
**COVERAGE OF WOMEN ISSUES IN THE PAKISTAN'S PRESS:
A CRITICAL ANALYSIS**

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this research is to thoroughly analyze the part multilingual dailies play in covering women issues in Pakistan. It is rooted from national newspapers, the Daily 'Dawn', the Daily 'Jang' and the Daily 'Kawish' in the year of 2011. The study explores to what extent of the violence against women and education issue of women is dealt by the sampled dailies. The study employed content analysis a quantitative research methodology during 1st January 2011 to 31st December 2011. The contents of the newspaper were measured in column per centimeter of the space of one year. For this research work three major dailies of three different languages, the Daily Dawn, the Daily Jang and the Daily Kawish were selected.

In sum up, an elite class newspaper the Daily Dawn has published 562 very little issues of women and used 0.6 percent of the total capacity which is of 4353024 col./cm in the year of 2011. However, the Sindhi language newspaper, the Daily Kawish has used 2430 a little more issue of women and covered 2.3 percent of total capacity of 1678976 col./cm of this daily in 2011. To some extent, the Urdu language newspaper the Daily Jang has reported 1297 more number of women issues and used 1 percent of total capacity of 2423616 col./cm in one year. Hence, the result shows that Pakistani press gives a little bit space to issues of women rights. Although, the Daily Dawn and the Daily Kawish have reported more issues of violence against women but the Daily Jang (an Urdu language newspaper) has covered more education problems of women in its newspaper in the year of 2011.

Keywords: Women Issues, Women Rights, Pakistan's Press.

RATIONALE

In today's world, the issue of women right's has become a matter of grave importance and reactivity, Pakistan one of the most talked states in regard how women are denied of their rights. During the past century, media's role in the society has grown to become quite significant. Today, media has become a crucial segment of every society throughout the globe.

Print media in particular has voiced the hardships and the trauma women go through before the general public. The crux of the actual role press is to play in regard to women rights has not been identified thoroughly in Pakistan yet. Hence, there is not much evidence of work done on women's rights in Pakistan. However, I have shed light on the current situation in Pakistan of how women rights are rebutted and media is to play an unbiased role by reporting with clarity the crimes committed against women such as honor killing, child marriages, domestic abuse and dispossession from property. According to the latest report of Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (2018), in term of gender equality, Pakistan has been recognized at the lowest rank in the Global Gender Gap Index 2018.

According to the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (2016) "while life expectancy for females increased by almost 4 years to 67.3 percent from 2005 to 2015, preventable disease caused most of the deaths. Poor mental health care services were a major cause of death of expectant women and girls in the country. Whereas maternal mortality rate of 276 per 100,000 live births, Pakistan Maternal Mortality Ratio Index fall by two points to 149 in 2015". Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (2017) reported the violence against women cases were the tip of the iceberg, particularly in rural areas, where violence against women cases remain unreported due to the fear of dishonor, illiteracy, shame, poverty and marriage within the clan, powerlessness in tribal and feudal circle and unawareness due to the absence of means of communication in hamlet areas. Human Rights Commission of Pakistan reports depicted very low incidence of violence against women, it is impossible to prove accurate number of incidence. For instance, 309 honor killings, 3238 rapes, 257 gang rapes, 14 incest, 1266 murders, 694 beatings, 18 acid throwing, 15 vanni/sawara, 58 sexual harassment issues are probably low reported, when compared to the analysis of the print media and electronic media. About the coverage of women's sport Malik *et.al.*, (2017) found that women's sports were covered less reports in the newspapers on account of the perceptual mindset of the editors in 2017. However, their study depict that all newspapers of Pakistan do not properly report the sports news concern to the women. For instance, where images of women's sports were given sufficient space in newspapers was to show their bodies instead of sports skills. Whereas, the Daily *Dawn* shares a bit more coverage to women's sports as compared to the Daily *Jang* and the Daily *Kawish* (Malik *et.al.*, 2017).

The overall picture highlighted that the media in general and press in particularly covers violation of women rights issues and treated poorly. This include how there is lack of women representation and how women are misused in advertisements, an ambivalent attitude to women evident in certain stereotyped images (Gallagher, 1983). Similarly, according to Marzolf (1993), conventionally, media refuses to highlight the voice of

feminists. Whereas, Creedon (1993) too states that men abuse their spouses, leading to a poorly valued family structure moreover, 'Media person have been reluctant in highlighting the recent women liberalism movement due to threat in male supremacy'. The liberalism movement is seen as a ticket to freedom for duties, social norms and customs (Molotch, 1978). Media on the whole refused to give coverage to more than 20% of the women related issues at worldwide level (Gallagher, 1981). Raza & Haider (2016) revealed that the Daily *Dawn* has represented positive news stories concern to women in many aspects of life. However, the Daily *Dawn* presented conventional and non-tradition 53 percent, whereas the Daily *Jang* represented a bit less 47 percent respectively (Raza & Haider, 2016). Furthermore, they concluded that the Daily *Dawn* shows positive attitude readers towards professional, enthusiastic and motivated women. The Daily *Dawn* mostly gives more coverage to women as a goal oriented compared to the Daily *Jang* (Raza & Haider, 2016). According to the Status of Women in the US Media Center (2019) articles of the newspapers exploring sexual assault and harassment at 14 of the nation's largest newspapers surged by 30 percent during the 15 months after Hollywood mogul Harvey Weinstein have alleged sexual crime hit headlines.

Violence and abuse against women has been rising at the rate of 15% annually in Pakistan (Zia Ahmed Awan, n.d.). As per Maddadgar (NGO) database report (2000-2005), reveals that 43570 cases of violence against women were reported during 2000 to 2005 in Pakistan. (Zia Ahmed Awan, n.d.). According to Sonia Bathla (1998), police refuse to investigate murder cases relating to dowry and other extreme violence against women such as burning alive. Similarly, Sonia Bathla (1998), Rabia Ali (2001), Hamadulah Kakepoto (2005), Zeynep Alat (2006), Sanda (2010), Murad Bano (2010), Tasneem Ahmar (2011), Devpura (2011), Nautiyal and Dabral (2012), Eran Shor *et.al.*, (2013) Reetinder Kaur (2013), Role *et.al.*, (2014) and Phillips *et.al.*, (2015) have given adverse opinion about the role of media is believed to be negative regarding coverage of women issues. Another study of Huda & Ali (2015) depicted that media is biased in all sections. Media portrayed negative and biased image of women badly and deteriorated to flourish stereotypes behavior of society. They suggested that media can encourage the stereotype image of women. But, some media houses are interested in money making via sensuous advertisements (Huda & Ali, 2015). Now, it's the responsibility of the government and all media houses to ensure security of women for the development in media organizations and positive represents women image by media's contents. The contribution of government of Pakistan is necessary in portraying positive image of women at national and international level (Huda & Ali, 2015). At Ghanaian media coverage of violence against women and girls and reveals that Ghana's media largely used non-sympathetic language in the news and media has failed to change the perception of society against violation on women (Addo *et.al.*, 2018).

WOMEN ISSUES

The analysis of the deep rooted problems faced by the women in Pakistan is a dilemma hence this study has come into being. It highlights the media coverage of women problems in three commonly known and well circulated newspapers of Pakistan. The study pays heed to the following violations of women rights.

- Women's Property Issue.
- Women's Education Issue.
- Women's Employment Issue.
- Women's Health Issue.
- Violence against Women Issue (Sexual Assault, Sexual harassment, acid throwing, kidnapping, murder, domestic violence).
- Women's Marriages Issue.
- Women's Credit Issue. (to get loan, entrepreneurship by the government or private institutions e.g.: government support programs or projects)
- Prostitution and Trafficking Issue.

THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The objective of this study is to analyze the role of the multilingual dailies in covering women issues in Pakistan. It is built on national newspapers, the Daily '*Dawn*', the Daily '*Jang*' and the Daily '*Kawish*' in the year of 2011.

The study explores that how much coverage has given to the violence women issue and education issue of women.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- 1) How many news, non-news materials, visuals and advertisements on women issues have been published in the selected newspapers during 2011?
- 2) How much space has been given to each issue of women in the English language newspaper the Daily '*Dawn*', the Daily '*Jang*' (an Urdu language newspaper) and the Daily '*Kawish*' the Sindhi language newspaper?
- 3) In what aspects and how is the coverage of these issues different in Sindhi, Urdu and English newspaper?

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

- The advantages of the study are to bring change to the print media policies.

- The results of the research may possibly be of grave importance for the women's welfare organizations, Pakistan's National Commission on the Status of Women Organization (NCSO) and citizen of Pakistan.

RESEARCH DESIGN

For this study, a quantitative content analysis method was selected. This method describes the basis for descriptive method to analyze the coverage of various women issues in the press during the sample year of 2011. The content analysis is needed in order to come up with the basic understanding of how the press deals with women rights issue. Particular aim to select content analysis is to measure the allocated space for the said issues in the three dailies, in three main languages of Pakistani press. It was deemed purposeful to know the amount of space allocated to women issues.

UNIVERSE OF THE STUDY

For this research work three major dailies of Pakistan have been selected. These are:

- The Daily *Dawn*: The English language newspaper
- The Daily *Jang*: An Urdu language newspaper.
- The Daily *Kawish*: The Sindh language newspaper.

All newspapers published from 1st January 2011 to 31st December 2011 have read in search of relevant material. The year 2011 was selected due to increase the issues of women's rights and due to some important laws, which were passed and amended in the year of 2011.

Table Z

DETAIL OF SIEVED TOTAL PAGES AND TOTAL SPACE OF NEWSPAPERS IN THE YEAR OF 2011

| Dailies | Total Number of Pages (TP) calculated in 2011 | TP x Column/page x length of paper in Centimeter =Total Space TP x 8 x 52= TS | Total Space (TS) |
|---------------|---|--|------------------|
| <i>Dawn</i> | 10646 | 10646 x 8 x 52= 4353024 | 4353024 |
| <i>Jang</i> | 5826 | 5826 x 8 x 52 = 2423616 | 2423616 |
| <i>Kawish</i> | 4036 | 4036 x 8 x 52 = 1678976 | 1678976 |
| Total Pages | 30812 | 12742080 | 12742080 |

Source: Author's Primary Data

For pre-testing, the data of one month (from 1st January 2011 to 30th January 2011) was collection in the Daily *Dawn*. After pretesting some columns have been added to the master code sheet. The arrangement of news regarding women rights was traced from front to back pages, which included:

front page, national page, opinion, editorial, business, international, back page, sport, metropolitan page and special Sunday are included as well. The news items were conceptualized before data collection. The contents of the newspapers were measured in column per centimeter Col./Cm of the space.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Coverage of News Items

TABLE-1
COVERAGE OF NEWS ITEMS IN THE DAILY DAWN

| NEWS ITEMS | THE DAILY DAWN | | |
|--------------------------|---------------------|------------------|------------|
| | No. of Women Issues | Space in col./cm | % of space |
| Crime News Items | 154 | 3711 | 31.89 |
| Legal News Items | 37 | 1418 | 12.18 |
| Social News Items | 162 | 6506 | 55.91 |
| Miscellaneous News Items | 154 | 3711 | 31.89 |
| Total | 353 | 11635 | 99.99 |

Source: Author's Primary Data

Table 1 shows that legal news items were (37) less covered by the *Daily Dawn*. It seems that the *Daily Dawn* has less attention towards bringing awareness/information regarding women's protection laws and orders in the society (Refer Table-1).

TABLE-2
COVERAGE OF NEWS ITEMS IN THE DAILY JANG

| NEWS ITEMS | THE DAILY JANG | | |
|--------------------------|---------------------|-----------------|------------|
| | No. of Women Issues | Space in col.cm | % of space |
| Crime News Items | 185 | 1271 | 13.27 |
| Legal News Items | 173 | 1647 | 17.20 |
| Social News Items | 530 | 6405 | 66.91 |
| Miscellaneous News Items | 16 | 249 | 2.60 |
| Total | 904 | 9572 | 99.98 |

Source: Author's Primary Data

In Table-2, it has found that the *Daily Jang* has reported (185) more issues related to crime against women. However, this newspaper has focused towards development of women in society as well (Refer Table-2)

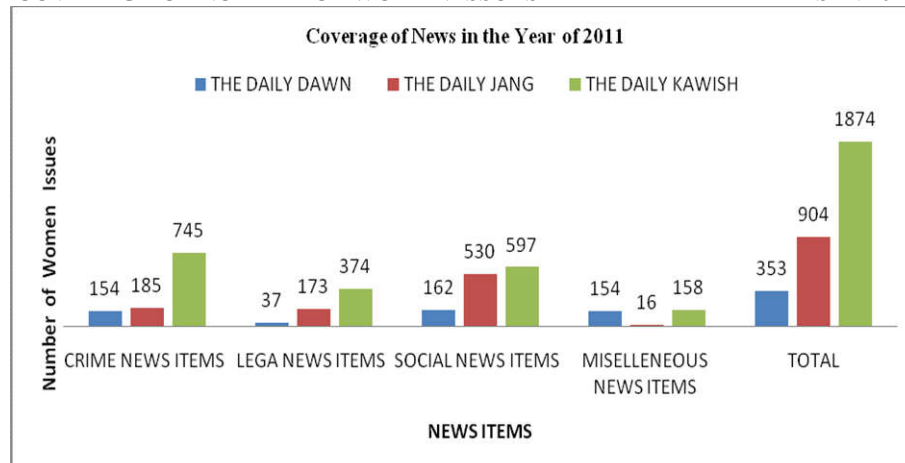
TABLE-3
COVERAGE OF NEWS ITEMS IN THE DAILY KAWISH

| NEWS ITEMS | THE DAILY KAWISH | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------|-----------------|------------|
| | No.of Women Issues | Space in col.cm | % of space |
| Crime News Items | 745 | 11117 | 41.67 |
| Legal News Items | 374 | 5757 | 21.57 |
| Social News Items | 597 | 7789 | 29.19 |
| Miscellaneous News Items | 158 | 2015 | 7.55 |
| Total | 1874 | 26678 | 99.98 |

Source: Author's Primary Data

In Table-3, it has depicted that the Daily *Kawish* has reported (374) legal issues of women as compared to crime 745 and 597 social issues of women. However, this newspaper has published more news items on honor killing, domestic violence, including; beating by husband, stove burning issue, family related conflicts in rural areas of Sindh province of Pakistan (Refer Table-3).

GRAPH-A
COVERAGE OF NUMBER OF WOMEN ISSUES BY THE THREE DAILIES IN 2011



Graphical Representation of Table 1, 2 & 3

Graph-A shows that mostly the Sindhi language newspaper, the Daily *Kawish* has published 1874 more news items regarding women issues as compared to the Urdu newspaper the Daily *Jang* 904 and the English newspaper the Daily *Dawn* 353. Mostly the Daily *Kawish* reports more news regarding marriage issue and violence against women issue. Cases of honor killing, domestic violence, murder, rape, early marriages, and exchange of

girls in marriages, acid throwing cases and sexual harassment are more happening in the country. This newspaper particularly focuses on the issues of women in both rural and urban areas of the country.

Coverage of Non-News Items

TABLE-4

COVERAGE OF NON-NEWS ITEMS IN THE DAILY DAWN IN 2011

| NON NEWS ITEMS | | THE DAILY DAWN | |
|-------------------|---------------------|------------------|------------|
| | No. of Women Issues | Space in col./cm | % of space |
| EDITORIAL | 13 | 429 | 4.02 |
| LETTERS TO EDITOR | 55 | 1835 | 17.20 |
| COLUMNS | 19 | 1767 | 16.56 |
| ARTICLES | 8 | 571 | 5.35 |
| FEATURE | 63 | 6034 | 56.56 |
| MISCELLANEOUS | 1 | 32 | 0.29 |
| TOTAL | 159 | 10668 | 99.98 |

Source: Author's Primary Data

Table-4 proved that editors had more interest in writing editorials on political issues. Moreover, the Daily Dawn has also given only eight articles in its newspapers in one year of 2011. Although, this newspaper has interest in giving space 55 letters to editor in the year of 2011.

TABLE-5

COVERAGE OF NON-NEWS ITEMS IN THE DAILY JANG IN 2011

| NON NEWS ITEMS | | THE DAILY DAWN | |
|-------------------|---------------------|------------------|------------|
| | No. of Women Issues | Space in col./cm | % of space |
| EDITORIAL | 3 | 31 | 0.50 |
| LETTERS TO EDITOR | 17 | 299 | 4.88 |
| COLUMNS | 37 | 3073 | 50.18 |
| ARTICLES | 24 | 1205 | 19.67 |
| FEATURE | 11 | 1218 | 19.89 |
| MISCELLANEOUS | 8 | 297 | 4.85 |
| TOTAL | 100 | 6123 | 99.97 |

Source: Author's Primary Data

It has found in the table 5 that the editor of the Daily Jang has almost ignored the issues of women in its editorial pages. Only 17 Letters to editor were published in the Daily Jang in one year of 2011. However, the issues of Mukhtara Mai, Dr.Shazia and Asifa Siddiqi were more published in columns and articles in the daily Jang in 2011. (Refer Table-5)

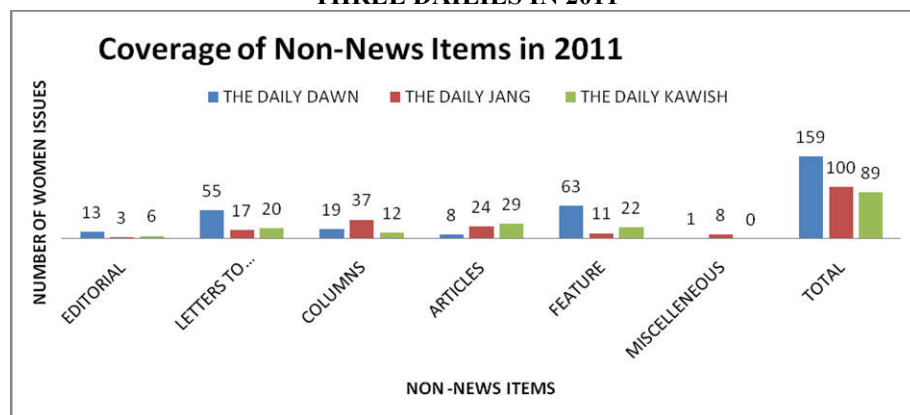
TABLE-6
COVERAGE OF NON-NEWS ITEMS IN THE DAILY KAWISH IN 2011

| NON NEWS ITEMS | THE DAILY DAWN | | |
|-------------------|---------------------|------------------|------------|
| | No: of Women Issues | Space in col./cm | % of space |
| EDITORIAL | 6 | 296 | 4.61 |
| LETTERS TO EDITOR | 20 | 397 | 6.18 |
| COLUMNS | 12 | 1046 | 16.29 |
| ARTICLES | 29 | 2206 | 34.36 |
| FEATURE | 22 | 2474 | 38.54 |
| MISCELLANEOUS | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| TOTAL | 89 | 6419 | 99.98 |

Source: Author's Primary Data

If table 6 is observed carefully it shows that the Daily *Kawish* has preferred political, social and economic issues of society in non-news items in the year of 2011. The Sindhi language newspaper, the Daily *Kawish* consumes less space to non-news items related to women issues (Refer Table-6).

GRAPH-B
COVERAGE OF NUMBER OF WOMEN ISSUES BY THE THREE DAILIES IN 2011



Graphical Representation of Table 4, 5 & 6

Overall, graph B shows that the Daily *Dawn* has published 159 more numbers of non-news items in one year, whereas, the Daily *Jang* has published 100 non-news items. The Sindhi language newspaper the Daily *Kawish* has given a little bit less space to 89 non-news items. Further, the daily *Dawn* English language newspaper has given more priority to letters to editors and features in its newspapers in the year of 2011.

TABLE-7
DIVISION OF SPACE CONCERN TO WOMEN ISSUES IN THREE NEWSPAPERS IN 2011

| Types of Content | The Daily Dawn | | | The Daily Jang | | | The Daily Kawish | | |
|------------------------------------|----------------|-----------------|------------|----------------|-----------------|------------|------------------|-----------------|------------|
| | No. of WI | Space in col.cm | % of space | No. of WI | Space in col.cm | % of space | No. of WI | Space in col.cm | % of space |
| NI | 353 | 11635 | 0.26 | 904 | 9572 | 0.39 | 1875 | 26678 | 1.58 |
| NNI | 159 | 10668 | 0.24 | 100 | 6123 | 0.25 | 89 | 6419 | 0.38 |
| VI | 30 | 1927 | 0.04 | 167 | 2095 | 0.08 | 92 | 1008 | 0.06 |
| Advt | 20 | 2430 | 0.05 | 126 | 7598 | 0.31 | 374 | 4868 | 0.28 |
| WI | 562 | 26660 | 0.61 | 1297 | 25388 | 1.04 | 2430 | 38973 | 2.32 |
| Total space of the Dailies in 2011 | | 4353024 | -- | -- | 2423616 | - | -- | 1678976 | -- |

NI= News Items, NNI= Non-News Items, VI= Visual Item, Advt= Advertisements Item, WI= Women's Issues

Source: Primary Data Source by Author

Overall, it has analyzed that the Sindhi language newspaper the Daily *Kawish* has used (26678 col./cm or 1.58 percent) more space in highlighting the news concern to violence against women issues, marriage issue, health related issue and issue of illiteracy among women. The Daily *Dawn* has published (10668 col./cm or 0.24 percent) more non-news items as compared to the Daily *Jang* (6123 col./cm or 0.25 percent) in the year of 2011.

As far as images of newspapers is concerned readers also given importance to pictures of newspapers. The Daily *Jang* has consumed 2095 col./cm more space to visual items than the Daily *Dawn* 1927 col./cm and the Daily *Kawish* 1008 col./cm. whereas, in advertising, the Daily *Jang* has sold 7598 col./cm more space for advertising items concern to women's scholarships, HIV/AIDs awareness, cancer, child & mother care information etc. (Refer Table-7).

Moreover, a Sindhi newspaper the Daily *Kawish* is the single newspaper, who sells space for publishing 'Qasam Nama' 'Promise Oath' in the inner page of advertising. The Qasam Nama is written Oath from the married couple and appeal to court for the protection of their life (Refer Table-7).

TABLE-8
COVERAGE OF WOMEN ISSUES IN THREE DAILIES IN THE YEAR OF 2011

| CATEGORIES OF WOMEN RIGHTS | THE DAILY DAWN | | | THE DAILY JANG | | | THE DAILY KAWISH | | |
|--|----------------|-----------------|--------------|----------------|-----------------|--------------|------------------|-----------------|--------------|
| | No. of WI | Space (col./cm) | % of Space | No. of WI | Space (col./cm) | % of Space | No. of WI | Space (col./cm) | % of Space |
| Property Right | 5 | 193 | 0.72 | 2 | 9 | 0.03 | 44 | 653 | 1.67 |
| Education Right | 58 | 2429 | 9.11 | 465 | 10903 | 42.94 | 91 | 2355 | 6.04 |
| Employment Right | 37 | 2032 | 7.62 | 102 | 816 | 3.21 | 76 | 1690 | 4.33 |
| Health Right | 69 | 4558 | 17.09 | 107 | 3198 | 12.56 | 69 | 2414 | 6.19 |
| Right of Protection from Violence against Women | 228 | 8176 | 30.66 | 260 | 3653 | 14.38 | 1051 | 15668 | 40.20 |
| Marriage Right | 25 | 1509 | 5.66 | 90 | 1170 | 4.60 | 593 | 7612 | 19.53 |
| Credit Right | 21 | 711 | 2.66 | 23 | 431 | 1.69 | 41 | 1130 | 2.89 |
| Right of Freedom from Prostitution & Trafficking | 1 | 52 | 0.19 | 4 | 904 | 3.56 | 28 | 447 | 1.14 |
| Miscellaneous Issues | 118 | 7009 | 26.25 | 257 | 4304 | 16.95 | 437 | 7004 | 17.98 |
| Total | 562 | 26660 | 99.96 | 1297 | 25388 | 99.96 | 2430 | 38973 | 99.97 |

Source: Author's Primary Data

It has found in table 8 that press has totally ignored the covered of women's prostitution & trafficking issue, credit issue and property issue of women in the country. It is very much surprising that an elite newspaper the Daily *Dawn* 2429 col./cm and the Daily *Kawish* has covered 2355 col./cm less space to issue related to women's education after the Daily *Jang* (an Urdu language newspaper). As far as the right of protection against women is concerned the Daily *Dawn* has reported (228) less issues of domestic violence, murder, acid throwing, sexual assaults, and sexual harassment issues against women. Whereas, the Sindhi language newspaper the Daily *Kawish* has covered more (1051) violence issues against women. Similarly, the Daily *Kawish* also covered 593 more issues of early marriages, honor killing and exchange of marriages (Refer table 8).

CONCLUSION

TABLE-9
OVERALL COVERAGE OF WOMEN ISSUES IN THREE DAILIES IN 2011

| Dailies in 2011 | No.of Women Issues | Space in col/cm | % of Space |
|-------------------------|--------------------|-----------------|------------|
| The Daily <i>Dawn</i> | 562 | 26660 | 0.61% |
| The Daily <i>Jang</i> | 1297 | 25388 | 1.04% |
| The Daily <i>Kawish</i> | 2430 | 38973 | 2.32% |

Source: Author's Primary Data

In sum up, an elite class newspaper the Daily *Dawn* has published 562 a little issues of women and used 0.61 percent of space out of total space of 4353024 co./cm in the year of 2011. However, the Sindhi language newspaper, the Daily *Kawish* has reported 2430 little more issue of women and covered 2.32 percent of space out of total space 1678976 col./cm of this Daily in 2011. To some extent, the Urdu language newspaper the Daily *Jang* has reported 1297 more issues of women and used 1.04 percent of space out of total space of 2423616 col./cm in one year (Refer Table 9).

Hence, the result of the study has proved that Pakistani press gives a little bit space to issues of women rights. Although, both newspapers the Daily *Dawn* (English language newspapers) and the Daily *Kawish* (Sindhi language newspaper) have reported issues of violence against women but the Daily *Jang* (Urdu language newspaper) has covered more education issues of women in its newspaper in the year of 2011. It depicts that newspapers highlight more violence against women issues than right of women's education. It editors of newspapers might have less interest in reporting of different issues of women and less support sympathetic attitude against the weak gender of the society.

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