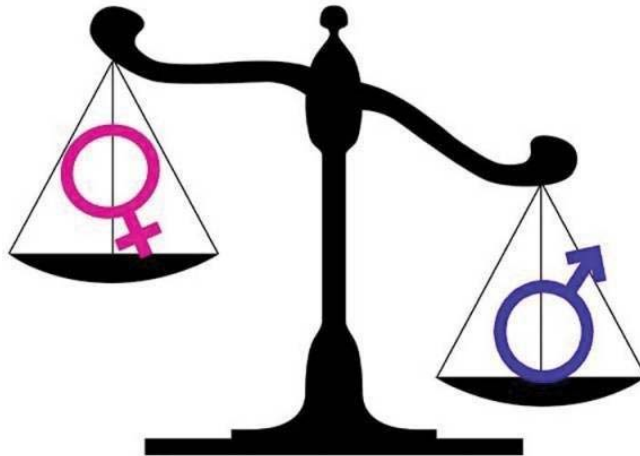


Balancing it out: Creating gender-sensitive guidelines for media

KARACHI:

In an effort to contribute to gender equality in media houses, UNESCO Pakistan, in collaboration with Uks, organized a consultation meeting, titled 'Gender Sensitive Guidelines for Women in Media in South Asia', on Saturday.

The objective of the consultation was to refine and validate the guidelines for women in the media developed earlier this year and to propose a plan of action for the steps to be taken, said UNESCO representative to Pakistan Vibeke Jensen.



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She emphasised the important role of the media in promoting gender equality in society and said the media in Pakistan needs a better balance of men and women in key decision-making positions and in investigative journalism. The consultation brought together senior and mid-level media professionals from print, electronic and online media.

Inspired by the development guidelines, the consultation addressed six issues that need to be focused on by Pakistani media institutions. The first group discussed the importance of gender balance in media institutions; at decision-making level, in work and working conditions, such as ethical codes for gender-sensitive policies.

Sadia Mehmood, assistant professor of mass communication at Karachi University, said that gender-sensitisation courses should be conducted at all levels. According to her, analysis and revision of existing curriculum and content should be done across the board. She said a concerted effort at levels to introduce and have gender inclusive content through deliberations must be made.

Journalist Farieha Aziz said laws and policies already exist to counter gender-based violence, safety and harassment at workplace. She said that lack of implementation of the law is due to lack of awareness, lack of will within the organisations, top management and confusing procedures. She suggested that mandatory training of employees and employers on gender

and sexual harassment law and discussions on the definition of sexual harassment must be implemented in all workplaces.

Regarding the portrayal of women in news and current affairs, TV anchor Amber Shamsi said we must create alternative content to include women's perspective in hard news and current affairs.

Source: <http://tribune.com.pk/story/1195788/balancing-creating-gender-sensitive-guidelines-media/>
