EMPOWERMENT THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA ENGAGEMENT : A STUDY OF WOMEN'S PERSPECTIVE

Thesis submitted to the
Central University of Jharkhand
for the award of the degree
of
Doctor of Philosophy

By

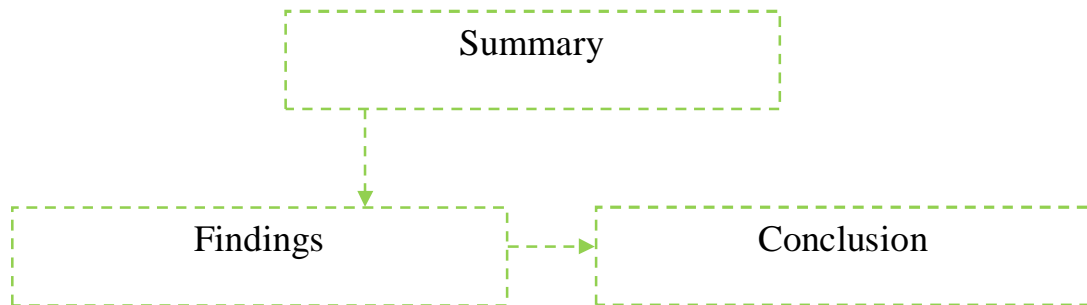## RUPA KUMARI

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SUMMARY, FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

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6.1 Summary of the study

The study delves into the perspectives of women regarding empowerment through social media engagement. The study analyses the media theories (Uses & Gratification and Network theory) and theory of empowerment to validate the responses received from the questionnaire, interviews and focus group with the women. Efforts were also made to find out the dimension of women empowerment on which women were showing much more interest after using social media. Efforts were also made to analyze the change women have felt in them after using social media.

Research Questions

The present study sought answer for the following research questions:

1. How is social media contributing to women empowerment?
2. What is the perception of women using social media of women empowerment?
3. In what ways have the women using social media experienced empowerment through social media?
4. In what ways have the social media changed the self-perception of women using it?

Statement of the problem

The formal title of the study is as follows:

Empowerment through Social Media Engagement: A Study of Women's Perspective

Operational definitions of the key terms used in the study

The key terms used in the study are defined as follows:

Empowerment

In this study the definition of empowerment formulated is on the basis of Rowlands theory of empowerment (1997). Rowlands defined empowerment in terms of power. Further she classifies power in four aspects: Power to; Power over; Power with and Power within.

In this study empowerment refers to the ability of women to participate, create new possibilities, influence and take control over decisions regarding political, economic, social, psychological and personal aspects of their lives.

Dimensions of Women Empowerment

- **Political Empowerment:** Is the process of her participation in voting and mobilizing, organizing, analyzing political discussions, movements and campaigns for bringing change.
- **Economic Empowerment:** It is her capacity to create new opportunities and have access to assets and resources.
- **Social Empowerment:** It is collective participation and raising of her voice against societal prejudices and evils.
- **Psychological Empowerment:** It is the capacity for building new possibilities that enhances her knowledge and cognition.
- **Personnel Empowerment:** It is the influence and control over decisions that affects her life.

Social Media Engagement: In this study, it refers to as interaction, communication and dealings by sharing information, ideas and forms of expressions in real time via virtual communities and networks.

Perspective: In this study perspective refers to the viewpoint of the women on empowerment by the usage of social media.

Objectives

The researcher has formulated the following objectives for this study:

1. To study the contribution of social media to women empowerment.
2. To study the perception of women using social media about women empowerment.
3. To study the empowerment process as occurring via social media from the experiences of the women.
4. To study the changes depicting empowerment which women have perceived in themselves as results of using social media.

Research Hypotheses of the study

The following hypothesis was prepared to fulfill the objective no. 4:

Null Hypotheses of the study

For achieving objective no. 4, following null hypothesis was formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance:

H_0: **The perception of women about themselves at present does not differ significantly from their perception of themselves in the past.**

H_1: **The perception of women about themselves at present differs significantly from their perception of themselves in the past.**

Delimitations of the study

Following are the delimitations of the study:

1. Only women using at least three of five social media (Facebook, WhatsApp, YouTube, Blog and Twitter) forms the sample of the study.

2. Only the five social media have been taken i.e.(Facebook, WhatsApp, YouTube, Blogs and Twitter) for the study.

3. Only women residing in Ranchi city forms the sample of the study.

4. Only five dimensions of women empowerment was considered: political, economic, personal, social and psychological.

5. Only women using smart phones have been taken for the study.

Research Methodology

The researcher centered into heuristic type within phenomenology method. Heuristics is that form of phenomenological inquiry that brings forth the personal experience and insights of the researcher. There are two major focusing elements of heuristic inquiry within the larger framework of phenomenology. First, the researcher must have the personal experience with and intense interest in the phenomenon under study. Second, others who are part of the study must share an intensity of experience with the phenomena.

Population

The population of present study comprised of women based in Ranchi, Jharkhand. The participants of the study comprised of 400 women.

Sampling technique

To select the participants for the study, purposive sampling technique was employed. Snowball sampling is a non-probability/purposive sampling technique that is used by researchers to identify potential subjects in studies. Here, researcher has used this sampling method to get rich and diverse sample.

Tools used in this study

Tools for data collection

The specific tools were used by the researcher for achieving the different objectives of the study:

Tools used for data collection for Objective 1

1. **Questionnaire –** The analysis of section –C and E has been done.

Tools used for data collection for Objective 2

1. **Questionnaire–**The analysis of section –D has been done.

2. **Semi- structured interviews for participants:** This interview schedule was designed to know the perspectives of respondents about women empowerment. The schedule consisted of two sections. The first section included personal data sheet of the participants and the second section comprised of themes for inquiry. Content validity of this tool was established by seeking the opinion of the experts from the fields of media.

3. **Focus group for participants: -**The focus group discussion schedule was designed to know the perspectives of respondents about women empowerment. The schedule consisted of two sections. The first section included personal data sheet of the participants and the second section comprised of themes for inquiry.

Tools used for data collection for Objective 3

1. **Questionnaire –** The analysis of section –B has been done.

2. **Semi- structured interviews for participants:** This interview schedule was designed to know the experience of empowerment through social media felt by the respondents. The schedule consisted of two sections. The first section included personal data sheet of the participants and the second section comprised of themes for inquiry. Content validity of this tool was established by seeking the opinion of the experts from the fields of media.

3. **Focus group for participants: -** The focus group discussion schedule was designed to know the experience of empowerment through social media felt by the respondents. The schedule consisted of two sections. The first section included personal data sheet of the participants and the second section comprised of themes for inquiry.

Tools used for data collection for Objective 4

1. **Questionnaire –** The analysis of section – F has been done. **Self-Perception Scale for women (SPS)** has been constructed. It consists of 12 items. The test-retest reliability of SPS, calculated by using Kendall Coefficient of Concordance was found to be 23.01and significant at 0.05 levels. Content validity of this tool was established by seeking the opinion of the experts.

Data Analysis

In the present study, data were analyzed in two ways:

1. Questionnaire

For section A, B, C, D and E of the questionnaire the statistical computations were performed with the help of Microsoft Excel and the statistical software SPSS. The data so analyzed were transformed into tabular form. For Section F, Wilcoxon Matched-Paired Signed-Ranks Test was used in this analysis. SPSS (17th version) was used to calculate the scores of the scales obtained from SPS.

2. Analysis of data obtained from Interviews and focus group discussions.

The data collected through interviews and focus group discussions with women were transcribed and analyzed by three flows of activity i.e. data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing.

3. Trustworthiness of Research:

Trustworthiness is the basis that establishes the validity and reliability of qualitative research. In the present study, trustworthiness of research was established in the following ways**:**

- **Credibility (Internal Validity)**

The strategies that were used to enhance credibility in the present study are following:

i) Persistent Observation

ii) Prolonged Engagement

iii) Member Checks

iv) Triangulation

- **Dependability (Reliability)**

To ensure dependability in this study following techniques were used:

i) Audit Trail

ii) Triangulation

- **Transferability (External Validity)**

In this research, external validity is reader or user generalizability in which the responsibility is on the reader, not on the researcher, to generalize the findings to his or her own situation.

- **Confirmability (Objectivity)**

To ensure confirmability in this study following techniques were used:

i) Audit Trail

ii) Triangulation

6.2 Findings of the study

The major findings of the study, objective wise are as follows:

6.2.1   Objective 1

To study the contribution of social media to women empowerment

Findings

Social media and Women Empowerment

- Facebook, WhatsApp and YouTube are contributing most in women empowerment.
- Blogs and Twitter have not emerged out as a platform for women empowerment for the respondents.
- Facebook and YouTube have emerged as a great platform for college goers.
- WhatsApp and YouTube have emerged as a great platform for housewives.
- Facebook and WhatsApp have emerged as a great platform for working women and self-employed women.
- WhatsApp has emerged as a great platform for senior citizens.
- Active participation of all college girls, working women and self-employed women have been seen at personal and professional front on Facebook and WhatsApp. Whereas, less participation of respondents have been observed at social front and passive participation at political and psychological front on Facebook.
- Active participation of housewives has been observed at personal and social front on WhatsApp. Whereas passive participation at political and psychological front.
- Passive participation of all the respondents has been seen at personal front and no participation has been seen at social, professional, political and psychological front on YouTube.

- Passive participation of 5% college goers and 1% working women has been seen at personal front on blog and Twitter, whereas no participation of college goers and working women (except personal) housewives, self-employed women and senior citizens has been seen at personal, social, professional, political and psychological front on Blog and Twitter.

Theories and women empowerment

- The Uses and Gratification theory and Network Society theory has been successfully validated that the respondents using social media as it is satisfying their needs and desire of being empowered in this fast and competitive world where knowledge is power and same goes with the concept of network society where everybody is linked together sharing and collecting information from each other.

- The reasons of using Facebook, WhatsApp and YouTube more as compared to blog and Twitter is that the later social media is not user friendly and not satisfying the needs of the women as compared to the former ones.

- Two dimensions of Rowland's theory of empowerment 'power with' and 'power to' has emerged strongly among women. 'Power With' reflects the sense of all round growth which participants felt was essential to foster and continue for both individual growth and collective participation, whereas 'power to' signifies that women were eager, enthusiastic and involved in both accessing of resources and organizing them.

Dimensions of women empowerment

- Personal and economic dimensions of women empowerment has emerged strongly among college goers, working women and self-employed women.

- Personal dimension of women empowerment has emerged strongly among housewives.

- Personal dimension of women empowerment has emerged slightly among senior citizens.

- Personal and economic dimension of empowerment have strongly related to 'power to' dimension and college goers, working women, self-employed

women, housewives and senior citizens felt 'power to' dimension strongly. It signifies their eagerness, enthusiasm to increase individual capacity and opportunities for access through social media.

6.2.2 Objective 2

To study the perception of women using social media about women empowerment

Findings

- All the college goers want personal and economic empowerment for themselves. For them real empowerment is personal and professional development.

- All the housewives want personal and social empowerment for themselves.

- All the working women want personal, economic and social empowerment for themselves.

- All the self-employed women want personal, economic and social empowerment for themselves.

- All the senior citizens want the economic and social empowerment for themselves.

- 'Power to and 'power with' dimension of empowerment of Rowland's theory has emerged strongly.

- Personal and economic dimension of empowerment has strongly related to 'power to' dimension, signifying women eagerness, enthusiasm to increase individual capacity and opportunities for access.

- Social dimension of empowerment has strongly related to 'power with' dimension, signifying women keenness to increase solidarity to challenge underlying assumptions.

- College goers, working women and self-employed women felt 'power to' dimension strongly.

- College goers, working women, self-employed women, housewives and senior citizens felt 'power with' dimension strongly.

6.2.3 Objective 3

To study the empowerment process as occurring via social media from the experiences of the women

Findings

- All the women have experienced empowerment through social media.

- College goers, working women and self-employed women have experienced personal and economic empowerment through social media.

- Housewives and senior citizens have experienced personal empowerment through social media.

- All the women have experienced psychological empowerment through social media.

- College goers, working women, self-employed women and housewives have experienced social empowerment through social media.

Media Theories and Women Empowerment

- The Uses and Gratification theory and Network Society theory has been successfully validated that the women experiencing empowerment through social media because it is satisfying their needs i.e. affective, personal integrative, social integrative and tension release needs and desire of being empowered.

- Similarly three dimensions of Rowland's theory 'power with', 'power to' and 'power from within' dimension of empowerment has emerged respectively. 'Power over' dimension of empowerment has not found.

Dimensions of women empowerment

- Personal and economic dimension of empowerment has strongly related to 'power to' dimension. And college goers, working women, self-employed women, housewives and senior citizens (only personal dimension) felt 'power to' dimension strongly. It signifies their eagerness, enthusiasm to increase individual capacity and opportunities for access through social media.

- Social dimension of empowerment has strongly related to 'power with' dimension. And college goers, working women, self-employed women and housewives have experienced 'power with' dimension strongly. It signifies their keenness to increase solidarity to challenge underlying assumptions.

- Psychological dimension of empowerment has strongly related to 'power from within' dimension. All the women have felt 'power from within' dimension strongly. It signifies their intensity to increase awareness and desire for change.

- Lack of media literacy has been observed among housewives and senior citizens. Which shows their understanding of social media is less as compared to college goers, working women and self-employed women.

6.2.4 Objective 4

To study the changes depicting empowerment which they have perceived in themselves as results of using social media

Findings

- All the women have perceived change in them after using social media.

- College goers, working women and self-employed women have perceived both positive and negative change.

- Housewives have perceived positive change.

- Positive change has been perceived by senior citizens

Media Theories and Women Empowerment

- Only one dimension of empowerment of Rowland's theory i.e 'power from within' has emerged respectively. Participants have shown the interest in getting more informed/aware as well as a desire for change.

Dimensions of women empowerment

- Psychological dimension of empowerment has strongly related to 'power from within' dimension and all the women have felt 'power from within' dimension strongly. It signifies their intensity to increase awareness and desire for change.

6.3 Conclusion

In the light of the above statistical analysis and findings of the study, following conclusions were drawn:

- 'Power to', 'power with' and 'power from within' dimensions of empowerment of Rowland theory has emerged strongly among women. 'Power to' signifies increased individual capacity and opportunities for access,

'power with' implies increased unity to challenge underlying assumptions and 'power within' defines increased awareness and desire for change.

- Personal, economic, social and psychological dimensions of women empowerment has also emerged strongly. Personal empowerment is the influence and control over decisions that affects women life. Economic Empowerment is the capacity of women to create new opportunities and have access to assets and resources. Social Empowerment is the collective participation and rising of women voice against societal prejudices and evils. Psychological Empowerment is the capacity of women for building new possibilities that enhances her knowledge and cognition.

- Facebook, WhatsApp and YouTube have emerged as the most contributing social networking sites in empowerment of women.

- College goers are harnessing the benefits of social media more followed by working women and self-employed. Housewives are also not lagging behind and senior citizens have perceived minute change in them.

6.4 Suggestions

1. Similar research may be undertaken to study the perspectives of women residing in metro cities on women empowerment through social media engagement.

2. Research may be undertaken to study and compare the perspectives of illiterate and literate women towards women empowerment through social media engagement.

3. Experimental and developmental studies can be done to see the changes on the dimensions of empowerment due to use of social media.

4. Qualitative approach can be employed to study the relative contribution of other social networking sites in the empowerment of women.

5. Research on new media literacy and women empowerment through social media can be done.

6. The present study investigated the perspective of women regarding empowerment through social media. Further research may be carried out by exploring the perspectives of teenagers regarding empowerment through social media.

7. Research may be undertaken to study and compare the perspectives of men and women regarding empowerment through social media.

6.5 Limitations

1. The study could not undertake the analysis as per marital status and occupation.

2. Socio-economic status was not considered during the data collection and further analysis could well be enhanced on that basis.

3. The samples had constraints in realizing the numerous ways they used social media. Thu the researcher had to use lot of prompts to initially guide the respondents.