

# **Gender Stereotyping in the field of Electronic Media; Causes and Consequences (A study with special reference to Pakistan)**

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## **ABSTRACT:**

*The world is like a global village. We, as a generation, preparing ourselves for fifth generation warfare (5GW). In this changing era, media is the most powerful tool for creating buzz in every field of life. Be it digital media or electronic media, it is in the use of everyone. In Pakistan, both men and women are joining the field of media i.e., as a journalist, anchor person, actor, director and the list goes on. But the notable aspect is that there is still gender stereotyping in the field of electronic media. Men have the audacity to do whatever they want while women still face many problems. The purpose of this paper is to highlight those itinerant rights to women that are given by religion and society. It is an analytical study about the gender stereotyping in the field of Electronic Media with all its reasons, causes, impacts and consequences with the help of case study. Following are the topics which can be discussed:*

- \* Media and its development in post-truth era.*
- \* Electronic Media and its dimensions.*
- \* Gender Stereotyping in the field of electronic media.*
- \* Contemporary problems faced by women of Pakistan i.e., harassment, bullying, roasting, less opportunities etc.*
- \* Case Study*
- \* Consequences and Conclusion.*

**Keywords:** electronic media, gender stereotyping, Women, case study, post-truth era

### **Significance of the study**

The basic focus of this research paper is to highlight those issues that are faced by women in our society when they joined the field of electronic media. It also highlights that how gender stereotyping affects the career of girls. The research paper further put light on the constraints faced by the women of media and reasons of gender stereotyping in the field of electronic media. It also monitors the consequences of stereotyping with the help of case study. Some recommendations are also given that can be helpful for breaking the stereotypes of gender.

### **Objective of the study**

(i) To increase the participation and access of women to expression and decision making in and through the media and technologies of communication. (ii) Promote a balanced and non-stereotyped portrayal of women in the media.

### **Methodology of research**

It is an analytical study about the gender stereotyping in the field of Electronic Media with all its reasons, causes, impacts and consequences with the help of case study.

### **Media and its development in post-truth era.**

Media is defined as: the main ways that large numbers of people receive information and entertainment that is television, radio, newspapers, and the Internet. The internet, newspapers, magazines, television, etc., considered as a group.

In today's era, media plays a very pivotal role in everyone's life. People started their day from watching news and ended it on listening talk shows about current affairs. Media and its tools help everyone to stay connected and updated about all the recent happenings around the globe. Everyone can easily check out the latest news via social media or electronic media. Now people rely so much on this fast mean of communication because it gives immense knowledge to everyone; sometimes in just few seconds. It also broadcasts and updates information every passing hour so people stay connected of what is going on in the country and in the entire world. Media also raise our standard and consciousness. Now everyone, even children too; are aware of everything. People raise question on politics and on social issues. No one is unaware of any issue happening in the society. People listen news, analyze it, discuss it and also share their ideologies on different forums. It gives empowerment to every individual of society. People raise voice against social evils and media help and support them through all the possible ways. Media shows the real picture to everyone by live broadcasts and recordings. It also educates people by showing the real picture of society.

Despite the importance of media in our lives, it is not hidden from anyone that how negatively it influences. We are living in a post-truth era

where people believe on personal beliefs more often rather than objective and rational facts. They can believe whatever they want to believe. In this era, media has been developed to such extent that it also threatens the broadcasting of truth. People make fake websites and published whatever content they wanted from others to read. In this way they hide the truth and convince people of what is untrue. Whether it is social media, electronic media and print media; real situation and words are manipulated everywhere. The policy makers and liberals are changing ideologies and thoughts of a common man by manipulating words. People then exchange information with others that support their convictions and point of views. The same happens in the field of electronic media. Situations created first then make the headline that create thrill among people. An anchor person asks those questions that create controversies among politicians and this can easily give them the hype they wanted on social media. With such tools and mind games, it seems that stopping the flow of misconceptions is really hard. We are unable to understand the two-sided opinions.

This is the post-truth era! It is when lies replace the truth, emotions replace honesty, personal analysis replaces verified information and one opinion replaces multiple opinions. In the post-truth era, mainstream media, and particularly TV channels, must formulate a clear vision based on their experience and expertise, away from amateur experimenting and imitating others. They must maintain the context of their core and original content, based on which they built their experience and people's trust, thus becoming their main asset.

### **Electronic Media and its dimensions**

Media has very vast dimensions. It can be entertaining to informative and can also be treated as professionalized and mass generated. Electronic media uses electronics for connecting to the audience. It includes audio, video, digital, recordings and screening. It also covers information literacy and digital literacy through different modes of communication. Some important modes of electronic media are:

- Television
- Radio
- Telephone

In this article, we will discuss “Role of Women and Gender Stereotyping” in the field of electronic media specifically in television and in television; we have further specified the field of *journalism*.

### **Gender stereotyping in Pakistan**

Gender stereotyping can be defined as: being male or female, especially when considered with reference to social and cultural differences, rather than differences in biology; members of a particular gender as a group.

According to United Nations of Human Rights Gender stereotyping refers to the practice of ascribing to an individual woman or man specific

attributes, characteristics, or roles by reason only of her or his membership in the social group of women or men.

In simple words, gender stereotype is a generalized concept about the characteristics and role of men and women that are given to them from society. It limits the choices of living in their own way for both genders. Men playing cricket and Women do cook is an example of gender stereotyping. This shows that how our society has set the roles according to one's gender.

Gender stereotyping is an overgeneralization of characteristics, differences and attributes of a certain group based on their gender.

In general, the concept of gender stereotyping demands from men or women to behave or perform in society according to what their gender demands from them. It is harmful because it lessens the opportunities and the will of living according to one's own choice.

### **History of Exclusion and Stereotypes**

Women's exclusion from the serious news of the day was raised as early as the 18th century by women suffragists and women's rights activists in Europe and North America. The early suffrage leaders needed the attention of the news media to carry their ideas and activities to wider publics, but male-run newspapers and magazines mostly ignored the women activists. The news outlets that did cover women frequently ignored their goals. Women who departed from the social norms of passivity and deference to male authority, and the traditional roles of wife and mother, risked being characterized as inappropriate, insane or misfits.

### **The Pakistan context**

Analyzing media representation of women means analyzing the way society represents women. There is intentional as well as unintentional reinforcement of social stereotypes about women in our society. In many cases, women themselves are unaware of their own biased attitudes. Women's access to and growth in media organizations has not been supported in Pakistan. The openings for women within the media industry, especially in decision-making positions are limited. In fact women are missing from top management positions in media houses in Pakistan. Due to the environment of media houses in Pakistan, a lot of times women tend to feel frustrated and move away from the media industry to find other jobs.

Two research-based events were organized to look at how media has not been giving proper coverage to women related news, specifically on issues of energy, water, hygiene, sanitation, and economic development. The first event, a roundtable in Islamabad was held on the March 14, 2009, with limited participation from national and regional media (print and electronic). The participants were selected from media outlets in

Islamabad and included top management (editors, bureau chiefs, director generals, etc.). It also included news desk staff. This was a brainstorming session with participants discussing and debating how women are portrayed in media, identifying the gaps and the way forward. During the roundtable, commitments were sought from some, not all, media managers to allocate at least 10 percent of their space to development issues. The second event was a National Conference held in Karachi on October 13, 2009. This conference focused on commitments made during the first roundtable and the subsequent group discussions in the second phase.

### **Women in media: Constraints and opportunities**

We are living in a modern society where every individual has number of opportunities to pursue their dream career. In Pakistan, numbers of girls are getting admission in subjects like digital and film art, mass communication and journalism. They can now pursue their career in the field of electronic media too but In Pakistani media, a secondary position has been given to women which is already alarming for our society. Women are working in almost all fields of media but we are still demanding their rights. In journalism, women faced many challenges in Pakistan. Harassment, roasting, intimidation, violence, torture and kidnapping women journalists and news reporters are very common. Sometimes when the second party is stronger, they often do murder of such journalists who stand against false. Men often oppress women with their terror that is why it is very difficult for a woman to stand or speak against cruelty. Columnists, when wrote truth in their columns, faced backlash even from the channel owners too. The flood of freedom of opinion and misinformation on the Internet has severely affected the job of women columnists.

News reporters when go outside for reporting, they faced street harassment often. People tortured and bashed them. They didn't give them the respect they deserve. News owners also demand for modern news that is more challenging for a female reporter. Working on television is more challenging than working behind the screen. It demands that each female should be dressed up properly with makeup and a smile on their face. So, it is very difficult for struggling girls to meet all the challenges of this field.

According to the statistics of international federation of journalists, there are 40% journalists worldwide. 3% to 5% are editors, head of departments and directors. In Asia, 21% of the women are working in media workforce but it varies from country to country. (IWMF, 2000) Due to such issues, our societies still don't give respect to the field of media, the way it gives respect to the other fields. People usually considered this field only for males due to the harsh challenges that are faced by woman who are working day and night in news channels. Like all other jobs, media job is also very tough that is why most of the families in Pakistan don't allow their girls to join news channels.

Media is one that field in Pakistan that women face many challenges to join. This is not about just field; this is basically about being women. Our culture and tradition don't allow women to go outside and pursue their career in the field of media. Such constraints are because of issues like lack of awareness, less education, gender discrimination and many others. Some of them are explained below:

- **Lack of empowerment**

It is because of less education and lack of awareness. When, especially women; don't get enough chances of doing work, it ultimately lessens the chances of empowerment for her. A society cannot run or progress smoothly when there is lack of empowerment. Only one quarter of the women are working or looking for jobs compared with 85 percent of men in Pakistan. This is because lack of favorable environment on workplaces for women. It is right to highlight that the 5th objective of the Sustainable Development Goal (SDGs) is about abolishing all types of discrimination and violence against female coupled with ensuring women labor force participation. For instance, women's empowerment depends upon cultural values, the social position, and life opportunities of a woman.

- **Less education**

People are usually traditional or tribal societies, don't allow their girls to get education. Literacy rate, adult female (% of females ages 15 and above) in Pakistan was reported at 46.49 % in 2019; according to the World Bank collection of development indicators, compiled from officially recognized sources. Less education in women, first of all creates gender discrimination that leads to discrimination in every field of work for women. IN addition, adult women had less secondary-school education than males (26.7% vs. 47.3%)

- **Gender discrimination**

In Pakistan, gender norms are still illiberal. There are number of girls who face gender discrimination while working. They don't have legal and political protection. Uneven access to education leads to lack of employment equality and this is all because of gender discrimination that always begins from home. Parent's desire to have son, teacher's desire to consider boys for extracurricular activities and then society's demand to hire boys in workplaces rather than girls, always created problems in society. The same happens in the field of media. According to The World Economic Forum (WEF) Pakistan has ranked on the number of 151 out of 153 countries with 56 percent gender gap on the Global Gender Gap Index report of 2020, compared to 112 out of 115 in 2006, which shows the widening of Gender gap parity. This shows how much are society is obsessed with males and how much they discriminate girls and boys. There are number of girls in Pakistan who are studying media studies, journalism and mass communication but they hesitate to join the field because of such traditional and cultural pressure. Families and then

workplaces don't prefer them to be a media person as much as they prefer men in this field. We are still unable to create a healthy environment in media field that is why gender discrimination in this area is increasing as the time passes.

- **Wage discrimination**

When there is gender discrimination, there is wage discrimination too. Pakistan has a very low rate of female labor-force participation compared to their male counterparts (25% vs. 82%) When women don't get jobs, they will remain economically weak and become a dependent that relies on men's income. It also creates burden on men because in all developed countries, both men and women, can work together to meet the resources. When only men do work, income declines and never allows a family to meet their resources properly.

- **Traditional and cultural Issues**

Traditional and cultural constraints are the biggest hurdle for girls who want to pursue the career of their own choice. First, our families don't allow girls to join fields other than medical, designing and some other girlish fields like this, Secondly, if any girl join fields other than this, our society don't accept this. Societies don't allow girls to be a media person, a police girl, cricketer and actor. Girls who follow such professions, they have to face so much backlash from society. This is the reasons that discourage other girls to join such fields. We are living in a modern era but our society is still male-dominated. In the history of Pakistan, there's no women who has been the editor of an Urdu daily. Until recently, Dr. Maleeha Lodhi (The Muslim and The News International) was the only woman to head English language dailies. She is joined by Dr. Shirin Mazari who now heads The Nation as its editor. It is a high time that we should let our girls follow their dreams and our workplaces should have a feasible environment of girls too so that they never hesitate before joining any field.

- **Religious Norms**

A religious norm, no doubt, indorses the well-being of an individual but when it comes in pursuing the career, these norms create many hurdles especially for girls. There are number of girls in Pakistan who don't join the field of media just because their religious values don't allow them to go outside. It discourages many girls to join the field of media because the environment in such areas is quite unfair and it demand modernization from girls. On one hand, in a modernized world, it is necessary to follow the new traditions of society for every individual, be it is a girl or boy. But on the other hand, there is a need of fair system that allows religious girls too to follow their paths. There should be no abusive behavior with girls in these fields so that they can easily join media-related fields. Allah Almighty has given equal rights to both women and men but this is our society that refrains women's rights.

If all these issues will be sort out, there will be no gender stereotyping in any field and every girl can easily join the field of her own choice without any hesitation and social hurdles.

### **Conclusion/Recommendations**

We all know that media plays a very important role in everyone's life. In Fact, electronic media is a part of everyone's daily life. When people watch television, they become attached to the people who are doing programs on-screen. So, it is our duty to give equal rights to all the workers who are working in the field of electronic media. Be it is a women or men; we should give them equal opportunities so that we can create a modernized community at a global level. There are several constraints that possess women to minimize their roles in media. Government and authorities should take step for providing the suitable environment to women. Some important actions should be taken at governmental level for discouraging gender stereotyping. These recommendations are written below:

- An active and visible policy about equal rights of women should be made at Government level.
- Women's equal participation should be promoted at government level.
- Legal and political protection should be given to women.
- Equal salaries should be given to both men and women.
- To realize the concerns of women, programs should be monitored.
- Designations should be given to women media experts along with male experts.
- At media, women's position should be on creative level rather than just an inferior being.
- The concept of gender stereotyping at public places should be discouraged.
- Effective measures should be taken against those channels and media pages that show violence and abuse against women.
- The portrayal of women on television screen should be shown positively.
- Training and workshops should be given to people regarding the work of media so that people should be aware of its work and stop discriminating men and women.
- Media watch group should be established.
- Professional guidelines should be followed.
- Women's participation in decision making level of media should be encouraged more.



- Strict ban should be applicable against all the pornographic, abusive, violent material on media websites and channels.
- A gender perspective on all concerns to community and consumers should be developed.

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