

# The Coverage of Violence Against Women in Daily Jeejal Newspaper

Rameez Ali Mahesar<sup>1\*</sup>, Worakamol Wisetsri<sup>2</sup>, Zareen Qadeer<sup>3</sup>, Fozia Soomro<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>MPhil Scholar, Department of Media & Communication Studies, Shah Abdul Latif University, Khairpur – Pakistan.

<sup>2</sup>Associate Professor, Department of Manufacturing and Service Industry Management, Faculty of Business and Industrial Development, King Mongkut's University of Technology North Bangkok, Thailand

<sup>3</sup>Lecturer, Department of Social Work, University of Sindh, Jamshoro – Pakistan.

<sup>4</sup>MPhil Scholar, Department of Media & Communication Studies, Shaheed Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto Institute of Science and Technology, Karachi – Pakistan

\*drkapook@gmail.com

## Abstract

History avouches for decades that without concerning their personal sentiments, emotions and feelings, women have been treated as properties and have also been seen working like the servants in their own homes. This research paper aims at examining systematically the newspaper coverage of violence against women in Sindh. A quantitative content analysis of Sindhi print media was done for the period of two months i.e., 1st January 2020 to 29th February 2020. A reputed local newspaper of Sindh; Daily Jeejal Sindhi-language newspaper was chosen for the current study on the basis of its circulation and readership. Different types of the violence inflicted upon women across Sindh province were used as the themes of the coverage in this study. The newspaper, as the findings show, has brought 110 news about the violence against women in Sindh. It was observed that the greatest proportion of the coverage (32%) was given to the issue of domestic violence with different ways. Also, the other problems regarding violence against women were seen in the newspaper but they were out of the context of this study.

## Keywords

Media, Violence, Crime, Assault, Print Media, Women

## Introduction

Violence against women is not a problem rose recently. In the days of ignorance, women were treated as servants, properties, and so forth. They could not exercise their due rights, even they could never claim to achieve their guarded rights. But with the passage of time, the problem has some changes which also wants much more improvements as well. In the days of yore, the violence against women was a common practice and could never be reported anybody.

In the current times, all-inclusive media has been fighting against this malpractice but the space and time given to this viciousness is different in each one of these media. Greater coverage and representation by print and electronic media respectively can witness the change. But what matters it is to what extent these media bring to surface this gruesome pitfall.

At present, women face the music in all fields of life not only at domestic level but also in work places. Newspapers bring hundreds of news about physical violence against women. According to FRCE research report on violence against women on international day for the elimination of violence against women, media reported the cases of violence against women from Jan 1, 2012 to 23, Nov 2012. It showed, 7 percent increase in those cases as compared to the year of 2011 in Pakistan. Most of the stories showed that young or married women were the target of violence in Sindh. Around or more than 1913 cases of violence were befallen married and 1615 cases were occurred with unmarried women, 38 victims were divorced and 71 victims were widowed and that figure was really very high. The same situation is existing at alarming rate. When women go outside their homes, they fall easily victim to blackmailing especially at workplaces. It is claimed that only about 10% of all the rape cases get reported and in every fifteen seconds a woman is beaten savagely.

In this regard, print media have the power to encourage the people in multiple different ways, can play an effective role in molding the opinion of people. Through their explanatory

stories, they help peoples to explicate the intensities of issues. The Sindhi newspaper was specifically chosen in that it has more readership as compared to any other Urdu as well as English daily in Sindh. They mostly represent lower and middle classes where there are more problems about violence.

- ✓ To determine the extent of coverage of violence against women.
- ✓ To find out the issue gets more coverage in the selected newspaper.

## Rationale of the study

It is an undeniable fact that the media plays very constructive role in bringing out the social evils to the surface. And violence against women is one these said social evils. Women have always been victims and their victimizations are still prevailing. This issue is common in Sindh as compared to other provinces of Pakistan. In Sindh, thus, Sindhi newspapers have wider circulation as well as readership. In the said province, to that end, Sindhi newspapers have a great media credibility and they have also been carrying the social problems and combating them to a fault. To this end, this research is subject to the measurement of the coverage given, by Sindhi newspaper, to the issues of violence against women befalling Sindh province. This issue has been getting reported in all-inclusive media and it has also been getting conferred about in the society. However, for this reason, it is important to start a debate on the responsibility of media and the extent they report.

## The types of violence under this study

### Physical Torture:

Niaz, U. (2003) Violence against women in some patriarchal societies and male dominant customs is accepted as chastisement and for the discipline cause in family as well as society. For the few men domestic violence cum bodily torture are deemed as the private case of the concerned family because of this state agents or the government do not consider the need of action to be taken against the offenders

of such assault on women or even they do not feel a need to report<sup>1</sup>. The statistics of a study executed by World Health Organization (WHO), 20% to 50% of women claimed to be inflicted bodily torture by their male partners, no less than for one time in their whole life. In most of the Asian countries i.e., Pakistan, women are considered to be inferior to men and the second-class citizens. Whereas the biggest cause for women to find the option of divorce from their male partners – husbands, in most of the countries, is physical torture.

#### **Sexual Harassment:**

Mahmood, et al (2011) state that the cases of rape and sexual harassment of rape have neared atop of the list of violence against women in different countries. Unwelcomed some verbal and sexual favor or even a physical conduct to have sexual relation is said to be a sexual harassment<sup>2</sup>. 87 percent of women in every country, as a survey study reveals, face sexual harassment. As per a report released by Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) there is a very high growing peak of the cases of rape and sexual harassment for the duration of the last ten years in the country depicting the rate of one woman to be raped every two hours (HRCP, 2000b).

Furthermore, this figure as per few other reports is very high because of some social pressures and shame linked with such sorts of cases, majority of the cases have stayed unreported in media and could never filed in the court. Those case which has been unreported in media and have also been unfiled in the courts are sexual harassment by dint of the shame and embarrassment connected to the honor of the impacted family. Similarly, Parveen, R. (2010) had found in a study on the sexual harassment at workplace and analyzed that only 1/4<sup>th</sup> of the sexual harassment cases which were reported in media are marched on court against justice<sup>3</sup>.

The same report of HRCP also had found that there was a very high rise of the gang rape cases as well, for the duration of the last some decades across the country. In Addition to this, one more very aching violent act is that in many places of the tribal areas, the women are raped openly or before their family members, in the exchange of some kinds of clash between groups of two families.

#### **Child Marriage/ Marriage with Quran:**

The ferocious problems of marriage to Holy Quran and also child marriages are not new in rural as well as tribal areas of Sindh Province. On behalf of protection to a family's property from sharing, the small age girls are usually forcefully given two choices either to accept husbands to some men of old ages of the family or to marry with Holy Quran. The hearsays of many NGO's states that over 5000 women in Sindh province are knitted to (married with) Holy Quran. Whereas exchange marriages, child marriages and old age marriages are general in all areas of the country.

#### **House Burns/ Dowry Violence:**

In Asian countries comprising Pakistan and India, the House burns and Dowry violence related cases are at alarming rate. Most of the women are died every year by dint of stove burning. It can deem to be the kind of extreme domestic violence in that in almost cases of house burns ladies are oppressed as usual by their husbands or by either of their in-laws only due to displeasure from the oppressed women's dowry.

#### **Honor Killing:**

Somir, et al (2008), in countries like Pakistan 5000 women are killed every year all over the world in the name of Honor killing. The countries atop the list of cases of honor killing are Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, Turkey, Lebanon, Syria, Iran, Yemen, Pakistan and the Gulf countries. Babur, et al (2010) In accordance with the custom of Vanni in Punjab and Swara in Kheber Pakhtunkhwa, young women are paid or exchanged in the form of forced marriages to rival family or to the hostile as a compensation of some kind of crime which is committed by any male member of that family. However, women are oppressed with such kinds of violence which should have to get reported in media with a sense of responsibility.

#### **Literature Review**

Kirkland Gilespeie et al (2013) conducted their research that highlights; when violence against women is appeared in the news media, the reporting tends to revive, and therefore boosts patriarchal stereotypes of typical male and female behavior, and works as a warning to all women for what is accepted female behavior and what would be the magnitudes for not behaving in according manner to the stereotypes. The coverage too tends to simplify the intricacy of violence against women to concerned individual or family pathology in lieu of inflicting violence against women in the context of a social problem. (e. g. Meyers, 96, Bullock & Cubert, 2002 and, Richards, Givens & Smith, 2013).

Raza H. S et al (2016) conducted their research on the news coverage of physical violence against women; where do we position. The researchers concluded that those cases which are not registered in the police and those also which are pending in the courts, are highlighted in the media. Although, media is playing its part but some developments also need to work effectually. Ahmed S, (2014) done a research on "violence against women: media representation of violent issues in the perspective of Pakistan" the result showed that media generally give a very little space to the problematic issues of women in their daily news broadcasts that stands as the main cause of violence against women in Pakistan.

Truth and the shape of a survey run in newspapers also shows certain truths about the offense done by men and their own families. Azeem (2010) the data represents violence against women, specifically honor thrashing and killings have signed up a prompt growth in Pakistan over 20 percent, with the Sindh province and the national capital the most vulnerable. The 9,396 such cases were documented in the whole year of 2009 against 7,802 in the comparable year of 2008, comparing to interior ministry's survey relative number available with the news headlines. Set up record, proffer that 112 and 170 women were literally harassed at the work place whereas in the Punjab respectively, 6,955 conditions of violence against women were documented in the whole year 2009 in comparison with 6,323 in the year of 2008, rise of ten percent or 632 conditions corresponding to the statistics.

#### **Research Design**

The study is based on the quantitative content analysis technique as a research design which is aimed at examining the coverage of violence against women news appeared in daily Jeejal newspaper. Keeping in mind the nature of topic,

technique of content analysis is employed in order to get done the research study. Bernar Berslon expounds the content analysis as a “research technique for the objective, systematic and quantitative description of manifest content of communication.” (Berslon, 74). It is a research tool which focuses on actual content and internal features of media. It is used to assess the presence of certain texts, sentences, characteristics, themes and also the concepts within texts or sets of texts and put a figure on presence objectively.

The texts comprise books, chapters of book, essays, articles newspapers headlines, discussion, interviews, speeches and historical documents and so forth. To execute a content analysis on certain texts, these texts can be coded broken down into appropriate categories on many levels i.e., words, phrases, sentences and then examined this content analysis method. Then results are used for implication for the messages within the texts.

**Universe of the study:**

Daily Jeejal Sindhi-language newspaper was selected as the universe of the study by dint of their large readership.

**Sampling procedure:**

In this research, the types of violence against women which are popular and common were selected as the categories of the study.

**Sample size:**

The publication of two months of January and February, 2020 are the sample size of this study.

**Themes of the study:**

All news stories which are related to violence against women in the selected newspaper.

Types (themes) of violence

1. Honor killing
2. Domestic violence
3. Sexual harassment
4. Rape and sexual assault

**Honor killing;**

The murder done by families or family’s members were concerned as honor killing.

**Domestic Violence:**

The violence that results in sexual and psychological harm to women was concerned as domestic violence.

**Sexual harassment:**

To harass a woman sexually or request for some sexual favours and other physical and verbal harassment.

**Rape and sexual assault:**

The forced sexual intercourse; sexual assault, sexual intercourse between an adult and a minor will be concerned as rape.

**Table 1.** Coverage of Physical Violence against Women by Daily Jeejal from January 1, 2020 to February 29, 2020.

Month	Honour Killing	Domestic Violence	Sexual Harassment	Rape	Forced Prostitution	Acid Throwing	Total
January	15	16	6	9	11	1	58
February	10	19	4	6	13	0	52
<b>Total</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>110</b>

**Interperterion**

The above data presented in the table illuminate from January 1, 2020 to February 29, 2020, the newspaper in its 2 months coverage has reported 110 news regarding the violence against women and that is good coverage ratio that summarizes 2 news of violence against women every day appear in the newspaper.

As far as the coverage given individually to the different types of violence is concerned, the greatest proportion of the

coverage is given to the issue of “domestic violence” as it indicates that 35 out of 110 news reports are of domestic violence. After it, the bigger coverage is given to the issues of “honour killing and forced prostitution” at the number of 25 and 24 respectively. The third major proportion of the news is about “rape issue” is 15 news. Then coverage given to the issue of “sexual harassment” 10 news published about the issue. The least coverage (only 1 news) is given to the issue of forced prostitution.

**Conclusion**

It is examined that all the covered issues of violence against women in Daily Jeejal newspaper indicate that the 32% reports are about the domestic violence, about 23% reports are about the honour killing, 22% reports are about the forced prostitution, and 9% reports are about the sexual harassment. If we match all the issues reported in the newspaper about the human rights, then mostly reports are about the domestic violence.

**Discussion**

Violence against women has always been a very important issue all over the world. The media can perform a starring role in reporting the issues of violence against women in Pakistan and the role media has been playing or has played is looked rather lethargic and biased. Most of the News networks report, as usual, the women issues or news about violence against women in an adverse manner which seldom affects the development or the role of women in society. To this end, while reporting, with especial focus on some sensitive issues like the rapes or the sexual harassments, the media should have to give wider berth to the sensationalism cum exaggeration and should not have to depict the photographs or to show the video clips or of the oppressed women or their families. Whereas the reporting on this sensitive issue of violence against women, the case of confidentiality should have to be practiced in priority by every journalist or a reporter. However, the media, in case of reports of violence against women, should have to be very accountable towards society.

**References**

- [1] Ahmed, S. (2014). Violence against women: media representation of violent issues in the perspective of Pakistan. *Science International*, 26(1).
- [2] Azzem, D. (2010). “Violence against women on the rise”. *The Nation*, 08 March, 2010.
- [3] Babur, Z.U (2010) Violence against Women in Pakistan: Current realities and strategies for change. *Journal of Sex Roles*. Vol: 06. April.
- [4] Gillespie, L.K., Richards, T.N., Givens, E.M. and Smith, M.D. (2013). Framing deadly domestic violence: Why the media’s spin matters in newspaper coverage of femicide. *Violence against women*, 19(2), pp.222-245.
- [5] Mahmood, Q.K. and Ahmad, I., (2011). Perception of sexual harassment at workplace, knowledge and attitude of working women towards Workplace Harassment Act 2010. *Social sciences review of Pakistan*, 22.
- [6] Niaz, U. (2003). Violence against women in South Asian countries. *Archives of women’s mental health*, 6(3), pp.173-184.
- [7] Parveen, R. (2010). Violence against Women in Pakistan. Islamabad, Aurat Foundation. Retrieved from <http://www.na.gov.pk/en/acts.php>.
- [8] Raza, S. and Hussain, S., (2016). News Coverage of Physical Violence against Women: Where Do We Position. *Journal of Culture, Society and Development*, 19, pp.75-81.
- [9] Somiry, B. (2008) Honor crimes and TV audience Reception: An analysis of meaning production and gender Interpretation. Master Thesis. University of Punjab. Pakistan.