The Impact of Television Advertising on Women in Nigeria and Iran

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ABSTRACT

The impact of media on society is a widely discussed, debated and investigated subject of the 21st Century. The media are rightly considered as the fourth estate of a democracy. The media are also known as informal universities which provide constant education, orientation and guidance to the mankind. There is a phenomenal growth of mass media including television all over the globe. The role of television as a medium of communication and development is subjected to scientific research in Nigeria, Iran and elsewhere. A new generation of audience has grown up with television exposure in modern society. The impact of television advertising on the lives of women needs to be examined scientifically and systematically in developing countries like Nigeria and Iran. The present study evaluates the impact of television advertising on women in these two countries.

Keywords: Women, Gender, Advertising, Society.
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INTRODUCTION

The word 'advertising' is derived from its Latin root ***ad verter,*** which means 'to turn towards' or 'to attract attention'. Advertising basically comprises all acts that are directed towards drawing the attention of people about the availability of goods and services. Advertising is commonly defined as any form of non-personal presentation and promotion of ideas, goods and services usually paid for by an identified sponsor or advertiser. Advertising is also directed at a specific group of consumers of goods and services. Advertising is a paid form of communication. The advertiser is also duly identified by the media of advertising for obvious reasons. Advertising has become a necessary evil in the modern society. Advertising has promotional, educative, economic and social dimensions. Advertising is usually delivered through a communication medium designed to reach more than one person but to the masses. Scholars have defined advertising as the process by which a product or service is introduced with the purpose of persuading the people of a locality to utilize that product or service. Others have also defined advertising as the process of introducing to the public an idea, product or Service through a paid announcement from a non individual and identifiable source to encourage the public to make use of what is introduced.

Root (1994) defines advertising as any paid form of non personal communication by an identified sponsor to promote a product or company. Advertising has been the dominant instrument of mass promotion of goods and services through planned advertising services. Advertising has been defined as the dissemination of information concerning an idea, service or product to compel action in accordance with the intent of the advertiser. The American Marketing

Association defined advertising as 'any paid form of nonpersonal presentation of idea, goods or service by an identified sponsor. This definition provides about 5 important elements of advertising which include – a) Advertising is a paid form of communication, b)Advertising is non-personal communication directed at specific target group, c)Advertising precisely promotes favorable ideas regarding the goods and services, d)Advertising is directed at the target group in order to create interest in them about the goods and services; and e) Advertising is issued by an identified sponsor who is interested in generating income through the sale of goods and services. Advertising provides socially and economically beneficial services to the mankind. Modern business organizations gain immensely through advertising services. The consumers also get necessary information about the availability of goods and services which suit their convenience. Today, the goal of business promotion cannot be actualized in the absence of planned advertising services. Advertising services also dramatize the goods and services and trigger the sales of goods and services in a competitive environment. The most common types of advertising are classified by the scholars on the basis of the nature or purpose of the advertisement. Prominent among them include - brand – building advertising, tactical advertising, national advertising, retail advertising, public service advertising, corporate advertising, primary – demand advertising and business to business advertising.

In reality, the communications media serve as the bridge between the sellers and buyers of goods and services. The advertisers are required to utilize the services of skilled, specialized and competent media planners who can help them to place and schedule their advertisements. The advertisers are required to understand the reach, frequency, selectivity, efficiency and credibility of the traditional and modern media of advertising. The advertising agencies also help the advertisers to select the available best media of advertising. Broadly speaking, the media of advertising can be chosen on the basis of first hand information, personal observation, authentic data and experts' suggestions under the normal circumstances. The media of advertising include – print media, electronic media, outdoor media and new media. The print media are the oldest means of mass media which primarily include newspapers and magazines. The print media provide detailed advertising services to the consumers. The newspapers have a wider reach and they can go to any geographic location and attract the attention of the consumers. The magazines are known for limited reach when compared to newspapers. But, the magazines offer a tremendous degree of selectivity for advertisers. The electronic media of communication namely radio and television provide competitive advertising services across the globe. In the present times, television has become the most prominent medium of advertising as compared to the radio.

TELEVISION AS A MEDIUM OF COMMUNICATION

Television was indeed, one of the greatest inventions of 20th century. John Logie Baird gets the credit for inventing the first mechanical working television system in 1926 (Burns 2000). The television contents include both sound and visuals which make it a magic medium of communication. This unique feature allows the viewers to watch the world from their drawing rooms. This powerful visual nature helps television to create vivid impressions in the minds of the audience which in turn leads to emotional involvement. The audio visual quality of television makes the images more memorable. Hence, television is rightly regarded as a domestic medium of communication which provides information, education, entertainment and allied services to the mankind within the four walls. The domestic nature of television makes it an intimate medium. This makes the viewers experience a sense of closeness to the anchors of a show or with the characters in a serial.

The eye is one of the most powerful sensory organs and two thirds of learning comes through the sense of sight much more than what people learn through the sense of sound. Audio-visual information lasts long in one's memory. The presence of color enables one to show things in natural colors enhancing the level of communications. The motion gives one more dynamism to the process of communication. The other chief element is drama that is interwoven in the presentation. Thus, the presence of these rich characteristics of theatre in television makes the communication process more effective and helps the viewers in the perception of information. The live nature of television allows it to transmit visuals and information almost instantly. This capacity of television makes it ideal for transmitting live visuals of news and various events. A large number of audiences who cannot read or right can watch television and access the information shown on television. As a medium of communication, television also has a very wide output, range and reach. By nature, television is generally identified as a transitory medium of communication. It is different from other media of communication. It combines compelling visuals with the personal immediacy of radio. This audio visual character gives television a great power in conveying realism which keeps the viewers emotionally involved with the programme. It allows the audiences to witness various events which take place around the world. The new media enable the audiences to participate in various events by posting their comments on websites.

Television offers several advantages to the mankind. It can be used to demonstrate processes or physical skills, to show movement, to enrich reading skills, to make distance learning more personalized and make teaching and learning very attractive and dynamic. Television provides different kinds of programmes for different sections of the society. Today people spend most time watching variety of television programmes both domestic and foreign. It is very well said that television is the heavy weight of all mass media. Nicholas Johnson (2003, p. 208) observes: "Television is one of the most powerful forces man has ever unleashed upon himself". It denotes the importance television has assumed in our lives and the dramatic changes it has brought about in our modern society. Television is a collective art combining the significant elements of print, radio, film and theatre. Television is a visual bonanza – a medium appropriate for demonstration. It has tremendous demonstrative capability when compared to other media of communication. There is no distraction in television viewing as the medium demands one's physical presence in front of TV set. Television, therefore, gets a large mass of heterogeneous audience all over the world. Television has virtually become a market place for consumer products and services. TV commercials have immensely influenced and changed the society. It has also become a major economic force. Television has a vast variety of programmes. Television signals are accessible to the greatest majority of the people all over the world. There are also digital and non-digital television subscribers all over the world. Television also generates maximum advertising revenue all over the globe one compared to other media of communication

EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN

The concept of empowerment has been widely discussed and debated all over the world. The United Nations Organization (2001) has provided a meaningful conceptual framework of empowerment of women. It reads: "Empowerment is defined as the processes by which women take control and ownership of their lives through expansion of their choices. It is the process of acquiring the ability to make strategic life choices in a context where this ability has previously been denied". Several researchers have tried to define the empowerment of women in their own ways on the basis of theoretical and empirical evidences and experiences. The definition most quoted by the scholars is one provided by Batilwala (1998, p. 42). It reads: "Empowerment is the

process by which the powerless gain greater control over the circumstances of their lives. It includes both control over resources and over ideology. Ultimately it includes a growing intrinsic capability – greater self confidence and an inner transformation of one's consciousness that enables one to overcome external barriers".

Inherent in this definition are two important ideas, the first of which is that empowerment is not about power over others (a feature of domination), but power to achieve goals and ends. By conceptualizing empowerment in terms of 'power to the definition explicitly recognizes that the process of empowerment involves not only changes in access to resources, but also an understanding of one's rights and entitlements and the conscientization that 'gender roles can be changed and gender equality is possible'. The second important idea is that the concept of empowerment is more generally applicable to those who are powerless, whether this be male or female individuals or a group, class are cast. Hence, there is nothing about the concept of empowerment per se which applies to women alone. Nonetheless, women's empowerment or lack of it, is unique in that it cuts across all types of class and cast powerlessness and unlike class or caste powerlessness, is played out also within families and households, according to Malhotra et al (2002:270). While empowerment literally means 'to invest with power', in the context of women's empowerment the term has come to denote women's increased the control over their own lives, bodies and environment. Scholars have placed emphasis on women's decision making roles, their economic self-reliance and their legal rights to equal treatment, inheritance and protection against all forms of discrimination in addition to the elimination of barriers to their access of resources such as education, finance, political power and developmental initiatives.

Kabeer (2001) identifies the core elements of the empowerment of women namely-agency, awareness, self-esteem and self-confidence. Women's empowerment is indeed a multi-dimensional revolution. There are several agencies and activities which are associated with the process of empowerment of women. The Constitution of Nigeria not only grants equality to women, but authorizes the State to adopt progressive measures of positive discrimination in favour of women. Within the framework of a democratic polity, our laws, development policies, plans and programms have aimed at women's empowerment in different spheres of human life. Scholars have identified the core elements of empowerment namely-agency (The ability to define one's goals and act upon them), awareness of gendered power structures, self-esteem and self-confidence. Empowerment of women takes place at a hierarchy of different levels of individual, household, community and societal and is facilitated by providing encouraging factors. United Nations Development Programme (2001) identified two processes related to the empowerment of women. The first is social mobilization and collective agency, as poor women often lack the basic capabilities and self confidence to counter and challenge existing disparities and barriers against them. Often, change agents are needed to catalyze social mobilization consciously. Second, the process of social mobilization needs to be accompanied and complimented by economic security. As long as the disadvantaged suffer from economic deprivation and livelihood insecurity, they will not be in a position to mobilize.

The year 2001 was celebrated as 'Women Empowerment Year' and the Government of Nigeria and Iran realized the need for improving the access of women to national resources and for ensuring their rightful place in the mainstream of economic development. The objective of the Government was to create large scale awareness with the active participation of women themselves in the process of their empowerment. The major components of empowerment of women include-access to economic resources and influence over their uses, participation in economic decision making, opportunities for self-development, participation in socio-political decision, scope for skill development and impact on general welfare of the family and community. In the age of globalization, the economy is increasingly becoming a market driven economy in Nigeria and Iran. The macro entrepreneurial activities have not benefited the poor and

marginalized sections of the society in Nigeria and other developing nations. The urban and rural poor cannot break the grinding cycle of poverty. Small and marginal farmers, artisans, workers and other poverty stricken people badly need micro entrepreneurial activities which are facilitated by the cooperatives since financial institutions have failed to meet the requirements of the poor and needy people for obvious reasons like policy and practical constraints.

The need for women's empowerment is seldom questioned by anybody in developing economies like Nigeria and Iran. Self-help groups are necessary to overcome poverty, unemployment, exploitation and other disabilities which have come in the way of empowerment of women and weaker sections. These groups are also capable of creating confidence for the economic self reliance of the poor, particularly among women who are mostly invisible in the socio-economic structure of Nigerian and Iranian societies. Women continue to struggle both at micro and macro levels in order to access finance and other economic resources which are required to achieve the goal of empowerment of women in Nigeria and Iran. At the macro level prevailing business practices continued to marginalize women's enterprises and small businesses from sources of capital and information. The access to capital, credit and technology remains inadequate despite the claimed success of micro credit programs through co-operatives. Globalization has presented new challenges for the realization of goal of women's empowerment in Nigeria and Iran.

Several investigations have revealed the importance of re-examining the impact of various development programmes which are implemented in developing countries such as Nigeria and Iran in the age of globalization of economy. Women friendly policies, plans, initiatives and allied progressive measures are required to enhance the capacity of micro credit programs and actively engage the women in institution building and creation of enabling environment activities. It is high time women's groups, NGOs, cooperatives and SHGs self help groups become self reliant and generate their own funds rather than basing economic empowerment work on grants and subsidies given by governments and banks. Women's perspectives have to be included in designing and implementing micro and macro economic policies and programs. Their contribution socio-economic development as producers and workers need to be recognized in the formal and informal sectors in Nigeria and Iran.

SCIENTIFIC STUDY OF WOMEN

Womanhood is respected all over the world and many international organizations have emphasized the need for empowerment of women who are excluded from the mainstream of national life (Ekurii 2011; Ekurii 2019). Several national constitutions have also upheld the need for protection of women and development of women since they are subjected to historical injustice since times immemorial in the world. The womanhood is also affected by several environmental factors namely social complexities, economic compulsions, political conditions, development status, educational facilities and so on. The processes of urbanization, industrialization, modernization, westernization, globalization, liberalization and privatization also affect the status of women across the globe. The women have very special and distinct needs, which can no longer be overlooked. It is also essential to invest in women's development as they are the producers of national wealth and builders of the nation. They need to be helped to mold healthy personalities and grow well in a positive manner in modern society. By addressing their needs one would not only be contributing to the socio-economic development of the country but also to other societal concerns like social harmony, gender justice, population stabilization and improving the quality of life of the people. Scholars have provided an overview of the history of the research on womanhood.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights has also recognized the importance of women's rights protection and development of women in all spheres of human life. Scholars have provided meaningful theoretical models and embraced all aspects of womanhood. The first phase of women's studies began in the 1950's after several countries in the world became politically independent. The national governments have also designed and implemented several women – specific projects all over the world. Scholars have examined the impact of development programmes on women. This tendency continued till the end of the 20th Century. It was characterized by more focused hypotheses testing and application of scientific inputs to real life problems and situations. In the beginning of the 21st Century, the third phase began with a fond hope of empowering the women in modern society. The dawn of 21st century witnessed the emergence of a new era in the history of the scientific study of womanhood. Behavioral scientists have stated that this phase involved the emergence of the field of women's development as an exemplar of the sort of developmental sciences which has benefited the policy makers, bureaucrats, practitioners and others interested in the advancement of civil society. Several national constitutions have upheld the need for extensive research and development programmes concerning women's development all over the globe. The Millennium Development Goals (MDP) also laid emphasis on women's development specially in the developing nations. Contemporary scholarship on womanhood reflects individual context relations, developmental systems, plasticity, diversity, longitudinal methodology and application that were crystallized and integrated within the scope of the scientific study of childhood. The UNESCO, UNDP, World Health Organization and other organizations have also conducted series of research and development programmes concerning women's development. Several scholars have also provided a sound vision for the scientific study of women which involves reciprocal collaborations among researchers, practitioners, policy makers and activists who are responsible for the development of women.

The present generations of policy makers, administrators, developmentalists and behavioral scientists have a vital role to play in enhancing human development through the generation of basic and applied knowledge concerning the overall progress of women in particular and mankind in general. Today, advanced scientific studies are carried out all over the world on the need and importance of empowerment of women ranging from historical to human development aspects. Professional organizations are also established to facilitate debates, discussions, seminars, conferences, longitudinal studies, publications and allied activities associated with the integrated and sustainable development of women.

PORTRAYAL OF WOMEN IN CONTEMPORARY MEDIA

The fourth United Nations World Conference on Women (1996) held at Beijing Lobbied actively on several macro issues of concern to women all over the world. These included globalization and the impact of SAP, the girl child, restructuring of the World Bank and IMF to make them more accountable, restoration of a United Nations Committee which would help Third World Countries negotiate with Multi National Corporations and overcome the barriers to the political participation and economic progress of women in the world. Moreover, Nigeria and Iran also endorsed the resolutions of the conference. Despite unresolved contentious issues, the focus was on the hardware issues and not the software. This Conference had given rise to a new generation of women activists who would influence the world scene for the next Century. The situation in Nigeria and Iran is highly frustrating. In reality, the birth of the girl child in the family does not generate happiness and that it is generally viewed as a source of frustration and an unwanted burden. The educational and developmental interests of the girls are found as the last

thing on the family agenda especially in the case of rural, tribal and backward families. A girl is married far too early, pushed into a double load of family raising and family support through paid and unpaid. Despite putting all her resources in raising her family and in many cases single handedly, she is a victim of various kinds of atrocities and violence. The development process has not done much to improve her bargaining power in most of the developing countries across the globe.

The conferences and deliberations have failed to bring about greater awareness among women folk in regard to their rights, privileges, roles and responsibilities. We find the articulation of the women's point of view through conferences, rallies and other events. At the end, both the girl child and the women find themselves inextricably located in a mesh of values and aspirations that have little meaning outside the context of family and culture. Women are not thoroughly organized in our country. They are yet to improve their bargaining power even in the beginning of new millennium, observes Mahesh Chandra Guru (1996, p. 168).

Women constitute the largest number among the illiterates, knowledge havenots and under-privileged class of modern society (Ibok & Ogar 2018). Women are indeed the backbone of national development. It is in this context that the importance of mass media for extending the educational and developmental support to women assumes an additional dimension for national development especially in Nigeria, Iran and other developing nations. The UNESCO report in 'Women and the Media' states: "The perspective of women reflected in messages disseminated by the mass media expresses male concepts of women. The commercial media produces message systems and symbols which create or structure prevailing images of social reality which in our set-up show women as house-wives, consumers and sex objects. Women in advertising are always young and attractive, they are frequently depicted as sexual objects, as in the home and they are seldom shown as intelligent people. The mass media's role is primarily to reinforce definitions and identities set in a frame work constructed for and by men. It is clear that mass media are not only dominated by the men who run it, but also, in large part, by the men who read or see or hear it. The transformation of ordinary women into efficient managers coping with challenging development situations and performing multiple roles demands constant communication support from various media of communication.

In reality, mass media in Nigeria, Iran and most of the developing nations are male oriented, male dominated and male biased (Akpan 2005; Okeke & Akpan 2012; Akpan et al., 2020). When it comes to projecting the image of women, all types of mass media are guilty of portraying a negative image. The media have not been able to ensure a judicious communicative space and time for the coverage of women's issues. There has been a failure in identifying the problems of women and there is a continued projection of women through men's eyes. In the process, their needs have been overlooked and they have been discriminated against. An exploration of this material reveals this bitter reality in the present times regardless of space and time. Women are not seen as important constituents in decision making positions in Government, the media, academia or traditional development agencies. The role that women play in media, their professional status in them (media) and the images of women projected by the media are inextricably linked. The number of women in key decision-making posts in print media, radio, television, film and advertising is not adequate.

The subject of portrayal of women in the Nigerian and Iranian media has drawn the attention of media critics in the present times. It arises especially when our society is going through a period of social change. Women have been portrayed as men would like to see them beautiful creatures, submissive, mothers of their children, efficient house keepers, but nothing else. The positive side of their progress and their contributions for national development has not been adequately discussed in the media of communication. The values projected by the entertainment media are imbibed by the audience, especially the female audience, who are

conditioned to dwell upon much frivolous content by their exclusion from the serious world of hardness. The apparent notion that the mass media are depicting women in a better manner is only the surface trimming. The actual message to audience still is that society opposes the liberation of women. For, unless the media can show society supporting women in their fight for their rights, women will continue to be treated shabbily by society, observes Bebsodeh & Joseph (2013). The attitude of the media managers and owners toward women has to be drastically changed. There is a growing tendency to neglect the needs and demands of women as far as the coverage is concerned. The mass media portray women in a unrealistic and negative manners.

Akhileshwari (1988, p. 10) makes a scathing attack on the negative aspects of the portrayal of women in mass media thus: "These images of women are blindly accepted as truth and are internalized both by women and men. The commercial film can take the credit if it can be called for creating certain images of women which have been perpetuated by other media, particularly TV. For instance, the image of the educated women is typecast as arrogant, insensitive, self-centered, wily (contrast this with an illiterate women as being loving, considerate and sacrificing). Or the economically independent woman is shown as domineering, hard, ruthless and the cause of all the sufferings around her. As a matter of fact, women are depicted as the chief mischief mongers and trouble –makers, spreading sorrow and suffering the (film) world over. Under these circumstances, to expect the media to portray women realistically, to reflect their aspirations and discuss their problems sympathetically is futile. Besides, any such discussion is neutralized in the face of a barrage of distorted images that are constantly fed to the masses. Rarely is a woman shown as capable of solving her problems, facing challenges or taking decisions. Invariably, her world revolves around a man and she faces consequences of his decisions or actions. Perhaps the most damaging portrayal of women is in advertisements and commercials. The world that emerges from our media, which are rapidly expanding their area of influence, is biased against women and hardly conducive for their rights or seek their due from the society. Far from being instruments of social change, our media emphasize status quo.

The media created world is dangerously unreal, propagating and perpetuating thinking that is intolerant of women's struggle to be considered as individuals in their own right". In reality, the coverage of women's issues suffers from both inadequacy and distortion. The problems of women are the last thing on the agenda of modern mass media. This is evident from the media statistics which show lesser communicative space and time. Further, the media have served to confine feminism into a single seamless totality, an adjective rather than a form of praxis. The media services are increasingly commercialized. Especially, the electronic media and new media are increasingly exploiting women by projecting them as sex-symbols. The problems that are confronting the growth and development of women are not adequately and objectively discussed. There is glorification of romance, sex, crime and violence towards making money. Women are portrayed in negative manner which reveals injustice, indecency, cruelty and inhumanity. Thus, the woman is continuously overlooked and meted out a raw deal by the policy makers in the media organizations in Nigeria and Iran. Although women are discriminated against in our mass media, it will be an interesting exercise to study each medium and analyse as to what extent and how women are discriminated against. There is still the prevalence of the age old attitude that mass communication is a man's world. There are many mass media organizations wherein women are not wanted. The proprietors and with a few exceptions, make no bones about their skepticism regarding the capability of women in shouldering responsibilities and discharging their duties within and outside the families. The usual reasons attributed are that women cannot manage the crisis situations and perform odd jobs; that women cannot devote their complete time and energies to their jobs; that they are likely to cause social tension within the organizations; that they are born to get married and serve the family members at homes; that they will quit the job on getting married; that they will go on maternity leave after marriage and cause series of

problems to the organizations; that they are capable of causing trouble in a male dominating organizations and so on. Right from the beginning, women are discouraged and discriminated against at all stages of their professional life. This has been commonly experienced by most of the women media professionals. They confine themselves to reporting trivial or traditional topics such as art and culture, fashion shows, flower shows, entertainment programmes, etc. They are barred from major posts and challenging assignments. They are prevented from that of proving themselves as resourceful and enterprising in their jobs as their male colleagues. Only a handful of women have risen to responsible positions through merit and performance. The media organizations do not discriminate where salaries are concerned. There is discrimination in regard to placement, promotion and recognition in Nigeria and Iran.

The problems and prospects of women are not discussed and evaluated by the mass media organizations on a priority basis. The media managers have miserably failed to take note of the trends, problems and developments pertaining to the women folk. This has been referred to as 'symbolic annihilation - the consequence of a combination of condemnation, trivialization and absence' by Gaye Tuchman et al., (1978) a media expert. The invisibility of women in society is thus further perpetuated and enhanced by the media. Further, many aspects of women's oppression are so common place and widely accepted that they are not judged unusual to merit coverage. Thus, most issues of special concern to women do not fit into the traditional concepts of what constitute news', observe Ammu Joseph and Kalpana Sharma (1991). The media institutions have miserably failed in terms of defining the women's issues and ensuring justice to them in Nigeria and Iran.

The print media in Nigeria and Iran have been doing well as far as the coverage of woman is concerned. Lead reports, articles, editorials, features and news analysis, have been published on women's issues. The regional press, especially the small newspapers and rural newspapers are not doing justice to women. They are publicizing predominantly political, economic, business and crime news. They are lacking news, comments and analyses pertaining to women folk awfully. These newspapers do lack the will and commitment for gender justice, equity and empowerment of women. Most mainstream newspapers do not pursue an openly anti-women line. This is at least partly because of the ideal of the equality of the sexes is enshrined in the Nigerian and Iranian Constitutions and because measures to ensure equal participation in national life as well as to eliminate discrimination and oppression are among the accepted goals of the countries. The advent of women reporters and the presence of some senior journalists in positions of responsibility have made significance, if limited difference to the coverage of women's issues in the press. The most important factor contributing the process of the is perhaps, the opening up of communication channels between the press and women's group through the involvement of women (and some men) journalists in the women's movement, as participants and sympathizers, write Dominick Joseph (2010). The modern magazines contain volumes of advertisements and entertainment oriented writings in Nigeria and Iran. Most of the magazines are known for the portrayal of women as sex objects, consumers and slaves. The feminist writing are sadly lacking in most of the magazines in Nigeria and abroad. That apart, women journals are mostly elitist and sexist. They are not in a position to advocate the cause of men and rejuvenate the socio-political, economic and cultural orders which are against gender justice. The targeted readership of these magazines is the upper and lower middle classes, living in cities and townships. Several studies have pointed out that most of the women's journals consistently seek to direct women's energies into a narrow channel and to define their concerns, preoccupations and aspirations with an arbitrarily imposed 'feminine framework'. The studies have also revealed that the outside world belongs to men and the issues which arise their do not affect women except indirectly through the men related to them. There are not even two dozen women's magazines in Nigeria and Iran in order to serve the cause of women.

Gita Wolf (1981. p, 432) writes: 'While the producers of these magazines would be shocked to be told they are pornographers, their material works on the modes of pornography. They fetishism sexual repression, cater to secret, unacknowledged male sexual fantasies and mutilate the female body at will. The woman is presented as an object of sexual lust and aggression. Male power aims at obliterating the 'other', the woman and seeks pleasure, in her sexual subservience and pain.' Sita Chanda (1991, p. 83) observes: "Paradoxically, capitalism has fallen in love with difference, advertising thrives on selling us things that will enhance our uniqueness and individuality. In the commoditization of language and culture, objects and images are torn free of their original preferences and their meanings become a spectacle… Differences ceases to threaten and signify power relations. Otherness is sought often for its exchange value, its exoticism and the pleasure, thrills and advantages it can offer." The coverage of women's issues in the print media is not only inadequate, but it suffers from lack of objectivity and fair play. The growth of women's movement and public quest for women's emancipation has led to the media coverage in Nigeria and Iran. One cannot deny the fact that the modern press has made a humble beginning in this regard. Despite this, the women's perspective has not been property integrated into the mainstream of journalism in Nigeria and Iran. Women are not still important constituents for the traditional power structure of the Press in these countries.

Film is an audio-visual medium of communication. It is a complex structure which brings together various elements in a dialectical unity, ideas, themes, compositions, language, etc. Nigeria produces the largest number of feature films, documentaries and newsreels in the world. We do not lack the best brains to produce quality films. We do not have the audience to see and appreciate them. The producers too have taken the audience for granted. The quality of films is sub-standard in the case of most of our motion pictures. One can not blame the producers for this reason. The quality films or the new-wave films are a big failure in terms of box-office economics. The people have not patronized such good films in our country mainly because of illiteracy, ignorance and immaturity. The representation of women in cinema has been a major issue of debate amongst feminist film theorists. In Nigeria and Iran, the post-emergency period witnessed the production of a number of films dealing with women's issues, particularly by those who came under the category of the 'new wave' directors. In reality, the number of women oriented films produced in this country form a microscopic minority. The sufferings of women is not at all a subject of concern to a great majority of film producers in Nigeria who are always pre-occupied with producing commercial films and multiplying their profits. Akhileswari (1988, p. 11) observes: "If our movies' producers continue to show (women) as nothing but love dolls… the stereotype thus created will prove harmful to them. These Malayalam films are an unfortunate distortion of reality. The sufferers are the women of Nigeria. There are mentally sickmen out there who take film fantasy for reality'. In Nigeria film industry is under the private monopoly. Production, distribution and exhibition are the leading functions which are subjected to private monopoly and male domination. Women are the worst victims in process".

RESEARCH ON WOMEN AND TELEVISION

The women are very much attracted by the television which is known for glamour. Experience reveals that television can introduce women to several things, issues, trends and developments pertaining to environment and development. The kinds of messages women get from television will affect how they think of others. The young female children under six years usually face some difficulty working out the difference between fantasy and reality on television. The girls from six to nine years are bound to have some difficulty working out the difference between fantasy and reality, especially if it looks like real life. They tend to admire and want to

be like the hero or heroine. Older primary school age girls are likely to be disturbed by material that is based on fact as it could mean it could happen to them. They are curious about the teenage world, sex and fashion and can be misled by the way boy-girl relationships are shown in the television screen. The girls are affected by the television programmes in several ways according to empirical findings. The girls need to understand and enjoy the mixture of differences in lifestyles and traditions that make up the society.

Television has the potential to generate both positive and negative effects, and many studies have looked at the impact of television on society, particularly on women. The women's developmental level is a critical factor in determining whether the television and other media will have positive or negative effects. Television viewing frequently limits girls time for vital activities such as playing, reading, learning to talk, spending time with peers and family, storytelling, participating in regular exercise, and developing other necessary physical, mental and social skills according to several studies.

Television has a strong influence in consumers including the women. But this influence can be understood within a larger and more complex framework of lifestyles and social relations of individuals and groups. Television is also responsible for the construction of meanings and the possibility of interpreting what women watch or do not watch and television can influence the way women understand what they watch over television and meanings they obtain from the contents. The research carried out in different parts of the world revealed the importance of the direct interaction between television and women. Scholars have also examined the television experiences of women over a period of time. In the beginning, most of the research on media effects was done in the West since the spread of media was rapid and effect of media and society was strong over there. In the first stage, the researchers concentrated on the theoretical aspects of media management and delivery system. In the second stage, the researchers carried out investigations on the effect of print media, film and radio. During 1940s since the presence of television was not felt by many in the world. The third phase witnessed the new phase of research which laid emphasis on the effect of television on women. Schramm (1964) were the prominent researchers who studied the role of television in the lives of the people including the women. The researchers concentrated mainly on the television viewing habits of women rather than the impact of television on women. The initial faith attached to the inhibition hypothesis waned, however, when early studies comparing the reading skills of viewers with those of non-viewers failed to confirm the inhibition hypothesis.

In the decade of 1970s, the United States witnessed unprecedented violence which was depicted in the television programmes. This situation prompted the policy makers in America to appoint a Scientific Advisory Committee on Television and Social Behavior headed by Bernstein (1984). He reports: "The experimental findings are weak and are not wholly consistent from one study to another. Nevertheless, they provide the suggestive evidence in favour of the interpretation that viewing violence on TV is conducive to an increase in aggressive behavior, although, it must be emphasized that the causal sequence is very likely applicable only to some children who are predisposed in this direction and TV is only one of the many factors which in time may precede aggressive behavior". In the 1970s, belief in the inhibition hypothesis was restored by the publication of two types of evidence exciting the suspicion that the reading skills of America's youth had changed for the worse. First, in a number of reviews of test-score trends published in the middle to the end of the 1970s, the conclusion was reached that the reading skills of children, youth and women had been declining dramatically since the mid- 1960s. Second, several studies on the functional literacy of (young) adults were published, most of which conveyed the impression that a great many Americans were insufficiently equipped with the writing and reading skills necessary to use and understand the printed material one. Spurred by the revived public

debate, quite a few researchers have carried out studies, especially since the mid-1970s regarding the role of television in the lives of people including the women.

The decade of 1990s witnessed series of organized and scientific investigations on the effects of television on women's personality and progress. The researchers carried out several experimental studies which revealed that television contents did not produce the same response from all the television viewers. They also observed the relationship between the stimulus and the response of audience including the women to the television programmes. These studies identified several intervening factors such as personality factors, family environment, cultural factors, economic factors and social factors which had a considerable impact on the television viewing habits of audience in general and effects of television on women in particular.

A review of the research on women and television carried out in this decade also revealed that largest proportion of 'effects' studies focused on aggression and sexuality specifically. Scholars have also noted that the global nature of television must continue to be considered in future in terms of the economics of the industry, comparative studies technological availability and media use, and the cultural and social implications of non indigenous messages and representation. The dawn of 21st century witnessed multi – dimensional and multi – directional investigations which dealt with the impact of television on women. Television became a well-established medium of communication which attracted the attention of audiences including women. The market forces broadcast television programmes which affected the women adversely in the age of globalization of media. Several scholars primarily focused on the attitude of women towards television viewing, impact of television advertisements on women and role of television in the development of women. These studies concentrated mainly on television affinity, viewer motivation, family mediation, level of television exposure and effects of television on women. The studies also confirmed that television programmes provided informational, educational and entertainment contents in general. The women who frequently watched television programmes had a higher risk of receiving a negative impact from television. The scholars also called for societal mediation in order to modify or prevent the negative impact of television on women. Research evidence also demonstrated that cognitive development mediated women's understanding of television programmes and their response to programmes. Women who were exposed to television advertisements explored new ideas about the goods and services which attracted them. Women were also receptive to new communication technologies which provided the benefit of interactive media. Various scholars also dealt with the impact of television on women in order to provide specific television programmes which protected the interest of women.

There are a plethora of television channels which offer greater choice and quality (both positive and negative) of programming to the mankind. Television is now an interactive experience with women being able to interact digitally as they watch and continue the experience online. It is clear that Television viewing, like any life experience, needs to be managed and monitored in the very young with supervision decreasing as the young women audience learn to appropriately manage their own viewing behaviour, critically evaluate what they view and discuss any issues or concerns that come out of what they have viewed. Contemporary research has highlighted that for many families, television is an essential part of modern culture and it needs to be monitored and managed with increasing parental confidence given advances in technology. It is important that women are supported and feel empowered – via their own management choices and their use of the available broadcasting technologies which have given the benefit of connectivity to the mankind.

CONCLUSION

Women's empowerment includes empowerment within the family and empowerment in the society. Involvement of women in decision making, earning, sharing of basic needs and commanding respect for self is a pre-requisite to the empowerment of women in modern society. Women are also required to participate actively in the process of development namely policy making, planning, implementing and evaluation along with their male counterpart. The raising social status of women, increasing educational opportunities, obtaining employment opportunities, sharing economic resources, raising of standard of living, active participation of women in governance and so on constitute the process of 'empowerment of women' in letter and spirit. The builders of Nigerian Republic and founding fathers of Constitution of Nigeria had considered it necessary to provide specific safeguards and promotional opportunities in the constitution for the empowerment of women who are weak, vulnerable and oppressed section of Nigerian society mainly due to existing caste system, social order, economic order, political order and a combination of various circumstances. However, there is still a sharp division and discrimination based on sex and caste in society in respect of securing equality, justice, dignity and other basic rights and needs to lead a decent life in Nigerian society. Despite various measures to improve the social, educational, economic and political conditions of women, they remain weak and vulnerable in all spheres of human life in Nigeria. Iran has a long legacy of development which dates back to the Achaemenid Dynasty (550-330BC) when the rulers recognized the need and importance of gender equity and justice. During the Sassanids era (224-651 A.D.), women were encouraged to gain the benefits of education and social participation. In the course of Mangol rule (1217-1335 A.D.) women played a notable role in society as equal partners in the process of nation building. The Iran-Russia collaboration also played a significant role in the process of gender justice. In 1979, the Revolutionary Council of the Islamic Republic of Iran also paved the way for active participation of women in education, health care, institution building and other activities. Series of constitutional safeguards and promotional opportunities are guaranteed in Iran with reference to development of women on par with men. However, there are still subjugation of women evident in the Iranian society.

The usefulness of communication as an input to development has been sufficiently examined by communication scholars and researchers. It has been proved beond doubt that communication is a critical factor in the process of development. Today, in all countries, 'empowerment of women' is considered to be a subject of special concern. Media intervention for women's development assumes great significance in 21st century. The programmes of women's development should reach out to the target groups and that communications media are required to function as angel guardians of gender justice. The most important function of communications media in relation to development of women is to educate, organize, motivate and empower women. Several commissions have emphasise the need for media intervention for the empowerment of women. Television is not an exception to the social obligation of media with respect to the development of women.

Television is also providing women-specific programmes which have brought about women's development to some extent. Special audience programmes have also succeeded in generating enthusiasm among women about the various ways and means of empowerment to certain extent. Television is known for advantages and disadvantages from women's development point of view. However, only few researchers have assessed the state of educational, social, economic and political empowerment of women in Nigeria, Iran and abroad. The past studies dealt with some aspects of media effects on women but did not focus the attention of policy makers and scholars on the impact of television on women's personality or progress with special reference to Nigeria and Iran.

Television in modern society is primarily viewed as an entertainer. Limited efforts are made by public and private television channels toward broadcasting special audience programmes

which benefit the women. Advertising code has been formulated to mitigate the harmful effects of advertising on women. Adequate scientific investigations are not made on the impact of television on the overall personality of women with reference to Nigeria and Iran. Further, past studies did not indicate the factors contributing to television broadcasting and women's development. The role of television in women's development is widely debated all over the world. Several commissions and individuals have examined the impact of television programmes and commercials on particular segments of global population, spefically children and women. The women in modern world spend more time watching television than they do at home and field according to several investigations. Despite television's potential for positive contributions to society, the medium has attracted severe criticism for its negative and harmful effects on people in general and women in particular. Studies have also revealed that watching television programmes studied with crime, violence, sex and other negative themes are associated with several negative mannerisms and tendencies among women.

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