

## **Women Protection Laws Awareness Among Working Women: Role of Leading Newspapers Of Pakistan**

Saima Quddoos<sup>1</sup>

### **Abstract**

The role of media on our decision making and life style is enormous. Mass communication has great impact in the progression of a country. No one can deny the fact that women are fundamental element of all societies. No society can be developed without giving due appraisal to women and their rights. This study examines the role of newspapers in creating awareness regarding women protection laws in working women of Lahore. Researcher has selected recent five laws of women protection i.e., Sexual Harassment Act, Domestic Violence Act, Anti Women practices Act, Hudood Ordinance and Acid Control and Crime Protection Act. These laws are safeguarding women at workplace and at domestic level. Researcher used survey as method of data collection. Stratified sampling is used and researcher divided respondents in four groups from different professions. Theoretical framework comprises of agenda setting. It is hypothesized that newspapers are giving awareness among working women of Lahore regarding laws related to women protection.

*Key words: Awareness, women protection laws, working women.*

### **Introduction**

This research analyzes what role newspapers play in creating awareness of women protection laws among working women of Lahore. The role of media on our decision making and life style is vast. Mass communication has great impact in the progress of a country. Media gives opportunity to everyone for sharing thoughts and new ideas. Media is very powerful tool as it works

---

<sup>1</sup> Saima Quddoos, PhD Scholar, Institute of Communication Studies, University of the Punjab, Lahore, Pakistan.

efficiently. Mass communication serves as great tool in progress, the device that can spread the knowledge and ideas more rapidly and extensively than ever before. Media consists of all kinds of distribution sources like television, Radio, e-media, telephone, internet and fax. Commonly there are three kinds of media: digital media, print media, and electronic media. Print media is primary source of information and considered to be the first form of mass communication. Print media includes newspaper, weeklies, magazines and all types of printed material. Print media hold significant place and space in the realm of mass communication. The major analysis of this study is the role of newspapers in awareness regarding women rights which can best be achieved through print media.

No one can deny the fact that women are building blocks of all societies. No society can be developed without giving value to women and their rights which form part of human rights. These rights include the right to live freely from slavery, violence and discrimination.

In Pakistan women rights are guaranteed by both Islamic Law and Constitution of Pakistan, the injunctions of Islam teach us to give women respect and equal rights as men. The constitution of Pakistan 1973 assures equal status to women and their rights. As Pakistan's constitution clearly describe that all citizens are equal before law as declared in article 25 and it guarantees equal protection of law. Article 27 protects women against discrimination in appointments in the services of Pakistan. There are some prominent laws in Pakistan which are exclusively incorporated for the protection and safeguard of

women. Researcher has selected some major women right Acts and ordinances i.e., Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Act, Protection against Harassment of Women at Workplace, Acid Control and Acid Crime Prevention Act and Anti Women Practices Act.

Mass media plays a pivotal role in creating awareness among masses. Once woman rights are introduced it becomes inevitable to create awareness and let the women know about what rights they may enjoy. Media is the basic pillar of society and has its significant effect on its viewers or readers. Media is used for multiple purposes. Here researcher is keenly interested to know the role of newspapers that how it is creating awareness of women right laws among the working women of Lahore.

A woman is the essential unit of the society. In the present era, the contribution of women in the development of society is more crucial than before. For the development of country the participation of women is very important as men, as in Pakistan the trend of women entering in jobs is increasing for national development. In this way women are using their skills and supporting their families and besides this playing their role in the development of country. Shehzadi, (2002) mentioned that the survival of Pakistan lies in fast development. Development cannot be postponed further. In order to make development both male and female must play their role. But the rising trend of jobs among women is creating many troubles and in this context many laws are made to protect women at workplace. Working women are facing difficulty at both institutional and domestic level. Working women due to more exposure and high

qualifications are expected to know more about the laws favouring women rights. The rationale behind these laws is to protect women. To get more accurate results researcher has selected working women to know the role of print media in spreading awareness regarding women rights. Print media is considered to be a cheap medium through which spreading of information can be done easily at all levels.

Generally people emphasize on all five senses, but new technology generally the communication media has caused people to stress one sense over the others. Print media has influenced the visionary sense and in return it has emphasized on our thinking. Most of the people rely on newspapers and take it as a factual and authentic medium of mass media. Newspapers are read by almost every person because it is available in low price and easily accessible everywhere including work place.

Researcher has hypothesized that;

**H1.** Print media is giving awareness among working women regarding laws related to protection of women rights.

The purpose of this research is to know the role of print media in creating awareness of women right laws among working women and to suggest agenda for future researchers and to give recommendation to media for the improvement of their role in creating awareness of women right laws.

### **Literature Review**

The purpose of literature review is to know what type of research has been done in the area and what has been found in

the previous studies. The researcher reviewed the literature available in form of thesis, articles and journals. The review of literature by researcher of the study is as follows.

Sumaira Mushtaq, (2009) investigates the “role of print media in highlighting women issues”. The study applied Agenda setting, framing and social responsibility theories. Methodology used in this study deals with the role that media played in highlighting women issues in the country. Findings reveals that the print media of Pakistan has plays not a satisfactory role in highlighting women issues in the country through its news coverage. And “Jang” gives more coverage to women issues then “Nawa i waqat”.

TV dramas are creating awareness of laws protecting women rights among youth as study “Role of Hum TV Dramas in creating awareness of women rights among young girls in Lahore” (Arif, N., 2012) analyze that Hum TV dramas are effective and influencing youth. The method applied by the researcher for this purpose was survey method and questionnaire was used for data collection.

S. Huma, (2005) in her research “women rights: A comparative analysis of print media coverage during political and Army regime” explore that English press was found to be supportive to women rights in its content. The coverage also unveiled that the press during political form of government and especially of a female premier do not support women rights issue. The researcher also found that print media addresses on development and social rights of females that includes violence, rape, abduction, forceful marriage, women education health etc.

overall the attitude of media towards women rights remained positive, still a few areas were neglected that includes the problems of working women, health legislation and so on.

Tawab, A. (2000) in his study find out that selected newspaper has played significant role in shaping the policy of the organization in accordance with government and financier's aspiration. Study concludes that the issue of women right in leading English press coverage is hopeful and encourages expanding area of this coverage.

Sadrudin, M. (2010) in his research article," Sexual Harassment at Workplace in Pakistan-Issues and Remedies about the Global Issue at Managerial Sector" this study discuss the status of women in Pakistan and how women right are violating. The research revealed that women in Pakistan are faced harassment at workplace which impacted on their work efficiency. He concluded that it's a global issue that women is facing such problems at work place law is made but it is not implemented. He investigate that mostly women are aware of their basic rights but not aware about that what protection sexual harassment of women at the workplace act 2010 gives them.

Abbas, Z. (2008) in his study "Legal protections provided under Pakistani law against anti women practices" he said that women is having so much importance as NGO which are working to provide women basic rights and fighting for their legal rights.

These non-Governmental organizations are fighting for violence against women. Pakistan is protecting women by

providing them legal rights and playing very important role in giving them protection of the said rights. He especially focused on the prevailing anti-women practices in Pakistan and their impact that how they are violating basic rights of women. It highlights the current issues of Pakistani women by conducting the debates, the legal improvement, and the media and social awareness on these existing anti-women practices. It also critically examines the present legislation and moreover it will state the new legislation that how to prevent anti women practices.

Anand, (2002) told in his research in spite of legal protection gender issue in media is a serious issue now as the problems of women's portrayal in the media has been agitating the mind of the civil society and an attempt is being made to curb this growing problem. Continue incidences of obscene depiction of women in television and in media in general, call for a debate on the need for effective laws against them and proper implementation of the existing legal provision.

There is a section of society which upholds the opinion on having their creative freedom of expression fundamental human rights however that has to along with exercising this freedom has to be stressed upon apart from complying with prevailing laws.

While Pervaiz, (2001) pointed out that in our society these media to a great extent influence women because of the social deprivation and home confined interest in life. For them in most of the case media remains the only contact with the outside

world. Many studies on mass media have proved that the media play a vital role in conserving or reinforcing the existing views and attitudes of a society. It acts as a strong force in maintains the status quo, in the roles of different segments of the society.

The analysis of media contents in this study reveals that the media and image of devalued inferior and economically and emotionally depend on women. In spite of being the central character of the fiction in most cases, she has not even real human value. The media tries to put too much emphasis on the description of her beauty jewelry clothes and physical appearance. It is revealed from the survey of the related researches that emphasis on the physical beauty of women is universal concern of the media rather than the issues they face.

Latif, F. (1998) focused the relationship of media, women and Islam in research. To analyze the women projection in the print media, the method of content analysis was employed. The quantitative and qualitative analysis revealed that print media is portraying the image of women against her true Islamic position. Researcher concludes that the role of print media is not satisfactory regarding the development plans and projects for women. The publicity of such projects has always been secondary importance in the priorities of these newspapers.

Instead of creative and constructive development news media show political statements, issues, crime and sports in its contents. Development issues were exhibit in the form of statements, not in the form of hard news and in analytical



manners. The reason is find out that political, crime and sports news attracts the readers more than other sort of news.

Kapoor and Anuradha, (1986) remarked in their research report “women and media in development” that the Pakistani press, especially Urdu newspapers and magazines, contains biased reporting on matters concerning women. Crime is given a great deal of coverage and accounts pertaining to women have heavy slant in favor of the oppressor. The brother, father or cousin who murders a sister or mother is given implicit or explicit applause for upholding honor there is no distinction between adultery and rape: moral laxity on the part of woman is held to be the cause of both. Women are thus made to hold the ultimate responsibility for ills of society. There are a few English language newspapers /magazines which are partially staffed by a and full of enlightened and emancipated women .Their articles are exceptions to the general pattern. In feature articles, news coverage and editorials, human rights and constitutional legal as well as social/cultural problems of women are often dealt with in a responsible manner in the vast majority of Urdu press; however the social paradox outlined at the beginning is fully manifest. Apart from the slanted news coverage that has already been referred to, the establishment press carries little news about the achievement of women in productive work.

### **Theoretical framework**

Theoretical framework of the study is a formation that grips the theory of the research work. Researcher has selected the agenda setting.

Agenda setting is one of the possible ways that the mass media can have an effect on the public. Agenda setting is the idea that the news media, by their display of news, come to determine the issues the public thinks about and talks about ( Tankard, J. W. & Severin).

### **Method**

To conclude the results of the study and by keeping the objectives of the study researcher has selected survey method for data collection. 250 survey forms were filled from working women of Lahore. Stratified sampling is used which divide professional women into four categories i.e., lawyers, doctors from Children hospital and institute of child health, Lahore general hospital, teachers of Punjab university, Lahore college for women university, university of central Punjab, and office workers of 17 or above scale. 63 questionnaires were filled from each of four profession.

### **Data analysis and discussion**

Survey was conducted on working women from different professions. A greater number of respondent read newspaper daily as it's easily available at offices or in working areas and a reasonable number of respondents read newspaper weekly and rarely and a small portion of respondents read newspaper sometimes. A fair number of respondents read newspaper at office and a great majority read newspaper at home and a few number of respondents read at any other place.

When respondents were asked about timing of reading newspaper large number of respondents read newspaper at evening and very little number of them read when ever get time and fair number of them read newspaper at morning and office time.

**Table: 1 which contents you read at first glance in the newspaper?**

Content you read at first glance in the newspaper	Frequency	Percent
Headline	151	60.4
Picture	63	25.2
Detail story	36	14.4

In questionnaire women were inquired about content they read at first look in newspaper, the response in table 1 shows that a huge number of them read headlines and the number of people who see the pictures and very few to read detail story. Results show that more people read headlines at first glance because headlines are made so attractive and informative that capture the attention of reader and make clear the whole story.

Respondents were asked about which page grab their attention firstly a larger majority said that front page and a small number of women read opinion page and a very few number of women read back page and no respondent chose the option of any other.

When women were asked about the news related to women grabs your attention then a greater majority said that

news related to women grabs their attention and very less said that at times news related to women grabs attention and few numbers of them said no.

A great majority of women told the reason that women news grabs their attention because they are interested in knowing prevailing issues of women and a fair number of respondents said that because they are women and relevant to their profession that's why women news grabs their attention and a few of them selected option any other. This is because women are very keen to know what issues women facing now days and how they can prevent their selves by making their selves aware.

When respondents were asked about that do they ever compare the news regarding women right laws of different papers greater majority said no and lesser said yes. People relay the authenticity of one paper they don't need to match up.

**Table: 2 Does your profession enhance your interest to know about women right laws?**

Profession enhance your interest to know about women protection laws	Frequency	Percent
Yes	201	80.4
No	49	19.6

A large majority said that their profession enhances their interest to know about women right laws and fair number of respondents said no their profession not enhances their interest in knowing women right laws.

Respondents were asked about level of knowledge about existing women protection laws in Pakistan a great majority said they know about few women protection laws and a fair number of respondents said they don't know and no one said that yes she know all existing women protection laws.

A great majority use print media to enhance understanding of women right laws and a fair number of respondents not use print media to enhance understanding of women right laws.

When respondents were asked about which content help you to get more understanding about laws great majority said news and fair number of respondents said editorial and few number of them said articles and no select option columns.

Level of knowledge of sexual harassment act at work place asked by respondents a great majority know only name and a fair number of respondents know clauses and few numbers of women know detail of sexual harassment act.

Respondents were asked about what protection sexual harassment act give to women a great majority chose option provide safe working environment and a little number of respondents select option protect from violence, protect from wanni, karokari and all of above.

Respondents were asked about source from where knowledge about sexual harassment act is gained a great majority said electronic media and fair number of respondents select option peer discussion and any other and lesser than select option that they get information about it from newspaper.

*Saima Quddoos* **Women protection laws awareness**

Level of knowledge of domestic violence act asked by respondents a great majority know only name and a fair number of respondents know clauses and few numbers of women know detail of domestic violence act.

Respondents were asked about what protection Domestic violence act gives to women a great majority chose option protect from violence and few said that protect from karokari and provide safe working environment and few of them select option all of above.

Respondents were asked about source from where knowledge about Domestic violence act is gained a great majority said electronic media and fair number of respondents select option peer discussion and newspaper and some said they get knowledge from any other source.

Level of knowledge of Anti women practicing act asked by respondents a great majority know only name and a fair number of respondents know clauses and detail of anti women practicing act.

Respondents were asked about what protection anti women practicing act gives to women a great majority chose option protect from wanni, karokari, and early marriages and few said that provide safe working environment and protect from violence and no chose option all of above.

Respondents were asked about source from where knowledge about anti women practicing act is gained a great majority said electronic media and fair number of respondents

select option newspaper and some said they get knowledge from peer discussion and from any other source.

Respondents were asked about Anti Women Practices law from respondents and a great majority knows only name and a fair number of respondents know clauses and detail of anti women practicing Act.

Respondents were asked about what protection Hudood Ordinance gives to women a great majority chose option protection from zina and few said that provide safe working environment and protect from wanni, karokari and early marriages and some chose option all of above.

Respondents were asked about source from where knowledge about hudood ordinance is gained a great majority said newspaper and fair number of respondents select option electronic media and some said they get knowledge from peer discussion and from any other source.

**Table: 3 Knowledge about existing women protection laws in Pakistan?**

Knowledge about existing women protection laws in Pakistan	Frequency	Percent
Yes about all	102	40.8
Yes about few	100	40
No	48	19.2

Women were asked about is Pakistani law is providing legal rights to women majority said no and fair number of respondents said yes and few don't know.

**Table: 4 Role played by print media in creating awareness of women protection laws among working women.**

Role of print media in creating awareness	Frequency	Percent
Yes	143	57
To some extend	75	30
No	19	7.6
Don't have idea	13	5.2

Respondents were asked about is print media is playing its role in creating awareness about women right laws as shown in table 3 majority said yes and fair number of respondents said to some extend and few said print media is not playing its role in creating awareness about women right laws.

If we discuss the research question, are newspapers creating awareness among working women regarding laws related to women rights. This was tested through survey. In question no 10 respondents were asked about level of knowledge about existing women right laws, a great majority know about existing women right laws in Pakistan. By survey's question numbers 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, and 27 respondents were asked about level of knowledge about Sexual harassment act at work place, anti women practicing act, Domestic violence act, acid control and acid crime act and hudood ordinance and source of knowledge about these laws. A large majority knows about women right laws and a fair number of respondents get knowledge of these women right laws from print media.

Respondents were asked about their view that is print media is playing its role in creating awareness in question no 29 a great



majority of respondents believed that yes print media is playing its role in creating awareness about women right laws and a fair no of respondents said that to some extent print media is playing its role and a few number of people said that print media is not playing its role in creating awareness about women right laws.

### **Hypothesis Testing- Results**

#### **H1 Print media is giving awareness among working women regarding laws related to women rights**

**Table: 5** Chi- square value in table 2 shows the significant association between print media is creating awareness among working women. Hence Hypothesis is accepted.

#### **Chi-Square Tests**

	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	18.596 <sup>a</sup>	3	.000
Likelihood Ratio	27.981	3	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	16.445	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	250		

### **Conclusion**

Women are rudimental element of the society, without empowerment them no society can develop. Media plays significant role in creating awareness among masses. This study is about the role of print media in creating awareness among working women. By analyzing the results it can be concluded that newspapers are creating awareness among working women

regarding women protection laws but as in discussion it is clear that mostly working women just know about the name of laws they don't know details or how these laws protecting women. Laws are made to protect women but there is need for implement these laws to make women empower.

### **Reference**

- Arif, N. (2012). *Role of Hum TV dramas in creating awareness of women rights among young girls*. [Unpublished thesis] BS (Hons). Lahore College for Women University. Retrieved on Jan 15, 2016. Debate on Women's rights.(n/a). [online] Retrieved on Jan 1, 2016. From [http:// www.pdhre/rights/aged.html](http://www.pdhre/rights/aged.html)
- Hijazi, Ma & Naqqash. (1995). *Mass communication theory and practices*, Lahore A one publisher.
- Hylar , S. (2013). Legal protection provided under Pakistani Law against anti women practices: implementation gap between theory and practices, 20(3). Retrieved on Feb, 10, 2016.
- Latif, F. (1998). *Media strategies for Islamic feminist theory*. [Unpublished thesis]. Department of Mass Communication University of the Punjab.
- Mushtaq, S. (2009). *Role of print media in highlighting women issues, comparative analysis of national dailies Jang and Nawa i waqt*. [Unpublished thesis]. Pakistan, Lahore: Department of Mass communication University of the Punjab.

**Journal of Media Studies 34(2)**

- Sadaf,H. ( 2005). *A comparative analysis of print media coverage during political and army regimes*. [Unpublished thesis]. Pakistan Lahore: Department of Mass Communication Lahore College for Women University.
- Shehzadi, S. (2002). *Women in news a critical study of nationals*. [Unpublished Mphilthesis]. Pakistan. Lahore: Department of Mass Communication University of the Punjab.
- Nosheena, S. (2000). *Editorial Treatment of US image in two dailies. The Nation and Dawn with special reference to Soviet Military Interventation in Afghanistan*. Unpublished M.Phildissertation. Department of Mass Communication University of the Punjab, Lahore
- McQuail, D. (1987). *Mass communication theory*. London: Sage Publication
- Misbah, H. (1999). *A comparative study of development issues in Print media during Benazir and Nawaz regimes*. [Unpublished M.Phil dissertation]. Pakistan Lahore: Department of Mass communication University of the Punjab, Lahore.
- Kapoor, S., & Anuradha. (1986). *Women and media in development*. A report of the South Asian regional workshop. NewDehli: Cendit
- Kinnick, K. (1998). *Women Studies in Communication*. Organization for research on women and communication. London

