

STATUS OF WOMEN JOURNALISTS IN ELECTRONIC MEDIA - A CASE STUDY OF BANGALORE CITY

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Abstract: Women in Indian media have carved a niche for themselves. The profession which was completely regarded as Male dominated has been a passé now. After 2000 the influxes of women to various media have proved it wrong and that they too have all the calibre to deliver their best at given situations. The media too have opened up their arms to employ the fairer sex in their organization. But very less has been provided to them in creating favourable environment to make it a better place for them to work and sustain their jobs in a long run. This paper tries to take a peek in to the status of working women in news channels and their working condition and also tries to suggest measures which can be implemented in the organization.

Keywords: Gender discrimination, Job Satisfaction, Working Environment, Women Journalists.

Introduction: The Women's Movement has emerged as one of the most vibrant and longest running social movements in the world. Apart from its primary goal of improving women lives, the women's movement has wide ramification on various other movements-social, economic and political. Indian women who have enjoyed a high status in the early years played a prominent role in the advancement of the society. But with a paradigm shift, several factors have contributed to relegate them to the lower rung of the social order.

Our Country has witnessed a remarkable growth in the status of women's education and economical growth in the few decades, the status and empowerment of the fairer sex has not been accelerated, there has been a disparity and a huge gap between the formulation of policies for the development of women and the implementation part of it which needs to be addressed at a faster pace.

The development index of nations is being judged by the measure of the well being of the people. Development is a widely participatory process of social change in a society, which not only intends to bring about materials and social improvements, including greater equity, freedom and other valued qualities for a majority of the people through gaining greater control of their environment (Rogers- 1976). The other half in the universe must be made a part of policy formation, development initiatives so that they too can access equal resources on par with men. Opportunities and privileges in all aspects must be made obtainable to them. They should be encouraged to participate fully in all issues that can shape their lives for a better tomorrow.

Women and Media: As an agent of information disseminator MEDIA has been playing a pivotal role in educating the women regarding the avenues and options available to them for empowerment. The tremendous upsurge of Media in India has exposed them to lot of choices. Women's access to media is also related to power relations not only at home but

even at workplace. The networking and sharing of ideas between women who face similar challenges have contributed meaningfully for their empowerment. The media has been proactively made the issues related to them a part of their work and trying to change the perception of the society towards them in a positive way which is more welcome trend. Issues related to gender disparity, exploitation of women, in equality, ill treatment are not only highlighted but, many issues related to their personality development and growth is also been given equal importance.

Women in Media: Throughout the twentieth century, women journalists across the globe be it American, British, south Asian or European, have been struggling hard to make progress, the media industry continues to be a male dominated one. The number of women entering the field have progressed, but sustaining in the profession in the long run has taken a back seat. The profession of Media and related activities which was confined and over ruled by the male has been broken with a influx of women, taking up various roles and been contributing better than her counterpart. The print, electronic, advertising, Corporate communication, PR, technical writing and so on have opened up their arms for the right kind of talented fairer sex to be a part of the most desired and influential profession.

Women Journalists who are always considered to be more proactive, feminists, direct in thoughts and action also undergo certain problems and find it hard to raise voice against the system and the organization they are working for years together.

Review of Literature: According to Belinda Hopkins, a project consultant with UNESCO claims that only when a women is given decision making position, they can influence the programming and orient the media in her report about women journalists.

The reporters gender does indeed make a important difference in news and thus can be an advantage for

the media organization and for the readers too opines Peter Hart of University of Pittsburg while referring to senatorial election of Hillary Clinton.

Patricia Holland (1980) has debated in her study that representation and high social visibility of women journalists in popular discourse contrasts with their relatively invisibility in boardrooms and at the other senior management meetings.

Objectives of the Study:

- To Study the educational background , Employment policy awareness among women journalists
- To assess the problem faced by these working women journalists in their organization
- To suggest remedies for solving these issues faced by the journalists

Sample: Karnataka state has a strong hold in television industry, Bangalore is considered as the media hub. Majority of the Regional Channels have headquarters and stationed here. All the channels have women journalists working in various positions. The sample size was 50 women journalists from these channels.

Methodology : The well-structured questionnaire was administered to the selected 50 respondents. The survey method was followed which looked into various issues such as recruitment, Job Segregation, promotions, working hours, security , leaves , decision making and so on. The inferences was drawn based on the results of the answers provided by them. The size of the respondents and the fact that we had to depend on questionnaires filled and did not necessarily have a representative cross section of women journalists which is one of the limitation of the data. However, the results are important indicators of the views and perceptions of women journalists, especially since their impact on various issues at the news channels will steadily increase as their numbers are doubled.

Results and discussions: The results shows that majority of the women Journalists (48%) of them are degree holders followed by (38%) of them were Post graduates, 12% diploma holders and just 2 % were some other background. The results have shown that 64% of them had put in service between 1 to 5 years, followed by 24% above 5 -10 years, 10% less than 1 years and hardly 2% have crossed above 10 years of service in media . Its also been revealed that when it comes to income, 42% of them have been earning salary between 10-20 k, 36% of them between 20-30k, 14% less than 10k and just 8% are drawing salary above 30 k.

Table 1: Shows years of experience

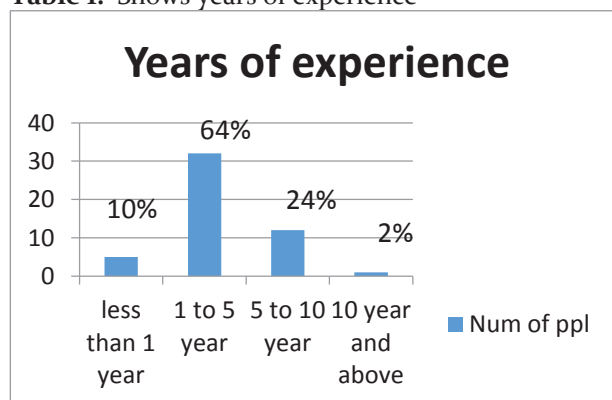
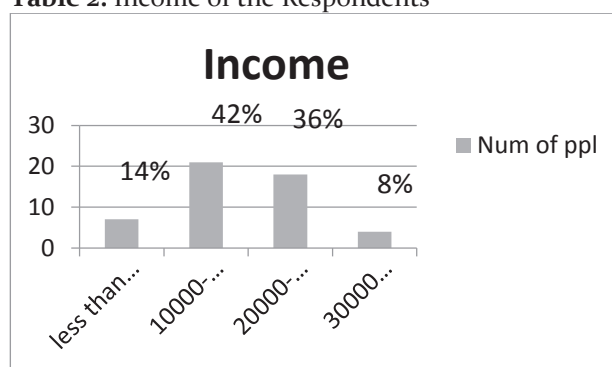


Table 2: Income of the Respondents

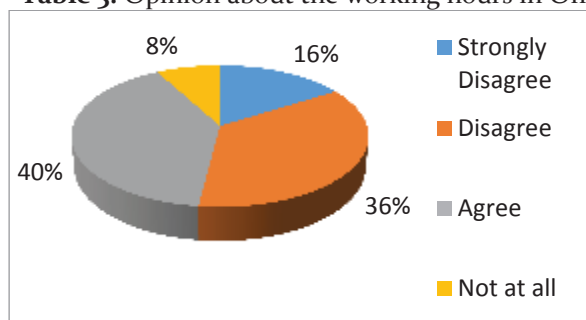


76% of the respondents belonged to the secondary level in the organizations which comprised of reporters, anchors, senior reporters, graphic designers, Bulletin producers Whereas 22% of them belong to the primary level which include voice over artists, , freelancers , proof readers, copy writers and hardly 2% belong to the management level such as editors, associate producers.

Observations have been made in the following areas during the study:

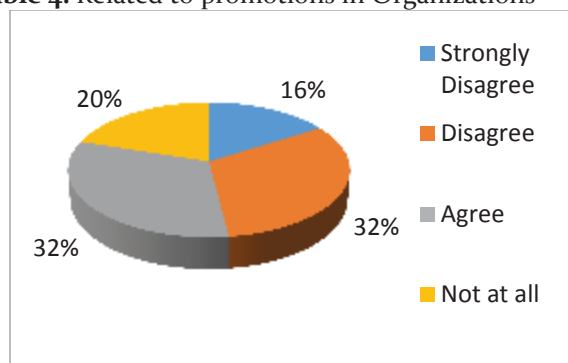
- 66% of the respondents are happy with the working environment in their respective organization
- 46% of the respondents still feel that even now their lies a disparity among the Male and female journalists when it comes to assigning a story. The general tendency still remains that Male journalists can deliver better stories than women
- 36% of the women journalists are not comfortable with the present working hours, though the office provides them the commuting facilities late nights after shifts in work.

Table 3: Opinion about the working hours in Office



- An astounding 32% of the respondents said that women were discriminated against giving promotions at regular intervals, 32% feel it's because of their gender, 16% felt it because of their age and 20% refuse to comment on this issue.

Table 4: Related to promotions in Organizations

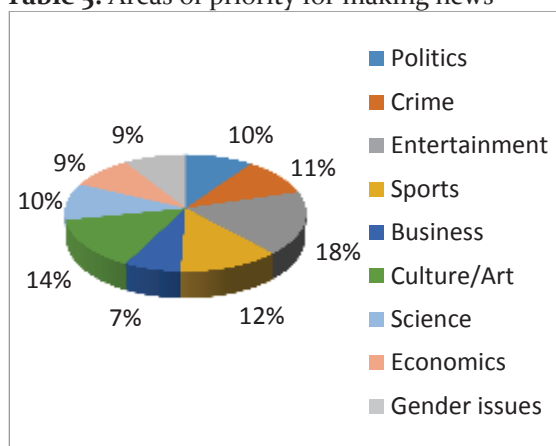


- Evidences have also emerged that 30% of the women journalists are not happy with the kind of pay packages offered to them from their organization
- During the personal interaction it was also emerged that many of the women journalists 56% are opposed to the fact that job should be given and reserved only for the candidates who has a journalism background
- With regard to the working conditions, an overwhelming majority of the women journalists (58%) believe that their working conditions are similar to their male counterpart such as rest rooms, lounges, lunch rooms, commuting and accommodation facilities which is given to their employees.
- 63% of the women journalists are well aware of the equal employment policy existed in the organization
- 18% of them are aware of the on the job training facility in the organization, where as 56% of them are not at all aware and where as 26% are of the opinion that they have availed these facilities once in a while for up gradation.

- The respondents are well aware of sexual harassment do exist in the media organization, and majority of the organization doesn't have a separate women cell where they can place a complaint. Majority of them choose not to do anything about it and hardly 18% have registered a formal complaint against harassment.

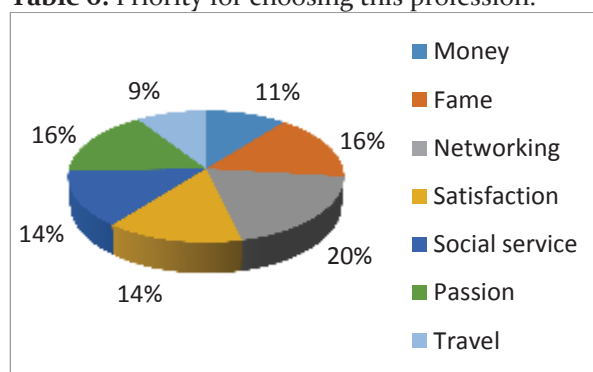
The study has shown that the typical mindset among the women journalist do exist when choosing the reportage in the news room. The figure shows that entertainment (18%) culture (14%) and sports are the more hot favourites among them and gender issues (10%), economics and business (9%) has less takers.

Table 5: Areas of priority for making news

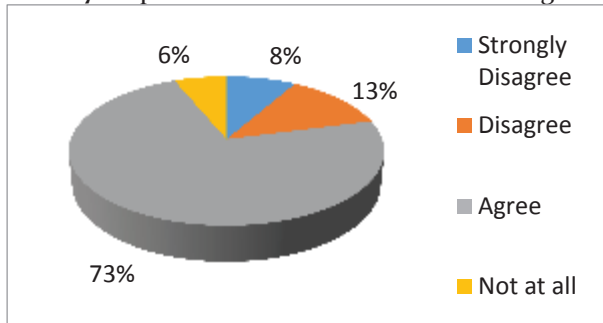


The respondents still feel that the media professions adds nothing more than an economical independence, networking, passion, social service. Fame and networking tops the preference with 20 and 16% respectively, whereas travel and social service motto is least on the list on the journalists.

Table 6: Priority for choosing this profession.



- 73% of respondents are of the opinion that representation at the management level is a must to bring about a change in the conditions of working women journalist

Table 7: Representation at the decision making level

Suggestion for the improvement of the status and conditions of working women journalists in electronic media:

- Selection and appointment of women journalists should be based on merit and not on influence and other stream of education
- Create provision for training about sensitization on gender issues to male colleagues

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