Communicating Gender in Print Media

A Two Day National Workshop

(12th and 13th December, 2007)
Islamabad - Pakistan

UNFPA

Ministry of Women Development
Government of Pakistan

Advocates of Gender, Education & Health Information
AGEHI Resource Centre
SACHET - Pakistan

Message from Country Representative, UNFPA-Pakistan

Dr. France Donnay

UNFPA supported the initiative taken by Ministry of Women Development to sensitize members of the print media on issues related to gender inequality so that journalists can highlight & portray more effectively gender related problems and play a constructive role in policy development as well as public awareness on these issues.

Message from Secretary, Ministry of Women Development Government of Pakistan

Mr. Mehmood Saleem Mehmood

The Ministry of Women Development has ever been trying its best to come up to the expectations of those who are facing any kind of problems in solving issues relating to empowerment of women. Despite financial constraints I and my other team members in the Ministry try to prove any lagging behind in the matters, which relate to female population of Pakistan. During the year 2007 the Ministry represented Pakistan in CEDAW and many other forum providing different type of literature indicating steps taken by the Government of Pakistan for protection and empowerment of women. The Ministry has also been implementing/ executing different projects in collaboration with foreign donor agencies like UNDP, UNFPA, GTZ etc to achieve targets of the Ministry mainly focused on legal, political, social and economic empowerment of women.

2. It was also expressed by the Secretary, MoWD that at this point of time the Ministry is 100% gender sensitized and also assured that no body will find the Ministry lagging behind in any issue/matter relating to female gender and female population of Pakistan.

3. For future interventions during 2008 he categorically stated that the Ministry wants solid contribution in addressing the aforesaid issues in collaboration with UNFPA to bring something qualitative which will help the gender focused issues to be addressed properly.

Acronyms / Abbreviations

UNFPA — United Nations Fund for Population Association

MoWD — Ministry of Women Development

SACHET — Society for the Advancement of Community, Health, Education & Training

GoP — Government of Pakistan

AGEHI — Advocates of Gender, Education & Health Information

RH — Reproductive Health

GBV — Gender Based Violence

UNFPA (United Nations Population Fund), Pakistan and Ministry of Women Development (MoWD), Government of Pakistan (GoP), in collaboration with AGEHI[1] Resource Centre, SACHET (Society for the Advancement of Community Health, Education and Training) Pakistan have undertaken a project to gender sensitize aspiring Pakistani print media professionals on gender issues including Gender Based Violence (GBV) and Reproductive Health (RH) Care with the objective to highlight these issues in the media while maintaining cultural sensitivities.

To achieve this mega objective the MoWD, GoP, has arranged a series of four one-day workshops at the provincial level; in collaboration with UNFPA, Pakistan in 2006.

In the year 2007, a follow-up two day workshop was organized in Islamabad on 12th & 13th of December. AGEHI Resource Centre, SACHET Pakistan facilitated the workshop. Member of the workshop organizing team consisted of Dr. Rakhshinda Perveen, Amara Kanwal, Zartash Moomi, Humayun and Amin Muhammad. (SACHET) and Amna Khawer (UNFPA & MOWD).

The workshop aimed at stimulating thinking process among the print media journalists regarding understanding of gender roles and discussing gender portrayals in Urdu, English and local newspapers that reaffirm gender stereotypes.

[1] Advocates of Gender, Education and Health Information.

Workshop Objectives

- To stimulate a thinking process among the target audience regarding understanding of gender roles
- To familiarize the target audience with gender portrayals in Urdu, English and local newspapers that reaffirm gender stereotypes
- To initiate an informed dialogue process for challenging stereotyped gender roles in Pakistani society through print journalism

Share/acquire

(a) Skills for highlighting gender issues in media.
(b) Gender sensitive media reporting.

A total of 15 participants from all over Pakistan took part in the workshop. As the workshop was related to print media, only those journalists were invited who are working on gender related reporting. The group included representation from urban, rural, remote and difficult areas like Turbat (Baluchistan), Hunza (Northern Areas), AJk etc. All of them were representative of different newspapers. There were 6 woman and 9 male participants. See annex 1 for the list of participants.

The workshop methodology was interactive and participatory. The sessions were presented on different topics. There was a lot of discussion among the participants. See annex 2 for the detailed agenda.

Facilitators of the training workshop were experts in Gender, Reproductive health ,Advocacy, Communication and Media. They used electronic and printed material to express their views on the topic. Handouts were distributed at the end of each day. See annexure 3 for handouts.

Workshop Objectives

- To stimulate a thinking process among the target audience regarding understanding of gender roles
- To familiarize the target audience with gender portrayals in Urdu, English and local newspapers that reaffirm gender stereotypes
- To initiate an informed dialogue process for challenging stereotyped gender roles in Pakistani society through print journalism

Share/acquire

(a) Skills for highlighting gender issues in media.
(b) Gender sensitive media reporting.

A total of 15 participants from all over Pakistan took part in the workshop. As the workshop was related to print media, only those journalists were invited who are working on gender related reporting. The group included representation from urban, rural, remote and difficult areas like Turbat (Baluchistan), Hunza (Northern Areas), AJk etc. All of them were representative of different newspapers. There were 6 woman and 9 male participants. See annex 1 for the list of participants.

The workshop methodology was interactive and participatory. The sessions were presented on different topics. There was a lot of discussion among the participants. See annex 2 for the detailed agenda.

Facilitators of the training workshop were experts in Gender, Reproductive health ,Advocacy, Communication and Media. They used electronic and printed material to express their views on the topic. Handouts were distributed at the end of each day. See annexure 3 for handouts.

Review Day One

Day one of the training focused on basic understanding of gender which was followed by an inaugural session attended by the representatives from the Ministry of Women development, civil society including media and UNFPA along with participants from the workshop.

Tone Setting

Dr.Rakhshinda Perveen, Director AGEHI, SACHET was the lead facilitator. She welcomed the participants to the two day workshop. A brief overview of the project and objectives of the workshop were shared in plenary. In plenary, participants were asked to share their expectations from the training.

They hoped that at the workshop they will be:

- Able to share opinions and experiences
- Acquiring more and new information.
- Utilizing learned skills from the training in their work.
- Understand cultural differences in reporting and journalism.

Later in plenary, participants shared their names and area of work. Norms were set in plenary to create a better learning environment.

Norms for the workshop

- The language used will be simple preferably, Urdu.
- Time management and punctuality will be observed.
- Only one person will speak at a time.
- Respect for opinions of others.
- Focusing on the objectives of the workshop.

UNDERSTANDING GENDER CONCEPTS WITH REFERENCE TO PRINT MEDIA
(by Dr. Rakhshinda Perveen.)

The presentation focused on Basic concepts of gender with reference to print media. It was mainly focused on the difference between gender and sex and how gender stereo types are formed and reinforced in our society. It was discussed during the presentation that we as change agents always focus on issues of poverty and education, where as the root of all the problems lies in discrimination and violence prevalent in the society. Causes and consequences of violence were also shared.

One of the participants shared that women are victims of abuse and discrimination. He added that in tribal areas many women have committed suicide due to high rate of depression. The sole reason to this was suppression and violence in the families.

It was asked from one of the participants that what role media can play in order to combat discrimination. It was shared that print media can do awareness raising campaigns and involving civil society and government officials in advocating these issues in the society.

The presentation was followed by a video from a series of 19-episode television program 'Gender Watch' by SACHET in 1999. The series was designed to create awareness about gender issues in Pakistani context. First episode of this Gender Watch series "Gender and Media" was shared with the participants. The program highlighted women portrayal in media, and how media reinforces gender stereotypes. Participants shared that mostly women are portrayed as 'colorful displays' in the newspapers. If a woman commits suicide, there will be a 2/3 column story about it and nothing will be followed up on why she committed suicide and where her body was found. Also if a woman has distinction of any sort is not highlighted.

The first day of the workshop was followed by an inaugural session and dinner, attended by representatives from the UNFPA, MoWD, SACEHT, Media and other civil society members talked about the relevance and need of on gender issue. Dr. Rakhshinda Perveen (Director – AGEHI) presented the welcome note. She gave an overview of the project and appreciated the MoWD and the UNFPA for this initiative. Dr. Salman Asif expressed his views about the project. Later, Dr. France Donnay (Country representative UNFPA) shared her views on how gender, RH and print media are connected together. She shared that as print media can play the role of a change agent in the society, thus training becomes imperative. Mr. Mahmood Salim Mahmood (Secretary of Ministry of Women's Development) offered full support and assistance on behalf of the ministry to work on the issues of gender and Reproductive health. Amna Khawaer from the UNFPA presented vote of thanks at the end of the inaugural session.

Reflections

Participants were asked to reflect on what they liked and learned from the previous day of the training. Many participants shared that they enjoyed the methodology as it was interactive.

Following learning were shared

- Able to understand the difference between gender and sex
- Learned about informed consent and how women are portrayed in print media.
- Find the concept of empathy new and appealing.
- Learned about various forms of violence. :

Participants were then asked to brain storm problems they face in print media journalism. Following problems were shared by the participants:

Problems faced in Print Media journalism

- Cultural norms and values hinder in addressing issues.
- Lack of ways to combat gender stereotyping.
- Lack of communication among journalists.
- Lack of prior education and training.
- Difficult to involve women in journalism.

Imaging Gender in Media
(by Dr. Salman Asif)

This session discussed how gender of men and women are portrayed in the media and it impact on the society. The session started with a description of three components that comprises gender. The facilitator asked the participants to brainstorm characteristics of an ideal society. The responses were justice, equality, rights, merit and opportunities for everyone. He explained that when we talk about availing opportunities, it is also important to keep in account that whether all groups of the society have equal opportunity to avail these 'opportunities'. The marginalized groups in the society which includes women and children are often deprived. That's where the need for equity comes in. He further added that equality will provide equal opportunity to both powerful and powerless groups in the society and only the powerful will be benefitted from that. Whereas, equity will provide more opportunity to the marginalized groups keeping in mind their problems and hindrances. So only an 'affirmative action' can fill this gap.

He further shared that equity for the marginalized has two approaches. Whether we play the welfare role, where we work on the welfare of individuals; or we play the agency role where we act as change agents and identify them in the society as well. He used the term "right based approach". This explains that when we are doing welfare for the marginalized groups, we are actually providing them their rights. We as print media journalist should be the "change agents" and further identify change agents in the community. For this purpose we need to empower these groups so that they can get aware of their right and then fight for them. As change agents it is our duty to empower the marginalized groups.

He then gave a presentation on imaging gender in media. He quoted various portraits of films and banners displayed in our society that depicts women as a 'sexual being' and 'seductive woman' who is at the helpless and just a pleasurable sight for men. On the other hand, men are portrayed as heroes, with weapons, they are the life savors. Both these classifications not only define the role of a man and woman in the society, but also limit their potentials to only these areas.

The facilitator shared examples from newspapers, where cases are reported with ambiguity and often women are portrayed as the culprit. A participant asked that in this scenario how is on the driving seat/ print media or the society? Because we publish and show what the society wants to see. The facilitator explained that a drug provider will also state that there is a need for drug that is why he is supplying it. But we should not treat the society as a "Pavlov's dog", reinforcing the same attributes again and again. We as change agents should only satisfy the need of the readers but also take responsibility of its impact on the whole society and then decide what path we need to follow. In our newspapers the victim becomes the responsible for his/her victimization. This is "contributory negligence" and we as print media journalists are doing that. The session was concluded on the remark we all should realize our responsibility for the words we use, the way we report and what we print. The participants really enjoyed and took keen interest in the presentation.

Group Discussion

DEVELOPING GUIDELINES FOR JOURNALISTS
(Ms. Amena Aly Kamal)

A group discussion was carried out to brainstorm guidelines that print media journalist should follow in order to minimize gender stereotyping in print media. Participants discussed photo journalism and whether victims photograph should be published or not. It was discussed that it a dilemma and for this purpose informed consent must be obtained from the victim. It was also discussed that a journalist we have the power of pen, we should write articles and publish stories to raise awareness in the society. There are risks involved but it is part of our profession. As journalist we can draw line and decide how we can raise our voice against discrimination. Following is the list of guidelines that came out from the discussion.

Ethical Guidelines

- Gender neutral Event reporting
- Gate keeping (editor, photo journalism, news desk)
- Confidentiality
- Highlight justice in articles
- Reporting should be Factual based on research and investigative.
- There should be a call for action in our reporting when required.
- Avoid sensationalism
- Informed consent
- Proactive issue raising
- Keeping in mind Cultural and religious sensitivities.

Second episode of Gender watch, "Gender and Print Media" was shared. This episode focused on portrayal of women in print media and its impact on the society. Participants took keen interest in the video and found it very informative and thought provoking.

Gender issues in print media-context/history
(Dr. Arif Azad)

The session mainly highlighted role of gender in print media in the context of history. The facilitator shared examples from all over the world where different movements and activism tool place to point gender portrayal in print media. He shared that media is a potentially powerful agent of socialization and change. The ways in which women are presented in mass media sends important messages to the society about women's place, role and lives. He further added that objectification, irrelevant sexualisation and victimizing women by labeling silly, weak, passive creates a trend. He shared statistics from all over world clearly showing invisibility of women in media. The facilitator shared theories to elaborate the portrayal of women in media.

With respect to the south Asian region the facilitator shared that women are in traditional roles and passive most of the times. In newspapers, words like fahisha, ashna, ghairat dominate the space. To counter gender stereotypes in media, media advocacy, increasing women representation and trainings for journalists on gender sensitive reporting should be held. A participant inquired that it seems like media in foreign countries is more liberal so how the media portrayal of women is different their. It was discussed that the forms of violence prevail throughout the world; the difference is only in higher prevalence of one form than the other. Also, these countries are still struggling with women representation in media, irrelevant sexualisation and portraying women as objects.

The session was concluded with remarks by the facilitator that media needs to identify trends that tend to degrade women. There is a need to drastically reverse the situation and presenting women as empowered human beings with capabilities and potentials.

Aurton ka safa kaisa hona chahiyay (Requirements of a women's page?)
(Ms. Rubab Ayesha)

The session focused on the requirements of a women's page and what points should be kept in mind while portraying women in media. The facilitator discussed that woman portrayal in media is ? only limited to colorful pictures and sensational stories. The women's page is only printed for the sake of entertainment and to add color in the newspaper. She added that as a journalist it is our responsibility to be aware of the discrimination faced by women in the society. Also to get familiar with issues of violence and how we can avoid promoting those norms and values for women that have hindered their growth and empowerment.

She emphasized on the importance of words and its impact. She added that we only report a small news about a woman missing, but often this news is printed in such a language which implies that she must have had a 'bad character' or 'she ran away with someone'. This news will make people think that women should not be given any sort of freedom or liberty. This intensifies those values and norms in the society that has already shattered women freedom and right to life. She accentuated that as a writer we must read on types of issues and must acquire training. Awareness ?raising on legal and health issues of women and publishing thought provoking stories can only counter gender stereotyping in print media.

Participants were divided in to groups and asked to brainstorm issues they want to bring up and raise awareness on in their relative areas. Participants took keen interest in the groups work and discussed topics in detail. They shared the following topics they look forward to work on in the following year.

Priority Topics

- Violence against women
- Child labor
- Women's health issues
- Involving women in policy making
- Raising awareness on various forms of violence like “walvar”.

Closure and Evaluation

Representatives from the MoWD Javed Iqbal Butt (DG Development) and Riaz Hussain (Deputy Secretary) attended the closing session and distributed certificates among participants. They congratulated SACHET – Pakistan and UNFPA on the successful completion of the workshop and hoped that this process will continue further and will help to mainstream gender in print media in Pakistan. A few participants expressed their views about the workshop. They shared that it was a great learning experience and they would definitely take this word forward in their respective areas. Participants also shared that they would publish a press release about this training in their respective areas to involve more journalists in this process. The training workshop and inaugural sessions were covered by leading newspaper journalists. **See annexure 3 for press coverage of the workshop.**

Evaluation forms were distributed among the participants to fill out. Participants really liked the session and graded most of the content of the workshop as good or excellent. **See annex 4 for evaluations of the workshop.** Following are some comments from the participants.

"Workshop helped us getting aware with issues of violence and discrimination".

"It was a great opportunity for journalists from remote areas to come and learn on the issue of gender. More training should be held in future."

Participants were asked to recommend topics for future training. They shared the following:

Recommended Topics

- Women's Rights
- Violence against women
- Advance gender training
- Involving women in print media

Certificate Distribution

Annexure

List of participants for Media workshop

Sr. #	Name	Location
1.	Mr. Haji Abdul	Quetta (Balochistan)
2.	Mr. Shehzad Lolaby	Muzaffarabad (AJK)
3.	Mr. Sardar Zulfiqar Ali	Muzaffarabad (AJK)
4.	Ms. Nighat Haneef	Gilgit (Northern Areas)
5.	Mr. Kudabaksh Qumi	Turbat (Balochistan)
6.	Ms. Irum Noor	Karachi (Sindh)
7.	Mr. Mohammad Amin Lakho	Hyderabad (Sindh)
8.	Mr. Arshad Nazir	Chakwal (Punjab)
9.	Mr. Gul Hammad Farooqi	Chitral (NWFP)
10.	Ms. Babra Rizvi	Rawalpindi
11.	Ms. Naheed Sherazi	Islamabad
12.	Ms. Anila Mohsin	Islamabad
13.	Ms. Noor Afshan Arshad	Islamabad
14.	Ms. Irum Usman	Mansehra
15.	Mr. Khalid Nadeem	Hunza,Northern Areas

SCHEDULE OF THE TRAINING

Day I: 12th December 2007 (3:00-6:00 PM)
3:00-3:30 PM: Arrival tea and restoration

S#	Activity/session	Time
1.	Recitation	3.30 – 3.35
2.	Introduction of the workshop, participants & facilitators	3.35 – 4.05
3.	Expectations	4.05 – 4.20
4.	Norms setting	4.20 – 4.35
5.	Understanding gender with special reference to print media	4.35 – 6:00

Day 2: 13th December 2007 (9:00- 5:30 PM)

	Activity	Time
1.	Recap / Reflections	9.00 – 9.20
2.	Introduction of the guest speakers	9.20 – 9.40
3.	Imaging Gender in Media (by Salman Asif)	9.40 – 11.00
4.	**Tea break (11:00-11:15 am)**	
5.	Energizer	11.15 – 11.20
6.	Group Discussion Imaging Gender in Media (facilitated by Amena Aly Kamaal, Communications Specialist, UNRCO)	11.20 – 12.15
7.	Gender watch episode: "Gender in Print Media"	12.15 -12.40
8.	Gender issues in print media-context/history (Dr. Arif Azad)	12.40 – 1.30
9.	**Lunch break (1:30-2:30 PM)**	
10.	Energizer	2.30 – 2.35
11.	Session on "*Aurton ka safah kaisa hona chahiya*" (by Ms. Rubab Ayesha)	2.35 – 3.10
12.	Group work (writing a News item on a gender issue) & presentations	3.10 – 3.55
13.	• Wrap up • Evaluation of the work shop • Closing / certificates distribution	3.55 – 5.00
14.	Closing Tea	5.00 – 5.30

THE NEWS INTERNATIONAL
Thursday
December 13, 2007

Of women and media

A two-day workshop based on communicating gender in print media with special reference to women was organised by SACHET, recently in Islamabad

By Sana Akhtar

Pakistani society is experiencing a positive change in values and norms, yet patriarchy and culture of silence are still its characteristics. Reproductive Health (RH) and gender are widely perceived as foreign funded agenda items by the masses, conservative religious groups and critics of NGOs. There is a genuine need to make a serious impact oriented attempt to dismiss these misconceptions. Sensitising print media journalists is a relevant intervention, and would be effective because in Pakistan, even an absolutely illiterate person possess the ability and means to relish the newspapers story.

Ministry of Women Development, Government of Pakistan ,UNFPA (United Nations Population Fund), Pakistan and AGEHI Resource Centre of SACHET Pakistan have undertaken a project to gender sensitise aspiring Pakistani media professionals (print) on issues including Gender Based Violence (GBV) and RH Care with the objective to highlight these issues in the media while maintaining cultural sensitivities.

A series of four one-day workshops at the provincial level; were organised in 2006 and a follow-up two day workshop was organised in Islamabad in December 2007.

Dr.France Donnay with Secretery women Development

The workshop entitled 'Communicating gender in Print media with culturally sensitive reporting on issues like gender-based violence and reproductive health' was designed to give an orientation to the journalists in a limited time about these insightful and complex issues within Pakistani context.

The said workshop was attended by local and mainstream print media journalists. For the first time journalists belonging to AJK and Northern areas were invited ensuring the presence of journalists belonging to remote areas like chitral (NWFP) and Qila Saifullah (Baluchistan).

The resource persons of the workshop were Dr. Arif Azad, Ms. Amna Kamal, Dr. Salman Asif, Ms. Rubab Ayesha and Dr. Rakhshinda Perveen. The formal inaugural session was addressed by Country representative UNFPA Pakistan, Dr. France Donnay and Secretary Ministry of

Dr. Salman Asif was very thought provoking. His presentation was based on actual facts and was like an eye opener to the journalists present there. His approach was simple and practical. He showed selected slides of Pakistani filmi posters, which he collected over a period of time, where women were projected as mere entertainers and vamps - a glimpse of a typical male dominated society. "Over all the media treatment of women is narrow and cinema and videos frequently show stereotyped images of women." He stressed on the need of portraying real and balanced female characters. He also presented slides of few selected ads - beautiful ones but delivering ugly messages. All such advertisements allure people to take loans to buy a car or build a home or to marry off one's daughter ostentatiously. In a nutshell all were based on capitalist consumer society. "This trend is not healthy and through such deceitful ads we society towards more debts," he expressed.

Dr. Arif Azad presented the historical and analytical perspective of women movements in media. According to him, distorted media coverage leads to consolidation of portraying sexist attitude. "The media campaign regarding awareness of women in the media was imitated in the west in '70s by a group of female journalists who began to push for positive description of women in the media," he observed.

Ms. Rubab Ayesha, a senior journalist, shared her experiences with other journalists and gave some useful tips on giving the right kind of coverage to women issues. "We need to be very careful while reporting issues related to crimes. Blatant use of careless language should be avoided while reporting rape cases. We need to sensitise women issues and for that we need male support."

Participants at the workshop

Dr. Rakshinda Perveen in her brief but interesting speech emphasised on the need to develop empathy and sympathy for the victims. This factor can motivate us to do something practical for the betterment of the society."

The workshop employed interactive methods to engage journalists with diverse backgrounds into the complex domain of gender. Two documentaries 'sinf aur media' (Gender and Media) and 'sinf aur print media' (Gender and print media) from SACHET`s award winning series 'Gender Watch' were also screened to provide food for thought on a variety of gender issues in print media. SACHET introduced (rather revived) the Urdu word 'sinf' for English word gender thus defining the term in its Pakistani perspective. Earlier the Urdu word 'Jins' was used interchangeably with gender in media and within development organisations. Now the national channels, newspapers and the NGOs have adopted the Urdu alternative.

The journalists also received a certificate of participation in the closing session by Mr. Javed Iqbal

INTERNATIONAL
THE NEWS

Wednesday
December 12, 2007

OPENING SESSION of national workshop with print media journalists, organised by Ministry of Women Development in collaboration with United Nations Population Fund and AGEHI Resource Centre SACHET, at the Holiday Inn, Civic Centre, Markaz G-6, Islamabad, 6:30 p.m.-7:30 p.m.

Evaluation of the workshop

Sessions	Excellent	Good	Satisfactory	Poor
Understanding gender with special reference to print media (By Dr. Rakhshinda Perveen)	9	6	-	-
Imaging gender in Media (By Dr. Salman Asif).	10	5	-	-
Gender issues in print media-context/history (by Dr. Arif Azad)	2	13	-	-
Session on " *Aurton ka safah kaisa hona chahiya*" (by Ms. Rubab Ayesha)	2	13	-	-
Achievement of workshop objectives	2	13	-	-
Relevance of content to my needs and interests	6	9	-	-
Organization of the workshop	8	7	-	-
Usefulness of group exercises	6	9	-	-
Usefulness of visual aids	6	9	-	-

1. The length of the workshop was:

Too long	Too short	Just right
-	2	13