EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Society is enamored with the media. Owing to its ubiquity, women and youngsters are virtually gripped by the 24x7 version of the media. Media usage has become a necessity than a need in the information era. Proliferation of media, due to technological advancements, has changed the way society used to operate and function. The advent of new media has provided an impetus to such change. Media has taken a predominant place in the lives of modern day nuclear families. In many cases, if not all, media has become a baby sitter too. Numerous scholars have highlighted the fact that 21st century women learn the way of life from screens. Unlike their family members, who belonged to the old generation, women do not need lessons regarding how to use various media. There are various reasons for which women use media. These can include entertainment, empathy, social learning, information etc.

The women an active audience, they uses media depending upon their needs and desires. Literature has documented that women, these days, spend considerable time with various media, hence, there are effects that are being studied and measured by media researchers across the globe. Researchers have established that media usage has positive as well as negative effects on the users. The kind of effects depends on the extent of time one spends on using various media and its contents.

The present research focuses primarily on the effect of MGNREGA awareness campaign on women stakeholders of Mewat region in Haryana. The researcher has studied the effect of MGNREGA awareness campaign on knowledge and its impact on the socio-economic condition of women stakeholders.

The objectives of the study are:

1) An assessment of gain in knowledge about Flagship Rural Development Programmes, especially MGNREGA, and the level of recall and retention of details thereof.

2) Enumeration of views of communities/stakeholders on the relevance of the NREGA campaign in creating awareness and to discuss alternative and improved ways of communication of need-based information.
3) Identifying socio-economic, communication and cultural factors which act as barriers or enablers for public mobilization and behavior change.

4) An assessment of women beneficiaries of the NREGA scheme in Mewat district and evaluation of their overall socio-economic position after the inception of MGNREGA.

5) An evaluation of the premise whether women beneficiaries face any gender discrimination and availed of the scheme according to NREGA Act2005.

6) An assessment of how families, especially children, of women beneficiaries benefitted after their mothers started working under the scheme.

7) An assessment of changes in expenditure on livestock and non-food items by women beneficiaries before and after the implementation of the rural employment guarantee scheme in Mewat.

The researcher has used primary data for the study that has been collected after conducting a survey. For in depth views and observation, FGDs & IDIs of representatives of various agencies responsible for implementing the scheme were conducted.

The survey was conducted in 15 villages of 5 blocks wherein 400 women respondents in the age group between 18 and 69 were interviewed. The respondents were selected through multi-stage sampling techniques.

Similarly, FGDs and IDIs were conducted of 50 representatives of different agencies responsible for MGNREGA implementation in Mewat.

As far as, methodology is concerned, four types of questionnaire were developed and used for data collection and recording of in depth views of opinion makers.

For measuring the views of women, a questionnaire with open and close-ended questions was developed, while, for FGDs and IDIs questionnaire comprising open-ended questions was developed.

Further, all women respondents were either illiterate or Class V pass and their answers were recorded by well-trained investigators. FGDs and IDIs of all opinion leaders were collected by the researcher himself. Audio-video recording of these was done which was then transcribed. All data was processed on SPSS on which various statistical tests were applied to get concrete result.
The main findings of the study are:

- Women are exposed to, consume and use mass media and traditional media.
- Women had more faith on traditional media, person-to-person interaction and views of opinion leaders.
- In mass media, television is the most popular among women than radio, the Internet or newspapers. Movies and daily serials are most popular programmes of TV among women. They watch TV 3-4 days in a week.
- Women observed MGNREGA awareness campaign at local level rather than on mass media, including TV. They received information about NREGA from panchayats members, local leaders, and opinion leaders etc. who also educate them about especial benefits for women under this scheme.
- Women also recalled easily Mid-day meal, JSSY, old age pension, Nai Roshni including NREGA scheme. However, RTE, IAY, PFBY and PMGSY are least known scheme among women.
- Women were registered under NREGA verbally, whose job cards and allotment of works was done after stipulated time i.e.15 days. Despite this, they didn’t get unemployment allowance by any panchayat.
- Mostly panchayats failed to provide basic facilities like shade, crèche’, clean drinking water and First Aid Box on worksites of NREGA. Even complaint register was not available on worksite which discouraged several wagers to enroll under MGNREGA.
- It was found that the respondents’ job cards were with the Sarpanch who was making entries of wages and payments without informing the women workers. Payment of most of the beneficiaries was being made after 30 days, in violation of NREG Act rules.
- Women were not paid on daily basis but were paid on measurement of work basis. Further, they were also not aware of the celebration of ‘RozgarDiwas’.
- Rural connectivity, digging of ponds and renovation of traditional bodies were the three types of works taken up under NREGA by most of the panchayats, while, the most demanded irrigation and plantation works were least performed under NREGA in Mewat.
• Vigilance and Monitoring committee and NGOs proved to be nothing but white elephants for people of Mewat though there are more than 5,000 NGOs in Mewat region. Some of the NGOs like SMS foundation also running community radio stations in Mewat for promoting modern life among listeners.

• Women’s working days, income and saving have improved after the implementation of MGNREGA in Mewat. After increase in income their expenditure on non-food items like LPG connection, electronic items, latrines, two wheelers etc. had increased. Along with this the women were spending more on other household expenses as well on livestock like buffaloes, goats and poultry.

• MGNREGA failed to stem the migration of youngsters to cities in search of job and better life. The major reason of increase in migration isthe wage difference in cities. Besides this delay of payment and lesser number of days of employment in a financial year under MGNREGA also led to migration to cities.

• Women were empowered at household level, community level and economical level after implementing MGNREGA. Their role indecision making at household level and mobility at society level increased. Overall, their socio-economic condition improved after MGNREGA.

• Most of the Muslim respondents were in favor of engaging local Muslim leaders and mosques to popularize various rural development schemes among Muslim families. Further, they want to increase working days and wages under MGNREGA.