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Literary presentation is satisfactory and the thesis is in a form suitable for publication. Work evinces the capacity of the candidate for critical examination and independent judgment.

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Prof. Padam Lal Devkota, Ph. D.

April, 2015

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I understand that my thesis will become part of the permanent collection of Singhanian University. My signature below authorized release of my thesis to any reader upon request for scholarly purpose.

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ABSTRACT

The main thrust of this research is to identify and explore the role of mass media (audio, audio-visual and print) for promoting women empowerment in Nepal. Mass media is considered an important and effective means to empower people. Mass media started on the Nepali soil only one and half century ago, compared with four and half century long history of world media.

Mass media is a potential agent in the empowerment of women. It influences social, political and economic dimensions of women. As a result, women become capable to encounter the constraints that come across in their way of development process.

Effective communication has the potential to enhance women's quality of life, protect them in the fragile environment and create a knowledge-based society that is more responsive to change and development issues. It can lead to the empowerment of women, enabling them to take control of their lives and participate as equals with men in development.

Information is power. Communication existed even during the most primitive times as it does now when tremendous changes have come up in this field as a result of the feats accomplished in science and technology. The art and science of using information to one's own advantage is the key to influence the society. In today's world, mass media occupies an important place on socialization process. It has contributed for emergence of public opinions and public images on important issues in the mass society. In fact, mass media plays significant role in socialization of community's members - influencing their attitude, performance and manner.

Women empowerment through mass media is an ideal, realistic and practical strategy. Women are the builder and modular of the nation's destiny.

Women empowerment is a process of awareness and capacity building leading to greater participation, decision-making power and control to transformative action.

Women are the major force in the development of any society and nation. The notion of 'communication for development' has been facing new issues and challenges in the last decade, as a consequence of globalization, media liberalization, rapid economic and social changes, and the emergence of new information and communication technologies. The communication of information is a powerful force for fostering positive change and empowerment in the process of development.

Women population is more than half of the total population of Nepal. Despite that, they face problems of inadequate health services, existence of domestic violence, social malpractice such as dowry, conservative socio-cultural practices, lack of access to education and productive employment opportunities. Majority of women lives in rural areas unskilled and over-burdened with work. Majority of them are involved in agricultural sector with an added load of rearing their children.

In Nepal, no specific policy focused on women empowerment until 1975. Since then, a few women's empowerment programmes have been implemented along the line of a few plans and policies that have been formulated. Despite that there has been no significant change in women's livelihood in the recent years.

Media coverage is a very broad area. This research explored the media behaviour, women's attitude towards the media, perception of message and influence by mass media on social, political and economic empowerment of women in Nepal.

The broad objective of the study is to investigate the role and performance of mass media in promoting women's empowerment. The specific objectives of this study are: to identify women's access to different components of mass media, to examine women's attitude towards the mass media, to find out the message perceptions and influence of mass media; and to explore mass media promoting women's empowerment.

The study has adopted descriptive as well as analytical research design. The study area is identified using multistage sampling method and purposive sampling technique was adopted for selecting the sample. The research included women of different ecological region, different development region and on the basis of rural and urban residence. Nature of the data is qualitative as well as quantitative and both primary and secondary sources were used for data collection. Schedule interview, observation, key informant interview, focus group discussion and case studies were used to collect primary data and information for this study.

Based on the objectives, the thesis is organized into eight chapters. The first chapter deals with the background of the study, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, significance of the study, and outline of the study. The second chapter is the review of literature. It includes overview of relevant literature, theoretical review, and conceptual frameworks of the study. The third chapter is concerned with the research methodology, such as research design, the study area and rationale for selection, the universe and sample size, nature and sources of data, tools and techniques of data collection, reliability and validity of data, data analysis and interpretation, limitations of the study and ethical considerations. The fourth chapter is devoted to geographical settings of the study area. The fifth chapter is the respondents' profile, which included demographic and socio-economic characteristics of the respondents. The sixth chapter deals with the access to

different components of mass media, attitude towards the mass media and message perception and influence of mass media. The seventh chapter is on mass media promoting women's empowerment (social, political and economic empowerment) and the eighth chapter deals with the summary of the findings and conclusion of the study.

Findings of the study indicate that the root means for social, political and economic empowerment is their access on media. Radio is the most accessible media among the media users than television and newspapers. Internet access is very limited to women who live in remote areas in Nepal. The users of mobiles are increasingly radio listeners and Internet users. Most preferred time to listen radio is morning, watching television is night and using Internet is afternoon. Newspapers readership is low and only limited readers are subscribing newspapers.

From the findings of the study, it can be argued that radio is considered informative and television considered of having adequate information, but Nepali women have less than enough satisfaction from them. Language used in television is understandable and use of slang words on radio is difficult to understand for the listeners. Media users use radio and television as entertaining media and consider that radio is the most reliable medium.

The findings of the study show that message perception and influence by information, entertainment and advertisement are positive. Information and news from media are considered comprehensive, useful to the people, and influential. It helps them to change their behaviour or habit. Entertainment and advertisement from media are less comprehensive than information. However, they are influential on them to change behaviour or habit.

Role of mass media on social empowerment is found to be impressive. Information, entertainment and advertisement through media play positive role on social empowerment of women. Mass media affected them on their mobility, social responsibility, decision-making role in societal level, advocacy against exploitation of natural resources, raising voice on discrimination against girls, educating daughters, knowledge about STDs/AIDS, knowledge about the reproductive health and knowledge on domestic violence against women.

Role of mass media on political empowerment of women is increasing. Mass media provides them knowledge about the current political situations increasing their involvement in politics by casting vote or involvement in community based organization and community works, communication with political leaders, involvement in public protests and political events, and commitment for social reform. One of the most important and critical factors observed in the context of political empowerment of women was the role played by mass media.

Role of mass media on economic empowerment of women is remarkable. Information, entertainment and advertisement through media encourage on economic empowerment of women. Mass media is helpful to them to get involved in income generating works, training on agriculture management, control over income of family, rights to immovable property, knowledge about the hereditary property rights of women, taking loan, investment on business, expenditure, equity and equality of male and female and division of labor. This study also threw some light on the level of economic empowerment of women that was possible with the access of mass media.

There is a varied leisure season according to different ecological region. Time availability is very limited to the women due to the workload and

high mobility for daily heavily burdened work schedule. The findings of the study show that high empowerment of beneficiary women could take place in social, political and economic walk of life. More so, empowerment is a gradual process that takes time to be achieved for further improving quality of life of both rural and urban women in Nepal.

From the findings of the study, it can be concluded that a significant difference is found in the level of empowerment of women in different places of Nepal. In addition, it recognize the fact that social, political and economic empowerment are the basic components which play an important role in promoting women overall quality of life. The study concluded that the mass media in Nepal have contributed to the empowerment and development of women in the specific context of their everyday work and life.

Abstract approved by - Prof. Padam Lal Devkota, Ph. D.

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