

**A Study On How Investigative Journalism Is Perceived By Women  
Journalists In India**

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**Abstract**

In today's field of journalism women are creating an impact on how news is produced and packaged to a selective audience. Women journalists are interested to join the field of journalism more than ever before. Even though journalism has become a much sought after profession it is still a place where the contribution of women journalists is much lesser than their peers of the opposite gender. And it should be noted that in this time of global information penetration only a few women journalists are interested in the field of investigative journalism. This study is to conduct a research on the functions of investigative journalism in the society and the threats faced by women journalists.

The research will include a survey and analysis of the attitude of female students towards journalism as a career. The research also focuses on the threats faced by women journalists. A quantitative study will be followed. The research will bring out the overall impact of investigative journalism on women.

**Key words:** Investigative Journalism; Women Journalists; Crime; Threats

**Introduction:**

In the present world, the women are taking challenging jobs as their career, but there are still only few women who are ready to take investigative journalism as their life goal. The main reason for this is that our own society is still primitive and has conservative thinking. Women in the Indian society are not ready to take investigative journalism as a career even though they aspire to be one.

The family, marriage, gender, male dominance are some of the main barriers faced by the women who wish to choose this field. Other issues can be suppression of the stories that are

brought in by women journalists and the act of killing the story by the editor fearing repercussions of publishing the same.

Apart from the above mentioned problems women are opting to take up journalism as a career. This can be seen by the recent trends where we see that there are many women who are graduating in journalism field every year.

but only few are taking it as their permanent job or profession even if some of them are taking it we can see them quitting after some time. So sometime it's not the external factors that stop us from working in this field but ourselves, because we are not sure that it's a safe job to do.

In the modern world women journalists are not only facing these threats they are also facing online harassments too, the attack against journalist Burka Dutt is an example for this. Burka Dutt had registered a FIR with the cyber cell stating that she was receiving threatening messages and calls from strangers. The case of Burka Dutt is just one example, there are many journalist who face problems like the ones mentioned above.

Even after the release of sections like Section 507 of the Indian Penal Code - which deal with Criminal intimidation by an anonymous communication and Section 66A of the Information Technology Act, which penalizes sending of offensive messages, still women in this field are not safe. We can compare this situation with a article published by Reuters, where Elisa Lee Munoz the executive director of the US based IWMF said "female journalists are facing harassments in a daily basis and it's all most accepted as a part of their work".

Even though we have investigative journalists like Aniruddha Bahal, Amrita Chaudhry and Neha Dixit as fine examples of women in the field of journalism many of our young women journalists are not ready to take up investigative journalism as a profession. The killing of Gauri Lankesh sent ripples of unrest among women journalists in total. This study is to bring out the perspective of the women towards investigative journalism and threats faced by them. All the above show that women in this field need more protection to be journalists in our country.

## **Objectives of the Study:**

The objectives of the study are to know the perspective of women towards investigative journalism as a career. The study will also find what are the threats faced by the women in this field. Moreover the study will also understand the reasons behind why there are only few women who are ready to take investigative journalism as a profession. Eventually the study will help us to understand the perspective of women towards investigative journalism.

## **Review of Literature:**

On a study done by Denise-Marie Ordway out of 75 women he interviewed 73 had experienced gender harassment online, or harassment that focuses specifically on their gender or sexuality. Women journalist in our society need more support from the government, editors and supervisors to face their threats.

Female journalists are dealing with harassment on a daily basis. Gender is the key reason behind why they are being targeted."Such on and offline attacks against women journalists are an attempt to silence women working in the media and deter others from doing their jobs," said Michelle Stanistreet, head of Britain's National Union of Journalists.

Today, journalists around the world depend on right to uncover corruption, provide transparency and demand accountability. However, verbal threats and hate speech increasingly put this function at risk. Journalists are on the front line when it comes to protecting freedoms in society and women journalists are often the most vulnerable and exposed. They are targeted, not only because they report on the abuse of power, but because they are women said Afton Bladet

## **Methodology:**

Quantitative analysis was used as the methodology for this study. In this methodology information will be gathered using surveys, online polls and questionnaires. The sampling method used in this research is simple random sampling. Through this all the women from the age group of 18 to 24 get equal chance for responding. Through this sampling method we can reduce the chances of having bias in the study.

The primary data was collected using questionnaire method. A questionnaire was distributed among the targeted samples. The sample for the study were selected using simple random sampling. The secondary data for the study was collected from published thesis, books, online newspapers, trusted online websites and articles.

## **Analysis and Interpretation:**

The survey showed that 58% of the respondents are interested to take investigative journalism as career while 21% of the samples are not interested and the rest of them are still not sure about it. This clearly shows that many of the women in our society are interested in taking investigative journalism as career. We can be sure about this perspective of the women since all the respondents are women.

As many as 62% of respondents believed that the women journalists in our country are not safe. Only a few percentage of women are not sure about this and only 15% think that the women journalists in our country are safe. From this we can understand that majority of the women in our country think that the women who are working in this field are not safe.

More than half of the women (62%) in our society believe that the women are not getting enough encouragement. Only 8% of the sample believe that the women are getting enough support. And 30% of the respondents believe that it depends on the situation.

Almost 72% of the respondents think that more women have to take investigative journalism as their profession. This also helps us to understand the interest of women towards investigative journalism. The 21% of the respondents are not sure about this and 7% of the samples are against this idea.

From the respondents 60% of them think marriages place a major role in selecting investigative journalism as their career while 29.80% of the sample says marriages will not always effect being in this profession. And 10.60% of the respondents say marital status will not influence women to quit this profession.

The major problem or reason that is stopping women from taking investigative journalism as a profession is security. 54% of the respondents agree that security is the main reason that is holding back the women. After security reason the next reason that stops the women according to the respondents is family, 33% of the respondents agree with that. Only 9% of the respondents think that its because of the 24 x 7 job and 4% of the respondents say that children's are the main reason holding women back from being an investigative journalist.

Almost 62% of the respondents think that the gender is a main reason behind the women getting less support to join this field. Even though 13% of the respondents think that gender is no longer the reason why women are getting less encouragement or support. The 25% of the respondents think that only sometimes the gender become a reason.

As per the results 40% of the respondents believe that the main reason which is stopping them from taking it as profession is the security problems. And 32% say it is because of the stereotyping in the society, 9% say it is because of the lack of recognition.

The survey shows that 43% of the respondents agree that male dominance is a barrier to the women who are trying to come to this field and the women who are already working in this field. While 40% of the respondents say only sometimes it effects the women in this field. And 17% of the respondents say it is not effecting the women at all.

As per the respondents 51% of the respondents believe that by giving more encouragement and support we can make more women interested in this field. While 28% say that taking actions against the harassments faced by the women we can get trust from the women and through that they will be ready to come to this field. Only 21% of the respondents reacted that by giving more security we can make more women come to this field.

## **Findings:**

The major objectives of this research was to find out the perspective of women towards investigative journalism as a career and also to understand why there are only few women who are ready to take investigative journalism as their career. Both of the objectives were found out using the survey method. The third objective of the research was to find out the various types of threats faced by the women in this field. This objective was found out using the help of both the survey method and through the online newspapers, online magazines and online articles.

Through the help of the survey method it was really easy to understand that a big part of the women in our society are interested to take investigative journalism as their career. But they are not able to come forward because of many restrictions and barriers, as the result of the survey say women in our society need more support and encouragement to come forward and take it as a career. Even the respondents of the survey agree that more women have to come forward to

take it as a profession. Through the research it was found that other than giving encouragements by giving more security in this field and taking actions against all the harassments and threats faced by the women in this field can make other women come and join in this field. Taking action against all this will make the young women understand that being an investigative journalist is safe. This belief will give them enough guts to join in this field. So one of the findings of this research is that by creating a safe environment we can make more women interested in this field.

Another objective of this research was to find out why there are only few women who is ready to take investigative journalism as there career. This issue is mainly because of the security issues faced in the investigative journalism field. The fact is that the government is not taking enough steps for the women in this field. The survey results also agree with this. Almost 50% of the respondents say that the government have to take enough steps for the protection of the women and make new laws and acts for the same purpose. Another reason why majority of the women are not ready to take this as their profession is because of the family issues and the stereotypes, even in this modern world women are restricted to take jobs like this even the marital status is also a major trouble why women are not coming to this field. Even though these women have degrees in journalism related subjects they will end up doing some other jobs. The male dominance in this field is also a reason why only few women are taking it as career but because of this dominance sometimes they are also loosing their opportunity. The less recognition is the other reason why women are not interested to take it as their profession.

The other objective of the research was to find out types of threats faced by the women in field of investigative journalism. The women who are there in this profession will be facing many threats including death threats, threatening calls and mails, sexual harassment and the like. According to the survey results given by the respondents its visible that the main threats are now using online comments, the use of these kind of threats started since the development and increase in the use of social media. Being an investigative journalist is not a easy task there will be threats and reactions cause of the articles we publish but the women in this field is not only facing it from outside but also from the work places too. As per the survey report 36.2% of respondents agree that the women in this field are getting harassed or threatened.

## **Conclusion:**

After the detail analysis of data collected from the samples through survey method and trying to connect it with the objectives, it is clear that the young women in our society is interested in taking investigative journalism as there career. But because of the less encouragement and support they are getting only few of them are showing their interest now or only less percentage of women are taking it as a career. Many women are not taking it as there career because of the risk and challenging factors of this field. It is important to have more women investigative journalist in our country. The barriers including the less security and the few number of laws and acts for the protection of the women in this field shows that the government need to work and give more attention to this for the development of investigative journalism. The support from the government is very important for the more women to come to this field.

Through the study, it is clear that the influence of the family is also a reason why the number of women journalists are less. And so by the help of new government policies even the families will be confident enough to sent their daughters to this field. The families who allow their female children to choose their careers like journalism are very few. The main reason behind this is the risk involved in the job. Comparing to other journalism field, the risk factor of being a women investigative journalist is more so they need more protection. This can help the upcoming women journalists to be more confident and this will also help to change everyone's perspectives towards investigative journalism.

From the analysis, it can be found that it is important to encourage and support women and also the government to show more attention towards this field. It is important to stop all these threats and harassments against women. The government have to take enough steps to protect the women journalists so that in future there will be more successful investigative women journalists.

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