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Media Representation of Women and its Influence on Societal Perception

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ABSTRACT

Media is an impact full medium from which each and every part of the society gets effected. Depiction through media influences the mentality of public at large. In India representation of gender based portrayals are still quite common. With an emphasis on how these representations are present in the cultural environment, the article examines scientific studies on the connections between gender stereotypes, objectification, and sexualisation in the media. The public's right to accurate, timely, and pertinent information is the media's main responsibility. The act of being exposed to representations that rereinforce gender stereotypes and support gender role norms also seems to encourage discrimination, harassment, and violence towards women and discourage women's aspirations in their careers. This article also covers the influence of media in the representations of women and its impact on the society from back in history to present scenario . Media in India is considered to be forth pillar of democracy. In India the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (MIB) is the main regulatory body for media monitoring and regulation. However their are various other regulatory body which also plays a vital role in the regulation of media they are. The press Council of India(PCI),New Broadcasting standards authority (NBSA),and Broadcasting content complaints Council (BCCC) .The constitution of India also mentions the rights and duty of media in various articles. As we live in a changing society which is highly influenced by the new upgraded technologies. Media is also getting influenced by these technologies. So now it's impact on every age group in the society is also getting very high and easy.

Keywords: *Media, Women, Society, Representation, Gender.*

I. INTRODUCTION

According to sociological school of jurisprudence the meaning of sociology is the study of society, public behaviour, mass opinion of the society and changing behaviour of the public. And jurisprudence means the study of law . So the overall meaning of the term sociological jurisprudence is the relation of society and the law. Thus as the media portrayals effects and influence the society at large it also effects and influence the law making. So the portrayals of

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women by the media also plays a major part in law making and give a significant impact on the overall society. So, the depiction of women and women rights should be positive empowering and encouraging. In patriarchal society like India were women are still suppressed and discourage for their rights . It's the duty of the media to give a powerful impact and influence on the society for the encouragement of women for their rights. Political scientist James Roseau, well-known for his research on globalization, addresses the media's function in the larger framework of international relations and globalization. He places special emphasis on how media, especially in the present day, crosses national borders and shapes perceptions and relationships all across the world. His concept would probably emphasize how the media has the ability to influence global political and cultural dynamics, as well as to mould public opinion and spread knowledge beyond national boundaries.

II. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF MEDIA IN INDIA

In ancient times India has a long tradition of storytelling, poem, music, art performance. Conveying entertainment, conveying knowledge and beliefs. In British era the first time the media was introduced in India. In the colonial period the crucial role of media was to shape public opinion and demonstration of Information . In 18th century the first newspaper “Bengal gazette” was public by James Augustus. With 99 million newspaper copies eaten, the country had the second-largest newspaper market in the world as of 2007. With 7,570,000 people having access to broadband Internet as of 2009, India was ranked 11th in the world for the number of users in 2010. 81,000,000 people in the nation, or 7.0% of the total population, were Internet users in 2009. In 2009, India ranked among the nations with the fourth-largest television broadcasting networks globally, with over 1,400 stations . After independence, the Indian media underwent significant self-reinvention, realignment, and evolution. Today, there is a distinct, occasionally arbitrary line between the artistic and economic expressions of our media giants. In terms of aesthetics, modern mass media are completely different: their vulgarity and haughtiness render any interpretation of their content meaningless. The more potent response to the violence of contemporary mass media is aesthetics. The mass media of today appears to elude all laws, exposing its message to every conceivable variation before ultimately eradicating it. The objective of mass communication is always the impartial dissemination of any content, and the internet is unquestionably the most effective media instrument.

III. POSITIVE IMPACT OF MEDIA REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN AND INFLUENCE ON SOCIETAL PERCEPTION

Women have been the integral part of the Indian society and culture. However their status in

India is still not acknowledge and they are not given equal opportunity, gender discrimination, violence unequal pay and many more. The women in India are struggling to come out of from the patriarchal society. Infanticide and female foeticide continue to be major concerns, especially in rural regions. Given the high number of sexual harassment and assault cases that are reported annually, women's safety and security are also major concerns. As media is the top instrument to shape the public opinion at large and give knowledge about the women safety and their legal rights. It's their duty to accomplish the positive change regarding women in India and their social status.

Some of the positive impact of women representations influence on societal perception are given below:

(A) Awareness about women legal rights and government program:

In India women are given various legal rights to enhance their status in society as media play a crucial role in Broadcasting information. Awareness of women rights in the public at large is their foremost duty. As media covers all age group it's easy for them to convey women's rights at a larger scale .besides not only women but society as a whole gets to know about women rights and their importance. Media not only includes news channels or news papers but also social media through which the new generation of the society gets influenced very easily. By making them know about women rights its give them opportunity to Pursue in their careers, education and lot more elements from which they are deprived of.

Their are various government schemes and program which helps in empowering women they are:

The Swadhar Greh Scheme is a centrally sponsored program designed to assist women who have been subjected to adversity and require institutional support for rehabilitation in order to live a dignified life.

Ujjawala Scheme: This centrally sponsored program aims to prevent human trafficking and provides rescue, rehabilitation, reintegration, and repatriation services for victims of trafficking for the purpose of commercial sexual exploitation

Working Women Hostel: The government runs the Working Women Hostel Scheme, which aims to give working women secure and handy housing in urban, semi-urban, or even rural areas where there are opportunities for employment for women, along with day care services for their kids whenever feasible.

Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP): The Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP) Scheme was

introduced on January 22, 2015, with the intention of addressing the concerns of diminishing Child Sex Ratio (CSR) and the empowerment of women and girls throughout their lives. Preventing gender-biased sex-selective elimination, ensuring the female child's survival and protection, and ensuring her education and participation are the goals of the program.

Mahila Shakti Kendra (MSK): The Mahila Shakti Kendra (MSK) Scheme is a centrally supported program that aims to empower rural women by involving the community. It was approved in November 2017. The intends to make it easier for plans and initiatives targeted at women to converge across sectors. With the exception of the North East and Special Category States, where the funding ratio is 90:10, the program is administered by State Governments and UT Administrations at a 60:40 cost sharing ratio with the states. There is 100% central financing available for Union Territories.

By the help of media these government programs and schemes gets a significant value and visibility among the society. Government reach out various media agencies to broadcast these program and to show their benefits. Media play a vital role in portraying the benefits of these programs and schemes.

(B) Challenges stereotypes

Media plays a crucial role in shaping societal perceptions, including how women are portrayed. Here are some ways media can challenge stereotypes about women:

Diverse Representations: Showcasing women from diverse backgrounds, with varying body types, abilities, and roles, helps break stereotypical moulds and fosters inclusivity.

Complex Characters: Portraying women as multi-dimensional characters with strengths, weaknesses, ambitions, and vulnerabilities challenges simplistic stereotypes and promotes empathy.

Empowering Narratives: Highlighting women in leadership, problem-solving, and decision-making roles promotes the idea that women are capable, competent, and influential.

Positive Relationships: Depicting healthy, respectful, and equal relationships between men and women helps challenge harmful stereotypes about gender dynamics.

Authentic Storytelling: Presenting authentic stories that reflect real women's experiences, struggles, triumphs, and resilience can counteract stereotypical tropes and offer more nuanced perspectives.

Media Ownership: Supporting and promoting women in media ownership, production, and creative roles can lead to more balanced and authentic representations of women.

By incorporating these strategies, media contribute to breaking down harmful stereotypes and fostering a more inclusive and equitable society.

(C) Community building

Women in India have been seen as homemaker it's a stereotypical norms that a Women should do only house work and its seen culturally unfit for a Women to get education and have a career . So they lack communication from the society they are deprived from the latest news and information. Media play a big role in helping women to communicate By offering venues and resources that encourage communication, contact, and cooperation among people who have similar interests or objectives, the media plays a vital role in fostering community development. Here's how the media support the establishment of women's communities:

Online Communities: Across geographical borders, social media platforms, online forums, and digital networks give women a place to meet, interact, exchange experiences, provide support, and develop bonds with like-minded people.

Educational content: Media platforms may provide women with educational information that is suited to their interests and requirements. This content can address issues like leadership, entrepreneurship, health and wellness, career development, and personal development.

Advocacy and knowledge: Women in the community can be mobilized to promote change and advocate for change through media campaigns and internet activism that increase knowledge of women's rights, gender equality issues, and social justice causes.

Networking and Collaboration: Media platforms enable women to network, collaborate on projects, share resources, and access opportunities such as mentorship programs, workshops, and career advancement initiatives.

Cultural and Creative Expression: Media allows women to express their creativity, share cultural experiences, and showcase their talents through art, writing, photography, music, and other forms of creative expression, fostering a sense of identity and community pride.

Community Building Events: Media can promote and organize community-building events, conferences, webinars, and discussions focused on women's issues, empowerment, and skill-building, fostering a sense of belonging and collective action.

Networking and Collaboration: Women can network, work together on projects, exchange information, and take advantage of opportunities like workshops, professional advancement initiatives, and mentoring programs through media platforms.

Cultural & Creative Expression: Through art, writing, photography, music, and other forms of

creative expression, media enables women to showcase their viabilities, exchange cultural experiences, and express their creativity, so promoting a feeling of identity and communal pride.

Community Building Events: To encourage a feeling of community and group action, the media can plan and promote conferences, webinars, and talks centered on women's issues, empowerment, and skill development.

(D) Career opportunities:

The media can significantly influence women's professional chances in a number of ways:

Visibility and Representation: When women are positively portrayed in the media in a variety of professions, sectors, and leadership capacities, it can raise awareness and encourage more women to follow comparable career paths.

Networking and Connections: Women can build their professional networks by connecting with mentors, business executives, prospective employees, and collaborators through media platforms like LinkedIn, professional forums, and networking events.

Talent Acquisition: The media provides access to webinars, workshops, online courses, and other learning materials that support women in gaining new abilities, expanding their areas of knowledge, and maintaining their competitiveness.

Entrepreneurship Support: By promoting their companies, offering resources for start-up growth, and putting them in touch with partners, investors, and clients, media coverage, digital marketing, and internet platforms may help women entrepreneurs.

Visibility for Achievements: In addition to recognizing women's accomplishments, media coverage of their honour's, prizes, and contributions across a range of industries also creates new avenues for professional growth, partnerships, and speaking engagements.

Campaigns and initiatives in the media that promote diversity, inclusiveness, and gender equality in the workplace can foster a more encouraging atmosphere for women, which will boost their chances and representation

Global Reach: Women can present their work, skills, and abilities to a wider audience through the media's global reach, which may lead to partnerships, collaborations, and international employment prospects.

Mentorship and Role Models: Successful women leaders can be included in articles, interviews, and profiles on media platforms. This can offer aspirational women professionals mentorship insights, direction, and role models.

Through efficient use of the media, women may exhibit their abilities and accomplishments, establish robust professional networks, gain access to career-enhancing opportunities, and help create a more diverse and equitable workforce.

(E) Advocacy and Representation of women by media

Media advocacy and portrayal of women are essential for advancing gender parity, dispelling myths, and elevating the voices and viewpoints of women. The media support advocacy and representation in the following ways:

Increasing Awareness: News stories, documentaries, and campaigns in the media can increase public knowledge of important topics such as gender-based violence, employment discrimination, and women's rights. This can start a dialogue and promote societal change.

Encouraging Positive Role Models: By showcasing successful women who shatter stereotypes and encourage others to follow their dreams, the media can encourage positive role models for women in a variety of industries.

Challenging Stereotypes: The media may promote tolerance, diversity, and acceptance by challenging stereotypes about women's roles, abilities, and qualities through varied and nuanced portrayals

Amplifying Voices: Women can express their stories, experiences, and viewpoints through media channels, which gives them a voice and helps to create a more inclusive public conversation.

Promoting Representation: In order to promote gender balance and visibility, media organizations and content creators should push for greater representation of women in leadership roles, decision-making capacities, and media content.

Supporting Women's Movements: Collective actions aiming at improving women's rights and equality can gain attention, credibility, and momentum from media coverage of women's movements, protests, and advocacy initiatives.

The media may help create a more equal and inclusive society where women's perspectives are heard, appreciated, and respected by actively participating in advocacy and representation.

IV. NEGATIVE IMPACT OF MEDIA REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN AND INFLUENCE ON SOCIETAL PERCEPTION

The media has a big say in whether social norms and behaviours that support violence against women are upheld or challenged. From overt violence to everyday hypersexualized, one-

dimensional pictures of women and girls, new media can serve as a platform for the objectification of these groups of people.

Inappropriate photographs of women are sometimes posted online, and cyberstalking is one method used to continue direct attacks against women and girls. Women have reported more often than not having their rapes and other sexual acts captured on camera being posted online without their permission, according to an expert assessment submitted to the Commission on the Status of Women.

As media play a vital role in Broadcasting information and giving a impact on the societal perception it's not always positive sometime the information and influence broadcasted by the media impact the women negativity. Some of such negative impacts are:

(A) Image based sexual abuse of rape victims.:

In today's generation social media is the foremost platform for communication and interaction. Each and everyone in this generation are some or the other way are connected to these social media it's part of the life. Thus being a very helpful platform to communicate and interact it comes with various negative influence on the society especially for women. Cyberbullying, trolling, and online harassment are more common among women on social media. Their mental health may suffer as a result, as well as psychological anguish. The non-consensual picture of the rape victims also know as image -based sexual abuse. Is a grave invasion of privacy that can have terrible repercussions, for rape victims. Here is more information about this matter:

Violation of Privacy: It is a clear violation of the privacy and autonomy of rape victims when pictures of them are posted without their permission. Often, the purpose of sharing these photos is to harm the victim by intimidating, humiliating, or embarrassing them.

Trauma and Retraumatization: Unauthorized photo distribution of rape victims can cause severe emotional and psychological trauma. It may cause powerlessness, guilt, nervousness, and fear of becoming a victim again. Reopening wounds from the initial traumatic experience can also function as a sort of Retraumatization.

The dissemination of these kinds of photos has the potential to promote victim blaming and stigmatization. Victims can face unwarranted judgment or blame for the attack, and people might start to doubt their morality and reliability.

Safety Concerns: Sharing photos without consent might potentially put victims' safety in jeopardy. When perpetrators and others use the victim's photographs to target and harass them, it can result in harassment and threats.

Legal and Ethical Concerns: It is against the law and ethical norms to share private photos without permission. Many jurisdictions have legislation particularly addressing image-based sexual abuse, however enforcement and protection might differ.

Relationships and Reputation: The victim's relationships, future prospects, and reputation may all suffer permanently as a result of the sharing of these pictures. It may have an adverse effect on their personal and work lives, upsetting them and impeding their ability to heal.

(B) Infringement of Privacy :

The term "life," as guaranteed by Article 21 of the Constitution, does not mean merely existing as an animal or carrying on with life's arduous tasks. Its definition is far broader and covers things like the right to a better standard of life, the workplace, recreation, and living conditions. "The dynamic significance that is related to life and liberty is not the only aspect of quality of life that is covered by Article 21. The right to human dignity is part of the right to life. Article 21's guarantee of the right to live in human dignity is derived from the overarching principles of state policy. The case of *Maneka Gandhi v Union of India* established that the right to life included not only the right to bodily existence but also the right to live with human dignity. Thus media being a foremost platform for advertising and Broadcasting images. Women's rights to safety and privacy is violated by media sources publishing personal information about them, including home addresses, phone numbers, and medical records, without their permission. The media occasionally sensationalizes or misrepresents the experiences or deeds of women, violating their privacy by falsifying information or presenting them in an unfavourable or dramatic way Without respecting limits, journalists may conduct intrusive interviews or pry into personal matters, which could result in the revelation of private information. Without respecting limits, journalists conduct intrusive interviews or pry into personal matters, which could result in the revelation of private information without authorization. Social media and internet platforms can also be used to violate women's privacy through practices like cyberstalking, doxing, or posting personal information online and propagating untrue rumours and gossip.

(C) Stereotypes regarding women by media:

Conventional Gender Roles: Stereotypes about women's main responsibilities being supportive and domestic are reinforced when women are portrayed in the media as homemakers, caregivers, or romantic interests.

Beauty Standards: Women with particular body types, skin tones, and features are often portrayed in the media as the ideal, perpetuating limited and unattainable beauty standards.

Women who do not meet these criteria may have low self-esteem and body dissatisfaction as a result.

Emotional and Irrational: Stereotypes that limit women's capacity for reason, logic, and assertiveness are reinforced when they are portrayed as excessively emotional, irrational, or prone to mood swings.

Sexual Objectification: Rather of recognizing women's brains, abilities, and accomplishments, the media frequently objectifies women, reducing them to their physical attractiveness or sexual appeal. This has the potential to reinforce an inequitable and sexist culture.

Incompetence in Leadership: The perception that women are unfit for positions of power or authority is reinforced when women in leadership roles are depicted as less capable or competent than their male colleagues.

Damsel in Distress: The "damsel in distress" cliché perpetuates stereotypes of female weakness and dependence by depicting women as defenceless and in need of male characters' rescue.

Motherhood and Family: The media frequently romanticizes motherhood and the family life for women, ignoring the range of experiences and decisions that women make when it comes to their relationships, careers, and children.

Ageism: Older women are marginalized and ageist prejudices that devalue women as they age are reinforced by media depictions of women that frequently emphasize youth and beauty.

Media portrayal that captures the range, complexity, and agency of women's lives is necessary to challenge these prejudices. In addition, it entails advancing gender equality, fighting for inclusive and truthful representations of women in the media, and giving women the confidence to confront and defy damaging stereotypes.

V. MEDIA LAWS RELATED TO WOMEN

1. Section 292 of Indian Penal Code 1960:

The definition of obscenity, according to dictionaries, is the state of being obscene, which is insulting to modesty or decency; it is dirty, disgusting, and indecent. The suppression of obscenity is unquestionably in the best interests of society. Pornography and obscenity differ in that the latter term refers to texts, images, etc. Meant to evoke sexual desire, while the former can contain texts, etc. Not meant to, but with a predisposition toward that outcome. Of fact, both violate morality and public decency, but pornography is an extreme type of obscenity. Section 292 of the Indian Penal Code 1960 addresses the sale of pornographic books, pamphlets, and other materials that are judged to be lascivious or that appeal to the lustful interest. This includes

pornographic advertisements. For the simple reason that “indecent representation of women can be obscene,” the Indian Penal Code as safety legislation to prevent the indecent representation of women in advertisements. Therefore, a rule restricting obscenity may be beneficial. The obscenity test was established in the case of *Ranjit D. Udeshi v. State of Maharashtra*. A copy of *Lady Chatterley’s Lover’s* unexpurgated edition was sold by the appellant, a bookstore. He was found guilty in accordance with Section 292 of the Indian Penal Code, which states that emphasis shouldn’t be placed on individual words or passages while evaluating a piece of art. While taking into account the work as a whole, it is also important to examine the explicit content independently to determine whether it is so egregious and how strongly decidedly indecent that it has the potential to deprave and corrupt those whose minds are susceptible to such effects.

2. The indecent representation of women (prohibition) act 1986:

The act penalizes the indecent representation of women, which is defined as the portrayal of a woman’s figure in any way that is likely to degrade, corrupt, or harm public morality or morals, or that has the effect of being indecent, disparaging, or demeaning to women. It says that no one is allowed to publish, arrange for publishing or exhibition, or cause to be published any advertisement that features offensive depictions of women in any way.

3. The information technology act 2000:

The most severe law against pornography is found in Section 67 of the IT Act. The section states as follows: on the first conviction, the offender faces up to five years in prison and a fine of up to one lakh rupees. Upon a second or subsequent conviction, one faces a fine of up to two lakh rupees in addition to ten years worth of imprisonment. Publication, disseminating, or causing to be published any electronic pornographic content is a necessary component of an offense under section 67.

4. The cable television networks (regulation) act 1995

The Cable Television Networks (Regulation) Act of 1995 forbids the broadcasting of advertising that do not adhere to the Advertisement Code on cable networks. The Cable Television Network Rules, 1994, Rule 7, lays forth the Advertisement Code. Violating these regulations can result in legal consequences. According to Rule 7(2)(vi), no commercial that depicts women in a way that goes against the guarantees provided to all citizens by the Constitution is allowed. Specifically, no commercial that presents a negative image of women is allowed. Women shouldn’t be portrayed in a way that highlights their meek, subservient traits and pushes them to take on a secondary, subordinate role in the home and in society. The cable

operator is responsible for making sure that the female form is portrayed in shows that air on his network in an elegant and tasteful manner that adheres to established standards of decency and good taste

5. Article 21 of constitution of india:

Women are born with the right to dignity: “Life,” as guaranteed by Article 21 of the Constitution, does not mean merely existing as an animal or carrying on with a life of drudgery. Quality of life, as defined by Article 21, encompasses more than just the dynamic meaning of life and liberty. It also includes the right to a higher standard of living, hygienic working conditions, and leisure time. In the case of *Maneka Gandhi v. Union of India*, it was decided that the right to life encompasses not only the right to exist physically but also the right to live with dignity. It was decided in *Francis Coralie V. Union of Territory of Delhi* that this encompasses “the right to live with human dignity” in addition to “merely physical survival” and is not limited to the protection of any faculty or limb that allows one to enjoy life or communicate with the outside world. Women are members of the human race. Therefore, women are not immune to any human rights. Women are entitled to a life of dignity.

VI. CASE LAWS RELATED TO WOMEN REPRESENTATIONS BY MEDIA

M. C. Mehta v. Union of India (2009)

The regulation of tobacco product ads and content was at issue in this case. It emphasized the role of media rules in improving public health and ethical advertising practices, which can also apply to depictions of women in media, even though it was not specifically focused on women’s representation.

Ranjit D. Udeshi v. State of Maharashtra (1965):

The problem of obscenity in literature and the media was addressed in this case. It brought up significant issues of censorship, artistic expression, and the bounds of permissible content, including how women are portrayed in the media, even if it wasn’t specifically related to women’s depictions.

National Commission for Women v. State of Delhi (2010)

In this instance, the National Commission for Women submitted a petition to regulate the content of television serials that purportedly encouraged violence against women and regressive gender norms. Concerns on how media representations affect society attitudes and behaviours were brought to light by this case.

VII. CONCLUSION

The way that women are portrayed in the media has a big impact on how society views women and shapes norms, values, and beliefs. Stereotypes can be challenged or reinforced by a variety of media, including social media, television, and movies, which can affect how people perceive and treat women. As we advance, encouraging varied, genuine portrayals of women can encourage constructive change and support an inclusive, egalitarian society. The way that women are portrayed in the media has the potential to either reinforce negative stereotypes or promote constructive social change. In order to promote a more fair and inclusive society where women are respected, valued, and empowered, it is imperative that diverse, authentic depictions of women be promoted throughout multiple media channels. Women's rights in the media cover a wide range of topics, from encouraging equitable representation and opposing discrimination to protecting against harassment and upholding privacy and dignity. These laws, which are influenced by political, social, and cultural circumstances, aim to establish a setting in which women are protected from abuse, given equal opportunity, and shown with respect in the media. Though these laws' efficacy varies, it is crucial that advocacy groups, international organizations, and media watchdogs continue to monitor compliance, resolve issues, and promote gender equality and women's empowerment in media portrayal. The dynamic interplay between tradition and innovation in India's media history is a reflection of the nation's broad cultural heritage and socio-political progress. India's media environment is resilient and adaptable; it continues to enlighten citizens, shape public conversation, and strengthen the democratic foundation of the country. Indian media can greatly enhance the way women are portrayed by putting into practice tactics like encouraging diversity, eschewing stereotypes, emphasizing stories of empowerment, guaranteeing fair coverage, addressing gender-based violence, involving women in decision-making, offering training, working with women's organizations, keeping an eye on content, and interacting with viewers. This will support positive social change and gender equality in society in addition to creating a more equal and powerful media environment.

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