

Winds of change: Increasing role of women journalists and challenges in Electronic media

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ABSTRACT:

When a child is born, it's the mother who teaches her to pronounce a letter. There cannot be a better communicator than a woman in the world as she provides and invent various modes of communication to a child who does not even know the meaning of speech. Slowly and steadily women are proving that their communication skills can turn them an impeccable professional too in the media field. Though the mindset of the society has changed towards women working in the reporting field, carrying heavy cameras and anchoring and shooting at night, still there are few concerns which work as hurdles in the path of their progress and distracting them attaining the career heights. As tv medium is majorly depends upon the field reporting, one of the major concern of media professionals is security and safety while doing their job. Organisations here play a crucial role to make their employees comfortable to achieve the goals proposed.

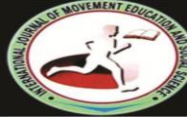
Key Words: *Communication, Electronic Media, Gender Bias, Safety and Security, Working Women Professional*

INTRODUCTION:

Women have entered with a bang in the field of communication that is electronic media. Since ages TV news medium was dominated by the male fraternity as it was more of a field work, where time was not a constraint. But now more and more women journalists in electronic medium are penetrating in the so called male bastion. With new opportunities and liberal atmosphere, women are now able to achieve what they want in field of tv reporting and production.

Though women journalists have chosen this unconventional working field to prove their career aspirations, this comes with some more challenges of being part of tv medium. A woman journalist has to full fill all her duties which is expected from a tv reporter. But with that they have another world to take care off. Taking care your family with your job, is quite a tough task. But if a girl gets education, contribute to the country's economy; it becomes a positive and progressive sign for a developing society. Though there are several psychological and economical factors which keep running in the state of mind of a woman.

One of the major reasons for the upliftment and progress of women in various organisations is the balance between family and working life. Work-life conflict leaves deep impression in the professional life of a person,



male or female. In case of female employees, as they have to work double for their family as well as for office, it is again a tough task. Earlier researches have indicated that women, getting support from the family show more positive sign in the field and get more frequent promotion. Reason being they are filled with confidence and joy as they have no mental pressure on them about their family. There may be other demographic factors like marital status, family structure and nature of job which matters a lot.

This paper reflects on the increasing role of women journalists and changing professional attitude in the media field. The study reveals that working women can touch heights of success without any hurdle, provided their organisation supports them especially for their safety and security. The psychological pressure on working women when they are in office or in home indirectly affects their output. Employers should appreciate women workers to go ahead in their field with some lenient policies and rules so that they can work with an open mind.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

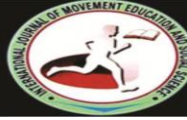
Crystal L. Hoyt, Women, Men, and Leadership: Exploring the Gender Gap at the Top, (2010)

Elite-level leaders in business and government make significant and far-reaching decisions influencing many facets of society. However, relatively few of these powerful positions are held by women. This study explores gender in leadership by focusing on the difficulties women experience in attaining and being seen as effective in top leadership positions. It begins by revealing the lack of parity between the sexes in leadership and in the remaining sections it addresses empirical research that serves to illuminate the leadership labyrinth, or obstacles to women's progress, also known as the glass ceiling.

Joseph Ammu, Whose News? The Media and Women's Issues, (2006), explored the complex reality of the media and women in India. She highlighted the challenges and opportunities presented by the prevailing situation, and to discuss some of the measures and strategies currently being essayed to enhance the potential of media to tackle gender-based disparities within the media and in society, as well as to empower women both as professionals and as citizens.

Gallagher Margaret, Women, Media And Democratic Society: In Pursuit Of Rights And Freedoms, (2002) stated that it is undeniable that women are now 'present' as an important middle-level cohort of producers, directors, journalists and reporters in the media of many countries round the world. There is no easy way of dismantling the obstacles faced by women media professionals. Mentoring systems, networking, improved recruitment procedures, management and skills training, family- friendly working conditions, setting numerical targets to redress gender imbalance in creative and decision-making posts, regular monitoring and performance assessments – all these can help. But the hardest task is to change the attitudes which foster inequalities, and the organizational culture that supports this attitude.

North Louise, Women's Struggle for Top Jobs in the News Media, (2012)



The study provides an overview of the rise of women and women leaders in the Australian news media and outlines aspects of newsroom culture that continue to hamper women's career progression. The chapter draws on a recent global survey and literature on the status of women in the news media. The most recent and wide ranging global data shows that while women's position in the news media workforce (including reporting roles) has changed little in fifteen years, women have made small inroads into key editorial leadership positions.

Rosenwald Anne G. Women on the Verge of a Glass-ceiling Breakdown, (2011)

The issue—growing and maintaining a successful career as a woman in the sciences—is one that remains of concern today. Some aspects of efforts to seek balance between family and career have eased over the years as a result of increased institutional support (e.g., better onsite child care, mandates like the Medical and Family Leave Act), many of the stories reveal choices to leave or never enter tenure-track positions.

O' Brien Anne , 'Men own television': why women leave media work (2014)

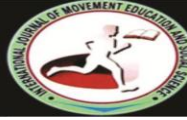
While all media workers face challenges particular to flexible specialization in a networked economy, there are differences in career outcomes for men and women, which occur as a result of gendered work cultures. Women leave media work because of a combination of the gendered nature of work cultures, the informalisation of the sector and structural restrictions placed on women's agency to participate in networks. The interplay of these factors ultimately creates an impossible bind for many female media workers forcing them to exit media work.

Cortis Rachelle and Cassar Vincent, Perceptions of and about women as managers: Investigating job involvement, self-esteem and attitudes, (2005)

The purpose of the study was to investigate specific barriers that might be hindering Maltese women from achieving a managerial position. Here this study is based on research by Cromie. Results indicate no differences between job involvement and work-based self-esteem of male and female managers. On the other hand, both male employees and students seem to hold more stereotypical attitudes towards women in management than their female counterparts.

Cabrera Elizabeth F, Opting out and opting in: Understanding the complexities of women's career transitions, (2007)

This study aims to explore the reasons why women are leaving the workplace. Are they opting out of the workforce to stay at home with their children as current media reports suggest, or are the reasons more complex as the Kaleidoscope Career Model suggests? The results revealed that 47 percent of the women surveyed had stopped working at some point in their career. Sixty-two percent of the women reported that their career focus had changed. Findings show that there are barriers that make it difficult to move across organizations, especially if time is taken off between jobs.



Ibarra Herminia, M. Carter Nancy, and Silva Christine Why men still get more promotions than women, (2010)

Although women are mentored, they're not being promoted. A Catalyst study of more than 4,000 high potentials shows that more women than men have mentors—yet women are less likely to advance in their careers. That's because they're not actively sponsored the way the men are. The survey findings are echoed in our interviews: Men and women alike say they get valuable career advice from their mentors, but it's mostly men who describe being sponsored.

Thakkar Sagar, Nandan Saket, Bhardwaj Shefali, Jhangiani Swati Mittal Raghav, Gender stereotypes and workplace bias Research indicates that most people are not aware of how stereotyping automatically influences their thinking and, therefore, believe that their perceptions are based on objective observations. This paper focuses on the substantial inequalities between genders in the modern workplace and also reviews the evidence for stereotyping, prejudice, and discrimination. Other aspects that have been looked into in this paper are sexual discrimination, prejudices against women journalists, and disparities that do not involve stereotyping. Conflicting views between stranger to stranger research on gender bias and real world discrimination has also been shown.

Desai Malavika, Majumdar Bishakha, Chakraborty Tanusree, Ghosh Kamalika, The second shift: working women in India, (2011)

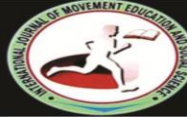
The study aims to establish the effect of personal resourcefulness and marital adjustment on job satisfaction and life satisfaction of working women in India. In the Findings It is found that the home- based working women are the least stressed, most well adjusted, and the most satisfied with their careers among the groups studied. Their ways of perceiving and handling stress are found to be more effective than those used by women in the other two groups. Practical implications of the study are that the study implicates women friendly work policies - like flexible job hours and home office - as well as a cooperative home environment and assistance for housework.

III.OBJECTIVE:

The objective of the study is to find out the level of increased role of women journalists in electronic media and challenges faced by them.

IV.HYPOTHESIS:

- Role of women journalists has significantly increased in electronic media as women have excelled in various roles in news organisation.
- Safety and security is still a major concern amongst women journalists working in electronic media.



V.RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

- To fulfil the objectives of the study, data was collected from the primary sources.
- Interview was conducted with 20 senior journalists working in electronic media.
- The results of the data collected from the working media professionals, was analysed.

VI.CONTENT ANALYSIS:

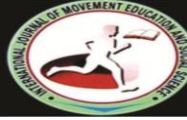
According to the outcome of Interviews, a large section of the working journalists admire the changed and increased role of women journalists in tv medium. Respondents including both male and female admit that women have come across a very long struggle period proving themselves capable as a field journalist. It is also noticeable that working environment has also undergone a major transformation in terms of acceptance of second gender in the field job. Earlier there was not much women seen covering political or sports events in the field or even handling the camera at the locations. But now with the increasing number of successful women journalists the new generation is also positive about their career aspirations.

Male journalists who started their career in 80's and 90's see a drastic positive change in terms of acceptance of women journalists in various departments of electronic media including production, anchoring, reporting , technical and camera. They compare the gender inequality scenario way back in 90's when there was hardly a women technician or camera person could seen in the reporting field. Women were confined till in-house anchoring or in door shoots based on entertainment theme. As the field is considered as a male dominated field, women back then felt uncomfortable if at all they were deputed on some outdoor shoots.

Respondents including senior anchors and camerapersons admit that the outlook of the society towards women journalists has changed. That is why the number of women journalists can be seen covering political, sports, crisis situation and business events. Credit should also be given to the zeal and dedication of the current generation of journalists who believe in taking challenges and proving them as a compatible individual who can take up any task successfully.

Professionalism and journalistic approach has played a crucial role in covering the ideological gap between male and female journalist fraternity. Both male and female journalists can be seen working together more professionally now, sharing news and information and working as a journalistic fraternity.

Though few respondents admit existence of gender biasness in the tv medium. Difference in perspective towards a male and female journalist is easily witnessed in journalistic circles. Few female anchor and reporters pointed out the issue of gender difference by sharing their personal experience. According to their view, society sees male and female journalists with a difference perspective. A male reporter who spends extra time in political circle or with his source, it is said as professional part of his job, but if a woman does so, her character is questioned. Credit of all her hard work and dedication to dig out breaking news from her source is given to her physical appearance and vulnerability.



Safety and security is still a major concern according to the respondents. As visual medium is primarily based on the quantity and quality of visuals, media person has to report in the field irrespective of the distance and time. Women journalists still have to various security challenges at work sometimes as well as in the field. It is also seen that many organisation do not follow the safety procedures of female employees like security guards during the odd hours of pick and dropping. This is a major concern not only for the working women but also their family members. Cases of harassment and exploitation can also be noticed which are most of the time remains unnoticed. Safety concerns sometimes push a working mother or married woman to change the work profile or even leave the career.

VII.HYPOTHESIS

- Role of women journalists has significantly increased in electronic media as women have excelled in various roles in news organisation.

Considering the response of the male and female journalists, the statement is proved correct completely. Both the gender admits the increasing role of female journalists in almost all the streams of electronic media irrespective of their parallel challenges.

- Safety and security is still a major concern amongst women journalists working in electronic media.

Analysing the loop holes in implementation of safety measures in media organisations, the safety concern of women media professionals stands true. It does not only affect their work output but also put their family in worrisome situation. Security factors impact the overall performance of a person working in field or in the newsroom, as it affects the human psychology and comfort factor while working in the field.

VII.CONCLUSION:

Increasing amount of exposure, mindset and changing social values are the core factors which are contributing to the increasing role of women working professionals in electronic media field. As woman has always been considered working in the periphery of a house, the image of a care giver, house wife is still in mind of the society. That mentality sometimes creates hurdle in progression of woman in the society. Even after doing equal efforts in the newsroom and on the field, her hard work and dedication is covered up by her gender. Reason may be the physical strength of a man which is deep rooted in the ideology. Though it is a positive sign that modern working woman are giving credit to their family and partners, that shows, mindset of Indian society is changing rapidly.

It is unfortunate to notice that gender difference is still the issue of a concern in 21st century. Woman who make every effort to prove herself in the field and the newsroom, many times does not get due respect and reward. They have to double their hard work as they have to prove themselves on the work front and on the other side



they have to fight with the mindset of professionals, especially narrow minded professionals sitting on the crucial position in the organisation. It would be inappropriate to say that media industry is full of these kinds of minds, but if the backward ideology creates hurdles in career growth of a working woman, it disturbs a hard working person dedication and zeal.

Though, security is the prime concern of every individual working in the media field, mostly women becomes victims of any such hazard being a vulnerable individual. No doubt there is a need of safety and security of the people working in this 24x7 work culture, so that they can easily and comfortably disseminate the news across the world. It has been noticed that not all news channels follow the norms made for the employees of the news organisation, especially for people working in odd hours. The leniency and careless attitude of the management towards its work force sometimes creates feeling of distrust amongst the employees. So, it would be better for the organisation as well as its manpower, to develop a mutually understanding to fulfil the basic responsibilities keeping all important aspects in mind, so that a positive environment can be created which gives a wonderful output for the organisation.

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