ANALYSING STATUS OF WOMEN JOURNALISTS IN INDIAN TV NEWS CHANNELS

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ABSTRACT

The growing contribution and participation of women in journalism has opened a new era for enhancement of socioeconomic condition of women. Increased exposure to media in India has resulted in need for adequate representation of women in public and private sectors of the media. This in turn has not only provided source of livelihood for women journalists but also ensured adequate and effective representation of women journalists in media. With their will power and hard work, they are seen standing shoulder to shoulder with their male counterparts in every event including natural calamities such as flood and earthquake etc. To analyse the increasing role of women in media, a survey was conducted amongst the media professionals. The findings depicted that though the involvement of the women journalists is increasing, they have to cross a long road to mark their impression on the senior positions in the field of electronic media. Interestingly, some of the male journalist indicated family as their preference while going to an urgent field reporting task, while female journalists took these opportunities as a challenge. They seem to be keen to take any task of reporting, editing or production. Though, the issue of security remains a major concern for all of the respondents, as it is related to a larger perspective of the society.

Keywords: Gender Sensitisation; Electronic Media; Women Journalists; Decision Makers

INTRODUCTION

It has been constantly said that Woman is the backbone of our society and has a very important role to play in a household. But when it comes to the world outside the home, the society has a different perspective towards her. If we talk about media, which is said to be the voice of backward and oppressed section of the society, it is expected that media should play an important role to empower them by creating awareness about the rights of this section. Having been neglected for centuries, women also need a push to claim their rightful place in the society - equivalent to that enjoyed by men. Media has contributed a lot by portraying the sorry state of affair of the fair sex but there is a lot to do when it comes to an equal footing for the women in media industry itself.

The adverse effects of which, as prevalent these days, are bitter testament that women are objectified for vested gains. It is irrefutable that many media houses widely promote feminist glam to market their journal or TV channel.5

The functioning and overall structure of media industry in India has undergone a major change in the last few years. Some factors have shaped the growth of this powerful medium of Communication over the years. Globalization has opened the floodgates to a cut–throat competition virtually in every sphere of our activities. The media and communication industry has immensely contributed in facilitating overall globalisation and in turn this industry has also been affected by this phenomenon.
There was a time when it was hard to spot a woman journalist in the field covering some crucial event related to business, finance, natural calamities etc. But now in a welcome change, women journalists are occupying responsible positions both in managerial and editorial cadre in media industry. Women are working in Media houses as Producer, Technician, Cameraperson, Editor, Reporter and anchor as well. However women representation, in comparison to their male counterparts in the media industry is still very less.

Another important issue is professional inequality which is embedded in media that is structured and strongly based on social differences between man and woman.

It is often seen that women journalists are assigned soft beats such as entertainment and fashion. However now is has been observed that women journalists are moving beyond these boundaries. It has been a hard struggle for women to break the glass-ceiling.

The increasing number of women in media industry alone cannot ensure better status of women. The job assigned to them is always not of their choice but women journalists are continuously proving themselves in hardcore journalism.

**REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

Chugh S, Sahgal P, Why Do Few Women Advance to Leadership Positions? (2007) stated that Women comprises a major part of the talent pool around the world, even then their representation on the senior level has been very limited. Whether working in any field, leadership quality and managerial skills needs to be there, and women managers or those who are on the decision making level has been giving a tough fight to their male counterparts. Many multinational companies, Public Sector as well Private Banks can be the places to observe this change. Thought there are few parameters where the base is quite rough for women. Luck of career planning amongst the working women managers and concepts related to power sharing management are some of the points where the difference can be seen between the genders.

Mishra Deepanjali, Portrayal Of Women In India, ( 2015) The image of women in Indian media is generally in a format that can be associated with a person, who most of the time thinks about the family, not capable to take decision in time of crisis, politically less informed and close to the traditions. Even in the print media material related to sports, business, politics, scandals can be seen easily but persuasive issues are missing. Most of the time readers see articles or features related to women are associated with lifestyle, family and society or some health issues. Female columnists are comparatively very less in number here. Mostly the women, who find place in the main pages are political activists or page three personalities.

Crystal L. Hoyt , Women, Men, And Leadership: Exploring The Gender Gap At The Top (2010) In the world of business and governmental policies, we mostly see elite class leaders who belong to the same field. They are being appreciated for their managerial skills, decisions and leadership qualities. Only few women leaders can be seen here with an impressive position. There is a very important gender factor that has to be studied. While studying this factor, problems faced by women entrepreneurs, business women and leaders can also be analysed, as gender factor also plays an important role to reach at the top position. It begins by revealing the lack of parity between the genders in leadership role and in general, also known as the glass ceiling effect. The study included the research on gender and their leadership styles, traits, and effectiveness which was reviewed in terms of their impact and results. This also shows the difference between a male and a female leader on the top position. The focus of the study was also to study the stereotypes, prejudice, and discrimination, which contribute to the under portrayal of women leaders.

Tomar Ranu, Gender And Media: Status Of Women Journalists In Hindi Print Media In India (2011) found that portrayal of fair gender is just a professional and ethical aspiration. It is as admired as value of accuracy, fairness and honesty. Though it is said in our society that women needs to be promoted, to get recognition, but the reality indicates something else. Mere expectations are not enough. It is just a
concept that women need to be more active and visible at higher levels of the news business, both at work and in the unions. Fact is that in world of hard news, it is still mainly reported and presented by male journalists. So the need of the hour is, people who are there on the top, should actively participate in the campaign to promote and increase the women counterparts in number. They will have to take a stand of the issue of gender equality. Though, despite having efforts to promote gender equality in media, the fact depicts an altogether different story on the ground.

Joseph Ammu, Whose News? The Media And Women's Issues (2006), tried to describe the complex reality of the media and women in India. She highlighted the challenges and opportunities presented to the women by the prevailing situation. It was realised that media has a very important role to tackle a serious issue of gender bias and disparities with the media and our society. The point to focus is that the change in attitude is not only important to bring equality in media, but in every walk of life. If women are treated and given equal opportunities in employment, family and society, the structure of the society will be more strengthen. Women empowerment is a key factor to real development of the society. There should be an attempt from every citizen of the society to give equal space to women in every aspect of life.

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 it talks about different aspects of newsroom culture, which is a constant factor for the progress of women in any area. According to the study, women’s position in the news media workforce (including reporting roles) has quite changed in fifteen years. With their hard work and dedication, women have made small space into key editorial leadership positions. Nevertheless, the relative absence of women in these senior roles remains glaring, particularly in the print media. The study also indicates that in most of the countries, male dominance can be easily observed in the media industry.

O’ Brien Anne, ‘Men Own Television’: Why Women Leave Media Work (2014) The study talks about the reality prevailing in the media organisations and the root cause of the women leaving the media sector. There are differences in career outcomes for men and women, which occur as a result of gendered work cultures. Even after so much transformation of the society, gender bias is still prevailing in the society and work places. The results of the study shows that women leave media work because of a combination of the gendered nature of work cultures, the in formalisation of the sector and structural restrictions for women workers. Social security, responsibilities and attitude towards different gender plays a vital role in the overall development of the half population. Role of these factors ultimately creates an impossible bind for many female media workers forcing them to exit media work.

Bhandare Usha V. Women Exploitation In Media (2015) The study states, that exploitation of women in any field has becomes easy. Being a vulnerable section of the society, women even working at higher position in various fields does not get respect equivalent to men. Advertising and mass media is also one of the fields which attracting young women for career option but unfortunately, it has been noticed that here also working women are being harassed through presenting them in a wrong manner to advertise the product and services of the advertisers. In such a rapidly changing environment, women in media have a large responsibility in not only changing attitudes towards women but also shaping public opinion. The objectives of the study were to study the portrayal of women and their exploitation in different media. The results state that there is need for a widespread understanding that no country can develop without the development of it women citizens. Though, the next generation, especially girls are approaching the field of journalism but here they should also be ready to tackle any type of situation. They will have to learn self-defense mechanism and capable to fights with any problems occurs with their life while performing risky responsibilities in the society specially the occupation choose as women journalist or any other field job in media.

**OBJECTIVES**

1. To find out the level of involvement of women journalists in Electronic media.
2. To get the extent to which news channels have adopted pro-equality policies in their newsrooms.

HYPOTHESIS

- Women journalists are significantly underrepresented in the electronic media in the areas of production, technical and senior management level.
- There will be a significant differentiation in decision related to beat allocation and promotion of the female and male journalists.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

To fulfil the objectives of the study, data was collected from the primary sources. The results from the data collected from the working media professionals will be analysed and tabulated.

The study is based upon objective pattern, as it throws light on the present status of women journalists and their progress.

The primary data was gathered from 50 Journalism professionals through survey. These included male as well as female journalists.

The tool used for study was a questionnaire, comprises of 50 specific questions related to the issue.

The method included purposive sampling technique where professionals related to journalism only will be questioned.

Sampling was done of journalism professionals including women correspondents, producers, editors, video editors, technicians and others, working in television media in different capacities.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

To find out the level of involvement of women journalists in Electronic media:

According to the survey, the number of women working in the media has been rising in Delhi NCR, the top positions like producers, executives and chief editors are still male subjugated. This disparity is due to the fact that because of existing cultural hindrances, responsibilities like like travelling away from home, evening work and reporting issues such as politics and sports which are still considered to be a man’s job. Moreover, female journalists are more likely to be allocated ‘soft’ subjects to cover such as education, lifestyle, designing, fashion and arts.

It also came into light that women working in the media are aware of gender biasness and prone to cover women’s requirements and angles while it is difficult for men to cover such issues because they may not be able to understand the perspective of other sex in depth. Nonetheless, the existence of women in media is more likely to provide optimistic role models for women and girls, to gain the poise of women as sources and interviewees, and to attract a female audience.

To understand the level of working conditions and satisfaction among female journalists a survey was conducted. The results indicated that approx 55.4% felt that men and women received equal wages for equal work in media organization. Women usually comprised between 25-35% who attended trainings. Appreciably more women 65% than men 51% reported that their workplaces offered professional development opportunities.

Hypothesis

- Women journalists are significantly underrepresented in the electronic media in the areas of production, technical and senior management level:
- The statement is partially correct because there is not drastic change in the male and female ratio at middle position. However males at top position are more than the females but still significant difference is still not noticed.
As out of 50, approx 9 females are at top level position while 12 are at Middle level position and only 4 are at low level positions. However, approx 12 males are at top level position, 11 are at middle level position and 2 are at low level position.

There will be a significant differentiation in decision related to beat allocation and promotion of the female and male journalists.

The statement is true as approx 72% of the females have issues related to timing, distance, family and beats. Women and especially employers prefer to give females more soft news rather than hard news. Approx 64% of the females have timing issues while 21% have beat related issues, 3% have distance issues and 12% consider the family factor as a priority before their job.

CONCLUSION

At a time when our society is said to be a modern society, it is expected that in terms of sense of responsibility, there should be no discrimination. The results show a positive ray of hope, as most of the working journalists believe that by each passing minute, society is moving towards a gender neutral live and view.

There are still some issues like social security, physical appearance which are affecting women journalists’ progressive approach. The positive responses towards the gender angle at the time of beat allocation and coverage deployment shows that positive and daring attitude of women journalists is turning the air in to a positive way.

Most of the journalists say that they feel no difference in the news channel’s hiring policy while recruiting any male or female journalist. In fact, women journalists are appreciating the idea of crucial project like crisis reporting for them. Indeed, this indicates a strong developmental phenomenon for the base of pro-equality in the society.

In comparison to the earlier scenario, working women are now openly admitting the loopholes of the system and wanted to be a part of the positive change. They are daring, intelligent, talented and open minded now.

Other important point which emerged out of the content analysis is that male journalists also want equal participation of their female counterparts. This can be analysed as positive sign in the mental approach in our patriarchal society.

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