

Women And Media: An Analytical Study on Women Portrayal in Today's Time

Nasir Kasam Sheikh

Asst. Prof, Shri Vitthal Rukhmini College Sawana Ta. Mahagaon Dt.Yavatmal

Abstract- This paper is a contemporary study on how the Media is projecting Women in today's time and what is actually required or expected from the media. We are still talking about equal chances and equal representation and coverage to Women in all the ways possible. This is not limited to Women as a homemaker or like a mere subject anymore. Women are doing wonders and adding to society but the Media is yet to understand that. The paper carries out a google survey from people aged between 15-50 years with good educational background establishing the fact that Media is the primary body which shapes the opinion of people and therefore certain changes, or in fact certain efforts are required from Media to project the image of a woman equally by producing good programmes, and giving unbiased coverage to them.

Keywords: Media, Women Portrayal, Equality, Position of Women in Media

INTRODUCTION

Since time immemorial humans have earned the range of distinctions from becoming great conquerors by shifting around erecting and destroying kingdom over kingdom to pioneering great business ventures which still crave to quench their thirst centering around the new business gimmick of 'demand and supply'. At the same time we may lag behind in terms of empowering certain sections which have been imploring for its emancipation and equal representation. One such section comprises 'women' which have been at the center of it. Over the course of time, besides investing into the contemporary scientific advancements we have equally succeeded in perpetuating existing gender inequalities, though vaguely visible but having the same and significant effect. These differences and inequalities tend to vary with time and place, and oftentimes result in stigmatization if tried to budge from the norm.

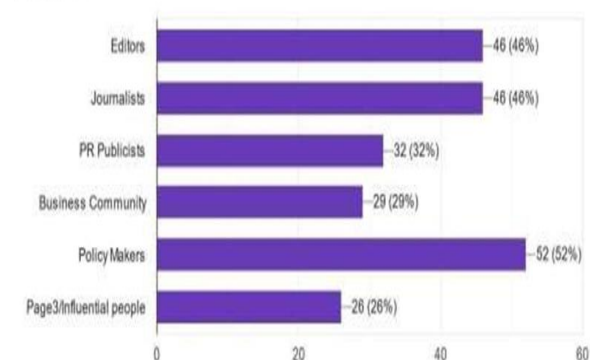
Seemingly, one of the most acclaimed avenues at this

crucial juncture should be the role of Media in ensuring non-stigmatized, non-stereotyped representation as well as a fairly dissected view from the old and conventional ways of portraying women and their problems. While we are entering into the tech age we must also be cognizant of the persisting difficulties faced by women in the workplace which oftentimes surfaces in the form of #MeToo and #TimesUp movements. It's true that we are narrowing down the gender gap and promoting gender parity in every possible manner but it's also true that we lag far behind the expectations.

Being an outlier takes a heavy toll even on capable and achieving women: ignoring presence, stifled voice, and exaggerated mistakes. Proliferation of information has now strengthened and become comparatively faster with the emergence of New Media. This has also enabled ill and corrupt elements to tap into the indecent portrayal of women through various platforms. In an attempt to protect women's dignity, the government, in 2012, consolidated a legal machinery by making amendments to the Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act, 1986. The ultimate aim was to put an end to the existing stereotypes which are still perpetuated through Multimedia Messaging Services and the Electronic Media.

Who is responsible for ensuring that all genders are represented in the media

100 responses



This chart from the current study re-establishes the fact that primarily it is the Media people who ensure that all genders are represented in the Media. The power of the media to reach the people and form an opinion is very effective. It is not about equal representation as it entirely depends upon the nature of the news but yes, the coverage and program outreach should be equal. As evident in the chart above, the majority of people are saying that Editors and Journalists are mainly responsible for ensuring this. So it becomes their primary responsibility to shape the opinion of people towards Women by writing and producing programs.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Media freedom, media pluralism, media independence, and media safety make up the four axis around which the persona of women in media revolves. In addition to gender inequalities, safety concerns, or under representation, women in media encounter the same challenges and dangers as males. Women are typically slender and sexualized in all forms of media. They are less communicating. They are less opinionated. Additionally, they are much less likely to portray roles as professionals, leaders, or even as women who work for a living in the entertainment sector. Women's presence as news subjects and sources is declining in India, as per a study that was published in *Deccan Herald*¹.

However, the trend in TV media shows a preference for more women at work. This could be interpreted as 'sexism at work reinforcing the notions of glamor' which was studied in *The Global Media Monitoring Project's* sixth edition. This survey was conducted in India in collaboration with the Network of Women in Media in India (NWMI), which revealed the prevalence of women in news as topics and sources. The

other category in which women figured in large numbers is Celebrity, Arts and Media, Sports (25%) followed by Social and Legal (17%), Crime and Violence (15%) and Science and Health (14%), Economy (12%). The fact that more women figured as subjects and sources in the gender and related category indicates that while women are under-represented in news in all categories, they are more likely to appear in news if they are victims of gender-based violence.

Globally, women's presence as spokespeople rose to 24% in 2020 from 19% in 2015 globally. In India however, women's function as spokespeople dropped to 8% in 2020 from 15% in 2015. In a study conducted by *Media Rumble* in collaboration with UN Women (2019), it was revealed that leadership positions such as the ones in the mainstream newspapers like *Economic Times*, *The Hindu*, *The Indian Express* etc, were taken up by women in media, even in 2019².

S.S.Roy (2012) in his article, states that globalization has had a significant impact on India. Globalization brought about significant changes in the economic, cultural, social, and political spheres over time. In the current economic structure, the private sector has been exalted while public sector has been ignored. The development of a specific nation like India has been guided by the open market system and privatization. The author emphasizes on the fact that the state transfers significant authority to private players. Due to this, competition between the producers of various markets will be commonplace. Everyone wants to sell their goods as quickly as possible. Therefore, they use a number of deceptive techniques to sell their items. They are using advertisements to their advantage because of this. The author claims that businesses that are fiercely competitive use the faces and bodies of attractive women to promote their goods. These manufacturers consistently create a large number of goods each day, and there is intense competition to become the top seller. Whether it is necessary or not, they are employing women in this way in order to save money. For instance, ladies are used in the commercials for cigarettes, men's underwear, and shaving products, among other products. For their own purposes, they are inaccurately depicting women³.

In 2012, the government approved changes to the Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act, 1986 in an effort to fortify the legal framework defending women's dignity. The intention was to include emerging technologies like MMS and electronic media as well as some that were left outside the purview of the Act, such as posters and TV shows that support gender stereotypes. To use the media in a progressive way and prevent the negative effects of any such medium of Media, it is imperative to promote a balanced and non-stereotypical portrayal of women in the media⁴. In most societies, women still have limited access to, knowledge of, and power over the

various forms of traditional and contemporary media. In a manner, women are empowered by the rise in their participation in and access to self-expression and decision-making through the media and new communication technology. It is important to promote and continue to research the potent and beneficial role that the media can play in advancing gender equality and the empowerment of women⁵.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main objective of this study is to analyze the portrayal of Indian Women in and through all forms of Media in today's time. Also to bring in light on the image created by media of women by stereotyping or in limited social and professional roles that do not reflect their actual skills and competences; diffusing a model of femininity relegated to the private sphere and epitomized by the values of romance, care, motherhood and domesticity; spreading images that are degrading to women/girls and harmful to their dignity (portraying them as sexual objects, as stupid, as submissive tomen, etc.); promoting images, values and behavior models that are likely to encourage violence against women is the foremost objective of the present study. The paper also tries to define opinion and response of the viewers against the portrayal of women in Media and how do they perceive it. The study is an attempt to to provide insights to Media to adopt a new perspective and the way women are beingprojected. It's a New world; therefore the reporting pattern should also be spic-and-span and not stereotyped.

METHODOLOGY

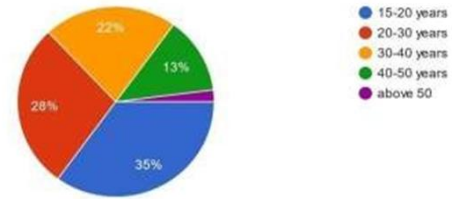
The present study used the Simple Random Purposive Sampling technique; that is, selected based on the objective or purpose of the study.

Sample

The sample comprised of 100 participants aged between 15-50 years old, such that mean age is 20. The main characteristics of the sample are as follows:

Mean = Sum of all observations/Number of observations
 Mean = $\frac{35+28+22+13+2}{5} =$

Age
100 responses



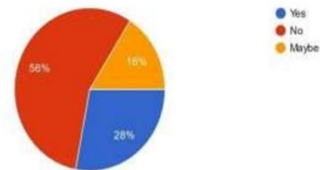
Method of Data Collection

The data is collected by using the Google form survey. This was the most appropriate way for the current study as the survey was done with the objective of collecting the views of the masses on how do they think is media portraying Women in today's time.

Method of Data Analysis

The data obtained from the survey was analyzed by making an analysis of the responses obtained from each research question and generating the common themes found.

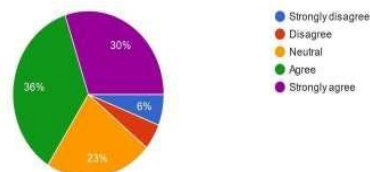
Do you think that all genders are portrayed evenly when appearing in the media (eg. television, radio and press)
100 responses



The age and education of the sample was also mentioned as it established the maturity of the sample and their views and opinion towards society, as to how they perceive things and think about them.

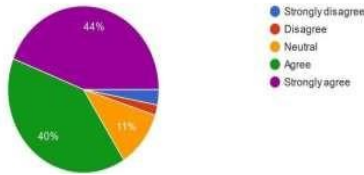
Only 28% people are of the view that all genders are portrayed evenly/equally in Media. That means, Media has a lot to do when it comes to 'Women' as a beat.

Important Women issues like wage discrimination, inequality, education, development get limited coverage in Media in comparison to the space occupied by cinema actresses, models, and the rich women and their hobbies.
100 responses



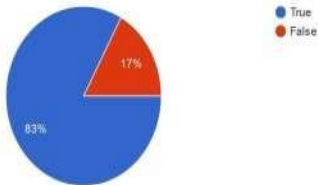
Majority of participants (36%) agree that important women issues like wage discrimination, inequality, education, and development get limited coverage in Media in comparison to the space occupied by cinema actresses, models, and the rich women and their hobbies.

Is there a need to produce programmes on job opportunities for women, women success stories, income generation, their role and their participatio... and comparing them with Sita or Kaikaiyee still?
100 responses



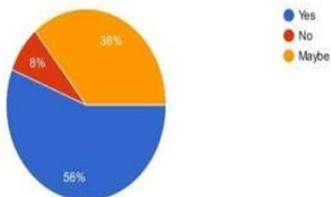
This requires attention as 44% of participants say that there is a need to produce programs on job opportunities for women, women success stories, income generation, their role and their participation in nation building instead of portraying and comparing them with Sita or Kaikaiyee even in this age?

Media is expected to stress on non-traditional skills which can break the myth that women are suited to certain kinds of jobs only.
100 responses



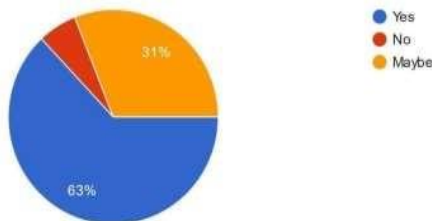
83% of participants are expecting that media must stress on non-traditional skills and break the myths related to women.

Does portrayal of women sometimes contain unintended bias and discrimination in media?
100 responses



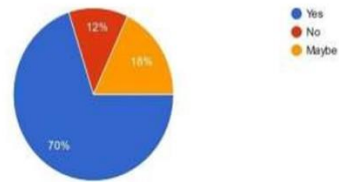
56% of people are of the view that portrayal of women sometimes contain unintended bias and discrimination in media.

Does it show them at times as secondary, bound and dependent?
100 responses



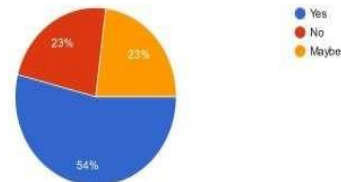
It is important to note that 63% people believe that Media, at times, portrays Women as secondary, bound and dependent.

Do you feel that only sensational matters about women are given extensive coverage, while essential discourses and discussions on women related issues rarely occur?
100 responses



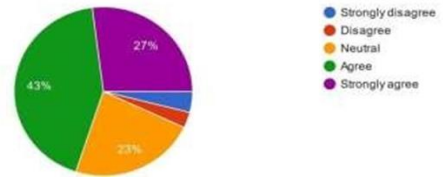
More than 70% people believe that only sensational matters about women are given extensive coverage, while essential discourses and discussions on women related issues rarely occur.

Do you think that media does not offer any serious analysis of women empowerment, their economic rise and conditions and inter-relationships of social issues?
100 responses



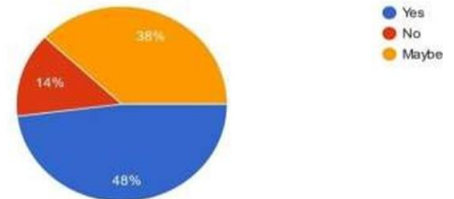
54% participants said that media does not offer any serious analysis of women empowerment, their economic rise and conditions and inter-relationships of social issues.

Sexual objectification and commodification of women are prevalent in movies and advertisements.
100 responses



There is a majority of people (43%) who think that sexual objectification and commodification of women are prevalent in movies and advertisements.

Is there a gender digital divide creating unequal space in Media?
100 responses



Yes, there is a Gender Divide and 48% people are of this view.

ANALYSIS

It is regrettable that media is still not sensitized towards this problem. General but the most prevalent problems which have come out of this study and where

Media must look are

1. Gender Inequality
2. Wage Discrimination
3. Crime against women
4. Under Representation in important position
5. Health
6. Gap on male-female ratio
7. Women Education
8. Women Portrayal

The the following factors should be taken into account by the media.

1. The media needs to portray women who work in the unorganized sector as employees rather than just as wives or daughters. They must be shown as producers rather than just consumers because they are the key earners.
2. The media should make conscious efforts to not only portray the issues faced by women living in poverty, but also to keep an eye out for any depictions of contradicting role models or disparaging remarks about their contributions.
3. Increasing interaction between NGO's, women's social action groups, research organizations, institutes of mass communication, and media people should be fostered in a concerted effort to improve content and coverage.

Many reports have concluded on the complicated challenges surrounding women empowerment. The media frequently publishes research on issues relating to women, which is frequently influenced by market forces. Women are genetically predisposed to shop, according to one study, while another asserts that they prefer males who drive hybrid vehicles. Another study indicates that women are more drawn to bad boy types. This demonstrates that women have primarily become new study subjects in less important fields. Research is actually required to comprehend women and their ability to bring in a new era. When news headlines do not specify where these studies were conducted, it is even more difficult to distinguish between actual research and studies that are marketing ploys. The majority of study findings that are published in important news outlets today are sensationalized to grab readers' attention. This is where the media must intervene to assist readers in learning pertinent information on women's empowerment. It will only be appropriate if they make it explicit in their reports as

to who funded the study and whose peer-reviewed journal it was published in. This should be done in the spirit of complete disclosure. The reader can use this information to determine for themselves which study is more accurate and which is not. Numerous studies on women and the media have been conducted to determine how women are portrayed in the media, how topics relating to women are conveyed, and how much weight is placed on these issues. Such research has shown that women are not portrayed for feminine beauty and artistic portrayal but for infusing sex appeal which more often than not enters the arena of obscenity. To understand why obscenity has increased so much in the media, social activists and the media must do an objective, in-depth investigation. It will be challenging to limit obscenity in the media unless there is a change in how society views women.

Media has the capacity to enhance women's status far more broadly everywhere. They can develop self-regulatory systems that can aid in the eradication of gender-based programming that is inaccurate and inappropriate. It is important to pay close attention to women's issues and how women are portrayed in the media, which in a democracy has enormous power that is only growing. Perhaps it is essential to bring the calming power of women to the Indian people. There is an ethical and spiritual realm in every family and culture that has historically been dominated by women. The media has the power to elevate women's standing globally. They can create self-regulatory mechanisms that will help eliminate erroneous and improper gender-based programming. Women's issues and how they are represented in the media, which in a democracy has a lot of influence and is only getting stronger, are vital to pay particular attention to. Maybe it's crucial to provide the Indian people access to women's calming influence. Every family and culture, especially those where women have traditionally held the majority, has an ethical and spiritual world.

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