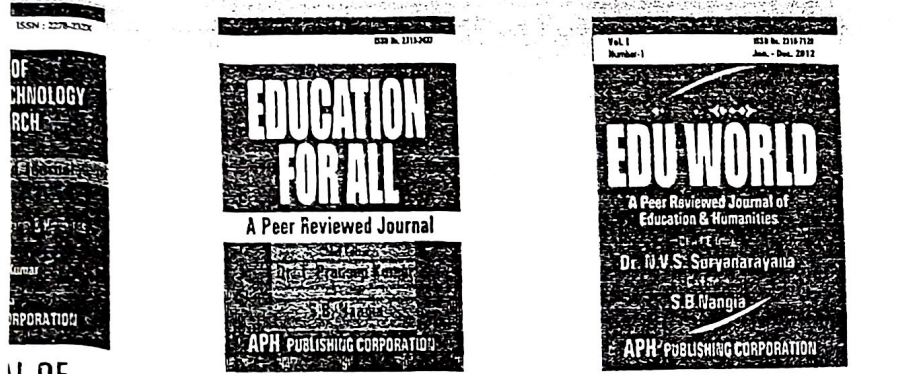


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Journalism Education and Gender Sensitization among Journalism Students in Tamil Nadu

Dr. S. Jenola*

ABSTRACT

Journalism education in the narrow sense prepares students for careers in newspapers, magazines, broadcast news and news services. Journalism students try to form an opinion on their attitude towards society and all spheres of life only during their education which is likely to get reflected in their media content produced by them when they take up media jobs. Journalism education should also prepare students for careers in journalism. Journalism education as part of journalism education will sensitize the male students and women issues. The paper looks into the possible impact on the representation of women in the media content through the curriculum and training imparted to journalism graduates, with particular reference to Tamil Nadu. The study examines various gender issues like the presence of gender issues in the curricula, gender and journalistic skills of the students, reception of gender messages by the students and career options of women students. The methodology used is analysis of the curriculum of select universities / colleges and in-depth interview with 20 media professionals. The study also includes a review of the existing literature on the subject. The present study found that gender issues occupy marginalized space in the curricula of all Universities. A marked difference between male and female students in terms of innate journalistic skills. Male students tend to get irritated and ignore gender messages received during the course

Keywords: Journalism education, Gender Sensitization, Curriculum Analysis, Journalism etc.

Journalism education should prepare graduates to work as highly informed, strongly committed professionals who have high ethical principles and are able to fulfil public-interest obligations (Guy and Newbold, 1990). Today the need for journalism training has been accepted all over the world. Even in India, we have accepted the fact that journalists should be properly trained and expected to have the skills to enter the media industry (AMIC study, 2002). According to the report of the University Commission (1981) on the 'Status of Journalism and Communication Education in India' the need for journalism training is no longer in doubt or dispute. There is scope for proper briefing and training on the concept of journalism, the role it has in the society and the role it can play in the media (Ma, 1990). Journalism students try to form an opinion and shape their attitude towards all spheres of life only during their education which would definitely get reflected in their

SCOPE OF JOURNALISM EDUCATION

Journalism education should prepare graduates to work as highly informed, strongly committed professionals who have high ethical principles and are able to fulfil public-interest obligations (Guy and Newbold, 1990). Today the need for journalism training has been accepted all over the world. Even in India, we have accepted the fact that journalists should be properly trained and expected to have the skills to enter the media industry (AMIC study, 2002). According to the report of the University Commission (1981) on the 'Status of Journalism and Communication Education in India' the need for journalism training is no longer in doubt or dispute. There is scope for proper briefing and training on the concept of journalism, the role it has in the society and the role it can play in the media (Ma, 1990). Journalism students try to form an opinion and shape their attitude towards all spheres of life only during their education which would definitely get reflected in their

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The study also examines various gender issues like the presence of gender issues in the curricula, gender and journalistic skills of the students, reception of gender messages by the students and career options of women students. The methodology used is analysis of the curriculum of select universities / colleges and in-depth interview with 20 media professionals. The study also includes a review of the existing literature on the subject. The present study found that gender issues occupy marginalized space in the curricula of all Universities. A marked difference between male and female students in terms of innate journalistic skills. Male students tend to get irritated and ignore gender messages received during the course

Moreover, preparing women for jobs in journalism will not only increase the number of women in journalism but also change the news content in such a way it is gender sensitive. To promote this gender inclusiveness is to impart quality journalism education for women. The best way to put women into various jobs in news media and also to get women general content. Journalism education should also promote gender sensitivity to propel into journalism with social consciousness particularly with reference to issues concerning women. Such women in the media will go a long way to end stereotyping of women in media content.

Journalism education will also equip women to tackle the subjugation of women in newsroom and to shatter glass ceiling and come up in profession. When women get into the range in media jobs such as decision-makers in the newsroom, they will play a more effective role in setting the agenda in favour of their gender. According to Margaret Gallagher, *Critical Mass* will have some success in changing the long established media practices, routines and which individual female professionals have been powerless to shift.

A lot many developments are happening in the polity and the society at large to benefit women. The 73rd and 74th amendments of the Indian Constitution have ushered in a three-tier governance with women taking the reigns of power at the grassroots. Even the debate on reservation for women in Assemblies and Parliament is actively carried out in news media anywhere else. This is probably because of the steady increase in the number of women in journalism profession in the recent years. Even then, the number of women journalists is still folds less compared to the number of women taking to journalism education. This is probably because media jobs are not all that open to women even though qualified or because of the societal bias that looks down upon women entering journalism.

In this context, it is worthwhile looking at how far journalism education is preparing students to contribute to women empowerment once they get into media jobs. A gender sensitive education as part of journalism education will sensitize the male counterparts undergoing journalism education as well to women issues. The paper looks into the status of journalism education and its possible impact on the representation of women in the media content through the curriculum and training imparted to journalism graduates, with particular reference to Tamil Nadu. The methodology used is analysis of the curriculum of select universities / colleges and in-depth interview with 20 media teachers who are Heads of the University Departments and Chairpersons of the Boards of Studies and teachers handling journalism papers, besides a review of the existing literature on the subject.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A study titled "Journalism as a Profession in India - A Sociological Perspective" by S. Jenola traces trends in Journalism in India and issues like professional autonomy in Journalism. One of the major trends traces back the history of Journalism education in India, the role of organized forums in Journalism education and Journalists' opinion on major issues in journalism education.

The book authored by K.E. Eapen titled "Communication - A Discipline in Distress" provides a historical background of communication education in India and deals with what ails Journalism education in India. This book analyses current trends in Journalism training programmes in India. It has also highlighted the need for standardization of journalism education in the country.

In another study carried out in the Indian context by AMIC and UNESCO - II titled "Communication and Media Needs in India" presented a detailed overview of Communication and the status of media industry in India. It has tried to link the scope of media institutions