

# **EMERGING ISSUES OF WOMEN EMPOWERMENT IN PRINT MEDIA: A STUDY ON NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION**

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## **DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN JOURNALISM AND MASS COMMUNICATION**

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# CHAPTER 6

## CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

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### 6.1 Conclusions

This chapter highlights the conclusions derived from the analysis of data of four newspapers- Jansatta, Hindustan Times, The Times of India & Dainik Jagran related to the emerging issues of women empowerment in print media.

Women empowerment is considered a significant instrument for bringing the social change in the society and people's perception. For empowering women, it is very important to make them aware about their rights. Media plays an important role in addressing various problems faced by women thereby drawing attention of the concerned authorities towards different women issues and making them work on different mechanism & ways to combat the problems faced by them. Print media possess a great power of influencing people on different developmental issues of women. However, in the study the issues related to women empowerment got less visibility. Some stories didn't even get prominence even if they appear. The analysis of the current study shows that the issues are pre-dominantly event oriented.

News items/opinions related to women's achievement got limited coverage in the back pages or no coverage at all.

From the data analysed it is quite clear that the coverage of different issues related to women empowerment are absolutely event based. Only issues of high significance and national importance gets the coverage, however there are several issues that can be covered in a more sustained manner.

My research work holds true of my hypotheses that the coverage of different issues related to women empowerment in the four national dailies is not adequate. Despite women being active in every sphere, they are either ignored or under-represented. And the subject of women issues is generally side-lined, marginalised, disregarded and mistreated. They are not given enough space. The coverage is usually based on the urban areas neglecting the other areas which constitutes the majority of the India. Very few women-based issues make it to the front page.

The Indian print media under study is not doing enough to draw the attention of policy makers and readers to women's issues so that concrete debates are done and appropriate laws can be enacted to enhance their status in the society. There is a high possibility that less coverage by the established national dailies of India might get neglected by their readers. Such a coverage doesn't not have any sort of positive impact on them as unable to add an insight on the empowerment of women.

The coverage of different issues of women empowerment other than sports did not get enough coverage which could have helped in increasing the status of women in the society. Thus, media should highlight more on the positive coverage of women empowerment. Issues like curbing dowry, child marriage & other social evils, education, equal rights, law & order, justice, politics, achievement, safety & security, health/hygiene, welfare of the society, recognition, self-reliance,

etc. should get adequate space in the print media rather than the covering negative or sensational issues related to women.

The research stands true to The Agenda-Setting Theory and the Gatekeeping Theory of mass communication as the print media highlights other issues over women empowerment.

Print media's focus on other issues and downplaying issues related to women empowerment actually ignores women's active contribution in the different walks of life. Such coverage set people's frame of mind that women are inferior to men, someone who are easy prey to crimes, women can't handle entrepreneurial work, not an able decision maker, they can't participate in the economy of the nation, etc. There's a great need to bring about a change in the representation of women in print media. More coverage should be done related to the women empowerment so that people's perceptions about women change and they could enjoy the status they actually deserve.

The data collection of four national dailies over the period of one year clearly shows that the emerging issues of women empowerment in print media is highly

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concentrated around sports. The coverage of women empowerment issues is not justifiably done in the newspapers. Other relevant issues are not given adequate attention in these newspapers. Out of the total coverage it's evident that the top most read Hindi daily of India- *Dainik Jagran* gave highest number of issues related to women empowerment.

The maximum coverage of news items was given by a Hindi national daily -*Jansatta*. However, it did not carry any of the opinions related to the theme. In fact, *Hindustan Times* carried the maximum number of opinions. English dailies under study in comparison to Hindi newspapers did not do enough coverage.

The coverage in terms of area covered in per square centimetres was almost equal in *Hindustan Times*, *Dainik Jagran* and *Jansatta*. Least coverage in terms of number of columns and area per square centimetres was done by *The Times of India*. *Hindustan Times* gave highest coverage in terms of columns in news items as well as opinions.

Maximum number of news stories were filed from the nation and the source of maximum stories was different news agencies (Government/ Private) established in India. Almost all the sources of the opinions were acknowledged except the editorials.

More than half of the news stories (67.80%) under study were given with photographs. *Dainik Jagran* used the maximum number of photographs with various news items and *Jansatta* used the minimum number of photographs. Maximum opinions were supported with photographs.

Opinions in *Hindustan Times* gave the highest number of photographs.

Maximum number of news items were placed on the sports page as the maximum sub issues were related to sports only. Barely a few news items made it to the front page.

Maximum coverage was related to the economic indicator as various achievements in the sports was considered as a sub theme of the economic indicator only. Minimum coverage was done on legal aspects of women empowerment. Social aspects related to women in India were highlighted the most in the opinions of four newspapers (excluding *Jansatta*). Least coverage in opinions were given to the economic indicator of women empowerment. Opinions focussed on the

health/hygiene, rights, fashion, equality of women, various achievements made by women in different fields like sports, education, politics, legal, etc.

Out of all the sub themes, maximum coverage was done related to sports. Major developmental issues like health, education, law, justice, curbing issues like dowry, infanticide/feticide, trafficking/prostitution, etc. were either missing or marginally covered by the four newspapers.

Unfortunately, issues related to rural women were seen rarely in the publications under study.

*Dainik Jagran* almost regularly features its entertainment section called as *Manranjan*. The entertainment stories in this section is related to the Bollywood actress. So, the marginalisation of important women's issues and almost regularly addressing such stories must be avoided. A regular column/ section must be added in the newspapers just like *Manranjan* wherein issues, opinions, success stories, etc. can be put forward for the readers and actual process of women empowerment can be initiated.

The coverage done by the print publications were general in nature. Proper sensitisation of readers by addressing different types of news items/opinions related to women empowerment in print media was rare.

Meaningful coverage related to women is less covered in the print media. News about female sportsperson participation or winning any event made the maximum news in the print media. It is followed by achievements made by women like politicians, judges, etc. they are hardly given coverage for health/hygiene, agricultural activities, economic activities, etc. No clear voice has been made to make the women feel more empowered.

It is quite evident from the study that for media, different issues addressing women empowerment is of no significance to the readers as well for the sale of the newspapers. The media has completely forgotten its responsibility of creating awareness about various women issues in the society. Less priority is been given to the women, who makes almost half the population of India.

**Highlighting the women**

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issues on special days like International Women Day or Mother's Day or Girl Child Day won't serve the purpose.

Such coverage is the result of journalist's professional socialisation and infusion of patriarchal perspective within a social order.

Also, such a minimal coverage of women empowerment by print media can be related to limited access of women and unequal participation in decision making authority of the media organisations and governing bodies that actually formulates and implements the policies related to media. Therefore, the power to design media policies and major decisions related to media is still is not with the women media practitioners.

The current study provides with an insight that a lot has to be done for women empowerment in India. All the media forms- Print, Electronic, Online, etc. have a significant role to play in this as it helps in shaping opinions of people. The adequate and positive representation of all the issues of women empowerment is done, it will surely bring women in the main discourse.

## **6.2 Recommendations**

On the basis of the major findings of the study, following are the recommendations to enhance the status of women in our society:

- Women and various important women's issues have been ignored in the economy, in politics, in different power circles, in the media and in the stereotyped minds of many. In light of these developments in our country, constructive and strong efforts are required to eliminate this one sided and often ignored media representation of women. Also, women need to take a stand to be counted as a strong individual, to make her presence felt in different areas like politics, education, etc.
  
- As there are few women in comparison to men in most of the leadership positions in India. It is highly recommended that the public and private sector make constructive measures to ensure that a greater number of women are employed, encouraged to such positions where they are recognised themselves as a source of news coverage.  
This can be achieved by launching different policies and programmes, legal framework especially for women.
- It is highly recommended that the media organisations should employ more women at all levels of their different departments. Inclusion of women within the media regulatory bodies is also the need of the hour. All the people working in these media houses should be gender sensitised so that news can be redefined while keeping women in mind and to make sure just, fair and appropriate coverage of women.
  
- The print media should refrain themselves from representing women as weak and inferior to men. Rather, it should promote women in a more positive role and present women in a realistic image rather than sensationalised coverage of women.
  
- Also print media should allocate special page addressing different issues related to women, wherein the space can be judiciously used for dissemination of information, opinions or ideas revolving around the empowerment of women in India.
  
- Different women's organisations (National Commission for Women, CARE, etc.) working in India should get associated or establish alternative media, like, community radio, rural newspapers at the grassroots levels to cater different issues of women empowerment as all issues doesn't get the space in the print media. They must keep a check on the portrayal of different issues of women empowerment by media houses. This action may not be welcomed by the owners of these media organisations, but this might raise awareness about different ill-treated news coverage related to women empowerment.

- A broader study on the emerging issues of women empowerment should be done, not just covering the four Delhi/NCR based dailies, rather other newspapers from different language and areas can be considered get the better understanding and results. Considering all the newspaper supplements with the main newspapers will give deeper insights about the coverage.