

The Portrayal of Violence Against Women in Bangladesh News Media: Seeing It Through Rumana Manzur's Case

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Abstract : The media's role in shaping perceptions of violence against women (VAW) and their portrayal in news reporting significantly influences our understanding of this critical issue. My research delves into the portrayal of violence against women in mainstream media, using the prominent case of Dr. Rumana Manzur, a former UBC Fulbright Scholar from Bangladesh who suffered a brutal assault by her ex-husband in June 2011. Employing a qualitative research approach, this study uses an ethnographic media analysis method to scrutinize news reports of the aforementioned case from selected newspapers in Bangladesh. The primary objectives are to investigate how the popular news media in Bangladesh addresses the issue of violence against women and frames the victims of such violence. The findings of this research highlight that news media can perpetuate gender stereotypes and subtly shift blame onto the victim through various techniques, creating intricate interactions between the reader and the text. These techniques include sensationalized headlines, textual content, and graphic images. This victim-blaming process not only retraumatizes the survivor but also distorts the actual facts when presenting the case to a larger audience. Consequently, the representation of violence against women cases in media, particularly the portrayal of women as victims during reporting, significantly impacts our collective comprehension of this issue. In conclusion, this paper asserts that the Bangladeshi media, particularly news outlets, in conjunction with society, continue to follow a pattern of depicting gender-based violence in ways that devalue the image of women. This research underscores the need for critical analysis of media representations of violence against women cases, as they can perpetuate harmful stereotypes and hinder efforts to combat this pervasive problem. Therefore, the outcome of this research is to comprehend the complex dynamics between media and violence against women, which is essential for fostering a more empathetic and informed society that actively works towards eradicating this problem from our society.

Keywords : media representation, violence against women (vaw), ethnographic media analysis, victim-blaming, sensationalized headline

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