

## THE MEDIA AND WOMEN WELFARE MEASURES

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### ABSTRACT

The Print Media played an important role in improving the status of women. The twentieth century appropriately has been called as the age of the "Development of Print Media. The official organ of the Women's Indian Association Madras started the journal "Sridharma" in 1917. In 1920 the Journal "Manoranjini" was started by Veduvur Duraisamyengar. The women's organization and welfare associations actively worked for the betterment of women's education as well as their social status. In this literary renaissance V.M.K. Kodainayaki Animal holds an important place. The media attributed to greater awareness of social problems and particularly highlighted women's problems. The aim of the "All India Women's Conference" is to stress importance of women's education. The Print media controlled by corporate interests concentrated in the metropolitan cities and focused the sufferings and hardships of city girls.

**Keyword:** Print Media, Women Welfare, India

### Introduction

The "Media" means tool or instrument is used to communicate information relating to entertainment, education, social problem and women's problem etc. Women's issues like bride- burning, dowry death, sati, violence and other atrocities against them came out in the media. The Women's participation, in social, economic and political life depends on their educational status. During the nineteenth century social reformers like Rajaram Mohan Roy, Iswar-Chandra Vidyasagar, KandukuriVirasalingamPantutlu, MahadevGovindRanade, etc., fought for women's welfare. A number of women's welfare association emerged during this period.

### Development Media

The media played an important role in improving the status of women. The twentieth century appropriately has been called as the age of the "Development of SM Media". The basic function of the media is to provide all sorts of information, essential to the people. The media also motivated people to discharge their functions in a meaningful and purposeful manner in the society. The media is a very important component of society. It plays a vital role in a developing country like India.

The main objective of media policy was to preserve and strengthen the democratic way of life. The media's efforts are directed for inculcating an abiding faith among the people in democratic institution such as rule of law, independence of Judiciary, freedom of press and gender equality. Media is a platform where various interests of the women are focused.

Media is the carrier of public opinion and plays a crucial role in giving voice to people. Print media is the model of face-to-face communication to discuss public issues media is a "Power Resource" in term of exerting influence in the society. The media policy gives a ferment plea to the policy makes and academicians on nation building issues and themes.

During the Twentieth century, the city of Madras became a centre for a number of women's liberation movement in which Annie Besant, Margaret Cousins, Dr.Muthulakshmi Reddy, AmmuSwaminathan and others raised the banner of revolt against the social practice, which affected the rights and privileges of women.

The official organ of the Women's Indian Association Madras started the journal "Sridharma" in 1917. The journal "Sridharma" worked actively for the welfare of women and children, to promote education along right lines.<sup>10</sup> It was a leading women's journal which fought for the upliftment of women folk in all directions. The journal utilized the opportunity to popularize the ill-treatment of women by men. It highlighted women's problems such as illiteracy, ignorance and unequal marriages. "Sridharma" made propaganda for removing illiteracy among women."

The journal "Sridharma" published a number of pamphlets for enhancing female education. The editor of the journal, Mrs. Cousins, Sub-editor of the Journal Kamaladevi Chattopadhyaya, and others sent deputation on 11<sup>th</sup> February 1928 to the viceroy for enhancing female education. The early efforts taken by this journal gave good effects to female education in the city of Madras during the pre-independent era. In 1920 the Journal "Manoranjini" was started by Veduvar Duraisamyengar. Its aim was to propagate the importance of women's education.

### **Women Education**

Fiction was used as a platform to make pronouncements on social problems and women's education. The first of this kind was "Pratapa Mudaliar Charitram" (1879) by Mayuram Vedanayakam Pillai. In this novel he highlighted the importance of women education and argued how education could enable women to be efficient in the household affairs.<sup>13</sup> His other works were "Sughuna Sundari Charitram and Padmavathi Charitram. Nallasiriyana, (1906), Kalvi (1917), Arambakkalvi (1933) The Kalvikkadal (1924) and Pungottu (1941) were some of the special journals devoted to the education.<sup>14</sup>

The media by publishing various articles exposed the aggravating social problems and served as catalyst to initiate various social welfare measures. The rapid growth in number of print media agencies attributed to greater awareness of social problems. "Amrita Bazar Patrika" along with liberal Muslim dailies and periodicals, supported the cause of women's education. Maulana Abdul Kalam Azad started "Al-Hital" from Calcutta in 1912 and "A-Bilagh" in respectively. Anuradha Ramanan is running a magazine called "Valaiyosai" which aims to create awareness among women. R. Chudamani another women writer highlighted the importance of women's education.

The women leaders like Sarojini Naidu, Annie Besant and Muthulakshmi Reddy, through newspapers and meetings campaigned for the welfare of the women in society. The "women's Indian Association" in Madras and a few women's organizations continuously urged the demand for franchise for women.<sup>19</sup> The Madras legislature granted voted rights to women in 1920.

Legislative forum was considered as an apt body to take measures to enhance the welfare of the women. Hence media insisted the legislatures to initiate bills to promote the cause of women. Between 1922 and 1927, the Indian legislative assembly debated a number of bills concerned with raising the age of consent. In 1927 Harbilas Sarada introduced the "Hindu Child Marriage Bill" which he claimed, struck at the real problem of child marriage. The bill was approved and the Sarada act came into effect in 1930.

An intensive campaign was conducted to educate women and make them interested in their rights. The women's organization and welfare associations actively worked for the betterment of women's education as well as their social status.

### **Women Writers**

In this literary renaissance V.M.K. Kodanayaki Animal holds an important place. She was the driving force behind women writers, broadening their outlook, helping them to break free of orthodox restraints. She brought out the magazine Jagan Mohini. She took an active part in the women's education.

A writer, Venkatacharriar, in his book "Vivekavilakkam" championed the cause of women's education and uplift. Further he insisted in his book to provide western education to women in order to enhance their prestige and dignity.<sup>21</sup> He condemned child marriage and selling young female children to old men in the name of marriage.<sup>22</sup> Many books depict the plight of the widows and condemn the society for treating them with contempt. Narasimalu Naidu in his book "Remarriage of Hindu Widows" made his view clear that the widows should be allowed to remarry instead of keeping them in perpetual widowhood.

Another writer Venkataswamy Naidu was a staunch opponent of Devadasi system and condemned this system as an obstacle to decent social and religious life. Madhavi in his novels, "Muthumeenashi" (1903), and "Clarinda" (1910) described the widow's problems.<sup>24</sup> (1912) Chenkai Raju Chettiar's novel "Gnanakanthi" in this novel he explained about the social aspects of the people. Ramasamy Iyen gar's Novel "Sundari" (1917) highlighted the problem of child widows. "Kokilambal Kadithangal" (1921) by Swami Vedachalam, better known as Maraimalai Adikal, highlighted the sufferings of a Brahmin widow. (1925) Subramania Bharathi's novel entitled "Candrikaiyin Kathai" was undoubtedly a memorable work. The novel highlighted the hard life of a young widow.<sup>25</sup> Panayappa Chettiar's "Kantimati" (1926), "Mohana Ranjani" (1931) by Girija Devi, K. S. Venkataramanis "Desabhaktankandan" (1932) and "Desikalin Mosaveli" (1936) by Ramamirthammal, were stressed the

importance for an eradication of superstition and immorality. These two novels were written by women who were themselves victims of a rotten social system. Girijadevi was a Brahmin child widow who dared to break the rule and married a Harijan.<sup>26</sup>Ramamirthammal was a former devadasi who campaigned for the emancipation of women.

Women began to edit magazines. NanjangudThirumalamba was the first writer, first publisher, who edited a "KannadeMagazine" called "Karnataka Nadu".

### **Women Organisations**

The media attributed to greater awareness of social problems and particularly highlighted women's problems. Print media have played a pioneering role to encourage the women's welfare measures through Women's welfare organization and Women's Organizations.

### **Women Social Reformers**

The issue related to women drew the attention of women social reformers. They took the question of devadasis and prostitutes. A bill for the suppression of immoral traffic was introduced in the Madras legislature by K. R. VenkataramaAyyar and was seconded by Dr. Muthulakshmi Reddy. The Journal "Deenbandu" published from Masulipatnam and the other Journal "Tamilnadu" published from Madras supported the bill and blamed the government for not enacting the law to ban prostitution. The continuous plight of the devadasis touched the heart of Muthulakshmi Reddy who was stubborn to eradicate the devadasi system. She introduced a bill in 1929 by which the government issued orders to the various district collectors to free the devadasis from the obligation of service to the temples. After being referred to a select committee and long debate, the bill passed into law in January 1930, but its scope was limited to Madras-Mrs.Margaret Cousins demanded the media to focus the issue of immoral traffic, and insisted upon equal moral standards for men and women.

### **Upliftment of Women**

The aim of the "All India Women's Conference" is to stress importance of women's education. Health and family Welfare activities claimed a major part of the "All Indian Women Conference's" attention. From 1930 onwards the All Indian Women's Conference was able to organize creches, lectures on health in general and nutrition and birth control in particular. Subbulakshmi Anand from Madras was responsible for the opening of the widows' home where the girls and women were admitted with the aim to educate themselves and learn to stand on their own. She was responsible for the upliftment of women in South India.

Women Education The Christian Missionaries did valuable work in the field of women's education and carried an novel experiments in rural education in their schools at "Moga", "Salem", "Medak", "Ankaheshwar", "Dernakal" and at several other places.

The Christian writers and missionary scholars like Alexander Butt, Charles Gran Marshman, Robert Caldwell, Able Dubois, and Hutton Pituked bring the explanation about the condition of women in their works and exposed the then prevailing discriminative social step. The Central Social Welfare Board operated its sphere of activities to promote women's welfare.

The media controlled by corporate interests concentrated in the metropolitan cities and focused the sufferings and hardships of city girls. The print media used by women's group and organizations created a public impact on women's issues. The print media effectively function as a catalyst of change by proposing developmental measures, schemes and projects of welfare of the people by identifying the neglected areas and the needy sections of the society.

### **Conclusion**

As a matter of fact the media has been more supportive by covering various issues of women. The major campaigns led by women against dowry murders, rape and violence have made headlines and editorials and opinion polls have mostly supported these campaigns. The number of women journalists has grown rapidly and it witnessed the emergence and growth of the contemporary women's movement.

There is no doubt that the visualised picture has a permanent and lasting impression whereas a spoken word. It is transitory effect. Thus, media plays a greater role both in empowering women and women's welfare measures.

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