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Role of Woman Journalists in Layout & Design

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ABSTRACT

Woman plays variety of significant roles in our society from her birth till the end of life. She is believed to have her aspiration, abilities and qualities as a man does have. It is an irony of our society that even after playing her all the roles in competent manner in the modern society, she is weak because men are still the strongest gender of the society. In fact, the scenario in the field of journalism and mass communication sector has been changing rapidly for last few decades. It is true that the presence of women in media has more than doubled. They constitute only 28.6 percent of the media workforce in Asia and the Pacific region. The ratio of men and women in India is 4:1 and 5:1 in Pakistan. But they have played very insignificant role in making the layout & design of magazines. We cannot deny the fact that few women have attained positions at the decision-making level that influence media policy. But the lack of gender sensitivity in the media is evidenced by the failure to eliminate the gender-based stereotyping and it is found in public and private local, national and international media organizations

Keywords- *Enhancement of women, Portrayal of women in the mass media, Gender sensitivity, Role of women in mass media, Women in Layout & Design*

I. INTRODUCTION

It is also said the Media is the mirror of the society. But the portrayal of women in the mass media as sex icon to increase the appeal of media or a product to the detriment of, or without regard to, the interests of the women is degrading images of women in electronic, print, visual and audio visual media. This does not provide a balanced picture of women's diverse lives and contributions to society in a changing world. In addition, violent and degrading or pornographic media products are also negatively affecting women and their participation in society. No research work has been done regarding the role of women in layout and design especially in India. This article will focus on the subjects why media is not capable to handle and solve the issues of women and woman is not still playing significant role in the field of journalism and mass communication or empowered.

First it was said that Literature is the mirror of the society, but today it won't be wrong if I say that Media is the mirror of society and media reports are reflection of happenings in the society. The media plays very significant role in shaping present days society. It has become the part of the life. It directs and guides our routine as we watch shows on television, music on the radio, read the books, magazines and newspapers. It entertains and educates people about the current affairs and makes or influences the public opinion. Today, we are dependent on media to know about happenings in the society. We know it very well that media is considered to be the 4th estate of the democracy. Media has to have the keen observation on the happenings in the country and has power to analyses the drawbacks of democracy.

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The common people can not imagine the smooth life without the information. After the information revolution the reach of media to common people has increased and it has started to play very powerful role in all spheres of life. The social & electronic media have become the very influential medium of mass communication in the country. In spite of its significant role in the society, There arises the question whether media is wavering from its actual role and giving mere entertaining or biased information. This information is not appropriate and this is why it is big barrier in the development of the healthy society. Today, media has become more responsive towards global market and commercial gains. TV news channels, Magazines and newspapers are trying to make fast money by cashing on the news in wrong direction. They are sensationalizing the news and information to attract the audience. In the race TRP and money making, they have broken all the limits of principles and ethics. There has been low priority of Indian media to portray women as equals in the society. They have been interested in conveying to the public a particular kind of message regarding women. The Indian media loves to see women as home-makers and as ardent consumer. It focuses much more on a whole host of negative or limiting aspects of women, including an intense scrutiny of and emphasis on their looks, and a keen focus on how they're struggling so hard to balance life and work. For them, the woman is the one who buys without end and her hair, dress, shoes, each bears the stamp of the latest, the most expensive products.

According to findings of a study, "Inside the News: Challenges and Aspirations of Women Journalists in Asia and the Pacific", launched by UNESCO, and the UN Women and the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) in 2014-the presence of working women in media has increased double in last two decades. They constitute 28.6 percent of the media workforce in Asia and the Pacific. Our neighbor Pakistan has one of the worst gender imbalances in terms of the gender pay gap. But the situation of India is also not satisfactory. The ratio of men and women is 4:1 in India and 5:1 in Pakistan.

Only two regions in the world, Eastern Europe and Nordic Europe, have crossed "one-third Rubicon" occupying 33 percent or more of the top management and governance jobs in the media. While Asia and the Pacific are located at the other end of the scale with "women occupying only about a fifth of governance positions and holding less than 10 percent of top management jobs".

The report says, Cambodia and Pakistan had the widest gender pay-gap with men earning much higher salaries. Apart from this, sexual harassment remains a key issue in workplaces with 34 percent of journalists in Asia and the Pacific saying they witnessed sexual harassment at work places. At least 17 percent of female journalists have personally experienced workplace sexual harassment, and 59 percent of the time it is a superior who is the perpetrator. Further, nearly 42.5 percent of all respondents said there was no official complaints cell or anti-sexual harassment policy in their workplace. In its analysis of the Indian media scene, the report states that the country has a well-established media and its strong media landscape was full of women journalists. But Sexual harassment remains a critical issue for the industry. Nevertheless, women within the industry are strong and defiant, and are regularly challenging this status quo on gender rights issues and sexual harassment.

Women are Moving Up in the Indian Media. But it is not laudable. A journalist Divyani Rattanpal says, I am a journalist, and the newsroom I work in is dominated by women like me and we feel empowered. But are things really equal for women in the Indian media? Not quite. A Newselaundary review of four leading Indian English newspapers in 2015 says that there is a clear gender imbalance in the number of contributors to the press. Of the 8,681 articles reviewed, 73 percent were written by men. This means that for every piece written by a woman,

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three were written by men. A UNESCO report on women journalists says that even today, women in the media account only for 24 percent of all opinion-makers. But if you looked at absolute number of employees, the imbalance is not as skewed. A senior journalist Seema Chisti believes that the media is one of the few industries in India where women can outnumber men, at least in metro dailies, websites and TV channels. That doesn't mean however that these women are making it to the top. Though few women like Paula Scher, Leta Sobierajski, Jing Jhang, Indre Klimaitė, Jessica Walsh, Sarah Boris etc are globally performing excellently in graphic and fashion designing, yet there is not very satisfactory position in layout & design of magazines specially in India. The biased attitude of male journalists is often seen in media. Though not so prevalent in television these days, women have often been asked by editors to focus on "soft stories". They are asked to write features, and report on issues that men can't. Men don't want to cover gender, fashion, lifestyle, health and education issues. Reporting on hard stories like terrorism or crime is more difficult to break into. Still, even here the glass ceiling has been breached.

Journalism especially reporting field for women is full of challenges. Dhanya Rajendran, Senior journalist says that reporting is in fact easy for a woman. Her experience as a reporter in southern India has been better than it would have been had she been a man. She says that even in tense, crowded situations in villages in Tamil Nadu and Karnataka, people have been better behaved with a woman journalist. But This is not situation everywhere Sameeksha Uniyal, who worked as a crime reporter for the channel TV9 had to leave her job in a year. She says, my job of a crime reporter was challenging. The cops don't take you seriously. Language press has more sexism, sexual harassment, and a bigger pay gap for women, says Dhanya, who has worked along with reporters from the language-press and regional television news networks. Though television news channels have thrown open all doors for women reporters and editors, women are routinely judged on the basis of their looks, especially if they appear on screen.

There is lack of appropriate media coverage on women related issues. Public awareness is significantly lessened if a story is not reported. Various incidents of violence against women occur but the consequences of media ignorance and bias are horrific. In our country media coverage is proportional to the actual prevalence of the kinds of violence and gives a false impression. Most disturbing is the disproportionate coverage of sensationalized violence. Invariably, rape stories get far more coverage than domestic violence stories. More often the sexual brutalization of women is a highly marketable business and a profitable story for the media. For example the Indian media prefers to highlight the rape and murder of a 14-year-old girl rather than to report about the success of women in recent municipality elections in any state. They usually show only those handpicked stories which sells and increase their TRPs.

II. CONCLUSION

Thus I have come to this conclusion that Indian media has not empowered the woman. It needs to be sensitized to gender issues. The media must project the working women in the unorganized sector as worker and not merely as performing the duties of wife, mother, sister or daughter. They being major earners, must be projected as producers and not merely consumers. It should play proactive role in inculcating gender sensitivity in the country and should ensure that women are not depicted in poor light. The media should go in long way in enhancement of women's empowerment and facilitate drastic reduction in cultural biases as well as gender

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biases. There is need for a widespread understanding that the nation cannot progress, as long as women are left behind as the lesser half of society. Therefore, the improvement of women's conditions, status and image must be defined to be a major objective for media channels. Women must not be portrayed in stereotyped images that emphasize passive, submissive qualities and encourage them to play a subordinate secondary role in the family and society. Both men and women should be portrayed in ways that encourage mutual respect and a spirit of give and take between the sexes. It is necessary to ensure that a large number of rural women gain access to TV. Therefore, in the placement of community TV sets preference should be given to the meeting place of Mandals; Mahila Mandals should also be involved in the community viewing arrangement." Along with this Press Council should be given more powers so that it could intervene effectively to counteract objectionable publications. There must be mechanisms to sensitize Censor Boards and bring about a working dialogue between members of the Censor Board and citizens groups. The Government must at the earliest formulate clear guidelines regarding the positive portrayal of women on television.

(Note-Research Scholar is doing research under the supervision of Dr. Manoj Kumar Singh)

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