

GENDER BIAS IN INDIAN NEWS MEDIA A STUDY OF THE ODISIA LANGUAGE NEWS PAPERS

Hari Krishna Behera, UGC-NET-JRF, Doctoral Scholar, Department of Journalism and Mass Communication, Berhampur University, Odisha-760007, Email: harikrishnabehera@gmail.com.

Dr. Sunil Kanta Behera, Professor, Department of Journalism and Mass Communication, Berhampur University, Odisha-760007, Email: behera_sunil@yahoo.com.

Introduction

Media are in the business of providing information. Women and men read watch and listen to this information daily which is in the shape of what we know as news. The media do not merely represent; they also recreate themselves and their vision of the world as desirable, saleable. What they reproduce is chosen, not random, not neutral, not without consequence. The media's focus on the current issues and events of the day and the collection and editing of this information for presentation through the news media – newspapers, television and radio – is the practice of journalism. News is a choice, and extraction process, saying that one event is more meaningful than another event. The very act of saying that means making judgments that are based on values and based on frames.

The media do this by providing information that is collected and edited based on the media guiding principles of accuracy, fairness and balanced representation. The media also see their key role in any society as a “watchdog” of the government and all entities to ensure accountability in a society in the public interest. The media's ability to carry out this role depends greatly on whether the media operate within political and legal environments which enable free speech, reasonably unfettered access to information, free media, and economic and political environments which encourage and promote the development of a diversity of media.

The media now constitute a central and powerful force in societies across the world, and certainly in India. They are increasingly playing the roles once played by family, community, religion and formal education: not only disseminating information and knowledge, but also shaping values and norms, moulding attitudes and behaviour and influencing the very process of living.

The present study is an attempt to study the regional Odia language media (Newspapers, Radio and Television) and gauge the portrayal and coverage of women and men as news subjects; presence of women and men news subjects by story topic; occupations of women and men news subjects; and news and gender stereotypes.

The news is an integral part of life in the 21st century. Once a discrete category available only in certain formats at certain times, news is now available around the clock on radio, television, the Internet, sent via text to your phone, as well as in its traditional paper form. What is surprising is that despite the proliferation of news outlets, and the advances in technology that have altered the way it is gathered, processed and received, the product itself has barely changed since the emergence of a mass circulation popular press in the second half of the 19th century. The different news outlets catered to different audiences and so gave greater or lesser prominence to different types of stories all under the heading of ‘the news’.

The news is further influenced by the way the news is gathered. Ultimately the news is a business and as such it is highly organized. The detailed structure of a news organisation may vary from one outlet to another, but to large extent very news organisation uses the same sources to get the news. Editors cannot rely on events just happening in order to fill their paper or bulletin, so the vast majority of stories are not spontaneous but planned. As Paul Manning points out, ‘The production of news each day, each week or on a rolling 24-hour basis, involves the routine gathering and assembling of certain constituent elements which are then fashioned to construct or fabricate an account of the

particular news event'. In other word, in order to satisfy the increasing demand for news, reporters tend to access similar sources that traditionally provide material.

GENDER BIAS

Gender bias is a preference of prejudice toward one gender over the other. Bias can be conscious or unconscious, and may manifest in many ways, both subtle and obvious. In many countries, eliminating gender bias is the basis of many laws, including those that govern workplaces, family courts, and even the voting booth. Despite these efforts, many legal and political scholars argue that total gender parity remains a far off goal, one which many regions are not remotely close to reaching.

The legality of gender bias is an area of huge contention in regard to pay equity between the sexes. Historically in many countries, men make more money over a career than women, even if they hold the same job. While the disparity has dwindled since the mid-20th century, it still exists in most areas to some degree. Opponents of additional laws increasing protection of women's equal pay argue that this may be due to women working less over their lives, instead making a choice to remain at home and raise children. Women's rights activists often cite this argument as part of the overall gender bias of modern society, suggesting that women are financially punished for choosing to rear children, despite the fact that this action is vital to the continuance of the state.

It is important to note that gender bias exists in both directions. Although many historical examples and evidence suggest that bias has typically gone against women, there are certainly cases to the contrary. Abortion legality, for instance, is often a situation where gender bias claims against men are suggested, as some biological fathers insist they should have the right to prevent an abortion in order to raise their biological child.

It is also important to remember when considering gender bias and the law, that not all regions approve or desire gender equality under the law. In some countries, women are not allowed to drive, let alone vote. Studies of some regions have also showed tremendous gender bias in laws, with women being subject to severe penalties, including execution, for crimes such as adultery, where as for men, adultery may not be considered a crime at all or may have lighter sentencing guides.

In other parts of the world, the complexity of gender issues and overall desire to create an equitable society has lead legal systems with an interest in eliminating gender bias to institute laws prohibiting overt gender prejudice. The first law allowing women voting rights was passed in New Zealand in 1893, although earlier laws existed in Scandinavia that allowed limited female voting. England, the United States, and Ireland all have laws prohibiting pay inequity based on gender, however these are not often strictly enforced.

Gender biases in the media may have declined significantly over the last 15 years, but they are still far from resolved, says the report of the Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP) 2010, in which India participated for the first time this year. In the Indian media, women constituted less than a quarter of the people heard or read about in the news, according to the report.

The men and women who work together in a place know that the media cannot be "free" and "independent" as long as women who work within the media experience injustices that range from discrimination in promotion and hiring to sexual harassment in the newsrooms, and as long as the news is told day in day out through the voices and perspectives of men.

News on the violations of women's human rights and discrimination against women are few and far between. When the media does cover gender issues such as violence, sexual and reproductive health, women in decision-making, these articles are often confined to special pages and segments in the media and tagged as women's issues', rather than being placed on the news pages as issues of concern to everyone.

While the media worldwide fight tenaciously to guard, protect and obtain legally the right to be free from government censorship, free from political and economic interests and controls, the media has been unable to detect, analyse and change alone, the gender biases, prejudices and inequalities that influence and impact on its operations and content.

The fight to free the media of gender bias and inequalities has come largely from gender activists who have identified the media as a key institution in the struggle for gender equality. Gender and feminist activists see the media as:

The mediums through which messages are transmitted (through editorial content, images and adverts) about the gender roles of women and men in any society. The messages can either reinforce, or challenge gender stereotypes and sex-based discrimination.

As news and communications channels that can put women's rights and gender equality on the agenda of public policymakers. One way the media can do this is by holding governments accountable to many of the international and regional women's rights conventions and instruments they have signed in the same way the media holds governments accountable to conventions on torture, political rights, labour rights, etc.

An institution that practice sex-based discrimination, and therefore also sites where the struggle for gender equality must be confronted.

NEWS MEDIA

The news media remain the major and most influential sources of information, ideas and opinion for most people around the world. They constitute a key element of the public and private space in which people, nations and societies live. They are in a position to further public understanding of the political, economic, social and cultural environment and to gauge the public mood. A society that does not fully know itself cannot respond to the aspirations of all its members. So who and what appears in the news and how people and events are portrayed does matter, who is out and what is not covered are equally important. The cultural underpinnings of gender inequality and discrimination against women are often reinforced through the media across the world.

INDIAN NEWS MEDIA

Indian news media consist of several types of communications media: television, radio, cinema, newspapers, magazines, and internet-based Web sites. The Indian media was initiated since the late 18th century with print media started in 1780, radio broadcasting initiated in 1927, and the screening of August and Louis Lumiere moving pictures in Mumbai initiated during the July of 1985 – is among the oldest and largest media of the world. Indian media-private media in particular – has been “Free and Independent” throughout most of its history. The period of emergency (1975-1977), declared by Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, was the brief period when India's media was faced with potential government retribution.

GENDER STUDIES: NEED AND IMPORTANCE

A gender study is a field of interdisciplinary study which analyses race, ethnicity, sexuality and location. Gender study has many different forms. One view exposed by the philosopher Simone de Beavour said: “One is not born a woman, one became one”. This view proposes that in gender studies, the term “gender” should be used to refer to the social and cultural constructions of masculinities and femininities, not to the state of being male or female in its entirety. However, this view is not held by all gender theorists. Other areas of gender study closely examine the role that the biological states of being male or female have on social constructs of gender. Specially, in what way gender roles are defined by biology and how they are defined by cultural trends. The field emerged from a number of different areas: the sociology of the 1950s and later; the theories of the psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan; and the work of feminists such as Judith Butler.

Gender is an important area of study in many disciplines, such as literary theory, drama studies, film theory, performance theory, contemporary art history, anthropology, sociology, psychology and psychoanalysis. These disciplines sometimes differ in their approaches to how and why they study gender. For instance in anthropology, sociology and psychology, gender is often studied as a practice, where as in cultural studies representations of gender

are more often examined. A gender study is also a discipline in itself: an interdisciplinary area of study that incorporates methods and approaches from a wide range of disciplines.

The need of gender studies is the building of a positive man-woman relationship based on equality, dignity and mutual respect. The often 'neglected women's dimension' should be taken note of and made an inherent part of all media content.

The committee on portrayal of women in the media noted the following characteristics in the image of women projected in the media programme:

A woman's place is in the home.

The most important and valuable asset of woman is physical beauty.

A woman's energies and intellect must be directed at finding the right man and keeping.

Women are dependent, coy and submissive; they are masochistic in their response to indignities, humiliations and even to physical violence inflicted on them.

The good woman is the traditional housewife, long-suffering, pious and submissive; and modern woman who asserts herself and her independence is undesirable and can never bring happiness to anybody or find happiness herself.

The working woman is the undesirable exception who must be brought into the marriage fold and be made to submit to the prevalent norms of the society.

The importance of gender studies refers to differential management of men and women, the impact of which may be positive, negative or neutral. Nevertheless, for research purposes, it could be redefined as an erroneous approach to the similarities or differences between men and women which may lead to incorrect or partial knowledge arising from past and current research, causing inequitable responses and discrimination against either of the two sexes.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

In any research programme, whether professional or educational, objective occupies an important place. No research will be fruitful without any objective. So, the present study was undertaken by the researcher with the following objectives in below;

To examine and analyse the concepts and issues on gender and development themes.

To analyse the shifts in policies, constitutional provisions and programmes relating to gender issues in India.

Develop an understanding of structures that perpetuate gender inequalities at the level of household, community, workplace and the state.

To differentiate between gender and sex.

To understand the implications of gender in terms of the life situations of both women and men reflected through macro and micro indicators.

To familiarise with related concepts of gender division of labour, gender stereotyping, patriarchy, gender relations women in development, gender and development and sexuality.

To analyse the various programmes launched by the Government of India (and the respective State Governments) to make women equal partners in the development process.

IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

It is important to understand that the gender bias media do not just provide information and reports on news events and current issues. Through the selection of types of news stories, choice of words and language used, choice of people interviewed to give their views and perspectives, selection of images to illustrate stories and decisions about where stories should be placed (on what pages or which item in the news line-up heard on radio or television), the media also **communicates** and sends a **message**.

The role and importance of media is vital in 21st century as media is playing the role of gatekeeper and watchdog. It is an age of globalization and media which influences thoughts, lives, emotions and actions. Males and females are waving together not only the in media institutions in modern age but they are also participating in every walk of life including the police, army, business, law, medical, engineering, aeronautics, teaching, etc. women are part of every field of life in developed and modern societies while their participation is limited in different spheres in the conservative societies where they have to face problems and criticism.

MEDIA MONITORING

Monitoring the media is an effective content analysis tool for gender and media advocacy. Media monitoring is one way to keep track of the media's performance on gender. The findings of monitoring can be used to raise awareness among journalists, editors and media managers, as well as advertisers, for the development of gender and media advocacy campaigns and for identifying areas where policy, codes and guidelines need to be developed.

The objectives of monitoring are done occasionally, even though it is a systematic surveillance of media performance for the purpose of its description and critical evaluation. Mostly it generates knowledge about the media by focusing on content. By observing the content, patterns and practices that media professionals use become more accessible. Frequently media monitoring reveals isolation, exclusion and discrimination – human – made inequalities as oppose to “objective” reflection of the reality of the situation as it is.

The objectives of monitoring can differ. Analysis may be interpretative or quantitative; it may be a special ‘case study’, it may focus on the language or narrative of news stories; the duration of analysis may be short or long; it can include one medium and single country or it may be comparative. Trends and changes, as well as media employment patterns also can be monitored.

Monitoring how often women are quoted as primary sources is an example of quantitative monitoring. Qualitative monitoring would analyse gender biases, stereotypes, the change of value judgement, perceptions and attitudes.

The findings of media monitoring can be documented in short reports and/or fact sheets which can be publicized in the media itself and can be used to challenge the media to change practices which violate women's rights or foster gender disparities and discrimination.

Key Points of Monitoring

News is a choice, an extraction process, saying that one event is more meaningful than another event.

Understanding the media's various roles, its power and sphere of influence and the role it can play in bringing about change are essential for any type of advocacy that aims to change the media.

The media do not just provide information, education and entertainment. By selecting the types of news stories choice of words and language used, choice of people interviewed to give their views and perspectives, selection of images, etc., the media send messages.

Gender biases and prejudices in the media emerge through the ‘choices’ media managers, advertisers, and media professionals make each day. Decisions about who will be promoted; who will not, what will make

news; what will not, who will be interviewed; who will not, etc are affected by media professionals “beliefs about where women and men, should be” in a society.

Good advocacy depends on taking the time to think through how you will work with and influence each of the audiences.

Central to any approach taken for gender and media advocacy is the need for gender and media activists to engage the media, as oppose to taking an antagonist stance.

GMMP – 2010 (Findings)

“The GMMP is democracy in action... it highlights how people all over the world are passionate about the media, about gender equality and critically, they are passionate about being agents of change”.

The Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP), the world’s largest and longest running longitudinal research and advocacy initiative on gender in the news media. The first GMMP on 18 January 1995 captured a picture of gender in the news media of 71 countries. Later that year in September, media monitoring was officially recognised in the Beijing Declaration and platform for Action adopted in 1995 at the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women as a tool for change towards gender equality.

Every five years since 1995, the GMMP has documented trends in the portrayal and representation of women and men in news media discourse and imagery. The qualitative and quantitative evidence gathered has revealed that women are grossly underrepresented in news coverage in contrast to men. The outcome of under representation is an imbalanced picture of the world, one in which women are largely absent. Further, the studies have shown a paucity of women’s voices in news media content in contrast to men’s perspectives, resulting in news that presents a male-centered view of the world.

The imperative to focus on news media becomes clear when we consider two facts. The first is that the news is the foremost source of information about issues and events, knowledge that in turn informs communities’ understanding of and responses to their world. The second is that the news has the ability to influence policy agendas as issues attain centre-stage in public debate, starkly evident in changes to local and foreign policies during times of humanitarian disasters.

For the fourth GMMP, 1281 newspapers, television and radio stations were monitored in 108 countries on 10 November 2009. The research covered 16,734 news items, 20,769 news personnel (announcers, presenters and reporters), and 35,543 total news subjects, that is people interviewed in the news and those who the news is about.

Internet news monitoring was introduced on a pilot basis for the first time in the GMMP. 76 national news websites in 16 countries and 8 international news websites containing 1061 news items 1044 news personnel and 2710 news subjects were studied. The internet news monitoring results are presented in an exclusive chapter of this report, separate from the analyses of findings from print, television and radio news.

Special commentary

The GMMP 2010 research has found some positive changes in the dimensions of gender in the news media studied. However, that the changes are small points to a number of possible contributory factors. The commentary concentrates on factors within newsrooms and the news production process itself.

The questions that readily come to mind are: What is the nature of the production routines and process in the media houses? Who oversees these process, and what positions do women and men occupy? Are women in positions of influence? Do newsrooms have a directory of women experts who can serve as sources of news? Are there mentoring programmes on gender and development reporting in the media houses?

To begin newsroom editors, features editors, and senior reporters who are mostly male, are ordinarily responsible for assigning stories to reporters and journalists. Work allocation within media houses is not always based on competence in covering certain areas; stereotyping in the distribution of stories persists. Female journalists continue to cover what are termed as 'soft' stories such as culture, health and other social issues rather than reporting what may be seen to be more challenging topics, such as politics, business, technology, science, elections and finance. Rarely are female journalists considered to be 'grand reporters'.

Further, it is important for newsroom decision makers to be conscious of the need for gender balanced reporting and to be mentors who can guide their colleagues in producing more gender-fair coverage. As leaders who oversee the news production process, it is vital that they recognize the value of improving the reporting skills of their journalists from a gender perspective, which in turn will improve the overall quality of reportage. Newsroom decision makers need to constantly remind reporters during editorial meetings and before assignments of the importance of paying attention to high professional standards, ethics and creativity, where gender-balance and fairness are integral components of professionalism.

In a different scenario, a reporter may be gender sensitive and may provide progressive, gender-balanced stories but does not have final say on the editorial judgments. Taking the case of Africa where generally the majority of media gatekeepers, editors and senior reporters are male, certain prejudices about gender in media content do not occur by occur by accident. These prejudices are reflected in the way assignments are distributed, who covers what story, the way stories are re-written and edited, what sources reporters are referred to, and the perspectives that are seen as important and that should be retained just to mention a few. In fact, the lack of diversity in voices in the news reflects the status quo in society where reliance on stereotypes that are part of our shared culture remain giving more voice to men than women as sources and purveyors of information and knowledge. Most of the voices in the news are male and given the way in which newsrooms are run the primary objective is to get the story regardless of the fact that sources can be diversified.

Another area worth reflecting on is the complex nature of media houses. Most media houses have units/sections and or desks that deal with different aspects of programming such as education, features/and or documentaries, sports, the newsroom, drama, etc. Experience shows that at times there is little or no coordination between the different units and sections, particularly within the news rooms. In places where the news room and the production units do not work together to produce quality reports, there are bound to be missed opportunities in gender coverage. This is particularly true of the broadcast and print news media where the events-driven nature of news production practice coupled with the need for rapid results leads to missed opportunities to incorporate gender or even rights' perspectives during coverage. How to link gender as a common thread cutting across development issues whether it is education, health, human rights, poverty, good governance, democracy, elections, HIV and AIDS, representative health or economic issues remains a challenge for the media.

Gender concerns are relegated to magazine, discussions, features or documentary programmes in broadcast media. At times, magazine programmes targeting a largely female audience are erroneously referred to as 'gender programmes'. Experience with media houses in Africa reveals an impression that 'gender' is synonymous with 'women'. This suggests an inadequate comprehension about the concept and the impact of skewed power relations on social progress. Media audiences have come to expect news columns or broadcasts about 'gender' to focus on 'women's issues'. This observation suggests the need for mainstreaming gender in media houses to be a management decision requiring the full support of the gatekeepers in newsrooms, the production units/departments and other segments of media houses.

Related to this is the level of awareness and knowledge about gender issues, gender protocols and what they imply, and institutional commitment to gender-balanced reportage. Where awareness is low, stories will tend to reinforce gender stereotypes rather than challenge them. Where awareness is high and there are in-house gender policies

guidelines, materials and resources, the tendency will be to produce stories that will challenge gender stereotypes, highlight gender equality or inequality policies or human and women's rights legal instruments as bases for programming and news content. Most media houses lack resources materials and policy guidelines that can serve as guide for reporters.

A gender supportive in-house policy framework in isolation is not sufficient; it needs to be backed by a systematic training programme that may consist of short formal training sessions with in-house coaching and mentoring activities, taking into account the newsroom structure, dynamics, staff and other requirements. Training should begin in journalism training institutions and continue within the media houses. Journalist training institutions on their part have a responsibility to review curricula, to incorporate gender into teaching, develop the relevant training resources and encourage students to embark on research in gender and media issues. Mainstreaming gender in media training and journalism education will build journalists' capacities to challenge the stereotypes that continue to relegate women to the background and ensure gender-just news media coverage. As well, it will enhance the skills and capacity of trainers and lectures to teach journalism that is aware and responsive to concerns about gender-based inequality and discrimination. Finally, in-house plans should spell out indicators to monitor impact in terms of not only quantity, quality and diversity of voices but also the periodicity of stories and programmes on gender-equality issues.

Such a holistic approach will bridge the gap that exists between the gate keepers and decision makers on the one hand and the reporters and producers on the one hand and the reporters and producers on the other, and can gradually help transform media practice. Most media houses and journalists unions and associations do not have structured and systematic training plans or mentoring programmes with a well integrated gender component for their workers and or members.

Training and sensitization of editors' reporters and journalists is a sine quo non to address stereotypical reportage. If we consider media houses that have rare examples of gender-aware reportage, we note some contributory factors. Of prime importance is political will from the highest level. Taking again an illustration from Africa, we find a strong correlation between what transpires at the national level in terms of policies and programmes on gender and development in line with the Beijing Platform for Action the African Union (AU) Protocol on the rights of women, protocols on gender and development and other instruments and the manner in which media report gender and development issues. At the national and regional levels, most governments have ratified and adopted all the protocols mentioned. Yet the protocols have not been domesticated to a significant extent due to reservations on some articles especially those hinging on culture, tradition, religion and customary laws. In some instances, the provisions in the protocols are in contradiction with the national laws, resulting in policies with glaring gaps. What this implies is a lack of political will to put in place or implement gender policies effectively and resistance to change, not only from power holders but from a predominantly patriarchal society in general. The media being part of that same society follows suit, with attitudes and perspectives that are reflected in and through media coverage and in-house culture. This explains, to some extent, the biases and stereotypes portrayed through the media in coverage. The media mirrors society to the extent that reportage and practices echo the bias and discrimination taking place in real lived experiences.

The level of training and education are closely linked to recruitment, career development and advancement as well as the ability to professionally contest gender injustices within media houses, unions and associations. This has an impact on opportunities for women to occupy positions of leadership and decision making. Gaps in these factors combined result in the perpetuation of the status quo of male dominated leadership positions in media institutions unions and associations. The cycle is reproduced when media owners assign position of responsibility to men rather than women, the most common reason cited being a prejudice against women's other responsibilities in their families. That women occupy few leadership positions in media institutions limits the possibilities available to them to influence content in favour of women or gender-equality concerns.

The GMMP results and analysis support an argument for the establishment of gender policy and reporting guidelines backed by effective monitoring guidelines backed by effective monitoring an evaluation in media houses in order to contribute to increasing fair, balanced and ethical reporting. To this effect, training and sensitization of editors, reporters and journalists remain sine quo non.

Gender (in) equality in the news

Slight progress is observed in the proportion of news stories highlighting issues of gender equality or inequality. In 2005, 4% of stories highlighted inequality issues compared to 6% currently.

Some regions has improved remarkably. Latin American is noteworthy for tripling the proportion of such of such stories, from 4% in 2005 to 12% in 2010. North America and the Caribbean were leading at 5% in 2005. They now fall in second and third place respectively having achieved double the figures registered five years ago. The seeming progress in reportage in the Middle East from 1% of stories highlighting (in)equality issues in 2005 to 4% in 2010 may in fact be a truer representation of the region: the rise in the number of participating countries from only 2 in 2005 to 6 in 2010 could account for the new finding that is close to the 6% global average.

Other region have either stagnated or regressed as in the case of the Pacific that fell 2 points from 3% in 2005 to only 1% currently. The decline in the Pacific however, may be explained by the larger sample size from the increased number of participating countries from the region, in turn suggesting a finding that may be more regionally representative at present.

In 2005 women reported 47% of stories found to raise inequality issues with the remainder 53% being reported by men. These findings are more or less similar to the 2010 research results. In 2005 women reported 36% of the stories that did not highlight an aspect of inequality and male reporters 64%. The status quo is maintained in 2010.

The stagnation in the world averages implies that overall journalistic patterns in reportage have remained unchanged. That said, the regional breakdown shows variations between female and male reporters.

Breaking down the 2010 data by region reveals varying patterns. In Africa, Europe and Latin America, stories by female reporters are more likely to raise issues of gender equality or inequality than stories by male reporters. In Africa 7% of stories by female reporters compared to 4% by male reporters evoke (in)equality issues. In Europe the statistics are 7% of stories by women and 3% of stories by men while in Latin America the findings are 12% and 10% for female and male reporters respectively. The difference noted in North America is statistically insignificant while none at all was found in Asia and the Middle East. The Caribbean region is striking in that stories by male reporters (18%) are to a larger extent more likely to highlight (in)equality issues than stories by female reporters (10%).

Gender stereotyping in the news

The results of the 2010 monitoring are starkly different from those obtained in 2005 in view of the efforts made to develop a shared understanding of the 'stereotypes' concept. Feedback from monitors who participated in the 2005 research revealed that while they were able to identify many more news items that contained stereotypes, they were unable to code properly because of lack of clarity on this question. The question was sharpened in 2010 and pictorial examples of 'stereotyping' added. Considerable training was providing as well as constant, collective virtual and in-person exchanges about the concept, how to identify 'stereotypes' and how to respond to the question. Multi-level training was provided, from a global training workshop, to several regional workshops, to national workshops and the smaller local monitoring teams' training. Given the diversity of 'stereotypes' in different cultural contexts, monitoring team leaders were encouraged to identify and discuss examples exhaustively with monitors in preparation for the coding.

Gender, media and women's human rights

Rights: Proponents for gender-just media contend that human and women's rights are relatively invisible in mainstream news content. The GMMP research purposed to discover the extent to which journalists exploited opportunities presented in news stories to raise awareness on legal instruments in place designed to protect human and women's rights.

The research found that only 10% of the stories monitored quoted or referred to relevant local, national, regional or international legal instruments on gender equality and/or human rights.

This finding suggests that numerous stories miss the opportunity to create awareness on instruments enacted to protect human rights, women's rights or gender equality, supporting the observation on the relative invisibility of rights in mainstream news content.

GENDER ROLE

Gender roles refer to the set of social and behavioral norms that are considered to be socially appropriate for individuals of a specific sex in the context of a specific culture, which differ widely between cultures and over time. There are differences of opinion as to whether observed gender differences in behavior and personality characteristics are, at least in part, due to cultural or social factors, and therefore, the product of socialization experiences, or to what extent gender differences are due to biological and physiological differences.

Views on gender-based differentiation in the media workplace and in interpersonal relationships have often undergone profound changes as a result of feminist and / or economic influences, but there are still considerable differences in gender roles in almost all societies. It is also true that in times of necessity, such as during a war or other emergency, women are permitted to perform functions which in "normal times would be considered a male role, or vice versa.

The media do this by providing information that is collected and edited based on the media guiding principles of accuracy, fairness and balanced representation. The media also see their key role in any society as a "watchdog" of the government and all entities to ensure accountability in a society in the public's interest.

The media's ability to carry out this role depends greatly on whether the media operate within political and legal environments which enable free speech, reasonably unfettered access to information, free media, and economic and political environments which encourage and promote the development of a diversity of media.

Because the process of collecting, editing and choosing what is news is not purely objective, media and communications researchers and analysts have identified several other key roles the media play in any society.

- Shape public opinion and attitudes

- Determine the public discourse and thereby shape our political, cultural and economic priorities

- Influence public policy through the news agenda

- Reinforce or challenge gender, racial and other stereotypes and norms

- Serve as the channel through which the public communicates to policy makers and through which policy makers communicates to the public

- Media can act as catalysts for social change through coverage of injustices and the marginalization of populations in society which often have little access to expression in the public sphere. In other words, the media can give a voice to those who often find their voices marginalized.

Vision and Mission of the Network, Current and Future

Most members agreed that the network was an effective support group to women journalists. It provided a sense of community, identity and provided a platform to women journalists. Its loose, flexible, organisational structure helped

it in remaining a loose, informal network that supported women journalists and raised pertinent media issues from time to time.

WHY GENDER EQUALITY MAKES GOOD EDITORIAL BUSINESS SENSE FOR THE MEDIA

Freedom of speech

Giving equal voice and air-time to women and men, representing both in their multiple roles in society is intrinsic to freedom of expression and speech.

Good governance

“Do as I say and not as I do” can no longer be the mantra of the media which is being more and more scrutinized by all sectors of society. As much as the media has a duty to serve as a watchdog on society, the media itself must lead by example and practice good governance in its own operations.

Respecting women’s and men’s human rights

The media’s editorial content, through images, language, portrayal and absence of a diversity of voices and views, and its workplace should not be the site for the violation of women’s rights to voice, equal opportunity, integrity and dignity. Language used by the media should not perpetuate stigma, discrimination or sexist attitudes against women or men.

Women are a large growth market for the print media

In most countries, women constitute the highest potential growth market for the print media and have also been shown to be among the most loyal readers. Segmenting readership by gender and responding accordingly, would, in all likelihood, reveal that gender sensitivity is a good business proposition.

Women’s needs as listeners and viewers

Few analyses of programming for radio and TV are gender disaggregated. They fail to take account of women’s time constraints as a result of their multiple roles and of their preferences with regard to content. As research elsewhere has shown, gender sensitivity in programming could yield significant business gains.

Women as consumers

Women make many of the decisions of household spending. This is yet to be factored in many countries into the way advertising is designed. Is advertising that demeans and turns women into commodities really enlightened self-interest on the part of advertisers?

The impact of globalization

The spread of satellite communications and the opening up of the airwaves and other forms of media to less state-regulation in favour of free markets and commercial interests creates new gender and media challenges for activists. These include:

Corporate ownership of media that has forged powerful political and business links and sets limits on freedom of expression.

Foreign ownership of media that has implications for accountability issues.

The creation and interpretation of news that are shaped and influenced by factors associated with the control of media by governments, advertisers and business groups.

Existing media codes that do not have a gender concern or address issues such as the portrayal of violence against women.

The presence of transnational media corporations and the consequent becoming of homogenous media images and perceptions of women.

Influx of pornographic material and databanks on women through the internet, video tapes and DVDs and also through the print media.

Influx of computer and video games that violate women's images and reinforce violence against women.

INDIA FINDINGS OF GMMP - 2010

The decision to carry out a fourth GMMP was made in response to the urging of groups from around the world. Some had taken part in earlier GMMPs and stated the need for updated evidence to bring about change. Others were from groups in countries that had not previously participated in the GMMP and who needed reliable evidence specific to their country. These calls to carry out a fourth GMMP were complemented by the wide interest demonstrated by the extensive use of the GMMP findings by international, national and local organizations and agencies beyond the GMMP network, including some who requested updated evidence to support their work.

The fourth GMMP has seen an explosion in participation. This report includes 43 countries that did not take part in the previous GMMP. Participation has significantly expanded in Africa especially French speaking countries. Participation also increased in Asia, the Caribbean, Europe, the Middle East and North Africa, and the Pacific. The expansion of the GMMP in Arab speaking countries is particularly noteworthy.

In this preface to the 2005 GMMP report, Anna Turley, past coordinator of WACC's Women's Programme, wrote, "if gains spring from an awareness that current representation of gender in the news is something to be questioned, rather than taken for granted, they have potential to be transformative. While this will not happen overnight, GMMP brings us one step closer to such a transformation."

The 2010 GMMP results show that there is still a long way to go. Change is occurring and even gaining speed in some important areas, while in others progress remains slow or has even been eroded. Yet in each dimension of news measured by the GMMP, instances of exemplary journalism do exist. These instances, often isolated though they may be, show how gender-balanced, gender aware journalism is not only compatible with but are also intrinsic to high quality journalism.

From 2000 to 2010, we have been seen an increasing of 6 percentage points in women's presence as subjects in the news. At the current rate of change, it will take more than 40 years to reach parity. What is needed is concerted dialogue and action by advocates for women's advancement, civil society groups concerned with human development, media users, media professionals, media decision makers and owners, media training institutions, media development agencies, and where appropriate and relevant, public decision makers.

GENDER BIAS IN MEDIA IN ODIA LANGUAGE

The most prestigious awards and symbols of quality and ethical journalism, though sometimes, unfortunately, the recognition is posthumous. The importance of this phenomenon in contemporary media development cannot be exaggerated, since it expands the general journalistic discussion and enriches our entire profession. Women journalists have broken many gender stereotypes and prejudices still existing among their readers and viewers and are working for the future democratization of the media.

In Odisha women can be found in all newsrooms they work in print broadcasting and online media; they cover issue from education to business man. As more and more women gain economic independence, they are a group to reckon with for advertisers and media owners. And everywhere individual women are not in a position to "cast their vote at the newsstand" women media associations demand better coverage on behalf of women. Media owners disregard women's concerns at their peril. Nor is it right to think that the struggle for equality in journalism has been won. Many issues remain unsolved and as long as women are still impeded by discrimination over the top jobs, or have less access to training or continue to be forced into impossible choices between career and family journalist's unions must keep women's right at the top of their agenda.

In Odisha women increased their presence in professional journalism. Despite an appreciable rise in women journalists in Odisha, many feel that it is mostly limited to the English media and the profession in general seems to be still male-dominated.

Notwithstanding this, women journalists say they are making the most of what career opportunities they find, while conceding that they may not have the opportunity to reach the kind of high profile beats that male journalists attain. Often, this is because they are “left out of the loop” for various reasons – not available for night shifts as a consequence of which not assigned important beats that often results in being buttonholed into accepting a lesser deal. Alternatively, they say that while they might be very successful as assistant editors, a shot at the top job may not come their way because they are not considered “management material”. The survey has demonstrated that women journalists have learnt that hard work, a supportive management and a positive attitude can be keys to success. However, they have also learnt that within the newsroom, resentment, exclusion and hostility are flip sides of those coins. By and large, women journalists have a positive perspective and believe that advancement opportunities in the industry have improved over the last few years. In Odisha things were not different. Although there were women editors in pre independence era, but there were hardly any women journalist in real reporting beat. There were few women in journalism mostly on the desk. Women reporter or photographer was a rare sight. However, things have changed since the 80s. As Elisha Pattnaik writes, “A decade ago women journalists in Odisha were rarely heard of. The few who took up the profession either free-lanced, or were confined to desk jobs and had to be satisfied looking after women’s and cookery segments of the newspaper. Women reporters venturing out and running around for news at odd hours was something, which was not quite acceptable by the traditional Odia families and society. However, things have changed dramatically from 1980s. More and more women in Odisha-both in print and electronic media – are opting for journalism as their chosen profession. The establishment of media training institutes, growth in media avenues and career opportunities, exposure of women and a changed public opinion has been responsible for the gradual entry of an increasing number of women into journalism. “Perhaps, the women journalist in the early 80s in the mainstream media and it was not very easy”. Then Jyotsna Rautray who was joined Chief sub-editor of Sambad, a leading Odia daily news paper. She has now left Sambad to work as a free-lancer. When she joined Sambad in mid-eighties, contrary to the norm Rautray was sent to the field for stories to various parts of the State.

Subsequently, the launch of Sun Times, an English daily by the same Group in the late 80s saw many women entering the profession. The launch of Odisha editors of national dailies and growth in regional dailies also started providing avenues to many women writers. Until early 90s, however, the growth in opportunities for women was mostly limited to the print media. The national television channels offered little scope and it was only after the beginning of a local Odia channel – O-TV- that women got a chance to prove themselves in the electronic media. Later E-TV made its entry offering openings to women media persons. Nevertheless, till today, the opportunities in the electronic media by and large are restricted to the production and editing segments only with rare exceptions. Says Sharda Lahangir, State Correspondent for ANI, “Though there has been a perceptible increase in the number of women reporters in newspapers, in the electronic media they are few and far between. Despite an appreciable rise in women journalists in Odisha, many feel that it is mostly limited to the English media and the profession in general seems to be still male-dominated. For example leading daily the Samaja, which had a woman editor, Manorama Mahapatra, has not encouraged the entry of women into its fold. It hardly has any women journalist on its payroll. In comparison, other major Odia news papers like Dharitri and Sambad have sizable number of women journalists. Yet another opinion expressed by women journalists is that despite a rise in numbers, they are yet to be accepted in the male dominated media fraternity of the state. They are given to handle social features and soft stories and not business and politics which constitute the prime beats in any newspaper. Moreover, very few are members of the journalists’ associations or any press clubs in Odisha. a glance at the list of accredited journalists also reveals that there are not many women journalists. Their number has definitely increased, but the recognition of their talents and their contribution to the media is yet to be acknowledged.

In the past they were ignored and rarely appreciated and never entrusted challenging jobs. But now we can proudly say that we have women bosses and reporters and that's enough change.

However, another senior woman journalist, Manipadma Jena feels that though the bias is not overt, the mindset that women may not be capable of doing justice to anything other than soft stories still remains.

But it's insurmountable if a woman journalist decides to prove herself, she says adding, there is no barrier as such except that the scope in Odisha is limited. Nevertheless, despite the varied opinions, the fact remains that more and more women are establishing their presence in the profession. Farhat Amin, a freelance journalist sums up by saying, in the past they were ignored and rarely appreciated and never entrusted challenging jobs. But now we can proudly say that we have women bosses and reporters and that's enough change.

Odisha has had several mainstream daily newspapers with women editors. For example, Manorama Mahapatra was the executive editor of Samaja, Trupti Nayak is the editor of Janavani, Salila Kar is the editor of Matrubhasa, Sairendhri Sahu is the editor of Dhvani Pratidhwani, Binapani Dash is the editor of Dinalipi. Women are occupying responsible positions in several news media in Odisha. Sulochana Das, who was bureau-chief of E-TV, now runs an Odisha – news centric website kalingatimes.com. Another indicator of growing presence of women in journalism is the growing number of girl students in journalism courses. In IIMC Dhenkanal the numbers of boy and girl students in Odia Journalism course over the years show a pattern: number of girl students is increasing. The same pattern is observed in MJMC (Master in Journalism and Mass Communication) course in Berhampur University, Center for Development Education and Communication (CEDEC), Bhubaneswar and other institutes as well. This indicates two trends: first, girl students are taking to journalism like never before; and second, journalism as a career option for women is gaining social acceptance.

PROBLEMS OF GENDER BIAS IN NEWS MEDIA IN ODISHA

The major area of concern that emerged out of the survey was job security, low pay and lack of prospects.

Only 35 per cent worked as permanent full time employees. The rest worked as permanent part timer or on contract basis.

None of the respondents were in senior positions, the highest being a senior reporter and sub editor.

72 per cent of them got salaries ranging between Rs.1500-Rs.5000. Of this 7 per cent received salaries below Rs.1500.

40 per cent said that they had never been promoted, while 31 per cent said that they had been promoted once.

There was no mechanism for addressing grievances or making appeals and even where there was such a mechanism it was inadequate.

Only 27 per cent were member of some superannuation scheme.

Not allowed at night job, the women journalists are working up to 5 P.M.

Sexual harassment for the women journalist.

Gender, media and women's human rights at Odisha

Proponents for gender-just media contend that human and women's rights are relatively invisible in mainstream news content. The research purposed to discover the extent to which journalists exploited opportunities presented in news stories to raise awareness on legal instruments in place designed to protect human and women's rights.

The research found that only 10% of the stories monitored quoted or referred to relevant local, national, regional or international legal instruments on gender equality and/or human rights.

This finding suggests that numerous stories miss the opportunities to create awareness on instruments enacted to protect human rights, women's rights or gender equality, supporting the observation on the relative invisibility of rights in mainstream news content.

Table – 1
Female News Subjects by Medium: 1995-2010 (Percentage)

	Global				National (India)	Regional (Odia)
	1995	2000	2005	2010	2010	2010
Print	16	17	21	24	24	20
Television	21	22	22	24	20	16
Radio	15	13	17	22	13	10
Overall	17	18	21	24	22	17

The above table – 1 represents only 24 per cent of the people seen, heard or read about in print, radio and television news are female at a global level whereas the corresponding figures for national and regional levels are 22 per cent and 17 per cent respectively. Despite a slow but overall steady increase in women percentage in the news over the past 15 years, the world depicted in the news remains predominantly male with 76 per cent news subjects.

Table - 2
Overall Presence of Women in the News: 1995-2010 (Percentage)

	Global				National (India)	Regional (Odia)
	1995	2000	2005	2010	2010	2010
Science & Health	27	21	22	32	37	28
Social & Legal	19	21	28	30	32	20
Celebrity, Arts & Sports	24	23	28	26	14	28
Crime & Violence	21	18	22	24	26	20
Economy	10	18	20	20	10	9
Political & Government	7	12	14	19	18	10
Total	17	18	21	24	22	17

The above table – 2 indicates out of all the topics women are most present in science and health news (32 per cent) closely followed by social and legal news (30 per cent) at the global level and with 37 and 32 per cent at the national level. Women are mostly visible at the regional level in celebrity and arts with 28 per cent and science and health (28 per cent). But considering the global as well as national and regional priorities of the news agenda, politics and government; economy news top the hierarchy where presence of women is lowest at all the levels. As the table shows the change in the presence of women in major news topics across the globe is unevenly distributed across major news topics.

It was no surprise that politics and government made the biggest news with 37 per cent (radio), 35 per cent (TV) and 30 per cent (print). The news topics in order of priority are crime and violence, social and legal including human rights, economy followed by celebrities, arts and sports.

Table – 3
Occupation of Female News Subjects: 2000-2010 (Percentage)

	Global			National (India)	Regional (Odia)
	2000	2005	2010	2010	2010
Homemaker or parent	81	75	72	82	85
Celebrities (artists, singers, actors, etc.)	45	42	41	59	62
Activists or workers of civil society organisation, NGOs, human rights bodies, etc.	24	23	34	51	30
Government employees, public servant, bureaucrats, politicians	22	29	34	35	25
Academic experts, teachers, educational administrators, etc.	27	25	31	40	32
Others (media, agriculture, health, business, religion, etc.)	17	19	20	22	15
Total	18	21	24	22	17

Men outnumbered women in almost all occupational categories represented in the news. The only categories with a larger proportion of women than men were: homemaker-parent at the global level; homemaker-parent, celebrities and civil society activists, etc. at the national level; and homemaker-parent and celebrities at the regional level.

Table – 4
Electronic Media in Odisha (work force)

Sl. No.	Network	Male	Female
1	MBC TV	72	20
2	“O” TV	167	98
3	KANAK TV	112	64
4	KAMYAB TV	92	37
5	S TV	70	31
6	E TV	85	26
7	DD 1	46	17
8	NAXATRA	65	32
Total		709	325

(The above figures are taken approximately)

The above table – 4 indicates that the no. of persons working in electronic Media at Odisha. We have taken eight electronic media. The highest male and female journalists are working in O TV media i.e. 167 male against 98 female and the lowest working in DD1 w is 46 male against 17 female. The total numbers of males are 709 and females are 325. It means the total number of females are 46% (approximately) of the total numbers of males. By the observe of above electronic media. The male reporters are utilise maximum time for the electronic media. But the female journalists are cannot spent more time. The male script writer, editor, photographer are better then the female

Table – 5
Print Media in Odisha (work force)

Sl. No.	Print Media	Male	Female
1	Samaj	85	17
2	Sambad	120	21
3	Dharitri	135	26
4	Prameya	66	9
5	Khabar	92	22
6	Anupam Bharat	68	13
7	Utkal Express	82	16
8	Dinalipi	76	14
Total		724	138

(The above figures are taken approximately)

The above table – 5 shown the no. of persons working in print media in the state of Odisha. We have observed the eight print media. The highest male and female journalists are working in Dharitri i.e., 135 male against 26 female. The lowest journalist represents to Prameya which is 66 male against 9 female. The total numbers of male journalists are 724 and female journalists are 138. Here the total numbers of females are 19% (approximate) of the total number of male journalists. By the observe of above print media the male reporter are more hard working than the female reporter. The male reporter are gave maximum time for the print media. But the female reporters are spent more time. The male script writer, editor, photographer are better performance than the female journalists.

Conclusion

The gender bias in news media, not only in India but also in other developing countries occupies an important place in the agenda for development. The government and non-government organizations of respective countries are making persistent efforts for women so that she can uplift her own self, her family and the society at large. The committee on status of women (1974) followed by the National Commission for women have made concerted efforts and have taken a list of major initiatives to improve the condition of women in India. They have taken these initiatives with a view to removing inequality and imbalance and to improve the quality and standard of life of women gender. But it's a grim reality that despite certain initiatives, women's plight continues to be the same.

Media must play a significant role in bringing huge reformations in women's life. Since long, women have been portrayed as traditional housewives, sacrificing her life for the sake of the family. Its stereotyped images, which is often found in television serials and films. Media can empower women by portraying vividly the real sufferings in a woman's life and finding solution for it. In fact, media possess great power to influence the orthodox mindset of the male gender and can propel them to offer equal status to women which they themselves enjoy.

Various women's movements have been organised. The feminists have been rightly clamouring for a National Media policy to curb the negative portrayal of women and to highlight women's proper and just role in the society.

The need of gender studies is the building of a positive man-woman relationship based on equality, dignity and mutual respect. The often 'neglected women's dimension' should be taken note of and made an inherent part of all media content.

Women working at the country and regional levels in the 1970s and 1980s developed their own tools to gauge the media's discrimination against them, boost in 1995 with the first Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP), which has become a global tool of analysis of gender representation in the media.

GMMP 1995 and GMMP 2000 have become important tools for gender media activities. The findings of both have been used to show the media the problems with the representations and portrayals of women and men in the news and to stimulate discussions on how these might be addressed.

The 2010 GMMP results show that there is still a long way to go. Change is occurring and even gaining speed in some important areas, while in others progress remains slow or has even been eroded. Yet in each dimension of news measured by the GMMP, instances of exemplary journalism to exist. These instances, often isolated though they may be, show how gender-balanced, gender aware journalism is not only compatible with but are also intrinsic to high quality journalism.

In Odisha women increased their presence in professional journalism. Until early 90s, however, the growth in opportunities for women was mostly limited to the print media. The national television channels offered little scope and it was only after the beginning of a local Odia channel – O-TV-that women got a chance to prove themselves in the electronic media. Later E-TV made its entry offering openings to women media persons. Nevertheless, till today, the opportunities in the electronic media by and large restricted to the production and editing segments only with rare exceptions. Though there has been a perceptible increase in the number of women reporters in newspapers, in the electronic media they are few and far between. Despite an appreciable rise in women journalists in Odisha, many feel that it is mostly limited to the English media and the profession in general seems to be still male-dominated. In comparison, other major Odia news papers like The Samaj, Sambad and Dharitri have sizable number of women journalists. Yet another opinion expressed by women journalists is that despite a rise in numbers, they are yet to be accepted in the male dominated media fraternity of the state.

Besides Newspapers, other forms of media such as television, radio, films must bring out vital changes in it's programmes which reflect the positive and proactive images of women. Media without doubt, is a major force, which shapes attitudes, belief and behaviour in contemporary time. It acts as a powerful vehicle of communication, which can influence modernization and social development. At the same time the conscientious citizens; the intellectuals, and social bureaucrats and the people who hold the regions of administration must play active roles in the process of socio-economic empowerment of women. They should make considerable efforts in bringing out changes in the parochial attitude of the people. The development of women and their bright future also require changes in the policy of the Press Council of India, parliamentary standing committee, All India Newspapers Editors board and various other organisation in which woman is not a member.

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