

## Violence Against Women: Analysis Of Some Works Related To Media

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### Abstract

The mass media have important role in modern society as the main channel of communication. The population relies on the media as the main source of information and the basis on which they form their opinions. Any selection of messages in the mass media will therefore have a profound effect on the entire society. A society cannot progress unless if women are given due recognition and respect. Mass media can play a significant role in reflecting social realities and in profiting the positive role of women, as envisaged in Islam. This article has examined the prevalence of violent assault against women in Pakistani society. Some works related to media and women have been stressed.

**Keywords:** Violence against Women, Media

### تلخیص

جدید سائنس کی تشکیل میں ذرائع ابلاغ عام کلیدی کردار ادا کرتے ہیں۔ معلومات حاصل کرنے کے لئے آبادی کا زیادہ تر انحصار ذرائع ابلاغ پر ہے اور رائے عامہ کی تشکیل میں بھی بہت مؤثر ذریعہ ہیں۔ پیغامات کے چناؤ میں ذرائع ابلاغ کے اثرات سے انکار نہیں کیا جاسکتا۔ کوئی بھی سوسائٹی اس وقت تک ترقی نہیں کر سکتی جب تک خواتین کی اہمیت اور ان کے کردار کو تسلیم نہ کیا جائے۔ ذرائع ابلاغ سماجی حقائق کو نمایاں کرنے میں معاون ہوتے ہیں اور خواتین کے مثبت کردار سے مسائل کا حل ممکن ہو سکتا ہے اس کی تائید اسلام نے بھی کی ہے۔ زیر نظر مطالعے میں پاکستانی معاشرے میں خواتین پر تشدد کی صورت حال کا جائزہ پیش کیا اور ذرائع ابلاغ اور خواتین کے اشتراک پر روشنی ڈالی گئی ہے۔

**کلیدی الفاظ:** عورت کے خلاف تشدد، ذرائع ابلاغ

### The Power of Media

Today world is driven increasingly by a combination of information and entertainment values, and these are both promoted by the expression of different names of communication, especially electronic communication such as satellite television and internet. The market of information is extremely competitive and is charactering by overload on the audience, mass media and funders and advertisers.

Most people today even in many developing societies like us, have access to scores of information sources in their homes and workplaces, including television, radio, internet

and others, the audience is overloaded with potions, so if you want to catch people's attention via mass media you have to produce quality material that is deemed appropriate to use by media men and deemed worth reading or viewing by the audience, Mass media men are flooded with sources of information and request for coverage. This mean that if one want to attract media person attention and get coverage on their channel, one has to produce quality information and material which is credible and that catch the attention of the media. These people who pay money to the mass media, advertisers and funders are also flooded with more request than they can meet. It is important today to produce high quality work, if they wish to attract funds from donors.

Mass media consists of professional communicators sharing messages, transmitting them over great distances using technological devices and influencing large audience. The word influence in mass communication refers to the effect that the communicated message has on the audience. Communication revolutions have been occurring through human history. Each new medium provided a means by which significant changes could be brought in the organization of society and the accumulation of culture. Ian Robertson said that a society is a population that occupies the same territory, is subject to the some political authority, and participates in a common culture (Robert, 1989, p:51).

In society mass communication play a very important role. The society as a whole depends on media for different type of information. Dependence on the media is both social and personal. In any society women play very important role and are more vulnerable sectors of society.

### **Significance of Women in Society**

Two aspects of the position of women merit particular attention to provide adequate context for a study of impact of personal status law: women defacto status in society, which renders them the vulnerable section in society and social encounters; and women's social image, which promotes the idea of a weaker and second grade sex.

The social role of women has been defined by the economic, social and cultural values of the society. There are many social and economic factors that interact in this complicated picture underlying the drafting and implication of the law, economic factors and the issue of illiteracy are the most critical, in this context of the family structure, women tend to supper a double social and political suppression. Moreover, men have the advantage of being more involved in social life and are therefore generally more experienced than women, apart from the few women who manage to overcome the restricted boundaries of the family.

The role of women in any society and power of media are so much a part of an daily lives that we offen take it for granted, Mass media are capable of communicating messages

and electronic media are more successful in achieving desired result than the print media, Television not only force the audience to attend the message but transmit these messages from our section of society to another. In all of these the role of television is crucial.

### **Work in Media**

In media, women have remained the topic of numerous debates and discussion since the invention of media. The communication revolution began to gather with the spread of television following World War II. After 1980 masses use media with the fast pace in average home, the television is watched approximately six hours. Public attitudes regarding the role of women are major determinants in deciding the status of women in a society. In shaping attitudes the media exert a strong influence. Women play the multi-dimensional roles in society but they are generally expected to be less capable than men particularly in situation involving some sort of task performance. The status of women have been a subject of serious controversy since ages. Women play a crucial role in ensuring internal cohesion and helping the society together and in media women also have been the topic of discussion.

Mass media play crucial role in the functioning and change of society. Media has a considerable power to lead public opinion. By virtue of its content, the media is able to shape the beliefs and attitudes of individuals. Mass media give audience ideas that may then be translated in to open behaviour similarly the portrayal of sex and violence in media effect the attitude and behaviour of receiver and it varies depending on the detail of presentation.

In 1950, Will Durant mentioned the theories of churchmen were generally hostile to women some laws of the church increased her subjection “To priests and theologians women was still in these centuries what she had seemed to Chrysostom a necessary evil, a natural temptation, a desirable calamity, a domestic peril, a deadly fascination, a painted ill” (Durant , 1950) The remarks of Chrysostom were very harsh.

The status of women in Islam, as described by Gibb, “Muhammad (Peace be upon him) enhanced the status of women in general is universally admitted” (Gibb, 1935) women are more protected in Islam. According to a Muslim Scholar; “Many progressive features in the social-cultural structure of the different Indian communities like respect for women and their human rights can be treated to the influence exercised upon them by Islam through various channels” (Nadwi, 1989). In sura Nias Allah says:

“To men allotted they earn and to women what they earn”, (Al Quran, 4:32)

God thus decrees that men and women are equal in all aspects of work and manners of earning livelihood, Islam give equal basic rights to men and women.

Although men and women are the numerical majority, their media treatment has much more in common with minority groups (Shoemaker, 1991). Mostly scholars have compared women to ethnic minorities. Ceulemans noted that “women have largely been featured in television commercials in two capacities as most solicited consumers and as instrument of persuasion” (Ceulemans & Guide, 1978). Gupta’ and Jain said that 75 percent of advertisement depict women stereotyped roles and images” (Gupton & Jain N, 1977).

Media reflect the status of common in society in stereotyped roles. Burner noted “women are underrepresented and are stereotypically deferent and nurturing while males are shown as active and aggressive” (Barner, 1999). Since 1970s, women have begun appearing in higher status jobs on television and in some what fewer stereotypical occupations. Signorelli and Bacue described that the percentage of women shown working outside the home has changed. Through decades men on television are still more likely to be employed as compared to women, and there are still fewer females than male roles overall (Singnireli & Bacue, 1999)

Feminist scholar Gaye Tuchman in “The symbolic Annihilation of women by Mass Media” states that television commercials “neglect or rigidly stereotype women”. Kamla Bhasin pointed out “we are not just concerned with how women are portrayed in the media or how many women work in the media. We are also concerned about what kinds of lives they lead, what status they have, and what kind of society we have”. The answers to these questions will determine our future strategies for communication and networking. Communication alternatives, therefore, need to emerge from our critique of the present world order and our vision of future, (Bhasin, 1994).

Sut Jhally, in his educational documentary ‘Dream worlds’ argues that the channel constructs an image of women through a particular discourse of ‘nymphomia’ as ever available objects in an endlessly repetitive male adolescent fantasy world. Other studies agree that despite the presence of strong female images in some music videos, it is hard to fault the essential truth. Sarah Graham analyzed female imagery in Arab states and used women in conflicting ways “as symbols of progress” and symbols of continuity with cultural post” in reaction to representations of women imposed from outside the society. Major ideological changes effect the use of female imagery promotes national goals (Graham, 1988).

There is a gap between the ideological message of certain national interest television serials and experience of life in particular communities. The explanation of such images is fraught with complications. Media representation of women and men today may indeed be more diverse than they were thirty years ago. In dramas, including popular fiction, soap operas and telenovelas has to some extent begun to expand the new currents and

complexities in gender relations with occasional portrayals of the man (gentle, supportive) and modern women (independent, assertive) (Bondura & Walkers, 1963)

Television entertaining of programs portray the women discrimination, reflect and raise the feeling of guilt. Bandura, a leading protagonist is of the view that any enjoyment derived from watching acts of aggression gives rise to un-pleasant socialized feelings of guilt. Gallagher said "overall media treatment of women can best be described as narrow-- woman are rarely portrayed a rational active or decisive --- underlying practically all media images is a dichotomous motif which defines women as either perfectly good wholly evil, mother or whore, virgin or call girl, even tradition or modern." (Gallagher, 1970) Mcneil mentioned women character projected in fictional contents on television have depicted in traditionally female occupation and men are shown in high prestige field. The type of problems women have, the nature of interactions, and focus of their activities, indicate their home and family bound orientation women primarily appear on TV in a narrow social context of interpersonal relationship (Mcneil, 1975). Elena Beasley noted that women are underrepresented in television. "The fact that a majority of voiceovers on television are male, that there are male news readers on television and that many of the major films are made by men indicates that it is the male who has the authority and control of the world of television." (Beasley, 2005)

Studies in USA television Commercials discloses that men dominated in all areas except in cosmetic and house hold commodities Dominick and Rauch said that 75% of the advertisements using female were products found in the kitchen or bathroom and that females were on camera 21% of the time. Dominick and Rauch concluded that women were over represented in family and home settings and must often seen performing domestic tasks involving the product. Men dominated in the entertainment, business, sales and management occupations and rarely demonstrated products. They were more often shown as benefiting from the tasks and activities performed by women (Dominick, & Rauch, 1972).

According to Mac Bride Commission Report in both developed and developing societies public attitudes regarding the role of women in society are major determinants in deciding the status of women. In shaping these attitudes the media exert strong impact. As regard portrayal of women the print and electronic media have been identified as major culprits. Women basically seen as performing decorative function and as being marginal to national development and growth resulted a reinforcing of stereotyped images. The negative stereotypes have been indicated as women place in home. The most valuable asset of women is physical beauty and a women energies and intellect must be directed to find right man and 'keep him, women are, dependent, submissive, masochistic in then response to humiliation and even to physical violence in fledged on them, the good women is the tradition house wife. The working women must be brought into the

marriage (Mac Bride, 1980). Women are generally defined as helpless and more emotional than men. The modern image of the more liberated woman is not the image of the contemporary women on television. Gunter referring to the characteristics of women on adult television said that it seem that “sex role stereotyping is more deeply woven into the fabric of television programming than the obvious numerical distinction between the sexes suggests” (Gunter, 1986)

Public attitudes regarding the role of women in society are major determinants in deciding the status of women. In shaping these attitudes the media exert a strong influence. There has been a growing rate of violence against women. These studies provided guideline to take analytical debates on women in media. The studies have documented the interesting feature of exploring a comparison of dramatized reality and social reality. In this regard the studies could provide strong knowledge based the nature and function of the media in identifying violence against women.

It is nearly Universal that gender matters in ways that keep women relatively less free, less independent, less empowered and less physically secure than men. But the challenges of contesting and altering inequalities are compounded in societies where gender and family relation are governed by religious laws. Debates over the legitimacy of gender equality have been especially vigorous in Islamic Societies. The Quran says:

“Whosoever doth right whether male or female and is a believer, him verily we shall quicken with good life and we shall pay them a recompense in proportion to the best of what they used to do” (Al Quran, 16:97).

Before the advent of Islam, the Women were treated in a cruel way:

When if one of them recieveth tidings of the birth of a female, his face remaineth darkened and he is wroth inwardly. He hideth himself from the folk because of the evil of that whereof he hath had tidings (asking himself); shall he keep it in contempt or bury it beneath the dust verily evil is their judgment and when the girl child that was buried alive is asked for what sin she was slain (Al Quran, 17:8-9).

Islam said for the inheritance of property rights for women in these words:

"O ye who believe! It is not lawful for you forcibly to inherit the women (of your deceased kinsmen) noor (that ye should put constraint upon them that ye may take away a part of that which ye have given them unless they be guilty of flagrant lawdness. But consort with them in kindness for if ye hate them it may happen that ye hate a thing where in Allah hath placed much good" (Al Quran, 4:19).

Islam has given the right to women to marry a man according to her choice:

"Allah citeth an example for those who disbeliever the wife of Noah and the wife of Lot who were under two of the righteous slaves yet betrayed them. So that they (the husbands) availed them naught against Allah and it was said (unto them). Enter the Fire along with those who enter and Allah eiteth an example for those who believe the wife of Pharaoh when she said My Lord! Build for me a home with thee in the Garden and deliver me from Pharaoh and his work and deliver me from evil-doing folk. And Mary, daughter of Imran whose body was chaste therefore we breathed therein something of our spirit. And she put faith in the words of her Lord and His scriptures and was .of the obedient" (Al Quran, 66:10-12).<sup>24</sup>

"And they (women) have right similar to those (of men) over them in kindness, and men are a degree above them Allah is Mighty, Wise." (Al Quran, 2:228)

Many verses of the Quran protect women and their rights for the prevalent misguided stereotypes of women and give them a respectable position in society. God teaches us that superiority in this presence is a not on gender, but rather on one's fear and respect of Allah, faith, good character, devotion and dedication.

The Quran verses and Hadith accept the equality of men and women. The studies discussed above describe violence against women which is an extreme difficult subject and prevailing not only in Muslim societies but virtually everywhere. In societies the rate of violence tends to be high. However, the available information is very limited. In Pakistan, there are lack of reliable information because of the refused or failure of authorities and document reports or make reports publicly available; and official or social acceptance of certain forms and degrees of intra-family violence. Hence, the quality and availability of information about domestic violence varies from non-existent to partial at best.

In the country there is virtually no statistical information what so ever. Most information about domestic violence that does exist comes from local and international organization, including women and human rights organizations.

God made men and women essentially different and these differences contribute to different familial roles, rights and duties which are complementary and this complementarily is crucial to the cohesion and stability of family and society. The Quran condemn violence between spouses. For example: Sura 30: 21 (Al Quran, 30:21)<sup>26</sup> describes martial relations as tranquil, merciful and affectionate and the relationship itself as based on companionship, not service or tyranny. Islam does not sanction any form of

violence against women. Domestic violence became a major issue in all societies, particularly in Muslim societies and efforts are made to promote women right as human right, Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) has prohibit numerous forms of violence as human right violations. Islam has given a guide line for compensatory provisions to protect women from violence.

Violence against women is prevalent in Pakistan. According to a report by Aurat Foundation there were 8539 cases of violence against women in 2011, a 6.74% increase from 2010. Over 70% of women get domestic violence (Aurat Foundation, 2011). Sexual violence is also prevalent within marriage and marital rape is not a criminal offence as men are perceived as entitled to demand sex from their wives. Domestic violence, particularly sexual violence also regularly exists during pregnancy to women.

The constitution of Pakistan guarantees fundamental freedoms to women, in view of Article 25(3), which entails states to make specific provision for women and children. The equality of women and children is firmly enshrined in Article 14 as well as 25 (1) of the constitution (Constitution of Islamic Republic of Pakistan, 1973). The most important article, with respect to enforce full participation of women in all spheres of national life is article 14, which states that any form of violence on women is a violation of the fundamental right to dignity.

## **Conclusions**

Media are powerful instrument in creating lasting impression, conveying for reaching messages and providing for a variety of activities. A nation cannot progress, if its women are not given due recognition and violence against women is rejected by the society. Media can play a significant role in reflecting social realities and projecting positive role and awareness of women rights as explained in Islam. Media should help to enhance gender equity by expanding women access to justice and women's human rights to increase women's empowerment by expanding knowledge of their rights and opportunities to exercise their rights in workplace community and home. The constitution of Pakistan gives equal rights to all citizens and there shall be no discrimination on the basis of sex (article 25 of the constitution of Islamic Republic of Pakistan). Women are guaranteed fundamental rights and are considered equal citizens in all respect. The constitution is based on the fundamental teaching of Islam. Gender disparity continues to exist between women and man in Pakistan. Media should discourage negative social values, cultural practices and should help to implement affirmative policies for women, Violence against women such as "honour killing" and murder in the name of religion and custom are common in the society and media can play an effective role in reducing violence against women. Violence against women have deep social, psychological and mental affect on women. They destroy women's confidence, their respect, their status



and position within family. Women are the basic instrument for the progress of any society. This dimension of progress shall be basic task of Pakistani Media.

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