

Positions Occupied by the Print Media Women Journalists in Tamilnadu:

A Quantitative Study

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Abstract

In India there are laws not only for the functioning of media but also guidelines for ethical issues. However invariably there is gender discrimination which is implicit or explicit depending on the nature of the organization; there is inequity in terms of wages, positions and promotions held by men and women. There are equal or more women at the entry level positions but the ratio drastically decreases as it goes up. The current study qualitatively analyses the status of women in the media industry with respect to the positions occupied by them and whether women journalists have work life balance would throw light on the considerations that should go into policy making with reference to working conditions in the media sector.

Introduction

Women were identified as home makers and men as bread winners of the family from early days till today. Men get paid for their work as well recognition within the household and in the society whereas women's contribution to the family is never considered as worthwhile. Women work as much as men within the walls of the house which keeps the institution of family intact. But it doesn't get the importance neither inside nor outside the house. Their role in the family is taken for granted and starting from the epics till today their services are considered to be their responsibilities. Recently a study by Sachin Kumar Jain (2014) proved

that the amount of work a woman performs in her house during her lifetime was worth 16 lakhs core which goes unnoticed. Women work longer hours than men.

Though it seems like things have changed, in reality today the responsibilities and burden of women have doubled. It is a fact that more women have started working and are engaged in almost all kinds of occupation which earlier were thought to be men's domain. At least a considerable number of women have economic independence in all the strata of the society. However this economic freedom doesn't ensure individual freedom to take decisions. Men earlier and now have the liberty to act on their own and take decisions depending on their individual personality. But women are always expected to behave within the prescribed codes of behavior under any circumstance. They are expected to consult their father, brother or husband depending on the period of their life cycle. These kinds of expectations don't allow her to take decisions for herself.

Women's career and issues

Women of olden days started their occupations as seamstresses, domestic servants, and factory workers. Indian women today are not only doctors, engineers, scientists, but also engine drivers and pilots; they are entrepreneurs, corporate creative heads, financial consultants, and media personalities. Since three decades women have entered the field of journalism in India. In today's scenario their presence in print, radio, television, news agencies and new media could be noticed at a glance. Relatively they are more in number but they don't get their rightful public space. Even the so called techsavy information society is finding it difficult to accept the equal rights of women. Though families are considered to be their women's primary responsibility they are not given any special consideration or flexibilities at work place. They are expected to juggle between the two, at the same time

work wise as the men they are competing with to prove their worth. This is the scenario in the case of media industry also.

In India there are laws not only for the functioning of media but also guidelines for ethical issues. However many studies have proved that there are a number of impending issues for women even today in work place. First and foremost is that they are not treated on par with men. Other major problems include disparity in pay, discriminating treatment by the management, sexual harassment, lack of proper family support and most of all the insecurity that arises because of all these factors.

Working conditions

In terms of working conditions, no media organization is sensitive to the women journalists. There are no facilities specifically intended for women in terms of infrastructure and amenities. Journalist industry being 24*7*365, women are required to stay in office at odd times. Women are criticized saying that they cannot do night shift or it becomes a burden for the management to take care of their security. Women are deprived of their rightful place in the organization based on these reasons. But the administration does not take any action to overcome these obstacles. Rather they blame the women, which force many women not to opt for promotions/ transfers.

Psychological problems

Certain positions are reserved only for men. Recruitment bias is there for certain positions like Resident Editor, Chief of Bureau, etc. In spite of the same kinds of work performed by both gender women are considered to be inferior when compared to their male coworkers in most cases.

Though women start with the same salary as their counterparts, women are not given the benefits and increments really due to them while work done by both men and women remain

the same. Unequal pay structure is a major issue in many industries including media. This gets exuberated when women take leave for biological reasons. For example, when women go for maternity, it affects their career ambitions to a larger extent in terms of promotions. This break up in service is not understood as part of women's biological cycle and family life. Some of the institutions even put clause in their appointment restricting marriage and maternity. Though they adapt themselves to these situations psychologically they become depressed as they cannot pursue advancements in their career. In addition to all these Harassment is present invariably in all working sectors. It could be both sexual and otherwise. These kinds of situations inevitably put much greater strain on working women who are already stressed out balancing their families and career. Hence the study tried to find out the working environment in the media organizations, to find out whether the ambience within media organizations is gender sensitive.

Review of Related Literature

The National commission for women (2015) explored different issues that are confronting women working in media and to identify the contemporary issues that needs to be addressed. The major issues evolved during the study were recruitment bias, sexual harassment, lack of training and development at workplace. Women journalists still found to pursue their career with a positive attitude in spite of the discrimination between female and male employees. More women employees were in the lower cadre in contract system.

According to International women's media foundation (2010) gender equity included work force, pay differences, employment terms and equality policies. The outcome of the study showed that only 27% of women occupied top management level posts, 36% of women were reporters, 41% of women were in writing jobs. In comparison with the previous survey conducted during 2005, the results have gone up by 12% where women have raised to top

management levels. The study concluded that media is a male dominant profession. Dhanya Rajendran (2015) reporter of News Minute said language press has more sexism, sexual harassment and higher pay gap.

Preeti Misra (2015) of Hindustan Times said that women's voices are unheard in the society. Rashme Sengal stated that her talents are not recognized and even if it's recognized it is to a particular extent. Smrithi (2015) stated that women have to go overboard and show more commitment towards work than men to prove herself. Sudha Menon of Hindu Business Line said that women have to be twice as good as men just to get their presence accomplished.

The patterns of employment and working conditions were traced in a survey conducted by International Federation of Journalists (2015). The study claimed that regional channels were owned by politicians that they use the channels for their party promotion. Free speech of women is totally hampered. Journalists lose freedom to write about various issues that revolves around politicians.

Divyani Rattanpal (2015) stated that there is a clear gender imbalance in terms of contribution to the press. 73% of articles in the four leading English newspapers were contributed only by men. Women are asked to cover only soft stories such as gender, fashion, health and education. Sameeksha Uniyal said if women cover crime stories even cops doesn't take the job seriously.

A study was conducted by the McKinsey Company (2012) to encourage female leadership and to practice gender equality in the work place. It revealed that women are underrepresented in all levels in corporate pipeline because women leave companies at higher rates because of family commitments. In senior leadership there is a greater disparity as women face barriers to advancement and they are promoted in a steady rate. That is the

reason why most of the women do not aspire for senior leadership. The inequality at home also makes women struggle to manage workplace and home. Women having less access to senior leadership level also don't help them increase their cadre in workplace. The four major bias stated in the study was likeability bias which is positively correlated with men and negatively with women, performance bias where women are promoted on the basis of what they have accomplished and men are promoted on their potential, performance attribution bias where women give credits to the external factors for their success and men to their innate qualities and skills, and maternal bias which triggers assumptions that women are less committed to careers and are less competent.

The issues related to women in the media industry job demands, role overload and work-family conflict. Burnout is a crisis in one's relationship at work and not with the colleagues at work. It is caused by stress that affects the person's behavior and motivation. A newspaper journalist will have stress in forms of deadlines, competition, long and unusual work hours and work overload. Journalists who are less experienced face higher rates of burnout. A study conducted by Reinardy (2009) reveals that woman in media faces higher levels of exhaustion and lower levels professional efficacy.

Robin Abraham (2011), Research Associate in Harvard Business says women rarely view themselves as working for their families the way men do. Men think that their family responsibilities end in terms of breadwinning, whereas women often see theirs as role modeling for their children. Marguerite Rigoglioso (2011) stated that a woman who knows to display masculine traits and knows when not to are likely to be promoted more than men. A successful woman must present themselves as dominant and self-confident.

Research Problem

Government has laws to protect women against discrimination. These laws are not only associated with media but also all organizations. As far as media is concerned, women are more in entry level positions and freelancing. The ratio of women goes up in the entry level positions, decreases in the middle level positions, and it goes invisible in the top level position. The reasons for women's invisibility are an unexplored issue in the media industry. Media industry is a platform which highlights lots of issues to the public. But there are problems in media industry itself and it is unexplored. Though there are laws ensuring women's rights, the execution of these laws in organization is almost nil.

Objectives

- To identify the positions occupied by women journalists in the leading newspapers of Tamilnadu
- To find out the working hours of women journalists in the leading newspapers of Tamilnadu

Research Methodology

The study adopted quantitative research method involving a survey among 118 women journalists in Tamilnadu. Snow ball sampling was employed to select sample units from Tamilnadu.

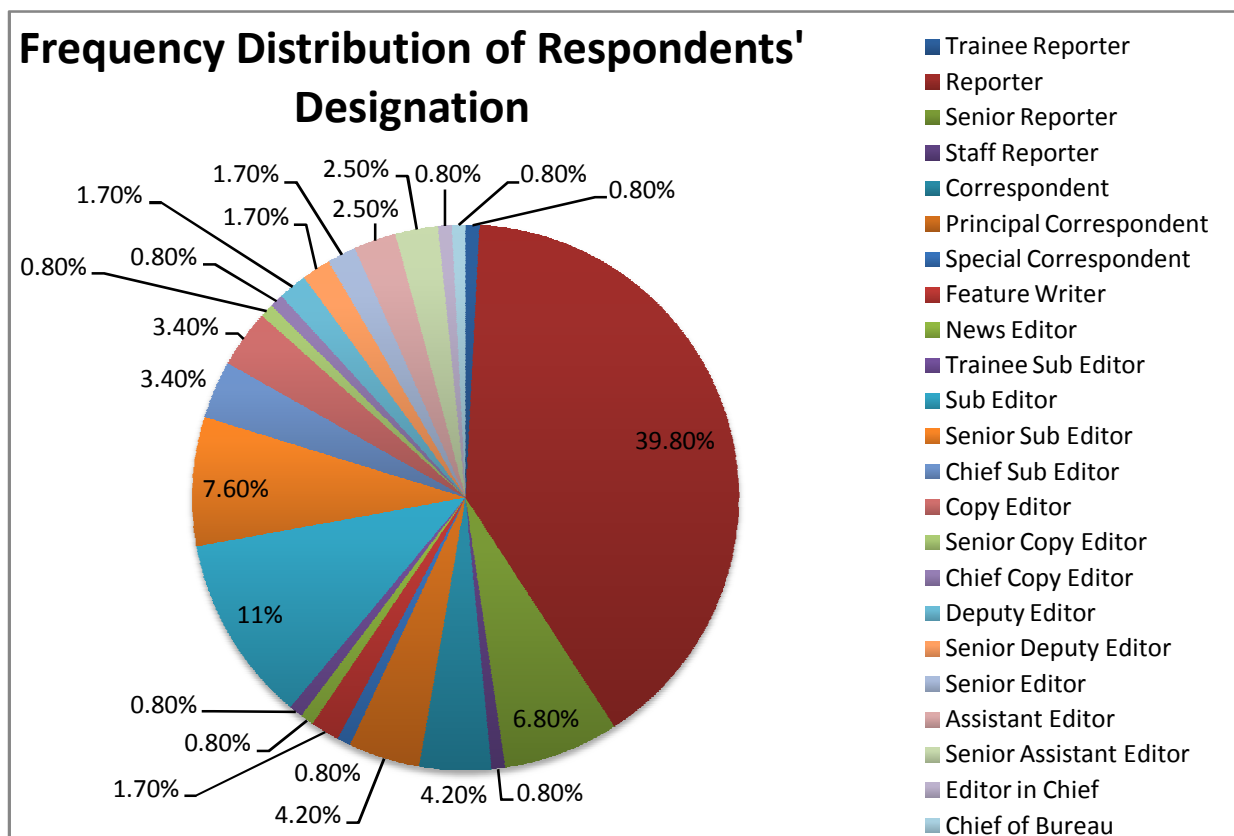
Data Analysis

Designation of the respondents

It was found that the respondents were representing varied jobs in the media organization and yet broadly they were reporters, editors in various levels, and correspondents. Though the

nature of the job apparently was the same, designations varied depending upon the organization they were working for.

Frequency Distribution of Designation of the Respondents		
Designation	Frequency	Percent
Trainee Reporter	1	.8
Reporter	47	39.8
Senior Reporter	8	6.8
Staff Reporter	1	.8
Correspondent	5	4.2
Principal Correspondent	5	4.2
Special Correspondent	1	.8
Feature Writer	2	1.7
News Editor	1	.8
Trainee Sub Editor	1	.8
Sub Editor	13	11.0
Senior Sub Editor	9	7.6
Chief Sub Editor	4	3.4
Copy Editor	4	3.4
Senior Copy Editor	1	.8
Chief Copy Editor	1	.8
Deputy Editor	2	1.7
Senior Deputy Editor	2	1.7
Senior Editor	2	1.7
Assistant Editor	3	2.5
Senior Assistant Editor	3	2.5
Editor in Chief	1	.8
Chief of Bureau	1	.8
Total	118	100.0

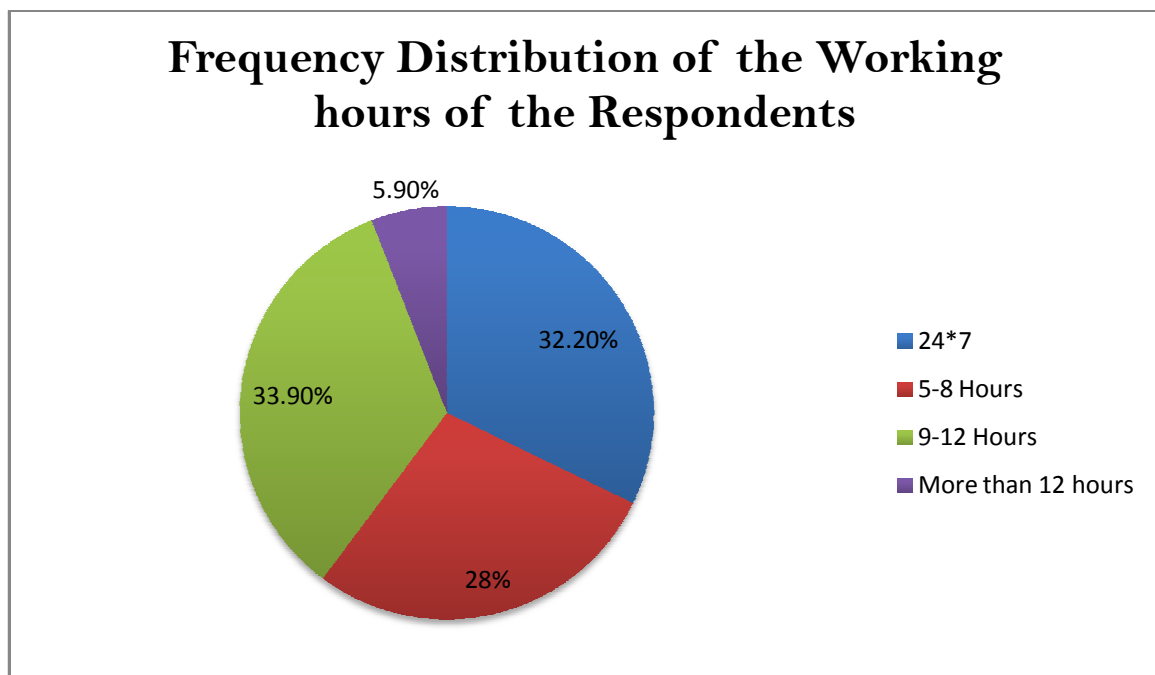


Out of the 118 respondents, 39.8% were Reporters, 6.8% of them were senior reporters. The other designations included Trainee Reporters, Reporters, Special Correspondents, Trainee Sub Editors, News Editors, Senior Copy Editors, Chief Copy Editors, Editor in Chief and staff reporters were 0.8 per cent each. Correspondents and Principal correspondents were 4.2% of the respondents each. Feature Writers constituted 1.7% of the sample. 11.0% of the respondents were working as Sub Editors, 7.6% of the respondents were working as Senior Sub Editors and 3.4% of the respondents were working as Chief Sub Editors. 3.4% of the respondents were working as Copy Editors. Deputy Editors, Senior Deputy Editors and Senior Editors were 1.7% each. Assistant Editors and Senior Assistant Editors were 2.5% each.

Working Hours

The nature of the job demands the respondents to stay available to work throughout the day for covering stories. However respondents working hours varied for each designation.

Working Hours	Frequency	Percent
24*7	38	32.2
5-8 Hours	33	28.0
9-12 Hours	40	33.9
More than 12 hours	7	5.9
Total	118	100.0

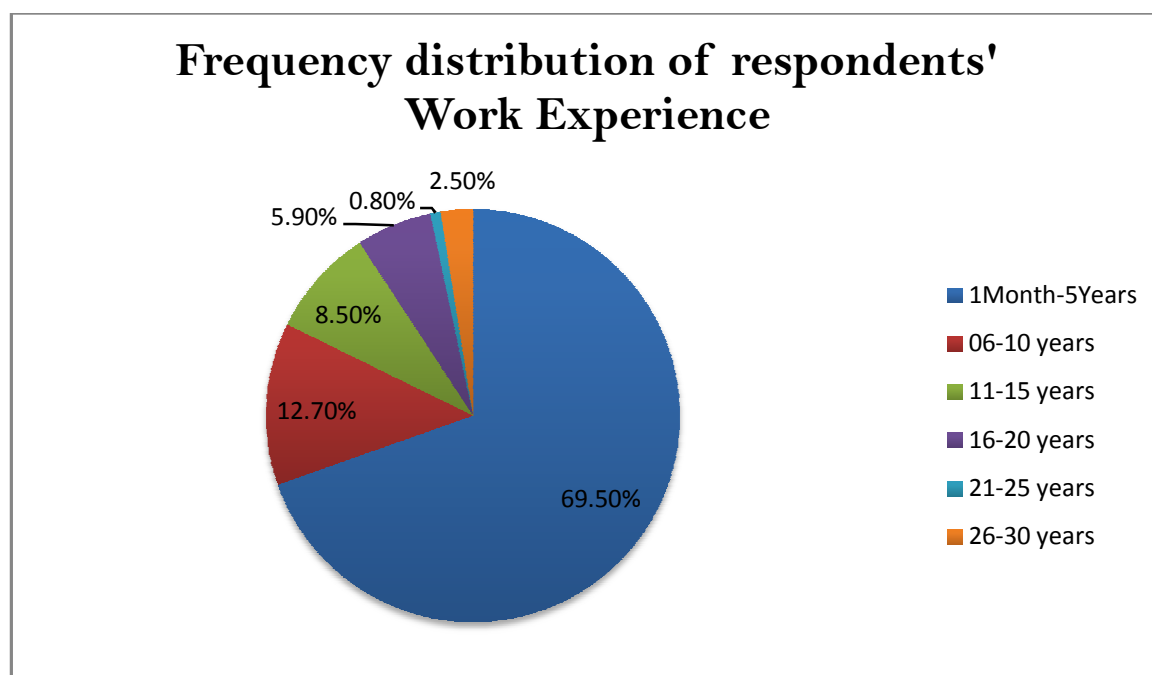


32.2% of the respondents said that they should be available to work all through the day. 28.0% of the respondents were working for 5-8 hours in a day where 33.9% of the respondents were working for 9-12 hours a day and 5.9% of the respondents were working for more than 12 hours.

Work Experience of the Respondents

The experience of women journalists varied from a month to 30 years.

Work Experience of the Respondents		
Experience	Frequency	Percent
1Month-5Years	82	69.5
6-10	15	12.7
11-15	10	8.5
16-20	7	5.9
21-25	1	.8
26-30	3	2.5
Total	118	100.0



12.7% of the respondents had 06-10 years of experience. 8.5% of the respondents had 11-15 years of experience. 5.9% the respondents had 16-20 years of experience. 0.8% of the respondents had 21-25 years of experience. 2.5% of the journalists had 26-30 years of experience.

Findings and Discussions

1. 25% of the women respondents are part of desk jobs such as sub-editors in the print media. In the current study, women who are part of the reporting jobs are taking it as a challenge to work for hard news such as crime, politics, and sports. Most of the young respondents are part of reporting. Very few women have occupied top level positions such as Chief of Bureau, Deputy Editor, and Senior Assistant Editor.
2. Regarding the duration of service an overwhelming majority of the respondents (69.5%) had experience ranging from 1-5 years, (12.7%) have experience of 6-10 years. Interestingly (5.9%) had years of experience between 16-20 years. 0.8% of the respondents had 21-25 years of experience Women who have occupied top level positions have experience of more than 26 years.
3. The nature of the job demands the journalists to be available through the day for covering stories. Desk jobs demands 5-8 hours of work from the journalists. In both the cases, the profession demands the media personnel to meet deadlines. In the due process of completing the task they are subjected to work pressure sometimes because of unforeseen circumstances that arise in the last leg of the work.

Conclusion and Suggestions

It is pathetic to know the media industry which serves as a platform on highlighting various issues, also have gender disparities in the organization in terms of the designations occupied by women. In the recent days, there are so many colleges exclusively for journalism to train

students. There are many girls who join the course but very few step into the media field for work. The college must not only train girl students with journalistic skills but also teach them to fight for their equal rights in media industry. Work environment should be in a way that women journalists get the chance to climb up ladders. Women journalists should be given a chance to occupy almost all the designations in the company. They should demand gender sensitive environment. Gender inequality should be clearly understood to be eliminated. However if recruiting is done by following proper nondiscriminatory practices, creating a smooth working environment that keeps all the employees comfortable, and promoting employees by monitoring and ensuring the developments of female employees, will eradicate gender disparity. To conclude, a lot more changes have taken place in the welfare and development of women in a more positive way when compared to yesteryears. Eradicating gender inequality is a slow process. Even developed nations are in the process of eradication and India is no different from it. Organizations should have a woman-friendly environment which will definitely of a great support for women to work reliably and manage family equally.

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