

The Role of Mass Media in the Me Too Movement: A Content Analysis of News Coverage

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Abstract-

Here in this article, the focus is drawn toward the spread of the #MeToo Movement and how social media played a crucial role in its expansion. With this movement, a dreadful wave of fright came to people of all positions whether the personals were actors, government officers, politicians, singers, minors, and whatnot which is discussed in quite detail here and the major point of coverage that needs to be paid attention to is the role of mass media. Focusing clearly on the working of the news coverage industry towards this movement and getting to know the framework of it helping towards its cooperation as well as to some extent the movement's demise. Everything regarding all these key features is paid attention to here as well focus is drawn on how different media-leaning ideals have impacted the movement differently.

Introduction-

#MeToo movement was one of the most remarkable movements of its time where women from all over the world came together to raise their voices against the injustice faced for years in terms of sexual exploitation, sexual assault, sexual harassment, etc. Women came together and shared stories over media and once it started, it spread like a fire all across the world. Social Media holds great power within itself and one of the Afro-Americans understood and used it as a tool to initiate this movement in 2006. The movement excavated like crazy from October 2017 when one American actress posted the #MeToo movement on social media to encourage as well as motivate the victims worldwide to unite the community and come as raising a common voice against the injustice faced mentally, physically, or emotionally. Social Media has a particular type of algorithm to reach popularity and this thing was critically taken care of that affective engagement, behavioral engagement, and cognitive engagement were paid careful attention to so that the movement reaches the heights that it requires. Here all types of sexual harassment were given the focus on whether it's organizational, criminal, or ethical. Also, the media helped in analyzing the grave threat that's imposed severely at workplaces and was prominently witnessed between the years 2017 to 2018 (Shukla, Singh, Garima, 2018).

Social media platforms provide people the freedom to self-disclose their actual emotions and physical problems while yet maintaining their privacy. This approach is particularly prevalent, in particular, when people are expressing thoughts regarding socially taboo subjects like mental health, obesity, cancer, etc. Contrarily, sexual abuse, which has historically been disregarded owing

to a fear of humiliation, retaliation, and revenge, did eventually come to light. Regardless of whether it occurs in a physical or online situation, sexual assault and abuse in general are very tough subjects for people to discuss. Social media platforms are persuading people to safely share such concerns more and more. The #metoo campaign is one movement that has recently uncovered and is continuing to expose the sexual abuse of people. Although the term #metoo was first used in 2006 by social activists to raise awareness about sexual abuse in general, which is a very difficult subject for people to discuss regardless of whether the environment is an online or online setting, it only really took off in October 2017 in the wake of the alleged sexual misconduct in Hollywood. A huge number of people from all around the world soon stepped out to share their own personal stories or to show their support for this trending internet campaign (Manikonda, Beigi, Kambhampati, & Liu, 2018).

Indian women gradually got linked together with the rest of the world and gave the message to elevate sisterhood within society by raising their voices. Ironically the one thing that started happening after it was a common response to the movement i.e. the men started filing lawsuits against the women on the basis that women were doing so to get fame. Also other than this questions started getting raised about the security of women in the workplace, institutional accountability, and women's rights were interrogated. After listening to so many women a wide thought that was evaluated was that women are safe nowhere whether it's their home, workplace, or any other place. The community of women has to face all this every day just because of the mysoginity of society because of which women fail to take a stand against the injustice faced that is still running in the form of soft power in the society (Benedictis, 2018).

Furtherly the different ideology-leaning media covered the movement with different outlooks which was witnessed in this tenure and the different social media handles were boasted by this movement whether it's Twitter or any other media handle. Different universities majorly in the UK took a stand towards this and came forward to ignite this movement even forcing the higher authorities to take all the necessary actions that were required (Ghosh, Su, Shah, et al., 2018).

Literature Review-

The role of mass media in this particular movement is not positive as the news coverage that was made was done to amplify the stories of survivors so that the crime could be stopped to some extent but there were also cases witnessed where the media was responsible for deleting some of the very crucial stories from coming to the vigilance of people. Soon after this, the movement started even getting political attention to a greater extent, and from here only the entire face of the movement got changed and gained different brims to it. As per different media supporting different ideologies becomes very necessary to get to know the basic framework and working style of different ideological industries that have been running for ages. Liberals since the very start have favored women's rights and raised their voices supporting educational opportunities, reproductive rights, economic equity, and security of women whereas on the other hand conservatives were the ones who always have supported traditional gender roles i.e. male dominant society and have barely paid attention towards equity of men and women whether its at the workplace or different institutions, etc. Depending on the above ideals only functioned the left, the right, and the central leaning media in the #MeToo movement all across the world (Thomson, 2018).

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Despite the fact, that women's empowerment has been the norm, it is simple to claim that sexual harassment does not decrease. Although some critics question if the #MeToo movement has gone too far, others wonder whether it is a planned move and why the majority of victims opted to keep silent given that some of the claims made by the most powerful women in Hollywood and others are older than 25 years. There is an easy solution. The majority of individuals have patriarchal mindsets, and sexism is strongly ingrained in all civilizations. The fact that many women from both the developed and developing worlds defend domestic violence and wife beating is also noteworthy to notice. However, there are far more women from the underdeveloped world than males (Bhattacharya, 2018).

Not only in India, with the help of news coverage and mass media, but it was also witnessed how the fire of movement was spreading in different countries whether China, USA, Australia, UK, etc. As everyone is well aware of the fact that the news and media coverage of China is censored by its government so it was a very difficult task to get to know the inside story of women living over there. So with the help of different MeToo activists of West Holland: protests, training, discussions, etc. were done and the women within China were also helped and given the assistance of this and all this was able to be known because of just the power of news coverage (Washington, 2018).

Now when the focus is drawn toward different countries so it is very evident how different countries reacted to this particular movement. This movement went viral in October 2017 in Australia and the movement raised another level of heights in this country as the women here directly pinpointed high-profile men in high positions including even Geoffrey Rush (the actor who won Oscar). The impact of media was so strong that within the tenure of October 2017 and February 2018 approx 17.8k news articles were solely published that shook the entire mankind from its very roots. But if one focuses on the contribution of media towards #MeToo then it was also highly variable and conflicting as different ideologies supporting media reacted differently to this particular movement which is quite interesting to pay attention to. There are 3 different types of ideology-supporting media present globally i.e. left-leaning, right-leaning (ex: The Daily Mail, etc.), and central-leaning. The left-leaning media (ex: The Guardian, The Distinct, etc.) is highly inclined towards raising voices against sexual assault, misconduct, harassment, etc. since the very start as compared to the other two. Due to these different belief systems, it was witnessed that the news that came out from different leaning media handles came out differently i.e. some articles favoring women as well as some articles raising questionable remarks on women's character came to limelight. This happened because with time a large lot of high-posted professionals including politicians, entertainment industry personnel, journalists, and many more started coming out as accused and which entirely shook the federal system worldwide (Wisconsin-Madison. (2018).

Different Time magazines namely "Silence Breakers", "The Person of the Year", "#TimesUp initiative" and many more came together to raise voices against the injustice done towards women and forced at different levels so that the safety of women in all sectors can be ensured. Other than this American news media is also getting pulled apart and the victims i.e. the women's voices are only getting blamed just because celebrity culture or political culture is associated with high-power authorities can alter the truth easily (Mitchell, 2018).

The way in which #MeToo differs from earlier initiatives to increase public awareness of sexual harassment and sexual assault is not limited to the number of people who have joined the discourse

globally. Drawing on two areas of research—work in feminist social epistemology on epistemic injustice and work in social philosophy on the significance of recognition in the formation of self-identity—can provide light on the differences. "Me too" is positioned to develop into #MeToo, a political movement that unites victims in solidarity to strive towards cultural change. This is because it acknowledges the epistemic and moral agency of its members and then creates new ideas to describe the harms experienced by its members. It is a public conflict that needs everyone's attention and aims to improve the group's standing. Instead of eradicating the group's characteristics through assimilation, this calls for acknowledging the distinctive qualities of the group as separate yet deserving of equal attention. The more effective social movements are in bringing the overlooked importance of the qualities to the public's notice (Debra, 2018).

This is a highly significant but also extremely challenging time. It is an effective movement because it appeals to women all over the world, providing an opportunity to engage in dialogues with individuals from various cultural backgrounds and viewpoints in various geographic locations. This gives a chance for both domestic and international students to learn about other cultures. I also encounter rejection, contempt, and blatant criticism when I visit various nations. Not everyone is in favour of #MeToo; for many, it is considered as a privilege that women in countries with civil war or extreme poverty cannot afford. Because women are now defining what harassment, aggression, and assault mean to them, this is an exciting time. How have these encounters changed their perceptions of their bodies or of their roles in society as large? But it's also a challenging time because it calls for us to acknowledge how heteronormativity, class privileges, racial and ethnic privileges, political environment, powerful institutions, and many other forces exerted by networks of power and dominance have shaped it (Regulska, 2018).

Objective of the Study

Explore the role of mass media in the #METOO movement

Methodology

This study utilized a structured questionnaire to conduct a survey, and statistical methods such as mean & t-test were used to analyze the responses from 212 participants. The sampling method used in this research was convenience sampling, where individuals were selected based on their accessibility & willingness to participate.

Table 1The Role of Mass Media in the #MeToo Movement

Serial No.	Statement of Survey	Mean Value	t-value	p-value
1	The #MeToo movement encouraged survivors to break their silence and speak out against their perpetrators.	4.25	9.654	0.000
2	Mass media played a pivotal role in raising awareness about the prevalence of sexual harassment and assault.	4.31	9.806	0.000
3	Mass media played a crucial role in amplifying the voices of survivors in the #MeToo movement.	4.44	11.097	0.000
4	Mass media played a crucial role in holding	4.05	5.546	0.000

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	perpetrators accountable for their actions.			
5	The #MeToo movement brought the issue of sexual harassment and assault to the forefront of public discourse.	3.92	4.445	0.000
6	Mass media empowered survivors by providing them with a platform to share their stories and be heard.	4.49	11.815	0.000
7	The extensive coverage of the #MeToo movement by mass media played a role in influencing policy and legal reforms.	4.41	11.283	0.000
8	Mass media coverage of sexual misconduct allegations in workplaces pushed organizations to take a stronger stance against harassment.	4.15	8.914	0.000
9	Mass media may play a vital role in spreading the #MeToo movement globally.	3.83	4.307	0.000
10	The #MeToo movement prompted a critical examination of the media industry itself.	4.27	10.113	0.000

Table 1 demonstrates the mean values for each of the statements of the study done on “the role of mass media in the #METOO movement”, examining the average scores, the statement that obtains the highest mean score can be described as “Mass media empowered survivors by providing them with a platform to share their stories and be heard”, which has the mean score of 4.49. Looking at the next statement which is “Mass media played a crucial role in amplifying the voices of survivors in the #MeToo movement” the mean score is found to be 4.44. Looking at the mean value of 4.41 for the statement “The extensive coverage of the #MeToo movement by mass media played a role in influencing policy and legal reforms” shows that policy and legal reforms also impacts mass media. Looking at the other benefit of mass media is, “Mass media played a pivotal role in raising awareness about the prevalence of sexual harassment and assault” which displays the mean score of 4.31, and the statement “The #MeToo movement prompted a critical examination of the media industry itself” showcase the mean value of 4.27. Then the statement “The #MeToo movement encouraged survivors to break their silence and speak out against their perpetrators” obtains mean value of 4.25 and the statement “Mass media coverage of sexual misconduct allegations in workplaces pushed organizations to take a stronger stance against harassment” has 4.15. The statement “Mass media played a crucial role in holding perpetrators accountable for their actions” showcase the mean value of 4.05. Therefore, the last two statements fall within the lowest category or level, “The #MeToo movement brought the issue of sexual harassment and assault to the forefront of public discourse” mean value of 3.92, the statement “Mass media may play a vital role in spreading the #MeToo movement globally” has 3.83. The significance of the t-value for each statement in the investigation on the role of mass media in the #METOO movement is significant. The t-value statements were positive, and their significance value was less than 0.05, indicating a significant relationship between the two variables.

Conclusion-

Media played a tremendous role in letting the movements reach new peaks as it covered every spectrum whether its language, ethnicity, race, etc. no matter what and the women came together breaking every barrier and becoming a common voice that shook the entire world. The media with different sets of ideals helped in developing and encouraging the movement differently but it was the first time that on such a large scale, women came together and fought for their rights together breaking all the barriers. The major hype of the movement was witnessed in one year i.e. between 2017 to 2018 but this movement led to the formulation of different laws and different safety measures in favor of women's security.

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