

# Mass Communicator

International Journal of Communication Studies

Indexed/Abstracted: J-Gate, EBSCO Discovery, Summon(Proquest), Google Scholar, Indian Science Abstracts  
Indian Citation Index, InfoBase Index (IB Factor 2016 - 2.2), SJIF Impact Factor (2016-4.159)

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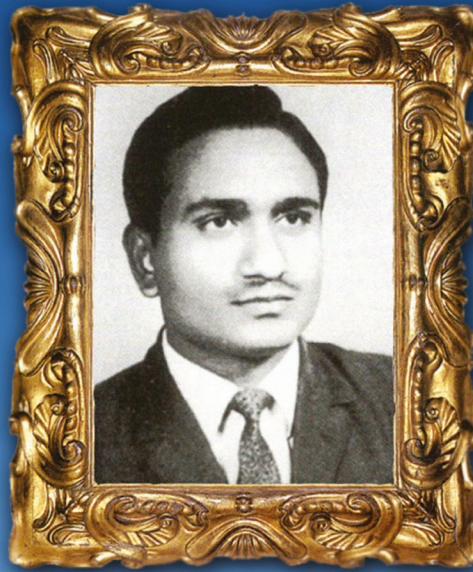
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# A TRUE VISIONARY

*“You see things and you say **Why?** But I dream of things that never were and say **Why not?**”*

- George Bernard Shaw



Shri Jagannath Gupta  
(1950 - 1980)

*Also a true visionary...who dared to dream!  
He lives no more but his dreams live on....and on!*

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<b>Jagannath University (Jaipur)</b>	-	<b>2008</b>
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*And more dreams to come!*

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E Mail: masscommunicator@jagannath.org,

Website: www.jimmsd.org

Available Online at [www.indianjournals.com](http://www.indianjournals.com)

RNI No. DELENG/2007/23438

Online ISSN No: 0973-967X

Exclusively Marketed and Distributed by  
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## Editor's Desk

The discourse of the philosophical perception of the world and man's place in it gives birth to various ideologies, which govern the behaviour of the individual and the conduct of nations. As this discourse has been framed majorly in the west due to the dominance of its creative and cultural industry, the discourses that have emanated from the so-called South have for all practical purposes been overwhelmed by the former.

The Western Philosophical discourse has hovered around the binary of the self and the other through the ages. This discourse has been further reinforced by the empirical approach of Science and Technology. The fallout of such a development is for all to see in the narratives of hegemony and exploitation all across the globe. At this moment, the world stands on the precipice of a conflict brewing between the world powers in the South China Sea. The belligerence of one nation against the others and the sense of insecurity among the others is a direct precipitate of the binary discourse of the self and the other.

Countering such a discourse is the philosophical tradition enunciated in the revelatory works of Rig Veda and the Upanishads in India. These non-partisan texts give out a universal message of the quintessential unity of the world at its foundation level, which the Veda calls the Brahman. Almost all the religious texts of the world echo this message, though it is limited there by the distinctive boundary of the community of believers. The Indian texts declare in unequivocal terms that the infinite variety of forms, colours, creeds and other distinctions in the manifest world are only the phenomenal manifestation of the one infinite reality. By steering clear of imposing finite boundaries on the manifestation of truth and pointing to the quintessential unity of this world, these texts debunk the myth of the self and the other. Such a philosophical discourse does away with the clash of self-interests that urge individuals and nations to fight one another. The world therefore needs a new narrative of peace which is not intellectual but spiritual and yet inclusive of intellectual explanation.

**(Ravi K. Dhar)**

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## About the Journal

**Mass Communicator: International Journal of Communication Studies** has been conceived as an international quarterly peer-reviewed journal with the avowed objectives of stimulating research in communication studies in Indian academia of international level as also to publish research carried out abroad to serve as a window on the multi-dimensional aspects of media and communication research in countries beyond the Indian borders. To this end, the journal is a platform for the publication of outcomes of new and innovative thinking in the subject/profession that follow not only the rigours of academic research methodology but also non-conventional modes of expression such as perspectives and opinion, which often come from media and communication practitioners, be those journalists or development communicators self-interrogating their profession. The scope of research published in the journal is deliberately kept open-ended to facilitate an osmotic interchange of ideas across disciplines with a bearing on media and communication theory.

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# COVERAGE OF COVID-19 PANDEMIC BY SELECT ONLINE NIGERIAN NEWSPAPERS

**Oliver Ufuoma Komiti\* Ezekiel S. Asemah\*\***

*This study was conducted to determine the reportage of Covid -19 by online versions of six Nigerian newspapers, namely; Tribune, Punch, Vanguard, the Nation, Daily Trust, and Leadership. The study was hinged on the media dependency theory. The researcher adopted content analysis method while coding was used as instrument of data collection. The population for the study comprised 31 editions for each of the six mainstream online newspapers published between 29th April, 2021 and 29th May, 2021. Chi-square test was used as instrument for testing data and hypothesis. Findings revealed that Covid -19 was not adequately reported by the select newspapers, and that the media gave low coverage to Covid -19 in relation to coverage of other health-related areas in the post-lockdown COVID-19 era. However, the findings indicated that in the online newspaper sites, stories published have greater elements of permanency than the prints in that they are reflected in the days or weeks that follow after being published until they are moved to previous page(s). This permanency was not limited to Covid -19 related stories but all other stories. It is suggested that media, especially newspapers should give more coverage to Covid -19 until World Health Organization (WHO) declares that the pandemic is over.*

**Keywords:** Coverage, Media, COVID-19, Post-lockdown, Newspaper Online Versions, Nigeria.

The year 2020 was unusual to virtually all people across the world in general and Nigerians were not left out in that weird experience. That year had a historic outbreak of a disease known as Covid -19, Corona Virus Disease of 2019. World Health Organization (WHO 2020) noted that reports of the outbreak were first known in December 2019 in the Wuhan province of China, which prompted the designation or addition of 19 to Covid. However, it was in early 2020 that the disease was declared a pandemic. Since then the world has felt gruesome impact of the disease, which for most part of 2020, kept the entire world in mandatory hiatuses. Movement was restricted globally and locally; education went into abrupt long holidays, and economies were passive or comatose. Health infrastructures were overwhelmed. In all these, Nigeria and Nigerians had their own painful dozes too.

Panic everywhere; hunger everywhere; criminality was on the increase consequence upon the outbreak. Recall the “#Endsars” protest in October, 2020 which was later hijacked by hoodlums (Adedira, 2020 & Adelaja, 2020). Words such as lockdown, quarantine, isolation, palliatives, isolation center, self-isolation, Covid -19 protocols, etc. became catchwords and catchphrases on media and on lips of everyone. People became much closer to the mass media – radio, television, and importantly the new media, which comprise online newspapers since movement was greatly restricted. At the center of all these traumatic situations was the mass media with perhaps renewed vigour collaborating with relevant agencies and authorities in combating the pandemic head on. Food and medicines were important for

survival but not adequate; yet the mass media needed mostly for awareness and mobilization was available. Coverage on the Covid -19 pandemic was intriguing.

In the last quarter of 2020, most of the easing processes were completed due to news of significant reduction of the outbreak all over the world. The easing processes started in May, 2020, but when more infections were confirmed it was withdrawn until meaningful progress was made. Ibrahim, Ajide & Omokanmi (2020) highlighted that “the unbearable economic consequences of the lockdown in the country prompted the government to announce a phased and gradual easing of the lockdown in FCT, Lagos and Ogun taking effective on 5 May 2020. Since then, the reported cases of COVID-19 have returned to its usual exponential rates in the country.” By October, 2020, things began to jazz up again as normal life (to some extent) resumed. Then the mass media like the relevant agencies, groups and individuals, rested on their oars. Reportage of COVID-19 waned. Later in late December, 2020, vaccines were discovered and inoculation started after approvals from the WHO and local health and government agencies around the world. Thus, Regulatory experts convened by WHO from around the world and

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WHO's own teams reviewed the data on the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine's safety, efficacy and quality as part of a risk-versus-benefit analysis. The review found that the vaccine met the must-have criteria for safety and efficacy set out by WHO, and that the benefits of using the vaccine to address COVID-19 offset potential risk (World Health Organisation, 2020). Things began to jazz up again; life capered again as bans on movement were lifted and movement resumed again into 2021. But then the virus was not fully tamed; it still lurked around looking for whom to devour. There have been slack in all anti-COVID strategies. COVID-19 protocols are being broken with reckless abandonment. The mass media, whose social responsibility was to set agenda and maintain same and keep the public perpetually warned and informed about the dangers in losing their guide in 2021 and beyond seemed fixated. India saw a tragic comeback of the pandemic, ravaging the entire country and more lives went six feet down to the wicked hand of COVID-19. The mass media in Nigeria, which were at the front burner and vanguard of the anti-COVID-19 awareness and social mobilisation, soft-peddled presumptuously, that with the discovery of vaccines the pandemic was a history. Perhaps that led to a rise again in the number of people contracting the virus, rather than petering out. If the media have not relapsed in the coverage of COVID-19 the rise might not be mentioned. Number would have been declining rapidly until it would finally fizzle out to zero number forever. Therefore, it became important to assess the reportage of COVID-19 post-lockdown era by online versions of the six selected newspapers in Nigeria. Findings can be used to draw attention of the select media and others to fasten their belts with regards to COVID-19 coverage in Nigeria.

### **Statement of the Problem**

In 2020 when COVID-19 first sneaked into Nigeria by an Italian, and to a greater part of the year, reports of coverage pervaded the mass media, which got relevant agencies like the Nigeria Commission for Diseases Control (NCDC), Presidential Taskforce on COVID-19, the various security operatives, state government bodies and private individuals and organisations to fast track their efforts to defeat the highly dreaded virus until reports showed it was reduced. Like the two clichés "it is not over until it is over" and "it is not finished until it is finished", so was the case of COVID-19 pandemic. The reportage by the mass media on COVID-19 in the post-lockdown era was believed to have dropped significantly. Before now, these media provided daily coverage of COVID-19. Understandably, that was most critical period of the pandemic and now was post-shutdown era. What about India, recently ravaged by the outbreak? The question is that to what extent was COVID-19 covered by the mass media in this era? How frequently was COVID-19 given coverage? How was the rate of coverage of COVID-19 to

other health related issues? Could coverage have dropped? The researchers therefore, accessed the level of coverage COVID-19 in the post-lockdown Nigeria by the select online newspapers.

The objectives of the study were to:

1. Assess the frequency of the reportage of COVID-19 in relation to other health issues.
2. Determine the ratio of COVID-19 coverage to other health related coverage.

### **Hypothesis**

The following is the null hypothesis developed based on existing literature:

Ho: There is no significant relationship between frequency of reportage of COVID-19 to other health related stories in the post-lockdown era in Nigeria.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The researchers adopted agenda setting theory. Asemah (2011, p. 176) and Potter (2019) noted that the agenda setting theory is introduced by Maxwell McCombs & Donald Shaw. The theory is hinged on the believed that the media set agenda through their manifest coverage and content to influence public perception and views. The theory is premised on the explanation of the connection between patterns in news reportage and the public agenda and policies about what is of priority importance to society. Anorue & Nwogbo (2020, p.60) observed that "as a theory of media effects, agenda setting attributes substantial influence (on audiences) to media." The theory proposes that the media through their activities make certain issues appear more important and guide society to focus more on the current more important issues. The agenda setting theory is suitable for this study because of its element of frequency and regularity of coverage since that is also part of the objectives of the seminar.

#### **Conceptual Overview**

Nda (2020, p.13) observed that "we communicate to overcome barriers; but severally, failure is prevalent". For communication, there must be shared understanding of the subject matter among the senders and the receivers. Sapienza & Veenstr (2016) put it thus, If scientific progress is the goal of academic enterprise then it logically follows that the vitality of any field should be measured in the strength of its concepts. Indeed, at the heart of every discipline or field is a set of concepts that help to assist and support their primary theories and explanations by laying the foundation for their existence.

Concepts are described by experts as the basic building blocks or ideas of theory and research. Komiti (2016) described

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concepts as vital because they assist communication among those who have common understanding of them. Variably, concepts impede communication among those who do not have shared understanding of them. In line with the foregoing, Cicero cited in Okoro (1995) noted that “Any systematic treatment of a subject should begin with a definition so that everyone may understand the subject of enquiry.” Thus, it becomes pertinent to have conceptual review of this study.

**Coverage:** The term “coverage” simply describes the amount of time given to an event on the mass media. Cambridge Dictionary (n.d) defines coverage as “the reporting of a particular important event or subject”. It is the quantified amount of attention given to a particular news item or news category. Coverage can be seen as the extent of recognition giving to something else. It is the area that can be covered by a specified volume or weight of a substance. The term “media coverage” is more frequently used in the field of mass communication. According to AT Internet (n.d), “media coverage is used to refer to all blog articles, RSS feeds, video content or other types of digital content (produced by individuals or organizations other than your own company) where your brand, products or services are discussed or shown.” The terms: coverage and media coverage can however be used interchangeably to describe the reporting of a particular important event or subject by the mass media. Media coverage is simply media reportage.

**Media:** The term ‘media’ can also be used as a synonym for mass media. Media, according to Marc (n.d.), “is also commonly used as an aggregate noun to refer to the entire industry, often because of a perceived homogeneity or sameness of point of view.” They include books, newspapers and magazines (known as the print media), and recordings, radio, and television (called broadcast media), photo-journalism and cinematography, and the Internet and the new media. They can also be classified into the following three types: Prints (Newspapers, Books and magazines), Broadcast (Radio, Television and Cable TV) and, Telecommunications: internet, satellite and social media. Media are generally referred to as means of communication that reach large numbers of people in a short time such as television, newspapers, magazine, radio and more recently, the Internet and social media. Wogu (2004), cited in Komiti (2016) “pictures the mass media to be means of transferring information or to communicate to a very large number of people in places at the same time.” The distance between these people (also known as audience/receivers) is never a barrier neither does it affect the content and structure of the message. The media are also described as channels that are meant to reach a large audience by mass communication. What actually defines the mass media includes ability to reach many people simultaneously and currently, and the use of a

technology to transmit message to audiences. What typify the media are: communication - audiences have wide range of choice; they impact and can be impacted; and messages are designed to attract large viewers, listeners and or readers.

**Online Newspapers:** There have been great collaborations and convergence of the conventional mass media (i.e. newspapers, radio and television) and the new media (which include social networking sites like Facebook, Twitter, etc. and WWW, the Internet. Instead of the traditional media fading away or ceasing to exist as a result of the emergence they now operate side by side with the new media. Thus, most of these mainstream media organisations are also active in the new media to meet up with new realities. For newspapers, their digital or new media versions are often referred to as online newspapers or e-papers. Newspapers accessed on the internet or digital platforms are known as online newspapers. Of course, there are a number of Nigerian digital newspapers that are not in hard copies, namely; Sahara Reporters, Premium Times, Legit.Ng and People’s Gazette. These are powerful media organisations with wide online followership. However, there is this larger group which has perfectly infused the mainstream print newspapers with their own online versions. It is from this online newspapers group that this study examined. The six mainstream online newspapers also operate in print, and are widely circulated with very high readership across the length and breadth of Nigeria. They are Tribune, Punch, Vanguard and Nation (all four have their head offices in Lagos). The others are Daily Trust and Leadership based in Abuja and strong followership in Northern Nigeria. See tables I and II for illustrations on the traditional media with their new media counterparts and how they have been able to form infusion.

**COVID-19:** COVID-19 is a disease caused by a new strain of corona virus. The “CO” stands for corona, “VI” for virus, and “D” for disease, while the suffix “-19” stands 2019, the year the outbreak of disease was first known in 2019. This is why it is referred to as “2019 novel coronavirus” or “2019-nCoV”. Vergnaud (2020) explained that the term “COVID-19” announced by the World Health Organization (WHO) in collaboration with the International Committee on Taxonomy of Viruses on 11th February, 2020 for the disease caused by the novel coronavirus SARS-CoV2, started in Wuhan, China in late 2019 and has since spread worldwide. Vergnaud (2020) asserted that “on December 31, 2019, a strange new pneumonia of unknown cause was reported to the Chinese WHO Country Office. A cluster of these cases originally appeared in Wuhan, a city in the Hubei Province of China. These infections were found to be caused by a new coronavirus ...” Since then, COVID-19 has led to the death of hundreds of thousands of people across the world. The World Health Organisation (2021) put the latest figures succinctly:



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“Globally, as of 2:48pm CEST, 31 May 2021, there have been 170,051,718 confirmed cases of COVID-19, including 3,540,437 deaths, reported to WHO. As of 31 May 2021, a total of 1,579,416,705 vaccine doses have been administered.” That implies the severity of the pandemic. It is important to note that COVID-19 was not the first form of coronavirus. There had been outbreak of coronaviruses in domestic poultry, in the 1930s. So, what are coronaviruses? Corona viruses are generally referred to as common human and animal viruses that cause various respiratory, liver, neurologic and other diseases. Seven variants of coronaviruses are known to cause diseases in humans; including COVID-19 which is deadlier.

## I. Review of Literature

There is a strong connection between COVID-19 and Mass Media in Nigeria. The mass media helped in creating awareness about the pandemic and setting agendas for social mobilisation. In December, 2019, when WHO first announced the outbreak, the Nigerian mass media which include the online newspapers, took the lead by ensuring the masses were informed regularly. The media stood up to the challenges of the times by mobilising and socialising their respective audiences and calling on relevant agencies on the need to rise up to the challenges brought by COVID-19. Therefore, countries of the world came up with various strategies to subdue the spread or eliminate it. In Nigeria, for in instance, one helpful strategy was restriction of movement with partial shutdown of the economy starting with Abuja and Lagos on the 30th of March, 2020 (Obieze, 2020).

On 28 February, 2020 when the Federal Ministry of Health via Nigeria Centre for Disease Control announced the confirmation of the first case of COVID-19, the media doubled up efforts even till during the lockdown season. Recall that the first index case, which was confirmed on the 27th of February 2020, involved an Italian citizen who worked in Nigeria and had just returned from Milan, Italy to Lagos, on the 25th of February 2020. He was confirmed by the Virology Laboratory of the Lagos University Teaching Hospital (Nigeria Centre for Disease Control, 2020). In a similar content analytical study, Smith, Smith & Ajayi (2020) asserted that:

The role of the mass media including television, radio, print and in recent times social media has remained indispensable in teaming and eradicating pandemics. Information on positive public health practices such as social distancing, hand washing, respiratory hygiene and government policies in tackling outbreaks has often been disseminated via these media ... The vibrant Nigeria’s Mass Media which comprise of over 200 radio stations, 150 television channels, and about

350 print (newspapers) outlets has remained a force to be reckoned with and has been faithful to its social responsibilities as the fourth estate of the realm.

Citing [www.fmhc.gov.ng](http://www.fmhc.gov.ng), the official website of the Ministry of Information and Culture, Smith, Smith & Ajayi (2020) added that the Nigerian mass media was applauded by the Nigeria’s Minister of Information, Alhaji Lia Muhammad, for bringing messages of the COVID-19 pandemic to Nigerians, through their media contributions in the advocacy, sensitisation and social responsibilities functions.

The mass media mustered available resources to ensure that the citizenry was duly informed about the dangers of the pandemic, COVID-19 prevention protocols. It was the crudest period of the pandemic in Nigeria, when relevant agencies seemed confused and lacklustre, the mass media, especially the newspaper online versions, set the agendas. The media by their reportage and programmes pushed the relevant bodies to action. This was corroborated by Smith, et al (2020), that the media churned out thousands of reportage since the disease was first reported in the country “and the Nigerian Union of journalist applauded its members on their efforts in reporting the pandemic in the face of challenges such as lack of sufficient and inadequate protection equipment coupled with remuneration being owed some of their members by some employers.” Thus, the media did not stop at mere report of events but went extra miles into investigation. Where relevant agencies like the Presidential Task Force on COVID-19, monitoring groups at both states and federal levels, airport management, obedient or disobedient to COVID-19 protocols, etc. left much to desire, the media at various levels put in their support by setting agendas. WHO Africa, in one its articles, eulogised the Nigerian mass media for their courage and conscientious input in the fight against COVID-19. According to the article by WHO Africa (2020), at a time when the whole thing seemed zigzag and uncoordinated, Regina Otokpa, an Abuja-based journalist, co-authored a newspaper article on poor observance of mask-wearing and physical distancing directives in Nigeria. The Otokpa’s report was far reaching as reactions and effects were immediate. WHO Africa (2020) put it clearly that “Government officials reinforced warnings against disregarding the preventive measures, while medical personnel voiced satisfaction that awareness had been created among policymakers: health workers are at a higher risk of COVID-19 infection, and in Nigeria more than 2000 health workers have been infected by the disease.” The Otokpa’s report helped stakeholders to identify or figure out loopholes and grey areas that could impede the anti-COVID-19 fight in Nigeria. Thus, the media investigated and interrogated governments’ and individuals’ responses to the pandemic and that helped to create awareness of the virus. To be forewarned is to be forearmed.

Nwaoboli, Chukwu, Arijeniwa & Asemah (2021) conducted a study on the status conferral approach to mass media and coronavirus campaign in Benin City. Their findings showed that residents of Benin City had very high exposure to COVID-19 messages. Thus, the researchers concluded that the media carried out their basic roles of surveillance of the society, correlation of information, education, entertainment and information dissemination. The mass media were also discovered to have sensitised Benin City residents about the serious nature of the coronavirus pandemic and measures at curtailing it. Also, Akpoveta (2021) examined the perception on mass media reportage of the COVID-19 pandemic among students of tertiary institutions in Delta State. The findings showed a very high level of exposure to media campaigns on coronavirus among the students of the select schools. Akpoveta (2021) concluded that students of tertiary institutions in Delta State perceived that the media reported extensively on the coronavirus pandemic.

Orji & Okolie (2021) did a study on the perception of the effectiveness of social media in creating awareness on government Covid-19 preventive measures among Imo State residents. The objectives of the study were to find out Imo state residents' level of awareness of government Covid-19 pandemic preventive measures based on exposure to social media message; examine the effectiveness of social media in influencing the behaviour of Imo state residents in embracing government Covid-19 preventive measures and Identity factors affecting the effectiveness of social media in ensuring Imo State residents compliance to government Covid-19 preventive measures. The findings of the study revealed that Imo state residents' level of awareness of government Covid-19 pandemic preventive measures based on exposure to social media was high (weighted average mean =3.33). The researchers concluded that social media played significant role in the dissemination of information needed to create awareness on government Covid-19 preventive measures, but failed to influence respondents' adoption of these measures. They, therefore, recommended that government and stakeholders in health should endeavour to make social media gadget and network available to all and sundry as it has proven to be reliable channel of information on outbreak of disease. Looking at the three studies reviewed above, it is evident that the scholars focused on the perception of media coverage of COVID-19 pandemic. This present study focused on the frequency of coverage and the coverage in relation to other health-related issues.

## II. Research Design and Methods

The researchers adopted content analysis as the research design. According to Kerlinger (2000), cited in Asemah, Gujbawu, Ekharefo & Okpanachi (2017, p.79), content

analysis is “the method of studying and analysing communication in a systematic, objective and quantitative for the purpose of measuring variables.” Asemah et al explained that it is based on manifest content of a media message, and instead of observing people’s behaviours directly; efforts are put on the message. In order to have fair representation of available data, six Nigerian newspaper online versions were carefully selected. The population of the study comprised all online editions published by the select newspapers, namely; Tribune, Punch, Vanguard, Nation, Daily Trust, and Leadership from 29th April to 29th May, 2021 which amounted to 31 editions each. The six newspapers were purposively chosen due to their nationwide circulation, wide coverage of national, local, trending issues and fidelity to the masses. While the first four are headquartered in Lagos, Lagos state, the other two are based in Federal Capital City, Abuja. Data were analysed using the chi-square test. All the 31 editions, the total of 20 were used as sample. A simple random sampling was adopted in selection of the days and editions studied. The instrument for data collection in this study was the code sheet which is the most appropriate for content analysis. The researchers employed the services of two trained coders. The formula used to calculate the inter-coder reliability was Hoisti formula for inter-coder reliability in terms of percentage agreement, which states:

$$\text{Reliability} = \frac{2m}{N_1 + N_2}$$

Where M = is the number of coding decisions on which two coders agree

N1 and N2 = the total number of coding decisions by the first and second coder.

Asemah et al (2017, p.85)

$$R = \frac{2(16)}{20+20}, R = \frac{32}{40} = 0.8$$

### Data Presentation and Analysis

From the data presented in table 1 above, the newspapers analysed published more other health related stories than COVID-19 stories in post-lockdown era. With a total of just 65 stories of COVID-19 out of the 243 health stories published in 31 of editions of six newspapers showed that enough coverage was not given to COVID-19. The newspapers gave adequate reportage to other health issues. With the pandemic still ravaging the world and Nigeria, the media should have had a much higher coverage COVID-19 but with the data presented less than 27% attention was given whereas the remaining over 73% coverage was given to other health stories giving the impression that the coverage of COVID-19 was not as important as other health stories.

Analysis of table 2 above indicated a breakdown of health stories. It sought to measure the frequency of COVID-19 stories as well as other health related stories like Public Health, Mother & Health, Foreign and Management & Policy. The frequency of COVID-19 stories with 26.74% was a little higher than each of subgroups of other health stories despite being a pandemic. Coverage on Mother & Child competed favourably with COVID-19 with a difference of less than 5%. Data also revealed that Vanguard gave more coverage to health stories followed by Punch with the two newspapers publishing 19 and 18 COVID-19 stories respectively. The Nation, Leadership and Tribune were the least in terms of COVID-19 reportage.

**Hypothesis Testing**

Using Chi-square test (Gupta, 2011 t.10)

$$X^2 = \sum \frac{(O-E)^2}{E} \quad E1 = \frac{34 \times 65}{243} = 0.8$$

$$E2 = \frac{47 \times 65}{243} = 12.57$$

$$E3 = \frac{59 \times 65}{243} = 15.78$$

$$E4 = \frac{31 \times 65}{243} = 8.29$$

$$E5 = \frac{41 \times 65}{243} = 10.97$$

$$E6 = \frac{31 \times 65}{243} = 8.29$$

$$E7 = \frac{34 \times 178}{243} = 24.91$$

$$E8 = \frac{47 \times 178}{243} = 34.43$$

$$E9 = \frac{59 \times 178}{243} = 43.22$$

$$E10 = \frac{31 \times 178}{243} = 22.71$$

$$E11 = \frac{41 \times 178}{243} = 9.09$$

$$E12 = \frac{31 \times 178}{243} = 22.71$$

O	E	O - E	(O-E) <sup>2</sup>	$\frac{(O - E)^2}{E}$
7	9.09	-2.09	4.3681	0.4805
17	12.57	4.43	19.6249	1.5612
19	15.78	3.22	10.3684	0.6571
4	8.29	-4.29	18.4041	2.2200
10	10.97	-0.97	0.9409	0.0858
8	8.29	-0.29	0.0841	0.0101
27	24.91	2.09	4.3681	0.1754
30	34.43	-4.43	19.6249	0.5700
40	43.22	-3.22	10.3684	0.2399
27	22.71	4.29	18.4041	0.8104
31	30.03	0.97	0.9409	0.0313

23	22.71	0.29	0.0841	0.0037
			$X^2 = \sum \frac{(O-E)^2}{E}$	X2cal 6.8454
				6.8454

X2 tab (r-1) (c-1),0.05=X2 tab (2-1) (6-1),0.05

X2tab 5, 0.05 = 11.070

Decision Rule

Reject Ho any time X2cal greater than X2 tab

Since X2 tab= 11.070is greater than,X2cal = 6.8454 we accept Ho and conclude that there is no significant relationship between the frequency of media reportage of COVID-19 to other health related stories in the post-lockdown era in Nigeria.

**III. Results and Discussion**

This study was on coverage of COVID-19 in post-lockdown era by six Nigeria newspaper online versions, namely; Tribune, Punch, Vanguard, Nation, Daily Trust, and Leadership. The findings showed that there was significant difference between COVID-19 reportage and other health areas. While the total of COVID-19 stories published within a month by the six newspapers was 65 (26.74%), the total of other health area stories published within the same period by the same newspapers was 178 (73.25%). Vanguard published more health stories with a total of 59 out of which 19 are on COVID-19, followed by Punch , 47 health stories, 17 of which were on COVID-19 , whereas Nation had the least publication on COVID-19: 31 health stories with 4 on COVID-19. Findings showed that none of the six newspapers examined published COVID-19 stories on daily basis except repeated stories which are always on the site. The highest was Vanguard with 19 COVID-19 stories in 31 days. The study also looked into the frequency of the various sub-groups of other health stories in relation to COVID-19 stories. They followed this order: COVID-19 stories - 65 (26.74%), Public health - 44 (18.10%), Mother and child - 53(21.81%), Foreign - 40 (16.46%), and Management & Policy - 41 (16.87%). Data indicated that COVID-19 stories appeared a little higher than each of the sub-groups of other health related stories despite the existence of COVID-19 in the country in post shutdown era.

Generally, the findings of the study disagreed with earlier reports on during COVID-19 and COVID-19 lockdown where reports as seen in literature reviewed showed that the mass media mobilised the masses with their agenda setting functions through a way of copious reportage of COVID-19 activities in Nigeria. For instance, in a study on How Do Nigerian Newspapers Report COVID-19 Pandemic? The



Implication for Awareness and Prevention, Omar & Apuke (2020) asserted that findings revealed that the Nigerian newspapers “performed well in terms of covering the pandemic, which turn created awareness,” but coverage lack depth “as most of the reported stories were short and were predominantly straight news.” It is also important to note, base on findings, the select newspapers did not continue with agenda setting in post-lockdown COVID-19 era as expected. Anorue & Nwogbo (2020, p.60) observed that “agenda setting attributes substantial influence (on audiences) to media.” The theory proposes that the media through their activities make certain issues appear more important and guide society to focus more on the current more important issues. Variably, findings of this study indicated the newspapers through their reportage did not give due importance to coverage of COVID-19 in post-lockdown era.

However, the study agreed with facts as shown in the data that there was reduction in the coverage COVID-19 in the COVID-19 post-lockdown era. The total of 65 COVID-19 stories was published by the six newspaper online versions during a period of 31 days. That is, 31 editions multiplied six newspapers which are 186 and 26.74% of all health stories published by the select newspapers as indicated in the data above. With less than 50% (precisely 26.74%) publication of COVID-19 stories of all health stories, indicated that coverage dropped drastically. Result of hypothesis testing in the study agreed with the foregoing. That is, the study accepted the Ho which stated that there is no significant relationship between the frequency of reportage of COVID-19 and other health related stories in the post-lockdown era in Nigeria. However, the findings indicated that in the online newspaper sites, stories published have greater elements of permanency than the prints in that they are reflected in the days or weeks that follow after being published until they are moved to previous page(s). This permanency is not limited to COVID-19 related stories but a commendable feature of online newspapers.

#### IV. Conclusion

It was obvious from the study that the six newspaper online versions analysed did not give adequate coverage to COVID-19 in post-lockdown era in Nigeria, from 29th April to 29th May, 2021. It was obvious that less reportage was given to COVID-19 when compared with the amount of coverage given to other health areas. Therefore, the researchers concluded that media coverage of COVID-19 in post-lockdown era in Nigeria is low and inadequate (unlike the lockdown era), and there is no significant relationship between COVID-19 stories and other health related stories in terms of frequency and regularity. Frequency of reportage of other health related stories is far higher than COVID-19 stories despite the fact that COVID-19 is still a pandemic.

Thus, the agenda setting function of the mass media was not properly displayed by the select newspapers as findings indicated. Consequently, the researchers recommended that the mass media in Nigeria, the newspaper online versions in particular should prioritise coverage of the COVID-19 until World Health Organisation and Nigeria Centre for Diseases Control announce formally that COVID-19 bodies, the media should not relax in their agenda setting function in terms of COVID-19 coverage.

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**Table I: The Conventional Media and their New Media Forms.**

Convention Media	New Media Forms
Books	Ebooks, wikis
Journalism	Blogs, e-papers, citizen journalism
Music	Boomplay, Tiktok, Pandora
Newspapers, Magazines	Ezines, e-papers, online newspapers
Radio	Podcasts
Television	Full episode on the web, YouTube, etc
Telephone	VOIP, WhatsApp Call, Facebook Call etc
Films/Videos	Vimeo, YouTube, IGTV, TikTok, Netflix, Vevo
Photography	Flickr, 500px, google photos
Art	Museums on the web
Advertisement, Marketing, Sales, PR	Facebook, Yahoo, Amazon, Google, Online adverts, marketing and PR

**Table II: Some of the Mainstream/Conventional Media and Online/E-Paper Platforms.**

Mainstream	Online Version
Nigerian Tribune	<a href="https://www.tribuneonlineng.com">https://www.tribuneonlineng.com</a>
The Punch Newspaper	<a href="https://www.punchng.com">https://www.punchng.com</a>
Daily Trust	<a href="https://www.dailytrust.com">https://www.dailytrust.com</a>
Vanguard Newspapers	<a href="https://www.vanguardngr.com">https://www.vanguardngr.com</a>
Leadership Newspaper	<a href="https://www.leadershipng.com">https://www.leadershipng.com</a>
The Guardian	<a href="https://www.ngrguardiannews.com">https://www.ngrguardiannews.com</a>
This Day Newspaper	<a href="https://www.thisdaylive.com">https://www.thisdaylive.com</a>
Independent	<a href="https://www.independentng.com">https://www.independentng.com</a>
The Nation	<a href="https://www.thenationonlinng.net">https://www.thenationonlinng.net</a>
Nigeria Television Authority (NTA)	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=nta+network+news+nigeria+li">https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=nta+network+news+nigeria+li</a>
Channels Television	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=channels+tv+live+nigeria">https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=channels+tv+live+nigeria</a>
African Independent Television	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=ait+tv+nigeria+live">https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=ait+tv+nigeria+live</a>

**Table I: Coverage of COVID-19 in Relation to Other Health Stories.**

Variables	Tribune	Punch	Vanguard	Nation	Daily trust	Leadership	Total
Covid-19 Stories	7	17	19	4	10	8	65 (26.74%)
Other Health Stories	27	30	40	27	31	23	178 (73.25%)
Total	24 (13.99%)	47 (19.34%)	59 (24.27%)	31 (12.75%)	41 (16.87%)	31 (12.75%)	243 (100%)

**Table 2: Frequency of Coverage of Health Stories**

Variables	Tribune	Punch	Vanguard	Nation	Daily Trust	Leadership	Total
Covid-19 Stories	7	17	19	4	10	8	65 (26.74%)
Public Health	6	8	9	5	7	9	44 (18.10%)
Mother & Child	9	8	15	8	8	5	53 (21.81%)
Foreign	5	7	10	10	6	2	40 (16.46%)
Mgt. & Policy	7	7	6	4	10	7	41 (16.87%)
Total	34 (13.99%)	47 (19.34%)	59 (24.27%)	31 (12.75%)	41 (16.87%)	31 (12.75%)	243 (100%)



# WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION AT DECISION MAKING LEVEL IN THE NEWS MEDIA OF BANGLADESH

Muhammad Anwarus Salam\* Kazi Nafia Rahman\*\*

*The main objective of this study was to identify the present status of women's participation at policy-making levels in the news media of Bangladesh. It explores the organizational culture of media that remains predominantly masculine, where women are still far behind from the decision-making levels. The study followed quantitative research design, where 26 media houses were selected purposively from news agencies, electronic, print, and online media. Data was collected from sample media houses using interview method with a structured questionnaire. Results showed that the participation of women journalists was insignificant in ownership of media, decision-making levels, reporting section, editing section, and many other sections of journalism as the presence of female journalists was very less. These results a significant roadmap for formulating and introducing an appropriate strategy to resolve the issues and the positional representation of male and female journalists that will lead to eliminating inequality between men and women in this evolving profession.*

**Keywords:** Women's Participation, News Media, Bangladesh, Decision Making, Ownership, Journalism.

*"No press is truly free unless women share an equal voice."*  
— International Women's Media Foundation (IWMF)

In the last fifteen years, the global media industry has experienced dramatic changes, including the emergence of new technologies and the manner of producing, consuming, and also understanding of news. Even though the number of female journalists has been consistently increasing, this has not improved women's equal participation in media or gender balance. Despite the increasing number of female journalists in newsrooms, women are still seen as outsiders by their male colleagues. A considerable amount of research has been done on women's representation in mass media. Still, somewhere women as workforce in media are untouched or less-talked about, especially as academic work. Thus, the study is trying to locate the related aspects of women's status in journalism and their participation at the policy-making level. In this study, efforts have been made to highlight the types of work, obstacles, and expectations from women journalists at workplace. Simultaneously, the opportunities for women to play a significant role in policy-making have also been highlighted.

## Women in Journalism: Past and Present

The history of women's participation in journalism in the Bangala language is quite ancient. About, one hundred fifty years back in history, Bengali women journalists contributed at the policy-making for media. Mokkhadayini Mukherjee edited a fortnightly Bengali journal and it was the first female edited Bengali language journal in April 1870. Five years later, the first women-edited monthly newspaper, 'Anathini' was published in July 1875. The first women-edited Bengali

weekly newspaper 'Bangabashini', was published in September 1883 (Chowdhury, 1997:21). The first women-directed Bengali newspaper 'Antopur' was published in January 1898, whose editor was Banalata Devi. (Lipon, 2005:37) On the other hand, 'Annesa' was published in 1921 which was the first monthly newspaper edited by a Muslim woman- Begum Sufia Khatun. The first women-edited quarterly newspaper, 'Papia', was published from Dhaka in 1927, edited by Bibhabati Sen, and it became a monthly magazine in 1928. Meanwhile, Muslim women-edited first Bengali weekly newspaper, 'Begum', was published in July 1947. It was edited by Nurjahan Begum and Sufia Kamal. Though, Nurjahan Begum started editing the newspaper alone from its 12th edition. (Chowdhury, 1997:1) The first women-edited Bengali newspaper 'Banganari', was published in the region of present Bangladesh in 1923 from Mymensingh, a monthly newspaper edited by Chinmoyee Devi. The first female weekly 'Sultana' of East Pakistan was published in January 1949, edited by Sufia Kamal and Jahanara Arju (Chowdhury, 1997:21). In the 20th century, women's advancement in journalism in the country was surprising. In an essay titled 'Media and Women' by Altaf Parvez, it is mentioned that women were involved in reporting and editing in the '50s and '60s. Women's participation increased in the '70s, when women started choosing journalism as a full-fledged career-oriented profession. (Lipon, 2005:38-39).

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After the liberation of Bangladesh in December 1971, the percentage of newspapers-publication gradually increased in the country. Though, publishing and broadcast media were controlled by various laws and regulations, in 1991, with the termination of Printing and Publication Act, Section- 17C by special order, there was a vast elapse of publication of newspapers (Chowdhury, 2016:16).

The picture of women's involvement in media can be gathered by reviewing some of the studies from the 1980s. Bangladesh Press Institute conducted a survey in 1987 titled 'Media and Women'. The study showed that 241 newspapers were published in Bangladesh on a daily, weekly, fortnightly, and monthly basis. At that time, there were only 34 female journalists among the 900 journalists working in Dhaka city. In other words, only 4 percent of women journalists were working in newspapers in that period. (Chowdhury, 2016:16) About ten years later, in 1997, Bangladesh Center for Development Journalism and Communication (BCDJC) conducted a survey. The findings revealed that of 1,500 journalists in Dhaka, there were only 60 women, which means just four percent of women journalists were there. Journalists in newspapers were just 7 percent in 1998. Women journalists began their work in Feni, Jhalokati, Barisal, Patuakhali, Pirojpur, Barguna, and Bhola, all outside of Dhaka. Another, 2001 study by the Television Network indicates that just six percent of women work in various newspapers. Thus, the women's participation in media was virtually equal, and there was no substantial change from 1987 to 2001 (Chowdhury, 2016:16).

National Research Report of the World Media Monitoring Project 2015 (comprising eight national and four newspapers of local newspapers, eight television outlets, three private radio stations, and two online newspapers) reported that sixty six percent of news presenters included women, and thirty four percent were men. In comparison, nineteen percent of the journalists were women, and eighty one percent were men. The findings of this research states that women were in the field were popular as newsreader as well as news presenter in the newspapers, it seems like women do not have much significance as a reporter (Chowdhury, 2016:16). Consequently, the participation of women in media has been marginal in comparison to men. The impression that women are less interested in journalism has several explanations. The Beijing Forum for Action (1995) reports that women are engaged in more careers in the communications industry but that few are at the decision-making role or serves on boards and committees that impact media policy.

The absence of gender sensitivity in media is shown by the fact that state, global, and foreign media outlets have struggled to eradicate gender stereotypes. The government

formulated a 'National Women Development Policy 2011' under the 'Beijing Forum for Action.' In this policy, the section 'Women and Media' emphasizes the focus to undertake positive initiative for taking up the role of women in the mass media, ensuring their access to it, elimination of discrimination in participation and projection of women and children issues; to arrange publicity campaign to stop defamation, negative, archetype reflection of women and to stop violence against women; to create equal opportunity in the management of various media and formal training for women, and to integrate a gender perspective in media policy. Therefore, the people involved should work on eradicating existing barriers regarding women engagement in media.

### **Objectives of the study**

The purpose of this study was to assess female journalists' overall position in the journalism profession and women's inclusion at the policy level:

- To compare participation of men and women in journalism.
- To identify the position of women at the top level of media.
- To offer suggestions for solving the problem.

## **I. Review of Literature**

A considerable amount of literature has been published on women's participation in mass media at different times from different perspectives. Marilyn Greenwald articulated in her essay 'Women in the Media', that the bulk of the studies on media portrayals of women considered women to be understood in different ways: media outlets, media administrations, news, and images. But the story of women in the media was not all negative. Most analysis also indicates that, albeit steadily, figures are increasing (Marilyn, 2003).

Benjamin Mullen revealed in his report titled 'The majority of US news is still produced by men, a new report finds' released by the Women's Media Center as at 20 of the nation's top media outlets, men produce about 62.3 percent of news coverage, according to the report, which examined 24,117 pieces of content from newspapers, wire services, television and internet media (Mullen, 2017).

According to a 2015 Women's Media Center report, men still generate 62.1% of all print news in the most widely circulated newspapers and wire services. This dominance and the subsequent effects on attention will lead to a societal ecosystem that does not reflect women's lives, which can have a detrimental influence. Studies have repeatedly demonstrated that media portrayal matters, especially to women, and can influence young women's self-conceptions (Zeilinger, 2016).

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Julie Burton, president of the Women's Media Center, comments that 'the bottom line is this: Overwhelmingly, men still dominate media. Women are 51 percent of the population—but hardly equal partners in telling the story. Society is best served when media accurately reflect the population. The Women's Media Center challenges media decision-makers to get truly serious about ensuring balanced, equitable gender and racial representation at every level of their organizations (The Status of Women in US Media 2015).

A critical overarching finding in European countries is that women are under-represented in the media workforce, particularly at senior, decision-making levels. According to a study conducted by Skillset in the UK (2008), which was based on a labor market census, women are a minority in virtually every segment of the media sector in the UK, including mainstream news and television, creative industries, gaming, and other digital media industries. The study also showed that the loss of women beyond middle age is a significant factor for this imbalance. Despite more women than men entering the sector as graduates, women in the UK media workforce are far less likely than men to have dependent children living with them, suggesting that women who have children leave the industry (European Union, 2018).

A 2015 global survey of the International Women's Media Foundation found that women represent only a third of the full-time journalism workforce in the 522 companies surveyed. Research from the European Institute for Gender Equality found that women are under-represented in decision-making roles in European media industries, and that gender inequality was significantly worse in the private sector than in the public sector (European Union, 2018).

In Bangladesh, several studies have reported women's participation in journalism. Survey-based research on women's participation in journalism was first undertaken in Bangladesh in 1987 at the Press Institution of Bangladesh (PIB). The research was conducted specifying women's participation in journalism and analyzing women's issues in newspapers and women's pages. The study found that only 34 of the 900 women who served in Dhaka were female journalists. That means 4% of female journalists at that time served in various press (Moslem, 1987, p. 5-6).

The participation of women in reporting was limited, narrated by Baby Moudud, one of the pioneers of women journalists in Bangladesh. She wrote in 1990, "Focusing on women participation in risky work like reporting, I feel sad that there was only one female reporter in national dailies in 1970, and four in 1972. Today in 1990, mere one or two names are found. Yet it was common to have more women reporter." She again referred that, "There are approximately five

hundred newspapers and magazines nationwide including daily-weekly, but the number of female journalists has not reached up to 50 yet. Most of them work as sub-editor, feature editor, female page editor and editing assistant in news desk" (Moudud, 1990, p.19).

In 1998, the Bangladesh Center for Development Journalism and Communication (BCDJC) published a study of 69 female journalists from 20 national dailies, three journals, and five news organizations. According to the survey, only 7% of these institutions' staff are women, and only 2% of these are photographers, with only one woman photojournalist among them. (Women in Media, 2004, p.41).

The Bangladesh Nari Sangbadhik Kendra (BNSK) is Bangladesh's oldest women's journalist organization, established in 2001. According to BNSK 2006, the number of female journalists in Bangladesh is rising, but it remains alarmingly poor. Working journalists in Bangladesh are reported to number about 6000 men and 300 women, according to the BNSK. Unfortunately, there were fewer female policymakers (Safa, 2015).

Limited participation of women in Bangladeshi journalism was cited in an article published in 'Nirikka' of the Press Institute of Bangladesh (PIB) in 2005. The article focused on one female reporter in 1970, four reporters in 1972, and two reporters in 1987, 1990, and 1998 in Dhaka.

In 1987, only 34-woman journalists out of 900 were female, making for less than 4% of the number. In 1996, just 7% of Dhaka's journalists were women. In 1997, there were 60-women journalists among 1500 journalists. There were only 6 percent women, among regular kinds of stuff in 2001 (Lipon, 2005:39).

In 2001, the private news organization 'News Network' published a nationwide survey, showing that women journalists made up 6% of the staff of the mass media at the time (Chowdhury, 2016:16). The World Association of Christian Communication (WACC) surveyed in 2005 and published a report on women's role in the media as television editors, presenters, and reporters. The study showed that (a) women represent 83 percent of news presenters in the media, while men made up 9 percent; (b) women made up 18 percent of reporters, while male reporters made up 82 percent; and (c) there were 108 women journalists in TV, 29 in Radio stations and 132 in newspapers and (d) 78 percent women working in TV news presentation (Chowdhury, 2006:42).

According to an ABC survey from 2007, 577 newspapers were published in that year, but women journalists were underrepresented, with just 200 out of 6000 journalists being



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female. In the top and policy-making positions of newspapers, women were sheerly negligible (Chowdhury, 2008:10).

Participation of women in policy-making level in media is comparatively less than that of men. This situation exists not just in Bangladesh but all over the world. According to the International Women's Media Foundation's annual report on "The Role of Women in the News Media," "worldwide, 73 percent of top managerial positions or places of decision-making are occupied by men, while the remaining 27 percent are held by women." Males accounted for two-thirds of the reporting position (Munni, 2016:17).

### **Theoretical Framework**

#### **Muted Group Theory (MGT)**

The study is guided by the muted group theory (MGT), first developed in 1975 by Edwin and Shirley Ardener, explores how dominant groups' contact activities suppress, silence, or devalue the words, thoughts, and discourses of subordinate groups. Since its emergence in the late 1960s and early 1970s for use in anthropology, the muted group hypothesis has been broadly adopted by communication theorists as well as academics in broad range of fields, including media studies, philosophy, sports, industry, literacy, political science, education, and literature. (Kramarae, 2009)

According to Kramarae, women were prohibited from entering the publishing industry until 1970, restricting their presence in the media and allowing them to be misrepresented in history. This is the prevalence of male gatekeepers, described as editors and other cultural arbiters who dictate which books, essays, poetry, plays, feature films, and other works will be published in the mass media. Similarly, Pamela Creedon states that women started to join the male-dominated field of journalism in the mid-1970s. (Kramarae,2009)

The Women's Media Center researchers investigate the current role of women in the mass media sector in The Status of Women in the United States Media 2014. The results show that women (36.1%) are significantly outnumbered by men (63.4%). Even though that the number of women on TV news broadcasts is rising, women are nevertheless misrepresented not just in terms of their appearance as anchors but also in terms of the events they cover. Several studies have shown that while men are more likely to report "hard" news, women are more likely to cover "soft" news. As a result, women's voices are often silenced when it comes to the subjects they address. (Grabe, 2012 cited in Wikipedia)

The Muted Group Theory would not assert that these differences are biologically based. Instead, the theory argues that if men listen to women, integrate their perspectives into the language, and encourage women to be equal participants

in language usage and production, they risk losing their prominent role. Language is about power, and men have it.

## **II. Research Design and Methods**

The population of the study is all the news agencies electronic, print, and online media that exist in Bangladesh. According to the Bangladesh Film & Press Directorate, there are 411 national dailies released from Dhaka till November 2016. According to the information minister's statement in parliament on February 25, 2016, there are 2834 newspapers published in the country, as well as there are 26 television channels and 16 FM radio stations. Apart from that, 1800 online newspapers have submitted registration applications. The county, on the other hand, has only two news agencies, according to the Press Information Department (PID). From the entire population, 26 mass-media institutions have been selected purposively to sample the present study from every branch of media as mentioned earlier, i.e. electronic, print, online newspaper, and news agencies.

### **Sample of Mass Media as given in Table 1.**

**Newspaper:** The analysis has been done using seven newspapers as samples. The Prothom Alo, The Bangladesh Protidin, The Samakal, The Amader Somoy, The Daily Star, The New Age, and The Daily Shongbad were selected based on factors such as circulation, perspectives, language differences, and long-term publications.

**Television:** Seven television channels have been selected as samples in the study. Sample television channels were taken by considering government ownership, the durability of broadcasting, news-based contents. The television channels were Bangladesh Television, ATN Bangla, Somoy Television, Dhaka-Bangla Channel (DBC), Ekattar TV, Jamuna News, and ATN News.

**Radio:** Four radio channels have been selected as the sample of study considering the government ownership, longevity of broadcasting, and the presence of the news department. The chosen radio stations were- Bangladesh Betar, Radio Today, Radio Dhoni, and Radio Amar.

**Online newspaper:** Six online newspapers have been selected as the sample considering their longevity of publication, objectiveness, and presence of female editor. The selected online newspapers are bdnews24.com, banglanews24.com, jagonews.com, risingbd.com, report24.com, and bbarta24.net.

**News Agency:** Two news agencies, Bangladesh Sangbad Sangstha (BSS) and UNB have been selected as the sample considering government and non-government ownership. In

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this analysis, data was gathered from 26 media outlets through a questionnaire that included open-ended and closed-ended questions. Two case study of women journalists were also conducted to identify the actual situation of the workplace to find out about gender balance and equal participation of women at the decision-making phase.

### III. Results and Discussion

The analysis based on the data gathered is given below;

#### **Ownership of Mass-media**

The result show that men own the entirety of the media company. Women have no voice at the ownership stage. Bangladesh Television and Bangladesh Betar are both state-owned; therefore, their ownership is irrelevant to analyze from a gender standpoint. (Table 2)

#### **Editors of Mass-media:**

The study discloses that no woman is employed as an editor in any of the selected newspapers. Three of the seven television channels have male chief editors. Also, Bangladesh Television's Director-General is a male. ATN News, on the other hand, has a female chief editor. Ekatore Television's Chief Editor is also the Managing Director, who is a male. The organization's Chief Executive Officer, who also works as the editor, is a female. As a result, women represent 28.57 percent of television editors.

The survey radio stations' news editors are all males. Females are not represented as editors of radio stations or news organizations at all. In the selected online newspapers, there is only one female editor. (Table 3)

#### **Policymakers of Mass-media**

In seven selected newspapers and two news agencies, women have no involvement in the policy-making phase, as shown in Table 03. The percentage of participation in policy-making was zero percent. Just one policymaker as the chief reporter is shown in online newspapers, and only two (15.38 percent) female policymakers can be seen in selective television channels. It is noted that policymaker stands for editor-in-chief or executive editor and the positions like this who can decide whether or not news is covered. (Table 4)

#### **Reporting Section of Mass media**

The study shows that a few (6.23%) female reporters are there in the newspapers, (7.41%) online newspapers, (14.24%) televisions, and (22%) radios. The majority of the reporters found in the surveyed media houses are male. Data also indicates that female reporters in two news agencies were very few as the figure is only 5.56 percent. It is noted that

there is no female reporter in the reporting section of the UNB news agency. (Table 5)

#### **Editing Section of Mass Media**

The findings also show that presence of women is marginally more (12.44 percent) in the editing positions in the media houses than in the reporting or other sections of the selected newspapers. In the editorial section of selected television channels, women make up 34.60 percent of the staff. This section has a much higher level of participation than rest of the television channels. Women make up 32 percent of the editing staff at a selected radio station and 17.96 percent of online newspapers. The editorial section of news agencies has a marginally higher gender representation (26.23 percent) than most media houses. (Table 6)

#### **Local Correspondents in Mass-Media**

The study reveals that women's representation in the media as local correspondents is almost negligible. In the selected newspapers, there are only a few female local correspondents. According to the results, newspapers have eight correspondents out of 1395 local representatives; television channels have ten correspondents out of 431; radio stations have seven correspondents out of 195; online newspapers have one correspondent out of 407, and news agencies have one correspondent out of 138. This somewhat is a depressing figure in terms of women's involvement in the media. (Table 7)

#### **Foreign Representative**

The collected data shows women's representation in media as foreign representative's lack, with only one female foreign representative appearing in a newspaper. In the sample TV channels, online newspapers, and news agencies, there were no foreign correspondents. (Table 8)

#### **Presenter in TV/Radio**

The findings also show that the majority of the presenters on selected television and radio stations are women. In sample television channels, women participate as presenters. Unlike past media sections, a large portion of employees (63.64 percent) are female presenters, which is significantly higher than male presenters. More than half of radio news presenters (51.43 percent) are female, according to data. Women make up the majority of the presenters on Bangladesh Betar. (Table 9)

#### **Video/ Audio Editor**

In comparison to male, female involvement in video editing on select television channels is insignificant, according to the table. Radio stations have no audio editors, while television stations have only 12 video editors out of 137. (Table 10)

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### Women's position in Production Section

According to the table statistics, a limited proportion of female producers (9.33 percent) work for specific television channels, while a more significant numbers (57.14 percent) work for various radio stations. (Table 11)

#### Case study

Following up on cases show common to sexual harassment and gender-based issues are also women journalists' everyday work lives. Gender disparity in the workplace has been reported as a critical cause of these workplace-harassments, among many other reasons. In June 2016, interviews were conducted.

**Case 01:** Nadia (not her real name) is a Dhaka-based sub-editor with an online newspaper. Before her current job, she worked in several media organizations, including print and electronic. During her six years as a journalist, Nadia faced many obstacles, including sexual harassment. 'I was formally exposed to sexual assault,' she added. In my office, male colleagues' perceptions became an obstacle as well as a drawback.' She states that women are limited in the workplace, saying, "I was just permitted to report news about women and children. When I was working for another online newspaper, I interviewed the mother of Abhijit, a freethinking writer who was murdered by a fanatic militant. Still, the interview was canceled by higher authorities. This something I've had to deal with on many occasions.'

Nadia believes that women face a variety of challenges both within and outside of the media industry. As a result, women face many obstacles from their male colleagues, and they do not have a fair chance to display their skills. In terms of harassment, the new workplace is safer than the former one, but there is also a gender gap, she notes. When a male colleague enjoys more benefits and pays more than a female colleague, though their experiences and skills are similar, a minority feeling emerges. The key reasons for this uncomfortable situation are gender inequality in the workplace and women's lack of participation in decision-making.

Nadia argues that, though women hold positions in policy-making, it does not necessarily seem helpful to female journalists. According to her, involving women in policy-making could result in a partial change. Also the sole solution to the current crisis referencing her own experience with a television channel's viva board that comprised three female and one male member. They asked as to why she had abandoned the former media houses. When she brought up the topic of sexual harassment, a male member of the board questioned whether she had been harassed or had an affair. If women in positions of power are not self-sufficient, they will

be unable to improve others' lives. Woman journalists, according to Nadia, should be viewed as workers, not as women. There should be a good policy in place to fix gender inequality and other challenges. Opportunities and support should be provided based on merit, not gender.

**Case 02:** Nondita (not her real name) began her career in journalism as a contributor in 2009. She is now a sub-editor (entertainment) for a renowned online newspaper in Dhaka. Earlier, she worked for few months as a guest radio jockey in an FM radio station. She argues that the new house still views her as a journalist, not male or female. As a result, she is allowed the same advantages and resources as her male colleagues. For the sake of the office, she works till midnight. In that case, she is still provided with comfortable transportation from her home. According to her, the current working environment is very favorable to females. She received a six-month maternity leave package that included a salary and other benefits. She adds that office teamwork and commitment to work will make journalism easy for females.

Nondita, on the other hand, acknowledges that the bulk of her male teammates are unsupportive. Even though she did not experience any unpleasant situation at workplace, but still gender balance at the workplace is vital for comforting and raising women's voices. Women should be part at the policy-making level as much as possible. Women's emancipation would not be achievable without empowerment, according to Nondita.

Table 12 gives a glance into women's participation in media industry. According to this report, women journalists in the media industry lag well behind their male peers when making decisions. Women have no participation in decision-making in the selected dailies, according to the results, with only one female journalist in the policy-making stage of the online newspaper. On the other hand, 15.38 percent of women participate in television channels, while two out of every thirteen executives are women. Women's exposure to reporting is at a low ebb, with 7.41 percent working in online newspapers, 14.24 percent in TV channels, 22 percent in radio stations, 5.56 percent in news agencies, and 6.23 percent in dailies, according to the results. UNB, jagonews24.com, risingbd.com, Bangladesh Betar, and Radio Amar both have no female reporters. In the news segment, women account for 10.42 percent of the entire media industry. Female reporters are found to be marginally more common in the editorial sections of media organizations. In this respect, figures show that TV is ahead of other media houses, with 17.96 percent of women working in online newspapers, 34.60 percent in TV channels, 32 percent in radio stations, 26.22 percent in news agencies, and 12.44 percent in dailies. The employees of Radio Amar's editing section are all female, which is a



remarkable finding. The number of female journalists who serve as local correspondents is also negligible.

Women work 2.27 percent in television stations, 0.25 percent in online newspapers, 3.47 percent in radio stations, 0.72 percent in news agencies, and 0.57 percent in dailies, according to the results. The fact that only one woman works as a foreign representative for Dainik Shongbad is also discouraging. As a foreign representative, no woman serves in the sample mass-media institutions. A significant trend is that the percentage of female news anchors is greater than that of male anchors. According to statistics, women present 51.43 percent of the content on radio stations and 63.64 percent of the content on television channels; all presenters on Bangladesh Betar are female. According to the data obtained, women make up 9.33 percent of television producers and 42.86 percent of radio producers. Women make up just 11 percent of all producers of media firms. Women's involvement in television and radio stations is still higher than in other types of mass media, according to the results. Furthermore, women make up a more significant proportion of news presenters in media organizations than in any other industry branch. However, issues of gender balance and decision-making in media have been identified as crucial to women empowerment. Because of the desire for justice or democracy, an equal representation of male and female is expected in the decision-making process. This disparity had a particular influence on the presentation of sensational cases affecting women and children. A male journalist cannot cover these type of news with sensitivity as compared to women journalist can do. Equality, development, and harmony cannot be accomplished without women's participation at all decision-making stages.

#### IV. Conclusion

As per the findings of the study it can be concluded that women's participation in news-based media is almost negligible. The position of women at the level of policy-making is also trivial. As a result, the entire broadcasting system is under the control of men, and women are out lying in this profession. This study explored the participation of women's journalist in various sections of news media, and the unpleasant situations that they were facing were also identified through the cases studies. But the paper did not examine the other factors related to women journalists, i.e. what type of news they were covering and what kind of difficulties they were facing; what were their viewpoints regarding this profession. Further research on the answer to these questions is needed. Another research opportunity would be to explore the job satisfaction of women journalists. This study suggests that mass-media organizations, as well as government, should focus on the imbalance as an effective

policy could be formulated for mass-media houses for women. Also, the positional balance of men and women in this evolving profession should be emphasized because of the influence of mass media on society, culture, and civilization.

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**Table 1: Sample of the Mass Media.**

S/N	Name of Selected Mass Media			Total
1.	Newspaper	The Prothom Alo, The Bangladesh Protidin, The Samakal, The Amader Somoy, The Daily Star, The New Age, and The Daily Shongbad		07
2.	Television	Bangladesh Television, ATN Bangla, Somoy Television, Dhaka Bangla Channel (DBC), Ekattor Television, Jamuna Television, and ATN News		07
3.	Radio	Bangladesh Betar, Radio Today, Radio Dhoni, and Radio Amar		04
4.	Online Newspaper	Bdnews24.com, Banglanews24.com, Jagonews24.com, Risingbd.com, Bbarta24.net, and Thereport24.com		06
5.	News Agency	Bangladesh Shongbad Shongstha (BSS), United News of Bangladesh (UNB)		02
Total number of mass media				26

**Table 2: Ownership of Mass media.**

Media	Male		Female	
	Number	Percentage (%)	Number	Percentage (%)
Newspaper	07	100	0	0
Television	06	100	0	0
Radio	03	100	0	0
Online Newspaper	06	100	0	0

**Table 3: Editors of Mass media.**

Media	Male		Female	
	Number	Percentage (%)	Number	Percentage (%)
Newspaper	07	100	0	0
Television	05	71.43	02	28.57
Radio	04	100	0	0
Online Newspaper	05	83.33	01	16.67
News Agency	02	100	0	0

**Table 4: Policymakers of Mass media.**

Media	Male		Female	
	Number	Percentage (%)	Number	Percentage (%)
Newspaper	14	100	0	0
Television	11	84.62	2	15.38
Radio	07	100	0	0
Online Newspaper	11	91.67	1	8.33
News Agency	03	100	0	0

**Table 5: Reporting Section of Mass media.**

Media	Male		Female	
	Number	Percentage (%)	Number	Percentage (%)
Newspaper	241	93.77	16	6.23
Television	259	85.76	43	14.24
Radio	39	78	11	22
Online Newspaper	125	92.59	10	7.41
News Agency	68	94.44	4	5.56

**Table 6: Editing Department of Mass media.**

Media	Male		Female	
	Number	Percentage (%)	Number	Percentage (%)
Newspaper	169	87.56	24	12.44
Television	134	65.40	77	34.60
Radio	34	68	16	32
Online Newspaper	137	82.04	30	17.96
News Agency	45	73.77	16	26.23

**Table 7: Local correspondents in mass media.**

Media	Male		Female	
	Number	Percentage (%)	Number	Percentage (%)
Newspaper	1395	99.43	08	0.57
Television	431	97.73	10	2.27
Radio	195	96.53	07	3.47
Online Newspaper	407	99.75	01	0.25
News Agency	138	99.28	01	0.72

**Table 8: Foreign Press Representative.**

Media	Male		Female	
	Number	Percentage (%)	Number	Percentage (%)
Newspaper	21	95.45	01	4.55

Television	31	100	0	0
Online Newspaper	29	100	0	0
News Agency	03	100	0	0

**Table 9: Presenter in TV/Radio.**

Media	Male		Female	
	Number	Percentage (%)	Number	Percentage (%)
Television	72	36.36	126	63.64
Radio	17	48.57	18	51.43

**Table 10: Video/ Audio Editor.**

Media	Male		Female	
	Number	Percentage (%)	Number	Percentage (%)
Television	137	91.95	12	8.05
Radio	09	100	0	0

**Table 11: Women's position in the production department.**

Media	Male		Female	
	Number	Percentage (%)	Number	Percentage (%)
Television	175	90.67	18	9.33
Radio	3	42.86	4	57.14

**Table 12: Women's Participation in the Media industry at a Glance.**

Areas	Newspaper (%)	Television (%)	Radio (%)	Online (%)	News Agency (%)
Owner	0	0	0	0	-
Editor	0	28.57	0	16.67	0
Decision Maker	0	15.38	0	8.33	0
Reporter	6.23	14.24	22	7.41	5.56
Editing Section	12.44	34.60	32	17.96	26.23
Local Correspondent	0.57	2.27	3.47	0.25	0.72
Foreign Representative	4.55	0	-	0	0
Sub-editor	2.53	-	-	16.67	-
Presenter	-	63.64	51.43	-	-
Video & Audio Editor	-	8.05	0	-	-
Production Section	-	9.33	51.14	-	-

# ROM-COMS IN NEO-LIBERAL HOLLYWOOD: A FORMULAIC APPROACH THAT AFFECTS THE PERCEPTION OF LOVE AMONG VIEWERS

Indumathi S.\*

*For ages, the neo-liberal Hollywood has relied on its formulaic approach, which often takes the form of genres such as Rom-Coms to attract the unsuspecting audience. The study analyzes the content of Hollywood made romantic comedies. Using Social Cognitive theory and Cultivation theory as the basis, the study carried out content analysis of top five highest grossing romantic comedies of all times, produced in Hollywood. The study found repetitive relationship-based elements in these films indicating that Hollywood uses formula approach to ensnare the audience around the world. The study also concluded that Hollywood-made -rom-coms had a negative effect on the perception of romantic love among its viewers.*

**Keywords:** Hollywood, neoliberal media, Romantic comedies, Rom-Coms, Hollywood romantic comedies.

When the famous Canadian scholar, Marshall McLuhan voiced his notion of Global Village way back in the 1960s, he possibly could not have imagined the present state of the globalized world. Well, it is true that his predictions regarding globalization came true, but the nature is far from imagined. Thanks to advancement in technology, communication, and free market policies, globalization is a reality now, but it comes at a heavy price called neoliberalism.

Neoliberalism, a fancy term used to denote the deregulation of economic policies to serve the capitalistic interests of the business entities, is one of the biggest threats haunting the entire world. Neoliberalism and media proliferation go hand in hand. In the present age of globalization, neo-liberalization has resulted in the proliferation of media conglomerates that have spread their tentacles all across the world. Global media may seem innocuous, but through its carefully crafted messages the sole interest of such organizations to make consumers out of people cannot be ruled out. This economy policy which features deregulated market with less than powerful governments that favors the capitalistic tendencies of corporate has turned the world into a global market arena. Globalization has help build this cause. Media is now a globalized phenomenon. Prior to 80s and 90s which was way before neoliberalism, media was more of a national affair. But post-neo-liberalization, the media corporate giants especially United States based have moved at lightening speeds across the world to make a cut in the profit overseas. Acquisitions and conglomeration are a common place in the global market resulting in concentration of media ownership with serious repercussions on the content of news and information.

Hollywood and its big studios cannot be ignored when it comes to profit on a global level. According to a report released by Motion Picture Association of America, "In 2016,

the global box office for all films released in each country around the world reached \$38.6 billion, up one percent from 2015 (2015 theatrical market statistics report, 2016)." Since the 1990s, Hollywood's presence has grown across the world. According to an article by Hollywood Reporter, the box-office revenue of Hollywood, globally, was up by 3 percent in 2017 and it reached an all-time high of \$39.9 billion. "The growth was thanks to a 6 percent uptick at the international box office, where ticket sales came in at an estimated \$28.8 billion. (McClintock, 2017)" The biggest concern, however, is regarding the cultural impact of Hollywood on the worldwide audience. As Robert W. McChesney puts it, "As for culture, the "Hollywood juggernaut" and the specter of U.S. cultural domination remains a central concern in many countries, for obvious reasons (McChesney, 2001)." Hollywood has often been accused of cultural imperialism and considering its ever-increasing sphere of influence overseas especially with the help of big studios, the possibility of cultural imperialism cannot be ruled out. Hollywood is known for its formulaic based genres that are popular globally. One genre of particular interest is the romantic comedy which has had a great fan following.

In the past, the researches that studied Hollywood-made romantic comedies, pointed out the exaggerated portrayal of romantic relationships in this genre films which adversely affected the perception of romantic love among teenage girls and women. It affected them to a large extent that women who watched romantic comedies had false notions, and unrealistic expectations about love in reality.

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The present study analyzed Hollywood made romantic comedy films as researchers in the past had concluded that romantic comedy films with its exaggerated and idealistic notions of romantic love affected the perceptions of love especially among women.

### **Theoretical framework**

This phenomenon can be interpreted in terms of two theories: Social cognitive theory and cultivation theory. These two theories are popular way to study media effects. The social cognitive theory states that an individual's behavior is governed by internal dispositions and external environment. The observer can get influenced by media content and imitate the behavior seen on media if perceived as desirable. Such behavior becomes model behavior due to its positive or desirable outcome and can serve as a motivator. "These motivational effects are governed by observers' judgments of their ability to accomplish the modeled behavior, their perception of the modeled actions as producing favorable or adverse consequences, and their inferences that similar or unlike consequences would result if they themselves were to engage in similar activities. (Bandura, 2001)" According to cultivation theory, people who watch media often perceive reality as what media constructs. Gerbner says the term cultivation is used to describe the television's contribution to conceptions of social reality. "People are born into a symbolic environment with television as its mainstream. Children begin viewing several years before they begin reading and well before they can even talk. Television viewing both shapes and is a stable part of lifestyles and outlooks. (Gerbner, 1998, p. 180)" If romantic comedies of Hollywood were to be interpreted based on these theories, it can be argued that they have an effect on the perception of romantic love on the audience in real life. The study analyzed the nature of formulaic approach of Hollywood's romantic comedies and its subsequent effect on viewer's perception of love.

Following are the objectives of the study:

- To identify relationship-oriented concepts in the romantic comedy genre of Hollywood.
- To analyze Hollywood's formula for romantic comedy.
- To discuss the effect of Hollywood's romantic comedy on perception of romantic love among viewers.

### **I. Review of literature**

Researches in the past have analyzed the psychological effect of watching romantic content both in TV and cinema. A study carried out by Signorielli (1991) studied the portrayal of marriage in 596 TV programmes that were broadcasted from the year 1976 to 1986. The researcher analyzed the effect of watching marriage content on 3000+ high school seniors. The study revealed that the continuous viewing of TV content on

marriage created interest towards marriage among the students who were desirous to get married and stay married to the same person in life, and also have children.

Shapiro and Kroeger (1991) studied the relationship between exposure to romantic media content and satisfaction in one's relationship. 109 adults took part in the research. The results revealed that more exposure to popular romantic media resulted in unrealistic beliefs in relationships and married women were found to be dissatisfied with their marriage. A study (1996) by Christine M Bachen and Eva Illouz carried out a study to find out what shaped the romantic ideals of adolescents. The researchers carried out 183 interviews with children between the age of 8 to 17. The study found out that children's romantic imagination was shaped by the content and forms they viewed in the media.

Johnson and Holmes (2009) carried out a content analysis of top 40 highest grossing romantic comedy films. "Analyses revealed that such films appear to depict romantic relationships as having qualities of both new and long-term relationships; that is, to be both novel and exciting, yet emotionally significant and meaningful." They researchers state that these films were shown to have highly idealistic and undesirable qualities. Another study carried out a content analysis of top 52 highest grossing romantic comedies from the 2000 to 2010. The study found that these films had romantic ideals and challenges. In the second part of the research, the researchers conducted a survey of 335 undergraduate students. The results revealed that students who watched these films endorsed the romantic ideals strongly when compared to students who did not watch these films (Veronica Hefner, 2013).

### **II. Research Design and Methods**

For the purpose of this study, the highest grossing romantic comedy films of all time in Hollywood were chosen. The sample of films was chosen from the list prepared by the website box office mojo.com. However, since the study also intended to analyze the spread of Hollywood's films across the world, only the films produced by the big six studios of the Hollywood (Paramount, Sony, Fox, Warner Brothers, Universal Studios, and Disney) were chosen simply because they have the resources for wider distribution across the world. A total of five top grossing films were selected for the purpose of the analysis. The Grounded Theory method was chosen to carry out content analysis of the research sample which included the top five films which included, *What Women Want*, *The Hitch*, *There's something about Mary*, *Sex and the City* and *Runaway Bride* as shown in table 1. The process involved three stages of analysis: open coding, axial coding and selective coding. First all the films were watched



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and open coding was carried out. In open coding, “from the data, that is from the text, a succession of concepts is developed that may ultimately be used as building blocks for the model.” (Uwe Flick, 2004) In the next step, axial coding, the concepts were assigned under different categories. Under selective coding, one category was chosen as the core category that related to all the other different categories. Some of the concepts identified during open coding included relationship concepts such as kissing, hugging, arguments, Break-up, wedding, among other things (Holmes, 2009). These concepts were divided under six categories – Affection, expression, relationship issues, time together, happy endings, and Hollywood’s formula.

### III. Results and Discussion

After watching the films from the sample, a total of 30 relationship related incidents or concepts were identified which were prominently featured in the films. Many of these incidents were previously analyzed by an extensive study on romantic comedies in Hollywood carried out by Johnson and Holmes (Holmes, 2009). Based on their similarity these incidents were further divided into six different categories.

#### Category 1: Affection

The first category was based on the affection the couple shared towards each other and it included kissing, hugging, sex, and holding hands among others. However only three of these incidents were chosen as they prominently appeared in the films compared to others. As shown in table 2, kissing topped the list as 59% of the affection shared by the couple was in terms of kissing. Hugging was 27 % and sex was only 11%. Hugging and kissing appeared in all five of the sample films. Sex, however, was limited to two films. This clearly shows that kissing is an important aspect of Hollywood made romantic comedy films. It appears in the beginning of the whirlwind romance and often these films end with the couple kissing which signifies happily- ever- after.

#### Category 2: Expression

The second category Expression dealt with the way the couples in the films expressed their love and appreciation for each other. As shown in table 3, under this category, compliments topped the list with 27 % followed by sharing personal information to the partner with 16 % and grand gestures at 8%. Irrespective of gender the couple in a relationship or in love complimented each other in terms of looks or the work done by one another. Often in these films it was portrayed that as the relationship grew, the couples would share their personal information with one another and talk openly about their failure or heart aches from the past. Grand gesture such as doing something extra-ordinary for the loved one was also featured in some of the films. For instance, in

the film, *Sex and the City*, John builds an extravagant closet to impress his partner Carrie who loves closets. Even these films showed couples gifting one another. For example, in the film, *Runaway Bride*, one of the protagonists, Maggie gifts her love interest Ike with his favorite band’s record. Other forms of expression that occurred in this genre included defending the partner, sacrifice, proposal, changing for relationship, big speech, and he or she is the one. The big speech was observed in four out of five films. Just before the end, one among the partners will try to make up for the mistake of the past by giving a grand emotional romantic speech which will influence the other partner to accept the love of the person. The concept of ‘he/ she is the one or he/she is special also featured in all five films. Changing for relationship wherein a person tries to change his or her way for the betterment of the relationship was observed in four out of five films. Also, many a times, one character in the film will defend his or her love interest in front of the others often resulting in gaining more admiration from the concerned person. This was observed in three out of five films.

#### Category 3: Relationship issues

This category deals with the different kind of problems faced by couples in rom-com films. As shown in table 4, arguments account for 20% of the relationship issues. The couple often have one or two arguments in film. This may be due to the ‘big mistake’ committed by one of them which accounts for 17% of relationship issues. The big mistake is concept that is quite common in this genre. For instance, in the film, *Sex and the City*, John does not show up for the wedding because he has last minute doubts about the process. Carrie gets emotionally devastated. Big mistakes were present in all five films while arguments were present in four out of five films. The big mistake often results in break-up which is also 17%. Break-up is followed by separation (17%) and the couple end up missing (17%) each other. The missing each other is often portrayed in the films as the two-character living separately going about their daily mundane life with less enthusiasm and this is often marked by a sad tune or song in the background. For instance, in the film *Hitch*, Allegra misses Albert which is signified by her looking at his empty seat in an office meeting, and Albert is shown frustrated and speaks about contemplation of suicide. Arguments, break-up and separation were observed in four films while big mistake and missing were observed in all the five films. The lesser appearing concepts in this category was cheating and therapy which accounted for 2.5% and 5.1% respectively and appeared in one and two films only.

#### Category 4: Time together

This category showcases the different concepts related to the time spent together by the two people in love as portrayed by the genre of Rom-Coms. It often took the form of long

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conversations which accounted for 27% in this category as shown in table 5, and having a good time which was the highest in the list at 42%. Having a good time is mostly portrayed as the couple spending time together. They are visibly happy and playful and are often accompanied by an upbeat or romantic background song or music. Conversations and have a good time featured in all the five films. For instance, in the film *There's Something about Mary*, Mary and Ted are seen having fun together as they go shopping or for dinner. The other concepts under this category include date and dancing. Date accounted for 19% while dancing accounted for 10%. In the film, *Hitch*, Allegra and Albert go out on several dates to the Knicks game and other places. Date was observed in three out of five films while dancing was observed in four out of five films. In the film *What Women Want*, Nick and Darcy are seen swaying to a slow song while in *Hitch*, also the Albert and Allegra are seen dancing to a pumping number.

#### **Category 5: Happy endings**

Romantic comedies almost always have happy endings. This is signified either with a wedding at the end or happily-ever-after is implied as the couple are seen together hugging and kissing. This study found that 37% of the category ended with weddings as shown in table 6, while 62% showed that it was happily-ever-after (implied). In fact, all the films had happily-ever-after ending. In *What Women want*, the film ends with the couple kissing in embrace.

#### **Category 6: Hollywood's formula**

This category features the commercial nature of Hollywood, and includes the techniques that it employs to sell its romantic comedies such as casting big stars, incorporating love songs in the films. Also, the inclusion of references to other popular romantic comedy films comes under this category. As shown in table 7, in all the five films, the studios had casted big stars and it accounted for 35% under this category while the love songs were the highest at 59%. Even love songs were featured in all the five films. Reference to popular romantic comedy films was a mere 5.4% and was observed in only two films. For example, in the film *Hitch*, the female character, Sara is shown watching the film, *Jerry McGuire*. After analyzing all the categories, the core category was selected. In the present study, the core category is the Hollywood's formula. The different categories can be coded under this one big category of Hollywood's formula.

#### **Interrater Reliability for Axial Codes**

One of the biggest concerns with content analysis is its subjective nature. In order to mitigate this problem interrater reliability test was carried out. The interrater reliability helps to establish the extent of agreement between two or more coders with reference to data results. For this purpose, a

coding manual was constructed which comprised of the different axial coding categories. A post-graduate mass communication student was trained about the different coding categories and acted as a second coder. The coder found out the presence or absence of the different categories in the selected sample of five films and also determined the percentage of occurrence of these codes in the films. The data of the first coder and second coder results were analyzed or in other words the reliability was analyzed using Cohen's Kappa. "Scores between .41 and .60 are considered moderate interrater reliability, .61 and .80 as substantial, and .81 and above as almost perfect." (Holmes, 2009). The results of this analysis are given in table 8. It was found that four out of six categories were in almost perfect agreement and the remaining two were of substantial agreement.

### **IV. Conclusion**

The first objective of this study was to identify relationship-oriented concepts in the romantic comedy genre of Hollywood. After conducting content analysis of the five sample films, the study identified 30 relationship-based elements that were observed repetitively in almost all the films. Some of the relationship-based elements identified include kissing, hugging, sex, dancing, having a good time, conversation, the big mistake, break-up, separation, missing, happily-ever-after and the big romantic speech. The second objective of this study was to determine and analyze Hollywood's formula for romantic comedy. The Hollywood's formula is the repetitive relationship elements observed in the films that range from almost similar narrative. The basic plotline in all films is a typical scenario of a boy meets girl, fall in love, then faces some obstacles and then finally get together and have a happily-ever-after.

This is further standardized by the usage of typical relationship elements such as kissing, sharing personal information, having a good time, the big speech, the separation and of course the happy ending. 11 coded relationship elements such as kissing, hugging, compliments, he/she is the one, the big mistake, missing, conversation, happily-ever-after, having a good time, big stars, and love songs were observed in all the five films. 7 coded relationship elements that included sharing personal stuff, changing for relationship, big speech of love, arguments, break-up, separation and dancing were observed in four out of five films. Out of 30 coded relationship elements 18 coded elements were observed in at least four out of five films. This clearly indicates the repetitive aspect of relationship elements in Hollywood romantic comedy films. In other words, Hollywood employs carefully constructed formula for its genre of romantic comedy, which is nothing but the

relationship elements coded in this study under different categories.

The third objective of this study was to discuss the effect of Hollywood’s romantic comedy on the perception of romantic love among viewers. This can be understood in terms of the two theories discussed earlier: Cultivation Theory and Social Cognitive Theory. According to Cultivation Theory, media cultivates reality for people. What viewers see on TV is subsequently considered as reality especially when it comes to their imagination of romance (Christine M Bachen, 1996) (Veronica Hefner, 2013). Romantic Comedies feature exaggerated ideals of romance such as happily-ever-after and life of pure romantic bliss which is not necessarily reality. The relationship concepts that the study identified can be considered as romantic ideals by viewers of romantic comedies which can affect them in real life. Furthermore, this perception of romantic ideals may be dictated in behavior as well. According to Social Cognitive theory, our behavior may be dictated by external influence such as media if we strongly consider it as an ideal model. So, in addition to the belief, viewers of romantic comedies may even behave in the manner as depicted in these films which can lead to dismay and disillusionment in their relationships (Holmes, 2009) (Kroeger, 1991). Further research could increase the sample size to give a better understanding of the formulaic approach of rom coms by Hollywood.

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**Table 1: Hollywood’s highest grossing romantic comedies – Produced by the big six studios. Based on the list prepared by boxofficemojo.com**

Rank	Film	Studio	Lifetime gross	Date of release
1	What Women Want	Paramount	\$182,811,707	15/12/2000
2	Hitch	Sony	\$179,495,555	11/02/2005
3	There’s something about Mary	Fox	\$176,484,651	15/07/1998
4	Sex and the City	Warner Brothers	\$152,647,258	30/05/2008
5	Runaway Bride	Paramount	\$152,257,509	30/07/1999

**Table 2: Category 1 – Affection.**

Category – Affection	Films	Number	Total
Kissing	What Women Want	7	37
	Hitch	10	
	There’s something about Mary	1	
	Sex and the City	15	
	Runaway Bride	4	
Hugging	What Women Want	3	17
	Hitch	4	
	There’s something about Mary	2	
	Sex and the City	6	
	Runaway Bride	2	
Sex	What Women Want	0	7
	Hitch	1	
	There’s something about Mary	0	
	Sex and the City	6	
	Runaway Bride	0	
	Total	62	

**Table 3: Category 2 – Expression.**

Category – Expression	Films	Number	Total
Saying I love you	What Women Want	0	5
	Hitch	4	
	There’s something about Mary	0	
	Sex and the City	0	
	Runaway Bride	1	
Sharing Personal Stuff	What Women Want	4	12
	Hitch	1	
	There’s something about Mary	3	
	Sex and the City	0	
Compliments	What Women Want	12	20
	Hitch	3	
	There’s something about Mary	1	
	Sex and the City	2	
Grand Gestures	What Women Want	0	6
	Hitch	2	
	There’s something	1	

	about Mary		
	Sex and the City	3	
	Runaway Bride	0	
Gifts	What Women Want	0	4
	Hitch	1	
	There’s something about Mary	0	
	Sex and the City	1	
	Runaway Bride	2	
Defending Partner	What Women Want	1	5
	Hitch	1	
	There’s something about Mary	0	
	Sex and the City	0	
	Runaway Bride	3	
Sacrifice	What Women Want	1	3
	Hitch	1	
	There’s something about Mary	1	
	Sex and the City	0	
	Runaway Bride	0	
Proposal	What Women Want	0	1
	Hitch	0	
	There’s something about Mary	0	
	Sex and the City	1	
	Runaway Bride	2	
Changing for relationship	What Women Want	1	8
	Hitch	4	
	There’s something about Mary	0	
	Sex and the City	2	
The Big Speech of Love	What Women Want	1	4
	Hitch	1	
	There’s something about Mary	1	
	Sex and the City	0	
He/she is the one	What Women Want	1	5
	Hitch	1	
	There’s something about Mary	1	
	Sex and the City	1	
	Runaway Bride	1	
	Total		74

**Table 4: Category – Relationship Issues.**

Category – Relationship Issues	Films	Number	Total
Arguments	What Women Want	0	8
	Hitch	2	
	There’s something about Mary	1	
	Sex and the City	4	
	Runaway Bride	1	
The Big Mistake	What Women Want	1	7
	Hitch	2	
	There’s something about Mary	1	
	Sex and the City	2	
	Runaway Bride	1	
Break-up	What Women Want	0	7
	Hitch	2	
	There’s something about Mary	1	
	Sex and the City	3	
	Runaway Bride	1	
Separation	What Women Want	0	7
	Hitch	2	
	There’s something about Mary	1	
	Sex and the City	3	
	Runaway Bride	1	
Missing	What Women Want	1	7
	Hitch	2	
	There’s something about Mary	1	
	Sex and the City	2	
	Runaway Bride	1	
Cheating	What Women Want	0	1
	Hitch	0	
	There’s something about Mary	0	
	Sex and the City	1	
	Runaway Bride	0	
Therapy	What Women Want	0	2
	Hitch	0	
	There’s something about Mary	1	
	Sex and the City	1	
	Runaway Bride	0	
Total			39

**Table 5: Category 4 – Time together.**

Category – Time Together	Films	Number	Total
Conversations	What Women Want	4	18
	Hitch	4	
	There’s something about Mary	2	
	Sex and the City	5	
	Runaway Bride	3	
Having a good time	What Women Want	3	28
	Hitch	7	
	There’s something about Mary	6	
	Sex and the City	5	
	Runaway Bride	7	
Date	What Women Want	2	13
	Hitch	6	
	There’s something about Mary	5	
	Sex and the City	0	
	Runaway Bride	0	
Dancing	What Women Want	1	7
	Hitch	4	
	There’s something about Mary	1	
	Sex and the City	0	
	Runaway Bride	1	
Total			66

**Table 6: Category 5 – Happy-endings.**

Category : Happy Endings	Films	Number	Total
Wedding	What Women Want	0	3
	Hitch	1	
	There’s something about Mary	0	
	Sex and the City	1	
	Runaway Bride	1	
Happily ever after	What Women Want	1	5
	Hitch	1	
	There’s something about Mary	1	
	Sex and the City	1	
	Runaway Bride	1	
Total			8



**Table 7: Category 6 – Hollywood’s formula.**

<b>Category – Hollywood’s Formula</b>	<b>Films</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Total</b>
Big Stars	What Women Want	2	13
	Hitch	2	
	There’s something about Mary	2	
	Sex and the City	5	
	Runaway Bride	2	
Love Songs	What Women Want	4	22
	Hitch	5	
	There’s something about Mary	4	
	Sex and the City	5	
	Runaway Bride	4	
Reference to popular romantic films	What Women Want	0	2
	Hitch	1	
	There’s something about Mary	1	
	Sex and the City	0	
	Runaway Bride	0	
Total			37

**(Interrater reliability test)**

<b>Axial categories</b>	<b>Kappa Scores</b>
Affection	0.84 (Almost perfect agreement)
Expression	0.69 (Substantial agreement)
Relationship Issues	0.75 (Substantial agreement)
Time Together	0.94 (Almost perfect agreement)
Happy Endings	1.00 (Almost perfect agreement)
Hollywood’s formula	1.00 (Almost perfect agreement)

# COVERAGE OF CORONA RELATED NEWS IN PRINT MEDIA OF UTTAR PRADESH IN INDIA

Neeraj Khattri\* Yashasvi Yadav\*\*

*This paper examines the print media coverage to corona related news in Hindi newspapers published in state of Uttar Pradesh in India. The study does analysis of Corona related news published on the front page of four Hindi dailies during the national lockdown. The study also tries to analyse the advertisements was appeals published on the front page related to Covid 19.. Content analysis shows that the information related to corona is not properly covered by the print media, news items printed on front page of Amar Ujala was more as compared to Hindustan, Dainik Jagran and Navbharat Times (NBT). Also that Navbharat Times (NBT) published maximum appeals related to Corona on the front page. The findings of the study also suggest that print media should translate technical and difficult terminologies for public as health experts often use technical terms in their communication which are difficult to understand by the reader and also provide a wordbook which contains meanings of such terms.*

**Keywords:** Corona virus, Content analysis, Newspaper, Advertisement, Pandemic

Today science and technology are very advanced but in 2020 the entire world could not find a permanent cure for one of the most unique virus that the world has been experiencing. The year 2020 was historical as globally scientists and doctors were exploring for vaccination to fight corona virus. This novel and unfamiliar Corona virus disease (COVID-19) emerged in Wuhan, China and the world Health Organization declared it as a pandemic on 11 March 2020. The Covid 19 pandemic led the countries to announce for lockdowns and India announced national lockdown from March 25 to May 31, 2020. The study analyzes coverage of news related to the Covid 19 pandemic and investigates how much coverage was given to advertisements and appeals in the four Hindi dailies namely Hindustan, Amar Ujala, Dainik Jagran and Navbharat Times.

Following are the objectives of the study;

- To study the coverage of corona related news published on the front page of the four newspapers selected for the study
- To analyze the other news published on the front page not related to Corona
- To analyze the advertisements and appeals published

Content analysis of coverage regarding corona related news of four Hindi dailies i.e., Hindustan, Amar Ujala, Dainik Jagran, Navbharat Times (NBT) for period of 32 days was done. The study period was from March 14, 2020 to April 14, 2020 through purposive sampling method. As per the Audit Bureau of Circulation, Hindustan newspaper was ranked 13<sup>th</sup> in the world by flow of circulating news, whereas Amar Ujala newspaper has a circulation of around two million copies and has 4<sup>th</sup>-largest daily readership with circulation of 26.75 lakh copies. Dainik Jagran in 2017 was the largest newspaper in

India by circulation whereas Navbharat Times (NBT) is also one of the largest distributed Hindi newspapers and has largest percentage of readers as well.

As per Table -1, Hindustan published a total of 411 news items on the front page in which Corona related news were 186 (45.2%) whereas in Amar Ujala there were 403 news and total corona related news were 317 (78.6% ). Dainik Jagran published 325 news items on front page, out of which corona related news stories were 149 (45.8% ) and Navbharat Times (NBT) a total 270 news stories of which 194 (71.8%) were corona related.

As per Table-2, Hindustan published a total of 411 news on the front page of which 186(54.8%) were not related to corona whereas Amar Ujala, published 403 of which 86 (21.3% ) were not related to corona. Dainik Jagran published a total of 325 of which news not related to Corona were 149 (33.2%) whereas Navbharat Times 270(27.0% ) out of which 73 were not.

As per Table -3, Hindustan published a total of 411 news on front page of which 38(0.92% ) advertisements were related to corona whereas Amar Ujala had 403 of which 33 (0.81% ) were related to corona. Dainik Jagran had a total of 325

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whereas advertisements related to Corona were 65 (0.2%), Navbharat Times (NBT) published 270 of which 38(0.14%) were.

As per Table 4, Hindustan published a total of 411 total news of which 06(0.14%) appeals were related to corona whereas Amar Ujala had 403 of which 09 (0.22%) were related to corona. Dainik Jagran published a total of 325 news and appeals related to corona were only 03 (0.09%) whereas Navbharat times (NBT) had published 270 of which 11 (0.40%) were appeals related to corona.

The findings based on content analysis of the four leading newspapers of Uttar Pradesh reflect that corona pandemic was not adequately covered. The coverage was least in Dainik Jagran in comparison to Hindustan, Amar Ujala and Navbharat Times (NBT). Corona related news published on front page of Amar Ujala (78.2%) is actually more than Hindustan, Dainik Jagran and Navbharat Times (NBT). It depicts that leading newspapers of Uttar Pradesh have not appropriately covered the most important issue of covid 19. It is clear from the study that Dainik Jagran published maximum advertisements related to Corona in order to spread awareness. Such efforts by the leading newspaper have been extremely vital in clearing the doubts and myths on Coronavirus. This finding also shows that Navbharat Times (NBT) published maximum appeals related to Corona Virus. Also priority should have been given to report on patient recovery and measures taken by other countries which was missing.

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**Table 1: News Published on Front Page Related to Corona.**

S.No.	Newspaper	Duration	Total News related on corona published on front page	News related to corona published on front page	Percentage
1.	Hindustan	March 14 to April 14, 2020	411	186	45.2%
2.	Amar Ujala	March 14 to April 14, 2020	403	317	78.6%
3.	Dainik Jagran	March 14 to April 14, 2020	325	149	45.8%
4.	Navbharat Times	March 14 to April 14, 2020	270	194	71.8%

**Table 2: News Published on Front Page not related to Corona.**

S.No.	Newspaper	Duration	Total News published on front page related to corona	News published on front page not related to corona	Percentage
1.	Hindustan	March 14 to April 14, 2020	411	225	54.8%
2.	Amar Ujala	March 14 to April 14, 2020	403	86	21.3%
3.	Dainik Jagran	March 14 to April 14, 2020	325	108	33.2%
4.	Navbharat Times	March 14 to April 14, 2020	270	73	27.0%

**Table 3: Advertisements Published on Front Page Related to Corona.**

S.No.	Newspaper	Duration	Total News published on front page	Advertisement published on front page	Percentage
1.	Hindustan	March 14 to April 14, 2020	411	38	0.92%
2.	Amar Ujala	March 14 to April 14, 2020	403	33	0.81%
3.	Dainik Jagran	March 14 to April 14, 2020	325	65	0.2%
4.	Navbharat Times	March 14 to April 14, 2020	270	38	0.14%

**Table 4: Appeals published in Newspapers related to Corona.**

S.No.	Newspaper	Duration	Total News published on front page	Appeals related to Corona published in front page	Percentage
1.	Hindustan	March 14 to April 14, 2020	411	06	0.14%
2.	Amar Ujala	March 14 to April 14, 2020	403	09	0.22%
3.	Dainik Jagran	March 14 to April 14, 2020	325	03	0.09%
4.	Navbharat Times	March 14 to April 14, 2020	270	11	0.40%

# INFLUENCE OF DESIGNER FASHION HANDBAGS ON MOVIE STARS, CELEBRITIES AND POPULAR CULTURE

Rahul Sethi\* Dushyant Dave\*\*

*Fashion has been a common denominator across most sections of urban living which has influenced society many ways of living, thinking, buying and wearing. We have possibly been influenced by movies in the most profound manner especially by Hollywood and its continuous charm on romancing the past and what the present offers with a prelude into the future. Clothing has been the major focus in most of these influences while another very important area not always given its due has been handbags. This paper tries to analyse and explore the role of fashion in building up of the persona related with movie stars and celebrities while exploring the role played by handbags in adding to their persona and their influence on popular culture. The paper also tries to look at the important role played by The French Artisanal expertise of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the French Couture Houses their legacies, Italian handcrafted mystiques in mid-20<sup>th</sup> century and into the present-day conglomerates of fashion and luxury.*

**Keywords:** Fashion handbags Couture Designers Artisanal Hollywood Movies.

The world of fashion has been intertwined with popular cultures and movies have been at the forefront in this arena. Movies and other entertainment medium have created the persona of the stars to a larger-than-life identity thereby conveying to thousands and millions across various regions, countries and time spans the birth and significance of fashion, styles, and their characteristics, which have been ingrained in the minds of the viewers. These attributes being signified through the clothing, footwear and accessories worn by certain stars in the tinsel world have been coordinates of aspirations to the masses and classes alike. “There is something magical about movies. Something spellbinding about the coherent narratives present especially when compared to the nonglamorous and disintegrated experiences of our daily lives. Taken into their captivating alternative realities, they make us long for the illusions created on the screen.” When we look at movies the obvious reaction would be that of Hollywood which has been responsible for creating the glamour and myth surrounding the stars created by the studio system of the Hollywood golden era.

## Fashion Designers and Hollywood

After the 2<sup>nd</sup> world war Europe was struggling to find means for surviving the aftermath. Christian Dior creates the much-required infusion of creative excitement with the New Look in 1947. Hollywood and its studio system saw the first major change when their inhouse star costume designer started to give way for the Parisian and other European designer invasion. “In the 1950s, the role of the designer took a radical change away from the Hollywood system when the young Audrey Hepburn asked the Parisian couturier Hubert de Givenchy to design the clothes for her new

movie *Sabrina* (1955). Edith Head did the studio work on the costumes, but it was the (Brathwaite, 2017) magical chemistry between Hepburn and Givenchy that created the Hepburn Look that influenced the next decade, including its most famous devotee, Jacqueline Kennedy.” Noting the changing dimensions in the studio productions from the costumer designer to the Fashion Designer made prominent by Givenchy in the 1950’s. “It was Hubert de Givenchy’s collaboration with Audrey Hepburn that fundamentally changed the relationship between film and fashion. In *Sabrina* (1954), as in *Funny Face* (1957), the distinction between the costume designer and the couturier co-opted into costume design is signalled ironically in the films’ Cinderella narratives. In both, Edith Head, the films’ costume designer, produced the drab, ordinary clothes that Hepburn wore as the still-immature chauffeur’s daughter or bookshop assistant, but her work was marginalized by Givenchy, who designed the show-stopping evening gowns that Hepburn wore once her character had metamorphosed into a sophisticated, glamorous woman.”

Post Givenchy’s collaborations with his muse it became a trend for Hollywood studios to have couturier included on their teams along with the costume designers who has till now served their purpose quite well. Yves Saint Laurent who is

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Catherine Deneuve and Yves Saint Laurent.  
Photograph: Alain Nogues/Sygma via Getty Images

accredited amongst the most influential designers from the late 50's till 80's, being under the tutelage of Christian Dior and famous for his creative association with muse and French actress Catherine Deneuve. His designs for her movie *Belle de Jour* in 1967 created the classic with a twist for 'Severine' the character played by Deneuve. The designs of the garments were straight and unmuted in browns and blacks while using leather, fur and vinyl having a structured exterior with fetish ascents. The success of the film cemented the designer muse combination of YSL and Catherine while making the designs in mainstream fashion including the iconic black pump shoes worn in the movie (called the Pilgrim Pump for whom the design credits go to Roger Vivier, the style has been copied countless times and is still in demand) and the trench coat which formed a part of YSL's 1966 'Rive Gauche Collection'.

Looking at Gergio Armani, we are able to trace his Hollywood connections back to Hollywood since his debut with dressing Richard Gere for the *American Gigolo* in 1978 which leads him onto a journey of more than 200 movies and being credited as the innovative creative mind behind at red carpet. A defining friendship and collaboration with Martin Scorsese saw them in several film projects, including *Goodfellas* and most recently *The Wolf of Wall Street*. American Designers Ralph Lauren gave amongst others two important film as costume designer *Annie Hall* and *The Great Gatsby* (1974) creating the androgynous look and feminist aspirations respectively. These two films showed the together defined the regressive and romantic trends in American

fashion scene gaining prominence on and off the screen in the 1970s.

### Designer Fashion Handbags

Mid twentieth century, handbags were small in size having a primary utility towards concealing makeup and cigarettes. A lady's tote bag which was larger in size turned into a definitive catchall, and was utilized to convey vehicle keys, cigarette holders, and different images of ladies' expanding opportunities. A huge number of troops in World War II followed severe clothing standard guidelines and wearing belted military clothing. Those equivalent young fellows, the labor force of the 1950s, were instilled with the idea of the vital belt—if pants had waist bands, a belt should be worn. The 1950s started a period of status purses. Popular originators encouraged an interest for moderate superficial points of interest that has proceeded to the current day.

Coco Chanel, the couture style architect, caused a buzz called the 2.55 Chanel Bag. The jewel stitched pack, suspended on brilliant shoulder tie chains, is likely the most duplicated satchel of the twentieth century. It was named for the month and year of its beginning - February 1955. "This quilted handbags with shoulder straps of leather plaited with gilt chains with flattened links, similar to those used to weight her jackets. The bags were offered in leather or jersey and were initially available in beige, navy, brown, and black, lined with red grosgrain or leather—Chanel chose a lighter color for the interior to help women find small items in their bags. Updated each season, Chanel's distinctive handbags were still top sellers in the early 2000s." Alluring characters have impacted twentieth century satchel designs. Hollywood entertainer turned-princess, Grace Kelly (Princess Grace of Monaco), was included on the front of a 1950s Life Magazine covering her pregnancy with an enormous crocodile Hermès sack, later named the "Kelly Bag" in her honor.

Princess Diana, the late Princess of Wales, advocated the Ferragamo grip tote and the Lady Dior pack, which turned into an overall sell-out. During the 1980s, handbags were varied, but many developments from the previous decade prevailed. The trend for outdoors and active wear continued to be reflected in bags. Styles inspired by the countryside, with design details that promoted a rugged, protective, and well-made aesthetics. Growing societal interest in health and fitness led to the influence of sportswear and bags upon high fashion with examples of the Nylon Knapsack by Prada in 1985. As more and more women pursued demanding careers, and progressed up the corporate ladder, handbags became an important part of their lifestyle. On one hand, handbags in large with conspicuous designs and branding gave their wearer an air of power at the same time, they could also perform pragmatically to ease their wearers' lives and offer

sense of control. By now the handbag emerged as a luxurious, coveted item in its own right. More and more media attention and consumer desire began to be generated around high-end designs, which were released frequently with the seasons, sparking waiting lists and copies. Karl Lagerfeld, for example, became chief designer at Chanel in 1983, and promptly created new versions of the house's classic "2.55" bag, in creative shapes and materials, including denim and rubber.

The new hysteria and marketing around handbags within this decade can be demonstrated by Hermès' creation of the Birkin Bag named after the actress Jane Birkin in 1984, with a traditional yet identifiable leather shape, stylish metal hardware, and range of color choices. This great popularity for designer labels continued into the 1990s, and accessories such as handbags increasingly became more than a staple on the catwalk at designer shows, which increased attention for their collections. Many designers came out with Bags Collections for the first time to join the bandwagon. At the beginning of the 90s, smaller bags were most fashionable, and Hermès even produced a miniature version of the Kelly, designed meticulously to be worn proudly and explicitly around the neck. A plethora of cheaper, fake articles mimicked designer originals, which allowed large volumes of women to adopt the aesthetic. High-street brands, such as Next and Hobbs in the UK, also began to offer stylish and affordable options to the mass market, which complemented their existing clothing lines.

In 1997, Fendi launched its "Baguette" design, a small bag with a short handle, held tightly under the arm like its namesake French loaf with a requirement for easy and functional handbag, it was produced in many colors and patterns gave it devoted popularity, and regular appearances on the television program *Sex and the City*, which captured a fashionable Zeitgeist. During the early 2000s, the "It Bag" remained popular, and designs such as Marc Jacobs's "Stam" and Chloé's "Paddington" continued to generate widespread publicity and coverability, enhanced by enforced waiting lists.

### **The Luxury Fashion Bags: The Artisanal Italian and French**

The Italian traditional artisanal equity has been a part of creative folklore. Trade and craft guilds in this region having their traditional lineage and systems thereby encouraged towards production and the most exquisite products in the traditional techniques and materials. From this repertoire of skill and tradition emerged many Italian Cordwainers and leather goods workshops. The leather history in Florence goes back a thousand years and the main areas include Tuscany, Florence, and Marche. Across Italy due to the rich artisanal tradition of leather tanning, footwear and goods making, many of the major fashion establishments commenced their

journey into fashion based on their expertise in leather. We see that Prada started as a leather goods business setup in 1913, Gucci with a leather goods store in 1921, Ferragamo with leather footwear in 1927 and Bottega Venetta with their leather woven bags in 1966.

During the 2<sup>nd</sup> World war Gucci worked with cotton canvas due to shortage in leather and created their distinguished Double G Symbol woven into the fabric. They also innovatively used bamboo for their handles and with Aldo & Rodolfo Gucci the expansion of this home-grown Italian business set off to expand in the USA. Movie stars and the Jet set were busy bringing their glamour to Florence in the 1950s and 60s while the charming Jackie Onassis was an ardent supporter of the Gucci atelier seen often wearing their large, unstructured bag which later became synonymous as the Jackie Bag. Gucci became one of the most copied bag designs across the world



**Gucci. Handbag [Original work found in Kerry Taylor, Bermondsey, London, SE1 4PR].**

As per Semmens V, it can be well-noted here that "Gucci in the 1940s the company experimented with materials, due to supply shortages. Out of this came the Bag with a bamboo handle, which is still a signature of the brand, inspired by the shape of a saddle; equestrian activity is an ongoing symbol of the brand. The house has dressed celebrities since the first half of the twentieth century: its "Jackie O" Bag is named after Jackie Onassis, as it was a constant component of her attire. Elizabeth Taylor, Ingrid Bergman, and Anita Ekberg were often photographed with Gucci bags." Hermès is known as one of the most elegant French accessory design businesses. The company has a reputation as one of the world's finest makers of luxury leather goods, luggage, accessories and scarves As discussed by Bowes Thierry Hermès established a business in 1837, which specialized in equestrian leather goods such as the harness. With Emile Hermès, a grandson of Thierry in 1920 a new direction for the business emerged, Hermès expanded into the luxury leather market and endorsed

a modern design policy. The brand is known for exuding an ethos of classic timelessness over the capricious whims of ever-changing fashion trends, with an emphasis on luxury materials and craftsmanship. In addition to this, Hermès is famous for its ability to create and design handbags that capture the imagination of the consumer. The iconic “Kelly” handbag was named in 1955 for the American actress Grace Kelly and the famous “Birkin” handbag was named in tribute to the English actress and singer, Jane Birkin. Both of these handbags have become emblems of the brand and status symbols across the globe with extensive wait-lists that control the possession of these bags.”



**Hermès. In Fashion Photography Archive**

Salvatore Ferragamo was a pioneer at using Movies as a medium to advertise his homegrown footwear collection. He provided free all the sandals for each and every person who appeared in the film director-producer Cecil B. DeMille’s version of Ten Commandments without any credits. He did not underestimate the power of the Word-of-mouth publicity which went a long way in serving his professional image with the stars. Ferragamo had christened a strapless ballet pump after Audrey Hepburn which continued for decades at Saks and made over 40 pairs for the gorgeous Marilyn Monroe. The House of Ferragamo continues this tradition of paying tribute to Hollywood stars by naming styles on them or their Reel Characters with the Elise Stiletto named after the character played by Angelina Jolie in the Tourist. The 2<sup>nd</sup> World War affected Louis Vuitton adversely as production had reduced when overseas orders had diminished. In their centenary year, the company moved from Champs-Élysées to Avenue Marceau. There on, understanding the requirements of modern travel and the reduction of time while using trains, cars, and the luxury of airplanes the company made a decisive shift in the product line with the introduction of soft-sided and carry-on luggage being very different to its 100 years style of hard luggage. Gaston Vuitton perfected on the motif canvas in its durable lightweight version making it suitable for day and short journeys. In between 1959 to 1965, they introduced 25 new models of luggage and handbags per year and stars like Audrey Hepburn were used to help rebuild the image of the

brand. The next decade was about massive popularity and leading to counterfeits of the Louis Vuitton Bag. In 1970 they decided to set up shop in Tokyo to introduce the Real LV bags to Asia in an attempt to curb counterfeits. Before the 1970’s handbag designers were rarely acknowledged by the editorial press or the consumer. The styles and shapes generally followed the direction of the apparel industry. All of this changed in the 1970s, when apparel designers such as Dior and Cardin began to affix their signatures and logos to the bags. Fashion-oriented women quickly purchased them with as much excitement as they afforded the buying of apparel. According to Karla Alindahao Senior Contributor at Forbes Life there are three kinds of chic Parisian women—those who carry a classic Chanel flap bag, the other who would prefer a Hermès Birkin or Kelly. Then there is the third type: the busy, no-nonsense women who can’t do without Longchamp’s cult bag—the nylon Le Pliage tote. A modern classic from the House of Lonchamp which is a Parisian brand from the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century the Le Pilage was designed in the early 90’s and the name comes from the verb – to fold. It has been designed by Philippe Cassegrain, the style has been inspired by origami. Le Pilage has all the features of a practical bag with a quick collapse and neat fold lines while being able to expand for the occasional extra space. It has seen a steady celebrity preference including Miley Cyrus, Kate.

#### **Middleton and Alexa Chung**

A comparatively new entrant into the artisanal Italian leather goods arena Bottega Veneta which translates for “Italian Shop” was set up in 1966 and is the brand for people who do not like logos. Fine craftsmanship with signature weave called *intrecciato* with delicate leather strips produces objects of beauty and strength. Best known for their cabat, veneta and knot bags, with launched their multiple versions over the years. A part of the luxury conglomerate Kering group Bottega as a brand projects sophisticated elegance. Bottega has been spotted on celebrities like Princess Charlene, Jaqueline Kennedy, Amal Clooney, Nicole Kidman, Cameron Diaz, Rihanna and more.



**Bottega Veneta. Bag**



Prada was founded in 1913 solely as a leather goods company by the grandfather of Miuccia Prada the current CEO who has revolutionized not only her family business but also the ways of the fashion industry as we know it. Thanks to pop culture references in movies – *The Devil Wears Prada* or music lyrics by Kanye West – “Praises due to the most fly, Prada” we see that Prada has become a known name in circles beyond fashion.

### The American Neo Luxury Fashion Bags

**Coach:** An American lifestyle brand set up in the early 1940’s as a family run artisanal workshop it was being run by Miles Cahn for the owners who introduced the robust and natural aesthetics of full grained leather to its product line. Strong bags capable of holding the user’s possessions in bags which lasted for long the distinguishing features of these Coach bags which set them apart from purses and bags having leather strips pasted onto cardboard. In the 1960’s the company collaborated with Bonnie Cashin who successfully introduced the colored leather bags with the match your dress concept moving away from the traditional black and browns. By the 1990s, coach was looking to expand from the leather handbag brand into other fashion and accessories items. Coach with its jacquard logo canvas and leather bags bearing uncanny resemblance to the higher priced league European luxury brands of Louis Vuitton and Gucci thereby creating an acceptable quality product and earning the tag of “accessible luxury” with American aesthetics. The book *Coach: A Story of New York Cool*, by Joel Dinerstein from Rizzoli, commemorates the brand’s 75th anniversary as a visual history of Coach in its continual exploration and redefinition of American style and distinctively cool New York City spirit. Coach models and icons appear in photographs throughout the collection, including Lauren Bacall, Robert Redford, Ali MacGraw, Prince, Madonna, and Zoë Kravitz.



Rizzoli New York, 2016: A Story of New York Cool; © Coach

**Michael Kors** is an American designer who started his Women’s Collection in 1981, which was sold at Saks Fifth Avenue, Neiman Marcus, Bergdorf Goodman, Lord and Taylors, and Bloomingdale. In the 1990’s, his company ran into financial problems and filed for bankruptcy and by 1997 LVMH invested in his company and lower priced lines. He was hired as the designer for LVMH and in a few years, he turned the brand around with his unique designs that were ready to wear. He gained popularity as Judge on a TV show *Project Runway* and at that time, he launched his accessory and fashion collections. They were presented and sold in stores in the United States. During 2004, he introduced lower priced dresses that did well in the recession and added perfume and handbags. In 2006, they opened their first retail store.

Peter Dooney and Frederic Bourke inspired by America’s rich history in leather goods, mail pouches and saddlebags created the Dooney & Bourke brand in 1975. A distinct blend of classic and contemporary styles the brand was launched with an intent make a difference in the fine leather goods market. Quality, materials and traditional techniques are the cornerstones of this brand which epitomizes American-heritage style. Many recognize the brand by the iconic duck logo. In the tradition of American ingenuity and with a spirit of “work hard, play hard,” the company launched a line of luxury bags and accessories made of rugged, pebbled leather treated to shed water, as the old saying goes, like water off of a duck’s back, without stain or damage. Some of the celebrities seen wearing Dooney & Bourke are Hayden Panettiere who in 2008 designed the Hyden Bag, Mischa Barton, Emma Roberts, Marcia Cross while Lindsay Lohan, and Michelle Trachtenberg have modelled in advertisements for Dooney & Bourke in past years.

## Consumers and acceptance of Fashion Bags

Cinema made fashion more acceptable to the masses, it reduced the fear between elitist fashion and the acceptance of the movie star and their style as a part of the pin up poster entirety. Certain designers were not just creative beings with materials, colour and fashion, they were ingenious in their business acumen toward the popularity and spread of their distinctive style features and the aura of their brand image building. They were involved directly and therefore gained financially rather let their style be copied. Dressing the leading ladies and using films to show off their distinctive style proved mutually beneficial. Moving away from the traditional relationship between star and designer we say in American 1980's the use of product placement in movies. The impact of influences nowadays with the availability of entertainment media beyond the screen, into the daily and hourly activities of the influencers have propelled them another level. Celebrities are an important aspect of cultural representatives who with their ideas and communications are able to influence large sections of their followers. Luxury products have seen themselves being placed as characters in movies – *Le Divorce* starring Kate Hudson, an Ivory merchant production had a Kelly bag from *Hermès* occupying screen space throughout the movie and the purple fur trimmed cashmere coat worn by Jennifer Lopez in *Shall We Dance*, an obvious Versace creation. People look at celebrities today for similarities in lifestyles and they want to imitate them. There is an assumption made by the consumer that what is good for the celebrity is good for them (Cohen, 2006). It has been well documented regarding the effects of Media on the consumers purchasing behaviour and the members of the audience identifying themselves with the screen character or the star persona. Celebrities are publicly well-known people in the realm of popular culture (sports, entertainment, and fashion; see Giles, 2000). The meaning transfer model posits that celebrities develop a persona through the types of roles they play in society as well as how they are portrayed in the media (Amos, Holmes, & Strutton, 2008). It is believed that when celebrities endorse a product, the meaning developed around a particular celebrity ideally should transfer to a company, brand, or product and hence when a consumer identifies with a celebrity, he/she purchases the product in the hope of claiming some of these transferred meanings for their own lives (Erdogan & Baker 2000; McCracken 1989). Hence, it can be assumed that consumer's purchase behaviours would be influenced by what they see on television, movies and more recently on social media. Fashion Bags have gained on the impact index as a substantial element to distinguish a persona based on the type of bag, the material, colour, shape, size, texture and at times the graphic content it depicts about itself and the user.

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## REPORT OF FACULTY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM ON CHANGING TRENDS IN INTEGRATED COMMUNICATION RESEARCH

**Neha Singh**

The Department of Media and Communication Studies, Jagannath International Management School, Vasant Kunj affiliated to Guru Gobind Singh University had organized a one week Faculty Development program (FDP) on the theme, “Changing Trends in Integrated Communication Research” from 3<sup>rd</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> August 2021 in collaboration with the Institute of International Journalism, Ohio University, USA; School of Media, Arts, Aesthetics, Central University of South Bihar and the Department of Vocational Education, Indira Gandhi National Tribal University, Amarkantak.

The objective of FDP was to deliberate the trends spanning academia and industry which could be picked up for research in the Post COVID-19 scenario. The week-long FDP witnessed experts from industry and academia enthusiastically discuss and debate News, Views, Gender, and Data, Health, Branding Digital / other spaces. The FDP saw participation from Heads, Program Coordinators, Associate professors, Assistant professors and Research Scholars from different states across the country and overseas, including from Bangladesh and Austria. All sessions were followed by question and answer sessions and any discussion points.

In the inaugural session, Prof (Dr.) Ravi K. Dhar, Director, Jagannath International Management School, Vasant Kunj spoke on the topic, “Research Paper Writing”. In his address, Dr. Dhar emphasized on emergence of logical reasoning during the Renaissance period. He commenced his argument explaining the need for logical presentations in scientific and technical research followed by inductive and deductive reasoning. Inductive research involves the search patterns from observation to reach conclusions; whereas, in deductive research the premises is the theory or phenomenon which is tested by formulating the hypotheses to check the validity in given circumstances.

Dr. Enakshi Roy, Assistant Professor, Towson University, USA spoke on the topic, ‘News and Information Literacy’. She elaborated on how media has become party to gender stereotyping and possibly only media can be the beacon of change for the society to break the stereotypes around gender representation and misrepresentation. She also spoke about the under representation of women in news ecosystem in India and according to some studies barely five per cent of

newsroom leadership positions are held by women, three out of every four news articles, across mainstream English and Hindi newspapers, are authored by male journalists and only one out of five panellists appearing in English debates is a woman.

Dr. Uma Shankar Pandey, Associate Professor & Head BA (JMC), SN College for Women, University spoke on, “Null Hypothesis Significance Testing”. Dr. Pandey began the session by explaining the basic terminologies of quantitative data analysis. The Predictor and outcome, and three variables—moderating, mediating and control variables. He explained the concept of Standard Deviation and its importance in interpretation. While explaining the terms he has also discussed the concept of P value in research. He also distinguished between parametric tests and Non-Parametric Tests. While differentiating between these two, he emphasized on the prerequisites of these tests. Dr. Pandey demonstrated the steps of data interpretation using Excel and how researchers must interpret the available results.

Dr. Jatin Srivastava, Director, Institute for International Journalism E. W. Scripps School of Journalism, Ohio University, USA spoke on the topic, “Introduction to Communication and Media Research”. He began the session by highlighting the importance of communication and elaborated on different aspects of research with examples and demonstrated about conceptualization of the research process. He also explained the difference between qualitative and quantitative research citing examples and focused on the different kinds of problem statements/ questions that form the basis of research along with hypotheses formation. He discussed with examples some research questions and how hypotheses can be derived from these. He stressed on how areas for communication research such as Mass Communication, Political Communication, Health Communication, and Persuasive Communication among others be explored. Mr. Rahul Bajpai, Regional Digital Manager, Africa and South Asia, British High Commission

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New Delhi spoke on, “Data Discovery and Discovery through Data-Emerging Trends in Communication”. Mr. Bajpai who identifies himself as a communicator, spoke about the Power of Data. He opined that modern journalism has Big Data at the heart of it. He proved how we all use Artificial Intelligence in our lives without so much as batting an eyelid. While digital devices created data, he explained, data was to be found everywhere. The session threw up discussion and dialogue around, ‘Data as Currency’. Data Protection and the Indian IT act were amongst topics discussed in this factually charged session. Mr. Indroneel Roy Managing Director, Burette Communications Pvt Ltd. spoke on the topic, “The Art of Storytelling in Marketing Communication Research”. Mr. Roy, spoke about Upsizing not Upscaling, and the fact that business cycles were now shorter. He highlighted the different aspects of marketing communication with respect to research and the various areas with which it could be associated with. Mr. Roy focused on the art of storytelling and its importance in marketing communication research. He cited case studies to help audience better understand the relation between the two fields. He delved further into some other areas of communication research and how storytelling is both an art and science.

Dr. Himani Gupta, Associate Professor, Department of Management, Jagannath International Management School, Vasant Kunj spoke on the topic, “Introduction to R programming and its descriptive analysis”. She explained the tools and packages of R Software and their use in research and the concepts with a number of in-depth examples of brands using digital media with respect to Covid-19. She also provided comparative analysis of the brands using strategies Pre and Post Covid scenarios.

Dr. Shalini Narayanan, Independent Communication Consultant spoke on the topic, “Trends in Digital Advertising”. She explained the behavioural change of the consumers in terms of their buying preference’s due to the pandemic and elaborated on, the Ad spend globally pre and post Covid, Innovations in current trends, Hyper-localisation, Hyper-personalisation, Chatbots, Virtual Reality and Augmented Reality and the trends that to look forwards to are Pragmatic Advertising, Personalised and automated email, Geo fencing, Quora Marketing, Omni Channel Marketing and Indic languages SEO. Prof. (Dr.) Himadri Roy, Director, School of Gender and Development Studies, IGNOU spoke on the topic, “Research Areas in Gender Studies”. He encouraged the participants to think on issues related to the under-representation of women, the LGBT community, communication and gender studies, bodies of communication and gender related concerns in cyberspace. He also elaborated on how research area could also be around stereotypical

images of the gender, Gendered Roles and the Male/Female gaze.

Dr. Harsha Ratnani, Associate Professor, Department of Information Technology Jagannath International Management School, Vasant Kunj discussed data extraction techniques on Twitter and Sentiment analysis using packages of R Programming.

Dr. Amit Singh, Assistant Professor, Southern Connecticut State University, USA expressed his views on the topic ‘Digital Branding’. He spoke about how the process of business and branding has been affected during COVID-19 pandemic. With the lockdown in effect, there has been no choice left for both brands and customers but to adapt to digital technology and whatever be the branding and storytelling and how it is important to gain the trust and confidence of the customers. Dr. Rajesh Kumar Sinha, Programme Manager, NCoESAM, LHMC and associated KSCH, New Delhi and Fellow-Centre for Global Health Economics, Institute for Global Health, University College London, UK spoke on the topic, ‘Areas of Research in Health Communication’. As a discipline, health communication is the study and application of creation and dissemination of health-related information and also includes health-related interactions among individual, social actors and institutions, and their effects. The areas for research can be, potential influencers for communicating any health message in public and/or individual consultation, effectiveness of use of different media for communicating on any public health message, looking for the best strategies to communicate health messages in media and determinants of gender disparity in access to health communication. Prof. (Dr). Srinivas Melkote, Eminent Development Theorist, Professor Emeritus Bowling Green State University, USA was the keynote speaker in the plenary who spoke on the topic, Health Communication Research and Covid 19 Pandemic’. He began by giving the example of best practices in health communication being a result of behavioural change and stressed that behavioural change is not likely to happen overnight. Some areas of interest are reasons for discontinuation of the Covid appropriate behaviour, influence of social media on health-related behaviours and practices during the pandemic, the role of media in policy advocacy or the role of advertisements in shaping health behaviour choices. He also laid stress on Social Justice in health communication and practices, as “The guarantee of good healthcare and wellbeing to all members in a society.” The individual should have access to facilities regardless of their caste; gender etc. he stressed. The FDP concluded with the host expressing their deep gratitude to the partners, the experts and the participants.

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