



RESEARCH PAPER

Women Empowerment Through Legislation: An Analysis of Editorials and Comics of Pakistani Mainstream English Dailies

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The current study targets to examine the treatment on issue about legislative measures on violence against women and gendered stereotype roles, in two mainstream Pakistani English dailies from 26th February 2016 to 31st December 2017. Legislative measures on violence against women are directly related to sustainable harmony and peace in society. In the year 2016 finally; regional, national and global campaigns and pressures are created condition for making law in Punjab on ferocity against female. Through content analysis and semiotic analysis the researchers analyzed the role of Pakistani dailies played in levitation of mass awareness, enhanced understanding about the seriousness of the issue, people engagement and willingness to respect and accept the law. Dailies contributed to highlight the sensitivity of issue and narrated the women protection bill; support its strength and significance in both in editorials and comic illustrations but editorial cartoons often sketched the situation as it depicted the domestic gendered stereotypes in our society. The findings revealed that editorials of Pakistani dailies pointed out the worth of female voters and their political participation but less discussed the females role should be mandatory in policy making and their role as the head or member of all esteem organizations

Introduction

The inclusive proposition is that the image constructed of females by media is a replication of society. The framing of legislative measures on violence against women in Punjab, Pakistan could be an indicator of how freedom from violence,

female political participation and influence, gender inequality stereotypes and gender empowerment are observed in society. Earlier researches have focused on biased media treatment and women have long protested that media covers them differently from men (Berns , 2004; Bhanbhro ,2015 , Eastal, Holland and Judd ,2015; Hadi, 2017; Phillips,2015; Raza and Liaqat, 2016).

“Every day in Punjab, approximately six females are killed or bear homicide attempt; at least eight females are raped, another 11 beaten, and 32 kidnapped for several motives”, according to a description printed by the Law and order section of the Special Monitoring Unit (SMU).The Punjab Assembly on 24th February 2016 approved the long-awaited “Protection of Women against violence Bill 2015”, which covers remedies for sufferers of violence, criminalize all forms of ferocity against women, including abetment of a crime, domestic violence, sexual violence, physical and emotional exploitation, financial abuse, aggravation and cyber-crime.

Therefore, it’s vital to analyze the editorials and their illustrations to study how they framed women empowerment; through legal measures on violence against women and setting the community and political dialogues on the said issue.

Literature Review

Inferring illustration is an amalgamated technique that requires readers to have a wider acquaintance of prior and prevailing proceedings, a delicacy of critically thinking and have a systematic grip at traditional signs and codes. (Refaie, 2009). Editorial caricatures have been indorsed to practice deep criticism. Editorial cartoons often wield irony to uncover the naked truth about celebrities as well as about social issues (Lamb, 2006, Agba, 2010). All the illustrations in newspapers may not be categorized as political cartoons. They can be gripped on community annotations as well. So, the illustrations on opinion page may be labeled i.e. community issues-oriented images and intensive political sketches (Treanor&Mateas, 2009).The editorial cartoons have now appeared very ample genre, as readers love to envisage the entire story by just sighted a brief illustration (Shaikh et.al, 2016). Editorial cartoons discoursed; cherished or condemned the significant social, administrative and foreign policy related concerns. It is pragmatic that caricatures positively or negatively shaped public opinion on administrative as well as the human interest-oriented concerns nationally as well as internationally (Streicher, 1967; Medhurst and DeSousa1981; Seymour-Ure, 2001; &Baldry and Thibault, 2006).The leading themes of earlier researches have been revealed; while it’s also substantial to analyze some other form of portrayal through caricatures. The traditional gender segregated roles; mother, wife, daughter, objectification of women as sex symbol are numerous in academic discourse and current discussions (Courtney &Lockeretz, 1971; Dominick & Rauch, 1972; Goffman, 1979).

Mavin, Bryans and Cunningham (2010) analyzed the representation of women legislators in Britain dailies and government websites, about UK 2010 election drive. The researchers focused at female MPs and particularly illustration of Harriet and Theresa May. The inferences of the study asserted that Britain media ignored female politicians' worthy social offerings, thus detracting their veracity as leaders. Mazid (2018) explored the gender politics in films; the selected films revealed a constant struggle between women resistance and misogyny. Chang (2008), applied semiotic analysis to analyze the images of Newsweek, reconnoitered that first lady "Hilary Clinton" was more presented as a wife and mother instead of presidential aspirant. In illustrations consequently, females are painted as acquiescent, preferring male's opinion, whereas, males are shown administering, influencing women in all circumstances; domestically and professionally (Brown & Campel, 1986).

In a nutshell, the analysis of literature reports that there is inadequate study on the role of editorial caricatures about the framing of female stance; freedom from violence, legislative measures for women, political participation and influence, financial assistance and women empowerment and gender inequality.

Theoretical Framework

This study is grounded on the theory that caricatures in leading Pakistan English dailies from 1st February 2016 to 31st December 2017 are signifying certain frames. Framing is a practice, through which certain point of view is emphasized and other marginalized in different media genres. As Entman (2007) noted in his research, media is biased and frame the issues according to their strategies and predilections. The media through illustrations is framing legislative measures on violence against women, freedom from violence, political participation and influence and gender inequality.

Research objectives	Research questions	Methodology	Data analysis
1. To analyze the depiction of legislation for females and their related issues in caricatures of leading Pakistani English dailies from 1 st Feb 2016-Dec 2017.	1. How are particular mainstream English dailies depicting the freedom from violence, gender inequality, legislation for women and political participation and influence in caricatures from Feb 2016-Dec 2017?	Content analysis	Percentage analysis
2. To identify the themes/metaphors/signs and symbols used by mainstream Pakistani media in their illustrations.	2. How nominated mainstream papers applied diverse themes/metaphors/signs and symbols regarding females to make their position impactful.	Semiotic analysis	Thematic analysis

Material and Methods

Descriptive and analytical research methods are applied in the present analysis. In this research quantitative content analysis is used to state the present situation of media treatment regarding portrayal of women issues. While in an analytical section, the researchers answer the questions of why and how. In this study, quantitative content analysis and semiotics analysis are used to answer the question of how the editorial cartoons have highlighted the women issues by using different signs and symbols. Semiotics is generally defined as the “science of signs”. Semiotic study comprises a quest for the meaning consciously or fortuitously associated to sign.

Universe	Sample	Sample Size	Unit of Analysis
Editorial illustrations are the universe of the research, which are the important genre of mainstream dailies.	The sample of the present work is editorial illustrations of <i>Dawn</i> and <i>TheNation</i> .	Opinion page illustrations of the said dailies from 1 st February 2016 to 31 st December 2017 regarding freedom from violence, political participation and influence, Economic rights and women empowerment.	An opinion page caricature and editorials.

Categorization and Operationalization

A number of chief and subsections are articulated for qualitative and quantitative content analysis which is given below:

- A. Freedom from violence; Discourage honor killing, gender discernment at work place, harassment and abuse.
- B. Legislative Measures; Narrate, explain the strength of Women protection laws and Support the legislative measures for women, critically address the groups that oppose these Measures and all anti-women movements and activities.
- C. Political Participation and Influence--- Female as a political leader and female voting trends.
- D. Gendered inequality Stereotype.
- E. Economic rights and Empowerment.

Results and Discussion

Table 1
Frequency wise illustrations on Women issue

Themes	sketches in Dawn	Percenta ge	sketches in The Nation	Percenta ge
Freedom from Violence	03	13.6%	03	14%
Legislative Measures	07	31.8%	02	9.5%
Political Participation and Influence	06	27.3%	03	14%
Gendered-inequality Stereotypes	06	27.3%	12	57%
Economic rights and Empowerment	00	00%	01	4.7%
Total	22	100%	21	100%

Dawn drafted 22 editorial illustrations at female's related issues. Out of 22, only 03 (13.6%) discoursed about freedom from violence, 07(31.8%) are indirectly supported the legislation for females as all these caricatures ironically drafted the reservations of mainstream religious groups at the law for female protection against violence. 06(27.3%) opinion page illustrations are relate to female political participation and influence as well as 06(27.3%) underpin gender inequality.

The Nation printed 21 illustrations at the said issue, out of 21, 12(57%) fortify gender inequality in the society through socially acknowledged traditional gender based labels. 03(12.05%) caricatures are shown the female political participation and influence in the society and 03 (12.05%) highlighted the miseries faced by women in society. Only 01(4.2%) caricature is reinforced the strong association between girl's education and her financially independence.

Table 2
Frequency wise Editorials on Women issue

Frames	Dawn	Percentage	The Nation	Percentage
Legislative measures on violence against women	04	23.5%	05	26.3%
Freedom from violence	05	29.4%	06	31.5%
Rights for Religiously Minority Woman	01	5.8%	02	10.5%
Appreciation for Women Achievements	05	29.4%	04	21.0%
Political Participation and Voting Rights	02	11.76%	02	10.5%
Total	17	100%	19	100%

Dawn penned 17 editorials at female's related issues. Out of 17, only 04 (23.5%) editorials are supported the legislation for females, 05(29.4%) opinion page articles are about freedom from violence. 01(5.8%) articles are related to rights for religiously minority woman, as well as 05(29.4%) underpin appreciation for women achievement, 02(11.76) articles are about female political participation and voting rights beyond gender inequality .

The Nation printed 19 viewpoints at the said issue, out of 19, 05(26.5%) fortified the significance of women protection bill. 06(31.5%) editorials mentioned the miseries faced by Pakistani women and raised voice for freedom from violence. 02(10.5%) advocated for the rights for religiously minority women. and 04(21.0%) celebrated the achievements of women in diversified fields of life. 02(10.5%) editorials penned that the female political participation and voting rights are associated with collective upgrading and equity.

Finding of Semiotic Analysis

The succeeding and most important methodology of this study is semiotic analysis--- illustrations at opinion page which involve in the framing of gender-based issues are studied through "Barthes model of connotation and denotation". The subtitles, marks, codes, and symbols that applied in caricatures of *Dawn* and *The Nation* are examined to apprehend the connotative significances of the sketches. Following main themes appear from the semiotic analysis. The discussion is given below:

Freedom from Violence



Figure 1 of *Dawn*, is indicating the hand (male) holding a knife tightly and woman is being frightened; in a latent meaning a very cruel patriarchal society that threaten the women through man's ferocity. The majority of women faced lack of freedom from violence. Whereas the members of civil society quietly witnessed the whole dirty practice but sustained their indifferent stance. Media seriously portrayed the violence face by women in society.

Legislative Measures for Women

Pakistani English dailies especially *Dawn* highly appreciated the legislation for women rights, the said daily frequently exposed the groups that have anti-women gestures and expressions publically, projected the extreme reaction of religious parties at women protection bill.



Figure. 2, shows that in *shalwar kameez; wascotwearing turban, having beard* (signifying dutiful religious person/Islamization frame) is keeping a *placard having female sign on it*, while the sign was crossed (is signifying to break female rights) in his hand, With frenzied expression staring at the crossed female sign. The cause of that depiction is the severe criticism of mergers religious groups at Women protection bill. Both leading dailies cherished the women protection bill.

Political participation and influence



27 December 2018 *Dawn*

Figure 3.1 sketches the male saturated political parties. In latent meaning, Gender inequality in political activities also effects women's voice and policies particularly at institutionalize gender mainstreaming. Female politicians are marginalized in Pakistani politics whosoever have political influence generally belongs to the influential political families.

Gendered inequality Stereotyped



13th September 2017

In figure 4, the viewer (male) in a leisure mood sitting on a sofa, watching a match (signifying has a control at entertainment tool) and giving comments that appeared above his head while a mute passive woman (his wife), wrapped her arms (signifying obedience) standing behind him just looking at TV admiringly. These symbolic themes in editorial cartoons implicitly reinforce the gendered stereotypes already prevalent in society. These editorial cartoons seem to have internalized these stereotypes.

Economic Rights and empowerment



9th March 2017 *The Nation*

A young female student in Pakistani *Educational institute apparel* (signifies a pupil) with a manuscript in one hand and sign of victory from other hand, standing at the step with the feeling of achievement; however the person in obvious Muslim dress code, with beard and turban (the male), the wealthy/ typical “feudal lord” appearance person (the male) as well as street boy (the male) looked at her irksomely. In the latent message, the dominate of society (males) do not support, cherish and appreciate the women’s education, success and financial prosperity.

Conclusion

The current study endeavored to reconnoiter a previously under explored topic of opinion page illustrations in mainstream Pakistani English newspapers and affirmed that the editorial illustrations frequently sidelined or underestimated the concerns that addressed freedom from violence; victim of acid attacks, domestic gender discrimination, physical as well as psychological abuses against women. It also verified that through this witty depiction a media group's gender categorized affiliations are exposed. The study of the said Pakistani dailies tinted that female critical issues are least sketched in *The Nation*, as compare to *Dawn*.

The analysis examined many variances in the expose of men and women in editorial illustrations. Males were usually sketched in driving roles, females in subservient ones (Goffman, 1979). Such representation frequently observed in *The Nation* delicately prolonged a continuity of gender discrimination.

The contributions of Pakistani ladies that make us feel gratified totally overlooked or ostracized in editorial drawings. Print and electronic mainstream media indeed need to have their own strategies and itinerary instead of just emulating others. Dailies should speak out against gender prejudice and destructive social customs at home, in class and in society. Whereas, feminist intellectuals begin with an argue that gender is among the silent characteristics of social life. Gender influences the way we behave, the thinking patterns, and the way we feel in a manner that is usually unseen to us (Miller 2002 as cited in Ishaq, 2002). Cumulatively, both newspapers’ editorial cartoons supported the women empowerment through law. Ironically, the media depicted the religious elements who so ever, criticized women protection bill. But, gendered stereotype roles of women in political activities and rest of areas show the status quo. The outcomes of the study bare that ladies delineation in cartoons also fortify gendered pigeonholes. These comic illustrations and editorials supported the legislation but also unable to through light at the implementation of laws (Pakeeza, 2015) However, these are not the final words on editorial cartoons in the Pakistani English dailies.

The editorials of the said newspapers were also analyzed how legislation on violence against women portrayed at the selected time period. The findings

show that both dailies seriously amplified the strength of women protection bill but highly criticized the segments of society whosoever, criticize the bill. *Dawn* and *TheNation* discussed the gender inequality and have the firm opinion that freedom from violence should be insured administratively and legislatively. Pakistani English dailies appreciated women achievements in academics, sports, films and in every field of life. And also emphasized the voting rights of female and the worth of their political participation. The findings show that editorials of Pakistani dailies pointed out the worth of female voters but less discuss the females role should be mandatory in policy making and their role as the head or member of all esteem organizations.

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