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Empowerment in the headlines

– how three Indian newspapers report on gender inequality

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Abstract

India is the world's largest democracy, one of the fastest growing economies and an enormous market for newspapers. It is also a country with deeply rooted gender biases where women are highly discriminated and marginalized at all levels of the society. The media is considered an important agent of power. Therefore this study focuses on how and to what extent the three Indian newspapers *Hindustan Times*, *The Hindu* and *Times of India* report on and approach gender inequality and women's empowerment issues. How do journalists look upon their role and the role of the press in the women's empowerment process?

A quantitative content analysis was performed during five weeks (October 18 – November 21, 2010) and 69 articles that highlight gender inequality and women's empowerment were found, collected and coded. This content analysis is combined with a qualitative method. Two informant interviews and six respondent interviews with journalists are included in the study.

The most common main topics of the articles found were Law and amendments, Women's movement, Political power, Reproductive health and Development. Five out of six interviewed reporters believe that their newspapers have a major impact on its readership and all six respondents were of the opinion that their newspapers encourage reporting on these matters. Although they believe that media's overall influence is limited. *The Hindu* and *Times of India* report more on gender inequality and women's empowerment issues than *Hindustan Times* does and some of the respondents express that *The Hindu* promotes development journalism more than the other two newspapers do.

Keywords: Development, Gender inequality, India, Media, Press, Women's empowerment.

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*Not the respondent's real name

¹ For further information on the Minor Field Study scholarship and the project, see Appendix.

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1. Introduction

Media plays an important part in the struggle for women's empowerment. UNESCO acknowledges media's crucial role in the gender equality process. Within the project "Women make the news" UNESCO stresses "the importance of having a balanced and fair representation of both women and men in the media as well as diversity of voices and opinions in order for the media to complete their democratic responsibility".¹

Gender inequalities and discrimination of women is a worldwide phenomenon. In India, gender inequalities are found everywhere in the society. Two thirds of the women suffer domestic violence², more women than men are illiterate, female foetuses are aborted, and there are few women in power positions within politics and the business world. With a population of more than one billion people India is the second largest developing nation in the world. At the same time, it is the largest democracy. The press sets its own agenda and is an important opinion-maker in the Indian society. Since the country is going through an important phase socially as well as economically, it is interesting to see how the Indian press approaches women's empowerment and gender inequalities.

This study examines the reporting on gender inequality and women's empowerment issues in India's three most read English newspapers: *Hindustan Times*, *The Hindu* and *Times of India*. It also studies how journalists' working on these newspapers look upon the role of the press in the women's empowerment process.

1.1 Purpose of study

The scientific aim of this study is to distinguish how, and to what extent, three Indian newspapers report on gender inequality and women's empowerment issues. India is the world's second largest developing country and its biggest democracy. *Times of India*, *Hindustan Times* and *The Hindu* are among the world's biggest newspapers. How they approach these issues are therefore of great importance. Media plays a decisive role as an opinion-maker in a democratic society, and has a crucial function in the gender equality and women's empowerment process.

1.2 Research questions

India is a fast developing country socially as well as economically. Gender inequalities and

¹ UNESCO, *Women make the news 2010*, http://portal.unesco.org/ci/en/ev.php-URL_ID=28336&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html, (Retrieved: 2010-05-13)

discrimination of women is a widespread phenomenon that occurs in all spheres of the Indian society. In this phase that the country finds itself in, it is interesting to see how the press approaches one important developing issue. The research questions for this study are:

1. How and to what extent do *Hindustan Times*, *The Hindu* and *Times of India* report on gender inequality and women's empowerment issues?
2. How do journalists look upon their role and the role of the press in the women's empowerment process?

1.3 About India

With more than 1.1 billion inhabitants, India has the second largest population in the world after China. The country has an area of 3.2 million square meters and is a federal republic that consists of 28 states. India is a secular democracy with a parliamentary form of government. The constitution that came into affect in 1950 guarantees democratic rights such as equality before law and freedom of speech. The president, Pratibha Devisingh Patil, possesses the executive power. But the president's role is considered ceremonial. Instead the substantial executive power is within the Government, led by the Prime Minister. Since 2004 his name is Manmohan Singh. As a Sikh, he is the first non-Hindu to occupy the office. Every Indian state has its own Parliament and the legislative power is divided between the central government and the states. The former has charge of foreign policy, defence, trade and public transport. The latter handles law and order, police, agriculture policy and health care.³

1.3.1 Colonial history

The British colonialists gained total control of India in the 1840s. Landowners had their estates confiscated, and reforms, new laws, new technology and Christianity was forced upon the citizens by the British rule. This caused a riot in 1848. Soldiers in the East Indian army shot their British officers and marched to Delhi. Their mutiny encouraged rebellion by considerable numbers of Indian civilians in a broad belt of northern and central India. The riot became the starting shot for India's struggle for independence that continued for a century. Within the constraints of a colonial order, a modern India was emerging by the end of the 1800s. There was a great import of western technology and a huge railway system was constructed. The railways, the vastly increased capacity of steamships, and the

² United Nations, *Women and violence*, <http://www.un.org/rights/dpi1772e.htm>, (Retrieved: 2010-05-10)

³ Nationalencyklopedin, *Indien*, <http://www.ne.se/indien>, (Retrieved: 2010-11-03)

opening of the Suez Canal linked Indian farmers with world markets to a much greater degree.⁴

1.3.2 Independent India

The India National Congress (INC), which was established after the riot in 1848, became the most important force in the century-long struggle for independence. The freedom activist Mahatma Gandhi's ideas about pacifism and questioning of the legitimacy of the British rule had great impact on the independence movement, and in 1947 the country achieved independence. Another influential figure during the struggle was Jawarahlal Nehru, leader of the INC, who became Prime Minister in 1947. He governed the country until his death in 1964, and the politics were characterised by strong governmental power and dirigisme. His daughter Indira Gandhi became Prime Minister in 1966 and was in turn succeeded by her son Rajiv Ghandi in 1984. In the beginning of the 1990s the Government removed regulations and the economy was transformed towards a liberal market, which rapidly increased the growth of the economy. Many Indians became middle class with living standards close to European, and today India has developed into a regional superpower and is one of the world's 20 largest economies.⁵ But, according to a report carried out by the World Bank in 2005, 42% of the Indians are still living below the poverty line, on less than \$1.25 a day.⁶

The INC and the Nehru-Gandhi family have played a dominant role in Indian politics the last 60 years, but were challenged by other political interests in the 1990s. The Hindu orthodox Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) governed the country between 1998 and 2005 and is now the second biggest party in India.⁷

The Indian society is considered very corrupt. Politicians and civil servants are regularly caught accepting bribes or engaging in other corrupt behaviour, and hot money is a big problem within the electoral system.⁸ Of 178 countries measured, India ranks as the 87th most corrupt country in the Corruption Perception Index 2010. On a scale where 10 is best and 1 is worst, India gets 3.3 points.⁹

1.3.3 Conflicts

When India achieved independence in 1947 the tensions between Hindu and Muslim people were so

⁴ BBC, *British India and the 'Great Rebellion'*, http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/victorians/indian_rebellion_01.shtml, (Retrieved: 2010-11-03)

⁵ Nationalencyklopedin, *Indien*, <http://www.ne.se/indien>, (Retrieved: 2010-11-03)

⁶ World Bank, *Revised Poverty Estimates: What does this mean for India?*, <http://www.worldbank.org.in/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/COUNTRIES/SOUTHASIAEXT/INDIAEXTN/0,,contentMDK:21880804~pagePK:141137~piPK:141127~theSitePK:295584,00.html>, (Retrieved: 2010-11-03)

⁷ Regeringen, *Landfakta: Indien*, <http://www.regeringen.se/content/1/c6/01/39/73/15981139.pdf>, (Retrieved: 2010-11-04)

⁸ Freedom House, *Country report India (2009)*, <http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=22&year=2009&country=7625>, (Retrieved: 2010-11-05)

⁹ Transparency International, *Corruption Perceptions Index 2010 Results*,

severe that the country was divided in two: India and Pakistan. This separation of the sub-continent is referred to as The Partition and remains a traumatic part of both India's and Pakistan's history.¹⁰ 12–14 million people were forced to flee, Hindus from Pakistan and Muslims from India. The relations between the two countries have always been strained, and the situation in the state of Jammu & Kashmir, on the border to Pakistan, is still characterised by armed violence between Hindu and Muslim groups.¹¹

During the last ten years, a series of terror attacks have often been attributed to Islamic extremists with connections to Pakistan. But with some interruptions, there have been continuing peace talks between the countries. A number of terror attacks in Bombay in 2008, in which about 170 people were killed, slowed the peace process for over a year.¹²

1.3.4 Social conditions

The social state in India is characterised by divisions between castes, religious and ethnic groups, as well as between states and the rural and the urban areas of the country. 42% of the people in India lived below the poverty line in 2005.¹³ The caste system is an ancient hierarchy system that divides people into different groups. Traditionally, a person's caste decides what occupation, living standards, rights and obligations one has. Each caste has its place in the hierarchy but aims to raise its status. Today the caste system is formally abolished, and according to the constitution it is prohibited to discriminate individuals because of religion, sex or caste. But still people from the backward castes are subjected, landless, poor and lack education.¹⁴ The class differences are also visible in the use of language. English has been retained as a language of official communication, and is primarily known by the urban middle and upper class. Hindi is the most common language, spoken by 45% of the population. In total, India has about 15 major languages. Among the most common are Bengali, Tamil, Malayalam and Gujarati. There are also around 844 different dialects.¹⁵

1.3.5 Religion

The constitution states that India is a secular republic. But religion plays a significant role in the daily

http://www.transparency.org/policy_research/surveys_indices/cpi/2010/results (Retrieved: 2010-11-05)

¹⁰ Regeringen, *Landfakta: Indien*, <http://www.regeringen.se/content/1/c6/01/39/73/15981139.pdf> (Retrieved: 2010-11-04)

¹¹ Nationalencyklopedin, *Indien*, http://www.ne.se/indien?i_whole_article=true (Retrieved: 2010-11-04)

¹² Ibid. (Retrieved: 2010-11-04)

¹³ World Bank, *Revised Poverty Estimates: What does this mean for India?*,

<http://www.worldbank.org.in/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/COUNTRIES/SOUTHASIAEXT/INDIAEXTN/0,,contentMDK:21880804~pagePK:141137~piPK:141127~theSitePK:295584,00.html> (Retrieved: 2010-11-04)

¹⁴ Nationalencyklopedin, *Indien*, <http://www.ne.se/indien>, (Retrieved: 2010-11-04)

¹⁵ Indian Embassy, *Sweden & Latvia*, http://www.indianembassy.se/index.php?option=com_content&id=54, (Retrieved: 2010-11-04)

life of people, as in the political debate.¹⁶ About 80 % of the Indians are Hindu. The second biggest religion is Islam, with 13% of the population as practising. There are also many minority religions, such as Sikhism, Buddhism, Christianity, Jainism and a lot of tribal religions.¹⁷

Hindu people believe that existence is a cycle of birth, death, and rebirth. The actions of a person contribute to ones karma. The actions, good or bad, will have an equal reaction either immediately or at some point in the future. The soul passes through a cycle of successive lives and its next incarnation is always dependent on how the previous life was lived. This process of reincarnation is called samsara, and the goal of liberation, moksha, is to make us free from this cycle of action and reaction, and from rebirth.¹⁸ Scholars sometimes draw attention to the caste system as a defining feature of Hinduism, but many Hindus view such practices as merely a social phenomenon or a perversion of their original teachings.¹⁹

1.3.6 Business life

Characteristic for the Indian business life is its duplicity. The industry in the country has made great progress, simultaneous with a substantially poverty rate. When the economy was deregulated in the 1990s, the development of productivity rose and foreign investments increased. At present India is one of the world's twelve biggest industrial nations. The service export field is hastily growing. Due to low costs, a young well-educated workforce and improved internet and telecommunications, many developed countries have outsourced their services to India in the last decade.²⁰

2. Gender inequality issues in India

In the end of the 19th century women in India started to shape women's rights organizations around the country. Before the independence from the British in 1947 the two most important issues for organizations were political rights and reform of personal laws. This women's movement, in pre-independent India, is referred to as the first wave of feminism. During this period the activists often blamed religion and tradition for their suffering. When women started to take part in the struggle for freedom it also expanded the women's movement. In post-independence India more and more women's groups appeared and they started to raise issues like violence against women and challenged

¹⁶ Nationalencyklopedin, *Indien*, <http://www.ne.se/indien>, (Retrieved: 2010-11-04)

¹⁷ Regeringen, *Landfakta: Indien*, <http://www.regeringen.se/content/1/c6/01/39/73/15981139.pdf>, (Retrieved: 2010-11-04)

¹⁸ BBC, *Religions*, http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/hinduism/concepts/concepts_1.shtml#section_4, (Retrieved: 2010-11-04)

¹⁹ BBC, *At a glance*, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/hinduism/ataglance/glance.shtml>, (Retrieved: 2010-11-04)

the whole patriarchal system. This happened not only at an activist level but also at an academic level.²¹ Women's suffrage was finally achieved in 1950.²² In the 1970s and 1980s the women's movement grew stronger and they started to question male and female roles, such as the belief that the public sphere is a male domain while the family sphere is the women's area.²³

Today gender inequalities and discrimination of women are reported in all spheres of the Indian society. In the *Global Gender Gap Index 2009*, India positions in the bottom half of the rankings, holding the 114th position out of the 134 countries covered in the index.²⁴ Less resource is spent on girls' education and medical care, 37% of the Indian women participate in household decisions and only 14% have a personal bank account.²⁵

The Indian government has made efforts to highlight gender inequalities in the country. In 2001, the Ministry of Women and Child Development published a policy document, *National Policy for Empowerment of Women*, with guidelines aiming to advocate women's rights. Among major topics such as education and health care, the policy document stresses the significance of mass media when it comes to removing "demeaning, degrading and negative conventional stereotypical images of women and violence against women."²⁶

2.1 Domestic violence

According to a UN report, two-thirds of the married women in India suffer domestic violence.²⁷ Freedom House, an international NGO that publishes an annual report called *Freedom in the world*, states that thousands of Indian women are murdered or forced to commit suicide by their families. These honour killings are an enormous problem in India, in particular in the states of Punjab and Haryana in the Northwest.²⁸ According to International Institute for Population Sciences only 12% of women who

²⁰ Regeringen, *Landfakta: Indien*, <http://www.regeringen.se/content/1/c6/01/39/73/15981139.pdf> (Retrieved: 2010-11-04)

²¹ Delhi University, *Indian Women's Movement*, www.du.ac.in/fileadmin/DU/Academics/course_material/hrge_15.pdf (Retrieved: 2011-01-19)

²² Women's history, *International Woman Suffrage Timeline*, http://womenshistory.about.com/od/suffrage/a/intl_timeline_2.htm (Retrieved: 2011-01-19)

²³ Delhi University, *Indian Women's Movement*, www.du.ac.in/fileadmin/DU/Academics/course_material/hrge_15.pdf (Retrieved: 2011-01-19)

²⁴ The World Economic Forum, *Global Gender Gap Index 2009*, <http://www.weforum.org/pdf/gendergap/IGGR09.pdf>, (Retrieved: 2010-05-23)

²⁵ National Family Health Survey, *National Family Health Survey (NFHS-3)*, http://www.nfhsindia.org/nfhs3_national_report.html, (Retrieved: 2010-11-02)

²⁶ Ministry of Women and Child Development, *National Policy for the Empowerment of Women*, <http://wcd.nic.in/empwomen.htm>, (Retrieved: 2010-05-12)

²⁷ United Nations, *Women and violence*, <http://www.un.org/rights/dpi1772c.htm>, (Retrieved: 2010-05-10)

²⁸ Freedom House, *Map of freedom in the world*, <http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=22&year=2010&country=7840>,

were victims of sexual violence have talked about it or asked for help.²⁹

2.2 Dowry deaths

Dowry, the money, gifts or estate that a woman must bring to her husband when they get married, remains an important Indian tradition. As a consequence, the dowry a woman brings along measures her worth.³⁰ In 2006 a law against dowry-related harassment was instated.³¹ But dowry demands and harassments and killings of newly wed women are still a widespread problem.³²

2.3 Sex-selective abortions and skewed sex ratios

Female children are often neglected, mainly because of traditions such as supplying dowries for daughters and poor inheritance rights for women.³³ Even though prenatal sex-determination tests are prohibited they are used to selectively abort female foetuses. This has led to skewed sex ratios in the whole country.³⁴ The census from 2001 shows that there are 35 million more men than women in India.³⁵

2.4 Women in public spaces

Most Indian women are subject to harassment in public spaces. Due to lack of security women's mobility is highly limited. Therefore women have less access to education, health care, sports, markets, etc.³⁶ According to a survey carried out in Delhi by Cequin (Centre for equity and inclusion) 97% of the respondents were of the opinion that sexual harassment of women is fairly common. 88% of the women felt that “when a woman is harassed in a public space she rarely or never gets any help from the public”.³⁷

(Retrieved: 2010-11-01)

²⁹ National Family Health Survey, *National Family Health Survey (NFHS-3)*, http://www.nfhsindia.org/nfhs3_national_report.html, (Retrieved: 2010-05-23)

³⁰ Joseph, Ammu and Sharma, Kalpana, *Whose news? The Media and Women's Issues* (New Delhi: 2006, 2:nd ed.) p. 90

³¹ Freedom House, *Map of freedom in the world*, <http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=22&year=2010&country=7840>, (Retrieved: 2010-11-01)

³² Joseph and Sharma, 2006, p. 89

³³ Action Aid, *Disappearing daughters*, http://www.actionaid.org.uk/doc_lib/disappearing_daughters_0608.pdf, (Retrieved: 2010-11-02)

³⁴ Freedom House, *Map of freedom in the world*, <http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=22&year=2010&country=7840>, (Retrieved: 2010-11-01)

³⁵ Action Aid, *Disappearing daughters*, http://www.actionaid.org.uk/doc_lib/disappearing_daughters_0608.pdf, (Retrieved: 2010-11-02)

³⁶ Cequin, *Addressing gender based violence in public spaces*, <http://cequinindia.org/AGBV.html>, (Retrieved: 2010-11-01)

³⁷ Cequin, *Perception and Experience of Gendered Violations in Public Places in the City of Delhi*, <http://cequinindia.org/perception%20and%20experience%20of%20gendered%20.html>, (Retrieved: 2010-11-01)

2.5 Education

In 2001 the literacy rate among women was merely 48%,³⁸ which means that almost 245 million Indian women cannot read or write.³⁹ Only 50% of children who start school finish 5th grade and girls are much more likely to dropout than boys are.⁴⁰ In many poor families, both boys and girls must do household chores from an early age, but later on the girls get a much higher amount of responsibility.⁴¹

2.6 Political power

Lok Sabha is the Lower house of the Indian parliament and has 545 members. Since the election in 2009 there are 59 women in Lok Sabha.⁴² The Constitution (81st Amendment) Bill, drafted in 1996 and more popularly known as the Women's Reservation Bill, suggests reserved seats for women in Lok Sabha. This Bill is supported by women's rights groups and politicians from various parties, but is also highly discouraged.⁴³ Since 2007 India has a woman President, Pratibha Devisingh Patil. Before that she was the Governor of Rajasthan.⁴⁴

3. Media in India

3.1 Print media

The first Indian newspapers developed in the 1780s. They were all in English and published for Europeans staying in the major cities, such as traders and administrators. About 40 years later a few Indian-owned newspapers rose up, and became an important component in India's struggle for independence.⁴⁵ The press was a vital platform used by the leaders of the national movement.⁴⁶ In the late 1970s, a revolution in Indian language newspapers started. The print media market grew tremendously, mainly because of increased literacy. In 1975 Prime Minister Indira Gandhi imposed censorship laws on the press, as part of Internal Emergency restrictions. The press was under censorship for the first time in free India. This would have been considered detestable during the independence movement. The Emergency experience became a break with an old benevolent

³⁸ Nationalencyklopedin, *Indien*, <http://www.ne.se.till.biblextern.sh.se/lang/indien/utbildning>, (Retrieved: 2010-11-02)

³⁹ United Nations, *Women in India – How Free? How equal?*,

<http://www.waveindia.org/stage/resources/undp%20women%20in%20india.pdf> (Retrieved: 2010-11-03)

⁴⁰ Nationalencyklopedin, *Indien*, <http://www.ne.se.till.biblextern.sh.se/lang/indien/utbildning>, (Retrieved: 2010-11-02)

⁴¹ United Nations, *Women in India – How Free? How equal?*,

<http://www.waveindia.org/stage/resources/undp%20women%20in%20india.pdf> (Retrieved: 2010-11-03)

⁴² Indian Parliament, *Lok Sabha*, <http://parliamentofindia.nic.in/parl.htm>, (Retrieved: 2010-11-02)

⁴³ United Nations, *Women in India – How Free? How equal?*,

<http://www.waveindia.org/stage/resources/undp%20women%20in%20india.pdf> (Retrieved: 2010-11-03)

⁴⁴ National Informatics Centre, *President of India*, <http://presidentofindia.nic.in/profile.html>, (Retrieved: 2010-11-11)

⁴⁵ Ståhlberg, Per, *Lucknow Daily – How a Hindi Newspaper Constructs Society*, doctoral dissertation, (2002, Stockholm,) p. 48fff

relationship between the press and the Government. This heralded a more vigorous, investigative style of reporting. It also meant the beginning of a greater coverage of human rights issues, marginalised social groups and women's oppression and need for emancipation.⁴⁷ By 1997, almost two-thirds of urban Indians and one-quarter of rural Indians regularly read newspapers.⁴⁸

Today most print outlets are privately owned and provide diverse coverage.⁴⁹ India has the second largest market for newspapers in the world, with 6000 newspapers⁵⁰ and 99 million copies sold daily.⁵¹ *Times of India* is the biggest English newspaper with 13.3 million readers. The second biggest is *Hindustan Times* (6.3 million readers) and the third is *The Hindu* (5.33 million readers). The Indian journalists and media researchers Ammu Joseph and Kampala Sharma point out that the English language press has "a position of special privilege and eminence in India although its audience is substantially smaller than that of the regional language press". This stems from India's colonial past, which made English the language of the ruling class and elite. According to the authors, the situation remains much the same half a century after the country reached independence. The power of the English press is reinforced by the class-composition of the publicists. The powerful group of which its readership consists also runs it.⁵²

Dainik Jagaran is the biggest Hindi newspaper with 54.5 million readers. The second biggest is *Dainik Bhaskar* (33.5 million readers) and *Amar Ujala* is the third biggest (28.6 million readers).⁵³ Between 2004 and 2008 the newspaper industry increased with 12.9% and newspaper publishing is expected to grow 5.6% between 2009 and 2013.⁵⁴

3.2 Television

Television came to India in 1959, with support from UNESCO and the United States, and was initially meant as a tool for education and national development. The broadcasts were limited to the Delhi-area. In 1965 entertainment programs were aired for the first time.⁵⁵ In the 1980's television grew

⁴⁶ Joseph and Sharma, 2006, p. 15

⁴⁷ Joseph and Sharma, 2006, p. 61f

⁴⁸ Jeffrey, Robin, *India's Newspaper Revolution*, (2000, London), s. 1

⁴⁹ Freedom House, *Map of Press Freedom*, <http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=251&year=2009>, (Retrieved: 2010-11-10)

⁵⁰ PricewaterhouseCoopers, *Indian Entertainment and Media Outlook 2009*, PDF-report, <http://www.pwc.com/.../PwC-Indian-Entertainment-and-Media-Outlook-2009.pdf>, (Retrieved: 2010-11-10)

⁵¹ World Association of Newspapers, *World Press Trends 2008*, <http://www.wan-press.org/article17377.html>, (Retrieved: 2010-05-13)

⁵² Joseph and Sharma, 2006, p. 63

⁵³ PricewaterhouseCoopers, *Indian Entertainment and Media Outlook 2009*, PDF-report, <http://www.pwc.com/.../PwC-Indian-Entertainment-and-Media-Outlook-2009.pdf>, (Retrieved: 2010-11-10)

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Asian Mass Communication Research and Information Centre, *Media Asia*, issue 34-35, <http://www.amic.org.sg/?link=11>, (Retrieved: 2010-11-10)

tremendously in India, mostly in metropolitan cities like Delhi, Bombay and Calcutta.⁵⁶ In 2008 there were 450 TV channels in India⁵⁷ and 118 million households had a TV.⁵⁸ The television industry recorded a growth of 17.4% over the period 2004-2008.⁵⁹ Doordarshan is the Indian state-controlled television station. Since Indian television started with a development purpose Doordarshan has many typical public service-attributes, such as a policy that says it should be “a catalyst for social change”. But today Doordarshan is widely criticised and said to be as commercialized as the private channels.⁶⁰ It has also occasionally been accused of supporting the Government while some private television channels have been charged with reflecting the opinions of their owners.⁶¹

3.3 Radio

Radio broadcasting started in India in the early 1920s. In 1927 two privately owned transmitters were set up but these were taken over by the Government in 1930 and they started Indian Broadcasting Service. Later this name was changed to All India Radio (AIR) and since 1957 it is known as Akashvani.⁶² Today Akashvani broadcasts covers an area of 91.79% of the country and offer services in 24 languages and 146 dialects.⁶³ Today there are more than 350 radio stations in India.⁶⁴ Most of the radio stations are privately owned and private FM radio stations are prohibited to broadcast news. The state has a monopoly in AM radio broadcasting.⁶⁵ The radio industry recorded a growth of 36.4% over the period 2004-2008.⁶⁶

3.4 Internet

In 2008 7.1% of the population had internet access. The Government still has the right to censor the internet.⁶⁷ Most people who use the internet are between 15 and 24 years old.⁶⁸ The most common purpose of using the internet is to send e-mails, search for general information and search for

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ PricewaterhouseCoopers, *Indian Entertainment and Media Outlook 2009*, PDF-report, <http://www.pwc.com/.../PwC-Indian-Entertainment-and-Media-Outlook-2009.pdf>, (Retrieved: 2010-11-10)

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Asian Mass Communication Research and Information Centre, *Media Asia*, issue 34-35, <http://www.amic.org.sg/?link=11>, (Retrieved: 2010-11-10)

⁶¹ Freedom House, *Map of Press Freedom*, <http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=251&year=2009>, (Retrieved: 2010-11-10)

⁶² Government of India, *All India Radio*, <http://india.gov.in/knowindia/radio.php>, (Retrieved: 2010-11-26)

⁶³ All India Radio, *All India Radio*, <http://www.allindiaradio.org/about1.html>, (Retrieved: 2010-11-26)

⁶⁴ PricewaterhouseCoopers, *Indian Entertainment and Media Outlook 2009*, PDF-report, <http://www.pwc.com/.../PwC-Indian-Entertainment-and-Media-Outlook-2009.pdf>, (Retrieved: 2010-11-10)

⁶⁵ Freedom House, *Map of Press Freedom*, <http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=251&year=2009>, (Retrieved: 2010-11-10)

⁶⁶ PricewaterhouseCoopers, *Indian Entertainment and Media Outlook 2009*, PDF-report, <http://www.pwc.com/.../PwC-Indian-Entertainment-and-Media-Outlook-2009.pdf>, (Retrieved: 2010-11-10)

⁶⁷ Freedom House, *Map of Press Freedom*, <http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=251&year=2009>, (Retrieved: 2010-11-10)

⁶⁸ PricewaterhouseCoopers, *Indian Entertainment and Media Outlook 2009*, PDF-report, <http://www.pwc.com/.../PwC-Indian-Entertainment-and-Media-Outlook-2009.pdf>, (Retrieved: 2010-11-10)

educational information.⁶⁹ Between 2004 and 2008 online advertisements increased with almost 70%.⁷⁰

3.5 Freedom of the press

The Constitution in India pledges freedom of speech and press freedom and apart from a few exceptions these rights are normally sustained.⁷¹ But in some states journalists have been threatened, imprisoned and even killed.⁷² The most unsafe states are Chhattisgarh, Jammu & Kashmir, Assam and Manipur. In 2009 two reporters were murdered in Assam and an editor was killed in Manipur. In Kashmir members of the press are particularly vulnerable and do not have as good legal protection as reporters in other parts of India. In the summer of 2008 security personnel physically abused 35 journalists and a cameraman was killed.⁷³ Sometimes foreign journalists encounter problems in the country. For example, American, British and French reporters have been denied Indian visas. After reporting on social problems in India two journalists from Sweden could not enter the country.⁷⁴ In 2009 Freedom House ranked India 76th out of 195 countries in their *Freedom of the Press* report and as “partly free”⁷⁵ while Reporters Sans Frontières ranked the country at position 105 out of 175 countries in their *Press Freedom Index 2009*.⁷⁶

4. Theoretical framework

4.1 Gender and media

Gender inequality issues are common topics within media research. A lot of research has been carried out on the frequency of women in news reporting as well as portrayal and stereotyping of women in the media. Women's representation in the newsroom, working conditions for women journalists and gender differences in areas of coverage has also been examined.⁷⁷

The Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP) is a worldwide survey on the representation of women in the world's media that is carried out every five years. It is a one-day study executed by volunteers from women's rights organisations, media associations and academies in 76 countries, analysing and

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Freedom House, *Map of Press Freedom*, <http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=251&year=2009>, (Retrieved: 2010-11-10)

⁷² Reporters Sans Frontières, *India*, <http://en.rsf.org/report-india,63.html>, (Retrieved: 2010-11-10)

⁷³ Freedom House, *Map of Press Freedom*, <http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=251&year=2009>, (Retrieved: 2010-11-10)

⁷⁴ Reporters Sans Frontières, *India*, <http://en.rsf.org/report-india,63.html>, (Retrieved: 2010-11-10)

⁷⁵ Freedom House, *Map of Press Freedom*, <http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=251&year=2009>, (Retrieved: 2010-11-10)

⁷⁶ Reporters Sans Frontières, *India*, <http://en.rsf.org/report-india,63.html>, (Retrieved: 2010-11-10)

⁷⁷ Steiner, Linda, “*Gender in the Newsroom*”, in *Handbook of Journalism Studies*, ed. Thomas Hanitzsch and Karin Wahl-Jorgensen (e-book, New York and London, 2009), p. 123, 126

comparing data from print media, television and radio. The result of the 2010 *GMMP*-project shows that women constituted only 24% of the news subjects in the world news, people who were heard or read about in the news. The figure for India was 22%.⁷⁸

Research has also been done on media's reporting on gender inequality issues. Gender and media researcher Margaret Gallagher has concluded, "Issues that are particularly central in women's lives come low down in the scale of what is regarded newsworthy. At best, they may become 'news' in coverage around a particular event such as Women's Day".⁷⁹ Gallagher argues that the media content still manifests a "masculine vision of the world" and that this will not change simply by increasing the number of women journalists or fighting sexism in advertising. Women's rights need to be a natural part both of the mass media and the society.⁸⁰

When the media frequently highlight certain issues, a major part of the audience believes that those issues are more important than others. This process of stressing certain issues in the mass media is called agenda setting theory. If the mass media keep reporting on one specific issue, eventually the public will think that this issue is essential.⁸¹ Studies that favour this theory can be used to further argue the important role of the media as an opinion-maker. If gender inequalities are illuminated in media's reporting, this will have an impact on the audience, and can change people's mindsets on these matters.

In this study, the respondents' answers can be analysed in the light of this theory. To see how the journalists think that they and their newspapers influence the readership is one of the focal points of this research. Previous research has stressed the media's role as an agent of power. This study focus on how the working journalists look at their role in the development process. If the respondents consider themselves to be in an agenda setting position, it is even more relevant to see how they look at their responsibility to report on gender inequalities and women's empowerment issues.

4.2 Development journalism

This study aims to place gender inequality and women's empowerment issues in a development context. This perspective is found in the practice of development journalism that emerged in the late 1960s in

⁷⁸ Global Media Monitoring Project 2010 National Report, *Who makes the news?*
<http://www.waveindia.org/resources/mediakit/Indiagmmpreport.pdf> (Retrieved: 2010-12-18)

⁷⁹ Gallagher, Margaret, *Women, Media and Democratic Society*,
<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/egm/media2002/reports/BP1Gallagher.PDF>, (Retrieved: 2010-05-23)

⁸⁰ Ibid, (Retrieved: 2010-11-18)

⁸¹ Coleman, Renita, McCombs, Maxwell, Shaw, Donald and Weaver, David, "Agenda Setting" in *Handbook of Journalism Studies*, ed. Thomas Hanitzsch and Karin Wahl-Jorgensen (e-book, New York and London, 2009), p.147

Asia. The idea of development journalism was to use journalism as an effective tool in the process of "facilitating and fostering national development", particularly in newly independent countries.⁸²

According to the researcher Floyd J. McKay the main function of development journalism in the last decades has been to empower the people and to engage them in various processes of development.⁸³

Development journalism has been practised in India since the 1960s and is an extremely respected and promoted type of journalism in the country today.⁸⁴ One key component of this kind of journalism is to focus not on day-to-day news but on long-term development processes. In *The handbook of journalism studies*, Xu Xiaoge states "The whole point of development journalism is to engage and empower the people and to involve them actively in the process of economic, cultural and political development."⁸⁵ The focus is on the ordinary people instead of the elite. The term "ordinary people" refers to farmers, women, children, the elderly, the less fortunate, etc. It is these people who development journalists care most about.

Issues of women's empowerment are an important part of the field of development journalism. What the respondents in this study have to say about their reporting on gender inequalities and women's empowerment reveals how they look upon their role, responsibility and possibility to influence the public opinion and policy makers in the development process.

A concept that is closely linked to development journalism is advocacy journalism. Both are also relevant for the in-depth-interviews in this study. Originally this term refers to journalists as representatives for the weak groups in society that are denied "powerful spokesmen". The journalists' mission is then to support perspectives that are typically under or misrepresented in the media.⁸⁶ Advocacy journalism promotes social change, but it can face obstacles in the newsroom because it is not commercial enough. In "Advocacy journalism in a global context", Silvio Waisbord writes, "Aside from editorial politics, advocacy-journalists frequently confront the disinterest of their news organisations. They have meagre resources and space for their work. Also, they often clash against editors who are reluctant to publish "depressing" and "soft" stories that are "not relevant to audiences," and "show interest only in sensationalistic coverage of social issues [...]"⁸⁷

If women and women's empowerment issues are seen as under-represented, they are to be covered by

⁸² Xiaoge, Xu, "Development Journalism", in *Handbook of Journalism Studies*, ed. Thomas Hanitzsch and Karin Wahl-Jorgensen (e-book, New York and London, 2009), p. 357

⁸³ Xiaoge, 2009, p.364

⁸⁴ Waisbord, Silvio, "Advocacy Journalism in a global context", in *Handbook of Journalism Studies*, ed. Thomas Hanitzsch and Karin Wahl-Jorgensen (e-book, New York and London, 2009), p. 379

⁸⁵ Xiaoge, 2009, p. 362

⁸⁶ Waisbord, 2009, p. 371

⁸⁷ Ibid., p. 380

advocacy journalists. Perhaps this journalistic practice can be traced in this study's respondents' understanding of their own professional roles. If this is the case it gives an interesting perspective of the journalists' function in the women's empowerment process.

4.3 Whose news?

The Indian journalists Kampala Sharma and Ammu Joseph carried out a study on how the Indian press reported on five gender issues between 1979 and 1988. They examined the coverage given by a cross-section of newspapers and magazines to five women's issues that attracted media attention over a period of ten years.⁸⁸ In 2006, the authors published a revised edition of the study, which looked at how these same issues were addressed by the print media in the first years of the new millennium. The issues were dowry deaths, rape, sex determination tests, sati⁸⁹ (widow-burning) and the Shah Bano controversy.

The reporting on each issue was studied over a period of three to four months, when media attention was at its height. Both English and Indian language newspapers were included in the study. Among the English newspapers were *Hindustan Times*, *The Hindu* and *Times of India*.⁹⁰ The vast study comprised both a quantitative and qualitative analysis of the news items. Among other things the authors looked at to what extent women's perspectives were promoted in the articles and how women were portrayed in the news.⁹¹

The issue that received most coverage was sati. This ancient practice has been outlawed in India since 1829. Though it is very rare, incidents with widows dying on their husbands' funeral pyres still occur. This ritual was highlighted when an 18-year-old widow, Roop Kanwar, died a macabre death on her deceased husband's pyre in 1987. An action that seemed to be a socially sanctioned murder or society-induced suicide. This tragedy made its way to the front pages of all the newspapers in the study. Another sati-case in 2005 resulted in a brief spurt in media coverage of sati-related issues.

After sati, the Shah Bano controversy was the issue that merited most coverage. In 1985 the divorced Muslim woman Shah Bano was entitled maintenance from her ex-husband by the court. This eventually led to the Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Divorce) Bill.⁹² The Shah Bano controversy came into national focus because of the issue's religious and political dimensions and the question of having

⁸⁸ Joseph and Sharma, 2006, p. 12

⁸⁹ Ibid., p. 69 The practice through which widows are voluntarily, or forcibly, burned alive on their husband's funeral pyre.

⁹⁰ They were chosen due to their leading positions in different regions of India. *Hindustan Times* in the North, *The Hindu* in the South and *Times of India* in the West.

⁹¹ Joseph and Sharma, 2006, p. 70

different civil codes for different religions.⁹³

Issues of dowry deaths and rape were given almost equal coverage. In the late 1970s, a rise in the cases of dowry deaths came to public notice in India. A visible change in the reporting on dowry issues could be seen in the following years. From being two line items under crime briefs in the newspapers, the issue merited in-depth articles towards the middle of the 1980s. Joseph and Sharma concluded that women's groups campaigning against these harassments and violence against women resulted in an increased coverage of these incidents. This also applies to rape issues.

In their earliest study, Joseph and Sharma found that the question of sex selection and female foeticide received the least attention among the five issues examined. They claimed that this was because sex selection is not an event, but the consequence of a process comprising various elements of gender inequality: women's status in general, women's rights to inherit property, etc.⁹⁴ The follow-up of the study showed that the print media took up the issue to a greater extent in this past decade. According to the authors, this was because of a census carried out in 2001 that showed a declining sex ratio in the country.

Joseph and Sharma found that events and issues involving politics, economics, law, and religion -in that order - were those topics considered most newsworthy. The Shah Bano controversy had such an impact on the press mainly because it was viewed as a legal, religious and political question rather than as a women's issue.⁹⁵

The authors point out that events rather than processes are considered newsworthy. They mean that this is why the Shah Bano controversy and the sati issue earned much wider coverage than any of the other five issues in the study.⁹⁶ Issues concerning women's work, health, position in society and experiences within the family are less covered. Joseph and Sharma state that when such issues became news, it was because they were referred to by traditional sources such as the Government, the police, the Parliament, courts, international organisations, etc.⁹⁷

According to Ammu Joseph and Kalpana Sharma the mass media is today playing the role once played by for example family and religion, not only when it comes to information but it is also influencing norms and values. Joseph and Sharma argue that the media is a “powerful force” and that it has a

⁹² Ibid., p. 124

⁹³ Ibid., p. 135

⁹⁴ Ibid., p. 139

⁹⁵ Ibid., p. 66

⁹⁶ Ibid., p. 74

⁹⁷ Ibid., p. 66

massive impact on people's thoughts and actions. What is, and what is not, covered by media is therefore of major significance.⁹⁸

4.4 Women in Print

In the study *Women in Print – the change over the last half century in reporting on women and gender issues by Indian newspapers* the media researcher, consultant and former journalist Shree Venkatram highlights media's potential as a contributor in the gender equality process. Venkatram stresses that media has “enormous power to change and shape attitudes and to influence socialisation processes”.⁹⁹ The purpose of the study *Women in Print*, performed in 2003 in co-operation with UNIFEM (part of UN Women), was to see how the reporting on women in Indian Hindi and English newspapers changed over 50 years.¹⁰⁰ The study was conducted on a random selection of 84 national and region-specific newspapers over three time periods: the early Fifties, the mid-Seventies and 2000-2001. Both news material and features were included in the study.¹⁰¹

The result shows that women make Page One news mostly as victims, for example when murder or rape is committed. Women politicians are the second largest category.¹⁰² Venkatram also concludes that news items about crime on women are often very short and seldom discussed or followed up. She also points out that "dowry is not an issue for the English print media".¹⁰³ The study shows that women are rare on business and edit pages¹⁰⁴ and that none of the papers carried a single article on women's health.¹⁰⁵

Out of the stories appearing on the front pages in 2000-2001, 6.9% mentioned women.¹⁰⁶ Venkatram writes, "Page One in Indian newspapers is still a male preserve. Women make front-page news mostly as victims. It is usually when some drastic crime, like murder and rape is done to them, that they are put on Page 1."¹⁰⁷

⁹⁸ Joseph and Sharma, 2006, p. 47

⁹⁹ Venkatram, Shree *Women in print*, (New Delhi, 2003), p. V

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 2003, p. 2

¹⁰¹ Ibid., p. 5

¹⁰² Ibid., p. 20

¹⁰³ Ibid., p. 60

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., p. 61

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., p. 63

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., p. 19

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., p. 59

4.5 Our perspective

A look at the previous research shows that violence, such as dowry, rape and sati has been the focal point of content analysis in the reporting on gender inequalities and women's empowerment.

Venkatram read up on what extent the media reports on issues of violence against women.¹⁰⁸

But there is a void to fill within the research here. As far as we can see, there has not been a study on the extent of media's reporting on gender inequality issues, which stretches over various categories of content. Joseph's and Sharma's study ranged over five issues. Since gender inequalities are a problem within all spheres of society, we find it important to study the media reporting on these issues from a broader perspective.

Therefore, several categories of content are added to this research. This study looks at how frequently gender inequality issues are highlighted in other categories of content, such as education, political power and reproductive health. Among others, these issues are crucial in the women's empowerment process, and it is interesting to see what topics of content that benefit most coverage in the print media.

Joseph and Sharma state that events rather than processes become news, which also counts for gender issues. This is an interesting remark, which raises the question of what events that merits coverage as well as what processes that become invisible in the reporting on gender inequality issues. This study comprises of 22 categories of content, in which both news of events and processes can be included.

Quantitative content analysis and qualitative text analysis have dominated the previous research on gender inequality reporting, at least in India. *Whose news?* and *Women in print* are the main starting points of this study. They focus solely on newspaper content. To add a new dimension to this research, we have chosen to combine the quantitative content analysis with the method of in-depth-interviews. The purpose of this approach is to gain a more profound understanding of the reporting on gender inequality issues. This study will contribute with interesting perspectives on these issues and hopefully become a new piece in the theory puzzle.

¹⁰⁸ Venkatram , 2003, p. 37

5. Methodology

5.1 Definitions

Common conceptions used in this study need to be defined.

Print media- All media content that is printed. Newspapers, magazines and periodicals.

Press- Daily newspapers.

Media- Media as a whole: print media, television, radio, and webpages with media content.

Story, News item- Journalistic news articles in the print media.

Article - Refers to news items, editorials and opinion material in print media.

5.2 Limitations

Because of media's important role as an opinion-maker and assumed impact on its audience, it would have been interesting to include the readership in the research. A study of how the readers look upon the newspapers' reporting on gender inequality issues would be an illustrative complement to the content analysis and the respondent interviews. Though with such a broad focus the research would be difficult to manage. Such a survey would also have been somewhat complicated and time-consuming. On account of the measure of this study, a readership survey was unfeasible.

Since Hindi newspapers have much wider range than the English press in India, naturally it would have been favourable to include them in this kind of study. Due to our limited knowledge of the Hindi language this was not possible. From a development perspective a study of the Hindi press could be better since their readership is not only wider than the English press' but also more varied, for example when it comes to social classes. But since the readership of the English newspapers includes politicians and other influential people in power positions this perspective is also relevant and valuable.

One could argue that editors and editors-in-chiefs should be included in the qualitative part of the study. They occupy the power positions within the news factories, and have the final judgement when it comes to if a story that highlights gender inequalities is published or not. The questionnaire though includes questions on how the journalists experience the editors' approach to these issues, as well as the reporting in the newspaper as a whole. Within the interviews, there is a discussion about how power structure affects the reporting on gender inequality issues. We considered in-depth-interviews with the journalists who deal with these issues in their reporting the most interesting focal point of the study.

5.3 Quantitative content analysis

The quantitative content analysis is an adequate tool when the purpose is to look at the occurrence of different categories of content within a certain material. The variables for this study have been chosen to be able to answer the questions of frequency and space, which is the core of quantitative content analysis. These conceptions are central because they term the significance given to the studied variables.¹⁰⁹

The variables have been divided into three levels of analysis: range, content and actors. The variables in the range section map what type of text that is being analysed, what the material source is, the extent of the text and if it appears on the first page.

The content variables demonstrate what the main topic of each news item is, for example Labour market or Health care. To be able to pick up as many news topics as possible in the analysis, we designed 22 content categories. Every article is placed in one category only. For the result to be as specific and exhaustive as possible, it was relevant to have as many as 22 categories. We designed the categories looking at the major social and economic issues in India today. Essential for women's emancipation worldwide is for example access, to health care, education and the labour market. Laws to prevent discrimination and violence against women are other fundamental conditions for women's empowerment. India is also troubled by sex selective abortions, skewed sex ratios and discrimination of women because of caste. These 22 designed categories are meant to grasp all possible gender inequality issues.

The variables at the actors' level depict who is quoted in the text, for example a Government representative or a private person. The purpose of this variables is to see to what extent people from different parts and positions of society are directly included in the reporting on gender inequality issues.

The frequency of these different variables should give us a good picture of how prominent gender inequality issues are in the three newspapers that are the objects of this study. Through the quantitative content analysis patterns can be traced in the news items-material, which will benefit both the descriptive and comparative part of the analysis.

Information on the investigated newspapers is presented in *Results and analysis*.

¹⁰⁹ Esaiasson, Peter, Gilljam, Mikael, Oscarsson, Henrik and Wängnerud, Lena, *Metodpraktikan – konsten att studera samhälle, individ och marknad* (Stockholm, 2004, 2nd ed.) p. 223

5.4 In-depth-interviews

The qualitative research interview seeks to understand the world through investigations of people's point of view and develop meanings from their experiences.¹¹⁰ Interviews are particularly useful when studying people's descriptions of their experiences and self-concept, and clarify their own perspective on their life world.¹¹¹ Qualitative methods refer to "what kind" while quantitative methods refers to "how much of a given type".¹¹²

To get a deeper understanding of the present media landscape in India two informant interviews were conducted. These were held with Shree Venkatram, a media researcher, consultant and former journalist and T.K. Rajalakshmi, journalist at the *Frontline* magazine. Seven respondent interviews were conducted and six are included in the study. The seventh interview, with Richi Verma at *Times of India*, was conducted before we decided to only include two respondents from each newspaper in the study. Two interviews with reporters at *Hindustan Times* are included, two with reporters at *The Hindu* and two with reporters at *Times of India*. Four women and two men respondents are included in the study. To get a broader and more varied perspective both general reporters and reporters with women's issues as their field of work were interviewed. The questions asked focused on the personal views of the reporters as well as the newspapers' general approach towards gender inequality and women's empowerment issues. A rough guide for the interviews was made to ensure that the same general information was collected from each respondent.

Three different perspectives are treated in the interviews – the media's, the newspapers' and the respondents' personal views. It is relevant to examine if the journalists' personal opinions are in contradiction to the newspapers'. The questions were elaborated with the theory and previous research in mind. For example, the question "How much influence do you think your newspaper has on its audience?" was asked in relation to the agenda setting theory. Do the reporters see themselves as agenda setters? The questions "What topics are most important to cover when reporting on gender inequalities?" and "Is there any topic you think isn't covered enough?" were asked to compare the reporters' beliefs with the result of the quantitative study. Do they report predominantly on the issues they think is most important? See Appendix for Interview guide. Information on the respondents is presented in *Results and analysis*.

¹¹⁰ Kvale, Steinar and Brinkmann, Svend, *Den kvalitative forskningsinterview* (Lund, 2009), p. 17

¹¹¹ Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009, p. 133

¹¹² Ibid.

5.5 Validity and reliability

A problem when performing this research is to distinguish what articles that actually highlight gender inequality issues. The quantitative method selected has a qualitative dimension, which could bring inconsistencies to the result. The code instruction provides the researcher with a detailed explanation on what is required for an article to be counted in the quantitative analysis. Still, there is a problem with validity if researchers are dissentient if gender inequalities are highlighted in an article or not. Not using keywords such as "gender inequalities" and "women's empowerment" to determine what articles to include in the study makes the research process more complicated. But these conceptions are not necessarily used in news items that deal with gender inequality issues. Therefore the validity of the study would not benefit from using keywords. To be able to include the reporting on gender inequality issues across various categories of news, the code instruction cannot be stricter than it is.

Lack of reliability is often caused by careless mistakes in the data gathering process.¹¹³ To eliminate the risk of missing articles when operating the quantitative research both of us read the issues of every newspaper during the five weeks of gathering material.

5.6 Ethical considerations

In *The qualitative research interview (Den kvalitativa forskningsintervjun)* Steinar Kvale and Svend Brinkmann say that there are certain questions that researchers should ask themselves before conducting an interview. One of these questions is "How important is it that the interviewees remain anonymous?". Only one of our respondents requested to remain anonymous.¹¹⁴ We had not discussed the possibility of an interviewee asking for anonymity and would have preferred if all respondents participated with their real names, to keep the project as open as possible. Since the specific interview with the anonymous respondent was regarded important and valuable for the study, we nevertheless decided to include it. Kvale and Brinkmann also discuss the matter of so-called "informed consent". This means that the interviewee should receive information on the purpose of the interview as well as the research project as a whole.¹¹⁵ All of the in-depth-interviews included in this study were started with information on the project and we answered the respondent's possible questions.

¹¹³ Esaiasson, Gilljam, Oscarsson and Wängnerud, 2004, p. 71

¹¹⁴ Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009, p. 85

¹¹⁵ Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009, p. 87

5.7 Research process

This quantitative content analysis was conducted from October 18 to November 21, 2010. The newspapers were read each day by both of us, and the coding of the articles was done separately. After coding the texts, we compared the figures to see if our results matched up. Sometimes our opinions of what was the main topic of an article diverged, and we had to discuss what category to place the article in.

The interviews were conducted with the two of us present. Though they were recorded we felt it was important that both of us got a notion of the respondents' answers, which also made the transcribing easier. With two interviewers being observant, the risk to miss out on any important follow-up question decreased.

Five of the interviews took place at the newspapers' offices and one in a café in Delhi. The time spent on each interview was between thirty minutes and one hour.

6. Results and analysis

6.1 The investigated newspapers

6.1.1 Hindustan Times

Hindustan Times was founded in 1924 and is owned by HT Media. In addition to *Hindustan Times* the group also consists of the Hindi newspaper *Hindustan*, the national business newspaper *Mint*, a radio channel and a number of websites, such as the social networking site *Desimartini.com*.¹¹⁶ *Hindustan Times* has a circulation of about 1.7 million copies.¹¹⁷

6.1.2 The Hindu

The Hindu started in 1878 as a weekly and became a daily newspaper in 1889. *The Hindu Group* also publishes a business daily called *The Hindu Business Line*, the fortnightly magazine *Frontline* and the weekly sports magazine *Sportstar*. *The Hindu* has its headquarter in Chennai and most of its readership in South India. It has a circulation of about 1.4 million copies.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁶ Hindustan Times, *About us*, <http://www.htmedia.in/Section.aspx?Page=Page-HTMedia-AboutUs>, (Retrieved: 2010-11-27)

¹¹⁷ Hindustan Times, *Print English*, http://www.htmedia.in/brandSupplement_hindustan.aspx?Page=Page-HTMedia-HTSupplements, (Retrieved: 2010-11-27)

¹¹⁸ The Hindu, *About us*, <http://www.thehindu.com/navigation/?type=static&page=aboutus>, (Retrieved: 2010-11-27)

6.1.3 Times of India

Times of India is the world's largest broadsheet English daily. It has a circulation of about 2.7 million copies. *Times of India* was founded in 1838 and is owned by *The Times Group*, which is the leading media conglomerate of the country with 48 dailies and periodicals and a total readership of more than 41 million.¹¹⁹

6.2 The quantitative analysis

6.2.1 Range

The research was performed during five weeks, from October 18 to November 21, 2010. In total, 69 articles that highlight gender inequality or women's empowerment issues were found. *The Hindu* carried out 28 articles, *Times of India* 26 and *Hindustan Times* 15. See figure 6.2.1.a.

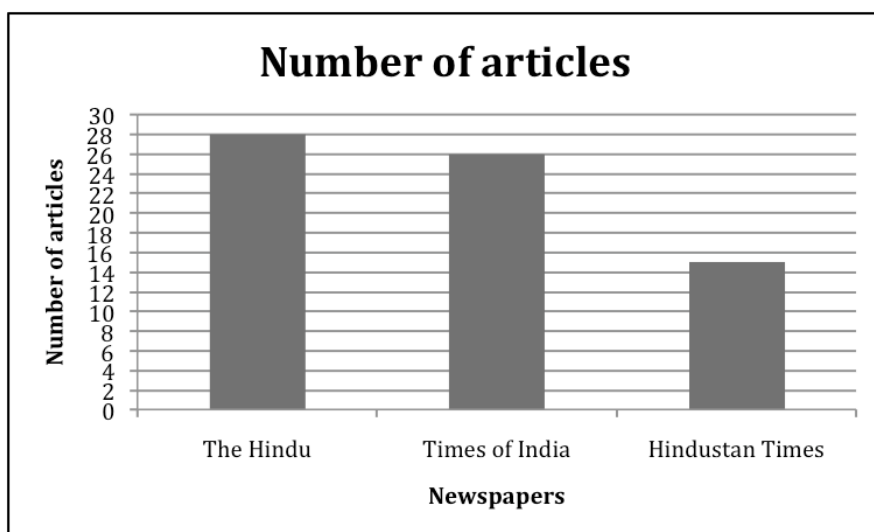


FIGURE 6.2.1.a.: Number of articles found in the quantitative content analysis.

The most common extent of texts was Medium. 35 articles were Medium-length, 25 were Long and only 9 articles were Short. Articles highlighting gender inequalities and women's empowerment seldom made it to the front-page. 8 articles appeared partly on the front-page and 4 articles were shown on first page as a whole.

An overwhelming majority of the texts were National news items. 51 National news articles were

¹¹⁹ The Times Group, *About Times Group*, <http://www.timm.indiatimes.com/timm/aboutus.jsp>, (Retrieved: 2010-11-27)

found, compared to only 9 International news articles. As a comparison, editorials and opinion material were few: 6 Editorials and 3 Opinion articles appeared. See figure 6.2.1.b. The newspapers themselves produced an overwhelming part of the texts. 52 articles were written by reporters at the newspapers, and 6 articles had news agencies as their source.

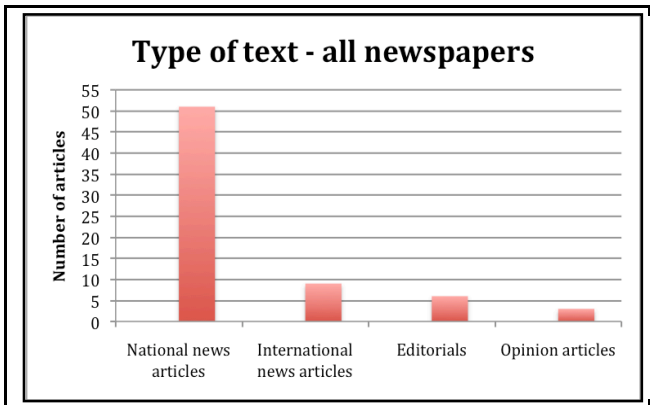


FIGURE 6.2.1.b.: Type of texts found in the quantitative content analysis.

6.2.2 Actors

Authority is the most common actor. In the 69 articles found it appears 37 times and in 26 articles. The second most frequent actor is Expert. It appears 22 times and in 12 articles. NGO is the third most common actor and appears 16 times and in 12 articles. See figure 6.2.2.a. 16 articles do not contain any actor at all.

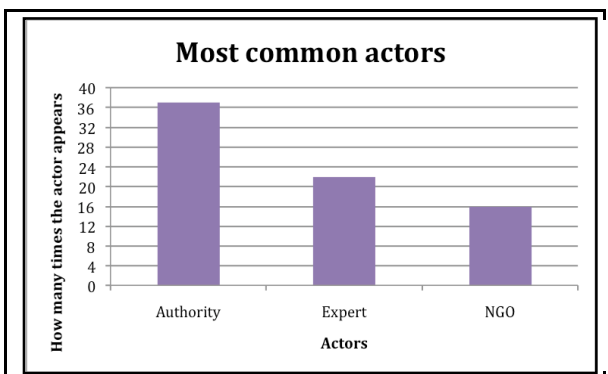


FIGURE 6.2.2.a: How many times the 3 most common actors appears.

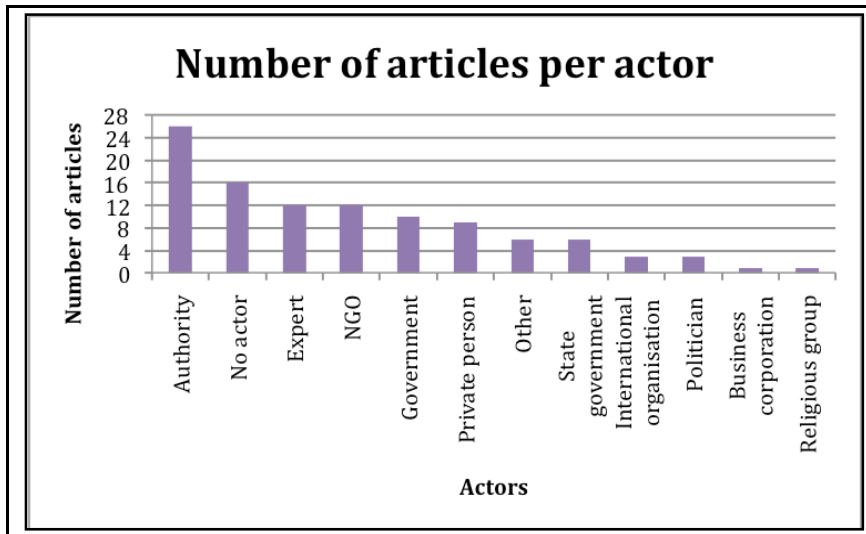


FIGURE 6.2.2.b: Number of articles each actor appears in.

In the largest category, Law and amendments (14 articles), Authority and Expert are the most common actors. They both appear 8 times in the 14 articles found. In the second largest category, Women’s movement, Authority and NGO are the most common actors. The actor Authority appears 7 times in the 10 articles found in this category. NGO also appears 7 times. In the third largest category, Political power (7 articles), Politician (10) and State government (5) and Expert (5) are the most common actors.

6.2.3 Content

The five most frequent categories were: Law and Amendments, Women’s movement, Political power, Reproductive health and Development. The most frequent category is Law and Amendments, with 14 articles. See figure 6.2.3. *Hindustan Times* and *Times of India* both carried 5 articles on the topic and *The Hindu* carried 4 articles. Women's Movement is the second largest category (10 articles). 7 of these were published in *The Hindu*, 2 in *Hindustan Times* and merely 1 in *Times of India*. The third largest category is Political power. This category is most frequent in *The Hindu* (5 articles) while *Times of India* published 2 texts in this category. No articles on this topic were found in *Hindustan Times*.

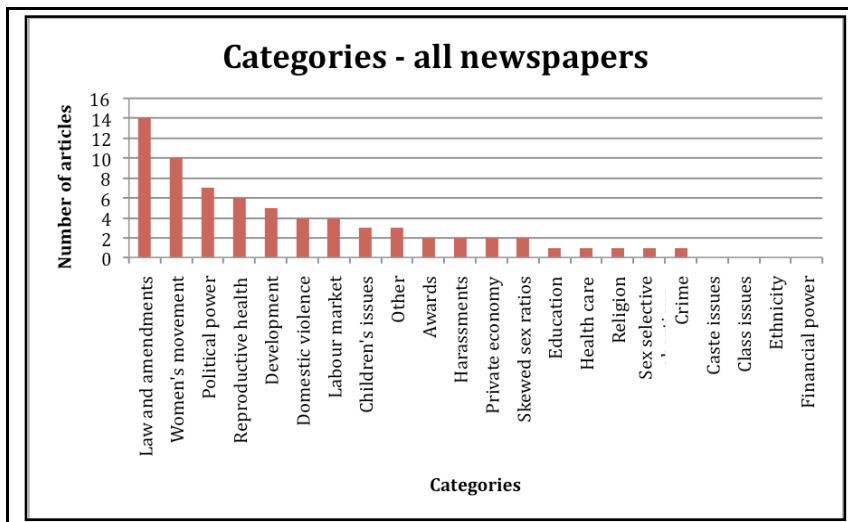


FIGURE 6.2.3: Number of articles in each of the 22 categories in the quantitative content analysis.

6.3 Top five categories

6.3.1 Protection bill on page one

The most frequent content category is Law and Amendments. 14 articles were found in this category. 6 of these news items are Long texts, 7 are Medium and 1 is Short.

Times of India and *Hindustan Times* each published 5 articles belonging to the Law and Amendments category during the five weeks of the quantitative study. 4 articles were found in *The Hindu*. The dominating news topic is "The Protection of Women against Sexual Harassment at Workplace Bill", a bill which is likely to be passed as law in the Parliament in the winter of 2010. There have been several years in making of this bill, and it is frequently debated as it is now on the brink of becoming law.

Times of India and *The Hindu* have front-page articles on this issue. Besides the articles on a well-reported election in the state of Bihar, this is the only news topic that merits front-page coverage in more than one newspaper. The topic also gets extensive space on the news pages. Out of the 5 news pieces dealing with the sexual harassment bill, 4 are long and 1 is Medium. The actors who are interviewed in the articles are exclusively experts, authorities and directors of organisations and centres.

The other articles within this category deal mostly with legislation proposals and court decisions. *Times of India* publishes an article about a proposal that will give monetary relief for rape victims, *The Hindu* writes about a suggested reservation bill for women in the Indian Parliament, and *Hindustan Times* reports on how Pakistan's divorce laws affects women.

6.3.2 All sorts of activism

The second most frequent category is Women's movement, with 10 news pieces found during the research period. 3 are Long, 5 are Medium and 2 are Short. *The Hindu* is the dominating newspaper in this category with 7 articles.

The dominating news topic is a controversy that took place in the Supreme Court at the end of October (2010). An Additional Solicitor general objected to misogyny language usage by judges in the Supreme Court. *Hindustan Times* published two articles about this incident and *Times of India* 1. These are the only news items in the Women's movement category found in *Hindustan times* and *Times of India*. *The Hindu* stood behind the rest of the articles. *The Hindu* is also the only paper that published a long article about the mentioned controversy and put it on the first page. The actors in these articles are the additional solicitor and the judges.

Of the remaining articles, 2 focus on the All India Democratic Women's Association, AIDWA. One is a report from the association's national conference. The other is a call by a former secretary of the association for AIDWA to support the women's movement in the state of West Bengal. Both articles are Long. Another news item deals with the US President Barack Obama's meeting with a community leader whose work for education among girls have been successful. NGO representatives are the most common actors in these articles.

6.3.3 Women voters

7 articles were found concerning women's access to political power. 3 of them were published in *Times of India* and addressing the state election of Bihar that took place in November. 2 long news articles report how a high turnout of women can change the outcome of the election, and 1 article about the few women candidates in the same election. The remaining 4 articles in this category were published in *The Hindu*. This paper had two long editorial texts about the representation of women in the local bodies in the state of Kerala. Kerala now has a 50% reservation bill for women, and the editorials discuss what impact this has on the politics. The dominating actors in the articles are state government representatives, authorities and experts, together with a few private persons.

6.3.4 Reproductive health

6 articles appear in this category, whereof 2 report on the expected opening of five shelter homes for pregnant destitutes. This initiative was launched after a woman had to give birth to her baby on the street and died. Half of the articles in the reproductive health category were found in *The Hindu*.

6.3.5 Development in the dailies

The fifth biggest category is Development with 5 news items. 3 of them appeared in *Times of India*, reporting that gender equality helps to improve other factors, such as economy, and that gender equality is needed in the development process in India. 3 of the articles are long and 2 are short. Very few actors appear in these news items.

6.4 In-depth-interviews

The result of the interviews is divided into 7 sections: Women's situation in India, The readership, The reporting, Changes in the reporting, The topics, The newspapers' responsibility and The newspapers' influence.

6.4.1 The respondents

Charu Kasturi, *Hindustan Times (HT)*: Has been a journalist for six years and has worked at *HT* as a reporter since the middle of 2010. Before that he was at *The Telegraph*. He believes journalism is fundamentally about making the public aware of what is happening while being as objective as possible. Charu reports on the social sector, such as education and women's issues.

Smriti Gupta (not the respondent's real name), *Hindustan Times (HT)*: Has worked for *HT* for six years but been a journalist for 16 years. She has also worked for *Marie Claire*, a French magazine. Smriti says that the aim with her journalism is to report on things that are sort of swept under the carpet or things that are not very politically correct. She mostly reports on arts, culture and women's issues.

Aarti Dhar, *The Hindu*: Aarti mostly covers women and child development, health and education. She has been a journalist for 19 years and began her career as a trainee at *The Statesman*, a daily newspaper. After about nine months she shifted to *The Hindu*. Aarti says that she thinks that if only one person benefits from what she writes, it is a great achievement.

Gargi Parsai, *The Hindu*: Gargi has been a journalist for almost 30 years and she has been at *The Hindu* for about 19 years. Before that she was with *Hindustan Times*. Her areas of coverage are agriculture, food, water resources and rural development. Gargi became a journalist because she wanted to do something good for the people by giving them a voice.

Himanshi Dhawan, *Times of India (TOI)*: Himanshi's aim with her journalism is to bring truth and clarity to the people. She has been a reporter for eleven years and she wrote for the magazine *India Today* before she started working at *TOI*. Women and child development are her main topics.

Josy Joseph, *Times of India (TOI)*: Josy is an investigative journalist and he mostly covers politics with corruption cases as his main focus. He has been a journalist for 18 years and came to *TOI* in the spring of 2010. Before that he worked for *Daily News and Analysis*. Josy wants to influence policy makers and change policies with his journalism.

6.4.2 Women's situation in India

"I don't know a single lady who has lived in Delhi and who has not faced molestation. Not a single lady do I know." –

Charu Kasturi, *HT*

All respondents believe that things are changing in the country. They think that women are getting more and more empowered, but the process is long and slow. Some of them emphasize the regional differences and mark the communities in South India as more tolerant towards women and more aware of women's rights. They also stress the differences between rural areas and urban parts of the country. Josy Joseph, *TOI*: *"It is not a change that is sweeping through the villages. It is a change that you feel in the television studios and newspaper corridors, but that's not enough."* He continues: *"I think India desperately need some real social awakening, to fight the biases against women"*. Gargi Parsai, who writes a lot on rural development at *The Hindu* says: *"A lot of revolution has happened in rural India and there are NGO:s and there are women-headed NGO:s who are looking to empower women to be able to do their own thing. But movements for women are few and far between"*.

Charu Kasturi at *HT* says that women's empowerment is one of the most important issues in India but that the policy makers as well as the news media is not paying enough attention to these matters. He says: *"Every time there's a new policy or a policy shift or anything new, any new plans, scheme, program that is brought from the Ministry of Women and Child Development to the Cabinet for discussion, it is invariably placed at the bottom of the list"*. Charu also thinks that if you read the newspapers you would come away with the perception that the problem (with gender inequalities and biases against women) is less severe than it is.

6.4.3 The readership

Himanshi Dhawan (*TOI*) describes the readers of *Times of India* as "very basic". She says their readers are usually middle- or upper class and fairly well educated but may not be that well informed. Himanshi

means that the news items are “dumb down” to a large extent. Her colleague Josy Joseph believes that their readership is to be found in the urban and English-speaking India.

Charu Kasturi at *HT* says that the target group of *Hindustan Times* is the urban upper middle class. He also points out that they focus on the youth and readers who do not have a lot of time to read the newspaper. Smriti Gupta, also at *HT*, mentions that the reporters are constantly told that they should write for a young audience, but she adds that it does not mean that they “dumb down” the articles.

Aarti Dhar (*The Hindu*) believes that many politicians and policy makers read *The Hindu*. She also thinks that their readers are highly educated people and a lot of students. Aarti says: “*we write about people who need help, who are socially depressed, but unfortunately they are not our readers?*”. Her colleague Gargi Parsai explains that the newspaper has a major loyal readership that consists of a lot of elderly people, but she thinks that this is now changing. Gargi says that while many other newspapers have chosen to focus on the youth, *The Hindu* decided to “take the middle path”. She says: “*The Hindu has taken a conscious decision to remain a serious newspaper. A serious newspaper that is taken seriously by policy makers, the Government and everybody else?*”.

6.4.4 The reporting

All six respondents believe that their newspapers actively promote reporting on gender inequality and women’s empowerment issues. Most of the respondents were of the opinion that *The Hindu* encourages development journalism and reporting on gender issues more than *HT* and *TOI* do. The reporters also notice that stories on women’s empowerment are treated the same way as any other development story. For an article to be carried it must have the right news value and attract the readership.

Charu Kasturi at *HT* believes that his newspaper report a lot on these issues, at the same time he points out that a story on women’s empowerment must align with the interests of their readers. Charu explains: “*If the story has to do with problems that slum women in eastern Delhi face, the fact that many slums, most slums in Delhi still don’t have toilets. So women have to travel kilometers every morning to go to an open field to defecate. And they don’t have any toilets, and it’s unsafe, it’s terribly unsafe. And that story, for example, it would be unrealistic to expect that to be carried in HT. It’s my point. Because they aren’t our target audience, unfortunately?*”.

Aarti Dhar and Gargi Parsai at *The Hindu* both believe that their newspaper highly encourage development journalism. They are also of the opinion that *The Hindu* is a well-respected newspaper that is high on credibility. Gargi Parsai says: “*Hindu is one of the few national papers, national daily newspapers, who*

is still giving a lot of attention to developmentally news". Aarti Dhar agrees: "We give a huge space to development issues, women's issues, social issues, including health, women, children. We focus on these areas which unfortunately other papers do not give so much space".

6.4.5 Changes in the reporting

Josy Joseph (*TOI*), Smriti Gupta (*HT*) and Charu Kasturi (*HT*) say that the reporting on women's empowerment issues have increased during the last few years. Smriti Gupta says: *"It has increased I would say, definitely. People do write about it more, in all different sections of the paper"*. Her colleague Charu Kasturi agrees with her: *"I would say it's increased, but I don't think it's increased anywhere near as much as it could have or as it should have"*.

Gargi Parsai (*The Hindu*) is convinced that generally the reporting on women's empowerment issues has decreased, but not in *The Hindu*. Gargi says: *"In fact gender stories are treated quite well in my paper. In other papers also what has happened is that there have been a decline in development stories. Because of globalisation and the liberalisation of economy there has been a rise in economical stories and political stories"*.

6.4.6 The topics

"Women as such are not a priority. Again, I'm not talking about my paper. My paper is different."

– Gargi Parsai, *The Hindu*

The reporters had various opinions about what topics within the gender inequality and women's empowerment field is most important to cover. Josy Joseph at *TOI* believes that female foeticide is a phenomenon that needs much more coverage and Gargi Parsai at *The Hindu* says that illiteracy among women is her first priority. Smriti Gupta (*HT*) would like to see more stories on women on power positions and raise the discussion about why there are so few women politicians and business managers. Her colleague Charu Kasturi has a somewhat different view: *"I don't think the field itself is covered enough, so I don't think it would be appropriate for me to pick an area that is not covered enough, as the field itself is not covered adequately"*.

6.4.7 Media's responsibility

"Media has a duty, but the media reporting alone is not able to penetrate the traditional biases in our society." – **Josy Joseph, *TOI***

All six respondents are of the opinion that media has a responsibility to report on gender inequality and women's empowerment issues. Some of them also emphasize that this topic is only one of many areas within development that needs to be highlighted by media. All development issues, such as education, health and sanitation, should be given equally amount of space.

Gargi Parsai at *The Hindu* says: "Media's responsibility is as great as I would say the civil society groups'. I mean, if you don't highlight this, people don't get to know about it, the Government does not get to know about it and things don't get moving". Aarti Dhar, also at *The Hindu*: "Responsibility? Of course, of course, of course, how else would you raise the issues? I mean, how else do we sensitise the society?" Himanshi Dhawan at *TOI* stresses that the newspapers have a "huge responsibility". She thinks that on the editorial pages the newspapers have a greater possibility to influence the public opinion, but she notes that at the moment only *The Hindu* does this.

Charu Kasturi at *HT* means that newspapers do have a responsibility to report on women's empowerment issues as they do on any other issue that is socially relevant. He says: "I personally think it's from a purely business perspective as well it makes sense because half of the readers are women, so why would you not want to target them, and their issues and their concerns?"

6.4.8 The newspapers' influence

"Oh, huge. The newspaper sells four million copies, it's a monopoly. You know it's almost a giant in the media market."

– **Josy Joseph, *TOI***

"Oh, huge. Yeah, I'd say it has huge influence. I mean, it has massive influence."

– **Charu Kasturi, *HT***

"Oh, huge! Huge, huge, huge, huge. You can ask anyone." – **Aarti Dhar, *The Hindu***

Five out of six reporters believe their newspapers have a major impact and influence on its readership. Josy Joseph at *TOI* thinks that media is making more and more impact and constantly gaining power. He says that it is not likely that you can change the mindset of a reader with only one article but if the newspaper keeps raising an issue the public will eventually show an interest. Josy Joseph means that since *TOI* started investigating corruption cases to a greater extent it has come back as an important public issue. His colleague Himanshi Dhawan disagrees with him: "We like to believe that we rock the world when we write against certain people and certain things. But in India it's very difficult to say because whatever you say the opposite is also true. First of all, an English paper cannot have a huge influence; it's read by like 10 out of 100 people in India. So we can flatter ourselves and say we make a difference, but if you take a perspective of our population and the number of people who read an English paper, that gives you a reality check on the situation".

The other reporters also stress the fact that media plays an important role in the gender equality process but that media alone is not able to change the mindsets of people. Josy Joseph at *TOI* underlines that about 50% of India's population are actually unable to be influenced by newspapers, since they are illiterate. Smriti Gupta at *HT* says that "*newspapers are commodities at the end of the day*" and that she has no illusion that what she writes is actually changing people, even though she would like to hope so. Her colleague Charu Kasturi says: "*India is a country full of problems, in the minds women's issues remain a concern, and media does its bit, but it is not enough.*"

7. Discussion

7.1 Development and advocacy journalism

Several of the respondents mean that *The Hindu* is the newspaper that promotes development journalism the most. This assumption is enhanced by the result from the quantitative study. *The Hindu* carried 7 of the 11 texts in the category Women's movement, and 6 out of 9 articles in the category Political power. Reporting on the empowerment processes of underprivileged people is a key feature of development journalism. The articles often reported on women's situation in rural areas.

This practice is also associated with advocacy journalism. None of the respondents look at themselves as representatives of certain groups' interests, but they agree on the importance of the press to highlight gender inequality issues and are confident of the possibility of the press to change the mindsets of their readership in the longer-term.

Many of the respondents say that they want to report more frequently on women's empowerment and gender inequality issues. *Hindustan Times* is the newspaper with least coverage of these issues, 15 articles compared to 28 respectively 26 texts in *The Hindu* and *Times of India*. The journalists at *Hindustan Times* think that the reporting on these issues is obstructed due to the readership of the paper and commercial mechanisms. Charu Kasturi says that *Hindustan Times* would not carry a story on the sanitary conditions for women living in the slum, because "*they aren't our target audience, unfortunately*". Smriti Gupta says that the reporters are told that *Hindustan Times* should make people feel happy. "*If you're just talking about page one, the idea is that India is doing very well. And when you wake up, the news should reflect that.*" These obstacles are the same that advocacy journalism face, with editors being reluctant to publish "depressing" and

“soft” stories that are “not relevant to audiences.”¹²⁰ *Hindustan Times* has a slightly more easy profile compared to the other newspapers, with more short stories, coloured boxes and summaries. This may contribute to the less coverage of women's empowerment issues.

7.2 Actors

Authority and Expert are the most common actors in the largest category, Law and amendments. In this category most articles are about bills and court decisions that affect the public. Since these bills are highly advocated by NGO:s, and directly concern the common people it is notable that hardly any private persons or NGO:s are heard in these texts, instead all focus are on the decision-makers. 16 out of 69 articles did not have any actors at all.

7.3 Range

12 of the 69 articles found appeared on the first page. In contrast to Shree Venkatram's study, women did not make front-page news mostly as victims exposed to some drastic crime. Instead the topics were participation in elections, legislative proposals and pregnant destitutes, to mention a few. In Venkatram's study, it was the number of front-page articles mentioning women that were counted, not the coverage of women's empowerment issues. The degree of sensationalising in the latter category of reporting seems low, in the light of our study. National news articles were the most common type of text to have a women's empowerment focus. 51 of the articles found were National news articles, compared to 9 International news articles, 6 Editorials and 3 Opinion texts. This is not surprising since the national reporting is the major part of the newspapers, though some of the articles in the national segment of the paper also carried international perspectives.

7.4 The content

The most common content category is Law and amendments. The articles in this category focus mainly on processes, rather than events. For example, 5 out of 14 articles in this category addressed The Protection of Women against Sexual Harassment at Workplace Bill. This is in contradiction to the result in Ammu Joseph's and Kalpana Sharma's study *Whose news?*. They conclude that events rather than processes are considered newsworthy.¹²¹ They also conclude that issues concerning health are poorly covered. This as well can be seen in contradiction to this study, where 7 out of 69 articles had

¹²⁰ Waisbord, Silvio, "Advocacy Journalism in a global context", in *Handbook of Journalism Studies*, ed. Thomas Hanitzsch and Karin Wahl-Jorgensen (e-book, New York and London, 2009), p. 380

¹²¹ Joseph and Sharma, 2006, p. 74

reproductive health or health care as main topics. Also Shree Venkatram's study *Women in print* showed that health care was not a priority for the newspapers. Not a single article was carried on the subject.¹²² None of the respondents in this study mentioned health care or reproductive health as the most important issue to cover.

Joseph and Sharma notes that sex selection and female foeticide received the least attention among the five issues examined. We found merely 1 article on the subject sex selective abortions and 2 articles on skewed sex ratios. Josy Joseph at *Times of India* mentions female foeticide and sex selective abortions as the one issue he thinks needs much more coverage. Since skewed sex ratios are one of the most severe social issues in India we think it is notable that the newspapers do not cover this problem to a greater extent. It is also remarkable that we found only 1 article on the topic Education. Illiteracy is another major social issue in the country and many of the respondents did mention the high illiteracy rate as a catastrophe. Gargi Parsai at *The Hindu* expressed that illiteracy among women is her highest priority.

None of the 69 articles found were placed in the categories Caste issues, Class issues, Financial power or Ethnicity. Since class and caste issues permeates all spheres of the Indian society, this perspective was seen in many of the examined articles, but it could not be considered the main topic of any text. The business world in India is highly dominated by men and this is presumably the reason why the category Financial power is empty. But this fact can also be seen as a reason for the press to raise the issue of the lack of women on financial power positions. It is complicated to answer why no articles were carried on the subject Ethnicity. Our presumption is that questions of ethnicity are often overshadowed by issues of religion, class and caste and therefore not common as a main perspective in news articles.

7.5 The newspapers' influence on the public opinion

Five out of six reporters believe their newspapers have a major impact on its readership. Josy Joseph (*Times of India*) gives an unmistakable example on how he sees the newspaper as an agenda setter.¹²³ He says that since *Times of India* started investigating corruption cases it has come back as an important public issue. Common for some of the respondents is that they believe that their newspapers have "huge" impact on its readership; at the same time they say that the media's overall influence is very limited. This shows that though the respondents are convinced that their journalism affects the readers, they have a less optimistic approach to media's possibility to influence people in general. Josy Joseph mentions the high illiteracy rate as a problem. Since only about 50% of the Indian population can read,

¹²² Venkatram, 2003, p. 63

many citizens have no chance to perceive the press' reporting on gender inequality issues. Smriti Gupta (*Hindustan Times*) says that “*newspapers are commodities at the end of the day*” and her colleague Charu Kasturi means that the newspapers are doing their bit, but that it is not enough to make any major changes in the mindsets of people. Gargi Parsai and Aarti Dhar at *The Hindu* have a somewhat different opinion about their role as agenda setters. They both mention that politicians and policy makers are an important part of their readership and Gargi says that *The Hindu* is taken seriously by “*the Government and everybody else*”. Aarti and Gargi seem to be very confident when it comes to the question of how much influence *The Hindu* has on its readership and how it affects the public opinion.

7.6 Media's responsibility

The consensus of opinion on media's responsibility to report on women's empowerment issues is striking among the respondents. It seems that this responsibility is a product of the journalist's professional role. Most of the respondents highlight the importance of being objective and informing the people about what is happening around them. Some of them underline that all major development issues should receive the same amount of space in the newspapers and that it would be immoral to advocate one specific issue. Gargi Parsai and Aarti Dhar at *The Hindu* describe media's responsibility slightly different than the other reporters. It appears that they think media has a greater responsibility since they are convinced, to a larger extent than the other four respondents, that their newspaper influences the public and the policy makers. Gargi and Aarti both express the belief of media as *the* opinion-maker. Gargi says: “*if you [media] don't highlight this, people don't get to know about it, the Government does not get to know about it and things don't get moving*”. Aarti's view is very similar: “*Responsibility? Of course, of course, of course, how else would you raise the issues? I mean, how else do we sensitise the society?*”. The respondents from *Times of India* and *Hindustan Times* illustrate media's responsibility in a somewhat more tentative manner. Josy Joseph (*TOI*) stresses media's responsibility but he also means that media alone cannot “*penetrate the traditional biases in our society*”. In contradiction to the reporters at *The Hindu* it does not seem like Josy sees media as *the* opinion-maker.

¹²³ Coleman, McCombs, Shaw and Weaver, 2009, p. 147

8. Conclusions

- The most common topics of articles about gender inequality and women's empowerment issues in *Hindustan Times*, *The Hindu* and *Times of India* are: Law and amendments, Women's movement, Political power, Reproductive health and Development.
- *Hindustan Times* do not report on gender inequality and women's empowerment issues as much as *The Hindu* and *Times of India* do.
- The most common actors are Authority and Expert.
- All six respondents are of the opinion that media has a great responsibility to report on gender inequality and women's empowerment issues.
- Five out of six respondents believe their newspapers have a major impact on its readership. At the same time they think that the media's overall influence is limited.
- The reporters at *The Hindu* are somewhat more convinced that their newspaper affect the public opinion than the respondents from *Hindustan Times* and *Times of India*.
- All six respondents believe that their newspapers actively promote reporting on gender inequality and women's empowerment issues.
- Most of the respondents are of the opinion that *The Hindu* encourages development journalism and reporting on gender issues more than *Hindustan Times* and *Times of India* do.
- In contradiction to previous research within the gender and media field this study shows that processes do sometimes become news.

9. Suggestions on further research

The main disadvantage of this study is the absence of newspapers published in other languages than English, such as Hindi. From a development perspective it would be interesting to examine the function of Hindi newspapers in the rural areas of India. These newspapers reach a remarkable number of people and we presume that their impact on the public opinion is wider than the English press'. This kind of study could possibly include an audience study. It would give significant information on the readers' perception of the newspaper content and women's empowerment issues.

Another relevant approach to these matters is a qualitative study of newspaper content. How are the women and the issues portrayed? Do women get a voice in these texts?

This study relies on the journalists' view of their reporting and the newspapers' approach. To obtain information from another perspective it could be interesting to do an ethnographical study of the newsrooms. How do the reporters discuss gender inequality issues? How do they argue? This study could also include editors and news directors. How do they approach these issues? Some of the respondents in this study expressed that articles must have a certain news value and attract the audience to be printed. Since the editors and news directors have the final say on what to publish it is relevant to observe their views.

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10.4 Respondent interviews

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Dhawan, Himanshi, *Times of India*

Gupta, Smriti (not the respondent's real name), *Hindustan Times*

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Kasturi, Charu, *Hindustan Times*

Parsai, Gargi, *The Hindu*

10.5 Informant interviews

Rajalakshmi, T.K. , journalist at the *Frontline* magazine

Venkatram, Shree, media researcher and former journalist

Appendix

Minor field studies

Minor Field Studies (MFS) is a scholarship funded by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA). It gives students at universities and colleges to perform a research project in a developing country to gather material for a bachelor or a master thesis. For a minimum of eight weeks the students can investigate issues of importance to developing countries' economic, social, political or knowledge development.¹²⁴

The idea of this Minor Field Study emerged during the spring of 2010 when we planned our bachelor thesis. As journalism students we found it incredibly interesting how the Indian newspapers are growing, in contradiction to the Swedish and many others that are struggling to survive. Since we are also interested in development studies, and gender inequality and women's empowerment issues in particular, this approach came quite naturally to us. Because both *Hindustan Times* and *Times of India* has their headquarters in Delhi we found the capital as the most appropriate location for this study.

¹²⁴ SIDA, *Minor Field Studies*, <http://www.programkontoret.se/sv/Program-Stipendier/Program1/Minor-Field-Studies/> (Retrieved: 2011-01-18)

Interview guide

1. How long have you been a journalist?
2. How long have you worked on X?
3. Why did you become a journalist?
4. What is the aim with your journalism?
5. Are you generalist/specialist?

6. What would you say is the profile of the newspaper?
7. What is your target group?
8. How would you describe your audience?
9. How would you describe your news value? What is considered as news?
10. How do you find your stories?
11. Do you accommodate your news to your target group?
12. How much influence do you think your newspaper have on your audience? (Media in general.)
13. How interested are your readers in gender equality issues?
14. Do you get any response from your readers when you report on these issues?

15. Does your paper have a policy on how to write about these issues?
16. How would you describe the discussion about these issues in your newsroom?
17. Has the reporting increased/decreased over the years?
18. Has the attitude towards these issues changed over time?
19. Do you think media has a responsibility to report on these issues?
20. Who at X gets to report on gender inequality issues?
21. How much do you personally write about gender inequality/women's empowerment issues? (What topics do you write most about?)

22. What is our own definition of gender inequality/women empowerment issues?
23. How do you think your personal opinions affect your reporting?
24. Why do you report on these issues?

25. What topics are most important to cover when reporting on gender inequalities?
26. Is there any topic you think is not covered enough?
27. Where do you get your material? What kind of sources do you use?
28. What do you think of the Governmental policy document "National policy for the empowerment of women" (2001). Does it affect you in your work?
29. Is there any difference between female and male journalists interest to report about these issues?
30. Who has the power to decide if you are going to write about this or not?
31. Does lobbyists or other people who have interests in these matters affect you?

Code book

Identification variables

ID-number

XX-XX-XX

Newspapers

01 Hindustan Times

02 The Hindu

03 Times of India

Month

10 October

11 November

Day

01-31

Content variables

Range

Type of text

9 National news article

10 International news article

11 Editorial

12 Opinion

Material source

40 Reporter

41 Leader writer/columnist

42 News agency

43 Combination of news agency and reporter

44 Independent writer

45 Unspecified

Extent of text

46 Short

47 Medium

48 Long

Text published on first page

50 Yes as a whole

51 Yes partly

52 No

Content (topic of content)

- 13 Labour market
- 14 Health care
- 15 Reproductive health
- 16 Private economy
- 17 Domestic violence
- 18 Law and Amendments
- 19 Caste issues
- 20 Class issues
- 21 Education
- 22 Women's movement
- 23 Development
- 24 Children's issues
- 25 Awards
- 26 Crime
- 27 Harassments
- 28 Ethnicity
- 29 Religion
- 30 Political power
- 31 Financial power
- 32 Sex selective abortions
- 33 Skewed sex ratios
- 34 Other

Actors – specific actors

- 60 Government
- 61 State Government
- 62 Politician
- 63 Authority
- 64 NGO
- 65 Expert
- 66 Private person
- 67 International organisation
- 68 Religious group
- 69 Business Corporation
- 70 Other
- 71 None

Code instruction

This study focuses on printed newspaper articles, both national and international material. Entertainment and sports are excluded, as well as all sorts of inserts, such as Weekend inserts. The only exception is Business inserts, which are included. Since the main aspect of this study is the newspapers' approach and reporting it also includes editorial texts and all kinds of opinion material with the editorial staff or independent writers as source. Opinion material with an independent writer as source is included. Reader-generated material, for example letters to the editor, is not included.

Gender inequalities or women's empowerment issues need to be the most prominent topic of the article. It is not sufficient that these matters are mentioned; they must be referred to as a problem within society. For example, an article that is solely about a woman who has been abused by her husband is not considered to highlight gender inequalities or women empowerment. Therefore it is excluded in this study. But if the same article handles domestic violence as a social problem or a problem for women as a group it is included and coded.

Content variables – Range

Type of text

National news article – News articles with India as main focus.

International news article – News articles with other countries than India as main focus or with a global perspective.

Editorial - Texts that express the opinion of the newspaper.

Opinion – Texts that express the opinion of an independent writer.

Material source

Reporter – The journalist's byline is printed, the alias of Staff member, the alias of Special correspondent, or the name of the paper, for example *HT (Hindustan Times)*.

Leader writer/columnist – The byline of a leader writer or a columnist is printed.

News agency – The byline of a news agency is printed, such as Reuters, AP or Press Trust India. An exception is Times News Network (TNN). Since it is directly linked to *Times of India*, the articles with the byline TNN or TNN combined with a reporter's byline, will be counted as reporter.

Combination of news agency and reporter – Both the byline of a journalist, or the newspaper, and the byline of a news agency is printed.

Independent writer – The name of an independent writer is printed.

Unspecified – There is no byline, or the writer is anonymous.

Extent of text

Short – Not more than 160 words.

Medium – 161 – 450 words.

Long – more than 450 words.

Text published on first page

Yes as a whole – The article appears solely on the front page of the newspaper.

Yes partly – The beginning or a short version of the article appears on the front page, the rest of it inside the newspaper.

No – The text do not appear on the front page.

Content

The themes of content are divided into twenty-two categories representing different topics. Each article can only belong to one of these categories. If an article contains more than one topic, it is placed in the category that is the main focus of the article.

Topic of content

Awards – Awards and prizes given to people working with gender inequality and women's empowerment issues.

Caste issues – The caste system in India and its impact on women and gender inequality issues and women empowerment.

Children's issues – Childhood, upbringing, safety for children and their recreational activities.

Class issues – Class differences related to gender inequalities and women empowerment.

Crime – Criminal acts affecting women.

Development – How gender (in)equality and women's empowerment affect the social or financial development process within a country or a region.

Domestic violence – Violence within the family and at home.

Education – School attendance, training facilities and schooling environment.

Ethnicity – Issues concerning women belonging to a certain ethnic group.

Financial power - Sex ratios within the business world and women on power positions.

Harassments – Physical and verbal molestation of women, for example verbal abuse in public spaces.

Health care – Women's health, wellness and medical treatment.

Labour market – Women's service conditions, job opportunities, wages, working environment, labour unions.

Law and amendments – Juridical matters and reforms.

Political power – Sex ratios within decision making institutions and women on power positions.

Private economy – Financial independency or financial dependence, women's possibilities to support themselves and their influence on the family economy.

Religion - Issues concerning women belonging to a certain religion.

Reproductive health – Issues connected to sex and reproduction. Sex education, gynaecology, pregnancy, abortion.

Sex selective abortions – Issues concerning abortion of female foetuses.

Skewed sex ratios – The shortage of women in the population, due to sex selective abortions or other factors.

Women's movement – NGO:s and organised efforts focusing on the empowerment of women. Group and individual protests against gender inequality.

Other – None of the above.

Actors

Persons who are quoted are counted as actors. Organisations, governments, corporations, etc, are also considered as actors, if quoted. The actor is not necessarily interviewed by the newspaper. Quotes from press releases, speeches and conferences, etc, are counted as well.

Specific actors

Government – Representative of the administration of any country.

State government – Representative of the administration of states, regions and municipalities. In India the term for municipality is *panchayat*.

Politician – Politician in non-governmental position.

Authority – Representative of an authority.

NGO – Representative of a non-governmental organisation or association.

Expert – Actor who is quoted because of her/his specialist knowledge.

Private person – Actor who is solely representing herself/himself and her/his experiences.

International organisation – Globally operating organisations, such as the UN.

Religious group – Person speaking on behalf of a certain religious group.

Business corporation – Representative of a business corporation.

Other – None of the above.

None – There is no actor.

Coded articles

1. "Haryana sets up award for women"

ID: 02-10-18

Range: 9-40-47-52

Content: 25

Actors: 61

2. "Tribal woman felicitated for fighting discriminatory customs"

ID: 02-10-18

Range: 9-40-48-52

Content: 25

Actors: 67-70

3. "Haryana girls win glory but sex ratios worsens"

ID: 03-10-19

Range: 9-40-47-51

Content: 33

Actors: 65-64-70

4. "Girl, interrupted"

ID: 03-10-20

Range: 11-45-47-52

Content: 32

Actors: 71

5. "DTC hires women conductors"

ID: 01-10-20

Range: 9-40-47-52

Content: 13

Actors: 63-66-66-66

6. "60 Lakh Indians get a safety net"

ID: 03-10-21

Range: 9-40-48-52

Content: 15

Actors: 60-60-63

7. "Neglected better halves casts a long shadow"

ID: 03-10-21

Range: 9-40-48-52

Content: 23

Actors: 71

8. "Make provision for destitute expecting mothers"

ID: 02-10-21

Range: 9-40-47-52

Content: 15

Actors: 63

9. "Reserve 5 homes for pregnant destitutes"

ID: 01-10-21

Range: 9-40-48-51

Content: 15

Actors: 65-63

10. 'Kudumbashree' dominates Kerala local polls'

ID: 02-10-22

Range: 11-41-48-52

Content: 30
Actors: 62-62-61-66-65-63-61-62

11. "Arundhati Roy's mother gets her share"
ID: 03-10-22
Range: 9-40-46-52
Content: 18
Actors: 71

12. "ASG says offended by gender bias in SC Ruling"
ID: 03-10-23
Range: 9-40-47-52
Content: 22
Actors: 63-63

13. "SC 'keep' remark triggers row"
ID: 01-10-23
Range: 9-40-47-52
Content: 22
Actors: 63-60-63

14. "How can Supreme Court use the word "keep" for a woman?"
ID: 02-10-23
Range: 9-40-48-50
Content: 22
Actors: 63-63-63

15. "Talk of 33% quota, but only 8% woman in Bihar poll fray"
ID: 03-10-26
Range: 9-40-47-52
Content: 30
Actors: 64

16. "Womenfolk in priest's families have share in offerings fligh fourt"
ID: 01-10-25
Range: 9-42-47-52
Content: 18
Actors: 63-68

17. "Language Matters"
ID: 03-10-25
Range: 11-45-47-52
Content: 18
Actors: 71

18. "Finger tests violates rape victim's privacy"
ID: 01-10-25
Range: 9-42-47-52
Content: 18
Actors: 63-63

19. "Kerala won't be the same again"
ID: 02-10-25
Range: 11-41-48-52
Content: 30
Actors: 70-62-62-66-62-65-62-62-62-65-65-65-63

20. "Passing off dowry death as suicide"
ID: 03-10-28
Range: 9-40-47-52

Content: 17
Actors: 71

21. Empowering poor rural women to take charge of their future
ID: 02-10-28
Range: 9-40-48-52
Content: 16
Actors: 65

22. "Budding DU shutterbugs draw portraits of women and their lives"
ID: 03-10-29
Range: 9-40-47-52
Content: 34
Actors: 63-65-66

23. "Gender bender"
ID: 01-10-29
Range: 12-44-47-52
Content: 22
Actors: 71

24. "Budding photographs capture shades of women's empowerment"
ID: 02-10-29
Range: 9-40-47-52
Content: 34
Actors: 63

25. "Feminism is funny?"
ID: 01-10-30
Range: 9-40-47-52
Content: 34
Actors: 71

26. "Gender issues awareness project making headway in Rajasthan"
ID: 02-10-31
Range: 9-40-48-52
Content: 15
Actors: 67-63-63-67-70-61-61-67-63-67

27. "Jaali work empowers them"
ID: 03-10-31
Range: 9-40-48-52
Content: 16
Actors: 66-64

28. "Dowry killings deserve death penalty: Supreme Court"
ID: 02-11-01
Range: 9-40-48-52
Content: 17
Actors: 63-63

29. "Our society has become sick: SC on dowry deaths"
ID: 03-11-02
Range: 9-40-47-51
Content: 17
Actors: 63

30. "In a first, Haryana women pray for long life of girl child"
ID: 03-11-03

Range: 9-40-47-52
Content: 33
Actors: 66-66

31. "Saudi fatwa against women cashiers sparks outrage"
ID: 03-11-03
Range: 10-42-46-52
Content: 13
Actors: 60-65-65

32. "Brazil's first Presidenta pledges gender equality"
ID: 02-11-03
Range: 10-40-47-52
Content: 30
Actors: 60

33. "Dowry, bribery, crime and punishment"
ID: 02-11-03
Range: 12-44-48-52
Content: 18
Actors: 63

34. "Bill on sexual harassment on Cabinet agenda"
ID: 03-11-04
Range: 9-40-47-52
Content: 18
Actors: 71

35. "Official apathy over malnutrition flayed"
ID: 02-11-04
Range: 9-40-47-52
Content: 15
Actors: 65-64

36. "Wolves in geeks' clothing"
ID: 01-11-04
Range: 9-45-46-50
Content: 27
Actors: 71

37. "Women's Protection Bill coming"
ID: 02-11-05
Range: 9-40-48-50
Content: 18
Actors: 71

38. "Domestic helps left out of sexual harassment Bill"
ID: 03-11-05
Range: 9-40-48-51
Content: 18
Actors: 64

39. "India worse than Pakistan on gender equality"
ID: 03-11-05
Range: 9-40-47-51
Content: 23
Actors: 71

40. "Saudis defy no-women-cashiers fatwa"
ID: 03-11-07

Range: 10-42-46-52
Content: 13
Actors: 69

41. "No place of their own"
ID: 01-11-09
Range: 11-41-48-52
Content: 23
Actors: 71

42. "AIDWA must defend Left, democratic women's movement: Brinda Karat"
ID: 02-11-10
Range: 9-40-48-52
Content: 22
Actors: 64-64

43. "Women drive development in a much more significant way"
ID: 03-11-10
Range: 10-41-48-52
Content: 23
Actors: 70-63

44. "More women officers around girls' colleges"
ID: 01-11-11
Range: 9-40-47-52
Content: 21
Actors: 63

45. "Muslim women face multiple discrimination: AIDWA"
ID: 02-11-11
Range: 9-40-48-52
Content: 29
Actors: 64-64-61

46. "When Obama met woman sarpanch from Rajasthan"
ID: 02-11-11
Range: 9-40-47-52
Content: 22
Actors: 64

47. "88% women subjected to sexual harassment at workplace"
ID: 02-11-12
Range: 9-40-47-52
Content: 27
Actors: 71

48. "It's time women's quota Bill was passed"
ID: 02-11-13
Range: 10-40-47-52
Content: 18
Actors: 66

49. "Shyamoli Gupta elected AIDWA president"
ID: 02-11-13
Range: 9-40-48-52
Content: 22
Actors: 64-64-64

50. "Why not death, SC asks killer hubby"
ID: 03-11-13

Range: 9-40-48-51
Content: 17
Actors: 63-63

51. "India on U.N. women panel"
ID: 02-11-13
Range: 10-42-46-52
Content: 22
Actors: 67

52. "23 lakh kids aged below 5 died in one year in India"
ID: 03-11-13
Range: 9-40-47-52
Content: 24
Actors: 65

53. "Make it work for working women"
ID: 01-11-13
Range: 12-44-48-52
Content: 13
Actors: 70-64-63-66

54. "Easy divorce ruining lives in Pakistan"
ID: 01-11-13
Range: 10-40-47-52
Content: 18
Actors: 65-63

55. "Promote education among women, says President"
ID: 02-11-14
Range: 9-40-47-52
Content: 23
Actors: 60-60

56. "Why this law is not what I need"
ID: 01-11-14
Range: 11-41-48-52
Content: 18
Actors: 71

57. "She said, she said"
ID: 01-11-14
Range: 9-40-48-52
Content: 18
Actors: 60-65-65-65-65-65-63-65-65

58. "Crimes against women deserve the death penalty: Supreme Court"
ID: 02-11-15
Range: 9-40-47-52
Content: 18
Actors: 63-63

59. "Job strain is bad for women's hearts"
ID: 03-11-15
Range: 10-42-47-52
Content: 14
Actors: 65

60. "Monetary relief for rape victims soon"
ID: 03-11-15

Range: 9-40-47-52
Content: 18
Actors: 60

61. "Ela Bhatt doing path-breaking work for women: Hillary"
ID: 02-11-17
Range: 10-40-47-52
Content: 22
Actors: 60-60-64

62. "Scheme for women agriculturists planned"
ID: 02-11-18
Range: 9-40-46-52
Content: 22
Actors: 71

63. "Safe, separate shelter home for pregnant minors"
ID: 01-11-19
Range: 9-40-47-51
Content: 15
Actors: 63-63

64. "Gamechanger? Women may decide who wins in Bihar"
ID: 03-11-19
Range: 9-40-48-52
Content: 30
Actors: 61-61-63-61

65. "Scheme for adolescent girls launched"
ID: 02-11-20
Range: 9-40-46-52
Content: 24
Actors: 60

66. "Atrocities by Maoists on women go unreported: study"
ID: 02-11-20
Range: 9-40-47-52
Content: 26
Actors: 64

67. "The decision-makers"
ID: 02-11-21
Range: 9-40-46-50
Content: 30
Actors: 71

68. "Health scheme for teenage girls in 200 backward dists"
ID: 03-11-21
Range: 9-40-46-52
Content: 24
Actors: 60

69. "Breaking all barriers"
ID: 03-11-21
Range: 9-40-48-51
Content: 30
Actors: 66-61-62-66