

A review of UNESCO's publications on women and communication

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Abstract

This paper reviews six UNESCO's publications on women and communication that were published before the 1995 Beijing Conference. The purpose of this paper is to show that different publications conceptualize "women", "communication", and "development", also the relations between them differently. These six publications do not speak in one voice and do not constitute an unified force for action. Looking at these six pre-Beijing Conference publications with Platform for Action and the gender mainstreaming approach adopted by the UN system, this analysis shows the conceptualization of "women" in selected publications is outdated and no longer endorsed by the UN system.

This paper aims to review six UNESCO's publications on women and communication, all of which were written and published before the 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing (hereafter, the Beijing Conference). The purpose of this paper is to show that, echoing UNESCO's own evaluation of its accomplishment before the Beijing Conference, the organization's effort in promoting gender equality and equity was scattered. This non-unified effort is evidenced in the different assumptions that different authors of the publications have of "women", "communication", and "development", also the relations among them. Although contesting voices in an organization are at times beneficial in the way that dialogues can be facilitated, the six publications seem to be in occasional discordance in problematizing the relations among women, communication, and development. Looking back at these six publications after the Beijing Conference and the adoption of the gender mainstreaming approach in the UN system, some of the assumptions of women and communication that some publications hold may seem outdated. However, the authors of some of the earlier publications have some insightful thoughts on the conceptualization of women and communication. The contribution of some of the earlier publications is not to be dismissed, and indeed should be taken into account in designing and implementing programmes on women and media for UNESCO. Particularly, as the Director-General of UNESCO highlights (UNESCO 2002), and as pointed out in the Medium-Term Strategy for 2002-2007, the eradication of female poverty is a primary concern of UNESCO. The economic condition of women is not to be isolated from women and communication, the political economy of communication should be emphasized more in UNESCO's programmes on women, communication and development if achieving gender equality is one of the major aims of UNESCO.

Assumptions

This paper has two assumptions on UNESCO and its publications on women and communication. First, UNESCO is not seen as an organization that is fixed and static

over times; also it does not speak in one single voice. UNESCO is seen as a dynamic and ever-changing discourse that is composed of multiple contesting and complementary voices in a long period of time (Bakhtin 1981). In the area of women and communication, for instance, there are at least two types of discourses. The first type is discourses that the public have access to. For example, educational materials, campaigns, webpages, publications, press releases, and so on. The second type of discourse is circulated within the organization. For instance, internal memorandum, meetings, drafts of reports and so on. UNESCO publications can be seen as the first type of discourse.

UNESCO publications also speak in multiple voices. First, each publication is written for its specific purpose and serves specific aim. Second, different publications are penned by different writers and have been reviewed and edited by some other people. To assume that all UNESCO publications on women and communication are pointing to one single direction of action is slightly unrealistic. In the first place, different authors conceptualize "women" and "communication" differently. If there is no common sharing of the meanings of "women" and "communication", how can UNESCO probe for consensual action that brings social change? Particularly, the gender mainstreaming approach aims to bring in a gender perspective to UNESCO in every sector and at every level in a more coherent way; also, communication is a tool and a channel for UNESCO to communicate to its various publics. It is indeed a challenge for UNESCO, as a discourse, to reach a commonly shared meaning of what "women" and "communication" are. How may the meanings attributed to the terms "women" and "communication" by different authors help re-evaluate and re-think the aim and objective of UNESCO and its concern for women and communication?

After saying this, it is, however, believed that contesting voices are vital in the discourse of UNESCO. It is only through dialogues and debates that one understands how individuals construct their own world view, and conceptualize social relations. Steeves (1993) suggests that the scholarship of development communication may take

into account the significance of engaging in dialogue in context. The key point is to engage in dialogues that lead to outcome that probes consensual social action.

The second assumption that this paper has is that studies that are written by women, about women, on women are not necessarily feminist writings. There is no guarantee that women are more gender-sensitive than men, or men are less gender-sensitive than women. Definitely, writings that involve women have concerns about women, regardless of the degree and type of concern they may be. Feminist writings are written from a woman's perspective and this perspective should be clearly acknowledged and identified. Also, feminist writings probe for social change, and women are seen as change agencies themselves.

Selection of publications

The pool of UNESCO's publications on women and communication is drawn from the UNESCO bibliography *UNESCO publications concerning the status of women: Annotated bibliography for the period 1965-1985* (1986) and UNESCO publications website.¹ From these two sources, a list of publications in the area of women and communication is drawn. Checking against the library catalogue at University of Oregon and the Orbis system, six publications were obtained. The six publications that are analyzed are: *Mass media: The image, role, and social conditions of women* (1979), *Women in the media* (1980), *Unequal opportunities: The case of women and the media* (1981), *Women and media decision-making: The invisible barriers* (1987), *An unfinished story: Gender patterns in media employment* (1993), and *Impact of communication technologies on women* (1994).

Analytical framework

For each of the publications, the following questions are asked:

☞ What is the purpose of this study? What is the concern of UNESCO?

- ≡ Which school(s) of feminist thought help understand the concern of the study? Is it necessarily a study informed by feminist thought?
- ≡ How is "women" conceptualized?
- ≡ How is "development" conceptualized?
- ≡ How is "communication" conceptualized?"
- ≡ What are the relations between "women", "development" and "communication"?"

Various feminist schools of thoughts

According to Steeves (1987), feminist media research is mostly informed by four schools of thoughts: liberal feminism, Marxist feminism, socialist feminism, and radical feminism. Steeves (2001) adds to her previous essay three schools of feminism: poststructural feminism, postcolonial feminism, and black feminism. Here I briefly summarize some of the assumptions behind each school of thought.

The lines that are drawn between different schools of feminism are not absolute, they are subject to contest. Also, some writings subscribe to various schools of thoughts at the same time; that is, the concern of some writings is multi-folded that no one single school of feminist thoughts can fully inform the inquiry. In fact, the relations among women, communication, and development are complex, no one single school of thoughts can help problematize this relation comprehensively.

Liberal feminists believe that women and men should be equal as one sex is not inferior to another one. In order to gain equal status, women may have to advance themselves through learning values, skills, knowledge that men hold true to. Liberal feminists believe in equal opportunities to both sexes and equal jobs, equal pay mark gender equality. Liberal feminists do not question the formation of men-women dichotomy, they do not inquire into questions such as who determines the truth. Also, liberal feminists do not challenge the capitalist socioeconomic structure. Gender equality is believed to exist within a capitalist system.

¹ UNESCO Publishing <http://upo.unesco.org>.

Marxist feminists see the root of women oppression is capitalism. Capitalism devalues women's labour as both producers and reproducers by not acknowledging women's "free" labour in the household. Also, women's labour is usually of a lower cost than men's labour in the workplace. In order to free women from oppression, capitalist system has to be overthrown. Marxist feminists believe that stereotypical images in the media are indication of how male capitalists use women's bodies to sell products.

Socialist feminism stemmed from Marxist feminism. Socialist feminists see the root of women's oppression being capitalism and patriarchy (Eisenstein 1979). Capitalism and patriarchy work hand in hand in oppressing women by devaluing them as producers and reproducers. To socialist feminists, both the capitalist and patriarchal systems have to be questioned in order to achieve equality between the two sexes.

Radical feminists advocate for a complete separation of women from men (Firestone 1970), they believe that men's languages and men's sciences dominate and oppress women. Women should unite (and co-habit) together in order to fight against male domination. Women should start their own media in order to own their own channels of communication.

Poststructural feminists privilege language in their studies. Poststructural feminists such as Irigaray question if gender equality as anticipated by liberal feminists is possible at all as the two sexes are different in the first place. The oppression of women is mediated by the way that languages are used. Languages are used to construct social relations and the material world. In order to achieve gender equality, the difference between the two sexes has to be acknowledged. Transforming the way that languages are used also help women to find their own voices. Steeves (2001) critiques poststructural feminism being too abstractly academic, it does not directly help women to encounter their daily problems such as illiteracy and poverty.

Postcolonial feminists such as Mohanty suggest that feminist theories are western-centred, they say nothing about feminists in the so-called developing countries.

Western feminists are said to discursively colonize third-world feminism.

"Women", "development" and "communication"

To Hall (1997), "language is the privileged medium in which we 'make sense' of things, in which meaning is produced and exchanged" (p. 1). There is no one single way to make meanings of words such as "women", "development" and "communication". However, cultural conventions may lead the conceptualization of these words in a narrow and fixed way. Uncovering these terms help question one's assumptions of the world.

Women / gender A rough distinction between the terms "women" and "gender" is that "women" denotes a fixed category of one of the two sexes. This category is an entity on its own. Gender is a more fluid concept that questions the binary pair "women-men". Gender questions the fixed and somewhat biologically-determined relation between "women" and "men". Gender is seen as a discursive formation that is composed by different contesting voices (Van Zoonen 1994). Hence, women's writings are not necessarily feminist writings as it is previously argued precisely because in which voices women writers speak - whether they share more commonalties with their male counterparts of the same race and class or with other women in different parts of the world.

Development Melkote and Steeves (2001) argue that most scholars and practitioners agree that development implies an improvement in living condition among a population. However, different schools of thoughts have different views of what "improvement" should be. Melkote and Steeves (2001) identify three major perspectives in development theories: modernization, critical and liberation. Modernization theorists see development is a westernization and industrialization process, which is primarily materialist in nature; adopting western and modern way of thinking and living is a necessary process to develop. Critical theories of development see development as a collective process of consciousness-raising. The ultimate aim of

development is to overthrow the oppression that modernization brings. From the liberation perspective, development is an individual empowerment process in which individuals have to be self-reliant. Both the oppressors and the oppressed have to be freed and liberated in order to achieve development. Wilkins (1999) sees development as an institutional discourse which is mainly sponsored by funding agencies throughout the years. As institutional discourse, the authority has the power to define what a problem is. Problem is very often dressed up as natural rather than political or economic. Wilkins' definition of development is illuminating in the way that one has to be careful that UNESCO does not reduce development to a form of institutional discourse. In other words, programmes on women and communication are to provide solutions to real problems, not to create pseudo solutions to auxiliary problems.

Use of terms

Terms such as "developed countries", "developing countries" and "Third-world countries" are used in the manner that they are conventional (and in a sense, convenient) references to certain populations of the world. It is not assumed that "developed countries" do not need development *per se*. Indeed, wealth gap in some western industrialized countries grows dramatically that the majority of the population is worse off than a few decades ago. On the other hand, elitist groups in some "developing countries" continue to enjoy privileges after decolonization.

Before presenting the review of selected publications, the aim and objective of UNESCO, its Communication and Information Division, and its press are briefly stated.

Objectives and Aims of UNESCO

Set up in 1945, after the Second World War, the aims of UNESCO as stated in a 1947 document are that:

In the first place, it is international, and must serve the ends and objects of the United Nations, which in the long perspective are world ends, ends for humanity as a whole. And secondly it must foster and promote all aspects of education, science and

culture, in the widest sense of those words (Huxley 1947:5).

In 2002, the goal and objective of UNESCO are said to be:

The main objective of UNESCO is to contribute to peace and security in the world by promoting collaboration among nations through education, science, culture and communication in order to further universal respect for justice, for the rule of law and for human rights and fundamental freedom what are affirmed for the peoples of the world, without distinction of race, sex, language or religion, by the Charter of the United Nations.²

The Division of Communication and Information is one of the five divisions in the organization. The other four are Education, Culture, Natural Sciences, and Social and Human Sciences. The objective of the Division of Communication and Information is:

To promote the free flow of ideas by word and image, a wider and better balanced disseminations of all forms of information contributing to the advancement of societies, without any obstacle to freedom of expression, both through the traditional media and the new electronic media.³

Finally, UNESCO Press is said to function like a university press. This may imply that UNESCO Press is an extension of the organization's aim through publishing works that are in the main concern of UNESCO's objectives.

1995 Beijing Conference and gender mainstreaming approach

As will be shown in the following analyses, different UNESCO publications conceptualize "women", "communication" and "development" differently. Although these voices do not contradict each other, they are not complementary either. In other words, one study does not build upon the previous ones. UNESCO's own evaluation also suggests that although some of the studies are ground-breaking, no further action was followed up. This may be a result that there was not a centralized unit that overlooks UNESCO's publications on women, let alone women and communication. Each publication was written and published for a specific purpose. Looking back at

² <http://www.unesco.org/general/eng/about/what.shtml>

³ http://www.unesco.org/webworld/cii_sector/index.shtml#NGO

the six publications on women and communication in the past twenty years or so, it is rather difficult to generalize UNESCO's standpoint on women and communication if individual studies are not contextualized in their temporal contexts.

In fact, although UNESCO has identified women as a priority group back in 1975 UN Decade for Women Conference, it was not after 1995 did UNESCO set up a more permanent unit called the Women and Gender Equality Unit. The task of this unit is to ensure *every* programme and policy mainstreams gender. Also, this unit meant to ensure the conceptualization of gender is somewhat coherent across the board and at all levels.

In the area of women and communication, the Programme of Women in the Media was set up within the Division of Communication and Information as a response to the Beijing Conference and its Platform for Action. Section J of Platform for Action states that in the arena of women and the media, the UN aims to:

- (1) increase the participation and access of women to expression and decision-making in and through the media and new technologies of communication;
- (2) promote a balanced and non-stereotyped portrayal of women in the media.⁴

Drawing on Section J from Platform for Action, UNESCO's Programme of Women in the Media aims to: (1) promote freedom of expression; (2) promote free flow of information, and (3) promote women's access to decision-making media posts.⁵

The review first presents studies that were published the earliest. It should, however, be noted that it does not necessarily mean the most recent publications reflect UNESCO's current position on gender mainstreaming the most.

1. *Mass media: The image, role, and social conditions of women* (1979)

⁴ <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/platform/media.htm>.

⁵ <http://www.unesco.org/webworld/com/media/media01.shtml>.

Ceulemans and Fauconnier (1979) review literature on women and mass communication worldwide. The literature reviewed is grouped under two headings: the image of women in mass media, and the professional status of women in mass media. The four types of mass media that the literature examines are advertising, broadcasting (television and radio), film, and the press (newspapers and magazines). Ceulemans and Fauconnier (1979) believe that the mass media are both a mirror and creator of reality. Subscribing to social learning theory, Ceulemans and Fauconnier (1979) believe that media representations serve as role models for women. In order to improve the images of women in the media, there should be more women practitioners working in decision-making positions in media organizations.

Ceulemans and Fauconnier (1979) suggest that the images of women in the media are limiting; they do not reflect the variety of social activities that women engage in in reality. The mass media is a patriarchal system that does not truly allow full participation from women.

WOMEN: Women are seen as representations and media practitioners in this study. The role of women practitioners is crucial in the sense that they may affect the content of mass media. Probably due to the time period that this publication was published, mass communication research, by the late seventies, did not pay a lot of attention to audience studies. Hence, there were a few, if not none, studies on how women consume media texts. Certainly, women were not seen as active consumers in the late seventies.

The complexity of women as historical, socioeconomic beings is not discussed. There is not much discussion on the historical formation of the inferiority of women in bureaucracy. The authors suggest that organizational structure limits and constrains women from career advancement, yet they do not see media organizations as economic structure.

DEVELOPMENT: The authors have a list of suggestions of how women's status

in the mass media can be improved. It is interesting to note how the authors phrase their recommendations:

Recommendation for corrective measures to be implemented by the industry, for affirmative action to be taken on the local, national and international level on the part of official and private agencies, and for continued protest and pressure to be exerted by women media consumers and media workers (Ceulemans and Fauconnier 1979: 69).

The measures *per se* to develop women are of different types. First, affirmative action is thought to be able to ensure equal treatment of women in the workplace; second, advancing women by means of education and training; third, finding new values of femininity and establishing alternative media for women; finally, women activism . These measures ask women to advance themselves not only as individuals, but also as collectives. These measures also point out that the change in structure is salient to the change in women's status.

COMMUNICATION: The literature showed that by the time of late seventies, only a few types of mass media existed and were studied. More interestingly, although the scope of this study is international, media studies in Africa and Asia were scarce, hence the literature review is still very much based on studies in the West. The import and export of mass media products were not largely discussed in mass communication research at that time.

Communication here is strictly confined to mass communication. Mass communication is seen as a system of representation and media organizations. Mass communication is not seen as economic structure or political tool.

WOMEN, DEVELOPMENT AND COMMUNICATION: Mass communication is seen as a social institution that has considerable impact on women's images and women's employment in the media. In order to develop women, the mass media can be better made use of. Adding more women to media organizations is seen as one of the remedies as it helps achieve equality between the two sexes in the workplace; it also helps better women's images and expand the range of images in the media.

2. *Women in the Media* (1980)

This publication consists of two parts. Part one is a study compiled by Jerzy Toeplitz, the Director of Australian Film and Television School in New South Wales. The study is entitled "Inquiry on participation of women in radio, television and film in four countries (Australia, Canada, the United Kingdom and the United States)". The second study is a report on women in cinema, a symposium took place in St. Vincent, Italy in July 1975. Both parts are contributions to the Programme of UNESCO's Division of Human Rights and Peace. As the second part is mainly a report that documents the symposium in the forms of interviews of a number of participants without explicit input from the anonymous author, this report is not analyzed here.

The study "Inquiry on participation of women in radio, television and film in four countries" was a response to the United Nations Decade for Women (1975-1985). This study is interested in understanding the roles played by women in "audio-visual professions" (p. 10) and to what extent women take part in decision-making process. It is believed that women in decision-making positions can help rectifying women's image in the media.

Although this study has an interest in understanding women's place in the media, it cannot be said to be written from a feminist point of view. The author, for most of the time, compiles reports on women and the media in the four selected countries. This study appears to be an "objective" account with slight, if not none, personal imprint. However, the hostility that the author shows towards women activist groups seems to suggest grass-root or non-governmental women's groups make things worse off (more discussion in a later section).

WOMEN: Women are seen as producers, reproducers and representations in the media. As biological beings, women are producers and reproducers. Women are producers as they work in different sectors and at different levels in media organizations. Women are reproducers as women workers are sometimes mothers and wives; also, women workers are always potential mothers and wives. Women are seen as

representations in the media: as actresses in TV and films, as voice-over in radio, as models in advertisements. Toeplitz (1980) does not specify how women working in media organizations are related to women's representations in the media. From the introductory section, it seems that Toeplitz (1980) suggests that stereotyping of women in the media will mitigate if more women occupy decision-making positions in media organizations.

In contrast to women, men are only seen as producers in this study. Family responsibilities of men are not mentioned, let alone questioned in this study. Also, there is no mention of men's representations in the media.

DEVELOPMENT: As the countries examined (Australia, Canada, the United Kingdom, the United States) are all western, industrialized countries, "development" does not seem to be the concern of Toeplitz (1980). However, this paper assumes that development is an ongoing process among individuals and groups. Women that are underprivileged in a system need development as much as their privileged (male) counterparts. Indeed, one woman production assistant was quoted in this study saying that her hourly rate is lower than that of supermarket cashier (p. 43). Despite being an educated woman in an industrialized country, this woman's experiences, expertise and knowledge are not seen as worthy (at least in economic term) by the organization.

Language defines the way we conceptualize issues and problems (Wilkins 1999). The reason why recruiting more women in the media and eliminating sex role stereotyping are important is because they are believed to lead to equality between the two sexes. "Development" here can be seen as elevating women's status so that it will be at the same level as men's.

As suggested in the report, one of the obstacles that women face in their career advancement is their lack of self-confidence. Toeplitz (1980) believes that women's lack of confidence traps them in their secondary and inferior positions in media organizations. In order to bolster women's confidence, women need professional

training and education. The question, here, is of course: What is the relation between self-confidence and training? Who trains them? How should they be trained? Whose knowledge is taught and learnt?

The argument that women need to be trained in order to break the glass ceiling is not unlike that of developing third-world citizens by westernizing and modernizing them (Lerner 1958). Whilst women lack self-confidence, third-world citizens lack empathy. The solution to women's "problem" is to train and educate women in, most likely, the men's way; the solution to third-world problem is to modernize and westernize third-world citizens.

In order to change, this study suggests that bureaucratic organizations have to rely on governments, international organizations such as the United Nations, trade unions and professional groups. Interestingly, Toeplitz (1980) suggests that "radical" women pressure groups are disliked by organizations, including the female workers. The three main reasons of this disliking are:

1. Movement for women's rights are seen as political, closely linked with the extreme left.
2. The fear that pressure groups aim at destroying, not changing, the establishment; if that happens, what will become of hundreds of jobs, of thousands of women employed today by media institutions?
3. The movement is alleged to disregard or despise many hard-working women at the lower levels in the media, and to care only about the few trying to reach the top of the ladder (Toeplitz 1980: 78).

This may seem to suggest that the institutions and bureaucratic structures may better be preserved as the current structure is not a problem to gender equality on its own. Breaking down the current structure will make thousands of women lose jobs even though women's jobs are characterized as low paid, dead-ends in an earlier part of the report. Also, the hard work of women should be appreciated despite the lack of promotion and double burden of work and family responsibilities.

COMMUNICATION: Communication is both the media organization and the site for representation. The idea of media organizations involves structure, rules, norms and practices - how media organizations are structured and how they are run on a daily

basis. However, whose structure is it? Who set the norms and normalize the practices? The author suggests that mass media constitute a vehicle of social change without specifying how mass media lead to social change, or are led by social change, or *are* social change.

Mass media are said to be regulated by legislation and laws by governments. These include passing laws to eliminate gender discrimination in job employment, having quotas for women to work in managerial positions. The political economy of communication is not considered here. There is an assumption that governments and international organizations (such as the United Nations) can impose laws on media organizations.

WOMEN, DEVELOPMENT AND COMMUNICATION: As previously discussed, "development" is not seen as an issue in this study as the current socioeconomic system under which media organizations are operating is not questioned. Gender inequalities in the media in terms of job opportunities and media representations are discussed without linking it to socioeconomic structure. The solution to balance the visibility of women and men in the workplace and in media representation is through legislation and women's individual self-improvement. The system that defines what is valuable and normal is not questioned. Also, in terms of gender equality, who decides what is equal? Who takes action to achieve equality? To whom is equality granted? Who *receives* opportunities? Alternative women's voices are not valued and appreciated in this study. Any "destructive" action taken by "radical" women's pressure groups is seen as uninformed and trivial actions. It seems that women as a group, if they do not conform to the existing political structure, are not supposed to raise their own consciousness.

3. *Unequal Opportunities: The Case of Women and the Media* (1981)

Published in 1981, this study evaluates the relationship between women and communication in the middle of UN Decade for Women. This study points out six

issues that are the most pertinent to women and the society. These six issues are: women's issues can only be understood historically, women are socioeconomic beings, women are constructed through cultural consciousness, the complex relations between women and the media, distribution and access to the media among women, women as a social construct. Then it synthesizes the studies that are done on women and media around the globe. The two major bodies of literature that Gallagher (1981) reviews are media portrayals of women and women's participation in mass media organizations. Also, what have been done to improve women's status and encourage women's participation in the media. Gallagher (1981) looks at projects regarding women's roles in development, feminist media that are outside corporate control, and alternative news distribution channels. Lastly, it suggests to researchers, government officials, and activists what can be further accomplished in providing equal opportunities to women.

Socialist feminists and global feminists will agree with Gallagher (1981). Socialist feminists see women as historical beings who are oppressed by both patriarchal and capitalist systems. In order to change women's status in the society, the existing socioeconomic system has to be changed first. Global feminists (such as Mohanty) suggest that western feminists dominate feminist thoughts. Third World feminists have to raise consciousness among themselves and question to what extent western feminism is relevant to them. Feminism is only relevant if it is seen from a local woman's point of view.

WOMEN: As suggested in the above, women as material beings are historical. Western male philosophers such as Plato and Aristotle conceptualized women as inferior beings to men. Historical discourses continue to inform our conceptualization of the world and the relations between human beings. Women are socioeconomic beings, according to Gallagher (1981). Female labour in the workplace and in the family is extracted for exploitation. Women are also cultural beings; women are unable to develop their full sense of consciousness due to subordination and oppression.

Taken into account women being historical, socioeconomic and cultural, Gallagher (1981) unfolds the complex relations between women and the media. Women are sometimes the producers of media products, sometimes the workers in the production of media products, also the consumers of media products. Hence, the concept of women is multi-faceted and complex. In other words, women take up different identities in different social settings; this identity is very often than not subject to subordination and oppression.

Gallagher (1981) also takes into account men's roles in relations to women's. She argues that women's roles in the media will not change if men's roles do not change. Hence, it is the gender relations between men and women, rather than women's roles, that one should examine. Gallagher (1981) also suggests that women need not turn themselves into men to gain recognition for their works. Also, simply recruiting more women in media organizations and moving women up the hierarchy do not change anything unless the patriarchal media system changes.

DEVELOPMENT: It seems obvious that projects that involve the integration of women in national development mainly come from developing countries (some examples are Costa Rica, Colombia, India). Some development programmes are for minority women in developed countries (such as Asian immigrants in England).

Although projects that aim at integrating women in national development are meritorious and commendable, Gallagher (1981) asks us not to take the dominant socioeconomic structure for granted. Hence, projects that are said to develop women through cultivating and socializing them into the mainstream do not develop women in Gallagher's (1981) sense. To her, development involves access, participation and self-determination. Education and training are salient to development, yet skills are not the only components in training. In training practitioners, sensitivities and consciences towards women's issues are more important than skills and techniques. Social and world events should be interpreted at a local level, from a woman's point of view. To Gallagher (1981), development is not an individual business, but a group effort and a

collective action.

COMMUNICATION: Communication can be unfolded into four dimensions which are highly interrelated to each other: communication as structure, as representation, as bureaucracy and as economics. Communication is structure as it is partly regulated by government and state policies; international organizations such as UNESCO suggest how media can be structured. Media organizations themselves have their own structures for daily operations. Communication is representation: media construct images for consumption. Communication is bureaucracy as media organizations are governed by rules and regulations, strategized by aims and objectives. Norms, practices, ways to do things are cultural doctrines that socialize workers in the bureaucracy. Communication is also economics: some of the media organizations in western industrialized countries are established for the purpose of money-making. The economic aspect of profit-driven media is emphasized here.

WOMEN, DEVELOPMENT AND COMMUNICATION: As shown in the above, both "women" and "communication" are complex concepts. Women assume different identities at different levels of communication in different contexts. There is no one single sweeping statement that can conclude the relations between women and communication. If the concept of women is historical and can only be understood historically, so are the concepts of development and communication. Taking only one fraction of the whole picture (such as the representation of women in TV in one single country) does not help us to untangle the complex relationships between and among women, development, and communication. In order to develop women in communication, women themselves should be the agency. Women should find their own voices in the media. Therefore, it is important to know what "feminism", "women's media" mean to women coming from different backgrounds in different parts of the world.

4. *Women and Media Decision-making: The Invisible Barrier* (1987)

This publication is the outcome of UNESCO's programme on the Contribution of the Media to Promoting Equality between Women and Men and Strengthening Women's Access and Participation in Communication. Five case studies are presented here: Canada, Egypt, Ecuador, India, and Nigeria. As Gallagher (1987) writes in the introduction, women media practitioners in the world very often encounter an invisible barrier which stops them from being promoted to decision-making positions in the organization. This glass ceiling is constituted by the conventional attitudes, biases, and presumptions that media organizations (read: men who hold high positions in the organizations) have on gender and career advancement.

The five case studies here illustrate the glass ceiling of media organizations in five different countries. What is interesting here is that the professions and political orientations of the contributors shape how the glass ceiling is conceptualized and understood. The Canada case is written by a woman journalist called Susan Crean. The Nigeria case is written by the Director of Home Services of the Federal Radio Corporation, Enoch Maria Etuk Irukwu. Although these five essays are collected in this single volume, by no means do they speak in a single voice. In fact, a careful examination of the case studies suggests that different writers assume different feminist or non-feminist positions.

The India case is written by Joshi (1987), she suggests that under-representation of women in decision-making posts in media organizations is a deep-rooted "problem" that is a result of the secondary status of women in the society. Women should be improved in order to make advancement in social, educational and economic status. Hence, equality between men and women (in this order, *men* and *women*) is striven for.

The Nigeria case is written by a woman government officer, it can be expected that the working condition of women media practitioners is presented in a favourable light. Although this case is written by a woman, it is not written from a feminist viewpoint. In fact, it is argued that this essay is patriarchal in tone. The few women practitioners are said to perform excellent and professional jobs. The author, however, states that

women's "problems" begin when they enter the decision-making level. The problem is women have the responsibilities to take care of the family and "only the women themselves will eventually work out a solution" (Irukwa 1987: 75). Also, "in our environment a happy secure home is a top priority" (Irukwa 1987: 76). It seems that the author suggests that women should not seek advancement in their career as they are supposed to stay home and take care of their families.

Despite the diversified feminist / non-feminist viewpoints included in the case studies, they seem to agree with each other on the concepts of women, development and communication.

WOMEN: Women here are seen as biological beings that are both producers and reproducers. Women are producers as they are workers in media organizations; women are reproducers as they are assumed to be mothers and wives. While this is, undoubtedly, a valid way to conceptualize women, men are only seen as producers who do not have family responsibilities. In fact, there is only one reference of men taking up family responsibilities, and that one is not seen in a positive light:

Men are not ashamed to say they have a sick child or have to go home because their wives will be angry if they are late another night. It has almost become chic for men to use their children as a way to get out of there (Crean 1987: 117).

It seems that gender roles are not questioned, women are expected and assumed to take up family responsibilities while men are precluded from family responsibilities.

DEVELOPMENT: Development here is best translated into personal, individual advancement. In order to develop women, they have to be educated and trained like their male counterpart. The India case shows that women are perceived by their male co-workers as "more conscientious, hard-working, honest, responsible, Systematic, disciplined and obedient or polite" (Joshi 1987: 33). These outstanding women's qualities are not taken into account when Joshi (1987) suggests proposals to improve women's opportunities to climb up the social ladder. In other words, the different qualities that women and men are believed to have are not taken into consideration in

the design of women's training programmes. She suggests that "facilities for training, refresher courses, and orientation programmes for women should be improved" (p. 39). This suggestion does not seem to see women as agencies of change, instead women have to be changed.

Women media practitioners in the case studies belong to the middle-class. This is particularly the case in developing countries. To start with, the literacy rate among Indian women is only 25%. Most of the women who are able to secure a job in media organizations are educated: three-quarters of them have post-graduate qualifications. In terms of development, it is less about collective class struggle than individual enhancement and improvement.

COMMUNICATION: Communication here is strictly confined to media organizations. Organizations here are seen as organisms which have very little to do with the content that they produce. Organizations here are made up of structures, rules and order. Rarely do the authors suggest why it is important to include women in decision-making positions (Canada is the only exception here). Most of the authors start with the premise that more women in decision-making posts means gender equality and gender equality is merely about having the equal number of men and women in media organizations, there is no suggested linkage between this and media content. Also, in none of the cases is the issue of media ownership being questioned. This can be reasoned by the fact that apart from radio in Ecuador, the broadcasting organizations in the rest four countries are state-owned.

WOMEN, DEVELOPMENT AND COMMUNICATION: All five case studies point out one remedy of women breaking the glass ceiling: training. Training is not examined critically here: Who trains women? How are they trained? What should be trained? Whose knowledge is taught? Whose qualities and skills have to be acquired? Only in the case of Ecuador does the author recognize self-reliance and recognition are remedies of women's advancement. The Nigeria case suggests that women should be accountable for their own incompetence in breaking the glass ceiling. This

incompetence is rooted from the reproductive functions of women. However, the remedies suggested in the Nigeria case do not deal with lifting family responsibilities off from women. A happy family is the first and foremost responsibility of a woman. If a married woman cannot choose between her career and family, she is the one who has to sacrifice her career.

The issue of class and economic power is not discussed in all five case studies. The India case is a good example to show that the opportunities for women to work in media organizations are not equal among the women population, only the educated, middle-class women have the chance to work in the media. How may this group of women serve the needs of the majority of Indian women who are poor and illiterate? Is advancing the elite women a way to revolutionize gender relations in the society as a whole or is it just a gesture to show gender equality in a privileged class?

5. *Impact of communication technologies on women (1994)*

This publication compiles studies that look at the impact of communication technologies on women in a number of countries around the globe. Two focal points of UNESCO are the socioeconomic impact of new communication technologies, and women and communication. The scope of this study is international; the following countries in the five continents are covered: Burkina Faso, Egypt, the United States of America, Canada, Bolivia, Chile, Singapore, India, France and Sweden. For each country, local researchers were asked to give a brief account of the gender context of respective countries. Although the presented contexts vary greatly from case to case, the following information is mostly included: women's economic status, social and political lives, and demographics. Researchers were allowed the freedom to choose a case that involves the impact of communication technologies on women to study. Finally, the case study was critiqued, the project thus discussed is assessed. Communication technologies are categorized into two major types: first, new ways to use "conventional" communication technologies (such as radio and film); second, new

communication technologies (such as mobile phone).

This publication takes on a feminist perspective to study the relations between women and communication technology. In critiquing some of the projects carried out in some regions, the editor cautions that there is a difference between "feminine" media content and "feminist" media content; the mere fact that women's issues are included in the media does not on its own qualify the content being "feminist". The editor also believes that the structure of existing media organizations does undermine the possibilities of feminist voices.

This study does not aim to enter into the debate of various schools of feminism. It, however, highlights three themes of how the relations between women and communication technologies can be understood: equality between the two sexes, in particular the public life; differences between the two genders - what femininity means; third, new values brought by women to the media. Whilst liberal feminists concern more about equality between the two sexes, poststructural feminists concern more about "differences" and "new values".

WOMEN: This study highlights the point that the identities of women are interpreted and understood differently in different cultures due to different historical, socioeconomic and cultural contexts. Women is not seen as ahistorical beings who share commonalities with one another regardless of class, nationality, age and so on. This study suggests that women media producers cannot be seen as a homogeneous entity; nor can women media consumers be seen as one. Hence, prior to each case study, a brief account of the economic, cultural and political statuses of women is given.

For the purpose of analysis, women are seen as media producers, media consumers or both. For example, the Canada case study is about women making films in a state-funded programme; the case in India focuses on the use of cable television among women in India; the case in France focuses on women making use of an interactive online discussion group, here women can be seen as both media producers and media consumers.

Extra notice has been taken to see women as multi-faceted beings whose identities as media producers / consumers intersect with those of family members (wives, mothers, daughters), community members, and workers.

The conceptualization of women in this study is sophisticated and reflective of the reality of women's life. However, the political economic of communication technology and its relation to women is not looked into deeply. Although various case studies note that the women in question belong to the minority, privileged group in respective countries, the political economic aspect of the production and consumption of communication technology is not largely discussed. For example, the case in the United States suggests that telephone companies did not target women as mobile phone users at the beginning but the husbands demanded mobile phone services for their wives. This could be analyzed as a political economic issue: the profits that telephone companies make from mobile phone for business customers and non-business customers, who pays for the services and so on.

DEVELOPMENT: The theme development is not overt in this study. However, technology can hinder women from developing by marginalizing them. At the same time, technology can help women to find new means of expression. Development here can be seen as a gendered form of development. For example, the case in Canada shows that through state-funded programme, women filmmakers may be able to find their forms of expression.

What is interesting though, is that with its international scope, this study does not attempt to discuss women and *national* development. Some of the countries included are highly developed (Sweden, France, the USA), some are highly under-developed (Burkina Faso, Bolivia). Not only are the available communication technologies different, the use of communication technologies among women is also different. For instance, radio in Burkina Faso is used to educate women about health, hygienic and family planning; these kinds of knowledge are salient to nation-building. On the other hand, the use of mobile phones in the United States among women contributes more to

the economy than nation-building. Although technology may enable women to transcend their current status and find new values, it may mean different things to national development in different countries.

COMMUNICATION: Communication is defined broadly in this study. However, as the focus is on communication technologies, forms of communication that do not rely on technologies (such as face-to-face communication) are not included. As researchers were free to choose the forms of technology for discussion, this study is particularly successful at presenting communication in its complexity. To women as media producers, communication is an organization and structure. To women as media consumers, communication can be seen as texts (such as television programmes, radio programmes) and technology (mobile phones). What is more downplayed though, is the fact that some forms of communication are privately-owned whilst others are publicly-owned.

WOMEN, DEVELOPMENT AND COMMUNICATION: This study excels in showing the concepts of "women" and "communication" are complicated. Women are seen as sociohistorical beings that have to be understood and studied in local contexts. Also, the identities of women as media producers and media consumers intersect with those of family members, community members and workers. Women are also seen to participate in communication technologies in different ways. In short, this study is able to complicate the relations between women and communication technologies.

Given the differences in all cases, it is difficult to have one sweeping statement concluding one common theme that links all cases together. It seems that the use of technologies by women is not radical enough for them to find new values and new voices. Hence, if women have to develop, they actually have to transform the way that communication is used.

6. *An unfinished story: Gender patterns in media education (1995)*

Gallagher and von Euler's (1995) work is the first of a similar kind to compare the status of women employment in media organizations on a global scale. Gallagher wants to demystify the suggestion that the media are getting more "feminized". The apparent fact that more women appear in news programmes does not necessarily mean there are more women behind the scenes.

The author looks at comparative data obtained from both developed and developing countries concerning percentage of women in media training, different types of media jobs, and higher positions. Obstacles that women face and the remedies to the obstacles are discussed. More number of women working in media organizations is seen as desirable even though she is also aware of the socialization process in media organizations. She also sees values of women's lobby groups and women's activist groups in bringing social change.

WOMEN: Based on the objective of this study, women are primarily workers. Gallagher and von Euler (1995), however, suggest women are multi-faceted beings: women as media workers, representations in the media, social beings, and reproducers. Gallagher and von Euler (1995) believe that the increasing number of female presenters and news anchors (as representations) by no means implies there are more women working in decision-making positions. However, the more women occupying decision-making posts, the higher chance women are represented in the media. Also, women are disadvantaged in media organizations due to different socialized values of women and men. In other words, women as workers are not only producers but also social beings that bear societal values shaped by social upbringing. However, men are once again left out in the whole picture - there is hardly any mention of men bearing family responsibilities.

DEVELOPMENT: Gallagher and von Euler's (1995) works on the assumptions that more women holding decision-makings is desirable as more "women's issues" can be covered. However, for whose interests do these decisions serve? In the

examination of women's training in the university, there is no examination of the socioeconomic background of the women that can enjoy the privilege of higher education. Can we assume women coming from a middle-class background will always understand the problems that working-class face?

Gallagher and von Euler (1995) list eight remedies to solve the problem of under-representation of women in the media. Some of them are mentoring (women employees be guided), training and career development, monitoring employment patterns. Are women the agencies of change here or simply the objects? Again, who trains women? Who mentors them? Are women trained so that they are more like men?

COMMUNICATION: As in *Women and decision-making: The invisible barrier*, communication is primarily media organizations. Gallagher, however, suggests the linkage between representation of women in media organizations and representation of women in media content. She suggests although more women in media organizations does not directly and automatically lead to more positive images and more frequent appearance of women, there is definitely a relation here.

WOMEN, DEVELOPMENT AND COMMUNICATION: It is rather difficult to generalize how the remedies suggested by Gallagher and von Euler (1995) can be applied at a global level. Obviously these remedies are more applicable to media organizations that are already well-structured and well-funded. However, in most parts of the world, this is not quite yet the case. It will be difficult to visualize how childcare assistance can be provided by organizations to their women employees if there is no, or weak, infrastructure in the first place.

Now and then: the change

As stated in *Gender equality and equity: A summary review of UNESCO's accomplishments since the Fourth World Conference on Women* (UNESCO 2000), UNESCO continues to promote gender equality by implementing Section J of Beijing

Platform for Action to its programmes. In fact, the two strategic objectives stated in Platform for Action have always been the concern of UNESCO's publications on women and communication. However, as the above analysis shows, some of the notions and assumptions that some publications hold are outdated, and are no longer promoted and endorsed by the UN system.

For instance, the gender mainstreaming approach is more interested in gender relations than women as a biological entity: "it is a call to place human relations, as manifested in their 'male' and 'female' roles, at the centre of all programming, action, and evaluation, instead of treating these as marginal, or even 'ghettoised' phenomenon" (UNESCO 2000: 5). In previous publications, women are seen as a group that needs to be studied and examined. Gender relations are rarely looked at, this is particularly true in the family responsibilities and roles of men and women. Whilst women as reproducers are discussed in some studies, men's family responsibilities are not discussed at all as if they do not exist.

Second, the gender mainstreaming approach stresses that gender inequality not only will harm women, it will also harm human race as a whole. Thus, promoting gender equality is not to merely advance women. Through advancing gender relations, it is believed that the whole humankind will benefit. In previous publications on women and communication, promoting gender equality has always been the aim but it was not clearly stated why gender equality is desirable and beneficial except that women's rights are parts of human rights.

Third, the gender mainstreaming approach suggests that women and men are complementary beings that are interdependent. Gender equality does not mean men and women are the same and hence, should be treated differently. Gender equality, as defined by International Labour Organization, means:

All human beings, both men and women, are free to develop their personal abilities and makes choices without the limitations set by stereotypes, rigid gender roles and prejudices. Gender equality means that the different behaviour, aspirations and needs of women and men have become the same, but that their rights, responsibilities and opportunities will not depend on whether they are born male or female (International

Labour Organization 2000: 48).

Most of the publications suggest that one of the remedies to gender inequality in the media is to increase the number of women decision-makers, and to train women through in-job training or education. As the analyses show, the suggestions hardly suggest how to train women: Who trains them? What kinds of knowledge are taught and learnt? What are the benchmarks that women are fully trained? Gender equality, as in the gender mainstreaming approach, means that women and men may have different values and qualities, training women so that they can be more like their male counterparts is not endorsed in the gender mainstreaming approach.

The gender mainstreaming approach is a promising approach to promote gender equality. It moves radically from the approaches of liberal feminism and radical feminism in the way that women are no longer seen as the oppressed. Also, men and women have to work together so that the world and different cultures can sustain. However, the gender mainstreaming approach does not highlight the political economy of communication, the world order and economic structure. In the aspect of women and the media for instance, Section J states that women are to participate in decision-making through the media and new forms of communication technologies. Communication technologies, however, cannot be seen as a free and gender-neutral form that exists outside the economic order. One has to take caution of the political economic implications of training women to produce and use technologies and information. The central question is how technologies and information can empower women to become citizens and full participants of the society, not to turn women into commodities and consumers that can be bought and sold among a handful of information and new technologies giants in a few industrialized countries. On the study of the political economy of communication and its impact on women, UNESCO may need to put some effort on.

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