

# How might we leverage the influence of different media to challenge gender stereotypes in India?

The world has seen an explosion in the field of media and communications. With advances in cable television, computer, mobile and global access to information continues to increase and expand, creating new opportunities for the participation of women in communications and the mass media and for the dissemination of information about women.

## Role of Media

- Informing public
- Raising awareness, educating public
- Being a “watch dog” to ensure that the government is being responsible, transparent, accountable, just, and is acting in the public interest, free of fraud, illegality, or personal benefit
- Creating and shaping of public opinion
- Challenging perceptions and breaking stereotypes
- Sharing best practices

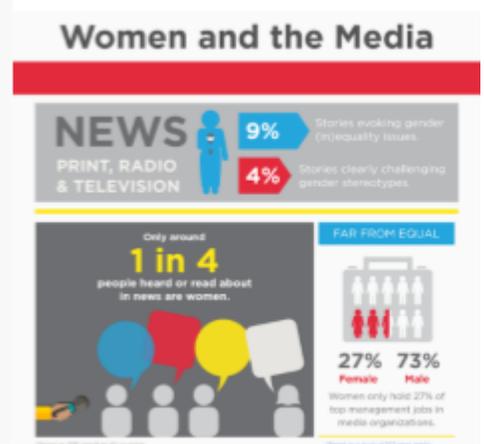
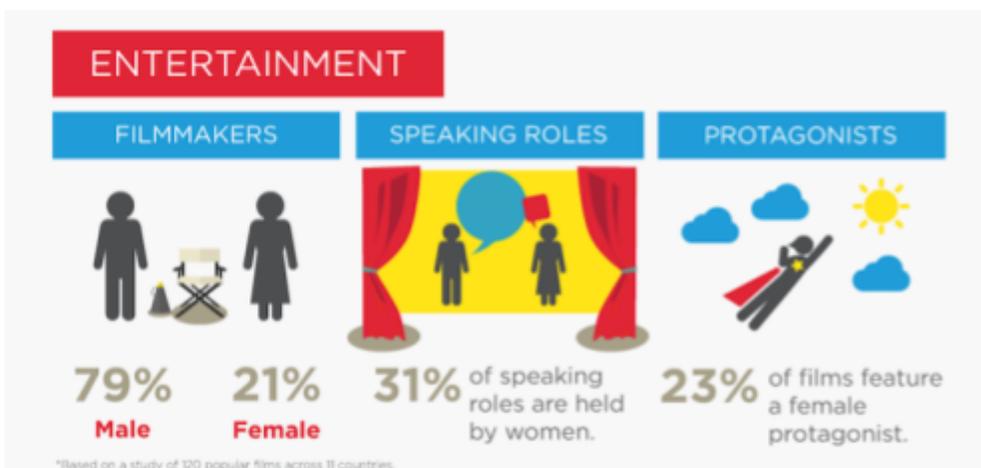
## Power of media

- Media are key ‘entry point’ for promoting gender equality and preventing violence against women in the long-term
- Media may reinforce the social norms that contribute to gender discrimination, inequality and violence against women and girls.
- Media can shine a light on important societal issues such as violence against women.

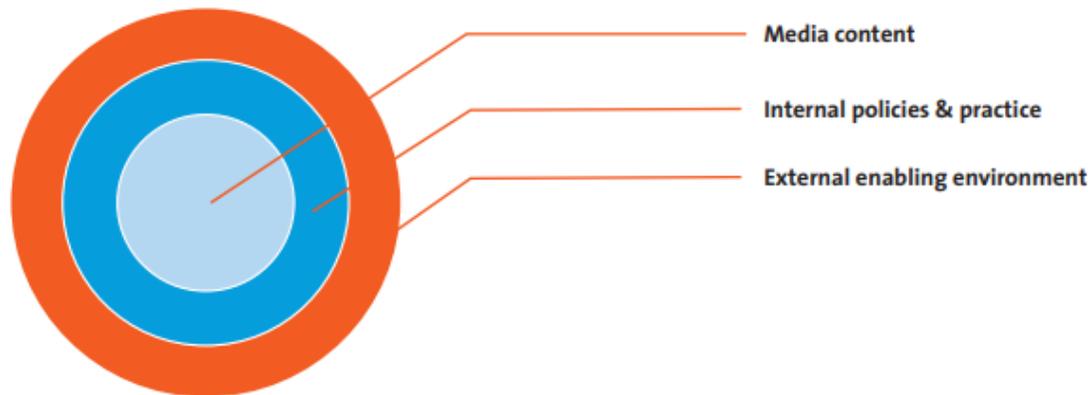
## Gender inequality in media

However, national, regional and global communication networks have been used to spread **stereotyped and demeaning images of women for narrow commercial and consumerist purposes.**

- Only around 1 in 4 people heard or read about in news are women
- Only 9% of stories evoke gender inequality issues
- Only 4% of stories clearly challenge gender stereotypes
- Sexism and gender stereotypes (such as showing women only as care-givers of the family or as sexual objects)
- Prevalence of men (opinions, experts)
- Invisible women (women, living with HIV; migrant women, women with disabilities, former detainees, etc.)
- Unethical coverage and usage of images



## 1. What are we targeting for behaviour change?



- **Improved content**

Engaging in transforming social norms by addressing content that stereotypes gender and are discriminatory and lacks an understanding of the root causes of violence against women and girls,

- **Internal policies and practice: Engage with media to change social norms and behaviors**

Promoting positive institutional change for gender equality, such as working towards parity of men and women in the workforce and in decision-making.

- **External enabling environment: Promote gender equality within the sector**

Strengthening the external enabling environment that facilitates positive change in structural and social norms, such as improving laws and policies (regulatory frameworks) to address potential harm.

## 2. What the current behaviours of target group/s?

### Target groups

- **Decision makers in media agencies:** editors, owners, producers, executives
- **Content creators:**
  - Journalists
  - new journalists
  - students of journalism department
  - Bloggers
  - Film directors, script writers, producers
  - Advertisement agencies
  - Jokes, meme creators
- **Media champions:** opinion leaders, role models on and offline, influential celebrities who perpetuate stereotypes, protagonists
- **Content curators**
- **Content users/consumers**

## Common behaviours of target group

- **Few women in decision-making positions in media:** More women are involved in careers in the communications sector, but few have attained positions at the decision-making level or serve on governing boards and bodies that influence media policy.

Until women participate equally in both the technical and decision-making areas of communications and the mass media, including the arts, they will continue to be misrepresented and awareness of the reality of women's lives will continue to be lacking.

- **Gender insensitivity in media:**
  - **Gender stereotyping:** The lack of gender sensitivity in the media is evidenced by the failure to eliminate the gender-based stereotyping that can be found in public and private local, national and international media organizations.
  - **Negative and degrading image of women:** The continued projection of negative and degrading images of women in media communications - electronic, print, visual and audio - must be changed.
  - **Do not provide balanced picture:** Print and electronic media in most countries do not provide a balanced picture of women's diverse lives and contributions to society in a changing world.
  - **Violent, degrading and pornographic media products:** In addition, violent and degrading or pornographic media products are also negatively affecting women and their participation in society. Programming that reinforces women's traditional roles can be equally limiting.
  - **Consumerism:** The world-wide trend towards consumerism has created a climate in which advertisements and commercial messages often portray women primarily as consumers and target girls and women of all ages inappropriately.

## 3. What are the intended behaviours we want to promote with the target group/s?

- a. **Increase the participation and access of women to expression and decision making in and through the media and new technologies of communication**

### By Governments

(a) Support **women's education, training and employment** to promote and ensure women's equal access to all areas and levels of the media;

(b) **Support research** into all aspects of women and the media so as to define areas needing attention and action and review existing media policies with a view to integrating a gender perspective;

(c) **Promote women's full and equal participation** in the media, including management, programming, education, training and research;

(d) Aim at **gender balance in the appointment** of women and men to all advisory, management, regulatory or monitoring bodies, including those connected to the private and State or public media;

e) Encourage, to the extent consistent with freedom of expression, these bodies to increase the **number of programmes for and by women** to see to it that women's needs and concerns are properly addressed;

(f) Encourage and **recognize women's media networks**, including electronic networks and other new technologies of communication, as a means for the dissemination of information and the

exchange of views, including at the international level, and support women's groups active in all media work and systems of communications to that end;

By national and international media systems

(a) Encourage the development of **educational and training programmes** for women in order to produce information for the mass media, including funding of experimental efforts, and the use of the new technologies of communication, cybernetics space and satellite, whether public or private;

(b) **Encourage the use of communication systems**, including new technologies, as a means of strengthening women's participation in democratic processes;

(c) Facilitate the compilation of a **directory of women media experts**;

(d) Encourage the **participation of women** in the development of professional guidelines and codes of conduct or other appropriate self-regulatory mechanisms to promote balanced and non-stereotyped portrayals of women by the media.

By non-governmental organizations and media professional associations

(a) Encourage the establishment of **media watch groups** that can monitor the media and consult with the media to ensure that women's needs and concerns are properly reflected;

(b) **Train women** to make greater use of information technology for communication and the media, including at the international level;

(c) **Create networks** among and develop information programmes for non-governmental organizations, women's organizations and professional media organizations in order to recognize the specific needs of women in the media, and facilitate the increased participation of women in communication, in particular at the international level, in support of South-South and North-South dialogue among and between these organizations, inter alia, to promote the human rights of women and equality between women and men;

(d) **Encourage the media industry and education and media training institutions** to develop, in appropriate languages, traditional, indigenous and other ethnic forms of media, such as story-telling, drama, poetry and song, reflecting their cultures, and utilize these forms of communication to disseminate information on development and social issues.

**b. Promote a balanced and non-stereotyped portrayal of women in the media**

By Governments and international organizations:

(a) Promote research and implementation of a strategy of information, education and communication aimed at promoting a balanced portrayal of women and girls and their multiple roles;

(b) Encourage the media and advertising agencies to develop specific programmes to raise awareness on gender equality;

(c) **Encourage gender-sensitive training** for media professionals, including media owners and managers, to encourage the creation and use of non-stereotyped, balanced and diverse images of women in the media;

(d) Encourage the media to **refrain from presenting women as inferior beings and exploiting them** as sexual objects and commodities, rather than presenting them as creative human beings, key actors and contributors to and beneficiaries of the process of development;

(e) **Promote the concept** that the sexist stereotypes displayed in the media are gender discriminatory, degrading in nature and offensive;

(f) Take effective measures or institute such measures, including appropriate **legislation** against pornography and the projection of violence against women and children in the media.

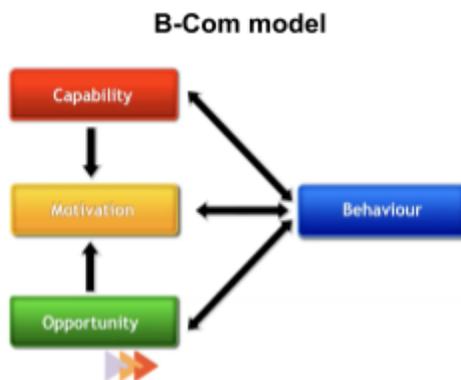
By the mass media and advertising organizations:

- (a) **Develop**, consistent with freedom of expression, **professional guidelines and codes of conduct** and other forms of self-regulation to promote the presentation of non-stereotyped images of women;
- (b) **Establish**, consistent with freedom of expression, **professional guidelines and codes of conduct** that address violent, degrading or pornographic materials concerning women in the media, including advertising;
- (c) **Develop** a gender perspective on all issues of concern to communities, consumers and civil society;
- (d) Increase women's participation in decision-making at all levels of the media.

By the media, non-governmental organizations and the private sector, in collaboration, as appropriate, with national machinery for the advancement of women:

- (a) Promote the equal sharing of family responsibilities through media campaigns that emphasize gender equality and non-stereotyped gender roles of women and men within the family and that disseminate information aimed at eliminating spousal and child abuse and all forms of violence against women, including domestic violence;
- (b) **Produce and/or disseminate media materials** on women leaders, inter alia, as leaders who bring to their positions of leadership many different life experiences, including but not limited to their experiences in balancing work and family responsibilities, as mothers, as professionals, as managers and as entrepreneurs, to provide role models, particularly to young women;
- (c) **Promote extensive campaigns**, making use of public and private educational programmes, to disseminate information about and increase awareness of the human rights of women;
- (d) Support the development of and finance, as appropriate, alternative media and the use of all means of communication to disseminate information to and about women and their concerns;
- (e) **Develop approaches and train experts** to apply gender analysis with regard to media programmes.

4. What might be some of the motivational drivers/ factors for the target group/s to adopt intended behaviours?



● For improved content

- Research
- Training, seminar, workshop
- Education

Education	Campaign for Restrictions (policy)	Research (deliverables)	Create own content (deliverables)
Awareness, Training	Incentive/ Award	Support women to tell their own stories (deliverables)	New journalists, content creators (deliverables)
Campaign	Role Modelling	Media toolkit (deliverables)	Agencies to have functional gender policy (deliverables)

- Media toolkit
- Facilitate the compilation of a directory of women media experts
- Incentive/ award
- Role modelling
- Create own content
- Support women to tell their own stories
- Targeted campaigns and programming to foster values, beliefs and attitudes that are based on equality, respect for diversity and non-violence.
- Encourage, to the extent consistent with freedom of expression, these bodies to increase the **number of programmes for and by women** to see to it that women's needs and concerns are properly addressed;
- Encourage the establishment of **media watch groups** that can monitor the media and consult with the media to ensure that women's needs and concerns are properly reflected;
- **Create networks** among and develop information programmes for non-governmental organizations, women's organizations and professional media organizations in order to recognize the specific needs of women in the media, and facilitate the increased participation of women in communication, in particular at the international level, in support of South-South and North-South dialogue among and between these organizations, inter alia, to promote the human rights of women and equality between women and men;

- **Internal policies and practice**

- Self-regulatory mechanisms for the media need to be created and strengthened and approaches developed to eliminate gender-biased programming.
- **Develop and establish**, consistent with freedom of expression, **professional guidelines and codes of conduct** and other forms of self-regulation to promote the presentation of non-stereotyped images of women;
- **Develop and establish**, consistent with freedom of expression, **professional guidelines and codes of conduct** that address violent, degrading or pornographic materials concerning women in the media, including advertising;
- **parity of women and men in the workforce and in decision-making;**
- training on gender, discrimination and violence against women and girls;
- and strengthening policies around gender (sexual harassment and domestic violence, work-life balance, safety of journalists) and those related to editing and publishing.

## 5. What might be some of the contextual factors (such as media and social environment) to support changes in behaviour among target group/s?

- **External enabling environment:** Strengthening the external enabling environment that facilitates positive change in structural and social norms, such as:
  - improving laws and policies (regulatory frameworks) to address potential harm;
  - **Women's skills, knowledge and access to information technology** should be supported. This will strengthen their ability to combat negative portrayals of women and to challenge instances of abuse of the power of an increasingly important industry.
  - understanding the successes and challenges of the sector through research and monitoring

- enhancing media and information literacy for populations to better navigate content that they are exposed to;
- and celebrating promising practices through **awards and recognition**.
- Most women, especially in developing countries, are not able to access effectively the expanding electronic information highways and therefore cannot establish networks that will provide them with alternative sources of information. Women therefore need to be involved in decision-making regarding the development of the new technologies in order to participate fully in their growth and impact.

#### Reference documents

- Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, 1995
- Presentation on Media and VAW, UN Women