

Glass Ceiling

Empowerment of Women through Media



wmc

Seminars Report 2007-8

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Seminar Reports:

Role of Media in Women Empowerment

Documentary: A Tool to Strengthen Democracy

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Acknowledgments

The Women Media Center Pakistan wish to thank all those who attended these workshops, panelists for their presentation ensured to proceedings to be informative and interesting, The WMC would also like to extend special gratitude to national Endowment for Democracy, Washington, DC for its financial support. The opinions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the views of NED.

Women Media Center would like to acknowledge the support, cooperation and encouragement for this publication to Mr. Nazir Leghari, editor of Daily Awam.

We are also grateful to Ms. Tehseen Nisar, Ms. Nazeeha Nadir and Mr. Quraysh Khattak for their valuable input.

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Preface



Women's role in the decision making processes of media organizations has always been very limited. Women media professionals are seldom consulted on the issues of how to structure and place a news story. Decision making in media organizations is predominantly men's domain where women have no or very little say. The situation in the society at large is not different from that inside the media organizations. Women are also far behind than men in politics. There are very dim chances for a woman to win nomination of a political party for a public office or win an election. Though there are a few examples of lucky and wealthy women who managed to carve out a place for themselves in politics. The situation in many developed and developing countries is also not very encouraging. Women participation in the decision making processes is still a dream. But it is heartening that the movement for women empowerment is getting momentum across the world.

Media is mirror of the society. But we should not forget that the mirror can only have reflection of those objects and places which are accessible. Same is the media. In media news are predominantly from the urban areas where it has easy access. Very few news stories from small towns and villages get coverage in the mainstream national media. History is witnessed to the fact that how unprofessionally the floods in 2006-2007 in the provinces of Sindh and Baluchistan were covered by the newspapers at that time. Death of dozens of people and destruction of homes and crops was not an important event. Some newspapers did cover the news but only in its Dak Editions (edition sent through post to other cities) and majority of people in the provincial and national capitals remained unaware of the natural calamity that had destroyed several villages in the two provinces.

The Information Technology revolution has made communication easier. The development in IT has also changed the face of media. It has made transmission of news much faster and easier. New Satellite Television and FM Radio Channels, online editions of the newspapers, and internet are giant steps forward. The media expansion has open up new opportunities for women and many young ladies are adopting journalism as career. The Women Media Centre (WMC) Pakistan aims to realize the dreams of this new world by catering to the needs of women media professionals and female university students, aspiring to make a career in journalism. It is indeed very commendable that the Federal Ministry of Information and provincial Information Department of Sindh are now headed by two very dynamic women - Ms. Sherry Rehman and Ms. Shazia Marri. Both the ladies have been a long time supporters of the movement for women empowerment in Pakistan and have attended and addressed events arranged by the Women Media Centre. A former Federal Minister of Information Mr. Javed Jabbar is also very supportive of the WMC's cause. We are thankful to them all for their valuable support.

Fauzia Shaheen
Executive Director
Women Media Centre

Role of Media in Women Empowerment

Arranged by:
Women Media Center (WMC)
Pakistan

Session-I

Panelists: Ms. Fauzia Shaheen, Ms. Uzma Al-Karim, Ms. Zobia Laghari, and Ms. Rabia Baig
Chair: Ms. Shazia Maari, Provincial Minister of Information

Ms. Shahzia Maari, provincial information minister chairing the session, Zobia Leghari, Fauzia Shaheen and Rabiah Baig are also seen in the picture.



May 10, 2008
Sheraton Hotel, Karachi

Welcoming the participants, Ms. Fauzia Shaheen, Executive Director of the Women Media Centre, said that Pakistani women are faced with numerous problems at homes, offices and other workplaces. Quoting a

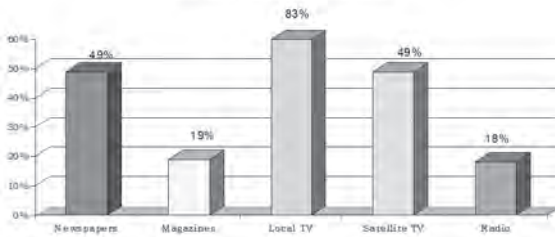
Chinese Proverb, she said that the journey of a thousand miles starts with a single step. We took this first steps in the journey towards empowering women with the establishment of Women Media Centre (WMC) in 2005. Since then the WMC has been struggling to make space for women media professionals in print as well as electronic media. During the last three years the Centre has arranged 12 training workshops

for capacity building of women working in various media organizations and the female university students of journalism and mass communication. She said male journalists have more trainings and learning opportunities while social restrictions deprived their women colleagues of such opportunities. The aim of

the WMC is to facilitate women in journalism by building their professional capacity through training workshops. She said besides working women reporters the Centre has also provided training to 250 students of journalism and mass communication from University of Karachi, Jinnah University

Total media consumption 2007

Total Media Consumption Adults 15Y &+



Courtesy—presentation by Seema Tahir

Prevalent Gender-Patterns

Along with under-representation, also comes the percentage of women in top positions

Very few women journalists have made it to the top ladder

For example, till 2004, no woman had ever been editor of an Urdu newspaper

Only one woman (Dr. Maleeha Lodhi - The Muslim) had been editor of any English daily

The official wire service APP had never had a woman Director General

The state-controlled Pakistan Television Corporation has had one woman reaching the top position of Managing Director and another woman that of Director Programmes

State-owned Pakistan Broadcasting Corporation has never had a woman as Director General

The many, new private television and radio channels have no doubt employed many young women as reporters, producers, directors, anchors and hosts

Today's media woman holds top positions in the various spheres of media and is pivotal in steering the medium

Courtesy—Gender & Media in South-Asia SAFMA—Jun 2004

and Federal Urdu University. She said 35 out of the total 250 trained girls are now working in very good positions in different media organizations. Media industry has expanded tremendously in Pakistan during the last five years, opening new opportunities for women to make a career in journalism. Women have also done well in the field especially in news documentary they have excelled and have won many awards.

Ms. Shaheen said that women empowerment means economic uplift of half of the country population. She said Pakistani society is predominantly a feudal and tribal society where women are considered a commodity and having no rights. She regretted that 37% children in Pakistan, majority of them girls, were out of school today. On the positive side Pakistani women have been given 33% representation in the national and provincial legislatures on reserved seats. The objective of this seminar is to explore that what role media can play in empowering the millions women of Pakistan.

Ms. Uzma Al-Karim, news anchor of Geo TV, said that in Pakistan majority of men and women are denied their rights because of mass illiteracy and poverty especially in the rural areas of the country. She was of the view that there are several hurdles for women journalists but most of the problems are created because of negative attitude of female journalists. When doing our duty, we should remember that we are journalists first and women second. She said that some women journalists are not willing to do field work and prefer to stay in the office. This is not professional attitude and restricts chances of professional growth. Mentioning example of a lady camera woman in Geo TV, she said that the lady has chosen the job and cannot say not filming outside the office. She named some famous reporters who have not only covered the Parliament but also have hosted political shows. The women media professional have not only to fight for their rights but should also be the role model for others. Today girls are queued up to join the banking sector because the chief of the State bank of Pakistan is a

Media Explosion

Expected growth in TV households from 21.9 million in 2002 to 24.6 million in 2008 @ 10% per year
Expected growth in TV penetration from 55.3% in 2002 to 86.9% in 2008

Courtesy–presentation by Seema Tahir

Highest Reach Medium

56% penetration across Pakistan
55 + terrestrial/local satellite channels
74% in urban Pakistan
60% Cable/Satellite penetration across the country

Literacy Gap

Gender gaps still persist in access to education

Males literacy rate increased from 58% in 2001 to 65% in 2005-06

Female literacy increased from 32% to 42% during the same period

woman. Today more women are willing to enter politics than before because Benazir Bhutto has set an example for the generations to come.

Ms. Zobia Laghari, Chief Executive of Step Consultants, told women reporters to have confidence in their abilities and appreciate their own achievements. Commitment to do the best, good communication skills and self-confidence can earn one distinction in his/her field.

Ms. Rabia Baig, Producer of Voice of America (TV), said that girls usually complain of not given much opportunity of professional without a soul searching that how much efforts they have put in their professional development. If you want to do the best no one can stop you from reaching the top. She gave examples of young women who have worked hard and

are now working in good positions in the electronic media. She admitted that there are certain hurdles and restriction

for working women in Pakistan but that can be overcome if you have supportive family. She also pin pointed flaws in curriculum of journalism and mass communication being taught in the universities. She said that the curriculum is more theoretical and gives the students very little skills required for working as a journalist. As a result experience is more valued than a degree in



(L to R) Farah Tanvir, Masooma Zaidi, Dr. Huma Baqai and Dr. Khalida Ghoush

journalism in Pakistan.

In her concluding remarks, the Provincial Minister for Information, Ms. Shazia Marri, said that Pakistani women are working shoulder to shoulder with men for development and betterment of the country. Now no one can deny women their due rights. She said criticized the previous government for putting curbs on the media. The minister assured that the provincial government will encourage women media

professionals and will provide them with jobs in the Information Department.

The session was followed by an interactive question and answers.

SESSION-II

Panelists: Ms. Seema Tahir, Dr. Khalida Ghuas, Ms. Masooma Zaidi of the MQM, and Ms. Farah Tanveer

Chair: Prof. Dr. Huma Baqai

Ms. Seema Tahir, chief executive of TV One Channel, said media has become a powerful tool to mould public opinion. It is policy of my TV channel to highlight women problems and issues. We are trying to change the mindset of men through our programs. If want to empower women we have to change men's mindset first. She regretted that in rural areas women are still bonded by rotten tribal traditions and are given no rights. Men watch TV, listen to Radio and read newspapers and these are the medium through which we



CEO of NewsOne
Ms. Seema Tahir
speaking at the
seminar.

Women & Media-Equity

- Women need to break the glass ceiling, using the mainstream media to highlight more sensitive issues, adding that they also need to learn to use the Internet, which can open whole new vistas of information for them.
- Women need to have leadership positions in order to create a media that is truly free and democratic.
- Media leaders are not just leaders in that industry, but have the power to shape society's attitudes.
- Encouraging gender-sensitive training for media professionals, including media owners and managers, to encourage the creation and use of positive images of women in the media.
- Encouraging the media to presenting women as creative human beings, key actors and contributors to and beneficiaries of the process of development.

Courtesy-presentation by Seema Tahir

Drawbacks of Women in Media

- They face a major problem when covering conflict areas.
- However, women have the advantage of access to female victims of conflict.
- Male colleagues still resist the integration of female colleagues.
- Women themselves tend to prefer to work in magazine sections or on soft features.

should try to change their minds about women rights and status in the society.

Ms. Masooma Zaidi, in charge communication of the MQM Co ordination Committee, said that women cannot progress unless they the realization of their as individuals. She said that women empowerment will remain an elusive dream until women step out of the four walls of their homes and take roles as equal citizens of the country. She said as women we should stop giving preferential treatments to sons over our daughters. The change will come from home.

Dr. Khalida Ghuas said media is changing society but not in a balanced way. The media is full of crime news against women and one wonders is woman empowered in our society or still she a powerless. Our media is promoting stereo types. She said we all need to understand our social values and move forward

without trampling those values. Women empowerment is not in conflict with our traditional values. If one talks politely and in a respectful way that does not mean that one is not empowered. We have to strike a balance between our traditional values and modernity and move ahead, she added.

Ms. Farah Tanveer of the Geo TV shared her professional observations and experiences with the participants.

Prof. Dr. Huma Baqai, in her concluding remarks said that without economic empowerment of women they don't have any significance role in society but media can play a very important role for economic empowerment of women in Pakistan.

The session was followed by questions and answers. At the end Fauzia Shahan thanked the panelists and students and women media professional for their participation in the seminar.

Women in leadership roles

- The first female general was made in 2001
- Pakistan has the first female Muslim fighter jet pilot
- At the local level we have a quota of 33% for women
- In parliament we have a 17% quota for women

Documentary: A Tool to Strengthen Democracy

Arranged by:
Women Media Center (WMC)
Pakistan

With support from:
**National Endowment for
Democracy (NED)**

June 22, 2008
Hotel Avari Tower, Karachi

Session I

Panelists: Mr. Muhammad Khazada,
Producer, Dawn News, Ms. Fauzia Shaheen,
Executive Director, WMC

Chair: Mr. Javed Jabbar, Former Federal
Information Minister

The Women Media Centre (WMC) Pakistan with support from the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) arranged a one day seminar titled "Documentary: A Tool To Strengthen Democracy". A large number of male & female journalists from print and electronic media and students of mass communications attended the seminar.

In her opening remarks Ms. Fauzia Shaheen, Executive Director of the WMC, said that the Centre was striving to build capacity of women media persons by arranging training workshops and seminars. Mentioning some documentaries on the issues of human smuggling, women trafficking, mistreatment

and abuse of migrant women workers, Fauzia said that these documentaries have played a vital role in not only highlighting the heinous practices but also emphasizing need for making effective policy and strategies to eliminate these evil practices.

Mr. Javed Jabbar, renowned documentary maker and head of Banh Beli, an NGO working in interior Sindh, was the guest speaker on the occasion. Speaking on the “Role of Documentaries for Promoting Democratic Norms and Culture,” he appreciated efforts of the WMC for capacity building of women media professionals. Comparing ratio of

men to women globally, he said that for every 106 men there are 100 women. In Pakistan for every 100 men there are only 96 women. He said democracy is a prerequisite for development. Democracy demands citizens’ participation in governance processes and provides equal opportunities to women. He said it is very encouraging that Pakistani women have 35% representation at the



Mr. Mohammad Waseem, director Interactive Resource center, Mr. Javed Jabbar, Former Information Minister, Ms. Fauzia Shaheen, Director WMC, and Mr. Mohammad Khanzada, documentary maker

local government level and about 17% in the national and provincial legislatures. Pakistani women are making places for themselves in every field. Even in documentaries the issues pertaining to the plight of women have been a major focus of attention, Mr. Jabbar said. He said correct facts and figure have wider appeal and documentaries based on truth would have a magnanimous effect on the audience. Adding that since no medium can cover the 360 degree reality, media has not only to be selective but also subtractive and subjective. Truth has to be presented and explained like peeling an onion layer after layer with impartiality. Even if one is not impartial then at least one has to have an independent outlook in terms of covering facts. Mr. Jabbar said that all conventional criteria of Documentary making have become obsolete. Today documentaries are shown in almost all Cinema Houses in the West, which has expended scope of documentary to new

heights. Javed Jabbar explained that in democracy selecting a political party necessitates taking sides while a documentary has to be impartial. A political party member has to follow his/her party rules and manifesto while a documentary viewer is left to think and make an opinion supporting or opposing the issue.

The next presentation was given by Mr. Muhammad Khanzada, a documentary reporter working for Dawn News TV Channel, on "Documentary: A New Source of Expression". He said the whole idea of a documentary is to express one self and making it easier for people to take and accept a documentary in a realistic way and apply it accordingly.

Khanzada mentioned that some of his documentary making work includes kidney selling and plight of street children. The whole idea of a documentary is to compile facts regarding an existent particular reality. It is important that one should know what story one is going to cover. Giving example of his documentary on kidney selling, he said there are people who exploit and there are others who get



exploited because of lack of funds and resources. One should do research on the community and try to find out facts that why some people are selling kidneys and in what way others thrive on this trade. He said there has to be a continuation of facts one after the other explaining the issue. The facts should be arranged in way that portrays reality, he added.

The session was followed by questions and answers. Responding to a question that documentaries deal with reality no matter how ghastly it is and may cause increase in political agitation, he said documentaries reveal the truth. Mentioning example of Michael Moore who made Fahrenheit 9/11, he said Moore's film was an efforts to find answers to several questions like what caused the event. Who was responsible for it? Who suffered and why? And what were the motives behind the attack? Such questions are essentials for all documentaries and must be addressed in a documentary film.

Group photo of the seminar's participants and speakers

Session II

Panelists: Mr. Muhammad Waseem, Director, IRC, Mr. Nusrat Amin, executive producer, Geo Television Network, Mr. Moin Qureshi, producer

Chair: Dr. Huma Baqai, TV anchor and academic

Mr. Nusrat Amin, executive producer of the Geo Television Network, spoke on “Documentary: A Strong Way of Revealing the Undocumented Truth”. He said that documentaries actually deal with recording the occurrence of happenings. Giving an example, he added that if one were to make a

documentary on martial law and democracy then it would have to be dealt differently and in a very tricky way because of the complexity of these two visibly parallel themes and systems of governance in Pakistan. He said that in the earlier times films were technically documentaries. In fact, he added, the history of motion pictures starts with documentary. Amin said documentary is essentially an expansion of news and ideas. In fact it is the idea coming first and news following the idea. He said that there are various kinds of documentaries out of which investigative documentaries are more important and popular than the rest. This is perhaps because of high risk factor attached to making such a documentary. To explore facts and formalize them in the form of a documentary, one needs to have skills and contacts for indentifying the right people.

Apart from this whenever one seeks to explore

facts and formalize them in the form of a documentary one would need to have skills, contacts ranging from identifying right people contacting them and making it possible to implement the task. One has to do extensive research and thinking for gathering correct information and analyzing the facts. Equipment’s which can enhance the visual content of any given documentary is a pre-requisite in making a documentary. A good research work and video editing skills are essential tools that make a documentary most presentable, Mr. Amin said.

Renowned script writer, Moin Qureshi gave a presentation on “Documentary for Promoting Social Changes in Civil Society”. He said the genesis of everything starts from knowing and apparently documentaries open room for vast

In democracy selecting a political party necessitates taking sides while a documentary has to be impartial. A political party member has to follow his/her party rules and manifesto while a documentary viewer is left to think and make an opinion supporting or opposing the issue.

reservoir of knowledge. Every art starts from the basic premise of knowing and then issues are selected in accordance with this criteria. There are social and professional issues that have to be covered in accordance with what one sets forth as an objective of the documentary. For instance when one covers an event like BASANT (kite flying festival) then one has the basic objective in mind that in what way the event is different from other events. But the whole issue is that of showing a different perspective and that needs a lot of professional skills. The long list of objectives for documentary making includes it being a hobby, a business or a social cause. One also has to ascertain the target market, like what country or which culture it covers. Questions that make the premise of documentaries would be how to make it more acceptable for the target market and how to make it more simple and straight. Moin Qureshi said that it is important to address the content and the intensity of the issue which needs to be highlighted and there are certain guidelines for this purpose. Documentaries actually serve the purpose of touching the social pulse and addressed the pressing needs of the society. He also told the audience that during recent times there is a trend of Short Films and Documentary Drama which involve maximum challenge and innovation.

Mohammed Waseem, Director of Interactive Resource Center, spoke on "Documentary: A Tool for Awareness". Highlighting significance of the theatre, he said that the theatre is an alternate medium for expressing facts and realities. The whole point of the theater also revolves around the notion of how to seek a dialogue and engage people. Creativity and confidence are two vitals of this work. He said that the Interactive Resource Center was working very uniquely in the sense that people who were the victims of an eventuality were asked to make groups and perform themselves. The group members performed their roles according to the issues they were facing in real lives. It made the documentary more realistic and near to day to day life of the community.

In her concluding remarks TV anchor and academic, Dr. Huma Baqai stressed the need of extensive research to dig out facts. She said that facts should be arranged like building blocks one after another. Everything in life revolves around sentiments and emotions touching people's lives and a documentary is no exception. Facts analyzed properly and presented in a forceful way would certainly help bring change in the society.



About NED

The National Endowment for Democracy (NED) is a private, nonprofit organization created in 1983 to strengthen democratic institutions around the world through nongovernmental efforts. The Endowment is governed by an independent, nonpartisan board of directors. With its annual congressional appropriation, it makes hundreds of grants each year to support pro democracy groups in Africa, Asia, Central and Eastern Europe, Latin America, the Middle East, and the former Soviet Union.

The Endowment is guided by the belief that freedom is a universal human aspiration that can be realized through the development of democratic institutions, procedures, and values. Democracy cannot be achieved through a single election and need not be based upon the model of the United States or any other particular country. Rather, it evolves according to the needs and traditions of diverse political cultures.



About WMC

The Women Media Centre (WMC) is a non-profit organization and its core function is to carry out research, training and education of media women. The WMC is a unique body in its conception and functions. Diverse factors contributed to establish such body primarily due to feeble democratic structure in Pakistan and insignificant number of women in mainstream media. Another objective of the WMC is to promote new and creative ways of thinking among the Pakistani women so that their valuable suggestions may be included in the country policies. The WMC is currently involved in organizing projects, which promotes women organizations and work of strengthening democracy and other vital societal issues. The Women Media Center's mission is four-dimensional: Firstly, we aim to provide professional environment to women journalist. Secondly, we want to raise awareness of democratic and civic issues from the perspective of Pakistani women journalist. Thirdly, we endeavor to increase women's participation in the mainstream media through training, research and education. In addition, final mission of WMC is to address the entry barriers confronted by women journalist and maintain liaison with media industry to facilitate against women journalist.



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