

Chapter 14

Media: The Crux of Gender Violence

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ABSTRACT

Gender, viewed differently throughout history, is influenced by media. Media's reach and influence on society, particularly regarding women, can be both positive and negative. Restrictive portrayals of women perpetuate gender-based violence, and media's role in this is concerning. However, media can also be a powerful tool to raise awareness, sensitize people, and promote gender equality. Grassroots efforts, especially in developing countries like India, can benefit from media interventions to inform and uplift marginalized groups. Violence against women, including trafficking and sexual abuse, remains prevalent, highlighting the need for media to address these issues responsibly. Media should be gender-sensitive, trained, and aware of the impact it can have on society. It can challenge stereotypes, showcase strong female role models, and contribute to ending gender inequality. However, media must also avoid sensationalizing sensitive stories and misrepresenting victims. By promoting equality and respect, the media industry can play a pivotal role in shaping perceptions of women.

I. INTRODUCTION

Gender is an ever-changing word having different connotations from ancient to contemporary times, a word viewed from different lenses by different generations. And these lenses have taken a very aggressive and edifying way in the form of media. As contemporary times revolve around the system generated by media. Media has evolved and continues to evolve taking into its fold every encompassable entity. Especially in contemporary times, the role of media is interlinked with every single soul and psyche. Its effect is far-reaching and its consequences have become inconsequential. The effect media has on a

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particular gender that is the feminine gender is described as challenging as the view on women keeps changing as it is completely dependent upon the role of women as portrayed in media. This role is mostly confined to certain restricted views and ideologies on women which the waves of feminism have been trying to eradicate from society. These restricted views of women have become a challenge for women as it entangles them in a web of expected roles of either the goddess or the witch having a very thin line showing the normal persona of a woman. And media has become the feeding ground for gender-based violence by having a fixed notion of the role women play in society and if she deviates, she becomes a soft target for gender-based violence within the family or the society. The gender perspective harboured by the media is often misleading and tends to be dangerous. And the scope to harness such types of violence is the myriad media systems that have spread across the globe and have become perhaps the new age messiah.

The impact of media on gender can be a boon or a bane depending on the gender-friendly perception in general and the gender-censored perception in particular be it at an international or grassroots level. The positive side of media on women can be multidimensional and can be used to highlight and sensitize people regarding a myriad of issues surrounding women from every sphere. It is especially crucial at the grass root level as awareness generation, especially in a developing country where the tribals, the rural and the urban poor are left out from the mainstream and are not oriented about welfare measures, plans and policies and are not at all gender oriented. Thus, sensitization measures especially at the grass root areas where the tribal populace is completely cut off from any gender mainstreaming initiatives and as India especially Odisha has a rich tribal culture and several PVTGs, special initiatives should be undertaken to improve their condition and what better way than media to orient them on several proposal and efforts undertaken at centre and state level for their upliftment.

Gender-specific programs in various areas like entrepreneurship, education, skill enhancement, family planning and gender budgeting can be implemented within the target group easily by the proper media intervention. As most people are not aware of the various welfare measures for them. An important area that remains grey is violence against women in our country where the capital Delhi remains the most unsafe place for a woman in the global count. Gender-specific violence against women results in trafficking, sexual assault and abuse, girl child abuse, rape, dowry, sexual harassment at the workplace, acid throwing, and female infanticide to name a few.

Other horrendous acts such as incest are also dominant in our tradition-bound country which makes us question the role of media. It is perhaps adding fuel to the fire as globalization has opened many doors the various use of media and technology has resulted in cybercrimes that take gendered violence to a new level of menace surrounding our society and making this place an unsafe haven for women. Gender violence does not limit itself to only women but has also risen against transgenders in acts of violence and abuse. Gender violence many times is the result of gender inequality which is visible in every sphere and is extremely pronounced among women and the transgender communities. Through a workshop held by UN Women, 21 Georgian journalists received training on gender-sensitive reporting and how to cover violence against women in the media. Media should be gender sensitive as well as trained and properly sensitized while handling issues dealing with gender. According to a study of gender stereotypes in Georgian media, the majority of journalists lack awareness of gender issues and stereotypical attitudes dominate coverage of women's issues. During the training, journalists produced survivors' stories on domestic violence for an interactive exhibit and performance.

According to the Beijing platform: media plays an important role in perpetuating and challenging social norms that condone discrimination or violence against women. It can objectify women but also

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