

Media Representation of Sexual and Gender Based Violence

In context of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa



Latest in string of attacks

Bill on domestic violence introduced in KP Assembly amid MMA reservations

Minister says govt to adjust 'sensitive' amendments proposed by opposition

The government will move a bill soon to amend the Domestic Violence Act, 2010, in the Provincial Assembly of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) amid reservations from the MMA.

The provincial government has introduced a bill to amend the Domestic Violence Act, 2010, in the Provincial Assembly of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) today.

The bill is to provide protection to women who are victims of domestic violence. It will also provide for the punishment of offenders.

The bill is expected to be passed in the next few days.

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Media is the most important stakeholder which has the potential to play key role in eradication of Sexual and Gender Based Violence SGBV. Media sets the agenda which gives it the power to dictate what people see, hear as well as shape their attitudes towards different aspects of life. Now a day's media in Pakistan covers cases of Sexual and Gender Based Violence on daily basis which shows that there is recognition of issue. But the reporting and coverage of the issues show that we are missing an understanding among the media persons of the links between sexism, gender inequality, community attitudes and this violence. Unfortunately, a significant volume of reporting perpetuates attitudes and myths that give rise to the violence in the first place instead of addressing the issue.

This study, which aims to provide an overview of the available evidence on the way news and information media portray sexual and gender-based violence in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, is a part of the work of Blue Veins and The Australian Government under the project “Policy Advocacy and Research to Strengthen Implementation of Pro-Women Legislation and SGBV Response Services in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa”.

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Chapter 1

1.1 INTRODUCTION

For organizations and institutions working to prevent and response sexual and gender-based violence, one of the key areas of focus in the paradigm of gender and media is the depiction of cases of sexual and gender-based violence. It is generally observed that often the victims of sexual and gender-based violence especially women victims are depicted as weak and frail both in entertainment and news media which reinforces the stereotypical image of women in our society.

Media covers the issues of violence against vulnerable communities on daily basis and therefore is it extremely important to discuss gendered portrayals of violence in popular media. It is important to understand and highlight the fact that media texts still silently mirror & resonate patriarchal dominance that exists within our society.

In a province like Khyber Pakhtunkhwa where women are traditionally given high esteem; Rape, murder, child and forced marriages dowry deaths, swara, trafficking, marital abuse, spousal abuse, honor killing, ghag and other forms of traditional and harmful practices against women happen every day. And it is important to mention that most of the violence and crimes perpetrated on women goes unreported like other parts of Pakistan. Such crimes, which do make it to the news bulletin, depict just a fraction of the reality and are extremely small in numbers and does not reflect the true and actual amount, type and number of violence.

Sexual and Gender-based violence remains existent in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa due to deeply rooted patriarchal attitudes towards the roles of women and men in the society, and even more accepted attitude that such violence is an act of lower risk for society and that it is a private problem of women and children who are subjected to or survived the violence.

Mass media has a great potential to play a strategic role in shaping the general awareness of the society about violence considering the way in which they represent violence in their reports, language and narrative, and the audience they reach.

Sexual and gender-based violence and its prevalence in Pakistani society is undeniably an issue that came out of the private into the public sphere. This issue is being reported in the media and it is talked about in society. For that reason, it is important to start a debate on the responsibility of media and the way they report, initiate and (non)support the debate on sexual and gender-based violence.

We acknowledged the tumultuous power of the media and hope that, it would promote positive attitudes towards women; justifying their rights and position in society, and reiterate the issue of occurrence of crime & violence towards the factors and attitudes which cause sexual and gender-based violence.

Civil society across Pakistan is now increasingly engaged with print and electronic media and encouraging media to promote gender equality. Some progress has been already made but at large, the media still proliferates the prejudice about gender which is negative and still stereotypical and sexist. The major concerns of women rights activist and advocates for gender equality in Pakistan are that the media often represent women as sex objects, the attitude of media especially the electronic media towards women is hypocritical and traditional; women are often marginalized in terms of both representation, role, and topic.

The research you are now reading aims to explain the way in which the media in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa report on sexual gender-based violence. More precisely, this research wants to portray the manner in which the media report on violence against women and to examine whether the media examine the stereotypes that exist in our society. Based on the information obtained, this document gives practical recommendations for gender-responsive, inclusive and contextualized reporting on sexual and gender-based violence.

This research is a part of many other efforts carried out by Blue Veins under the project " Policy Advocacy and Research to Strengthen Implementation of Pro-Women Legislation and SGBV Response Services in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP); to ensure that media reporting on this issue in line with ethical and professional standards is important on that road.

1.2 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The issue of Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) is covered by the print and electronic media on a daily basis, which is a positive indicator that there is a recognition of the problem. It is also a reason to analyze the manner in which the media report on this issue and their responsibility in the process of starting a discussion on SGBV as a social problem.

This research has pointed to flaws in the work of media and the challenges of media when it comes to reporting sexual and gender-based violence. While the cases of violence are reported regularly in the print and electronic media, less attention is given in highlighting the social economic cost of the sexual and gender-based violence and to raise public awareness on the prevention of SGBV and even unethical reporting on sensitive cases.

The media do not initiate topics of sexual and gender-based violence but rather report on those cases in brief covers once they get information from their source, most frequently police source or non-governmental organizations or social media. Photographs used to illustrate SGBV articles often reinforces the stereotypical, subordinate and weak image of women and gender minorities. The most present topic in the stories is sexual and physical violence and recognized as a problem, other forms of gender discrimination and violence are mostly not mentioned or reported at all.

The findings of this research clearly indicate that there needs more awareness and sensitization among media on reporting sexual and gender-based violence rather than making it more attractive and sensationalize it. The media cross Pakistan must be sensitized to report SGBV in its social context with ethical standard and empathy and this is something that needs to be changed urgently.

Sexual and gender-based violence and its prevention are legitimate topics of public interest and while some aspects of reporting on violence against women in Pakistan are changing for the better, there remains much room for improvement.

1.3 GLOSSARY

Violence Against Women

Any act of gender-based violence that causes or could cause physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of harm or coercion, in public or in private life. This definition encompasses all forms of violence that women experience (including physical, sexual, emotional, cultural/spiritual, financial, and others) that are gender based.

Domestic Violence

Domestic violence refers to acts of violence that occur in domestic settings between two people who are, or were, in an intimate relationship. It includes physical, sexual, emotional, psychological and financial abuse.

Family Violence

Family violence is a broader term that refers not only to violence between husband and wife but also to violence between family members including intimate partners and includes, elder abuse and adolescent violence against parents. Family violence includes violent or threatening behavior, or any other form of behavior that coerces or controls a family member or causes that family member to be fearful. In Indigenous communities, family violence is often the preferred term as it encapsulates the broader issue of violence within extended families, kinship networks and community relationships, as well as intergenerational issues.

Prevention of Violence Against Women

Prevention of violence against women is defined as activities and interventions that aim to prevent violence against women before it occurs by addressing the primary (first or underlying) drivers of violence. Primary prevention is distinct from service response or early intervention, which occurs after violence has occurred or at early signs of violence. It differs also from more specific actions targeted at individuals and groups who exhibit early signs of perpetrating violent behavior or of being subject to violence.¹² The term prevention or primary prevention is used in this document to refer to work that contributes or is relevant to the prevention of violence against women. The term applies to work carried out by prevention-specific practitioners as well as other experts and spokespersons.

Gender

The socially learnt roles, behaviors, activities and attributes that any given society considers appropriate for men and women; gender defies masculinity and femininity. Gender expectations vary between cultures and can change over time.

Gender Equality

Gender equality involves equality of opportunity and equality of results. It includes the redistribution of resources and responsibilities between men and women and the transformation of the underlying causes and structures of gender inequality to achieve substantive equality. It is about recognizing diversity and disadvantage to ensure equal outcomes for all and therefore often requires women-specific programs and policies to end existing inequalities.

Gender Inequality

Gender inequality refers to the unequal distribution of power, resources, opportunity, and value afforded to men and women in a society due to prevailing gendered norms and structures.

Gender Equity

Gender means fairness of treatment for women and men, according to their respective needs. This may include equal treatment or treatment that is different but which is considered equivalent in terms of rights, benefits, obligations and opportunities.

Media

Media is used to refer to a variety of forms of media, including news reporting, social media, advertising and popular programming.

News Media

Print, electronic and broadcast (television and radio) media that focus on delivering news to the general public or a target audience.

Social Media

The collective of online communications technologies and applications dedicated to community-based input, interaction, content sharing and collaboration. Social media is a new and constantly changing platform/medium, and therefore its scope, reach and consumption is constantly being redefined. It describes a variety of applications such as forums and content communities (YouTube), blogging and micro-blogging (Twitter), social networking (Facebook), social news networking (Reddit), social curation (Pinterest), collaborative projects (Wikipedia) and visual media exchanges (Instagram).

1.4 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The media plays an important role of watchdog of society and this tradition bestows upon them the social responsibility to mirror and guide the process of social change. But the concerning fact is that the mass media in Pakistan under various pressures is becoming more commercial and failing to reflect the social problems or aspirations of the entire population, especially the problems faced by various social and vulnerable groups including women and sexual and gender minorities.

Therefore, the portrayal of women in mass media is becoming an area of great concern to social activists. Civil society organizations, social activist and women groups are noting with concern that there is an ongoing trend in media, both electronic and print, to portray women as a commodity, sex objects and sometimes as victims.

Unfortunately, Pakistani society is a patriarchal society where patriarchy is established and reflected at all level and aspects of life, and unfortunately, media is not exception to that. Media is increasingly becoming a corporate organization dominated by males who often intentionally and unintentionally depict the picture of women as weak and inferior in front of society.

Sexual and gender-based violence in Pakistan is a significant problem which has a huge economic cost and is a major barrier for Pakistan to achieve sustainable development goals (SDGs) and is one of the most widespread violations of human rights.

Evidence-based primary prevention of sexual and gender-based violence is a new and emerging field but there are promising strategies for prevention. This evidence highlights the importance of challenging cultural and social norms that condone, tolerate or excuse sexual and gender-based violence. It is within this context that the news and information media – a dominant force in shaping the discourse on matters of public importance is seen to play a crucial role.

However, like many other workplaces in Pakistan, the media itself is struggling with gender equality in almost all facets of its work from the production of news to equal representation of men and women in the newsroom and in senior executive positions. We see very little progress towards closing the gender gap in media employment, with women vastly unrepresented in front of, and behind, the journalistic lens. Although the impact of this on media reporting of sexual and gender-based violence is not well understood, gender gaps and disparities in the newsroom and among key decision-makers in the media organizations must be taken into consideration as it has the potential to influence media culture and the way it reports and depicts SGBV.

1.5 AIM OF THE RESEARCH

The aim of this study is to provide an overview of the available evidence on the way media portray sexual and gender-based violence. This study aims to provide analysis on representation of sexual and gender-based violence cases in different media outlets including print, electronic and social media and challenges around it.

1.6 OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH

Role of media in eradication of sexual and gender-based violence through its representation has become an important topic for the civil society who work to improve the prevention and response services to SGBV. The present research is conducted to study the role of media in the reporting of problematic and chronic issues of violence against women in Pakistan. The research was conducted for the following objectives:

- To explore the role of different media outlets in eradication and prevention of sexual and gender-based violence or in violence against women in Pakistan.
- To explore how media portrays sexual and gender-based violence and how it effects the society.
- Challenges for media while covering cases of violence against women.

Chapter 2

2.1 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

There have been very less studies conducted in Pakistan on portrayal of sexual and gender-based violence in media and all the conducted researches reflect quantitative data. For the purpose of this research to get the general perceptions of the experiences and challenges on representation of sexual and gender-based violence cases qualitative methodology approach was adopted.

The findings of this knowledge paper are the result of the semi-structured qualitative interviews with journalist and civil society experts working on the issue of sexual and gender-based violence. To get the objectives of the current study, review of the various studies conducted on the issue was also made.

Mix-methodological approach:

The mixed-methodological approach was used to explore the underlying challenges and gaps of representation of sexual and gender-based violence in media. The methodology for this qualitative study and data collection included primary and secondary sources. The study involved three areas to be covered i: e

- i. how media portrays or represents cases of Sexual and gender-based violence?
- ii. what are the effects of reporting on viewers/audience and how they perceive it?
- iii. Common challenges and flaws in media reporting and how to overcome them.

Based on the qualitative feature of the study and the areas covered under it, research methodology included:

Literature Review: The other main approach to data collection for the purpose of this study was in the context of desk review and literature review. As a secondary source of data collection for the study, review of relevant researches was made throughout the study and in the data analysis stage. It included researches conducted on the topic, summary reports, articles, case studies, journalists' codes or guidelines for reporting etc. Some of the reviewed publications included research on media reporting on gender-based violence against women in Bosnia and Herzegovina" 2016 by UN Women, "Myths Broken or Sustained: Representation of Women Victims in Pakistani Media" 2013 by Musarat Yasmin, Ayesha Sohail and Riaz Ahmed Mangrio, The Portrayal of Violence in the Media: Impacts & Implications for Policy" by Melanie Brown, "Sexual violence against women: consequences of news media (mis)representation" 2017, summary report "Victorian print media coverage of violence against women" 2012 published by VicHealth, Women Protection Legislation and Media Discourse In Pakistan, Social representations of domestic violence against women in the media: A South African study by Dane Henry Isaacs, Media Portrayal of Street Violence Against Egyptian Women: Women, Socio-Political Violence, Ineffective Laws and Limited Role of NGOs 2017 by Rasha El-Ibiary.

- Key informant interviews KII: As a primary source of data collection for the purpose of this study, journalists who works on cases of violence against women and covers the human rights violation were identified and interviewed. Journalists were identified from the targeted districts of the research. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with journalists and CSOs in the selected district. Semi-structured individual interviews were conducted during field visits from media and civil society actors. Journalists interviewed for the study, belong to five target districts of the project under which study have been carried out which includes Peshawar, Nowshera, Mardan, Swabi, and Swat.

Sample size:

Data collection for the objective of this knowledge paper was made through two ways i:e first the review of the researches and publications which investigate the media representations on particular forms of SGBV which is the main objective of the study and this approach covers the major part of the study while the second way was the interviews of small number of journalists and some member of the civil society to get information on the basis of experience personal perceptions who are already working on the same issue. So, while ascertaining the sample size for this study paper consideration was given to limited number of journalists and civil society who are working on human rights issue. Semi structured were conducted with media persons. The interviews didn't confine to the questionnaire but it included general discussions and questions to get a general perception. For this study 15 journalists belonging to print and electronic media were interviewed including female journalists. Also, to get perceptions from the civil society who work closely with media and on the prevention or response to sexual and gender-based violence 5 civil society members were also interviewed. CSOs included representatives of NGOs, CBOs and alliances working on the issue.

Questionnaire: -

To cover the area of study a questionnaire was developed for the key informant interviews. Questionnaire was comprised of open and close ended questions. To meet the objective of the research targeted brief two separate questionnaires were developed for media persons and CSOs.

The main topics questionnaire covered were: -

- How the cases and issues of gender-based violence are represented in media?
- What are the challenges for media persons while covering SGBV cases?
- Role of different media outlets in eradication of SGBV.
- Challenges of different media outlets in coverage of sexual and gender-based violence.
- What are the areas of reporting which needs to be improved?

2.2 ETHICAL CONSIDERATION:

Ethical issues greatly impact the credibility, confidentiality and authenticity of the research data. Special consideration was given to the ethical norms and standards while collecting the data and conducting interviews for the research. Following ethical consideration were followed during the research:

- The research ensured full and consented participation of the respondents.
- Consent form were developed in discussion and collaboration with Blue Veins team.
- Keeping in view the best interest of participants and following the safeguarding principles of minors, all the respondents above age of 18 years were interviewed with their consent and willingness.
- All the participants were informed about the objectives, aim and other information related to the research before interview.
- Names, organization, department and other details of the respondents not shared between them and even not used in the research.
- Anonymity and confidentiality highly ensured throughout the research.

2.3 LIMITATIONS OF STUDY

This study is focused on the knowledge and portrayals of sexual and gender-based violence in the mass media on the basis of review of various studies and summary reports and does not include the analysis of newspapers, magazines, films, television, music, plays and dramas or others. Keeping in view the specification of topic only those were interviewed for the study who are directly working on the issue.

Chapter 3

3.1 LITERATURE REVIEW:

According to the research “RESEARCH ON MEDIA REPORTING ON GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA” conducted by UN Women in 2016, Mass media play a crucial role in shaping the general awareness of the society about violence considering the way in which they represent violence in their reports, language and narrative, and the audience they reach. Violence against women and girls is undeniably an issue that came out of the private into the public sphere. This issue is being reported in the media and it is talked about in the society. For that reason, it is important to start a debate on the responsibility of media and the way they report, initiate and (non)support the debate on violence against women and domestic violence

In 2013 a study was conducted by Musarat Yasmin, Ayesha Sohail and Riaz Ahmed Mangrio titled “Myths Broken or Sustained: Representation of Women Victims in Pakistani Media” to examine the current portrayal of women in crime reporting in Pakistani English print media. The study provides that a deep insight into the content and language of the media enables us to assess its contribution to gender issues. Gendered messages that are semiotically and linguistically encoded in print media, by virtue of their being naturalized in the mainstream discourse about gender, not only affect our experience of consuming news and entertainment but also define the construction of gender identities and create a gate-keeping mechanism that ultimately determines the extent to which communities become (or not) gender-inclusive

A study “The Portrayal of Violence in the Media: Impacts & Implications for Policy” by Melanie Brown says that the relationship between media depictions of violence and subsequent violent behavior is extremely complex. There are number of interacting variables which play an important role in determining who will be affected, by what material, and in what way. The context in which the violence is portrayed and age of the viewer/player are the most important variables for determining the potential impact of violence. Also significant is the participant's ability to differentiate between fantasy and reality, and justified or unjustified use of force.

In 2017 a study “Sexual violence against women: consequences of news media (mis)representation” was conducted to shed light on the interplay between societal misconceptions of sexual violence against women and how these misconceptions are informed and perpetuated by news media reporting on the subject. According to the study, before we look at how news media treat the issue of sexual violence against women, it is important to understand how news media treat women in general. One important aspect is to understand who produces news media content and what attitudes are held by people involved in the process.

Several studies have shown that women are generally underrepresented in news stories (Len-Ríos, Rodgers, Thorson, & Yoon, 2005; Rodgers & Thorson, 2003; Rodgers, Thorson, & Antecol, 2000). Their findings show a large gender gap in news coverage and “all coverage focusing on a relatively small number of famous individuals who are largely men” (Shor et al., 2015, p. 976).

Furthermore, they found that increasing the number of women on newspapers' editorial boards only makes a small difference, if any at all, regarding the gender gap in news coverage. A report by the Global Media Monitoring Project 2010 (2010, p. 57) explained that "if conditions remain unchanged and the rate of progress is maintained, it will take at least 40 more years to reach parity".

It seems like not much has changed since then. Because of these discouraging findings, several scholars have questioned if individuals or even groups are able to change the gender coverage bias within the media industry (Shor et al., 2015). Apparently, the overall gender inequality we find in society at large is also impacting the composition of news rooms, as well as their content regarding sources and topics. This gender difference is especially relevant in the context of the more specific topic of how news media portray sexual violence against women.

In 2012 VicHealth published a summary report "Victorian print media coverage of violence against women" with the aim to identify opportunities to strengthen reporting on violence against women to improve community understanding of the nature and causes of the issue. The report explored that sensationalism is regularly incorporated in the reporting of violence against women. Much of the research reviewed for the report showed that sensationalistic coverage of violence against women is common place in print media (Carter 1998; Evans 2001; Greer 2003; Kothari 2008; Soothill & Walby 1991; Sunindyo 2004; Wykes 2001). Often sensationalism incorporates elements of humour, frivolity or ridiculousness. This can come in the form of puns, rhymes, the inclusion of odd details, quotes, or 'humorous' nicknames for perpetrators. The inclusion of humorous or ridiculous elements in the reporting of violence against women is troubling, and only works against the idea that violence against women is a serious social issue. In this study, sensationalism was regularly incorporated in the coverage of violence against women: 40 per cent of articles included an element of sensationalism. When sensationalistic elements appeared, they were most likely to occur in the headline of the story.

Sensationalistic news coverage of violence against women is problematic for a number of reasons which includes that it represents gender-based violence in a way that is unrepresentative of the realities of the social problem, particularly because it tends to highlight the most unusual examples of (and details around) such violence (

The study conducted in Pakistan to examine the role of national media towards the promotion of women rights awareness highlights that media is especially considered important when it comes to spreading awareness regarding women's rights. Various researchers argue that awareness can be utilized as an important instrument to influence societal behavior towards women (Migiro, 2009) and in this way, may play a pivotal role in controlling human and women rights violations.

Therefore, it is of much importance how media report and debate gender related issues and stir relevant stakeholders and forums. However, the impact of media on society, whether in a positive or a negative manner, depends on the way it behaves and responds. For instance, media campaigns can promote women rights, emphasize condemnation of discriminatory behavior and convey the message of zero tolerance for violence against women.

On the other hand, media may undermine the position of women and may strengthen stereotypical behaviors towards females. Especially, the way media portrays women has been an arguable case. It has been observed that media images regarding violence against women, like the description of rape, representation of females as sexual objects, or pornographic imagery and their continuous prevalence impacts the public in an adverse manner.

The study provides that as far as the Pakistani media is concerned, their main focus has been and remains to be political centric, subsequently leading social issues to be under reported regularly. Therefore, the role of Pakistani media, commendable to quite an extent, is criticized often in lieu of disregarding various societal issues (Zaheer, 2016a; 2016b) like women rights and women empowerment.

Chapter 4

4.1 THE ROLE OF NEWS MEDIA IN PRIMARY PREVENTION

Media is considered to be a key priority area in the prevention of sexual and gender-based violence because of its outreach and potential influence on public about the understanding of sexual and gender-based violence and public knowledge and behavior around this issue. Print and electronic news media, in particular, plays an important role in shaping the public discourse because it reports on current events and provides a framework for interpretation for the general population and policymakers at the same time.

By increasing the visibility of the issue of sexual and gender-based violence in our society and the way it impacts the individual, family, society and country the media helps to construct and regulate public understanding and increases the pressure for policy reforms. Keeping in mind the role, and influence of media there is a potential that media helps in creating a social space where sexual and gender-based violence can be discussed in its wider scope rather than a family/private or shameful matter which cannot be discussed in society but as a problem that should and can be prevented.

While there have been very less studies conducted in Pakistan on this topic, this knowledge paper provides compelling evidence about predominant patterns in the way news stories on sexual and gender-based violence are presented; which offers overly-simplistic, inadequate and distorted representations of the nature, extent, and the seriousness of SGBV issues to the audience.

This knowledge paper reflects the unique potential of media to:

- Report SGBV in the social context in which GBV is perpetrated and occurs.
- Discourage sensationalizing stories around SGBV.
- Debunk myths and misrepresentations around the issue of SGBV.
- Skew public perceptions about who perpetrates gender-based violence, who is most at risk of violence and where violence occurs.
- Discourage shifting blame from male perpetrators of violence and assigning responsibility for violence to women by focusing on the behavior of women.
- Exert pressure on legislatures and policymakers for introducing and implementing laws and policies that can prevent and respond SGBV.

This study paper reinforces the importance of media as a primary prevention tool, its potency in influencing community attitudes, and the increasing importance of social media and its interaction with traditional news media, for young people in particular.

4.2 ROLE OF MEDIA IN SHAPING PUBLIC UNDERSTANDING AND PRIMARY PREVENTION OF SGBV

Civil society organizations and social activists see print and electronic news media as a far-reaching key and credible source of public information which has a significant influence on knowledge and public opinion. The relation between the policy reform, public opinion and media is complex but there is little doubt that media coverage matters. Media can be an influential tool in primary prevention of SGBV.

There is a strong belief that attitudes and perception of the community can be reshaped by increasing the knowledge regarding the understanding of social problems. It can transform attitudes and shape survivors' response to victimization and influence community responses to sexual and gender-based violence. As the media play a key role in the communication of information about matters of public importance and therefore in the way people understand social issues such as sexual and gender-based violence. Understanding what causes gender-based violence is crucial to taking effective action to prevent it.

There are strong assumptions which support the concept that preventing gender-based violence is possible using strategies that address these underlying causes. The causes of sexual and gender-based violence are embedded in the environments where people live, work and interact with each other. Strategies to prevent violence need to target these same places. Media is one of the areas for action identified for preventing sexual and gender-based violence, due to the role that it plays in transmitting social norms and beliefs.

4.3 SEXUAL AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AND THE MEDIA

The role of media is acknowledged worldwide as media is playing an important role in constructing masses' perceptions and public understanding of social issues. All forms of media are identified as being authoritative and important sources from which images of sexual and gender-based violence are constructed and reproduced. Images and narratives presented by the media play an important role in constructing community perceptions, attitudes, and knowledge of what is normal and acceptable in terms of behavior around SGBV. However, it has been observed that media often under-represents stories of sexual and gender-based violence and focus primarily upon female victims/survivors, and give little or no attention to perpetrators of SGBV. Additionally, the media often sensationalize and trivialize SGBV. Media usually frames SGBV on the basis of three components: sources, context, and word choice or language and misses to depict it in social context so as the underlying stereotypical norms can be explored. In terms of source, the police and criminal justice system routinely act as the primary source of reference to obtain insight concerning incidents of abuse against women. However, SGBV is usually under-reported to the police, it commonly leads to false depictions of SGBV as well as inaccurate information of some individual cases of domestic violence in the media. In addition, unfortunately, the media's representations of SGBV often do not satisfactorily contextualize incidents of sexual and gender-based violence.

It is important to mention that language and working are playing very important role in framing of sexual and gender-based violence as a title/headline determines the public's perception. Use of insensitive language is found to be magnifying harmful cultural myths and promoting traditional representations of gender stereotypes. Perceptions of journalist and reflections of civil society organization representative strongly suggest that media in large portray gender-based violence in a way which supports patriarchal institutions such as law enforcement and legal systems and obscured connections between violence against women and societal structures that help preserve gender-based power. Because of the perceptions and biases, it is found that media give greater attention to violent crimes, such as those of a sexual and violent nature, while approaches other forms of gender-based violence with little interest. The specific criteria of newsworthiness are largely dependent on the opinion of the journalist and the news organization. In most cases, media is more interested in breaking exclusive stories which has more sexual violence, conflict, and drama keeping media audiences captivated.

Respondents have argued that the dominant discourse of silence and stigmatization surrounding the issue of SGBV is perpetuated when it receives limited media coverage. At the same time media is blamed for its overrepresentation of physical and extreme cases of violent SGBV cases. The findings reflect that focusing only on physical acts of abuse distorts the true reality of domestic violence, which is multifaceted and inclusive of emotional and psychological abuse.

This representation of media starts to lead a widespread perception among listeners, reader, and viewers that of gender-based violence as a distinct incident of physical violence as opposed to it being a continuous process of abuse, where the portrayal of male power and control does not depend on violent acts alone.

4.4 MEDIA AS A SITE FOR PRIMARY PREVENTION OF SEXUAL AND GENDER BASED VIOLENCE?

Men, women and the transgender community are disproportionately affected by sexual and gender-based violence and media play a significant role in perpetuating and challenging social norms that condone this violence. This study strongly suggests that despite all the progresses media has made there is a strong and emerging need to professionalize media from a gender perspective which could be helpful in eradicating sexism in journalism that supports and normalizes practices of discrimination and violence against women and other socially marginalized segments of society.

The key informants of this study strongly recognize the potential of media as a site for primary prevention of Sexual and Gender-Based Violence. It is agreed that high quality, informed unbiased and accurate media coverage of sexual and gender-based violence can be important contributors in addressing the issue. The reflections from the key informants suggest that to prevent SGBV and bring behavior change among the members of society media should:

- Accurately convey full impact of sexual and gender-based violence on our communities.
- Convey accurate and meaningful context for SGBV stories with a special focus on patriarchy and patriarchal values which often promotes violence and discrimination.

- Challenge community attitudes and behaviors that underlie or reinforce sexual and gender-based violence.
- Help to identify available specialists and support services for SGBV survivors and ensure that experiences of survivors are accurately and sensitively communicated.

The key respondents also emphasized that media outlet needs to take professional ethics for gender-fair reporting seriously and encourages journalists to pursue a gender lens in news content across print and digital media platforms.

Because of its outreach, popularity, and influence media has an opportunity to encourage open communication around issues of sexual and gender-based violence so that people facing SGBV can report violence without fear of repercussions. If media plays its new role it can be a game changer in preventing and responding to sexual and gender-based violence. It can transform community norms, attitudes, and behaviors that condone sexual and gender-based violence, including engagement with religious leaders, engage men to promote positive images of masculinity and gender equality, while encouraging reflection on what it means to be a man in society and help combat stigma and raising public awareness about the protection system to address SGBV in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

At the same time, media can be an important tool of triggering accountability towards policymaker for putting required laws and policies in place and improve implementation of the existing laws for the prevention and response of SGBV. The key informants also argued that international human rights instruments provide an opportunity to identify with more precision the responsibilities of media platforms to mitigate harm perpetrated through their networks, and ensure that the systems they create do not reproduce gendered inequality.

4.5 MEDIA INFLUENCING THE CONCEPT OF GENDER

The findings of this study strongly suggest that media is the most persuasive and powerful influence on how our society views women, men and other sexual and gender minorities. With increasing access to all forms of media and its importance in our daily lives, media insinuate its messages into our consciousness at every turn. All forms of media communicate images of the sexes and gender identities many of which perpetuate unrealistic, stereotypical, and limiting perceptions. The way media reports about the sexes and gender dimensions promotes the idea that men are the cultural standards while women and transgender population are not equally important, it at the same time media depicts the gender roles which portrays and reflects in a very stereotypical ways which sustain socially endorsed views of gender. Because the personal biases and gender insensitivities are reflected in the media the relationship between different sexes and gender identities are reported in a way that it endorses emphasize traditional roles and normalize sexual and gender-based violence.

Stereotypical and Under representation of Women

One of the major challenges is that media under-represent women in mass media. The constant distortion tempts society to believe that there really are more men than women and, further, that men are the cultural standard. Women from minorities and women with disabilities are excluded to the higher extends and when they appear on media they are featured in stereotypical roles. Media at large show fewer older women than men, presumably because youth and beauty is considered to be more "marketable" at the same time elderly individuals specially women are frequently portrayed as sick, dependent, fumbling and passive, images not borne out in real life. The lack of women in the media is paralleled by the scarcity of women in charge of media. The key informants reflected that very less number of women are television writers, executives, and producers are women, this is a troubling fact because a good number of journalism graduates are women, they make up less in higher or management positions. Some respondents believe that if more women had positions and authority at executive levels, media would offer more positive portrayals of women.

Civil society representatives argued that continued portrayal of men, women and transgender community in a stereotypical manner limit society's perception of human possibilities and inter result it limits the opportunities and choices for people based on their sex and gender identities. Today men are seen as active, adventurous, powerful and aggressive because this is how the media represents and showcase them. While on the other hand women and other sexual and gender minorities are depicted as sex objects who are usually young, thin beautiful, passive, dependent, and often incompetent and dumb. Because media is playing an influential role in creating our perceptions, the ways they misrepresent genders distorts how we see ourselves and what we perceive as normal and desirable for men and women and gender non-binary community to the greater extent.

Some of the female journalists reporting from the field reflected that they could not make it to newsroom because female newscasters are expected to be younger, more physically attractive, and less outspoken than males. The male journalist reflected that large majority of people reporting today don't have education in the relevant field and there are very few opportunities for them to go through extensive or specialized training, therefore, they carry their biases and reiterate the cultural image of women as dependent, ornamental objects whose primary functions are to look good, be obedient to men, and stay quietly on the periphery of life.

The discussion carried out in this study with the key informants very strongly reflects that the mass media has created a distinction between good and bad women. Good women are portrayed as good looking, deferential, and focused on home, family, caring for others and subordinate to men.

Relationships Between Men and Women and its Representation by Media

Media at large represents the stereotypical portrayals different sexes and gender in ways that reinforce stereotypes. The respondents of this study agree that intentionally or unintentional media reflect and promote traditional arrangements between the sexes. The male dominance/female subservience pattern that permeates mediated representations of relationships is no accident and is a reflection of the patriarchal mindset embedded in our society. Stereotypical Portrayals of Men

The mass media typically shows males as “aggressive, dominant, and engaged in exciting activities from which they receive rewards from others for their 'masculine' accomplishments.” Media disproportionately depicts men as serious, confident, competent, powerful, and in high-status 'position who embody the stereotype of extreme masculinity Media, then reinforce long-standing cultural ideals of masculinity:' Men are presented as hard, tough, independent, sexually aggressive, unafraid, violent, totally in control of all emotions, and-above all-in no way feminine. While boys and men are rarely presented caring for others, they are typically represented as uninterested in and incompetent at homemaking, cooking, and childcare. This perpetuates a negative stereotype of men as uncaring and uninvolved in family life at the same time reinforces gender stereotypes.

4.6 NORMALIZING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

While the key informants from the media strongly reject that media contributes towards the normalization of sexual and gender-based violence in our society, the civil society activists interviewed for the purpose of this study strongly argue that media positively portray aggression in males and passivity in females, which contributes and normalizing gender-based violence and that exposure to sexual violence through media is linked to greater tolerance, or even approval of sexual and gender based violence. Women rights activists have a strong belief that exposure to media violence within a relationship tends to normalize it by showing it as part of the family life. The reflection of the views by the participants clearly suggest that repeated exposure to SGBV in media influences how it is perceived in society and how the society react to it.

The cultural values communicated to us by family schools, media, and other sources constantly encourage us to believe men are superior, men should dominate women and other sexual and gender minorities, male aggression is acceptable as a means of attaining what is wanted, women are passive and should defer to men, and women are sex objects. In concert, these beliefs legitimize violence and aggression against women and sexual and gender minorities.

4.7 MEDIA AND THE FEMINIST APPROACH

The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) is an international treaty adopted in 1979 by the United Nations General Assembly calls to the responsibility of the media in the elimination of violence against women and girls. In 1995 the Beijing Platform for Action (BPFA) called explicitly on governments to 'take effective measures or institute such measures, including appropriate legislation against pornography and the project of violence against women and children in the media' (UN, 1995, p.102).

The Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA) called on both the media and advertising industries to establish, consistent with freedom of expression, professional guidelines, and codes of conduct that address violent, degrading or pornographic materials concerning women in the media, including advertising, it also calls for disseminating information aimed at eliminating spousal and child abuse and all forms of violence against women, including domestic violence at the national level.

However, while the Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA) asks for actions would achieve gender equality and stop gender-based violence, there is no single formal policy on gender and communication in most countries in the world. The representation of sexual violence in media content was one of the first issues taken up by feminist communication studies. Feminist critics showed how through the commodification of women's bodies, media content –news, films, magazines– contributed to the 'normalization' of sexual assault, rape and other forms of sexual violence and how they reinforced gender inequalities.

Chapter 5

5.1 KEY FINDINGS AND AREA: WHICH NEED IMPROVEMENT

5.1.1 Media covers individual incidents and overlooks the social context of the problem

The findings of this study reflect that journalist and reporters cannot blame the way media reflects and reports on gender-based violence because little or no training is provided to them in this regard. In addition, the media industry operates under numerous constraints and social pressures, their audience, and readership comes with different perspectives and have their own interpretations of all issues in society. Nevertheless, at the same time, the sensitivity and the knowledge of the journal is on the background, context and different perspectives of gender-based violence in our society can be of great significance in changing mindsets and behavior in our society.

The data analysis reflects that it is another major challenge of coverage that media covers the cases of SGBV in form of individual incidence of violence and fails to cover the cases from contextualized and informative point of view. Media reports on individual cases of violence against women rather than addressing the issue and its roots. Women rights activists argue that incident-based reporting of the sexual and gender-based violence limits the issue to the individualized pattern which overlooks contextualized challenges and patterns of the society which supports such violence. The tendency to cover individual incident shifts the responsibility for solving the problem from society to the individual /survivor victim and perpetrator.

This study suggests that there should be more contextualized and informative coverage which should not only provide information but also trigger a debate at personal and Society level. The findings suggest that incorporating thematic elements, even to a little extent, could give, readers, the viewer, and audience a greater understanding of the realities of sexual and gender-based violence in the cultural context.

5.1.2 Coverage of the issue and absence of information regarding respond services

The media including print, electronic and social media is the main source of information in today's technology era. The delivery of information and social context of the issue not only really helps to educate and inform citizens about the issue but also contributes in strengthening media credibility and reliability. The key informants of this study agree that media reports the incidents of sexual and gender-based violence but does not provide information about support services and referral Pathways provided both by governmental and non-governmental service providers. The absence of this information creates a huge gap between the available services and those who required the services when they face gender-based violence. Not only women, sexual and gender-based minorities but also the majority of men do not know about the available support services therefore they fail to seek available help and services.

The findings of the study further reveal that incorporating information about the response services, and exposing the root causes the issue within the social context, could give the public a greater understanding of the realities of gender-based violence and its available support services. This is one of the major challenges for those working to help victims and their families that they do not know who to turn to when the issue of sexual and gender-based violence takes place.

The key informant interviewees shared that by publishing helpline numbers, contact numbers, websites, addresses, services descriptions and other information when covering issues of violence against women, media persons could contribute greatly to raising public awareness of the services available to those experiencing gender-based violence. This would be an important step in bringing victims and support services closer. Also, at the same time it will significantly contribute towards establishing a link between SGBV incidence and broader contextual issues related to gender-based violence.

5.1.3 Some forms of SGBV receives low levels of media coverage

While the cases of sexual and gender-based violence are reported regularly, there are some areas of SGBV including cases of inheritance, maintenance, children custody, dowry, and others which do not receive significant level of media coverage. The findings of the study suggest that other than the particular forms of sexual and gender-based violence which include, honor killing, rape, domestic violence, sexual harassment, and child abuse, some forms of SGBV lacks visibility. This lack of coverage reinforces the myths and invisibility of most forms of SGBV. Therefore, it is important to highlight all forms of violence to create more sensitivity and awareness around these issues.

5.1.4 Sensationalism in media coverage on sexual and gender-based violence

Media has always been blamed for sensationalism in news reporting. Much of the researches reviewed for this study reflected that sensationalistic coverage of sexual and gender-based violence is commonplace in print media as well as in electronic media. Respondents of the study also believed journalism in Pakistan is more about sensationalism than facts-based reporting.

Issue of sensationalism in the media is both an ethical and a theoretical one. Media sensationalism involves use of fear, anger, excitement and crude thrill in the reporting/ coverage, undertaken by the media to increase the viewership and ratings. Review of various articles, researches and reports reflects that sensationalism in media has increased and is being regularly practiced by all media outlets in Pakistan including print, electronic and social media. When it comes to the reporting or coverage of gender-based violence it is reflected by the key informant interviewees that the unethical practice of sensationalism is one of the flaw of media reporting, which exploits SGBV to a large extent, and has direct or indirect effects on victim and perpetrator. Sensationalistic stories perpetuate myths and mis presentations about the sexual and gender-based violence and this is something that needs to be changed. Because of the increased use, media reporting lost its credibility and perpetuates stereotypes.

The respondents shared that sensationalistic coverage of the incidents of sexual and gender-based violence snatches interest from the readers/viewers and causes degradation of values in our society. Sensationalism is so deeply embedded with all media outlets that the distinction between accurate and inaccurate news has completely vanished. Media is a major source of information for public which provides information on the basis of which opinions and attitudes are formed. Sensationalism in SGBV reporting affects public in a large way because what the effects of what we see, what we read and what we hear has on our thoughts. Sensationalism leads to developing positive and negative perceptions about the issues and underlying causes which direct our actions.

The findings reflect that there is an alarming increase in the sensationalistic coverage of the cases related to sexual and gender-based violence. Often sensationalism also overlooks the principle of "do no harm". The key informants reflect that sensationalism is regularly incorporated in the coverage of sexual and gender-based violence and when sensationalistic elements appeared, they were most likely to occur in the headline of the story. The sensationalistic news coverage of violence against women is problematic because it represents gender-based violence in a way that is unrepresentative of the realities of the social problem and at most times such coverage moves from necessary information to the exploitation of the victim's experience.

5.1.5 Media ignoring experts as sources

Key informants of the media reflect that they have a huge pressure from their editors to get quotes and information from individuals who are considered more credible and have a social standing in the society. Majority of reporters and journalists heavily rely upon police and legal professionals; therefore, police and other criminal justice personnel tend to be the primary sources used by journalists when reporting SGBV cases. In the context of developing countries like Pakistan, police personnel hardly possess enough knowledge about SGBV and related issues. They can provide media information regarding the incident but can't explain the underlying causes, social context, and expert opinion about its prevention and response mechanisms. For such cases police cannot be blamed and there is lack of training in police department about the issue. The study suggests that there is a need to extend the outreach of the civil society activists and women rights experts which can be of great significance in establishing the connection between sexual and gender-based violence and a broader social context.

5.1.6 Challenges of ethical reporting

Media in Pakistan covers a variety of issues including the sensitive issues on women, girls, children, youth and transgender persons on a daily basis. The role of journalists and media is not only confined to the coverage of the issues and its potential in helping to find solutions to this problem cannot be over-stated. Media as a key stakeholder can help to shape positive public opinion for action in favor of positive action to defend women's rights by telling the story of gender violence through the ethical, careful and sensitive prism of quality journalism.

When it comes to reporting on SGBV cases or issues, it is observed that in majority of the coverages, media fails to follow the ethical and credible standards of reporting. Findings of the study and responses of the respondents reveals that there are several challenges to the ethical reporting. The major challenges which comes to the notice and which media faces in terms of ethical reporting while covering cases of sexual and gender-based violence SGBV is that media, with intention to cover each aspect of the issue to spread it around the world, fails to ensure transparency, impartiality, and privacy of the victims/survivors and perpetrators. Principles of ethical reporting not only applies to the victims but are also required to be followed for the perpetrator. Sharing of the personal details like name, addresses, family members or pictures of the victims or the perpetrator can put them at high risk. This is one of the biggest challenges for media to ensure that transparency about their intentions for coverage of the issue and credibility of their source of information. Ethical challenges with regard to reporting not only violates the right to privacy but it further leads to the discussions about sensationalism which becomes more prominent when it comes to graphic depiction of shocking and inappropriate content. Which negatively effects audience perceptions and also causes serious issues for the perpetrator and victim/survivor.

The study suggests that this is highly needed to organize trainings for media professionals on ethical and sensitive reporting. There are several handbooks and guidelines have been developed on the basis of internationally recognized practices on ethical and standard reporting which can be of high significant in this regard. We need to provide trainings and equip our journalists and reporters with the guidelines and internationally recognized practices of ethical reporting so that the issue of unethical practices and its negative effects on the society can be vanquished.

5.1.7 challenge of gender stereotypes in coverage

The media plays a very significant role in shaping public perceptions about women and men, therefore it is important that reporting avoids any form of gender stereotypes, which often limit and trivialize females and males, as well as presenting an inaccurate view of the world and its possibilities. Furthermore, the use of stereotypes reflects a mental block not only in terms of what society may expect from women and men, but also—more seriously—in terms of what women and men may expect from themselves. UNESCO, 2012.

Media play important roles in society in shaping public perceptions, behaviors and bringing to the forefront the hidden issues of the society. Media report on ongoing events, social issues, provide frameworks for interpretation, mobilize citizens with regard to various issues, reproduce predominant culture and society, and entertain. Media can be an important stakeholder in the promotion of gender equality, both in terms of promoting enabling gender sensitive environment for female journalists and in representation of equal, fair, sensitive and inclusive gender portrayal of women and men.

The respondents of the study mentioned that in Pakistan, media is highly influenced by certain cultural and social norms with less sensitization on gender inclusive and sensitive reporting. Media's portrayal of women in its articles and reporting often gives an impression that women are the subordinate part of the society. If we look into the entertainment media in Pakistan, in

majority of the serials or dramas, issues that are lighter in nature like fashion, culture and housekeeping as assigned to women. This implies the underlying impression of women as the weaker gender in the society.

Review of the various researches for the purpose of this study and interviews of the respondents reflected that one of the most frequent criticisms of media coverage is that it portrays women in terms of gender stereotypes: simplistic generalizations attributed to all women or all men without regard for accuracy or truth. According to the respondents most common stereotypes of women which is evident in media reports that they portray women in most of the shows, programs, articles as a homemaker, weak, subservient, victims, intellectually inferior to men. Such portrayal creates common gender stereotypes about men and women. When media reproduce these stereotypes, they are shaping public opinion in ways that reinforce them and deepen inequality, stigma and prejudice. Many studies have shown that the media most frequently represent women as sex objects for men to look at and fantasize about. In news, features, entertainment and advertising, images focus on women's personality, their clothing and their looks. The impression is that women have nothing else to offer society and that women must live up to unrealistic and undesirable standards.

The study suggests that media either its entertainment media or news media needs to change its practices regarding the gender roles and stereotypes and should promote gender equality, gender equity, diversity and gender mainstreaming.

5.1.8 Role of entertainment media in gender sensitive portrayal and SGBV

In this modern era and time, entertainment media is a powerful medium to inform, educate, entertain and create awareness. Importance of the television, effects of its content on its viewers and presentation of societal norms cannot be denied. To discuss the role of entertainment media with regard to SGBV, the respondents of the study were also asked about the role of entertainment media in eradication of sexual and gender-based violence. Television broadcasting now a days has expanded its horizons to the extent of hundreds of channels. There are dozens of channels, many of the channels are owned by private corporations and few are run by government. This has created a sense of competition among the media channel owners regarding the content they produce and the programs they play.

According to the respondents of the study, entertainment media holds very influential role in effecting the perception of people especially of household population who take keen interest in dramas, movies, talk shows and other entertainment programs. Some of the most beloved TV programs include drama serials and morning shows. They happen to be the favorites of Pakistani viewers and specifically of housewives who happen to take up a majority of Pakistan's female population. According to the respondents, the way our dramas and movies depicts gender and violence against women especially in form of forced marriages, early marriages, domestic violence, honor killings, harassment and marital abuse, it reflects that these programs are produced and written to boost rating instead of changing the mind set and challenging the root causes. The content shown and used in the programs is not only distressing for the viewers but is also against the commonly accepted standards of decency and societal norms.

Our entertainment media lacks the representation of liberal, progressive and gender-sensitive messages, most of them reinforce stereotypical patriarchal values and discriminatory societal norms and practices.

The portrayal of the women, their role, and issues of violence against them in entertainment programs are far removed from the reality. The content of the programs with the aim to improve high ratings, reinforce damaging stereotypes about women and mostly depicts them as dependent and subordinate part of the society. The exposure of the violent acts shows that women are easy and frequent targets of violence. The respondents reflected that gender-based violence is depicted in various forms like dramas, films, music videos, advertisements and the excessive show of violence against women results in acceptance of such issue as a normal action.

The responses of the key informant interviewers reflect that arts, drama and other entertainment programs are among the most effective ways to raise awareness against gender-based violence and challenge the mindset by depicting the negative effects of violence. Since a significant portion of society is illiterate and household population and visual or entertainment media is the only source for information for them and an excellent platform for raising awareness.

5.1.9 Social media, its potential and coverage of social issue

Usage of social media is increasing day by day. Its utility in Pakistan is also increasing and people are understanding and acknowledgment the use and power of social media platforms. Many issues that were considered too controversial to be raised on media either through print or electronic or by social media are now supported on the internet and people showing more interest to get information through social media. In the era of modern technology, social and digital media are providing more informative and interactive platforms for people to speak for their rights and raise the social issues which are difficult to be raised. Social media and digital platforms are not just providing platforms business purposes and grow but it is also giving the space to the public to exercise their right to speech, raise the social issues and spread awareness.

According to the statistics issued by Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA), number of mobile phone users reached 151 million by July 2018 in Pakistan. The growth in mobile phone use has provided the opportunity for increased access to the internet, and through this, the social media. Easy access to internet, websites and social media forums in turn offers tremendous communication benefits and also provides educative and awareness raising forums. In case of Sexual and Gender-Based Violence SGBV, there is no doubt that social media is one of the most useful media platforms proving itself the most useful, fastest and convenient tool to highlight the issues and spread the awareness by sharing transformational messages to change existing negative mindsets, stereotyped attitudes towards gender rights, patriarchal norms, and support the eradication of SGBV. Social media as a means of generating knowledge and evidence has become a vital tool for change. Well informed, fact based, standardized and information-based issues of SGBV shared through social media goes viral in minutes and initiate and strengthen the information and sensitization process.

Many of the respondents of the study shared that it is through the use of social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and many other websites and apps that new understandings, means of communication and dialogues are emerging. Data and information are being gathered not only by the internet users but also by mainstream media channels, police, investigation authority, civil society organizations etc. who can use the information to solve, monitor and follow up the issue. Indeed.

The respondents of the study also argued that despite the useful potential of social media in highlighting issues, it cannot be ignored that social media has also fueled the gender-based violence in form of online harassment, bullying, shaming, abuse, hacking, impersonation, surveillance/tracking, recruiting victims into violent situations, revenge porn and other forms of violence. The key informant interviewees shared that everyone has an access to internet and can post anything against anyone violating the privacy rights and ethical practices. Any person who gets any information either in form of photos, videos or description of the case, they post it on social media without keeping in view the ethical consideration and privacy rights of victim/survivor and perpetrator which not only constitute the violation of 'do not harm' principle but also puts the safety of victims and perpetrator of SGBV on risk. Everything which is posted on social media goes viral in minutes and reaches to everyone which in itself is a threatening issue because it reveals the identity and information about the people involved in incident and such information is sometime misused.

The respondents of the study also highlighted that sometime the news shared or posted on social media are fake or misrepresent information and it becomes sometime challenging for media persons to follow that case. The study and respondents suggested that journalists and reporters should always be aware of false data and information and should verify the validity of any uploaded material before incorporating it in reports or following the incident.

Chapter 6

6.1 CONCLUSION

There are several important factors which influence public perceptions about sexual and gender-based violence, media is one of the most influential tools. In this study we tried to explore the representation of SGBV in the mass media of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. There were several limitations in conducting this study but still, this study strongly reflects that media frequently mirrors society's confusion and ambivalence about sexual and gender-based violence. The scope of the study was not to establish the link between SGBV and media reporting in the context of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa but it clearly reflects that media can play a role in dispelling myths and reinforcing information about the true nature and extent of the problem and its context. This study also emphasizes the need for more research to gauge the impact of media coverage on public understandings, attitudes, and behaviors and how to best craft mediated messages to more effectively promote positive social change.

This study emphasizes the training and sanitization of media persons so that they can streamline wider societal factors such as culture, gender, and power in fostering sexual and gender-based violence could be explained and understood in the contextual framework. If the media representation on the issues related to sexual and gender-based violence improves it will provide a unique opportunity that society may be presented with a more holistic view of sexual and gender-based violence in the socio-political context of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. As a result, this society can start first-time questions like what can be done to address the issue of SGBV? In response, policies and intervention programs might be introduced to address those socio-structural factors and unequal systems of patriarchy that have existed to perpetuate SGBV in our society.

The reflections of the key informants of this study help to conclude that little attention is paid by media to the broader and the contextual realities of SGBV cases and the greater focus all the media is to report the individual cases. Also, it is a matter of concern that occasionally there is unethical reporting which undermines the "principle of do no harm" and overlooks integrity, safety, and wellbeing of the SGBV survivors/victims. The media is more interested in sensationalistic coverage and is often more interested in reporting SGBV incidents which increase its viewing rate.

While it might be correct that media reporting cannot stop gender-based violence but it can contribute so that the society takes it into serious consideration and to initiate a stronger action and trigger greater accountability at the same time. Therefore, media should strongly support and combat against violence through professional reporting or by specific and clear campaigns that will aim to change gender stereotypes and widespread attitude that gender-based violence is a private problem and that it does not pose an alarming threat to the society.

Media are seemingly aware of their role, but essentially, they do not constitute a part of the solution. They largely do not contribute to changing of the situation where gender-based violence happens, media yet has to play a proactive role in educating society, reshaping public attitudes and promote behavior change and improve knowledge of society about the laws available to end sexual and gender-based violence because one of the missions of journalism is not only to inform but also to educate. Most of the media content is around physical and sexual violence while it is very little about psychological and especially economic violence. Media reports rarely question stereotypes which exist in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Strategies need to be developed to encourage journalists to incorporate more context and analysis when reporting violence against women.

As a cornerstone of information, media plays a fundamental role in the public understanding of social problems. While the question of media effects is complex and multifaceted, it is clear that media plays a part in shaping people's knowledge in all societies. It is for this reason that strategies need to be developed to encourage media to incorporate more context and analysis when reporting sexual and gender-based violence.

6.2 KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Media houses should encourage sensitization session and training for journalist and reporters so that they by their work and actions and promote gender equality and able to discourage stereotypical and sexist portraying of women and gender minorities in media.
- While reporting the SGBV cases media should not restrict itself to report individual case but should also highlight the contextual realities of society.
- Media should always adhere to the principle of "Do No Harm" particularly when reporting on sexual gender-based violence and avoid publish any content which directly or indirectly puts the survivor/victim in unfavorable position or discriminates them on grounds of their gender.
- Media and civil society must work in close coordination towards raising of awareness of problems of gender-based violence against women, in all of its forms: physical, sexual, psychological and economic, and not only when an incident of violence occurs.
- Media should take a more proactive approach to the issue of sexual and gender-based violence, without only relying on the information provided by police sources or non-governmental organizations, and by making more frequent analytical features about these topics and calling upon relevant institutions to act.
- Media should approach the reporting on sexual and gender-based violence as a social evil instead of frequently writing about it in crime and accident chronicles, with no context and in short forms.
- Media whenever possible should use longer journalistic forms such as interview, comments or investigative stories.
- Media must report personal tragedies with special care, to treat persons who were subjected to violence with respect and without victimization. Portraying women and gender minorities in the public as victims may create an impression that they are powerless and weak.

- Media should not only limit its self to reaching out police officials and legal experts for an expert opinion while reporting SGBV cases they should also consult sociologists, psychologists, and social workers in order to report the broader context and impact of SGBV and to communicate that violence against women is a serious and systemic social problem that is preventable.
- For responsible media, it is always good to avoid sensational “sellable” headlines and words such as “shocking” brutal” and “horrific”.
- Media should be more active in exchanging information with the governmental and non-governmental actors in the field of combating gender-based violence and be more aware that their reporting can be not only informational but also educational.
- Develop a group of dedicated violence against women media spokes people to drive the conversation rather than only responding to violence against women related issues. This group of individuals should help to develop insightful pieces about the prevention of violence against women for publication.
- Civil Society organizations needs to initiate consultations with the media industry to generate more effective strategies to improve media reporting on violence against women and encourage a collaborative approach.
- The Civil Society Organizations should explore education and training strategies for journalists. These include targeting university curriculums, developing short courses, and on-the-job training.
- Consolidate or develop existing resources for journalists, including specific tools and guidelines focusing on the prevention of violence against women.
- Civil Society and donors must fund initiatives such as “Media awards” to acknowledge responsible reporting of SGBV in the media.
- Explore strategies for encouraging law enforcement officers to incorporate messages about the nature of SGBV in their conversations with media.
- Research into the strengths and weakness of media coverage should be conducted every five years to evaluate current strategies and identify further areas of work. Alternative media strategies (non-news based) should be explored.
- Explore and develop innovative uses of new media to effect change in public knowledge of SGBV.
- Organize high-profile media events to attract media attention, keeping in mind the needs of the media. These events should present information on the realities of violence against women and strategies to prevent it.
- Acknowledgement and celebration of quality reporting practices which should have at its heart opportunities for networking, sharing, guidance, training and encouragement.
- Government to introduce and strengthen regulation and policy aimed at preventing spread of sexual and gender-based violence through the media and ICT.
- Media and ICT organizations must be encouraged to adopt gender mainstreaming mechanisms for monitoring, evaluation and action; adhere to national and international legislation to end gender-based violence; improve gender mainstreaming training programs for content producers.
- Encourage media unions and journalists' groups to adopt basic principles for the production of news on gender issue which is free of sexist stereotypes.
- Promote the exchange of best practices to gender in media and online contents and link with the research community.

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ANNEXURES

Annexure 1: Consent form

Media Representation of Sexual and Gender Based Violence in context of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

You are being invited to participate in a research study about media representation on sexual and gender-based violence SGBV, supported by The Australian Government under the project “policy, advocacy and research to strengthen Implementation of Pro-Woman Legislation and GBV Response Services in KP.

The objective of this research project is to provide an overview of the available evidence on the way media portray sexual and gender-based violence and to provide analysis on representation of sexual and gender-based violence cases in different media outlets including print, electronic and social media and challenges around it.

You have been identified as a respondent for being working on the issue and covering it. There are no known risks associated or costs for your participation, if you decide to participate in this research. Your participation completely depends on your willingness. We assure your complete confidentiality and anonymity. The information or viewpoints you provide will be completely confidential and will not be used with your identity in the research nor will be shared with other participants.

You have been provided with all information about research and your participation in this study is voluntary. It is also to inform you that you can withdraw from the interview or research anytime and the data you will shared or provided will not be used in the research. If you choose to participate, please sign this consent form and handed it over to the researcher. In case of any issue or query you can contact Blue Vein team as well. Once you confirm your participation and sign the consent form, you will be interviewed and questionnaire will also be shared with you.

If you have any questions or concerns about this consent form about being or about this study, you may contact me at hamzamarwan@uop.edu.pk.

Name:

Department:

Signature:

Date:

Annexure 2: Questionnaire

Questions for Media Persons

1. In your media reporting do you cover the issue of human rights violations and incidents of sexual and gender-based violence?
2. What forms of sexual and gender-based violence are most often covered by media?
3. What are the gaps in portrayal of sexual and gender-based violence in media news and reports?
4. What challenges media reporters face while covering SGBV incidents.
5. What are the challenges for media persons with regard to gender inclusive reporting?
6. How media can play its role in eradication of sexual and gender-based violence.
7. How media portrays gender roles and how it influences concept of gender.
8. What are the challenges of ethical reporting?
9. How do you consider role of entertainment media with regard to the prevention and eradication of sexual and gender-based violence?
10. What is your perception about the role of social media as a most frequent communication mean and as a source of information?
11. How reporting can be improved and what are your suggestions regarding the capacity development of media persons on sexual and gender-based violence and responsible reporting over it.

Questions for Civil Society

1. What are common flaws or gaps in media reporting and coverage.
2. How media portrays the incidents of sexual and gender-based violence.
3. What forms of SGBV are mostly covered by media?
4. What do you think how audience perceive coverage of particular forms of SGBV?
5. What is the role of media in shaping public perceptions and eradication and prevention of sexual and gender-based violence?
6. What are the common gaps of media reporting and what are their effects on audience or viewers?
7. How do you consider role of entertainment and social media with regard to the prevention and eradication of sexual and gender-based violence?
8. How reporting can be improved and what are your suggestions regarding the capacity development of media persons on sexual and gender-based violence and responsible reporting over it.



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