

## A Study on Challenges for Women Journalists in Electronic Media

Aparna Rastogi

Assistant Professor and Centre Coordinator, Fashion Communication Department,  
National Institute of Fashion Technology, Ministry of Textiles, Government of India.

### ABSTRACT

No nation can endure without its essential cornerstone, the media, whether print or electronic. When discussing the communication of government programs and schemes, electronic media is the primary consideration. During the third wave of feminism, the prevalence of women journalists throughout various states in India reveals a striking paradox. Additionally, a concerning tendency of 'gendered' journalism is developing, in which exclusively 'gendered' or feminine news is allocated to female journalists. Despite several opportunities in the realm of electronic media for women, several barriers persist for female journalists. This paper seeks to determine whether the pronounced disparity in the numbers and roles of female journalists exists throughout various regions of India. It examines hard and soft news articles disseminated by prominent regional English and Hindi newspapers. The analysis has been conducted about several characteristics, including the ratio of male to female reporters, the beats given to female journalists, the nature and frequency of stories they cover, and the priority of female journalists concerning key problems. This article relies exclusively on secondary data sources. Numerous cases involving women journalists in various electronic media have been studied.

**KEYWORDS:** *Feminine News; Gender Disparity; Gendered Journalism; Women Journalists, Electronic Media.*

### INTRODUCTION

In the age of Information and Technology, journalism is a profession that should equally represent both males and females in society. Historically, journalism was regarded as a predominantly male vocation. The situation has completely transformed; educated young women have infiltrated the masculine stronghold. An exemplary case is that of the late PrabhaDutt, who graduated with distinction from the Chandigarh School of Journalism and completed her training at Hindustan Times, Delhi, in 1964. Upon her request for employment at the conclusion of the course, the editor, Mr. Mulgaonkar, stated that the publication did not hire women. Prabha departed only after receiving a formal guarantee from the editor that any future employment of a woman will be taken into account. Several months later, upon hiring

a young woman for the front desk, she intrusively entered his office and secured employment. The susceptibility of women to social pressures and their

**Address for correspondence : Dr. Aparna Rastogi**, Assistant Professor and Centre Coordinator, Fashion Communication Department, National Institute of Fashion Technology, Ministry of Textiles.  
ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0006-9395-8438>  
E-mail: [smile.aparnarastogi@gmail.com](mailto:smile.aparnarastogi@gmail.com)

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vulnerability to sexual harassment and physical threats cannot be disregarded. Gender sensitisation sessions and fundamental human principles should be implemented to dismantle the hurdles hindering women in media. The working environment have consistently been uninviting for women to pursue occupations beyond domestic responsibilities. The primary challenges that female journalists encounter are to transportation and communication in their offices and during field reporting. A majority of female journalists globally frequently encounter various forms of intimidation, threats, or harassment associated with their profession, with severity ranging from derogatory remarks to death threats. Shivani Bhatnagar, principal journalist for The Indian Express, was murdered in her East Delhi flat while accompanied by her young son. Shivani Bhatnagar, a journalist, passed away on January 23, 1999. Her murder escalated into a scandal that permeated the highest echelons of Indian politics. On September 27, 2002, service officer Ravi Kant Sharma was charged with murder by the Delhi Police after evading capture since an arrest warrant was issued on August 2 of the same year. Sharma purportedly murdered Bhatnagar due to his worry that she would reveal their “intimate” relationship. On 22 August 2013, a 22-year-old photojournalist in Mumbai was gang-raped by five individuals at the Shakti Mills facility, when she was on assignment with a male colleague. The males purportedly beat the coworker, restraining him with belts, then sequentially raping the female while threatening her with a broken beer bottle.

### **WHAT CONSTITUTES ELECTRONIC MEDIA?**

In the 19th century, early innovators such as Samuel Morse developed the telegraph, signifying the advent of electronic media. The introduction of the radio in the early 20th century revolutionised communication by allowing the public to access audio content. However, the genuine transformation in electronic media occurred with the advent of television. The late 1920s witnessed the inaugural successful demonstration of a television system. By the mid-20th century, televisions significantly impacted the manner in which individuals consumed information and entertainment, as they became a commonplace household appliance. Television connected viewers to distant events by rendering sounds and sights

tangible. It significantly influenced political discourse, public sentiment, and the globalisation of culture.

The advent of electronic media has transformed communication methods among individuals. The advancement of smartphones has enabled continuous connectivity, eliminating constraints related to geography and time. Social media platforms facilitate global idea and information exchange, fostering virtual communities and linking individuals with similar interests from diverse backgrounds. The internet has significantly increased the accessibility of information. Currently, a vast array of information on various subjects is available to everyone with internet access. Social media facilitates the rapid dissemination of news and information, offering real-time updates on global events and issues. Television and streaming services have revolutionised the entertainment industry, enabling customers to access a wide array of information on demand. Viewers now possess greater autonomy in their viewing preferences due to the shift from traditional cable television to over-the-top (OTT) providers.

The emergence of electronic media has facilitated cross-cultural contact and enhanced globalisation. The distribution of materials from several cultures to a worldwide audience has led to the amalgamation of traditions, beliefs, and concepts. This may result in cultural uniformity or promote cross-cultural understanding, each with positive and negative consequences. The swift and seamless dissemination of information on the internet has led to the proliferation of misinformation and fabricated news. False information proliferates due to the challenge of differentiating between credible and dubious sources in the era of social media.

The digitisation of personal data presents significant privacy and security issues. Robust security protocols are essential to safeguard users' data and digital identities, given the increasing prevalence of identity theft, data breaches, and cyber-attacks. Despite the pervasive utilisation of electronic media, numerous individuals, particularly in underprivileged nations, continue to encounter obstacles in obtaining opportunities and information as a result of the digital divide. To promote

digital inclusion and ensure equitable access to financial and educational resources, closing this gap is essential<sup>1</sup>.

The persistent connectivity of electronic media may adversely impact mental health and contribute to addiction. Social media has been associated with issues such as depression, anxiety, and cyberbullying, particularly among younger users. Technologies such as virtual reality and augmented reality possess the capacity to fundamentally transform material consumption by providing immersive experiences across various sectors, including entertainment, education, and gaming.

Artificial intelligence is becoming vital in data analysis, personalisation, and content recommendation, enabling media companies to more effectively cater to their clients and address their specific requirements. The trend of cord-cutting, when people prefer streaming services to traditional cable television, is anticipated to continue. This transformation presents both opportunities and challenges for media enterprises and content creators. As electronic media evolves, governments and stakeholders must confront issues such as data privacy, content moderation, and the responsibility of social media platforms to mitigate dangerous information and disinformation<sup>2</sup>.

## **WOMEN PROFESSIONALS IN ELECTRONIC MEDIA: THE INDIA STORY**

In India, numerous news channels are accessible, and the representation of women is evident. There has been a significant transition from print media to electronic media due to the advent of electric power generation and other developments in electronic gadgets. With the proliferation of electronic media devices, the government has made significant strides in deploying numerous communication satellites to enhance communication. To enhance the efficacy of electronic media, numerous satellite TV channels have been introduced in recent years. The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting's recent study on India's Media and Entertainment business reveals that there were 905 satellite TV stations in the country as of 2022-2023. This represents a 7-channel increase compared to the prior year. Subsequent to the COVID-19 outbreak, there has been a persistent yearly reduction in the number of satellite TV stations. The quantity of channels diminished by four, resulting in a

total of 914 for the 2020-2021 year, compared to 2019-2020. Furthermore, there was a notable reduction of 16 satellite TV channels throughout the 2021-22 period, culminating in a total of 898 channels.

In 2014-15, there was the most significant decrease in the number of satellite TV channels, with a loss of 38, resulting in a total of 821 channels.

Conversely, there was a 52-fold growth in the number of TV channels during the period of 2015-2016. An analogous increase in figures was observed in the fiscal year 2019-2020.<sup>3</sup>

### **Growth of private satellite TV channels in India from 2012-13 to 2022-23**

| <b>S. No</b> | <b>Year</b> | <b>No. of satellite TV channels</b> | <b>Yearly growth</b> |
|--------------|-------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------|
| 1            | 2012-2013   | 850                                 | 28                   |
| 2            | 2013-2014   | 859                                 | 9                    |
| 3            | 2014-2015   | 821                                 | (-)38                |
| 4            | 2015-2016   | 847                                 | 26                   |
| 5            | 2016-2017   | 899                                 | 52                   |
| 6            | 2017-2018   | 877                                 | (-)22                |
| 7            | 2018-2019   | 866                                 | (-)11                |
| 8            | 2019-2020   | 918                                 | 52                   |
| 9            | 2020-2021   | 914                                 | (-)4                 |
| 10           | 2021-2022   | 898                                 | (-)16                |
| 11           | 2022-2023   | 905                                 | 7                    |

\*Source:-Ministry of I&B

When we talked out the participation of men and women in electronic media it gives another turn to the growth perspective of electronic media, because a lake in participation of men and women will affects its growth.

<sup>1</sup>Toll, B. A., & Ling, P. M. (2005). The Virginia Slims identity crisis: An inside look at tobacco industry marketing to women. *Tobacco Control*, 14, 172-180.

<sup>2</sup>Vasiljevic, M., Petrescu, D. C., & Marteau, T. M. (2016). Impact of advertisements promoting candy-like flavored e-cigarettes on the appeal of tobacco smoking among children: an experimental study. *Tobacco Control*, 25, e107-e112.

<sup>3</sup><https://www.exchange4media.com/media-tv-news/india-has-905-satellite-tv-channels-as-of-2022-2023-mib-130524.html>

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## **OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY**

To find out the level of increased role of women journalists in electronic media, challenges faced by the women journalist in electronic media and also future growth and development of the women journalist in electronic media.

## **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

The literature review's objective was to get a handy into the status that women in India have enjoyed so far, the working women and the working women journalists. Accordingly, the researcher has categorized the review of literatures into four important categories to achieve the objectives.

- A) Status of Working Women in India
- B) Overall Status of Women Journalists (Then and Now)
- C) Gender Bias in News Room

### **A. Status of Working Women in India**

A report entitled "Educational Status of Girls and Women: The Emerging Scenario" by Sudarshan (2000) provided information about education in India from independence to the present day. The analysis assessed the strengths and shortcomings of the existing system, school attendance, literacy outcomes among states, and disparities in educational access between genders, as well as among other social groups and castes.

Sandhu and Singh (1979) conducted a study indicating that motivational factors such as the sense of achievement, utilisation of abilities, gratitude, rewards, creative autonomy, and opportunities for professional growth significantly enhance job satisfaction more than factors like the conduct of immediate supervisors, job security and advancement, salary adequacy, organisational structure, and the social status associated with the job.

A research by Vinita Srivastava (1984) examined the employment of educated married women in India. The research has analysed the occupational prestige of both spouses. The survey revealed that at every socio-economic level, the employment of wives were either

consistent with or only marginally lower in status than those of their husbands.

Locke (1979) noted a causal association between family functioning and job life. This cause-and-effect relationship may operate bidirectionally. The work attitude may influence family attitudes and vice versa. The mechanism that positively induces this effect is the emotional generalisation of spillover.

L. Krishnaveni (Status of Indian Women, 1984) defines a "Working Woman" as one who is employed outside her home for remuneration. Due to economic necessity, the majority of women are now entering the workforce to secure a livelihood. However, women in this context experience diminished or nonexistent job security relative to the organised industry.

### **B. STATUS OF WOMEN JOURNALISTS**

Female journalists have made significant progress since the inception of journalism. They currently constitute approximately fifty percent of the newsrooms of prominent daily newspapers and are permitted to undertake historically male-designated responsibilities, such as sports reporting, police coverage, and editorial composition. Furthermore, girls receive equivalent compensation in comparison to their male colleagues (Nieman, 2001).

The 2012 Wage Indicator Salary Survey on the Gender Pay Gap indicated that female journalists earn lower salaries, receive fewer perks, and are more frequently employed without fixed contracts compared to their male counterparts. They recognise this, which diminishes their satisfaction with their salary, work environment, and, indeed, their male colleagues.

Byerly's (2011) analysis on female journalists analysed over 500 news organisations across nearly 60 countries and revealed that 27 percent of senior management positions (publishers, chief executive officers) globally are held by women. Men occupy about two-thirds of positions in the reporting sector.

The Media Awareness Network (2005) claimed that in 2001, just 38% of working journalists globally were women. The Network reported that, despite women comprising over half of journalism graduates in Canada, just 30% of news pieces were authored by women, and they were largely absent from Canadian television news.

D. Bhardwaj (2014) in his study, "Status of Working Women Journalists in India: A Study of Delhi NCR,"

finds that the working environment for female journalists is somewhat discouraging. The majority of female journalists encounter challenges while reporting in public spaces due to the apathy of the general populace.

N. Singh (2016) in her paper, “Analysing Status of Women Journalists in Indian TV News Channels,” states that factors such as social security and physical attractiveness continue to impact the progressive approach of women journalists.

### **C. Gender Bias in News Room**

A 2014 report from the International News Safety Institute, based on a global poll of almost 1,000 female journalists, indicated that approximately two-thirds had encountered workplace violence, manifested as intimidation, threats, or abuse. Gabriel Arana (2015) asserts in the article “A Mental Health Epidemic in the Newsroom” that a 2001 survey revealed that over 85 percent of individuals encounter work-related trauma.

Neeta Mahajani (1989) in her work titled “The Problems Faced by Women Journalists in India” asserts that societal factors impede the achievement of women journalists in their careers. Contemporary society remains predominantly patriarchal. Undoubtedly, the women are serving as significant dignitaries. However, they may be regarded as alternatives to the regulations. Male supremacy is the prevailing norm in India.

According to the National Commission on Women (2004) report on the “Status of Women Journalists in India,” a remarkable 20.5 percent of existing literature indicated that women faced discrimination in promotions. Nearly half of the participants (45.5 percent) attributed it to their gender.

Aside from the minimal compensation they receive for their labour, women are more susceptible to layoffs (Greenhouse, 1984) and terminations (Kleinman, 1988) compared to men. Furthermore, they are less likely to possess sufficient health insurance and other ancillary benefits, such as paid vacations (Perman & Stevens, 1989), even when considering variables such as tenure, hours worked, and job title.

A study by Helen Castelli (1984) titled “Women in Media” examined the involvement of Indian women in the press from the 19th century to the present. The analysis indicated that few women had received formal education

in journalism. At that time, the majority of women belonged to the elite community and were pursuing self-fulfilment rather than money and social prestige.

June O. Nicholson (2006) of Virginia Commonwealth University identified persistent difficulties affecting women in newspapers, including work-family balance, wage disparity, and the glass ceiling. The survey has also indicated that the professional advancement of women in newspapers is sluggish and unpromising.

Sammye Johnson (2006), in her paper “Women’s Salary and Status in the Magazine Industry,” provides a historical review of women’s magazines and analyses women’s status within the magazine industry. Women in the magazine industry assert that the sector is equitable and that their earnings are comparable to those of their male counterparts.

Rama Jha (1992) conducted a comprehensive field survey and interviews with women media professionals in India. The study articulates the compelling narrative of women’s resolve, commitment, and accomplishments. The research also highlighted how traditional male bias seeks to marginalise women’s contributions in subtle manners.

A research conducted by S.R. Joshi in 1987 examined the opportunities and challenges encountered by women employed at Doordarshan in India. Doordarshan is a government-owned media entity. Joshi has attempted to ascertain the ratio of women employed in various roles and to determine if there has been any alteration in the trend of women’s employment over the past few years.

A research conducted by Pooja Ravi Kumar (2007) examined both male and female journalists in Bangalore, an information technology hub. It studied the pronounced disparities between males and females in their occupations and work environments concerning gender. The study’s findings indicated that reporters and editors did not regard gender sensitivity as a significant factor in news writing or broadcasting.

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This study is based on the secondary data which has been collected through various secondary sources like, like journals, newspapers, Books, websites, conferences etc. and various cases related to women

journalist in various electronic media has been analyzed. Descriptive Research digizine has been used in this study.

## **DATA ANALYSIS**

### **CHALLENGES FACED BY WOMEN IN ELECTRONIC MEDIA INDUSTRY**

#### **Case Study: Challenges Faced By Women in TV News Industry**

##### **Case-1**

An individual named Manisha Kulshreshtha holds the position of senior news producer at News24 TV news station. She possesses around 13 years of professional experience in several news media establishments. Regarding her professional career, she expressed her enduring satisfaction in the field of news media and the execution of her duties. It is incumbent upon me to ensure that I do not commit any minor errors throughout the broadcast of my news article. I consistently strive to produce news articles that are abundant in substance and impart knowledge to the audience. However, I perceive a lack of recognition for both my job and my wage package. I have attempted to express my apprehension on a favourable evaluation of my wage, but my concerns have not been acknowledged. I am consistently interested in reporting on news stories that pertain to the economy, given that I have obtained a Master's degree in Economics from one of the most prestigious institutions in our nation. However, my coverage has been limited to soft news beats. When queried about her social life, she expressed a persistent sense of sleep deprivation. This is due to her tendency to sleep late at night after doing all her household chores when working the morning shift, and to work during the day for homework and caring for her children when working the night shift. She believes that she seldom expresses dissatisfaction with her busy schedule, but she believes that she deserves recognition and esteem for her professional contributions at her company.

##### **Case 2**

Involves Amita Nandal, a senior journalist currently employed at Republic TV. According to her statement, she has been employed in the field of news media for a duration of eleven years. She commenced her journalistic profession in 2009 and has since been consistently engaged in diligent and committed work. She has acquired extensive expertise in many capacities within the news

media industry, having worked in both the input and output departments. In several news organisations, she has gained experience in news reporting within the input department and has also served as a news producer within the output department. She has collaborated with her current organisation in her professional endeavours. According to her, she experiences a sense of safety and security in her profession. The organisation offers a taxi service. Regarding her employment, she acknowledges and derives pleasure from it, despite occasional work-related stress. However, she diligently and wholeheartedly works diligently during her designated working hours at her office. She expressed that she feels secure in her office due to the consistently professional behaviour of her coworkers towards her female colleagues. I am consistently accorded respect. We collaborate; we partake in shared meals during lunch or dinner. We derive pleasure from our professional colleagues. In my department, there is a notable disparity in the representation of male and female personnel. The organisation exhibits a positive attitude towards female employees. Regarding her remuneration, she asserts that the organisation provides her with a satisfactory wage in addition to comprehensive medical coverage. In response to an inquiry regarding her interactions with male coworkers, she expressed that within the news media organisation, an individual's pay grade, designation, and job profile are contingent upon their professional background. Consequently, many media professionals hold distinct positions and receive varying salaries. However, when it comes to the job, the position or salary is insignificant. What truly important is the completion of news items and other assigned tasks, regardless of one's seniority or juniority. The entire office operates as a cohesive team. A conversation was held regarding her personal and social life. According to her statement, her personal life revolves around her family and elderly parents. Following my work hours, I consistently enjoy spending quality time with my elderly parents. We derive pleasure from engaging in shared tea consumption. As an individual who remains unmarried, my family and I encounter significant societal pressures. However, I am unable to do so due to my responsibility of caring for my elderly parents, which prevents me from leaving them unattended. When queried about societal perceptions of her personal and social life, she expressed that possessing a strong cognitive ability and access to favourable career prospects consistently engenders a sense of pride within the community. I and my parents consistently garner respect from others. It is commonly asserted that the presence of a female journalist inside our society elicits a sense of pride.

### Case 3

Another female journalist During the interview, Sarika Jain, a news producer employed by India News channel, provided insights into her personal experiences. She stated that she has been employed in the field of the media for the past 12 years. She stated that she has had significant challenges in maintaining her employment in this field, and she has surpassed the boundaries of diligent effort to attain some success in her professional advancement. Additionally, she noted that she was had to undertake additional tasks in comparison to her male counterparts in order to demonstrate her journalistic aptitude. Regarding her wages, she expressed dissatisfaction with the remuneration she receives. I exert significant effort and genuine dedication to my work, and as a result, I anticipate receiving fair compensation. I receive significantly lower compensation in comparison to my male colleagues who possess an equivalent level of expertise and job description. Additionally, she expresses dissatisfaction with the work climate in her office, including issues such as excessively long working hours. She has very little to reveal about her personal life. She has expressed that she experiences happiness due to the unwavering love she receives from her family.

### CASE 4

In our interview, Rachna Upadhyay, a news reporter, recounted her experiences in the field of news media. Currently, she is employed at TV18 news channel. She stated that she has been employed in the field of the media for the past four years. I am dissatisfied with the nature of the task I have been allocated, but it has provided me with valuable learning opportunities in the field of news media. I am dissatisfied with the salary I receive in relation to the level of work I perform.

In relation to her personal experience, she also expressed that within the fast-paced field of the media, the safety of women is often overlooked. I am required to visit locations for news story coverage, where I have apprehension in doing reporting due to insufficient security measures in place. However, in order to proceed, it is imperative that I prioritise the preservation of my employment and diligently accomplish the assigned duty. Despite the numerous challenges, I derive great satisfaction from my work. I work under significant pressure, with minimal breaks, and for 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. In my perspective, the news media industry

lacks job stability. I am uncertain about my ability to work the following day due to the absence of a job guarantee. However, I derive satisfaction from my work and employment, as I have deliberately selected this profession and made the deliberate decision to pursue a career in news media.<sup>4</sup>

### WHAT IS RADIO?

Radio: The process of creating and disseminating educational, entertaining, and informational material for listeners via radio waves. People used to cover interviews, engage with the audience, and provide daily and current updates on politics, the economy, and other news from other radio stations.

It was one of the most popular forms of media in the past because of its widespread appeal. Even now, a lot of people utilize the radio to stay current on traffic and weather while they're on the go. Additionally, the radio's broad reach makes it more beneficial for marketing or advertising goods and services, as well as disseminating vital information and social messages.

### When started?

Broadcasting in India really started about thirteen years before AIR was founded. In June of 1923, the Radio Club of Bombay conducted the nation's first transmission. The formation of the Calcutta Radio Club came five months later. Founded on July 23, 1927, the Indian Broadcasting Company (IBC) faced collapse in less than three years. The Department of Industries and Labor launched the Indian Broadcasting Service in April 1930 as an experimental venture. In August 1935, Lionel Fielden became the first controller of broadcasting. The next month saw the launch of a private radio station in Mysore called Akashvani. The Indian State Broadcasting Service changed its name to All India Radio on June 8, 1936.

August 1937 saw the founding of the Central News Organization (CNO). The Department of Communications took over AIR in the same year, and the Department of Information and Broadcasting took over four years later. There were six radio stations in India at the time of independence: Tiruchirapalli, Delhi, Bombay, Calcutta, Madras, and Lucknow. Pakistan had three: Dacca, Lahore, and Peshawar. That was just 2.5 percent of the region and 11% of the people that AIR covered. The next year saw the splitting of CNO into

<sup>5</sup> Md. Afsar& Suman Kumari (2020), Case study of Urban and Rural Women Journalists in India, social science, Humanities and Education, Barlin Germany

the External Services Division (ESD) and the News Services Division (NSD). The National Broadcaster officially changed its name to AKASHVANI in 1956. Popular cinema music served as the foundation for the 1957 establishment of the VividhBharati Service<sup>5</sup>.

### **CASE:-1**

Four days subsequent to the enactment of the sexual harassment at workplace Bill by Parliament, the ministry responsible for information and broadcasting (I&B) has found itself in a predicament whereby more than 25 radio jockeys (RJs) have lodged complaints against the senior management of All India Radio (AIR). The presenters have expressed grievances on the perceived inequitable treatment in relation to labour distribution, remuneration, and have reported instances of sexual innuendos and advances during the past two years.

According to the RJs, who are affiliated with the AIR Broadcasting Professionals Association (AIRBPA), their persistent grievances directed towards high-ranking officials in AIR, PrasarBharati, and the I&B ministry were received with insufficient attention.

The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (I&B) has issued a statement indicating that a committee, led by a joint secretary, would investigate the charges put forth by the news presenters of AIR FM Gold and Rainbow. The group will then provide suggestions about the safety of women at these channels. The AIRBPA members have lodged a formal complaint with the Delhi Commission for Women and are contemplating initiating proceedings with the National Commission for Women as well. Presenters said that certain production executives requested their presence and accompanied them on social outings. Individuals who rejected these advancements were assigned a low grade, leading to a reduced number of shows to host and therefore lower remuneration. A duty officer commended a presentation I had presented and thereafter informed me that he had expressed his want to embrace the host of the show to his wife. He thereafter proceeded to embrace me...The presenter expressed astonishment and uncertainty on how to respond.<sup>6</sup>

### **CASE-2**

After a period of six months and the completion of two inquiries, the 20 radio jockeys (RJs) who voiced their opposition to sexual and workplace harassment at All India Radio's FM Gold and Rainbow channels assert that they persistently experience victimisation.

The RJs, including the individual who has lodged a First Information Report (FIR) and initiated a legal proceeding accusing sexual harassment, have expressed grievances over inadequate working conditions, delayed remuneration, preferential treatment, and unreasonable work schedules. According to the group's assertion, they are not provided with opportunities to anchor shows and are marginalised inside the organisation. They stated. A purported offender, who was subjected to a brief suspension, has been restored in a different department within a span of two months. The director of the Delhi station remains in his current role. Only the two individuals who were employed on a temporary basis and then terminated by the management have incurred any consequences for the transgressions.

The AIR Broadcasting Professionals Association (AIRBPA) established two committees, one led by the Information & Broadcasting ministry and the other an internal inquiry committee led by PrasarBharati. Although they assert that they have not received the report from the ministry, it is worth noting that the internal inquiry committee report of the AIR was delivered to one of the complainants late last night. She asserted that the study, which exonerated all four individuals accused of harassment, was deficient and prejudiced.

### **CASE -3**

All India Radio (AIR) informed the Delhi High Court on 20 September 2016 that there have been no reported cases of sexual harassment against female radio presenters, as stated in a Public Interest Litigation (PIL). The PIL alleges that the authorities have neglected to address multiple complaints made by female radio jockeys (RJs).

According to an affidavit submitted by the Director General (DG) of AIR, it was asserted that the organisation

<sup>5</sup>Growth and Development. (n.d.). Retrieved March 27, 2024, from Prasar Bharti: <https://prasarbharati.gov.in/growth-development-air/#:~:text=In%20June%201923%20the%20Radio,Radio%20Club%20five%20months%20later.>

<sup>6</sup> Dhawan, H. (2013, March 6). *Radio jockeys air tales of harassment, AIR left red-faced*. The Times of India. <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/radio-jockeys-air-tales-of-harassment-air-left-red-faced/articleshow/18840172.cms>

has periodically implemented measures to guarantee comprehensive security for its female personnel.

Despite receiving multiple complaints from the female RJs, the AIR has not taken any action against the individual in question, as they have stated that no proof has been uncovered against them. However, AIR is countering the charges by asserting that it has been implementing measures to guarantee comprehensive security for all female employees.

According to the AIR, the court was presiding over a Public Interest Litigation (PIL) initiated by Meera Mishra, which pertains to the purported instances of sexual harassment and exploitation experienced by female radio presenters affiliated with AIR, the national public radio broadcaster. Advocate Sugriva Dubey has filed a Public Interest Litigation (PIL) alleging that one of the Resident Judges (RJs), who had lodged a sexual harassment complaint against a duty officer, was terminated from her position.<sup>7</sup>

#### **CASE-4**

March 6, 2013 Sexual harassment at the workplace has been alleged by radio broadcasters employed by a PrasarBharati-run channel. On March 4, 2013, the AIR Broadcasting Professionals Association (AIRBPA) lodged a formal complaint with the Delhi Commission for Women, alleging instances of sexual harassment experienced by members of the AIR FM Gold radio station. A comparable complaint will be lodged by the AIRBPA with the National Commission for Women (NCW).

Moreover, it has been asserted that the governmental entity lacks a dedicated committee to address such grievances, as stipulated by the Supreme Court's ruling in the Vishakha case. The AIRBPA has also made allegations on instances where the crew on duty exhibited intoxication and misbehaviour against female employees. However, the officials of AIR have shown no concern regarding these allegations. Despite the AIRBPA's multiple complaints, it is asserted that no action has been taken thus far, despite the passage of almost four months when the union submitted the letter to the director of the AIR Delhi Station, as well as its copies to the CEO

PrasarBharati, director-general of AIR, and the president of NCW. The complaint accused the programme executives of the radio station of displaying bias and unethical conduct. It notably targeted FM Gold director-general LeelaDharMandloi for "undermining the self-esteem" of the female presenters.<sup>8</sup>

### **WHAT IS WEB MEDIA / NEW MEDIA**

#### **When started?**

The idea of mass communication has been significantly changed by digital technologies powered by computers and the Internet. We may refer to social platforms, blogs, video games, and online news portals as new media as a whole. It provides an additional element of interaction that is mostly absent from conventional forms of communication and is the basis for digital media marketing. Digital media integrates many digital technologies to expand its audience and allow them to engage at their own leisure. Most importantly, it offers everyone the chance to stop being mere recipients and start creating.

#### **New Media Types**

There are many different kinds of new media available on the market right now. It will be difficult to combine them into a single spectrum, however, since new technologies cause communication channels to alter annually. Even the solutions that were previously regarded as outdated look outdated given the abundance of possibilities accessible in the modern day. It has advanced significantly in the area and is no longer merely restricted to websites. The kinds that are accessible in the current situation are as follows:

Web sites Social media networks, blogs, and OTT platforms such as Netflix Augmented and virtual reality Spotify-like music streaming via email<sup>9</sup>.

#### **CASE 1**

The ongoing Me-too movement in India is exposing significant disparities between the national media and regional press in terms of their operational cultures, as well as the mechanisms via which accountability and impunity are established. Contrary to their male

<sup>7</sup> Correspondent, D., Correspondent, D., & Chronicle, D. (2016, September 27). *Deccan Chronicle*. Deccan Chronicle. <https://www.deccanchronicle.com/nation/current-affairs/270916/no-instance-of-sexual-harassment-against-female-rjs-air-to-hc.html>

<sup>8</sup> Any, S. (2013, March 6). *Women staff allege sexual harassment at All India Radio*. The Indian Express. <https://indianexpress.com/article/news-archive/latest-news/women-staff-allege-sexual-harassment-at-all-india-radio/>

<sup>9</sup>New Media: Definition, Courses and Scope. (2023, April 3). Retrieved March 28, 2024, from Wings: <https://leverageedu.com/blog/new-media/>

colleagues in national media, numerous female journalists working in local media outlets in Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, and Kerala have expressed their inability to voice concerns about workplace harassment, let alone lodge official complaints. Indeed, only a small fraction of these organisations possess an internal disputes resolution body. In instances where it is present, it typically lacks functionality.

In the year 2003, Jeya Rani encountered a situation where she sought to lodge a sexual harassment complaint against a male coworker at a prominent Tamil magazine. However, she encountered a lack of an internal entity with which she could legally initiate the process. The establishing of internal complaints committees was authorised by the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace Act, 2013, almost ten years ago. Consequently, she sought assistance from the Network of Women in Media, which subsequently requested her company to establish a committee and do an investigation. The Tamil language media had its inaugural internal complaints committee. "The investigation lasted for a duration of three years," Jeya Rani recollected, emphasising that it was the most distressing phase of her life.<sup>10</sup>

### **CASE 2-Swati Chaturvedi:**

Swati Chaturvedi, an independent journalist and novelist, faced online hatred and threats because to her coverage of the COVID-19 outbreak in India. Chaturvedi has conveyed his criticism of the government's approach to managing the pandemic, namely in relation to the distribution of vaccines, dissemination of public messaging, and allocation of healthcare resources. She has been subjected to instances of harassment and personal insults on various social media platforms, perpetrated by members of the ruling party and individuals engaging in internet trolling.

Swati Chaturvedi and her parents have experienced a series of instances characterised by intimidation, harassment, and a multitude of phone calls and messages, which encompass explicit threats of sexual assault and even death. RSF expresses significant concern on the potential cessation of these dangers. An individual has positioned a deceased feline in close proximity to her entrance.

After a parliamentary address delivered by Member of Parliament Nishikant Dubey on August 7, 2023, the Indian journalist saw escalating instances of mistreatment and intimidation. Dubey asserted that China was offering monetary aid to NewsClick, a news website, with the intention of undermining India's reputation. During that period, Dubey made reference to Chaturvedi as an individual purportedly involved in a conspiracy aimed at undermining the reputation of India. This assertion garnered significant attention upon its nationwide broadcast on television.<sup>11</sup>

### **CASE 3**

Indrani Sarkar, a veteran Indian journalist, is a member of the executive committee of the National Union of Journalists-India (NUJ-I) and the founder and director of Riaan. This blog is published in Federation International des Journalists (FIJ). The television programme chronicles her encounters with India's media sector and the challenges she has faced in order to establish herself as a critical and autonomous journalist. The individual expressed that web media platforms exhibit reluctance in disseminating their content, prompting them to opt for independent work primarily with media sources that demonstrate a willingness to publish content that critiques the government. I possess a clear approach and maintain the belief that truthfulness is essential. Journalism is not the reverse; it is public relations. I am a proponent of ethical journalism and dedicated to serving the collective welfare. In my perspective, journalism serves as a reflection of society. Hence, I established my own broadcasting enterprise (Riaan Broadcasting Communications Pvt. Ltd.) with the purpose of narrating stories in a straightforward and unambiguous manner.

When examining the challenges encountered by women in attaining positions of authority within the corporate sphere, an additional significant issue that emerges is the issue of harassment.

Although there has been an increase in complaints, the prevalence of abuse inside the media sector remains alarming. When individuals within our professional network experience instances of bullying and harassment, they often opt to disengage from the media due to their awareness of the protracted nature of the complaints procedures, the limited provision of justifications by the

<sup>10</sup>Senthalir, S. (2018, October 11). In *South India's regional media, women can't even 'afford to outrage' against sexual harassment*. Scroll.in. <https://scroll.in/article/897520/in-south-indias-regional-media-women-cant-even-afford-to-outrage-against-sexual-harassment>

<sup>11</sup>RSF urges the UN to take immediate action against escalating threats and harassment targeting Indian journalist Swati Chaturvedi. (n.d.). RSF. <https://rsf.org/en/rsf-urges-un-take-immediate-action-against-escalating-threats-and-harassment-targeting-indian>

justice system, and the potential alteration of the perpetrator's identity, particularly in cases involving stalking. Frequently, individuals who have been harmed tend to opt for departure, and it is evident that frequently altering one's place of employment makes it unfeasible to progress in a professional trajectory inside a certain industry.<sup>12</sup>

## CONCLUSION

The trajectory of female professionals in the electronic media industry in India exemplifies a story of fortitude, resolve, and metamorphosis. In spite of encountering various obstacles, women have gradually established their presence in this ever-evolving sector, challenging societal expectations and transforming prevailing narratives in the process. Women have played a significant role in defining the landscape of electronic media in India, ranging from early pioneers who challenged traditional norms to contemporary leaders who are at the forefront of driving change. The contributions made by these individuals have not only enhanced the industry by introducing a wide range of perspectives, but have also provided future generations of women with the confidence and courage to pursue their dreams. Nevertheless, there are still obstacles to surmount, such as gender prejudice, inequitable prospects, and challenges related to maintaining a healthy work-life equilibrium. It is crucial to acknowledge and tackle these difficulties in order to foster a more inclusive and supportive environment for women professionals while the sector undergoes ongoing transformation.

To ensure the continued success and excellence of women in the electronic media sector in India, it is crucial to implement mentorship programmes, advocate for gender-sensitive policies, and promote a culture of equality and respect. By fully utilising the capabilities of female professionals, we can effectively use the influence of diversity and stimulate innovation and advancement in the media industry. Regarding gender equality in newsrooms, it is evident that 80% of coverage is occupied by men, while only 20% is occupied by women. The majority of female journalists are not in favourable positions. When it comes to expert panellists, it is typically males who hold the positions, with barely a few women being present. The following are initial findings derived

from the study titled "Gender Inequality in Indian Media 2021," which was conducted by News Laundry in collaboration with UN Women and Hyatt. The research examined the gender representation inside Indian newsrooms, gathering data from various forms of media (digital, broadcast, and print) over the period spanning from August 2019 to July 2020. The study conducted this year incorporated qualitative data collected from journalists via questionnaires and interviews.

The data collection process involved the acquisition of information from seven English publications and four Hindi newspapers. The dataset encompassed a total of seven English news stations and seven Hindi news channels. A total of ten digital media outlets and 47 radio stations were included in the poll.

The following findings have been obtained. During the surveyed period, a total of 6,467 panellists participated in 1,295 English news debates. A majority of the panellists, specifically 85%, were male. Hindi networks exhibited even poorer performance, with a mere nine percent of panellists on 985 debates being women. Furthermore, a total of 673 English debates, accounting for 51 percent, lacked any female panellists. The reported statistic for the fiscal year 2018-19 was 53%.

In the context of Covid-related debates, the representation of women's perspectives was noticeably lacking. Out of the 271 Covid-related debates held on the English news channels that were surveyed, a total of 1,300 panellists participated, with only 14 percent of them being women. Among the 125 Covid-related debates on Hindi networks, women constituted eight percent of the panellists.<sup>13</sup>

The Media Rumble 2022 issued a report by News Laundry and UN Women on gender representation in newsrooms. The survey reveals that 87 percent of editors and proprietors at India's leading newspapers are men.

In the aforementioned scenario, it is evident that Kashmiri journalists such as Israt Bhat, Indrani Sarkar, Swati Chaturvedi, and various other women journalists encountered numerous instances of harassment and prejudice. However, it is noteworthy that women in this area continue to actively engage and make significant contributions with utmost dedication and determination.

<sup>12</sup>Despite misogynistic abuse & difficulties, I am an unapologetic journalist / IFJ. (2022, December 7). <https://www.ifj.org/media-centre/blog/detail/category/end-impunity-2022/article/india-despite-misogynistic-abuse-difficulties-i-am-an-unapologetic-journalist>

<sup>13</sup>singh. S. (2021, July 13). *Newsroom gender gap: Men get over 80% of TV panel slots, 75% of bylines*. <https://www.newslaundry.com/>. Retrieved April 21, 2024, from

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