Best Practices in Journalism for Reporting on Gender Issues

A Training Manual for
JOURNALISTS

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Disclaimer:

Abbreviations and Acronyms

Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

Gender-based Violence (GBV)

Television (TV)

United Nations (UN)

United Nations for Development Fund (UNDP)

Global Neighbourhood for Media Innovation (GNMI)

Acknowledgements

Preface

Women make half of our population. Despite being in equal number they do not get equal representation at their homes, offices and public places. Media, which is fourth pillar of the state and acts as an opinion maker in the society, portrays women in stereotypical roles that have been in its society for decades. These reporting practices stand in the way of women from getting equal voice and representation in the society.

It is the need of the time that we change the way we report news. Journalists must use gender lens while writing their news or evaluating news worthiness of the events. Women should get equal representation in news reports as sources and subjects of stories. Journalists should interview women experts and commentators to get their opinion on the concerned subject.

Gender-sensitive reporting is not limited to only women journalists. Journalists of any gender can play their role in changing attitudes towards women through their work.

In light of these issues, Global Neighbourhood for Media Innovation conducted trainings for journalists and journalism students on gender-sensitive reporting so they can make their news reports equal and representative for all. This training manual has been designed to provide a curriculum that can be used to train journalists in developing sensitivity towards gender and related issues.

The material included in this manual are intended to be flexible so the training organizations can tailor trainings as per needs and requirements of their participants.

CONTENT

Introduction

One of the most enduring prejudices in most societies is the gender disparity visible in their socio-economic and political spheres of life that limits the opportunities for women to express themselves and their abilities in comparison to men. Media being the fourth pillar of the state enforces gender related stereotypes in the society through its media coverage. Those who work in the media come from the same society with the same set of beliefs about gender. Their beliefs influence how the media reports on, portrays and provides access to women. Therefore, it is very essential for media houses to provide gender training to their staff. These trainings help journalists to understand the attitudes, prejudices, biases and socialization that allow them to recognize and analyze the imbalance of women's voices, as compared to men's voices, in the media. Gender training provides skills and techniques for journalists and editors to analyze facts, issues and data from a gender perspective. This training manual will help organizations that work for media development to train journalists in making their reports gender neutral and sensitized.

Who is this Manual for?

This training manual has been developed for organizations that work for media development, journalists and media trainers who train other journalists, media practitioners and journalism students about gender-sensitive reporting in their specific domains.

This manual can be used in conjunction with other training manuals relevant to the topics covered. This manual serves only as a guide for the trainers. They may add additional information, exercises and appropriate examples for the target audience.

Objective of the Manual

This training manual has following objectives.

- Expand access to information on women's issues and increase capacity of journalists to develop media content with improved and more relevant context.
- Share skills and techniques for effectively reporting on women's issues with journalism and media students and working journalists.

Structure of the Manual

This training manual opens up with an introduction of gender-sensitive reporting followed up by discussion around its need in today's journalism. It throws light on the insensitive language that media uses in its daily coverage and provides substitutes that are more gender neutral in their nature. It also discusses the communication techniques to use while interviewing victims of gender based violence or of any traumatic event. This section ends at two activities to analyze the learning experience of trainees.

The second section of this document discusses gender neutral reporting through blogging and vlogging which are new forms of content creation in journalism industry. It also discusses main blogging platforms with a hint on monetization techniques.

The last part of the manual covers the need of launching digital news startups which are autonomous and independent giving space to journalists to try their hands-on different forms of journalism keeping gender in focus.

This training manual has been crafted keeping in mind the change COVID-19 pandemic brought with it - pushing organizations to take their operations online. The activities and exercises mentioned in this document have two versions: offline and online. The trainers may choose any version of their choice as per the nature of their training session.

Global Neighbourhood for Media Innovation

Global Neighbourhood for Media Innovation (GNMI) is a not for profit organization that promotes innovation, excellence, and leadership in the media industry in Pakistan. It aims to develop an independent, pluralistic, and innovative media that empowers every individual, community, and democracy at all levels. The organization values ethics, skills, and opportunities to support media development, democracy, and diverse communities.

Gender-Sensitive Reporting

Gender-sensitive reporting is a broad term. We first need to explain gender before jumping to gender-sensitive reporting to have clarity on the subject. The word 'gender' is often confused with word 'sex', thus, it is essential to tell the difference between both terms.

## Understanding Difference between Gender and Sex

The words 'sex' and 'gender' are deceptive. They may look simple and straightforward but they are not. Many people confuse the terms gender and sex with each other. Therefore, it is essential to define both terms. Researchers from the field of psychology often define sex as biological aspects of being male and female and gender as behavioral, social and psychological characteristics of men and women assigned to them by the society they are born and raised into (Pryzgoda and Chrisler, 2000).

These definitions might give basic understanding of both terms but these are also not enough. United Nations (UN) defines gender as social attributes and opportunities attached with being male and female and the relationships between women and men and girls and boys, as well as the relations between women and those between men (UN Women). These attributes, opportunities and relationships are socially constructed and are learned through socialization processes. They are context/time-specific and changeable.

We will use this definition of gender for relevant discussion in this document.

Coming to gender-sensitive reporting, media scholars have tried to explain it in their own way. Following figure explains the concept using Who, What, Where, Why and How. (Ramsat)
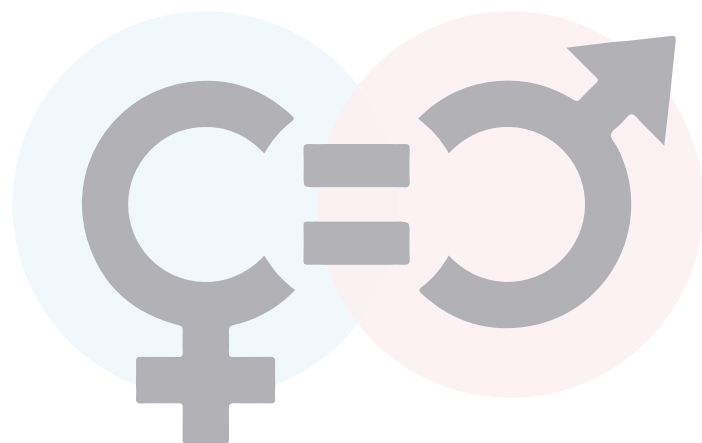
Who

The reporting journalists, editors, editors-in-chief, photographers, managers, board ... Gender is everybody's business.

What

To be sensitive to gender inequalities and portray and treat women and men in a fair and just manner.

How

Achieved through:
selection of sources and stories, fair portrayal of women and men through elimination of stereotypes, use of gender fair language,
promoting gender equality within media organizations

Why

Fair gender portrayal is a professional and ethical aspiration, similar to respect for accuracy, fairness and honesty. It can importantly contribute and co-create more gender balanced and inclusive societies.

Where

On all levels: At the managerial level where the general directions are made, at the editorial department where decisions are taken about stories to be covered, on the field when information is being gathered, at the desk when the information is being selected,

Why We Need Gender-Sensitive Reporting

Media scholars have found that the images and texts produced in traditional media are biased, patriarchal and reinforce male hegemony and control over women's bodies and their minds. The media coverage of women strengthens the existing power structures that prevail in different societies. Media either ignores women in its coverage or shows them as victims of violence, sex objects, passive, dependent, weak and having submissive roles both in their houses and offices. Other than that media also ignores women when it seeks experts for their opinion on the subject of their report. Read a newspaper, watch television or listen to radio for an hour and you will realize the news carry more voices of men than women. Gender-sensitive reporting practices mean covering news through a gender lens, giving equal representation to women in news, and treating women working in media on equal grounds.

Following are a few headlines that were published in mainstream Urdu language newspapers of Pakistan.

بیوی نے آشنا کے ساتھ مل کر شوہر کو قتل کر دیا۔

This is a very typical headline that often appears in Urdu language newspapers. The word 'Aashna' is not a gender-neutral word. Its literal translation in English language is someone familiar or with who one has a connection. Newspapers and TV channels use this word in their news for women who leave or murder their husband after falling in love with another man. Interestingly, they will never use this word in connection with a man.

پاکستان کی اسٹائل آئیکون سیاسی خواتین[1]۔

This is another headline published in a leading Urdu language newspaper objectifying women politicians. The mainstream media has always remained more interested in clothing and style of women politicians than their work. On the other hand, you will never see news on watches, shoes and cars of male politicians. The news media only talks about their work and statements. This pattern of coverage enforces the gender stereotypes about men and women in the society.


[1]https://jang.com.pk/news/474644

عدالت نے ٹینس کی شہزادی ماریہ شراپوا کی سزا دو سال سے کم کے ۱۵ ماہ کردی۔[2]

This headline calls Maria Sharapova 'Tennis ki Shehzadi' which translates to "princess of tennis" in English. It may sound a positive term to the international audience but the punch in it can be understood by those who speak Urdu language. The newspapers do not use same term for men players. They are called champions and superstars but when it comes to women they are labelled as princesses and queens overshadowing their achievements in sports.

برے کام کا برا انجام: پاکستان کی مشہور سٹیج ڈانسر کو گولیوں سے بھون دیا گیا، ہلاکت نے ڈرامہ انڈسٹری میں صف ماتم بچھا دیا۔[3]

This highly biased headline judges the career choice of a woman. The term "stage dancer" is not a gender-neutral term; the news media uses it for the women who work in stage dramas. On the other hand, their counterparts are called stage artists or comedians. This headline is a perfect example of how media tells people to think about a specific group.

Even the pictures and advertisements that published in news media are not gender-neutral. These pictures show men in dominant roles, holding executive positions, doing tough jobs while the women are shown in submissive roles, holding junior positions, working in domestic settings or as an object to grab attention of the target audience towards the subject. This following ad was published on front pages of newspapers of Pakistan.

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[2] https://urdu.shafaqna.com/?lang=UR&cou=PK&id=294428
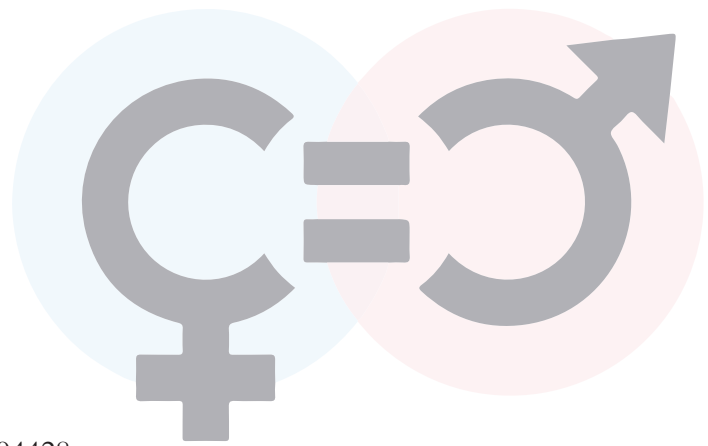
[3] https://hassannisar.pk/showbiz_104233.html

The ad shows an Indian actress Nargis Fakhri with a mobile set which was supposed to be the highlight of the advertisement but the main attraction of the advertisement is the actress herself. The placement of the ad also brought a lot of outrage to the newspapers. Normally, the front page is dedicated to hard news – politics and crime. Placement of this ad rose serious questions on their advertisement policies.

Following pictures from an earthquake hit area were published in national newspapers of Pakistan. These pictures from an earthquake hit area were published in an English language newspaper in Pakistan. The gender difference is quite visible here. Men are shown performing duties related to rehabilitation and women are shown sitting under a tree or involved in household chores. Men are usually shown calm and quite in these situations, even at funerals. However, the women are shown in grief, crying with their hands beating their chests.

Figure 1: The army officers are shifting aid for victims in a helicopter
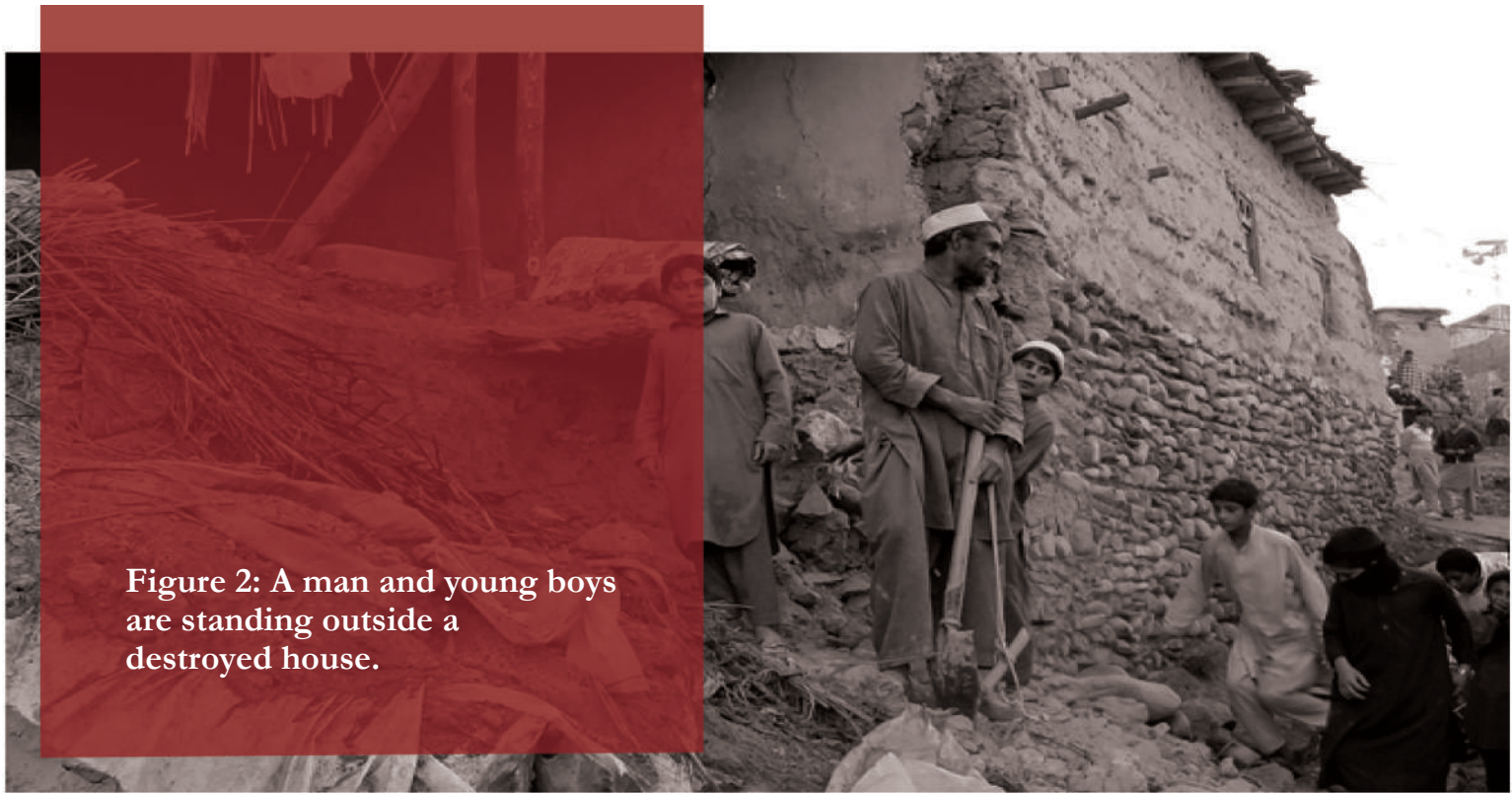
Figure 2: A man and young boys are standing outside a destroyed house.

Figure 3: Women and children are sitting in despair under shadow of a tree.

Figure 4: A woman is giving bath to her child outside her wrecked house.

Figure 5: Men are offering funeral prayer for a deceased.

Five Principles of Gender-Sensitive Reporting

Following are key principles of gender-sensitive reporting that journalists must follow in their work.

1. Balance the presence of women and men in media coverage to mirror the society, human experiences, actions, views and concerns.

2. Avoid gender stereotypes that do not mirror the world and its possibilities and perpetuate a bi-dimensional portray of the society.

3. Weigh the representation of women and men, making sure to give equal voice to women, including as experts, in often male-dominated areas – such as politics, government, economic, business, war, conflicts, science, technology and sports.

4. Use gender-sensitive language.

5. Cover gender equality issues and discussions as an important and integral part of the media coverage because media act as a watchdog of society.

Please refer to following pictures to see the difference in their approach towards gender representation.

Figure 6: A couple is crying on murder of a Pakistani girl in Texas shooting

Grief and pain are common to all and not restricted to one gender. If media has to show grief of the people, it should not limit it to one gender. It not only portrays women as the weaker gender but also dismisses feelings of men.

what makes the difference?

PIA'S PEOPLE

Pakistan International Airline (PIA) published this ad in its golden time. It carries a group picture of air-hostesses in their uniform. The writing following it talks about their professionalism and commitment to the company which company cares. The women can be seen smiling, having different styles of hair which were considered modern at that time. This advertisement was published in all newspapers of Pakistan. The point to remember is that it was produced by PIA, not by newspapers. They just published it on their pages as a paid advertisement. What we learn from this advertisement is that not only mainstream media but also the companies that buy advertisement space in media, public relation companies and advertising agencies must be gender neutral in their approach and work. Media should also develop guidelines and policies about what kind of work it should carry on behalf of other organizations.

Besides visuals, the media also use words and phrases in its reporting and coverage that strengthen bias towards gender. United Nations for Development Fund (UNDP) has given some examples of gender-biased media content and their gender-neutral substitutes in the following table.

Gender Biased	Gender -sensitive
Social Good Summit attendees and their wives are invited.	Social Good Summit attendees and their partners are invited.
Ahmed and Sara both have full time jobs; he helps her with the housework.	Ahmed and Sara both have full time jobs; they share the housework.
Research scientists often neglect their wives and children.	Research scientists often neglect their families.
The average construction worker is experiencing impacts on his health due to hazardous working conditions by the age of 35 years.	Recent research reviled that construction workers are experiencing impact s on their health due to hazardous working conditions by the age of 35 years.
The policy manual states that the Deputy Resident Representative attends every Project Appraisal Committee meeting at his Country Office.	The policy manual states that the Deputy Resident Representative attends every Project Appraisal Committee meeting at the Country Office.

Similarly, the media should also be careful while writing titles, labels, and individuals' names in its coverage. The media often mentions the gender of women while mentioning their titles. This practice must discontinue.

Gender biased	Gender-sensitive
Salesman / saleswoman	Sales clerk; sales person; sales representative
Career woman	Professional; executive; business person
Stewardess; waitress	Flight attendant; waiter / server
Male nurse	Nurse
Spokesman	Spokesperson

Activity No. 1:
Building Gender Awareness Among Participants

The moderator will read a few statements about gender and common ideas surrounding it. After each statement, the participants will give their views on it.

List of Statements

1. The most important goal of women's development is for women to attain economic autonomy.

2. What a woman was wearing at the time of her assault determines what happened to her.

3. We should not support the development of an autonomous women's movement because it is divisive (Aurat March).

4. Domestic violence is an issue that only NGOs should address.

5. Supporting the development of a traditional woman's skill (sewing, cooking etc.) is an effective strategy for empowering women.

6. Workplaces should cater to a woman's specific needs, like providing daycares for working mothers.

7. It is for women to decide about their fertility and reproduction.

8. We should target our development aid to the family. It is the best way to ensure that the benefits reach all members.

9. Job roles should be clearly defined for women and men where one cannot do the other.

10. Should minor and the families of traumatic incidents are interviewed for news stories?

It is a useful activity for bringing about strong views and provoking open discussion on gender. Allow plenty of time for debate and exploration regarding these statements. The statements themselves can be altered to suit the situation and environment as the trainer sees fit.

Objective

- To start a discussion on critical topics related to gender.

Methodology for Offline Setting

Draw five smileys on separate pieces of paper or take out their prints. These smileys should represent five sentiments of strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree and strongly disagree. Paste these papers with the help of double side tape on different walls of the room.

Make sure each paper is within reach of the participants. Ask the participants to gather in the middle of the room. Explain the activity to them. Read the statement one by one with an interval of three minutes. After each statement, the participants will go to the wall with a smiley expression of their opinion on the statement. The moderator will count the response on each statement, followed up by a brief discussion.

(The Oxfam Gender Training Manual, 1994)

Time Required	**Material Required**
30 Minutes	Papers and pens or Smiley prints, Double-sided tape

Methodology for Online Setting

Choose five smileys representing five sentiments of strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree and strongly disagree. Explain the activity to the participants. Read the statements one by one with an interval of three minutes. The participants will post the smiley of their choice in the chat option of the software. The moderator will review the chat after one minute and count all smileys representing different opinions on the statement. The moderator will then do a brief discussion with the participants on the statement.

Time Required	**Material Required**
30 Minutes	Internet

Activity No. 2:
Analyze Media Content through a Gendered Lens

Objective

- To enable participants to change their perspective while consuming news.
- To help them understand perspective of women and their lives.

Methodology for Offline Setting

The moderator will ask a few questions to the participants about the podcast and the gender related issue it covered. For example, the moderator may ask following questions about above mentioned podcast.

Brohi has an unusual mindset — for example, she says that "the best part of poverty was I got to have a great childhood." What does she mean by this? What does it reveal about her?

What impact did Brohi's father have on her life? Are such fathers unusual?

Brohi distinguishes between village life, "where women had jobs," and city life where girls had "less life … they had to ask permission for everything." Is this accurate? Is it surprising? Why?

Could you see yourself using a Q&A format like this when blogging/vlogging for a story about gender/difficult subjects? What are the up/downsides? How might this work for you?

Despite her sense of humor, Brohi's memoir is about the honor killing of her 16-year-old cousin. One review describes the book as revealing "the hard work of changing minds." Based on what you've heard, how do you think Brohi will go about doing this? What kind of storyteller will she be?

What makes this podcast an example of solutions journalism?

The participants can take a few minutes to think. The moderator will choose a few participants at the end of the activity who will share their answers with the whole group.

Time Required	Material Required
15 Minutes	Papers, pens, Multimedia, Podcast, speaker

Methodology for Online Setting

The moderator will explain the activity to the participants. The moderator will share their screen with the session and will play the podcast. Make sure there is no technical glitch, and each participant can listen to the podcast. The moderator will ask a few questions to the group about the podcast. The participants will be given two minutes to think and respond. The participants will use the hand raise function of the software to get permission to share their responses with the session.

Time Required	Material Required
01 Hour	Zoom or any other video conference software, internet access and podcast

Basics of Reporting On or Interviewing Survivor of Trauma or Gender-Based Violence

"Were you raped during the war?" A foreign journalist asked this question to the Liberian peace activist Leymah Gbowee who was later awarded Nobel Peace Prize winner in 2011. The journalist was disappointed when she said no. Her answer made her no longer of any interest for the journalist. This example shows the lack of gender sensitivity in the traditional media system, which is male-dominated. Besides learning about gender, the journalists should also know how to interview victims of conflict or trauma. Please refer to the following guidelines while interviewing victims of conflict or trauma.

❯ Resist the urge to say, "I understand how you feel: No matter how much you have prepared for an interview, you do not "get it" or "understand" what a source has been through.

❯ Use the term "trauma survivor" rather than "trauma victim: Special care and increased ethical sensitivity.

❯ Respect a potential interviewee's right to say no: Do not argue.

❯ A safe space/privacy to discuss individual trauma: Do not exploit or belittle trauma survivors if they open up to you. If you have earned their trust, keep it. In sexual violence/rape cases, blur faces do not reveal identity.

❯ Listen a little harder: Observe facial expressions and body language. The time for a journalist to process an interview's personal impact is after it is complete, away from the interviewee.

❯ Be careful of asking "why" questions: Trauma is often associated with high degrees of self-blame, guilt and shame. For this reason, avoid language that might imply the interviewee is responsible in some way.

❯ Speculation has no place in trauma reporting: Utilize information, data, resources and various experiences wisely to provide you with insight and to ensure you are reporting the truth — not how things appear at first glance.

- Look beyond the trauma: A person is more than just a singular event. Explore the survivor's story with the same care, attention to detail and respect that you would want if roles were reversed.

- Thank the survivor for sharing their story.

Activity Number 3:
Trauma Reporting

Objective

To analyze the understanding of trauma and its coverage related responsibility and sensitivity among the participants.

Methodology for Offline Setting

The moderator will explain the activity to the participants of the training program. The participants will be divided into smaller groups, each consisting for three to four participants. The moderator will allow each group to choose one case study of recent traumatic incidents involving women. The participants will be required to prepare a news report on the case study. They could assign different roles to each other depending upon their experiences and interests. At the end of this time, the participants will be encouraged to present their work in front of whole session.

Time Required	Material Required
01 Hour	Papers and Pens

Methodology for Online Setting

The methodology for the online setting will remain the same as of offline setting. The only difference would be assigning breakout rooms to the groups. To do so, you will require the business services of Zoom. Video sharing platform allows its premium subscribers to split a Zoom meeting into small groups of a few people where it is easier to communicate. The participants will receive a notification from joining their respective breakout room to have their privacy required for discussion without disturbing other participants.

Time Required	**Material Required**
30 Minutes	Zoom with a business plan, Internet

The moderators could choose these case studies or any of their choice.

First Case Study

Balochistan University harassment case

- The Federal Investigative Agency has started investigations on an alleged sexual harassment case reported in Balochistan's biggest university, University of Balochistan (Quetta).
- The university's teacher union has alleged that the sexual harassment is not limited to students only in fact the academic faculty has often faced harassment and blackmail from certain quarters.
- A high ranked source in the FIA Quetta said that the investigations started after the Balochistan High Court notice took notice of several untoward incidents.
- The FIA in raids at the university's hostels and security branch at the Saryab road found hidden cameras from the restrooms, sources said.
- Balochistan University administration denies the involvement of its staffers in the alleged organized sexual harassment prevalent in the campus, calls it propaganda against its success.
- The student leaders have alleged that they have been approached by female students, claiming that they have been repeatedly harassed by the teachers, adding that the govt has not given the issue required consideration.

Second Case study

Rawalpindi Rape Case

- A young woman accused three police officers and one civilian of gang-rape that took place in a private housing society at 2AM — around sehri time — as per the FIR filed two days after the alleged attack.
- Three police officers were among the four sexual predators, she alleged.
- A lady doctor observed that there were three scratches on the survivor's body as well as bite marks on her left arm. The rape did in fact take place in her opinion, the doctor added. The forensic agency's request for more samples includes the woman's washed clothes..

- The accused including three police constables and a driver were presented before a duty magistrate today. The accused are: Muhammad Naseer, Rashid Minhas, Muhammad Azeem and Amir.
- Mazhar Iqbal, the superintendent of police (SP) for Saddar Rawalpindi, also commented on the matter. He said all three police officers had been fired over the gang-rape case.
- Speaking in Rawalpindi, Iqbal added that while the girl had rescinded her statement from the court of her own will, the police stood with her. He said they had not yet received a DNA report of the young woman.
- "Police does not have any space for 'black sheep'," he said, adding that police have made true on all legal duties they were bound to, arrested the four suspects, and all of them were behind the bars

Third Case Study

Karachi Rape Case

- The police arrested four suspects, including two policemen, for allegedly raping a woman in North Karachi's area of the metropolis, officials said.
- Six men allegedly raped the woman and two of them were serving police constables posted in
- separate areas.
  "She visited the police station with her husband and made a complaint against six men. She knew four men very well with their names and profession, but did not recognise the remaining two. According to the details of the FIR, all six men stormed into her house on the afternoon of Sept 26 when she was alone in her home and her husband was at work," a policeman informed on the condition of anonymity.
- The woman was subjected to sexual assault by the suspects, who also made a video of the incident with their mobile phones, said the police complaint.
- "The medico-legal report of the victim is expected in a day or two which will further set the course of future probe," the police official added.
- The arrested persons include Danish, Sarfaraz, Razzak, Naeem and Kamran.
- The accused persons have confessed their crime, claimed officials.

Fourth Case study

Couple arrested for raping, filming minor girls

- Police on Saturday arrested a couple for sexually assaulting minor girls and filming their explicit videos to blackmail them.
- According to City Police Officer (CPO) Muhammad Faisal Rana, the suspects, a man and his wife, confessed to raping as many as 45 minors and filming their heinous acts.
- Videos of 10 minor girls and thousands of nude photographs were recovered from the suspects' custody, he said, adding that the couple in question used to sell the explicit videos and photographs to pornography websites for a large sum of money.
- The CPO further said the computer used by the suspects has been sent for forensic analysis to confirm the suspects' links with the websites where they uploaded the nude videos.
- "There could be two motives: first, to blackmail the victims to get money; second, to supply videos of young girls to international sex traders and bloggers," the CPO said, adding that the forensic examination of the computer would offer more information into the matter.
- Police officials further said the wife of the main accused assisted him in filming the trapped girls. The couple was tracked and arrested following a complaint lodged by a girl with the CPO Rawalpindi.
- According to the police, the girl, who is a student of MSc, said in her statement that the couple lured her into their car and took her to a house where she was raped and filmed.

Practical Strategies for Gender-Sensitive Reporting

Journalists working on gender and related issues must follow following strategies to produce authentic reports safely.

- Learn the language: Look for journalism resources that will help you approach gender in a professional (and ever-evolving) way.
- Set a metric: Challenge yourself to include one or more women in every story, no matter what it's about. Try writing a story that is not about women using male sources only. Try writing a story about men that uses female sources only.

- ❯ Add a beat: No matter what else you cover, add a side beat or issue that disproportionately affects women or interests women where you live, for example, COVID, food insecurity, arts, education. The sources you develop here will extend into your other work.

- ❯ Write fast: Blogs, vlogs, social media for news that can be told briefly and in a timely way. Break stories into smaller pieces that reduce risk but build audience. For example, Check out this IJNet tip sheet on Instagram stories

- ❯ Write slow: Do longer, in-depth stories where you intentionally assume more risk, interview more sources and provide more content/background. Kindly check how to apply for a grant/get mentored at the Solutions Journalism network

- ❯ Write safe: Create a policy to provide anonymity and safety for your sources/yourself. Join a group that can mentor and support you. Women journalists can report harassment related complaints to the Coalition for Women in Journalism

Checklist for Detecting and Avoiding Gender Insensitive Reporting

- • Who are the sources of the reports?
- • How many sources are government and corporate officials?
- • How many belong to the progressive, public interest groups?
- • How many sources are women?
- • How many sources are from minority groups?
- • From whose point of view is the news reported?
- • In whose interest does the report serve?
- • Does this interest coincide with that of the government?

[4] https://ijnet.org/en/story/tips-journalists-using-instagram-stories

[5] https://www.solutionsjournalism.org/hub/finish-your-story

- Does it coincide with that of the corporate world?
- Is the report in the public's interest? Which public?
- Are there double standards in the news report?
- Is there contradictory double standard?
- Are stereotypes used in the news report?
- How is one group portrayed in the story?
- Is this group always associated with certain characteristics?
- Is loaded language used?
- Is the language objective enough to not sway public opinion?
- Is the language objective enough so the public can form its/ own opinions?
- Is the report contextualized?
- Is the story put in context so the public can form its own opinions?
- Does the graphics used match the content?
- Do the images and illustrations used contradict the content?
- Do they lead the public to understand the story content differently?

Activity No. 4:
Finding Female Sources

Objective

- To give journalists time to think about the way they chose their sources
- To help them look for women voices around them

Methodology for Offline Setting

The moderator will explain the activity to the trainees. Divide participants into smaller groups, each group consisting of three to four participants. The trainees will create a list of female sources who can comment on various topics, e.g., coronavirus and COVID. Tell them to include health experts, government, religious or other leaders, community voices, women with compelling professional or lived experience. The groups can take 5 minutes to compile their list of sources. The participants will share their list of sources with the whole class at the end of the activity.

Time Required	Material Required
10 Minutes	Papers and Pens

Methodology for Online Setting

The methodology for the online setting will remain the same as of offline setting. The moderator can assign breakout rooms to each group for discussion. Participants can go into their respective breakout rooms for five minutes before returning to the main session for discussion.

Time Required	Material Required
10 Minutes	Zoom with a business plan, Internet

Reporting GBV and Gender Issues through Blogging/Vlogging

The blog has appeared as an effective form of media content on digital platforms. The word "Blog" is an abbreviated version of "weblog" that is used to define those websites which publish an ongoing chronicle of information (Introduction to Blogging, 2019). Blogs can discuss a variety of subjects ranging from personal tales to political drama to sports to entertainment. On the other hand, a vlog is a blog in a short video format. For example, a girl shooting herself on her trip to Malaysia showing details of her trip to her audience is an example of a travel vlog. Like blogging, anyone can use a basic knowledge of producing catchy content, handling a camera, and video-editing. Vloggers are described as people who mostly produce a series of videos on a specific category, such as food, culture, current affairs, makeup, or cooking.

Blogging also opened a new arena for women from developing countries like Pakistan. These women used blogging to speak about a variety of subjects. They also used this form of communication to start their own income, ultimately making them independent and stronger. If we talk specifically about Pakistan, several women bloggers started from scratch, built their blog website, and made a name for themselves. Marjan Arbab is one of those names. She started her blog when she was a student. Years later, she was the most famous female bloggers in Pakistan.

Go to Instagram or YouTube, and you will find dozens of accounts documenting the life and thoughts of Pakistani women breaking barriers and stereotypes altogether.

A decade ago, the bloggers would develop their own blog website to share their thoughts about a subject with their audience. Now, several news giants have included blogs into their websites that publish the work of renowned bloggers. It indicates the value blogging has earned over time. It also shows the power digital media holds in shaping the way mainstream media used to work traditionally.

Some of the well-known blogs with wide readerships are The Huffington Post, TechCrunch, Gawker, and Mashable (which recently launched in Pakistan). These media startups first started as blog websites, for example, TechCrunch and Mashable. Over time, these websites transformed into news outlets covering issues that would not get coverage in mainstream media. Blogging and Vlogging allow journalists to play around with different topics. They can cover stories from politics to sports to entertainment to social issues to viral social media posts in their blogs or vlogs depending on what suits the liking of their target audience.

While blogging is mainly informal but if a journalist wishes to report through their blog or vlog, they must follow the same journalistic ethics that they follow in their news reports for mainstream media. The first rule includes the '5 Ws' and '1 H' (who, what, when, where, and why; How) in their blogs to give a clear picture of the topic to their audience. Copyright and plagiarism rules also apply in the same way. The content must be original with authentic sources, and necessary steps need to be taken if the content is being reproduced. This includes proper citations of publications, sources of images, videos, or any other multimedia used.
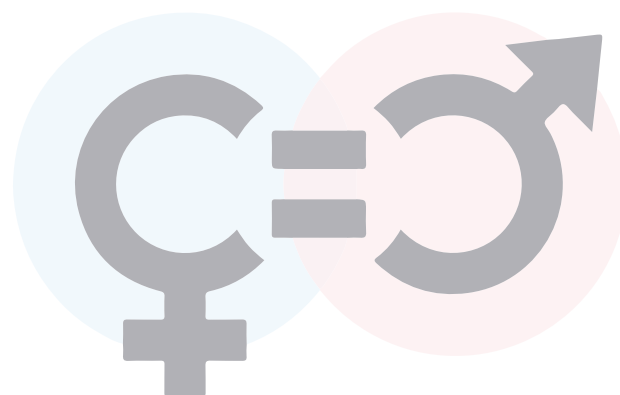
Blogging and Vlogging in Pakistan

Much like in global digital spaces, blogging and vlogging in Pakistan are also done in various categories. Over the years, many foods, lifestyle and current affairs blogs started by Pakistanis have garnered many subscribers. Some of them include current affairs blogs such as HumSub, news and technology blogs like ProPakistani and TechCrunch, food blogs/vlogs like Girl Gotta Eat, travel and daily life blog like Irfan Junejo, travel blogs like Girl with Green Passport and feminist/gender vlogs like Kanwalful/Conversations with Kanwal.

Girl with green passport

IRFAN JUNEJO

Kitchen with Amna

Many homemakers from Pakistan run their own YouTube channels covering their kitchen routine or daily life routine. Most of these women reside in other countries, which has given them the liberty to share their personal life online without facing any judgment from their families. Women living in Pakistan also run their vlogs, but their number is not that big at the moment. The channel "Kitchen with Amna" is one such example. With more than three million subscribers on YouTube, she earns a decent amount every month from the video-sharing platform. Her success pushed her brother, sister, husband and few members of her husband's family to start their own YouTube channels.

Naya Daur is another news outlet that has garnered a significant following and credibility in the past year and routinely publishes opinion pieces and commentary by experts and common citizens. Dawn, Express Tribune, Dunya, Samaa and other national-level media houses also run a special blog section on their websites. Journalists who wish to make their entry into blogging can either work with these organizations or start their own blog. Considering the popularity of such platforms that have become household names in the country, talking about gender-based violence and gender issues such as women empowerment through such platforms would create a larger impact and key advocacy messages reaching to massive audience, ultimately creating a wave of awareness among viewers/readers/subscribers.

Platforms for Blogging

There are three major platforms that can be used to start a blog: WordPress, Blogger and Medium. Users can create free accounts and also purchase domains for specific packages. Some of the important factors that can make a blog or vlog useful are:

- Catchy blog names and description of the content a user can expect on it
- Quality content
- Regular updates and blogposts
- Engagement with the audience by replying to reader's comments
- Use of pictures and visuals to make it more eye-catching
- Social media accounts for the blog
- Track analytics to see which posts receive the most hits or shares

Other than these platforms, you may also use social media channels solely to launch your blog or vlog. The bloggers/vloggers first make their identity on social media and then develop their own website on any of the aforementioned platforms. They use their social media presence to get traffic on their website or use their website as a resource point for their audience. Mostly, women use Instagram for blogging as it gives them the liberty to keep their space safe and secure. They make use of the story feature of Instagram in combination with the feed option to share their content. Recently, journalist Sahar Habib Ghazi started her blog on parenting and adulating on Instagram.

Platforms for Vlogging

For vlogging, YouTube is the most popular as it is also a major search engine. Besides, Facebook videos and Facebook Live are popular among people and can be used for journalism too. Independent and BBC are also using the live function on Facebook and Twitter to cover important events of public interest. Lifestyle bloggers and celebrities mostly use Instagram and its live option to give their audience a glimpse of their life and activities. For breaking or important news that needs to be or has the potential to go viral, the content can be shared via videos or a thread on Twitter. Like a digital news outlet, the blogs and vlogs also need to be shared on social media platforms to maximize followers and readership. Appropriate hashtags and terms should be used on Twitter and Facebook when sharing content.

Monetizing Content

Independent blogging and vlogging is an excellent way to share your opinion and thoughts with a larger audience but can it help you generate money? Yes, it can. Many bloggers/vloggers and independent journalists earn thousands of dollars every month from their blog or Vlog. Everyone has their own success story, but the common elements are original content, hard work, and consistency. As mentioned in the above section, monetization of a blog or a vlog adds to the independence and freedom of a woman blogger/vlogger. Its value increases in those areas where women do not have many opportunities or do not have permission to go out of their house for work. They can use their talent and skills to start their own blog from the comfort of their home.
With global digitization in all areas, there has been a shift in advertising patterns too.

TV and print journalism are no longer the top or only choices for advertisers globally; however, in Pakistan, the trend has not taken up fully yet, and TV remains the most accessible. Nevertheless, products and companies have a dedicated staff for digital marketing to reach a wider and increasingly diverse audience.

New and independent news outlets can sustain or earn their businesses by hunting for ads from such companies. Digital outlets are also employing "sponsored posts," posted on their websites on a regular article placement but are labeled sponsored posts.

The most common and reliable way to earn is through Google AdSense. Users can create an account, choose from various setting the types of ads and other details that most suits their website and content. Facebook Audience Network can also be used to monetize videos and content posted on Facebook.

YouTube Monetization

YouTube is the best option for freelance journalists and content creators to earn through their content using this video-based platform. YouTube reviews channels before approving their content for monetization on its platform. This review process continues even after the first approval to make sure the content creators are adhering to the policies and guidelines of the platform.

To set up a channel for monetization on YouTube, one needs to join the YouTube partner program and meet its requirements. Once it is done, the creators can activate monetization on their videos to start earning revenue through Google Adsense.

The following are the primary requirements of this program.

- Adhere to all policies of the YouTube Partner Program.
- Live in a country or region where the YouTube Partner Program is available.
- Have more than 4,000 public watch hours in the last year.
- Have more than 1,000 subscribers.
- Have a linked Google AdSense account

YouTube also monitors channels after this approval to make sure those are not violating community policies. It automatically removes channels from its partner program if it finds them violating its policies.

YouTube monetization is based on the number of views – more views will generate more money. Companies also create advertisements that get placed at the beginning of their videos. These are called pre-roll ads. Each time a viewer watches an ad all the way through, it adds into the account of the content creator.

YouTube offers the following options to earn money through videos.
- Advertising revenues
- Channel memberships
- Merch shelf
- Super chat and super sticker
- YouTube premium revenue

Activity No. 1:
Produce a Blog or Vlog with a Specific Focus on Gender Neutral Language

Objective

- To give participants a hands-on experience of blogging and vlogging in the training session.
- To analyze their understanding of the session.

Methodology for Offline Setting

After explaining the activity to the participants, divide them into small groups, ideally in four-member groups. Give each group a case study to produce their blog or vlog around it with gender-neutral and sensitive language and approach. The participants will have to produce the blog and the vlog in the reporting style and use appropriate journalist language.

In the end, each group will present their blog or vlog in front of the whole session with an explanation of the role of each member of the group.

The trainer will then provide feedback on the work and encourage participants to share what they may or may not have learned from the activity.

Time Required	Material Required
30 Minutes	Paper sheets and pens

Methodology for Online Setting

The online setting will use the same methodology as above. The only difference will be the allotment of breakout rooms on video conference software. The business services of Zoom allow the host to breakout a larger group into smaller ones. The moderator can assign breakout rooms to each group to work together on their blog or Vlog.

Time Required	Material Required
30 Minutes	Zoom with a business plan, Internet

Building a Digital News Startup

Digital news startups or outlets use the internet to distribute news and editorial content to a diverse audience. It also allows entrepreneurs to own their work and enjoy the autonomy and control that come with it. It gives more independence to women who find more difficulties than men in finding opportunities and excelling in their careers. We have many prominent examples from Pakistan who started their work independently using digital platforms of their choice and established their own brand. Take the example of Anita Jalil, who belongs to Gwadar, Balochistan. She is the first vlogger from Gwadar, that too a woman, who is using her channel to show the beauty of her area to the world. She uses her channel to document her daily life and different sites of Gwadar. Many international media houses have made reports on her work.

The entrepreneurs who wish to make their entry into the digital world may choose any platform on the internet depending on the characteristics of their audience to launch their startups. They make use of the different functions of the selected platform to create content that not only meets its needs but also of their niche.

Mainstream media limit options of journalists in content creation. A print media journalist can only write a news story, feature or opinion writer. If they have to reference any previous story, they cannot hyperlink it in their text. They have to explain it in a sentence or two to give their audience a brief background. Journalism on digital platforms works differently from traditional forms of journalism for a different audience with different needs and characteristics. The news on digital platforms can be presented solely or in combination as text, audio, pictures, videos or gifs.

Understanding Niche

Niche is a smaller audience with a shared interest or belief. It is a smaller subset of the broad, generalized audiences targeted by more mainstream journalistic organizations. They are currently not being served well and have unmet needs. For example, women who enjoy sports or 20 to 30-year-olds who are interested in fashion or people interested in farming and agriculture.

Niche audiences are often not served by the mainstream media. In its effort to be broad and general, the media overlooks many people, and it reports on some parts of the population, whether it be women or racial or religious minorities, by "othering" them.

Traditionally, newspapers would produce women's pages every week, but most of the content of these pages was either about cooking recipes or beauty tips enforcing traditional gender roles assigned to women. Then came TV channels with their morning shows intended to entertain homemakers who have free mornings after sending their husbands and children to their offices and schools etc. These shows adopted the same approach as of the newspapers. The morning show host would invite a guest typically from entertainment industry and ask them questions related to their domestic and professional life. The show will also have a cooking and a beauty segment. Later, these shows started celebrating festivities mainly marriages and its different functions. It means women have very limited options available when it comes to media content produced for consumer consumption.

Digital news startups can take advantage of this situation by targeting women with varied needs and tastes in media content. Former journalist and feminist Sabahat Zakariya chose a similar approach.

She started a Facebook page in 2018 and named it "feminustani". Traditional media in Pakistan has its own agenda when it comes to feminism and women rights movement. Their hunger for rating is bigger than their role that demands them to educate their audience about the concepts. Zakariya uses her page to upload videos explaining various concepts around feminism in the simplest way possible. She also has an Instagram account and YouTube channel. Although Zakariya is not very regular in posting content on her channels, however, she gained visibility based on the quality of her content. It supports the fact that marginalized groups that do not get much media attention would turn to digital media to have their needs served.

Establishing a News Startup

Those women and individuals from minority groups who wish to launch their own setups online struggle with getting the required information. Sadly, our universities still do not teach digital media basics and how it can be used in journalism. Establishing a news startup on digital platforms with a sustainable future requires a steady business plan, consistent hard work and patience. The whole process can be divided into six stages, starting from planning the news startup to thinking like a startup to picking the right platforms and toolbox to ensure digital security and the big launch.

Planning For a News Startup

The first step in launching a news startup is planning. In this phase, one must have clarity on which kind of media products and services they would be throwing in the market and at what pace and for whom? They will also have to develop a clear timeline and roadmap of their plan of action to keep themselves focused on turning their business idea into a sustainable business model. This stage also requires the entrepreneurs to develop a revenue plan and team building. It may sound a little technical to some women, and they may leave their idea of starting a startup but do not do that. Several women entrepreneurs have launched their own startups, and they have been working successfully. Most of them are also happy to share their experience with other women who may wish to follow their path. You need to reach out to them to get the support you need. There are also videos of entrepreneurs available on YouTube for motivation. You may watch those for a more precise idea. Remember to do your research before taking any step.

Thinking like a Startup

Starting with a blank slate is important to launch a digital venture. The same techniques that big companies have used in their business strategy do not need to work for your venture. Each business model has different needs and approaches that must be dealt with differently. Mostly, startups are considered a man thing, but in reality, they are gender-neutral. There are many women-led startups in journalism and outside of it. A profitable startup with a bright future requires an entrepreneurial mindset that is not limited to any gender.

 If we talk about journalism or media-related startups, several women are running successful ventures impacting society. Take the example of Conversations with Kanwal - a feminist show on YouTube that tells tales of women from Pakistan. The show's basic concept is to unwrap stories of common women who had been let down by the deeply-rooted patriarchy in society. The format of the show is quite simple. There are a host and a guest. The host introduces the guest to the audience before asking them to tell their story. This show has successfully produced two seasons and its third season is all set to go on air soon. Similarly, other women entrepreneurs can also launch their news startups on any social media platform of their choice.

Important Questions to Ask Before Establishing A News Set Up

❯ What is your journalism about? What is your specialty?

❯ Can your work accommodate other women who may be looking for work or a platform   to share their voices and concerns on?

❯ What niche audience are you targeting? Where and how can you reach them? Why are their needs unmet or underserved?

❯ What innovative formats are you using to reach this audience?

❯ What are your monetization methods?

Picking the Right Platform

Not every business model is meant for every platform on the internet. Each media startup has its own specifications that can meet only by specific platforms. For example, if one is interested in making podcasts, YouTube would be better for them. If one would like to build a community, they can choose Facebook to do so. The entrepreneurs can also choose a combination of platforms for their startups, depending on their need.

What are Digital Platforms?

Digital platforms can be defined as two-sided networks on the internet that allow an interdependent group of users to interact with each other in multiple forms (Asadullah and Kankanhalli, 2018). These platforms are getting popular with the masses because they are interactive, diverse, easy to access, low cost, and trendy. These platforms can be divided into different categories based on the services they provide. Some of the categories are:

- Social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram
- Knowledge platforms such as Yahoo and Quora
- Media sharing platforms such as YouTube, Spotify and TikTok
- Service oriented platforms such as Uber, Airbnb and Amazon

Taking Your Startup on Social Media

Conjunction of social media platforms can help companies and businesses in reaching a bigger audience. The users on social networking sites are connected in a way that can generate traffic on external platforms and get more views and reactions to the content. When a content creator posts its content on social networking sites, the users who are directly in contact can see it. They can choose to share that content with their contacts. Twitter allows users to retweet the content or sends it directly to share it with their contacts. Facebook allows sharing on timelines, pages, groups and messenger of their contacts. Digital news ventures mostly use their social networking platforms to generate traffic on their websites.

Entrepreneurs have their Facebook pages where they share their content, Facebook groups that they use to build their community, Instagram profiles where they share more than their work and YouTube channels that give their audience a real-time experience of their work and life.

Online Business Models

With an increase in online readership and content consumption, it would seem that online journalism is thriving. Advertisers have new forms of advertisements which were not possible to implement before. They can modify their campaigns based on online reader behavior and measure their effectiveness with unprecedented accuracy. The new model of business on internet is threatening the legacy business model of mainstream media which are now struggling with managing their finances. The digital news startups are paving the way with disruptive businesses whose success depends on the capacity for exponential Internet market growth.

The digital platforms have also opened new ways for women to earn money especially for those living in developing countries. Women are mainly considered responsible for the care work at home which is unpaid and not appreciated. If they wish to do job for their personal satisfaction or to support their family, they have to go out of their house, which makes many uncomfortable. Many women do not get into professional world because of this concern. Digital media has brought them an opportunity to start their work from comfort of their home. Many big companies have also moved online permanently post COVID-19 which means more opportunities for those who prefers to work from home.

Internet provides information that is abundant, long lasting and largely free to consume for the audience. With this concept in mind, entrepreneurs in digital journalism require business models that meet requirements of the audience along with generating stable income stream for themselves. A successful business model creates revenue for an organization while providing values for consumers. There is no difference in which model any gender prefers. It entirely depends on your liking and business. See which model will suit your business the best and use it to earn revenue.

The online news startups follow different ways to earn revenue from their products or services. These models can be divided into three categories.

❯ Scale Dependent and Ad Supported

❯ Subscription Dependent and Ad Supported

❯ Digital Niche Publications

Social media platforms also offer different options for monetization of content on their channel. Entrepreneurs use combination of platforms to push their content online, earning through each platform. The monetization on digital platforms requires a refreshed mindset that can understand and make use of different choices of their consumers.

Activity No. 1:
Drafting Plan of a News Startup

Objective

• To give trainees an understanding of the planning phase of news start-up

Methodology for Offline Setting

Divide the participants into three groups, ideally of three or four-person. Ask them to draft their news startup plan on the set template specifying the name, short description, and niche and business model with business model end, each group will make a presentation in front of the whole session. The moderator will give their feedback at the end of the activity for further improvement.

Time Required	**Material Required**
30 Minutes	Startup template, papers and pens

Methodology for Online Setting

The online setting will use the same methodology as above. The only difference will be the allotment of breakout rooms on video conference software. The business services of Zoom allow the host to breakout a larger group into smaller ones. The moderator can assign breakout rooms to each group.

Time Required	**Material Required**
30 Minutes	Zoom with a business plan, Internet, Startup template

Conclusion

Media is considered the fourth pillar of the state. Its coverage of the events determines how society will look at those events. Therefore, media must produce coverage complete and diverse, representing all people on equal footings.

Women should be involved at all levels of media organizations. They are usually given junior position with no say in the decision making processes. It is also considered that women cannot cover hard beats such as crime, judiciary and parliament. They are often given soft beats such as entertainment and weather. Men and women must be given equal opportunities at all levels without showing any bias and prejudice towards their gender.

The main point to focus on here is that having more women in media organizations do not guarantee gender-sensitive reporting. That requires additional care that falls on the shoulders of everyone working in the media industry.

The nature of news, the choices made about what is newsworthy, and how the story is reported must change. The reporters must reach out to women experts to take their comments for their stories. Most of the time, reporters take comments from men as the source.

The nature of the women related stories should also change. The reporters and editors must keep an eye on the language news stories carries. It must be gender-neutral and not supportive of traditional gender-related stereotypes.

Lastly, all journalists, both female and male, should change the attitudes of media and society towards women, issues related to them and media coverage of them.

Glossary

Gender

Gender denotes social attributes and opportunities attached with being male and female and the relationships between women and men and girls and boys, and the relations between women and those between men. These attributes, opportunities and relationships are socially constructed and are learned through socialization processes. They are context/time-specific and changeable.

Gender-based Violence

Gender-based violence[8] means the harmful acts directed at an individual based on their gender. It has its roots in gender inequality, the abuse of power and harmful norms. It is a serious violation of human rights and a life-threatening health and protection issue.

Gender Equality

Gender equality[9] refers to equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities for all – men, women, boys and girls. Equality among genders ensures that rights, responsibilities and opportunities guaranteed to different individuals cannot depend on their sex with which they were born.

Gender Parity

Gender parity refers to the equal number of men and women working at all levels, specifically at senior positions.

Gender Mainstreaming

Gender mainstreaming[10] is the process of assessing the implication for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programs, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programs in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality.

Women's Rights

Women's rights are human rights. These rights guarantee full and equal participation of women in political, civil, economic, social and cultural arenas at all levels. It also demands the eradication of all forms of discrimination against girls and women.

Gender-Sensitive Journalism

Gender-Sensitive journalism is often described as a tool for journalists who strive to understand happening and events around from a gender lens to understand that the way they will report the event will affect the understanding of the event by the masses.

[7] https://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/conceptsandefinitions.htm

[8] https://www.unhcr.org/gender-based-violence.html

[9] https://www.un.org/en/sections/issues-depth/gender-equality/

[10] https://www.unwomen.org/en/how-we-work/un-system-coordination/gender-mainstreaming

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