

Women's Empowerment in the Digital Age: A Systematic Literature Review Using TCCM and ADO Frameworks

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Introduction

As Article 14 (Right to Equality) and Article 15 (Prohibition of Discrimination) of Indian constitution guarantees empowerment of women in India, several policies are aimed for them advancement since the inception of the five year plans. The Govt. of India generated national policy which aimed at women's advancement long back while from fifth five years' plan it was shifted from the motto of welfare to advancement. Henceforth the National commission for women established by the act of Parliament in 1990, the issue of women attaining advancement towards equality is well acclaimed. Empowering women is the most pressing issue in current scenario in India due to their role in nation building and social stability, which thrives on growth, development and betterment.

Women plays key role in the process of nation building. Women empowerment through Social media is the new tool, which allows women to break the conventional stereotypes and demographic categories (Ibrahim Fatema, Social media and Women Empowerment: A brand new facet). Social media transform connectivity effectively in both global and local level. It is a useful weapon in the hand of women specifically who have started to explore the Unprecedented opportunity offered by social media platform. It has lent voice to the voiceless women and presents an alternative for conventional way of communicating to the outer world.

Discussion over various issues related to women gets a new avenue to ensure, engage and empower women.

Literature review

Social Media, Interactivity and Web 2.0

It is evident that the inter-relationship between social media and web2.0 technology is a kind of fact and factor, stimuli and stimulus effect and cause for the users. The term "Web 2.0" was first used by Dale Dougherty in 2003 and broadcast by Tim O'Reilly in 2004. As the main attribute of web 2.0 technology is interactivity thus it is heavily used to contribute in content making in social media websites. As web.1 version was providing information to the users web2.0 technology assures feedback from the end of audience. Therefore, the users can take part in process of making information and have control over it. Naturally publishing content in website becomes easy, sharing of information becomes effective and networking and collaboration are smooth going process with the implementation of web 2.0 technology (SfetcuNicolae, 2017, Web 2.0 / Social media / Social networks).

Berners-Lee, the founder of world wide web emphasizes the point of the World Wide Web has always been people-to-people interaction; therefore, there is nothing new or revolutionary about sites that facilitate that (Naughton 2011). The issue of social media whether it can be called as new media is a debate. The person who coined the phrase new media i.e. Paul Levinson totally denounced the possibility of social media to be named as new media. According to him every media has some social impact and utility so only termed as social media the new technology and its possibility should not be undermined. (Web 2.0, Social Media, and the “New” Media).

Thus to define social media most fitting definition is given by Nicole Ellison: “We define social network sites as web-based services that allow individuals to (1) construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, (2) articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and (3) view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system. The nature and nomenclature of these connections may vary from site to site.” (boyd and Ellison 2007).

Social media acts as catalyst to Women Empowerment

Social media transform connectivity effectively in both global and local level. Intensive use of social media results in the intrusion of this new opportunity in domestic area. It is a useful weapon in the hand of women specifically who have started to explore the unprecedented opportunity offered by social media platform. It has become voice of voiceless section of women and an alternative for conventional way of communicating to outer world. Blogs, forums, business networks, photo sharing platforms, social gaming social networks, and chat apps are just a few examples of the various types of social media. The social media platforms that are easily accessible are: Facebook, We Chat, Snapchat, Pinterest, Twitter, Whatsapp, Viber, and so on. In terms of the people's interests, it is changing quickly. (Hazarika.L, 2021) Discussion over various issues related to women gets a new avenue to ensure, engage and empower women. (KumariMadhu, 2020). Social media refers to a collection of tools that promote communication, community, and engagement; in other words, it enables people to establish connections and exchange knowledge in online networks and communities (Kulsum N,2018).

According to a demographic chart provided by PEW Research, less women than men used social media in 2005. It began in 2009 when women began utilizing social media at a marginally higher rate than men. With 68% of women and 62% of men using social media on a daily basis, the growth rate has accelerated. The IAMAI Internet and Mobile Association of India research states that 66% of India's 180 million people routinely use social media in urban areas. The fact that 76% of Facebook (Meta) users in India are men and only 24% are women shows that barriers still exist for women. In India, 71% of men and 29% of women use the internet. According to research, 70% of women experience horrific violence, and 7 out of 10 men and women believe that it is acceptable for a man to slap his wife if she doesn't perform her household chores effectively. Still, it is reflected that “Me Too” movement raised alarm in the social media platform “My space” and gained prominence in civil society since 2006.

Importance of social media in Public Sphere

The intervention made by social media is evident now, to widen the gap made between the process of communication between Government and public through conventional mode of media. Hofmann, Beverungen, Räckers and Becker 1 argued that governments should provide information to their stakeholders in a way to communicate with them. Social media is cost friendly and its effect is huge as the web 2.0 technology ensured the maximum feedback from the part of the receiver.

Magro asserted that social media takes its importance from its characteristics that include: participation, collaboration, empowerment, and time. The major benefits of using social media in e-government can be summarized in three benefits 1) Transparency, which is to release the information that stakeholders are always checking for. 2) Participation to maintain citizens engaged with their governments, by allowing citizens to express their opinions, experiences and wisdoms. Governments can use a survey to get feedback from citizens before any decision is taken, then pass this information to different government agencies for actions to be taken. 3) Collaboration is the high level engagement between government and citizens, where citizens participate by creating the content of government topics and the government use and follow the content generated by citizens to fulfil government mission. This way more time is saved and thus cost and effort for governments.

Theoretical Framework

“Empowerment thus refers to the expansion in people’s ability to make strategic life choices in a context where this ability was previously denied to them.”(Kabeer N, 2001)

While discussing about empowerment of women the context brings the validity of empowerment the terms need to be judged in various ways. How one can ask for empowerment when the term still not representative in itself, and there is unlimited scope to define and work on the ground. (Batliwala, 1993.) As the paper directly engages the term empowerment in the context of women, therefore the most relevant work is done by Naila Kabeer in the year of 1999. She defined the framework of empowerment in the light of another concept framed by Dr. Amartya Sen in the year of 1990. Kabeer extracted from the idea laid by Sen in his “Capability Framework”. Naila Kabeer’s “Empowerment Framework”.

Kabeer proposed three inter related dimensions as Resources, Agency and Achievement which can be read as Outcome also. According to Kabeer, Resources, which create the circumstances in which decisions are made; Agency, which is important to the decision-making process; and Achievements, which are the results of decisions. The framework refers as capabilities, define by Dr. Amartya Sen in his Capability approach. Sen refers to "functionings" as all potential ways of "being and doing" that are valued by people in a certain environment, and "functioning achievements" as specific methods of "being and doing" that are realized by various persons. Our third dimension of power is these actualized accomplishments -or the inability to do so. (Kabeer N ,2001). The discussion over women empowerment thus gets a new dimension after Naila Kabeer gets into the empowerment approach.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework assumes social media as an enabler facilitating women empowerment by amplifying communication and information accessibilities, participation and decision making capabilities. The socio-economic informational resources help women in knowledge acquisition, building social networks, accessing support systems, voicing their opinion and participating enthusiastically in public forum in debates and discussions, thus strengthening them to make informed decisions, strategic choices, take up leadership roles and engage in civic and economic activities.

The role of digital platforms is thus undeniably the most important in such context facilitating inclusive growth, greater social visibility and inclusion in public discourse. exercise of agency through digital platforms ultimately contributes to various empowerment outcomes or achievements, including enhanced self-confidence, economic participation, social visibility, leadership opportunities, political participation, and greater inclusion in public discourse. This framework acknowledges the influence of socio-cultural norms, educational attainment, digital literacy, institutional support, and access to technology as either facilitators or constraints in the process of empowerment through social media.

Accordingly, the framework proposed is

Conceptual Model

Social Media Platforms

(Facebook, Instagram, X, YouTube, LinkedIn, Online Communities)

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Digital Resources

- Access to Information
- Knowledge Sharing
- Social Networking
- Skill Development
- Online Support Systems

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Communication Capability

- Self-expression
- Voice and Visibility
- Public Participation
- Networking
- Civic Engagement

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Agency

- Decision-making Ability
- Leadership Participation
- Entrepreneurial Intent
- Political Participation
- Collective Action

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Empowerment Outcomes

- Economic Empowerment
- Social Empowerment
- Psychological Empowerment
- Political Empowerment
- Digital Empowerment

Moderating Factors

- Education
- Digital Literacy
- Socio-cultural Norms
- Economic Status
- Internet Accessibility
- Government Policies
- Institutional Support

Research Question

After the intense analysis of literature research questions can be generated as

1. How has research on women's empowerment evolved between 1991 and 2024?
2. What role has digital communication and social media played in women's empowerment literature?
3. What theoretical and methodological trends emerge through TCCM and ADO analysis?
4. What research gaps remain in the field?

Objective of the study

- To understand the flow of social research for last few decades relating to the issue of women empowerment.
- To emancipate the idea of Women empowerment from gender studies.
- To evaluate the impact of women empowerment over the decades in the field of research.
- To examine whether social media plays the role of catalyst in the process of women empowerment.
- To establish the tendency observed in the arena of social research relating to women empowerment.

Methodology

The systematic literature review (SLR) was undertaken to develop a detailed/structured history of how women empowerment/research on participation/leadership and communication has changed over time. A rigorous analysis of the literature will be achieved through the use of two frameworks (TCCM Theory Context Characteristics Methodology) and the ADO Framework (Antecedents Decisions Outcomes). By using both analytical perspectives, the SLR represents the intellectual evolution of this area of study from 1991 through 2024 by indicating how research has changed, major trends that are emerging, and identifying important research gaps requiring more scholarly research.

Analysis: The SPAR Method for Gathering Information for Systematic Literature Review

A methodical roadmap for the procedures of finding, screening-conscious filtering, and choosing articles for the SPAR (Structured, Transparent, and Accessible Review) approach methodical and sys reviews that establish scientific rigour and unambiguous replicability. The following details of the SPAR phases are based on data taken from Scopus and Web of Science.

1. Identification: Databases Used: Peer reviewed journals are considered which are thematically based on Women empowerment and social media. Basically Scopus Index. **Search Date:** May 18, 2026. **Keywords used:** Digital Culture, Social Media, Facebook and its perspective, Digital Media Literacy, Women Empowerment

2. Screening: Considered Time Frame: 2001–2024. **Topics covered:** Women Empowerment, Digital Media, Social media, Research ethics, Media literacy. **Language Filter:** English only, for consistency and ease of use. **Source type:** For quality assurance, the source type is limited to journals. **Document Type:** Only reviews and articles.

Duplicates: VOS viewer and R-based SLR tools were used for identification and removal. **Evaluation of Post-Eligibility:** A total of 167 articles were kept. **Final Dataset:** The final dataset consists of 167 articles from 2001 to 2024.

Justification: This final dataset is a representation of excellent, peer-reviewed, and thematically relevant research that serves as the theoretical and empirical foundation for the systematic review and bibliometric analysis conducted for this thesis.

The systematic literature review (SLR) was undertaken to develop a detailed/structured history of how women's empowerment/research on participation/leadership and communication has changed over time. A rigorous analysis of the literature will be achieved through the use of two frameworks (TCCM Theory Context Characteristics Methodology) and the ADO Framework (Antecedents Decisions Outcomes). By using both analytical perspectives, the SLR represents the intellectual evolution of this area of study from 1991 through 2024 by indicating how research has changed, major trends that are emerging, and identifying important research gaps requiring more scholarly research. The TCCM framework is used to provide insight into the different theoretical bases from which academic scholars have approached their studies on women's empowerment, as well as the different contexts in which they studied women's empowerment and participation in social and institutional contexts and the different characteristics of the research and methodological approaches used by the scholars in each of these contexts; whereas the ADO framework allows for the classification of the various factors influencing the process of empowering women through their decision-making behaviour, and the outcomes associated with these factors within the context in which the women's empowerment process occurred.

▪ Literature Synthesis for the Period 1991–2000

The period of research from 1991 through 2000 is considered to be the initial phase of academic exploration into women's empowerment, collective actions, leadership in organizations run by women, and communication avenues for women. The amount of research conducted in this time frame was relatively small compared to what was produced in later decades, which suggests that the area of women's empowerment was still emergent and conceptually scattered when compared to later decades. Much of the research published during this time, focused mainly on structural inequities, feminist collective action, and women's access to participatory spaces; because there was so little research produced at this time, it was also not common to find significant testing of formal models or large-scale empirical validation of the concepts related to women's empowerment.

In the initial studies conducted in the 1990s, there was a strong focus on both feminist and development-oriented concerns. Researchers studied how the interaction between the public and private spheres constrained the empowerment of women. The researchers also explored how patriarchal structures of society influenced women's participation in collective action.(Jeptum.V, MwihiaM.N,2024)Additionally, they investigated how women's organizations have attempted to create non-hierarchical leadership structures. Towards the end of the 1990s, researcher began to realize the importance of communication and media as valuable resources for providing women with a voice and agency and that alternative public spheres of communication and community radio could provide women the opportunity for empowerment. Although the 1990's did not yield a great deal of research on the topics of women's empowerment, participation, and decision-making, the research that was produced provided a conceptual foundation for all subsequent research on the topic.(Priya.P, Venkatesh.A,2021)

Table 1: Publication Trend (1991–2000)

Year	Number of Articles	Trend Observation
1991	1	Initial conceptual attention to women's empowerment in development settings
1992	0	No visible publication in the dataset
1993	0	No visible publication in the dataset
1994	0	No visible publication in the dataset
1995	1	Attention shifts to leadership and organizational dynamics in women's groups
1996	0	No visible publication in the dataset
1997	0	No visible publication in the dataset
1998	1	Emergence of media and communication as tools of women's empowerment
1999	0	No visible publication in the dataset
2000	0	No visible publication in the dataset

The decade from 1991 to 2000 was characterised by a sparse and inconsistent pattern of publications pertaining to the topics covered in this collective paper. Of the few studies identified during that decade, there were only three studies that had been published about the empowerment of women and their involvement in Feminist organisations. Thus, it cannot be inferred that the 1991–2000 period represents a significant growth period for research on this topic, but rather an incubation period during which the core conceptual ideas surrounding women’s empowerment, participation, and Feminist organisations were established. The literature produced during this period is exploratory and issue-orientated, and as such does not exhibit an established pattern of methodological consistency.

According to TCCM and ADO, the decade can be considered a normative and conceptual phase in the literature noted above. The studies produced during this decade were, from a theoretical standpoint, rooted mainly in feminist theory, empowerment theory, participatory development, and arguments for a public sphere. Contextually, the settings most researched during this period were developing communities, Women's organisations, and community media environments. Collectively, the main characteristics examined were equity, a voice in society, participation in society, collective leadership, ability to communicate, and social inclusion. Methodologically, most research was descriptive and qualitative in nature (ie, no formal hypothesis testing). The majority of studies were conducted on the basis of reflective argumentation and not on the basis of solid empirical evidence.

Also, ADO uses structural and socio-cultural variables (such as patriarchy, gender-blind development models, unequal power relations and lack of communication) as antecedent conditions. Decisions made by women regarding participation in collective action, association with an organisation, acceptance of leadership, and participation in the media are based on lack of access to information/communication. Empowerment, solidarity, visibility, and alternative spaces for cultural expression were among the most pronounced outcomes. On contrast, long-term social and institutional outcomes remained unclear.

Table 2: TCCM Framework Analysis (1991–2000)

Dimension	Sub-Dimension	Dominant Patterns Observed	Emerging Shifts	Research Gaps Identified
Theory (T)	Feminist Empowerment Perspectives	Strong focus on women’s oppression, empowerment, and gender inequality	Early move toward linking empowerment with participation and agency	Lack of integrated theoretical models
	Participatory Development Perspectives	Development and education viewed as tools of empowerment	Recognition that gender-blind participation models are inadequate	Limited theory explaining household–community interaction

	Public Sphere / Communication Perspectives	Women's voice and communication spaces discussed conceptually	Alternative media begins to be seen as an empowerment mechanism	Limited empirical validation of feminist communication theory
Context (C)	Community / Development Context	Women in Third World and developing community settings dominate	Empowerment linked with social and economic participation	Limited urban, institutional, and comparative contexts
	Organizational Context	Women's organizations and internal leadership structures examined	Focus on shared power and non-hierarchical organizing	Lack of cross-country organizational comparison
	Media Context	Community radio introduced as a feminist communicative platform	Media starts emerging as a public sphere for empowerment	Very limited studies on technology-mediated participation
Characteristics (C)	Empowerment Traits	Agency, participation, autonomy, and voice emphasized	Growing recognition of empowerment beyond public participation	Limited measurement of empowerment dimensions
	Leadership Traits	Ambivalence toward leadership and authority in women's groups	Shift toward collective leadership and shared authority	Lack of structured leadership models for women's organizations
	Communication Traits	Access, training, and representational voice highlighted	Media participation seen as a route to empowerment	Little work on communication outcomes and reach
Methodology (M)	Research Design	Conceptual and descriptive studies dominate	Some use of illustrative empirical cases	Lack of explanatory and model-based studies
	Analytical Methods	Interpretive and narrative analysis common	Initial use of case-based reflection	No advanced statistical or longitudinal analysis
	Data Collection	Limited empirical evidence; mostly qualitative and contextual discussion	Small-scale contextual observations appear	Absence of large-sample and comparative datasets

Table 3: ADO Framework Analysis (1991–2000)

Framework Dimension	Variable Category	Dominant Variables Identified	Research Direction Observed	Research Gap Identified
Antecedents (A)	Structural Drivers	Patriarchy, gender inequality, exclusion from decision-making	Structural constraints seen as primary barriers to empowerment	Limited multi-level analysis of barriers
	Organizational Drivers	Hierarchy, power imbalance, leadership tension in women's organizations	Organizational structure linked with women's participation	Insufficient work on governance mechanisms
	Communication Drivers	Lack of access, training, and media representation	Communication access starts being treated as a precursor to empowerment	Limited study of media inequalities
Decisions (D)	Participation Decisions	Engagement in collective action and community participation	Women's entry into participatory spaces emphasized	Little attention to withdrawal or non-participation
	Leadership Decisions	Acceptance, negotiation, and sharing of leadership roles	Leadership becomes a site of feminist tension and adaptation	Lack of formal decision-process models
	Communication Decisions	Involvement in women's radio and public expression	Women's communicative participation begins to gain importance	No study of sustained communication engagement
Outcomes (O)	Empowerment Outcomes	Increased agency, visibility, and social recognition	Empowerment framed as multidimensional and process-based	Lack of validated empowerment outcomes
	Organizational Outcomes	Group solidarity, effectiveness, and collective identity	Reflection and open communication linked with stronger organizations	Limited evidence on long-term organizational performance
	Societal Outcomes	Broader social inclusion and feminist public voice	Alternative public spheres emerge as transformative possibilities	Macro-level policy and institutional outcomes underexplored

Overall Interpretation of 1991–2000

The period from 1991 to 2000 seems to be mainly developmental in nature relative to research on women's empowerment and participation. There was no developed empirical field, for the deliberations centered on normative and conceptual issues that facilitated the later research. A lot of focus was put on how women might gain voice, agency, and collective power within patriarchal structures of social relations. Contrariwise, they also projected that public participation is not regarded as an avenue for empowerment. The private sphere, organizational power relations, and communicative exclusion were shaping the ability of women to act.

The 10-year block could be characterized in context of conceptual feminist theorization, narrow but significant contexts, wide empowerments-oriented characteristics, and mostly descriptive methodology. Through the ADO framework, predisposing factors held those of structural inequality, patriarchal authority, and restricted access to organizational and communicative resources; decisions made were toward the participation of women, leadership engagement, and media involvement. Outcomes were founded on empowerment, solidarity, and emergent feminist public visibility. As such, 1991–2000 could be described as a foundational conceptual phase that would pave the way for further in-depth empirical studies, situated in context-specific settings, on women's empowerment through participation and decision-making.

▪ Literature Synthesis for the Period 2001–2010

The decade between 2001–2010 marked an important transitional moment in the knowledge base about how women are empowered, participate, and communicate. That decade showed a decrease in the transition from the Kraushaar decade (1991–2000) to the Campbell decade, where research efforts began to take attention. (Moscrop& Webber,2017) The literature during this time shifted its attention from the primary conception of the feminist discourse to empirical studies that worked on the theoretical and practical mechanisms through which empowerment manifests in social, organizational, and communicative contexts.

These scholars believed that institutions, community involvement, leadership, and access to media influence the agency and social inclusion of women. They did mention how programs should cater to women, yes, but not regarding what are the practical steps toward women's empowerment; but it has moved beyond portraying empowerment as an ideological construct to projecting it as something that is multidimensional in nature. At present, the latter construct now encompasses economic participation, and the ability of women to participate in making decisions, as well as empowerment for their leadership and access to a platform for communication. Studies indeed start regarding the transforming roles of community-based organizations, such as NGOs, and participatory governance venture for empowering women.

In addition, little did it hurt that this particular decade grew increasingly taller than others in terms of understanding communications or communication vehicles—community media and participatory communication—as a vehicle for social change. Discussion moved onto greater undertakings, with more and more women expressing their voices through media venues, challenging normative

stereotypes, and participating vigorously in the public forum. Thus, the period 2001–2010 may be taken to represent the initiation of a process of empirical consolidation by which theoretical assertions were slowly and steadily propped up by empirical studies.

Table 4: Publication Trend (2001–2010)

Year	Number of Articles	Trend Observation
2001	1	Beginning of empirical exploration of empowerment and participation
2002	1	Increased attention to community participation and gender equality
2003	2	Emergence of organizational and leadership perspectives
2004	2	Greater emphasis on institutional mechanisms of empowerment
2005	2	Community-based development models gain importance
2006	3	Communication platforms increasingly discussed in empowerment discourse
2007	2	Focus on participatory governance and social inclusion
2008	3	Expansion of studies linking empowerment with socio-economic development
2009	2	Increasing use of empirical case studies
2010	3	Consolidation of empowerment research within development and communication studies

The publication pattern shows which the research output is increasing at a slow rate over time suggesting that the topic was gaining academic relevance. Unlike the preceding era, when research was sparse most of it being more of a conceptual nature, these years show growing academic involvement and diversification of research themes.

Table 5: TCCM Framework Analysis (2001–2010)

Dimension	Sub-Dimension	Dominant Patterns Observed	Emerging Shifts	Research Gaps Identified
Theory (T)	Empowerment Theory	Empowerment conceptualized as participation, agency, and resource control	Integration of empowerment with development and governance theories	Lack of unified theoretical framework
	Feminist Institutional Theory	Gender inequality examined within institutional and structural contexts	Institutional reforms seen as facilitators of empowerment	Limited testing of feminist institutional models

	Communication for Development Theory	Communication recognized as a catalyst for social change	Participatory communication models gain prominence	Limited integration with digital communication theory
Context (C)	Community and Rural Development Context	Studies largely focused on rural communities and development programmes	Community organizations seen as empowerment platforms	Limited urban and corporate contexts
	Organizational Context	NGOs and grassroots organizations studied as empowerment agents	Leadership and participation dynamics examined	Lack of comparative organizational studies
	Governance Context	Participatory governance and policy frameworks explored	Role of local governance institutions recognized	Limited analysis of policy effectiveness
Characteristics (C)	Empowerment Characteristics	Agency, participation, resource access, and decision-making emphasized	Empowerment measured through socio-economic indicators	Lack of standardized empowerment metrics
	Leadership Characteristics	Women's leadership roles in organizations and communities examined	Collaborative leadership models emerge	Insufficient leadership development frameworks
	Communication Characteristics	Communication access and media participation discussed	Community media seen as empowerment enablers	Limited exploration of digital platforms
Methodology (M)	Research Design	Increase in empirical and mixed-method studies	Case studies widely adopted	Limited longitudinal research
	Analytical Techniques	Descriptive statistics and qualitative analysis common	Gradual use of survey-based methods	Limited use of advanced quantitative models
	Data Sources	Community-level data and organizational case studies dominate	NGO and development programme data used	Lack of cross-national datasets

Table 6: ADO Framework Analysis (2001–2010)

Framework Dimension	Variable Category	Dominant Variables Identified	Research Direction Observed	Research Gap Identified
Antecedents (A)	Socio-Structural Drivers	Gender inequality, socio-cultural barriers, institutional constraints	Structural context seen as primary determinant of empowerment	Limited multilevel analysis
	Organizational Drivers	NGO participation, community organizations, leadership structures	Organizations viewed as facilitators of empowerment	Lack of organizational performance evaluation
	Communication Drivers	Media access, participatory communication, training	Communication platforms linked with voice and visibility	Limited digital communication research
Decisions (D)	Participation Decisions	Women's involvement in development programmes and governance	Participation linked with empowerment outcomes	Limited examination of participation quality
	Leadership Decisions	Acceptance of leadership roles within organizations and communities	Leadership associated with increased agency	Limited research on leadership training mechanisms
	Communication Decisions	Engagement in community media and communication forums	Communication participation linked with social visibility	Lack of long-term engagement studies
Outcomes (O)	Empowerment Outcomes	Increased agency, self-confidence, and social recognition	Empowerment framed as multidimensional	Lack of validated measurement scales
	Organizational Outcomes	Improved group effectiveness and collective participation	Organizational learning and collaboration emphasized	Limited institutional impact analysis
	Societal Outcomes	Enhanced social inclusion and gender equality awareness	Policy discourse on gender inclusion begins emerging	Limited macro-level impact assessment

Overall Interpretation of 2001–2010

One of the earliest periods of empirical consolidation in women empowerment and participation research is between the years 2001 and 2010. Although much of the theoretical grounding remained heavily feminist and development-oriented, the empirical part increasingly characterized research as examining the implementation of empowerment within communities, organizations, and governance systems.(Wang.J,2026) The research work gradually started concentrating not only on theoretical discussion but also on aspects of empowerment that are measurable like participation, leadership, communication access, and decision-making authority.

The period also manifested a pluralism of theoretical approaches, as well as the extension of the contextual coverage to include community and governance institutions, searching's deeper into empowerment features, and the gradual evolution of methodology through anecdotal case studies and surveys. The role of participation, leadership, and communication engagement; as well, the structural and institutional barriers continued to dictate the antecedents in contrast with enhancing participation as social agents. The literature on outcomes had identified that now result with increased agency, improved relations within organizations, and greater social inclusion.

Taking it all in all, the decade of the 2001–2010 era can be characterized as a shift period in the study of empowerment, where emerging conceptual insights from earlier feminist studies began to be researched empirically with regard to the real mechanisms and high confrontations of empowerment working in real-life social and organizational settings.(Govindharajan .M, 2022).

▪ Literature Synthesis for the Period 2011–2020

From 2011 to 2020, literature went through a growth phase before becoming diverse. The literature from this decade has until recently largely contributed to conceptual bursts on the issue of empowerment, participation, and institutional inclusion, moving on to engage freshly with digital communication, ICT-enabled agency, women's entrepreneurship, social media participation, political representation. public health, and media visibility.(Kushwaha.R. et. all) The literature of these days moved from the period of being contextually and methodologically narrow compared to earlier times. This was obviously evident by studies that involved not only debates but empirical investigations within a plethora of different fields.

Key characteristics of this decade comprise a growing convergence between empowerment mechanisms for women and ICT. Studies started to unveil the ways ICTs, social media, online platforms, and digital access could influence the voice of women, economic participation, expression in public, and socio-economic advancement. The movement also began concentrating more on other areas of empowerment such as engagement with politics, patriarchal power, participation in public decision-making, reproductive and maternal health, leadership, and the growing moment of feminist activism. It was considered to have been the stage in time where the transition went from the traditional discourse on empowerment towards a rather multidimensional understanding where agency was recognized as constructed by societies and their institutional structures, through media infrastructure, digital access, and digitally mediated participation.

A stronger thematic heterogeneity is also evident in literature during the 2011–2020 period. Some studies deliberated on the role of women in governance, elections, and state-building, while others could be seen toward women and entrepreneurship, digital literacy, public voice, violence, health care utilization, and professionalism.(Boateng S.L.; Boateng R.; Anning-Dorson T, 2023).This shows that empowerment research matured into a more interdisciplinary field by intertwining insights from gender studies, media studies, development studies, public policy, political sociology, and health research. Concurrently, there is still a remarkable fragmentation surrounding this period, with no predominant theory or standard measurement framework acceptable to all.

Table 7: Publication Trend (2011–2020)

Year	Number of Articles	Trend Observation
2011	2	Early decade studies focus on patriarchy, deprivation, and political representation
2012	0	No visible publication in the dataset
2013	8	Clear thematic expansion into inclusion, public voice, community radio, and entrepreneurship
2014	2	Continued attention to gender and state-building
2015	4	Greater interest in communication-based intervention and digital empowerment
2016	8	Strong diversification across ICTs, empowerment, public space, health, and development
2017	2	Focused examination of ICT capability and online activist media
2018	7	Emergence of technology, social platforms, machine learning, and civic digital spaces
2019	10	Broader consolidation across leadership, media, women entrepreneurs, and social inclusion
2020	20	Peak growth with strong expansion into health, media, political participation, digital literacy, and professional inclusion

The publication trend, by and large, can be identified with 2011–2020 as the first period of major expansion in the dataset, in which research output became more continuous and visibly accelerated by the end of the decade. The most increased output was pointed in the period 2018–2020, which can be refer as where empowerment research most increasingly absorbed digital participation, communication access, gender advancement, and predictive social analysis. Such growth patterns mark a field that is maturing and transitioning into interdisciplinary research streams.

Read as such through the TCCM and ADO optics, this decade seems to embody thematic elaborations with changing methodologies. Conceptually, literature drew on feminist theory, perspectives of empowerment, capability thinking, communicative agency in developing countries, logic behind gender-and-development issues, media activism, and institutional perspectives on social and political inclusion. Contextually, drastically expanded literature saw political institutions, the digital sphere, entrepreneurship networks, community media spaces, public health settings, and other professional networks under scrutiny.

A good number of features that were of interest in the study include agency, participation, voice, leadership media use, technological access, digital self-efficacy, political inclusion, and health-decision-making. In terms of the methodological orientation, the decade observed a variety of approaches in both conceptual essays, case-based analyses, qualitative studies, empirical studies based on survey data, or some computational methods like sentiment analysis or machine learning. Hence, there is a shift that points to a certain growth in its methodological openness, also exemplified yet constrained by the need for a good theory- and model-building/longitudinal kind of work. The framing of the titles prepared for later periods likewise reflect a move from the greater quantity of concept-driven work to more empirical modelling, while also stressing the need for longitudinal data and far more advanced designs, all of which traces this phase as having evolved from the same pattern.

Table 8: TCCM Framework Analysis (2011–2020)

Dimension	Sub-Dimension	Dominant Patterns Observed	Emerging Shifts	Research Gaps Identified
Theory (T)	Feminist and Empowerment Perspectives	Strong reliance on women's empowerment, patriarchy, gender justice, and agency frameworks	Empowerment increasingly linked with digital access, media participation, and entrepreneurship	Lack of an integrated theory combining gender, technology, and institutional change
	Capability and Participation Perspectives	ICT capability, access, and participation become important explanatory ideas	Empowerment increasingly treated as capability expansion rather than only symbolic inclusion	Limited operationalization of capability dimensions
	Political and Media Perspectives	Public sphere, representation, activism, and media voice gain prominence	Digital media and online platforms begin to reshape empowerment discourse	Limited theory on long-term digital empowerment and online exclusion

Context (C)	Political and Institutional Context	Studies examine municipal councils, elections, state-building, gendered governance, and public representation	Women's political participation seen as a major empowerment arena	Limited comparative analysis across institutional systems
	Digital and Entrepreneurial Context	Social media, ICTs, internet access, and digital entrepreneurship emerge strongly	Online participation becomes a route to economic and symbolic empowerment	Limited work on platform dependency, algorithmic bias, and digital inequality
	Health and Social Development Context	Maternal health, violence, education-entertainment, and community development receive attention	Empowerment increasingly tied to service access and welfare outcomes	Limited integration between health empowerment and communication research
Characteristics (C)	Agency and Participation Traits	Voice, autonomy, decision-making, and public participation remain central	Agency becomes increasingly linked with mediated and digitally networked environments	Limited standardized multidimensional measures
	Leadership and Inclusion Traits	Leadership, public decision-making, and institutional visibility become more visible	More attention to women as leaders, professionals, and public actors	Lack of dynamic models of leadership development
	Media and Technology Traits	ICT use, social media engagement, digital self-efficacy, and media participation grow in importance	Technology-mediated empowerment becomes a major sub-theme	Limited understanding of negative digital experiences and exclusion
Methodology (M)	Research Design	Mix of conceptual, qualitative, case-based, and empirical studies	More applied and issue-specific studies appear across sectors	Limited longitudinal and comparative designs
	Analytical Methods	Narrative, thematic, case analysis, and descriptive empirical approaches dominate	Initial appearance of sentiment analysis, machine learning, and mixed methods	Advanced causal modeling remains limited
	Data Collection	Case narratives, surveys, policy contexts, media content, and social data are used	Digital trace and platform-based inquiry begin to emerge	Lack of consistent large-sample and cross-national datasets

From the perspective of TCCM, the central feature of 2011-2020 is the growth in publication and the widening reach of concepts. No longer is the field looking at empowerment just as resistance to patriarchy or participation in development; it has become increasingly interested in the concept as a mediated, institutional, formidable entrepreneurial, or health-linked supply chain. Thus, it evolves into social, political, and economic expression alike in communication and technology. This makes the decade highly significant in bridging gender studies with contemporary digital and public sphere issues.

Table 9: ADO Framework Analysis (2011–2020)

Framework Dimension	Variable Category	Dominant Variables Identified	Research Direction Observed	Research Gap Identified
Antecedents (A)	Structural and Cultural Drivers	Patriarchy, gender inequality, exclusion, restrictive norms, and unequal access to resources	Structural barriers remain the dominant explanation of disempowerment	Limited multilevel modeling of household, institutional, and digital barriers
	Institutional and Political Drivers	Representation systems, quotas, governance structures, and public decision-making opportunities	Institutional openings increasingly linked to women's voice and leadership	Limited evidence on long-term institutional effectiveness
	Digital and Communication Drivers	ICT access, social media use, digital literacy, online networks, and media participation	Technology becomes a visible enabler of voice, entrepreneurship, and civic engagement	Limited study of privacy, platform power, and digital exclusion
Decisions (D)	Participation Decisions	Civic participation, entrepreneurial engagement, health-service use, and community involvement	Participation broadens from offline collective action to digitally mediated involvement	Little work on disengagement, exclusion, or failed participation
	Leadership and Representation Decisions	Leadership acceptance, public office participation, and professional visibility	Women increasingly examined as decision-makers and institutional actors	Lack of process models explaining leadership emergence

	Communication and Technology Decisions	Adoption of ICTs, social media engagement, online activism, and mediated self-expression	Communication decisions increasingly shape empowerment outcomes	Limited examination of continuance, fatigue, and technological withdrawal
Outcomes (O)	Empowerment Outcomes	Greater agency, voice, autonomy, confidence, and symbolic visibility	Empowerment increasingly framed as multidimensional and context-sensitive	Limited validated scales across contexts
	Socio-Economic and Organizational Outcomes	Entrepreneurial opportunity, professional inclusion, network expansion, and collaborative gains	Empowerment linked more directly with economic and professional advancement	Long-term economic sustainability remains underexplored
	Social and Welfare Outcomes	Health care utilization, awareness, inclusion, and public recognition	Empowerment begins to show measurable welfare and service-related implications	Limited macro-level policy and developmental impact assessment

According to the literature on antecedents, this decade marks a greater expansion of the historical context compared to earlier researches. For example, literature from the first half of this decade identified almost consistently patriarchy and social exclusion, while patriarchal settings conceptualized in social structures. Later research connecting short-stay discourses of media became the key in pointing to institutional settings or frames, media infrastructures and digital access as important enabling or constricting premises in relationship to increasing duration. Likewise, decision variables are seen evolving from simple participation towards the more varied forms of action and work as regards innovative use of digital technology. Outcomes taken together are much more varied now, ranging from symbolic power and collective voice to access to health, self-productiveness, and economic inclusion.

Overall Interpretation of 2011–2020

In its broadest sense, the period under examination could be best described as fortified consolidation and diversification within the field of empowerment literature. Within this paradigm, women's empowerment studies assume a truly interdisciplinary character, increasingly responding to social change. The field moves from an initial narrow focus on patriarchy, participation, and development, into building a broader engagement with subjects such as digital communication, agency fostered by ICT, entrepreneurship, health, leadership, governance, and media representation. More importantly, this was the bridge to allow foundational empowerment research to transfer into a more digitally mediated data-intensive period which has gained greater intensity in literature post-2020.

From the TCCM perspective, the last decade is fixed by many theatrical pluralities, contextual diversification, semantic richness tied to empowerment, and methodological shift toward more empirical and mixed designs. While from the ADO standpoint, antecedents become multidimensional, decisions become multiplicative, and outcomes become multipart. Nevertheless, the literature remains defective in the sense that it does not present coherent theory, long-term validation, or a stable structure to understand how structural inequality, institutional opportunity, and digital technologies jointly affect the empowerment in women as a phenomenon in process.

▪ Literature Synthesis for the Period 2021–2024

The period following the year 2021 marks the most rapidly evolving, recent study on women's participation, empowerment, leadership, and digital communication.(Nwaolikpe O.N.,2021) In this period, the studies have expanded the scope and methodological sophistication considerably in relation to the previous couple of decades. The literature continues to refine and improve itself with the overarching cartography of technology globally, digital governance, online media, artificial intelligence, and platform-created communication environments that affect women in their living stage and social-economic-political participation opportunities.

Scholars in the meantime have surpassed our traditional, older ideas on empowerment enhancing with discussions on digital transformation and technology access, combined with gender equal participation in social perception processes. Scholars are also interested in newer technologies such as social media platforms, artificial intelligence, the digital entrepreneurship system, and the network of online activism in the area of culture being linked to women’s voice, leadership opportunities, and professional inclusion.(Mehan A. ,2024) COVID-19 had further accelerated academic discourse pointing towards online engagement, remote participation, and online collaboration, further strengthening the function of digital communication in shaping empowerment processes.

Another characteristic of this phase was the increased acknowledgment of empowerment as being a social-cultural or institutional issue, which also implies a technological and economic phenomenon. Scholarly research is now investigating how women are using digital tools to access information, to build entrepreneurial ventures, to participate in governance, and to leverage professional networking. The reason is that there has been an ever-mounting intersection between empowerment research and digital sociology, communication studies, innovation studies, public policy, and entrepreneurship studies, which has greatly broadened the analytical scope of empowerment scholarship.

Table 10: Publication Trend (2021– 2024)

Year	Number of Articles	Trend Observation
2021	Moderate growth	Increased research on digital empowerment and ICT adoption
2022	Continued rise	Expansion of studies on online participation and digital entrepreneurship
2023	High research activity	Strong emphasis on technology-driven empowerment and social platforms
2024	Rapid growth	Integration of AI, data analytics, and digital governance perspectives

Published data shows that the period since 2020 was the time when the literature witnessed its quickest surge in size. There was a growing availability of data, social media analytics, and computational research tools with which the researchers turned to study empowerment under new methodological conditions, thereby strengthening the epistemology of the subject.

Table 11: TCCM Framework Analysis (2021–2024)

Dimension	Sub-Dimension	Dominant Patterns Observed	Emerging Shifts	Research Gaps Identified
Theory (T)	Digital Empowerment Theory	Empowerment conceptualized through digital participation and technological access	Integration of empowerment with digital transformation and innovation theories	Limited unified framework connecting technology and gender empowerment
	Feminist Technology Studies	Examination of gender bias in technological systems and digital platforms	Critical analysis of algorithmic inequality and digital exclusion	Lack of empirical validation of feminist technology frameworks
	Innovation and Entrepreneurship Perspectives	Digital entrepreneurship and innovation ecosystems linked with empowerment	Women's participation in digital economies explored	Insufficient integration with mainstream entrepreneurship theories
Context (C)	Digital Ecosystems	Social media platforms, online communities, and digital networks become major contexts	Platform-based participation becomes central to empowerment discourse	Limited research on digital governance structures
	Entrepreneurial Context	Women's start-ups, digital marketplaces, and innovation hubs examined	Digital entrepreneurship recognized as a pathway to empowerment	Lack of longitudinal studies on entrepreneurial success
	Policy and Governance Context	Governments promote digital inclusion and gender-sensitive policies	Policy initiatives aim to enhance digital literacy and technological access	Limited evaluation of policy effectiveness

Characteristics (C)	Digital Agency	Online voice, digital literacy, and platform participation become central traits	Empowerment measured through digital engagement and influence	Lack of standardized metrics for digital empowerment
	Leadership and Innovation Traits	Women's leadership in innovation ecosystems examined	Digital leadership and online advocacy emerge as new dimensions	Limited models explaining leadership in digital environments
	Technology	Adoption of AI, digital tools, and ICT systems studied	Technology acceptance models applied to empowerment research	Need for interdisciplinary measurement frameworks
Methodology (M)	Research Design	Increased use of mixed methods and empirical surveys	Computational approaches such as big data analytics and social media analysis	Limited longitudinal and experimental research designs
	Analytical Techniques	Machine learning, sentiment analysis, and digital trace analysis appear	Integration of computational social science methods	Need for stronger causal modelling
	Data Sources	Digital platforms, online communities, and social media datasets widely used	Cross-platform data collection emerging	Ethical concerns regarding data privacy

Table 12: ADO Framework Analysis (2021–2024)

Framework Dimension	Variable Category	Dominant Variables Identified	Research Direction Observed	Research Gap Identified
Antecedents (A)	Structural Drivers	Gender inequality, cultural norms, digital divide	Structural barriers still influence empowerment outcomes	Limited multi-level modelling
	Technological Drivers	Internet access, digital literacy, AI-enabled tools	Technology access becomes a critical empowerment enabler	Unequal access across regions remains underexplored
	Institutional Drivers	Policy initiatives, digital governance, entrepreneurial support systems	Governments and institutions promote gender-inclusive digital initiatives	Limited evaluation of policy implementation
Decisions (D)	Digital Participation Decisions	Engagement in social media activism, online communities, and digital platforms	Digital participation increasingly shapes empowerment trajectories	Limited understanding of participation sustainability
	Entrepreneurial Decisions	Adoption of digital entrepreneurship and innovation practices	Women increasingly engage in digital start-ups and online marketplaces	Lack of research on business scalability
	Technology Adoption Decisions	Acceptance and use of AI, mobile technology, and digital tools	Technology adoption linked with empowerment outcomes	Need for behavioural models explaining technology adoption
Outcomes (O)	Empowerment Outcomes	Increased agency, autonomy, digital voice, and leadership opportunities	Empowerment increasingly measured through digital influence	Lack of universal measurement scales
	Economic Outcomes	Growth in digital entrepreneurship and income generation	Digital platforms create new economic opportunities	Long-term sustainability remains uncertain
	Societal Outcomes	Greater social visibility, gender equality awareness, and policy advocacy	Digital activism influences social change and policy discourse	Limited evidence of structural transformation

Overall Interpretation of 2021–2024

The period onwards from 2021 equated to the Start of the digital transformation phase in the literature on women's empowerment and participation. With some significant developments, there is also Hermeneutic space to discuss how technological ecosystems are shaping the agency, leadership, and socio-economic participation of women. The digital platforms, artificial intelligence (AI), and online infrastructures of communication form part of the road toward empowerment—lending themselves toward various aspects of entrepreneurship, activism, professional networking, and knowledge sharing for the women concerned.

The period can be summed up according to the TCCM perspective: a period of theoretical fusion between empowerment and digital transformation theories, which have been profoundly influenced by the broader contexts developed around digital platforms and entrepreneurial complexes; at the same time, both digital agency and adopting technology have played a major role, together with such sophisticated data-extraction methods as application use and mixed designs on combined data. In the perspective of ADO, it could be fitted in that technological access and institutional support systems have emerged as pre-standards, with digital participation and technology acceptance as main decision variables which have an impact on the repercussion of the empowering outcomes. Undefined, such outcomes could find ways to evolve into socio-economic transformation, such as among others, digital entrepreneurship, an upswing in visibility, and progressively increased public participation.

Currently, scholarship states that the empowerment of women is increasingly built upon digital infrastructures, innovation ecosystems, and technology-driven participation, suggesting a move toward a more technically mediated view of empowerment in contemporary societies.

Conclusion

A comprehensive analysis of the literature has shown a definite trend towards evolution in the academic discussion around women's empowerment, participant engagement, governance, leadership, and communication over the last 30 years. Research from earlier decades has focused primarily on theoretical concepts; these are based largely on feminist philosophies and structural inequality perspectives; therefore, empirical studies that considered how women are empowered will have been added progressively over the past two decades. Research has also broadened the scope of the literature, with regards to topics investigated, due to new technology-related topics (e.g., digital participation, technology access and use, entrepreneurship, governance, and public representation). The use of the TCCM and ADO frameworks reveals an evolution of the literature from a primarily theoretical focus to a wider range of multimodal and multi-perspectival scholarly research that examines the way in which empowerment is understood to be a continuous developing process and is influenced by structural factors, institutional opportunities, and the technological environment.

Limitation of research

In addition to evidence of positive development in the literature, there are still significant gaps in the literature (e.g., lack of consensus on theoretical frameworks, a lack of longitudinal studies, and a lack of cross-context comparisons). There is a clear need for the identification of these gaps to enable further development of the body of literature assessing the evolution and nature of empowerment processes against a back drop of rapidly evolving social, economic, and digital systems.

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