

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF COMMUNICATION DEVELOPMENT



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About The Journal

The International Journal of Communication Development is a new journal devoted to the analysis of communication, mass media and development in a global context in both Indian and international perspective. Authors are encouraged to submit high quality, original works which have not appeared, nor are under consideration, in other journals.

The International Journal of Communication Development examines the way in which similarities and differences open up scope for discussion, research and application in the field of communication, mass media and development. This journal seeks innovative articles, utilizing critical and empirical approaches regarding global communication including, but not limited to, systems, structures, processes, practices and cultures. These articles could deal with content, as well as its production, consumption and effects, all of which are situated within inter- and trans-national, cross-cultural, inter-disciplinary and especially comparative perspectives.

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FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

2020 changed the world and the academic arena saw the biggest change since education became a part of growing India's life for the last hundred years. Who would have thought schools and university campuses would become a strict no-no and e-Learning process the new way of life for students and teachers. Class rooms have gone digital and so has the experience of teaching, learning and examining. And just one virus which made terminology like social distancing, masks, sanitizers and COVID-19 the most researched. Due to a global pandemic created by the novel corona virus, the change in education pattern did not exclude research and research methodologies.

E learning is probably the way forward, but limited by internet availability. 2020 also gave the world new professional norms and the global lockdown taught us to work from home, meet on google meet & zoom, say bye to seminars & conferences and get used to webinars for brain storming.

There were months when the black and white was not read all over. Print media took a back seat for the fear of paper being a carrier to the virus. And the digital media forged ahead with a tempo which has still not slowed down, rather it became more vibrant. The readership of the online media has also increased during this time. And the end of the year saw most of the print media houses subtly but surely shifting news to their existing or newly created virtual platforms.

COVID-19 has also affected research vastly. Starting from the literature review to data collection to data categorisation to coding to data analysis to framing and finally writing, every step in research seemingly has undergone a change including bibliographies and references. Libraries and library sittings have now paved way for online libraries and websites. Reference books and previous editions have now become alien words till the students get back to the library buildings. The new social norms of social distancing and sanitisation along with current academic scenario of e-learning have given a changed structure to research design. Data collection, compiling, editing and coding also will see changes resulting into data integrity.

But theories applicable to media research seem to be the same as the pandemic saw a rise in news on the social media which definitely see the agenda setting theory and theory of media effects being justified.

And the most important phenomenon which 2020 and the pandemic gave to the media was narrative journalism. With the strong emergence of the online media when printing got hit, it became important to understand that controlling the narrative is the key to media sustenance.

And the most palpable progress in the media in 2020 is Citizen journalism which was directly proportionate to the growth in the numbers of online internet platforms. Social networking, mobile phones and social media platforms have made citizen journalism not only popular but have also given it the liberty of journalistic ABCD – Authenticity, Brevity, Clarity and Direct. COVID-19 hit world did change the media's traditional face.

Dr. Durgesh Tripathi
Editor, IJCD

MASS MEDIA AND SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION: AN OVERVIEW

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Abstract

The role of communication and mass media in the process of social change are one of the central areas of debates and deliberations in media studies. The present paper intends to discuss the role of mass media in transforming society. Mass media educates and informs people about varied contemporary issues so as to shape their opinion. It gives voice to the voiceless focusing on their concerns and worries, thereby contributing towards the process of change in society. The emergence of social media has also provided a public sphere where users can exchange ideas and emotions regarding issues of importance. There are also instances where social media has extensively been used for encouraging the youths for voter turnout, thus causing a transformation in society (Supli, 2013). Towards the implementation of good governance, the role of mass media and especially social media cannot be undermined. This study tries to assess the role of mass media including social media in the process of social transformation.

Keywords: *Mass Media, Social Change, Social Media, Social Movements, Transformation.*

Introduction

Mass media is a means of communication that is used to reach heterogeneous groups of people scattered over large areas simultaneously. Newspapers, magazines, radio, television and the Internet, all are the platforms of mass media. Mass Media aids in socialization and caters to our information and entertainment needs. From influencing public opinion to determining political agenda, mass media also has various other functions like acting as a link between government and the public and most importantly, acting as a watchdog of the government. Further, mass media affects the socio-cultural life of society and brings changes in the attitudes and behaviours of people. Through its news and views, mass media shapes and moulds public opinion towards various contemporary issues.

Media conveys information for the betterment of the community. That information has the power to build and to destroy. Thus free and adequate information is imperative in the process of development of a society. Researchers Ojenike, Odugbemi & Ojenike (2016) asserts that free and adequate information is a means of bringing desired social change.

Communication plays a very significant role in social transformation and social change. Effective communication, therefore, can only set the path to change in society. To bring

awareness at different levels of society, effective communication must take place between media and society. In recent times, the emphasis is given to participatory communication and horizontal communication like community media and stakeholder consultation. This creates a space where people can communicate, share ideas, define development and thus give meaning to their citizenship. Through such spaces, people can reshape their boundaries and redefine social and cultural norms. Participatory communication basically possesses the potential to contribute to sustainable change at various levels of society. This contributes to transformation in society. In developing countries like India, mass media plays a vital role by catering to the socio-economic needs of wider groups of people. Awatade (2016) asserts that mass media can accelerate growth rate if it is used properly and even awaken people for sustainable development. This study, therefore tries to assess the role of mass media including social media in the process of social transformation.

Media and Social Transformation

Initially, the print media with its printed words in newspapers, magazines, and journals could trigger the change in attitude and approach of individuals. As electronic media was introduced, with its numerous broadcasts and telecasts, it also significantly changed the thoughts and outlook of major sections of the society. Change not only occurred in the beliefs and values, trends and styles, but also in the contents of social structure. Even today, media is the driving agent of such change in the society.

In this digital era, Internet and World Wide Web, smartphones and digital television, and such other information and communication technologies are gradually opening new ways of transforming not only our ways of communication but also our ways of living and learning.

Social media has mitigated the constraints of time and space and made McLuhan's idea of 'global village' a reality. The development of information and communication technologies is transforming almost every sector. As the new communication technologies are developing the society, they render significant influence on the people especially the youth. The developments in the communication systems are gradually changing the information society to a knowledge-based society. The evolution of social media in this digital era is playing a prime role in accelerating this change.

The mass media has gradually become an inevitable part of our lives acting as a bridge in the process of transition from a traditional society to modern society. Mcquail thus, rightly referred to media as an engine of change. Some of the major roles it plays in society are:

- It expands the horizons of thoughts.

- It can focus people's attention to what is important and raise awareness
- It raises community aspirations by delivering the latest trends (Paul, Singh, & John, 2013).

Further, the mass media supports and contributes towards social change by aiding in providing information, making decision and as educators. Without the presence of media, people cannot get quick and accurate information. Mass media delivers information in the form of discussions, so as to deliver the information of community leaders and convey important issues in a clear manner. Furthermore, media as educators increase public knowledge about varied issues and events. This can alter the social orientation of people. Media has power over an individual's sensibilities and thus with its content and coverage can raise people's consciousness. It is the media's effort that the young generations today have discarded various age-old taboos and inhibitions. It makes and moulds the very fabric of society. Media can thus be referred to as an agent of most transformations.

In the process of social transformation, mass media thus plays a central role by influencing as well as promoting new standards. Forsberg (2006) states that media, in the process of raising awareness can motivate social development and social change by "promoting both individual and communal interests in a society". It is the media, which with its content and coverage can promote development by involving people in the process of social change. It can transform Indian society by "developing it as an information community which means rich in information and advanced in technology" (Awatade, 2016).

However, media must be free and independent and disseminate information to people which is a pre-requisite for debates and discussions that give shape to their opinion. As citizens get access to information, they can hold the government accountable. This improves transparency and contributes to the development of the nation. Researchers Ojenike, Odugbemi & Ojenike (2016) pointed out that a report in the year 2007 highlighted how the information by media empowers citizens to "determine their own change and development path". Media can improve governance and bring a positive change by monitoring the activities of the authorities and by making people aware of corrupt activities. Corruption needs to be eliminated from every sphere so as to increase the rate of productive activities and mass media has a significant role to play in this regard. Researchers Ojenike, Odugbemi & Ojenike (2016) found in their study that if the power of media is harnessed in an appropriate manner, it can impact governance by exposing corruption in public and private sector, impact economy by monitoring various economic policy development process, and impact socially by disseminating information to citizens and making them sensitized towards the rights and obligations to society (Ojenike, Odugbemi, & Ojenike, 2016). Only a free and independent media can do so and can contribute towards the betterment of society.

Mass media plays a positive role in society by giving people the opportunity to voice their opinion. The media which reaches out to masses of people and makes the voices of the vulnerable heard can create informed citizens who can form their own opinion and make informed decisions for the country's progress. The advent of social media has in fact given users a platform to voice their concerns in literal as well as in audio-visual means.

Social Movements and Social Change

The emergence and evolution of social networking sites has provided a democratic device (Shaw, 2016) to users worldwide. In addition to changing the process of communication, social media also organizes people to form social movements. Social media has therefore become a tool for social change. Social change is the change in a society that is brought about by social movements and also by several external factors. Technological innovations or environmental shifts are among such external factors. Two major forces that drive social change are collective behaviour and social movements. The recent years have witnessed many such social movements that have made a great impact and all such movements were born and organized over social media.

The evolution of the internet and social media has geared up the trend of social movements. Arab Spring, Occupy Wall Street, Nirbhaya case, Hakkolorob, anti-corruption movement are all well-known examples of social movements. Such social movements are organized groups who work and strive to achieve a common goal. They mostly aim at bringing or resisting change. Contemporary social movements thus attempt to create social change on a global scale.

Sociological Perspective

The social movements can be looked at from three sociological perspectives.

- i. Functionalist perspective: It generally focuses on why does social movements develop, why do these continue to exist and also the social purposes they serve.
- ii. Critical perspective: it focuses on the creation as well as the reproduction of inequality. This perspective sees an inherent conflict in social relations and that conflict drives social change.
- iii. Symbolic interaction perspective: It talks about the day to day interaction of social movements, the meanings that people attach to involvement in such movements and the individual experiences of social change.

Initially, social movements start as people are activated. The very first stage is the preliminary one where people get awareness about issues and only with a click they can make thousands of other followers informed and get them thinking about the issue or cause.

Thereafter, leaders appear who continue to mobilize people and social media makes this whole process faster.

The interactions happening on social media have a global character having inputs from people worldwide. In fact, many top news stories are originated from social media. People now have intense discussions and deliberations on political issues in social media which have widespread implications. The virtual platform is also being used in effectively utilizing human resources in various voluntary activities. People show support towards initiatives taken by individuals with their time and resources.

The sharing feature of social media allows people to share content numerous times across space, wherein individuals post their views as comments forming threads of comments in wall posts. This collective action resolves to initiate virtual protests and create events, thereby forming mass social movements. This forms various other aspects of social realities.

Conclusion

Mass media and especially social media exert tremendous influence on social transformations. Media, as vehicles of socio-cultural change shapes the cultural patterns of a society and determines people's behaviour. In this phase of transformation in society, the youth have a big role to play. Media, as the fourth pillar of democracy, has the core responsibility of building public opinion and social media is such a platform which connects the youth of the nation and allows them to voice their ideas and opinions. This is certainly a welcoming sign if such resources are utilized in a positive way. However, many challenges lie in the process of ushering in social change or transforming society which needs to be addressed. Though the number of socio-economic development programs is no less in number, they can bring change only with their faster implementation. Thus, if the power of media is properly harnessed, the future perspectives of media can be more progressive thereby promoting sustainable rural development (Awatade, 2016).

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GENDER EQUITY FOR WOMEN JOURNALISTS IN THE NEWS MEDIA INDUSTRY – AFAR CRY

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Abstract

News media organizations across the Globe have increasingly been criticized for not only gender insensitive environment but also discriminating against women with equal or more qualification and experience than their male colleagues in terms of wage parity and choice of beats. The issue has been on the front burner of many national and international professional associations and academia. The augmentation of digital media, especially social media platforms have only seen a steep rise in misogyny, hate-mongering and abusive trolls against many women journalists who cover hard beats, especially politics and other critical beats. No country has any specific policy to address the menace. The UN General Assembly in 2017 has exhorted its member nations to make policies in this regard.

Key words: Gender-discrimination, Media, Misogyny, Women-journalists Trolls, Policies.

Introduction

Like any other industry, one has seen a surge in women's employment in the media industry also. When looked at carefully, women may be visible, but not necessarily in substantive editorial positions, decision-making positions and on hard beats, when compared with their male colleagues. More and more women are assigned soft beats like culture, education, and fashion. Very few can be seen covering politics, economy, international relations, and wars and insurgency. Not many women are invited as panelists in news channel discussion as the news media by and large remains a male bastion. When we look at the extent of space women get in the content, there is a huge misrepresentation, under representation and worst of all, inappropriate portrayal in both the regional and the mainstream media discourse.

The media office spaces are not necessarily gender sensitive. The #Me Too movement that rocked the media industry including the news media sector in India in 2018 tells in no uncertain terms that there is more than meets the eye. Despite laws, women continue to suffer gender-based stereotypes and sexual violence at work place. A number of women journalists opened up about the alleged misdemeanor of once a celebrated editor and at the time of controversy, a cabinet minister. The fall out of this was that he resigned voluntarily or was asked to resign. He went to the court filing defamation suit against a journalist denying the allegations. The court cases take unusually long and often the onus of proving the crime is left on the victim.

Ammu Joseph, a senior Indian journalist and an expert on gender issues had this to say on the movement, ‘I personally think the #Me-too in media moment that made waves in mid to late 2018 was perceived as a thunderbolt mainly because of its high visibility thanks to social media, which is where much of it was concentrated. We’ve known about the prevalence of SHW in media workplaces for a long time...These experiences certainly taught us that there is no short-cut to justice, in fact, we’ve seen that justice has been elusive in most cases.’ⁱ

In the same interview, on asking why the media houses in general were not interested in ensuring gender equity, Joseph said that a few at least were “trying harder” than others to create such policies, but they were in minority, while others were either not convinced on the need for gender justice, or spoke of meritocracy without any gender bias. The other reason according to Joseph could be that these media houses had not introspected enough on the subject as others did.ⁱⁱ

Pursuing journalism is not like any other job. Journalists in general face threat to their person and life from those who feel harmed by their writing. Some studies suggest that journalists covering politics, insurgency, and corruption have faced more threat to their life or have lost their lives in the line of their duty than those covering other beats. Women reporters who cover these beats, often find themselves at a double disadvantage—being reporters and women—when they take on a public role, reporting on issues and events that fall in the male bastion.

Many empirical studies the world over suggest that women journalists are discriminated against vis-à-vis their male colleagues on various counts, including in terms of wage parity, choice of beats, and in decision making positions, besides facing sexual harassment. The various research studies that are in the public domain prove it without any doubt that the issue of gender sensitivity has not made much resonance within the media houses, journalists’ associations and trade unions.

Almost half of the women journalists around the world say they experience sexual harassment at work.ⁱⁱⁱ Gender insensitive environment and sexual harassment is the bane of various workplaces and the media industry is no stranger to that. Abetted by technology, women journalists now face online attacks, especially trolling. This may result in women reporters, with some exception, either leaving the job or declining to take up challenging assignments. In order to address the issue, the International Women’s Media Foundation (IWMF) financially supports an NGO that works to track digital harassment of women journalists.^{iv}

International Media Support (IMS), an independent group working for the rights and safety of women journalists based out of Denmark, in a report “*The Safety of Women Journalists: Breaking the Cycle of Silence and Violence – An Overview of Nine Countries*” has addressed the issue. The report was commissioned by IMS to ‘assess the question of how women in media are being targeted and how journalism is impacted by gender specific harassment and violence.’ The Study aims to inform, debate and take stock of ‘actions by media owners and editors, policy makers, press freedom organizations and journalists.’^v

The report identified many challenges that repeatedly came up in the nine countries, most of which broadly encompassed the following areas.

- *Physical security:* Women journalists are more often targets of sexual violence than male journalists. There is a need for more gender-specific preventative resources, such as training and risk assessments.
- *Verbal threats and abuse, particularly online:* Women journalists are subject to a particularly damaging brand of vitriol that includes, in high volume, explicit threats of sexual violence, personal insults, and circulation of private information or demeaning images.
- *Sexual harassment, workplace, and social inequality:* Gender inequality is entrenched within the media sector and societies, and manifested in unequal pay, low numbers of women being able to advance to the decision-making levels, and a tolerance or lack of protocols when it comes to sexual harassment by colleagues, sources or interviewees. Social pressure against women joining professional ranks or family obligations also disadvantage women in the field.^{vi} The report covered nine countries including Afghanistan, Colombia, Indonesia, Iraq, Kenya, Nepal, Pakistan, the Philippines, and Somalia.^{vii}

In a groundbreaking Global report on the Status of Women in the News Media by the International women’s Media Foundation (IWMF) that evaluated 500 media houses in over 60 countries, some foreseeable facts emerged. Men occupied majority of the management jobs and reporting positions in most countries; 73 per cent men were in top management compared with 27 per cent women. Among reporters, men occupied two-thirds of the jobs compared to 36 per cent held by women. However, among senior professionals’, women were almost nearing parity in reporting, editing, and writing jobs.

The IWMF commissioned the research to study gender equity in the news media around the world, and inform the development of a formal Plan of Action to improve the status of women. Released in 2011 after a painstaking work of two years, the global study looked at women in the workforce, pay differences, terms of employment, and pro-equality policies in newsrooms.^{viii}

When it comes to Asia and Oceania, the study reported men to women ratio of 4:1. The region covered 10 nations comprising Australia, Bangladesh, China, Fiji, India, Japan, New Zealand, Pakistan, the Philippines, and South Korea. In all, the research covered 82 news companies employing 47,000 people that included less than 10,000 women (p.213).

Some of the highlights of the study include that women comprised only about 1/5 (21.6 per cent) of those in board of directors and just about 9 per cent in top management. At senior and middle levels, women were found in just over 13 per cent positions each. The percentage increased to 32 per cent in jobs associated with reporting and editing, but men dominated here as well. The study, unlike elsewhere, reported “strong” job security for women in this region. Women were also seen as “greater beneficiaries” of regular part-time employment, holding about 65 per cent of such positions.^{ix}

The study reported that not all companies provided data on wages, but based on partial data that the researchers were able to get, the findings revealed that women’s salary and average high salaries were ‘often lower than those of men’s in this region, particularly in governance, where men made nearly five times the average high salary of women.’^x

When it came to gender-related policies, the study reported it as “encouraging” in the region as a whole with 89 per cent newsrooms appearing to have policies guaranteeing maternity leave and 57 per cent paternity leave, and 55 percent media houses assured women got back to their jobs after availing of the leave, if they so wished. Two-thirds (67 per cent) of media houses prohibited sexual harassment, but 51 per cent had ‘some broader policy guaranteeing gender equality’ (p.14).

Highlights of India Study

Seventeen Indian news companies participated in the study – 10 newspapers, 6 television stations, and 1 radio station. Together, these companies employ approximately 13,000, including 2,405 women and 10,518 men. Men outnumber women in these companies by 4:1.

The gendered pattern in these companies was one of women’s under-representation across occupational categories. Women did not rise higher than around a fourth in any of the various levels, and their participation drops to the single digits in two.

Both governance and top management levels of Indian companies seemed to be occupied by few select individuals. In the case of the first, women’s participation is approximately one-fifth (21%) of those in governance, which denoted roles on company boards of directors. Some company executives interviewed during data collection indicated that

women's place on governing boards was often determined by their membership in families owning the company (i.e. mothers, wives, daughters, daughters-in-law, etc.), rather than their ability to secure these positions through advancement.

At the top management level, which included publishers, chief executive officers and others responsible for running the company, women were exceptionally low at only 13.8%.

In junior and senior professional levels, which included the largest numbers of the journalistic workforce, women were 25.5% and 28.4%, respectively. Such low participation by women in these junior and senior writing, editorial and news producer ranks raises questions about women reporters' ability to influence overall news content.

A support category in which women sometimes dominate in other nations – sales, finance and administration – sees women holding only 11.4% of the positions in the Indian companies surveyed.

A few companies surveyed indicated that it has not been customary to hire women into some jobs, e.g., where they might be the only female with a fairly large group of male colleagues, or for certain kinds of reporting, namely beats with violence or other danger associated with them.

In both senior and top management levels, women are paid substantially less both at the average low and average high ranges. Only in one occupational level – sales, finance and administration – did women's pay noticeably exceed that of men. (pp. 233–235)

The UNESCO-UN Women International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) report of 2015, *Inside the News: Challenges and Aspirations of Women Journalists in Asia and the Pacific*, states that although the number of women professionals in media has doubled in the last two decades, it is still at only 28.6 per cent in Asia and Pacific and the men to women ratio is a dismal 4:1.^{xi}

Many academics, researchers and other institutions have undertaken studies on the state of women journalists for over a quarter century or so in India. To say that it is only the media sector where women suffer inequities would be far from truth. Women, in general, face the same issues in all the sectors and news media is no exception. News Media in India is more or less a private enterprise, where a lot of issues remain dormant. It is a well-known fact that the terms of appointment, promotion, and salaries and increments remain a confidential affair in the media industry. Colleagues often do not know each other's salary and perks.

In India over 300 universities and institutes of higher learning impart education and training in journalism. Thousands of young girls join these courses and subsequently the profession, but there is enough empirical data to suggest that after joining, not many are able to sustain

their jobs for a long time. The reasons are not far to seek; the various factors include striking a balance between home and work, lack of job satisfaction, lack of wage parity, and by and large a general lack of gender sensitive policies and environment at workplace contribute to the phenomenon.

According to the Press Information Bureau (PIB) data for 2020, out of 2516 accredited journalists in India, there are only 320 women. Interestingly the agency that gives accreditation, i.e. PIB, seems to allot accreditation to quite a few retired information officers/directors of the Ministry of Information & Broadcasting. Age seems to be no bar as quite a few accredited journalists are in their 70s and 80s. In all, women comprise about 15 per cent of the total number of accredited journalists.^{xii}

In order to be eligible for accreditation, reporters or cameraman need to have five years' experience and for freelancers, an experience of 15 years is required. Only print and television journalists are eligible for accreditation.

A year-long study by a Delhi-based Media Studies group released in 2012 reiterates the findings of many other studies on the dismal state of women journalists. Getting data vide the RTI (Right to Information Act) of 14,278 accredited journalists across 255 districts in 28 states representing 40 per cent of country's total districts, women journalists only represented 2.7 per cent of journalists at district level, while six states and two union territories had no women journalist at the district level. Interestingly Andhra Pradesh had the maximum number of women journalists (as many as 107) at the district level, while Sikkim and Meghalaya had 17 per cent each of women of the total number of journalists. Bihar and Chhattisgarh had about 10 per cent and over 9 per cent respectively. Surprisingly the national media did not perform better than districts, where women journalists' accreditation was found to be no better in regional and local newspapers. The study revealed that only two freelance women journalists were given accreditation at the district level, of which one was a photo journalist.^{xiii}

When there is a talk about media and gender, it broadly means the relationship of media and gender and how gender is represented in media. As more and more women join media, the issues relating to a general lack of level playing field in appointments, wage parity, their say in the decision-making, and the presence of gender-sensitive environment are important areas for empirical research. All these areas were included in the baseline survey undertaken in all the nine countries in South Asia including Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Pakistan, Maldives, Myanmar, Nepal, and Sri Lanka.^{xiv}

The SWAN (South Asian Women's Network) seminal study, that was supported by UNESCO until 2018 and included financial support for research in a few South Asian countries, reveals ominous data from the baseline survey. ***Women for Change: Towards building a gendered mediain South Asia*** as the project was titled was taken in tandem in all

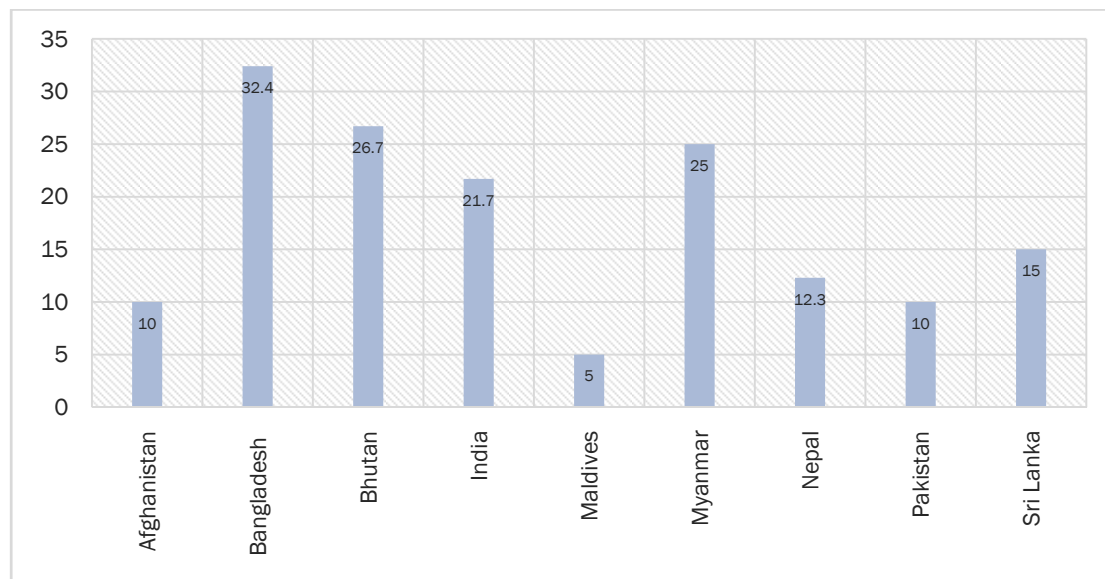
the countries referred above with common research indicators for the baseline survey and the following key objectives:

1. To address the vulnerability of women journalists in south Asia: advocate equal rights for women working in the media;
2. To strengthen the gender sensitivity of the south Asian media, including on portrayal of women in media content and through advertising; and,
3. To engage with stakeholders, including advocacy with governments, to bring about gender equality in and through the media.

Research Highlights: Findings and Insights

Women's participation in media organizations across the nine South Asian countries is significantly low in substantive positions.

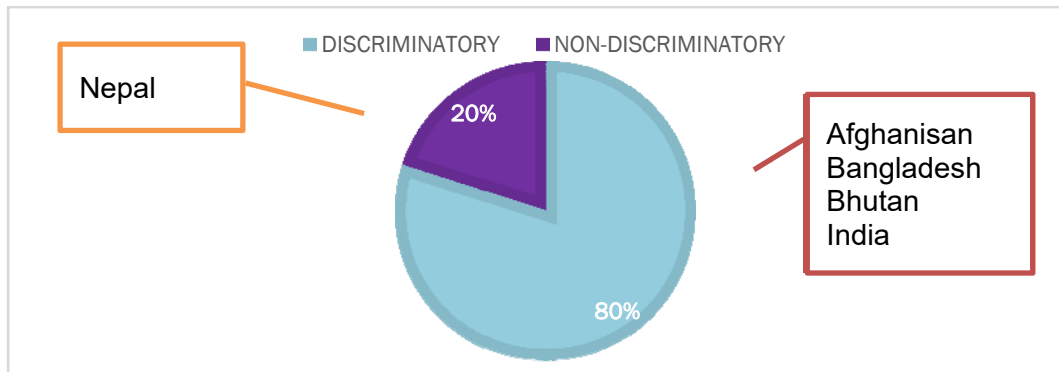
Table 1: *Women in Leading Positions in Media in South Asia (in Per Cent)*



Source: Swan Report

Low Job Security for Women in the Media Workforce

As may be seen in the pie chart below, only two countries, Nepal and Sri Lanka, reflect non-discriminatory job security for women in news media.

Table 2

Source: SWAN Report

Wage Disparity/Discrimination

Wage disparity is a vexed issue in countries like Afghanistan, Bangladesh, and Pakistan. In Afghanistan, for instance, women are often paid less than men (earning less than US\$ 250 per month). They are also not entitled to annual increments, bonus or medical allowances.

In Bangladesh, some media channels were accused of wage disparity and unequal opportunities for women journalists. In India, women journalists were mostly recruited and employed on contractual basis, denying them wage board scales. One of the allegations against women journalists in the Maldivian media as brought out in the country research report is that women demanded higher wages and this often became a reason for media organizations for not hiring more women. In contrast, Nepal has rarely reported cases of discrimination either about wage disparity for women journalists or in terms of distribution of opportunities. The Nepal Working Journalists (First Amendment) Act, 2064 (2007) further endorses minimum salary for media professionals. Sri Lanka also reported an equal distribution of wages with no known cases of gender bias, especially when it comes to sending women on foreign training and scholarships.

Ambiguous Leave Policies

Women in almost all the nine countries faced discriminatory leave benefits. India has a law in place to safeguard at least the maternity leave benefits for women employees, which also covers the media industry. The issue of maternity leave policy is of utmost concern among women media professionals in Afghanistan. In Bangladesh, maternity leave is often sanctioned depending on the in-house policies of various media organizations and the personal equation of women employees with authorities. Bhutan has similar concerns.

Safety and Sensitivity at Workplace

The findings from all the nine countries reflect gender insensitive environment at work places. The #Me Too movement in India in 2018 indicated that there is a lot than meets the eye in the media houses, where women journalist face unsafe environment. In Afghanistan, women even face threats from Taliban.

Socio-cultural Barriers

Women journalists in Afghanistan, Bhutan and Myanmar mostly face socio-cultural barriers, which prove to be a hindrance in their professional careers. Bhutanese women generally report having heavy domestic responsibilities, which often pose a limitation to their progress in the media-related professions. The case of Bhutan further revealed that despite support from the family and spouse, women's involvement in household management and care work seems to present substantial challenges for their participation in the media.

In retrospect, when we look at a study about the state of women working in the Indian news media industry, for the National Commission for Women conducted by women journalists led by Pamela Bhagat in 2004, it is quite evident that in the last over one and a half decade, things may have only got worsened due to the proliferation of social media.

The survey with a response from 410 women journalists from among 3500 journalists who were sent the questionnaire encompassed a wide range of issues such as recruitment and job segregation, promotions and work conditions, training and development to childcare and maternity facilities, sexual harassment, union involvement, superannuation and freelancing.

An important concern that emerged from the study pertains to job insecurity. To quote from the study, 'journalists were employed like daily wage labor, signing a muster at the end of the month to get a pittance of Rs 1500 to Rs 3000 as wages; contract system of employment; neglect of maternity and child-care provisions and sexual harassment.'

More than 20 per cent respondents said that women were discriminated against in promotions. Another 46 per cent felt that this was because of their sex, while some felt it was because of age. The data suggested that more than 8 per cent women journalists were forced to leave their jobs due to discrimination in promotions. About 38 per cent respondents shared that having children carried a misperception that women would not be able to work late hours. Similarly, over 29 per cent felt that having children impacted their promotion.

It came out in the research that although most of the respondents had not deferred marriage or pregnancy due to job insecurity, about 57 per cent of those with children had availed of maternity leave and another 11 per cent had availed of unpaid or part maternity leave.

Interestingly, over 17 per cent respondents were not aware of the existence of any such facility in their organization. Over 54 per cent women journalists who did not have children said that they would avail of maternity benefits in the future, if such a provision existed.

In personal interactions with respondents as a part of the qualitative survey, some upsetting facts emerged. About 23 per cent respondents said they had faced sexist remarks or gestures and sexual harassment in their work environment and professional associations of which they were members. Of those who faced such ignominy and discomfiture, over 31 per cent said that this had 'seriously undermined their confidence and affected their work.' Over 24 per cent said it mildly affected them, but more than 41 per cent that such issues had no impact on them, which is encouraging because such women did not let their self-esteem and confidence suffer because of gender insensitive environment at their workplace, but went about with their work.

The study found that the level of awareness about key issues was very low among women journalists. Out of the total sample, 31 per cent were not aware if any equal employment policy existed in their organization; 29 per cent did not know if women were targeted for filling vacancies in their organizations; about 20 per cent did not know whether formal appeal procedures or mechanisms for handling grievances existed in their organization, while over 50 per cent were sure of no such facility; 10 percent were not aware of any formal training programme in their organization, while over 42 per cent said that no such facility was provided; and, about 88 percent were not aware of any superannuation scheme or believed that it did or did not apply to them.^{xv}

In an ethnographic study of women journalists, a research study studied 50 women journalists from both mainstream and regional newspapers who worked in the media in the 1970 and 1990s. Some interesting findings include the following:

Women joining the profession of journalism mostly come from educated and upper middle- and middle-class families. Most women interviewed said that their parents encouraged them to study and take up the profession. Of the fifty women, majority of them were married and spoke of by and large supportive families; the apprehension generally was on their long working hours and returning home late.

The research reflected that women generally were not discriminated at the time of appointment, but mostly when it came to distribution of beats and the existence of gender stereotype among seniors and male colleagues. Women were 'sidelined, into soft news reporting and sub-editing.' This, however, could not be generalized as in some English newspapers, some women were found working on hard stories including economic journalism. The feature section in both the English and vernacular newspapers is considered

largely to be a female domain. One hardly found a man in this section. This section is generally known as “deadline free zone” as this section is weekly and the content is soft in nature. The research found that many women preferred working in the Features department to balance their home and work responsibilities. The newsroom of the newspaper organizations, the research found out, was less favourable to women journalists when compared to the features section. The study found the number of women journalists being almost equal to men in the English newspapers, but in the regional ones, the number of male journalists was dominant. Compared to the features section and newsroom, the reporting room is almost male dominated, with rarely a woman covering politics, war and defense.^{xvi}

Yet another study about women journalists in Kerala reflect that the findings are not very different. Gender discrimination in the choice of beats and stereotyping of women roles were found to be the common complaint by women journalists. The study found that hardships existed, from wage disparity to even lack of basic facilities like separate toilets and restrooms for women.^{xvii}

A study on working women journalists conducted by Akhileshwari (2013) revealed that English media persons received better wages when compared to the regional press. Women journalists were allotted soft beat news only. A study conducted by Devender Bhardwarj (2014) on women journalists revealed that women's family and social responsibilities were a major hindrance in the way of women journalist to continue with their jobs.^{xviii}

There are enough misogynists and gender insensitive people in the society and newsrooms are no exception. Ammu Joseph in an interview said, “It can’t be removed from newsrooms in isolation from the rest of society. But I think a declared policy ‘of active commitment to gender equality and equity, and zero tolerance for gender-based discrimination and harassment, would help media organizations lead the way towards more gender just institutions and, ultimately, a more just society.’^{xix}

When we analyze the findings of various studies, some exploratory and others seminal research work over a period of time, one thing is common in the findings: a general discrimination of women in the news media industry in areas of wages, work distribution, and near absence of gender insensitive environment in both the developed and the developing countries.

In an ongoing research study funded by the ICSSR on the news media industry, the initial findings reiterate the past research studies on the state of women in the Indian news media industry, especially on wage disparity and an overall gender insensitive environment that led many women journalists to change their career early on or mid-way.^{xx}

Women Journalists Face the Tirade from Misogynists and Hate Mongers on Social Media

The news media in India over a period of time is overtly divided on ideological lines. Being a journalist in current times and to top it, being a woman journalist is a double whammy, especially for those covering politics and other critical issues. Women journalists covering such kind of hard beats are often trolled, abused, their characters assassinated by a virulent discourse, which at times also includes morphing their pictures to present them in a bad light—the ultimate weapon in the sick minds of misogynists to disgrace women. One has not seen any women commission or the government taking a *suomoto* cognizance of this inhuman and criminal campaign against women journalists, the trolling often being on perceived ideological lines. Some brave hearts fight the battle on their own either by taking the trolls sometimes head on and at other times by ignoring them when it becomes too hard to handle or by lodging a complaint with the Cybercrime cell.

A 2018 survey by the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) reflected that 64 per cent women reporters have experienced online abuse. The online harassment takes various forms, the report says, ‘including death or rape threats, insults, the devaluation of work, sexist comments, being sent obscene images, cyberbullying, cyberstalking and account impersonation.’ Of the women who faced online harassment, 47 per cent did not report the abuse; if they did it was done only internally to their management, said 40 per cent of respondents. The fall out of these attacks had its impact on the victims. Sixty-three per cent said the attacks had psychological effects, 38 per cent went into self-censorship and 8 per cent lost their jobs. Mindy Ran, the co-chair of IFJ Gender Council, commented that the survey highlighted that online harassment was the growing forms of gender-based violence against women journalists. The survey also pointed out a near absence of support mechanism, laws, and a general failure on the part of national governments to implement international treaties.^{xxi}

Harry Stevens and Piyush Aggarwal in a thought- provoking, and probably one of its kind exercise followed the twitter account of some of the well-known woman journalists in India for a few days in April 2017 to analyze the tweets to find what kind of trolls these four Indian women journalists received and prepared a day’s account on which they received the maximum reaction within that timeline. The journalists short-listed for the study were BarkhaDutt, Rana Ayub, Madhu Kishwar and Tavleen Singh, all known for their candid and outspoken views.

The researchers shared their findings in their dispatch “*What’s it like to get trolled all day long?*” on the digital platform of a mainstream newspaper.^{xxii}

To say the least, the outcome is demeaning, insulting and outright criminal against women, at least against two of these feisty women journalists, BarkhaDutt and Rana Ayyub.

The abuses and expressions were categorized under the following themes, *Violent, Sexual, Racial, Religious, Political, and Other*.

According to the findings, it was found that BarkhaDutt was hurled with ‘sexist, racist slurs and violent threats.’ Trolls accused Dutt of being ‘shill for political causes, typically left-wing ones.’ Some of the words, the researchers say, were not necessarily meant to be abusive ‘in and of themselves,’ like “Pakistani” for example, which is a nationality, but this term was often used for her pejoratively. For Rana Ayyub, a Muslim, the researchers commented, ‘hateful tweets were often colored by “Islamophobia.”’ The trolls liked ‘to pretend Ayyub as an agent of Pakistan’s Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI)’ and to demand she “return” to Pakistan. ‘Any criticism of India or its government, however, reasonable or constructive, may be deemed traitorous,’ the report pointed out.

Tavleen Singh, the team commented, who has been perceived as being more “right-wing” than Dutt or Ayyub was also accused of being a “Pakistani propagandist” and an anti-national, ‘the harassment directed at Singh pales in comparison to that received by her more “left-wing” counterparts,’ the researchers noted.

Singh received 195 tweets that the researchers tagged as being potentially abusive during the entire week that began Monday, April 10 and ended Sunday, April 16—that were fewer than Dutt or Ayyub received on any given day throughout the week. Moreover, the hateful tweets sent in reply to Singh were often directed at people other than Singh herself.

AboutKishwar, the team commented, “like Singh, the hateful tweets she receives are generally directed at people other than her. Rather, trolls try to dissuade her from even engaging people with whom they disagree”.

When one analyze the trolls at a micro level, these were more vicious to Ayyub and Dutt—during the week beginning Monday, April 10 and ending Sunday, April 16. As many as 2,582 abusive tweets mentioning Ayyub and 3,020 mentioning Dutt were tagged, when compared with Kishwar and Singh, which had lesser number and were not as vicious personally.

The terms often included “Presstitute,” “Terrorist,” “Anti-national,” “Pakistani” (in a pejorative sense), and “Mulli” (for Ayyub). Sample some of the tweets for Ayyub.^{xxiii}

As if offensive tweets were not enough, her twitter handle, Ayyub's was morphed and the statements which she said in a media interview, she never gave, were ascribed to her that were shown on the morphed twitter handle of a mainstream English television channel.^{xxiv}

The Washington Post quoting Ayyub wrote, 'The threatening or disparaging messages come via voice call, text, WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. They are often sexual in nature, though they also accuse Ayyub, who is Muslim, of being anti-Hindu.' The paper commented that in a year, she changed 52 SIM cards in an effort to divert trolls who were stalking her over the phone. This seemed like a 'coordinated social media campaign' intended to intimidate her out of continuing her job as a freelance journalist.^{xxv}

In a column in the *Hindustan Times*, Ayyub wrote, 'I have no right -- none whatsoever -- to demand fairness from social media, not even from alleged intellectuals who profess neutrality and accuse me of being biased and communal.'^{xxvi}

The Delhi Union of Journalists (DUJ) Gender Council condemned unending trolling of Rana Ayyub in a press release issued in April 2018. Concerned about the growing number of sexist attacks on women journalists 'who are being singled out for intimidation and harassment,' the DUJ demanded that the complaint filed by Ayyub with the Delhi cyber-crime cell be looked into at the earliest.^{xxvii}

Barkha Dutt, who came to light during her coverage of the Kargil war, has been a role model for many aspiring journalists. She has also been the inspiration behind the role of a journalist essayed by mainstream actors in a number of popular Hindi movies.^{xxviii} Dutt suffered the maximum trolls as per the study. Her coordinates were shared by a misogynist in a troll that resulted in 1000 more trolls, all vituperative and abusive to her. She wrote to Twitter against that but nothing substantive came out of it.^{xxix} In a story in *The Quint*, reporter Swati Bhattacharya wrote that in order to "name and shame" her perpetrators, Dutt publicly announced the numbers which were sending her hateful messages and 'released the content of these messages on Twitter – including dick pictures they sent,' tagging Delhi Police and Twitter CEO and requesting him to take action against such men who 'threaten women and subject them to such disgusting behavior.'^{xxx}

In an opinion column in the *Hindustan Times*, Dutt wrote, 'I have been married off to men who either don't exist or who do but have had no romantic connection to me. Even my Wikipedia profile is routinely edited (despite formal complaints to them) to describe me as married to these men. The tweets about my fictional husbands have underlined that the men were Muslim by way of explaining my secularism — which, of course, is a word used as a slur. When I started publicly rebutting the rumors, with anger, humor and exasperation, the internet entries were amended to say I was "twice divorced."^{xxxi}

Discussion

The many research studies on the state of women journalists in various countries including India, make it clear that gender equity and gender sensitive environment within the workplace and in the overall ecosystem is still a far cry. The social media probably has done the utmost damage to women journalists, who by and large seem to be fighting lone battles. Internet/social media is the least regulated medium. In spite of many women commissions and a law against sexual harassment of women, there is no *suo moto* cognizance by these bodies on protecting the fundamental and human rights of some of the spirited women journalists who are trolled, abused and made fun of. These journalists who are in a watchdog function, working in extremely challenging environment, deserve protection from the misogynists and hate mongers who often hide behind the anonymity of trolls.

Another point worth debating is the different treatment meted out to male vis-à-vis female journalists when their writing hurts the powerful and their supporters who stalk and troll such writers. When a male journalist offends them, he at best would be called names for being ambitious or be hurled with certain expletives to be toying a certain ideology, but for women it is always character assassination. When a man is abused, the very abuses end up being disrespectful to women only! Taking a dig at people who played “victims”, as Madhu Kishwar, put it, who herself is trolled, she had this to say for fellow women journalists being trolled in her column, as a part of Hindustan Times’s campaign, ***Let’s Talk About Trolls***: Quoting Barkha Dutt who said “online abuse (is) a modern-day weapon to silence women”, Kishwar commented, “it sounds bizarre coming from a woman who is hyperactive on social media, who writes regular columns for leading national and international dailies, has been the prima donna of TV journalism for decades, is invited to speak at countless Lit fests and other high-profile public events on a regular basis. If this is proof of her “silencing”, one wonders how much more talking she wants to do! This is not to justify or condone rape threats or obscene posts that Barkha has been receiving. But she and others of her persuasion do not care one bit when those who oppose her brand of journalism receive such threats or are victims of real murderous attacks as I have been.”^{xxxii}

There probably is no country in the entire world that has adopted any specific provisions for the protection of journalists from online harassment. Recognizing the online threats to journalists, especially women journalists, the United Nations General Assembly in 2017 issued a resolution on their safety and the issue of impunity addressing violence, intimidation and harassment of journalists, especially female journalists, online and offline. The General Assembly called upon states ‘to create and maintain, in law and in practice, a safe and enabling environment for journalists to perform their work independently and without undue interference.’^{xxxiii}

In Finland, the media industry joined to create a “Journalist Support Fund” to counter online harassment. The fund is yet to get active as of September 2019. Besides, the Union of Journalists of Finland has issued a guide for active journalists with advice on what to do if they are the target of a hate campaign. At the same time, it also called upon journalists to return to “fact-based” journalism.^{xxxiv}

The initial idea of the internet meant *informational liberalism* that was led by a vision of networked computing as a public property that served the general interest. All this, however, changed too soon. Now, a large part of the web is dominated by a few leading players, almost all of them based in the US, who have consolidated their dominance over the last decade or so. The issues of cultural diversity and the plurality of voices in the current digital and global environment are raising new challenges beyond those already identified in the context of migration from classical media to the internet galaxy.^{xxxv}

The GAFAM (Google, Amazon, Facebook Apple and Microsoft) dominate the digital markets, making them not only the most valued companies, but also ones who control the information flow. The social media proprietors cannot get away from their responsibility of addressing the issue of hatred, misogyny and trolling against women journalists. Complaints by some Indian women journalists to social media platform owners met with indifference and no response.

As the social media is getting only more irreverent to people with a dissenting voice or supporting a different perspective on issues, it is only in the fitness of things, that our government addresses the issue head on in the context of women in general and women journalists in particular. The Ministry of Women and Child Development, the Ministry of Information & Broadcasting, the Press Council that has representation of media and opinion makers and TRAI need to debate the issue and advise media owners on making gender sensitive policies within the media outlets. Similarly, the government in consultation with various stakeholders must come out with stringent regulation against hateful and revengeful trolls against women journalists.

Many women journalists leave the profession due to insensitive work environment and an unsupportive eco system. The spirited women journalists who continue to work and express their opinion on issues, institutions and powerful people are now an endangered species in the media world; they need all the support from the society and policymakers, and the perpetrators of indecent troll deserve the strictest punitive action.

References/End Notes:

ⁱ<https://feminisminindia.com/2019/11/06/ammu-joseph-metoo-media-moment/>; accessed on 5.8.20.

ⁱⁱIbid.

ⁱⁱⁱSource: IWMF report on “Violence and Sexual Harassment Against Women in News Media: A Global Report.”

^{iv}<https://www.iwmf.org/issues/safety/>; accessed on 7.8.20.

^v<https://www.mediasupport.org/publication/the-safety-of-women-journalists/>

^{vi}Ibid. p5.

^{vii}Ibid.

^{viii}http://www.unesco.org/new/en/member-states/single-view/news/global_report_on_the_status_of_women_in_the_news_media_launc/ Full report is also available in PDF at <https://www.iwmf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/IWMF-Global-Report.pdf>; accessed on 18.8.20.

^{ix}Ibid. (pp14-15).

^{xx}Ibid.

^{xi}<https://asiapacific.unwomen.org/-/media/field%20office%20eseasia/docs/publications/2015/06/inside-the-news-final-040615.pdf?la=en&vs=3403>; accessed on 25.8.20.

^{xii}<http://pibaccreditation.nic.in/acrindeallphoto.aspx>; accessed on 25.8.20

^{xiii}<https://www.hindustantimes.com/delhi/women-journos-number-just-2-7-at-district-level-says-survey/story-sdlkSovLvdOPDr3zJPt3NJ.html>; accessed on 22.8.20.

^{xiv}URL links for accessing full reports.

https://www.academia.edu/42175130/WOMEN_FOR_CHANGE_Building_a_Gendered_Media_in_South_Asia_REPORT_ON_THE_STATUS_OF_WOMEN_IN_MEDIA_IN_SOUTH_ASIA_Vol_I

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The current author is the co-editor of both the volumes of the SWAN Report; part of the SWAN-UNESCO research and one of the two coordinators for research in all the nine countries.

^{xv}<http://ncwapps.nic.in/pdfReports/Status%20of%20Women%20Journalists%20in%20India.pdf> accessed on 1.8.20.

^{xvi} 13_chapter 5.pdf Shodhganga. Accessed on 4.8.20.

^{xvii} Priyanka Rajeev, Midhila.M.S, Karthika.C, “ Work and Life of Women Journalists: A Study with Special Reference to Kerala”, International Journal of Innovative Technology and Exploring Engineering (IJITEE) ISSN: 2278-3075, Volume-8 Issue-7S2, May 2019.

^{xviii} Devender (2015), “Status of working journalists (women) Delhi,” PhD thesis submitted to Manav Rachna International University, Sector -43, Faridabad, Haryana, India, reflected in the Shaik Mohammad Shameer & Prof.V.Sathi Reddy WORKING CONDITIONS OF JOURNALISTS AS A RESEARCH FIELD: REVIEW LITERATURE. Available at: WORKING_CONDITIONS_OF_JOURNALISTS_AS_A_R.pdf

^{xix} <https://feminisminindia.com/2019/11/06/ammu-joseph-metoo-media-moment/>

^{xx} The author’s fellowship research is on “Wages and related issues in the news media industry in India- a critical appraisal” in which she is also looking at the gender perspective in the area.

^{xxi} <https://www.ifj.org/media-centre/news/detail/article/ifj-global-survey-shows-massive-impact-of-online-abuse-on-women-journalists.html>

^{xxii} <https://www.hindustantimes.com/interactives/lets-talk-about-trolls/whats-it-like-to-get-trolled-all-day-long/> Accessed on 19.8.20

Count of categories (some tweets have more than one), per half hour

12a1a2a3a4a5a6a7a8a9a10a11a12p1p2p3p4p5p6p7p8p9p10p11p066- for Barkha Dutt.

The researchers collected the tweets on the evening of April 17, making use of Twitter’s free REST API. The team collected as many tweets as possible for all the four journalists, then selected the day with highest minimum tagged tweets among the four. It came out to be 14 April that had the maximum tagged tweets, Dutt mentioned in 520 tagged tweets, Ayyub in 433, Kishwar in 117 and Singh in 56 tagged tweets. The terms were shortlisted after going through hundreds of tweets to see which were the ones often used and used in abusive context. The list of terms the researchers say is not exhaustive.

^{xxiii} The term “Presstitute” was first used by Gen V K Singh former Chief of Army and cabinet minister in NDA government , in 2015. Story at <https://www.indiatoday.in/india/story/vk-singh-calls-media-presstitutes-twitter-djibouti-247635-2015-04-08>; accessed on 25.8.20.

^{xxiv} Ibid.

^{xxv} <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2018/05/26/an-indian-journalist-has-been-trolled-for-years-now-u-n-experts-say-her-life-could-be-at-risk/>; appeared on 26 May 2018. Accessed on 20.8.20.

^{xxvi}<https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/let-s-talk-about-trolls-women-are-molested-virtually-on-a-daily-basis-rana-ayyub/story-ehKczykSQcnhHe60eAujvN.html> accessed on 20.8.20.

^{xxvii}<https://thewire.in/media/delhi-journalists-body-condemns-relentless-trolling-of-rana-ayyub> accessed on 20.8.20.

^{xxviii} In war film Lakshya, Priety Zinta did a Barkha Dutt in Kargil, including in looks.
<https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/journalists-on-screen/article18201304.ece>

^{xxix}It is not uncommon for social media to be overactive in blocking users at the behest of the powers that be, who may write anti-government posts, but when it comes to women being abused and trolled, it turns a Nelson's eye. So much for business interests!

https://twitter.com/BDUTT/status/1097705446809522176?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw%7Ctwcamp%5Etweetembed%7Ctwterm%5E1097705446809522176%7Ctwgr%5E&ref_url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.idiva.com%2Fwork-life%2Fbalancing-act%2Fjournalist-barkha-dutt-abused-and-harassed-on-twitter-and-whatsapp-for-reporting-kashmirs-pulwama-attack%2F17079350

^{xxx}<https://www.idiva.com/work-life/balancing-act/journalist-barkha-dutt-abused-and-harassed-on-twitter-and-whatsapp-for-reporting-kashmirs-pulwama-attack/17079350>

Accessed on 22.8.20.

^{xxxi}<https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/let-s-talk-about-trolls-trolling-is-a-weapon-to-silence-women-barkha-dutt/story-A9X3fAuRwZiwVrhYQnKbYL.html>

Accessed on 22.8.20.

^{xxxii}<https://www.inuth.com/india/narrative-of-right-wing-troll-infested-social-media-is-a-manufactured-phobia-madhu-kishwar/>

^{xxxiii}<https://www.loc.gov/law/help/protecting-journalists/compsum.php>Ruth Levush a Senior Foreign Law Specialist in a Comparative Summary of laws and policies in some countries September 2019.

^{xxxiv} Ibid.

^{xxxv} Francisco rui cádima, 2017. PDF can be accessed at:https://www.researchgate.net/publication/320992499_Media_diversity_and_globalisation_in_the_digital_age

HOW TO MAXIMIZE THE RESEARCH IMPACT

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Abstract

In The Higher Education System, Universities ranking depends up there search productivity of the faculty members. The quality of the research articles they and the of score of the citation their paper earns defines the ranking to their institution. The paper suggests the helps techniques to increase the citation frequency.

Keywords: Research productivity, citation, impact factor

Introduction

The research output is an essential part of an institution's measure and evaluation of research quality. Earlier, the number of publication and journal impact factors were the means to derive research ratings. Recent approach for rating research quality rely on the number of citations per article. Citation shows that how many times an article has been cited by the research scholars. The more citation one article gets the more the credibility of the article affiliates. This increases the value of the article in academic fertility.

What is Citation

Citation is a way of giving credit to individuals for their creative and intellectual works that you utilized to support your research. It can also be used to locate particular sources and combat plagiarism. Typically, a citation can include the author's name, date, location of the publishing company, journal title, or DOI (Digital Object Identifier).

There are different types of citations styles, which dictates the information necessary for a citation and how the information is ordered as well as punctuation and other formatting is formulated.

There are many ways of citation styles. The citation style sometimes depends on the academic discipline involved. Mainly the following three citation styles are in use:

- APA: APA (American Psychological Association) is used by Education, Psychology, and Sciences.
- MLA (Modern Language Association) style is used by the Humanities.

- Chicago/Turabian style is generally used by Business, History, and the Fine Arts.

Literature Review

The research output is an essential part of an institution's measure and evaluation of research quality. Previously, the numbers of publication and journal impact factors were the means to derive research ratings. Recent approaches for rating research quality rely on the number of citations per article. Citation shows that how many times an article has been cited by other articles (Fooladi et al. 2013). Citations to research publications are a quality indicator, important for both the author and the affiliated university (Jones and Evans 2013). Most researchers are evaluated based upon their publications as well as the numbers of citations their publications receive. One of the key ways to increase citations is to expose the research output to the widest possible audience. If people are unaware of the research, they won't be citing it. The more researchers and students in other fields who have heard about the research, the researcher will receive more citations. Citations to an article might strongly depend on the visibility, rather than the merit of the article (Marashi et al. 2013). Ale Ebrahim (2012) argues that publishing a high quality paper in scientific journals will be a halfway of receiving citation in the future. The rest of the way is advertising and disseminating the publications by using the proper "Research Tools". Post-print publishing means to make peer-reviewed, published research articles freely available to anyone with an internet connection, often greatly increases the citation frequency of articles (LiU E-Press 2007)

Strategies for increasing the Citation Frequency

1. **Use a unique name consistently throughout academic careers:** Authors are highly advised to use the same variation of their name consistently throughout their academic careers. If the name is a common name, consider adding your full middle name to distinguish it from other authors. Consistency enhances retrieval. For example: Dr.Rajkumar Singh Athwal in place of Dr.RajkumarS.Athwal.
2. **Use a standardized institutional affiliation and address, using no abbreviations:** Standardization of author affiliation is important to make sure work can be attributed to the correct author and institution. Providing accurate contact details are essential so that researchers can contact directly for queries, further information and discussions about the publication. Therefore, a standardized institutional affiliation and address, without using abbreviations, is mandatory.
3. **Keep the title short of the article:** The article's title has the challenging task of triggering the curiosity of readers by inviting them to appraise the article and perhaps use it as a reference for new research. Thus, the title is the most important summary of

a scientific article. It is generally the first (and sometimes the only) information obtained from the published article

4. **Repeat key phrases in the abstract while keeping readability:** Make some key phrases of your study and repeat them in the abstract page of your paper. Since search engines and citation trackers search the abstract of your article, the normal repetition of key words increases the chance of your paper to be retrieved more easily.
5. **Usage of strong keywords and synonyms:** Once the keywords are chosen, they need to be mentioned in the right places: in the title, and as often as possible in the abstract and the body of the text (but, of course, not so often as to annoy readers);
6. **Select correct metadata:** When documents are converted to PDF, all metadata should be correct (especially author and title). Therefore, the completeness of documents metadata is very crucial. Some search engines use PDF metadata to identify the file or to display information about the article on the search results page. It may also be beneficial to give a meaningful file name to each article.
7. **Explain Why Your Research Matters:**
 - Create a website that lists your publications.
 - Offer to give lectures or talks about your research.
 - Create your Google scholar or
 - Create a YouTube video, TedEd Lesson, Dynamic Poster, or Prezi presentation to post.
 - Engage in discussions about your research outside of your University.
 - Utilize both institution and publisher press releases.
 - Most institutions have a public relations division that can help create and deliver a press release.
8. **Describe the Evolution of Your Research in a Review:** Citation rates of reviews are generally higher than those of other papers. A well-written review contains many citations of the leaders in your field. Citing leaders in a field leads to reverse citations, which carry more weight. A review demonstrates thought-leadership within your field.
9. **Actively promote your work:** Talk to other researchers about your paper, even ones not in your field, and email copies of your paper to researchers who may be interested. Create a blog or a website dedicated to your research and share it.

10. **Share your data:** There is some evidence that sharing your data can increase your citations. Consider posting to data sharing websites, such as fig share or SlideShare, or contributing to Wikipedia and providing links to your published manuscripts
11. **Use Social Media:** Provide links to your papers on social media (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, Academia.edu, ResearchGate, Mendeley) and your university profile page.
12. **Open Access (OA):** Increases citation rate Free access increases citation rates, searching online is more efficient and following hyperlinks quickly leads researchers to their prevailing opinion Open Access has a positive impact on growth of citations.
13. **Make a unique phrase that reflects author's research interest and use it throughout academic life:** Add the name of study in the title of all publications and use the same title/ name consistently. It is suggested that "Branding yourself" to promote your research finding by using social media platform such as, Blogs, LinkedIn and Twitter.
14. **Self-citation:** Cite your own or your co-authors past papers as appropriate. This is important since citations of your past work factors into how search engines rank your current and future work. According to a major publisher, more than half of the traffic to it's online library comes from Google, Google Scholar and other search engines. A reason why publishers and journals today are focusing on SEO strategies to help improve citations of their articles. Readership and citations affects the impact factor of the journal. And as an author you can and you should help improve the discoverability at the article level.

Conclusion

Publishing research output in high-impact journals is a primary concern of the researchers. The researchers also need to consider different ways to receive more citations after publishing a paper. When their works are published, they are concerned about citation which is directly related to the paper's quality and visibility. The researchers cannot increase the quality of their published papers; therefore, they can apply some of these 33 key points to increase the visibility of their published papers.

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ECONOMIC IMPACTS OF COVID-19 PANDEMIC (COUNTRY AND GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE)

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Introduction

The pandemic of 2020 caught many by surprise. In spite of regional outbreaks of epidemics with lethal consequences such as SARS or Ebola, for about a century the mankind has not faced such a global pandemic as hit the globe during the first quarter of 2020. However, in the history, there have been other pandemics, which took the death toll of millions of people such as Black Death in 14th century, or the 1918 Flu^{xxxv}, which probably killed more people than the World War I taking place at about the same time (Learn, 2020). The experience shows that during these pandemic periods, mistakes were also made, such as the failure of people to socially distance, which we can learn from even today. During the Spanish flu, the spread of the virus was also caused by the migration of soldiers during the war. Thus, the past experience also documents that the spread of the virus can be contained by reduced mobility of population, both within individual countries and internationally. However, it is also equally clear that the containment measures aimed to reduce the mobility are also very costly, have substantial consequences on the economy of the country and create recessionary pressures.

The pandemic of SARS-COVID-19, which started in Asia and briskly spread around the world during the first months of 2020, led to the containment measures, which were aimed to reduce the spread of the virus. Most of effected countries and their health care systems were not prepared for the pandemic and the needed time to prepare their health care and public health systems for the increased numbers of patients suffering from the virus. The measures, which were introduced, included the shut-down of schools, services, public transportation and the switch to working from home in case of those jobs, where such a switch was possible. At the same time, non-essential businesses and jobs, which could not be carried out from home, were closed. Even though these measures were not implemented in individual countries in the same way and they were not introduced with the same abruptness, when first positive cases appeared, virtually everywhere they had harsh impact on the economy and brought an economic downturn, which is being compared to the Great Depression of 30th of 20th century.

The pandemic and the subsequent lock-down measures were associated with a negative demand as well as a negative supply side shock to the economy. On one end, the worsening consumer and business sentiment (both domestically and in the export destinations) brought by the pandemic led to the decrease of the demand for goods and services (perhaps, except for groceries, toiletries and pharmaceuticals), on the other hand, closed businesses and distorted supply chains led to the drop of the supply. The cumulative effect of both shocks led to the drop of economic activity and raised the urgent need for policy makers to introduce measures, which would mitigate economic consequences of restrictive epidemiological measures.

It should be acknowledged that introduced epidemiological measures largely succeeded to flatten the epidemiological curve, however, at the same time, they contributed to an abrupt and steep economic downturn. However, also economies of those countries, which did not introduce strict lock-down measures, were negatively affected.

These countries with “softer” approach to epidemiological measures (such as Sweden) have also faced a harsh economic downturn. This can be predominantly explained by the fact that current economies are closely interlinked and thus, the developments in their external environment strongly affect a given country. At the same time, it has been observed that households and businesses have changed their behaviour also in those countries, where the measures aimed to ensure social distancing and to reduce the mobility, were not strictly enforced, but in this regard, the authorities provided an advisory only.

As the containment measures have been lifted, the debate persists about the shape of the economic recovery. An even more discussed question is the spread of the second wave of pandemic, appropriate mitigation measures to be used and the impact of the worsening epidemiological situation on the economy. It is expected that after the pandemic is over, the global economy will change. It is crucial to consider the upcoming changes and to use the current challenges so as to encourage necessary adjustments and changes in the economy.

Also, the countries should focus on the preparation of their health care systems for the next wave of the pandemic. Obviously, this is very challenging especially for those countries, which are more populous, economically weaker, or both. In that regard, international cooperation and support are needed and should be provided.

The pandemic will not be over until the effective vaccination is available. In spite of the fact that the research focused on developing an effective vaccine is under way around the globe, it is too early to say, when the vaccine will be available. Also, it is not clear, if the vaccine allows to achieve permanent immunity for vaccinated individuals, or if there is the need for repeated immunisation. Nevertheless, it is important that countries not only order the vaccine, but also develop their healthcare and public health systems, so as they were prepared if there is an onset of a new pandemic in the future.^{xxxv}

In this chapter, we provide insights into the economic impact of SARS-COVID-19 pandemic in the international context, review related statistical data, and present an overview of the forecasts and discussion related to the upcoming developments. We also look at the impact of the SARS-COVID-19 pandemic on changing media landscape and on individual types of media. We consider major foreseen changes, which current developments related to COVID-19 are expected to bring to our economies and to media.

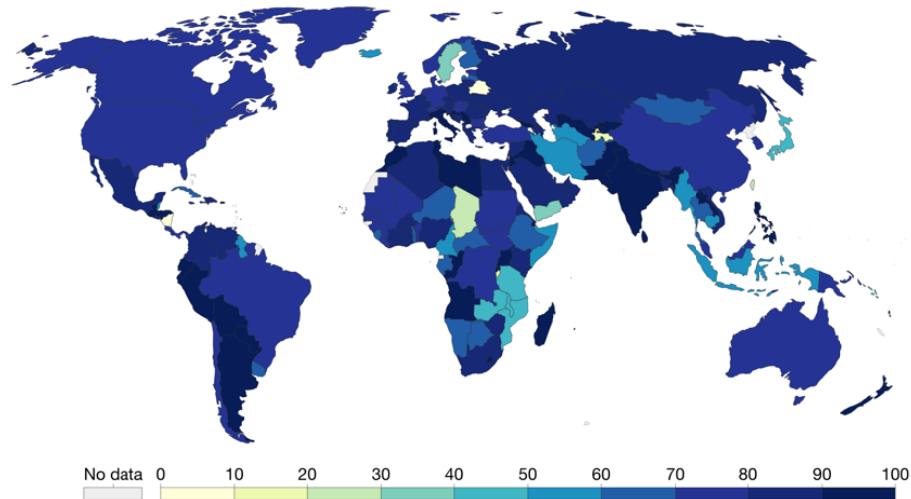
1. Epidemiological measures to contain the COVID-19 pandemic and their economic impact

The lock-down measures have been implemented gradually as the pandemic spread around the globe and as individual regions were affected by the virus. They started in China and South-East Asia, continued to be implemented in Europe, and then, moved to Americas and other parts of the world. The governments reacted to the pandemic with new expenditure programmes aimed to support local businesses and local employment and to limit the degree of disruption of economic networks in their countries. At the same time, they understood that due to harsh economic impacts of introduced measures, the extensive lock-down of the economies cannot continue without any time limits, or until the epidemiological situation is resolved. Thus, after several weeks/months of severe containment measures, the countries started to re-open their economies, at the same time, trying to control the epidemiological curve and to avoid the exponential growth of active cases. With the reopening of their economies, individual countries also started to re-open their borders. At the same time, the second wave of the pandemic has started in several countries, and it remains to be seen, how the situation will further develop. At the moment, it seems that countries try to avoid nationwide lock-downs. Thus, they redirect their measures on increased testing, positive case tracking and re-introducing some measures in those regions/areas, where local outbreaks and hot spots occur. Also, the data indicates that as the mobility of the population increased, in many countries, the age profile of COVID-19 positive cases has shifted towards lower age groups, which contributes to lower numbers of hospitalisations, critical cases and ultimately also related deaths as it was the case during the first wave of the pandemic.^{xxxv} As pupils and students return back to schools in many countries, it is as yet unclear, how this will contribute to the spread of the virus and how it will affect the scope of the pandemic. Nevertheless, there is fear that as the numbers of active cases grow, a larger fraction of older population will also be affected, which can lead to medical systems to be overwhelmed and the death rates to increase as we could observe during the first phase of pandemic.

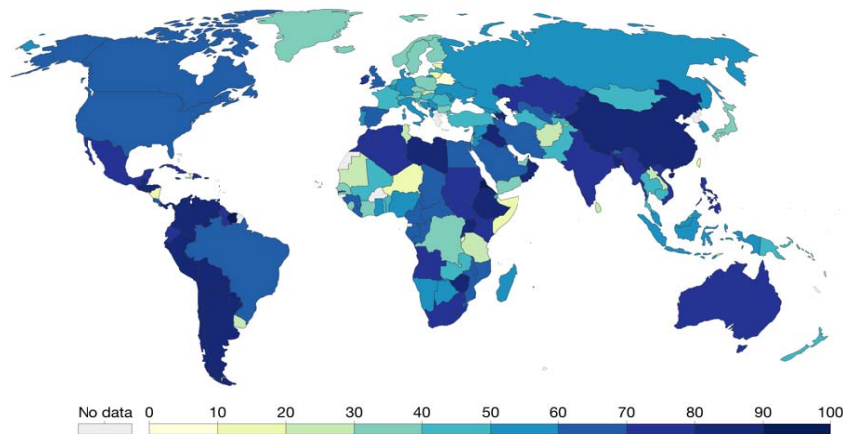
The policy measures in place to address the pandemic represent a relevant indicator to see the scope of measures to contain the spread of the virus in individual countries. A comprehensive measure of regulatory measures was developed by researchers of the Blavatnik School of Government at the University of Oxford, who publish the Corona virus Government Response Tracker (OxCGRT).^{xxxv} The OxCGRT is used to calculate the Government Stringency Index mapping the government response to COVID-19 pandemic. It includes nine indicators: school closure, workplace closures, cancellations of public events, restrictions on public gatherings, closures of public transport, stay-at-home requirements, public information campaigns, restrictions on internal movements and international travel controls. Thus, this indicator allows to track the strictness of policy measures introduced in individual countries over time and compare the measures in place in different countries. Potentially, it can help to understand the effectiveness of different types of epidemiological measures for decreasing the spread and the impact of pandemic. Also, since the epidemiological situation has been different in individual countries, it is important to understand the reasons behind. Obviously, one of the important factors are implemented government policies.

Figure 1. COVID-19: Government Response Stringency Index, on March 31st, 2020 and August, 31st, 2020

A) March 31st, 2020



B) August, 31st, 2020



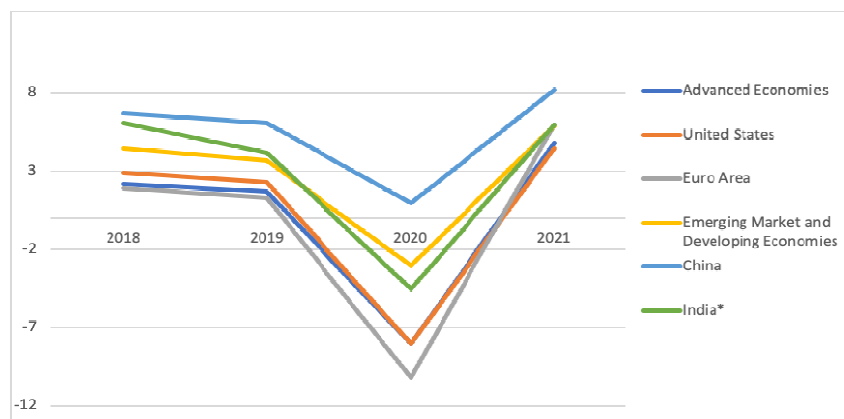
Source: Hale, Webster, Petherick, Phillips, and Kira (2020). Oxford COVID-19 Government Response Tracker – Last updated 6 September, 13:30 (London time)
 Note: This index simply records the number and strictness of government policies, and should not be interpreted as 'scoring' the appropriateness or effectiveness of a country's response.
 OurWorldInData.org/coronavirus - CC BY

As can be seen from the Figure 1 above, between 31st March and 31st August 2020, the Government Response Stringency Index decreased globally, which indicates that on average, countries have decreased the stringency of their government response to the COVID-19 pandemic as assessed by the containment measures included in the Index. As stated above, the relaxation of these measures was associated with the increasing numbers of active cases.

Strict containment measures had a pronounced effect on the economic activity. The studies to estimate the scope of this impact are only beginning to be published. One of the early studies is the study by Deb et al. (2020), who conclude that on average, the containment measures had a very large impact on economic activity. They estimate this impact to be equivalent to the loss of about 15 percent in industrial production over a 30-day period, which followed their introduction. They also conclude that the workplace closures and the stay-at-home measures are effective in mitigating the infections, but they are associated with the largest economic costs.

According to the IMF World Economic Outlook published in June 2020 (IMF, 2020), the global economic growth is expected to decrease by 4.9 percent in 2020. Based on the IMF estimates, in the first half of 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic had a more negative impact on economic activity than originally expected. The IMF also predicts that the economic recovery is going to be gradual and the global economic growth will reach 5.4 percent in 2021. If these estimates materialized, it would mean that in 2021 the global economy would be above its level at the beginning of 2020. However, since there is a lot of uncertainty about the future development, it remains to be seen, if these predictions are not to be adjusted downwards. Also, as shown by the IMF data (see Figure 2), an adverse economic impact of COVID-19 pandemic is not equally distributed across different countries. Also, not all income groups are equally affected by the effects of pandemic. According to the IMF (2020), the impact of pandemic on low-income households is going to be especially harsh. This situation can mitigate the progress, which was achieved in the effort to reduce extreme poverty in the world in the last few decades.

Figure 2. Economic growth projections (real GDP, annual percentage change)



Note: years 2020, 2021 – projections

* For India, data and forecasts are presented on a fiscal year basis and GDP from 2011 onward is based on GDP at market prices with fiscal year 2011/12 as a base year.

Source: World Economic Outlook Update, June 2020, Data processed by the author

The IMF projections of the dynamics of GDP during the first-quarter of 2020, generally point to a sharp drop in the economic activity with some exceptions of a few countries from among emerging economies, e.g. China, India, Malaysia, and Thailand, and from among developed ones, e.g. Australia, Germany, and Japan. However, during the second quarter of 2020 also these countries experienced a more severe contraction. China, which after the lock-down and the containment of pandemic in the first quarter of 2020, could ease its lock-down measures and the economy early on in the second quarter. Figure 2 indicates the annual real GDP percentage change in 2018 and 2019 and its projections for 2020 and 2021 for selected countries and groups of countries. As can be seen from the Figure 2, individual countries reached the lowest point in terms of their economic growth at the same time point. However, the depth of this decline is not the same for all countries. By far the sharpest decline is predicted for the Euro Area, followed by the US and advanced economies as a group. On the other hand, China, which experienced the most dynamic economic growth before the onset of pandemics, is predicted to have the lowest decline of its GDP growth and also, its recovery is predicted to be the fastest. It should be noted that China is predicted to sustain its economic growth throughout 2020 and 2021, in spite of the sharp decline of its dynamics in the first half of 2020. However, India, which had the growth rate not much lower compared to China before the onset of pandemics, is forecasted to go into recession in 2020, but then to experience a rather speedy return to its pre-pandemics growth rate.

When looking at the sectoral impact of the pandemic, the IMF data also point to the sharp drop of consumption and of the service sector activity. This is different from most other recessions, when the investment drops more than the consumption. In “standard” recessions, if consumer income drops due to the economic downturn, they use their savings to maintain the level of consumption. But, the drop of consumption during the lock-down and epidemiological containment measures can be attributed on one hand to the fact that most physical retail outlets were closed, but, on the other hand, also to the pessimistic sentiment of consumers and to weakening of their confidence as a consequence of the uncertainty of their future prospects. During the first phase of pandemic, also the firms decreased their investment due to the decreasing demand for their products and the distortions in the supply chains. Global character of the pandemic and related closure of borders led to the decline in global trade, which further exemplified the economic downturn.

Obviously, this development also affected the labour markets, since the decline in the demand for products and reduced production volumes require less labour. In their effort to help the businesses to overcome this (presumably) temporary situation, especially in Europe governments introduced temporary employment support schemes to cover a part of the labour cost during the period of the economic decline. In countries, where the labour markets are more flexible, such as the US, the impact of the pandemic on the growth of unemployment rates has been very fast and pronounced. According to the International Labour Organisation (ILO, 2020), in 2020 the global decline of employment is expected to reach 305 million. Compared to the fourth quarter of 2019, ILO predicts the overall deterioration in employment of 10.5 percent, but this estimate can increase with the extend of the lock-down measures during subsequent waves of the pandemic. ILO also points out that even though this development concerns all regions of the world, the US labour market is most affected.

Workers in the informal economy are to be affected especially harshly. According to ILO the jobs of about half of the population (1.6 billion) working in the informal economy are threatened by current pandemic. Thus, according to these estimates out of approximately 2 billion informally employed workers worldwide close to 80 percent have been significantly affected by the pandemic, since they usually work in most affected sectors such as wholesale, manufacturing, hospitality services and real estate. People working in informal economy belong to most vulnerable groups of population and their capacity to earn living is strongly undermined. According to ILO estimates, during the first month of the crisis, the income of informal workers decreased by 60 percent and this drop was largest in Americas and Africa.

Most workers working in most affected sectors are low skilled workers and do not have the opportunity of working from home. Also, income losses appear to be unevenly distributed across genders, with women being more severely affected in some countries.

The governments reacted to economic shocks brought by the pandemic with active fiscal and monetary policy, even though it was not very clear, what measures would work best for supporting the economy. Deb et al (2020) studied the effectiveness of the fiscal and monetary policy measures used to combat the economic impacts of pandemic and their preliminary findings indicate that the introduced policy measures have been effective in mitigating some of the related economic costs and contributed to reducing negative effects of the containment measures. Thus, the containment measures generated the loss of industrial production of about 22 percent in those countries that have used limited fiscal and monetary policy stimulus. Their results suggest that short-term economic losses from the pandemic have been larger in those countries, which used less fiscal stimulus and applied a more limited monetary policy easing. They arrived at these conclusions based on the analysis of the impact of fiscal stimulus on the changes in NO₂ emissions, since they can serve as a proxy for changes in the economic activity. The preliminary evidence from this research indicates that even though workplace closures, cancellations of events and stay-at-home requirements belong to most effective containment measures to curb the spread of the infections, they are also economically most costly. On the other hand, they find restrictions on international travel also effective in lowering the spread of the virus, but much less costly. Even though the easing of the containment measures led to the increase of economic activity, it has not led to the levels of economic activity observed before their introduction. They also emphasize the need for quantification of lock-down measures, since it can help to understanding of the trade-offs between the cost related to the loss of economic activity and the benefits related to the minimisation of health risks.

Chinazzi et al. (2020) studied the impact of travel restrictions on the spread of the virus on the case of mainland China and conclude that this measure is effective in decreasing the spread of the virus. Koh et al. (2020) studied the impact of complete travel bans and of all forms of lockdown-type measures and concluded that they have been effective in reducing the average virus reproduction number if they were implemented early, i.e. the lock-down measures about two weeks before the 100th case and the travel bans a week before the detection of the first case. They conclude that their combination with

early implemented physical distancing measures can be effective for containing the spread of the COVID-19 virus. However, they also conclude that in case of an uncontrolled outbreak a full lockdown is required, which brings huge economic consequences as witnessed during the first wave of the pandemic.

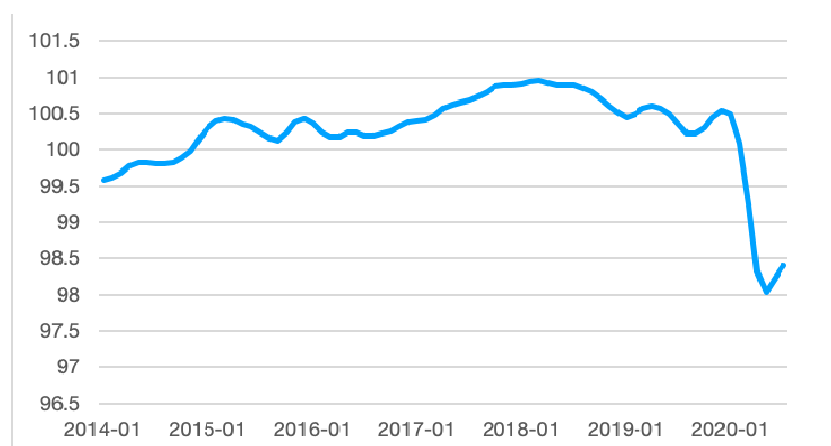
2. Consumer and business sentiment COVID-19

As stated above, the consumer sentiment was negatively affected by the spread of the pandemic around the globe. During the first phase of the pandemic as countries went into the lock-down and introduced strict containment measures, the consumer sentiment has quickly deteriorated. In the next phase, as the lock-down measures were largely lifted and societies learn to live with the virus, the improvements in consumer sentiment have also been observed.

The OECD publishes the Consumer Confidence Index (CCI) for OECD countries. This indicator is also used as an indicator of future developments of households' consumption and savings. The index is constructed using the answers from the survey related to the expected financial situation, the sentiment of consumers about the overall economic situation, the unemployment and the ability of consumers to save. The values above 100 indicate optimism of consumers, the values below 100 indicate their pessimistic attitudes towards future economic developments. If consumers are pessimistic, it could lead to their increased tendency to save, or to reduce consumption.

Figure 3 indicates the dynamics of the Consumer Confidence Index between 2014 and 2020. As can be seen from the Figure, during the considered period, the consumer confidence has never been so deeply pessimistic as during the first half of 2020. Also, it should be noted that during the second half of 2020 the consumer confidence started to improve, but it remains to be seen, how the consumers will react to the second way and possible further subsequent waves of the pandemic and related developments in their economies and in societies.

Figure 3. Consumer Confidence Index



Source: OECD (2020), Consumer confidence index (CCI) (indicator).

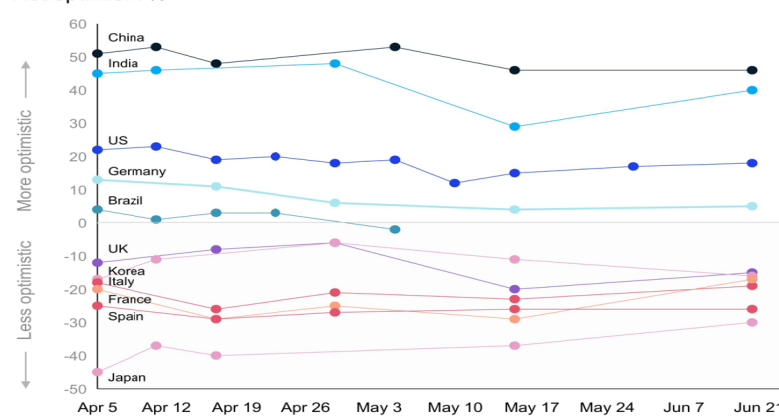
doi: 10.1787/46434d78-en, Accessed on 01 September 2020

According to the findings of the consulting firm McKinsey&Company(2020), five aspects have become evident in the behaviour of consumers globally as a reaction to the COVID-19 situation: a) a shift to value and essentials, b) the flight to digital and omnichannel, c) the shock to loyalty, d) the turn towards the health and caring economy, and e) the homebody economy. Similarly to other studies mentioned above, they also point out that the economic downturn led to the decreased income of consumers, which creates a barrier for their sentiment to become more optimistic.

Consumers have also become more careful about their spending, since they expect that the impact of the COVID-19 will also continue also in the upcoming months. As a consequence, they have shifted their spending largely to essential goods such as groceries and household supplies. The pandemic has led to the shift of consumers towards the online shopping and this change is expected to persist also in the upcoming months. One of the consequences of COVID-19 pandemic has been the disruption of the supply chains, which might have caused the unavailability of some brands on the market. This situation affected consumers and forced them to the switch from their favourite brands to different brands, or retailers. Also, the epidemic generated increased focus of consumers on hygienic packaging and hygienic norms for employees of firms producing consumables. The survey carried out between March and June 2020 by McKinsey&Company(2020) shows that during that period more than 70 percent of consumers did not feel comfortable resuming their “normal” outside of homes activities. Even though after the containment measures were eased many of them returned to the grocery shopping and socializing with friends, they continued to avoid travelling and crowded places.^{xxxv} When looking at the consumer sentiment across countries between April and June 2020 (Figure 4), China, India, and the US represented the most optimistic countries, on the other hand, consumers in most European countries, Korea and Japan were more pessimistic about the economic recovery.

Figure4. Dynamics of consumers entiment in selected countries (April-June 2020)

Optimism about own country's economic recovery after COVID-19¹
Net optimism %²



¹ Q. How is your overall confidence level on economic conditions after the COVID-19 situation? Rated from 1 "very optimistic" to 6 "very pessimistic."

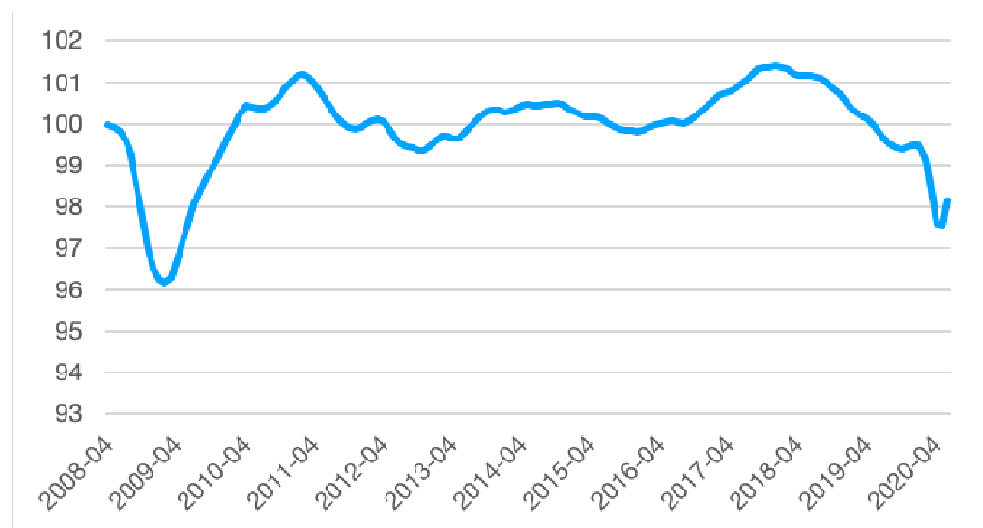
² Net optimism is calculated by subtracting the percent of respondents who answered 5 "pessimistic" and 6 "very pessimistic" from the percent of respondents who answered 1 "very optimistic" and 2 "optimistic."

Source: McKinsey & Company, COVID-19 Pulse surveys, conducted globally between March 15 and June 21, 2020

<https://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/marketing-and-sales/our-insights/a-global-view-of-how-consumer-behavior-is-changing-amid-covid-19>

Next to the consumer sentiment, OECD also monitors the dynamics of the business confidence in the OECD countries using the Business Confidence Indicator (BCI). Similarly to the Consumer Confidence Index, the Business Confidence Indicator also captures the opinions of businesses related to expected developments in production, orders and stocks of finished goods in the industry sector. The indicator above 100 indicates high confidence, on the other hand, if the BCI falls below 100 it indicates pessimism of businesses with regard to the future business outlook. As can be seen from Figure 5 in OECD countries the business confidence has been deteriorating since 2018, i.e. before the COVID-19 pandemic, however, as a consequence of the pandemic it has further dropped sharply. Nevertheless, it should be also noted that in the first half of 2020 the business confidence has not dropped below the level it reached during the economic crisis in 2009. Also, in the second half of 2020, the business sentiment has started to improve. However, its further dynamics will depend on the development of the epidemiological situation, containment measures and also on their economic consequences.

Figure 5. Business Confidence Index



Source: OECD (2020), Business confidence index (BCI) (indicator).

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3. The impact of economic downturn on the media landscape

As explained above, the COVID-19 pandemic has had significant adverse impacts on the global economy and brought it to the recession. Nevertheless, when looking at the impact of the pandemic on media, we should note that the demand and interest in information related to the pandemic of COVID-19 and its effects has increased, which led to the increased demand for media coverage. However, this effect has not been equally distributed across all types of media.

The market research published by Into the minds in May 2020 (Schwab, 2020) studied the effects of COVID-19 pandemic on different types of media. They conclude that during the observed period the time spent in front of the TV has reached its anytime high, e.g. 4.5 hours in France, 3.5 hours in Belgium, 3 hours in the United Kingdom of TV watching on average per day. This might be a surprising finding, since before the pandemic the time spent watching TV had been decreasing, which can be attributed, e.g. to the spread of online media. According to the estimates of this study (Schwab, 2020) on average the situation generated by the COVID-19 pandemic is expected to increase the time spent watching TV by 10 percent. In terms of the content broadcasted via TV, the lock-down and social distancing measures led to cutting the live shows and replacing them with other programmes, e.g. replaying older programmes, but also the developing new types of programmes using online media to engage the audience or actors/anchors in real time. The pandemic has also negatively affected the sales of an advertising space of TV channels, which had pronounced impact especially on private broadcasters. According to the market research (Schwab, 2020), in some cases, the loss of revenue in March/April 2020 might have exceeded 50 percent and requires large budget cuts of the TV broadcasters (Schwab, 2020).

An increasing share of media consumers has turned towards the online media. During the first months, the streaming sites have attracted large number of new customers, e.g. in the first quarter of 2020 the subscriptions of Netflix increased by 22.8 percent and its revenues increased more than originally predicted for the whole of 2020. Another streaming site, **Disney+ has reached 50 million subscribers worldwide 2 years earlier than originally planned**(Schwab, 2020). **However, the advertising revenues of social media are expected to decrease, and this decrease concerns also advertising revenues of such giants as Google, or Facebook.** Also, the data indicates an increased use of radio services during the first months of pandemic, when lock-down measures had been in place and the mobility of the population was substantially reduced. This is surprising, since the radio is usually listened to during a car drive and during the strict containment measures in place the commuting of people was reduced. At the moment it remains to be seen, if the shift towards the increased consumption of radio services is a general trend and if it continues also in the upcoming months.

Schwab (2020) concludes that the impact of pandemic on print media has also not been uniformed. The newspapers, which already have a digital version and those, which have high percentage of subscribers, have been doing better economically, since the pandemic has exacerbated the growing trend towards the use of the digital format of newspapers. At the same time, the demand for

hardcopies of newspapers has declined, which negatively affected especially those outlets, which rely on this type of the content provision.

However, the impact media have on the opinions of people consuming them should not be neglected. In this regard media have impact on the perception of the COVID-19 pandemic. Looking at the media sector in the UK, the study of BVA, BDRC (2020) indicates that the attitudes of people to corona virus could be driven by the type of media consumed. Their analysis of the data indicates that respondents, who supported the use of pragmatic policies towards COVID-19 situation, most frequently used the television and had relatively low levels of other media consumption. They also found that TV channels were less likely than other media to question the government handling of the pandemic and to criticise introduced measures. They also found that the respondents with an opinion that in spite of the COVID-19 pandemic the life goes on were most frequent users of the print media. The newspapers/print media are more likely to present a variety of opinions on different aspects of the pandemic. Consequently, readers of the print media are likely to be more exposed to different viewpoints about the pandemics and related situation than those, who focus on obtaining the information from other sources. These findings confirm that the type of media a person consumes affects their views on the situation. Thus, media have substantial influence on forming public opinion with regard to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Casero-Ripollés (2020) studied the secondary data from the online surveys of the Pew Research Center's American Trends Panel in the US and compared the data before and after the outbreak of the pandemic. The results of this study also confirm the resurgence of the role of television, but also the fact that people, increasingly sought the information from the news.

It is important to consider the effect of COVID-19 on the media landscape from medium and long-term perspective. According to Schwab (2020) there will be the need for freeze/cut of expenditures in individual types of media, which on one hand, will affect the employment in the sector, but it will also lead to changes in the type of the programmes produced. The IT infrastructure can be considered a priority. It remains to be seen, if the decrease of the social media advertising will be only temporary and it picks up again in 2021. The print media, which have not managed the transition towards the digital format are expected to be discontinued. Also, the success of print media to build the customer loyalty may represent a factor, which will determine the future existence of individual outlets.

The increasing role of media in shaping public opinion during the COVID-19 pandemic has also been confirmed by the study of the perceptions of people in the Czech Republic during the first wave of the COVID-19 outbreak (Trnka and Lorencova, 2020). It led to the conclusion that pessimistic communication used by the Czech mass media contributed to intensifying traumatic feelings, fears and psychological distress among general public in the Czech Republic. Media coverage can also affect the epidemiological situation, since effective media information campaigns have the potential to reduce the spread of the virus. Chang et al.(2020) built an SIHRS epidemic model with the media coverage, which was based on the epidemiological situation of the spread of COVID-19 in Hubei, China. Their results have shown that if the information implementation rate was decreased, the peak of confirmed cases would be significantly increased, and it would be delayed. Thus, in an effort to

carry out better prevention measures after the containment measures are eased, it is important to maintain the quantity of information provided and the existing media coverage of the pandemic.

Conclusions

The pandemic of COVID-19 has had negative effects on the world, affecting economies around the globe and bringing recession, which is perceived to exceed the financial crisis in the first decade of the new millennium. Its depth is being compared to the Great Depression during 30th of 20th century. In this chapter, we have shown that the effects of the pandemic have affected the consumer and business sentiment, which exacerbated a negative demand shock and further contributed to the deepening of the recession. Thus, the combination of a negative supply shock caused by the containment measures and the distortions of international supply chains combined with the drop of the demand have led to an abrupt and steep drop of the economic activity. Nevertheless, even though not all sectors of the economy and not all economies have been hit by these shocks to the same extent, the forecasts show that the economic output as well as other macroeconomic indicators are being affected globally.

The shock caused by the pandemic took most countries by surprise. They had to reshuffle their resources and build up their health care capacities to care for infected people suffering from the disease caused by the virus. As the first wave of the virus got under control in most countries, the containment measures started to be eased and the economic activity and the population mobility to increase. As we have shown, during this phase, the business and consumer sentiment has been improving, even though not to the same degree in each country. The loosening of measures and the opening of the economies generated the increase of the number of active cases and led to the onset of the second wave of the pandemic. During this phase, in general, countries have been more reluctant to implement harsh containment measures to decrease the economic and social impacts of the pandemic. It remains to be seen, how the situation develops, however, it is expected that the scope of the second wave will be globally larger than the first one. It is expected that the situation can be ultimately resolved only by the availability of an effective vaccine.

We have shown that the media play an important role in facilitating the access of population to information about the pandemic. However, as we have pointed out above, as a consequence of the pandemic, the media landscape is also changing, e.g. the print media not successful in their transition towards the digital interface experiencing economic losses and those, which have embraced the digitalization facing increased demand and economic boost. An increased demand for the content of streaming platforms and for traditional TV broadcasting represents an interesting phenomenon. It remains to be seen, if these changes will be sustained in the medium and long-term horizons. However, it is predicted that our societies and economies will change as a consequence of the pandemic and it is realistic to expect that the changed media landscape will be an integral part of these changes.

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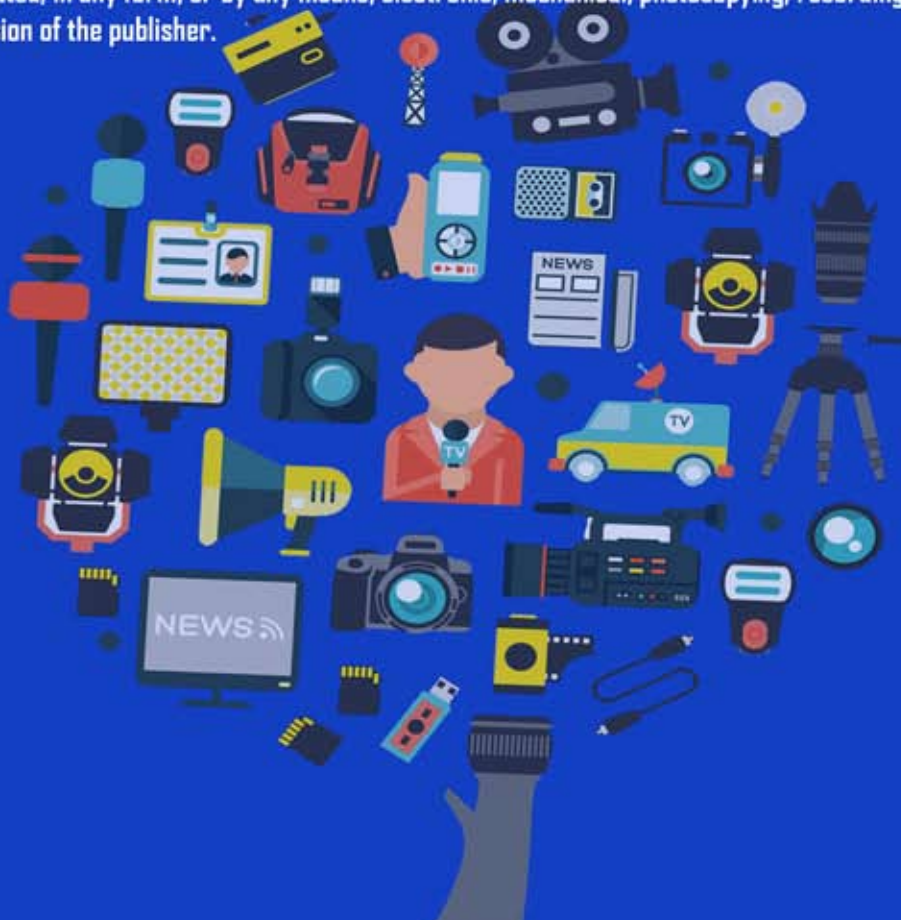
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