

This document is downloaded from DR-NTU, Nanyang Technological University Library, Singapore.

Title	AMIC Seminar on Women and Media in Asia : Singapore, Jan 7-9, 1987 : [rapporteurs' reports]
Author(s)	
Citation	
Date	1987
URL	<a href="http://hdl.handle.net/10220/854">http://hdl.handle.net/10220/854</a>
Rights	

**Rapporteurs' Reports**

Rapporteur's Report: Session I, Portrayal of Women in Media

PHILIPPINES: The portrayal of women in Philippine media (specifically in radio, television, women's magazines, komiks magazines, advertisements, and films) is bound by traditional images that do not reflect current reality. Women are portrayed as: 1) siren or vamp; 2) victim of rape and other crimes; 3) symbol of beauty and grace; and 4) housewife and mother dependent on men and tied to household work and interests. The latter is perhaps the most insidious of the images, since it assumes limitations which bind women to traditional roles.

PAKISTAN: Women are portrayed either as ideals or deviates from the ideal. The images are negative, whether of mother or of vamp. Although the new government has changed many of these through censorship and rules, and women are no longer presented in grotesque manners, still they are generally shown as emotional, irrational, and fatalistic, and in TV dramas, for example, stock situations (urban-rich vs. rural-poor) still prevail.

JAPAN: The portrayal of women in Japanese media reflect what the Japanese men believe ~~about~~ Japanese women should be. For example, when Takako Doi was chosen head of the Socialist Party, she was still portrayed as gaining more satisfaction from being a housewife than from being a national leader. Women are not treated as men are, because they are either ignored or played up ("treated too well") by focusing on their being women and not the leaders or professionals that they are.

INDONESIA: A content analysis of daily newspapers showed that women appearing in the papers were usually: officials, wives of officials, housewives, artists and celebrities, social workers and career women, and women in the workforce. Female models in the advertisements are used to present many different commodities. Wives are presented as supportive of their husbands' careers, rather than as having careers of their own.

INDIA: Traditional images also bind women into set images -- as sex symbols, as housewives, as weak and helpless. Women's issues are given very little attention.

The discussion showed that women in all the participating Asian countries are largely shown in the roles of: 1) sirens; 2) beauties; 3) victims; and predominantly, 4) wives and mothers. The latter, although reflecting the reality and the respect accorded women in society, is limiting, because it suggests that women cannot rise beyond this role. However, in all the Asian countries examined, change is happening, because of: 1) a new consciousness among both men and women; and 2) action by women's and other organizations, and by government agencies.

It was felt that there is a need to examine the reality especially with regard to ~~xxxx~~ women in rural areas. The woman's point of view must not be overlooked. Women's programs in media should be used to educate the women as well as the men. A critical awareness of women and women's issues should be engendered -- both through the media and through education.

Submitted by:

Doreen G. Fernandez

THAILAND: In both print and broadcast media, women's sexuality is much used to catch reader interest. Also presented are women as rape victims -- not usually women in politics or higher education. In the women's pages, women from the lower class are hardly ever featured. In the broadcast media, the images are predominantly those of housewife and mother. This is partly being changed by women entering the media world and trying to change their own images.

SINGAPORE: Commercials largely present housewives and mothers, and advertising agencies say that this reflect market research, which reflects life, and that this is what advertisements should be, because it is not the task of advertising agencies to change life. Women have little influence on the advertisements, but there have been some changes. Special mention was made of the highly successful "Singapore Girl" ads of Singapore Airlines, which are objectionable because of the image they present of women.

MALAYSIA: Malaysian women in the advertisements are stereotyped according to traditional roles -- keeping house, shopping, making small talk. They are largely used as adornments, to attract attention to products. Advertisers excuse themselves by saying that career women are really a minority, and 80% of Malaysian women are really housewives.

NEPAL: The portrayal of women in media is related to the social values of the country and status that women have reached. Up to the middle of the century (the 50s), women had little access to education, and were largely confined to the home. Women today feel that the amount of coverage given them in the media is not commensurate to their contribution to society. They also feel that they are used unnecessarily in the media, where men could do as well. Treatment of them, however, reflects the high respect given them in society.

(25)

HIGHLIGHTS OF SESSION IV - Status of women in media

9 a.m. - 10.30 a.m.

January 8, 1987

The objective of this session was to examine the levels of seniority that women have reached and to offer tangible suggestions for training and research to facilitate further advancement.

The following reports came from country representatives:

In INDIA, no woman heads a daily, but they do head Sunday editions of newspapers or hold senior positions in all branches of media. Radio and TV (the government organisations) have more women at top management, the reason for their inability to reach No. 1 seems to be based on discrimination rather than lack of capacity or enthusiasm.

In NEPAL, too, the percentage of women in radio and TV though slight, is larger than in the national dailies, while in private publications, they are a figurehead only. But the chief executive and general manager of the Film Corporation are both women.

In MALAYSIA, the same story continues with women doing well at senior management level but the chief editors of the top five dailies being men. The electronic media also seems to favour men. There are very few women in technical positions but they have done better in advertising and public relations. Their position has changed favourably in numbers rather than in reaching No. 1 position. In broadcasting too they are in the lower echelons.

In SINGAPORE, there is no discrimination no difference in recruitment promotion scales or treatment of women. They are found on the hard line beats like crime, politics, sports and have reached No. 1 position in many areas. The General Manager of Singapore Broadcasting Corporation is a woman, Straits Times also has women editors, they are also highly visible in advertising, airlines public relations.

In KOREA, which is still male dominated, the percentage of women in mass media is poor in comparison with men. They are also discriminated against in recruitment, salary scales, permitting of nightshifts. In short, they have to specialise to be recognised.

In THAILAND, few women are at the top in print media except in women's magazines. There are many in TV newscasting and production zone. They fail to get No. 1 position because of lack of seniority or motivation.

In INDONESIA, women have limited freedom due to the social stress on women's parallel responsibilities. In the three women's magazines, 60.14% staff is male, while 39% is female. In TV too they are in anchorman positions, not in key positions.

In JAPAN, women have not had enough time after entering public life to reach the No. 1 position. There is no managing chief editor though, there are five women editorial writers. Also very few women are in hardcore reporting. Japanese society is not yet ready for nightcare centres to facilitate shift duty for women. But women have become anchorpersons in TV and the future seems bright.

In PAKISTAN, almost half of the mass communication graduates are girls. PBC and PTC has the largest employees of women. But the field is opening up because today's women are more serious and the social fabric is beginning to accept that women will continue to work after marriage.

In PHILIPPINES, in the highest circulated daily, INQUIRER, the President and Chairman are both women. So is the Editor in Chief. Society is very supportive of the working woman even when her children are very young. Women came into their own mainly after the toppling of the Marcos regime because during the press restrictions, they had done many of the anti-stories. One of them was fired and the whole press was galvanized. In hindsight it seems as if women were so brave because they were doing their jobs and may have been ignorant of the consequences of fighting back. But, it did work in their favour. Probably their multi track

- 3 -

development from a young age is responsible for women's success today.

In SRI LANKA, there is no blatant discrimination but certain reservations prevent women from reaching the top. Two women edit Sunday papers and the Deputy Director of the Broadcasting Corporation is a woman. Sri Lankan society has been moulded on the Buddhist ethic so women have always been educated and a liberated species. Till two years ago, there was discrimination in wages in trades but that too is under control now. They are visible in Radio and TV as producers newscasters. But support systems are lacking although there is no discrimination in training.

Shailaja Ganguly

/jo  
090187