.20 MILLION (https://www.youtube.com/user/NishaMadhulika) In 2014, she was one of India's top YouTube Chefs. In November 2017, she won the award as the Top YouTube Cooking content creator in the Social Media Summit & Awards 2017
4	Prajakta koli	Comedy	One of the most renowned YouTubers in the country, Prajakta Koli aka Mostly Sane has a crazy audience. Koli is better known for female-run comedy channels on YouTube. The name of her channel is 'Mostly Sane', and it has 6.8 million subscribers. Apart from the YouTube channel, Koli is also an influencer and an actor. She has 7.3 million followers on Instagram. Even Prajakta Koli aka 'Mostly Sane' to cover World Economic Forum at Davos 2023"
5	Shruti anand	Makeup artist,	Shruti Anand bought make-up kits and began educating herself on technicalities but soon realised most of the products and tips on YouTube were not for Indian skin tones. In 2011, while in between jobs, she filmed a video and uploaded it on YouTube for a lark. She soon made it a weekly habit

Source: The Economic report 2021

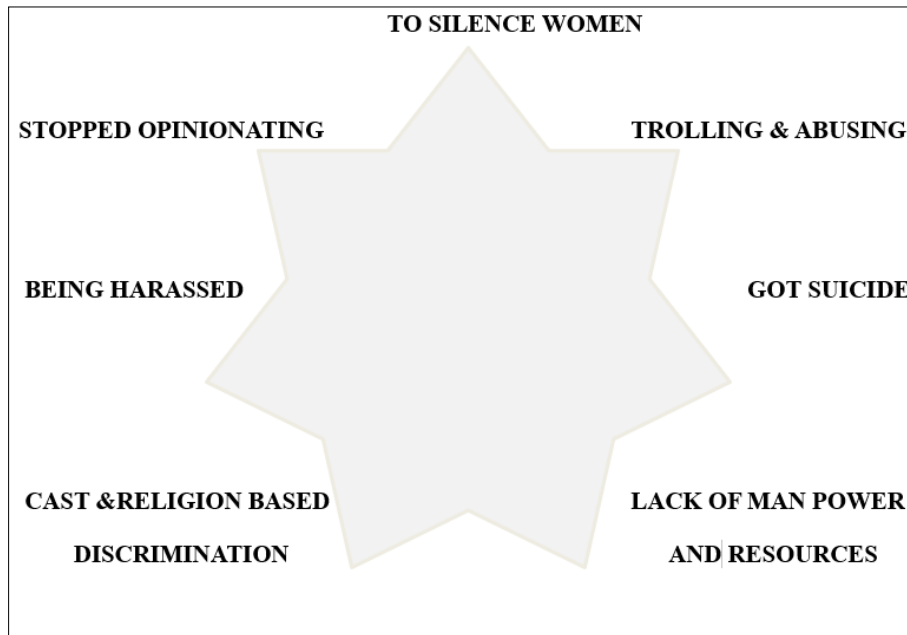


Fig 2: Backdrop of Social Media

Table 6: way forward

S.no.	By social media	By government	By NGO
1	Ensuring transparency and efficient reporting systems	Making social media accountable	Involve volunteers from various sector including men
2	A moral obligations should be as safeguard for users	Countermeasures against online trolling	To strength advocacy effort support to local women’s movements
3	Women team of social media must be set up for keeping an eye on content	Increasing political representation of women	Should be promote campaign
4	Increase women representation	Specific crime reporting unit	
5	Increase awareness	Increase women access to cyberspace	
6	Special features for privacy and security	Use it solutions& online campaigns	

Conclusion

The number of internet users in India has grown significantly over the years; according to Statista's 2023 research shows media usage by worldwide was 4.59 billion in 2022 and it can reach at 6 billion by 2027. This growth is expected to continue, as a report by IAMAI and Kantar IMRB (2023) jointly released a report titled 'Internet in India report 2022' points that 52% approx. 759 million are active user accessing the internet at least per month and it will reach 900 millions by 2025. Empowerment of the women is a basic human right that they have to be entitled too. Social media helps them tackle the new challenges display to them within the contemporary world. The use of these social media platforms should be encouraged to ensure that women rights can be advocated to the maximum extent. By facilitating the women’s acces to all these platforms and websites, it would ensure that all opportunities are available for all. So, despite all the backlash that social media receives, it can be said that a regulated media will really be a lot of useful than dangerous within the longer run. Women must be entitled to the fundamental human right of empowerment. They can overcome the new obstacles that the modern world presents to them with the aid of social media. To guarantee that women's rights may be promoted to the fullest degree possible, it should be encouraged to use these social media platforms. All opportunities would be available to everyone if women had easier access to all of these platforms and websites. Therefore, it may be concluded that, in the long term, a regulated media will

actually be more beneficial than harmful, despite all the criticism that social media receives.

Suggestion and Way Ahead

Everybody has access to all knowledge, truthful or false, in our incredibly free and just world. The social media era has further facilitated the dissemination of knowledge. However, the question of whether this simple access to information is beneficial to everyone or detrimental still needs to be answered. On the one hand, social media is a crucial tool for empowering women, but it may also be deadly in some situations. It has aided in democratising information access while also drawing attention to the main issues that are still present. At the national, regional, and international levels, this is becoming a serious concern. Perhaps the culture of hashtags is a strong instrument that can empower women, but it has also been seen to be frequently used to intimidate women. Slut shaming has grown very widespread, as has threats of rape and murder by unidentified accounts. There are situations where excessive transparency on social media might really violate someone's right to privacy. Furthermore, the abundance of hashtag movements leads to a certain activism fatigue and detracts from the critical focus that the larger movements need. Social media and the internet, which were once commended for providing an objective forum for underrepresented stories, are now being abused by some groups to further their own self-interested goals of maximising profits. Recent technology advancements have

made data more accessible than ever, and the majority of people are unable to distinguish between reliable and false information. Sometimes the real voices get lost in this power struggle. The real voices of real women are neglected, even if certain groups frequently use these instruments to propagate propaganda and sway public opinion. Furthermore, the growing number of cybercrimes is a well-known phenomenon. The victim becomes very vulnerable to offences like hacking, morphing, online trolling, harassment, cyber-defamation, dark net, pornographic websites, phoney profiles, cyber bullying, and so on. These crimes constitute a serious threat to the victim's security. The abundance of material on the internet that exploits sexuality, poses further threat to the safety of women. Thus, it is the need of the hour to ensure that strict laws need to be made. IT Act 2000 needs to be made stronger to tackle the increasing cases of cyber-crime.

References

1. Akhter N, Naheed F. Perceptions of Educated women about the role of media in women empowerment. *European Scientific Journal*, 2014, 10(31).
2. Amruth M. Silences and the Impossibility of Confabulation after Godhra, *Economic & Political Weekly*, 2007; 42(49):23-25.
3. <https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/in-focus/general-assembly/73/join-the-conversation>
4. Dewi AS. Investigating the impact of Instagram on women entrepreneurs' empowerment. In *Annual International Conference on Social Sciences and Humanities (AICOSH 2020)* Atlantis Press, 2020, 58-61.
5. Digital Content Creators Report, 2022.
6. Kadeswaran S, Brindha D, Jayaseelan R. Social media as a gateway for accelerating women empowerment. *Parishodh Journal*, 2020; 9(3):4876-4885.
7. Melissa E, Hamidati A, Saraswati MS, Flor A. The Internet and Indonesian women entrepreneurs: Examining the impact of social media on women empowerment. *Impact of information society research in the global south*, 2015, 203-222.
8. Narayana A, Ahamad T. Role of media in accelerating women empowerment. *International Journal of Advanced Education and Research*, 2016; 1(1):16-19.
9. Natalie Fenton, Veronica Barassi. *Alternative Media and Social Networking Sites: The Politics of Individuation and Political Participation*, *The Communication Review*, 2011; 14(3):179-196. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/10714421.2011.597245>
10. Singh AP. Role of media in women empowerment. *International Journal of Advanced Education and Research*, 2017; 2(5):50-53.
11. Sardesai Rajdeep. *The Election that Changed India*, London: Penguin, 2014.
12. Amruth M. Silences and the Impossibility of Confabulation after Godhra, *Economic & Political Weekly*, 2007; 42(49):23-25.
13. <https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/in-focus/general-assembly/73/join-the-conversation>
<https://www.sbs.com.au/language/tamil/en/podcast-episode/what-are-the-effects-of-social-media-on-women/pvar2h51pwc.in>
14. <https://www.statista.com/study/112194/digital-content-creators-report-2022/>
15. https://traai.gov.in/sites/default/files/Annau_Report_23022023