

Coverage of Women Issues in Sindhi Newspapers of Pakistan

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Abstract

Women issues are the most extensively increasing issue not only in Pakistan but globally as well. According to the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (2020) women, related issues become higher in the country each year. The issues of women became serious, which need to resolve. With time, women's issues are now a critical matter, particularly in Pakistan. Therefore, the goal of the study is to interrogate the coverage of women's issues concerning the violation of fundamental rights in Sindhi newspapers of the country. For data accumulation, three Sindhi language dailies, Kawish, Ibrat, and Hilal-e-Pakistan, were drawn from 1st January 2018 to 30 June 2018 as a sample size. The quantitative content analysis method has been employed. The findings reveal that the Sindhi language newspapers report satisfactory coverage concern to the issues of women in Sindh province of Pakistan. In contrast to this finding, these newspapers have frequently reported the issues of violence against women as compared to education, health, and property-related matters of women.

Keywords: Women Issues, Women Rights, Violence Against Women, Sindhi Newspapers.

INTRODUCTION

It is a fact that Sindhi print media plays a significant role in the dissemination of information and dealing with the development of women's social status particularly in the Sindh province of Pakistan. The Sindhi newspapers mostly cover the issues of women from all over the country. However, the most burning issues of the society are lack of education, unemployment, women's health, sexual and physical violence against women, freedom from prostitution & trafficking subjects concerning to women. The

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women issues can be described as ‘obstacles of female rights include; violence against women, property issue, education issue, health related issue, freedom from trafficking and prostitution, credit related issue (Sheikh, 2017)

However, it is believed that in a most patriarchal culture like Pakistan, a male dominates and a female subordinate to him. Furthermore, women are deprived of their fundamental rights and suffering from multiple issues of society. In this regard, media play a key role in covering the issues against women. The issues of women are usually highlighted in the newspapers, when victim report their issues in police stations or raise voice for justice in front of press clubs.

Sindh is the second largest province of the country. Sindh province has a long history of literature, culture and art. Sindhi is a historical language of a country. However, the Sindh language is mostly spoken by Sindhi people, usually living in remote areas of the Sindh province of Pakistan. Moreover, it is also observed that Sindhi people like to read newspapers in their native language. It has been proved that Sindhi language newspapers played a vital role for the independence of the country.² The Sindhi language newspapers mostly cover the issues of women. Generally, the Daily Kawish publishes violence against women issues at the inner side and back page of the newspaper. Sindh newspapers publish violence related stories of women with the images of the victims. Particularly, the Daily 'Kawish', the Daily 'Ibrat' and the Daily 'Hilal-e-Pakistan' are the most popular newspapers among the Sindhi readers (Mughal, 2008). Hence, it is essential to interrogate the coverage of issues concern to women issues. Therefore, the difference of judgments in highlighting women issues in the print media of the country is quite marked in our society. Thus, it's far obligatory to research the insurance of the Sindhi language newspapers of the country. Therefore, the purpose of the study is to interrogate the coverage of women's issues concern to violation of fundamental rights in Sindhi newspapers of the country.

The Status of Women in Pakistan

²https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Sindhi-language_newspapers

Despite seven decades, Pakistan is still included in the list of developing countries. This country is still fighting for equal rights of education, health facilities, economic stability, and women's rights.

In the context of the United Nations Human Development Index (2020), Pakistan's rank was 154th among 189 countries. In addition to this, Pakistan ranked 147th out of 188 countries in Human Development Index (2015). In terms of the Gender Inequality Index, 'Pakistan ranks 121 out of 155 countries, only 19.3 percent of women reach to secondary education compared to 46.1 percent of men, while female participation in the labor market is 24.6 percent compared to 82.9 percent for men' (Human Development Index, 2015). It is a notable fact that women are in the most vulnerable groups and they cannot be neglected. On one side, there are several factors including lack of access to education, the inadequacy of maternal health facilities, violence against women, property related conflicts, insufficiency of empowerment in decision making at home and freedom from prostitution and trafficking issues. On another side, the maternal mortality rate is high due to the lack of facilities in hospitals. The majority of women are house wives. Therefore, the large ratio of female population depends on men's income. Generally, in Pakistan, women have lesser participation in decision-making (Nizamani, 2018). In this context, women avail less opportunities and smaller amount of empowerment at home and at workplace too. They have to face optical in their whole life. Due to lack of political awareness, lack of education, lack of empowerment, violence and other many factors women mostly do not enjoy their basic rights. The researcher reckons that the proper leap forward in growing the mechanism to eliminate violence is to apprehend and maintain the precept of human equality as declared by the women's protection constitution of the country and Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

In 1996, Pakistan had ratified in the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and promised to provide health facilities, education, employment, property rights, protection from violence against women, credit rights, and provision of freedom from prostitution and trafficking to women through the constitution of the country. Unfortunately, Pakistan is still trying to achieve such

objectives. In 1995, during the Fourth Beijing conference, the concept of women and media was observed. In this regard, Zafar and Sehgal (1996) depicted that "the power of media for consciousness rising among the women need to be recognized and utilized that information plays a significant role for women's autonomy and empowerment". It is notable point that media is powerful for spreading awareness of empowerment and other issues among men and women. Besides this, inequality is perpetuated through women's lack of access to information services and consumption of media as a means of sharing experiences (Redaelli, 2019). Media is supposed as a powerful source of information but women have less access to information regarding their rights and understanding of other issues.

Problem Statement

Scholars agreed that print media have given very little coverage to the issues of women in the newspapers. In this regard, the study of Shaikh et al., (2019) found that the print media of Pakistan report very few issues of women related to their rights. In contrast to this, the Daily Kawish (Sindhi Language newspaper and the Daily Dawn (an English language newspaper) have covered more issues of violence against women but the Daily Jang (Urdu language newspaper) has published more education problems of women in 2011 (Shaikh et al., 2019). However, it has been pointed out that the majority of newspapers might be published at the regional level, so they cover more stories related to violence against women issues. Another study by Khalil & Shafiq (2020) has proved that regional newspapers report more issues of women as compared to the national newspapers.

The issue of women's health care is predominated. In this regard, in Nigeria, Adeniran (2020) found that 'this study have given greater support to prevailing journalistic norms and newsroom routines as the dominant factors influencing the underrepresentation of women in the newspaper's coverage of maternal-child health care issues.' Amenaghawon and Salawu (2020) also revealed that the causes of gender-based violence are financial indiscretion, infidelity, jealousy, guilt, and ritual intentions. Moreover, the study stated that the news were the desired editorial framework and episodic framing was preferable over thematic structure. Readers did not pay

importance to gender violence stories because all these were published inside, one-fourth and tiny pages of their newspapers.

Another research study on the coverage of women's issues, which was conducted by Goswami, et al. (2010) in the Bikaner city of Rajasthan, India disclosed that most subjects related to women were published in sections titled as local pages of selected newspapers. However, consultancy regarding career and business also did not highlight women's issues in the selected newspapers. Even another study of India conducted by Nautiyal and Dabral (2012) found that women's issues have been covered by two Hindi newspapers predominantly. However, women's issues have got slight attention in the non-news items (such as articles, analysis, editorials, letters to editor, features, and columns). Similarly, very few informative pieces of articles, columns, and features have covered issues concerning to political or economic activities of women (Nautiyal & Dabral, 2012). It means that Indian's newspapers most of the time report only two issues these concern to business and political news to women in detail. However, other issues of women were left behind.

The findings of Kaur (2013) research have also confronted that the coverage of sexual assault stories has many effects on society. It has been observed that print media is not excitable towards the coverage of sensitive issues of women (Kaur, 2013). Somehow, it is fact that media report the issue of women in pessimistic perception, which reflect negative effects on the audiences.

As far as coverage of women issues in the newspapers is concerned, the Indian scholars Nautiyal and Dabral (2012) found that "News related to women though still marginal have started to occasionally occupy important slots like editorials, features, articles, columns and front-page news". Therefore, it is observed that occasionally, male editor decides the placement of the news according to his interest.

Moreover, SN Tahir and G Mojiz (2006) concluded that nowadays women's issues have obtained a fresh prominence in the country. The country has approved the law regarding the rights of a girl to marry according to her will without the consent of the guardian, anti-honor killing law, women's protection law against violence, domestic violence, the

act of anti-harassment are some indications towards the progress of women status in the country.

If we analyze another part of the fact that women reporters tend to cover issues influencing women as victims and audience see more regular and utilize a broader perspective of news in creating a human intrigued point as compared to men's correspondents (Covert 1981, Mills 1997, Meyers 1997, Skidmore 1998, Christmas 1997).

Research Design

According to the report of Pakistan Peace Studies, "there are 142 dailies, which have regular publications. It means that there are 16% Sindhi dailies published regularly at regional, national and international level" (Sangi, 2014). The daily Kawish, the daily Ibrat, and the daily Hilal-e-Pakistan are old and popular newspapers of the country. For this study, the quantitative technique of content analysis method has been employed for analyzing the coverage of women's issues in three Sindhi language newspapers. Content analysis is the study of 'human communication. among the forms suitable for study are books, magazines, web pages, poems, songs, letters, email messages, newspapers as well as components or collection' (Babbie, 2007). The initial period of six months of 2018 (from 1st January 2018 to 30th June 2018) was chosen. The sampled newspapers were categorized into three items; including news items, non-news items, and women's issues. The contents of three newspapers were measured in a column per centimeter of space.

Table A

Total Space of Sindhi Newspapers

Sindhi Newspapers	Total no. of Pages	Total Pages *Columns * length of the newspaper = Total Space(TS)	Total Space (TS) in col./cm
The Daily Hilal-e-Pakistan	2550	2550x8x52=1060800	10,60,800
The Daily Ibrat	1955	1955x8x52=711360	7,11,360
The Daily Kawish	1987	1987x8x52=826592	8,26,592

Source: Primary data source by author

The total space of three Sindhi newspapers has been measured for the period of six months from 1st January 2018 to 30 June 2018 (Refer Table A).

Data Interpretation

Analysis of Sindhi Newspapers

Table 1

Coverage of Women's Issues from 1st January 2018 to 30 June 2018

Sindhi Newspapers	No: of Women Issues	Total Space of Issues in Col./Cm	% of Space	Total Space Newspapers in six months of 2018.
The Daily Hilal-e-Pakistan	422	4654	0.438%	10,60,800
The Daily Ibrat	697	10865	1.527%	7,11,360
The Daily Kawish	1643	21890	2.648%	8,26,592

Source: Primary data source by author

Table no., indicates that the daily Kawish and the daily Ibrat have given satisfactory coverage to women issues except the daily Hilal-e-Pakistan in the early six months of 2018. In contrast to this, the daily Kawish has reported more women issues as compared to the daily Ibrat and the daily Hilal-e-Pakistan.

Analysis of Women's Issues

The issues of women were classified into eight categories. (Refer Table 2)

Table 2
Coverage of Women's Issues in Sindhi Newspapers

WOMEN'S ISSUES	THE DAILY KAWISH			THE DAILY IBRAT			THE DAILY HILAL-E-PAKISTAN		
	No: of Women Issues	Space (col./cm)	% of Space	No: of Women Issues	Space (col./cm)	% of Space	No: of Women Issues	Space (col./cm)	% of Space
Property Issues of Women									
	05	72	1.940	16	167	9.319	3	69	9.212
Education-related Issues of Women									
	0	0	0	12	164	9.151	13	135	18.024
Employment-related Issues of Women									
	03	99	2.668	10	56	3.125	04	31	4.1388
Health-related Issues of Women									
	09	113	3.045	11	179	9.988	01	06	0.8010
Issue of Protection from Violence against Women									
	87	1459	39.326	26	450	25.111	19	140	18.6915
Marriage related Issue of Women									
	73	680	18.328	31	560	31.25	16	315	42.0560
Credit-related Issue of Women									
	04	80	2.156	01	8	0.446	03	32	4.2723
Issue of Freedom from Prostitution & Trafficking of women									
	06	123	3.315	02	61	3.404	02	21	2.803
Miscellaneous Issues of women									
	68	1084	29.218	04	147	8.203	0	0	0
Total	255	3710	100	113	1792	100	61	749	100

Source: Primary data source by author

A significant pattern has been found during the interpretation of data that the daily Kawish utilized more 1459 col./cm of space to 87 issues related to violence against the fair sex than other dailies. Here, it has also notable that 'women marriage' which may deny the practices of early marriages, honor killing, exchange of girls in solving

conflicts, and exchange of girls in the wedding has been reported 680 col./cm of space to 73 more issues by the daily Kawish, 560 col./cm of space to 31 issues in the daily Ibrat and only 315col./cm of space to 16 issues were reported by the daily Hilal-e-Pakistan. However, the issues of women's education are completely ignored by the daily Kawish but the daily Ibrat and the daily Hilal-e-Pakistan have published some issues regarding the education of women. Similarly, the issue of women's health was given very little space in all newspapers. However, the issue of employment, credit issue, and issue of freedom from prostitution & trafficking were given negligible space in these three above-mentioned Sindhi newspapers, which were mostly ignored by the editors of the newspapers.

Consequently, the results of the study revealed that only two dailies, the daily Kawish, and the daily Ibrat also given follow-up news stories with the focal point regarding violence on women compared with the daily Hilal-e-Pakistan.

Overall Analysis of Sindhi Newspaper's Contents

Traditionally, to murder for the sake of honor is the worst practice in our society. Such incidents happen every day all over the country. It is observed that almost all Sindhi language newspapers report such news stories on daily basis. According to the study, the contents of the newspapers were divided into four items, includes: I) News Items II) Non-News Items III) Visuals and IV) Advertisements.

Overall, it has been found that the daily Hilal-e-Pakistan has published very slight (2) news items and covered only 389 col./cm of space out of a total of 118560col./cm of newspaper in only six months from 1st January 2018 to 30 June 2018. Whereas, the daily Kawish has reported 179 more news items and published 2573 col./cm of space out of a total 15059col./cm of the newspaper in the early six months from 1st January 2018 to 30th June 2018. The daily Ibrat was another newspaper that has reported only 60 issues 964 col./cm out of its total 99840col./m of space in the early six months of 2018. (Refer Table 3)

Table 3
Coverage of Eight Issues of Women in Three Sindhi Dailies

Types of Content	DAILY KAWISH			DAILY IBRAT			DAILY HILAL-E-PAKISTAN		
	No: of issues	Total Space in col. cm	% of space	No: of issues	Total Space in col. Cm	% of space	No: of issues	Total Space in col. cm	% of space
NI	179	2573	1.708	60	964	0.965	42	389	0.328
NNI	07	638	0.423	16	512	0.512	04	271	0.228
VI	04	44	0.029	37	316	0.316	15	89	0.075
AdvI	65	455	0.302	0	0	0	0	0	0
WI	255	3710	2.463	113	1792	1.794	61	749	0.631
Total space of theDailies in June 2018		15059			99840			118560	

NI= News Items, NNI= Non-News Items, VI= Visual Item, AdvI= Advertisements Item, WI= Women's Issues.

Source: Primary data source by author

It is also worth pointing out that Sindhi medium dailies mostly covered crime or violence-related issues than social and legal news items concerning women. According to the policy of the newspapers, each newspaper has to publish political, economic, and social issues as news on the first and second pages of the paper (Refer Table 3). Most notable point is that Sindhi newspapers have mostly ignored the social issues regarding women's rights on the front and second page of the newspapers. The non-news item is the second content of the study. The daily Ibrat has published 16 non-news items about women's stories in the forms of features, articles, and columns as compared to the other two dailies (Kawish 07 and Hilal-e-Pakistan 04). It has been also analyzed that three dailies have focused on burning issues related to politics, economics, and religious extremism issues of society rather than women issues (Refer Table 3).

The third content of the research study is the visuals item. Table 3 depicts those two dailies (Ibrat and Hilal-e-Pakistan) have ignored the visuals item in their newspapers in the early six months of 2018 and only one newspaper the daily Kawish has a very tiny coverage of visuals items. (Refer Table 3)

The final item is advertisements. Advertisements are the major source of income for media industries. However, print media mostly sell its space for generating revenue. Table 3 shows that the two dailies (Ibrat and Hilal-e-Pakistan) have ignored the space for advertisement regarding women-related problems while only one newspaper the daily Kawish has published 65 advertisements and used 455col./cm or 0.302% of space out of total space of newspaper in early six months of 2018. It has been noted that the daily Kawish usually sells space to Qasam Nama³ (Refer Table 3).

Table 4

Coverage of Categories of News Items by the Sindhi Dailies

NI	THE DAILY KAWISH			THE DAILY IBRAT			THE DAILY HILAL-E-PAKISTAN		
	No: of issues	Total Space in col. cm	% of space	No: of issues	Total Space in col. Cm	% of space	No: of issues	Total Space in col. cm	% of space
CNI	69	1067	41.469	28	491	50.933	22	231	59.383
LNI	56	795	30.897	26	435	45.124	12	102	26.221
SNI	31	438	17.022	06	38	3.9419	08	56	14.395
MISI	23	273	10.610	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	179	2573	100	60	964	100	42	389	100

NI=News Items, CNI=Crime News Item, LNI=Legal News Item, SNI=Social News Item, MISI=Miscellaneous Items

Source: Primary data source by author

³Declaration by a woman on oath before a magistrate announcing free will for marriage. This is published to make public. With it, the elder or guardians of the women seizes the right to his daughter's or sister's marriage. While other two newspapers (the daily Ibrat and Hilal-e-Pakistan) have ignored the issues concern to women.

News items are further divided into three categories, including crime news items, social news items, and legal news items (Refer Table no 4). Table 4 reveals that usually Sindhi newspapers give priority to the issues of women which are mostly related to crime news items and legal news items. Overall, it has been found that Sindhi newspapers have more focus on different issues related to violence against women. Sindhi newspapers give very much less importance to the social issues concern with women's rights including; education, health, right of marriage, inheritance rights. This behavior of editors of the newspapers depicted that they are interested in highlighting those issues of women in which women are victimized and suffering in late court hearing cases.

Table 5
Coverage of Non-News Items by the Sindhi Dailies

NNI	THE DAILY KAWISH			THE DAILY IBRAT			THE DAILY HILAL-E-PAKISTAN		
	No: of issues	Total Space in col. cm	% of space	No: of issues	Total Space in col. cm	% of space	No: of issues	Total Space in col. cm	% of space
Ed	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
L to Ed	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
F	01	102	15.987	08	238	50	04	271	100
A	04	380	59.561	04	130	25	0	0	0
C	02	156	24.451	04	144	25	0	0	0
TOTAL NNI	07	638	100	16	512	100	04	271	100

Ed=Editorials, L to Ed= Letters to Editor, F=Features, C=Columns, A=Articles, NNI= Non-News Items, Source: Primary data source by author

To analyze the coverage of women issues given by the Sindhi newspapers were classified in Editorials (Ed), Letters to the editor to Ed), Features (F), Articles (A), and Columns (C) known as Non-News Items (NNI). Table 5 proved that the Sindhi newspapers give negligible space to the issues of women in editorials and letters to the editor in the early six months of 2018. However, the editorial is "An opinion piece of written by the editor or member of the editorial board, generally appear on the editorial page in a newspaper or magazine" (Richard, 1996).

The daily Ibrat has given more space to features in its newspaper in the early six months of 2018, whereas, the daily Kawish has utilized some space to only articles than others. The overall analysis of categories of non-news items provided evidence that editors of Sindhi language newspapers have given more attention to the political and economic issues rather than covering women issues in the month of 1st January 2018 to 30 June 2018.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The study reveals that Sindhi newspapers give satisfactory coverage to women issues. Mostly, newspapers cover a little more space to violence against women in crime news and legal news stories; like domestic violence, honor killing, acid throwing, and sexual harassment. The study reveals that daily Kawish have reported more than 2.463% out of total space of newspaper concerning issues of women as compared to 1.794 % in the daily Ibrat and 0.631% in the daily Hilal-e-Pakistan in the early six months of 2018.

Finally, it has concluded that Sindhi language newspapers have significantly published women's issues. However, sampled newspapers do not present a balanced picture of women's contribution to society. It has notable point that Sindhi language dailies publish less more prevention-related issues in the news and non-news items. They also present a balanced picture of women's contribution to society. Further, it is ascertained that Sindhi newspapers have published contents of women's education to change the perceptual mindsets of the Sindhi readers, due to which people intend to educate their daughters in schools/colleges. Only six months from 1st January 2018 to 30 June 2018 have been analyzed in this study, which is a major limitation of this study.

RECOMMENDATION

Although, this study discovered that there is coverage of women's issues in the Sindhi newspapers, firstly, this present research also noted that there is a lack of qualitative studies that discuss and highlight women's issues in detail with providing its solutions on a broader scale for society especially women. Secondly, despite providing coverage to women's issues, the selected Sindhi language newspapers did not foreground

women's contribution to society which is necessary for women empowerment in Pakistan.

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