

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF BYLINE DISPARITY AND THE THEMATIC FOCUS OF WOMEN COLUMNISTS IN OP-ED PAGES OF LEADING URDU AND ENGLISH NEWSPAPERS OF PAKISTAN

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Abstract

This research presents a comparative analysis of the op-ed pages of leading Urdu (Duniya, Express, Jung, and Nawai e Waqt) and English (Dawn, Express Tribune, The Nation, and The News) dailies in Pakistan, it investigates the disparity in bylines and the types of content produced by women. A mixed-method approach was utilized to quantify the frequency of women's bylines and to explore the thematic patterns of opinion pieces penned by women columnists. The findings reveal a significant underrepresentation of women's voices in the selected newspapers (680 opinions out of 6001). The content produced were mainly limited to clichéd content categories, mainly categorized as pink topics, including socio-cultural issues, lifestyle, and gender issues, in contrast to the range of topics covered by their male counterparts. This study emphasized the need for implementing gender-inclusive policies at both the organizational and government levels to ensure the equal representation of women's voices in media discourse.

Introduction

Newspapers are considered one of the most significant media vehicles that have the capacity to shape the public discourse particularly through editorials and opinions featured on their op-ed pages (Obiaje & Oloyede, 2024; Elyamany, 2020; Van Dijk, 1996; Salisbury, 1988). Op-ed pages enjoy a

prestigious status as they provide linkage opportunity to experts, policy-makers, rights advocates, and world leaders with relevant stakeholders (Golan, 2013, 2010). Hence, it is important to provide equal space to all genders and inclusion of marginalized voices to ensure balanced diversity on these pages. However, Gender disparity in op-ed pages has

long been a focus of feminist media scholars and activists (Aladi & Okoro, 2021; Harp & Bachmann, 2018), which is not numerical but symbolic as well, limiting the visibility and influence of women's voices in public discourse (Tuchman, 2000). Editorial pages, regarded as a platform for shaping political, economic, and cultural debates, have long been dominated by male voices, limiting the diversity of perspectives presented to the readership. Such trends not only affect the readers' perception but also reinforce the patriarchal norms that associate authority, expertise, and intellectual leadership with men (Davtyan-Gevorgyan, 2016; Kumari and Joshi, 2015). Inclusive societies are safe and healthier, and ensure increased productivity and economic growth. Women constituted almost 50% of the total global population (Statistics Times, 2025; the constitution of Pakistan makes no distinction between genders; however, the paucity of women bylines on these pages is a reflection of deeper structural barriers within the media industry. Additionally, the presence of a glass ceiling (Siciliano, 2022; Sternadori, 2019) in journalism further exacerbates disparities in the opinion section. According to UNESCO (2012) gender equality in news content is the fair and balanced presence of men and women avoiding gender stereotypes.

Though the philosophies of gender equality are widely recognized, the imbalance in bylines within op-ed sections remains a persistent problem, initiatives like the Op-Ed Project founded by Katie Orenstein in 2008 and studies by the GMMP-Key Findings (2025) highlighted male predominance in editorial domains worldwide. The findings of GMMP (2025) suggested only one percent improvement since their last report on gender disparity in media published in 2020. The Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP, 2025) key findings for Pakistan noted that

women portrayals are largely patriarchal, insensitive, and symbolic. The findings of the Women Media Center (2023) and GMMP (2025) reports reaffirms Tuchman (2000)'s narrative of symbolic annihilation which underscores how women are systematically ignored, trivialized, or stereotyped in the media. These reports also documented that even when women do write, their columns are often categorized under "pink" topics like lifestyle, fashion, and food (Hansen et al., 2025; Lowder, 2012). This extends the notion that men are the authorities on politics, economics, and national affair and these domains are a no go area for women and remain largely unheard in this space. These disparities distort public understanding and reproduce and reinforce gender hierarchies; thus, having a voice and being included in media discourse is a premise for social justice. Therefore, this study is designed to investigate the gender disparity at the op-ed pages of leading Urdu and English Dailies of Pakistan. Further to this, it will also explore the thematic categories of opinion-pieces published by both genders to identify the domains for which women are contributing on these pages. Following questions have been designed to investigate the extent of Gender Disparity and content categories produced by Women in the op-ed pages of selected newspapers:

RQ1: Which newspaper has published the highest number of opinion pieces authored by women?

RQ2: Which newspaper has published the lowest number of opinion pieces authored by women?

RQ3: In which content categories in which Women authored the maximum number of opinion pieces?

RQ4: What are the content categories on which women authored the minimum number of opinion pieces?

Literature Review:**Gender and media**

The struggle for Gender equality in press (Bradley. 2005) has been the prime focus of the media feminists scholars and activists (Ross, & Padovani, 2025, Geertsema-Sligh,, & Vos, 2022; Power et al., 2019; Baker, 2015, Shor et al. 2015). Studies have underscores persistent gender disparity in media more specifically in newspapers (Munouya, 2017). The gender has been discussed in previous studies with reference to underrepresentation , gender representation (Arooj et al. 2022; Asghar, & Akhter, 2022; Perangin-angin, 2021; Sjøvaag, & Pedersen, 2019) stereotypes (Santoniccolo et al. 2023; Yusuf, 2023; Eizmendi-Iraola, & Peña-Fernández, 2022), media bias, discourse analysis (Java, 2024; Mariwah et al., 2023) and glass ceiling (Shor et al., 2024; Fatinova, 2024; Ogunwemimo & Ibanga,2021). The literature review poses a significant gap on Gender disparity on the op-ed pages, few studies by different NGOs and think tanks such as Global Media Monitoring Projects (GMMP), Women Media Center and OP-Ed Projects investigating the disparity in different domains are available, however a paucity of research was also observed by the researchers in this domain specifically with reference to Pakistan. Therefore this study will focus on to fill the gap and assess the magnitude of disparity in bylines on op-ed pages of both vernacular and English language newspapers.

Significance of op-ed pages:

Op-Ed pages are the powerhouses of newspapers, featuring a range of opinions on issues of local and international importance by the policy makers, experts, politicians, and foreign contributors. Thus, the contributors writing for op-ed pages are generally perceived by the readers as authorities on their fields,

intellectuals of the society, and often quoted in discussions by the policy makers, political leaders, and general readers (Coppock et al., 2018; Taglo & Moges, 2025; Elyamany, 2020). The absence or marginal representation of any segment of society or gender has an impact on readers' perception of importance (Van Dijk, 2015). The brain of newspapers is op-ed pages, and the brain of op-ed pages is columnists or contributors writing for these pages. The gender disparity or imbalance in bylines on these pages can have significant and long standing impacts; and can play an important role in reinforcing the existing gender norms and patriarchal social structure (Carson et al., 2024; Colney et al., 2024; Tahseen, 2024; Asahina et al., 2024). This gives an impression of marginalizing a large segment of female voices, which also establishes the narrative where opinions present an issue through a gendered lens, and more dominating one is masculine (Obiaje & Oloyede, 2024; Tabada, 2022; Ahn et al., 2021; Eke, 2021; Harp et al., 2014). The literature indicated a significant gender disparity in the press, more specifically in newspapers. This study aims to explore the trends and patterns of disparity in the op-ed pages of leading newspapers of Pakistan to determine the magnitude and how different newspapers in Pakistan are doing in maintaining balanced op-ed pages in terms of gender equality.

Methodology

The researchers have utilized a mixed-method approach for this study, using the quantitative content analysis to quantify the byline disparity alongside the qualitative content analysis to extract the themes or the content categories within the data. The data was collected from the op-ed pages of eight leading newspapers in Pakistan: four in Urdu (Duniya, Express, Nawai e Waqt, and Jang)

and four in English (Dawn, Express Tribune, The Nation, and The News). Data is collected from August 2023 to November 2023; chosen because of its significance in both local and global affairs. During this selected period Pakistan was undergoing a transitional phase, marked by various key events, including the announcement of elections, PTIs, political leadership is on streets demonstrating their political power, Nawaz Sharif plan to return to Pakistan in October, appointment of new chief justice was in process, religious conflict including Jarianwala incident also captured the attention of news media, as did the establishment of military courts and the beginning of the Gaza conflict. Hence, this period is fertile and provided a rich context for contributors to contribute to the op-ed pages prompted this study to investigate whether women contributors have contributed with the same vigor as their male counterparts. All opinion pieces published during the selected period were extracted for analysis and coded as male and female categories to quantify the byline disparity. Further to this, the content categories were identified and coded to quantify the frequency of the themes appearing on the op-ed pages. The researcher manually coded the data after detailed analysis, discussion, and mutual agreement on content categories. All the opinion pieces published on the op-ed pages constitute the sample of this research, and the headlines and paragraphs are the unit of analysis for this research. Content categories were identified as

1. Politics (All opinions related to internal politics, elections, political leaders, and commentaries on political parties leaders and issues are included in this category)
2. Economy (All opinions related to economy, Budget discussion, Economic conditions etc)
3. Health Issues (Included all opinions mentioning health sector, health condition, mental well-being, basic health facilities, health policies etc)
4. Social and Governance Issues (Included all opinions related to social issues, education and governance, infrastructure issues, early marriages, child labor etc)
5. Climate change and Environmental Issues (Included all opinions discussing climate change and environmental issues)
6. Foreign Affairs (Included all opinions discussing International Affairs, global challenges, International war and conflicts, Regional politics and affairs etc)
7. Religious Affairs (Included all opinions containing religious contents, religious discussion etc)
8. Sports (Included all opinions discussing any form of sports related activities, sports events both International and local, sports festivals, facilities, players, match performances, and tournaments etc)
9. Judiciary, Army Act and other legal issues (Included all opinions discussing Judicial decision, court proceedings, challenges, appointment of new Chief Justice, establishment of Military Courts, Army Acts and other legal issues)
10. Internal Security (Included all opinions discussing internal security challenges, terrorism, terrorist organisations, law and order situations etc)
11. Women Empowerment (All opinions discussing gender equality, SDG-5 Women empowerment, Issues and challenges for women in Pakistan, global disparity)
12. Inflation, Energy Crisis, Dollar rates (Included all opinions discussing Inflation, Dollar rate fluctuations, Energy crisis, energy bills, power sector issues and challenges, IPPs etc)
13. Others

Findings:

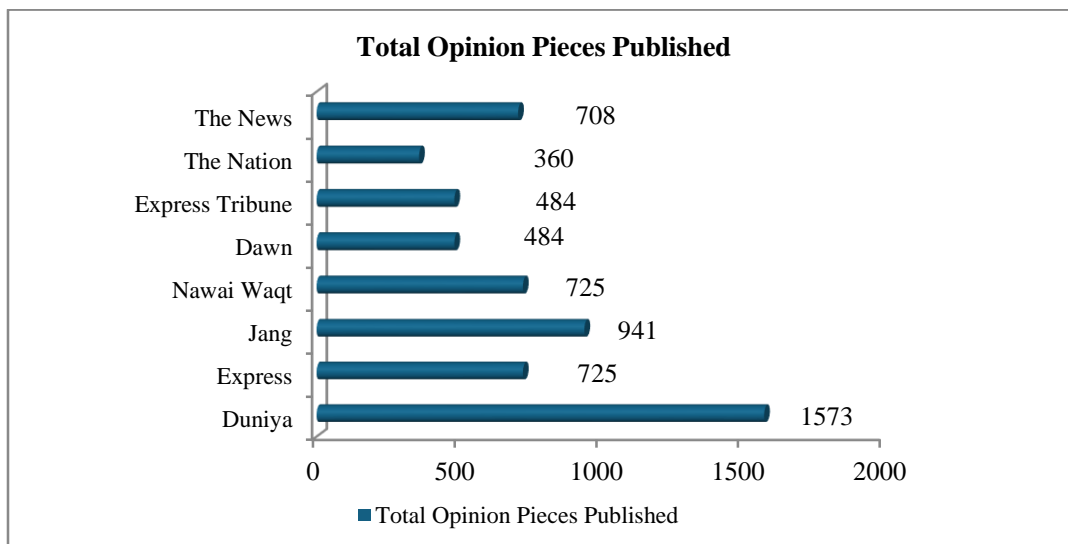
1. Total Opinions Published in Urdu Newspapers

During the period from August 2023 to November 2023, a total of 3965 opinions published in Urdu newspapers, out of which Duniya published the highest number of opinions, 1573 followed by Jang which

published 941 opinion pieces. English newspapers published 2065 opinions, The News leading the way with 708 opinions. The data indicates that the Urdu newspapers have published a substantially higher number of opinions during the understudied period as compared to the English newspapers (Table-1, Graph-1)

Table-1: Total opinions published in Urdu and English newspapers

Urdu Newspapers	Total Opinions Published	English Newspaper	Total Opinions Published
Duniya	1573	Dawn	484
Express	725	Express Tribune	484
Jang	941	The Nation	360
NW	725	The News	708



Graph-1: Total opinions published in Urdu and English newspapers

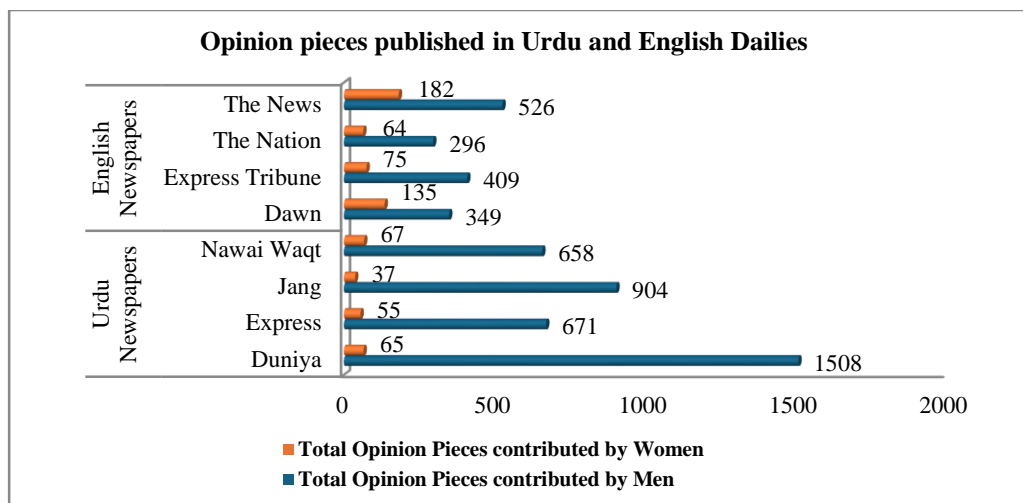
2. Detailed distribution of data of opinion pieces Published in Urdu and English Dailies contributed by both genders

The detailed distribution of data presented in Table 2, Graph 2 indicated the division of data with respect to gender (men and women), establishing a significant overall byline disparity in the op-ed pages across both language newspapers with 680 contributions

by women out of 5321. The detailed analysis of coded data reveals a consistent pattern of disparity across all newspapers; however, both Dawn(135 out of 484) and The News (182 out of 708) have a slightly better number of opinions authored by Women as compared to others, including Urdu and English newspapers.

Table-2: Total Opinions contributed by both Genders in Op-Ed pages of selected Urdu and English newspapers

Opinion Pieces	Urdu Newspapers				English Newspapers				Total
	Duniya	Express	Jang	Nawai Waqt	Dawn	Express Tribune	The Nation	The News	
Total Opinion Pieces contributed by Men	1508 (95.8%)	671 (92.4%)	904 (96.1%)	658 (90.8%)	349 (72.1%)	409 (84.5%)	296 (82.2%)	526 (74.3%)	5321 (88.7%)
Total Opinion Pieces contributed by Women	66 (04.2%)	55 (07.6%)	37 (03.9%)	67 (09.2%)	135 (27.9%)	75 (15.5%)	64 (17.8%)	182 (25.7%)	680 (11.3%)
	1573	726	941	725	484	484	360	708	6001



Graph-2: Total Opinions contributed by both Genders in Op-Ed pages of selected Urdu and English newspapers

3. Category-wise distribution in Urdu Newspapers

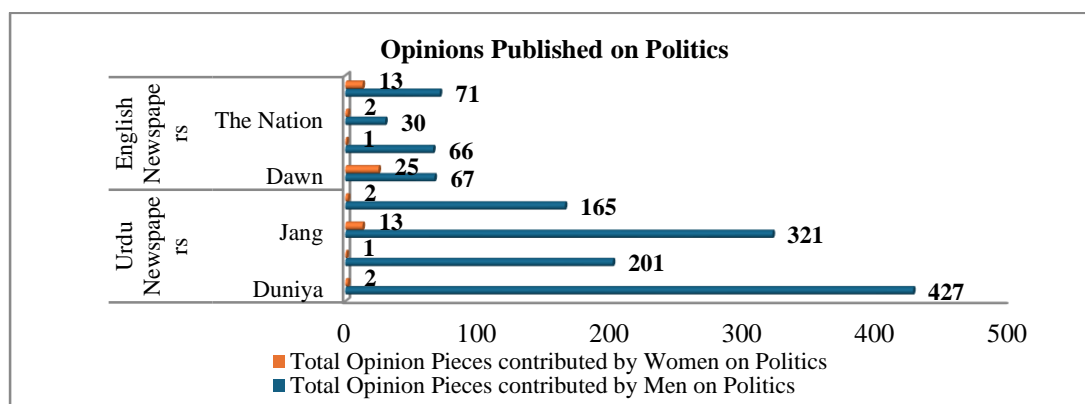
3.1. Opinions contributed by both genders on Politics.

The findings of this category (Table 3.1, Graph 3.1) indicated that English newspapers, particularly Dawn and The News, incorporated more women's voices on politics in their op-ed pages compared to Urdu newspapers, where such contributions are almost negligible. The proportionate analysis of the total opinions published on politics suggested that out of 1407, only 59 (4.2%) were authored by women contributors. The data also revealed an interesting insight that

despite Urdu newspapers published a significant number of opinions on Politics, the opinions contributed by women are notably scarce, such as out of 429 in Duniya only 2 (0.5%) were written by women); in Express there was only 1 (0.5%) out of 202 and in Nawai Waqt it is 2 (1.2%) out of 165. One of the oldest Urdu newspapers Jang published 321 political opinions, with a slightly better inclusion of women with 13 contributions, although this is still low in frequency. Similar patterns have been observed in English newspapers Express Tribune and The Nation, where it is 1 (1.5%) out of 67 and 2 (6.2%) out of 32, respectively

Table: 3.1: Opinions published on Politics in Urdu and English Newspapers.

	Urdu Newspapers				English Newspapers				Total
	Duniya	Express	Jang	Nawai Waqt	Dawn	Express Tribune	The Nation	The News	
Total Opinion Pieces contributed by Men on Politics	427 (99.5%)	201 (99.5%)	321 (96.1%)	165 (98.8%)	67 (72.8%)	66 (98.5%)	30 (93.8%)	71 (84.5%)	1348 (95.8%)
Total Opinion Pieces contributed by Women on Politics	2 (0.5%)	1 (0.5%)	13 (3.9%)	2 (1.2%)	25 (27.2%)	1 (1.5%)	2 (6.2%)	13 (15.5%)	59 (4.2%)
Total	429	202	334	167	92	67	32	84	1407



Graph-3.1: Opinion published on Politics in Urdu and English newspapers

2 Opinions published on Economy

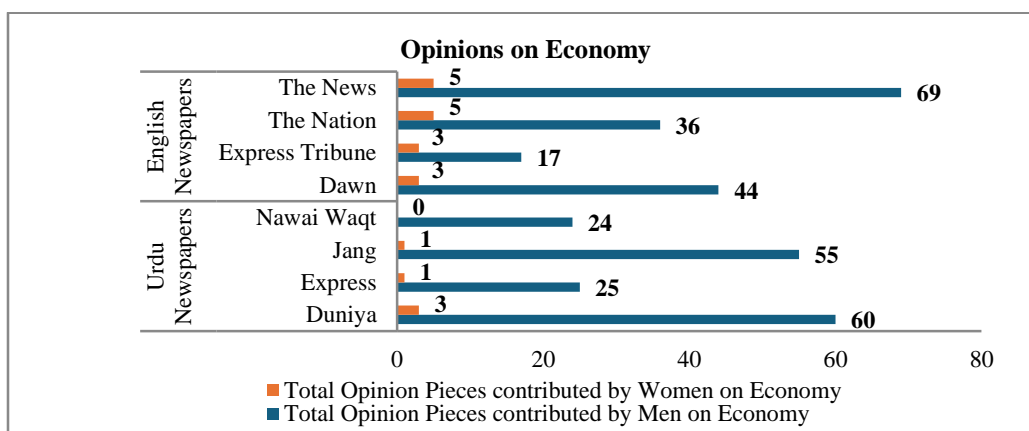
The data presented in Table 3.2, Graph 3.2 highlighted a significant byline disparity in opinions published on the Economy in both language newspapers, just 21(06%) opinions were written by women contributors out of the total 351 combined published on the op-ed pages of the understudied four Urdu and four English language newspapers. The frequency of the opinions pieces penned by

women were 3(4.8%) in Duniya (63), 1(3.8%) in Express (26), 1 (1.8%) in Jang (55), and 0 in Nawai Waqt (24). Similar trends is observed in English newspapers, where the frequency of opinions authored by women were 3(6.4%) in Dawn, 3(15%) in Express Tribune, 5(12.2%) in The Nation, and 5 (6.8%) in The News out of 47, 20, 41, and 74, subsequently.

Table-3.2: Opinions published on Economy in Urdu and English newspapers

Opinion Pieces	Urdu Newspapers				English Newspapers				Total
	Duniya	Express	Jang	Nawai Waqt	Dawn	Express Tribune	The Nation	The News	

Total Opinion Pieces contributed by Men on Economy	60 (95.2%)	25 (96.2%)	55 (98.2%)	24 (100%)	44 (93.6%)	17 (85%)	36 (87.8%)	69 (93.2%)	330 (94%)
Total Opinion Pieces contributed by Women on Economy	3 (4.8%)	1 (3.8%)	1 (1.8%)	0	3 (6.4%)	3 (15%)	5 (12.2%)	5 (6.8%)	21 (6%)
Total	63	26	56	24	47	20	41	74	351



Graph-3.2: Opinions published on Economy in Urdu and English newspapers

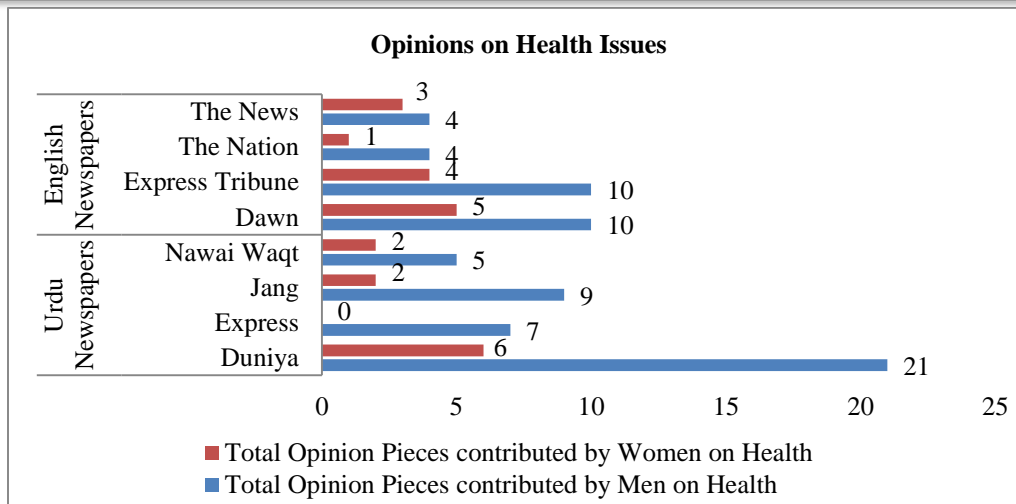
3.3 Opinion Pieces on Health

The findings of this category suggested that 23 (27.7%) were written by women contributors in both language newspapers including 10 in Urdu (6 in Duniya out of 27, 0 in Express out of 7, 2 in Jang out of 11, 2 in Nawai Waqt out

of 7). In English newspapers, 13 were penned by women; 5 in Dawn out of 15, 4 in Express Tribune out of 14, 1 in The Nation out of 4 and 3 in The News out of 4 (Table-3.3; Graph 3.3).

Table-3.3: Opinions published on Health issues in the op-ed pages of Urdu and English newspapers

Opinion-Pieces	Urdu Newspapers				English Newspapers				Total
	Duniya	Express	Jang	Nawai Waqt	Dawn	Express Tribune	The Nation	The News	
Total Opinion Pieces contributed by Men on Health	21 (77.8%)	7 (100%)	9 (81.8%)	5 (71.4%)	10 (66.7%)	10 (71.4%)	4 (80%)	4 (57.1%)	60 (72.3%)
Total Opinion Pieces contributed by Women on Health	6 (22.2%)	0	2 (18.2%)	2 (28.6%)	5 (33.3%)	4 (28.6%)	1 (20%)	3 (42.9%)	23 (27.7%)
	27	7	11	7	15	14	5	7	83



Graph-3.3: Opinions published on Health issues in Urdu and English newspapers

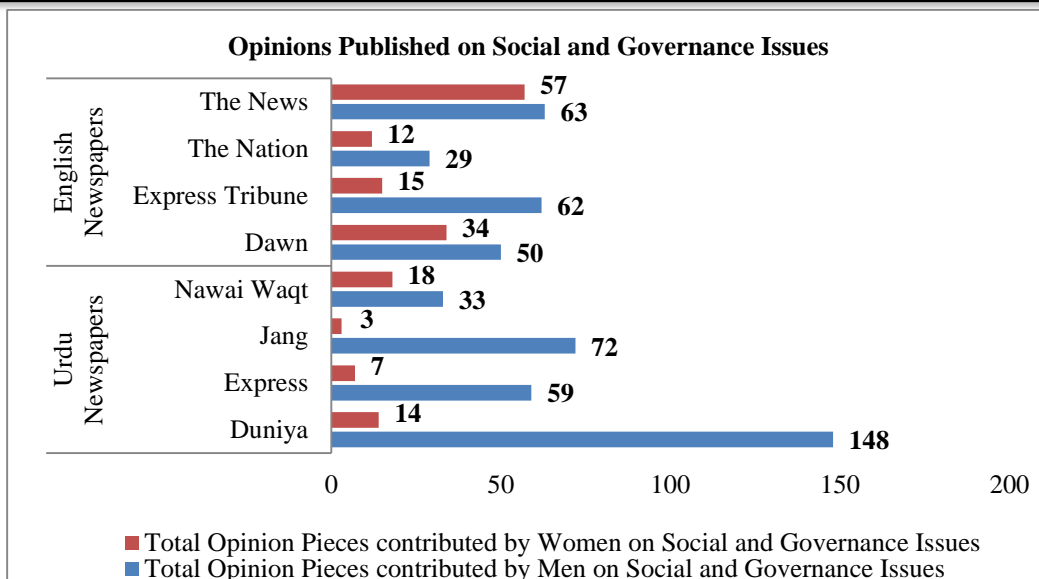
3.4 Opinions on Social and Governance Issues

The findings presented in Table 3.4 and Graph 3.4 suggested that a good number of 160 (23.7%) women have contributed in this category in both language newspapers, though healthy, but not considered as significant as compared to the total contributions by male counterparts. Women contributed the most

in two Urdu language newspapers (Duniya, 14 out of 162, and Nawai Waqt, 18 out of 51); and two English language newspapers (Dawn, 34 out of 77; and The News, 57 out of 120). The data indicated a slightly improved statistic of women contributors in English newspapers, mainly in the category of Social and Governance Issues.

Table-3.4: Opinions published on Social and Governance Issues in Urdu and English newspapers

	Urdu Newspapers				English Newspapers				Total
	Duniya	Express	Jang	Nawai Waqt	Dawn	Express Tribune	The Nation	The News	
Total Opinion Pieces contributed by Men on Social and Governance Issues	148 (91.4%)	59 (89.4%)	72 (96%)	33 (64.7%)	50 (59.5%)	62 (80.5%)	29 (70.7%)	63 (52.5%)	516 76.3%
Total Opinion Pieces contributed by Women on Social and Governance Issues	14 (8.6%)	7 (10.6%)	3 (4%)	18 (35.3%)	34 (40.5%)	15 (19.5%)	12 (29.3%)	57 (47.5%)	160 23.7%
Total	162	66	75	51	84	77	41	120	676



Graph- 3.4: Opinions published on Social and Governance Issues in Urdu and English newspapers

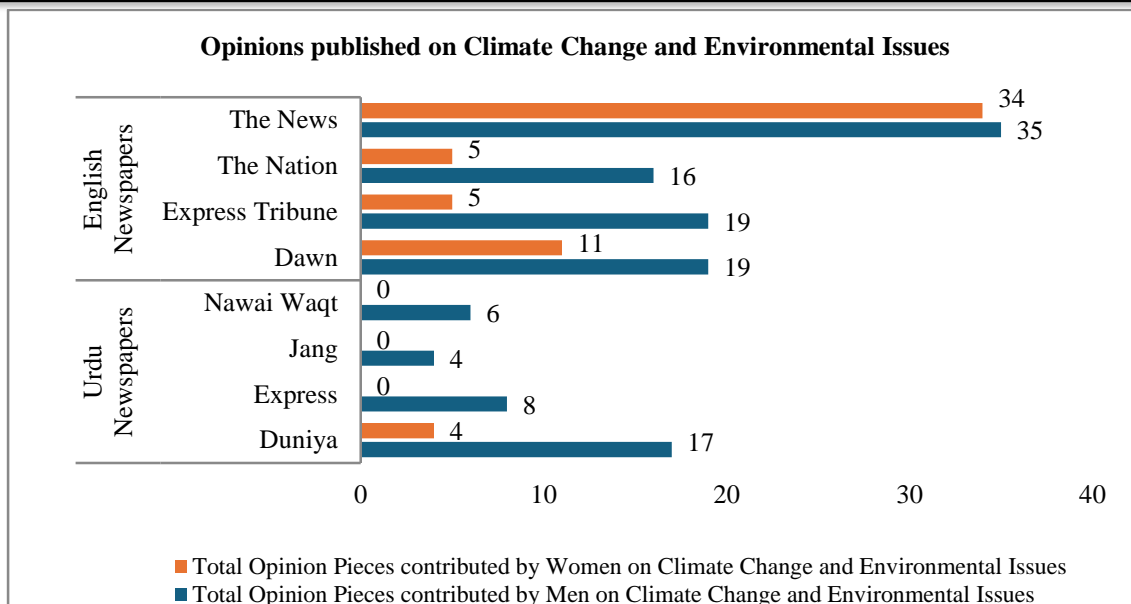
3.5 Opinions on Climate Change and Environmental Issues

Climate change and environmental issues are among the widely discussed domains these days; both language newspapers combined published 183 opinion pieces, out of which a significant number of opinions, 59(32.2%), were contributed by women. It is worth noting that in Urdu newspapers, women wrote only 4, all were published in Duniya, while other

selected Urdu newspapers had no contributions from Women. In contrast, English newspapers have published 55 (out of 89) authored by women. Among the selected English newspapers, The News has published the highest number of opinions, with 34 (out of 35) penned by women, followed by Dawn, with 11 out of 30, Express Tribune published 5 out of 24 and 5 were published in The Nation out of 21. (Table 3.5; Graph 3.5).

Table-3.5: Opinions published On Climate Change and Environmental Issues in Urdu and English newspapers

	Urdu Newspapers				English Newspapers				Total
	Duniya	Express	Jang	Nawai Waqt	Dawn	Express Tribune	The Nation	The News	
Total Opinion Pieces contributed by Men on Climate Issues	17 (81%)	8 (100%)	4 (100%)	6 (100%)	19 (63.3%)	19 (79.2%)	16 (76.2%)	35 (50.7%)	124 (67.8%)
Total Opinion Pieces contributed by Women on Climate Issues	4 (19%)	0	0	0	11 (36.7%)	5 (20.8%)	5 (23.8%)	34 (49.3%)	59 (32.2%)
	21	8	4	6	30	24	21	69	183



Graph-3.5: Opinion pieces published in Urdu and English newspapers on Climate change and Environmental issues

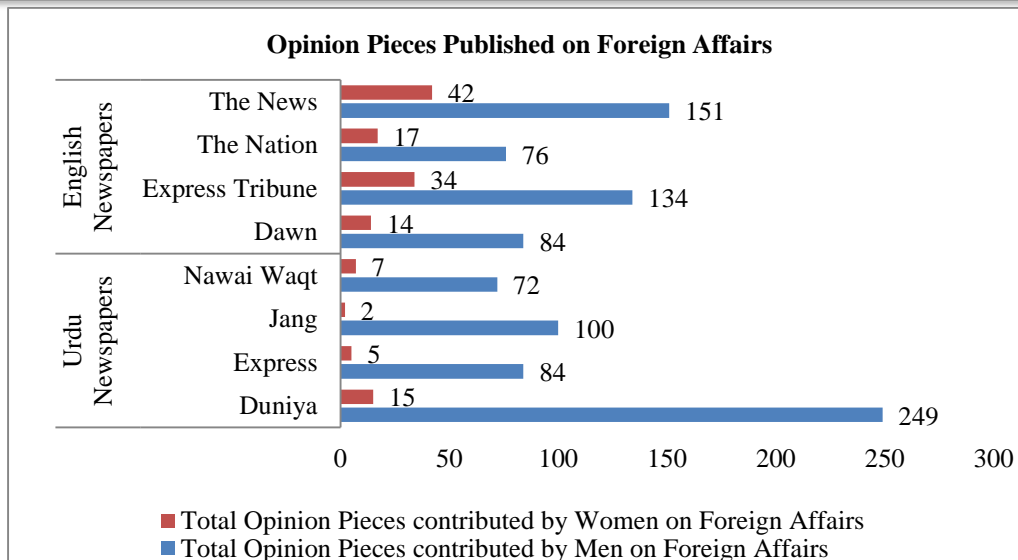
3.6 Opinion Pieces on Foreign Affairs:

This category falls among the top three categories with a substantial number of 1086 opinions were published in both language newspapers. Despite the significant numbers, the women's contribution is notably low in this category, 12.5% (136). Data, especially from Urdu newspapers, indicated that a significant number of 505 opinions were contributed by men, with distributions of

94.3% in Duniya, 94.4% in Express, 98% in Jang, and 91% in Nawai Waqt. However, data from English newspapers (See Table 3.6; Graph 3.6) presented a comparatively better representation, though still unsatisfactory, but slightly better. In these newspapers, women penned 14.3% in Dawn, 20.2% in Express Tribune, 18.3% in The Nation, and 21.8% in The News

Table 3.6: Opinion Pieces published in Urdu and English newspapers

	Urdu Newspapers				English Newspapers				Total
	Duniya	Express	Jang	Nawai Waqt	Dawn	Express Tribune	The Nation	The News	
Total Opinion Pieces contributed by Men on Foreign Affairs	249 (94.3%)	84 (94.4%)	100 (98%)	72 (91%)	84 (85.7%)	134 (79.8%)	76 (81.7%)	151 (78.2%)	950 (87.5%)
Total Opinion Pieces contributed by Women on Foreign Affairs	15 (5.7%)	5 (5.6%)	2 (2%)	7 (8.9%)	14 (14.3%)	34 (20.2%)	17 (18.3%)	42 (21.8%)	136 (12.5%)
	264	89	102	79	98	168	93	193	1086



Graph 3.6: Opinion pieces published in Urdu and English Newspapers on Foreign Policy

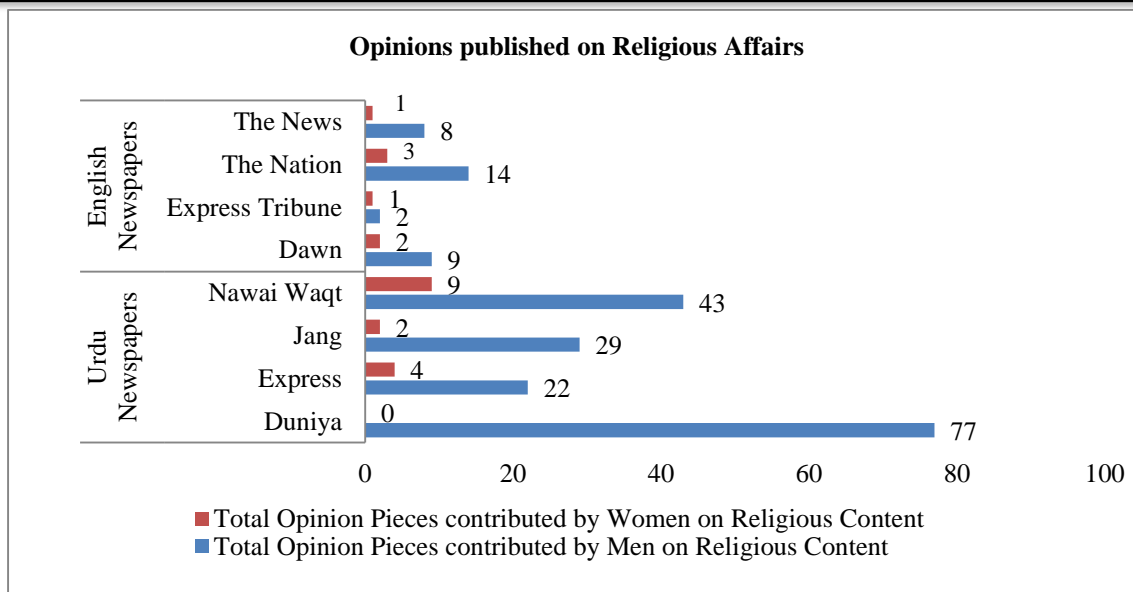
3.7 Opinion pieces on religious content

A total of 204 opinions were published containing religious content, of which 22 (9.7%) were written by women. Maximum numbers were published in Urdu newspapers, including 4 (15.4%) out of 26 in Express, 2 (6.5%) out of 31 in Jang, and 9 (17.3%) out of 52 were published in Nawai Waqt. Whereas

the women's participation in this category in English newspapers was almost insignificant (2 in Dawn of 11; 1 out of 3 in Express Tribune; 3 out of 17 in The Nation, and 1 out of 9 in The News) as compared to their male counterparts (Table 3.7; Graph 3.7)

Table-3.7: Opinion Pieces published in Urdu and English newspapers containing Religious content

	Urdu Newspapers				English Newspapers				Total
	Duniya	Express	Jang	Nawai Waqt	Dawn	Express Tribune	The Nation	The News	
Total Opinion Pieces contributed by Men on Religious Content	77 (100%)	22 (84.6%)	29 (93.5%)	43 (82.7%)	9 (81.8%)	2 (66.7%)	14 (82.4%)	8 (88.9%)	204 (90.3%)
Total Opinion Pieces contributed by Women on Religious Content	0	4 (15.4%)	2 (6.5%)	9 (17.3%)	2 (18.2%)	1 (33.3%)	3 (17.6%)	1 (11.1%)	22 (9.7%)
Total	77	26	31	52	11	3	17	9	226



Graph-3.7: Opinions published in Urdu and English newspapers on Religious Affairs

3.8 Opinions on Sports

Data in this category is presented in Table 3.8, Graph 3.8, which indicates the significant disparity in sports content. Only two opinion pieces were contributed in four months by women contributors. Total opinions were

published on sports were 55 out of which 53 were written by their male counterparts, underscoring sports as a predominantly male kingdom

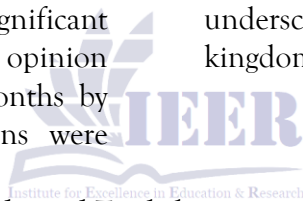
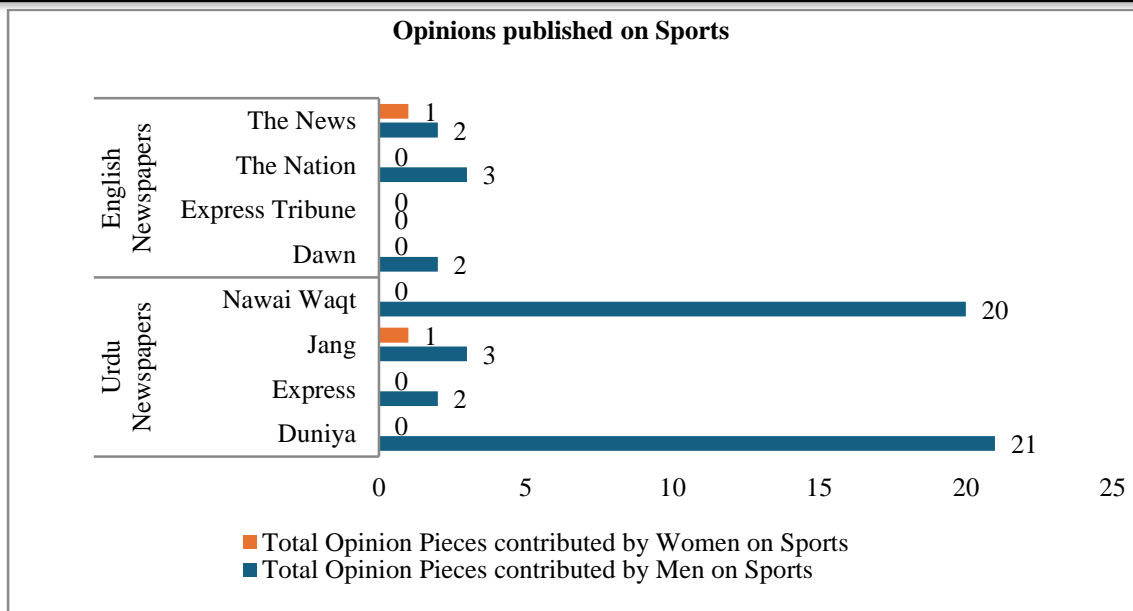


Table-3.8: Opinion published in Urdu and English newspapers on Sports

Opinions	Urdu Newspapers				English Newspapers				Total
	Duniya	Express	Jang	Nawai Waqt	Dawn	Express Tribune	The Nation	The News	
Total Opinion Pieces contributed by Men on Sports	21 (100%)	2 (100%)	3 (75%)	20 (100%)	2 (100%)	0	3 (100%)	2 (66.7%)	53 (96.4%)
Total Opinion Pieces contributed by Women on Sports	0	0	1 (25%)	0	0	0	0	1 (33.3)	2 (3.6%)
Total	21	2	4	20	2	0	3	3	55



Graph 3.8: Opinions published in Urdu and English newspapers on Sports

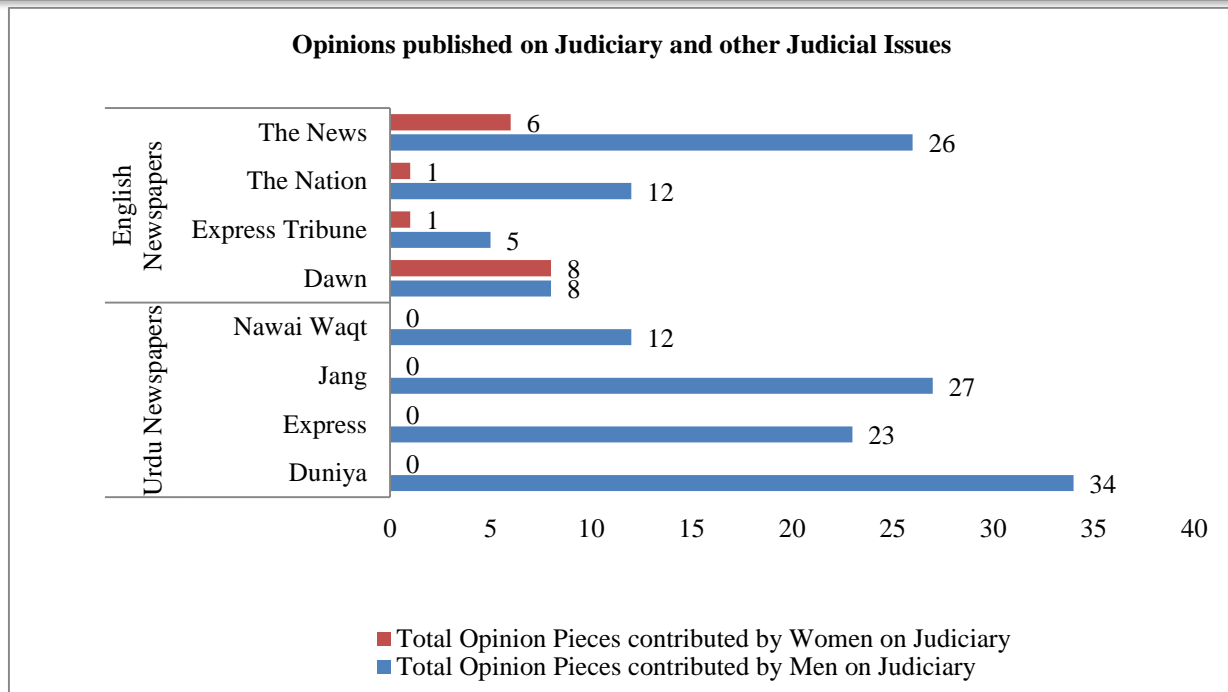
3.9 Opinion on Judiciary

The data of this category provided an interesting insight into the contribution patterns and byline disparity in the op-ed pages of selected Urdu and English newspapers. It was noted that no single opinion piece under this category has been published by women columnists; despite the Urdu newspapers have published more

opinion pieces than English newspapers. In contrast, although English newspapers have published smaller number of opinions, a significant contribution of women contributors, mainly in Dawn and The News with 8 (50%) out of 16; and 6 (18.7%) out of 32 respectively, whereas Express Tribune and The Nation have published 1 out of 5 and 1 out of 12, respectively (Table3.9; Graph3.9).

Table-3.9: Opinions published in Urdu and English newspapers on Judiciary, Army Act and other judicial issues

Opinions	Urdu Newspapers				English Newspapers				Total
	Duniya	Express	Jang	Nawai Waqt	Dawn	Express Tribune	The Nation	The News	
Total Opinion Pieces contributed by Men on Judiciary	34	23	27	12	8 (50%)	5 (83.3%)	12 (92.3%)	26 (81.3%)	147 (90.2%)
Total Opinion Pieces contributed by Women on Judiciary	0	0	0	0	8 (50%)	1 (16.7%)	1 (7.7%)	6 (18.7%)	16 (9.8%)
	34	23	27	12	16	6	13	32	163



Graph 3.9: Opinions published in Urdu and English newspapers on Judiciary, Army Act, and other judicial issues

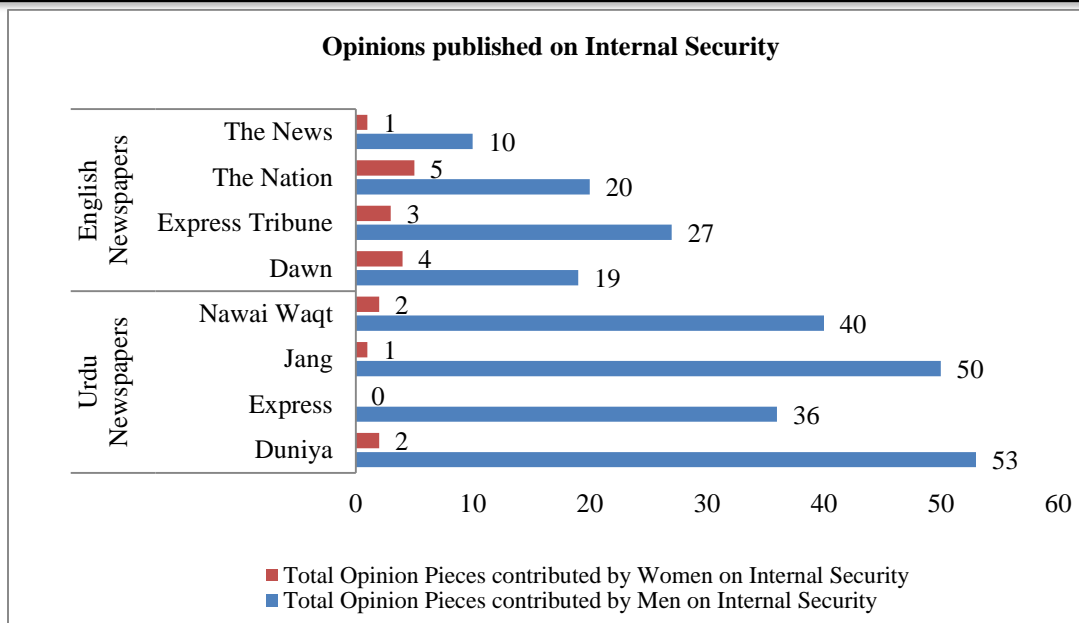
3.10 Opinions on Internal Security

A total of 273 opinions were published under this category, with women contributing notably less totaling 18 (6.6%). Only five opinions were written by women in Urdu newspapers (2 in Duniya out of 55, 1 in Jang out of 51, 2 in Nawai Waqt out of 42, and none in Express). In English, Women

contributed 13 opinion pieces (4 in Dawn out of 23; 3 in Express Tribune out of 30; 5 in The nation out of 25 and 1 in The news out of 11). The collection of opinions on Internal Security, include opinions on internal security, terrorism, law and order situation underscoring a substantial byline disparity in this category (Table 3.10; Graph 3.10)

Table-3.10: Opinions published in English and Urdu newspapers on Internal Security

Opinions	Urdu Newspapers				English Newspapers				Total
	Duniya	Express	Jang	Nawai Waqt	Dawn	Express Tribune	The Nation	The News	
Total Opinion Pieces contributed by Men on Internal Security	53 (96.4%)	36 (100%)	50 (98%)	40 (95.2%)	19 (82.6%)	27 (90%)	20 (80%)	10 (91%)	255 (93.4%)
Total Opinion Pieces contributed by Women on Internal Security	2 (3.6%)	0	1 (02%)	2 (4.8%)	4 (17.4%)	3 (10%)	5 (20%)	1 (9%)	18 (6.6%)
Total	55	36	51	42	23	30	25	11	273



Graph 3.10: Opinion pieces published in Urdu and English newspapers on Internal Security

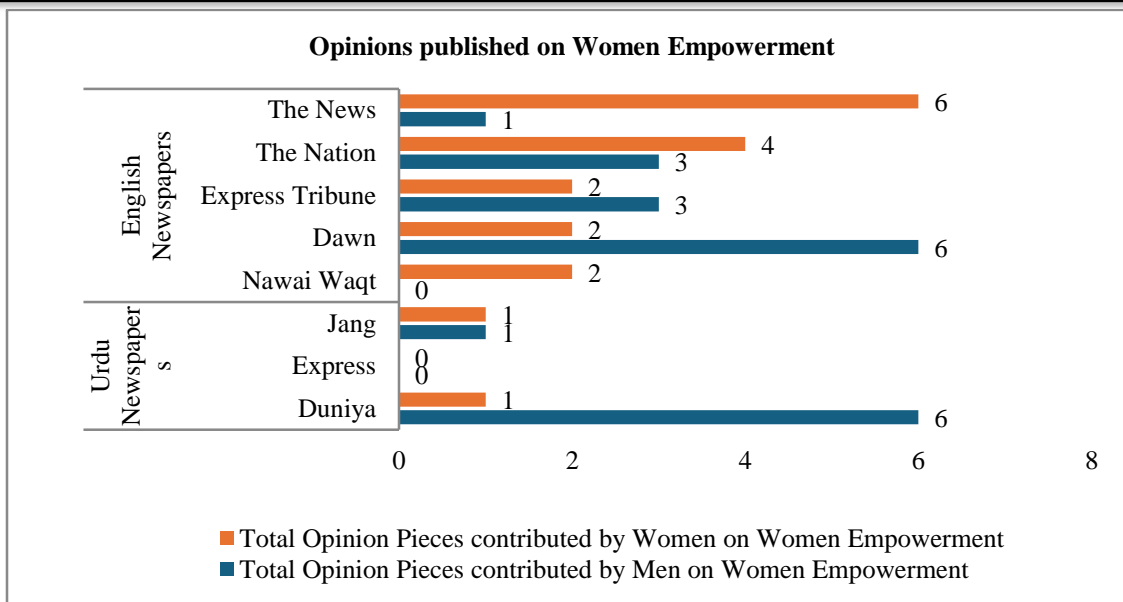
3.11 Opinions on Women Empowerment

Under this category English newspapers have published more opinions (27) than Urdu newspapers (11). The data also presented an interesting insight that in Urdu newspapers maximum (7) were contributed by men out of which 6 were published in Duniya as compare to 4 contributed by

women. In contrast in English newspapers 14 (out of 27) were contributed by Women and 13 were by men, The News is leading with 6 (7) penned by women, whereas Dawn has 6(8) contributed by men. The Nation also has 4(out of 7) and Express Tribune has 2(out of 5) contributed by female contributors (Table 3.11; Graph 3.11)

Table-3.11: Opinions published in Urdu and English newspapers on Women Empowerment

Opinions	Urdu Newspapers			English Newspapers					
	Duniya	Express	Jang	Nawai Waqt	Dawn	Express Tribune	The Nation	The News	
Total Opinion Pieces contributed by Men on Women Empowerment	6 (85.7%)	0	1 (50%)	0	6 (75%)	3 (60%)	3 (42.9%)	1 (14.3%)	20 (52.6%)
Total Opinion Pieces contributed by Women on Women Empowerment	1 (14.3%)	0	1 (50%)	2 (100%)	2 (25%)	2 (40%)	4 (57.1%)	6 (85.7%)	18 (47.4%)
Total	7	0	2	2	8	5	7	7	38



Graph-3.11: Opinions published in Urdu and English newspapers on Women Empowerment

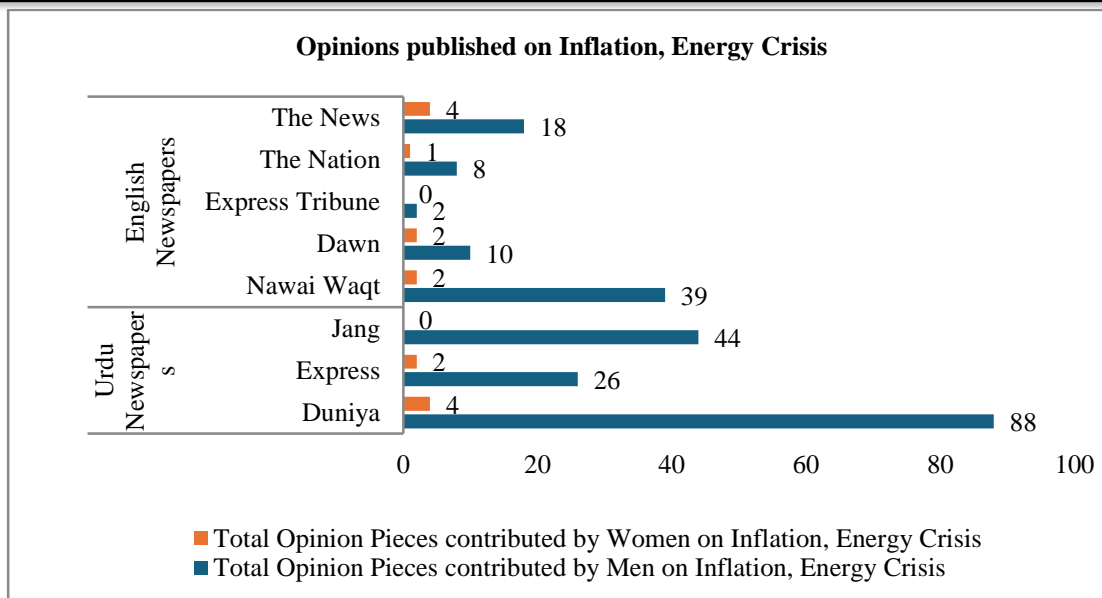
3.12 Inflation, Energy Crisis, Dollar rates

Table 3.12, Graph 3.12 reflected the similar patterns in both Urdu and English newspapers. Total 15(6%) opinions were written by women, as compare to 235 (94%) of their male counterparts. Duniya has published the highest number of opinions (92) in this category, out of which 4(4.3%) were contributed by women, Jang had no

opinions contributed by women out of 44, whereas Express and Nawai Waqt had 2 out of 28 and 2 out of 41, respectively. The English newspapers have collectively published 38 opinion pieces on Inflation, Energy crisis, and fluctuation in dollar rates, out of which 7 were from women contributors, painting a sad picture of byline disparity in this domain.

Table-3.12: Opinions published on Inflation, Energy crisis and Fluctuation in Dollar rates

Opinions	Urdu Newspapers			English Newspapers					Total
	Duniya	Express	Jang	Nawai Waqt	Dawn	Express Tribune	The Nation	The News	
Total Opinion Pieces contributed by Men on Inflation, Energy Crisis	88 (95.7%)	26 (92.9%)	44 (100%)	39 (95.1%)	10 (83.3%)	2 (100%)	8 (88.9%)	18 (81.8%)	235 (94%)
Total Opinion Pieces contributed by Women on Inflation, Energy Crisis	4 (4.3%)	2 (7.1%)	0	2 (4.9%)	2 (16.7%)	0	1 (11.1%)	4 (18.2%)	15 (6%)
	92	28	44	41	12	2	9	22	250



Graph-3.12: Opinions published on Inflation, Energy crisis and Fluctuation in Dollar rates

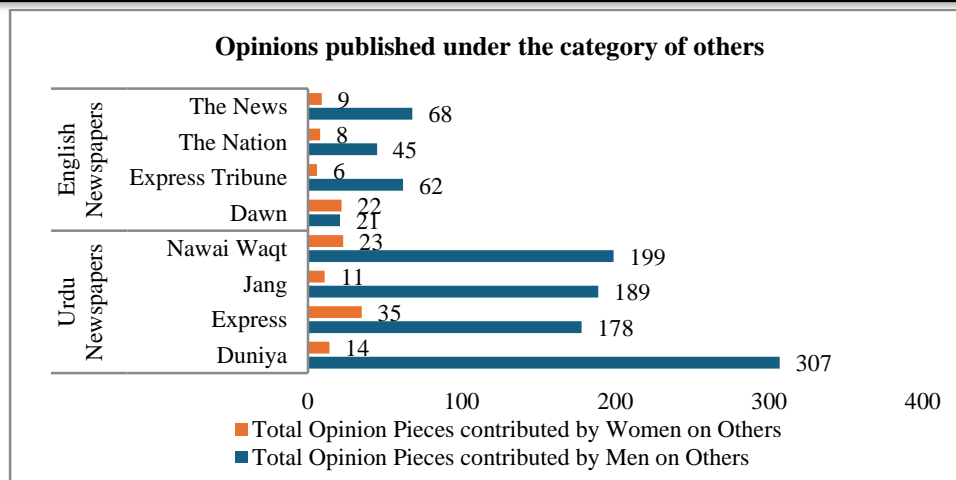
3.13 Category: Others

This category contains opinions on general discussions, personal experiences, literary contributions, celebrations and achievements, Independence Day significance, biographies, travelogues, etc. This category is the 2nd most populated category with 1197 opinion pieces, out of which a substantial number were contributed by 1069 male columnists while only 128 authored by women, indicating a notably low participation from female contributors. The highest number of opinions

published in Duniya 321, out of which only 14 (4.4%) were by women, similar patterns were observed in Nawai Waqt (23 out of 222), Jang (11 out of 200), and Express, which published a slightly higher number of opinions (35 out of 213). No different pattern has been observed in English newspapers, except Dawn, which published 22 out of 43; Express Tribune has 6 out of 68; The Nation has 8 out of 53, and The News has 9 out of 77 (Table 3.13, Graph 3.13).

Table-3.13: Opinions published under the category of others

Opinions	Urdu Newspapers				English Newspapers				Total
	Duniya	Express	Jang	Nawai Waqt	Dawn	Express Tribune	The Nation	The News	
Total Opinion Pieces contributed by Men on Others	307 (95.6%)	178 (83.6%)	189 (94.5%)	199 (89.6%)	21 (48.8%)	62 (91.2%)	45 (85%)	68 (88.3%)	1069 (89.3%)
Total Opinion Pieces contributed by Women on Others	14 (4.4%)	35 (16.4%)	11 (5.5%)	23 (10.4%)	22 (51.2%)	6 (8.8%)	8 (25%)	9 (11.7%)	128 (10.7%)
	321	213	200	222	43	68	53	77	1197



Graph-3.13: Opinions published under the category of others

Discussion

Gender disparity has been a global concern. The picture the data presented endorses the previous research studies in this domain, highlighting the constant disparity in media, specifically in newspapers. Overall findings suggested that only 11.3% opinions were contributed by women in all selected Urdu and English newspapers (Table-2; Graph-2). The data presented in tables (1-3.13) and graphs (1-3.13) depicted that only a few categories have surpassed the least of 25% contribution by women; mostly, it is negligible.

RQ1: Which newspaper has published the highest number of opinion pieces authored by women?

RQ2: Which newspaper has published the lowest number of opinion pieces authored by women?

The data presented in Table 2 and Graph 2 showed that The News has published the highest number of opinions (183 out of 708) authored by women, following The News, Dawn published a significant number of opinions (135 out of 484). If we take the ratio of the opinions published in both newspapers to judge, Dawn performed slightly better with 27.9% compared to 25.7% of The News.

However, it is worth noting that both are English newspapers. In contrast, in vernacular language dailies, the number and ratio of opinions contributed by women are insignificant or negligible. The data underscored that the Jang newspaper published the lowest number of opinions (37 out of 941), and the ratio (3.9%) is also the lowest among all newspapers (English and Urdu dailies). It is important to mention that the Urdu newspapers collectively published 3965 as compared to 2065 in English newspapers. Despite the highest number of opinions published in Urdu newspapers, the number of opinions contributed by women is substantially low or insignificant, that is, 225 (5, 7%) of the total. In comparison, English newspapers collectively published 456 (22%) opinions penned by women contributors. The data highlight a persistent byline disparity in both English and vernacular newspapers, though the English newspapers had comparatively better representation of Women on their op-ed pages; however, that too is not very encouraging.

RQ3: In which content categories in which Women authored the maximum number of opinion pieces?

The data underscores that categories of Social and Governance Issues (160), Foreign Affairs (136), and others (128) have the maximum number of opinions penned by women (Table 3.4, **Graph 3.4**; Table 3.6, Graph 3.6 ; Table 3.13. However, the researchers noted that these numbers are insignificant compared to the total number of opinions published under these categories (Social and Governance Issues 676 (Table 3.4; Graph 3.4), Foreign Affairs 1086 (Table 3.6, Graph 3.6), and Others 1197 (Table 3.13, Graph 3.13). The researcher observed that in some categories, women have contributed more, though the number of total opinions published is less, such as Climate Change (59 out of 188 Table 3.5, Graph 3.5) and Women's Empowerment (18 out of 20 Table 3.11, Graph 3.11). The detailed analysis highlighted a trend that the women contributed more in English newspapers in most of the categories than the vernacular dailies, for example, 118 opinions were contributed by women in English dailies in the Social and Governance issues category (Table 3.4, Graph 3.4), unlike Urdu, where it is 42 (Table 3.4, Graph 3.4). Similarly, 107 contributed in English newspapers for Foreign Affairs while only 29 were published in Urdu newspapers Table 3.6; Graph 3,6 . For almost all categories, a similar pattern has been observed, except for others and Religious Affairs, where Women contributed most with 83 and 15 opinions (Table 3.13, Graph 3.13; Table 3.7, Graph 3.7) .

RQ4: What are the content categories on which women authored the minimum number of opinion pieces?

The categories where women contributed the least are Sports (2 out of 55), Politics (59 out of 1407), and Economy (21 out of 351) Table 3,8, Graph 3.8; Table 3.1, Graph 3.1; Table 3.2, Graph 3.2 . The trend is almost the same as the maximum opinions in these domains penned by women were published in English

dailies. For instance, in Politics, 41 (out of 59 total opinion contributed by women in both English and Urdu dailies Table 3.1) were published in Dawn whereas 18 were published in Urdu newspapers Table 3.1. Similarly, (out of total 21 penned by women) in category of Economy 16 were published in English and 5 were in Urdu Table 3.2, and for Sports category out of 2, one is published in Urdu and one is in English newspapers Table 3.8.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study aimed to identify the gender disparity at the op-ed pages of newspapers in Pakistan; for this, the data of the editorial pages of four English and four Urdu-language newspapers were extracted and coded to quantify the gap. The data presented a substantial disparity on the op-ed pages of selected newspapers; however, the worst has been observed in Urdu-language newspapers. The op-ed pages of Urdu newspapers can be termed as a male kingdom with a negligible ratio of women contributors. The findings largely confirm the previous studies and highlight the urgent need for balanced and inclusive voices on op-ed pages. It is essential that these pages do not present one gender as authoritative, intelligent, and have a more critical eye on issues than the others, reinforcing the existing Gender roles and patriarchal norms. Since this study is limited to the content analysis of op-ed pages to identify the gender gap on these pages, it does not examine the reasons behind this underrepresentation of women's voices; hence, extensive research to figure out the reasons is needed to develop a better strategy to make these pages more inclusive and balanced.

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3. For this paper the researcher utilize Grammarly app for language improvement

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Author 1: Dr. Maha e Darakshan: Data Collection, Results and Discussion section

Co-Author: Dr. Syeda Maliha Begum: Introduction, Literature Review and Conclusion

Comparative Analysis of Byline Disparity and the Thematic Focus of Women Columnists in op-Ed Pages of Leading Urdu and English Newspapers of Pakistan

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