CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 AIM OF THE STUDY

The study is an attempt to understand the research method in analyzing the role of print media in the representation of women’s issues in three English newspapers of Assam. To investigate the coverage and portrayal of women’s issues in three selected English newspapers, The Times of India, Telegraph and the Eastern Chronicle the research method of content analysis has been applied.

3.2 PERIOD OF STUDY AND THE LOGIC BEHIND ITS SELECTION

The legacy of English press in India marked its presence from the British period. The English press in India holds a significant status and mostly the urban educated middle class forms the readership of the English newspapers. The three newspapers The Times of India, the Telegraph and the Eastern Chronicle, all Guwahati and Silchar publication were selected as samples for the study. The researcher selected these newspapers on the basis of their circulation, readership and publication. Three newspapers represent the three section, the national, the regional and the local region that command high circulation and multi-edition paper. The variety in selection was to obtain different views.

The year 2012 was selected for the researcher for academic convenience. Moreover, Assam witnessed the worst incident of injustice against women during this period. Taking notice of the voluminous data the scope of the study was narrowed down by purposive sampling (Krippendorf, 1980). Therefore, from January 2012 every first and fifth day of the week i.e. Sunday and Thursday were selected for the study. The total number of newspaper analysis was 288 (96 issues per newspaper). The reason behind selecting Sunday is because of the supplement newspaper issues which gives more converge of women’s story as articles in the lifestyle segment. The topics covered are not usually the serious women’s issues instead they carry lighter story with detailed background information. The week day carry women’s issues on diversified topic.

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Moreover, events that draw media’s attention are covered for a span of time due to the involvement of the various government and non-government organizations. Another reason for selecting these two days is to avoid the repetition coverage of certain events which usually follow in the consecutive days and help get an unbiased record of items.

3.3 UNIT OF ANALYSIS

The unit of analysis in the study is all the items/issues/news on women, including news, articles, feature, opinion stories, editorials, post editorials, columns, letter to the editor etc. The issues are categorized under different parameters framed to code the items. The unit of analysis was operationally defined as any item on a timely event with a current dateline, an account of that event reported by the paper’s own correspondent or staff reporter.

3.4 BASIS OF SELECTION OF NEWSPAPERS

The criteria for the selection of three newspapers are stated as under:

1. Selection on the basis of their circulation, geographical location and language. The Times of India is a national newspaper with the highest circulation. It is one of India’s most influential papers, and provides a strong platform to voice opinion that has frequently coincided with that of the national government. Delhi, Mumbai and Ahmadabad are the main many cities of publication. The newspapers is published from many other centre and Guwahati is one of them. The Guwahati edition of Times of India is selected for the study.

2. The Telegraph newspaper has rich historical background and coverage. The paper is published from Guwahati and Jorhat for the entire northeast. The extensive coverage on the burning problems is give wide coverage. The Guwahati edition of the Telegraph is selected for the present study.

3. Eastern Chronicle newspaper is a leading daily published from Silchar, Guwahati and Dibrugarh with diversified coverage on various issues. It is highly circulate English newspaper from Silchar and is selected for the present study.
3.5 SAMPLING TECHNIQUE

The sampling technique adopted for the present study is purposive sampling. Purposive sampling is also known as judgemental sampling or relevance sampling. The motive behind the selection of purposive sampling is that the researcher chooses the type of sample in accordance with his/her views or judgement on the characteristics of the sample relevant to the research topic and which are easily accessible to him/her. The variables are given importance in the universe according to the prior judgement of the researcher.

3.5.1 THE SAMPLE SIZE

The selected Guwahati editions of the of the three sample newspapers from 01 Jan 2012 to 31 Dec 2012 comprises of the universe. Two days per week, the first and the fifth day of the week, i.e. Sunday and Thursday is selected for the study. Thus, the study consisted of total 288 copies of the newspaper. Two newspapers per week i.e. (2X4=8), eight issues per month and (8X12=96) issues per year for one newspaper. Thus, a total of 288 (96X3=288) issues of the three daily papers have been covered for the study. Of the total sample the public holidays (15th April and 16th August) were excluded for non availability of the newspapers. Thus, a total of 282 issues have been analyzed for the present study.

3.6. RESEARCH TOOLS

Keeping in mind the exploratory nature of the research topic content analysis is applied to investigate the coverage of women’s issues in the selected newspapers. All kind of stories on the coverage of the women’s issues are examined over the selected time period of one year, 2012. Only the broadsheet and the supplement newspapers of the selected sample are included. Since the present study is on the analysis of newspapers, the supplement magazines are not included in the study. It is seen that the primary objective of the content analysis is accumulating the quantitative data that highlights the qualitative aspect of the coverage. The researcher has employed this technique in the study because frequencies or facts can be used as indicator of phenomenon (Krippendorff, 1980).
3.6.1 **CONTENT ANALYSIS**

In quantitative content analysis the data are used for quantified analysis to ensure valid statistical inference and the qualitative content analysis are purposively selected texts that addresses the research questions under investigation. Qualitative content analysis focuses on the uniqueness of the themes that conveys a range of meaning of a particular phenomena rather than the statistical inference of the occurrence. Smith suggests that, “qualitative analysis deals with the forms and antecedent-consequent patterns of form, while quantitative analysis deals with duration and frequency of form” (Smith, 1975, p.218). The products of the two approaches are different as according to (Patton, 2002). Quantitative content analysis involves a process designed to mould the available data into categories or themes on the basis of significant inference .The categorization involves the researcher’s careful examination and constant comparison. (Berg, 2001) assessed that the qualitative content analysis researcher benefit from the concepts or variables of theory or previous studies in inferring the inception of data analysis.

For analyzing the coverage, a coding schedule was designed that included all the women’s issues in the selected newspapers. The items were codes starting from basic variables like date, day and page number, the major categories coded are the as type of items and the frequency of coverage, source of items, placement, the format of presentation, level of coverage, nature of coverage. The categorization of the types of items are stories on women empowerment, crime against women, women as perpetrators, in politics, legal, social, health, sports, entertainment, international, others and photos . The coding of various issues in the coverage is very significant because it gave evidence as to which issues are represented in the media, which are not and why? In the present study the ‘issues’ fall under the broad category coded to identify the frequency and percentages. The issues or themes are coded in narrow categories for further interpretation of the data. For this study it was important to analyze the subtle themes to study the nature of coverage and the placements of the issues by the press. The dimension of issues in terms of news was diversified and could not be accommodated in a particular category. Moreover the whole universe was analyzed in purposive sampling rather than random sampling and therefore there is much less need of sophisticated statistical interpretations. The quantifying of the
data for quantitative analysis indicates the tendencies to be explored further. The analysis of data is not confined to the frequency and percentage counts rather interwoven with observations and treated in a qualitative and careful perusal of the stories.

In this study, the quantitative variables are:

- Extent in terms of total space measured in column centimeters.
- Frequency in terms of items on women’s issues.

The qualitative variables are:

- To find out the nature and pattern of the coverage of women’s issues in the newspapers under discussion.
- To find out the form of presentation in terms of hard news, soft news, editorials, letters to the editor, articles, features, columns, news briefs and others.
- To find the type of coverage in terms of tone of coverage.
- To find the placement of news stories.
- To find source of the news/issues on women.
- To find out the comparative analysis of the coverage of women’s issues in the three newspapers.

3.7 DATA ANALYSIS

The collected data were analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively. The extent of coverage is measure quantitatively in terms of space and frequency. The nature of coverage is covered quantitatively in terms of form of presentations, types of coverage, tone of presentations, placement and source of the news stories. The analysis is prepared and organized using the MS Excel tool.

3.8 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The present study assumes outmost importance not only from academic point of view but also from understanding the trend of media reportage and coverage by the English
dailies. The concept of credibility, accountability and performance is increasingly found in the discussions at various forums about public institutions like the judiciary, the executive, and the legislature. Since checks and balances control the judiciary, the legislature, and the executive, the fourth estate i.e. the press has no such mechanism to control it, except in certain circumstances where the law can be invoked against the media. Contrary to these institutions media have the duty to represent the case of public to the other three institutions for public good and this duty gives power to the media to be used for any purpose.

Hence the study recorded the pattern of coverage of social issues and the nature and extent to which these are covered which would help in the promotion of further research and offer a value addition to the field of knowledge as well as provide a proper framework for evaluating the perception of coverage pattern in any given universe.

3.9 UNIQUENESS OF THE STUDY

The study is unique because it traverses the underlying depths in the representation of women's issues in print media. The study touches the social aspects responsible for the marginal visibility of women's issues and shows implication on the mediated reality of representation. The study is of paramount importance for mass communication academics, media industry, media management, social work, and other allied social science disciplines.