“Our first attempt should be directed towards the awakening in the minds of as many women as possible, a consciousness of their present condition.”

Mahatma Gandhi
Chapter I
INTRODUCTION

The primeval portrayal of a God ‘Ardha Narishwar’ is half female (prakriti) and half male (purusha), thus clearly defining that both man and woman are equal in all aspects of life.¹ How far is this true?

Repression of women is a well observed fact, not only restricted to the underdeveloped nations but is equally prevalent in developed countries too. Women in India have stereotypical image living with two contraries, almost concurrently – shakti (power) the primordial cosmic power, the source of power itself and – the powerless, unfortunate with no identity of her own.²

“Toottilai oatum kai tollulakai aalum kai”, we say the hand that rocks the cradle governs the world. But, the harsh reality is that women have been exploited in our society, over centuries. The level of development of women is different in different parts of the country. This probably is one more example of the reality that India is like a snake whose head is in the 21st century and the tail in the 17th century.”³ From the years of sati, devdasi system and child marriages, to the recent years – women have undergone a substantial transition, like an avalanche which laid frozen and static for centuries – but is now full of positive energy and moving rapidly.

Woman in India has always been considered as an instrument of procreation or to be exploited physically and thus never considered anywhere equal to the males. Till date this fact exits to such an extent that a boy child is any day preferred over his counterpart.
Discrimination and exploitation of women along with poverty, ignorance and denial of basics of life aggravate the inequalities that women are forced to face. Gender equality is a prime human right allowing women to live independently with dignity.\textsuperscript{4}

A vital feature for the success of gender equality is the empowerment of women. In order to achieve this, the focus should be on providing more freedom to women, to organise their lives and also to identify and reduce power imbalances. Women’s empowerment is believed to be a dynamic process of individual as well as collective struggle against the forces which suppress and subordinate women. It accentuates a procedure of reorganisation of all existing resources in the society, be it social, economic, political, intellectual or cultural.\textsuperscript{5} It indicates a change from a state of powerlessness to one that recognises and strengthens women to take greater control over their lives.\textsuperscript{6} Women empowerment is to be achieved by insuring that women are productive labour, they have equal right to work and property and right to life.

The Indian Constitution in its Preamble, Fundamental Rights, Fundamental Duties and Directive Principles enshrine the principle of gender equality. It not only grants equality to women, but also authorises the state to approve procedures of positive discrimination in favour of women.\textsuperscript{7} But this is not enough, the stress is to be laid on women representing their views and unsolved issues and their portrayal in an encouraging manner which will finally lead to women empowerment.

Though globalisation has clearly led to an exemplar change in women’s role in the society, but even with the
introduction of various development measures, the situation is still not in their favour. Female sex ratio is merely 933 per 1,000 males, and female literacy is 53.7 per cent, it is 21.6 per cent lower than the male literacy rate (according to 2001 census) which indicates the shrewdness of our development programs. This is only half the story, it is glaring to note that discriminating old customs, skewed attitudes and patriarchal system continues like a rabies and even the government rulings have helped very little to cure it.

Year 2001 branded as Women Empowerment Year was certainly a successful year, dedicated to improve the status of women in the society. The objective was to create an extensive awareness with active involvement of women themselves. The primary focus was to bring women into the national mainstream and to guarantee their rightful place in the economic development of India.

A series of World Conferences related to women have strengthened social, economical, and political magnitude of gender equality through empowerment of women, internationally as well as nationally. The two calculated objectives of Beijing Platform of Action concerning women and media that aims to promote women empowerment is to increase women involvement in decision-making through media and other technologies of mass communication; and promotion of non-stereotyped portrayal of women in media.

Communication invigorates all forms of human efforts to enlighten and encourage, inspire and organise, build poise, restore confidence, change behaviour, and so on. Communication is one of the most essential two way process of life. A baby cries when it is hungry, thus communicating its
need. The mother hears the cry and she assures that baby is fed properly, thereby fulfilling baby’s need.

Information is a major contributor in the progress of change and development. It is only through communication one acquires information associated to our immediate surroundings. To get information on national/international news, politics, health, science, or trade, one of the media (print/electronic) comes into play directly or indirectly. Thus, media is the foremost source of information dissemination which considerably influences masses’ opinion. Views or behaviours are based on what an individual perceives from information collected through media.

For the empowerment of women, exposure to mass media channels of communication contributes as a major factor. Women get considerable information on issues related to their empowerment if they are more open to the elements of mass media channels like newspaper, magazines, radio or television. Communication processes and media together can bring socio-economic development in a developing country like ours.

The exposure to mass media can help in gaining knowledge and change attitudes which will indirectly help women gain freedom at all fronts. Mass media aims at improving the quality of life of those who are under developed and marginalised, thus contributing to empowerment. With the present advancements in global communications, the media has a larger role to play in the empowerment of women.

The Indian media, in its initial 30 years after independence, ignored women or merely focused on middle-class domestic problems. But in late seventies when women
organisation’s kicked off movements, media invariably played an important role in spreading information and ideas about the status of women in society and the need to improve it.

The crucial role of media for transmitting the development information was well perceived in Seventh Five Year Plan (1985-99) when a separate Chapter on “Communication, Information and Broadcasting” was included in the planned document. In this Chapter, the mass media has been highlighted as, ‘A vehicle of education and extension to narrow the information gap between different target groups like youth, women, children and weaker sections.”

The Eleventh Five Year Plan tends to ensure that every Indian woman develops her full potential and share the advantage of economic progress and prosperity. Women empowerment is fundamental to sustainable growth and recognition of the human rights. It is a proven fact that women are major contributors to the growing economies of the world and for the same to be replicated, woman’s development and empowerment has to be ensured by all means.

As our country is already experiencing a communication revolution, the mass media’s role of disseminating social and economic messages to large section of society will further commence the process of development in itself. Indian women being portrayed as a fairer sex can change the public image by gaining access as well as control to country’s means of mass communication.

This proves beyond doubt that for developments in any society, media plays a crucial role and serves as a powerful instrument of social transformation. The rapid expansion of print and electronic media in 20th century is accountable for
letting the sheltered and isolated women curbed by old societal
norms to know their rights and revolt against inequality.

The present decade is a decisive time for Indian society,
as the nation faces gender imbalance upon which the
civilisation depends is unraveling with daring consequences.
To build a sustainable future, the minds of the society need to
be cultured, all issues concerning women have to be
understood and responded. To live in a new global reality of
empowered women in all respects, a giant leap needs to be
taken by the media. The Indian media needs to react strongly
to socio-cultural forms of gender prejudice. Media has the
power and where-with-alls to provide magic multipliers for
development causes.

1.1 REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Jain\textsuperscript{13} conducted a study on empowerment of rural
women in Afro-Asian countries. His aim was to recognise the
empowerment strategies and its impact in different countries
on a comparative perspective. He found that in most of the
Afro-Asian countries, the strategies in the direction of political
empowerment have yet to be taken on persistent basis. The
efforts made were found to be restricted. They needed to be
backed by suitable legislative measures, like in India where
around 30 per cent of seats in rural local government bodies
have been reserved for women. There is a provision of $1/3^{rd}$
of local bodies to be headed by women only. The approach
implemented in India could act as a model for other Afro-Asian
countries.
Jandhyala et al.\textsuperscript{14} explored the issue of women empowerment in Andhra Pradesh through experimental lens of the Mahi Samhukya (MS) Programme. The meaning of terms such as – empowerment, participation, decentralisation – are widely used by ideologically divergent groups ranging from people’s organisations to the World Bank which possess a challenge to the translation of abstract concepts into everyday strategies and activities. The objective of MS is educating women for empowerment and its approach is to enable women to ask questions about their problems. Considering different ways of dealing with these problems and acting on them has eventually resulted in a wide range of issues being addressed by women groups. The study identified the need for a wider union of groups with other women movements in order to achieve gender and social justice.

Kotri\textsuperscript{15} pointed out that the empowerment of women is just one aspect of the overall matter of upliftment of women in the society. But it is the most significant one. The struggle to improve overall status of women should carry on in the society by waging war against discrimination and violence against women. Women should actively participate in decision-making processes. Kotri says that today’s need is to bring forward more women members into legislatures. Women have good managerial power, they are less corrupt and show more responsibility.

Hatim\textsuperscript{16} in her article stated that worldwide women are making endeavours so that their rights are respected, their voices are heard and opportunities are widened. Their voices from kitchen platform are being heard in national and international forums. It is believed that women do deserve
high regard, not only as an individual but also as a symbol of creation, significance and respect which are spiritual and aesthetic in all senses.

Kumari\textsuperscript{17} in a case study found that alterations in power association take both in economic sphere as well as in socio-political sphere. This feature is well brought out by the reality that women leadership in the Panchayat began from grassroot level like Self Help Groups (SHGs) and other micro level women organisations. It is apparent that this drift would be infectious and in the coming years women leaders would come from such social groups. It would surely auger well for the empowerment process of women on a wider scale. It would also help women to protect their gains and struggle to enlarge its reach and depth.

According to Mohanty et al.\textsuperscript{18} the status of women in Indian society has not changed much post independently, especially in rural India. Although women contribute as a significant work force in rural society, their work is not visible as it remains limited to labour intensive work like agriculture, food processing and looking after the household. In order to provide more economic independence to women there are organisations like SHGs. These SHGs help in providing financial assistance to the rural women. It is beyond doubt that the economic empowerment of women will indeed go a long way in ensuring high self-esteem, economic independence, awareness of law and becoming part of decision-making process. The major drawback in women empowerment schemes run by any government remains the ignorance of the rural women which forms a major part of backward and oppressed entity in the gender inequality
matrix. Hence, it is of paramount importance that for a balanced approach towards real women empowerment in any society, special emphasis should be given to the upliftment of the rural women.

Jaya et al.\textsuperscript{19} concluded that one of the reason of limited participation of women in various spheres of life is perhaps due to the male dominated society. The data used in the study was secondary data which included indicators – such as Human Development Index (HDI), women’s political participation, gender empowerment measure, gender equality in education, and gender equality in economic activity. The analysis revealed that gender equality has been the main focus. Inspite of the fact that women constitute half of the population, they still suffer from social, economic and political backwardness. This research paper focused on issues of empowerment in SAARC region which once used to be the most developed and highly civilised region. Interestingly, this is the only region in the world which enjoys the regional economic cooperation and growth through elimination of trade and investment barriers. Although there are significant signs of improvement of women’s status in the society but still a lot is left to be desired. In order to provide empowerment to women in real sense, government and social organisations should play a proactive role. The contribution of women resource in any country’s economic development can only be improved by empowering the women through social, economic, political, education and administrative development.

Guido et al. (1979)\textsuperscript{20} did content analysis to study media images of women – the way they are represented in advertisements, radio, television, press and films. The concept
of women’s role has not changed and emphasis is laid on physical appearance, as it serves as a commercial interest to advertisers. Women’s participation in contemporary life was missing from advertisement images. Television programs depicted women as inaccurate and distorted, and news almost ignored women’s participation in the society. Entertainment programs showed women’s dual role as a decorative object and as a homemaker. On radio, women remain unexplored and it was male biased as very few programs were directed to women. Films failed to deal positively with change in sex-role perception. There were very few women directors which was one of the causes for negative portrayal of women. In newspaper, along with women’s primary role, items related to women fashion and entertainments were published. New role of women was not reflected in the press (very less). In magazines, women role was presented as a social one and there were hardly any images of independent and employed women.

Mcmillin (1980)\textsuperscript{21} did content analysis of Indian television program on the national network - Doordarshan which revealed that prime time shows cast women as docile homemakers and as objects of male desire. It was a critical post-colonial theoretical framework and narrative analysis to detect ideologies of gender.

Jha (1992)\textsuperscript{22} studied women professionals in journalism and the change in portrayal and their performance in print media. Women are the easiest scapegoat - be it social, political, religious or cultural. Sensationalised women image provokes violence against women. Women professionals’ consciously opted journalism to convey their ideas and beliefs
to the world. Women by communicating/interacting can help in changing the society. Striking fact is also revealed that even if woman heads a newspaper, she has little control over administrative affairs. Women have plunged into journalism but still a lot is to be achieved. The portrayal of women is not enough; still there is lot of cultural prejudice which needs to overcome. Print media’s involvement to women related issues can only be appreciated if there’s a political stability and a broader consensus on women issues.

Bhasin (1994)\textsuperscript{23} believed that as feminists, women’s condition and position has to be changed along with their portrayal in media. Globalisation meant increase in violence and also meant patriarchy becoming stronger. Mainstream media alone cannot bring change in political or economic system. As it is controlled and oriented by men. There is a necessity to build up media which understands masses need and is controlled by them only. The need of the hour is to develop feminist media. She focused on strengthening media based on oral traditions, like songs, as they are low in cost and leads to creativity.

According to Banerjee (1995)\textsuperscript{24} the empowerment of women at grassroots level needs to be viewed from the point of their share in the women’s movement. While there is a little doubt that the vitality of Indian women’s movement owes a great deal to the pressures generated from the grassroots. But, it would be far more difficult to answer the question how far the women’s movement have been able to carry the development at grassroot level.

Gallagher (1995)\textsuperscript{25} in a seminar concluded that freedom of expression is incomplete unless rights of women becomes
an integral part of this freedom of expression. The legal framework within which societies are organised and run are powerfully male biased. It discusses the impact in the context of mass media, advertising, pornography and violence.

Nassanga (1997)\textsuperscript{26} dealt with broad challenges posed by gender bias in Uganda media. She says that media extremely affects people’s perceptions. Media – directly or indirectly moulds our attitude and conduct. Women are usually portrayed in feminine occupations keeping them at relatively low socio-economic and political levels. Low representation of women in journalism also contributes to gender imbalance in the media. Disparity in media is mainly due to requirement of extensive travel, not being a feminine occupation, and restriction to light assignments. Though there is noticeable rise in training of young women journalist but their representation in media is very low. Still many opt for public relation jobs. Low education level also plays a major role in creating gender disparity in access to media. There is need to advocate policies that increase women’s education and income level and thereby increasing their access to information.

According to Sahay (1998)\textsuperscript{27} women empowerment is a global issue. As women are subjugated in ever sphere of life, be it social, economic or political, so the need for empowerment of women arises undoubtedly. Empowerment of women is a two way process and an ongoing journey for everybody. Empowerment is a process at an individual level as well as a collective participation and thereby should challenge patriarchal relations. The elements of empowerment are quantitative (control on economic resource) and qualitative (social awareness, organisation of under privilege). The phases
and aspects of empowerment are independence in family, control over work, knowing women’s condition and developing own religious beliefs. The approaches of empowerment are economic empowerment approach, conscious rising and integrated development (family and community). Individual poor women can only overcome powerlessness if they get united and their strength lies in forming organisations. Empowerment has multiple dimensions. The stages of empowerment initiates when women distance themselves from a given situation, their fear turns into understanding. Then they experience the change, give a name to it and resist it. Finally, a stage comes when she knows more and confidence is generated.

Bathla (1998) critically analysed the media’s coverage of women issues and movements in Indian context. Even though progressive laws are adopted by the Indian Constitution still women are powerless in the democratic society. Various patriarchal and political interests hamper women’s rights. She says media is a part of the society as it has same cultural air and is influenced by it. Women issues are only event oriented and their news is reported only as routine news. Major focus was laid on violence stories (57.1%) and only 7 per cent stories were on front page that too were related to violence. News on women movement was almost missing. Women news was covered mainly in form of articles (12.7%) and editorials (1.4%). Majority of articles published on weekends were written by women themselves.

Chaudhuri (2000) discussed the issues of feminism in print media – newspapers and women magazines. Women’s movements and economic liberalisation are covered in popular
media. In post-feminism and post-liberalised period, magazines projected a corporate woman and newspapers carried both traditional feminism and feminism of choice. Growth in media business is the result of liberalisation. The write-ups on house-keeping, child bearing are merely presented as news/article but in reality they only sell product. Representing feminism in media is a sign of class, caste and social justice. The traditional feminism talks about endangers of feminism of choice and the unequal burden on women due to change in their traditional role and image. Modern India has witnessed the transformation of suppressed Indian women into a self-sufficient and proficient administrator.

Singh (2001)\textsuperscript{30} in her study found that though there was an increase in women-related issues in media but the dual role of women still continued. It can be gauged from the fact that Indian mass media does recognise women’s status and aspirations but also does not forget to represent traditional and conventional image of Indian women. Media eases tension by portraying all forms of men and women of the society. The content analysis of newspapers and magazines was done. Besides that audience interest, awareness on women-related issues, perception of new woman and preferences was calculated in six state capitals. She found that there were less than 1 per cent women issues covered by the leading dailies and the stories related to women were brief. On the other hand feminist magazines gave only 6.5 per cent women’s issues. There was hardly any women related news on AIR and Doordarshan. Women showed strong preference to women’s issues in mass media as compared to men.
Sharma (2001)\textsuperscript{31} examined the relationship between gender and fluctuations of power by concentrating on the reach of global media and its reworking in the local content.

Sultz (2001)\textsuperscript{32} did a case study on cultural analysis of New York Time magazine photography on women and power. He analysed the magazine’s treatment to gender and power and further compared it to existing stereotyped portrayals of women in mass media.

A research by Armlind et al. (2002)\textsuperscript{33} analyses the representation of feminists and feminism in media via content analyses of 35,000 hours of ABC, CNN, PBS and NPR news and public affair content. Feminists rarely appeared and were often demonised and were shown in a personalised and trialised fashion.

Morna (2002)\textsuperscript{34} studied the representation and portrayal of women in media. She found that women are missing in media; they are hardly interviewed or asked for opinions. They are mainly presented as homemakers and hardly portrayed as politician, newsmakers, experts or business leaders. Majority of coverage in mainstream media is about violence against women and domestic issues. Women are physically absent in sports and politics. Women voices are rarely heard on key national issues. Stories on gender issues do not give a balanced and fair view. Women are expressed in terms of their physical appearance and their sexualised images are common. In 1999 election coverage, out of 6,440 election stories only 42 focused on gender bias and women politicians were merely branded as unfeminine. As professionals in media, women can only be seen as presenters on television.
According to Sahai (2002), over the last decade or so the media has become more sensitive be it against the practice of dowry, wife burning, female foeticide or poverty. The role of media should be to project the plight of women, especially the poor rural women in India. The visual images tend to be more effective.

Grewal (2003) discussed the role of Indian and US mass media in preserving the stereotype image of middle-class immigrant Indian woman in US. Both US and Indian mass media serves as socialising agent in one or the other context. Indian media plays an important role for Indian woman in the US as she feels connected to the Indian tradition and culture. US media helps Indian woman to know their legal rights in foreign land and to be economically independent. Indian woman in US want their children to grow up with Indian morals and to understand the value of family. Mass media also plays more significant role for US woman who stay at home.

Holbert et al. (2003) in ‘Political implications of prime-time drama and sitcom use: Genres of representation and opinions concerning women’s rights’ found that use of certain type of prime-time entertainment TV programming was found to hold a positive relationship with support for women’s right. The use of content exposing in more conservative values had negative relationship with the criterion variable.

Aram et al. (2004) admits that in the present Indian scenario, print media holds a major role in shaping women’s attitude. They define culture of a particular group by the way they live their lives. The question asked is whether mass media is true to its character? If a news item/article related to women/sex-worker is covered by a woman journalist – a
different perspective of suffering is given instead of sensationalising it. The most insensitive fact is that photographs of women are published without their consent. She is generally seen as a pleasure object or source of sexual scandals. A woman relenting against social injustice creates a tremendous impact. Infact men find it hard to accept that women can be successful outside their homes. This idea is mainly stereotyped by cinema which portrays working women as sexually exploited. Entry of women journalist has surely led to change in portrayal of women in media and newspaper. Newspapers are basically political-oriented and not issue-based. But the fact cannot be denied that issues do emerge as part of politics. Despite all these, lately media has also been working for the cause of women. Women journalists have taken to hard beats and no more women issues are confined to supplements. Women magazines are also very successful as it has scope for depth analysis.

Buysse et al. (2004)\(^{39}\) did an analysis of media guide cover photographs for intercollegiate sports. 1990 and 1997 academic years were chosen for the study. Cover pages were selected as they are carefully chosen for giving message to the readers. These messages invariably speak about the attitude of the institution towards women and sports. It was found that in both 1990 and 1997 women athletes were under represented on court, though in 1997 gender difference in working uniform had disappeared. Results from such media productions show that males dominate sports. Media should act as a social agent by highlighting female athletic ability in sports. Gender difference and gender hierarchy (best female athlete not par with male athlete) still continued in cover photos.
Fahmy (2004) studied the portrayal of Afghan women in Associated Press (AP) wire photographs during the Taliban regime and after the fall of Taliban regime. Content analysis of the photographs showed that out of 284 photographs only 3 photographs (i.e. 1 %) women revealed their face and hair. Afghan women were depicted wearing burqas even after the fall of Taliban regime. As women images were completely covered, these images failed to humanise the subject (emotional state of viewer could not be judged). Around 80 % photos portrayed women in the foreground, and less than 15 % included close-ups of Afghan women. The AP photographs thus portrayed a more complex version of Afghan women’s liberation after the fall of Taliban regime.

According to Joseph (2004), reporting of gender violence is a global pandemic. The reporting of tragic incidents of women’s fiery death or burn injuries is either based on police version or husband’s statement. No reporter ever tries to investigate the whole story. It is only the daughter-in-law who is the victim and sufferer. The gender violence stories are presented in ordinary and mundane feature of a daily. These stories are presented in a careless manner which even does not arouse reader’s consciousness. The way gender violence news is reported and projected in the media needs to be tackled. The need of the hour is to analyse and then comment. Joseph questions that the magnitude of violence is sure to terrorise women all over the world, then why does not it find a space on front page or on the editorial page?

Prasad (2004) focused on various communication policies and their implications for empowerment of women in India. Indian media portrays negative picture of women. The
broadcasting policies should be region based and on gender equity. The role of various mass media can be effectively attributed in agriculture, health, behaviour change and child care. Rural and urban women respond differently to mass media. Rural women are more inclined towards serials, cinema programs whereas urban women watch more of educative and informative programs. The insights from selected Indian states focus on the role played by mass media in the process of women empowerment. State governments are making efforts to provide equality to women and this can be judged from projects/schemes being launched at various levels. In these states, various SHGs and NGOs aim to achieve economic and social status for women.

Wolf (2004)\textsuperscript{43} in his article sorted out theoretical dilemmas related to issues of women identity, differences and location that have arisen on the horizon of critical and cultural communication studies in the past few decades.

Singh (2005)\textsuperscript{44} covered diverse issues related to Asian women where patriarchy has a strong hold. Women face discrimination at all fronts be it social, cultural or economic thus resulting in their low status. But it is also true that there are more Asian women at top positions compared to other regions of the world. Indian women’s journey from panchayat to the parliament has been traced by the editor from the provisions in the Indian Constitution to five-year plans to Women Reservation Bill and women empowerment policy. In Pakistan at all walks of life the condition of women is slowly changing, but politically the set up is still based on male norms, values and lifestyles. Iranian women are not ready to ape western lifestyle but want to find a solution for their lost
rights. For actual development to take place women have to be on the vanguard in all fields – for health issues, for confronting domestic violence, upgrading village women, following religious norms or for elderly women.

Kupe (2006)\textsuperscript{45} said that media reflects power relations of the society. With more men as editors, women images have turned to be in sexualised fashion, body with fewer clothes and merely as an object to be desired. During 9 Aug National Women’s Day and 16 Day of Activism, there was an increase in content on status of women and issues of gender equality. But the representation of women as sexual objects did not lessen but increased due to increase in advertising. After the said period there was again a sharp decline of gender news. There was hardly any analytical or investigative coverage but more focus was on beauty contests.

Joshi (2007)\textsuperscript{46} concluded that the issue of women empowerment and the demand for gender equality has been debated and studied all over the world. The consideration of women as inferior sex is not only felt in developing countries but the subjugation is felt in developed nations too. In India, the condition is severe because of patriarchal society. The Indian Constitution and legal system has introduced the concept of gender equality but still there exists a wide gap between the implemented laws, plans and policies. The main task is to change the attitude of society. The contribution of media that has helped in social transformation has to be accepted. Radio and television made women aware of their rights and duties. The Indian cinema gave the message of fighting evil and revolt against the injustice. Media introduced women achievers to the society but there has been the other
side of the coin also where TV soap operas portrayed elite class and excluded middle and rural segment of the Indian population. They also did not pay much attention to domestic violence and to the working conditions of women in unorganised sector. Also presenting women in ads as a sex symbol and using them for sales promotion hampered their goal towards empowerment. She also pointed out that though there has been increase of women professionals in media but still they are confined to few subjects. Though Indian women are making use of media and removing their unawareness and empowering themselves, still lot more needs to be done collectively.

Kataria (2007)\textsuperscript{47} presented a vivid scenario of women’s portrayal on television from pre-feminist to feminist and post-feminist television. During pre-feminist television women have been shown as bound up with their male partners and portrayed as woman mainly in a family. In early 1970s single women are presented and also portrayed as a participant in paid labour force. In post-feminism, women were presented in both spheres. Family role was privileged with women as nurturer in nuclear set up and also showed as working for wages. The discrimination met by women at all fronts is not presented on television. Interviews of older, younger and working women showed interesting differences in experience with television related to overall interpretation of the same. Older women enjoy new television images of working women whereas younger women get emotionally involved in family television. Young women experience more social pressure. Women’s response to television is influenced by their position in society and their subjugation in all fronts of life. The sexual
violence is prevailing since olden times as shown in epics (Draupadi’s disrobing) on television. The process of personally getting involved with television text makes women understand and evaluate their own lives and future.

According to Basu (2007), civil society is essential for building a strong democratic nation as it works towards equity by empowering its weaker sections. New perspectives have to be created in the society, which would eventually lead to fostering of new values. This can only take place with the help of communication. Various forms of both print and electronic media have wired us all over the world. Society can move on a correct track if media projects women related issues. Media can provide the needed space and time to women and men to develop new perspectives and to become empowered. According to Basu, the need of the hour is to promote alternative media.

Narasimhan (2007) concluded that though the representation of women in media has increased but still media is dominated by patriarchal view and women are sexually harassed at work place. Women are still asked to cover ‘soft’ news. Network of women raising collective voice is more effective than a woman journalist dissenting. Working conditions of women working in BPOs have not been looked upon. Media neglects the coverage of gender linked socio-psychological aspect of countries in conflict and focuses only on political side of hostilities. As compared to newspapers, documentaries are more apt in conveying reactions of victims to serve a social purpose. Over the years advertisements have become more westernised in style and expression.
Chopra (2008) has provided insight into the field of portrayal of women in media. It is print media which is taken more seriously by the readers and considered to be more authentic. Overall the projection of women’s image in media is quite degrading and leaves lot to be desired. Most of the information available puts women under same stereotype image which exists down the years. In order to enhance the status and position of women in society, she suggests a concerted and sincere effort. It can be achieved by projecting women’s achievement in fields of art, literature, business and at the same time upholding Indian culture and ethos. She strongly recommends the need of creating awareness in public on issues of criminalisation, politicisation and commercialisation of women. The projection of women in stereotype roles of motherhood and a subservient wife makes it difficult for a woman to break the shackles and take on new roles.

Aram discussed the findings of Global Media Monitoring Project 2005 and further their implications in Indian perspective. He says that women make up only 21 per cent of people featured in the news. The news and voices are highly marginalised. Women professionals in media are mainly presented as television presenters (51%) and only 29 per cent of news items are written by women reporters. These women reporters cover ‘soft’ news only. The news in media is primarily presented from male’s point of view. There is still big ratio difference in women studying journalism to women joining the profession. A giant leap has been taken by women in journalism – as evident from women reporting post tsunami stories, but still lot more needs to be done.
According to Ahmar,52 globally media has been male dominated and they are the one who design and define portrayal and presentation of women. Therefore, media is biased which affects images of women and puts a negative effect on women’s development in the society. Women are under-represented in media and there are hardly few women in top media positions. The National Plan of Action by Government of Pakistan mentions the role of media and it also includes the achievement of gender equality in law by 2010. The main area of concern is crime reporting, it needs improvement as victims go through double humiliation. Magazines only produce stereotypical images of women focusing on domesticity. Advertisers need to change the way they turn women into commodities to be consumed. Pakistan media often uses abusive language and lacks analytical values and accuses women of all sins. Ahmar urges media for unbiased and objective coverage and says there is an urgent need to develop strategies and approaches for women development.

Batliwala53 drew upon a framework during South Asian study which was jointly undertaken by the FAOs Freedom from Hunger Campaign and Asia-South Pacific Bureau of Adult Education (ASPBAE). She says that the most important element of the word empowerment is that it contains the word ‘power’ and different degree of power is through social divisions (gender, age etc) to institution (family). The historical development of empowerment from seventies to the early nineties is still diffused and diluted. Batliwala explains the essential elements of women empowerment process and also
discusses the impact of women empowerment on both men and women.

Srivastava\textsuperscript{54} analysed the position of women in Bihar’s media. The advertisement hoardings, logos targeted and exploited women. In television serials, the negative portrayal of women is a matter of concern as the fact remains that media influences the women most. Rape and dowry deaths were reported in a routine manner in local dailies of Bihar. There is no investigative angle and the news coverage is completely insensitive to human aspects of the story. Media highlighted and exposed various sex rackets running in Bihar but due to involvement of influential people these sensational cases were shelved. There were no follow-up of the victims ever done.

Asian Network of Women in Communication (ANWIC) held workshop for Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam in Sep 2003 to discuss gender development and peace. The role of mass media in spreading gender equality and experiences were also discussed in the workshop. The Cambodian media doesn’t reflect women’s contribution; it just represents women as objects for entertainment. Nothing is done to eliminate violence against women and even radio in Cambodia is out of reach for rural poor. It feels that there is an urgent need to increase awareness on gender issues by mass media professionals. It was recommended that attention needs to be paid to basic education, healthcare, gender policies, and negative effects of globalisation needs to be stopped. The need for mass media relationships among the three countries was felt.\textsuperscript{55}

The fact sheet revealed that media does not provide a balanced picture of women’s contribution to the society. The
negative and degraded images of women led to a Beijing Platform for Action on the issue of women and media. Various actions have been taken by UN member states and various other organisations and societies. In many countries, women occupy high-level decision-making position in media organisations. There has been increase in programs devoted to women’s issues. There has been considerable increase in positive portrayal of women in media. A more balanced and non-stereotyped women are represented in media. Media professionals have been given gender-sensitive training too.\textsuperscript{56}

Despite being three fourths of India’s population, women and children, hardly receive public and policy attention they deserve as the future of India. High female infant mortality, poor health, nutrition and education of women have resulted as a glaring decrease in their number. Projection of women’s image in media is of grave concern, as they are simply shown as passive and indecisive beings. The print media glorifies women as housewives, mothers and dependents. Advertising is further ahead in spoiling women’s image by promoting it as a sex object to peddle all kinds of products. Issues needing urgent attention are oppression of women, limiting their capabilities, poor access to knowledge, social and cultural barriers to choice of options. Despite numerous directives women’s image has gone through various unjust projections at the hands of media. A comprehensive communication policy is the need of the hour to support and promote the mainstreaming and integration of women.\textsuperscript{57}

According to Patnaik, 1980s and 1990s marked a twist in the press when feel good stories on fashion, travel, art, films and everything except poverty were widely published. A study
conducted by Centre for Policy Research and Advocacy’s (CEPRA) development education cell examined the coverage of social and development issues in five Oriya and four English dailies. Women and development was one of the major themes with eight sub-issues. Both qualitative and quantitative content analysis was done. The findings showed that Oriya dailies gave less than four per cent and English dailies gave less than two per cent coverage to social issues. The dailies gave ample space to advertisements, sports and entertainment. The social issues were published on less important pages and placed insignificantly. English dailies showed less concern for social issues compared to Oriya dailies.58

Dagar focused on policy interventions to tackle media representation. Media’s response to gender can be calculated through gender portrayal and indicators of gender diversities. Women’s access within media has improved over last few decades but still it was found that there were less female reporters compared to their number as broadcasters and on desk jobs. Hindustan Times had only five female reporters out of 35 reporters and The Indian Express Chandigarh edition had six out of 23 reporters. Gender representation in news was found to be biased and women were mostly presented in traditional feminine roles. They were mainly depicted through ads, crime news and through social events.59

The list of these studies is endless, however foretaste can be taken from them for the present study, so that a strong foundation is prepared. Most of the researches have not taken
into account all the indicators of women empowerment. The review reveals that the empowerment of women has to kick start from grassroots level itself. There are still few women journalists in the field compared to men. Though there has been considerable increase in representation of women in the media but still they are merely portrayed in traditional roles and as objects of male desire. Women issues in media are mainly focused on violence and crime. Media ends up showing the stereotypical image of women and their sexualised images as always.

1.2 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Indian patriarchal society has diversified traditions, cultures, beliefs and mindsets. The media being a powerful tool of communication can help in moulding the thoughts and beliefs of a society. The role of mass media as a social constructor and as an agent of change is too obvious to be ignored. The media acts as a catalyst for the development of entire society and a nation as a whole by exterminating ill practices prevailing in the social system. It is for the media to contemplate on the long-term inferences of their efforts on society at large. The contents of the media, if powerful and appealing are nurtured by the masses. Today, the importance and urgency of nation building and the ideals on which it rests, requires adequate projection and reinforcement by the media more than ever before.
The woman folk desperately need their rightful share in the development plans of the nation along with recognition of their productive role in strengthening the family and society. The development efforts should be aimed at elevating the status of women in order to bring them into the national mainstream. The focus needs to be on wider perspectives of development and not only by raising their economic status but at the same time empowering them in all spheres of life.

The responsibility of media in projecting women’s role in society is extremely crucial and decisive. Determining selective issues relating to women on their status, political participation, economic contribution, and social importance and further projecting these in mass media would create awareness and lead to women empowerment.

Print media has a larger role to play in originating opinions on vital issues in a democratic system. It is further strengthened by the fact that during freedom struggle it played a critical role in mass awareness. Media’s role in handling and highlighting women issues is seen to be believed. Due to its wide outreach and affordability, print media can be one of the most effective medium of generating awareness among women. Women need to know their rights and should give away with the discrimination which is deep rooted in the age-old traditions and prejudices. Media plays a crucial role in articulating voices of the oppressed women by highlighting issues affecting them. The need of the hour is to understand the key variables and follow a constructive approach and remove the area of hindrances. To this end, media should play an everlasting role in empowering the women.
1.3 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of the present study are:

1. To find the space allocated to women empowerment issues in terms of square centimeters (sq cm).
2. To find the frequency in terms of number and percentage of women empowerment content.
3. To find out the type of treatment given to women empowerment news/views.
4. To know the column-wise coverage, placement of women empowerment issues on different pages, place of origin, generic and source of women empowerment news/views.

1.4 HYPOTHESES

Hypotheses provide an initial start to a detailed research through which the facts are confirmed or rejected. The following hypotheses have been formulated:

1. The subject of empowerment of women, who are active participants in the processes of development and change are being side tracked by the Indian print media.
2. The percentage of women empowerment issues is very less compared to the total number of news/views present in the newspapers.
3. The issue of women empowerment is ill treated, marginalised and ignored.

1.5 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Content analysis is one of the most important methods of communication research. The study proposes to follow this
research technique to examine the contents of dailies and to test the validity of the research hypothesis.

**Selection of research area:** In the present study, ‘women empowerment’ is selected as the research area, as it is still considered one of the neglected issues.

**Research design:** The three steps are:

a. **Defining the universe** - The researcher will be studying the content of women empowerment and the analysis is done from Jan 1, 2006 to Dec 31, 2006.

b. **Selection of media** – The present study deals with print media and four English newspapers are selected for the same.

c. **Selection of sample** – On the basis of popularity in Chandigarh region four English newspapers are selected. These are – *Hindustan Times, The Times of India, The Tribune* and *The Indian Express*.

The study seeks to explore and analyse the content through random sampling. Under this sampling, every item of the universe has an equal chance of inclusion in the sample; randomly a starting date is chosen and then every n\textsuperscript{th} day a sample is selected. It is based on the concept of equi-probable outcomes. Selecting sample every sixth day results in covering each day of the week and therefore reflects a variation in the content across different days of the month.

In this case a random date is selected in January (that is 1\textsuperscript{st}) and then every sixth issue (that is 7\textsuperscript{th}, 13\textsuperscript{th}, 19\textsuperscript{th} Jan and so on) of the four newspapers is analysed over a period of one year. A total of 248 (62 from each newspaper) newspapers are
selected, which also includes Women’s Day – March 8 and Mother’s Day – May 8.

Choosing unit of analysis: It is the smallest element of the content analysis. It can either be a word, symbol or a theme. In this study, the unit of analysis is taken as paragraphs and photographs. The printed matter in the form of news – items, articles, features, pictures, ads and cartoon will be analysed.

Constructing the categories of content to be analysed or the Indicators: The main purpose of construction of category is that the content under analysis can be well described and differentiated. The present study has considered four major indicators as given by United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and Pacific (UN ESCAP). The indicators of women empowerment are:


Political indicators: Rights, law, justice, policy, political, equality, governance, Women Reservation Bill.

Economic indicators: self-reliant, professional, achievement.

Miscellaneous indicators: international cooperation, sports, celebrity.

Pictures: Photos: celebrity, politician, general, exploitation, victim, sports, girl child.

Advertisement and Cartoons.
**Data analysis and interpretation:** Data analysis is done in terms of percentage representation. The calculation of space allocated to women empowerment news/views is done by measuring it in sq cms. The frequency is calculated in terms of number of times women empowerment issues appeared in the four newspapers. The above indicators are further measured in terms of number and arranged into column-wise, placement-wise, dateline-wise, source-wise, generic-wise and treatment-wise.

The columns of the concerned issues are counted to get the column-wise coverage (digest form, one column, two columns, three columns, four columns, and five columns and above). The placement of women empowerment content on different pages of the main edition and supplements like first page, editorial, page opposite to editorial, sports, supplements and other pages is done. Generic class is calculated in terms of presentation of women empowerment issues as news item, features, article, editorial or letter to editor. The place of origin of the women empowerment news/views is counted in terms of dateline – international, capital, state capital, metro, city, district, town, village and not-mentioned.

The source is mentioned in terms of women empowerment issue being reported by staff reporter, special correspondent, other agencies/features writer or not being mentioned by any source. Treatment of women empowerment issues is done on the basis whether it is for upliftment or for general awareness or merely just sensitisation news/views.
1.6 CHAPTERISATION

The thesis has been presented in six chapters. The chapter I includes introduction, which gives out a general foreword to print media and women empowerment. This chapter includes review of literature, wherein the focus is on the work already undertaken in the field of media and women empowerment. Besides this, it explains the methodology of the research. Towards the end it deals with significance of the study undertaken, the objectives of the research and the hypothesis upon which the entire study depends.

Women empowerment is discussed in detail in chapter II. The need for empowering women has been explained. The historical perspective of women’s status, various movements in India, international conferences, rights of women, laws, plans, commissions and Acts relating to women have been adequately mentioned.

Chapter III explains media and its importance in empowering women. It explains the way electronic media and print media portrays women. A brief account of Indian press and newspapers under study are covered in chapter IV.

Chapter V deals with the analysis and interpretation of the data. Summary and main findings of the study are given in chapter VI. It summarises and concludes the findings of the study. It also includes recommendations/suggestions for future researches in the same field. Bibliography is given in the end.
1.7 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

1. The study involves data collection from single state capital only.

2. The time period of one year actually cannot dictate the trend of publishing houses, as they keep changing their patterns and policies according to the situations.

3. The present study is only involved with English dailies and no other print media is taken into consideration.
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