

Women Journalists Experiences in Kannada Print & Electronic Media

A Report of Reflective Conversations



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and

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Executive Summary

Introduction

This report is based on a research study that sought to understand the everyday struggles of women journalists in Kannada media. The research focused on journalists located in Bangalore, Karnataka. Undertaken by Kanaja Research Cell and the Centre for Creative and Critical Media (CCM), Baduku Centre for Livelihoods Learning, Samvada, the study was qualitative in orientation. Through a range of reflective conversations and rich narratives from women journalists, this report fills a gap in our understanding of how women journalists in Kannada media negotiate their professional and personal lives, amidst a range of social structural constraints.

This study was designed and conducted in 2018-19 by faculty from Baduku's Centre for Creative and Critical Media, based on their reflections, after successfully training and placing six batches of journalists through a Post Graduate Diploma in Journalism. Conversations with alumni, and friends in media were important in framing the questions that shape this research. 30 women journalists in Bangalore were selected using a purposive sampling method to ensure that the sample reflected various age groups, professional designations, work experience, marital status, caste and religion among the women journalists as well as the different types of media platforms. Women journalists between 21 and 40 years of age were interviewed. Journalists belonging to different caste categories and religions were selected in equal proportions. The job profiles of respondents included news anchors, copy editors, reporters, sub-editors and chief editors across media platforms.

The study examines how women negotiate their career aspirations and actual opportunities, framed against the structural constraints of domestic responsibilities and the institutionalised culture of media houses. Unpacking how these aspects influence each other enables us to see the media industry through a gender lens. The lens helps understand how the "every day" within the media industry is constituted structurally by patriarchal social relations. Everyday experiences are unpacked in terms of the female employees' location as women in a largely male-dominated workplace, their location as women who are members of patriarchal family constellations with domestic responsibilities and their location as workers in the formal but semi-organised industry. Additionally, with the understanding that gender as a category needs to be seen along with caste, class and religion, we unpack how differential social locations impact women's negotiations.

Along with examining structural constraints and the ways in which they are negotiated, the study sheds light on the varied support systems that women have created for themselves to navigate the largely male-dominated patriarchal industry.

The report begins by identifying certain trends that mark media houses as workplaces, and the socio-cultural expectations women journalists cope with. Specifically, we explore (i) institutional culture and sexism in media houses, (ii) differential professional roles assigned to women, (iii) the criticality of family support, (iv) marriage as a rupture in their career growth, (v) explicit sexual harassment or the fear thereof and (vi) interplay of caste and region with the gendered nature of the workplace. Through these themes, we show what value is placed on women's labour and their role by their families and by themselves, and how the private and the public become mutually constitutive spaces.

The report has four core chapters. The first details the ways in which sexism manifests in media houses. Impressions that women workers need greater leave and additional facilities are popular, even as actual facilities such as safe-travel options are negligible. Additionally, women tend to be assigned only to beats that are considered less important or 'soft'. Perceptions that women can only replace other women in important positions creates an unhealthy competition, disallowing emergence of collective action. The second chapter provides an insight into the challenges women face and their negotiations around marriage. Patriarchal notions of women working in media as bold, masculine or promiscuous affect their private lives, in finding suitable partners. The continuous devaluation of women's economic work and the glorification of their care work make it difficult for women journalists to establish boundaries within their marital homes, while also foreclosing growth opportunities in the workplace.

The third core chapter focuses on women's experiences of sexual harassment in the workplace. With no institutional mechanisms for redressal and negligible support from male colleagues in positions of power, women strategize ways to navigate these encounters on their own. In many instances, harassment has forced women to drop out of the profession or to switch organisations. Women employees providing informal support systems to each other, although gives hope for future collectivization to claim their rights in the workplace, is not able to affect attrition rates.

In the final chapter, women's narratives point to the multiple axes of oppression and discrimination that takes place in the Kannada media. Language, influenced by region and caste, affects employability and perceived competence of women journalists. While some women have the advantage of caste identity and language, women without these advantages are "othered". There is an urgent need for media organisations to review their hiring policies and undo their own discriminatory practices to be more inclusive of women from different socioeconomic backgrounds.

1. Myriad Forms of Institutionalised Sexism in the Kannada Media

Perceptions of Women's Competence:

It is pertinent to understand the different ways in which institutionalised sexism manifests in the Kannada media workplace. Our participants speak of various experiences that throw light on these manifestations.

"As women journalists, we don't have space to take independent decisions in the organisation. We have to wait for work approval from senior staff, who are mostly men. I'm expected to consult a male Bulletin Producer in my office. If I don't consult them, and if there is a mistake they scold me for not consulting the male bulletin producer".

When women are selected for reporting or anchoring in visual media, it is often not necessarily because of their competency or interest, rather it is due to their appearance and how closely that matches with the standards set by society. Some of our respondents also reported that for women professionals in journalism, it is often not professional capacity but skin colour and "beauty" that determines the opportunities one gets. Success of women colleagues being attributed to their appearance by both male and female colleagues has emerged a significant concern. The woman's personal journey of struggles to enter the workplace and her struggles in the workplace are replaced by the social imagination of womanhood, reducing both the success and failure

of women journalists to their gender. The woman as an individual recedes into the background within the workplace discourse.

The Perception of Women Employees as Burdens

There is a perception that women ask for more leaves (due to domestic responsibilities, marriage, childbirth and menstrual issues), increase financial burdens of the management due to travel and safety requirements, and distract male workers from working efficiently. Such notions of 'distraction' are premised on the understanding of women as sex-ed and gendered subjects, different from the 'normal' worker

While preconceptions about women needing additional support remain popular, the actual facilities and institutional support given to women journalists belies this perception. Facilities such as maternity leave, provident fund, crèche facilities and leave or resting room during menstruation/ illness are scarce if not completely absent. Although one respondent reported having received cab service from her organisation for night shifts, the more common experience is that of negligible institutional support.

Women Given 'soft beats' and Less Learning Opportunities

Almost all the journalists spoke about how they were given 'less important or inferior responsibilities' that are given to them as compared to their male colleagues. This was justified through 'safety concerns' that could arise when covering sensitive news or regions, or under the guise of 'concern' for women's work-life balance. While these were institutional explanations, many of our respondents told us how the notion that women lacked competency to handle important news remained a significant reason for their assignment to 'soft beats'

Consider the response that a female desk-employee received from her male-supervisor when she requested to be considered for reporting:

"If you wish to do reporting, I'm not going to stop you. I would like to share certain difficulties of reporting. Consider me as an elder brother; it is not easy for women, specifically for unmarried women to do reporting. People will not take you as 'good women'. Reporting is a 24X7 job. You might be assigned projects at any time. I'm not saying that you will not be assigned for reporting at all, but kindly think about what I said. It is for your own good that I'm sharing this with you."

Consider how the colleague uses a familial relation, and patriarchal notions of women's honour to discourage the journalist from taking up reporting. As against such discouragement, some of our respondents' spoke of supportive colleagues who have helped them progress in their careers.

One print journalist said: *"Some of my colleagues have encouraged me. They give feedback about my writings and make me work on it further."*

Not being deputed to important news and hard beats also has serious professional consequences for women journalists in terms of their career growth and job satisfaction. Often, as the work that is allotted to women is considered less important, the management does not feel it worthwhile to invest in their professional training and upgrading of skills required for career advancement. This is aggravated by the perception that women employees would ask for more leaves, and have a higher drop-out rate compared to men. Thus, women journalists lag behind their male counterparts in terms of technical competency and knowledge, expertise in emerging technologies.

Pitting women against each other

Barely any women in important senior positions, or with possibilities for upward mobility means that younger women cannot envision advancing in their careers, unless they replace key women in senior designations. They are unable to imagine the possibility of replacing a male senior to occupy his post. This perception that women can only replace positions held by women creates an unhealthy competition between female staff with each of them considering the other as a potential threat, making it difficult for any sense of women's collective to emerge.

Privatisation of Menstrual Discomfort in the Workplace

"I feel privileged to be a political reporter. However, I have to compromise certain things to be in this field. For example, I get angry and feel nauseated during menstruation. But I cannot take leave during periods because the organisation could use this as an excuse to not recruit women for political or crime reporting. They would think that we [women] will take leave during menstruation, marriage and during pregnancy. So, I force myself not to give menstruation as a reason for mood swings and I try to work even during severe pain".

Menstruation was not discussed in public, as with most workplaces. Some women journalists spoke of how conversations were possible with women colleagues informally, allowing for some support and collective agency. One female news reader said: "during menstruation other female colleagues understand what we go through and we share our work responsibilities with each other."

However, the absence of women in general and in decision making positions in particular results in these conversations and collaborations remaining in the private and personal realm, even as the pain and discomfort associated with menstruation is experienced in a public work space. All the conversations that women have in their personal domain are considered strictly "private" and un-official, with no legitimacy in public spaces or official communication channels.

2. Marriage as Rupture in the Careers of Women Journalists

As in many other fields with demanding work hours and competitive atmospheres in the workplace, women journalists in the Kannada media have to strive to maintain a reputation of an efficient professional while having to fulfill their domestic roles too. Some of them have also narrated how they negotiate with the challenges of finding a suitable partner for marriage.

Difficulties in Finding a Partner

The narratives of the participants show that women journalists are considered by their own extended family and the society at large to be "aggressive, masculine and promiscuous." One women journalist who is unmarried recounted her experience, saying:

"People assume that our life is colourful since we work in TV Channels. But it has been difficult for me to find a good match for marriage since men consider us to be unapproachable. Men think twice if they get to know about our job."

Another respondent spoke of a similar experience when meeting prospective bride grooms and

their families: *“Some of them [the family of a potential groom] were scared that women journalists would take up family issues/quarrels to news channels”*

Though being ‘seen’ on TV enhances a woman journalist’s visibility and career mobility, it also carries moral prejudice and social stigma. At the receiving end of such negative myths and stereotypes, our respondents shared how they face high levels of stress that impacts their psychological health adversely.

Family Expectations from Married Women Journalists

In instances where women’s income from the media profession is not seen as significantly contributing to the family income, the in-laws have often not supported the women’s professional choices. The higher value attached to care and domestic work valued rather than their income, necessitates women who work as full-time professionals to prove their commitment as primary caregivers in the family.

Work related travel beyond office hours, staying back for casual chats or transfer to a different work location are not possible for women journalists as they are not seen as the primary breadwinner who needs to necessarily work outside the realm of the household. These conflicts often result in stagnation in the female employee’s growth, and in the longer run leads to dropping out from the profession.

Workplace Perceptions of Married Women Journalists

Organisations believe that women employees, on getting married, will need to relocate or reduce their working hours or even quit the profession. Women journalists who are single, and are looking to get married are viewed with scepticism. A crime reporter with a newspaper said that her boss expects her to quit crime reporting once she gets married as she will no longer have the choice to be ‘out in the field at odd times’ or be available whenever the situation demands. As one of her female colleagues in the crime department quit that post once she was pregnant, the management assumes that she too will follow a similar path. These assumptions tend to foreclose any opportunity at promotions. Even in the rare case that a young female reporter is given a hard beat to cover, it is only temporary as marriage and motherhood are “expected” to come in the way - what scholars have called the motherhood penalty.

Respondents also spoke of their negotiations with the management or the communication channel female peers manage to build among themselves. These instances, even if few and small in scope, point to the possibilities of stronger solidarities for the future. The support of their families in many cases have helped women secure their positions in the industry. However, the precarious balancing act of public and private is reserved only for the women in media, much like in any other profession.

3. The Shadow of Sexual Harassment

In 2018 the ‘#metoo movement’ drew attention to multiple instances of sexual harassment in the Kannada media industry. Gender based harassment now has serious legal implications for perpetrators and the gravity of long term social and psychological consequences for the victims is gradually being acknowledged. However, sexual harassment at the workplace remains

rampant across professions and continues to be underreported. This chapter documents women journalists' experiences as well as perceptions about women and sexual harassment in the Kannada media.

Experiences of Sexual Harassment

Respondents shared how they face sexual harassment on a daily basis including 'eve teasing', lewd comments, unwanted messages through social media and unwelcome physical contact. Many women journalists expressed their disappointment at how harassment in the form of body shaming, unwanted physical contact, unsolicited messages, slut-shaming and unwelcome comments on their private lives are so common that they are forced to accept it as a part of their professional lives.

Lack of Redressal Mechanisms and Processes to address Sexual Harassment

Although many women journalists part of our study recognize subtle workings of gender based and sexual harassment, such incidents being reported are extremely rare. What emerges from the narratives in this study is the near universal absence of any redressal mechanism or procedure to ensure the safety of women and which can lead to retribution.

"...There were many more male colleagues than female colleagues in the office, which was intimidating. I have seen male colleagues asking inappropriate questions when women dress up to office. They ask questions like: 'What is special today'... with a different tone - you will get to know that they are hinting at our personal choices. 'Whom are you meeting today?' I have also been harassed by them. One male colleague used to text us (women journalists) inappropriately. When we started questioning him, he began targeting us for that."

Many respondents said that their organisations do not have Internal Committees to deal with redressal in the case of sexual harassment or even any other formal modes through which they can raise their grievances. Often, it becomes the prerogative of the individual woman alone to negotiate unwanted sexual advances from her colleagues.

In many instances, the women's male seniors are directly or indirectly involved in the acts of harassment. Thus, as one respondent shared, women employees cannot report these cases to the senior male members of the organisation who are often given the charge to address employee grievances. The narratives show that women undergo severe stress due to these circumstances, and have either witnessed female colleagues quitting their respective organisations due to continued sexual harassment or have themselves had to take such decisions.

Moral Policing and Gender Segregation

The study has revealed a pervasive peer policing system in which women employees are continuously policed about their choice of clothing and behaviour towards their male colleagues among other things, and subjected to questions about their "character". While it is crucial for women to maintain a friendly relation with their peers for their career mobility, such friendly relationships are often taken as sexual overtures. Any rejection of sexual advances by male colleagues often comes at the cost of losing a promotion, salary increment, important assignments or sometimes, even their jobs.

“Professional jealousy is common. But when my work was recognised by the editor my colleagues gossiped about me. There was character assassination. I would like to share an incident...The Editor of my organisation dropped me in his vehicle since I had to meet the doctor for an emergency. A reporter from another organisation clicked our picture and wrote a gossip story which was published in a newspaper. Since we are women our character gets attacked first.”

While women journalists are engaged in similar kinds of paid work as their male counterparts, there is also a hidden burden of maintaining the status and honour of the organisation by conforming to gender roles and upholding a ‘respectable’ image of themselves.

Women’s Coping and Navigating Strategies

Without formal structures to safeguard their rights, women journalists have to devise strategies to navigate unwanted sexual advances in unique ways. Women form camaraderie and solidarity between each other to provide support whenever needed. Some respondents spoke of how they have confronted men publicly, hoping it would stir their conscience.

Consider the narration of one Dalit respondent:

“One of the senior male colleagues started texting me during late nights. Considering his seniority and position,] I used to respond to his messages initially, but he took advantage of that and started texting incessantly. I tried to handle it in my own way. The next day I went to the office, and with a loud voice I said, “Sir, sorry I missed your call at 12 pm yesterday night. I was sleeping. Was it something important?” It was my strategy to tell him that I wasn’t interested in him. However, he felt ashamed that I questioned him in front of others. Now he targets me for simple mistakes. He wouldn’t have considered it as a mistake if I had given into his desires.”

Since it is disproportionately aimed at women, sexual harassment contributes towards early drop out of women from jobs. Formal mechanisms, if instituted in all media organisations in order to prevent discrimination against women, can be a powerful means of retaining women employees and helping them grow in their professions.

4. Intersections of Gender Discrimination with Language, Region and Caste

The media industry in Karnataka is dominated by the upper castes from a few districts and regions of Karnataka. Leaders and seniors in the industry select new employees with a preference towards their own, that is, people of their caste and regional backgrounds. Caste prejudices and affinity based on regional identities have therefore come to play a major role in determining access to employment and growth. In this chapter, women’s narratives throw up issues of the multiple axes of oppression and discrimination occurring in the Kannada media.

Notions of ‘standard’ language and ‘Good’ Kannada

In Karnataka there are many different ways of speaking Kannada as well as several dialects. However, it is the Kannada of Mysore and southern Karnataka and its nuances as spoken by upper castes that are considered most superior. This has set the idea of a ‘standard’ Kannada.

As the media works through the deployment of language, this language hierarchy places all those women who do not speak the 'standard' Kannada, at a relatively disadvantaged position.

Consider for instance, this account by a journalist who comes from the Hyderabad-Karnataka region:

"Colleagues have commented about my language. I'm from Hospet [in Central Karnataka], and the Kannada that I speak sounds loud and rude; some words are different and that doesn't suit the standardised Kannada in the media."

Added to this linguistic barrier which affects their recruitment and career mobility, the fact that most of the media houses are located in Bangalore creates another layer of disadvantage. Distance from the capital, Bangalore and language proficiency marginalises women from north and interior districts and creates the impression that they are incompetent.

Rhetoric of merit

While the upper caste women who were part of the study rejected any possible discrimination on the basis of caste in media houses in Karnataka, and emphasised that competence and merit are the only determinants in the workplace, a respondent who belonged to the Scheduled Caste category reported this:

"My colleagues assumed I belong to a dominant caste (Gowda). They got to know my caste when I shared a book authored by my brother. My brother's caste was mentioned in the book and they got to know that I'm from the Scheduled Caste category. The way they interacted with me changed after that. I realised that if we perform well, they start assuming that we belong to a dominant caste."

One respondent who belongs to an upper caste has mentioned how her gender helped her in getting a position in the newspaper which is owned by some members of her own caste group. She also narrated how her male colleagues support her in her work and how the management is flexible to accommodate her working hours and other needs. While this could be attributed to her compliance with the norms established by the management, her caste identity significantly aids her career prospects. This also offers her a possibility to effect important, albeit minor, changes in the culture of the organisation. At the same time the exclusion of 'others' from the workplace maintains status quo allowing growth only for women of privileged castes, and invisibilising those women who may have entered the field despite many odds.

A serious reflection on organisational structure and review of their own hiring policies to strive to be more inclusive is the need of the hour. For a field of work that is involved with social justice in many ways, the media sector in the state ought to conceive of material ways to address their skewed employee compositions and the lived experiences of their women employees.

Research Report





1. Introduction: Background, Rationale & Methodology

The exponential increase in the number of newspapers, television channels and internet-based media platforms in the post liberalisation and post internet era in India is often taken for granted. Though this rapid growth has far reaching consequences for media workers and media consumers, the media industry, which is constantly inquiring into the lives of people has seldom been the subject of research. In fact, the sociology of the vernacular media and changing demographics of the workforce are especially interesting as this is one of the few industries that offer rural and/or underprivileged youth a range of employment opportunities without an emphasis on English proficiency. In the southern state of Karnataka, the city of Bangalore has emerged as a news media hub with a large number of employees working in the print and electronic media, creating a new career option for young people.

Today, young men and women continue to be attracted to jobs in the media and pursue undergraduate and post graduate training in journalism with the aspiration to access employment opportunities in media. As pointed out by Bhattacharyya & Ghosh (2012), the post liberalisation boom in terms of the opportunities for educated women residing in urban areas has not always converted into an equal workforce participation. While women have been playing diverse roles from reporting to editing to managerial functions, it is necessary to understand how young men and women access and experience the media workplace differently. The recent ‘#Me too movement’ and revelations of harassment of women journalists indicates that there is much to be discovered and understood about the predicament of women in the media. Yet, the everyday hopes, experiences, achievements and frustrations of women journalists, who constitute a significant part of the total workforce, remain largely invisible.

At this juncture, it is relevant to recall the findings of studies that have attempted to focus on women journalists and the concerns they have raised. One of the key issues that Byerly (2011) highlighted is the underrepresentation of women in the journalistic profession (Byerly, 2011, p. 6). Even though they constitute half of the global population and roughly half of the communication school graduates each year (Griffin, 2014), women's disproportionate absence in supervisory, directorial or other managerial posts in the media has been documented (ASNE Newsroom Employment Diversity Survey, 2014; Paper, 2014). A second issue of lower remuneration for women as compared to male colleagues for the same work has also been established (Joseph, 2005). A third concern of hindered career growth or drop-out due to child-rearing and other care work has been raised (Griffin, 2014). The assignment of 'soft-beats' to women journalists for news related to health, travel and home is another issue (Cohen, 2014). Explicit and implicit forms of sexual harassment that they go through every day from peers and bosses has been documented by Joseph (2005). Lastly, that anxiety about safety in general and sexual harassment in particular impacting work roles and assignments has been highlighted by Manjula (2015).

All these studies have drawn attention to specific factors that contribute to workplace gender inequality that finally manifests in job assignments, advancement opportunities and the distribution of rewards' (Huffman, Cohen, & Pearlman, 2010). Women either drop out mid way in their careers or do not get promoted to higher posts on par with their male colleagues (Byerly, 2011; Willnat & Weaver, 2014). Kay & Shipman, (as quoted in Griffin, 2014) and Everbach (2006) have pointed out how female bosses brought 'feminine standpoints' conducive to women workers while the absence of women in leadership positions has fostered a male centred institutional culture where women often feel out of place, and where 'underestimation of their abilities and understatement of their qualifications' is well entrenched.

In Karnataka, studies about women in the media are recent and are very few. A 2015 study by a woman journalist on an insider's view of women journalists in Bangalore was not published in her own name¹. In 2016, a PhD thesis by Manjushree Naik of Manipal University compared the experiences of women journalists in print/ television within English/ Kannada media and compared themes covered by men and women². This study elaborates women's increasing contribution to media, especially in Bangalore, Dharwad and Coastal districts, despite the institutionalised and multi-faceted discrimination they face in the workplace³. While the issues raised are serious, a concerted effort to delve deeper into women journalists' predicament is the need of the hour.

1 "How do women journalists fare in the Kannada media? An insider's account," 2015; <https://www.thenewsminute.com/article/how-do-women-journalists-fare-kannada-media-insiders-account>

2 "Women journalists in Kannada papers yet to break glass ceiling," 2013 <https://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/Mangalore/women-journalists-in-kannada-papers-yet-to-break-glass-ceiling/article4872868.ece>

3 <http://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in:8080/jspui/handle/10603/180687> and The changing status of women journalists in Bangalore a sociological study. Bangalore University. Unpublished PhD Thesis

1.1. Objectives of the study

This study by Kanaja Research Cell of Samvada aims to capture the current lived reality of women in the journalism profession in Bangalore, Karnataka. The faculty of the Centre for Creative and Critical Media, Baduku Community College of Samvada, have designed and conducted this study after having successfully trained and placed 7 batches of journalists through a Post Graduate Diploma in Journalism. At the time of initiating this study, Baduku College had over a hundred alumni working in the mass media. It is through their contacts that thirty women journalists across the industry could be interviewed individually about their experiences, aspirations, hopes and fears. This study based on reflective conversations hopes to fill a gap in the literature pertaining to women journalists in Karnataka by drawing attention to their experiences of negotiating between their career aspirations and actual opportunities, between demands of domestic responsibilities and daily interface with the institutional culture of the media. The study aims to explore how these aspects influence each other and thus examines the profession itself through a gender-lens by situating the “everyday” within the structural forces of patriarchy and the gendered workplace. These everyday experiences are explored in terms of the female employees’ location as women in a largely male dominated workplace, their location as women who are members of patriarchal family constellations with domestic responsibilities and their location as workers in a formal but semi-organised industry in the urban setting of Bangalore.

While the study focuses on workplace, family and industry as sites of patriarchy and as sites of power and powerlessness, it also recognises how these intersect with their specific individual locations and identities of religion, social class, caste and region. Therefore, the study explores the unique experiences of individuals contingent on caste, class, religion and region while also situating these experiences in the transitions that are engulfing the media industry, the media workplaces, communities and families in the era of economic neo liberalism and internet-based mass communication.

The purpose of the study is also to highlight the different negotiations that women journalists are engaged in to secure their careers as well as their private lives. It also explores the varied support systems that women may have created for themselves to navigate the male dominated industry.

1.2. Methodology

For the purpose of this study a group of 30 women journalists working in different media platforms in Bangalore were selected using a purposive sampling method. This was done to get respondents across age groups, types of media platforms, professional designations, work experience, marital status, caste and religion. In the final sample the age of the women ranged from 21 to 40 years of age. Journalists from General category (of caste), religious minorities, Scheduled Caste and Tribes and Other Backward Classes were selected in equal proportions. The sample was also reflective of the various media types from print, visual and web respectively. The job profile of the respondents included news anchors, copy editors, reporters, sub-editors and chief-editors across these platforms. The study used a qualitative research design which employed (i) an in-depth semi-structured interview questionnaire⁴ and (ii) a data sheet. The respondents were informed about the aims and objective of the study, and confidentiality was promised to them, if they chose to be respondents in this study.

4 See Annexure I for the questionnaire used for the study

The in-depth face-to-face interview was intended to capture ‘the lived experience’ of the women journalists with a primary focus on their present lived experiences in the profession. As “lived experiences” are not mere facts or events but includes how these are perceived, internalised and narrated, and ways in which they make meaning while selecting which experiences to reveal and focus on. As noted by Vygotsky (quoted in Seidman, 2006, p.9 and 19) the process of making meaning of their experiences is intrinsic to the narration during the interviews. The data sheet was used to capture information about age, educational qualification, total work experience, nature of work done, salary, caste, marital status and native place of the respondents⁵. This provided a context to locate their experiences.

1.3. Summary of findings: Aspirations and Motivations of Women Journalists

Among the thirty respondents, 93% have responded that journalism was a profession which attracted them and was their FIRST choice. The reasons stated included a desire to do something for their community (20% of the respondents), a passion and interest in this profession (32%), an aspiration to use journalism as a tool for promoting social justice (15%), and being inspired or encouraged by someone they knew (20%). This clearly indicates that journalism is well established as “a possible profession” for young women in Karnataka. It also suggests that there are clear avenues and pathways for women to gain qualifications and to seek entry into the profession. Most importantly, this suggests that women are making choices and aspiring for careers and for economic independence. This element of individual choice is significant especially in a context wherein the individual is subsumed by family, wherein autonomy to choose a career path is limited even for men and where women’s professional choices have been constrained by social perception about which kinds of work will accommodate a woman’s domestic responsibilities and family roles.

Whether journalism is now seen as a “woman friendly” desk based white collar profession, or is seen as a male bastion where women finally can make inroads, needs a deeper engagement with women’s lived experiences as unravelled below.

The broad themes that emerged from the interviews were identified and analysed in the light of their individual and shared contexts. This analysis has been employed to understand the lived experiences of the women journalists and to identify trends that are deeply embedded and/or newly emerging in them, in the industry and in the media workplaces. The themes that emerged were (i) institutional culture and sexism in media houses, (ii) differential professional roles assigned to women, (iii) the criticality of family support, (iv) marriage as a rupture in their career growth, (v) explicit sexual harassment or the fear thereof and (vi) interplay of caste and region with the gendered nature of the workplace. Through these recurrent themes, an attempt has been made to analyse the lived reality of the respondents in order to reveal work place dynamics, how women’s labour and role is valued by the industry, their families and by themselves, and how the private and the public become mutually constitutive spaces.

5 See Annexure II for a breakdown of the sample based on these variables



2. Myriad Forms of Institutionalised Sexism in Kannada Media

The culture of an industry and of an institution – in terms of shared beliefs, values and assumptions about the profession, the workplace, the nature of the work at hand and women's roles in the family- has a significant role to play in terms of women's career success, stagnation or exit. Institutions with significant presence of women and a good number of women in senior decision making positions are perceived to be women friendly workplaces and institutions with low women's presence are not seen as women friendly (Kalev, Dobbin, and Kelly, 2006, as quoted in Huffman et al., 2010, p. 257 and Powel, 1990 as quoted in Everbach, 2006).

Research about media houses in different parts of the world has established the near absence of women in decision making positions (Byerly, 2011; Cohen, 2014; Griffin, 2014). A general work environment which favours a 'masculine' management style based on lack of emotion and on rational analysis and which looks down on 'feminine' traits which include flexibility, empathy and collaboration for job performance has been well documented. There is also evidence of 'Feminine' styles being considered as signs of incompetency causing women employees to withdraw from situations where they are subtly made to feel inferior to their male counterparts (Lindsey, 1997, as quoted in Everbach, 2006, p. 480).

It is often the case that media does not represent the voice of the women in terms of the content (Media and Gender: A Scholarly Agenda for the Global Alliance on Media and Gender, 2014), and in terms of what it considers as important for the general citizen. An average viewer is also often assumed to be a man, and news and information which are often relevant to women and more related to their everyday experiences are given less airtime or not allotted prime time (Davis, 1990; Signorielli & Bacue, 1999). When they are allotted prime time, they have fewer "decisional, political and operational actions" (Berg & Streckfuss, 1992, p. 195).

What this means for the women viewer is that they often find the content of the news media not attempting to converse with them, and they lose interest. This process creates a vicious cycle that reinforces the image of the female viewer, which in turn shapes the roles and responsibilities assigned to female workers in news media. As the average viewer is considered to be a man, and because often men think that women cannot handle serious responsibilities, what it causes within the news media is that a news programme will be produced for this average male viewer, which will necessarily be presented and produced by or appears to be produced by men.

These forms of institutionalised sexism listed above have been found in the Kannada media workplace and are a part of the everyday experiences of women journalists. In this chapter the multiple facets and manifestations of sexism and patriarchy in the Kannada Media industry will be explored.

2.1. Perceptions of Women's Competence

"As women journalists, we don't have space to take independent decisions in the organisation. We have to wait for work approval from senior staff, who are mostly men. I'm expected to consult a male Bulletin Producer in my office. If I don't consult them, and if there is a mistake they scold me for not consulting the male bulletin producer. However, if a male Bulletin Producer commits a mistake he is not scolded for not consulting me, a female bulletin producer. I have been rebuked for a mistake committed by a male bulletin producer. He doesn't get targeted as much as I do. I feel that it is because a woman of a younger age handling the bulletin producer post is unacceptable in a male dominated organisation."

The dominantly male culture in the industry views women with suspicion in terms of their ability to complete important tasks. Further mistakes committed by women are attributed to their gender while those by the men to their individual selves. So even when institutional systems place women in important roles, it often becomes the task of the individual women to prove that they deserve the post – on a daily basis – and any mistake that they commit is attributed to their womanhood, thus reinforcing the prejudices and structural constraints on women.

To cope with this sense of perceived inadequacy, women put in extra hours and effort to constantly prove to their counterparts that they are competent. They put every effort to demonstrate that they can 'rise above' the inherent 'qualities of women', which are considered to adversely affect the overall efficiency and the objectivity required in journalism. Women journalists, to prove that they are like men, and not like other women, often suppress their emotions while dealing with sensitive news. As mentioned by a news reader:

"...when we read news we have to control any show of emotion.... we cannot express it as it will not be seen as sensitivity - but as female weakness".

Also in the case of visual media, the respondents have said that conforming to the norms of body shape and size is crucially important as women have more chances of being replaced due to non-conformity to beauty and body standards. This suggests that when women are selected for reporting or anchoring in visual media, it is often not necessarily because of their competency or interest, rather it is due to their appearance and how closely that matches with the standards set by society. Some of our respondents also reported that for women professionals in journalism, it is often not professional capacity but skin colour and "beauty" that determines the opportunities

she gets. Success of women colleagues being attributed to their appearance by both male and female colleagues has emerged as a concern. The woman's personal journey of struggles to enter the workplace and her struggles in the workplace are replaced by the social imagination of womanhood, reducing both the success and failure of women journalists to their gender. The woman as an individual thus seems to be disappearing in the workplace discourse.

2.2. The Perception of Women Employees as Burdens

The neo-liberal workspace is marked by fluidity and high attrition rates (Atkinson, 2010). In the case of media industry in India, which is very much a product of market reforms, respondents have reported that women employees are often considered to be a burden on the company. In popular perception, women ask for more leaves (due to domestic responsibilities, marriage, childbirth and menstrual issues), add financial burden on the management due to travel and safety requirements, and distract male workers from working efficiently.

While these perceptions exist, the actual facilities and institutional support given to women journalists, in terms of maternity leave, provident fund, crèche facilities and leave or resting room during menstruation/ illness belies this perception. Although one respondent reported having received cab service from her organisation for night shifts, the more common experience is that of having negligible institutional support. Consider the responses given by respondents:

Table 1: Availability of Facilities for Women in the Media

Facilities	Yes	No	Don't know
Maternity leave	12	08	10
Provident fund	18	12	
Crèche	00	30	
Leave for menstrual cycle	00	30	
Rest rooms during physical sickness	00	30	

These responses clearly indicate that there is NO provision for a restroom or crèche in any of the media houses. More importantly, 60% of the respondents reported that their organisation either does not give paid maternity leave or they are not aware about the existence of such a provision in their organisation.

2.3. Women Given 'soft beats' and Less Learning Opportunities

Throughout the interviews, almost all the women mentioned the 'inferior responsibilities' that are given to them as compared their male colleagues. This is ostensibly done in the name of 'safety concerns' when covering sensitive news or regions, or under the guise of 'concern' for women's work-life balance. Respondents shared that behind these reasons also lies the perception that women lack of competency to handle important news. A 30 year old journalist with eight years' experience reports:

“When I was working as [a] reporter, my chief would give me assignments related to festivals, temples and fashion only. We weren’t assigned for hard stories. I was not comfortable in such a working space [and hence] I quit that organisation.”

Other respondents have mentioned how they have felt discrimination in the workplace in terms of how higher authorities, who are often men, allot important interviews and news coverage only to men and cite reasons that the management often uses, like those related to safety, morality concerns and domestic responsibilities at home. Consider the response that a female desk-employee received from her male-supervisor when she requested to be considered for reporting:

“If you wish to do reporting, I’m not going to stop you. I would like to share certain difficulties of reporting. Consider me as an elder brother; it is not easy for women, specifically for unmarried women to do reporting. People will not take you as ‘good women’. Reporting is 24X7 job. You might be assigned projects at any time. I’m not saying that you will not be assigned for reporting at all, but kindly think about what I said. It is for your own good that I’m sharing this with you.”

While this trend of women being assigned soft beats has been reported worldwide in the media industry (Griffin, 2014; Macharia, 2015) it is also reflective of not just the discrimination in terms of immediate work allocation, but also marginalisation on a larger sense and closed access for upward career mobility. At the same time, those women journalists who have broken this glass ceiling and made it into reporting and hard beats have reported how difficult it is to maintain their position within the media industry.

Some of the respondents’ statements show that having supportive colleagues can help them make progress in the organisation and their careers. One print journalist said: “Some of my colleagues have encouraged me. They give feedback about my writings and make me work on it further.”

Other respondents explained how they are often envied by their fellow women colleagues, and made to feel inferior by their male colleagues. They have reported how on an everyday basis they have to prove to their supervisors and colleagues that they deserve these posts, and that even if they are women, they are able to rise above their ‘natural inclinations’. This means that they often have to put in more efforts than their male counterparts, pretend that they are emotionally stable and unaffected during menstruation or while reporting sensitive news and ignore various kinds of harassment that they have to suffer in the field in silence. This is what a women reporter had to say about being one of the few reporters in the field:

“Women are generally only recruited for metro reporting, and even in metro, they are often given only fashion beats.”

Not being deputed to important news and hard beats also has serious professional consequences for women journalists in terms of their career growth and job satisfaction. Often, as the work that is allotted to women is considered less important, the management does not feel it worthwhile to invest in their professional training and upgrading of skills required for career advancement. This is aggravated by the perception that women employees would ask for more leaves, and have a higher drop-out rate compared to men. Thus, women journalists lag behind their male counterparts in terms of technical competency and knowledge, expertise in emerging technologies. This in turn contributes to their own and the organisations’ perception that women are incompetent when compared to men.

One woman journalist reported that she was the only woman reporter among the thirty selected for a state level exposure that was organised by her organisation, and that too not because of her ability but because her name sounded like that of a man. Besides the responsibilities and patriarchal beliefs at home keep the women from attending training sessions that lasts for more than a day, and they lag behind men when the management has to choose a competent figure for a special task.

2.4. Pitting women against each other

The respondents in this study have reported that they feel they have more women enemies than men. They have narrated instances where other women are more jealous of their growth in the organisation. One person also reported that in her experience,

“women were the worst enemies of women....as female colleagues have often gossiped about my behaviour in the organisation”.

Women reporters, who handle key responsibilities and have had a career growth at a young age, have to be “mentally prepared for inappropriate comments and character assassination in the organisation”, as reported by a respondent. They also have to be prepared to be questioned about their competency and skills on a daily basis and maintain an apparent objectivity in the profession. In those cases where they are given responsibilities of a hard beat, they have to balance the demand of the work and home, and suppress emotional trauma and physical pain, lest they are perceived as weak and incompetent.

This situation, where there are only a few women in important positions, who receive technical training and have the possibility for upward mobility in their career, also means that women in subordinate positions often find it impossible to have career advancement unless they replace those few existing women in key designations. They do not have or imagine a possibility to replace a male senior and occupy his post, rather often their only option is to somehow replace their women seniors. This results in unhealthy competition between female staff with each of them considering the other as a potential threat to their own career growth.

As hiring policies are biased against older women as opposed to older men in the media, and with higher attrition among women when compared to men, the absence of women in the senior managerial positions can translate to a direct lack of support for young women as Kanagasabai (2016) writes in her study on the Indian television newsroom. She further shows how intergenerational solidarity between the few older and younger women in the industry could open up possible ways of creating better working conditions for all.

2.5. Privatisation of Menstrual Discomfort in the Workplace

Apart from mental and emotional masking, women journalists have to hide their menstruation related difficulties as these could influence the perception of male employees towards women (Belliappa, 2018). A women reporter narrated this:

“During periods/menstruation it is difficult for me to work. I get severe stomach pain and I have mood swings at that time. I enter the news room with severe pain and I force myself to concentrate on reading news. It has been challenging.”

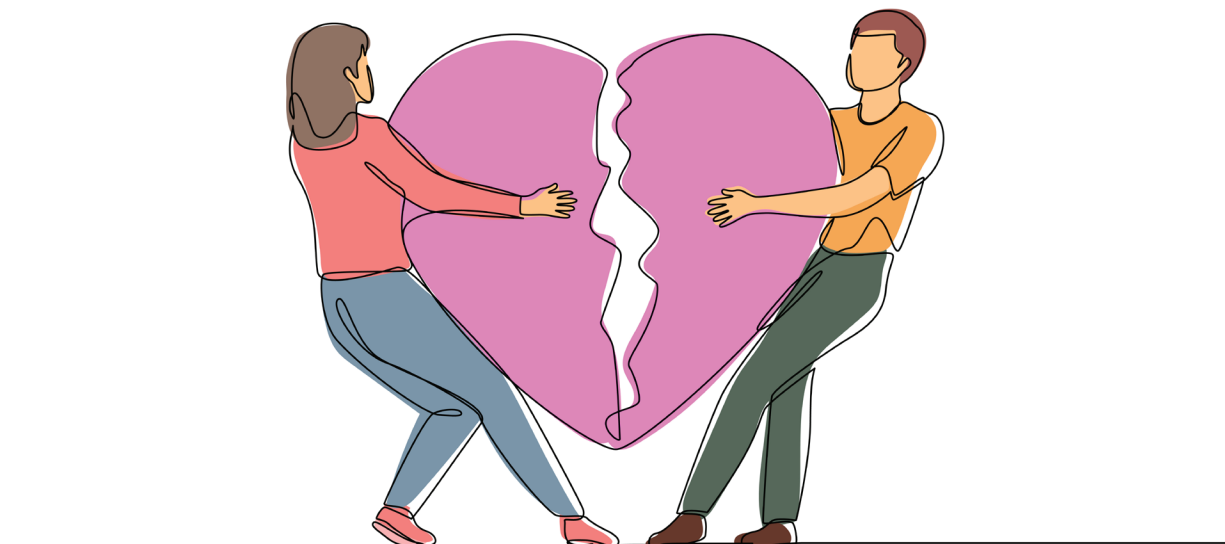
Other respondents stated that they are unable to convey to their male colleagues about their physical discomforts, which would be perceived as weakness of women in general.

“I feel privileged to be a political reporter. However, I have to compromise certain things to be in this field. For example, I get angry and feel nauseated during menstruation. But I cannot take leave during periods because the organisation could use this as an excuse to not recruit women for political or crime reporting. They would think that we [women] will take leave during menstruation, marriage and during pregnancy. So, I force myself not to give menstruation as a reason for mood swings and I try to work even during severe pain.”

Some of the women journalists spoke about the ways in which they have other female colleagues to share their difficulties with and how they have extended support informally, this way, exercising their agency as a group. One female news reader reports: “during menstruation other female colleagues understand what we go through and we share our work responsibilities with each other.”

However, the absence of women in general and in decision making positions results in these conversations and collaborations remaining in the private and personal realm even as they suffer the pain and discomfort associated with menstruation in a public space. All the conversations that women have in their personal domain are considered strictly ‘private’ and un-official, with no legitimacy in public spaces or official communication channels. Here again, as the institutional culture of organisations is perceived as neutral and objective, women’s problems, which are deemed subjective, are relegated to the side-lines (Ridgeway and Correll 2004; Ridgeway & England 2007; Roos & Reskin 1984, as quoted in Bobbitt-Zeher, 2011, p. 767). Yet in the gender-neutral space, women find it strange that there are designated official smoking places, but no designated spaces or communication channels for women who are nursing or menstruating.

At a time when the United Nations in Goal 5 of the Sustainable Development Goals call to end all forms of discrimination against all women and girls in all spheres of life (UNDP, 2020), a significant entity such as the media that can uphold equal rights of all, ought to work proactively towards creating a conducive environment for women to be able to work to their full potential. The sexism that women journalists are subject to is clearly not restricted to individuals who lack sensitivity, neither can they be overlooked as few cases of bias. It is a far more deep-seated prejudice against women and the devaluation of their labour, ingrained and perpetuated at an institutional level and needs to be addressed at the institutional level. The narratives of the participants in the study, even while throwing light on the grit and resilience shown by women journalists in Kannada media, reveal the unending challenges that women are forced to endure.



3. Marriage as Rupture in the Careers of Women Journalists

For women journalists, to stay and grow in a profession whose work culture is highly sexist, it is crucial to have a family support system which values their professional choice and acknowledges the contribution they make to society and to the family. Do women journalists receive this support? Or are they blamed for being unable to manage home and profession. It is significant that the unmarried women journalists interviewed have affirmed the critical role that their families play in helping them navigate through professional and personal struggles. However, a significant rupture in their careers that many of the respondents reported is with respect to marriage. In this chapter, the struggles of women journalists in the Kannada media in terms of managing domestic roles, managing perceptions at the workplace and difficulties in finding a marriage partner are explored.

3.1. Difficulties in Finding a Partner

As reported by the respondents, women journalists are considered by their own extended family and the society at large to be 'aggressive, masculine and promiscuous.' Consider these statements made by some of the unmarried women journalists:

"People assume that our life is colourful since we work in TV Channels. But it has been difficult for me to find a good match for marriage since men consider us to be unapproachable. Men think twice if they get to know about our job."

"Some of them [the family of a potential groom] were scared that women journalists would take up family issues/quarrels to news channels"

The women journalists shared how their career choice and agency came to be respected, and their financial independence valued by their natal families after long periods of negotiation. However, for marriage prospects such financial independence is perceived as a threat to their family responsibilities, duties and moral codes.

Some of the women journalists shared their own scepticism regarding their future professional role after marriage. They anticipate that they might have to let go of their career for the sake of their family life. At the same time, the respondents who were sure that they will continue in their profession, and whose families support them, find it difficult to meet men who are comfortable with their sense of liberty and passion.

For the women in the Kannada Media who have managed to overcome various levels of restrictions and have built a professional life of their own, their worldviews are shaped by these struggles. They expect their partners to respect their choices and stand by them in case of difficulties. An unmarried Christian female journalist had to say this:

"Nobody from my diocese like this profession (journalism). I'm not in love with anybody. So, I am anxious that I have to face the structure and norms of my church if it's an arranged marriage."

Along with their struggles in finding a partner due to their profession, they also have to negotiate their own choices with respect to their future husbands. They have shared that the financial independence that they have gained before marriage may not necessarily convert into individual liberty in terms of various choices in their life after marriage. This resonates with Belliapa (2013, p.82) who elaborates how the need for security that is associated with marriage forces women to navigate within the boundaries set by the family, at times pushing them to accept the family's choice of a marriage alliance.

Our respondents have also shared that though being 'seen' on TV enhances a woman journalist's visibility and career mobility, it also carries moral prejudice and social stigma. One of the respondents attributes this to a lack of knowledge about the media as a profession, and as a community, which has created myths about what really goes in the sector. Women journalists who have ventured into the unknown are thus seen as doing something that is illicit and illegitimate. Consider these responses by two participants:

"Since I'm an Anchor, I come on-screen. One prospective groom told me that if I wish to continue to work in the media, I have to quit on-screen appearances."

"It is difficult to get a match for marriage. Though the man might be fine with a journalist, his parents and family will not be approving of a woman journalist. They consider film industry and journalism as the same. Some men also have openly said that they don't want to get married to a journalist."

At the receiving end of such negative myths and stereotypes, our respondents reported high levels of stress that has affected their psychological health.

3.2. Family Expectations from Married Women Journalists

In Indian society it is expected that working women take care of the family which is considered their primary responsibility. While for some of the respondents the support from natal family members came more willingly, many had to negotiate for the same by highlighting to them the

‘job security in print media’ or the income flow as mentioned earlier. There was a recurring theme of the immediate family being accepting and proud of the women’s work and income, but the extended family disapproving a career in media for women, which in turn has an influence on their immediate family’s perception of women’s work.

The working woman gains legitimacy to work by ‘proving’ to family members that they can manage both the worlds, and are easily accused of forgoing domestic responsibilities for pursuing career interests (Belliappa, 2013). Among our respondents, although the partner was supportive in some cases, it was the in-law’s perception that could have a material bearing on women’s attrition from the industry. Consider this quote by one of the participants:

“Family is supportive but at times we get struck with tradition. It isn’t difficult to explain my shift timings to my husband but to make my in - laws understand. I have to strategize. So, for women to survive in this field, we strategize on daily basis.”

In a profession like journalism where one’s career success depends very much on the responsibilities that one is given, which in turn depends on how flexibly one can manage time, a lot is at stake for the women employees who are juggling family and profession. Women interviewed have stated that if their income from media profession is not seen as significantly contributing to the family income, often their in-laws – would not support the woman’s professional choices. There is a perception that their care work and domestic work is more valuable than their salary. Thus it is crucial for women in the media to be seen as someone who will manage the family in spite of her professional commitments. As a result, the emphasis and commitment that women give towards family is stronger than that of the men as also highlighted by Bhatnagar & Rajadhyaksha (2001, p. 552). Our respondents have narrated how they try hard to fix and arrange their work schedules in accordance with their familial commitments.

In the case of highly paid women professionals in India, there is an option to pay for a full time domestic help to take care of the family (Valk & Srinivasan, 2011). However, in the Kannada media industry this is not the case as the income levels are often not high. The full-time woman journalist thus ends up being the primary care giver of the family. Work related travel beyond office hours, staying back for casual chats or transfer to a different work location are not possible for her as she is not seen as the primary bread winner, for whom the family can pay a price. These conflicts often result in stagnation in the female employee’s growth, and in the longer run leads to dropping out from the profession.

3.3. Workplace Perceptions of Married Women Journalists

Women employees getting married is seen by organisations as a possible scenario for relocation, reduction of working hours or leaving the profession. Hence a female employee who is single, and is looking to get married is viewed with scepticism. A crime reporter with a newspaper said that her boss expects that she will leave crime reporting once she gets married. He assumes she will no longer have the choice to be ‘out in the field at odd times’ or be available when the situation demands. As one of her female colleagues in the crime department quit that post once she was pregnant, the management expects that she too will follow a similar path.

As discussed earlier, even while a female reporter gets a hard beat and important news coverage, it is never a permanent move as marriage and motherhood are “expected” to come in the way.

The ‘motherhood penalty’ (Correll, Benard, & Paik, 2007) on wages and career growth has been documented well and the ideal worker and the mother are considered as mutually exclusive categories (Correll et al., 2007, p. 1298). In the Kannada media industry, our respondents have shared that an unmarried woman is seen as a ‘future married woman and a future mother’. Organisations do not consider it wise to invest in women, seeing them as future drop-outs, thus making it logical to choose men instead of women.

Married professionals in the Kannada media have an additional threat of character assassination stemming from a perception that women’s financial independence could lead to promiscuity. As shared by one of the respondents, gossip about a woman’s character is well entrenched in the sexist culture of the workplace.

The very high dropout rate that has been reported among women journalists throughout the world has been mostly attributed to their inability to handle professional and domestic responsibilities (Griffin, 2014). The expectation on women journalists to be primarily responsible for all care-work is clearly not just from family members but also extends to co-workers who project the assumption that women will withdraw from the workspace with increasing familial responsibilities. With women’s personal life choices having material consequences on their career such as losing out on beats in spite of being passionate about them and receiving lower wages when compared to male colleagues, women continue to experience the media workplace as one that they constantly need to navigate with great caution. In some instances, their negotiations with the management or the communication channel they manage to build among women peers, even if few and small in scope, point to the possibilities of stronger solidarities for the future. The support of their families in many cases have helped the women secure their positions in the industry. However, the precarious balancing act of public and private is reserved only for women in media, much like in any other profession.



4. The Shadow of Sexual Harassment

Sexual Harassment has been recognised as one of the key reasons for the prevalence of gender inequality in the labour market (England, 2010), and a major factor that contributes to job dissatisfaction and decreased productivity among workers (Pina & Gannon, 2012). Within the Indian media, Joseph (2005) has established that sexual harassment in the workplace, ranging from explicit physical assaults to unwanted text messaging, and everything in between, is common, normalised, and deeply embedded in the structure of the industry. More recently, the #metoo movement drew attention to multiple instances of sexual harassment in the Kannada media. Such harassment now has serious legal implications for perpetrators and the gravity of long term social and psychological consequences for the victims is gradually being acknowledged. Schneider, Swan, & Fitzgerald (1997) who examined the psychological effects of sexual harassment on women have shown that even “low intensity” harassment and casual sexism has been found to take a major toll on the wellbeing of women workers. In this chapter we examine women journalists’ experiences and perceptions as well as perceptions of women and of sexual harassment in the Kannada media.

4.1. Experiences of Sexual Harassment

The respondents in this study have shared their experience of sexual harassment, ranging from eve teasing to lewd comments to unwanted messaging to crossing of physical boundaries. Women have reported that harassment in the form of body shaming, unwanted physical contact, unsolicited messages, slut-shaming and unwelcome comments on their private lives are so common that they accept it as part of their professional lives.

The predicament of experiencing gender based and sexual harassment but having to maintain a strong, objective front is described by Gill (2011) as ‘unspeakable inequalities’ where the “potency

of sexism lies in its very unspeakability” and any talk by women on the prevalent atmosphere that has adverse effects on them is interpreted as lack of merit, as individual failure even though the toxic culture affects women disproportionately in the workplace.

4.2. Lack of Redressal Mechanisms and Processes to address Sexual Harassment

A few of the respondents reported that they have not faced sexual harassment in their workplace and that they have heard very few cases of sexual harassment in the media. Although many of the women journalists recognize subtle workings of gender based and sexual harassment, such incidents being reported are extremely rare. In this context, what emerges throughout these narratives is the near universal absence of any redressal mechanism, procedures to ensure the safety of women and processes that can lead to punishment of the perpetrators. As discussed in the previous sections, the near or complete absence of women in decision making and managerial positions, the general unfavourable gender ratio in the media workplace and the entrenched system of patriarchal norms have contributed to organisational cultures that structurally refuse to pay heed to the needs of women. This is also reflected in the way media houses tend to deal with complaints of sexual harassment. One woman journalist reports:

“Initially I was scared in the office. I used to be quiet. There were many more male colleagues than female colleagues in the office, which was intimidating. I have seen male colleagues asking inappropriate questions when women dress up to office. They ask questions like: “What is special today (with a different tone - you will get to know that they are hinting at our personal choices)? ‘Whom are you meeting today?’ I have also been harassed by them. One male colleague used to text us (women journalists) inappropriately. When we started questioning him, he began targeting us for that.”

Many of the respondents reported that either their organisation does not have an Anti-Sexual Harassment Committee or any other formal modes through which they can raise their grievances. It therefore lies on the individual woman to negotiate unwanted sexual advances from her colleagues, and it is often the case that their male seniors are directly or indirectly involved in related issues. Thus, as one woman reported, they do not feel they can report to the senior male members who are often given the charge to address employee grievances. Another woman reported that it was her Bureau Chief, the official in charge for addressing sexual harassment cases in the office, who was asking her for sexual favours. He was also her immediate boss, who approved her leave applications, assigned her tasks and decided her promotion and salary increment. While she expressed that she is undergoing severe stress, one of her friends who went through a similar situation quit her job and joined a different organisation.

4.3. Moral Policing and Gender Segregation

Our interviews with women journalists have revealed a pervasive peer policing system, wherein the women employees are continuously judged and policed for their character, choice of clothing and behaviour towards their male colleagues. Women are constantly at the receiving end of gossip aimed at character assassination, and their choice of clothing is often commented on. While it is crucial for women to maintain a friendly relation with their peers for their career

mobility, such friendly relationships are often taken as sexual overtures. The women's rejection of sexual advances by male colleagues often costs them a promotion or salary increment or key assignment or even their jobs.

The perception that women's presence will distract men was also examined in the interviews. Respondents reiterated that the general institutional culture ensures maintaining a distinct gender separation. They cited instances of organisations monitoring women employees' movements and interaction with fellow male colleagues which has resulted in their exclusion from important networks and conversations. As communication and information flow between employees is critical for an employee's growth in an organisation, gender segregation interferes with information flows, mentoring for promotion, learning opportunities, and overall support (Ragins, 1989, p. 3).

Consider these statements made by two female editors:

"Men and Women are not supposed to spend more time together after 8pm in the office premises. We are instructed to do whatever we want outside the office premises, but not to engage in any kind of unnecessary conversation in office."

"My chief made unnecessary comments just because we went out with our male colleagues to have dinner during the night shift. We were targeted though we went in a group of four. When my female colleagues come fashionably dressed, the way male colleagues look at them is inappropriate. You cannot avoid the male gaze. I dress like a boy. So I am mocked at as a tomboy."

Such separation, marking and shaming in an institution has important consequences on the psychological wellbeing as well as on the professional growth of female employees. Being feminine or being tomboyish are both ridiculed leaving women on a tight rope walk.

A third aspect of the moral policing is the way women journalists are targeted when the reputation of an institution is at stake. Consider the response of a woman journalist when asked about the institutional culture of treating men and women who are involved in controversies:

"There was a case in my organisation. A male colleague and a female colleague were having an extra-marital affair. When the female colleague's husband complained about it to the management, she was fired. However, the male colleague was only given suspension for 15 days after which he re-joined us. In this case the management could have fired both of them but it didn't. Women are victims during these situations and men escape."

Another journalist reports:

"Professional jealousy is common. But when my work was recognised by the editor my colleagues gossiped about me. There was character assassination. I would like to share an incident...The Editor of my organisation dropped me in his vehicle since I had to meet the doctor for an emergency. A reporter from another organisation clicked our picture and wrote a gossip story which was published in a newspaper. Since we are women our character gets attacked first."

Thus while women journalists do similar kind of paid work as their male counterparts, there is also a hidden burden of maintaining the status and honour of the organisation. As has been reported widely, it is often the women who get punished and scandalised for illicit activities. In addition, the fear of being perceived to be associated with a female colleague often makes men in managerial positions to distance themselves from the everyday of women employees, thus

foreclosing the possibility of powerful men to have first-hand experience of women colleagues' struggles, significantly affecting the institutional culture to be inclusive of women's needs.

One person also reported that in her experience, female colleagues have gossiped about her behaviour in the organisation. In the case of women reporters who handle key responsibilities and have had a career growth in young age, they have to be "mentally prepared for inappropriate comments and character assassination in the organisation".

Thus through sexual harassment the skewed gender ratio in the workplace is maintained as it undermines the women employees ability to work in a conducive atmosphere (McLaughlin, Uggen, & Blackstone, 2012) and in a way helps the men to climb higher up the ladder at the cost of women. And studies have shown that those women who self-report sexual harassment in the workplace have to face cultural bias from their peers in the form of perception of lesser morality, warmth and social skills, thus contributing to them being considered less suitable for promotion and career advancement (Hart, 2019). This fear of facing bias contributes to their hesitation to report sexual harassment on their own, and forces them to often suffer in silence or quit the profession.

4.4. Women's Coping and Navigating Strategies

At the same time, women journalists also devise strategies to navigate the unwanted sexual advances in unique ways. Since there is almost no institutional system to deal with complaints of sexual harassment, and it is often the very same men who decide on matters related to the same, some of them form comradeship between each other and provide support to each other when needed. Consider the narration of one Dalit respondent when asked about navigating sexual advances from seniors in office:

"One of senior male colleagues started texting me during late nights. Considering his seniority and position, I used to respond to his messages initially, but he took advantage of that and started texting incessantly. I tried to handle it in my own way. The next day I went to office, and with a loud voice I said, "Sir, sorry I missed your call at 12 pm yesterday night. I was sleeping. Was it something important?" It was my strategy to tell him that I wasn't interested in him. However, he felt ashamed that I questioned him in front of others. Now he targets me for simple mistakes. He wouldn't have considered it as a mistake if I had given into his desires."

This response is in line with the research findings across the world where women think that sexual harassment is something that they have to work out themselves and find a solution for (North, 2016).

While women respondents who are in non-supervisory position either ward off sexual advancements contextually or change their job or suffer in silence, it is not clear how the women in supervisory or managerial position deals with sexual harassments in media workspace. This is because of their lack of representation in managerial positions and hence the corresponding absence in the sample collected. Since the domain of media in Karnataka has been heavily populated by men, traditionally there hasn't been a threat to men from women in terms of territory; but this is changing in the last couple of years as more women are entering the profession. And in the cases where women enter traditional male spaces, research has pointed out the prevalence of sexual harassment as an instrument to check women's rise in organisations and as a tool to



demote their status and authority (Berdahl, 2007a, 2007b; McLaughlin et al., 2012). At the same time since women who are in media industry in Bangalore have reported societal perceptions about them as well as the challenges they face to manage their professional and personal life, sexual harassment reports add to the perception of media sector being unsafe for women, or as a profession where women have to be constantly protected from possible harassment. This adds to their existing struggles to attain equality with their male colleagues in terms of assignment of field duties, reporting and important and sensitive news coverage. Sexual harassment reports also will contribute to the concerns that the respondents have shared in this study regarding their marriage and difficulty that they face in finding the suitable match. The moral codes associated with sexual harassment and perception of being a 'bad women' (Adikaram, 2014) would add to the already existing perception of women in media, especially visual media, and this can act as a factor that would make the women in media not report sexual harassment for the fear of personal costs attached to such moves; thus making it imperative to have institutional mechanism and legal protection for victims of sexual harassment and making the organisation aware of the power dynamics involved in sexual harassment.

Since it is disproportionately aimed at women, sexual harassment contributes towards early drop out of women from jobs. Formal mechanisms, if instituted in all media organisations in order to prevent the discrimination against women, can be a powerful means of retaining women. With more young women than men entering journalism and media schools in the country (Kanagasabai, 2016), it is of utmost necessity for employers in the industry to take stringent measures against perpetrators, allow for redress and indeed initiate pro-active measures to stem sexism and sexual harassment.



5. Intersections of Gender Discrimination with Language, Region and Caste

The media industry in Karnataka is dominated by the upper castes from a few districts and regions of Karnataka. Leaders and seniors in the industry select new employees with a preference towards their own, that is, people of their caste and regional backgrounds. Caste prejudices and affinity based on regional identities have therefore come to play a major role in determining access to employment and growth. While women in media have reported challenges varying from career advancement, work-life balance, sexual harassment and institutional bias, these experiences are in turn shaped by their respective social location in terms of their region, educational qualification, caste, religion and family background.

“Most of the Media organisations are patriarchal and women feel threatened in a male - dominated work space. Though we [women] are well educated and conscious of gender discrimination, we have not come out of [our] inferiority complex.” (A post-graduate Dalit woman journalist)

5.1. Notions of ‘standard’ language and ‘Good’ Kannada

The standard or official language of a region is often the dialect which has state support (Mesthrie, 2009). Since the institutional state often reflects the underlying power relations between various sections of the population, what is considered as ‘standard’ language is indeed the language of the dominant sections of the population (Agnihotri, 2009).

In Karnataka there are several ways of speaking Kannada and several dialects. However, it is the Kannada of Mysore and southern Karnataka and the way it is spoken by upper castes that is considered most superior. This has set the idea of ‘standard’ Kannada. As the media works

through the deployment of language, this language hierarchy places all those women who do not speak the 'standard' dialect of Kannada, at a relatively disadvantaged position. Consider these two observations from our respondents from the Kannada TV channels about the politics of language in Kannada media:

"I have not faced any problem because of my language since I speak the Kannada which is accepted in News Channels. People who come from Raichur and Gulbarga [in Northern Karnataka] face problem since their accent sounds rude. In my previous organisation, when two new people were recruited at the same time, one was warned to learn Kannada that is accepted in News Channels as soon as possible." (Journalist from South Karnataka)

"Colleagues have commented about my language. I'm from Hospet [in Central Karnataka], and the Kannada that I speak sounds loud and rude; some words are different and that doesn't suit the standardised Kannada in media." (Journalist from Hyderabad-Karnataka Region)

The responses of both the women, the one who speaks 'standard Kannada' and the one who doesn't, both indicate there is indeed a type of Kannada usage that is considered 'right' and of having superior quality. While the social and cultural capital (Bourdieu, 2011) of the standard-Kannada speaker acts as a supportive structure to navigate her professional world, the same discourse reinforces the prime position of standard Kannada, relegating all other forms of expressions into the informal and private realm. Thus, while it would be acceptable for the reporters to speak in their own tongue in their private conversation, the public, the visible and hence the legitimate is reserved for standard-Kannada. As a result, women who speak that 'standard' language are at a much more advantaged position than other women in the Kannada media.

Regional identity in Karnataka, and especially in the media, not only determines employment opportunities through nepotism, it also determines who is visible in the media and whose voices and words get considered as legitimate. The language that one speaks is not just some utterance but it reflects 'the whole social person' (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 653) and is used to identify people, mark them and decide which group that person belong to.

Added to this linguistic barrier, which affects their recruitment and career mobility, the fact that most of the media houses are located in Bangalore creates another layer of disadvantage. Distance from the capital, Bangalore and language proficiency makes women from North and interior districts to be perceived as inferior and incompetent. While caste identity is considered as one of the major factors determining career mobility and recruitment in India (Majumder, 2010; Mosse, 2018), it was also reported by the respondents in this study that "regional identity works like caste identity in Kannada media".

"I'm from Raichur, [in North Karnataka]. We are not considered as intellectual as the others. So, I'm made to feel inferior for my regional identity also."

5.2. Rhetoric of merit

While the upper caste women who were part of the study rejected any possible discrimination on the basis of caste in media houses in Karnataka, and emphasised that competence and merit are the only determinants in the workplace, a respondent who belonged to the Scheduled Caste category reported this:

“My colleagues assumed I belong to a dominant caste (Gowda). They got to know my caste when I shared a book authored by my brother. My brother’s caste was mentioned in the book and they got to know that I’m from the Scheduled Caste category. The way they interacted with me changed after that. I realised that if we perform well, they start assuming that we belong to dominant caste.”

And this is the response of another Scheduled caste respondent:

“My chief has enquired about my caste directly. I was surprised to know that colleagues directly ask about caste at the work place. The management doesn’t recognise us based on our caste. They look for committed employees. They recognise us for our obedient work. Nobody has got a job because of caste. But I do know that people have got jobs through references and social networks- which is common in most organisations and professions.”

This is in line with the argument that Deshpande (2006 & 2013) and Subramanian (2015) make that caste is now converted into merit with the upper castes claiming to be casteless but being meritorious. The identification of marketable traits as merit, and a denial of the historical social capital of the upper castes, has been a hallmark of how caste inequalities are redeployed in modern India. Thus, even while there may not be any explicit caste discrimination – in the form of exclusion and physical separation – employees from the lower castes are deemed inferior in terms of modern managerial principles and etiquette. The hegemonic structure of the caste system creates settings which appear to be neutral, not favouring any group over the other, but which are in fact mediated by structural stratifications and new modes of social segregations.

The presence of socially contextual segregations like caste and regional identity acts as additional barriers for women employees in terms of access and mobility within the media sector. From the discussion so far, it is evident that women face gendered and impersonal discrimination in the workplace, and the degree of discrimination is also mediated by other social markers that each woman carries. These identities while acting as barriers for those women who do not belong, also acts as ways of enabling some women to rise through the glass ceiling.

One of the respondents who belongs to an upper caste has mentioned how her gender helped her in getting a position in the newspaper which is owned by some members of her own caste group. She also narrated how her male colleagues support her in her work and how the management is supportive of her in terms of work flexibility. While this could be attributed to her compliance with the established norms, her membership in her caste group clearly has a significant impact on her career prospects. This also offers her a possibility to effect minor, albeit important, changes in the culture of the organisation. At the same time the exclusion of ‘others’ from the workplace also would mean that the workplace reflects and reproduces the status quo, rendering silent the voices of the unheard communities.

A serious reflection on organisational structure and review of their own hiring policies to strive to be more inclusive is the need of the hour. For a field of work that is involved with social justice in many ways, the media sector in the state ought to conceive of material ways to address their skewed employee compositions and the lived experiences of their women employees.



6. Conclusion

Our study, on one level, attempted to fill the gap in the existing literature about women journalists in Karnataka. Exploring the media industry through a gender conscious lens, the study highlighted various patriarchal and other oppressive structures that mediate women's experience of their work.

At another level, the study found small yet significant ways in which individual women use negotiations and strategies to secure their position within the media industry, highlighting the pressing need for institutional intervention to create better working conditions for them.

Between the demands of ideal womanhood that can balance domestic responsibilities alongside a career, and the expectations to hide any suffering felt due to a deeply patriarchal environment, the experiences of women journalists are deemed personal, and thus, subjective. This is in contrast to the impersonal and the so-called objective and neutral work environment. Organisations, failing to address the low number of women entering and remaining in the industry, perpetuate these stereotypical expectations of a woman in the workplace while simultaneously erasing the woman from larger discourses about the workplace such as wages or freedom of press.

In the chapter deconstructing institutional sexism, we have seen that multiple factors, sometimes overt and many times working in subtle ways, constrain women's right to a safe and good working environment in the Kannada media. Among the most common problems are the lack of facilities such as creches, menstrual leave, maternity leave, and rest rooms for physical sickness.

Despite no enabling facilities, both success and failure of women journalists are reduced to their gender. Most organisations, by not curbing normalised, every day sexism by male who are often more powerful employees, fail to eliminate systemic forms of marginalization of women. As various studies have shown across time and space, this study too has drawn attention to the beauty standards associated with any industry associated with glamour and the unrealistic demands it places on women and their bodies even to this day.

The subsequent chapter explored the idea of marriage and the rupture it can create in women's careers due to the disproportionate demands it places on women's lives. The narratives have affirmed that supportive natal families can play a critical role for young women aspiring for a career in media. Even in the midst of this somewhat hopeful picture, most of the respondents in this study have had to negotiate for respect and freedom by proving grit and financial independence.

However, these attributes are far from agreeable for marriageability. While being subject to character assassinations at work, and carrying the burden of misconceptions surrounding a career in media, women find it difficult to find a suitable life partner. Both married and unmarried women bear the extra burden of familial responsibilities while having to compromise in their workplace in terms of the topics and beats of their liking.

The narratives of success in our study have been a testimony, not to individual effort, but to the resilience that they have to imbibe in an atmosphere that systematically tries to devalue their labour. These deep-rooted institutional biases can only be addressed by resolve at the institutional level.

Similarly, the chapter centering on sexual harassment faced by women in Kannada media, shed light on the near universal absence of redressal mechanisms for those who face sexual harassment at the workplace despite the provisions of the Prevention of Sexual Harassment at the Workplace Act, 2013. Even with certain systems in place, the women journalists who raise a voice against sexual harassment are subject to various kinds of judgements, and are typically at more risk of being impacted adversely than even the accused. As in studies across the globe, this study too pointed to the high numbers of such cases that go unreported in the workplace and to the high rate of drop out due to sexual harassment perpetrated against women. Without formal mechanisms that send out a strong message that gender based violations will not be tolerated, it is left to the women to individually strategize on a daily basis, their mental health constantly at stake.

In the final chapter, the study brought out the ways in which family and industry intersect with specific individual locations and identities of religion, social class, caste and religion. While all women reported challenges they face, their experiences are mediated and shaped by their intersecting social locations. This implies, as the study showed, that some women have been able to overcome the disabilities caused to them on account of their gender, leveraging the social capital that their caste, religion, region and the standard, accepted language offer them. However, these same identity markers work against other women who come from marginalised castes and geographic locations. The work environments continue to exclude a large number of these women, making it multiply difficult for them to navigate the industry.

Essentially, the study drew attention to the urgent need for critical self-reflection and evaluation within the industry, and the significant scope for organisational changes in order to effect substantive transformation in the workplace. Among the most basic requirements is formalising facilities such as creches and cab services, maternity benefits and menstrual leaves that can enable all women to work to their full potential and scale up the career graphs they chart out for themselves. Throughout the study, what gets highlighted is the need for instituting redressal mechanisms for gender based and sexual harassment, and for pro-active measures to create a respectful environment for women's time and labour. Primarily, organisations need to focus on rooting out institutional sexism, working subtly and overtly at various different levels, perpetuated by both individuals in the workplace as well as administrative choices, that prevents women from growing and flourishing in the industry.

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ಕಾರ್ಯಗತಗೊಳಿಸುವ ಸಾರಾಂಶ

ಕನ್ನಡದ ಮುದ್ರಣ ಮತ್ತು ಎಲೆಕ್ಟ್ರಾನಿಕ್ ಮಾಧ್ಯಮಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ಪತ್ರಕರ್ತೆಯರ ಅನುಭವಗಳು

ಸಂಶೋಧನಾ ಅಧ್ಯಯನದ ಸಂದರ್ಭದಲ್ಲಿ ನಡೆಸಿದ ಮಾತುಕತೆಯ ಸಾರಾಂಶದ ವರದಿ

ಕನ್ನಡ ಮಾಧ್ಯಮಲೋಕದಲ್ಲಿ ಪತ್ರಕರ್ತೆಯರ ದಿನನಿತ್ಯದ ಸಂಘರ್ಷಗಳನ್ನು ಅರ್ಥಮಾಡಿಕೊಳ್ಳುವ ಪ್ರಯತ್ನವಾಗಿ ನಡೆಸಿದ ಸಂಶೋಧನಾ ಅಧ್ಯಯನದ ಆಧಾರದ ಮೇಲೆ ಈ ವರದಿಯನ್ನು ರೂಪಿಸಲಾಗಿದೆ. ಬೆಂಗಳೂರಿನಲ್ಲಿರುವ ಪತ್ರಕರ್ತೆಯರನ್ನು ಗಮನದಲ್ಲಿರಿಸಿಕೊಂಡು ಈ ಸಂಶೋಧನೆಯನ್ನು ನಡೆಸಲಾಗಿದೆ. ಸಂವಾದ ಸಂಸ್ಥೆಯ 'ಕಣಜ ಸಂಶೋಧನಾ ವಿಭಾಗ' ಮತ್ತು 'ಬದುಕು ಸೆಂಟರ್ ಫಾರ್ ಲೈವ್ಲಿಹುಡ್ಸ್ ಲರ್ನಿಂಗ್'ನ ಮಾಧ್ಯಮ ವಿಭಾಗವು ಈ ಸಂಶೋಧನೆ ನಡೆಸಿದೆ. ಈ ಸಂಶೋಧನೆಯ ಸಂದರ್ಭದಲ್ಲಿ ಪತ್ರಕರ್ತೆಯರು ಹಂಚಿಕೊಂಡ ಅವರ ಸಂಕಷ್ಟದ ಹಾಗೂ ಸಂಘರ್ಷದ ಅನುಭವಗಳು, ಅವರೊಂದಿಗಿನ ಮಾತುಕತೆಗಳು, ಕನ್ನಡ ಮಾಧ್ಯಮಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ಕೆಲಸ ಮಾಡುತ್ತಿರುವ ಪತ್ರಕರ್ತೆಯರು ಸಾಮಾಜಿಕ ಕಟ್ಟುಪಾಡುಗಳ ನಡುವೆಯೂ ತಮ್ಮ ವೃತ್ತಿ ಮತ್ತು ವೈಯಕ್ತಿಕ ಬದುಕನ್ನು ಹೇಗೆ ನಿಭಾಯಿಸುತ್ತಿದ್ದಾರೆ ಎಂಬುದನ್ನು ಅರ್ಥ ಮಾಡಿಕೊಳ್ಳಲು ನಮಗೆ ನೆರವಾಗುತ್ತದೆ.

'ಪತ್ರಿಕೋದ್ಯಮ ಸ್ನಾತಕೋತ್ತರ ಡಿಪ್ಲೊಮಾ ಕೋರ್ಸ್‌ನ ಆರು ಬ್ಯಾಚ್‌ಗಳನ್ನು ಯಶಸ್ವಿಯಾಗಿ ನಡೆಸಿದ ಅನುಭವದ ಆಧಾರದ ಮೇಲೆ 'ಬದುಕು ಸೆಂಟರ್ ಫಾರ್ ಲೈವ್ಲಿಹುಡ್ಸ್ ಲರ್ನಿಂಗ್‌ನ ಮಾಧ್ಯಮ ವಿಭಾಗವು 2018-19ರಲ್ಲಿ ಈ ಅಧ್ಯಯನವನ್ನು ವಿನ್ಯಾಸಗೊಳಿಸಿ ಕಾರ್ಯರೂಪಕ್ಕೆ ತಂದಿತು. ಈ ಕೋರ್ಸ್‌ನ ಹಳೆಯ ವಿದ್ಯಾರ್ಥಿನಿ/ವಿದ್ಯಾರ್ಥಿಗಳು, ಮಾಧ್ಯಮ ಕ್ಷೇತ್ರದ ಗೆಳತಿ/ಗೆಳೆಯರ ಜತೆಗಿನ ಸಂವಾದ, ಮಾತುಕತೆಗಳು ಈ ಅಧ್ಯಯನಕ್ಕೆ ಅಗತ್ಯವಿದ್ದ ಪ್ರಶ್ನೆಗಳನ್ನು ರೂಪಿಸುವಲ್ಲಿ ಪ್ರಮುಖ ಪಾತ್ರವಹಿಸಿವೆ. ಬೆಂಗಳೂರಿನಲ್ಲಿ ವಿವಿಧ ಮಾಧ್ಯಮಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ಕೆಲಸ ಮಾಡುತ್ತಿರುವ; ವಯೋಮಾನ, ಹುದ್ದೆ, ಕೆಲಸದ ಅನುಭವ, ವೈವಾಹಿಕ ಸ್ಥಿತಿ, ಜಾತಿ, ಧರ್ಮ - ಇವೆಲ್ಲವೂ ಬೇರೆ ಬೇರೆಯಾಗಿಯೇ ಇರುವ 21ರಿಂದ 40 ವರ್ಷದೊಳಗಿನ 30 ಮಂದಿ ಪತ್ರಕರ್ತೆಯರನ್ನು ಈ ಅಧ್ಯಯನಕ್ಕೆ ಆಯ್ಕೆ ಮಾಡಿಕೊಳ್ಳಲಾಗಿತ್ತು. ಉದ್ದೇಶಿತ ಮಾದರಿ ವಿಧಾನದ (purposive sampling method) ಆಧಾರದಲ್ಲಿ ಈ ಆಯ್ಕೆ ನಡೆಸಲಾಯಿತು. ಈ ಸಂದರ್ಭದಲ್ಲಿ ಭಿನ್ನ ಜಾತಿ ಮತ್ತು ಧರ್ಮಗಳಿಗೆ ಸೇರಿದ ಪತ್ರಕರ್ತೆಯರು ಸಮಪ್ರಮಾಣದಲ್ಲಿರುವಂತೆ ನೋಡಿಕೊಳ್ಳಲಾಯಿತು. ಈ ಅಧ್ಯಯನದಲ್ಲಿ ಕೇಳಲಾದ ಪ್ರಶ್ನೆಗಳಿಗೆ ಪ್ರತಿಕ್ರಿಯಿಸಿದವರಲ್ಲಿ ಸುದ್ದಿ ನಿರೂಪಕಿಯರು, ಕಾಪಿ ಎಡಿಟರ್‌ಗಳು, ವರದಿಗಾರ್ತಿಯರು, ಉಪ-ಸಂಪಾದಕಿಯರು, ಸಂಪಾದಕಿಯರು ಸೇರಿದಂತೆ ಎಲ್ಲಾ ಹಂತದ ಪತ್ರಕರ್ತೆಯರೂ ಇದ್ದರು.

ಮಾಧ್ಯಮ ಸಂಸ್ಥೆಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ರೂಪುಗೊಂಡಿರುವ ಲಿಂಗತಾರತಮ್ಯ 'ವ್ಯವಸ್ಥೆ' ಮತ್ತು ಮನೆಯ ಜವಾಬ್ದಾರಿಗಳೆಂಬ ಕಟ್ಟುಪಾಡುಗಳ ನಡುವೆಯೂ ಮಹಿಳೆಯರು ತಮ್ಮ ವೃತ್ತಿಜೀವನದ ಆಕಾಂಕ್ಷೆಗಳು ಮತ್ತು ನಿಜವಾದ ಅವಕಾಶಗಳ ವಿಚಾರದಲ್ಲಿ ಹೇಗೆ ಅನುಸಂಧಾನ ನಡೆಸುತ್ತಿದ್ದಾರೆ ಎಂಬುದನ್ನು ಈ ಅಧ್ಯಯನವು ಪರಿಶೀಲಿಸುತ್ತದೆ. ಈ ಅಂಶಗಳು ಪರಸ್ಪರ ಹೇಗೆ ಪ್ರಭಾವ ಬೀರುತ್ತವೆ ಎಂಬುದನ್ನು ತೆರೆದಿಡುವ ಮೂಲಕ ಪತ್ರಿಕೋದ್ಯಮವನ್ನು ಹೆಣ್ಣಿನ ದೃಷ್ಟಿಕೋನದಿಂದ (gender-lens) ನೋಡಲು ಈ ಅಧ್ಯಯನ ಅನುವು ಮಾಡಿಕೊಡುತ್ತದೆ. ಪುರುಷಪ್ರಧಾನತೆಯು ಪತ್ರಿಕೋದ್ಯಮ ಕ್ಷೇತ್ರದಲ್ಲೂ ಹೇಗೆ ದಿನನಿತ್ಯದ 'ವ್ಯವಸ್ಥೆ'ಯಾಗಿ ರೂಪ ಪಡೆದಿದೆ ಎಂಬುದನ್ನು ಅರಿಯಲು ಈ ದೃಷ್ಟಿಕೋನ ನೆರವಾಗುತ್ತದೆ. ಪುರುಷರೇ ಹೆಚ್ಚಾಗಿರುವ ಕೆಲಸದ ಸ್ಥಳ ಹಾಗೂ ಪುರುಷಪ್ರಧಾನ ಕೌಟುಂಬಿಕ ವ್ಯವಸ್ಥೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ಹೆಣ್ಣಿನ ಮೇಲೆ ಹೇರಲಾಗಿರುವ ಮನೆಯ ಜವಾಬ್ದಾರಿಗಳ ನಡುವೆ ಅರೆ-ಸಂಘಟಿತ ಕ್ಷೇತ್ರದ ಕೆಲಸಗಾರ್ತಿಯರಾಗಿ ಪತ್ರಕರ್ತೆಯರ ದಿನನಿತ್ಯದ ಅನುಭವಗಳು ಹೇಗಿವೆ ಎಂಬುದನ್ನು ಈ ಅಧ್ಯಯನದಲ್ಲಿ ತೆರೆದಿಡಲಾಗಿದೆ. ಇದಲ್ಲದೆ ಜಾತಿ, ಅಂತಸ್ತು ಮತ್ತು ಧರ್ಮದ ಜೊತೆಗೆ ಲಿಂಗವನ್ನೂ ಒಂದು ವರ್ಗವಾಗಿ (category) ನೋಡಬೇಕಾದ ಅಗತ್ಯವಿದೆ ಎಂಬ ತಿಳುವಳಿಕೆಯೊಂದಿಗೆ, ಭಿನ್ನ ಸಾಮಾಜಿಕ ಸ್ಥಳಗಳು ಮಹಿಳೆಯರ ಅನುಸಂಧಾನದ ಮೇಲೆ ಹೇಗೆ ಪ್ರಭಾವ ಬೀರುತ್ತವೆ ಎಂಬುದನ್ನು ಈ ಅಧ್ಯಯನವು ತೆರೆದಿಟ್ಟಿದೆ.

ವ್ಯವಸ್ಥೆಯ ಕಟ್ಟುಪಾಡುಗಳು ಹಾಗೂ ಪತ್ರಕರ್ತೆಯರ ಅನುಸಂಧಾನದ ಮಾರ್ಗಗಳನ್ನು ಪರಿಶೀಲಿಸುವುದರ ಜತೆಗೆ ಪುರುಷಪ್ರಧಾನವಾಗಿರುವ ಮಾಧ್ಯಮ ಕ್ಷೇತ್ರದಲ್ಲಿ ಪತ್ರಕರ್ತೆಯರು ತಮ್ಮ ನೆರವಿಗಾಗಿ ಯಾವ ರೀತಿಯ ಬೆಂಬಲವ್ಯವಸ್ಥೆಯನ್ನು ರೂಪಿಸಿಕೊಂಡಿದ್ದಾರೆ ಎಂಬುದರ ಮೇಲೂ ಈ ಅಧ್ಯಯನವು ಬೆಳಕು ಚೆಲ್ಲುತ್ತದೆ. ಮಾಧ್ಯಮ ಸಂಸ್ಥೆಗಳನ್ನು ಕೆಲಸದ ಸ್ಥಳಗಳಾಗಿ ಗುರುತಿಸುವ ಪ್ರವೃತ್ತಿಗಳು ಮತ್ತು ಇಲ್ಲಿ ಪತ್ರಕರ್ತೆಯರು ನಿಭಾಯಿಸಬೇಕೆಂದು ಬಯಸುವ ಸಾಮಾಜಿಕ-ಸಾಂಸ್ಕೃತಿಕ ನಿರೀಕ್ಷೆಗಳನ್ನು ಗುರುತಿಸುವ ಮೂಲಕ ಈ ವರದಿಯು ಪ್ರಾರಂಭವಾಗುತ್ತದೆ.

ಮುಖ್ಯವಾಗಿ, (i) ಮಾಧ್ಯಮ ಸಂಸ್ಥೆಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ಸಾಂಸ್ಥಿಕ ಸಂಸ್ಕೃತಿ ಮತ್ತು ಲಿಂಗತ್ವದ ಆಧಾರದಲ್ಲಿ ಭೇದಭಾವ, (ii) ಮಹಿಳೆಯರಿಗೆ ನೀಡಲಾಗಿರುವ ವಿಭಿನ್ನ ವೃತ್ತಿ ಜವಾಬ್ದಾರಿಗಳು, (iii) ಕೌಟುಂಬಿಕ ಬೆಂಬಲದ ಸಂಕಷ್ಟಗಳು, (iv) ಮದುವೆ ಎಂಬುದು ಅವರ ವೃತ್ತಿ ಬೆಳವಣಿಗೆಯನ್ನು ಹೇಗೆ ಭಿದ್ರವಾಗಿಸಿದೆ, (v) ಲೈಂಗಿಕ ಕಿರುಕುಳ ಅಥವಾ ಅದರ ಬಗ್ಗೆ ಭಯ, (vi) ಕೆಲಸದ ಸ್ಥಳದಲ್ಲಿ ಲಿಂಗಸ್ವಭಾವದ ಜತೆಗೆ ಜಾತಿ ಮತ್ತು ಪ್ರಾದೇಶಿಕತೆ ಕೂಡಾ ಹೇಗೆ ಪ್ರಭಾವ ಬೀರುತ್ತದೆ - ಎಂಬ ಅಂಶಗಳನ್ನು ಈ ವರದಿಯು ಒಳಗೊಂಡಿದೆ. ಈ ಅಂಶಗಳ ಆಧಾರದಲ್ಲಿ ದುಡಿಯುವ ಮಹಿಳೆಯರ ಮೇಲೆ ಯಾವ ರೀತಿಯ ಮೌಲ್ಯಗಳನ್ನು ಹೇರಲಾಗಿದೆ ಎಂಬುದನ್ನು ಈ ಅಧ್ಯಯನದಲ್ಲಿ ವಿವೇಚಿಸಲಾಗಿದೆ.

ಈ ಅಧ್ಯಯನವು ಮಹಿಳೆಯರು ಕುಟುಂಬ ವ್ಯವಸ್ಥೆಯ ಜವಾಬ್ದಾರಿಗಳು ಮತ್ತು ಹಲವು ರೀತಿಯಲ್ಲಿ ಲಿಂಗತಾರತಮ್ಯವಿನ್ನೂ ಉಳಿದಿರುವ ಮಾಧ್ಯಮಗಳ ಸಾಂಸ್ಥಿಕ ಸಂಸ್ಕೃತಿ - ಇವುಗಳ ನಡುವೆ ತಮ್ಮ ವೃತ್ತಿಆಕಾಂಕ್ಷೆಗಳು, ಲಭ್ಯವಿರುವ ಅವಕಾಶಗಳ ನಡುವೆ ಹೇಗೆ ರಾಜಿ ಮಾಡಿಕೊಳ್ಳುತ್ತಾರೆ ಎನ್ನುವುದನ್ನು ಪರಿಶೀಲಿಸುತ್ತದೆ. ಈ ಅಂಶಗಳು ಹೇಗೆ ಒಂದನ್ನೊಂದು ಪ್ರಭಾವಿಸುತ್ತವೆ ಎನ್ನುವುದನ್ನು ಪರಿಶೀಲಿಸಿದಾಗ ಮಾಧ್ಯಮ ಸಂಸ್ಥೆಗಳನ್ನು ಲಿಂಗಾಧಾರಿತ ಕಣ್ಣೋಟದಿಂದ ನೋಡಬಹುದು ಹಾಗೂ ಈ ಸಂಸ್ಥೆಗಳಲ್ಲಿರುವ ಪುರುಷ ಪ್ರಧಾನ ವ್ಯವಸ್ಥೆಯ ಸಾಮಾಜಿಕ ಸಂಬಂಧಗಳ ಸ್ವರೂಪವನ್ನು ಅರಿಯಬಹುದು. ಒಂದೆಡೆ ಪಿತೃಪ್ರಧಾನ ಕುಟುಂಬ ವ್ಯವಸ್ಥೆಯ ಜವಾಬ್ದಾರಿಗಳು, ಮತ್ತೊಂದೆಡೆ ಸಂಪೂರ್ಣವಾಗಿ ಸಂಘಟಿತವಲ್ಲದ ಸಂಸ್ಥೆಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ಕೆಲಸಗಾರರಾಗಿ ಮಹಿಳೆಯರ ಸ್ಥಾನಮಾನ - ಹೀಗೆ ಪುರುಷ ಪುರುಷ ಪ್ರಧಾನ ವ್ಯವಸ್ಥೆಯಿರುವ ಕೆಲಸದ ಸ್ಥಳದಲ್ಲಿ ಹೆಣ್ಣಿನ ಅನುಭವಗಳನ್ನು ಇವು ತೆರೆದಿಡುತ್ತವೆ. ಜೊತೆಗೆ ಲಿಂಗ ವರ್ಗೀಕರಣವನ್ನು ಜಾತಿ, ವರ್ಗ ಮತ್ತು ಧರ್ಮದ ಹಿನ್ನೆಲೆಯಲ್ಲೂ ನೋಡಬೇಕಿದೆ. ಮಹಿಳೆಯರ ಸಾಮಾಜಿಕ ಸ್ಥಾನಮಾನ ಹಾಗೂ ಅವರ ರಾಜಿ ಸಂಧಾನಗಳು ಲಿಂಗಾಧಾರಿತ ಮಾತ್ರವಲ್ಲದೆ ಜಾತಿ, ವರ್ಗ ಮತ್ತು ಧರ್ಮದ ಹಿನ್ನೆಲೆಯಲ್ಲೂ ಪ್ರಭಾವ ಬೀರುವುದನ್ನು ಅರ್ಥಮಾಡಿಕೊಳ್ಳಬೇಕಿದೆ.

೧. ಕನ್ನಡ ಮಾಧ್ಯಮಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ಸಾಂಸ್ಥಿಕ ಲಿಂಗತಾರತಮ್ಯದ ವಿಭಿನ್ನ ರೂಪಗಳು

ಮಹಿಳೆಯರ ಸಾಮರ್ಥ್ಯ ಕುರಿತ ಗ್ರಹಿಕೆಗಳು: ಈ ಅಧ್ಯಯನದಲ್ಲಿ ಭಾಗವಹಿಸಿದವರು ಕನ್ನಡ ಮಾಧ್ಯಮಗಳ ಕಾರ್ಯಕ್ಷೇತ್ರದಲ್ಲಿ ಹೇಗೆ ಸಾಂಸ್ಥಿಕ ಲಿಂಗತಾರತಮ್ಯವು ಕಾರ್ಯನಿರ್ವಹಿಸುತ್ತದೆ ಎನ್ನುವುದನ್ನು ಹೇಳಿಕೊಂಡಿದ್ದಾರೆ. ಬಣ್ಣ ಮತ್ತು ಸೌಂದರ್ಯದ ಕುರಿತು ಸಮಾಜವು ರೂಪಿಸಿರುವ ಮಾನದಂಡಗಳಿಗೆ ಅನುಗುಣವಾಗಿ ಅವಕಾಶದ ಬಾಗಿಲುಗಳು ತೆರೆದುಕೊಳ್ಳುತ್ತವೆ. ಅದರಲ್ಲೂ ಮುಖ್ಯವಾಗಿ ದೃಶ್ಯಮಾಧ್ಯಮದಲ್ಲಿ ಅರ್ಹತೆಗಿಂತ ಹೆಚ್ಚಾಗಿ ಈ ಮಾನದಂಡಗಳೇ ಮುಖ್ಯವಾಗುವ ತಮ್ಮ ಅನುಭವಗಳನ್ನು ಹಂಚಿಕೊಂಡಿದ್ದಾರೆ. ಯಶಸ್ವಿ ಮಹಿಳಾ ಸಹೋದ್ಯೋಗಿಗಳ ಯಶಸ್ಸಿನ ಹಿಂದಿರುವ ಕಾರಣ ಇದೇ ಎನ್ನುವುದು ಪುರುಷ ಮತ್ತು ಮಹಿಳಾ ಸಹೋದ್ಯೋಗಿಗಳ ಅಭಿಮತ. ವೃತ್ತಿ ಕ್ಷೇತ್ರದೊಳಗೆ ಕಾಲಿಡುವಾಗ ಹಾಗೂ ಕಾಲಿಟ್ಟ ನಂತರದಲ್ಲಿನ ಹೆಣ್ಣಿನ ವೈಯುಕ್ತಿಕ ಪಯಣದ ಸವಾಲುಗಳು ಮತ್ತು ವೃತ್ತಿಯಲ್ಲಿನ ಸವಾಲುಗಳನ್ನು ಸಾಮಾಜಿಕ ಕಲ್ಪನೆಯಲ್ಲಿನ ಹೆಣ್ಣುತನದಿಂದ ಅಳೆದು ಆಕೆಯ ಯಶಸ್ಸಿಗೆ - ಸೋಲಿಗೆ ಇದೇ ಕಾರಣ ಎನ್ನುವ ಹಣೆಪಟ್ಟಿ ಹಚ್ಚಲಾಗುತ್ತದೆ. ವೃತ್ತಿಕ್ಷೇತ್ರಕ್ಕೆ ಸಂಬಂಧಿಸಿದ ಚರ್ಚೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ಮಹಿಳೆ ವೃತ್ತಿಯಾಗಿ ಹಿಂದೆ ಸರಿದುಬಿಡುತ್ತಾಳೆ.

ಮಹಿಳಾ ಉದ್ಯೋಗಿಗಳು ಹೊರೆ ಎನ್ನುವ ದೃಷ್ಟಿಕೋನ: ಗಂಡಾದರೆ 'ಸಾಮಾನ್ಯ' ನೌಕರ ಎಂದು ನೋಡಲಾಗುತ್ತದೆ. ಅದೇ ಹೆಣ್ಣಾದರೆ ಹೆಚ್ಚುವರಿ ರಜೆಯ ಸೌಲಭ್ಯಗಳು, ಸುರಕ್ಷತೆ ಮತ್ತು ಪ್ರಯಾಣ ಸೌಲಭ್ಯಗಳು ಇವೆಲ್ಲವನ್ನೂ ನೀಡಬೇಕಾಗುವುದರಿಂದ ಆಕೆಯನ್ನು ಸಂಸ್ಥೆಗೆ ಆರ್ಥಿಕ ಹೊರೆಯೆಂದೇ ಪರಿಗಣಿಸಲಾಗುತ್ತದೆ. ಪತ್ರಕರ್ತೆಯರಿಗೆ ನಿಜವಾಗಿ ನೀಡಲಾಗುವ ಸೌಲಭ್ಯಗಳನ್ನು ನೋಡಿದರೆ ಇದು ಎಂತಹ ತಪ್ಪಾದ ದೃಷ್ಟಿಕೋನ ಎನ್ನುವುದು ಅರ್ಥವಾಗುತ್ತದೆ. ಮಾತೃತ್ವ ರಜೆ, ಪಿಎಫ್, ಮಕ್ಕಳಿಗಾಗಿ ಕ್ರಷ್ ಸೌಲಭ್ಯ, ಮುಟ್ಟು/ಅನಾರೋಗ್ಯದ ಸಂದರ್ಭದಲ್ಲಿ ರಜೆಯ ಸೌಲಭ್ಯ, ಶೌಚಾಲಯ ಸೌಲಭ್ಯ ಇವೆಲ್ಲವುಗಳ ಕೊರತೆಯಿದೆ.

ಮಹಿಳೆಯರಿಗೆ 'ಸಾಫ್ಟ್ ಬೀಟ್' ಮತ್ತು ಕಲಿಕೆಗೆ ಕಡಿಮೆ ಅವಕಾಶ: ಪ್ರತಿಕ್ರಿಯೆ ನೀಡಿದವರಲ್ಲಿ ಕೆಲವರು ತಮ್ಮ ವೃತ್ತಿ ಜೀವನದಲ್ಲಿನ ಪ್ರಗತಿಗೆ ಸಹೋದ್ಯೋಗಿಗಳು ನೆರವು ನೀಡಿದರು ಎಂದು ಹೇಳಿದರು. ಉಳಿದವರು ಗಂಡಸರಿಗೆ ಹೋಲಿಸಿದರೆ, "ತಮಗೆ ಹೆಚ್ಚು ಮುಖ್ಯವಲ್ಲದ ಇಲ್ಲವೇ ಕಡಿಮೆ ಜವಾಬ್ದಾರಿಗಳನ್ನು ನೀಡಲಾಗಿದೆ" ಎಂದು ಹೇಳಿದರು. ಸಂಸ್ಥೆಗಳು ಇದಕ್ಕೆ ಹಲವು ಸಬೂಬುಗಳನ್ನು ನೀಡುತ್ತವೆ. ಸೂಕ್ಷ್ಮವಾದ ಸುದ್ದಿಗಳು ಅಥವಾ ಪ್ರದೇಶಗಳಿಗೆ ಮಹಿಳೆಯರನ್ನು ಅವರ ಸುರಕ್ಷತೆಯ ಹಿತದೃಷ್ಟಿಯಿಂದ ಕಳಿಸುವುದಿಲ್ಲ ಎನ್ನುತ್ತವೆ ಸಂಸ್ಥೆಗಳು. ಮಹಿಳೆಯರು ಮುಖ್ಯವಾದ ಸುದ್ದಿಗಳನ್ನು ವರದಿ ಮಾಡಲು ಸಾಧ್ಯವಿಲ್ಲ ಎನ್ನುವ ಧೋರಣೆಯಿಂದಲೇ ಅವರಿಗೆ ಹೆಚ್ಚು ಮುಖ್ಯವಲ್ಲದ ಸಾಫ್ಟ್ ಬೀಟ್ ಸುದ್ದಿಯ ವರದಿಗಾರಿಕೆಯನ್ನು ನೀಡಲಾಗುತ್ತದೆ. ಇದರಿಂದಾಗಿ ಮಹಿಳೆಯರು ತಮ್ಮ ವೃತ್ತಿಯಲ್ಲಿನ ಪ್ರಗತಿ ಹಾಗೂ ವೃತ್ತಿ ಸಂತ್ಕೃಷ್ಟಿಯ ದೃಷ್ಟಿಯಿಂದ ಕೊರತೆ ಎದುರಿಸುತ್ತಾರೆ. ಹೆಚ್ಚಿನ ತರಬೇತಿಯಿಂದ ವಂಚಿತರಾಗಿ ತಾಂತ್ರಿಕ ಪರಿಣತಿ ಮತ್ತು ಜ್ಞಾನದ ಕೊರತೆಯಿಂದ ತಮ್ಮೊಂದಿಗಿನ ಪುರುಷ ಸಹೋದ್ಯೋಗಿಗಳಿಗಿಂತ ಹಿಂದುಳಿಯುತ್ತಾರೆ.

ಮಹಿಳೆಯರನ್ನು ಪರಸ್ಪರ ಪ್ರತಿಸ್ಪರ್ಧಿಗಳಾಗಿಸುವುದು: ಮಹಿಳೆಯೊಬ್ಬಳು ಹಿರಿಯ ಹುದ್ದೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ಇಲ್ಲವೇ ಮೇಲೇರುವ ಸಾಧ್ಯತೆಗಳಿದ್ದಲ್ಲಿ ಆಕೆಗಿಂತ ಕಿರಿಯಳು ಅವಳನ್ನು ಹಿಂದಿಕ್ಕದೆ ಮುಂದುವರೆಯುವುದು ಸಾಧ್ಯವಿಲ್ಲ. ಹಿರಿಯ ಹುದ್ದೆಯಲ್ಲಿರುವ ಪುರುಷನನ್ನು ಹಿಂದಿಕ್ಕಿ ತಾನು ಮುಂದುವರೆಯಬಹುದು ಎನ್ನುವುದನ್ನು ಕಲ್ಪಿಸಿಕೊಳ್ಳಲೂ ಸಾಧ್ಯವಿಲ್ಲ. ಇದು ಮಹಿಳಾ ಸಿಬ್ಬಂದಿ ನಡುವೆ ಅನಾರೋಗ್ಯಕರ ಸ್ಪರ್ಧೆಯನ್ನು ಹುಟ್ಟುಹಾಕಿ ಅವರೆಲ್ಲರೂ ಒಟ್ಟಾಗಿ ಮುಂದುವರೆಯಬಹುದು ಎನ್ನುವ ಪ್ರಜ್ಞೆಯನ್ನು ಹಾಳುಮಾಡುತ್ತದೆ.

ಕೆಲಸ ಮಾಡುವ ಸ್ಥಳದಲ್ಲಿ ಮುಟ್ಟನ್ನು ಗುಟ್ಟಾಗಿಡಬೇಕಾದ ಸ್ಥಿತಿ: ಹೆಚ್ಚಿನ ಕೆಲಸದ ಸ್ಥಳಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ಮುಟ್ಟನ್ನು ಬಹಿರಂಗವಾಗಿ ಮಾತಾಡುವುದು ಸಾಧ್ಯವಿಲ್ಲ. ಕೆಲವು ಪತ್ರಕರ್ತೆಯರು ತಮ್ಮ ಮಹಿಳಾ ಸಹೋದ್ಯೋಗಿಗಳೊಂದಿಗೆ ಈ ಕುರಿತು ಹೇಗೆ ಅನುಪಚಾರಿಕ ಮಾತುಕತೆ ನಡೆಯುತ್ತದೆ, ಹೇಗೆ ಅವರಿಗೆ ನೆರವು ಸಿಗುತ್ತದೆ ಎನ್ನುವುದನ್ನು ಹಂಚಿಕೊಂಡರು. ನಿರ್ಧಾರಗಳನ್ನು ತೆಗೆದುಕೊಳ್ಳುವಂತಹ ಹುದ್ದೆಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ಮಹಿಳೆಯರು ಇಲ್ಲದಿರುವುದು ಈ ಪರಿಸ್ಥಿತಿಗೆ ಮುಖ್ಯ ಕಾರಣ. ಆದ್ದರಿಂದಲೇ ಇವು ಖಾಸಗಿ ಮಾತುಕತೆಗಳಿಗೆ ಸೀಮಿತವಾಗಿದ್ದು ಕೆಲಸ ಮಾಡುವ ಸ್ಥಳದಲ್ಲಿ ಮುಟ್ಟಿನ ನೋವನ್ನು ಅನುಭವಿಸಿದರೂ ನ್ಯಾಯಸಮ್ಮತವಾಗಿ ಸಿಗಬೇಕಾದ ಸೌಲಭ್ಯ ಸಿಗುತ್ತಿಲ್ಲ.

೨. ಮದುವೆ ಎನ್ನುವುದು ಪತ್ರಕರ್ತೆಯರ ವೃತ್ತಿಗೆ ತಡೆ

ಸಂಗಾತಿಯನ್ನು ಹುಡುಕುವ ಸಂಕಷ್ಟಗಳು: ಪತ್ರಕರ್ತೆಯರನ್ನು ಅವರ ಮನೆಯವರು ಹಾಗೂ ಸಮಾಜ, 'ದುಡುಕು ಸ್ವಭಾವದವರು, ಗಂಡುಬೀರಿಯರು, ಸ್ವೇಚ್ಛಾಚಾರಿಗಳು' ಎಂದೇ ನೋಡುತ್ತಾರೆ. ಟಿವಿಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ಅವರು ಕಾಣಿಸಿಕೊಳ್ಳುವುದು, ವೃತ್ತಿ ಜೀವನದಲ್ಲಿ ಪ್ರಗತಿ ಸಾಧಿಸುವುದು ಎಲ್ಲವೂ ಇದ್ದರೂ ಕೂಡ ಅವರನ್ನು ನೋಡುವ ನೋಟದ ಹಿಂದೆ ನೈತಿಕತೆ ಪೂರ್ವಗ್ರಹಗಳು, ಸಾಮಾಜಿಕ ಪೂರ್ವಗ್ರಹಗಳು ಇದ್ದೇ ಇರುತ್ತವೆ. ಈ ರೀತಿಯ ಮಿಥ್ಯೆಗಳು, ನಂಬಿಕೆಗಳಿಂದಾಗಿ ಸಂಗಾತಿಗಳನ್ನು ಹುಡುಕಿಕೊಳ್ಳುವುದು ಪತ್ರಕರ್ತೆಯರಿಗೆ ಕಷ್ಟವಾಗುತ್ತದೆ. ಈ ಅಧ್ಯಯನ ತಂಡದೊಂದಿಗೆ ಮಾತುಕತೆ ನಡೆಸಿದವರಲ್ಲಿ ತಾವು ಎದುರಿಸುವ ಒತ್ತಡಗಳು ಹೇಗೆ ತಮ್ಮ ಮಾನಸಿಕ ಆರೋಗ್ಯದ ಮೇಲೆ ಪ್ರತಿಕೂಲ ಪರಿಣಾಮ ಬೀರುತ್ತದೆ ಎನ್ನುವ ಕುರಿತು ಹೇಳಿಕೊಂಡಿದ್ದಾರೆ.

ವಿವಾಹಿತ ಪತ್ರಕರ್ತೆಯರ ಕುರಿತು ಕುಟುಂಬದ ನಿರೀಕ್ಷೆಗಳು: ಮಾಧ್ಯಮ ವೃತ್ತಿಯಲ್ಲಿ ಮಹಿಳೆಯರ ಆದಾಯ ಕುಟುಂಬದ ಆದಾಯಕ್ಕೆ ಹೆಚ್ಚಿನ ಕೊಡುಗೆಯನ್ನು ನೀಡಲಾರದು. ಹಾಗಾಗಿ ಅತ್ತೆ ಮಾವನ ಮನೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ಆಕೆಯ ವೃತ್ತಿಯ ಆಯ್ಕೆಗೆ ಸಹಕಾರ ಸಿಗುವುದಿಲ್ಲ. ಆಕೆಯಿಂದ ಮನೆಗೆಲಸ, ಆರೈಕೆಗಳ ನಿರೀಕ್ಷೆಯೇ ಹೆಚ್ಚಿರುತ್ತದೆ. ಪೂರ್ಣ ಪ್ರಮಾಣದಲ್ಲಿ ವೃತ್ತಿಯಲ್ಲಿ ತೊಡಗಿಸಿಕೊಂಡು ಹಣ ಗಳಿಸುವುದಕ್ಕಿಂತ ಆಕೆ ಮನೆಕೆಲಸದ ಕಡೆಗೆ ಗಮನನೀಡಿ ಕುಟುಂಬದ ಆರೈಕೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ತೊಡಗಬೇಕೆಂದು ಮನೆಯವರು ನಿರೀಕ್ಷಿಸುತ್ತಾರೆ. ಹೀಗಿರುವಾಗ ಕೆಲಸದ ಮೇಲೆ ಅವರು ಎಲ್ಲಿಗಾದರೂ ಹೋಗುವುದಾಗಲಿ, ಚರ್ಚೆ ಇಲ್ಲವೇ ಮಾತುಕತೆಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ತೊಡಗಿಸಿಕೊಳ್ಳುವುದು ಅಥವಾ ಮತ್ತೊಂದು ಜಾಗಕ್ಕೆ ವರ್ಗವಣೆಯಾದಾಗ ಅಂಜಿಕೆ ಇಲ್ಲದೆ ಹೋಗುವುದು ಪತ್ರಕರ್ತೆಯರಿಗೆ ಸಾಧ್ಯವಾಗುವುದಿಲ್ಲ. ಈ ಎಲ್ಲ ಅಡೆತಡೆಗಳು ಅವರನ್ನು ನಿಂತಲ್ಲೇ ನಿಲ್ಲುವಂತೆ ಮಾಡಿ ಕಡೆಗೊಮ್ಮೆ ಕೆಲಸವನ್ನೇ ಬಿಡುವಂತೆ ಮಾಡುತ್ತದೆ.

ವಿವಾಹಿತ ಪತ್ರಕರ್ತೆಯರ ಕುರಿತು ಕೆಲಸ ಮಾಡುವ ಸ್ಥಳದಲ್ಲಿನ ದೃಷ್ಟಿಕೋನ: ಒಂಟಿಯಾಗಿರುವ, ಮದುವೆ ಮಾಡಿಕೊಳ್ಳಲು ಬಯಸುವ ಪತ್ರಕರ್ತೆಯರನ್ನು ಸಂಶಯದಿಂದ ನೋಡಲಾಗುತ್ತದೆ. ಅವರ ಬದಲಿಗೆ ಮತ್ತೊಬ್ಬರನ್ನು ತೆಗೆದುಕೊಳ್ಳಬೇಕಾಗುತ್ತದೆ, ಅವರ ಕೆಲಸದ ಅವಧಿಯನ್ನು ಕಡಿತಗೊಳಿಸಬೇಕಾಗುತ್ತದೆ, ಅವರು ಸುದ್ದಿಯ ವರದಿಗಾರಿಕೆಯನ್ನು ಬಿಡಬಹುದು ಇಲ್ಲವೇ ಕೆಲಸವನ್ನೇ ಬಿಡಬಹುದು ಎನ್ನುವ ಸಂಶಯಗಳು ಸಂಸ್ಥೆಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ಮನೆಮಾಡಿವೆ. ಈ ರೀತಿಯ ಪೂರ್ವಗ್ರಹಗಳು ಅವರಿಗೆ ಬಡ್ತಿ ದೊರೆಯದಂತೆ ಮಾಡುತ್ತವೆ. ಇದೆಲ್ಲದರ ನಡುವೆಯೇ ತಮ್ಮ ಕೆಲಸವನ್ನು ಉಳಿಸಿಕೊಳ್ಳಲು ಆಡಳಿತ ಮಂಡಳಿಯೊಂದಿಗೆ ರಾಜಿ ಮಾತುಕತೆಗೆ ಇಳಿಯುತ್ತಾರೆ, ಇಲ್ಲವೇ ತಮ್ಮ ಮಹಿಳಾ ಸಹೋದ್ಯೋಗಿಗಳ ಜೊತೆ ಮಾತಾಡಿ ಬೇರೆ ದಾರಿ ಹುಡುಕಿಕೊಳ್ಳುತ್ತಾರೆ. ಈ ನಿರ್ದರ್ಶನಗಳು ಕೆಲವೇ ಆದರೂ ಭವಿಷ್ಯದ ಸಾಧ್ಯತೆಗಳತ್ತ ಬೊಟ್ಟುಮಾಡಿ ತೋರಿಸುತ್ತಿವೆ. ಕುಟುಂಬದ ಸಹಕಾರವು ಹಲವರು ತಮ್ಮ ಕೆಲಸವನ್ನು ಉಳಿಸಿಕೊಳ್ಳಲು ನೆರವಾಗಿದೆ. ಉಳಿದ ವೃತ್ತಿಗಳಲ್ಲಿರುವಂತೆ ಇಲ್ಲೂ ಕೂಡ ಸಾರ್ವಜನಿಕ ಹಾಗೂ ಖಾಸಗಿ ಬದುಕಿನ ಸಮತೋಲನವನ್ನು ಕಾಯ್ದುಕೊಳ್ಳುವ ತಂತ್ರವು ಮೇಳಿನ ನಡಿಗೆಯನ್ನು ಮಹಿಳೆಯರು ಮಾಡಲೇಬೇಕಾಗುತ್ತದೆ.

೩. ಲೈಂಗಿಕ ಕಿರುಕುಳದ ಕರಿನರಳು

ಲೈಂಗಿಕ ಕಿರುಕುಳದ ಅನುಭವಗಳು: ಈ ಅಧ್ಯಯನ ತಂಡದೊಂದಿಗೆ ಮಾತನಾಡಿದವರು ತಾವು ದಿನನಿತ್ಯ ಎದುರಿಸುವ ಹೀಗೆಳಿಕೆಗಳು, ಅಶ್ಲೀಲ ಕಾಮೆಂಟುಗಳು, ಸಾಮಾಜಿಕ ಮಾಧ್ಯಮಗಳ ಮೂಲಕ ಕಳಿಸಲಾಗುವ 'ಬೇಡವಾದ ಸಂದೇಶಗಳು' ಮತ್ತು ಹಿಂಸೆಯಾಗುವ ದೈಹಿಕ ಸಂಪರ್ಕಗಳ ಕುರಿತು ಹೇಳಿಕೊಂಡಿದ್ದಾರೆ. ಹಲವು ಪತ್ರಕರ್ತೆಯರು ಈ ಕುರಿತು ಅಸಮಾಧಾನವನ್ನು ವ್ಯಕ್ತಪಡಿಸಿದ್ದಾರೆ. ಈ ಕಿರುಕುಳ ಎನ್ನುವುದು ಬಾಡಿ ಶೇಮಿಂಗ್, ಇಷ್ಟವಿಲ್ಲದ ದೈಹಿಕ

ಸಂಪರ್ಕ, ಕೆಟ್ಟ ಸಂದೇಶಗಳು, ತಮ್ಮ ವೈಯಕ್ತಿಕ ಜೀವನದ ಕುರಿತು ಟೀಕೆಗಳು ಸಾಮಾನ್ಯವಾಗಿದ್ದು ಅವುಗಳನ್ನು ತಮ್ಮ ವೃತ್ತಿ ಬದುಕಿನಲ್ಲಿ ಸಾಮಾನ್ಯ ಎನ್ನುವ ಹಾಗೆ ಸ್ವೀಕರಿಸುವ ಅನಿವಾರ್ಯತೆಯನ್ನು ಸೃಷ್ಟಿಸಿದೆ.

ಲೈಂಗಿಕ ಕಿರುಕುಳ ತಡೆಯಲು ಹಾಗೂ ಪರಿಹರಿಸಲು ವ್ಯವಸ್ಥೆಯ ಕೊರತೆ: ನಮ್ಮ ಅಧ್ಯಯನದ ಭಾಗವಾಗಿದ್ದ ಪತ್ರಕರ್ತೆಯರು ಇಲ್ಲಿ ಲೈಂಗಿಕ ಕಿರುಕುಳಗಳು ವರದಿಯಾಗುವುದು ವಿರಳ ಎಂದು ಹೇಳಿದರು. ಅವರ ಮಾತುಗಳಿಂದ ಎಲ್ಲೆಡೆಯೂ ಇರುವ ಈ ಸಮಸ್ಯೆಯನ್ನು ತಡೆಯಲು ಇಲ್ಲವೇ ಪರಿಹರಿಸಲು ಯಾವುದೇ ಸೂಕ್ತ ವ್ಯವಸ್ಥೆಯಿಲ್ಲವೆನ್ನುವುದು ಅರ್ಥವಾಯಿತು. ನಾವು ಮಾತನಾಡಿಸಿದ ಹಲವರು ಹೇಳಿದ ಪ್ರಕಾರ ಅವರು ಕೆಲಸ ಮಾಡುವ ಸಂಸ್ಥೆಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ಲೈಂಗಿಕ ಕಿರುಕುಳ ಕುರಿತು ದೂರು ನೀಡಲು ಯಾವುದೇ ಸಮಿತಿಯಿಲ್ಲ ಅಥವಾ ತಮ್ಮ ದೂರನ್ನು ದಾಖಲಿಸಲು ಯಾವುದೇ ಔಪಚಾರಿಕ ಮಾರ್ಗಗಳಿಲ್ಲ. ತನ್ನ ಸಹೋದ್ಯೋಗಿಯಿಂದಾಗುವ ಲೈಂಗಿಕ ಕಿರುಕುಳವನ್ನು ಮಹಿಳೆ ಏಕಾಂಗಿಯಾಗಿ ಎದುರಿಸಬೇಕಾಗುತ್ತದೆ. ಒಂದು ವೇಳೆ ಲೈಂಗಿಕ ಕಿರುಕುಳದ ದೂರನ್ನು ದಾಖಲಿಸುವ ವ್ಯವಸ್ಥೆಯಿದ್ದರೂ ಅದರ ಪರಿಣಾಮಗಳು ಹಾಗೂ ಆ ಕಾರಣದಿಂದಾಗಿ ಕೆಲಸ ಕಳೆದುಕೊಳ್ಳಬೇಕಾದ ಸಾಧ್ಯತೆಗಳೂ ಇರುವುದನ್ನು ಅವರು ಹೇಳಿಕೊಂಡಿದ್ದಾರೆ.

ಹಲವು ಸಂದರ್ಭಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ಕೆಲಸದಲ್ಲಿ ಹಿರಿಯರಾದ ಪುರುಷ ಸಹೋದ್ಯೋಗಿಗಳೇ ನೇರವಾಗಿ ಇಲ್ಲವೆ ಪರೋಕ್ಷವಾಗಿ ಈ ರೀತಿಯ ಕಿರುಕುಳದಲ್ಲಿ ಭಾಗಿಯಾಗಿರುತ್ತಾರೆ. ನಾವು ಮಾತನಾಡಿಸಿದವರಲ್ಲಿ ಒಬ್ಬರು ನಮ್ಮೊಂದಿಗೆ ಹಂಚಿಕೊಂಡಂತೆ ಮಹಿಳಾ ಉದ್ಯೋಗಿಗಳು ಈ ರೀತಿಯ ದೂರುಗಳನ್ನು ಸಂಸ್ಥೆಯ ಹಿರಿಯ ಪುರುಷ ಸದಸ್ಯರಿಗೆ ಕೊಡಲಾಗುವುದಿಲ್ಲ. ಅವರೇ ಉದ್ಯೋಗಿಗಳ ದೂರುಗಳನ್ನಾಳಿಸುವ ವಿಭಾಗದ ಮುಖ್ಯಸ್ಥರಾಗಿರುತ್ತಾರೆ. ಈ ಪರಿಸ್ಥಿತಿಯ ಒತ್ತಡವನ್ನು ನಿಭಾಯಿಸಲು ಸಾಧ್ಯವಾಗದೆ ಹಲವಾರು ಮಹಿಳೆಯರು ಕೆಲಸ ಬಿಟ್ಟು ಉದಾಹರಣೆಗಳಿವೆ ಎಂದು ಹೇಳಿದರು.

ನೈತಿಕ ಪೋಲಿಸ್‌ಗಿರಿ ಮತ್ತು ಲಿಂಗಭೇದ

ಮಹಿಳಾ ಉದ್ಯೋಗಿಗಳ ಉಡುಪು ಹಾಗೂ ಪುರುಷ ಸಹೋದ್ಯೋಗಿಗಳೊಂದಿಗಿನ ಅವರ ವರ್ತನೆ ಮತ್ತಿತರ ವಿಷಯಗಳ ಕುರಿತು ಸದಾ ಕಣ್ಣಿಡಲಾಗುತ್ತದೆ. ಹಾಗೂ ಅವರ 'ನಡತೆ'ಯ ಕುರಿತು ಪ್ರಶ್ನೆಗಳನ್ನು ಎತ್ತಲಾಗುತ್ತದೆ ಎನ್ನುವುದು ಈ ಅಧ್ಯಯನದ ಮೂಲಕ ತಿಳಿದುಬಂದಿದೆ. ಮಹಿಳೆಯರು ತಮ್ಮ ವೃತ್ತಿಯ ಹಿತದೃಷ್ಟಿಯಿಂದ ತಮ್ಮೊಂದಿಗಿನ ಪುರುಷ ಸಹೋದ್ಯೋಗಿಗಳೊಂದಿಗೆ ಸ್ನೇಹದಿಂದ ಇರುವುದನ್ನೇ ತಪ್ಪಾಗಿ ಅರ್ಥೈಸಿಕೊಂಡು ಲೈಂಗಿಕ ಸಂಬಂಧಕ್ಕೆ ಪರವಾನಿಗೆ ಎಂದು ತಿಳಿಯುವವರಿದ್ದಾರೆ. ಈ ರೀತಿಯ ಸಂಬಂಧದ ನಿರಾಕರಣೆಯಿಂದ ಬಡ್ತಿ ಕಳೆದುಕೊಳ್ಳಬಹುದು, ವೇತನ ಹೆಚ್ಚಳ ಕಳೆದುಕೊಳ್ಳಬೇಕಾಗಬಹುದು, ಮುಖ್ಯವಾದ ಅಸೈನ್‌ಮೆಂಟ್‌ಗಳು ಸಿಗದೆ ಹೋಗಬಹುದು, ಇಲ್ಲವೇ ಕೆಲಸವನ್ನೇ ಕಳೆದುಕೊಳ್ಳಬೇಕಾಗಬಹುದು. ಜೊತೆಗೆ ತಮ್ಮ ನಡತೆಯ ಕುರಿತು ತಾವೇ ಸದಾ ಗಮನಿಸುತ್ತಿರಬೇಕು. ಪುರುಷರಂತೆ ಮಹಿಳೆಯರು ಸಂಬಳ ಪಡೆದು ಕೆಲಸ ಮಾಡುತ್ತಿದ್ದರೂ ಕೂಡ ಸಂಸ್ಥೆಯ ಗೌರವವನ್ನು ಎತ್ತಿಹಿಡಿಯುವ ಹೊಣೆ ಮಹಿಳೆಯರ ಮೇಲೆಯೇ ಇರುತ್ತದೆ. ಆದ್ದರಿಂದ ತಾವು 'ಗೌರವಯುತವಾಗಿ' ನಡೆದುಕೊಳ್ಳುತ್ತ ತಮ್ಮ ಪಾತ್ರಗಳನ್ನು ನಿರ್ವಹಿಸಬೇಕಾಗುತ್ತದೆ.

ಮಹಿಳೆಯರನ್ನು ನಿಭಾಯಿಸುವಿಕೆಯ ತಂತ್ರಗಳು

ತಮ್ಮ ಹಕ್ಕುಗಳನ್ನು ರಕ್ಷಿಸಿಕೊಳ್ಳಲು ಯಾವುದೇ ಔಪಚಾರಿಕ ನೆರವು ಇಲ್ಲದಿದ್ದರೂ ಪತ್ರಕರ್ತೆಯರು ಈ ರೀತಿಯ ಲೈಂಗಿಕ ಕಿರುಕುಳವನ್ನು ಎದುರಿಸಲು ತಮ್ಮದೇ ಆದ ದಾರಿಗಳನ್ನು ಕಂಡುಕೊಂಡಿದ್ದಾರೆ. ಮಹಿಳೆಯರು ತಮ್ಮಲ್ಲೇ ಒಗ್ಗಟ್ಟಾಗಿ ಒಬ್ಬರಿಗೊಬ್ಬರು ಅವಶ್ಯಕತೆ ಇದ್ದಾಗ ನೆರವು ನೀಡುತ್ತಾರೆ. ಅಧ್ಯಯನ ತಂಡ ಮಾತನಾಡಿಸಿದವರಲ್ಲಿ ಕೆಲವರು ಕೆಟ್ಟದಾಗಿ ನಡೆದುಕೊಂಡ ಪುರುಷ ಸಹೋದ್ಯೋಗಿಗಳಿಗೆ ಅವಮಾನ ಮಾಡಿದ್ದನ್ನು ಹೇಳಿದರು. ಹಾಗೆ ಮಾಡಿದರೆ ಅವರು ಬದಲಾಗಬಹುದೆಂಬ ನಿರೀಕ್ಷೆಯಿತ್ತೆಂದು ಹೇಳಿದರು. ಅದು ಯಾವಾಗಲೂ ಸಾಧ್ಯವಾಗುವುದಿಲ್ಲ. ಕೆಲವರು ಇಂತಹ ಅವಮಾನದಿಂದ ಬದಲಾಗಬಹುದು. ಉಳಿದವರು ಸಣ್ಣಸಣ್ಣ ತಪ್ಪುಗಳಿಗೂ ಇನ್ನೂ ಹೆಚ್ಚು ಕಿರುಕುಳ ಕೊಡಬಹುದು. "ಆಕೆ ಕೊಟ್ಟ ಕೆಲಸ ಮಾಡುವುದರಲ್ಲಿ ಅಸಮರ್ಥಳು" ಎಂದು ಸಬೂಬು ಹೇಳಬಹುದು. ಈ ಲೈಂಗಿಕ ಕಿರುಕುಳದ ಕಾರಣದಿಂದಲೂ ಮಹಿಳೆಯರು ಕೆಲಸ ಬಿಡುವುದು ಹೆಚ್ಚಾಗಿದೆ.

೪. ಲಿಂಗಾಧಾರಿತ ತಾರತಮ್ಯದೊಂದಿಗೆ ಭಾಷೆ, ಪ್ರದೇಶ ಮತ್ತು ಜಾತಿವಾರು ತಾರತಮ್ಯಗಳು

ಕರ್ನಾಟಕದಲ್ಲಿನ ಮಾಧ್ಯಮ ಸಂಸ್ಥೆಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ಕರ್ನಾಟಕದ ಕೆಲವೇ ಜಿಲ್ಲೆಗಳು ಮತ್ತು ಪ್ರದೇಶಗಳ ಮೇಲ್ವರ್ಗದವರ ಪ್ರಾಬಲ್ಯ ಹೆಚ್ಚಿದೆ. ಈ ಸಂಸ್ಥೆಗಳ ಮುಖ್ಯಸ್ಥರು ಹಾಗೂ ಹಿರಿಯರು ತಮ್ಮ ಜಾತಿ ಹಾಗೂ ಪ್ರದೇಶಗಳ ಜನರನ್ನೇ ಕೆಲಸಕ್ಕೆ ನೇಮಿಸಿಕೊಳ್ಳುತ್ತಾರೆ. ಜಾತಿ ಹಾಗೂ ಪ್ರಾದೇಶಿಕತೆಗಳು ಉದ್ಯೋಗ ಗಳಿಸುವಲ್ಲಿ ಹಾಗೂ ಉದ್ಯೋಗದಲ್ಲಿ ಬಡ್ತಿ ಗಳಿಸುವಲ್ಲಿ ಪ್ರಮುಖ ಪಾತ್ರ ವಹಿಸಿದೆ.

‘ಪ್ರಮಾಣಿತ’ ಹಾಗೂ ‘ಉತ್ತಮ’ ಕನ್ನಡ ಭಾಷೆ ಎನ್ನುವ ಕಲ್ಪನೆಗಳು

ಕರ್ನಾಟಕದಲ್ಲಿ ಹಲವು ರೀತಿಯ ಕನ್ನಡವನ್ನು ಮಾತನಾಡುತ್ತಾರೆ. ಇಲ್ಲಿ ಹಲವು ಬಗೆಯ ಪ್ರಾಂತ್ಯೀಯ ಕನ್ನಡ ಭಾಷೆಯಿದೆ. ಆದರೆ, ಹಳೇ ಮೈಸೂರು ಭಾಗದ ಕನ್ನಡ, ದಕ್ಷಿಣ ಕನ್ನಡದವರ ಕನ್ನಡ ಹಾಗೂ ಮೇಲ್ಪಾಟಿಯ ಜನ ಬಳಸುವ ಕನ್ನಡವೇ ಶ್ರೇಷ್ಠ ಎಂದು ಪರಿಗಣಿಸಲಾಗಿದೆ. ಇದೇ ‘ಪ್ರಮಾಣಿತ’ ಕನ್ನಡ ಎನ್ನುವ ಮಿಥ್ ಅನ್ನು ಹುಟ್ಟುಹಾಕಲಾಗಿದೆ. ಮಾಧ್ಯಮ ಕೆಲಸ ಮಾಡುವುದೇ ಭಾಷೆಯ ಮೂಲಕ. ಹಾಗಾಗಿ ಈ ‘ಪ್ರಮಾಣಿತ’ ಕನ್ನಡವನ್ನು ಮಾತನಾಡದ, ಬಳಸದ ಪತ್ರಕರ್ತೆಯರನ್ನು ಕೀಳಾಗಿ ನೋಡಲಾಗುತ್ತದೆ.

ಈ ಭಾಷಿಕ ಕಂದರವು ನೇಮಕಾತಿ ಹಾಗೂ ವೃತ್ತಿಗೆ ತೊಡಕುಂಟುಮಾಡಿದೆ. ಜೊತೆಗೆ ಹೆಚ್ಚಿನ ಮಾಧ್ಯಮ ಸಂಸ್ಥೆಗಳು ಬೆಂಗಳೂರಿನಲ್ಲಿರುವುದು ಕೂಡ ಈ ಅನಾನುಕೂಲ ಹೆಜ್ಜೆ ಕಾರಣವಾಗಿದೆ. ರಾಜಧಾನಿ ಬೆಂಗಳೂರಿನಿಂದ ದೂರವಿರುವ ಉತ್ತರ ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ಹಾಗೂ ಒಳನಾಡಿನ ಜಿಲ್ಲೆಗಳಲ್ಲಿರುವ ಮಹಿಳೆಯರಿಗೆ ತಾವು ಅಸಮರ್ಥರು ಎನ್ನುವ ಭಾವವನ್ನು ಹುಟ್ಟುಹಾಕಿದೆ.

‘ಅರ್ಹತೆ’ ಎನ್ನುವ ಚಾತುರ್ಯ

ಈ ಅಧ್ಯಯನದಲ್ಲಿ ಭಾಗವಹಿಸಿದ ಮೇಲ್ಪಾಟಿಯ ಪತ್ರಕರ್ತೆಯರು, “ಕರ್ನಾಟಕದ ಮಾಧ್ಯಮ ಸಂಸ್ಥೆಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ಜಾತಿ ತಾರತಮ್ಯವಿಲ್ಲ. ಅರ್ಹತೆಯೇ ಮುಖ್ಯ ಮಾನದಂಡ” ಎಂದು ಹೇಳಿದರು. ಆದರೆ ಕೆಲವು ದಲಿತ ಪತ್ರಕರ್ತೆಯರು ಇದನ್ನು ನಿರಾಕರಿಸಿದರು. ವ್ಯಕ್ತಿಯೊಬ್ಬರ ಜಾತಿ ಯಾವುದೆಂದು ತಿಳಿದರೆ ಅವರನ್ನು ನಡೆಸಿಕೊಳ್ಳುವ ರೀತಿ ಹೇಗೆ ಬದಲಾಗುತ್ತದೆ, ಅದರಲ್ಲೂ ಪರಿಶಿಷ್ಟ ಜಾತಿಗೆ ಸೇರಿದವರ ಪಾಡೇನು ಎನ್ನುವುದರ ಕುರಿತು ಮಾತನಾಡಿದರು. ವ್ಯಕ್ತಿಯೊಬ್ಬ ಅತ್ಯುತ್ತಮವಾಗಿ ಕಾರ್ಯನಿರ್ವಹಿಸಿದರೆ ಅವರು ಮೇಲ್ಪಾಟಿಗೆ ಸೇರಿದವರೇ ಆಗಿರುತ್ತಾರೆ ಎನ್ನುವುದು ಸಾಮಾನ್ಯ ನಂಬಿಕೆಯಾಗಿಹೋಗಿದೆ.

ಜಾತಿ ಆಧಾರಿತ ಸಂಪರ್ಕಗಳು ಮೇಲ್ಪಾಟಿಯ ಮಹಿಳೆಯರು ಕೆಲಸ ಗಳಿಸಲು ಹಾಗೂ ಆಡಳಿತ ಮಂಡಳಿಯ ನೆರವು ಪಡೆಯಲು ಕಾರಣವಾಗಿದೆ. ಅವರಿಗೆ ಅನುಕೂಲವಾಗುವಂತಹ ಕೆಲಸದ ವೇಳೆ ಮತ್ತಿತರ ಸವಲತ್ತುಗಳು ಸಿಗಲು ಕಾರಣವಾಗಿದೆ. ಇವೆಲ್ಲವೂ ಮೇಲ್ಪಾಟಿಯ ಮಹಿಳೆಯರಿಗೆ ಸಿಗುತ್ತಿರುವುದು ‘ಅನ್ಯ’ ಜಾತಿಗಳ ಮಹಿಳೆಯರಿಂದ ಈ ಸವಲತ್ತುಗಳನ್ನು ದೂರವಾಗಿಸುವ ಮೂಲಕ. ಎಷ್ಟೆಲ್ಲಾ ಅಡೆತಡೆಗಳನ್ನು ದಾಟಿ ಬಂದ ಉಳಿದ ‘ಅನ್ಯ’ ಜಾತಿಯ ಮಹಿಳೆಯರನ್ನು ಪಕ್ಕಕ್ಕೆ ಸರಿಸಿ ಈ ಮೇಲ್ಪಾಟಿಯ ಮಹಿಳೆಯರು ಬೆಳೆಯಲು ಅವಕಾಶ ಮಾಡಿಕೊಡಲಾಗುತ್ತದೆ.

ಸಂಸ್ಥೆಯ ಸ್ವರೂಪ ಹಾಗೂ ತಮ್ಮ ನೇಮಕಾತಿಯ ನೀತಿಗಳು ಎಲ್ಲರನ್ನೂ ಒಳಗೊಳ್ಳುವಂತಿರಬೇಕು ಎನ್ನುವ ಕುರಿತು ಆತ್ಮವಿಮರ್ಶೆ ಮಾಡಿಕೊಳ್ಳುವುದು ಈಗಿನ ತುರ್ತು. ಸಾಮಾಜಿಕ ನ್ಯಾಯವನ್ನು ಹಲವು ಬಗೆಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ಒಳಗೊಂಡಂತಹ ರಾಜ್ಯದ ಮಾಧ್ಯಮ ವಲಯವು ತಮ್ಮ ಉದ್ಯೋಗಿಗಳಿಗೆ ಸಂಬಂಧಿಸಿದಂತೆ ತನ್ನ ವಿಧಾನಗಳನ್ನು ಬದಲಿಸಿಕೊಳ್ಳಬೇಕಿದೆ. ಹಾಗೂ ತಮ್ಮ ಮಹಿಳಾ ಉದ್ಯೋಗಿಗಳಿಗೂ ಸೂಕ್ತ ವೇದಿಕೆ ಕಲ್ಪಿಸಬೇಕಿದೆ.

ಈ ಅಧ್ಯಯನವು ಮಾಧ್ಯಮ ಕ್ಷೇತ್ರದ ಆತ್ಮವಿಮರ್ಶೆ ಮತ್ತು ಮೌಲ್ಯಮಾಪನದ ಅಗತ್ಯದ ಕಡೆ ಗಮನಸೆಳೆಯುತ್ತದೆ. ತಮ್ಮ ಸಂಸ್ಥೆಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ಸಮಗ್ರವಾಗಿ ತರಬೇತಾಗಿರುವ ಪರಿಣಾಮಕಾರಿ ಬದಲಾವಣೆಗಳ ತುರ್ತಿನ ಕುರಿತು ಮಾತನಾಡುತ್ತದೆ. ಪತ್ರಕರ್ತೆಯರಿಗೆ ಅನೌಪಚಾರಿಕ ನೆರವು ಸಿಗದೇ ಇರಬಹುದು. ಅವರು ತಮ್ಮ ಕುಟುಂಬದೊಂದಿಗಿನ ‘ಉತ್ತಮ’ ಸಂಬಂಧವನ್ನು ನಿಭಾಯಿಸಲು ಹೆಣಗಬಹುದು. ಆದರೆ, ಸಂಸ್ಥೆಗಳು ಅವರಿಗೆ ನೀಡಬೇಕಾದ ಮಕ್ಕಳ ಪಾಲನಾ ಕೇಂದ್ರಗಳು, ಕ್ಯಾಬ್ ಸರ್ವಿಸ್‌ಗಳು, ತಾಯ್ನದ ಲಾಭಗಳು ಹಾಗೂ ಮುಟ್ಟಿನ ದಿನಗಳ ರಜಾ ಸೌಲಭ್ಯ ಇತರ ವ್ಯವಸ್ಥೆಗಳನ್ನು ಒದಗಿಸಬೇಕು. ಮಹಿಳೆ ತಮ್ಮ ಸಾಮರ್ಥ್ಯದೊಂದಿಗೆ ಕೆಲಸ ಮಾಡುತ್ತಾ ತಮ್ಮ ವೃತ್ತಿಜೀವನವನ್ನು ರೂಪಿಸಿಕೊಳ್ಳಲು ಮಾಧ್ಯಮ ಸಂಸ್ಥೆಗಳು ನೆರವಾಗಬೇಕು. ಲೈಂಗಿಕ ಕಿರುಕುಳದಂತಹ ಸಮಸ್ಯೆಯನ್ನು ಪರಿಹರಿಸಲು ಸೂಕ್ತ ವ್ಯವಸ್ಥೆಯನ್ನು ಕಂಡುಕೊಳ್ಳಬೇಕು. ಮಹಿಳೆಯರು ಸುರಕ್ಷಿತವಾಗಿ, ಆತ್ಮಗೌರವದೊಂದಿಗೆ ಕೆಲಸ ಮಾಡಲು ಸಾಧ್ಯವಾಗುವಂತಹ ವಾತಾವರಣವನ್ನು ನಿರ್ಮಿಸಬೇಕು. ಎಲ್ಲಕ್ಕಿಂತ ಮುಖ್ಯವಾಗಿ ಎಲ್ಲ ಹಂತಗಳಲ್ಲಿ, ವೈಯಕ್ತಿಕ ಹಾಗೂ ಆಡಳಿತದಲ್ಲಿ ರೂಢಿಯಲ್ಲಿರುವಂತಹ ಲಿಂಗತಾರತಮ್ಯವನ್ನು ತೊಡೆದು ಹಾಕಿ ಮಹಿಳೆಯರು ಈ ಕ್ಷೇತ್ರದಲ್ಲಿ ಕೆಲಸ ಮಾಡುತ್ತಾ ಬೆಳೆಯಲು ಸಾಧ್ಯವಾಗಬೇಕು. ಇದಕ್ಕಾಗಿ ಮಾಧ್ಯಮ ಸಂಸ್ಥೆಗಳು ಆತ್ಮಾವಲೋಕನ ಮಾಡಿಕೊಳ್ಳಬೇಕಾದ್ದು ಅನಿವಾರ್ಯ.

8. Annexure I

Questionnaire used for interview

1. **Personal Information.**

Name :

Age :

Educational Qualification :

Marital Status :

Caste :

Native Place :

2. What are the reasons for choosing Journalism as a profession?
3. What is your experience in this field? In what capacities/designations have you served in the past? Could you list out the organisations you have served in?
4. What is your current designation? Is this the designation you opted for? If not, please explain why you are not able to reach the designation you wished for?
5. As a newly employed, what are the challenge in the organisation?
6. If you are new to the field of journalism, have you received any support from your organisation for the personal growth and learning?
7. What is your monthly salary? Are you satisfied with the payment?
8. As a woman, what are the challenges you face at the work place?
9. What are your hobbies? Do you get enough time for your hobbies?
10. Do you share economic responsibilities of your family?
11. How does the structure of your job, affect your choice of marriage?
12. Does your organisation extend its support during your marriage?
13. Are there different challenges after your marriage? Does it affect your career? Are you able to balance your personal and professional life?
14. Due to the shift in your responsibilities (due to gender roles) after marriage, how do you manage your career?
15. Does your family support you in balancing personal and professional life?
16. What is the leave policy in your organisation?
17. Does your organization provide maternity leave?

18. Do you have PF, gratuity, and crèche facilities?
19. Does your organization recognise your work experience? Are you able to participate in decision making positions due to your seniority?
20. Are you passionate about journalism / are you in this profession due to financial needs?
21. How does your family treat you since you are in this profession?
22. Have you felt discriminated because of gender?
23. Have you experienced harassment at the work place? Have you felt embarrassed due to the unwelcome behaviour from male colleagues?
24. Have your colleagues commented on your skin colour? Have you been made to feel inferior about your skin tone?
25. Have your colleagues commented on beauty and dress of women colleagues?
26. Does your organisation have Anti-Sexual Harassment Committee?
27. Do your colleagues identify you by your caste/ religious identity? How do you feel about it?
28. How does your geographical identity play a role in your work place?
29. How is your relationship with women colleagues?
30. What is your experience during night shifts? How does your organisation support you during night shifts?
31. If it's not Journalism, which profession would you choose?

9. Annexure II

Sample size characteristics

1. Participant break down based on age
 - a. 10 Women Journalists between the age of 21 - 25 (to understand the challenges faced in the initial days of entering the profession)
 - b. 15 Women Journalists between the age of 26 - 35 (to understand the challenges faced by young women journalists in balancing career, marriage and responsibilities in family)
 - c. 5 Women Journalists between the age of 36 - 40 (to understand and evaluate women's participation in decision making positions in Kannada Media)
2. Participant break down based on media platform
 - a. 20 participants from Print Media
 - b. 25 participants from Visual Media
 - c. 05 participants from Web Journalism
3. Caste representation : OBC - 25% , SC & ST - 25% , General - 25% , Religious minorities - 25%
4. Marital status: 22 unmarried and 8 married participants
5. Native region wise breakdown:
 - a. Dakshina Kannada - 07
 - b. Bangalore rural - 05
 - c. Hyderabad Karnataka - 03
 - d. Mumbai Karnataka - 04
 - e. Bangalore Urban - 01
 - f. Shimoga - 05
 - g. Tumkur - 01
 - h. Hassan - 01
 - i. Mandya - 01
 - j. Kodagu - 01
 - k. Chikkaballapura - 01

6. Salary breakdown with designation

Salary Range (in INR)	No of Respondents	Designation
35,000 to 40,000	05	Senior journalists (in print media)
25,000 to 30,000	05	Journalists (with six to seven years' experience in print and electronic media)
10,000 to 20,000	20	Copy editors, bulletin producers and anchors (in visual media)

The Kanaja Research and Advocacy Center is a program of Samvada dedicated to generating and disseminating knowledge about youth and youthhood, in order to strengthen youth rights and build youth agency. By embedding youth rights in policies impacting education, employment, and health, and advocating for youth-friendly initiatives, the program aims to create a supportive ecosystem for young people.

ಸಂವಾದದ 'ಕಣಜ ರಿಸರ್ಚ್ ಅಂಡ್ ಅಡ್ವಕಸಿ ಸೆಂಟರ್' ಸಮಾಜದಲ್ಲಿ ಯುವಜನರ ಬಗ್ಗೆ ಮತ್ತು ಯೌವನದ ಸವಾಲುಗಳ ಕುರಿತ ತಿಳುವಳಿಕೆಯನ್ನು ಹೆಚ್ಚಿಸಿ ಯುವಜನ ಹಕ್ಕುಗಳನ್ನು ನೆಲೆಯ ಚಿಂತನೆಯನ್ನು ಮೂಡಿಸಿ ಯುವಜನರನ್ನು ಸಬಲೀಕರಣ ಗೊಳಿಸುವ ಅವರ ಹಕ್ಕುಗಳ ಪರ ವಕಾಲತ್ತು ವಹಿಸುವ ಕಾರ್ಯ ಮಾಡುತ್ತಿದೆ. ಯುವಜನರ ಶಿಕ್ಷಣ, ಉದ್ಯೋಗ ಮತ್ತು ಆರೋಗ್ಯದ ಮೇಲೆ ಪರಿಣಾಮ ಬೀರುವ ನೀತಿಗಳನ್ನು ಯುವಜನ ಹಕ್ಕುಗಳ ನೆಲೆಯಿಂದ ನಿರ್ವಚಿಸಿ ಯುವಜನರ ಪರವಾದ ಕಾರ್ಯಕ್ರಮ ಗಳು ರೂಪುಗೊಳ್ಳುವಂತೆ ವ್ಯವಸ್ಥೆಯನ್ನು ಪ್ರಭಾವಿಸುವ ಕೆಲಸದಲ್ಲಿ ಕೇಂದ್ರವು ತೊಡಗಿಸಿಕೊಂಡಿದೆ.

