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## The Impact of Social Media on Women's Empowerment

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### Abstract

Social media has quickly become a dominant mode of professional and personal communication. Education even through social media acts as a key to boost confidence, independence in thinking, doing, saying and problem solving and thus the hope for the upliftment of the value to the life for a peaceful living of a woman whole challenges such as cyber harassment and digital divide remain significant, Social media platforms continues to reshape gender dynamics and contribute to the global women's empowerment agenda. The present paper thus focuses on "The role of social media in the women empowerment." The present study is conducted with the objectives to study and assess the women social media status and its impact in all aspects and to assess the knowledge on socio- economic empowerment, equity, life skills among women. Critical analysis and implication was implemented in this study to explore the role of social media for rights opportunities, equity and dignity that women of India to secure equal concern and respect.

**Keywords:** Dominant, Communication, Strategically, Entrepreneur, Hashtag, Columnist, Campaign, girl's Education, Pervasiveness, Stereotypes, Cultural Shift, Complex Interplay.

### Introduction

Women's empowerment involves expanding women's ability to make strategic life choices in contexts where this ability was previously denied. Social media is a significant factor in the way that business and empowerment are evolving in today's world of entrepreneurship and social change, especially for women. A sophisticated knowledge of the opportunities and problems inherent in this digital era emerges as we delve into the complex interplay between social media, women entrepreneurship, and empowerment. This research undertakes a thorough investigation with the goal of analysing the complex effects of social media on female entrepreneurs and the larger story of women's empowerment. Social media's ascent in recent years has changed business as well as our ability to interact and communicate. These internet platforms provide women especially with previously unheard-of chances to promote their business endeavours and raise awareness of their voices. But social media brings special

difficulties and complexities in addition to the empowering promise. With an eye toward both its benefits and drawbacks, this study attempts to investigate how social media affects women's empowerment and entrepreneurship. Knowing these factors will help us to fully use social media to empower women in the business world. Social media has become a powerful force in the always changing world of entrepreneurship, greatly influencing the lives and paths of women entrepreneurs everywhere. These online channels have completely changed the way companies are started, promoted, and maintained by providing previously unheard-of chances for interaction, networking, and visibility. Social media in particular offers women a potent instrument for getting over conventional obstacles to admission, amplifying their voices, and creating areas of empowerment in traditionally male-dominated fields. Fundamental to this phenomena is the democratization of business. Social networking sites give women a level playing field where the size of one's network and the caliber of one's material frequently trump conventional success indicators like money or industry ties. Using Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram, and Twitter strategically allows women entrepreneurs to build their personal brands, present their knowledge, and reach audiences all over the world for very little money. Social media also encourages a cooperative and community-building mentality that is especially supportive of women's business pursuits. Women in business can find priceless tools, support, and mentorship in the virtual ecosystems that are created by online networks and associations. These groups offer encouragement and validation in a world where women's voices have historically been marginalized in addition to practical help. But social media has special difficulties and dangers for female entrepreneurs in addition to its revolutionary promise. The need to maintain an idealistic online persona can make self-doubt and imposter syndrome worse, so sustaining irrational expectations of beauty and achievement. Moreover, even if social media has surely increased the visibility and reach of women entrepreneurs, it has not always eliminated the institutionalized obstacles and systematic injustices that they encounter in the real world. Women-owned firms are still limited in their potential to expand and scale by gender inequalities in funding, mentorship opportunities, and industry visibility. Social media, then, cannot alone solve the ingrained injustices that still influence the entrepreneurial ecosystem, even if it may somewhat level the playing field. Social media also gives women the ability to write their own stories and define achievement anyway they see fit. Online sharing of their experiences, knowledge, and stories by women entrepreneurs can dispel myths, upend gender norms, and encourage others to follow their own business aspirations. Being able to relate to audiences personally can be a very effective strategy for fostering loyalty and trust in a time when genuineness and relatability are prized commodities. Analysing social media's effects on women empowerment and entrepreneurship critically is essential. Understanding the potential and difficulties present in the current digital environment will help us to build a more welcoming and encouraging atmosphere for the success of female entrepreneurs. Through focused interventions, legislative measures, and community-based projects, we may use social media's transforming potential to empower women, promote economic growth, and promote social change.

### **Social Media as a Voice for the Voiceless**

Social media has greatly empowered women by giving a voice to those traditionally marginalized. It offers a platform for visibility and representation. Social media has become a

forum for free speech in cultures where women's voices have been silenced. Women can now share their stories, opinions, and experiences with a global audience. Movements like #MeToo, which gained momentum on Twitter, allowed millions of women to speak out against sexual harassment and abuse. Women worldwide have used social media to find solidarity and amplify their voices, driving legal and cultural shifts. It has become a catalyst for change.

Information sharing has become more democratic because of social media platforms. Women in developing countries are using social media to spotlight local issues like domestic abuse, gender inequality, and education gaps. It's a vital tool for raising awareness. These platforms offer uncensored, right-away viewpoints that inspire global action in addition to bringing attention to particular issues.

### **Types of Women empowerment Supported by Social Media**

According to Makamba online, Women Empowerment can have six components:

Cognitive Empowerment would include the "women are understanding of their conditions of subordination and the causes of such conditions at both micro and macro levels of society. It involves acquiring new knowledge to create a different understanding of gender relations as well as destroying old beliefs that structure powerful gender ideologies". Psychological Empowerment would include the "development of feelings that women can act upon to improve their condition. This means formation of the belief that they can succeed in change efforts."

Economic Empowerment "requires that women can be able to engage in a productive activity that will allow them some degree of autonomy, no matter how small and hard to obtain at the beginning".

Political Empowerment would encompass the "ability to organize and mobilize for change and democracy. Consequently, an empowerment process must involve not only individual awareness but collective awareness and collective action. The notion of collective action is fundamental to the aim of attaining social transformation" (Stromquist).

Social Empowerment is a "process to change the distribution of power in interpersonal relations among different people, cultures, activities of the society". In past awareness regarding the society is unknown to the women but present scenario reveals completely different pictures and knows they are equally participating in all activities of the society.

Legal Empowerment is legal protection needed for the women in terms of health, harassments, superstitions, cultural barriers and protection.

Make the women aware of the civil rights, exercising the legal rights necessary, preparing and canvassing the documents regarding the legal freedom for women, providing good literary programmes regarding the legal empowerment, etc.

Social media: Social media has emerged as a powerful platform for discussing, sharing, and mobilizing collective action against violence and discrimination faced by women. It provides a space where individuals can voice their experiences, express opinions, and raise awareness about gender-based injustices. Hashtag movements, in particular, have become an effective tool to channelize public attention and collective resistance against sexual violence, harassment, and inequality. These digital campaigns have transformed social media into a new frontier for organizing protests, campaigns, and advocacy led by women's rights activists.

Through hashtags, women are able to break the silence surrounding sensitive issues such as sexual abuse, domestic violence, and workplace harassment. Social media enables survivors to share their stories, seek solidarity, and challenge deeply rooted patriarchal norms without the limitations of geographical boundaries. This digital connectivity has encouraged many women to speak up, empowering others to do the same and fostering a sense of collective strength and resilience. Hashtag movements have also played a crucial role in influencing public discourse and policy-making. Lawmakers, politicians, business leaders, and civil society organizations actively engage with these online movements, helping to amplify their reach and legitimacy. Campaigns such as #MeToo, #TimesUp, #HeForShe, and #StopViolenceAgainstWomen have sparked global conversations on gender equality, accountability, and justice. In India and across the world, similar movements have drawn attention to women's safety, legal reforms, and the need for cultural change.

Moreover, social media has enabled collaboration across borders, connecting women and allies globally in their fight for equality. It serves as a platform for education, advocacy, and mobilization, creating pressure on institutions to address gender-based violence and discrimination. Overall, hashtag movements demonstrate the transformative potential of social media in advancing gender equality and empowering women to collectively challenge violence and discrimination.

- **#MeToo movement and #HearMeToo movement**

The #MeToo movement emerged as a powerful global campaign against sexual violence and gender-based discrimination. It was originally founded in 2006 by Tarana Burke, a social activist, with the primary aim of supporting survivors—particularly women and girls from marginalized communities—who experienced sexual abuse, violence, and systemic discrimination. The movement focused on empowerment, healing, and solidarity among survivors whose voices were often ignored.

The movement gained worldwide prominence in 2017 when American actress Alyssa Milano encouraged women to share their experiences of sexual harassment using the hashtag #MeToo on social media. This digital mobilization led to a massive outpouring of testimonies across industries, especially within the film and media sectors, exposing the widespread nature of workplace harassment and abuse of power. Social media became a transformative platform, enabling survivors to break the culture of silence and fear.

In India, the #MeToo movement gained momentum in 2018, when several well-known journalists, actors, academics, and artists were publicly accused of sexual harassment and assault. These revelations sparked national debates on workplace ethics, gender justice, and the effectiveness of legal mechanisms such as the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013.

The influence of the movement extended beyond national and cultural boundaries. For instance, in Japan, the #KuToo movement emerged in 2019 to protest against compulsory dress codes that mandated women to wear high heels at workplaces, highlighting everyday gender discrimination.

In recognition of these global struggles, the United Nations adopted the theme “Orange the World: #HearMeToo” in 2018 for the International Day for the Elimination of

Violence against Women, emphasizing the need to listen to survivors and amplify their voices worldwide.

- **#PadManChallenge**

The #PadManChallenge emerged as a powerful social media movement aimed at breaking the long-standing silence and stigma surrounding menstruation in India. The central message of the campaign — “Yes, that’s a pad in my hand and there’s nothing to be ashamed. Periods are natural” — resonated strongly across platforms such as Twitter and Instagram. By encouraging people to openly hold and display sanitary pads, the challenge sought to normalize conversations around menstruation and promote menstrual hygiene awareness. The movement drew inspiration from the work of Arunachalam Muruganantham, a social entrepreneur popularly known as PadMan. He is renowned for developing low-cost sanitary napkin-making machines to ensure affordable menstrual products for women in rural and underserved communities. His efforts not only addressed health concerns but also challenged deep-rooted cultural taboos associated with menstruation.

The challenge gained widespread visibility during the promotion of the Bollywood film *Padman*, which was based on Muruganantham’s life. Twinkle Khanna, columnist and former actor, played a pivotal role by sharing a photograph of herself holding a sanitary pad and posting it on social media with the hashtag #PadManChallenge. Her post encouraged others to participate and speak openly about menstruation.

Soon, several prominent Bollywood celebrities, including Akshay Kumar, Aamir Khan, Deepika Padukone, Shabana Azmi, Madhuri Dixit, and Rajkummar Rao, joined the campaign. They shared their own posts and tagged others, creating a ripple effect across social media. The collective participation of influential figures helped transform menstruation from a taboo topic into a subject of public discussion, reinforcing the idea that periods are natural and should be addressed without shame or embarrassment.

- **#SelfieWithDaughter**

The Selfie With Daughter campaign is a unique and impactful social initiative aimed at empowering the girl child and challenging deep-rooted gender bias in society. The campaign was conceived by Shri Sunil Jaglan, the Sarpanch of Bibipur village in Haryana. Its simple yet powerful idea encouraged parents, especially fathers, to take selfies with their daughters and share them on social media as a public expression of pride and love. Through this symbolic act, the campaign sought to promote positive attitudes towards daughters and oppose practices such as female foeticide and sex-selective abortions. To expand its reach, Sunil Jaglan launched the mobile application “Selfie With Daughter,” which helped transform the initiative into a global movement. The campaign gained nationwide and international recognition after Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi mentioned it during his Mann Ki Baat address on All India Radio on 28 June 2015. The Prime Minister appealed to parents across the country to actively participate in the campaign, emphasizing its role in strengthening the government’s flagship initiative *Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao*, which focuses on saving the girl child, promoting her education, and ensuring gender equality.

The movement further evolved with the establishment of the world’s first online museum titled *Selfie With Daughter – The Revolution for Girls*. This digital platform, developed

by the Selfie With Daughter Foundation, showcases thousands of selfies uploaded by proud parents from across the globe. With over 90,800 selfies shared, the campaign stands as a powerful example of how social media can be used to bring about social change, celebrate daughters, and foster a culture of respect, equality, and empowerment for girls.

- **#GENERATIONEQUALITY**

The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, adopted in 1995 at the Fourth World Conference on Women, stands as a landmark global commitment to advance the human rights of women and girls. Endorsed by 189 countries, it provided a comprehensive agenda to achieve gender equality and women's empowerment worldwide. The Declaration recognized that women's rights are human rights and emphasized the need for governments, civil society, and international organizations to work collectively to eliminate discrimination and inequality. The Platform for Action identified twelve critical areas of concern where urgent action was required. These include women and poverty, education and training of women, women and health, violence against women, women and armed conflict, women and the economy, women in power and decision-making, institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women, human rights of women, women and the media, women and the environment, and the girl child. Governments committed themselves to formulate policies, allocate resources, and implement strategies to address these interconnected areas and ensure equal opportunities for women in all spheres of life.

In 2020, the Beijing Declaration marked its 25th anniversary, serving as an important moment to reflect on progress achieved as well as persistent challenges. To reinvigorate global efforts, the United Nations launched the campaign #GenerationEquality: Realizing Women's Rights for an Equal Future. This campaign calls upon governments, youth, activists, the private sector, and citizens worldwide to use platforms such as social media to demand gender equality, challenge discriminatory norms, and promote equal rights and opportunities for women and girls. Generation Equality envisions a more just, inclusive, and prosperous future where women can fully realize their potential and contribute meaningfully to sustainable development.

- **#PinjraTodMovement**

The #PinjraTod ("Break the Cage") Movement emerged in 2015 as a powerful student-led feminist campaign initiated by women students in Delhi universities. The movement arose in response to restrictive and discriminatory hostel rules imposed on female students, particularly early curfews and excessive surveillance, which were not applied to male students. Women argued that such regulations violated their right to equality, freedom, and personal autonomy, and reinforced patriarchal ideas that sought to control women in the name of safety.

Initially limited to a few universities in Delhi, the movement quickly expanded into a nationwide campaign through the effective use of social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter. The hashtag #PinjraTod became a symbol of resistance against the moral policing of women in educational institutions. Social media played a crucial role in connecting women students from different universities, enabling them to share experiences, mobilize support, and build collective strength. Through online discussions, testimonies, and digital campaigns, the movement sparked a broader national debate on gender discrimination and women's mobility.

- **#PinjraTod** challenged the deeply rooted paternalistic belief that restricting women's freedom ensures their protection. Instead, the movement asserted that safety should be ensured through better infrastructure, lighting, transportation, and institutional accountability, rather than curtailing women's independence. Alongside online activism, the movement organized offline protests, meetings, and negotiations with university authorities to demand policy reforms.

As a result, #PinjraTod succeeded in pressuring several universities to reconsider and revise discriminatory hostel rules. The movement stands as one of the most influential social media-driven campaigns advocating gender equality and women's rights within India's educational institutions.

- **#IWillGoOut(2017)**

The #IWillGoOut campaign emerged in 2017 as a powerful digital protest against the gendered restrictions imposed on women's mobility in public spaces in India. The movement was triggered by reports of mass molestation during New Year's Eve celebrations in Bengaluru, which were followed by victim-blaming narratives suggesting that women should avoid going out at night to ensure their safety. These statements sparked widespread outrage, leading women to challenge the idea that their freedom must be curtailed to prevent violence. Women across India took to social media platforms, especially Twitter, using the hashtag #IWillGoOut to assert their right to occupy public spaces without fear, harassment, or moral judgment. Participants shared photographs, personal experiences, and messages declaring that public spaces belong equally to women and men. The campaign emphasized that responsibility for preventing violence lies with society and law enforcement, not with women's choices, clothing, or presence in public spaces.

Social media played a crucial role in amplifying the campaign, transforming individual expressions of anger into a collective movement. The hashtag not only facilitated online discussions but also encouraged offline protests and public demonstrations in several cities. Through widespread digital engagement, the campaign questioned patriarchal norms that normalize restrictions on women's movement in the name of protection.

Importantly, #IWillGoOut broadened the national conversation on women's safety, highlighting the need for structural and systemic changes rather than behavioral control of women. It drew attention to issues of urban planning, policing, and social attitudes in both urban and rural contexts. As a result, the campaign became a significant force in India's ongoing struggle against gender-based violence, reinforcing women's right to freedom, dignity, and equality in public life.

- **#GirlsAtDhabasMovement**

Originating in Pakistan, the #GirlsAtDhabas movement emerged as a powerful digital campaign aimed at challenging gendered norms surrounding women's presence in public spaces. Traditionally, roadside eateries known as dhabas have been viewed as male-dominated spaces, where women's visibility was limited by unwritten social rules. The movement began when women started sharing photographs of themselves casually spending time at dhabas, thereby asserting their right to occupy and enjoy these everyday public spaces without fear or judgment.

The campaign quickly resonated beyond Pakistan and found significant support in India, where similar restrictions on women's mobility and public participation exist. Through platforms such as Instagram and Facebook, women posted images and personal narratives of eating at dhabas, riding motorcycles, traveling independently, and engaging in activities conventionally associated with men. These posts were not merely symbolic; they represented everyday acts of resistance against patriarchal expectations that confine women to private or "respectable" spaces.

The #GirlsAtDhabas movement highlighted how digital media can be used as a tool for collective empowerment. By creating an online community, it enabled women to draw strength from shared experiences and normalize their presence in public arenas. The visibility generated through social media helped question deeply entrenched ideas about gender, safety, and respectability. Like many social media-driven feminist campaigns, #GirlsAtDhabas celebrated women's agency, autonomy, and right to visibility. It underscored that reclaiming public spaces is not merely about physical access, but also about redefining social norms and asserting equality in everyday life.

- **#IShapeMyWorld**

On the occasion of International Women's Day, Levi's launched the #IShapeMyWorld campaign to celebrate women who have challenged societal stereotypes and actively shaped their own worlds. The campaign aimed to recognize the strength, resilience, and individuality of women who refused to be limited by traditional expectations and instead emerged as agents of change. Through powerful storytelling and visual narratives, Levi's highlighted how women from diverse backgrounds have overcome social, cultural, and personal barriers to achieve success.

Running from 2017 to 2019, the campaign portrayed inspiring journeys of women who pursued their ambitions despite facing discrimination, inequality, and resistance. These advertisements emphasized that empowerment is not confined to a single definition of success but is reflected in courage, confidence, and the freedom to express one's identity. By showcasing real-life experiences, the campaign encouraged women to believe in their potential and take ownership of their choices.

The fifth season of #IShapeMyWorld marked a significant milestone, featuring 21 renowned and influential women in a visually striking music video titled "Fire Within Me." Dressed in Levi's jeans, these women symbolized unity, strength, and self-expression. The video celebrated individuality while reinforcing the message that every woman carries an inner fire that drives change. Overall, the #IShapeMyWorld campaign served as a powerful platform for women's empowerment, inspiring audiences to challenge stereotypes, embrace diversity, and recognize women as creators of their own destiny.

### **Online Harassment and Abuse**

Another significant obstacle to social media's potential to empower women is the pervasiveness of cyberbullying, abuse, and harassment online. Threats, hate speech, and sexual harassment are among the many ways that women are disproportionately targeted on digital platforms. As a result, they may be discouraged from fully engaging in these online environments. Women are 27% more likely than males to encounter online abuse, and many

of them receive grave threats of physical or sexual assault, according an Amnesty International report.

Social media sites like Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter have come under fire for their reporting and content moderation policies, which have often been found to be ineffective in protecting women from harassment. The persistent exposure to hate campaigns, trolling, and sexist remarks may have a negative effect on women's self-esteem, mental health, and desire to participate in public debate. To avoid being targeted, many women-especially those in leadership positions or who engage in activism often self-censor or stop using social media entirely.

In addition to restricting women's capacity to express themselves freely, this unfriendly climate makes it harder for them to utilise social media for activism and advocacy. The potentially powerful potential of these platforms may be curtailed when women are apprehensive of engaging in crucial debates, sharing their experiences, or confronting oppressive systems due to concerns about harassment.

### **Impacts of Social Media encouraging Empowerment of Women**

- **Social Empowerment**

Social media involves acquiring new knowledge to create a different understanding of gender relations as well as destroying old beliefs that structure powerful gender, the development of feelings that women can act upon to improve their condition, requires that women can be able to engage in a productive activity that will allow them some degree of autonomy, no matter how small and hard to obtain at the beginning and the ability to organize and mobilize for change.

- **Social Life**

There's plenty of evidence that social isolation is associated with a shorter life span, not to mention a diminished quality of life. Seniors and those who are disabled, who may have limited mobility, elderly people, someone stationed overseas in the military workers, friends who live in different states can use social media for positive connections to connect and improve social life.

- **Mental well-being**

The capacity to live a full and creative life, and the flexibility to deal with life's inevitable challenges results in having high levels of positive emotions, social well-being and psychological well-being as having the presence of psychological and social skills and abilities that contribute to optimal functioning in daily life.

### **Conclusion**

Social media provides women with unprecedented opportunities for self expression, identity formation and community building. Social internet has become a potent instrument for women's empowerment, providing formerly unheard-of chances for social activity, political engagement, economic independence, and education. Social media gives women the ability to question conventional gender norms, bring attention to problems that impact them, and fight for their rights locally and internationally via information access, business opportunities, and the amplification of voices. Protests such as #MeToo and #HeForShe serve as examples of

how internet platforms can unite women from different countries and promote collective action. But not everyone can take use of social media's advantages. The full realisation of digital engagement's uplifting potential is impeded by notable obstacles such the digital gap, online harassment, algorithmic prejudice, and the superficial nature of digital involvement. Structural hurdles impede women, especially those belonging to marginalised groups, from fully engaging in the digital world. In order to optimise the potential of social media, it is imperative to provide equitable accessibility, advance digital literacy, and establish more secure and welcoming virtual spaces. Collaboration between governments, IT corporations, NGOs, and feminist organisations is necessary to address these issues. Social media may become a more inclusive and powerful tool for empowering women worldwide by tackling algorithmic prejudice, supporting persistent advocacy, bridging the digital gap, and enhancing online safety. In summary, social media has enormous potential to advance gender equality, but in order to fully realise this potential, intentional steps must be taken to reduce its drawbacks and build a digital environment that is really empowering for all women. Social media may continue to be an important catalyst for women's empowerment and contribute to the creation of a more fair and equal society with thoughtful reforms and persistent activism.

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