Chapter – I

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

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CHAPTER - I
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1.1. Introduction:

The whole world is passing through a period of “Information Explosion”. This is the age of information. The electronic media, particularly satellite channels have completely changed the media scenario. All information has now been reaching to every home in any remote area. This has not only changed the psychology of people but also changed their approach and lifestyle in offices as well as in homes. With the revolution in communication technology, any information can reach in every part of the world within no time. The information explosion has particularly affected the minds of the young generation. The information revolution has also changed the thinking process throughout the world. The whole approach and emphasis has taken altogether a new turn.

Communication can be defined as “social interaction through messages”. Messages are formally coded, symbolic or presentational events of some shared significance in a culture, produced for the purpose of evoking significance (Gerbner, 1958). The media of communication are the means of vehicles, capable of assuming forms that have characteristics of messages. These media include Radio, Television, Internet, Telephone including Mobile and Fax, Video Conferencing, Social Networking, etc. The latest technological applications used for information communication are grouped under Information and Communication Technology and they include Internet, Telephone, Mobile, Fax, Video Conferencing, etc.

Communication is essential for social change and development. It permeates every process of human life and this characteristic of pervasiveness makes it vital for the growth and development of the society.
Today the society is more complex than it was a decade ago, making the process of communication also more complex and indirect. This view could be further strengthened by the research findings of Lerner (1958) who successfully established that the quickest way to change the ‘mind set’ of the traditional society was through the use of mass media.

Conceptually, the mass media are technological agencies and corporate organization, engaged in the creation, selection, processing and distribution of message that are produced at speeds and in quantities possible only with mass-production methods. Mass media, therefore, are the broadcast common currencies of public interaction in a society. Thus, the mass media are the organized means of reaching large number of diverse kinds of people quickly and efficiently.

Mass media of communication are very crucial for nation building and national development in any developing society. Mass media are the creations of modern science and technology. They play a major role in informing, educating and entertaining the people. Besides, they are used to bring about certain desirable changes among the people, as media and society influence each other.

We are living in an era which has frequently been characterized as ‘the age of communication revolution’ a cycle of profound and accelerating social and cultural change often attributed to the impact of new media technologies. This communication revolution is, in fact, a succession of three overlapping technological stages that have taken place during the last 150 years.

To provide entertainment is one of the principal functions of all the media. Thus, whoever enjoys freedom has certain obligations to society and, therefore, the media, which are guaranteed freedom in a democratic Society, are obliged to perform certain essential functions of mass communication. The speaker must also remember that actions speak louder than his words.
A silence, and nod, a wink, a handshake, grimace themselves speak. Audio-visuals like television, cinema, electric media like video, video tape, video cassette, audio cassette, computer assisted instructions, video text, video disc, tele-tutorial, telephone instructions, are the electronic media. There are a number of telecommunication, services as mechanical devices in oral communication, such as telegraph, telegram, telegraphy, tele-print, teletype telex, internet, etc.

The main role and responsibility of media is to transmit message to inform the receiver of messages. Mass media endeavours to send information to the public at large. Mass media not only inform but persuade. Media are used for entertainment and commercial as well as non-commercial. Without mass media there would be no social, economic and political system.

The mass media are the vehicles that carry messages to large audiences. They are so pervasive in modern life that many people do not even notice their influence. In Liberal democracy, the role of the media can be surmised to include informing, entertaining and educating the people. It is widely accepted in Liberal democracy that when the media help to put information at the disposition of the people, they will be able to formally or informally control the state. The mass media are essential for democracy. By keeping people on top of current issues, the media enable people to participate intelligently in public policy discussion and decision-making. In a democracy the principal role of the media is to act as a check on the state and fearlessly expose abuses of official authorities. This watchdog role is said to override in importance all other functions of the media and dictate the form in which the media system should be organized. The media also are the vehicles by which people debate the issues and try to persuade each other of different points of view. Even when they provide us with entertainment, the mass media are capable of portraying and shaping values that enrich our dialogue on social issues and public policy (Baishaki Nag, 2011).
They are major sources of information, education and entertainment in a modern society. Over the years, the growth in the field of communication has been phenomenal and the reach and influence of mass media on their users has increased substantially. Now, mass media are powerful instruments of social change. They inform and influence people almost on every aspect of life. The modern society is supported and sustained by modern means of communication system. Consequently, the rapid scientific and technological advancement in the last 200 years of human history have altered the mass media scene significantly. Today, mass media have been able to penetrate every section of the society bringing information from every corner of the globe. This development has been so extensive that it has made communication scientists to describe the present world as a “global village”.

Considering the technological aspects in the evaluation of mass media, printing can be said as one of the most significant developments. This technology heralded a new era in the dissemination of knowledge through mass media. The multiplication of the impressions literally multiplied the knowledge through mass media, entailing people to become literates, and thereby making them responsible citizen of the society.

Nevertheless, the innovations in the field of communication continued. Cinema became a reality by the end of the 19\textsuperscript{th} century bringing moving images on the screen. As a visual medium, the impact of cinema was emphatic on the audience. Development in the field of wireless communication resulted in the establishment of radio broadcast networks. Radio overcomes the barriers of literacy and distance and relayed news and music at the convenience of listeners.

The last few decades have seen tremendous changes in the lifestyles of men and women across all over the globe and particularly so in India. Globalization, market economics and above all, fast strides in technology have affected virtually all facets of life be it religion or education, politics or employment, fashion or health care. With the advent of computers and
telecommunications, media has also undergone a sea of change. Media in India, which until a few years back used to comprise of the morning newspaper, the radio broadcasts and the sole television network screen images of “Doordarshan”, comprises today of a dazzling and at times mind boggling array of communication devices. The media, which was earlier merely a reporting device, is today a vibrant means of shaping, molding and influencing public opinion.

The Information Explosion has changed the look, content and presentation of newspapers. The TV has helped people in making their opinion after seeing events on the screen. This has affected their thinking process and approach towards life. TV has today become a powerful medium of communication. Thus, its role has become very important. The information explosion has brought more openness. This has also affected the political and social systems and the market. No government can now keep its people in the dark or in any illusion. People can see the happenings in any corner of the world with the help of electronic media and they can form their own opinion. Due to information explosion all types of controls on the flow of information have become almost impossible. The flow of information has also been responsible for changes in the society. This has also accelerated the pace of technological development and economic progress. The Information Technology Revolution has greater impact on Agricultural and Industrial Revolution. Both the revolutions have affected man’s life and living. All the three have also been major civilization revolutions.

The population, land mass and natural resources are now no more big power potential. These are the old concepts. In the modern world, technology quality has greater and prominent role than even Industrial Revolution. The Information Revolution and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) are now playing a bigger role. As such major boon of the globalization is the Information and Communication Technology applications to each and every part of human life including education at different levels. The revolution
in ICTs has profound implications for economic and social development. It has pervaded every aspect of human life whether it is health, education, economics, governance, entertainment etc. Dissemination, propagation and accessibility of these technologies are viewed to be integral to a country’s development strategy. The most important benefit associated with the access to the new technologies is the increase in the supply of information. Information is shared and disseminated to larger audience.

**Mass Media:**

Media is not only a mirror of the society but also an instrument of social change. It must inform and educate the society and also act as a medium of communication between various organs of the society, between the government and the masses and between the elected representatives and the voter. Media must have a close look at the society in all its manifestation with a penetrating eye. Its job is to reflect the aspirations of the people and to spread noble ideas. It must expose social evils and help in their eradication. It is its responsibility to critically examine facts and to project them in an objective manner without fear or favour. A journalist is a trustee of the society and must not betray the trust reposed in him (Khosla, 2002).

Harold Lasswel (1967) has quoted three functions of mass media:

1. Surveillance of the environment, which means collection and distribution of information concerning events in the environment, both outside within a particular society. To some extent, it corresponds to what is popularly conceived as the new;
2. The correlation of the part of society in responding to the environment. Correlation here includes interpretation of information about the environment and prescription for conduct in reaction to these events. In part, this actively is popularly identified as editorial or propaganda;
3. The transmission of social heritage from one generation to another. The author says that the transmission of culture focuses on the
communicating of information, values and social norms from one generation to another or from members of a group to new comers. Commonly, it is identified as educational activity.

The main function of media, including TV, has been to inform and educate people. The films and TV added the new function of entertainment to it. But there is very thin line between entertainment and proper communication as the market forces have started dominating the media, particularly the TV. As there are large number of satellites and TV channels, they try to attract the advertisers. The manufacturers have found TV to be the most effective media to sell their goods by the help of advertisements and sponsored serials. To make their programmes attractive and popular they attach glamour to it. The overdose of sex and violence in programmes has become the order of the day. This all had its effect on the minds of the younger generation. With arrival of foreign media on large scale, it is said, that there is cultural invasion. This has changed the life style and also food habits of the people. Consumerism and commercialization have also changed their living habits. It is often alleged that we are drifting away from our own culture and identity. Western culture has been dominating the lifestyle. Thus, sometimes it is felt that people lose respect for their own culture (Sharma, 2002).

Through media, society gets entertainment and information. The information can be concerning education, agricultural development, social upliftment, national integration, social and human values, national defence, liberation from poverty and backwardness and growth of an individual personality. The entertainment programmes such as tele-serials, stories in newspapers, dramas, songs and such other programmes in Radio, blogging, social networking, etc in internet, etc are playing a major role in entertainment and education of the people in modern society.

India is a large and diverse country, with an equally sizeable and varied media. Radio reaches out, to 97.2 per cent of the population and is followed by
television which has a reach of 85.4 per cent. The print media, while much smaller and unlike radio and television, predominantly private, nonetheless has its own importance and legitimacy. Today, with the globalization of media, India is at the receiving end of a number of foreign television channels via satellite- In addition, local cable networks provide a wide range of programmes for different kinds of audience (Ramanamma, 2005).

**Press (Newspapers and Magazines):**

The print media is one of the oldest means of communication still being used in all the stages of life on a large scale and has brought revolution as well as modernization in society (Schramm, 1964). In 2001, India had 45,974 newspapers including 5,364 daily newspapers published in over 100 languages. The largest number of newspapers were published in Hindi (20,589), followed by English (7,596), Marathi (2,943), Urdu (2,906), Bengali (2,741), Gujarati (2,215), Tamil (2,119), Kannada (1,816), Malayalam (1,505), and Telugu (1,289) (Wijesundra, 2011).

A newspaper is such an answer book which has got lakhs of examiners. It works as the eyes and the ears of the readers. Newspapers serve people in three ways-they inform, guide and entertain. If used properly these can also be employed effectively and have the ability of reaching a large number of people simultaneously and quickly, these are also a low cost medium. Press which is powerful medium of public opinion and social change is supposed to reflect the activity of society especially those related to education, gender and health. Some newspapers have started allotting certain space to discuss health problems in addition to the coverage of news on them (Dahiya, 2002).

Newspapers are playing important role in educating the masses in rural areas and also provide knowledge on current trends and issues in different aspects of society. A rural newspaper has been defined as one that “is primarily published from a rural area, devoting at least 50 percent of its contents to the problems relating to the rural community, in a language akin to the idiom of the
rural readers” (Gupta, 2004). A rural newspaper provides a forum to articulate the urges of the common man. It takes up local issues and immediate requirements, affecting the people. It gives greater importance to the problems agitating the ordinary people: unemployment, scarcity of agricultural inputs, the law and order situation at the village level, etc., it is best suited to act as the second level of conversion of scientific knowledge into information in a usable form for the benefit of the ultimate clientele- the farmers.

Wilbur Schramm (1964) considered rural newspapers are one of the great movers of national development. Such a newspaper gives the neo-literate reason to learn to read better and makes public participation in governmental policies more informed, relevant and meaningful. Apart from the broadening the actual educational base of its readers, the rural papers break down the barriers of isolation and provide written material to the villagers who have learnt to read so that they can apply their reading ability to increase their production.

Radio:

India has a rich tradition of the use of radio for non-formal education and rural development programmes and also for providing various types of learning opportunities and information to its people. Radio is the most cheapest, fastest and the farthest reaching technique for communication of information to vast masses people at a time.

Radio broadcasting began in India in the early 1920s. The first programme was broadcast in 1923 by the Radio Club of Bombay. This was followed by the setting up of a Broadcasting Service in 1927 on an experimental basis in Bombay and Calcutta. The government took over the transmitters and began operating them under the name Indian Broadcasting Service. It was changed to All India Radio in 1936.
All India Radio is now one of the largest broadcast networks in the world. At the time of independence there were six radio stations and 18 transmitting media which covered just 11% of the population and 2.5% area of the country. As of December 2008, the network comprises 232 stations and 373 transmitters which provide radio coverage to 99.16% of population and reach 91.82% area of the country (Manorama Yearbook, 2011).

As a tool for development communication, reaching out to the people with relevant messages and usable information, and to encourage people's participation in the 'Open Forum' which it eventually provides; Community Radio is the ideal medium. It is interesting to note that several recent studies undertaken on media-related issues clearly prove that, contrary to popular impression about marginalization of radio, it continues to serve the village community effectively through its farm broadcasts. From the number of radio sets available and in use by the farmers in rural areas and the frequency and variety of programmes related to agriculture and rural development, including programmes like Farm Radio School, it is apparent that radio still having primary importance in disseminating message of rural development. The policy makers and planners, in both the sectors—development as well as information and communication—need to re-order their priorities and densify, radio broadcasting—in terms of number of radio stations, availability of cheap radio sets and larger budgetary allocation for staff recruitment and upgradation of their knowledge and skills. The continued step motherly treatment meted out to radio broadcasting signifies a particular mind set of policy planners which are conditioned more by glamour and high-tech hype rather than the hard realities of human condition of the rural poor and the marginalized sections of the Indian society (Dalal, 2002).

Knowledge, understanding and expertise in communication practice and profession should not be the exclusive prerogative of the media professionals. This need to be extended through a basic training course to all experts and workers at various levels working in the areas of rural development, health,
sanitation and other nation-building activities. A basic appreciation of the elements of communication needs to be imparted through appropriate short-term courses. Media specialists, sociologists and development planners should work out inter-disciplinary mechanism for identifying the audience requirement, establishing proper feedback systems and extend guidance in the evaluation of effectiveness of communication programmes.

While highlighting the significance of Radio for rural women, Arpita Sharma (2012) described that Sangham Community Radio was established on October 15, 2008 by the initiatives of the Deccan Development Society Community Media Trust in Village Machnoor of Jharasangam Mandal in Medak District, Andhra Pradesh. Target audience is rural women from the marginalized groups in particular and rural people in general. Programs include Seed sovereignty and women; Food sovereignty and women; Women and biodiversity; Women and land; Ownership; Women and ecological agriculture; Ecological enterprises for rural women; Healthcare and plant medicines; Herbal care for animal diseases; Making children's education relevant to rural milieu; violence against women; legal education for women. Programs also embody local issues in the light of global vision and are designed at the community level; Women Speak to Women with complete focus on women's issues. Programs are being broadcast daily between 08 pm and 09.30 pm and has a plan to increase duration of broadcast up to four hours daily.

Radio and TV broadcasting, essentially a part of mass media communication process, share the characteristics and limitations of such a system. In such a system amount of feedback readily available is low, the message flow tends to be one-way and can be used to increase knowledge.

**Television:**

The impact of visual media as a very powerful vehicle for communicating ideas and images is known to be tremendous. Television creates a world which seems very real and viewers are unable to differentiate
between the contrived world and the real one. Impact of television is more on the young children and adolescents, who sit in front of the television, and for hours, succession of pictures is watched by eyes that are only just opening onto the world and it becomes imprinted on minds that are still impressionable. The availability of cable and satellite television exposes them to new information about the outside world; reinforces stereotypes and beliefs which may affect individual attitudes and behaviors. It’s also a known fact that children’s gender development occurs through observation and imitation of gender behavior. While family and school play the roles of primary agents of socialization for children, transmitting values, beliefs, Do’s and Don’ts of society; the role and influence of television cannot be undermined considering the amount of time that children spend watching television these days. Because gender roles are socially constructed, most of the behaviour associated with gender is learned rather than innate. People learn what sorts of behaviour and personality are regarded in their cultural context as appropriate for males or females. Television also perpetuates traditional gender stereotypes because it reflects dominant social values. In reflecting these values, television also reinforces them, presenting them as 'natural'. Thus, as one might expect in our society, which is largely dominated by men; influenced by these stereotypes, unconsciously what gets reproduced is a traditional ‘male’ perspective, perpetuating dominant gender stereotypes. Many narratives on television are still implicitly designed to be interpreted from a biased perspective or a perspective that commodifies women or shows them in traditional stereotyped roles and responsibilities.

When television was introduced in India in 1959, the official policy stressed that television was to be used as a medium for social education as well as an instrument to support programmes of social and economic development. Specifically, it was stated that TV would be used as a weapon against illiteracy and ignorance; it would bring about awareness among the people of sociological problems and make them conscious of national goals; it would
create a sense of participation in India’s efforts to usher in a new social order; it would play a vital role in cultivating civic consciousness and respect for law and order, public morality and so forth and, in the field of entertainment, it would mould public taste to higher aesthetic levels (Gupta, 2004).

Over the years Television has become a central dimension of our everyday lives, and in India it has grown at a phenomenal pace. In India television was introduced 25 years after its invention and 30 years after its inception through government efforts to introduce public service broadcasting. The idea was primarily education and access to vast rural populations.

Today over 30 million Indian homes have cable and satellite connections. The viewer has access to information from local, national and global levels. The sheer number of channels gives him a plethora of options. Today TV is a powerful medium with extraordinary reach. No one can doubt its potential as a catalyst of social change.

Television has come a long way since its humble beginnings in 1959. As of 2010, over 500 TV Satellite television channels are broadcast in India. This includes channels from the state-owned Doordarshan, News Corporation owned STAR TV, Sony owned Sony Entertainment Television, Sun Network and Zee TV. Direct to Home service is provided by Airtel Digital TV, BIG TV owned by Reliance, DD Direct Plus, Dish TV, Sun Direct DTH, Tata Sky and Videocon. Dish TV was the first one to come up in Indian market, others came only years later. As per the TAM Annual Universe Update - 2010, India now has over 134 million households (out of 223 million) with television sets, of which over 103 million have access to cable TV or satellite TV, including 20 million households which are DTH subscribers. In urban India, 85% of all households have a TV and over 70% of all households have access to Satellite, Cable or DTH services. TV owning households have been growing at between 8-10%, while growth in satellite/cable homes exceeded 15% and DTH subscribers grew 28% over 2009 (Manorama Yearbook, 2011).
The amalgamation of human lives and mass media in the contemporary era is very complex. The vast expansion of the media has caused for the transformation of traditional lifestyle of humans in the modern society. Modern mass media behaves not only as a social organization but also as an authority on human beings. Many surveys conducted by various organizations throughout the world have estimated that there are 800 million television sets in the world and there are nearly 300 crores audience scattered all over 160 countries (Veronika Dilrukshi Ruwandeepa, 2011).

Television as a mass medium is an institutionalized source of information for creating awareness about the innovations. It is one of the most versatile audio-visual aid ever developed. Its ability to convey life and event in action has a profound influence upon masses. It is a powerful educational tool also. The eye and ear mindedness of rural women makes television as one of the most promising media of the present day educational sources. Television, an innovation of the year 1936, has reached every part of the globe within a short span of seven decades. It has become popular because of its tremendous visual and audible appeal.

India has not been left out of the satellite revolution: a recent survey finds that 112 million households in India own a television, with 61 percent of those homes having cable or satellite service (National Readership Studies Council, 2006). This figure represents a doubling in cable access in just have years from a previous survey. The study also and that in some states, the change has been even more dramatic; in the span of just 10-15 years since it first became available, cable or satellite penetration has reached an astonishing 60 percent in states such as Tamil Nadu, even though the average income is below the World Bank poverty line of two dollars per person per day. Most popular satellite television shows in India portray life in urban settings; further, a wide range of international programs are now available. The increase in television exposure, therefore, is likely to dramatically change the available information about the outside world, especially in isolated rural areas. Indeed,
anthropological case studies in India suggest that exposure to television in rural areas has an effect on behaviors as disparate as latrine building and fan usage (Johnson, 2001).

Using these data, Jensen and Oster (2007) found that cable television has large effects on attitudes and, to the extent the study have information, behaviors. After cable is introduced to a village, women are less likely to report that domestic violence towards women is acceptable. They also report increased autonomy (for example, the ability to go out without permission and to participate in household decision-making). Women are less likely to report son preference (the desire to give birth to a boy rather than a girl). Turning to behaviors, we find increases in school enrollment for girls (but not boys), and decreases in fertility (which is often linked to female autonomy). These results are apparent when using regressions with individual fixed effects and when using a matching estimator.

The introduction of television appears in general to have had large effects on Indian society. This is particularly the case for gender, since this is an area where the lives of rural viewers differ greatly from those depicted on most popular shows. By virtue of the fact that the most popular Indian serials take place in urban settings, women depicted on these shows are typically much more emancipated than rural women. Further, in many cases there is access to Western television, where these behaviors differ even more markedly from rural India. Based on anthropological reports, this seems to have affected attitudes within India.

Ever since the introduction of television in India in 1959, the expansion of television network has been phenomenal. An UNESCO funded pilot television project was commissioned in Delhi in September 1959 for carrying out studies in the use of this medium for imparting social education. In August 1961, educational programme for Delhi schools was introduced with the prime objective of imparting education. As the next step, television service for
general public was introduced on 15\textsuperscript{th} August, 1965 which marked the beginning of entertainment oriented programme through television. Two years later in January, 1967, ‘Krishidarshan’ programme was started.

The second television station in India came into existence in Bombay on 2\textsuperscript{nd} October, 1972. In 1973, the Bombay station began relaying programmes to Pune and later, the television stations were established at Srinagar and Amritsar. In 1975, the Satellite Instructional Television Experiment (SITE) was undertaken for a period of one year to cover 2400 villages in six states. In 1977, terrestrial transmitters were set up at Jaipur, Hyderabad, Raichur, Gulbarga and Sambhalpur. Since, then a number of television centers have been installed all over the country by expanding its net work on campaign basis, particularly during 1984-85. Parliament in 1990 passed the ‘Prasar Bharati’ (Broadcasting Corporation of India) bill to give autonomy to Doordarshan. All Doordarshan Kendra’s through their five hundred and fifty three television transmitters telecast programmes regularly in their service areas. These programmes occasionally include entertainment as well as various aspects of development like family welfare schemes, community development, functional literacy, agriculture etc.

**Information and Communication Technology (ICT):**

Information Technology (IT) together with Communication Technologies (popularly known as Information and Communication Technology or ICT) has brought about unprecedented changes in the way people communicates; conduct business, pleasure and social interaction. The evolution of new forms of technologies and imaginative forms of applications of the new and older technologies makes the lives of the people better and more comfortable in several ways. There is even greater realization that instead of a single-track technology, lateral integration of technologies can deliver startling results and the world seems to be moving towards such converged systems. With the emergence of IT on the national agenda and the
announcement of ICT policies by various state governments have recognized the “Convergence of core technologies and E-Governance” as the tool for good governance, sustainable development, globalization of economy and social empowerment. Information is the key to democracy. With the advent of ICT, it has become possible for the common man to access global information. The realm of electronic communication encompasses telecommunication, broadcasting, information technology, enabled services and industries, to undergo profound changes leading to a Global Information Infrastructure (GII), which will be capable of carrying any type of information, be it text, data, voice or video. Information is now broadly defined to embrace voice in telephony, text in fax and newspapers, images in video and television broadcasting, and data in computers.

As stated by Sanyal (2012), development communication is an important discovery for shaping rural change. This method can be of assistance in solving and designing projects and programmes that take into account the opinion and capacities of the beneficiaries. Many projects aiming at technological upgradation and implementation of ICT in rural areas have failed in the past because of lack of willingness among rural people to absorb such schemes. New irrigation programmes, initiatives for yielding new varieties of crops, use of advanced machinery in the fields have failed because of this gap in acceptance among rural people. Development communication has been a welcome method which has aided bringing about attitudinal and behavioural change among people in rural India through its simple pro-people approach and tools.

Information and Communication Technology is a complex and varied set of goods, applications and services used for producing, distributing, processing, transforming information (including) telecoms, Television and Radio broadcasting, hardware and software, computer services and electronic media (Marcelle, 2000).

ICT represent a cluster of associated technologies defined by their functional usage in information access and communication, of which one component is Internet. Internet is a global infrastructure for new millennium. It has become an indispensable… Internet serves as an encyclopedia giving detailed information on a wide variety of subjects. The internet has improved the users’ access not only to wide variety of information sources, but also to experts in the field (Kumbargoudar and Mestri, 2006). Hence, the ICT includes the computer storage and retrieval, internet, mobile communication, social networking through web, access to information sources, access to institutional web sites such as government web sites, etc.

Rural e-governance can provide timely information to the citizens and have the potential to spawn innovative means of wealth generation in rural context. ICT can improve living standards in remote and rural areas by providing important commercial, social and educational benefits. Electronic service centres have a pivotal role to play, especially in reaching out to the marginalized sections living in remote areas. In a developing economy like India, ICT has development applications in education, governance, environmental monitoring, health, human rights promotion, economic growth and other areas (Abdul Raheem, 2012).

The development of a society largely depends on the access to information and so far in rural India- ICT has greatly facilitated the flow of information and knowledge offering the socially-marginalized and unaware community unprecedented opportunities to attain their own entitlements. On the other hand, to break the vicious circle of rural poverty and to bridge the digital divide and empower the rural communities- ICT intervention has proved its effectiveness in the sphere of capacity-building of rural communities for breaking these barriers. So, the government, technology industry and society should work together to deploy ICT to accelerate economic and social development in rural areas (Hazra, 2012).
India had the second largest network with 562.15 million telephone connections at the end of December 2009. It has grown very rapidly in the range of 40 per cent per annum, permitting the addition of nearly 300 million connections in the first 2\(^1/2\) years of the Eleventh Five Year Plan. It aims at bridging the digital divide between urban and rural areas and extending broadband connectivity as an integral executed through the USO Support (GBS) for the 11\(^{th}\) Plan for Department of Telecommunications (DoT) was fixed at Rs. 1,752 crore with an Internal and Extra-Budgetary Resources (IEBR) component of Rs. 89,582 crore. The growth of telephony in India is led primarily by the wireless segment with over 10-12 million connections, on average, being added every month. Rural areas in the country have experienced rapid growth in telecom services and the tele-density increased from 5.9 per cent in March 2009 to 21.16 per cent in December 2009. The total number of rural communications at the end of December 2009 was 174.53 million, compared to 47 million at the start of the 11\(^{th}\) Plan (Kameswari, 2012).

The implications in growth of ICT impacting the very nature of learning process and education system, are equally far reaching, necessitating a continuous reassessment with respect to its effectiveness and scope. The traditional roles assigned to school, classroom and teacher and the expectation of the society in terms of quality of education are changing at a very fast pace. Concepts like the Learning Society, Interactive Technologies, Collaborative Learning, Knowledge Industries and Virtual University are not only transforming the way education is being imparted but also is changing the transmission of education itself. Information and Communication Technologies have brought human kind face-to-face with fundamental changes: by abolishing distances they are instrumental in shaping the societies of tomorrow; the most accurate, up-to-date information is now available to anyone, anywhere in the world, of ten in real time and reaches the remotest regions.
The mission of ICT is to promote the use of information technology in a sustainable, efficient and equitable way. It is important to enhance opportunities for women as skilled labour and entrepreneurs to have access to information and to acquire knowledge through information technology tools that will contribute to reduce the digital and economic gaps between genders (Bose, 2006).

**Role of Mass Media in Social Development:**

In rural areas, radio, television, newspapers/magazines play a vital role in spreading information, conducting propaganda, educating and enlightening people, strengthening national integration, and creating national identity. Mass media moulds opinions, thinking attitudes and behaviour. Because of their reach, mass media are far more powerful and their impact is greater than that of other media (Saxena, 2008.). There are two major usage patterns for mass media. Serban (2004) quoting Rubin (1984) identified these as primarily ritualized and instrumental. The primarily ritualized usage deals with habitual use of the mass media for diversion or in order to consume time accounts for health, education, and political information gathered by individuals through passive exposure to mass media. The instrumental usage is purposive or utilitarian for informational reasons, through seeking media content.

Mass media or media played and playing significant role in social development, that is it is improving and developing different aspects of the society. Few of such aspects are discussed as under.

**Rural Development:**

The Planning Commission defines Rural Development as: Rural development implies both the economic development of people as well as greater social transformation. Increased participation of the people in the rural development process, decentralization of planning, better enforcement of land reforms and greater access to credit with better prospects for economic
development. Improvement in health, education, drinking water, energy supply, sanitation and housing coupled with attitudinal changes also facilitates their social development (Dalal, 2002).

In the rural context, development involves use of physical, financial and human resources for economic growth and social development of the rural economies. The term rural development also represents improvement in quality of life of rural people in villages. Rural Development is a strategy to enable a specific group of people, poor rural women and men, to gain for themselves and their children more of what they want and need and Rural Development as a process leading to sustainable improvement in the quality of life of rural people, especially the poor. The fact of the matter is that three quarters of the World’s poor, about 900 million people are in rural areas, and the Millennium poverty target set by Millennium Development Goals (MDG), cannot be met unless the world addresses rural poverty. “Sustainable Rural Development can make a powerful contribution to four critical goals of Poverty Reduction, Wider shared growth, Household, National and global food security and Sustainable natural resource management”. Hence, worldwide there is a growing emphasis on development of rural economy of the countries. Any improvement, in the social or economic status of rural areas would not just directly benefit rural poor but would also bring down the migration-pressures on cities and contribute by positive ripple effect in global stride towards development (Abdul Raheem, 2012).

The Ministry of Rural Development Management Information System (MIS) software developed by the National Informatics Centre (NIC) provides users with a snapshot of the status of NREGA implementation against various parameters. Meanwhile, states such as Andhra Pradesh have developed detailed MIS capable of capturing data right down to the village level.

The Government has taken up many initiatives enabling the ICT applications in rural areas. The Government of West Bengal has taken up a
project of setting up in phases around 1500 Community Library and Information Centers in such villages, where there are no public libraries. Jana Mitra is a United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) supported scheme. Under this scheme information kiosks have been set up in remote areas of Jhalwar district of Rajasthan. The scheme aims at providing access to information pertaining to government services and availing of many such services on-line in remote pockets of the country there by bridging the gap between the local administration and the people of the area. Under this project community information centers have been set up in all 487 blocks of the North Eastern States and centers are connected through a satellite based computer communication network. Government of Chhattisgarh has initiated e-governance project called CHOICE (Chhattishgarh Online Information for Citizen Empowered) to provide various government services under one umbrella. Himachal Pradesh government has taken up Lokamitra Project to provide the general public, especially those living in distant rural areas of the Himachal state, easy access to government information and the facilities of e-governance at their doorstep. National Institute of Agricultural Extension and Management, Hyderabad under its National Agricultural Technology Project (NATP) has set up Internet kiosks in 24 districts in seven states viz., Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Maharashtra, Orissa and Punjab. Raj Nidhi is a web enabled information kiosks system, developed jointly by the Rajasthan Department of Information Technology and Rajasthan state agency for computer services. The citizens are able to access information/services relating to health, family planning, immunization schedules for children, employment, transportation, distance education, agriculture, water and electricity connections, birth and death registration etc. TRICGOS is a co-operative venture of Ministry of Social Welfare, Ministry of Local Administration and Ministry of Education covering 29 districts of Tamil Nadu through network. TRICGOS start digital mobile services, which will help to cover the remote villages where public transport facility is not available. The Govt. of India with the collaboration of C-DAC aimed at bringing about
one million books of digital library at the doorsteps of common citizens. Internet enabled mobile Digital Library is brought for the use of common citizen for promoting literacy. Government of India’s initiation of a scheme for computerization of land records in various states with the assistance of National Informatics Centre (NIC) the most successful Bhoomi project of Karnataka was started in 1991. The Dept. of Revenue in Karnataka state has computerized 20 million records of land ownership of 6.7 million farmers in the state. This system works with software called “Bhoomi” designed by NIC (Kumbargoudar and Atik-ur-rahaman, 2010).

ICT is providing tools and valuable cropping and management information, very crucial linkages with experts support as and when farmers require them. The need to be informed of the opportunities available for getting timely information regarding weather, disease management and control measures, epidemics and threats, etc. remain central to the agricultural information and extension activities. Indian scientists have launched an ‘Agricultural Wikipedia’ that will act as an online repository of agricultural information in the country. Indian Government initiative called ‘Agropedia’ was launched on 12th January 2009. The project called Agropedia aims to disseminate crop and region-specific information to farmers and agriculture extension workers. To help the farmers, a new system Aqua was developed by Developmental Informatics Lab at IIT Bombay, in 2003. It is an early effort to build a bridge between advanced technology and the farmers at the grassroots level. It is an interactive system between the computer operators, experts in agriculture and the farmers at remote areas, where the farmers’ queries are answered by the agriculture experts.

ICTs are a potentially powerful tool for extending educational opportunities, both formal and non-formal, to previously underserved constituencies-scattered and rural populations, groups traditionally excluded from education due to cultural or social reasons such as ethnic minorities, girls and women, persons with disabilities, and the elderly, as well as all others who
for reasons of cost or because of time constraints are unable to enroll on campus. Edusat is an example of such ICT based system.

The Union Ministry of Panchayati Raj has already started using ICT tools for implementing and monitoring of various programmes and projects that have been designed for the benefit of our rural population. Softwares like PRISoft, RuralSoft, NREGAsoft, etc., are helping the Union and the State governments in keeping an eye on the developments on the ground. These softwares also help maintain transparency in its functions and be accountable to the public (Kumbargoudar and Atik-ur-rahaman, 2010).

Apart from the Government’s initiatives to enable use of ICT to get information, there are also initiatives from Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) such as Drishtee Project, Gyandoot, Sustainable Access in Rural India (SARI), etc. There are also corporate ICT initiatives for rural development such as Amul’s Disk Net, Hindustan Lever’s i-Shakti, Ogilvy and Mather’s Param, Parry’s India Agriline, ITC’s e-chaupal, etc.

**Literacy and Education:**

Mass media are catalytic agent in the modernization process. There are several areas: increasing the flow of information, stimulating participation in development and making education more efficient or effective, where communication plays a significant role in accelerating the process of development. Education makes a significant contribution to national development through the development of a nation's human resources.

National Policy on Education (1986) laid emphasis on adult and continuing education: “Both the literate and the educated will be sensitized to take literacy work with as sense of pride patriotism and social obligation. The community of learners will be motivated and mobilized for literacy to perceive the need for literacy and internalize this need for their collective well-being. For this purpose, environmental building activities would continue to be
taken through organization of Jathas, street plays and nukad, nataks, wall writings, literacy songs and slogans, articles, in newspapers and magazines by creative writers, thinkers and opinion leaders etc”.

Further, it is laid down that media would be used in literacy promotion as a tool of dissemination of knowledge, as a tool of mobilization, motivation and sensitization, as a tool of learning by sharing information, ideas and experiences and as a tool of social action for change. For this purpose, discussion on various aspects relating to literacy would be arranged on Doordarshan and Radio, spots and motivational films would be produced and shown on TV and classes conducted through radio. Both print and non-print media, including traditional folk art would be fully harnessed for disseminating the message of literacy and for creating a positive climate for literacy (Chand and Singh, 2002).

Media policy is expected to play its role not only for awareness and inculcating pro-social and developmental values among illiterate masses for their movement towards literate world, but also to sensitize and activate the educated (privileged) people to contribute cause of mass educability. The beginning made by Doordarshan in the form of educational channel ‘Gyan Darshan’ is a welcome step, though it presently caters only to the educated sections.

All newspapers should cover different aspects of information such as role of literacy in development, health and hygiene and environmental awareness. Due coverage should be given to the news of seminars, symposia and functions of social organization aiming at welfare of the society. The development plans and other programmes should be covered adequately for proper dissemination of the message by the media users. Literate and educated persons can be motivated to teach the illiterates. The campaigns and mass movements can be built only if the media assumes a constructive approach. Further, the neo-literates, especially rural people and women need
support from print media for strengthening of literacy skills and their empowerment. If media is to be for people, then the shift in media policy is to be regulated only in the essence of media's role as defined by various national and international commissions and committees for democratization of information, promoting development ethos among people for national development in the broad framework of changing international scenario.

**Environment Protection:**

The media also played a notable role in carrying forward the message of Chipko movement. The non-violent, action oriented Chipko movement attracted the attention of environmentalists, organizations interested in the process of social change and the media throughout the world. Print media in India have also played a pivotal role in focusing attention of the people regarding the problems of environment. Several newspapers and magazines have started regular columns on subjects like ecology, environmental pollution, afforestation, wild life, conservation and development.

Teleserials like ‘Rakshak’, ‘Virasat’, Our Inheritance, Cultural Heritage etc. have been useful sources of information and enlightenment to the audience. That apart, talks, interviews and panel discussions organized by Doordarshan have also been useful to audience to gain new insight and outlook in regard to environmental pollution. AIR has also been providing talks, discussions etc (Aggarwal, 2002).

**Commercial Advertising:**

In a country like India where consumerism, born out of liberalization and globalization, is fast emerging as a major force, there is a strong case for social intervention in the matter of advertisements in order to ensure that they meet specific standards of truth and prevalent values of the society and do not violate ethical norms. True, mass media advertising is the only viable and economic way of providing marketing information to India's enormous population spread
as it is, over a vast geographic terrain. While the argument that consumers in India at large need information is a familiar one, the fact remains that little advertising is purely informative (Raut, 2002).

**National Integration:**

The news reports and programmes in mass media always reveal the popular principle of Indian democracy that is unity in diversity and diversity in unity. In this way, mass media is playing significant role in developing national integration, irrespective of different castes, religions, languages, states, territories, etc.

**Women and Mass Media:**

Mass media are used as channels of mass communication. The main aim or function of mass media is to inform, educate and motivate the people to accept new ideas and technologies so as to increase their living conditions and status. The ongoing communication revolution has opened up possibilities of accelerating development especially for the upliftment of women and children. But if it remains uncontrolled and unguided, this revolution will have adverse effect on the life of women. Every now and then, one comes across reports of one or the other group of women activists protesting against what they describe as wrong “exploitative” projection of women in media particularly in the electronic media. Women are basically seen as performing a decorative function and being marginal to national growth and development. Their primary place is seen as being with in the home and this value is reflected in the content and setting of most of the television programmes. The plural nature of Indian culture and diverse role that woman play is neither acknowledge nor communicated. This results in reinforcement of the stereotyped image and role specification of woman in an undimensional projection of their reality. When we speak of the image society projects of its women, we have in mind its ideal of woman hood or its popular stereo-types or the position of women of
the institution, of the role or position of women or the vision of poets, artists and prophets relating to women (Shrivastva, 1992)

Schramm (1964) said that it is extremely difficult to imagine that the national and economic development can be achieved without the input of external information. Irrespective of this complexity and indirectness, the fact remains that development related information must reach the population if any positive change is to be brought about. But when the bulk of population will live in less accessible and isolated villages both in plains and hills, such an effective communication is very difficult.

In such a situation mass media are extremely important in stimulating a sense of involvement, which is essential for development. Mass media create empathetic spirit, widens people’s horizon and conducive climate for change. That is why Bellurkar (2000) stated that the mass media should be put to service for national development. Among the different mass media television is considered as powerful media, as an institutionalized source of information for creating awareness about the innovation existent with additional information. It is used as powerful educational tool to reach millions of people all over the world simultaneously. The eye and ear mindedness of rural women makes this media as one of the most promising of the present day educational sources. They offer vitality and newness, which attract attention, create interest and stimulate desire to learn. To keep pace with such development, effective utilization of Television as a means of communication is very much essential.

Media does not merely “reflect” reality; it shapes it, both at an ideological and at a material level. While there are times at which the media is relatively open to the plurality of women’s roles and their contribution, these attempts often remain unseen and unheard because of the much stronger force of the negative messages as a result, of the women’s movement of the seventies and eighties, that women's issues began to find their way into mainstream papers. While coverage has been mixed, it is also true that many issues such as
women's struggles against violence, dowry, rape, their fight to protect the environment, have received a great deal of sympathetic coverage in newspapers. Several national dailies have also set up gender pages and there are more women working in the medium (Ramanamma, 2005).

The distance between women and media not only deprives the women of their right to information and knowledge but also keeps the women in the dark regarding the blatant misuse of the female and the distortion of the truth. Although the images of women as reflected by the different mass media in the country are not very different, it will be an interesting exercise to study how these images feed and reinforce the stereotypes. The distortion of realities by the media has increased the gap of understanding between the different sections of society. Effective informative communication is one of the most important channels for the growth and development of women in the informal or unorganized sector, as without information regarding services and benefits available through legislation, government schemes, banks and voluntary organizations, women can hardly take advantage of them (Ray, 2008).

The traditional mass media had a confined sphere in countries where it initially grew, functioning strictly in line with the values, norms, traditions and basic requirements of the local populace. But, the invention of new technologies like satellite communication, cable television and internet has helped it cross national boundaries and address the worldwide audience. These boosting inventions have, in fact, made the world a global village by transforming media into an international entity.

A large group of working women of India is in the rural and unorganized sectors. Socially the majorities of Indian women are still tradition bound and are in a disadvantageous position. The reasons for such disadvantage are the inequality in women’s access to and participation in all communications systems, especially the media, and their insufficient mobilization to promote women’s contribution to society.
Women and girls are exposed to great discrimination in economic, education, health and social services access worldwide. On the other hand the range of women’s economic activities in developing countries is very broad. It includes formal sector and informal sector employment, as well as self-employment in farming, trading and crafts production etc. There are numerous possibilities for ICTs to improve women’s economic activities in the field of trade, governance, education, health, crafts, employment in formal as well as informal sector. ICT’s bring lot of opportunities to women in the work situations and small business. Teleporting, flexi time and work from home arrangements are some of the gender dimensions of ICT’s usages (VAPS).

Following are few areas, which affected the lives of women positively by mass media.

**Women’s Education:**

In a country where illiteracy predominates over literacy, education becomes an important factor for social mobility and social change. In a developing society, education is a part of overall developmental effort. Indian women, for over a thousand years, were kept away from the corridors of 'education: In a closed traditional society family and kinship play the role of major agents of socialization. But in a transitional society part of this role, and that too the important part of is shifted to formal education. Education is, therefore, the first step towards the women's development. Many of the articles and reports published in newspapers emphasize the role of education for women. There are regular programmes in radio to increase the women’s participation in education and employment. With the advent of television, this electronic medium has become an important agency of socialisation. Much is learnt formally through television. In our society, it is being used in the Schools as an aid in teaching. Moreover, many educational programmes are relayed on television as its regular feature.
Health, Hygiene and Nutrition:

Another important area of women's development is that of health and nutrition (including maternity). Although maternity in our society is highly valued, yet mothers are not cared for properly. In the same way, the food patterns and dining manners are such that females in a family eat in the last when everyone else has taken the food. They are, therefore, provided with whatever is left for them. Being male dominant, nutritious food in our society is given to male members in the families. Moreover, females in a house do much more hard work than men. Their work may appear routine and simple on the surface. In fact, they get up first in the morning and attend to the needs of every member of the family in addition to other household jobs and they are last to retire to bed in the night. Many of the regular columns in newspapers highlight the health, hygiene and nutrition for women. Further, there are also regular programmes on women’s health and nutrition. Many of the health tips are also given in the radio programmes. Depending on the requirement, women can search ICT tools such as internet to get information on health and hygiene.

Women and Law:

Indian judicial system has a system of written and coded laws. Indian masses are not familiar with all the laws of the country. Legal knowledge has become a privilege of the few. This is true of men as well as women but it is more true in case of women than men. Many new laws have been enacted with a view to safeguard women's rights and to protect them from social discrimination. But majority of the women do not know these laws. Television is being used for disseminating knowledge about such laws. News papers are also playing significant role in revealing the provisions of different Acts and laws related to women.

Women and Employment:

Even though housewives are doing household work, it is treated as unproductive. But due to social conditioning, the household work of women is
not counted in the category of productive work. Whether their household work is recognized by society as productive or unproductive, the fact remains that they have been traditionally in the state of perpetual dependence. This has also contributed to their low status in society. Industrialization opened opportunities for women to seek gainful employment outside the home. Economic independence has contributed a lot towards the improvement of women’s lot in society. Moreover, the life styles have become so costly now-a-days that a single earner in the family can’t afford to meet all the requirements. Women’s employment, therefore, has become an important element in women's development. Mass Media of communication have themselves attracted lot of talented women. Many of the web sites are providing information about the self-employment, based on the homes of the women. Further, there are also many web sites which reveal the jobs for women in urban areas. Few of the TV channels telecast the self-employment opportunities for women.

**ICT as Problem Solving Medium:**

Many of the weaker sections including women are suffering from different problems related to health, nutrition, social and law. The experts in the respective fields are interacting to the problems of these women to solve their problems through blogs and social networking web sites. There are also many programmes related to the women’s problems in television.

**Women Empowerment:**

Women are treated as weaker sex in the society. Realizing the importance of women in the society to improve the status of women, government has formulated many schemes and policies. Many of the schemes such as Streeshakti, Myrada, SGSY, etc., are encouraging rural women to take up self-employment and generate savings. Further, the participation of women in administration of Panchayat Raj Institutions is also aimed for the women’s political empowerment. All these policies and schemes are published in the newspapers and magazines, so that women must gain awareness on the same.
Further, there are many programmes in radio and television, which are interactive for women empowerment. There are also web sites and social networking sites which popularize the women empowerment activities in India.

**Knowledge about World:**

Mass media helped Indian women to gain knowledge about the whole world and now their views are not narrow and limited to their own geographical area. It is this awareness that widens the vision of persons and reduces certain prejudices and stereotypes. By reading newspapers or watching different channels in television, now women acquired more awareness about different countries and culture of those people. In this way, they have gained more knowledge about the social culture and life of different people all over the world.

**Universal Friendship and Brotherhood:**

Few of the ICT applications enhanced two way communications between people of different locations and countries. In this way, communication has made possible to create friendship and brotherhood for Indian women with other people. Many of the social networking web sites such as Orkut, Facebook, etc helped Indian women to get links with their friends and other like minded people all over the world.

**Incidence of Crimes and Reduction in Social Evils:**

There are many social evils, violence and crimes, from which Indian women are suffering. They include exploitation, sexual harassment at work places, rape, acid attack, domestic violence, etc. Violence is on increase in everyday life. The front page of morning newspapers is full of stories of violence by the miscreants, criminals, terrorists, communal fanatics, feudal interest mongers, and by cruel and greedy dowry seekers. Majority of the films today are based on criminal and political themes full of violence and bloodshed. Mass media such as newspapers always report on the real events of
such crimes and also reveals the punishments given to criminals against such crime. Many of the programmes telecasted in television related to crime are also helps Indian women to be cautious about the criminals who use many ways and means of violence against women. It also develops the legal knowledge of women against such crimes. Mass media also helped Indian women to increase awareness on social evils and practices such as dowry, Devadasi, child marriage, etc.

Modern Lifestyle:

Modern woman is not only rational, but disciplined also. She is industrious, achievement-oriented and progressive. She is expected to work according to a well chalked out work schedule. Such a woman can never be expected to support any thing which is not bound with pre-decided rules. But in the name of individual freedom in matters of personal likings and tastes, sometimes unbridled life style is promoted. The style of conspicuous consumption also prompts for unbridled life style. In transitional society, this is more likely to happen. When traditions begin to be challenged, the traditional authority looses its potency. A state of anomie prevails. Mass media is no exception to it. Commercial advertisements carry attractive and unbridled images. Hence, it is possible that mass media may help in development of favourable attitudes for an unbridled life style.

Traditions, Norms and Values:

In recent times, tradition and modernity have loomed large in the conceptual baggage of sociologists. The process is an old one and earlier, it was subsumed under the terms ‘social change’ or ‘development’, whereby less developed societies tend to acquire characteristics associated with the developed societies. Modernization of a traditional society involves a multidimensional process. It signifies the evolution of a political community where individuals, emancipated from parochial loyalties of caste, community and kinship, project their allegiance to a progressively larger entity, the
Government. Earlier, tradition and modernity were viewed as contradictory to each other or a pair of opposites. But it has now been shown that tradition and modernity may not only coexist but may be complementary to each other (Sharma, 2009). Many of the programmes telecasted in television are proved significant in maintaining traditions, norms and values along with the modernity.

Many of the instances emphasized the importance of mass media for rural women empowerment. The success story of the Grameen Bank in Bangladesh, its approach which emphasizes the creation of enabling conditions in which every human being may have the opportunity to carve out dignified ways of living for herself/himself, has been an inspiring illustration for the developing countries. Grameen Bank in recent years has not only expanded its credit operations which are targeted at the poorest of the poor in rural Bangladesh, it has also rapidly diversified its activities. Grameen today is the focal point of a global network of institutions and individuals who provide micro-credit to fight poverty. Within Bangladesh, the Bank has undertaken major investment initiatives in those sectors where the poor have the comparative advantage in terms of their skills, enterprise and productive capacity. It has recently begun a scheme to provide mobile phones to women in every village. This shows that women can easily adapt themselves to the new communication technologies and use them for their family and economic survival. In India, the Self Employed Women Association (SEWA) has shown the way by the using video technology for articulating grievances of women construction workers, vegetable sellers and other such self employed women who had no forum for collective social action. It has gone a long way in innovating several self help programmes like opening bank accounts for the illiterate women account holders. These women workers also learnt to operate and handle video camera and other audio-visual equipment (Gupta, 2001).

Self Help Groups (SHGs) has emerged as the most vital instrument in the process of participatory development and women empowerment. The rural
women are the marginalized groups in the society because of socio-economic constraints. They remain backward and in the lower position of the social hierarchical ladder. They can lift themselves from the morass of poverty and stagnation through microfinance, Information and Communication Technologies and formation of Self Help Groups. So credit is a crucial input for socio-economic development of rural poor, but the institutional sources of credit to rural poor are still inadequate. As a result the moneylenders and landlords provide credit to the needy borrowers and particularly the depressed sections of the society charging an exorbitant rate of interest. This non-institutional source of rural finance has various exploitative practices. The debtor-creditor relationship gives birth to master-slave relationship as the debtor mortgage his labour with creditor. The lack of knowledge further added the fuel to the fire. In a country like India, more than 90 per cent women constitute the SHG groups. They lack knowledge in the proper channelisation of their products and selection of entrepreneurship. Through various development projects financed by the international developmental organizations, banks and the government of India supported their cause. But taking into account their poor knowledge and illiteracy level, most of the SHGs failed in the womb before seeing the light. But in southern India, like Andhra Pradesh and Kerla, SHGs in Tamil Nadu is progressing as per the objectives. To support their cause, various organizations have started the use of ICT for their further development.

Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) are for everyone and women have to be an equal beneficiary to the advantages offered by the technology, and the products and processes which emerge from their use. The benefits accrued from the synergy of knowledge and ICT need not be restricted to the upper strata of the society but have to freely flow to all segments of the female population. The gamut of areas in which ICT can put a greater control in the hands of women is wide and continuously expanding, from managing water distribution at the village-level to standing for local elections and having access to lifelong learning opportunities. ICT in
convergence with other forms of communication have the potential to reach those women who hitherto have not been reached by any other media, thereby empowering them to participate in economic and social progress and make informed decision on issues that affect them.

The mass media has the potential for information, inspiration, and instruction for rural women. From the definition of rural dwellers, most will be illiterates and few literates, engaged in the production of food fibre and raw materials. Those engaged in agriculture would no doubt require information on specific supplies required on their farm. They need to know where, when and how to begin to plant seeds, use pesticides, use mechanical equipment, etc. They also need to know the process, names of suppliers and how to satisfy the conditions for obtaining them. People who are engaged in rural non-farm economic activities need information on food processing, banking, textile, weaving, raffia work and tailoring, among others. They also require information on wood works, metal work, repair services for radio, vehicles and watches and other miscellaneous activities like soap making. Rural people also need information on the importance of good source of drinking water and the prevention of common diseases. Mortality and malnutrition of children are particularly prevalent in rural communities; therefore, a lot of information on childcare is required. Rural dwellers also require information on social participation in any programme for rural development.

To sum up, media is playing a significant role in the changing life style of women living in rural and urban areas. As such, the present study analyzed the impact of mass media on modern women.

1.2. Statement of the Problem:

As discussed above, the mass media have both positive and negative effects on status and life of women. Hence, the present study is made to assess the impact of mass media on women under the title “Impact of Mass Media on Women: A Sociological Study of Gulbarga District”.

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1.3. Importance of the Study:

It is noted that Government is encouraging women to use media such as television by providing information in different aspects such as agriculture, education, literacy, environment, business, handicrafts, arts, drama, culture, etc. Further, many of the media such as internet are essential to gain information at the global level. Due to e-governance activities of the government, it is easy to communicate the information. Hence, mass media changed and transformed women’s life by giving awareness about their rights and privileges in the society. On the other hand, the media is being misused by many persons, as reported in newspapers and other media. In this way, the mass media have both advantages and disadvantages. It is essential to know about the extent of usefulness of different media to the women. In this regard, the present study is proved as significant to assess the impact of mass media on women in Gulbarga district.

1.4. Aims and Objectives:

Mainly the present study assessed the impact of mass media on women. The particular objectives are:

1. To analyze the importance given by women to use different types of mass media.
2. To look into the interests of women in different aspects and programmes of these media.
3. To study the influence of mass media in different aspects such as agriculture, women empowerment, rural development, occupations, entertainment, etc. on women in Gulbarga district.
4. To know, whether the mass media has changed the life style of women in Gulbarga district.
5. To find out the advantages, disadvantages/merits and demerits of different mass media to the women in Gulbarga district.
6. To investigate the changes that made by mass media in the status of women in achieving gender equality.

1.5. Hypotheses:

Following hypotheses are formulated for the present study.

1. Much importance is given by women to mass media compared to basic infrastructure in their houses.
2. Mass media is influencing means in updating the knowledge of women about news and events.
3. To a greater extent, Radio and Television are entertainment oriented media rather than information media.
4. Television degraded the Status of Women by Indecent Representation in their programmes.
5. Women are deprived to use mass media in family and society.

1.6. Scope and Limitations:

Women comprise half of the total population. Further, women are working in different sectors such as agriculture, industry, business, organized sector and unorganized sector employment and a few women are also housewives. It is impossible to survey all the women in Gulbarga district and sample survey of 400 women is made to collect the primary data. Hence, the present study is limited to 400 women respondents using mass media. The selection of sample units and sampling methods are discussed in third chapter under the title of ‘Sources and Research Methodology’.

1.7. Organization of the Study:

The research report is organized into seven chapters with two appendixes as under.

The first chapter provided brief background information to the research topic. Here research problem is clearly defined. The need for the study of the
problem is discussed. The importance of this research topic is stated briefly. The clear aims and objectives are to be discussed. The scope and limitations are set in this chapter. Some generalizations and assumptions are fixed as hypothesis of the study. The first chapter is written under the title “Introduction to the Study.”

Before conducting the present study, it is necessary to know about the research gap in the studies that are already conducted. Hence, the studies already conducted and published already in the secondary literature such as research papers, books, journals, articles, conference and seminar papers that are published are reviewed in the second chapter under the title “Review of Literature”.

While conducting a research, it is needed to follow the principles according to the methodology. For this purpose, there is need to know about the existing literature and studies that are already done and the set parameters for the present study and also to work accordingly. The data collection techniques and tools used and sampling made, etc are discussed in third chapter under the title “Sources and Research Methodology”.

Geographical territory plays an important role in the status and development of the people. As such it is also applicable to the women and impact of media in Gulbarga district. Hence, there is need to study on the Gulbarga district in particular. The fourth chapter covered the area, demography, population, literacy, education, employment, occupation, environment, etc of the Gulbarga district under the title “Area of the Study”.

Before assessment of impact of mass media on women, it is essential to know about their personal socio-economic background. Hence, primary data collected on socio-economic aspects is analyzed and discussed in fifth chapter under the title “Socio-economic Background”.

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Impact of mass media on women is prime focus of the present research study. Hence, the primary data was collected on the impact of media in different aspects such as agriculture, occupations, self-employment, life styles, education, learning, women empowerment, rural development, gender equality, etc. from the women respondents. The primary data collected on these aspects are analyzed and discussed in the sixth chapter under the title “Impact of Mass Media on Women”.

After the analysis, discussion and interpretation of the primary data, certain findings are derived from the study and summaries of the study are stated. Useful suggestions are given for the development and empowerment of women through mass media. Further, the research study is concluded. Hence, the seventh chapter is written under the title “Findings and Conclusion”.

Apart from the above stated seven chapters, two appendixes are given at the end covering Bibliography and Interview Schedule. The research papers, books, Journal articles etc. that are used and relevant to the present study are listed in appendix-1 under the title ‘Bibliography’. The Interview Schedule used to collect Primary data is given in appendix-2.
1.8. References:


34. VAPS (Voluntary Association for People Service): Enhancing Women Empowerment through Information and Communication Technology. Report Submitted to Department of Women and Child Development, Government of India, New Delhi by Voluntary Association for People Service, Viruchunagar, Tamil Nadu.