

NEWSPAPER'S COVERAGE OF WOMEN RIGHT OF EDUCATION

*Shazia Shahab Sheikh
Dr Nisar Ahmed Zuberi*

ABSTRACT

It is argued in this paper that media give significant space to issues related to women education. The present study is focused on the coverage made by the Daily Dawn and the Daily News. These Karachi-based papers have large circulation in almost all big cities of the Pakistan. Analysis of 720 issues of the two newspapers shows that our premier newspapers provide only scanty coverage to the issues of women's education. According to the finding pioneer Daily Dawn provided negligibly more space for news items concerning women education (0.053 percent) than the news (0.0425 percent). In the same way, the Daily Dawn provided more space (0.279 percent) as compared to Daily News (0.183 percent) for non-news items. It is found that women issues receive attention less that they deserved. However, the issues like crime, business; national and international politics are covered in detail.

Keywords: Issues of Women's Education, Women's Education Right, Media, English Newspapers.

INTRODUCTION

Media of mass communication play a pivotal role in changing behaviors of masses and policies regarding socioeconomic, political and environmental issues (Liu, *et.al.*, 2008). A segment of the experts believe that the media are a watchdog, serving in the best interest of society (Dahlgren, 1992). According to another point of view, the media also spread biased views, incomplete information and hollow out the power of democracy (Kabir, 2007). In the modern world, media perform as a keystone of a democratic state which pass information to large heterogeneous masses and by which public also communicate its views to policy makers (Bathla, 1998). There seems to be a consensus that mass media play vital role in the diffusion of information, entertainment and education (Nautiyal & Dabral, 2012) which is very much needed by the people.

Among all media, newspapers are supposed to have a special status. Newspapers play the function of persuasion, entertainment and information in detail rather extensively (Defleur & Dennis, 2002). They bravely serve opinion, strengthen political, facilitate policy making and take positions in their editorials. As such, newspapers are supposed to be

more serious stakeholders compared to other media of mass communication.

Newspapers are also known to be the most reliable means of focusing attention on the issue of literacy, health, economic well being etc. They also highlight the problems faced by women. The press provides an important forum for discussion about the various issues including education issue. It engages various stakeholders belonging to Government, Non-government and private institutions. Newspapers are not only the main source of detailed coverage of issues concerning education, but they are also helpful in providing complete information about almost all social issues of society.

In spite of regular drum beating by the government education in Pakistan is the most neglected segment of the social life. There is almost complete consensus among the knowledgeable citizen that education is in a very depressive state. And education for women is even more disturbing as compared to other sub-issues of the problem.

Let's take the first general state of government education in Pakistan. As far as the structure of education in Pakistan is concerned, it consists on pre-primary to higher secondary level, which includes: I) Pre-primary Schools, II) Middle Schools III) Secondary School/Higher Secondary Schools IV) Degree V) Higher Studies in University level.

TABLE 1.1
GENDER WISE RATIO OF EDUCATION STAGES (2010-2011)

| S. No. | Education Levels | Total Enrollment in Million | Girls Enrollment in Million | Boys Enrollment in Million |
|--------|------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 | Primary | 16.894 | 7.543 | 9.441 |
| 2 | Middle(VI_VII) | 5.576 | 2.394 | 3.179 |
| 3 | HSS/Inter | 1.134 | 0.39 | 0.744 |
| 4 | Degree | 0.431 | 0.218 | 0.213 |
| 5 | University | 1.107 | 0.586 | 0.521 |
| 6 | Denni Madaris | 1.723 | 0.65 | 1.073 |
| | Total | 26.865 | 11.781 | 15.17 |
| | | | 43.71 | 56.28 |

Source: Pakistan Education Statistics 2010-11.

According to the Pakistan Education Statistics report 2010-11, the total enrollment was 26.865 million, out of it 11.781 million girls and 15.171 million boys were enrolled in different levels of education, as reflected in table 1.1. A cursory look up on the table 1.1 shows that people get more enrollment at the level of primary and middle, and then cannot continue education to higher levels. These figures show the

inequality of education among girls and boys. There are many causes of the imbalance. Whereas it is true that economic development cannot meet until unless country ensures participation of women in socioeconomic and socio-culture sectors (Noreen & Awan, 2011). According to the general belief and consensus among the right thinking of people, the issue of illiteracy among girls is much more serious than the literacy of boys. Many scholars agree that girls in Pakistan are kept out of schools because of social problems, including social taboos, poverty, violence, school distance, non availability of transport absenteeism of teachers and perceptual mindset of people.

According to another common believe an educated woman makes healthy family. Women do not play only a role in child caring at home, but also prove to be helpful breadwinners (Mishra, 2005). Customarily, women are supposed to be meant for child bearing while men are required to be the breadwinners (Qureshi & Rarieya, 2007). On the other hand, Pakistan's women have confronted cultural and social barriers while getting education. It is believed to be unfeasible to keep half of the population economically independent (Noreen & Awan, 2011). The situation, right from beginning warranted campaigning for the spread of education and particularly for the education of women.

This study was planned to find out whether our emancipated and gender-equality believes English language daily newspapers are seriously enhancing the cause of women's education in the country.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- i) Do the print media emphasize the need to change the mindset which does not support education right for women?
- ii) How far our premier daily newspapers are trying to plead the case of women's education in the country?
- iii) How much space is being given by the newspaper to issues related to education?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study investigated the primer newspaper's coverage of the major issues concerning education rights of women from January 2011 to December 2011 through the content analysis technique. The two English language dailies of Pakistan, namely Dawn and The News were chosen for the study. Old files of these newspapers were used at the library of Mass Communication department and the Mehmood Hussain Library, University of Karachi, Pakistan for data collection. Both dailies are

published from Karachi (a metropolitan city of Pakistan) and having wide circulation all over the country.

Selection of these two dailies is justified on the basis of their standing. Daily Dawn is an old newspaper, largely circulated national newspaper since the independence of Pakistan. It is also available online. The News is supposed to be popular among the younger generation, including the younger decision makers. It is also largely circulated all over the country. For the purpose of the data collection, women's education right was coded into news items, non news items and advertisements. Among the non-news items are included letter to editor, editorials and columns.

INTERPRETATION OF DATA

Coverage of News Items of 'Daily Dawn': Education of women is as important as men's. Daily Dawn used 2429col./cm (0.0537%) of its total space regarding issues of education. It published only 53 news items regarding women's education in the year of 2011. Table 6.1 shows that this paper gave some space in the months of April, May, August, and September. However, in contrast to other months, it has consumed negligible space. A cursory look over the table 6.1 shows that 'Dawn' did not give enough space to news 2011.

TABLE 6.1
COVERAGE OF NEWS ITEMS OF 'DAILY DAWN'

| Months, 2011 | No: of News Items | Space in col./cm | Total space of Dawn in col./cm | % of space |
|---------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------|
| January | 6 | 185 | 363744 | 0.050859945 |
| February | 7 | 156 | 371520 | 0.041989664 |
| March | 5 | 147 | 402624 | 0.036510491 |
| April | 5 | 351 | 349920 | 0.100308642 |
| May | 6 | 322 | 409536 | 0.078625566 |
| June | 2 | 117 | 379296 | 0.030846621 |
| July | 3 | 94 | 399168 | 0.023548982 |
| August | 9 | 373 | 367200 | 0.101579521 |
| September | 9 | 469 | 362880 | 0.129243827 |
| October | 1 | 42 | 337824 | 0.012432509 |
| November | 4 | 147 | 382752 | 0.03840607 |
| December | 1 | 26 | 396576 | 0.00655612 |
| Total | 53 | 2429 | 4523040 | 0.053702819 |

Source: Field Work.

Coverage of News Items of 'The News': Another newspaper, 'The News' published even less that is only 30 numbers of news items and provided 1894col./cm (0.0425%) of its space out of total issues related to women's education in the year of 2011. Table 6.2 shows that issues related to women could some little coverage in the months of February, April to September and December. On the other hand it gave less coverage in the months of January, March and October. While in the month of November, it did not publish even single news.

TABLE 6.2
COVERAGE OF NEWS ITEMS OF 'THE NEWS'

| Months, 2011 | No: of News Items | Space in col./cm | Total space of The News in col./cm | % of space |
|--------------|-------------------|------------------|------------------------------------|-------------|
| January | 1 | 75 | 393984 | 0.019036306 |
| February | 2 | 177 | 334368 | 0.052935688 |
| March | 2 | 54 | 374112 | 0.01443418 |
| April | 3 | 256 | 277344 | 0.092304142 |
| May | 1 | 175 | 404352 | 0.043279123 |
| June | 3 | 140 | 381024 | 0.036743092 |
| July | 2 | 103 | 392256 | 0.026258362 |
| August | 3 | 256 | 382752 | 0.06688404 |
| September | 3 | 302 | 376704 | 0.080169045 |
| October | 2 | 99 | 390528 | 0.025350295 |
| November | 0 | 0 | 366336 | 0 |
| December | 8 | 257 | 380160 | 0.067603114 |
| TOTAL | 30 | 1894 | 4453920 | 0.04 |

Source: Field Work.

TABLE 6.3
OVERALL COVERAGE OF NEWS ITEMS IN 'DAWN' & 'THE NEWS'

| Mode of items | Total News | Daily Dawn | The News |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| No: of women's education items | 83 | 53 | 30 |
| Women's education right space col./cm | 4323 | 2429 | 1894 |
| Overall space of newspaper | 8976960 | 4523040 | 4453920 |
| % of News space | 0.04816 % of space | 0.0537 % of space | 0.04252 % of space |

Source: Field Work.

Table 6.3 indicates that overall 83 no: of the news items were published on 4323col./cm (0.05%) of space, out of its total 8976960col./cm space in the year of 2011. However, 'Dawn' has given some more space as compared to 'The News'.

TABLE 6.4
COVERAGE OF NON-NEWS ITEMS OF 'DAWN'

| Months, 2011 | Total Space col/cm | Letter to Editors (LE) | | Editorial (Ed) | | Columns (C) | | Advertisement (A) | |
|--------------|--------------------|------------------------|--------------------|----------------|--------------------|-------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| | | No. of LE | LE space in col/cm | No. of Ed | Ed Space in col/cm | No. of C | C space in col/cm | No. of A | A space in col/cm |
| Jan | 363744 | 6 | 210 | 1 | 28 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Feb | 371520 | 4 | 172 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Mar | 402624 | 17 | 913 | 1 | 38 | 2 | 108 | 9 | 1072 |
| Apr | 349920 | 14 | 542 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 84 | 19 | 2272 |
| May | 409536 | 19 | 770 | 1 | 34 | 2 | 174 | 4 | 864 |
| June | 379296 | 2 | 127 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 108 | 8 | 748 |
| July | 399168 | 1 | 72 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 50 | 6 | 767 |
| Aug | 367200 | 9 | 295 | 1 | 28 | 1 | 82 | 1 | 96 |
| Sep | 362880 | 5 | 172 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 152 | 1 | 216 |
| Oct | 337824 | 11 | 306 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Nov | 382752 | 2 | 120 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Dec | 396576 | 13 | 512 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 40 | 8 | 1482 |
| Total | 4523040 | 103 | 4211 | 4 | 128 | 11 | 798 | 56 | 7517 |

Source: Field Work.

- Editorials are the opinion of the editors. Almost every newspaper publishes two or more editorials in their newspaper daily. Daily Dawn did not publish a single editorial on the issues of women's education in any month of the year of 2011 (see table 6.4).
- The table 6.4 reveals that Dawn published total 102 letters to editor that covered 4141col./cm space in the year of 2011. It has covered more space in the months of March, April, May, August and December in the year of 2011. On the other side, it has covered very little space in the months of January, February, June, July, September and November in the year of 2011. It is observed from this data that readers show some consciousness regarding women's education related matters as compared to editorial of this paper (see table 6.4).
- Column is the yet another category of non-news items. And 11columns were published on 798col./cm. It can be seen by the data

that Dawn did not publish any column on women education on regular basis.

- Dawn has published a little number of advertisements except in the months of January, February October and December in the year of 2011 (see table 6.4).

Coverage of Non-News Items of ‘The News’

- ‘The News’ published 30 letters to editors in the months of April and covered 288col./cm space in the year of 2011. Whereas, it did not publish any letter on the subject in the months of May, July, August, October and November of the year of 2011(see table 6.5).
- The coverage of editorials in ‘The News’ is not different. It published only five editorials on women education in January, April and November (see table 6.5).
- This paper published a covered total 20 columns, occupying 1365col./cm space, while it published 10 columns in 696 col./cm of its space in the month of April. It gave a little bit more coverage in the months of April, March, December and January. While in contrast, it did not publish any column in the year of 2011 (see table 6.5).
- ‘The News’ got there 48 advertisements in the months of March. June, July and October, 2011. It did not get any advertisements in the other eight months (see table 6.5).

TABLE 6.5
COVERAGE OF NON-NEWS ITEMS OF ‘THE NEWS’

| Months, 2011 | Total Space col/cm | Letter to Editors (LE) | | Editorial (Ed) | | Columns (C) | | Advertisement (A) | |
|--------------|--------------------|------------------------|--------------|----------------|--------------|-------------|-------------|-------------------|-------------|
| | | No: of LE | LE in col/cm | No: of E | Ed in col/cm | No: of C | C in col/cm | No: of A | A in col/cm |
| Jan | 363744 | 2 | 14 | 2 | 56 | 1 | 48 | 0 | 0 |
| Feb | 371520 | 2 | 36 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Mar | 402624 | 2 | 22 | 0 | 0 | 6 | 418 | 1 | 72 |
| Apr | 349920 | 30 | 288 | 2 | 72 | 10 | 697 | 0 | 0 |
| May | 409536 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| June | 379296 | 1 | 7 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 54 | 48 | 5616 |
| July | 399168 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 112 |
| Aug | 367200 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Sep | 362880 | 4 | 44 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Oct | 337824 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 432 |
| Nov | 382752 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 28 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Dec | 396576 | 2 | 28 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 148 | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 4523040 | 43 | 439 | 5 | 156 | 20 | 1365 | 54 | 6232 |

Source: Field Work.

Comparative Analysis of Non-News Items of ‘Dawn’ and ‘The News’: As far as non-news materials are concerned, ‘Dawn’ provided about 57% more space (12654 col./cm) as compared to ‘The News’ (8192col./cm). A category wise comparison shows that ‘Dawn’ published more than double letters to the editors (103:43). However, daily *The News* published more columns on education as compared to ‘Dawn’. But, space wise coverage of these materials shows that Dawn provided more space than ‘*The News*’ and these contents in ‘*Dawn*’ are more in detail. Advertisements bring us to an amazing comparing as ‘Dawn’ published 56 ads on 7517col./cm and ‘The News’ got on 54 ads, but these are quite small ones, as 54 ads have been published on just 6232col./cm space (see table 6.6).

TABLE 6.6
COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF NON-NEWS ITEMS BY ‘DAWN’ AND ‘THE NEWS’

| Non-News Items | Dawn | | | The News | | |
|---------------------------|--------------|--------------|------------|--------------|--------------|------------|
| | No: of items | Space Col/cm | % of Space | No: of items | Space Col/cm | % of Space |
| Letter to Editors in c/cm | 103 | 4211 | 33.27 | 43 | 439 | 5.358 |
| Editorials in c/cm | 4 | 128 | 1.011 | 5 | 156 | 1.904 |
| Columns in c/cm | 11 | 798 | 6.306 | 20 | 1365 | 16.66 |
| Advertisements in c/cm | 56 | 7517 | 59.40 | 54 | 6232 | 76.07 |
| Total | 174 | 12654 | 0.2797 | 122 | 8192 | 0.183930 |

Source: Field Work.

Note: Total percentage was computed by total number of space of two dailies 8976960 col./cm in the year of 2011.

According to the finding pioneer Daily *Dawn* provided negligibly more space for news items concerning women education (0.053 percent) than the *The News* (0.0425 percent). In the same way Daily Dawn provided more space (0.279 percent) as compared to Daily *The News* (0.183 percent) for non-news items.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

In all 720 issues of the two newspapers were analyzed for this study which shows that our premier newspapers provided only scanty coverage to the issues of women's education. 'Dawn' being the largest circulated daily has given a little more space for news and non-news items while 'The News' could manage less space in the whole year of 2011. Although newspapers usually give significant space for articles, features, advertisement and news stories to fashion of women (Nautiyal & Dabral, 2012). But for education the case is different. 'Dawn' gave only 0.05% of its total space for materials related to women's education. On another side, the issues like crime, business, national and international politics are covered in detail.

CONCLUSION

In view of the above figures, it is clear that the two newspapers have paid only little attention in coverage women's right of education. It was also observed that daily incidents related to politics, economics and crime news were reported by the newspapers in detail. Whereas, the right of the education related to women could not get enough space in reports and analyses. Many scholars agree that women received little preference in the perception of its readers (Nautiyal & Dabral, 2012). This study reveals a common pattern of far less than needed attention to women education and other issues regarding women, as well as similarity among the newspapers studies. These similarities were found between Daily 'Dawn' and 'The News'. Both did not even cover women's education on any preferential basis. In comparison, however, 'Dawn' is found slightly better. 'The News' could not highlight the women's education and their rights. A similar Indian study concludes that newspapers select and project news and non-news items according to the interest of the target audience and financial means of press (Bansal, 2003). Commonly, the work of the newspapers is organized into two units-editorial and business. Editorial is taking care by the editor; a person is supposed to who possess responsibilities for many contents. Reporters are assigned reports different beats and assignments (Defleur & Dennis, 2002). Editors, reporters etc are required to content analysis their newspapers. Which may reveals the real state of agenda setting and gate keeping. Before exercise they might remain uninformed about their own newspaper.

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