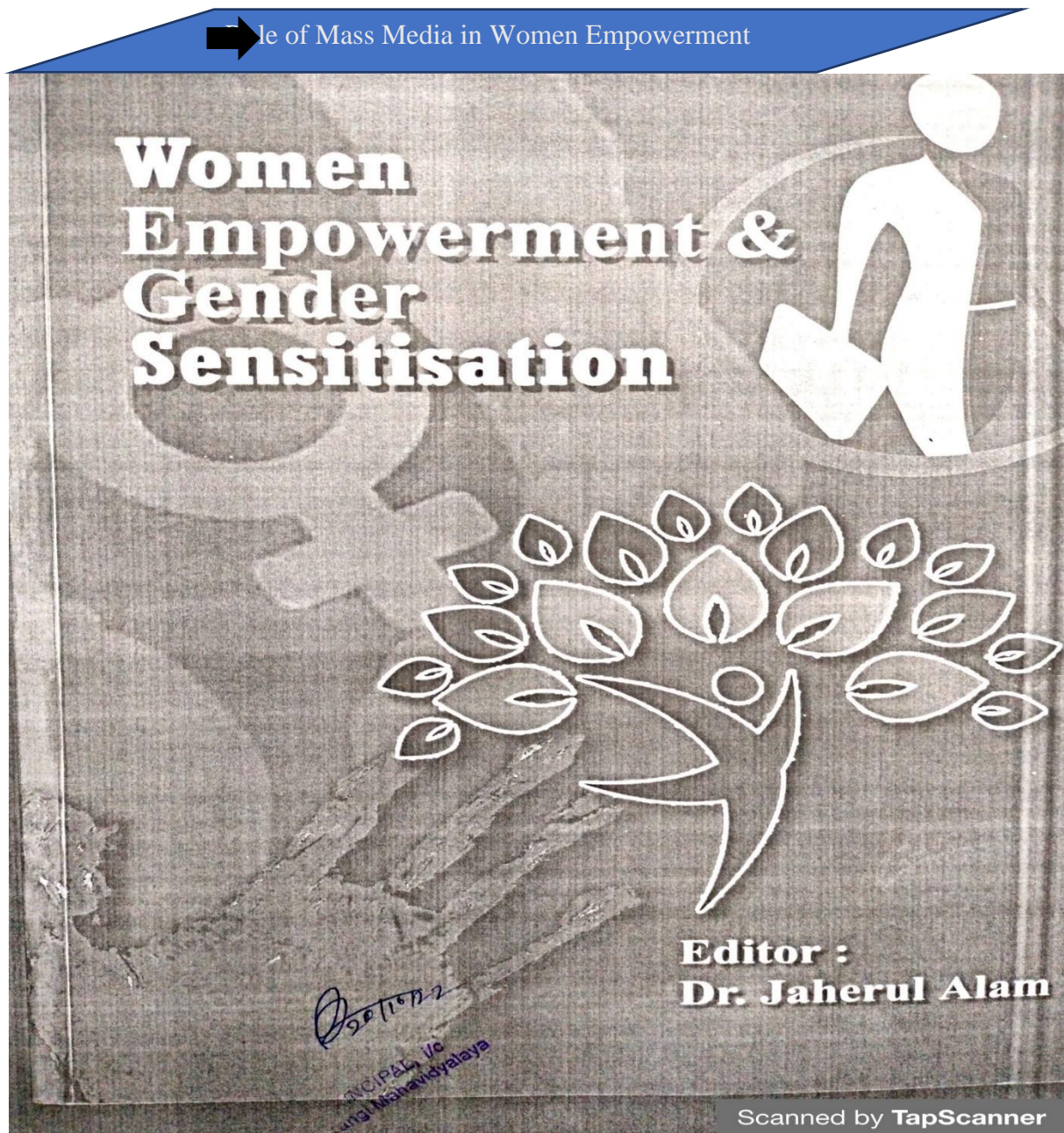


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Role of Mass Media in Women Empowerment

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Abstract:

Education is a lifelong process. Education strengthens the human resources and overall growth of our society. Education and knowledge are essential for people to successfully respond to the opportunities and challenges of social economics and technological changes. Like education, knowledge and information women empowerment is very essential for the development of a country. The social and economic empowerment could not be achieved without mass media in the technological era.

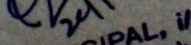
Media is considered as the 4th pillar of the society and democratic medium of information. The government of India has been taking up mass media as means of development communication since the beginning of five year plans which laid major thrusts on it for raising people's consciousness about their rights and duties.

Governments, educational institutions, non-governmental organizations are responsible for the prevention of all forms of discrimination against women. Besides all of them, the responsibility of the mass media is very important in this issue. Thus, mass media can play powerful and positive role in the empowerment of women and gender equality.

Keywords: Strengthens, Opportunities, Empowerment, Mass Media, Consciousness, Discrimination.

Introduction:

Empowerment refers to increasing the economic, political, social, educational gender or spiritual strength of individuals and communities. Empowerment is a multi-dimensional process which should enable

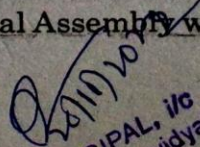

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individuals or a group of individuals to realise their full identity and powers in all spheres of life. It consist of greater access to knowledge and resources, greater autonomy in decision making to enable them to have greater ability to plan their lives, have greater control over the circumstances that influence their lives and free from shackles imposed on them by customs, belief and practice.

The term 'empowerment of women' has become popular especially after 1980. It refers to the process of strengthening the hands of women who have been suffering from various disabilities, inequalities and gender discrimination. Empowerment of women refers to the process of providing power to women to become free from the control of others. It can also be said as the process of providing equal positions to women with men in society.

Historically women have been regarded as constituting a weaker section and treated as 'second grade citizens.' Extension of voting right to women in Britain and America in the beginning of the 20th century brought about a series of changes the status of women especially in the western world. Many of their disabilities and inequalities came to an end in due course. But women of Asia and Africa were not able to secure equal status and opportunities. Their exploitation was continued. They were given unequal treatment on the basis of sex. This development was termed as 'gender discrimination'. The United Nations through its various meetings and pronouncements was giving call to its member- nations to remove the ugly practice of 'gender discrimination'. Due to the efforts of the UNO the issue of empowerment of women becomes an international issue and the United Nations declared the year 1975 as the international women's year. In continuation of the UN declaration of 1975 the 'Third Women's world conference was held at Nairobi (Kenya) in 1985, where a document released on the occasion towards empowerment of women. The Fourth world conference on women was held in Beijing (China) in 1995 in which representatives from 189 nations including India had taken part. The conference recognized 12 serious areas including empowerment of women special session of the United Nations General Assembly was also convened in the year 2000 in New York


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