Gender mainstreaming as an essential part of journalism education in India

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Abstract

The present paper posits relevance of gender mainstreaming (GM) in journalism education, which can redress rising gender discrimination, violence, and gap in media ethics, professionalism and journalistic practices. Reasons are embedded in the structural, spatial and temporal aspects of the media profession, especially in the digital media content and practice. Gender mainstreaming framework (UNESCO/ UNITWIN, 2018) has been used in this paper to explore the progress in gender mainstreaming in journalism education in India. The findings are based on a survey of 34 Journalism schools of public and private universities in India for an exploration of pedagogical and transactional practices in gender mainstreaming. Findings suggest that epistemological and ontological perspectives in teaching and research programmes fall short of a consistent gendered approach and are universally sporadic. Any conscious agreement on 'gender mainstreaming' is either restricted to a 'topic' or a paper and offers limited scope of influence on changes in the interpretation of content, gender sensitive pedagogical perspective or diversity of issues in research. The position of faculty on gender mainstreaming does not actually show a deep gender polarization, but such feelings essentially could not change the orientation of the curriculum of the course, their delivery and professional standards. If enrolment of female students in journalism, as part of higher education, has shown a significant rise, yet their entry in the media industry has not dented the status quo of discrimination, or stopped women from deserting the profession mid-way. Mapping of gender mainstreaming in journalism education holds the

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promise of ushering in affirmative policies and actions in changing the media discourse pertaining to exploitation, disempowerment and marginalisation of women.

Keywords

Gender mainstreaming, digital media, journalism and media education, women in media, women media professionals, India.

Introduction

An overall thrust in gender mainstreaming (GM) in the development process to offset disparity, stereotyping and discrimination (NPEW, 2001) has found resonance in the media practice where marginalised gender representation, sexy portrayal and exploitation are salient and persistent issues. Broadly, GM has been defined unequivocally as the process or program for making women's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programs in the social, cultural and economic spheres (ECOSOC, 1997). One potential reason for lack of progress in the media practice is an absence of GM in journalism education and curricula since the connection between cultural values, curriculum content and socialisation is strong (Gallagher, 2018; UNESCO/UNTWIN, 2019). GM in journalism and media schools has attained a primacy today with an increased reporting of violence against women, cases of misdemeanour by men in the media industry and harassment and risks women face with an increasing frequency both in online and offline media (Posetti & Storm, 2018; Vega Montiel, 2014). As in the erstwhile media industry, consolidation of media entities in the business of network and mobile data has acquired a tantalising commercial and business appeal in the digital media. The neo-liberal logic of online platform companies also implies a perverse confluence of interests that allows regressive gender and other ideologies to be perpetuated (Gurumurthy et al., 2018).

GM process through policy and programmatic interventions holds out possibilities of altering women's structural relations to both media and other social institutions (Byerly & Ross, 2006). Scope for change has remained an unfinished agenda since news room culture and androcentric perspectives are not challenged by alternative modes of practice and learning. A viable approach in disrupting the entrenched discriminatory arrangements in the media ecosystem rests with a recast of journalism education and pedagogy, so as to provide a next generation of professionals with the knowledge and understanding that will make a difference (French et al., 2019). However, an

absence of substantive education about gender issues and newsroom culture in the university journalism courses helps maintain a systemic gender inequality in the industry (North, 2010)

Rationale

Inveterate discriminatory practices within the media have remained unchallenged for lack of exposure of men and women to critical thinking, deficiency in diversity of views and epistemic aspects of gender discourse in the education and training. The present paper assesses scope of GM in journalism education in Indian universities by analysing the existing policies and processes therein and recommends how these gaps can be bridged by using the GM framework (French et al., 2018; Gender Link, 2010; Vega Montiel, 2014; UNESCO/UNITWIN, 2019). Some interesting research studies in the realm of GM provide the context for understanding the symbiotic relationship between journalism practice and education. The paper posits theoretical postulates in feminist and gender mainstreaming episteme to frame the argument on how GM in journalism education can situate changes in policies and programmes through an 'integrative and transformative' process.

Pursuit for change, an unfinished agenda

The pursuit of gender equality through 'visibility, voice and influence' in the media practice (Gallagher, 2014) has acquired a new meaning and relevance in the Journalism education. An avowed approach in ushering changes in the teaching and pedagogy of gender is a challenging proposition. Scholars at different intervals emphasize an inadequate approach to investing in gender-inclusive education to improve women's access and influence in media organizations (Ceulemans & Fauconnier, 1979). A large corpus of studies on gender equality in journalism practice have dwelt on the relevance of journalism education in provision of 'a critical mass' of women professionals in changing the representation and decision-making process in the newsroom to address stereotyping and discrimination in larger social settings (Steiner, 2009). Worldwide influx of women entering the media industry corresponds to the higher enrolment of women students in journalism education (Boateng, 2017; Densem, 2006; Gallagher, 1995; Golombisky, 2001; North, 2010). Large number of women in journalism schools was best assurance of changing the deep-seated bias in news reporting and to 'enable profound transformations in the journalism profession' (Boateng, 2017). Ubiquity of women in the media is deceptive since it hides the challenges women encounter in remaining confined to lower levels

of hierarchy or compelled to leave the industry. These rising numbers, which De Bruin (2014) termed as 'Body Count', do not add up to anything significant, as once women join the workplace, their numbers plummet and continue to dwindle until they become a tiny minority in the upper echelons of corporate media (Byerly, 2011).

A persistent struggle has been with the question of why rising numbers of women in journalism education do not add to the change in their representation in the decision-making echelons and newsrooms (Franks, 2013). Expectation of value aggregation in number of women joining the profession has been short-lived and inconsequential in influencing the type of content produced, issues covered, voices represented and the manner in which women – and men – are portrayed (Byerly & Ross, 2006; Djerf-Pierre, 2007; North, 2009). Women, even with the professional degrees and training, are disadvantaged in the profession since issues of power play, hegemonic and cultural/traditional relativities start acting here (Boateng, 2017). Marginalisation occurs not only through misrepresentation of women and their perspective but also the failure to recognise them as independent agents, apart from their relation to men (Rhode, 1997). Even when more women have followed the formal route of journalism, their inability to contend with the competition and compelling personal factors prevent their bid to reach the higher ranks. Unlike in Scandinavian countries, outright prejudice in other cultures has hampered women's ambitions in journalism (Franks, 2013).

The Nordic gender success story is reflected in GM from journalism education to journalism employment and career mobility (Boateng, 2017). In cultures where access to education is subjected to exclusion based on class, sex and ethnicity, the age-old gender disparity ratio in favour of men in education is gradually being reversed in journalism education by women's access to the privileged space. In her analysis of gender parity in enrolment in journalism schools in Ghana, Boatneg (2017) presents how journalism education is drawing more girls while the enrolment of boys is dwindling, a common trend in many other countries in Africa. However, progress in the admission of women into journalism education was not the result of deliberate institutional policies from within but emanated from the state policy directives and international agencies' push.

Routing change through curricula development
More women joining the journalism education and training does not convert to a noticeable change in the gender patterns of either media content or in editorial

decision-making roles (Gallagher, 2019; North, 2010). Not only numbers and positions women occupy would have a resultant change but, 'if more such women populate these spaces with a politicised understanding of the ways in which women's subordination is currently reproduced, and with the will to change it' (Arthurs, 1994, p. 100). Critical insight into journalistic practices and gendered decision-making is possible if journalism education institutions are aware and have the ability to negotiate GM as a means to establish new ways of thinking and doing journalism. Mere inclusion of gender or women issues within journalism studies does not however posit major positive outcome in spite of a more gender-aware education (Larrondo & Rivero, 2019). In their study of Spanish university journalism programme, Larrondo & Rivero (2019) found that the gender agenda was required across syllabus, teaching programme and in research to provide a substantive direction to GM. Challenges in initiating process of GM were at the institutional level, where any conscious understanding of the gender as an issue of critical study was low (Larrondo & Rivero, 2019). In her investigation of the gender discriminatory practices in journalism schools in Australia, North (2010) found a dismissive approach towards teaching and training of gender issues. Since future media persons are trained in these institutes, curricula must include content that educates these future practitioners of media to be gender sensitive in both media operations and content creation. Apathy to feminist or critical pedagogies preclude discussion on different facets of women's role in media or gendered aspects of news-making (North, 2010).

A pioneering work in an assessment of GM in journalism education was conducted by the Gender Links (2010) in 25 public institutions in the Southern African Development Community (SADC). Evidence of some beginning was found in a few of the institutions in unveiling a programme of learning skills, knowledge and attitude as part of the GM process (Gender Links, 2010) but significant focus at the institutional level was missing since majority of the faculty were men even when women students outnumbered men. The issue of equality was dependent on a lecturer's own knowledge and on their feminist interests (Made, 2010) while research on gender issues was unknown in many of the universities (Gender Links, 2009). In their analysis of journalism education in Nepal, Adhikary & Pant (2011) evinced how institutional apathy could stymie any progressive effort in GM. Women faculty in the journalism departments had been consistently excluded from the process of curriculum development and board of studies meetings given their low and ad hoc status. Domination of the male and exclusion of female faculty in the decision-making process and curricular development process was evident in the core journalism courses

which completely excluded gender perspective and gender issues (Adhikary & Pant, 2011).

Resultant effect of such gaps in institutional structure and policies are manifested in the type of learning materials and books recommended to position issues from a masculine and biased perspective. Contemporary journalism curricula and textbooks tend to ignore gender issues, that is, legitimizing professional standards and practices invented by men which advantage them over women exponentially (Steiner, 2017). In an analysis of state of journalism education in India, Muppidi (2008) highlighted the absence of critical thinking perspectives in the syllabus across some eminent journalism educational institutions in India. There was a marked interest in introducing technology-related journalistic skills to produce good editors, but not good analytical or thinking skills. Lack of thrust on gender issues in the course curriculum was apparent in an overall absence of gender sensitivity among students and lack of training in gender sensitivity among the faculty (Muppidi, 2008). Media education today needs to serve a broader agenda which 'makes for an active citizenry, strengthening critical abilities and communicative skills necessary for an empowered action and informed participation' (Jayachandran, 2018, p. 73).

These studies provide the context for examining the relevance of gender mainstreaming (GM) concept in the area of journalism education for substantive policy and programmatic changes to redeem backlog of exploitation, marginalisation and invisibility of women 'on and off the screen'.

Theoretical framework

Theoretical contours of GM are grounded in the feminist theories of interrogating the discriminatory and unequal social and economic practices. 'Distinctiveness of GM is that it seeks to equalize gender equality by embedding its norms and practices in the structures, processes and environment' of the institutions. Premise of gender mainstreaming (GM) is built on an enabling process of change in all aspects of policy formulation, structures and systems leading to a transformative environment (Daly, 2005). The complexity of achieving an unprecedented scale of change makes GM an overtly ambitious but concomitantly rooted in gender equality concepts of the feminist theory. Sylvia Walby (2005) defines gender mainstreaming as the re-invention, restructuring, and re-branding of a key part of feminism in the contemporary era. Emphasis on equal opportunities for women within the feminist theory has remained more women-centred without seeking to change deep-seated bias and entrenched discriminatory practices. An analysis or vision of how gender inequality is perpetuated is

a central feature of GM, but it is equally focused on laying out mechanisms and 'activities and/or tools' to attack gender inequality (Daly, 2005). This construct is based on identifying the actors, policies, structures and processes malleable in changing the environment for progressive decision-making and in implementation.

Opaqueness in how GM can be conceptualised, both at policy and at theoretical level, is clarified in situating it within the feminist perspectives of equality, knowledge creation and normative practices. Rees (1998) outlined three types of models to make the process more distinct and also evolutionary. The first model, guided by gender equality principle, entails 'sameness' in making allowances for women to share with men positions previously considered as erstwhile male domains. This amounts to 'tinkering' with the existing normative patterns of inequality. The second model is an enlightened valuation or 'tailoring' of existing and different contributions of women and men in a gender segregated society. The third model is transformative in nature since it proclaims new standards for both men and women, replacing the segregated institutions and standards associated with masculinity and femininity (Rees, 1998; Walby, 2005). What makes GM revolutionary is that it seeks to bring the process of change from within the institutions which it seeks to reform.

Agenda setting approach for transformative change

GM sets an agenda for change by building support from within institutional framework for changing existing policies and a long-term engagement through 'Agenda Setting' and 'Integration' as two approaches in achieving the process of transformative change. Agenda setting (Jahan, 1995) affirms change in the existing systems (mainstream), reorientation of existing policy paradigms, changing decision making processes and prioritising gender equality objectives and programmatic activities. The 'Integrationist' approach introduces a gender perspective without challenging the current policy paradigm in achieving existing policy goals. Walby (2005) professes that while 'Integrationist' approach spells that gender mainstreaming is less likely to be rejected; its impact is likely to be less substantial. These dimensions contain important aspects of the 'sameness/ difference' debate within the feminist theory. In addressing dichotomies in language, feminist perspectives deal with changes in the conditioning and interplay of power and prestige in the language. For example, the dichotomy between rationality (attributed to men) and emotionality (attributed to women) has led to 'valorisation' of rationality to be adjudged as the norm and the 'other' as a deviant standard.

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Disquiet with how empirical knowledge is reified as the masculine perspective and an objective presentation of reality, feminists have argued that academic knowledge is saturated with male values (androcentrism) that masquerade as objective truths (Krijnen, 2017). GM, as an extension of feminist critique of inequality, also provides an essential argument of changing the dimensions of empirical knowledge from positivist to Harding's Standpoint theory of locating knowledge in the human experience. The process of such production of knowledge compels an enquiry into who has the power and position, and who is deprived (Harding, 2004). At another level, social role theory of Alice Eagly and Wendy Wood (2012) suggests that human behaviour is structured by social norms and is affected by gendered roles. This structured position determines the particular content of the cognitions (i.e., gender role beliefs) that influence female and male behaviour (p. 459). Standpoint and Social Role theories provide an added theoretical dimension to conceptualisation and contextualisation of GM in policy directives and structural changes within the media practice and education.

Gender mainstreaming as a non-agnostic proposition

To appreciate how GM concept can address challenges in journalism practice and education in India, a realistic assessment of the academic and training programme in higher education is required. In India, gargantuan size of the education system is represented by 993 universities, 39931 colleges and 10725 stand alone institutions (AISHE, 2019). A large set-up of higher education in India reflects gender inequality in access since the enrolment of women in higher education (48.6 percent) still lags behind men but has seen an appreciable rise in the recent decade. Gender Parity Index (GPI) reached 1.0 for the first time from 0.88 in 2011-12 and Female (GER) jumped to 26.4 percent in 2018-19 by rising above male GER, (Pai, 2019). The enviable growth in participation of women in education in India has received attention consistently in policies and has been a major preoccupation of both the government and civil society (Ghara, 2016). Commitment in promoting education of girls, is evident in the state policy of treating the education system as an act of deliverance (Sahni, 2018) to 'neutralize the accumulated distortions of the past, and play a positive, interventionist role in the empowerment of women' (NEP, 1986). Apart from education, an overarching thrust to the process of gender equity was the formulation of the National Policy for Women Empowerment (NPWE, 2001) which spelled out the scope for gender equality in India in expansive and broader terms of 'mainstreaming gender perspective in the development process'.

Seized by changes in the structural and liberalization policies (post-1991), and technological developments in India, the redrafted NPWE (2016) professes to take the agenda of GM forward and significantly addresses the issue of women's education and gender sensitive curricula to address sex stereotyping. The NPWE Draft policy inter alia focuses on media and gender parity in the 'entry of women in the media and promotion of journalism and mass media courses <…> and setting up of women media centres for skill up-gradation'.

Position of women in the media has improved to some extent as it is evident in greater ubiquity of young women in the media industry, and higher enrolment in the journalism education courses in India (Muppidi, 2008). The shift in choices made by women, from traditional arts and social sciences to professional degree courses, especially the management and journalism and media studies, has been accompanied by changes in the liberal economic policies witnessed since the 90s in the country (Chanana, 2007). Blitzkrieg entry of private entities in the media industry in the 90s in India, until then monopolised by the public media, generated an euphoria in opening of the sector through FDI (Foreign Direct Investment) and an expectation of attractive job offers for women. Success did accrue in improving the positioning and safety of women in the print media (mostly in the English press) but commercialisation and materialization of digital media have brought in its wake new standards of discrimination and stereotyping, relegating women to the margins (Jayachandran, 2018).

Today, multiple players in journalism education range from public universities and media houses running journalism schools to journalism associations partnering with businesses and non-profits (Desai, 2017). The 'corporatization of media industry' in India, has had an impact on the course curriculum which has liberally emphasised technological skill enhancement mandated by the industry (Murthy, 2011). Indian higher education has been modelled on the western system in its design and curriculum. In line with the US and British schools of journalism, almost all courses in India follow a similar structure and a heavy component of historiography and orientation to practice-related skills but skimming over the ethical dimensions. Within the institutional framework, journalism education has been more proactive in introducing technological related skill formulation but has no cognizance of how digital architecture can further imperil little progress made in GM. Preponderance of journalism courses in the private universities exploits the psychological and employment uncertainties by offering technical skill training to the exclusion of liberal arts approach (Muppidi, 2008). This overemphasis on learning technological skills precludes attention to developing critical perspective in analysis of editorial and

reporting decisions and coverage which have implications for gender equity, its processes and barriers in achieving sustainable development goals.

There is a stark admission that realities of the world to be reported and focused on require a fresh perspective of shaping not just digital literacy but critical perspectives to shape a wholesome journalism. As UNESCO's Model Curriculum (2013) terms it as an effort to chalk out a 'future trajectory of journalism education. Gender in media and ICTs programmes compel a strategic rethink about the centrality of gender mainstreaming in the journalism curricula to deal with gender inequality in the institutions and industries they feed (UNESCO/UNITWIN, 2018). In 2001, the Indian University Grants Commission recommended a model curriculum, program execution specifications, and uniform 'journalism and mass communication' terminology and described journalism 'as a part of a larger discipline (Desai, 2017) of mass communication' (UGC, 2001). But most universities did not make any changes, and scholars debated whether 'uniformity was a good thing' (Sanjay, 2006).

Integrating gender mainstreaming in journalism education

GM in journalism education is confronted with a dilemma in making the curriculum relevant to needs of media and communication industries and simultaneously educating young media and journalism practitioners in creating gender sensitive media structures and content (UNESCO/UNTWIN, 2018). The present paper provides an evaluation of journalism courses in India based on the UNESCO/UNITWIN framework (Media Links, 2010; UNESCO/ UNITWIN, 2018). Major dimensions of the GM framework are based on (i) institutional normative framework, (ii) promotion of gender parity in access to education and other resources for students and scholars, (iii) curricula development and course content, (iv) teaching /learning of feminist theories and methodologies, (v) learning materials and research/publications on gender analysis, (vi) research/publications on gender in media and communication. We have adapted the GM framework to determine the institutional response and level of gender mainstreaming in the Journalism education in India.

Research questions

Following research questions were proposed to serve the stated objective:

a) What is the institutional framework for promoting gender parity ratio of enrolment among students, and scholars and the position of female faculty in the academic hierarchy?

b) What level of gender mainstreaming has been achieved in the curriculum development and within the syllabus?

c) What kind of gendered intersectional approach is adopted in teaching and learning of gender issues?

d) Does the gender epistemology guide the research programme/ publications?

e) What are the perceptions of senior journalism teachers/administrators on differentials in professional capacities and achievements based on gender?

Methodology

In this paper, we explore the pedagogical and transactional opportunities of GM in the journalism education programme as part of the higher education system in India. A cross-sectional survey of 34 universities/colleges teaching journalism/mass communication programme in India was conducted simultaneously across 10 regions in the country. The cross-sectional survey was considered an appropriate method since it helps in collection of data to make inferences about a population of interest (universe) at one point in time. The cross-sectional survey was considered most appropriate in seeking formal information and simultaneously drawing information on beliefs and attitude towards gender equality issues (Lavrakas, 2008; Mathers et al., 1998). This type of a survey usually takes a descriptive or exploratory form and simply sets out to describe behaviours or attitudes. For the survey, an in-depth-interview (IDI) schedule was used commonly utilised in the survey design and in exploratory and descriptive studies. A range of approaches to interviewing was followed from a completely unstructured one, in which the subject is allowed to talk freely about whatever they wish, to a highly structured approach in which the subject responses are limited to answering direct questions (Mathers et al., 1998). To draw information on skills, knowledge and attitudes of the senior faculty, semi-structured interview schedule was used to lead with open-ended questions and then devised follow-up questions to draw out more specific evidence from the respondents (Adams, 2015). In-depth interviews (IDIs) were conducted with the heads/senior faculty, representing the academic administration, to provide requisite official information pertaining to the enrolment procedure and intake capacity, staffing and recruitment policy, status of gender mainstreaming as part of the institutional framework, integration of gender as a cross-cutting issue in the courses/curricula, and in the research programme. The senior faculty's perceptions were also assessed on various dimensions of gender equality in professional abilities, decision-making and leadership skills to assess

implications for the leadership in promoting GM in journalism education. List of the academic administrators as key informants was drawn from journalism education departments of 34 universities to represent regional, language and media diversity.

The sampled list of the universities was drawn from the public and private institutions teaching journalism/mass communication programme based on the roll of NIRF institutions (National Institutional Ranking Framework, 2019). From five geographical regions of the country, two states were selected from each region based on the inclusion criteria of higher media penetration (based on higher newspaper circulation and TV viewership) and the state as a regional hub of journalism education. The ten selected states for the survey (out of total number of 28 states in the country) were: West Bengal and Assam in the east; Delhi and Uttar Pradesh from the northern region; Rajasthan and Maharashtra from the west; Chattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh in the central region; Tamil Nadu and Telangana from the south. From each of the ten states, three-to-four journalism teaching institutions were selected based on the NIRF list. A total number of 34 universities/colleges spread across ten states representing public (67.6 percent) and private (32.4 percent) institutions formed the sample for the country-wide survey.

An assessment of GM in the course curriculum also included the document analysis method to evaluate contents of the syllabus taught in the selected universities. One university from each of the ten states was sampled to enlist a proportionate number of public and private universities from the total sample. Following this process, 10 course syllabi were reviewed to ascertain the inclusion of theoretical and skills aspects of gender in the papers, units, topics, and in assignments. An analysis of the reading and reference list was carried out to examine if women authors/writers were included in the books prescribed and in the suggested list; women/gender related assignments in the practical section of the syllabus.

Gender parity in enrolment and academic positions

A wide range of courses offered in the journalism and media education promise entry of well-formulated, critically oriented trained professionals in the media industry. This premise is fulfilled by the provision of various types of under-graduate and graduate courses and research programmes offered by the public and private universities in India. Among 34 universities, many public universities (65.2 percent) and private universities (54.5 percent) offer research-based programmes apart from under-graduate and masters level courses in journalism

and media studies. Number of female students in universities showed an appreciable parity with the male students. The enrolment of female students was significantly higher in more number of universities (64.6 percent) ranging between 60 to 100 percent, whereas in a similar number of universities, it was significantly lower (30 percent) for the male students. In the research programme, the registration of female research students (64.6 per cent) was more than half of all the male scholars. This position may mask some gendered ground realities since technology-oriented courses drew more male students while female students opted for the television or public relations courses considered as soft professional choices.

As in the case of higher enrolment of female students, likewise, significant number of women in teaching position was indicative of their 'visibility' in the higher education. Within all institutions the number of male faculty (53.2 percent) was more than that of the female faculty (46.8 percent), but the difference was non-significant. As in the media profession traditionally dominated by men, the academia is becoming a big draw for women as a career path. However, a significant number of women as teachers do not indicate an 'equal opportunity' as not many women find it easy to break the glass-ceiling beyond the entry foothold. More number of women were positioned at the lowest rung of the hierarchy as Assistant Professor (68.8 percent), while most of the men held senior positions as Associate Professor and Professors.

Large-scale ingress into the academia by women is attributed to the twin effect of waning of media glitz and the slow-down in the traditional media sector. These changes have had a reverse influence in compelling women to leave the industry for the academia but have been accommodated at lower ranks as an Assistant professor in public (64.2 percent) and private (77.3 percent) universities in the country (*Graph 1*). This is suggestive of lack of affirmative institutional policies in the induction and promotion of women in the academia.

Graph 1

**Women faculty positions in journalism education
in public and private universities (N-125)**
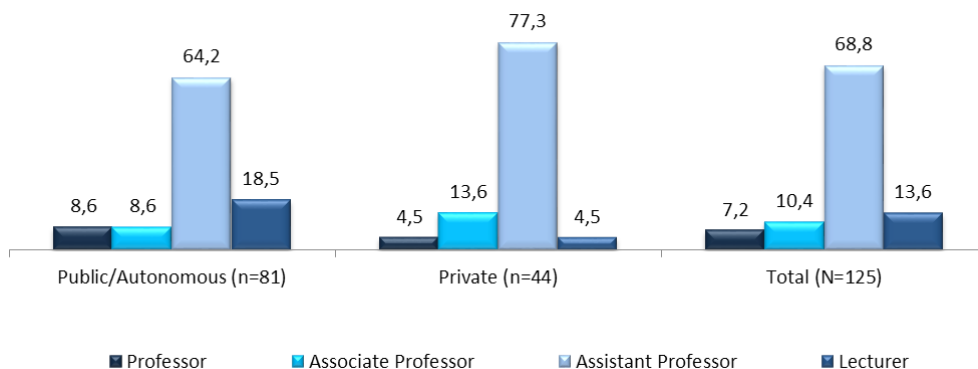
Large number of qualified women faculty with a Ph.D. degree as an Assistant professor/lecturer in all universities indicates a gender blind/neutral institutional policy in an upward mobility in the hierarchy. Similar level of subtle discrimination was in evidence in the academic administrative set-up. Among the senior faculty, holding the position of Dean/HOD/Chairperson, a greater number of female faculty possessed the research degree (66.7 percent) – a mandatory requirement in the academic recruitment procedure-as compared to the male faculty (54.5 percent). Some of the senior male teachers only had a master's degree (13.6 percent) or diploma or a certificate (4.5 percent), whereas none of the female faculty had an educational degree lower than a post-graduation (16.7 percent).

Perceptible gaps in gender mainstreaming in curriculum

A lack of institutionalised and integrated approach to gender mainstreaming was in evidence in all the surveyed universities based on in-depth-interviews with the senior teachers of the journalism departments. The faculty manning the academic set-up majority of whom were men, indicated an uncertainty and a lack of understanding about the gendered aspects of 'inclusion and diversity' across the syllabi. An overt gap was covered with a marked nonchalant attitude amounting to 'use of gender neutral terms', or a customary inclusion in the 'Development Communication paper' with a dedicated unit assigned to 'issues of women's empowerment'. A hiatus in the gender focus in journalism courses is attributed to 'lack of availability of the specialised faculty' and a

lackadaisical treatment is met through a 'workshop or a seminar on a specific occasion' (Women's Day). Perceptibly, gender as an area of skilled orientation and critical study is not considered of any significant value, but merely confined to a topic in the public (87 percent) and private (63.6 percent) universities than a cross-cutting dimension in the syllabus. A significant number of private universities (36.4 percent) did not deal with any aspect of the gender episteme in the syllabus across any of the existing courses. These efforts are suggestive of extemporaneous treatment to the idea of GM by assigning little weight to epistemological and ontological changes in the journalism education (*Table 1*).

Table 1

Views of senior faculty
on inclusion & non-inclusion of gender in syllabus

Reasons for inclusion
Helps in developing gender sensitivity outlook and approach among students of journalism
To apprise students about the existing situation regarding equity and empowerment issues in the society
Reasons given for no additional thrust
In the existing journalism courses 50 percent of social problems which concern women, like health and education are already covered
No faculty to teach this specialised area
Topics are covered during standalone workshop, assignment/seminar, etc.

An analysis of the syllabi of journalism/ mass communication courses suggests that gender as a critical area of interrogation and approach is not high on the agenda in journalism education.

Document analysis of the syllabi suggests that gender mainstreaming embedded in the pedagogy, learning of theoretical paradigms and research areas is at a latent stage across all types of universities, especially in the private universities. Gender as a standalone paper was taught at just one state-level university to form part of the cultural studies specialisation but largely ignored as an area of interest in the mainstream (technical) papers in all the universities. Gender as a topic for writing assignments was part of the syllabi in just two universities. One of the papers positioned 'women related issues' under social issues of 'sex, gender and empowerment' which testifies to the analysis of gender from a conventional perspective or by clubbing it with 'the marginal

community issues' in a paper on Development Communication. This approach of segregation and treatment of gender epistemology as an exclusive area of knowledge, with no bearing on different aspects of writing, reporting and research, does not fulfil institutional commitment to gender mainstreaming. The entire premise of teaching of gender is treated as about 'women issues' without establishing linkages with gendered aspects of usurpation of control, access, inequitable power, and marginalisation which translates into a surreal invisibility and silence.

As part of the document analysis procedure, the book-list, as part of the reading and reference material, was also examined to assess the opportunity given to students to become familiar with feminist scholarship and inclusion of women writers to explore alternative perspectives to learning. All universities surveyed showed a persistent preference for male authors with a fixation for western academics. Few of the women authors who found mention were largely limited to subjects such as Advertising and Public Relations, precluding feminist scholarship on multifaceted journalistic issues.

Pedagogical approaches in teaching gender

Among the majority of public institutions (75 per cent), use of gender-sensitive language was considered a more reasoned and discerning approach in addressing gender in journalism practice and in making it 'as an intersecting area of enquiry', whereas in majority of private institutions (66.7 percent) such an initiative was not even part of the pedagogy. Knowledge about methods and processes of gender mainstreaming in teaching and learning was restricted in comprehension and practice among the senior faculty in both the public and private universities. Commonly cited elementary measures for GM were 'use of neutral phrases, common noun for professionals, gender sensitive language and avoidance of sexiest words'. One of the significant measures cited was to 'focus on gender issues', but it did not elicit any detailed response. Most of the responses on how best GM can be integrated in the teaching and skill formation converged on 'use of sensitive language and using terminology which was neutral'. Below you will find a list of responses of senior faculty on mainstreaming gender in teaching:

1. Avoid gender bias, words or sentences. Use gender sensitive vocabulary in teaching.
2. Avoid using such terms as, common man, chairman or mankind. E.g., use the word 'actors' instead of 'an actor and an actress'.

3. Introducing gender sensitivity aspects in the classroom makes for conducive learning and 'friendly' environment as well.
4. Avoid any unethical act in and out of the classroom sessions.
5. Department takes care in using gender sensitive language while teaching. Teachers avoid use of any word that humiliates anyone, not only for women, but for anyone in general.
6. Teach gender framing as part of the discourse analysis.
7. Teachers should use gender sensitive language and avoid use of sexist vocabulary.
8. Media students are sensitized about use of gender sensitive language for reporting.
9. Students are encouraged to take up gender-related issues for their projects.
10. Use neutral words like 'cameraperson', 'chairperson', 'actor', etc. instead of male dominating words/terminology.
11. Use gender neutral words in teaching and writing, emphasize on gender-based issues.

Lack of fundamental orientation to GM by teachers in responsible positions suggests that the institutional preparedness in making even elementary pedagogical changes would entail challenges.

Naivety and nascence of gender research programme

The research programme lacked any institutional direction on gender as an intersecting issue of investigation or use of gender disaggregated data analysis for deeper understanding of the phenomenon. Many faculty members had no inclination or were oblivious to the issue of GM in research. Research in journalism studies was cast in a gender-blind or gender-neutral mode, leaving an individual inclination to take up a subject focusing on 'women issues' exclusively. Flagrant gaps were found in denotation of gender-sensitive research as based on the concept of 'gender and development', which entails analysis of a problem in the context of societal differences and similarities based on gender (EC, 2009). Irreverent approach to gender sensitive research was a result of bemusement about non-functional aspects of gendered aspects of the phenomenon in journalism studies. Relegating gender-sensitive research to women related issues falls short of interrogating social phenomenon and its effect on gendered roles and responsibilities. Gender-based differences was found in the research focus where any aspect of gender was treated as women-related and more women scholars were primed to take up research

in the 'gender-related' areas. Consequently, half of all female faculty in both types of public and private institutions (66.7 per cent) were conducting/guiding 'research on gender issues' as compared to the male faculty (40.9 per cent).

Gender sensitivity of media educators: Gender value clarification

Male and female faculty heading the journalism and media departments were asked a list of questions to map their value judgement on issues of gender parity and performance in the profession and practice. Both men and women agreed that women were as smart as men professionally (*Table 2*), though among the female faculty there was near unanimity (83.3 percent) on the issue than among the male faculty (50 percent). On a flip question that 'men make better leaders than women in profession', both groups disagreed with the statement even though women had a greater level of disagreement (41.7 percent) with the statement than men (27.3 percent). On the issue of jobs and promotions, both men and women agreed that merit, instead of gender, should be the criterion for the recruitment to a job. The statement that, 'women should take up leadership roles' received whole-hearted support from the female faculty (75 percent) as compared to the male (40.9 percent). On the issue of 'preferential treatment of men in being hired or promoted in the media', less number of men disagreed strongly (22.7 percent) than women (58.3 percent). On the question, 'if intellectual leadership should be largely in hands of men', more than one-fourth of all men had an ambivalent position while more women disagreed (66.7 percent) with the statement. Major contesting issue of performance and the leadership trait showed differences between men and women responses, but the difference was non-significant (*Table 2*). Even within the journalism faculty contesting lines are drawn but are not sharp and polarised on issues pertaining to qualities which make women equally professional as men in managing and in decision-making in the media practice. However, these views point to the assumption that some women faculty may share similar prejudices and biases and would not necessarily be better positioned to articulate feminist perspectives.

Gender sensitivity of media educators

Statements	Scale	Male (n=22)		Female (n=12)		Total (N=34)		Chi square	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
		F.	%	F.	%	F.	%		
On an average, women media professionals are as smart as men	Strongly Agree	11	50.0	10	83.3	21	61.8	4.808[a]	.308
	Agree	5	22.7	2	16.7	7	20.6		
	Neither Agree or Disagree	3	13.6	0	0.0	3	8.8		
	Disagree	2	9.1	0	0.0	2	5.9		
	Strongly Disagree	1	4.5	0	0.0	1	2.9		
Men media professionals are better leaders/Bosses than women.	Strongly Agree	0	0.0	1	8.3	1	2.9	6.294[a]	.098
	Agree		0.0		0.0		0.0		
	Neither Agree or Disagree	7	31.8	0	0.0	7	20.6		
	Disagree	9	40.9	6	50.0	15	44.1		
	Strongly Disagree	6	27.3	5	41.7	11	32.4		
A strict merit system in jobs/ appointment and promotion of media professionals without regard to Gender.	Strongly Agree	14	63.6	9	75.0	23	67.6	2.568[a]	.633
	Agree	3	13.6	2	16.7	5	14.7		
	Neither Agree or Disagree	1	4.5	1	8.3	2	5.9		
	Disagree	3	13.6	0	0.0	3	8.8		
	Strongly Disagree	1	4.5	0	0.0	1	2.9		
Women should take up leadership responsibility for solving intellectual and social problems of the day.	Strongly Agree	9	40.9	9	75.0	18	52.9	5.100[a]	.165
	Agree	7	31.8	3	25.0	10	29.4		
	Neither Agree or Disagree	4	18.2	0	0.0	4	11.8		
	Disagree	2	9.1	0	0.0	2	5.9		
	Strongly Disagree		0.0		0.0		0.0		
In many media-related jobs, men should be given preference over women in being hired or promoted.	Strongly Agree	1	4.5	0	0.0	1	2.9	5.415[a]	.247
	Agree	3	13.6	0	0.0	3	8.8		
	Neither Agree or Disagree	4	18.2	1	8.3	5	14.7		
	Disagree	8	36.4	4	33.3	12	35.3		
	Strongly Disagree	5	22.7	7	58.3	12	35.3		
Economic and social freedom is worth far more to women than the 'ideal of femininity' set up by men.	Strongly Agree	7	31.8	7	58.3	14	41.2	5.069[a]	.280
	Agree	3	13.6	3	25.0	6	17.6		
	Neither Agree or Disagree	6	27.3	1	8.3	7	20.6		
	Disagree	3	13.6	1	8.3	4	11.8		
	Strongly Disagree	3	13.6	0	0.0	3	8.8		
The intellectual leadership of a community should be largely in the hands of men.	Strongly Agree	1	4.5	0	0.0	1	2.9	3.048[a]	.550
	Agree	1	4.5	0	0.0	1	2.9		
	Neither Agree or Disagree	5	22.7	1	8.3	6	17.6		
	Disagree	6	27.3	3	25.0	9	26.5		
	Strongly Disagree	9	40.9	8	66.7	17	50.0		

Likert scale: 5 – Strongly Agree; 4 – Agree; 3 – Neither Agree or Disagree; 2 – Disagree; 1 – Strongly Disagree

Perception of professional abilities of students based on gender

The senior faculty was probed about their expectation of students' performance and how gender could be one of the significant markers in making that judgement.

Table 3

Professional abilities of female students in all types of media

	Print		Television		Radio		Online		Film production	
	M (n-22)	**F (n-12)**	**M (n-22)**	**F (n-12)**	**M (n-22)**	**F (n-12)**	**M (n-22)**	**F (n-12)**	**M (n-22)**	**F (n-12)**
Technical	50.0	75.0	59.1	91.7	59.1	83.3	68.2	91.7	63.6	91.7
Editorial section	68.2	91.7	59.1	91.7	68.2	91.7	72.7	91.7	59.1	83.3
Reporting	59.1	91.7	72.7	91.7	59.1	83.3	68.2	91.7	54.5	91.7
Desk	68.2	83.3	68.2	83.3	54.5	83.3	68.2	91.7	63.6	83.3

On the issue of what types of professional jobs girls could handle across various media, female faculty had a higher level of confidence on girl students in performing most of the technical (91 percent), editorial (91.7 percent), reporting (91.7 percent) and desk (91.7), especially in the online media. Male faculty had a much lower confidence and expectation of girl students performing in professional areas since their affirmation ranged from as low as 50 percent for technical aspects in print media to as high as 68.2 per cent for desk jobs (*Table 3*). Professionally girls were perceived by the male faculty to be more suited for the traditional jobs and bias and orthodoxy persisted against their abilities and performance as professionals. Such gender differences in the perception of women's professional abilities are suggestive of a perceptual divide which shapes learning and training opportunities in journalism education.

Discussion and conclusion

Epistemological and ontological perspectives in teaching and research programmes in journalism education fall short of a consistent gendered

approach and are universally sporadic. Any conscious agreement on 'gender mainstreaming' is either restricted to a 'topic' or a 'standalone paper' in most of the university journalism departments in India. Lack of comprehension about the gender equality and equity issues within the faculty offers limited scope of influencing treatment of content, gender sensitive pedagogical perspective or diversity of issues in research. The teaching programmes even in public institutions showed skeletal familiarity with GM. Commitment to gender was slender and bordered on 'tokenism' (Rees, 1998) since it was treated and transacted as a mere 'women-related issue' in the syllabus. Both public and private universities have settled for a low-bench mark in GM by appropriating the use of gender neutral language in teaching to the exclusion of transacting gender as part of the learning and cognitive development.

Gender parity in student enrolment and faculty position

Higher enrolment of women students in journalism education and training institutions is indicative of the demand for non-traditional professional courses. However, sanguinity about the ubiquity of women students and women faculty in journalism education would amount to beguilement and imperil efforts to unveil the process of change. If enrolment of women students in journalism education as part of the higher education has shown a significant rise, their entry in the media industry has not dented the existing discriminatory prejudices, or stopped women from deserting the profession mid-way. In many ways, the gender gap in the teaching positions and status mimics the media newsroom since women may influx the media industry but men retain their hold on senior and decision-making positions as in the academia. This feminization of academic labour is similar to what women experience in the media industry. Majority of women faculty in both the public and private institutions were placed at the entry level of the academic hierarchy. Women today are seeking opportunities in the academia, since it offers regular hours of work and security, and these aspects are rated higher by women as against decision-making opportunities and in breaking the proverbial glass-ceiling in the media profession. Women entering in droves in higher education may not lead to 'balancing of power' in position or in making judgements since many internalise the socio-cultural normative patterns in their teaching and practice as well. What journalism education needs is critically informed, academically astute educators who understand how issues of gender and power are implicated at every level of society – including in newsrooms and in the content journalists produce (North, 2010).

Integrating gender in journalism education and journalism practice

Teachers have a singular role to play in shaping the contours of the curriculum and demonstrating their understanding and sensitivity to gender equality both within the educational system and in shaping the media practice. Neglect of gendered aspects of a phenomenon can create a limited perspective derived from 'the consequences of promoting a product-oriented teaching culture instead of a process-focused learning culture' (Deuze, 2006). A proposal to redeem this is situated in the 'integrative' process, if not in the 'transformative' aspects (Walby, 2005) of gender mainstreaming by placing the issues of gender epistemology throughout the course content to address the gender-related complexities of the media practice. Evidence of sporadic and random GM in the journalism courses in universities was dependent on an individual teacher's own initiative than symbolized as an intrinsic institutional policy or process. Mere inclusion of gender issues within the journalism studies does not posit major positive outcome in redeeming perceptibly discriminatory conditions in the media practice.

A contestable issue in GM is dearth of mechanisms and tools for integrating gender in the curriculum and in influencing the pedagogical processes. Another reason for tardy progress in mainstreaming is lack of material and learning opportunities which has had a delimited effect on the way gender has been imagined in the journalism education. Any conscious agreement on GM lacks institutional support in influencing the treatment of gender as an intersecting area of study and skill enhancement, in pedagogical approaches and curriculum development of the surveyed institutions. Consigning gender perspective to a standalone topic or an elective paper in the courses is suggestive of an abnegation of gendered aspects of media profession and practice and its ramifications for the social and economic development. Number of male faculty who held the administrative positions in journalism education in the universities showed adherence to a traditional approach in their valuation of women's performance as professionals. Internalisation of societal and cultural values which undermine the value of women's capability was in evidence among women who shared with their male colleagues similar apprehensions about women's capabilities and professional acumen.

Abysmal level of research overall, and specifically on gender in journalism education is further compounded by misgivings among the journalism teachers about what constitutes gender-sensitive research. A misplaced understanding of the contours of gender-sensitive research has consigned such research to

the 'women issues' category and is treated disparagingly and from a narrow prism. Gender research paradigm is confronted with an opaqueness in failing to acknowledge that men and women have different socially ascribed roles and responsibilities that affect their status in the society (ES, 2009). Opprobrium of gender neutral or gender-blind research rests on their fallacy of ignoring the fundamental principles of research in investigating various dimensions of the media reality and its implications for both men and women. Based on the concept of 'gender and development' gender sensitive research has diverted its focus away from 'women exclusively' to understanding implications of an unequal and divided society based on gender. Appropriately, journalism education courses should be able to engage with a type of research culture whereby both men's and women's concerns, requirements and perceptions are mapped and addressed throughout the research cycle. Ignoring a comprehensive assessment of their research programme, majority of journalism departments have settled for either a gender-blind or gender-neutral perspective in research.

Agenda setting in implementing GM requires expanding it beyond the confines of 'women issues' to mainstream subjects of theorisation, reporting, media ethics and policies in course curriculum since it has potential to allow social issues to escape from marginal policy ghettos and of putting women at the centre stage (Jahan, 1995). Working within the education system, GM is designed to work as a cross-cutting area of discourse and research to end the exploitative systems within the media and outside. An important aspect of GM is intercepting the existing biases which requires 'enlightened valuation or tailoring' (Rees, 1998) of the existing structures and practices by working within these existing systems without displacing them. The mapping of GM in journalism education holds promise of instituting affirmative policies and action in changing the media discourse pertaining to the exploitation, disempowerment and marginalisation of women both as media professionals and in their portrayal. The unprecedented changes in digital technologies are projected to shape a new architecture of the media industry with *inter alia* changes in the socio-economic structures and systems. This seemingly democratic access and proliferation of digital platforms is suggestive of tectonic shifts with consequences for shaping media content, framing of issues and professional standards. These dramatic changes have nonetheless failed to mask the reality of surveillance, ambiguous regulatory framework and profiteering. The push for GM in journalism education is a result of the digitised content transformation accruing in the media industry and the burden of biases carried over from the legacy media.

A quintessential situation confronts journalism education in India in playing an important progressive and significant role in dismantling the archaic status quo and in redefining new gender roles in media practice and decision-making. However, a dualism of approach and practice characterizes the media since it subsists on reactionary approach towards women's representation, their sexualised and stereotyped portrayal while concomitantly upholding repudiation of biased approach to women's empowerment. Journalism education offers solutions which may appear challenging but can be handled incrementally and in a collaborative manner to ensure that GM is about the human development and consciousness to work towards a holistic goal. This symbiotic relationship between learning and practice is being established to address the point that education is the best guarantee in creating new axiom of journalistic practices, decision-making and participation.

India is at the threshold of media expansion but consolidation perversely can stifle diversity and inclusiveness of views and perspectives. Keeping these dimensions of GM in focus, aim is to build constituencies of support to strengthen its educational programmes. The progressive and functional approach would be of building sensitive young professionals with a gender lens while reporting-editing news stories and simultaneously analysing such stories located in a perspective drawn from diverse experiences. This stance is built on a sound understanding of the critical role gender plays in the economic and social change. This enables learning to create and cast such content which would enrich the story and lend it credence and probity. Media professionals who pass out through the reverential doors of journalism education would be primed to look at discrimination, violence and biases based on gender with a sensitive approach since they are placed appropriately in counterbalancing the existing gender hierarchies in the society (EG-S-MS, 1998).

GM is of prime importance in a country like India where the sex-ratio amplifies the gender inequity in social and not just political and economic spheres. Slow progress in GM is due to lack of gender policy formulation within the higher education and reluctance of the media industry to shun the apparition of entrenched sexism and discrimination, especially in the digital content. Not mere statement of gender mainstreaming, but a firm positioning at the centre of course curriculum and research programme has acquired more significance for journalism education in the digital age when trolling and sexual intimidation are rife. The argument does not rest on changing the curriculum alone but paving the way for structural, policy and programmatic actions for an integrative process of GM leading to transformative changes in journalism education.

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