

**PAPERS IN  
SOUTH ASIAN  
GOVERNANCE, POLICIES AND POLITICS**

04

December, 2016

Portrayal of Women in Media: A Case Study of Prime Time Shows in News Channel

Sushant Mishra

## IGPP- VMF -SAGPP

This paper series is run by Institute for Governance, Policies and Politics of the Vivek Manathana Foundation, New Delhi. The main objective of the series is to publish ongoing research on South Asian region in the form of research papers, made accessible to the academics, policy makers, civil society organizations and general public working on region. Keeping in view of the IGPP's mission and vision, the paper series would like to bring different issues related to natural resources and livelihood, media, politics and urbanization in South Asia. IGPP-VMF-SAGPP series is published in both hardcopy as well as on the Internet in electronic PDF format.

The series draws on the research being conducted at the Institute for Governance, Policies and Politics, New Delhi, contribution of the visiting scholars and external resource persons of the Institute. The opinions expressed in the series are those of the authors, and do not represent the views of the IGPP or the editorial staff.

Series Editor                      Prof. Anand Kumar

Deputy Editors                    Dr. Manish Tiwari  
    Dr. Sarada Prasanna Das

Editorial Assistant                Sushant Mishra  
    Vijay Pareek

### Editorial Advisory Board

Dr. Sarbeswar Sahoo, IIT Delhi  
Dr. Mukesh Bagoria, University of Delhi  
Dr. Rakesh Thakur, Government College, Chandigarh  
Ms. Rasmita Behera, University of Delhi  
Dr. Arun K. Nayak, Tripura University  
Dr. Sumedha Dutta, Central University of Punjab  
Dr. Azizur Rahman Azami, Aligarh Muslim University

### Suggested Citation:

Mishra, Sushant (2016) Portrayal of Women in Media: A Case Study of Prime Time Shows in News Channels, *IGPP-VMF Papers in South Asian Governance, Policies and Politics-NO-1*, New Delhi, Institute for Governance, Policies & Politics.

Copy right@ Author 2016

## Abstract

*Media has always been influenced by social developments and the rapid and remarkable developments in technology. It has become a well-established tourism that has changed our lives with revolutionary projection of technology, where the size of the screen has relatively become smaller and our life has become more easier but the challenges of women in media never finished because of the narrow mindset of the society but few of them set an example for women and give a message to the society that they are equivalent to men. In the present era there are numerous private channels where women are working but, onscreen they are used as a commodity like, anchors that have become more glamorous for media houses working for TRP. In media women are not given very big tasks and they do not appear in 'Prime Time' because the authority can't trust them. Why this kind of situation in the age of modernity?*

*This paper is based on the case study of the prime time shows in the news channels and their work. Also this paper explains about the culture of the organization, where women do not get the equal treatment in comparison to the male staff. This paper also finds out that these types of organizations are the voice of the people, and they spread the message about equality but in reality it is similar to our society where women do not get equal treatment and are not considered for big assignments in the prime time shows. In India most of the national television news prime time shows are done by the male members and there are no women members doing the prime time show. So the question here is that do they have no potential Or is this the narrow mindset of the organizations that women can't do these kinds of jobs but in the other fields they set an example for the women.*

## Introduction

Gender is socially constructed and culturally determined and associated with both men and women gender. It is the societal meaning assigned to male and female. Each society emphasizes particular roles that each sex should play, although there is wide latitude in acceptable behaviors for each gender. Whereas sex refers to physiological denotation- biology, hormones, chromosomes, and gender connotes the social and historical construction of masculine and feminine roles, behaviors, attributes, ideologies etc. Gender refers to the roles and responsibilities of women and men that are created in our families, our societies and our culture. The subject of empowerment of women has become a burning issue all over the world including India since last few decades. Many agencies of United Nations in their reports have emphasized that gender issue is to be given utmost priority. It is said that women now cannot be asked to wait for any more for equality."Women<sup>1</sup>, particularly in India, face various kinds of gender discrimination. It is notwithstanding the fact that under the Constitution, women enjoy a unique status of equality with men. In reality, however, they have to go a long way to achieve this," a bench of Justices AK Sikri and Abhay Manohar Sapre said.

In practicality men and women are not considered equal on the basis of their rights. In every stage of life women is considered to be less powerful in comparison to men but in reality women are more powerful than men and also working capabilities of women are much more in comparison to men. India is considered to be a patriarchal society where more importance is given to the men and every decision is taken by the men. There are no provisions in Indian society where the family members take decisions into consideration made by the women. So in our society the discrimination is existing at a high level.

Society also makes distinction between men and women like: in every society men is supposed to be superior and powerful in comparison to women. Men are responsible for participation in

---

<sup>1</sup>(2016, 10 February) SC: Economic empowerment is must for gender equality, The Times of India

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/SC-Economic-empowerment-is-must-for-gender-equality/articleshow/50924305.cms>

politics, economic and society as well as in other fields whereas the women are always neglected by the society.

The picture of Indian women on television is of a house bound, tradition bound and passive. The majority of women are housewives. There is hardly a glimpse of everyday adjustments, women have to make in the home, the burden of housework, their contribution as house wives and mothers, all this is taken to be granted in the society. There are no attempts of changing relationship and expectations even among the most protected of Indian women.

Article 1 defines discrimination as “any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex. In the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field.” (Domestic violence against women, DrshashiGoel, p 39)

### **Role of the Media in Our Society**

Media plays a very important role in showing the discrimination which is existing in society through newspapers, television, internet and films, advertisement etc. Many films show that women are only useful for Commoditization and there is no importance of women except getting the sexual desire from women. Media has become a part of our life like the food, clothing as well as our whole lifestyle. It plays a very significant role to build the society .In our society media is considered as the mirror of the modern world. Due to the impact of media, society is influenced in many sectors like culture, and use of technology. As the role of the media is to help the masses by providing information about the society and world it plays a significant role in influencing our attitudes, desires and priorities. It helps us to broaden our overlook on life. By this platform we get introduced to new cultures and people across the world through media. Media has contributed to global thinking and rapid change in the technological advancement. Sharing the information across national boundaries has broadened our transcontinental thinking. These kind of changes reflects the hasty changes in the various forms of media like print media, audio media, audio visual media and most importantly traditional media.

## Representation of the Women as Commodity

Media always play a vital role in the society and always try to inform and educate about the Society. But in this field media always represent the women as sex object and as commodity. Media does not portray the image of women as independent, like in any TV Show women is expected to sacrifice everything for her family which represents typical Indian women. The role of the women defined by the media is never in positive manner. Another example is advertisement, where a female actor is always shown either advertising a male product or simply her presence is shown in the video. So the trend is that in every advertisement women actresses are their but they are shown as a commodity.

Women's portrayal in Indian media<sup>2</sup> is nothing more than a showpiece or an icon of glamour or that of a householder. There is a difference between the idea of women as colleagues and equals in the work sphere and their actual projection. This is particularly true when it comes to women's participation, performance and portrayal in the media. Women's<sup>3</sup> portrayal in the media is it electronic, print, and visual or audio, is always accompanied with some negative and degrading images.

It is true in many ways that India has changed more dramatically over the last twenty-five years than at any other period since independence due to globalization which has also reflected massive changes in the media industry. Women in all types of media tend to be thin and sexualized. They talk less than men. They have fewer opinions. And they are far less likely, in the entertainment industry, to play roles as leaders or professionals, or even as women who work for a living. India<sup>4</sup> ranks 130 out of 155 countries in the Gender Inequality Index (GII) for 2014, way behind Bangladesh and Pakistan that rank 111 and 121 respectively, according to

---

<sup>2</sup>Dutt, Barkha, *The Unquite Land*, New Delhi, Aleph Book Company,2016

<sup>3</sup>Kedia, Shreya, (2015, December 04) THE MISSING WOMEN OF INDIAN MEDIA, ThePioneer,<http://www.dailypioneer.com/columnists/oped/the-missing-women-of-indian-media.html>

<sup>4</sup>, (2015, 15 December) Gender inequality in India than Pakistan, Bangladesh: UN,The Indian Express<http://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-news-india/more-gender-inequality-in-india-than-pak-bangla-un/#sthash.Bpw6yg84.dpuf>

data in the United National Development Programme's latest Human Development Report (HDR) 2015.

## Methodology

The research is based on the secondary data where the data is collected from internet, newspaper and research articles. In this research there is a very extensive presentation of secondary data which explores the status and role of women in general from a global perspective. The care and effort put in to assemble such a vast amount of information is commendable and is likely to render this work as a guide and reference source for future endeavors.

## Gender imbalance in the Media Organization

The status of women and their empowerment has been a stated priority for at least half a century globally. There is general consensus that while there is progress in some areas, there are still many issues facing development of women. There are regional and sectoral differences and there are also imbalances that show up based on vocation.

Journalism<sup>5</sup> is a field in India where women have made significant progress in the past few decades. Women reporters have covered wars and reported from the edge of calamitous events. They have become the face of many news channels and are even accepted in cricket reporting, for long a male bastion. Given the above, the author, explores and evaluates whether this transformation is complete or if there are gaps and imbalances.

There is a clear gender imbalance in the number of contributors to the press, a made clear by a News laundry review of four leading Indian English newspaper .<sup>6</sup>Of the 8,681 article reviewed, 73 percent were written by men. This means that for every piece written by a woman, three were written by men. It shows that how the dominance of male lays in the media industry.

---

<sup>5</sup><http://www.thehindu.com/books/books-reviews/women-in-journalism-only-half-the-race-is-run/article5519802.ece>

<sup>6</sup>Rattanpal,Divyani, (2015, July 15 )Women are Moving Up in the Indian Media But Not Fast Enough, The Quint, <http://www.thequint.com/india/2015/07/04/women-are-moving-up-in-the-indian-media-but-not-fast-enough>

Also in the news channels when Prime Time show is going to air most of the news channel depends upon male anchors and no female anchors are assigned for the task of prime time also we observed that every news channel makes a program where the eminent people come and anchor is supposed to ask questions to those people and it is very popular amongst the audience. The program like 'AAP KI ADALAT, SIDHI BAAT, DEVILS ADVOCATE' is led by a male anchor, no female anchor leads this type of program. In this prime time show we found that there is no place for the women anchor and in this time most of the channels organize a debate on the specific issue and this type of program is not led by the female anchor. So the question is that the media organization where people talk about equality do they also consider it for their own organizations? They assign works to women in those TV Channels which the audience is not keen interested in watching.

The number of women working in media industry has been rising. The top positions like producers, executives and chief editors are still male subjugated. This disparity is due to existing cultural hindrances, responsibilities like travelling away from home, evening work and reporting issues such as politics and sports which are still considered to be a man's job. Moreover, female journalists are more likely to be allocated 'soft' subjects to cover such as education, lifestyle, designing, fashion and arts.

It also came into light that women working in the media are aware of gender biasness and prone to cover women's requirements and angles while it is difficult for men to cover such issues because they may not be able to understand the perspective of other sex in depth. Nonetheless, the existence of women in media is more likely to provide optimistic role models for women and girls, to gain the poise of women as sources and interviewees, and to attract a female audience.

In this Prime time few women set an example for the society. It is the condition of the Indian Society if we are talking about the developed countries like America then **the news industry still hasn't achieved anything that resembles gender equality.**<sup>7</sup> Women are on camera only

---

<sup>7</sup> (2015, June 5), 8 Sad Truths About Women in Media, Time, <http://time.com/3908138/women-in-media-sad-truths-report/>



32% of the time in evening broadcast news, and write 37% of print stories news stories. Between 2013 and 2014, female bylines and other credits increased just a little more than 1%. At the *New York Times*, more than 67% of bylines are male. According to J. A. Doyle (1989, p. ill), whose research focuses on masculinity children's television typically shows males as "aggressive, dominant, and engaged in exciting activities from which they receive rewards from others for their 'masculine' accomplishments." Relatedly, recent studies reveal that the majority of men on prime-time television are independent, aggressive, and in charge (McCauleyThangavelu, & Rozin, 1988). Television programming disproportionately depict men as serious confident, competent, powerful, and in high-status 'positions.

The functioning and overall structure of media industry in India has undergone a major change in the last few years. Some factors have shaped the growth of this powerful medium of Communication over the years. As we know that the Indian media scenario is totally different and the participation of the women is very less. However, there are few women journalists who have set a milestone for other women journalists. In the Indian media industry Barkha Dutt, Sagarika Ghosh and Anjana Om Kashyap are the eminent news anchors and they are also doing the prime time show for their channels. But the problem is that they are not more effective than the male anchors. Like if we compare to the male anchors, they are always leading the debates very well but it is not the same in case of female anchors. The reason behind it is our patriarchal system of the society and the audience who can't accept the performance of the female anchors and the second thing is that if women are doing good job in this field then what about the male anchors. Also we know that this field is always dominated by the men's so they can't accept the success of women in this field.

A UNESCO<sup>8</sup> report on women journalist says that even today, women in the media account only for 24% of all opinion-maker. But if you looked at absolute number of employees, the imbalance is not as skewed 'According to a report by the International Women's Media

---

<sup>8</sup>Rattanpal, Divyani, (2015, July 15 ) Women are Moving Up in the Indian Media But Not Fast Enough, The Quint, <http://www.thequint.com/india/2015/07/04/women-are-moving-up-in-the-indian-media-but-not-fast-enough>

Foundation, women account for only 13% of all senior managers in the media in Asia and Oceania. In South Africa however, that Number is skewed the other way, with 79.5% women in senior management position.

## Conclusion

Gender inequality is especially tragic not only because it excludes women from basic social opportunities, but also because it gravely imperils the life prospects of future generations. Indian families often prefer boys to girls, and female feticide is tragically common. The reality of gender inequality in India is very complex and diversified, because it is present in many ways, many fields and many classes. Fields like education, employment opportunities, where men are always preferred over women because of the narrow mind thinking of the society. The things have been changing and women's are proving themselves every time. In the results of 10<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> girl candidate performance is increasing day by day. If we talk about media in terms of power men are still pulling the strings in television and newspapers. Women rarely have the decision-making power and are nowhere close to becoming equal curators or creators of news. But if we want to empower women in the field of media then we must eradicate the existence of gender gap and equally give power to women in decision making only then we can see the changes.

## References:

1. Kedia, Shreya, (2015, December 04) THE MISSING WOMEN OF INDIAN MEDIA, The Pioneer, <http://www.dailypioneer.com/columnists/oped/the-missing-women-of-indian-media.html>
2. Dutt, Barkha, The Unquite Land, New Delhi, Aleph Book Company,2016
3. (2015, 15 December) Gender inequality in India than Pakistan, Bangladesh: UN,The Indian Express <http://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-news-india/more-gender-inequality-in-india-than-pak-bangla-un/#sthash.Bpw6yg84.dpuf>
4. Rattanpal,Divyani, (2015, July 15 )Women are Moving Up in the Indian Media But Not Fast Enough, The Quint, <http://www.thequint.com/india/2015/07/04/women-are-moving-up-in-the-indian-media-but-not-fast-enough>
5. <sup>1</sup>(2015, June 5), 8 Sad Truths About Women in Media, Time,

6. <http://time.com/3908138/women-in-media-sad-truths-report>
7. <http://www.signis.net/spip.php?article2547>
8. <http://www.thehindu.com/books/books-reviews/women-in-journalism-only-half-the-race-is-run/article5519802.ece>
9. (2016, 10 February) SC: Economic empowerment is must for gender equality, The Times of India, <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/SC-Economic-empowerment-is-must-for-gender-equality/articleshow/50924305.cms>

## About IGPP

Institute for Governance, Policies & Politics (IGPP) is a think tank initiative of Vivek Manthana Foundation (VMF), which is dedicated for public policy research and analysis. It will operate independently and it is committed to providing public policy research, analysis and advice. It intends to develop initiatives to help government understand various issues and challenges and make informed choices for better policy and governance. As IGPP is envisaged as a research and policy focused institution and engage different stakeholders like academic, civil society, government, industry and international development agencies to pursue its objective of high quality interdisciplinary research on different issues of governance and public policy. The prime goal of the institute is to contribute towards effective policy design, implementation and governance mechanism with respect to focus areas on specific issues.

## About VMF

Vivek Manthana Foundation was established in the year 2011 by some eminent persons for the action research in different areas of socio—economic development. From its inception VMF is working towards the empowerment of the marginalized population. From the beginning we have been organizing different training programmes, workshops and camps. In the recent past we had also organized workshop and seminars on different governance and policy issues on the development and empowerment of marginal groups of our county.

## About the contributor

Sushant Mishra works as a Research Associate at the IGPP. Sushant has a masters in Culture and media Studies from Central University of Rajasthan. His current research interests are media and cultural politics in India.

E-mail - [sushant@igpp.in](mailto:sushant@igpp.in)

**Institute for Governance, Policies & Politics, 10, Institutional Area, Sector-IV, R.K. Puram, New Delhi, 110022**

**Telephone : +91 11 26182108, e-mail : [office@igpp.in](mailto:office@igpp.in), website : [www.igpp.in](http://www.igpp.in)**

**Printed & Published by : Institute for Governance, Polices & Politics and Vivek Manthana Foundation, New Delhi - 22**

Materials published by the IGPP may be reproduced free of charge in any format or medium provided it is reproduced faithfully, not used in a misleading context and properly attributed to the IGPP.