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Relative analysis of reportage of women allied news by English dailies in the region of Tamil Nadu

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Abstract

Women have held various positions and played a variety of roles' in society across centuries especially in a country like India. Women in India had great difficulties to have their voices heard in our country, women have had many barriers to even voice their opinions. They had difficulties to express themselves among family members, to gain access to education, sanitation, employment and also being treated equally in a male subjugated society. Print media being a traditional form of media in our country has been the watchdog of the society since its inception. Print media has had helped in bringing out various issues related to women and those that affected women on the whole at the policy level and in a variety of ways. It is vital to conduct a research study that articulates about the representation in women in print media. In such important phase, it is really necessary to undergo a research study to understand the significance of how media is giving coverage to women especially in the regional newspapers. This Research study is effectively intended to understand, the coverage and space given to women in the print media in Tamil Nadu, by analyzing various regional newspapers using suitable variables and parameters.

Keywords: press coverage, women, news, women, regional newspapers

Introduction

Representation of Women in Media

The representation of women in media has been an ongoing phenomenon in the study of communication, as there have been many scholars turning their attention to these issues. Rakow (1992) of the University of Wisconsin, revealed that from the second half of the 1980's the field of communication could no longer ignore feminist scholarship or the growing number of women calling themselves feminist scholars. Research on gender and feminism in communication thus became a point of focus. This has further played a significant role in communication scholarship and has exposed feminist issues that exist in the media. Amu and Kalpana (2006) wrote that women's issues are usually not the stuff of which headlines are made, nor are gender related concerns considered news or a good copy. They wrote that when women's issues draw the attention of the media, they are often sensationalized, trivialized, or otherwise distorted and thus their coverage involves a series of hits and misinformation as well. This is a clear indication on the issues of misrepresentation and underrepresentation of women in and by the media.

Recently, there have been an increasing number of women involved in businesses, either through ownership or in practice as revealed by the Missouri Women's Council (2012). This could reveal that society is in transition from being a dominantly male oriented to a more or less balanced state, especially in the field of career knowledge and in entrepreneurial practice. The Missouri Women's Council (<http://www.womenscouncil.org>) website provided statistics showing that between 1997 and 2006, the number of 'majority' women who owned businesses in Missouri increased by 42%. The Center of Women's Business Research Council noted that 48%, or nearly half, of all privately held firms are owned by a woman or women during that period (<http://www.womenscouncil.org>). However, one does not see these facts revealed publically through the media, or the impression of such growth when one reads through the newspaper or engages in other media sources.

Review of Literature

Impact of Newspaper in Society

Sharma (2013) in his article pointed out that contemporary society exhibits deep dependency

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on mass media and is dominated by media in all aspects of life. It is a well-known fact that media has an immense power to shape the attitudes of people in reconstruction of reality. People develop shared construction of reality through mass media. The media-provided interpretations of certain issues have a deep and far reaching impact on the masses. The media has the power to push various issues into the public domain. It is the need of the hour that sustainable development is given priority by the media. Mass media has an important role to play since along with legislation, formation of attitude towards sustainable development is required on a large scale which can only be accomplished through media. The media has a social responsibility and active contribution of mass media is essential for promoting sustainable development and motivating People to use alternative sources of energy so that we can make this world a better place to live.

Women, Society & Media

A primary way in which media distort reality is in under representing women. Whether it is prime-time television, in which there are three times as many white men as women (Basow, 1992 p. 159), or children’s programming, in which males outnumber females by two to one, or newscasts, in

which women make up 16% of newscasters and in which stories about men are included 10 times more often than ones about women (“Study Reports Sex Bias,” 1989), media misrepresent actual pro-portions of men and women in the population. This constant distortion tempts us to believe that there really are more men than women and, further, that men are the cultural standard.

Objectives of the Study

- To understand the significance provide by regional Print Media towards women and women related issues in Tamil Nadu.
- To study and analyze, how women has been portrayed by regional newspapers in Tamil Nadu.

Methodology

The methodology adopted for this study is Quantitative content analysis. The Analysis is done over two dailies, two English dailies Deccan Chronicle and The Hindu and their coverage on women related news in Tamil Nadu for a period of two months Nov& Dec 2015 randomly and the analysis as follows

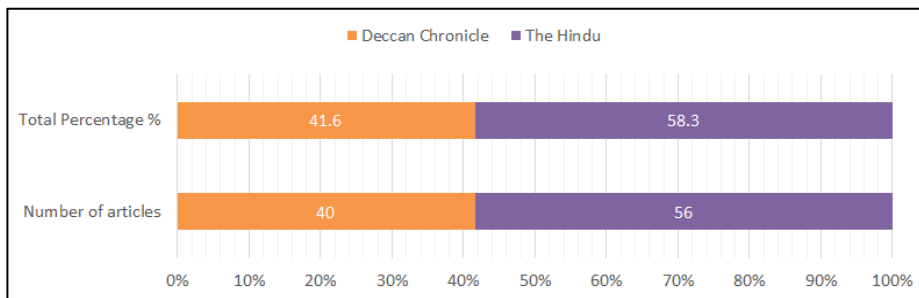


Fig 1: Women related news appeared in the English dailies

Table 2: Women based news reported in First page

Newspapers	Number of articles	Total Percentage %
Deccan Chronicle	3	75
The Hindu	1	25
Total	4	100

Table 3: Women news in the reader friendly page

Newspapers	Number of articles	Total Percentage %
Deccan Chronicle	36	47.3
The Hindu	40	52.6
Total	76	100

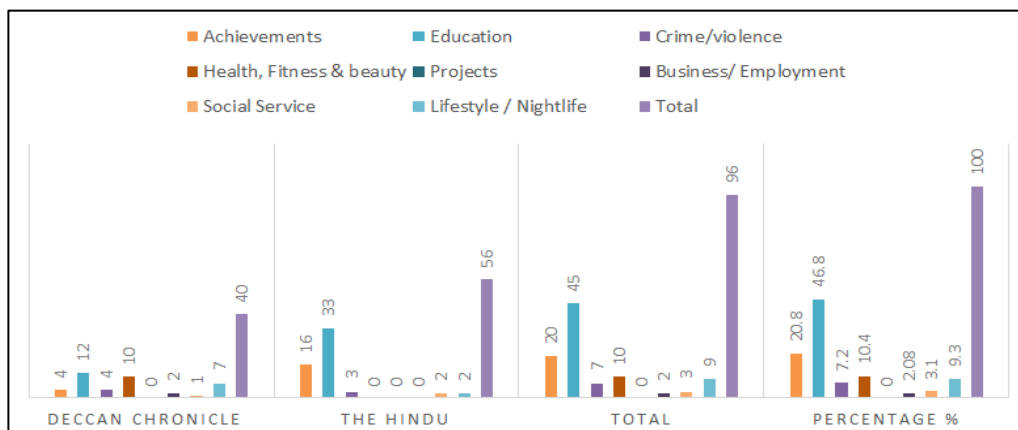


Fig 2: Types of women related Articles

Table 4: Categories of articles by type of story

Newspapers	Deccan Chronicle	The Hindu	Total	Percentage %
News	22	52	74	77.08
Feature	6	2	8	8.3
Comment	5	1	6	6.2
Interviews	4	1	5	5.2
Editorial	-	-	-	-
Education plus	-	-	-	-
Supplementary	1	-	1	1.04
Variety	2	-	2	2.08
Total	40	56	96	100

Table 5: Articles by Length

Number of words	Deccan Chronicle	The Hindu	Total	Percentage %
>800	-	-	-	-
400-799	12	-	12	12.5
150-399	6	15	21	21.8
100-149	13	19	32	33.3
<100	9	22	31	32.2
Total	40	56	96	100

Table 6: Nature of reporting

Tone of News	Deccan Chronicle	The Hindu	Total	Percentage %
Positive	31	52	83	86.4
Negative	9	4	13	13.5
Total	40	56	96	100

Table 7: Tone of the headline

Tone of News headline	Deccan Chronicle	The Hindu	Total	Percentage %
Informative	24	33	57	59.3
Educative	9	13	22	22.90
Motivating	7	8	15	15.6
Criticizing	-	2	2	2.08
Stereotypical	-	-	-	-
Total	40	56	96	100

Table 8: Number of Pictures & Graphic elements in women related news

Newspapers	Pictures	Graphics	Total	Percentage %
Deccan Chronicle	18	7	25	45.4
The Hindu	28	2	30	54.5
Total	46	9	55	100

V. Findings

- The English daily The Hindu give more importance to women by providing a maximum coverage of women related news with 58.3 % and English daily Deccan Chronicle show less importance on women comparatively with a coverage of about 41.6 % (Figure 1)
- Even though The Hindu provides maximum news coverage on women but Deccan Chronicle gives more importance for women in First page coverage 75 %, elevating more news value for women in front page, comparing to The Hindu (Table 2)
- In total of 56 articles 33 articles by The Hindu on women were completely based on education, which shows The Hindu giving more significance on educational aspect of women and also portraying them to be more academic oriented, regarding Business & employment both newspapers provides just 2.08 % news value, which reveals both newspapers didn't give importance to entrepreneurial & business aspects

of women, which is highly essential to this generation women for their growth and also Nation's development. (Figure 2)

- In both the newspapers, the total news articles were 96 , in which 74 articles with about 77.08 % were completely news type, means maximum number of coverage were given just as news, which shows these Print media didn't attempt to provide more information regarding women than usual news. (Table 4)
- Deccan Chronicle has attempts to give detailed coverage on women with about 12 articles with words (400-799), providing more information regarding women and maximum number of articles in The Hindu were less in words, 19 articles (100-149), 22 articles (<100), seems to allot less column for women in media coverage (Table 5)
- The satisfactory factor in coverage of both the newspapers is, the portrayal of women in these print media were less negative 13.65 % and even if there are negative news of women like (crime,

violence, antisocial, etc), those news were not hyped much as if women were involving in all such activities or criticizing women, they were just covered as general news , with reference to (table 4), so the portrayal of women in Regional print media is relatively positive with 86.4 % (Table 6)

Conclusion

Mass media plays a vital part in the growth of the Nation & Women empowerment. The coverage and space given by regional print media outlets towards women, is very much dependent on the overall coverage given to women by the major national media outlets. Majority of India's population is Women. Women play a major role in many aspects and also need to be given space for their representation of various issues and problems. Frequency of reporting about a particular issue or aspect is crucial so that it stays in the minds of the masses and will be considered as important. According to the study, the English Daily The Hindu gives importance for women in its newspaper by providing more number of news related to women in various aspects, making people frequently informed about the activities of women, but disadvantage is that they were less in description. On the contrary, the English daily Deccan Chronicle has less number of news, but coverage was descriptive in nature. The Hindu gives more significance to the educational aspects of women, by covering more educational news, thus by portraying women are to be more academically oriented, whereas Times of India attempts to promote wide variety of parameters like education, health, fitness, awareness, lifestyle, thereby portraying women involvement in all different aspects of social life. However, there were aspects that were hardly covered in both the dailies especially Business as research studies says that Indian women are lacking confidence in Entrepreneurship /business parameters, So print media could show more involvement in such aspects. A major factor observed from the study is that both the newspapers attempted to portray women in Tamil Nadu in a positive way, which meant that negative news were very less related to women and thereby concluding that print media outlets, The Hindu & Deccan Chronicle in the region of Tamil Nadu serves responsible coverage by providing news items of high news value & importance to women. The Hindu had more informative and educative headlines in their usage of tones in their headlines compared to Deccan Chronicle, but it is essential that these outlets have more coverage in empowerment factor of women.

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