

GENDER REPRESENTATION IN SENSITIVE NEWS STORIES: A TALE OF THE PAKISTANI PRINT MEDIA

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ABSTRACT. *Gender-sensitive reporting is a recent issue in the feminist media studies. Especially in the sphere of crime reporting, it is very necessary to maintain an ethical standard when one must report gender sensitive news. Gender-sensitive issues always involve feminist interpretations by the media practitioners, issues like domestic violence and sexual harassment are not properly reported by the newspapers. An element of the sensationalism is a major portion of the news related to the rape and kidnapping. Media should give special consideration to the gender-sensitive news with an eye of social responsibility and ethical boundaries should be seen in the report. In this research focus is given to the frequency of gender-sensitive news in terms of the gender representation and a comparison is given between frequency of crime news and gender-sensitive news in two newspapers which includes one Urdu and one English newspaper to advance the understanding about the coverage about the gender representation in the media. Additionally, a separate comparison among the gender-sensitive news stories is also analyzed to explore the frequency of gender-sensitive news covering the male and female. Then, further analysis is conducted to explore the gender-sensitive news stories which represents the women that how much coverage represents the gender-sensitive issues about the household women and working women.*

Keywords: Gender, Sensitive news, household women, working women.

1. Introduction. Media is considered as the representative of the society at the same time it has potential to serve as the crucial communication tool for the change [1]. Therefore, the coverage of the media can be the reflection of the events taken place in the society as it gives representation to the marginalized population of the society which has less freedom in terms of the expression and access to the justice. Thus, media are a voice of the people, which have less opportunity to access the justice in the meanwhile it has several issues to deal with. Gender representation in the sensitive news items is always challenging for the media to deal with the ethical and social responsibility manners to avoid the sensitivity. Similarly, addressing the attitudinal role of mass communication tools such as advertisements are well known in prior studies [2]. However, the focus of such studies was on the perpetual aspects of contents like advertising. Further, there are traces and critics in the media that it sells sensitivity specifically while it can be seen in its frequency in the male and female representation in the sensitive news stories. The current study is focused to explicate the representation of both genders in the sensitive news stories in the in the meantime to investigate its dynamics. Furthermore, it is said that the media is a mirror of the society it reflects what exists in the society [3].

Therefore, during this process media also end up reflecting all the inequalities that exist in the society as well and absorbs those inequalities in its structures. Within the context of Pakistan inequalities relating to gender are prevalent and when reflecting society, media knowingly or unknowingly reflect those

inequalities and most of the times in involved in promoting and further perpetuating them, Gender is a position of being a man or a woman with an orientation to civilization or intellectual variations rather than natural. Sex is the biological distinction of what it is to be male or female. All over the world these distinctions are confused and impact the progress of both genders. Whereas, the biological composition of a lady does not restrict them from exercising their rights and exploring opportunities, the roles, and responsibilities associated with the cultural definition of what it is to be a woman strictly limits women from transcending the private sphere, and go beyond the role of nurturing and caring as prescribed by the society [4].

Patriarchal understandings of what a male out to do and how a woman lead her life to permeate all social, political and civil structures and institutions. Media is one of them mindfully or inadvertently at times ends up covering news, producing shows, according to the parameters defined by the society relating to both genders. Therefore, it is not infrequent for society to observe a woman being within the home, catering, cleanup and men go outside to earn the bread and being productive in various media content society [5]. While on one level the coverage of the media is exceedingly partial when it deals with feminine, on another level woman who does jobs in the media have to face injustices that vary as of prejudice in endorsement and appointing to sexual annoyance in the different section of the organization, which leads to a cyclical pattern where news is produced by the men for the men relegating women's voices, concerns and opportunities behind. The technique or notion of male or female like a sociable development in addition to national seeing that negotiated explanation, launch feminist press scientific studies via the majority of the tensions associated with indication types of communication [6]. Paralyzing arguments concerning the autonomous male or female info associated with particular person female press companies grow to be redundant by providing precedence inside the institutional framework of the press production the multiple social context reality of the media texts is an acknowledged as in the relative autonomy of ordinances to accommodate them to their own situation society [7].

Women are taken seriously as active creators of their own daily lives and experiences, instead of being medical sides as helpless victims of dominant culture. In the true feminist tradition of undermining certainties rather than advancing than. Therefore, it would like to raise some new problems related to the feminist media studies which include gender sensitivity in crime news. Issues like rape, sexual harassment, domestic violence, kidnapping of women, property issues related to the women, baseless allegations at the workplace and in a home for women and it is necessary to dig out the news treatment related to the women. The researcher will conduct research on different spheres of gender-sensitive reporting and crime news to evaluate the issue wise coverage in two leading newspapers. The topic is stated as the Study of Gender Sensitive Reporting on Crime News in Dawn & Khabarain.

1.1 Objective of the Study

1. Explore gender issues within media on various levels.
2. Understand the concept of gender stereotypes.

2. Review of Literature. Gutek [8] says that reporting on women in most societies to highlight all cases of violent conflict or for their welfare, to continue to be gender insensitive and even blind-gender for all. Now, it is the time in which we can correct our vision through the media, which is very broad and explored nowadays and reporting on two major gender issues like.

1. Gender and conflict
2. Women's leadership in our newsroom

2.1 Gender and Conflict. Scholars have also highlighted that how journalists create a conflict in their reporting [9]. Daily front page news, highlighted in the newspaper and T.V channels, but in actual journalist really does not know this report origin. But their focus is on that so, woman gender issues are put back, from here different issues are suppressed and in actual journalist does not know how to resolve this kind of gender conflict [10]. This demands a reliable journalism because it's not just the matter of sophistication or satisfaction and for this purpose half-dozen languages are available. In media-reporting, we often put aside heroic sides of women's lives and are unable to acknowledge. Gender inequality we can say that it is a form of cultural denial of human rights. Women's issues were not conflicting issues, as it seemed [11]. The reality is that women are almost equal in power to men. Women act as a supporter of men as soldiers or often as fighters and mothers. But they have fought to get more rights and gender equality[12].

Ammu [13] has also a gender perspective on the conflict in which the need of highlighting the violence and pain of women in and outside the house. Now, the need of another thing is also important in which cultural and traditional are used to curtail human rights. The economic and social burden is more on the shoulder of women when food and shelter are not available and women of that area a responsibility to protect their families.

Sexual violence is one in conflict situations, Rape is a crime, but it is sometimes minimized by the media as a side-effect. Terrible amount of rape in Sudan can be an example of sexual violence. Rape is used to degrade, humiliate or punish the women in male dominant society, but this law should also be used for men. Now, the main thing is that women also suffer likely to men in gender beliefs, in which many stories are therefore sexual suffering related to women, but the response is not there in the end of every story. So male and female are suffering, male for their punished and female who don't know about the root causes and possible resolutions and healthy responses.

Gender conflict has bared an inequality of treatment of gender. Ignoring the conflict issues, the media tend to reinforce gender stereotypes, (which changes according to the situations). In conflict stories, they are portrayed as a sensational victim, but the other side of women as a fighter, community leaders, support workers, needs house-holder and workers, mothers and daughters. They are rarely considered to be highlighted by the media.

To highlight these kinds of stories the context should be pure. If the wording, idea or context is not attractive, then the image of the framing has conflict. The image of framing conflict stories will remain same. So, we should be sensitive to the choice of words [14.15]. This kind of reporting is not incompatible. If anything can be seen through sharp eyes, then it reveals the current gender inequality and the real needs and interests underlying conflict. By adopting this behavior media becomes more accurate, more belonged and more professional.

2.2. Making Change. Literature suggests that after getting conflicting analysis, by adopting some very tangible actions, we can handle these conflicting issues. Further, changing the policies of media is likely as changing the policies of the Government. So, the media has to make changes by itself level. Newsrooms are usually used to operate gender-blind societies so; they should keep a balance in social values to give equal attention [16]. Individually, all reporters should develop gender-sensitivity in their work.

2. Reporting process starts with editors who select what kind of stories to cover and who should cover them. Then this selection deals with copy-editors or line producers who determine what to cut and what to emphasize. Those changes are ever seen by senior editor and executive produces. Some influences come from outside and these influences and powerful signals back into the newsroom that shapes the perception of what is news [17].

According to scholars [18], some gender issues are purely related to women or very soft which should be dealt by a lady reporter, but these kinds of issues are not given to them for coverage. In conservative areas, female victims feel more comfortable talking to a female reporter as compared to a male reporter. So, to resolve this issue, female reporters should be appointed, but they must have gender awareness. Parekh has observed that woman journalist cannot automatically be expected to be sensitive or interested in gender issues. Cultural socialization and competitiveness profession make some reporters see themselves as journalists and women second. So, both male and female should have the knowledge of gender ebullience.

In another view [20] newsrooms have no concern with families and social pressure which women journalists face. There are inflexible routines and working hours which are not suitable for women, but the male can easily manage. So, we have two final some ways for female journalists to work away from home space. Employment practices, especially for women reproductive rights remain fair, in this maternity leave conditions are non-existent in the whole procedure. So, in this case, equal work does not receive equal pay. The executive initiative should be to educate all staff about national and international conventions, about gender and workplace and human rights. So, all staff should know what action to take if these rights are infringed [21]. The problem of a newsroom's gender – blindness in news value, when it produces unbalanced sensational stories related to stereotypical characters. Brief mention of stories is given in the newsroom, which is not sufficient it just seems like a paid up-service. The associated press stylebook is responsible for it [22].

According to the North [23], the phenomena of sexual harassment in various forms found in newsrooms. So, the manager should develop a code of ethics in this workplace, including serious penalties for sexual harassment. So, the company should provide every kind of support for women journalists like starting of late night transpiration for women practically, rather than a sign of pampering women.

Above recommendation is consulted for women conflict and Journalist Book. If these problems will not solve the conflict still can alerts reality, empowers, centers and renders invisible.

2.3. The feminist interpretation. During many decades, the researchers and theories have challenged the assumptions of the people that a rape accuser is a person who cannot control his several desires and feelings and cannot control his lust. Some theories are of the view that women herself participate in the rape by wearing vulgar dresses and reductive behavior by leading men to rape her ultimately [24,25]. Many interpretations say that rape ratio is high because of male dominance. Male is of the view that a woman is a weak, inferior and an object of pleasure [26].

All this analysis regarding rape and the attitude of the rape accusers is the part of study and research was made on 133 rapists. The angry rapist appeared to be expressing hatred and revenge against women, many of them were found to be having physical relationships with women or having other sexual outlets. Many of the rape accusers commit the criminal act of rape because they were of the view that they are having a dominant position over women [27].

Study of feminist was also of the view that some cases of rape also occur when woman misbehave with a man and as a revenge, a man rapes a woman. It is often found in court about a man saying “Woman has got what she deserved. She is herself responsible for her actions.” This is an excuse given to him. Medea and Thompson (1974). Men, however, are responsible for controlling their own behavior. However, feminist interpretation also says that the will of a woman is a compulsion in a sexual intercourse, a woman’s body is her own property and no one should have sexual access it without her consent [28]. Is it the most common violence against woman? It is a violent attack that injures a woman, i.e. wife battering. This type of violence is often found with fear, guilt, and harassment.

In 1970’s the wife-faltering issue got the attention of researchers, mostly it is found in male dominant society, although it is not permitted by law, such practice is very common nowadays, it reflects the relations of a man and woman in a society. It is seen as a normal and routine matter, but it is not normal behavior of a man towards a woman [29]. However, the research shows that not only the women who are married are beaten by their husbands, unmarried women are also beaten by men sometimes, but some cases, men are also beaten by women, and sometimes children also become the victim of such violence [30].

Media frames are persistent patterns of cognition, interpretation, and presentation, of selection, emphasis, and exclusion, by which symbol handlers routinely organize discourse, whether verbal or visual [31]. Therefore, the news frames are located within a particular culture and are products of the complex interaction between sources, media, and audiences. The political culture determines overall norms and values in a society, particularly relating to women, their place in the public and private sphere and the roles and responsibilities associated with them [32].

Social responsibility theory demands obligation of the media and the advertisers are also a major part of the media contents sponsor they are also obligated through the ethical bounds, so, that they all work properly for the betterment of the society by giving responsible coverage to manage social problems [33].

Gender-sensitive reporting, especially on crimes, also demands some obligations which can portray images of women in society. High amplification of the gender-sensitive issues may cause bad depiction of women image in society.

2.4. Hypothesis

- H1; More coverage of the gender-sensitive news related to males would be given in Khabarian than Dawn.
- H2; More coverage of the gender-sensitive news related to working women would be given in Dawn than Khabarian.
- H3; More coverage of the gender-sensitive news related to the household women would be given in Khabarian than Dawn.

3. Research Design. For this particular study, the content analysis method is selected as a research design. Quantitative and qualitative method of data collection is used. Quantitative data is the information in the form of numbers. This study considers the contents of the two leading newspaper “Dawn” and “Khabarain” from 1st January to 31 December (one year) as the universe of the study. In this study, the researcher has selected crime and gender-sensitive news items of the two leading newspapers “Dawn” and “Khabarain” from 1st January to 31 December as the population of the study. This study considers one year sample of the two leading newspapers “Dawn” and “Khabarain” selected from 1st January to 31 December. A systematic sampling technique is used, in which each odd number, the date is selected for this study from the aforesaid period. The

unit of analysis and unit for the coding is the “Crime News” and “Gender Sensitive News” published in the two leading newspaper “Dawn” and “Khabarain” from 1st January to 31 December. Among

4. Results. The overall results show that there is more coverage is given to the crime news in comparison to gender-sensitive news as 8633Ccm space is given to it; and in the analysis between gender sensitive news more coverage is given to household women as 2331Ccm than the working women’s space is given to it in the one year by Dawn.

Table 1. One Year Coverage in Dawn

Type	Space in Ccm	Percentage
Crime News	8633	72.5%
Gender-sensitive News (Male and Women)	3267	27.5%
Total	11900	100%
Gender sensitive News (Male)	634	19.4%
Gender-sensitive News (Women Overall)	2633	80.6%
Gender sensitive News (Working Women)	302	11.5%
Gender-sensitive News (Household Women)	2331	88.5%

Table 2. One Year Coverage in Khabrain

Type	Space in Ccm	Percentage
Crime News	28625	83.1%
Gender-sensitive News (Male and Women)	5819	16.9%
Total	34444	100%
Gender sensitive News (Male)	390	6.7%
Gender-sensitive News (Women Overall)	5429	93.3%
Gender sensitive News (Working Women)	208	3.8%
Gender-sensitive News (Household Women)	5221	96.2%

The Overall results show that more coverages gave to the crime news. As 28625Ccm space is given to it in the whole year by Khabrain. At the same time, the coverage regarding the household women is high among the gender-sensitive news stories. The second priority is given to the sensitive news stories about the male and less coverage is given to the working women category among the gender-sensitive news on women.

5. Summary and Discussion

In the analysis of gender-sensitive news more coverage is given to household women as 2331Ccm coverage is given to it. The second priority is given to the gender-sensitive news related to males as 634Ccm space is given to it and 302 Ccm space is given to the gender-sensitive news related to the working women in the whole year by Dawn. In the analysis of gender-sensitive news more coverage is given to household women as 5221Ccm coverage is given to it. The second priority is given to the gender-sensitive news related to males as 390Ccm space is given to it and 208Ccm space is given to the gender-sensitive news related to the working women in the whole year by Khabrain. It is not recognized in the light of data that Khabarian gives more coverage to the gender-sensitive news related with males in comparison with Dawn as 634Ccm space is given to the gender-sensitive news related with males by Dawn in whole year and 390Ccm space is given to the gender-sensitive news related with males by Khabarian in the whole year. It is recognized in the light of data that Dawn gives more coverage to the gender-sensitive news related with working women in comparison with Khabarian as 302Ccm space is given to the gender-sensitive news related with males by Dawn in whole year and 208Ccm space is given to the gender-sensitive news related with working women by Khabarian in the whole year. It is established in the light of data that Khabarian gives more coverage to the gender-sensitive news related to the household women in comparison with Dawn as 5221Ccm space is given to the gender-sensitive news by Khabarian in the whole year and 2331Ccm space is given to the gender-sensitive news by Dawn in the whole year.

This study explored the gender-sensitive news coverage and provides the insight of the mainstream media. The selection of the crime news and sensitive issues regarding gender have provided the foundation for the analysis that how main explicative media covers these issues. Further, the consideration of the English and Urdu press has helped to identify and compares the trends of gender-sensitive issues in crime news in the leading press outlets. Based on the exploratory nature, the study is limited to provides the trends of the media coverage. Future may consider the casual designs to explain the impacts of the gender-sensitive issues in advertising as well. In addition, scale development related to the gender-sensitive measurement scale is lacking. This is the important area specifically in the cultural context of Pakistan. This may be considered in the future by carrying out the content validation of the existing scales on gender-sensitive issues as recommended in some recent studies that scale validation in a cultural context is crucial.

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