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Coverage of News Related to Women Empowerment in Indian Press: A Content Analysis of Two Famous News Papers of Dakshina Kannada, Karnataka

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Abstract:

The role of press is said to be effective and powerful in changing the society. Since the robust feature of newspapers has able to grab loyal customers, it has to make use of this opportunity. This paper focuses on the coverage of news related to women empowerment published in the two leading newspapers – Udayavani and Deccan Herald- both being published and leading daily in Mangalore the heart of Dakshina Kannada district, Karnataka. South Canara consists of the areas of the present-day districts of Dakshina Kannada and Udupi of Karnataka and Kasaragod District of Kerala. Injustice against women is being the common news to be reported in the present scenario. News such as Rape, Dowry and many more has become common in growing cities. Unfortunately South Canara has been added one among such cities where crimes against women have become common and it has gone to the extent of acceptance. Newspapers are being the major source of information; newspaper has a greater impact on the readers. The print media said to be relevant and trustworthy, thus this trust and loyalty need to used to spread news related to women empowerment.

Keywords: Women empowerment, news, newspapers, press, South Canara, Karnataka, Udayavani, Deccan Herald

1. Introduction

The role of press is said to be effective and powerful in changing the society. Since the robust feature of newspapers has able to grab loyal customers, it has to make use of this opportunity. This paper focuses on the coverage of news related to women empowerment published in the two leading newspapers – Udayavani and Deccan Herald- both being published and leading daily of Mangalore the heart of Dakshina Kannada district, Karnataka. Injustice against women is being the common news to be reported from these areas, concentrating on the women empowerment news stories is very important. News related to crimes such as Rapes, Dowry, kidnapping, murder and many more has become common in growing cities. Unfortunately South Canara has been added one among such cities where crimes against women have become common and it has gone to the extent of acceptance. Newspapers are being the major source of news; press has a greater impact on the readers. Dakshina Kannada being the center of educational institutions and colleges, literacy rate is very high. The average literacy rate of D.K in 2011 is said to be 88.57 %. The male literacy rate is 93.13 and female literacy rate is 84.13. (“Census2011.co”)

According to Dakshina Kannada 2011 census, the population is 2,089,649, out of which 1,034,714 were male and 1,054,935 were female. (“Census2011.co”)

The sex ration in Dakshina Kannada is 1020 per 1000 male in 2011. Out of 1,666,323 literates Dakshina Kannada district has around 864,019 male literates and 802,304 female literates. (“Census2011.co”)

According to Stephanie Ouellette (2008) “Empowerment refers to increasing the spiritual, political, social or economic strength of individuals and communities. It often involves the empowered developing confidence in their own capacities.”

Udayavani a leading Kannada newspaper has a circulation exceeding 3, 00,000 copies as per ABC Jun-Dec 2012. It is widely read daily in coastal Karnataka region.

Deccan Herald is English daily which is being published from Bangalore and has an edition from Mangalore city. The ABC certified figures for the first half of 2009 put the daily paid circulation at 214,797. According to the Indian Readership Survey 2013, *Deccan Herald* is among the top ten most widely read English language newspapers in India, with an average daily readership of 458,000. (“Wikipedia”)

While studying the crimes against women we find the crimes such as Rape, Kidnapping & abduction and dowry are very common. They occur most often in the society. According to National Crime Records Bureau the statistics of crimes against women are as

follows; in the year 2012 number of Rape (Sec. 376 IPC) cases were 24,923, Kidnapping & Abduction (Sec. 363 to 373 IPC) cases were 38,262, Dowry Death (Sec 302/304 IPC) cases were 8,233, Torture (Sec. 498-A IPC) cases were 1,06,527, Molestation (Sec. 354 IPC) cases were 45,351, Sexual Harassment (Sec. 509 IPC) cases were 9,173, Importation of Girls (Sec. 366-B IPC) cases were 59, Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956 cases were 2,563, Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act, 1986 cases were 146 reported all over the country. The study also shows that the cases such as Rapes, Molestation, Torture, Kidnapping & abduction, sexual harassment has increased compared to the previous year, 2011. The study also show that cases like dowry death have decreased compared to the year 2011.

1.1. Importance of Women Empowerment News in Dakshina Kannada

With the female population of 1,054,935 in Dakshina Kannada, there is a need to look at the news coverage related to women. From the recent developments it is noticed that crimes against women is the common news which is being reported. The negative news all about women is usual to find in most of the newspapers in Dakshina Kannada. In a public meet related to crimes against women and children in Dakshina Kannada district, Police commissioner S Murugan said, "Sexual crime cases are registered without delay. Strict order has been given to the police officers to investigate the cases seriously. In 2013, there were 18 rape cases, in 2014 there were 27 and so far in 2015, two rape cases have been registered". This draws our attention to figure out the news coverage on the women empowerment issues. The coverage on crime against women is very common in any newspapers. Every day we find at least one crime news against women in any newspaper for that matter. But what the press has done to improve the condition of those women who have been the victims of such crimes, or those women who have been suffering in the hands of own family members. By reporting women empowerment issues, press can help women to spread awareness relating to the developments and activities occurring in and around the country which in turn makes them confident and comfortable enough to file a complaint against those culprits or raise their voice against the crime.

2. Objectives of the Study

- To find out the coverage of women empowerment news in *Udayavani* and *Deccan Herald*.
- To ascertain the role of press in publishing women empowerment news.
- To analyze and summarize how each newspapers differ in their coverage on women empowerment news.

3. Methodology

The research aims at studying news published by *Udayavani* and *Deccan Herald* leading and widely read newspapers in coastal Karnataka, regarding news related to women empowerment published during the period July 2014 to December 2014. The study incorporates the content analysis research method which would enable the researcher for the wide scope to interpret the contents published during the study period regarding the coverage on news related to women empowerment.

"Content analysis is a technique for systematically describing written, spoken or visual communication. It provides a quantitative (numerical) description. Many content analyses involve media - print (newspapers, magazines), television, video, movies, the Internet." (Stambor, Z. 205)

3.1. Operational Methodology

The objectives of the study can be better fulfilled by content analysis method. The method would enable for a wide scope to analyze and interpret the content published from the two newspapers, *Udayavani* and *Deccan Herald*. The study will be carried forward by analyzing the main editions of the two news paper *Udayavani* and *Deccan Herald*. The selection of websites is based on the popularity and widely read newspapers.

3.2. Sampling

The news reports, City news opinions, articles and blogs on women empowerment issues were identified and selected from these two newspapers for the purpose of content analysis. The news reports from July 2014 to December 2014 were analyzed. The selection of period was based on the random six months period. The issues were selected randomly with 4 issues dated 1st, 11th, 21st and 30th of each newspapers every month. A total of 48 news issues from both the newspapers were selected for the study. While selecting the items, the researchers studied all the articles pertaining to the women empowerment related stories. The study was carried forward based on the following parameters;

- Importance given to the news related to women empowerment.
- Amount of space and location, page allotted for women empowerment news stories.
- The presentation of stories using visuals and other graphic material.

3.3. Operational Definitions

According to Stephanie Ouellette (2008) women empowerment refers "to increasing the spiritual, political, social or economic strength of individuals and communities. It often involves the empowered developing confidence in their own capacities". Taking the definition as a benchmark, the study will be analyzed on the news related to women empowerment. All such news which fosters the strength among women through, spiritual, political, social, economical, personal and psychological will be covered.

4. Findings

4.1. Data analysis of the Udayavani and Deccan Herald

The content analysis of the two newspapers shown *Deccan Herald* has recorded 17 articles and *Udayavani* has recorded 12 articles for the specific period.

4.1.1. Positioning of News

Sl. No.	Newspaper	Front page	Editorial Page	Other Pages	Total
1.	Deccan Herald	5	4	8	17
2.	Udayavani	3	1	8	12
		8	5	16	29

Table 1: Distribution & Analysis of Positioning of Women Empowerment news in two dailies

Positioning of news determines the importance of news value in a newspaper. It reflects how the newspaper treats a news story. A lead story will obviously find a place in the front page of the newspaper and competes only with advertisements booked for the day. The study shows that a total of 29 news stories were published during the study period of six months meaning there were 4.83 women empowerment stories each month across both the dailies. There were more women empowerment stories in *Deccan Herald* (17) than the *Udayavani* (12)

Page	Frequency	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Front	5	29.5	29.5
Editorial	4	23.5	53.0
Inside	8	47.0	100.0
Total	17	100.0	

Table 2: Positioning of News in Deccan Herald

It may be inferred from the Table 2 that news stories relating to women empowerment issues gets less importance in both front page with 29.5 percent and editorial page with 23.5 percent. The inside pages which included pages meant for state, district and city news has carried highest number of news articles with 47.0 percent in *Deccan Herald*. The front page has carried the news more with 29.5 percent than the editorial page with 23.5 percent.

In the case of *Udayavani* the analysis shows that over 66.6 percent of news related to women empowerment stories was published in inside pages whereas front page published only 25.0 percent stories. The least priority given in the editorial page of *Udayavani* with 8.4 percent news related to women empowerment.

Page	Frequency	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Front	3	25.0	25.0
Editorial	1	8.4	33.4
Inside	8	66.6	100.0
Total	12	100.0	

Table 3: Positioning of News in Udayavani

However, *Deccan Herald* tops over *Udayavani* by publishing more number of women empowerment news (29.5) in front page. It is observed from the Table 2 and Table 3 that *Deccan Herald* has given priority in its editorial page (23.5) to news related to women empowerment than *Udayavani* in the editorial page (8.4). *Deccan Herald* and *Udayavani* have accommodated more news related to women empowerment in inside pages with 66.6 and 47.0 percent respectively.

Newspaper/ Positioning	Front page	Editorial Page	Other Pages
<i>Deccan Herald</i>	29.5	23.5	47.0
<i>Udayavani</i>	25.0	8.4	66.6

Table 4: Positioning of Women Empowerment news stories in Regional Press

4.2. Priority of News

Allotment of space for news article in a daily demonstrates the commitment of newspaper towards certain news. The news stories were therefore divided into two categories according to the importance given to them in terms of placement in a page and length of the story. On the parameters they were graded as high, medium and low.

Importance	Frequency	Valid Percent
High	5	29.42
Medium	9	52.94
Low	3	17.64
Total	17	100.0

Table 5: Priority of space and placement in Deccan Herald

The data of Deccan Herald shows that the importance given to women empowerment stories is medium with the highest percent of 52.94 whereas the percentage of high prominence is 29.42.

Importance	Frequency	Valid Percent
High	5	41.67
Medium	3	25.0
Low	4	33.33
Total	12	100.0

Table 6: Priority of space and placement in Udayavani

The data of *Udayavani* shows that the importance given to women empowerment stories is high with the highest percent of 41.67 whereas the percentage of medium prominence is 25.0.

4.3. Pictures

Pictures play a very vital role in conveying the meaning. As the saying justifies that 'a picture speak 1000 words', any story treated with a picture, increases its value and visibility. Similarly stories related to women empowerment when treated with single photographs it adds value and weight to that story.

Pictures	Frequency	Valid Percent
Yes	9	52.94
No	8	47.06
Total	17	100.0

Table 7: Women Empowerment story pictures in Deccan Herald

The Deccan Herald newspaper published 9 pictures related to women empowerment news with 52.94 percent.

Pictures	Frequency	Valid Percent
Yes	2	16.67
No	10	83.33
Total	12	100.0

Table 8: Women Empowerment story pictures in Udayavani

The Deccan Herald newspaper published only 2 pictures related to women empowerment news with 16.67 percent.

Newspaper/ Positioning	Yes	No	Total
Deccan Herald	52.94	47.06	100.0
Udayavani	16.67	83.33	100.0

Table 9: Pictures related to Women Empowerment news stories in Regional Press

The Deccan Herald has published 52.94 percent of pictorial coverage to women empowerment news stories during the study period. *Udayavani* has only published 16.67 percent of pictorial coverage to women empowerment news stories during the study period.

5. Discussion

The content analysis of regional press has shown light into various facts about the overall patterns of the news covered by the newspapers on Women empowerment issues. One of the important categories in this analysis is the division of articles according to their page of publication. The newspaper Deccan Herald has published 29.5 percent stories in the front page while *Udayavani* with 25.0 percent of stories. The analysis reveals that all the newspapers has its own agenda by not giving importance to the issue in the editorial page (Deccan Herald with 23.5 percent and *Udayavani* with 8.4 percent). Majority of the stories were published in the inside pages. The newspapers failed in helping shape public opinion on vital issues like women empowerment. The analysis of "letters to

editors' section helped to the come to the point that Deccan Herald daily has carried a letter written by the newspaper reader on women empowerment whereas *Udayvani* daily has not shown any emphasis on the issue, especially in editorial page. *Udayavani* with the least coverage of 8.4 percent on news stories related to women empowerment has proved that less importance is given to issues like this. As far as the placement of news is concerned in terms of placement in a page and length of the story, the newspaper Deccan Herald gave only 29.42 percent of its prime space while major percent of the news stories i.e., 52.94 percent were published in non-prime space. The *Udayavani* published news on the subject with highest i.e. 41.67 percent of their prime space. This clarifies the importance given in terms of placement of stories to women empowerment issues were vernacular language than English language newspapers. The analysis shows that the Deccan Herald published 9 photographs whereas *Udayavani* published only 2 photographs. It shows that Deccan Herald tried to highlight the issue more prominently than that *Udayavani* with better photographic coverage.

The fact that newspapers under study concentrates their attention more on political, governmental and soft news stories and there will be very little attention given to women empowerment issues is corroborated by this study. Further it was found that *Udayavani* devoted comparatively more space than Deccan Herald to women empowerment news. Interestingly, it is found that women empowerment news received more front page coverage in Deccan Herald but not *Udayavani*.

6. Conclusion

The influence of media on human lives is immense and effective. Newspapers being the oldest form of media, it plays an important role is building opinions. It even acts as a tool to bring forth voice of those voiceless people. Even though newspapers are the important source of information, the contribution of press in terms of coverage, news related to women empowerment is very minimal. There is a great need for the coverage of such news which has great influence and impact on all those women who are suffering and also on those who make them suffer. Through newspapers such women who are undergoing violence should be awake and strong enough to fight back against the injustice happening towards them. Newspapers can make a huge difference in covering news related to women empowerment. By making women aware of the developmental actions and events taking place in and around the country, they can be well known of the consequences which they would be facing present and in the future and fight back against the injustice and discrimination against women.

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