

PROFESSIONAL STATUS OF WOMEN JOURNALISTS IN ELECTRONIC MEDIA: A STUDY IN DELHI-NCR

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CHAPTER 6: RESULT AND SUMMARY

This chapter provides a summary of the entire research and also explains the limitations of the study. The recommendations have also been made on the basis of the study for further research so that it can pave the way for future researchers.

6.1 Summary of the Results

Findings of this study provide a snapshot of status of working women journalist in Delhi- NCR. Though the reasons and conditions may vary in some specific cases but majority of the factors are similar in the industry. The study was focused on some primary objectives including status of working women, their occupational role in electronic media, pro-equal promotion policy in this profession and psychological factors for female professional in the field. Based upon these objectives three hypotheses were made included: (a) Women journalists are significantly represented in the electronic media in the areas of production, technical and senior management level. (b) There will be a significant differentiation in decision related to beat allocation and promotion of the female and male journalists. (c) There is considerable psychological pressure on working women to handle professional as well as family life simultaneously.

Every research is based on the research questions which inspire a researcher to find out the answers in form of emerging trends and factors behind the research problem. The research Question is a statement that identifies the phenomenon to be studied. This study aims to explore the society mannerism and perspectives towards working women journalists and present conditions of the in terms of gender equality and professional status of female journalists.

The first research question of the study was “How has the electronic media welcomed the enhanced role of women journalist?”. The findings suggest that stature of women journalists have risen in comparison to earlier decades. Women can now be seen in every departments including technical, production, video editing, graphics, reporting or engineering. It also means they are getting mentally prepared to take challenges in the most vibrant and active industry. Women journalists are getting support of their male colleagues in the office as well as in the field in terms of news

gathering and coverage of an event.

The second question on which the study was based was “Are women journalists still finding narrow pathways in terms of their progress in the field?” Results of the study shows most of the organisations are focusing on the talent in their employees. Since TV News Medium is driven by visuals, physical appearance matters too. In the time of cut throat competition in media world, channels are hiring a combination of beauty with brain in context of female news anchors or reporters. Talking about other departments women are getting their due space because of their skills and dedications. Watching women handling heavy cameras in the field or handling news panel during hours long shift put them equal to their male professionals. Considering their work experience and sincerity channels are now hiring them for their own good.

One of the research question of the study was “Do female journalists get cohesive atmosphere and basic support in the field from other colleagues in 'Breaking News' conditions?” Even after being a journalist, a woman is considered as a vulnerable section of the society by certain section of the society. Considering this perspective safety and security has always been a major concern for working women and their families. Safety and security was the major concern amongst all the respondents as after Nirbhaya case in Delhi, the capital city was referred as ‘The capital of crime against women’ by the media. Obviously these kinds of incidents adversely affect women aspirants trying to join the journalism. Since in media, assignments given have to be covered irrespective of the time, most of the respondent accepted that they are scared of going out in the night, even with their teams.

Coming to positive aspects of working in media, the question related to this angle was “What are the positive changes women journalists are feeling in present context.” In response to this, most of the female respondents welcome changes coming in to this industry. Unlike earlier, aspiring journalists and working female journalists feel the change in positivity in the channel management and amongst seniors in various departments. Especially women who are work in field as reporter or cameraperson site their satisfaction watching the society progressing in a mature way.

On question regarding the most common and frequent problem faced by women journalists, most of the respondent talk about the tussle between the professional and family responsibility. Noting the nuclear family structure in modern society, women have to handle their family responsibilities on their own. Though the male partners of the female professionals are now coming forward to share the responsibilities, still in most of the families, a woman has to run between two grounds.

Family is the most important part of women's Journalist lives. The level of support working women get from their partners and in laws reflects on their career progress. Since ages the entire sphere of female activity in our society remained limited within the walls of the house. However, position and value of a woman has been undergoing a series of profound changes in recent times all over the world including our society. The study reveals that trend of supporting woman in Indian families is increasing, which reflects in the form of increasing women entering in the field of journalism.

The outcome of the study states that society mindset is progressing. Thinking of people is changing. Women are coming forwards to share their thoughts and desire to have their own identity. Their families are also supporting them, but safety and security is still a concern for them.

The problems to female Journalists during reporting have been investigated in the research and its relation was found out with the causes of the hurdles they face. Mass media is supposed to communicate the issues prevailing in the society in a positive manner so that people can differentiate in right and wrong. Things have changed in working patterns of electronic media but yet somewhere the core problem is still integrated to it. Problem of gender equality, harassment and psychological social limitation for woman is something which is still deep rooted. It will some some more time to be sorted out with higher literacy and openness amongst top genders.

In such situation, the study also indicate that organisations should give women professionals an extra hand of support like work from home or creche like facility so that they can do their assignment without any worry. Coming to capabilities of women journalists, in times of sharp competition, journalism students are joining

news channels with several qualities and expertise in hand. Aspiring journalists get training and internship before they join some channel. This platform provides all aspirants a choice of their wish, where they can prove their skills including camera, reporting, editing or production. Similarly in time of commercialization of every industry, every employer wants the best worker for its team. Considering the fast competition, channel prefers to hire a political correspondent having a lot of contacts with the political party. Similarly business channels now prefer a deep understanding of business models and issues and hire them. It is interesting to see the result of this exercise as in most of the news channels, women presenters can be seen during prime time shows.

In a nut shell the study indicates several crucial findings which are as follows:

- Total around 87 % female and 71 % male journalists admitted that gender differentiation is an issue to be showcased in media through various ways, as electronic medium is the most powerful and impactful way of communication with the masses.
- Around 48 percent respondents said that women journalists are not lagging behind their male counterparts in terms of better job opportunities and acceleration.
- Total 78 percent men and 66 women were in favour of the statement that News channels are following a gender neutral approach while recruiting journalists in any capacity for the organisation. Only 13% male and 21% female respondents stated that media organisations do not follow the gender neutral approach while hiring the employees.
- Around 64 percent respondents responded positively saying allotment of the beats in the media organisations is gender neutral. Out of populations of 500, 21 respondents strongly favoured gender neutral beats allocations in the media industry. 302 journalists were in agreement of the gender neutral beat system.
- Overall 90 % of the respondents said that women are equally good and multitalented as men at senior level in the media organisations. Out of these, 36 percent were strongly in favour of the question asked. Total 5 percent journalists were not agreeing with the statement.

- 58 % female and 54 % male respondents were having no doubt about the knowledge skills of female reporters. These respondents were in agreement that Women correspondents covering politics, business and sports have sufficient knowledge about the subjects they are covering. 14 percent respondents found themselves indecisive on this point.
- Over 90 % female and 78 % male respondents said, gender and physical appearance play an important role in this field. Out of these 12 percent male and 19 percent female strongly believed in the concept. Total 16 % respondents were not agree with the statement that physical appearance play an important role in electronic media.
- More than 80 percent female and around 69 % male respondents said that women journalists leave media industry or change their career due to the increasing family responsibility after marriage or motherhood. 9% male and 5 % female journalists disagreed with the statement.
- 56 percent female admitted that women are facing problems in getting promotions and salary hike even after giving their 100 percent. On other hand 45 percent male journalists were not agree with the statement. Only 18 percent males respondents admitted that women do face problems after their enormous hard work.
- Total 82 percent of the respondents say that working media professionals get less time to take proper care of their children. Here 14 percent respondents were very much agreeing with the statement, in which 9 percent were female. In rest 69 percent population, 35 percent male and 34 percent female admitted impact of media on personal life. Though 7.4 percent journalists do not think media profession creates problem for women journalists taking care their kids.
- Around 95 percent of the journalists admitted that there should be a separate body for electronic media to address complaints of exploitation, harassment and injustice towards employees. Majority of the respondents that is 57 percent were very much confident referring this issue, where 31 percent were female and 27 percent were male. In rest 38 percent respondents who were agree with the statement, 21 percent were male and 17 percent were female. Only 2.4 percent journalists were not in favor of constituting any such cell.

- 58 percent male and 40 percent female journalists admitted that complaints related to sexual harassment or any other exploitation gets addressed properly in the media organisation. However 20 percent respondents clearly said that such committees are not at all helpful solving harassment complaints. Amongst these 12 percent were female and 8 percent were male who were not hopeful about the existence of such committees. 23 percent respondents were not able to make their mind on this issue.
- Out of total population 58 percent respondents admitted that choosing the media field as a career, was their planned decision. They were self-motivated for taking this decision. After this 15.4 percent respondents said that coming to media was an unplanned decision which resulted their hectic life style. 11.6 percent journalists said they wanted to change the society's outlook and that is why they choose this profession.
- More than 80 percent journalists responded positively. They were in the view that media undoubtedly play an important role in terms of sensitizing people about gender equality. Among these 80 percent, around 61 percent respondents stated that media is an effective medium to create awareness towards the gender sensitivity. Around 22 percent journalists said that it is definitely creating vibes in field of gender awareness. Around 9 percent respondents were not agreeing that gender equality is a worthy issue raised in the media content. Around 6 percent journalists were not sure about the role of media in creating gender sensitivity.
- During the survey, more than 70 percent were in favour of the statement that News channels are following a gender neutral approach while recruiting journalists in any capacity for the organisation. Out of these, 6 percent were strongly defended their view point on the same. Approximately 66 percent media professionals agreed on the point that recruitment process is gender equal in modern times. 16 percent journalists were not in the favour of the statement that News channels follow the gender neutral approach during recruitment. Only one and half percent respondent stated that media organisations do not follow the gender neutral approach while hiring the employees.

- During the survey around 75 percent respondents stated gender is not the criteria to judge a journalist in the field. They were in favour of the skills saying both male and female reporter can be good while covering an event. Around 6 percent journalists clearly said that women are better performer in the field in comparison to male reporters.
- 82 percent of the population was on the view that both Male and female journalists are comfortable working in any shift. They did not categorised the issue on the basis of gender. Out of these more than 60 percent strongly believed that gender issue do not create any hurdle in working any odd hour shift. Interestingly around 10 percent of the population think that only male are comfortable in doing night shifts, as female have security concerns in odd working hours.
- In the survey 37 percent of the respondents were on the same page that women have to face problems in getting promotions and salary hike even after giving their 100 percent. Out of these, 12 percent were very much favour about this trend in the office life. 26 percent journalists were not agreeing that women are behind in terms of promotion and salary hike. 29 percent respondents could not make their choice on this issue as they were not sure about it.
- Between the gender and the knowledge, 82% male and 86% female respondents replied in favour of knowledgeable candidates in the survey. Out of 500 journalists, 421 said that being knowledgeable is more important than being just physically presentable. Only 9 percent female and 7 percent males gave weightage to physical appearance in comparison to skills.
- Overall 26 percent of the respondent stated that women do not prefer night coverage or shift because of safety concern during office pick and dropping. 23 percent out of this population were female which were concerned about their security but interestingly 29 percent male respondent also responded in the same manner, considering the security as the main issue for working women. Overall 22 percent journalists think that night duties interfere their personal life, so women do not prefer it. Total 21 percent said it was their personal choice not preferring odd working hours in the office. This is very disturbing to know that around total 17 percent respondent felt that the office premises is not that much

safe during night hours for female employees, so women journalists do not prefer doing late night shoots in the office.

- 44 percent of the female and 36 % male respondent here said that their first concern is the issue to be covered while going for an urgent shoot. Factors like family and children responsibility and organisation need are the reasons which come later in their priority list. Total 13 percent respondents said that they think about the distance factor while going for such coverage.
- Total 60 percent of the respondents agree on the point that today male and female journalists both gets equal salary and other benefits in electronic media. Where 13 percent strongly believes in the equal pay structure in the news channel offices. Total 21 percent though said that there is a difference in salary and profile of male and female employees with same work experience in this field.

6.2 Significance of the Study

In times when we call our society modern, cases of women harassment and exploitation still happen, that is a cause of concern. More critical aspect is most cases don't get reported and if reported justice is questionable. Media field is not untouched from this cruel reality. Today we see '**Me Too**' **campaign**, where various cases are coming out in society, which are giving us proofs that makes us realises the existence of this malpractice even in today's time. Women from almost walk of life are coming out in public and reporting the sorrowful experiences of their life.

This campaign has opened a debate where people are coming to put forward their thoughts related to gender discrimination. Allegation of sexual harassment on several media and journalism personalities also marks a question, whether women are able to fulfil to make a successful career in media, facing a lot of gender related barriers. No doubt there are women who have always taken a stand against any sort of exploitation in office, but they have also paid a cost for it. to speak against a boss or a superior may hamper a person's professional as well as personal life. Few women or men who have financial back up or solid background could be seen fighting with this negativity prevailing in the society.

Thanks to campaign like MeToo, which has provided a gateway for Indian women to vocalise the stand and message of “enough is enough” and seek justice. In society like India, where we still can hear loose talk for a successful women journalist, fight against gender difference is really tough. But these campaigns have given a boost to the aspiring women journalists who want to flourish their career in field of journalism.

Women are not only half population of the country but they are a crucial part of nation's economy too. It is true that works like household, farming for their own land and their other contribution are not counted many times, but indirectly they also matter when various aspects of the economy are considered. Policy think tank of the Government of India, NITI AAYOG also says that by doubling the women workforce of the country, India can drive GDP growth in to a new path. According to world Bank's report 2017, India's ranking was 120th among 131 country on women workforce participation. Contribution of women cannot be ignored in any profession as women are working hard and at par with their male colleagues in terms of working hours, duties and responsibilities. Niti Aayog says that Indian Economy can grow at the rate of 9% to 10 % if the country witness gender parity in various fields. Accordingly the share of female workforce should increase to 48% from 24% (As per 2018 data).

Women workforce has been a key issue during elections in India, specially in rural parts. Since women are indirectly engaged in farming and small scale industries, their financial share also counts. But there are serious inaccuracies in data related to proportion of women workers as there is no clear updated data of Indian women working in various sectors. It is still a subject of argument that country's GDP would increase when only the female participation would increase.

For considering the involvement of women power in economy mostly the Gollgappa and Samosa example is given. When we see a vendor selling gollgappas or samosas or any other snacks roadside, he is able to run this shop because his wife and other family members wake up early in the morning and spend 6-7 hours to roll out these gollgappas or samosas and making them and other ingredients ready to get loaded on the cart, so that the vendor can just go out and start selling the easy to eat food product. Cost of these snacks get counted in the country's GDP. This value also includes wife's labour in addition to the husband labour. Tragedy is while husband or

male worker's labour is seen and counted publically, everybody appreciates his hard work, neither the wife nor her husband, count her contribution on the parameter of value.

Coming into the regular sector which includes all IIT companies, MNCs, media houses and other manufacturing companies, number of women is also increasing simultaneously. Women workers can also be seen on various technical and financial, medical projects as well as on senior positions in media houses. Who so ever is at the senior or top most position, is responsible for fund raising and revenue generation process for the organisation. That ways credit equally goes to female as males. This draws a pictures where women force is also playing a crucial part of Indian economy.

According to McKinsey World Institute India has a bright opportunity in the world to boost its GDP by increasing women's involvement in labour force. Though, the contribution of women force in country's GDP is 18 percent, which is one of the lowest proportion in the world, it is still motivating many to come forwards, especially governments to work more in this directions to get a better picture in comparison to other developing country.¹

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Safety and security was the major concern amongst all the respondents as after Nirbhaya case in Delhi, the capital city was referred as 'The capital of crime against women' by the media. Obviously these kind of incidents adversely affect women aspirants trying to join the journalism. Most of the respondent accepted that they are scared of commuting alone in the night.

Family is the most important part of women's Journalist lives. The level of support working women get from their partners and in laws reflects on their career progress. Since ages the entire sphere of female activity in our society remained

limited within the walls of the house. However, position and value of a woman has been undergoing a series of profound changes in recent times all over the world including our society. The study reveals, trends of supporting women in Indian families are increasing, which reflects in the form of increasing women entering in the field of journalism.

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The problems to female Journalists during reporting have been investigated in this research and its relation was found out with the causes of these hurdles. The mass media supposed to communicate the issues prevailing in the society in a positive manner so that people can differentiate in right and wrong. Things have changed in working patterns of electronic media but yet the core problem is still integrated to it. Problem of gender equality, harassment and psychological social limitation for woman is something which is still deep rooted. So called intellectuals do not want to address it in its raw form. Male professionals who admires hard working women in public, does character assassination in their male clout.

- Contrary of the earlier research (Chugh S, Sahgal P, Why Do Few Women Advance to Leadership Positions? (2007): Despite being considered as a larger segment of the world talent pool in management sector, the representation of women at the top levels in the field is not satisfactory), the study indicates that women are getting due space and recognition in tv news industry.
- Whereas Nadler, Joel T. Workplace gender bias: not just between strangers, (2012) concluded saying women may get higher position but their pay scale will be lesser than male workers or women will be given underrated work profile at the same position, the study also gives a positive sign in terms of almost equal opportunities and remuneration for women employees as well.
- As viewers see more female anchors/news readers and reporters in prime time shows, the perception towards role of women journalists may have changed as

they can now be seen doing more field work and anchoring. This also shows increasing representation of female force in the Industry.

6.3 Limitations

- i. As media professionals have to work 24/7, it is very difficult for researcher to take some their time for research work. To fill the survey, they need to understand the issue in a whole and then choose their choices in the survey form. But since, news channels have a very hectic schedule, it was a difficult process to get sincere responses from the respondents. Many respondents took weeks to fill up the survey form and interviews as they are always busy with their shift system and outdoor shoots.
- ii. Even though the female respondents are clear in their mind on the issue of gender difference, they hesitate giving their real choices in the survey, as they feel their superiors may act adversely after knowing their views. Most women think, their views about the organisation and their experience can be transformed somewhere else in the office. Keeping this in mind they have a hesitation sharing the real feeling in the public. Whatever position they are possessing, everybody is adjusting things for that position. Revealing their real ideas about the media profession, they think they may have to face the negative effects.
- iii. All male respondents do not seem to be honest on issues related to gender equality. They may talk about in favour of gender equality in public forum, but actually they may have very different views for working women. They still find women as a home maker and keeping that image in their mind, they don't appreciate senior women journalists for their decision and work. Rather they oppose women' promotion, salary hike and any other opportunity being given to females like foreign tours while talking to their male bosses in person.
- iv. Since every respondent have its own angle of understanding, it may be possible that either they may have not understood the question of the survey or they have selected the option randomly. In the research process, this probability is expected as perception is always different for every individual.

- v. While working on the professional status of women journalists in electronic media, it would have been better to get the current authentic data related to percentage or number of women journalists working in various media organisations. Since news channels have a different working style and hierarchy, response regarding employees data was not positive from the channels. Some of the HR Department professionals of channels were not ready to share the details of number of employees. There were some, who took a lot of time to respond, saying permissions of the higher authorities in the organisations is mandatory to share such detail.

6.4 Recommendations

- Government has always considered media as fourth pillar of democracy. The autonomy of the media has always been the strongest centre of its power. Government has never dictated the media organisation but is also expected the autonomous structure does not harm any aim of a developing society. Considering the increasing importance of electronic media government and NGOs have to ensure that regulatory mechanisms on media are guided by the values of gender justice, human rights, sustainable development sexuality and lifestyle.
- Media organizations should be liberal to give assignments to the employee on medical ground especially with regard to the maternity leave or specially abled employees.
- The number of women on senior positions should be increased as per their experience and talent, so that it can give a positive message to other working professionals. Women journalists should be encouraged to discuss their issues related to support and protection to their heads, which need a healthy relation between employee and the employer.
- Support from both fronts home as well office should be increased so that women prosper and contribute in their house running process.
- There should be fair policy on promotion and hike for all employees irrespective of the gender angle. The policy should be based upon the output

of the individuals, so that the highest ranked employee motivates others in the channel.

- Indian media needs to explore the development of International media structure which addresses problems of diversity, human rights and gender issues using existing conventions and instruments. This will help our media grow in a more mature manner. It becomes more important when in sensitive issues like minors rape case and riots in sensitive areas, channels are asked to go slow and patiently. The exchange programmes between the national and international media houses will help to focus more on social development and not only on TRP crazy news dissemination.
- Governments must continue to support community radio and alternative radio channels as they too play an important role these days advertising the USP of a news channel. Radio channels are in good reach of a large section of our society including rural areas, so news channels should try collaborating with the radio channels. That will help news channels to spread its unique feature and focus area of news presentation.
- News Channels should rework on their HR policies in a way that encourage more and more talent beyond exploring the gender perspective into it. It should take advantage of zeal of the employees be it male or female to make the content of the channel better. It will benefit in two ways. One, it will boost the finances of the channel and two, the employees will get motivation to work more creatively.
- Media organisation should provide such an open environment where male or female can openly share their observation and expressions regarding the work and other personal aspects of their office duties. Governments and relevant bodies should commit resources and implement programmes that will increase women's access to communication resources and knowledge, especially to new communications technologies, in a framework of respect for cultural diversity and for regional and local needs and priorities.
- It must assign resources to promote gender equality through mainstream and alternative media and the Internet. It must also promote public debate on the social responsibility of the media, and draw up and implement ethical codes of

conduct. There is need for a widespread understanding that the nation cannot progress, as long as women are left behind as the lesser half of society.

- Electronic medium as a profession is still facing cases of gender biasness and harassment. While we say society is modernising and opening up for such cases, in reality it is not completely true. There are cases where women are being harassed professionally and mentally. Procedure of constituting committees to give justice to the victim here does not always get success to achieve the goal. Sometimes the victim is pressurised and sometimes the whole procedure is influenced from the higher authority. Sometimes the motive is to save the image and reputation of the organisation and sometimes the senior management does not take the issue seriously.

6.5 Scope for Further Work

1. The study has been conducted in Delhi-NCR region, but keeping the wide perspectives in mind, it would be very interesting and effective to conduct the study in some other states. That will give more integrated result to the topic and better utility to the media persons as well as the working women journalists.
2. Study based on similar issue if conducted in other states, it would be interesting to analyze the regional variations in multi- linguistic and multi-cultural, diversified country like India. It will be an interesting piece of information for the working women journalists and the media persons as a whole. The views on gender differentiation could be different in various states depending upon their social and education system.
3. It would also be a good idea to work on women stereotype through-out the states as gender biasness and social strings attached to it as women all over the world are affected to their social and traditional setup.
4. Here the study focuses on the status of working women journalists in various media organizations but it would be more interesting if the future research will be carried out in print media as a comparison can be done the outcome basis.

5. It would be more interesting to understand the perceptions and attitudes of female journalists in regional media houses as they can have their own story different from the above results.
6. A comparative study on the status of Web journalists and Television journalists can also be made in order to understand their perceptions at a deeper level.
7. As state of working women is an international subject to discuss, it is important to do it with much more time and more number of respondents for future researches.