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RESEARCH ARTICLE

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## UNVEILING VISIBILITY: A CONTENT ANALYSIS OF WOMEN'S COVERAGE IN PRINT MEDIA OF ASSAM

\*Dr. Joyjit Deka

Assistant Professor, Mass Communication and Journalism Department, Bhattadev University, Bajali

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\*Corresponding author: Dr. Joyjit Deka

### ABSTRACT

The representation of women in the media has long been a subject of scholarly concern. Print media, including newspapers and magazines, play a significant role in shaping public discourse and influencing societal attitudes. This content analysis seeks to delve into the depth and breadth of women's coverage, exploring the nuances of their representation. This paper presents a comprehensive content analysis of women's coverage in print media, focusing on newspapers and magazines. The study aims to uncover patterns of representation, topics covered, language used, and overall portrayal of women in these media outlets. By examining a diverse range of sources, this analysis sheds light on the extent to which women's voices and experiences are highlighted or marginalized within the print media landscape.

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## INTRODUCTION

The print media of Assam has a strong presence in both rural and urban areas. Majority of the households or families have the minimum exposure to print media directly or even in an indirect way. The print media, we have seen, devotes many columns to attract readership from different sections of the society. We have seen regular columns on topics like recipe, beauty tips, home decoration etc. for women. But present discourse that bears vital significance is if there is a clear pattern of publishing news, articles, features etc. on more serious matters that needs to be addressed concerning the fair sex. One can assert conclusively that from gender viewpoint the fabric of society in Assam is much more improve than some of the other state in India. Burning issues related to women like dowry and female infanticide are not there in address for. It leaves the task of media much easier. Print Media in a propagatory role can address to education, reservation of seats for women in jobs, local governments, SHGs, NGOs etc. for economic welfare of women.

**Significance of the study:** The plight of women in society reflects the progress of the society. To improve the lot of women, government efforts are not adequate. A complementary effort from all spheres of society is needed. Media is supposed to play a vital role regarding women issues, discuss them and create awareness to propagate change in existing outlook. So it will be worthwhile exercise to assess the role of media which has performed in other spheres if it has performed its share of the responsibility related to women empowerment.

## METHODOLOGY

**Sample Selection:** A diverse sample of newspapers and magazines from different geographic regions and publication types were selected to ensure a well-rounded analysis.

**Coding Framework:** A comprehensive coding framework was developed to capture variables such as headlines, topics covered, language tone, and accompanying images.

**Data Collection:** Researchers systematically collected and coded data from the selected print media sources over a specific timeframe.

### Representation and Visibility

**Quantitative Analysis:** The study examines the proportion of articles and features dedicated to women in comparison to those featuring men.

**Thematic Analysis:** An exploration of the topics covered in articles featuring women, analyzing whether they reinforce traditional gender roles or challenge them.

### Language and Tone

**Lexical Analysis:** Researchers analyze the language used in headlines and article content to determine if there are any gendered linguistic patterns.

**Tone Assessment:** A qualitative analysis of the overall tone of articles featuring women, assessing whether they are portrayed positively, negatively, or neutrally.

### Visual Representation

**Image Analysis:** Researchers scrutinize the images accompanying articles featuring women, assessing whether they reinforce stereotypes, break them, or present women in diverse roles. The coverage of news, published articles/features etc. related to women for in the The Assam Tribune (the English daily), the Asomiya Pratidin, Dainik Asom and Amar Asom (the Assamese dailies), and their space analysis comprise the major portion of the study. The published articles/features related to women for two years (2021 and 2022) in Nandini and Priyo Sakhi (Assamese women monthly magazine) and their content analysis. The print media of Assam has a strong presence in both rural and urban areas. Majority of the households or families have the minimum exposure to print media directly or even in an indirect way. The print media, we have seen, devotes many columns to attract readership from different sections of the society. We have seen regular columns on topics like recipe, beauty tips, home decoration etc. for women. But present discourse that bears vital significance is if there is a clear pattern of publishing news, articles, features etc. on more serious matters that needs to be addressed concerning the fair sex. One can assert conclusively that from gender viewpoint the fabric of society in Assam is much more improve than some of the other state in India. Burning issues related to women like dowry and female infanticide are not there in address for. It leaves the task of media much easier. Print Media in a propagatory role can address to education, reservation of seats for women in jobs, local governments, SHGs, NGOs etc. for economic welfare of women.

**Table 1. Total space given to news/views in The Assam Tribune, Asomiya Pratidin, Amar Asom, Dainik Asom, Nandini and Priyo Sakhi Jan 1, 2012 to Dec 31, 2013**

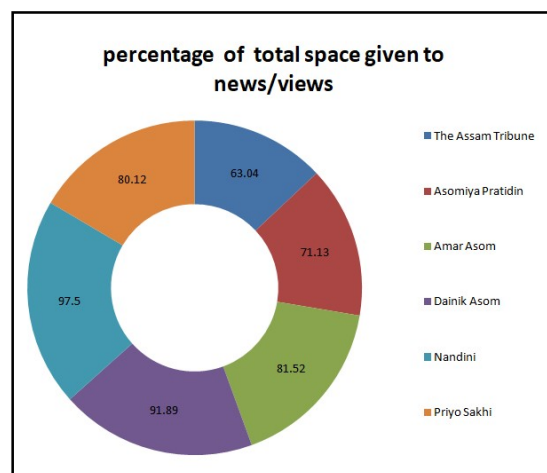
Sl. No.	Newspapers/Magazines	Total Print area (sq cm)	Total ads area (sq cm)	Total space given to news/views (sq cm)	Percentage of space given to news/views
1	The Assam Tribune	26,84,352 sq cm	9,92,000 sq cm	16,92,352 sq cm	63.04 %
2	Asomiya Pratidin	27,49,824 sq cm	7,93,600 sq cm	19,56,224 sq cm	71.13 %
3	Amar Asom	25,77,960 sq cm	4,76,160 sq cm	21,01,800 sq cm	81.52 %
4	Dainik Asom	23,48,808 sq cm	1,90,464 sq cm	21,58,344 sq cm	91.89 %
5	Nandini	10,26,720 sq cm	25,668 sq cm	10,01,052 sq cm	97.5 %
6	Priyo Sakhi	11,12,280 sq cm	2,21,030 sq cm	8,91,250 sq cm	80.12 %
7	Total	1,24,99,944 sq cm	26,98,922 sq cm	98,01,022 sq cm	78.4 %

Media is a powerful agent of socialisation. It invariably exhibits societal conventions. Media as a stimulant satisfies the information needed by the people to widen their horizon and this information must be dispersed undiluted. In the existing world, the social, political and cultural course of the society is highly influenced by the information and communication. It just takes merely seconds for new ideas to reach any corner of the globe. Media in true sense should be an exact reflection of the entire nation. It should participate as an important character in our present-day society. Media elucidates the common structure of the country and also tries to manipulate by shaping its pattern. In a democratic state, media helps in both political and economic development. It also brings to notice the public opinion of the countrymen. As one of the mass communication media, the contemporary newspaper has three fundamental functions and some secondary ones. The basic one are: (1) to inform its readers objectively about what is happening in their community, country, and world; (2) to comment editorially on the news in order to bring these developments into focus; (3) to provide the means whereby persons with goods and services to sell can advertise their wares. The newspapers less vital roles are: (1) to campaign for desirable civic projects and to eliminate undesirable conditions; (2) to give the readers a portion of entertainment through such devices as comic strips, columnists and special features; (3) to serve the reader as a friendly counselor, information bureau, and champion of his rights. Magazine disseminates a specialised kind of information. They contain articles to varied readers. Magazines may be published weekly, fortnightly or monthly. It has very high quality

representation of content and pictures. The content may be a factual reporting to a personal interview. Journal literally means record of daily events. It contains scholarly articles. Periodicals are the publications other than daily.

**Analysis:** It is good to say that the newspapers have great possibility to bring a social change in a country. The scenario regarding women's portrayal in the four dailies (one English) and two monthly magazines (Assamese) can be very well observed in the following pages. The total print area of the four newspapers – The Assam Tribune, Asomiya Pratidin, Amar Asom and Dainik Asom and the two Magazines taken during the study period of two years was 1,24,99,944 sq cm (Table 1). The total advertisement area of all these four Newspapers and the two magazines was 26, 98,922 sq cm. Therefore, the space left for news/views was 98,01,022 sq cm, which accounts to 78.4 per cent of the total print area. A huge share of 21.59 per cent was given to advertisements invariably. In newspaper-wise comparison, the total print area of The Assam Tribune was 26,84,352 sq cm. The total ad area and news/views area was 9,92,000 sq cm and 16,92,352 sq cm, respectively. Therefore, news/views got 63.04 per cent space in The Assam Tribune. The total print area of Asomiya Pratidin was 27,49,824 sq cm, out of which 7,93,600 sq cm was the total area given to advertisements, and the total space given to news/views was 19,56,224 sq cm. In other words news/views secured 71.13 per cent. The total print area of Amar Asom was 25,77,960 sq cm. The total ads area was 4,76,160 sq cm and 21,01,800 sq cm was the space for news/views. The percentage of printing area for news/views of Amar Asom was 81.52 percent. The total printing area of Dainik Asom was 23,48,808 sq cm where 1,90,464 sq cm and 21,58,344 sq cm was the total ads area and news/views area respectively.

The percentage of news/views area was 91.89 percent. The monthly magazine Nandini and Priyo Sakhi covered 10,26,720 sq cm and 11,12,280 of total print area respectively. The percentage of news/views area was 97.5 percent and 80.12 percent of both respectively. The percentage of space given to news/views is shown in graph 1. Nandini gets maximum share Of 97.5 per cent and least amount of space was given by The Assam Tribune with 63.04 per cent.



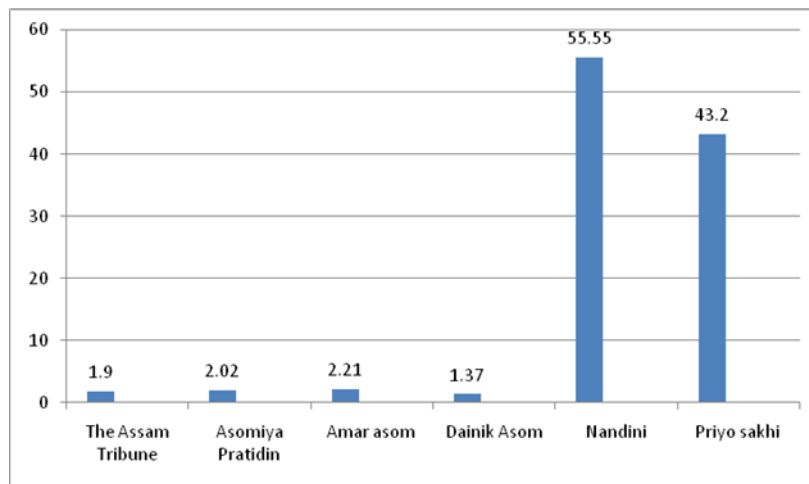
**Graph 1.**

Table 2 shows the total space given to news/views by all newspapers/magazines which was 98,01,022 sq cm, out of which the space given to women empowerment issues was 10,89,340 sq cm. Therefore, coverage given by all newspapers to women empowerment issues was merely 11.11 per cent of the total news/views area. Graph 2 gives the comparison of the percentage of women empowerment issues among all newspapers and magazines, Nandini gave maximum percentage of 55.55 per cent and minimum coverage was given by Dainik Asom i.e 1.37 per cent.

The percentage of total space given to women empowerment issues, including pictures in the all the magazines/newspapers is given in graph 3. The total space given to various women empowerment indicators has been mentioned in table 4. The indicators of women empowerment have been divided into four categories: social indicators, political indicators, economic indicators and miscellaneous indicators. Here Social indicators mean Health (personal, pregnancy, HIV/AIDS, ageing), Violence (domestic, harassment, general, gender-bias, trafficking), Education (general, adult), Girl-child

**Table 2. Total space given to women empowerment in *The Assam Tribune, Asomiya Pratidin, Amar Asom, Dainik Asom, Nandini and Priyo Sakhi* Jan 1, 2012 to Dec 31, 2013**

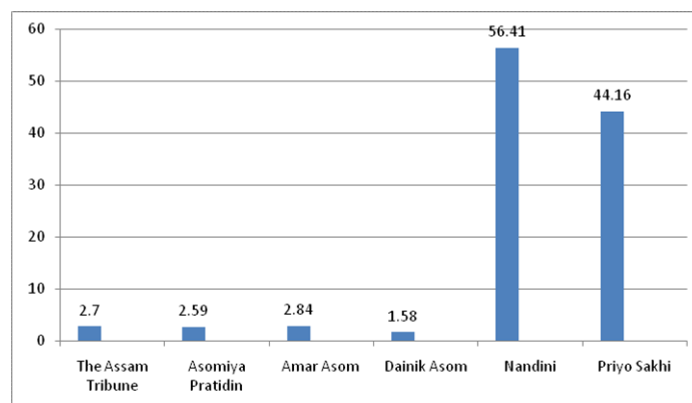
Sl. No	Newspapers/Magazines	Total space given to News/views (sq cm)	Space given to Women empowerment news/views	Percentage of women empowerment news/views
1	The Assam Tribune	16,92,352 sq cm	32,240 sq cm	1.90 %
2	Asomiya Pratidin	19,56,224 sq cm	39,680 sq cm	2.02 %
3	Amar Asom	21,01,800 sq cm	46,500 sq cm	2.21 %
4	Dainik Asom	21,58,344 sq cm	29,760 sq cm	1.37 %
5	Nandini	10,01,052 sq cm	5,56,140 sq cm	55.55 %
6	Priyo Sakhi	8,91,250 sq cm	3,85,020 sq cm	43.2 %
7	Total	98,01,022 sq cm	10,89,340 sq cm	11.11 %



**Graph 2. Percentage of total space given to women empowerment issue**

**Table 3. Total space given to women empowerment (including pictures) in *The Assam Tribune, Asomiya Pratidin, Amar Asom, Dainik Asom, Nandini and Priyo Sakhi* Jan 1, 2012 to Dec 31, 2013**

Sl. No	Newspapers/Magazines	Total space given to News/views (sq cm)	Space given to Women empowerment news/views (including pictures)	Percentage of women empowerment news/views (including pictures)
1	The Assam Tribune	16,92,352 sq cm	45694 sq cm	2.7 %
2	Asomiya Pratidin	19,56,224 sq cm	50,840 sq cm	2.59 %
3	Amar Asom	21,01,800 sq cm	59,892 sq cm	2.84 %
4	Dainik Asom	21,58,344 sq cm	34,224 sq cm	1.58 %
5	Nandini	10,01,052 sq cm	5,64,696 sq cm	56.41 %
6	Priyo Sakhi	8,91,250 sq cm	3,93,576 sq cm	44.16 %
7	Total	98,01,022 sq cm	1,14,8,922 sq cm	11.72 %



**Graph 3. Percentage of total space given to women empowerment issue (including pictures)**

**Table 4. Total space given to various indicators of women empowerment issue**

Sl. no.	Indicators	The Assam Tribune (sq cm)	Asomiya Pratidin (sq cm)	Amar Asom (sq cm)	Dainik Asom (sq cm)	Nandini (sq cm)	Priyo Sakhi (sq cm)	Total(sq cm)
1	Social	13,432 (5.59%)	5,350 (2.22%)	14,240 (5.93%)	4,928 (2.05%)	1,79,875 (74.91%)	22,285 (9.25%)	2,40,110 (22.04%)
2	Political	5,517 (3.29%)	17,190 (10.26%)	3,854 (2.30%)	12,778 (7.63%)	1,11,488 (66.59%)	16,584 (9.90%)	1,67,411 (15.36%)
3	Economic	5,806 (3.39)	5,568 (3.25%)	8,595 (5.02%)	5,580 (3.26%)	62,535 (36.57%)	82,895 (48.48%)	1,70,979 (15.69%)
4	Misc	7,485 (1.46%)	11,572 (2.26%)	19,811 (3.87%)	6,474 (1.26%)	2,02,242 (39.59%)	2,63,256 (51.53%)	5,10,840 (46.59%)
5	Total	32,240	39,680	46,500	29,760	5,56,140	3,85,020	10,89,340

(education, violence, sex-ratio, health, rights), Political indicators mean Rights, law, justice, policy, political, equality, governance, Women Reservation Bill, Economic indicators show self-reliant, professional, achievement and Miscellaneous indicators for international cooperation, sports, celebrity. The miscellaneous indicator of women empowerment (celebrity, sports, equality etc.) gave maximum coverage of 5,10,840 sq cm (46.59%), social indicator came at second place with 2,40,110 sq cm (22.04%). Economic indicator of women empowerment came at third place with coverage of 1,70,979 sq cm (15.69%). Minimum coverage was given to political indicator i.e 1,67,411 sq cm (15.36%). Graph 4 shows the percentage of space in sq cm given to social, political, economical and miscellaneous indicators of women empowerment news/views. Among all these four indicators, the miscellaneous indicator covered nearly half of the total percentage of space in the newspapers.

## FINDINGS

**Quantitative Insights:** The study reveals the extent of women's coverage in print media and identifies any disparities in comparison to men's coverage.

**Thematic Patterns:** An analysis of prevalent themes offers insights into whether women are consistently represented in specific contexts, such as career, family, politics, and entertainment.

**Linguistic Patterns:** The research sheds light on gendered language usage and whether it reflects and perpetuates stereotypes.

**Tone Trends:** A detailed examination of the tone in articles offers insights into how women are portrayed in the media.

**Implications:** The findings of this content analysis have implications for media organizations, policymakers, and society at large. The study provides a basis for assessing progress toward gender equality in the media and highlights areas where improvement is needed. Moreover, it underscores the importance of diverse representation and challenges media outlets to be more inclusive and equitable in their coverage.

## CONCLUSION

In a world where media holds immense power in shaping perceptions, this content analysis contributes to our understanding of how women are portrayed in print media. By unveiling visibility and examining various facets of women's coverage, this study calls for greater awareness, accountability, and change within the media landscape to ensure fair and accurate representation.

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