

## **Women Journalists Working Conditions and Their Suitability in the Media**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*Going through the historical accounts of the press in India, though the women entered the journalistic profession in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, they did not played an important role in designing and reshaping it. Today there are several women editors, columnists and television anchors. In the last decade, more women have entered the profession, and many have equal access to all beats, blurring the 'traditional male area' line considerably. In this context, a study was conducted to know the working conditions and their suitability in the media. The study was conducted in Chennai. A Sample of 60 respondents was selected randomly by using purposive random sampling technique. The sample frame for the study includes both male and female journalists of print and electronic media. The respondents comprised of editors, sub- editors, reporters, programme executives and free lancers in both print and electronic media. The data was obtained using the questionnaire and it was analyzed using percentage analysis method. The findings reveals that women journalists are encouraged and given freedom to organize their work and do not face major discrimination in their working spot on the basis of gender and they are also given decision – making position in the media and their positions in the media is satisfactory. Regarding, importance given for women issues in the media, both men and women journalist consider women issues as one of the important issue and women issues are portrayed adequately in the media.*

During the years since World War II, the percentage of women in the work force has increased steadily. By 2000, the International Labour Organization (ILO) estimated that half of global workers would consist of women. As of 2008, the percentage of women in the workforce was 40.5 percent. ([www.lycos.com](http://www.lycos.com).)

Going through the historical accounts of the press in India, though the women entered the journalistic profession in the late

nineteenth and early twentieth century, they did not played an important role in designing and reshaping it. Today there are several women editors, columnists and television anchors. In the last decade, more women have entered the profession, and many have equal access to all beats, blurring the 'traditional male area' line considerably.

The number of women in the electronic media is dramatically higher than in the print

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media, averaging 30-40 per cent- a figure that no editorial room of a newspaper can boast of (Akhileshwari, 1990).

Journalism is no longer an alien field for women. Like all other professions, women have also gained a foothold in the art of communication through writing. Still they are discriminated in terms of their representation in creative and decision making position. Women are not given duty after 7 PM, as a result of which even experienced journalists are denied responsible decision-making positions and challenging assignments, and also forced to forego promotions (Rajashri Dasgupta)

There are number of constraints on them. It is due to the male domination in the organization. In order to encourage more women to join the profession, it is necessary to undertake a study on the working conditions and position of women journalists in the media.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The study was conducted in Chennai. A Sample of 60 respondents was selected randomly by using purposive random sampling technique. The sample frame for the study includes both male and female journalists of print and electronic media. The respondents comprised of editors, sub-editors, reporters, programme executives and free lancers in both print and electronic media. The data was obtained using the questionnaire and it was analyzed using percentage analysis method.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

From Table 1 it was inferred that majority of the respondents i.e 80 per cent of the male and 73.3 per cent of the female agree that women journalists are encouraged as much as their male colleagues. Twenty per cent of the male and 26.6 per cent of the female respondent reported that the women journalists are not encouraged as much as their male colleagues.

Ninety per cent of the male respondents and 83.3 per cent of the female respondents felt that women journalists have freedom to organize their work assigned as they think whereas 10 per cent of the male respondents and 16.6 per cent female respondent reported that the women journalists does not have freedom to organize their work assigned as they think.

Seventy per cent of the male respondents and 56.6 per cent of the female respondents reported that the women journalists do not encounter any interference from male colleague whereas 30 per cent male respondents and 43.3 per cent female respondents reported that women journalists often encounter interference from male colleague while they work.

Seventy per cent of male respondents and 83.3 per cent of the female respondents reported that, in order to survive, women journalists are forced to develop good rapport with their male colleagues whereas 30 per cent of the male respondents and 16.6 per cent of the female respondents said that women

journalists are not forced to develop good rapport with their male colleagues.

Seventy per cent of the male respondents and 63.3 per cent of the female respondents' disagreed with the fact that, women journalists have to achieve more to get on par

with men whereas (30%) male respondents and 36.6 per cent of the female respondents agreed that women journalists have to achieve more in order to get on par with men.

It was observed from the findings that women journalists are encouraged both in the

**Table 1.**  
**Working Conditions of Women Journalists** (n=60)

Sl.No.	Items	Male				Female			
		Agree		Disagree		Agree		Disagree	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1.	Women journalists are encouraged as much as their colleagues	24	80	6	20	22	73.3	8	26.6
2.	Women journalists have freedom to organize the work assigned	27	90	3	10	25	83.3	5	16.6
3.	Women journalists often encounter interference from male colleagues	9	30	21	70	13	43.3	17	56.6
4.	Women journalists in order to survive are forced to develop good rapport with their male colleagues	21	70	9	30	25	83.3	5	16.6
5.	Women have to achieve more to get on par with men	9	30	21	70	11	36.6	19	63.3

print and electronic media to show their skill and they are given freedom to organize their work without much interference from the male colleagues. Majority of both the male and female respondents reported that women journalists are forced to develop good rapport with their male colleagues in order to survive in the media.

From Table 2 it was inferred that 80 per cent of the male respondents and 66.6 per cent of the female respondents reported that women journalists are given decision making positions whereas only 20 per cent of the male respondents and 33.3 per cent of the female respondents reported that still women

journalists are not given decision making positions in their working spot. This shows that women journalists' decision making power is recognized.

Majority of the respondents 73.3 per cent of male journalists and 80 per cent of female journalists do not agree that organizational policy disregards women employees whereas 26.6 per cent of the male journalists and 20 per cent of the female journalists agreed that organizational policy disregards women employees.

Sixty per cent of female respondents and 40 per cent of the male journalists agreed that

**Table 2.**  
**Position of Women Journalists and Their Suitability in the Media (n=60)**

Sl.No.	Items	Male				Female			
		Agree		Disagree		Agree		Disagree	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1.	Women are given decision making positions in media.	24	80	6	20	20	66.6	10	33.3
2.	Organizational policy always disregards women employees.	8	26.6	22	73.3	6	20	24	80
3.	Management feel men are better suited for the top job than women.	12	40	18	60	18	60	12	40
4.	Women journalists are consulted in the decision – making process	24	80	6	20	16	53.3	14	46.6
5.	Women journalist's suggestions are accepted in the organizations matter.	22	73.3	8	26.6	21	70	9	30
6.	Women journalists are not informative as men.	4	13.3	26	86.6	3	10	27	90
7.	Being straight forward, women ill-matched the organizations needs.	15	50	15	50	13	43.3	17	56.6
8.	Women journalists are discriminated in promotions and incentives.	5	16.6	25	83.3	11	36.6	19	63.3

management feels that men are better suited for the top positions than women whereas 60 per cent of male respondents and 40 per cent of the female respondents do not agree with this statement. This shows that women journalists' talents and capability in caring out the work is respected by the management.

Eighty per cent of the male respondents and 53.3 per cent of the female respondents reported that women journalists are consulted in the decision making process in the organization. 20 per cent of the male respondents and nearly half of the women journalists (46.6%) reported that women are not involved in the decision making process in the organization. It indicates that though now a days, women journalist are given decision making powers, still there is

discrimination in involving women journalists in decision making process.

Seventy three per cent of male respondents and 70 per cent of female respondents agree that women journalist's suggestions are accepted in the organizational matter. It reveals that the women journalists' suggestions towards organizational matter are accepted as that of men. Thirty per cent of the female respondents and 27 per cent of the male respondents reported that women's suggestions are not always accepted in the organizational matter.

Eighty seven per cent male and 90 per cent of the female respondents do not agree with the statement that women journalists are not informative as men. Only 13.3 per cent male

respondents and 10 per cent of the female respondents reported that women journalists are not informative as men.

Fifty per cent of male respondents and 43.3 per cent of the female respondents agreed that being straight forward, women ill – match the organizations needs whereas 50 per cent of male and 56.6 per cent of the female respondents disagree with the statement. That is being a journalist; straight forwardness is an essential quality which a journalist should possess.

Majority of the respondents' i.e 83.3 per cent of male respondents and 63.3 per cent of female respondents disagree with the

statement that woman journalists are discriminated in promotions and incentives whereas 16.6 per cent of the men and 36.6 per cent of women journalists agree that women journalists are discriminated in promotions and incentives. This statement is in line with a microscopic segment feels that they lack promotions and incentives. Rising up the ladder has been rather slow for women journalists. Promotions have not been as frequent as for male journalists (Surekha Sule).

It is inferred from Table 3 that 36 percent of male respondents and 50 percent of female respondents agree that there is an inadequate

**Table 3.**  
**Importance given to Women issues in the Media (n=60)**

Sl.No	Items	Male				Female			
		Agree		Disagree		Agree		Disagree	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1.	Prevailing male domination results inadequate portrayal of women in the media	11	36.6	19	63.3	15	50	15	50
2.	Writing on women issues in considered trivial for men and hence women are assigned the same always	11	36.6	19	63.3	13	43.3	18	60
3.	Women alone can understand better and write about problems of women	15	50	15	50	19	63.3	11	36.6

portrayal of women in the media due to male domination whereas 63.3 percent male and 50 percent female respondents feel that the situation has partly changed. Now the women issues are portrayed adequately in the media.

Majority of the respondents' i.e 63.3 percent of male and 60 per cent of female disagrees with the statement and reported that women issues are not considered trivial

by men and women issues are assigned equally for both men and women journalists whereas 36.6 per cent and 43.3 per cent of male and female journalists respectively reported by that considering women issues trivial and it is often assigned to women for coverage. Quite a few women believe there are no discrimination and no glass ceiling in major English language papers. However, there is a tendency to push women into feature writing

and even non – serious writing such as reporting parties and social events (Akhileshwari).

Fifty percent of the male and 63.3 percent of the female respondents reported that, women can understand better about the problems of women and give exclusive coverage than men. But 50 per cent of male and 36.6 per cent of the women journalists reported that even men can write better about women problem.

The above result reveals that both men and women consider women issues as one of the important issue and women issues are portrayed adequately in the media.

## **CONCLUSION**

The findings reveals that women journalists are encouraged and given freedom to organize their work and do not face major discrimination in their working spot on the basis of gender. It is also found that male

colleagues are friendly and co-operative towards women in the organization.

It is also observed that women journalists are given decision – making position in the media and their positions in the media are satisfactory.

Regarding, importance given for women issues in the media, both men and women consider women issues as one of the important issue and women issues are portrayed adequately in the media.

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