

**THE CHALLENGES FACED BY WOMEN MEDIA
PROFESSIONALS IN KERALA**

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DECLARATION

I, Subhida E K, hereby declare that this thesis entitled, **The Challenges Faced by Women Media Professionals in Kerala**, is a bona fide record of research work done by me and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma, associateship, fellowship or other similar title or recognition in the University of Calicut or any other Universities.

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the thesis entitled **The Challenges faced by women Media Professionals in Kerala** submitted to the University of Calicut for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Journalism is a bona fide record of research carried out by **Subhida E K** under my supervision and guidance.

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PREFACE

Women have made an impressive mark in male-dominated territories in great numbers and in wide areas. This is especially true in journalism. They have managed to achieve this despite the all-pervasive gender discrimination. Attaining a decision-making position is, by no means, a simple task. A number of constraints hold back women from taking forward steps. To encourage more women to join journalism, it is essential that they get the true picture of the challenges women media professionals face every day in and outside workplace.

Wide ranging issues make working nothing less than traumatic for women media professionals. Difficulties arise during recruitment and promotions. Working conditions are not comfortable. Cases of blatant or sublime sexual harassment exist even in the industry that must work as the watchdog of society. Job insecurity, gender pay gap, and job segregation hound women media professionals. Journalists are employed on contract akin to daily wagers, which results in them getting less pay. Personal and job security is the most serious challenge for women at workplace.

Fierce competition exists in the powerful media industry to rise above the rest. Those who manage to fight all odds are the ones who progress. But the odds are not in favour of women. Male dominance, family restrictions, unfavorable work environment, lack of training facilities, inadequate security, inflexible working hours, apart from that family commitments and societies backward thinking forces many women to quit journalism.

Women outnumber men in journalism training and enter into the profession in greater number, but very few rise to senior positions. So many women are well-qualified and have immense skills and experience, but they are curbed from moving upward in the professional ladder. Glass ceiling was found most common at the middle and senior management levels. In fact, there are many women who have decided not to take up top managerial roles. However, the huge number of qualified women within the profession may eventually push them into decision-making positions.

There are two big reasons for the poor representation of women in senior positions—their low confidence and institutionalized prejudices against them. Women need to be more confident and bold in proving their mettle. For long, women have been fed with the misbelief that they are professionally inadequate. As a result, even when the opportunity strikes, women choose to work on soft stories rather than on hard news. It is important for women that they learn to fight and survive. They have to prove themselves and make their worth known.

The male-dominated profession exposes women to many risks and humiliation. Women regularly face sexual harassment, including molestation and eve-teasing, in newsrooms, and it exists across the world. Often, women ignore it and move on, some put up with the humiliation to save their jobs while some fight, and others quit the job altogether in the belief that making a complaint would not help because the higher-ups would not support them. The strict women-protection laws hardly help because such cases are rarely reported. Now it is time women stand up for their self-respect and fight back against vengeful men.

Balancing work and family roles is a serious issue for many women. They work hard in office, but the family expects them to do all the household duties as well. Men, on the other hand, steer clear of all domestic responsibilities. The huge burden forces many women journalists to end their career after marriage. Journalism as a profession does not allow women to spend enough time with the family. Women need families that support them to pursue their career as long as they wish to. Many young women journalists delay marriage. When marriage happens, they delay having children. This is because the responsibility of children almost always rests on women. Marriage affects female journalists much more than it affects male journalists. For women, the dilemma is to choose between motherhood and career. Most workplaces do not have daycare/childcare facilities. Insufficient maternity leave is a major issue that working mothers face. This has an adverse impact on their performance at work as well as their personal life.

Media offices are reluctant to employ young women because their priority is usually family, which compels them to leave office early. Chances of them taking maternity leave are also high which ruins their chances of getting jobs easily. At work, young mothers are discriminated against and not given promotions because they cannot put in long hours.

Organizations often suffer the consequences of problems faced by women at the workplace. The most obvious results are increased absenteeism, higher dropouts and lower efficiency. Policies and laws alone cannot help in curbing the problems faced by women at workplace. The overall attitude has to change while the general level of acceptance must to rise. Equality of work status between women and men can be ensured only if the problems faced the female workforce are resolved. Organizations have to make an extra effort to provide safe work environment to their women employees. They also need to implement policies to make sure that woman workers feel motivated and continue their career even after childbirth

Do media offices have women-friendly facilities? Do women feel safe at their workplace? Do they get enough support from related sources? The questions are many. Considering the infancy of the issue in this region, answer to these and related questions formed the essence of the study. The only way to answer these questions is to have perspectives, perceptions and the account of the experiences of working women media persons. Thus, the research formed an elaborate focus group comprising many media professionals who belong to various professional levels in different types of media houses. The focus group comprised 74 women journalists in print, newspaper and magazine, television, radio and online sectors. And found out the nature of its intensity by measuring women journalists' satisfaction with each aspect of their professional life, executed by analysing the nature of its association between personal and professional variables.

The details of the study are presented in five chapters. The first chapter throws light on the background of the study, and its relevance. The next chapter of the thesis presented a review of previous literature in the discourse. The third chapter deals with the study objectives and methodology. In the fourth chapter, results of analysis are presented in two parts, in qualitative and quantitative aspects. These findings form the central segment of the chapter. The final chapter presented the important findings and conclusions drawn. The chapter also included recommendations considering the results of the study.

The entire study is centered on six dimensions of women journalists' possible professional challenges in the media sector in Kerala. The dimensions of these professional challenges are work environment issues, issues of unequal

treatment at work, issues of technological support at workplace, issues of support they get to work, life-work balance issues and issues of confidence in their professional competency. After establishing the presence or the absence of these dimensions, the researcher found out the nature of its intensity by measuring women journalists' satisfaction with each aspect of their professional life. The core of this method measurement is that lesser the satisfaction, higher is the intensity of the challenge. From the findings it can be deduced that the issues regarding professional dimensions of women media professionals in Kerala are partly on expected lines and their implications are thought provoking. The results lend to support to the existence of issues of work environment, unequal treatment at work, technological support, support they get to work, life work balance and confidence in professional competency. The least satisfactory professional dimensions are life work balance and gender equality. At the same time women perceive better satisfaction in technological support at workplace and confidence in their professional competency compared to other professional dimensions.

The existence of challenges women media professionals' face in media in Kerala detected in this study makes it essential to ascertain a more in - depth understanding of the possible workplace challenges and remedies to these challenges. There is need to pull down the issues and establish gender equity so that media can get on more efficiently. Research into these aspects is the need of the hour, so that we can come up with practical solutions and policies suited to prevailing conditions.

INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Media: Focus on Women

Communication is a powerful tool that is instrumental in bringing about social change in any nation. A dynamic, creative and competitive profession in mass communication is journalism. It not only accelerates the pace of social change, but also shrinks the world and revolutionizes the social locale.

By definition, journalism is the truthful account of the events of the day and contemporary issues which are interpreted as per their significance and whose opinion is offered to the world. A journalist acts as a medium to communicate information from the media organization to the reader by giving a responsible account of the events in a meaningful context. In the recent times, journalism has turned out to be an attractive profession, opening up doors that lead to the innovative world. The attraction towards it is as much for women as it is for men. Yet, journalism remains a male-dominated profession.

Gender equality is not just a women's issue, but a key human right for men, women, as well as the transgender. But, somehow, journalism has failed to move with the times. Women are a vital component of the profession, but they have to struggle hard to reach positions men easily hold.

Less than 50 years ago, journalism was a vocation exclusively for men. Women were discouraged from joining the profession on the ground that they would have to undergo different kinds of hard work; night shift was a big deterrent. Women were told multiple times of the hurdles they would have to face while working because of the responsibilities and social restrictions placed on them. The shackles became stronger when women confronted the male subjugation in the profession.

But with time, there has been a slow but steady change in people's attitude. Men have learnt to give space to women in the profession, albeit a little. Grabbing the opportunity, some women opted for the coveted reporting stream, making

pathways from soft news to hard news. The present generation is witnessing a dramatic social change, with women playing leading roles in many fields.

In this brave new women's world, there is no doubt that journalism is a profession that women can not only pursue with aplomb, but also where they can make a mark. Some women have reached the top of the editorial ladder, an unimaginable proposition just a few decades back. They broke the general assumption in the upper echelons of media organizations that women cannot manage editorial or non-editorial departments as heads due to their inherent incapability and conventional upbringing at home, (Joshi, Phad & Maniyar, 2006).

The number of women journalists across the globe is increasing by the day, but the percentage of women as editors, heads of departments, and media owners is still quite poor. In 2015, the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) conducted a research on media and gender in the Asian and Pacific regions. The major exploration into gender equity states that media is still a male subjugated industry. Women continue to be marginalized in the news, both in context of the work they do and the opportunities they get. While women are in minority in the profession, they represent at least half of the assistant news directors and assignment editors. They are also in majority in six key positions—executive producer, producer, news reporter, writer, anchor, and assistant. Women journalists' presence as professional writers and presenters of news is now commonplace. They are most under-represented among news photographers, sports anchors, and sports reporters (Yi & Dearfield, 2012 & Shaw, 1980).

In developing countries, irrespective of the status of development, social progression and women empowerment, women media professionals face several serious problems. Discrimination in the recruitment procedure, working environment, and professional augmentation exists in varying degrees. The result is gender inequality, gendered division of assignments, stereotypical image, gender pay gap, unfriendly and long working hours, absence of job and financial security, uncondusive work environment, and inadequate maternity leave and childcare facilities.

Given the combination of skills women unknowingly ingrain in themselves from their social and work environments, they are quite capable to escape from the professional ghettos in every sphere of journalism and prove their worth.

Society as a Hurdle

In India, woman is presented as the origin of power itself. But reality is quite contrary to this. She is a helpless being who has no distinct status except as that of a wife, a mother, or a daughter-in-law who has little decision-making rights, leave alone the liberty to make choices. Improving the status of women is the key to narrowing the gender gap and securing a better quality of life for all.

The degraded status of women, considering them inferior to men, and the roles they are forced to play in real-life situations, are the prime causes of male dominance in professions such as journalism. Abolition of social evil systems such as sati, polygamy, child marriage, giving women property rights and access to education and employment have helped improve their status. This improvement has influenced women's attitude, their values, inspirations, the way they think, and has resulted in their effective participation in all walks of life (Bhardwaj, 2014).

It is extremely important that mass media plays a significant role in women's progress. It must be acknowledged that education and employment to women has contributed to the growth of media, (Ray, 2008). However, it is also a fact that women's problems rarely figure on newspapers' front page unless there is a gruesome murder or a rape that can have sensational angles.

The soaring crime rate and violence in the country reflects women as the dominated and exploited weaker sex. She faces violence inside and outside the family throughout her life,. On the basis of a *PTI* report, *The Telegraph* reported on 13th November, 2008, that India is among the 20 countries that has the widest gender gap (Ram, 2011).

Print Media

A study was conducted on the 'Status of Women Journalists in the Print Media' initiated by the National Commission for Women and executed by the Press Institute of India (PII). The study points out that major hurdle for women are sexual

harassment, job insecurity, contract system of employment, and neglect of maternity and childcare provisions. Sexual harassment is a part of the profession in India, but women hesitate to complain about it (Bhagat, 2004).

Hindi newspaper and magazine offices do not accept women as professionals entitled to enjoy every professional facility equal to man (Tomar, 2011). A large number of women are working in the media, but offices do not provide them the basic facilities like transportation, adequate maternity leave, and a healthy and friendly work environment. They are not considered equal to men in decision-making. Marriage is considered a big hurdle in the profession. More women now go for late marriage and postpone pregnancy.

Audiovisual Media

Audiovisual is the only media where women outnumber men. Straight out of college, many women opt to join as reporters in radio and television. The attraction to be seen and heard lures them to choose audiovisual as a career option. The recognition gives them a celebrity status, which they enjoy. With a huge influx of women journalists in audiovisual media, offices now make it clear that there is no man or woman in journalism—a journalist is a journalist.

The first systematic study on women's employment in Doordarshan was undertaken by S R Joshi in 1987 as part of a research project of UNESCO. The study revealed unequal pattern of women's employment in Doordarshan. Representation of women in senior management positions was limited. There were hardly any women who could play a crucial role in decision-making (Camargo, Crean, Hassan, Irukwu, Joshi & Gallagher, 1987).

Challenges in Office

In 1970s and 1980s, women journalists were not allowed to work late in office. In fact, they themselves refused to work late because of the restrictions placed on them by their family. Though there is a radical change in the way women and their families think, the process is slow. Climbing up the professional hierarchy is a herculean task in itself. Ubiquitous problems prevent them from coming on par with their professional male counterparts. Gender discrimination is prevalent in

workplaces, men subject women to different kinds of treatments (Murthy & Anita, 2010).

Dropping women journalists' home after they complete their night shift is considered a liability. This apart, separate washrooms and lounges, refreshment facilities, which are prerequisites to create a conducive milieu, are usually not appreciated. In the male-dominated newsroom, leaves for childbirth or childcare are considered an impediment and stop promotions.

It is unfortunate that Kerala, the most literate state in the country, follows this mindset—not a single media organization in the state has childcare facility for working journalists. Worse, there is hardly any difference between private and government organisations when it comes to childcare provisions. Government-controlled All India Radio station in the state does not have any provision for childcare, such as a creche.

Domestic duties, combined with the dedication towards their job, subject women to intense strain. This routine of heavy work load at home and in office influences their private lives. Also, their other halves have little understanding of the commitment the profession calls for (Wijngaard, 1992). Many women leave journalism after marriage, or after having children. This is unheard of among men.

To lessen their problems, many women take up jobs in magazines which are considered to have easier working hours. Many women's magazines are devoted to fashion, glamour, beauty aids, body fitness and cooking. But these have minuscule articles dedicated to women's empowerment, the challenges they face, career opportunities, health, entrepreneurship, legal aid, counselling services, childcare services and financial management. Research shows that women are less likely to write stories on hard news—politics, economics or crime (Johannsdottir, 2015).

In newspapers, women work on lifestyle pages, but do not write much on crime, politics or sports pages. Their bylines, also far less likely to be seen on the front pages. In recruiting women reporters, one of the senior male editors commented that, "I never found any women with the remotest chance of working in that capacity in hiring women as reporters. Women are simply not able to do hard news stories, see themselves as experts on women's features. When a woman

gets married, her knowledge of the subject that interests her is increased, but of course, marriage makes it more difficult for women to work on shift,” (Franks, 2013).

Many media organizations now understand the bias and their advertisements for the recruitment of journalists are gender-sensitive. They believe there is no reason to think that women are less professionally equipped or interested than men in working as journalists, as it is a fact that they outnumber men in journalism education (Johannsdottir, 2015). But these media organizations are only a few in number. In most places, discrimination begins at the very first level. During recruitment procedures, employers see women incapable of succeeding in the challenging, creative and dynamic profession.

It's a long way for women to get gender parity in journalism, both in the content produced and in the positions held. They are assigned stereotypical beats and pushed to cover soft beats such as art, culture and entertainment. Hard news, which forms a major part of the news, is considered too difficult for women. No doubt, male journalists get more visibility within a short time. While women work more, achieving visibility in media takes a long time.

What's more, men assign desk job to women with the pretext of being considerate towards their requirements. Women seldom get the chance to be decision-makers in the management. Bound by duties at home, many a time they themselves are reluctant to accept higher posts and remain saddled with middle and low ranks in office hierarchy. Despite the number of women journalists growing by the day, only a handful hold top decision-making posts.

Sexual Harassment

The male-dominated profession exposes women to many risks as well as humiliation. Male reporters believe that women are a misfit in a work that requires them travel late in the night in remote areas. Some women do not want to do it either (Franks, 2013). This is because they are directly or indirectly subjected to sexual abuses and harassment while travelling, in office, and even in outdoor meetings. They are attacked physically as well as emotionally.

Journalism can be a very dangerous job, for both men and women, in particular for journalists or reporters who are uncovered corrupt and violent

environments, injustice in hostile and those who are in war zones (Ronderos, 2012). The different forms of violence against journalists and the obstacles to their work include threats, murder, exclusion of material, exile, arrests and intimidation.

Sexual harassment, theft, molestation, and eve-teasing are some problems that working women regularly face. Women and young journalists are at a heightened risk of exploitation and sexual harassment. As women do not occupy positions of power in media houses, there is no one to give an ear to those harassed.

While a few women ignore and move on, some brace themselves to fight it within the profession, and some quit the job. Now, women hold responsible positions in newspapers and in the electronic media. It is their responsibility to not only change society's attitude towards them, but also shape public opinion. Their competency should extend to wide areas and a range of issues (Ray, 2008). It is their duty to help other women dealing with gender discrepancies and other challenges.

Gender Pay Gap

Absence of security in employment and remuneration is an inherent problem in the profession. The management usually selects fresh journalists on contract basis. Their salary, to say the least, is meagre. Even when journalists are employed as trainees, women are paid less than men. The gender pay gap at the very outset lowers their confidence and works as a beginning for all the impediments that will come their way while working.

According to the Wage Board for Working Journalists, women's salaries should be equal to that of men. Also, its salary structure is much better than what media organizations offer. Adherence to the Wage Board's stipulations can end many woes of all journalists. But media organizations refrain from employing permanent staff. Instead, they hire journalists on contract, thus saving themselves from all the rulings of the Wage Board.

"I didn't fully understand what the wage gap meant for women until I was renegotiating a contract in 1994 as an overseas producer for CBS News based in London. I suspected I was being underpaid, so I called a few male producers at

CBS who had my same level of experience and asked them how much they were making. Forty per cent more, I learned,” says Susan E. Reed (Reed, 1999).

Despite the Wage Board recommendations, there is barely any media organization which gives salaries accordingly. If journalists demand better pay, the management transfers them to remote areas, forcing them quit their job.

To ameliorate the working conditions of mediapersons, in May 2007 the government constituted two wage boards—one for working journalists and another for non-working conditions—under the chairmanship of Mumbai High Court Judge Justice G.R. Majithia. The then Labour Minister Mallikarjun Kharge said this was a step to protect the media and their employees. A decade later, journalists do not find themselves better placed.

Demands for security in employment, wage and working conditions are often met with threats of dismissal. Highly qualified journalists are working with low remuneration only because of their passion towards the profession.

Low Confidence

Management’s prejudice and lack of confidence among women are two reasons behind the low number of women in the upper echelons of media organizations. Women need to be confident and bold in showing their professional prowess so that they are able to fight the prejudices that exist against them.

It is unfortunate that colleagues and seniors, instead of guiding them, ensure that women feel professionally inadequate. Many are now sure that they will be unable to bear the stress journalism demands. They show interest in doing soft stories and shy away from political, financial, sports, or any other hard story. Their professional inadequacy is so ingrained in them that even when they get the opportunity, they choose soft stories.

And opportunities rarely come by. Bureau chiefs or chief reporters, mostly men, distrust women and do not assign them hard stories to cover. If a bureau has two equally talented man and woman journalists, the former is preferred for political beats. Women are given serious beats only after they struggle hard to prove that they are better than the rest. They get to do routine jobs unless they demand and come forward to undertake serious tasks.

Low confidence among women and seniors' prejudice against them are two possible reasons for the poor number of women in the top management ranks. Figuratively, "glass ceiling" and "sticky floors" come in the way of women journalists' professional advancement.

Non-Acceptance of Talent

When a woman goes out to work, especially at night, society looks down upon her and questions her character. Her morals are doubted. What's more, if she is beautiful and progressing in her career, she is scorned at and frowned upon. Society does not allow women to travel or drive at night. She is forced to opt for comfortable jobs. The newsroom mirrors society's attitude towards women. Sexist jokes are commonplace here. If women complain, the usual answer is that the joke was understood the wrong way.

Women must learn to fight to survive. Some stop the fight mid-way, and only those who keep fighting are the ones who succeed. This holds true not only in journalism, but in all professions. Women have to prove their mettle to be accepted in any profession, while it is accepted that men will succeed in whatever profession they take up. Women's efforts are not appreciated as it is felt that they eat into men's territory. Their smallest mistake is widely discussed, which hits their confidence hard.

Life-Work Balance

There are many accomplished women in the corporate world. They take up challenging roles as professionals and show that they are better workers than men. Yet, the image of only the woman being the home-maker has not changed. Men are rarely seen in this role.

Family responsibility is the biggest challenge for the professional advancement of women journalists. She works hard in office, perhaps more than men, and returns home tired. But she is expected to prepare food, take care of kids and perform all the household duties, while the man barely shares any household responsibility.

In most houses, the salary that a woman gets is considered the second income of the family. What she earns goes either in the hands of her father or her husband.

For her, life is learning how to balance the stress that comes along with her responsibilities with her passion for work. In the process, she is deprived of her peace and independence. Being herself is a luxury.

Women need families that are supportive so that they can pursue their career as long as they wish to.

Gender Discrimination

Despite their qualifications, talent and hard work, women are considered less than their male colleagues. So, many women settle down with jobs much less challenging than their ability; or, get stuck at one point of their career with no opportunity for further growth.

A significant number of women study in and graduate from journalism institutes. But their male contemporaries are more likely to get employed in newspaper or television houses. Women find more job opportunities in local weekly newspapers. They barely ever reach top positions. In fact, men do not wish to see women in top positions. They cannot tolerate it when women excel in the profession they have chosen for themselves. Most men say they understand women's predicaments, and boast about it. But their real self is exposed as male ego clashes with female professional prowess. Their worst self can be seen when women somehow manage to reach the top and become their boss.

Lukewarm Response to Protests

Agitation for better terms, security and working conditions by journalists is often met with threats of dismissal. Women earn less than their male counterparts and suffer unequal treatment in many other respects, women and young journalists are at a heightened risk of exploitation and sexual harassment and they do not occupy positions of power houses in media.

Women are poorly represented in the print as well as the electronic media. There are only a few media organizations which have attained gender parity (Kiage

& Macakiage, 2009). Men always get better deal in terms of permanent recruitment and better working conditions. Many media organizations advertise for job vacancies but do not encourage women to apply.

Women Journalists Abroad

Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP), the world's longest running and most extensive research on gender in news media, in its first edition in 1995, found that only 17 percent of the people read about, seen or heard in newspaper, television and radio news respectively, were women. In 2000, it was 18 percent, 21 percent in 2005, 24 percent in 2010 and 24 per cent in 2015 as well. It is worrying that the number of women entering the profession has plateaued after its continuous growth in the past decade. Research is needed to explain the reason for this setback. The GMMP report shows that although there was slow but steady progress in women's presence in the media between 1995 and 2005, the years between 2005 and 2015 witnessed stagnation (Gallagher, 2015).

The rapid increase in the number of television channels has resulted in the growth of employment for women. The ideas expressed on various platforms on the role of women in Senegal, Africa, have led to the belief that the role of women as a journalist and that of a woman itself are mismatched. That, most Senegalese believe that women journalists cannot fit into the ideal image of a woman as a wife or mother. This prejudice is strengthened by statistics that show high number of divorce among women journalists in Senegal (Wijngaard, 1992).

Similarly, Pakistani society wants women to always be good wives and mothers. It usually does not appreciate them to do anything more, leave alone get employed in a profession as bold as journalism. A working woman in Pakistan is prone to a lot of discrimination, and this is especially true in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan (Shabir, 2012).

The situation is no different in Somalia. A study conducted by the National Union of Somali Journalists in 2010 shows that women journalists face a challenging environment in the African country (NUSOJ, 2010).

However, there is a difference in Eastern Europe and Nordic Europe. Compared to other places, there is higher representation of women in both

governance and top management here (Byerly, 2011). There are very few women holding senior management posts in Asia and Oceania. But some countries do exist where the number of senior women exceeds that of men. For instance, in South Africa and Lithuania, women dominate the reporting ranks of junior and senior professional levels. Their representation is approaching equivalence even in the middle and top management ranks.

The Winners

Society bound women at home and restricted them from entering a profession as challenging as journalism. It was a difficult struggle to break the reins and follow their passion. But the world they aspired to enter was also pervaded by heavy gender discrimination.

Over the years, the status of women journalists in India has improved. In the late 1960s and 1970s, many women journalists were in the forefront of journalism. Vidya Munshi was arguably the first woman journalist in the country. Swarnakumari Devi remained the sole editor of *Bharti* from 1885 to 1905, and from 1909 to 1915. *Bharti* was a magazine started by Jyotirindranath Tagore in 1877. Swarnakumari Devi's daughter Sarla Devi followed on her mother's footsteps and also edited the magazine. Sister Nivedita regularly wrote articles in newspapers and magazines such as *New India*, *Dawn*, *Indian Review*, *Modern Review*, *Prabuddha Bharat*, *Hindu Review*, *Mysore Review*, *Behar Herald*, *The Bengalee*, *East & West*, *Sindh Journal*, *Hindu*, *Bal Bharti*, *Amrit Bazar Patrika*, *Statesman*, *Advocate*, *Tribune*, *Maratha*, *The Times of India* and *Bombay Chronicle*. Hemant Kumari Dev, editor of *Sugrihini*, a journal for women, is the first women journalist in Hindi (Bhardwaj, 2014 & Chatterji, 2013).

These women were making a mark for themselves at a time when media offices were resisting their entry full-throttle. An unwritten rule existed in newspaper offices not to employ women as journalists. These offices did not have a single woman doing desk job, leave alone reporting. As time went by, women started entering the profession. But, they were not allowed to do night duty on the ground that they could not provide them transport to return home, as the labour law recommends. Till the mid-70s, women did not do night duty as they themselves

were vary of it. The first woman to volunteer for night duty was Coomi Kapoor of the *Indian Express* (Bhardwaj, 2014).

World, a Battleground

As journalism becomes a much sought-after profession, it is heart-warming to see a significant number of girls joining colleges and institutes to acquire degrees or diplomas in the field. The rapid expansion, almost a proliferation of the electronic media through satellite channels, the popularity of FM radio, and the growth of print media, gives good scope for the absorption of both men and women prospective journalists.

At present, the number of women in both the media has increased, but their ratio to men has more or less remained static. Reluctance to employ young women still exists. The fear is that they can take maternity leave or prioritize family over work, especially if they have children, (Bhardwaj, 2014). A policy to ensure adequate representation of women, both in public and private sectors of the media, is, therefore, a must. This would not only make the media truly national and representative in character, but also ensure a source of livelihood for all women.

Despite measures to redress gender imbalances, the power to define public and media agendas is still largely a male privilege (Chatterji, 2013). That is why we call journalism a male overruled world. Women are subordinates here. Women themselves should rise to the positions of higher levels through their competency and efficiency in the domain. Women media professionals face certain menace within this male-dominated vocation (Ronderos, 2012). If they are capable of facing the challenges and avoiding or surmounting them, they can achieve their goal of gender inequality in media workforce.

Professor Janice Neil in a one-on-one with Pamela Philipose in 2012 said that media benefits from greater diversity in the newsroom in terms of wider articulation of important issues. An important issue, as far as journalism in India concerned, is that professionals from lower casts are not adequately represented in newsrooms. This could be a problem in terms of the way news is framed, or issues of castes are discussed. Bringing voices of actual people always makes a news story more compelling.

Women in Indian Media

It has been quite a few years since the method of gathering information and its literary reproduction became a profession, but women across the globe have been denied entry to journalism as a practice. Nevertheless, despite the significant discrimination they faced, a handful of women did manage to work as journalists in the late 1880s. In India, women gained entry into the journalistic field during the freedom movement. More often than not, they considered journalism a service to society and not a profession (Bhardwaj, 2014).

There is no accurate documentation of the history of women media professionals in India, though women entered to the profession of journalism in late nineteenth century, they did not play an important role in it. Over the years, the status of women journalists in India has improved. However, women media professionals are slowly being accepted by the society. In the late 1960s and 1970s, many women journalists were in the forefront of journalism (Bhardwaj, 2014).

History record names of many woman journalists who have shown prowess in the profession. There are discrepancies on who the first woman journalist was? According to the newspaper *Khabar Lahariya*, Hemant Kumari Devi Chaudhary, born in 1868, was the first woman journalist in India. In 1888, she became the editor of the magazine *Sugrahini* which was published from Allahabad and carried stories on women's empowerment. According to Bhardwaj, Vidya Munshi born in Mumbai in 1919 and worked in various newspapers and magazines, including *The Blitz* was arguably the first woman journalist in Hindi in the country (Bhardwaj, 2014).

From 1885 to 1905, and then again from 1909 to 1915, Swarnakumari Devi was the editor of *Bharati*, the family magazine started by Jyotirindranath Tagore in 1877. Her daughter Sarla Devi was also involved in this venture (Bhardwaj, 2014).

According to Manjula (2015), the first half of the twentieth century had many woman editors in women's journals. Some of them were Asha Devi, Bhagwan Devi-Paliwal, Dhanrani Kunwar, Gay Krishna Behen Nag, Kulsoom Syani, Kumari Hardevi Malkani, Kuntal Kumari, Mahadevi Varma, Radha Devi Goenka, Rameshwari Nehru, Shivrani Devi, Shachirani Gurtu, Subhadra Kumari Chauhan, Yashoda Devi Vaidya and Yashowati Tiwari. In the early 1930s, Homai Vyarawalla

became the first woman photo-journalist of the country in mainstream journalism. She worked for the *Illustrated Weekly of India*, the Eastern Bureau of the British Information Service in Delhi, and *Onlooker*, an evening newspaper in Delhi (Manjula 2015).

Many more journalists gradually acquired place in journalism and made a firm base by the 1960s and early 1970s, writes Manjula. These include Razia Ismail, Jyotsna Kapoor, Neena Vyas, Modhumita Mojumdar, Zinat Imam, Rami Chhabra, Rashmi Saxena, Madhu Jain, Coomi Kapoor and Tavleen Singh (all in Delhi), Olga Tellis, Zarine Merchant, Fatma Zakaria, Elizabeth Rao, Bachhi Karkaria, Dina Vakil and Carol Andrade (all in Mumbai), Anjali Sirkar (in Chennai), Gita Aravamudan and Rima Kashyap (in Bengaluru), and Kalyani Shankar in Hyderabad etc.(Bhardwaj, 2014).

After 1960s, there was a sudden spurt in the number of woman journalists in the country (Khabar Lahariya - March 13, 2014). Opportunities opened up for women, especially in English journalism. Hindi and regional journalism also created opportunities for women, but mostly on the desk. It still has very few woman reporters.

Prabha Dutt, the late mother of journalist Barkha Dutt, started her career in the *Hindustan Times*, Delhi, in 1964. Usha Rai brought women's issues into mainstream journalism in 1965. In 1985, Maya Kamat became a political cartoonist, a department dominated by men even now. These women were making a mark for themselves at a time when media offices were resisting their entry full-throttle. An unwritten rule existed in newspaper offices not to employ women as journalists. These offices did not have a single woman doing desk job, leave alone reporting. As time went by, women started entering the profession. But, they were not allowed to do night duty on the ground that they could not provide them transport to return home, as the labour law recommends. Till the mid-70s, women did not do night duty as they themselves were varying of it. The first woman to volunteer for night duty was Coomi Kapoor of the *Indian Express* (Khabar Lahariya - March 13, 2014).

Now there are a large number of women works in the media, but many of the women journalists even lack access to basic facilities such as transport, maternity leave, childcare, and a healthy work environment and also face sexual harassment

and glass ceiling. Marriage is a big obstacle for women in this line of work, so many of them give up marriage, or marry late or avoid having kids (Tomar, 2011 & Bhagat (2004)). Society and its attitude is the primary thing that avert women journalists from focusing on their job. Women journalists in rural newspapers face more gender discrimination than in national newspapers (Mahajany, 1989).

Condition in Kerala

Like most places in India, men outnumber women in media organizations in Kerala. There are 75 dailies including tabloids, 72 audiovisual channels (65 Television channels and 7 Radio stations) and 10 news websites in Malayalam (PRD Directory, 2015). While there are hardly any women in the print media, their representation has risen in television and radio offices. Again, like other places, the audiovisual media is well represented by women in Kerala. Many talented women journalists are trying or working hard to establish their mettle in this profession in Kerala.

The ubiquitous situation that prevails now in Kerala is the poor remuneration journalists get. This is especially true for starters. The management employs trainee journalists on contract. In dire need of job, young journalists accept whatever meager amount that is offered to them. Like everywhere else, they are not appointed as permanent staff because the Wage Board recommends good remuneration to all employees.

As the media mostly comprises men, their points of view, concerns and priorities are widely portrayed. Society is deprived of women's issues, their views, and solutions to their problems. Recruiting women in journalism is the need of the hour.

Kerala is a state cultivated a culture of reading newspaper among one and all. Presenting the connection between the habitual newspaper-reading masses and the writers giving public opinion, V.K. Ramachandran, the economist writes, "Owing to the prevalent levels of literacy, the dissemination of information by means of the written word goes much deeper in Kerala than elsewhere in India; this has important implications for the quality and depth of public opinion and of participatory democracy in the State." (Ram, 2011).

Ezhuthachan (2012) noticed that there is a good number of talented women work as journalists in Kerala. But people have not been able to accept the fact and do not allow girls in their homes to join the profession. Most women journalists reach media offices after overcoming the resistance from their parents and husbands. Parents cannot be blamed as they are anxious about the safety of their girls as journalism is about taking risks and challenges. But it is ironical that even young men usually do not want to women to work as journalists.

Two decades ago, women were not allowed to write entrance test for recruitment to *Malayala Manorama*. Not a single woman was employed in its office, not even in the post of a receptionist. But the younger generation of newspaper owners has set aside the age-old tradition of keeping women out of workplace. Today, *Malayala Manorama* has women in almost all its departments (Ezhuthachan, 2012).

Although media offices have started accepting women reporters, people in Kerala do not like to see women outside the house after 7 pm. Moral policing is very high in the state. Newspapers and television channels provide vehicles to drop women home, but those who use buses or trains in the night are looked at with disdain (Ezhuthachan, 2012).

Typically, women work on the desk, or write for supplements and lifestyle pages. They rarely work as reporters or special correspondents, and are far less likely to report on crime, politics or sport stories. Their male colleagues, on the other hand, hog prime beats (Ezhuthachan, 2012).

Women in Kerala still have a long way to go to get gender equality, both in the profession and in the content produced. Noticeably, they are given serious beats only by proving themselves to be more proficient. Even as reporters they face discrimination. While women reporters are assigned routine or soft news stories, men are assigned byline or hard stories. Obviously, men become more visible within a short time (Ezhuthachan, 2012).

But women have made a mark at places where they work. They are very successful in dealing with soft stories in magazines. They have sensitively and forcefully elevate issues such as women's abuse, sexual exploitation and

harassment. Women and child relationship, missed out in newspapers, are written in-depth in magazines (Ezhuthachan, 2012).

The book by Krishnakumari (as cited in Santhosh, March 29, 2010) provided a glimpse in to the early women writers in Kerala, for them the profession was an extension of their literary effort or social work. *Kerala Sugunabodhini* (1885), is the first women's journal in Malayalam. But *Sarada* was considered to be the first magazine for women in Malayalam that extensively carried writings by women. The first woman to rise to the post of a News Editor (early 1970s) was K. Thankam Menon, who joined *Mathrubhumi* in 1952. One of the first leader writers in Malayalam was V. Parukuttiamma, who served in *Mathrubhumi* from 1968 to 1981 (Santhosh, March 29, 2010).

Social Change

The status of women media professionals, of course, has direct relation with the customs and traditions of Kerala. It is accepted that women must be good wives and extremely patient mothers. Society does not allow women to speak in public places, or take decisions in family on serious issues. This was dangerously apparent in joint families. Over a period of time, the social structure changed and joint families started to disappear paving way for nuclear families. The rigid control over women lessened, which gave them some equality, at least inside homes.

The proliferation of working women in society is the result of this social change. The modern generation demands and offers equal rights to men and women in jobs. As the working women spread themselves in wide-ranging occupations, they started becoming visible in media as well.

About three decades ago, the Indian media tended to either ignore women altogether or confined its attention to the problems of middle-class domesticity. But when women's organizations initiated major movements against gender violence in the late 1970s, the media had its own role to play (Chaudhuri, 2010).

The "feminization" of journalism led to an increase of women membership in journalists' unions and associations. The need to increase women membership in journalists' unions and associations is crucial to bring gender equality in the profession.

With the onset of liberalization, the print media underwent dramatic transformations. Journalists of the pre-liberalized era had witnessed the role of media differently. It has a direct bearing on the manner in which a rising trend within the English print media represents women and “feminism”. Today’s Indian woman is different from her predecessor. In the coming years, the number of women covering hard beats will undoubtedly grow, just as more men will become interested in writing on softer issues; but it is debatable whether this will also be accompanied by a change in perceptions.

From a situation when the media was not considered a place for woman, more and more women are now entering its doors. Just as women have broken barriers on political, financial and social professions while their male counterparts have undergone an attitudinal change, women journalists must learn to cope with and overcome the biases.

Society, too, needs to create parallel opportunities for men and women to chase their career dreams. The traditional outlook of society for women needs to change. Society should accept young women in journalism. Social barriers can break only if families are supportive and accept women’s changing requirements. Families can make a beginning by creating an affable environment by giving equal status to male and female members.

The Indian woman journalist has taken long strides to overcome the biases, but much remains to be achieved still. It is reassuring that it is not a depressing scenario any more. The cultural biases in media will take time to completely disappear. The biggest burden on women journalists is their domestic responsibilities as wife, mother and daughter-in-law. The brightest and most successful journalists have left their bright careers to settle in matrimony, or have moved to less demanding jobs after the birth of their children.

Family members, teachers and educational institutions must help to develop women’s self-esteem, analytical skills, risk-taking abilities and inquisitiveness so that they are able to skillfully handle the tasks that come their way as journalists. The glamorous world does a lot to attract people to pursue their career in this profession. It is clear that the stereotypes that exist in media’s portrayal of women do not generally originate from the media. They arise from the beliefs that exist in

society as a whole. It is media's responsibility to present the positive aspects of working women.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The multi-pronged study explores the challenges women media professionals in Kerala face in fulfilling their professional and personal responsibilities. It investigates how these become instrumental in male dominance in the news media in Kerala. The study also seeks to understand how women media professionals perceive the work environment—if they feel equal to their male counterparts, and if they get technological support. It studies how women understand the support they get at home and by society when they step out to work, how they maintain their life-work balance, and remain confident much-needed to stay in the professional race.

SCOPE AND RELEVANCE OF THE STUDY

Inequality based on gender has taken deep roots in the media. A negative attitude in society is often seen reinforced at workplace. The attitude and behavior of male colleagues is a major impediment to the well-being and progress of women media professionals. This is a daily struggle for women, especially when they freshers. They have to face humiliation from their male colleagues (Joseph, 2002 & Bhardwaj, 2014). Women can expect respect and a safe working environment only when their potential is tapped and their work appreciated. For this, they have to put in more effort than their male counterparts.

Every day, women reporters diligently perform their duties with minimum basic facilities at work. Uncomfortable work environment is now accepted in every media office; non-functional toilets is a typical case; transport provision is an obligation. The infrastructure maintained by news media offices is seldom women-friendly (Senah, 2018, Bhardwaj, 2014 & Tomar, 2017).

Inadequate support from the media office and supervisors results in non-attendance, low earnings and job frustration among women. Some senior staffs find it difficult to accept women's capabilities put a spanner on the growth of professionally talented women journalists. Favoritism in office is another big threat (Zambas, 2018). There is absence of institutional support that could help women

manage work along with domestic responsibilities. It forces many women to opt out of full-time employment (Joseph, 2002).

These days, media organisations employ journalists only on contract. This gives the management two advantages. It does not need to pay the journalists well, as per the Wage Board rules. It also gives the management an upper hand in sacking the employees at their whims and fancies. Only a handful of seniors in the mainstream media organizations get Wage Board pay scale. Women are preferably paid less; undervaluing women's work is the main reason behind gender pay gap (Bhagat (2004); Davidson, 2016; Joseph, 2002 & Tomar, 2017). The sense of insecurity among journalists and poor pay has led to journalists seeking other professions.

The Gender Council (GC) of International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) clearly defined its role and responsibility—*“The GC will be the main voice on gender, and the instrument to guide projects and policy concerning gender and good practice, raise awareness of gender issues, and mainstream gender issues throughout the IFJ, its projects and its member unions...GC recommendations, activities and projects on gender should be included in all Expert Groups, ExCom, Congress and IFJ projects, as well as in the IFJ constitution.”*(IFJ, 2015).

Media continues to struggle with gender equality, in everything from the creation of news for and about women, to getting promotions etcetera. Women continue to remain concentrated in low-level jobs, covering soft news, and doing human interest stories and features. A large number of them work on the desk and write for supplements. Men dominate media offices with most of the high status areas of news production, particularly politics, business and sports. The most gendered area is war correspondence. Women who report on war run a high risk of sexual violence and harassment (Tomar, 2017; Joseph, 2002; Bhagat (2004) & Steiner, 2017). Referring to Joseph (2000), Tomar (2017) writes that women journalists working in Indian language press tend to get sidetracked into magazines. They are assigned the task to handle feature pages, low priority district or regional editions, or women's pages.

Women substantially outnumber men in journalism training courses. They enter the profession in a good number. But the number of women who rise to senior

position is relatively low. Media offices do not have a policy to give promotions. The promotions are mostly irregular, non-transparent and whimsical. With women, it is worse. When women take a break from work they find it difficult to regain their place. Glass ceiling continues to stymie promotion of women media professionals (Davidson, 2016; Bhagat (2004); Franks, 2013; Joseph, 2002; Kangas, Haider & Fraser 2014 & Steiner, 2017).

International Women's Media Foundation (IWMF) and Unesco collaborated in a global research partnership to promote the voice of women media professionals and published a report on women in news media. The report shows that women currently fit into news-making operations, decision-making hierarchy and ownership structure of media companies. Of the 59 countries studied, in 20 countries glass ceiling was visible for women in the middle and senior management positions (Byerly, 2011).

Newsrooms have influenced and changed a lot by incorporating new technologies and new norms of professionalism. The pronounced visibility of women themselves contributes to the drastic change. The only difference in how technology affects journalism is the type of technology available. Countless platforms are now available that provide opportunities for challenging gender disparity as the emergence of new media and social networking sites (Steiner, 2017 & Gibson, 2017).

Sexual harassment prevails in media houses in India. Some women choose not to do anything about it in the fear of intimidation, victimization and sacking. Confidence in one's competence is a big factor to survive in a profession like journalism. Many women are too scared to take the professional risks fearing failure.

Some women media professionals have expressed the need for support groups and a special space to share and exchange problems (Bhagat, 2004). At present, there is complete absence of associations of women media professionals that can help improve access, employment and career growth through sharing of information and resources, training, and more intangible processes such as mentoring, lobbying and advocacy (Joseph, 2002 & Davidson, 2016).

Ezhuthachan (2012) states that, a majority of women media professionals in Kerala are more talented and sharp than their male counterparts. Yet, Malayalees show resistance to choose women journalists over men. It is a fact that most women journalists reach work after overcoming resistance from parents and husbands. It is surprising that even young men do not prefer to marry working journalists (Ezhuthachan, 2012).

Domestic responsibility, especially after having children, is a huge burden for women media professionals. They are unable to give quality time at work. Two conflicting responsibilities—of a journalist and of a woman—make life difficult for her. Childcare throws life-work balance off-gear for women media professionals. Most media organizations do not have daycare or childcare facility. Not one media office in Kerala has such a facility. Insufficient maternity leave is another big issue (Diwan, 2015 & Bhagat (2004)).

Some women media professionals delay having children while some get divorced to bring stability in their career. Most women who took a break after having children or even those who stayed home for a few months to have children believe they lost out professionally (Bhagat (2004) & Wljngaard, 1992). Women journalists are experiencing more job burnout and more intend to leave the field. The higher rate of exhaustion and cynicism, and minimum support from their organization often compels them to leave the field or change the job (Krings, 2015 & Reinardy, 2009). Society is the primary factor that prevents women journalists from focusing on their career, forcing them to leave the industry (Mahajany, 1989).

With the above stance, the present study examines how gender interferes with a woman journalist's personal and professional life. It scrutinizes how a woman media professional's work environment, working conditions, life-work balance, confidence level etcetera become significant in their growth and status in the journalistic field. This study gains significance considering that very few studies have been done to understand the situation of women media professionals in Kerala. It exclusively explores the challenges women face in the vocation. The study also investigates how women journalists perceive the gender imbalance in media offices and the support they require to overcome it within and outside the office.

CONCLUSION

Professional inequality is deep-rooted in a field that professes to be the watchdog, keeping close vigil on society and fighting the injustices that lie within. Many capable married women struggle to keep up with the work requirements. Ultimately, they realize that they have failed in giving their best to the profession. The dissatisfaction encourages them to either change their job, or quit working.

What's most required for women journalists is an understanding husband, supportive family and a favourable work environment. Without these, it is not possible for women journalists to work passionately and peacefully. But for years, familial bond has remained a major limitation for woman journalists. Journalists have to spend long hours at work. So, they give less time to their families and compromise on their personal duties. Because of long working hours, many women journalists face health problems. Seeing this, others hesitate to enter the profession scared of the challenges they may have to face.

Women journalists also find it difficult to maintain contact with their sources. Men have a lot of time at hand and, therefore, get the opportunity to maintain their social contacts. Women are tied to their homes and barely get the time to interact with their sources.

A prejudice prevails in society against women. Men do not like women to be bold, and expect them to make extra effort to prove their capability. They are reprimanded much more than men workers if they fail to meet deadlines, or make mistakes. The percentage of women in this field is less, compared to other professions, because they are unaware of the possibilities in the field.

Men hog all top posts; women can hardly be found in senior management-level posts. Obviously, news stories are written or presented from male viewpoint. Articles related to women have a negative colour. As media targets its audience, thrust is laid more on presentation rather than content.

Majority of women journalists in Kerala work on the desk as sub-editors. The organization assigns them desk job for the sake of their security and convenience. The general perception is that reporting is a difficult job for women. But it is the society which has made this categorization.

Over the years, the condition of women working in media has improved. A small space exists for them now. It is a fact that there has been slow but steady progress in this regard, especially in the audiovisual media. Nowadays, the good number of women is employed in audiovisual media organizations; some are in senior and decision-making positions as well.

But the road to achieve equality is long. As women lag in media, all journalists need to stand together for gender equality. The need is to create a gender policy targeting media organizations to promote and put women in positions of authority. Women should at least get the chance to prove themselves in hard or tough beats which involve investigative and technical news.

Women themselves should break the invisible barrier and come forward into the mainstream and voice their opinions on relevant issues. They must learn to face the world and take the challenges head-on that come their way. They should learn to fight for their space, and take over assignments to prove their efficiency. Only then they can leave their footprints for others to follow.

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REVIEW OF LITERATURE

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Meticulous review of earlier studies forms the basis of any research. This review of the existing studies lays the foundation to build a structure of the research, and paves the way for the methodology that will help in the fundamental interpretation of the findings. It aims to examine the area of the research, judge the research questions, and provide relevant literature to the readers. It establishes a theoretical framework of the research, and reinforces that the researcher is well-informed about the area of the study and adept at identifying the gap that the research aims to fulfill.

To provide an extensive background, previous studies on the challenges that women journalists confront have been comprehensively reviewed. Keeping the objectives of the study in mind, this review has been classified into four categories—Work Environment, Self Confidence, Gender Discrimination, and Work-Life Balance. However, these are not doctrinaire zones and do overlap at times.

The researcher reviews literature that share a connection with this study, and uses supportive as well as opposing arguments to prove their relevance to the research topic. Internationally, there are many studies on the status of women journalists focusing on the role of women working in the print and electronic media—the challenges and gender discrimination they face, how they balance life with work, and their under-representation in the vocation. Findings of many studies shed light on the fact that journalism is a male-dominated profession. However, there are not enough studies on the status and the professional problems of women journalists in Kerala.

Work Environment

Tomar (2011) explores women journalists' status in Hindi print media, based on a broad field analytical study conducted in key Hindi newspaper organizations in Delhi. The study sheds light on the fact that a large number of women work in the media, but do not have access to even basic facilities such as transport, maternity

leave, childcare, and a healthy work environment. Very rarely do women manage to acquire decision-making positions.

Marriage is considered a big hurdle for women in this profession, so many of them refrain from getting married, or marry late, and avoid having children. Studies also show that sexual harassment in various degrees is part of the work culture in media organisations, but these offices have no functional body to deal with such incidents.

In a similar study, by National Commission for Women to look in to Issues affecting the role of women working in the print media examines the problems of women working in the print media, the extent of discrimination in the workplace, and identifies the contemporary issues which need to be addressed. The findings show that in media organizations in India, sexual harassment is part of the work culture, but women either do nothing about it or do not know how to handle it (Bhagat, 2004).

Semary (2012) discusses how Arab women TV reporters perceive job satisfaction, and the factors which affect it. The study is an empirical research done by using quantitative and qualitative approaches. It uses Fredrick Herzberg's two-factor theory, power distance, and the masculinity-femininity theory of Hofstede to analyse data as well as the variables. The findings of the study show that work expectations and decision-making posts contribute to job satisfaction among women.

Women working in television with low work expectations are more satisfied with their jobs than their male counterparts, he states. The level of job satisfaction in government television stations is also higher than in non-government television stations. In television offices, women in decision-making positions possess a higher level of job satisfaction than women working as anchors, editors and reporters (Semary, 2012).

Wijedasa (n.d) analyses the situation in Sri Lanka and explores the contributions of women journalists to the profession, and the difficulties they face while working. The result of the study shows that the number of women journalists in the country is fast rising. At the same time, they are gradually taking on more influential roles in the media. Women journalists here face difficulties similar to what

their male counterparts face. They also grapple with sexual harassment in work place (Wijedasa, n.d).

The National Union of Somali Journalists (NUSOJ), a media organisation based in Somalia, conducted a survey in 2010 on the insecure working conditions of journalists. The survey investigates the extent of the problem, its consequences, and the factors that lead to it. It also shows how working conditions in a media organisation can be improved. The findings of the survey show that women and young journalists are heavily exploited and sexually harassed; and do not occupy decision-making positions. Protests for better work environment are often met with threats of dismissal. Women also get fewer wages than their male counterparts (NUSOJ, 2010) .

Self Confidence

Panday (2011) observes that women consider journalism to be hazardous profession as it involves outdoor assignments, odd working hours, night shifts, dealing with family disapproval, and achieving a work-family balance. The study exposes that majority of the women working in media in Bangladesh are confined to covering soft beats. Absence of women's alliances, networking groups, and mentoring, results in the denial of access to information in the workplace. This apart, there is difference in wage among male and female journalists (Panday, 2011).

While examining gender differences in workaholism and related variables, Burke and Matthiesen (2009) finds that women report higher levels of exhaustion in the profession. Less professional efficacy, and lower levels of satisfaction and well-being are also seen among women workers. This, while most women feel driven to work (Burk & Matthiesen, 2009).

Smirnova (2013) analyses gender transformations in journalism. On investigation of the problems and the conflicts entailed in the process, it was found that migration of journalism from a male dominant profession to a mostly female one brings about an inner psychological climate and creates inner transformations.

Gender stereotypes portray journalism as a typically male profession. Such stereotyping creates a negative psychological climate, as women journalists get influenced by gender stereotyping (Smirnova, 2013).

Sharma (2005) discusses women working in different media, and finds that although media has played an important role in highlighting women's issues, many a time the portrayal of women is negative. They are objectified as mere bodies present in the world for erotic male pleasures, and which can be bought and sold. This eventually leads to violence against women in society. The narrow-minded treatment of women by the media continually reinforces stereotyped gender roles and assumptions that a woman's role is nothing more than that of a wife, a mother, and one who serves men (Sharma, 2005).

The handbook, 'Getting the Right Balance' by International Federation of journalists primarily aims to provide journalists, more knowledge, information and understanding of gender issues in their work. It discusses the stereotypes in the media, and examines media's performance in the portrayal of women, and how it reinforces or breaks down the existing stereotypes. He also raises some key professional challenges which journalists face in their work. He comments that the use of stereotypes may reflect not only what society expects from women, but also what women may expect from themselves. When gender-biased language is used in an article, journalists support the bias that suggests women are excluded or incapable of their responsibilities. The gender equality liberates both men and women from such belief (IFJ, 2009).

Like most other areas, sports journalism remains a male province. Strong (2007) examines why women journalists do not enter the sports department, and what averts them from taking on the challenge. He writes that women are not upbeat about the subject, and are also not valued in sports reporting. Editors go with the idea that women neither have the interest nor the skill to be sports journalists. Many women feel that sports journalism lacks charm. As there are very few senior women sports journalists, new journalists do not have role models or mentors, and thus cannot comprehend the positive side of sports journalism (Strong, 2007).

Gender Discrimination

There are more women in media now than there were ever before. But, despite the improvement made over the past 25 years, female stereotypes limit the progress of women in media houses. Majority of the top management jobs are occupied by

men. 'Global Report on the Status of Women in the News Media' by 'International Women's Media Foundation' (2011) closely examines gender equity in the news media around the world. It is a baseline survey research which seeks both quantitative as well as qualitative data. The global study looks at women in the workforce and pro-equality policies in newsrooms.

In Eastern and Nordic Europe, there is higher representation of women in governance and top management compared to other areas. In Asia and Oceania regions, very few women hold senior management posts. In some countries such as South Africa, women exceed men in senior positions. In Lithuania, women dominate the reporting ranks of junior and senior professional levels, and their representation is nearing parity in the middle and top management ranks (Byerly, 2011).

Many media organisations still do not encourage women to apply when there are vacancies. Kiage & Macakiage (2009) document the level of women's involvement at professional, decision-making and governance levels. Their study shows that there is poor representation of women in media in senior and decision-making positions. Gender discrimination prevails in terms of permanent recruitment, promotional opportunities and working conditions (Kiage & Macakiage, 2009).

Shabir (2012) investigates the problems working women journalists face in Khyber Pakthunkhwa in Pakistan using a survey experimental research. The findings show that working women in Pakistan media face discrimination because society does not accept working women. They face problems within and outside office, such as while commuting. Lack of training, traditions, and custom are their major hurdles (Shabir, 2012).

In a similar study in Thai newspapers, Shaw (1980) reveals that women journalists face gender discrimination and prejudice even from news sources, as journalism has the image of being a male-dominated profession. The study was done following surveys conducted by journalists, their managers, peers, and readers (Shaw, 1980).

Likewise, Solomon (2006) examines the condition of women media professionals in terms of their education, employment status, job position, and work environment. Differences between male and female reporters and the obstacles

that women face are analysed. The study also investigates journalists' attitude while covering and portraying women in newspapers, and their role in media and women's associations. It is a case study of an exploratory nature. The findings reveal that women are featured less than men in broadsheets. Also, women are portrayed in stereotypical roles. Though tabloids feature women more, they are depicted as sexual objects and entertainment tools (Solomon, 2006).

What does a snapshot of gender equality in media look like today? What is the position of women in news production and in the management of media outlets? What are their working conditions and career development opportunities? What challenges do they face? These questions are the focus of the report by Hearne (2015).

The research traverses seven countries canvassing the views of men, women, and transgender individuals. The survey aims to garner 100 responses from each of the seven countries. As many as 697 journalists from seven countries participated in the survey, 433 of them were women (62.1 per cent), 258 men (37 per cent), and six self-identified as "other" (0.86 per cent). The number of respondents were broadly in keeping with the population size of each country—India 138, Pakistan 137, Malaysia 111, Cambodia 106, Nepal 103, Sri Lanka 80, and Vanuatu 22. Only full-time or part-time employees of media organisations were asked to respond to survey questions about employers, terms of employment, working conditions, opportunities for training and professional development, unions and professional associations, and the representation of women in their organisations.

The survey found that women journalists continue to be restricted by stereotypical beats, and face more job insecurity, lower wages and gender discrimination. Sexual harassment of women at workplace is rampant, which sometimes affects their continuation in the job itself.

The situation is slowly improving, but barring a few exceptions, women do not find adequate representation in decision-making bodies in the media industry. Even though there are opportunities, barriers do exist which prevent women from naturally making it to the higher echelons of media organisations. The phenomena of 'glass ceilings' and 'sticky floors' routinely hinder the growth of women who may

professionally be on par with their male colleagues. The lack of women's presence in editorial offices and media boardrooms is not, then, simply a matter of mechanical representation, but one of creating conditions to institutionalise gender equity (Hearne, 2015).

Martinson, Cochrane, Ryan, Corrigan, Bowdon, (2012) explores the role of women in the British media—those who are being written about and photographed in national newspapers. The findings show that although business is largely seen as a male preserve, the maximum number of bylines is by women. Men dominate the content of news stories (Martinson, Cochrane, Ryan, Corrigan, Bowdon, 2012).

Why do most women journalists shun sports reporting? Swanson (2009) explores women's representation in sports journalism, and the challenges they face. The study investigates the changes that occurred in sports reporting as the presence of women in locker rooms increased. It also exposes what professional players feel about reporting by women. Majority of the journalists had a story relating to gender discrimination (Swanson, 2009).

Hardin & Shain (2005) conducted a study which focuses on how women in sports journalism prioritise their career choice, ensure job satisfaction, deal with factors that could impact their tenure and promotion, and resolve problems that come their way while working.

The findings show that the participants found their choice to practice sports journalism gratifying, rewarding, and important. Although they saw the jobsite as a source of discrimination and potential harassment, they did not transfer the barriers to the overall satisfaction with sports journalism as a career (Hardin & Shain, 2005).

The handbook *Getting the Right Balance* by International Federation of Journalists (2009) is a resource material for journalists, to assess progress on gender equality, identify challenges, and contribute to local, regional and global debates leading to the formulation of concrete policies to promote gender equality and the advancement of women worldwide. It scrutinizes the resources that tackle gender equality in media, and the contacts who uphold women's rights and gender equality in media.

The handbook observes that significant progress has been made in the recent years, as women are breaking into war correspondents' clubs, which was earlier the preserve of men. There has been a steady increase in the number of women enrolling as members in journalists' unions and associations. In most countries, the gender pay gap and stereotyping still exists, and it rises with age. Women are even disregarded for promotion in favour of male colleagues (IFJ, 2009).

A study by Williams (2010) examines the impact of feminism on journalism—the experiences and beliefs of women working in an industry that upholds feminist ideas through its cultural products. The study is an enquiry into female journalists' experiences and thoughts about their occupation and gender equality. The findings point out that despite the numerical equality, many women in journalism hold low status and posts in office, and are employed in less prestigious areas than their male counterparts. Women journalists experience sustained inequality at workplace (Williams, 2010).

Work-Life Balance

Women's familial responsibilities combined with stress at work result in work-life imbalance. This is the primary reason for women leaving the industry. Mahajany (1989) explores the fact that society is the primary factor that prevents women journalists from focusing on their career. In Indian states such as Kerala and Maharashtra, where the level of literacy is high, many women choose journalism as a profession. Women journalists in rural newspapers face even more gender discrimination than in national newspapers (Mahajany, 1989).

Reinardy (2009) examines the burnout and job satisfaction among women newspaper journalists and the work-family conflict, the perceived organisational support, role overload and job demand, which might affect burnout and satisfaction. The result shows that women experience more exhaustion, and lower levels of professional efficacy or personal accomplishment than men do. Women are overburdened even at work and do not receive any organisational support, which leads to exhaustion and professional inefficacy. They are solely responsible for family and childcare, and face sexism, discrimination, and glass ceiling, while encouragement from the organisation is zero (Reinardy, 2009).

The research findings of Hearne (2015) reflect the need to achieve radical reforms in societal values and in the media industry, where women continue to remain marginal figures despite their significant contributions. To make working practical for women, they get transport at night, separate washrooms and lounges which create a favourable atmosphere for women in the male-dominated newsroom. But there are many barriers which come as a hindrance in women's career advancement. Maternity leave, child care and re-entry of women after childbirth continue to impede women's right to combine career with motherhood (Reinardy, 2009).

The handbook '*Getting the Right Balance*' by International Federation of Journalists (2009) points out those women face resistance from family because of journalists' inflexible working hours, even as they are penalised in office for spending time out towards the responsibility of children. These contribute to the wage disparity in media. The stress in the work, harassment, undesirable workload, and unfriendly working hours put pressure on working mothers to take up freelance positions. This puts them in more vulnerable position in terms of security for job, professional upgrading, and legal status. They are now unable to share the rights similar to those of their contracted colleagues

White discusses that sexual harassment remains an unspoken problem in some countries, and the problem is often compounded by shoddier access to training and education, the hidden bigoted practices such as curfews, and lack of childcare facility, harassment and explicit sexism in hiring practices (IFJ, 2009).

On the status of women in media in Canadian context, Rauhala, Lindgren & Fathima (n.d) reports that the participation of women in journalism is misunderstood or underexplored. This report points to the fact that there are more women in news in Canada, but their impact is unclear.

Women in journalism are less likely to be married, and if they are, most often they have fewer children than male journalists. Women leave the industry overwhelmed by the challenge of balancing work with family life, and also because the media industry does not allow them to show the true picture of society in newspapers or television (Rauhala, Lindgren & Fathima, n.d).

Ezhuthachan (2012) states that women journalists are aplenty in Kerala, and a majority of them are more capable and sharp than their male counterparts. Yet, Malayalees hesitate to choose journalism as a career for girls. It is a fact that most women journalists trying hard for overcoming resistance from their family members. It is surprising that even young men do not prefer to marry working journalists (Ezhuthachan, 2012).

In a similar study, Wljngaard (1992) outlines the situation of women journalists in Senegal. The ideas expressed on the role of women in Senegalese society lead to the belief that the role of a journalist and the role of women are incompatible. A majority of the Senegalese feel that women journalists fall short of the ideal image of women and, therefore, fail as wives and mothers. This prejudice is strengthened by the fact that a number of women journalists are divorced (Wljngaard, 1992).

Conclusion

The studies reviewed throw light on the plethora of challenges that women media professionals face worldwide. The studies are mostly qualitative or quantitative in nature, while some have used mixed methodology. Most of the studies indicate more or less a similar set of problems of women journalists, however, the results are not uniform. The literature reviewed here obviously points to the scarcity of significant studies about the challenges of women journalists in Kerala. This enhances the relevance of the present study, which takes women journalists in Kerala as a population. These journalists include those working in print, television, radio and online news portal journalists. Queries related to the challenges regarding work environment, self confidence, gender discrimination, sexual harassment, work-life balance form the core objective of the present study.

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OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

CHAPTER III

OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

The literature reviewed in the previous chapter points to the many challenges women journalists face at workplace. A majority of the studies conducted on the subject at a global level focus on challenges such as gender discrimination, life-work balance, and under-representation. These studies have confirmed that journalism remains a male dominated profession across the globe, even though the status of women journalists is widely and gradually improving. Compared to the global setting, women media professionals in India are less studied. Reasons for this could range from lower interest in women's issues, to dearth of academic interest or facilities to study problems in the Indian media sector. This global and Indian disparity reaffirms the relevance of the present study.

Kerala has limited quantitative representation of women in journalism. Studies on their challenges at workplace are still at a nascent stage. This study gives a valuable insight into the professional environment for a woman working in the media.

OBJECTIVES

The general objective of the study is to identify the challenges that are placed in front of women media persons in Kerala while fulfilling their professional and personal responsibilities; and in maintaining their professional competency; and to measure their satisfaction with the various dimensions of their professional life to get an insight into the degree of the challenges they experience in their daily life.

To materialize this objective, the researcher has set the following specific objectives:

1. To explore the challenges faced by women media professionals in Kerala in terms of the following professional dimensions:
 - a) Work Environment Issues
 - b) Unequal Treatment at Work

- c) Technological Support at Workplace
 - d) Support to Work
 - e) Life-work Balance
 - f) Self-confidence in Professional Competency
2. To identify the influence of the personal variables Age, Marital Status, Number of Children and Family Type on the perceived challenges faced by women journalists in Kerala and their level of satisfaction with it.
 3. To identify the influence of Media Type, Media Experience, Work Sector, Job Status and Professional Qualification on the perceived challenges faced by women journalists in Kerala and their level of satisfaction with it.

The first objective is explorative in nature, so it was materialized through qualitative analysis. The second and third objectives were materialized through quantitative analysis. Based on the objectives, the researcher set three hypotheses, which were guided by the trajectories of quantitative aspect of the study.

HYPOTHESIS

- H1: Women media persons in Kerala face varying levels of challenges in diverse aspects of their professional life.
- H2: The intensity of the challenges for women media persons in Kerala vary according to their personal variables Age, Marital Status, Number of Children, and Family Type.
- H3: The intensity of the challenges for women media persons in Kerala vary according to their professional variables Media Type, Media Experience, Work Sector, Job Status, and Professional Qualification.

Since the design of the research revolves around some key concepts related to working women, in this case working media persons and their problems, it would be pertinent to first get a clear understanding of the underpinning concepts, constructs, and factors.

KEY CONCEPTS AND THEIR FACTORS

For the smooth execution of the study, significant key constructs and factors that constitute qualitative and quantitative concepts were identified through literature search. The key concepts were: Work Environment, Equal Treatment at Work, Technological Support at Workplace, Support to Work, Life-work Balance, and Self-confidence in Professional Competency. These concepts were constituted with several appropriate factors.

Work Environment

Work Environment refers to the feeling of contentment in women journalists while working in office. A large number of women work in the media, but they lack a professionally healthy workplace. Working conditions in urban areas differ from those in rural areas, and each has its own set of problems (Tomar, 2011; Tomar, 2017; Bhagat, 2004; and Bhardwaj, 2014). Women media professionals' satisfactory work environment depends on factors such as Work Environment Infrastructure, Relations with Colleagues, Relations with Male Colleagues, Job Security, Sense of Security While on Duty and Financial Benefits.

Work environment infrastructure

Conditions and base facilities provided to women media professionals at workplace, which directly affect the quality of work, denotes the Work Environment Infrastructure.

Every day, almost all women journalists perform their duty without basic transportation, necessary equipment, and special environment which could cater to their specific needs in their respective newsrooms (Senah, 2018 & Bhardwaj, 2014). The infrastructure in news media offices are seldom women-friendly, are missing, or have non-functional toilets for women (Tomar, 2017).

Relationship with colleagues

Relationship with Colleagues refers to the rapport women journalists have with their colleagues. Building a strong support system at work greatly benefits women journalists. Surrounding yourself with colleagues who have a vested interest in your workplace success can actually help advance your skill set and career (Belanger,

2017). Effective interpersonal work relationship is the cornerstone of success and satisfaction with the job and career. Effective relationship with colleagues forms the basis for promotion opportunities, pay increases, goal accomplishment, and job satisfaction. Without good relationship or friendship with colleagues at work, work satisfaction deteriorates (Heathfield, 2018).

Relationship with male colleagues

Relationship with Male Colleagues refers to the relation of women journalists with their male colleagues. Negative social attitude is not only reflected, but often reinforced at workplace. Bad attitude and improper behaviour of male colleagues are a major impediment to the well-being and progress of women media professionals within the media (Joseph, 2002). This is a daily struggle for women at workplace, especially when they are at the beginning of their career. If the girls get emotionally involved with their male colleagues, they suffer daily humiliation (Bhardwaj, 2014).

Job security

Job Security is the assurance women journalists have to continue working for as long as they want to, with no threat of dismissal. Media organisations hire new recruits on contract, which the company proprietors use to sack the journalists on their whim and fancy. The sense of insecurity among journalists due to lack of labour laws and poor pay has led to the journalists seeking other professions (Bhagat, 2004).

Sense security while on duty

On-duty security is the assurance women journalists get on protection from any kind of physical danger at workplace. The security eventually results in their inclusive growth. Women feel respected at workplace when their good work is acknowledged and appreciated. The respect from people with authority results in respect from colleagues as well (Nagodara, 2017).

Considering the safety of women, Section 66 (1) (b) of Factories Act, 1948, of the Indian law prohibits women employees from working beyond the permissible 7 pm and before 6 am in factories and commercial establishments (www.asklabourproblem.info).

Financial benefit

This is the financial independence women media professionals get from the profession in the form of salary. Women usually do not get the same wage as men despite doing the same work and clocking equal hours. Women have to do more work to catch up with the remuneration of men (Barati, Arab, & Masoumi, 2015). Women often accept low remuneration without protest as they have been trained to be scared to speak up. Men are still seen as the real 'bread-winners' (Zambas, 2018). The global phenomenon is that women are paid less with wage-gap in comparison to their male colleague, and are the preferred choice to be fired (Tomar, 2017). Only a handful of seniors have pay scale as per the Wage Board irrespective of their gender. Now, media organizations are choosing the contract system for new recruits to avoid Wage Board payment (Bhagat, 2004).

Gender Equality

Gender Equality occurs when access to rights or opportunities is unaffected by gender. But media continues to struggle with it, in everything from creating news that is for and about women, to promoting equal number of men and women to senior executive positions (Davidson, 2016). Gendered double standards and glass ceiling continue to stymie promotion of women to key decision-making positions in media organizations. Countless platforms that provide opportunities to challenge gender disparity are now available with the emergence of new media and social networking sites (Steiner, 2017). However, women who take a break from work find it difficult to retain a place in journalism (Franks 2013). Gender inequality in media in Kerala depends on factors such as Equal Promotional opportunities, Equality in Salary, Representation in Top/ Management positions, Gender Stereotyping, verbal abuse and sexual Exploitation.

Equal promotion opportunities

Equal Promotion Opportunities is access to opportunities in promotions unaffected by gender. Media organisations that have a good number of women employees cannot claim to provide equal opportunities to men and women in promotions. In fact, most media organizations do not have a policy on promotions. The policies in most organizations are irregular, non-transparent and whimsical, and it is worse with women (Bhagat, 2004.; Steiner, 2017 & Franks, 2013). International Women's

Media Foundation (IWMMF) and Unesco collaborated in a global research partnership and published a report on women in news media. The report determines where women currently fit into the news-making operation, decision-making hierarchy, and ownership structure of media companies. The study identifies glass ceilings for women in 20 of the 59 countries studied, commonly visible in middle and senior management positions (Byerly, 2011).

Equality in salary

This gives an insight into the equality in remuneration among men and women media professionals. Gender pay gap is a general phenomenon (Tomar, 2017, Barati *et al.*, 2015 & Davidson, 2016). Undervaluing women's work is the prime reason for this. Differential remuneration leaves many women unable or unwilling to negotiate better deals for themselves (Joseph, 2002).

Representation in top/management positions

This indicates achieving equal participation of women and men in senior positions. Increasing visibility of women on television and in the print media suggests that there are no more impediments on women's path to the top of the editorial pyramid. But many female journalists still experience slow and limited progress, if not total stagnation, in their careers. The existence of glass ceiling is widely acknowledged (Joseph, 2002; Kangas, Haider & Fraser, 2014; Davidson, 2016 & Wihbey, 2015).

Gender stereotyping

Gender Stereotyping is a predetermined set of attitudes and behaviours believed to be typical for all women media professionals, or over-generalization of their characteristics and capabilities. In the earlier times, the biggest challenge for women who entered mainstream newspaper was to get the work that interested them. Senior male journalists always grabbed prime serious beats, while women were asked to cover soft beats. Though women media professionals are more visible now, they are largely on the desk or write for supplements (Bhagat, 2004; Tomar, 2017 & Joseph, 2002). Tomar (2017) cites Joseph (2000) and writes that women journalists working in the Indian language press tend to get side-tracked to magazines.

Verbal abuse

Verbal Abuse is when a person criticizes, insults, or denounces someone without physical contact, but by using insulting words. Character assassination and slander is a common ploy used against women to increase their insecurities and impair their professional accomplishments. It is common to hear sexist, vulgar, and snide comments against women colleagues and their work under the veil of humour (Bhagat, 2004).

Sexual exploitation

Taking advantage of a person's sexuality and charm for the purpose of personal gain, profit or for any other illegitimate purpose is termed as Sexual Exploitation. It is a widespread problem for women, irrespective of their status, personal characteristics and the nature of employment. Individually, such women become depressed, experience anxiety, or quit their jobs to avoid continued harassment (Catalyst, 2017; Diwan, 2015 & Barati *et al.*, 2015). Sexual harassment at workplace is not only a violation of women's right to a safe and supportive work environment, but also to the basic right to livelihood. Sexual harassment has, unfortunately, become a part of the work culture in Indian media organizations. Women are rarely seen protesting. This could be for a wide variety of reasons — either they do not know how to, or choose not to do anything about it, for fear of intimidation, victimisation or losing their job (Bhagat, 2004).

Technological Support

This is the support that media organizations provide to women professionals to use technology while working. Newsrooms are changed due to new economic constraints, technologies, audiences and norms of professionalism. Countless new platforms are available with the emergence of new media and social networking sites. Blogs and Twitter are also available for disseminating views as citizen journalists (Steiner, 2017).

To conceptualize technological support, the researcher used factors such as Tech-friendly Work Atmosphere, Chance for Improvement through Technological Awareness, Chance to Learn Technologies, Comfortable Atmosphere to Use Technology and Accessibility to Technology.

Tech-friendly work atmosphere

Tech-friendly Work Atmosphere means user-friendly assistance for latest technologies in the organization. Leading media organizations have digital workplace. They integrate technologies for employees' convenience — from e-mails, instant messaging and enterprise social media tools, to HR applications and virtual meeting tools. A digital workplace breaks down communication barriers and changes the way things work in office by fostering efficiency, innovation, and growth. The key to success lies in the effective implementation of a digital workplace capable of driving a true cultural change. The use of new technologies accelerates transparency in work with changing working style, providing employee user experience and providing choice, flexibility and personalization (Ordway, 2017; Deloitte, n.d & Gibson, 2017).

Improvement through technological awareness

This refers to improved performance at workplace by incorporating new technological developments. Technology makes finding sources so much easier, and gives journalists a way to report faster, which is what readers demand. The connection of journalists with digital technology aligns well with the needs of the increasing competition at different workplaces. It gives more opportunities, and allows more work with less struggle. Technology also allows stories to be presented in new and innovative ways (Gibson, 2017).

Chance to learn technologies

This refers to chances to learn latest technologies regarding news media operations. Journalists who have the aptitude to acquire technical knowledge and the willingness to work at the speed of news not only learn new technology quicker, but are also more likely to adapt to it faster. They start using it at work, which is crucial in today's news climate. It is shocking that many young journalists are not being training to have a better grasp of technology (Gibson, 2017).

Comfortable atmosphere to use technology

This refers to the feeling of comfort to work with latest technologies in news organizations. Gibson (2017) discuss that with their aptitude for acquiring technical knowledge quickly and their willingness to work at the speed of news, millennial are

adept at working in the field and thus succeeding in the field in higher numbers. They not only learn about new technology quicker, but they are more likely to adapt it and start using it for their reporting, which is crucial in today's news climate.

Accessibility to technology

This refers to accessibility to technology which is essential for improved performance in media. Technology has always been influential to journalism, and it has always shaped the changing field rapidly. The only difference in how technology affects journalism is the type of technology available (Gibson, 2017). Bolin (2006), pointed out lack of technical equipment as one of the biggest problem within the media

Support for Work

The support that women media professionals get from their organization, society and family, to lead effective professional life constitutes Support for Work. Its absence can make professional as well as personal life a burden for the woman media professional (Bhagat, 2004; Barati *et al.*, 2015; Joseph, 2002; Zambas, 2018; Ezhuthachan, 2012). To measure Support for Work the researcher used factors such as Support from Male Colleagues, Support from Superiors, Support from Family Members, Support from Support Groups and Supportive Work Hours.

Support from male colleagues

This is the support woman media professionals receive from their male colleagues, which enables them to perform well at work and progress in the profession. Maladjustment with the workplace culture may, however, lead to subtle conflicts with colleagues or superiors. Adjusting to the workplace culture can also be intensely stressful. Making oneself adapt to the various aspects of workplace culture like the communication patterns of co-workers can prove to be a life lesson for women (Barati *et al.*, 2015).

Support from superiors

This refers to the extent to which the chief or the superiors value employees' contributions and cares about her well-being. Lack of institutional support to enable women to handle their productive and reproductive roles without prejudice to either

forces many women out of full-time employment (Joseph, 2002). Inadequate support from supervisors inflicts widespread absenteeism, low turnover, and job dissatisfaction among women. They often feel ignored. Supervisors who find it difficult to accept that women are as capable as men, at times block opportunities for them to succeed. Office favouritism is another big threat (Zambas, 2018).

Support from family members

This is the support a woman media professional receives to work from her family members other than the spouse. Lack of family support is often detrimental to the success of a working woman. Some families show disappointment when women leave home, go to office, or work till late evening. This hampers women's performance and promotion. It is a fact that most women journalists reach work after overcoming resistance even from their parents and husbands. It is surprising that even young men do not prefer to marry working journalists. (Barati *et al.*, 2015 & Ezhuthachan, 2012).

Support from support groups

This refers to access to practical and emotional support groups which help improve professional lives. Though there are different opinions and confusions on the need for a segregated professional body, there are women media professionals who have expressed the need for support groups and special spaces to share and exchange problems (Joseph, 2002 & Bhagat, 2004). Mentoring and development programmes are a way to boost the careers of women whose skills may not yet be fully realised. The leadership and management programmes need to be made available for women also (Davidson, 2016).

Supportive work hours

This means flexibility in working hours for personal needs. These days, organizations look towards flexibility in work arrangements as an effective tool to attract the best talent and as a cost-saving measure to increase turnover and productivity, while also reducing absenteeism (Catalyst, 2017). Women face resistance from family because of journalists' inflexible working hours, even as they are penalised in office for taking time out to raise children. All these contribute to

the pressure on working mothers to take up part-time, temporary, or freelance positions (Byerly, 2011).

Life-Work Balance

This refers to the comfort level of women journalists in balancing life with work. It means spending meaningful time with family without compromising on the professional responsibilities. The biggest burden on women media professionals is their domestic responsibilities as wife, mother, and daughter-in-law. Some of the brightest and most successful women journalists left their career to settle for a happy family life. Some others moved to less demanding jobs after pregnancy and delivery.

History shows that the first priority of women has been home. This affects their work. A successful woman is backed by a cooperative husband or an understanding mother-in-law. Others depend on their parents to help them out to balance both the responsibilities when office pressures increase (Barati *et al.*, 2015; Zambas, 2018; Krings, 2015; Reinardy, 2009 & Bhagat, 2004). To understand the concept of life-work balance, the researcher used the factors such as quality time for professional efficacy, quality time with family and friends, vigour after a busy day in office, balancing time with professional life and personal commitments, family and societal support for spending time for profession ahead of family responsibilities and childcare facilities.

Quality time for professional efficacy

Women require quality time to make themselves fit for domestic as well as professional works. Domestic responsibilities, especially after having children, come as a big burden for women media professionals. This takes away the quality time for professional efficacy. Some women media professionals delay motherhood to boost their career, to give themselves professional stability, or because that's what the job demands. Many young mothers take a break from work to spend quality time with their children. But most believe the break made them lose out on professional advancements and promotions (Bhagat, 2004).

Quality time with family and friends

Quality Time with family and friends refers to the time dedicated to family and friends despite the work pressure. A woman's personal life tends to suffer due to her work commitments and vice-versa (Zambas, 2018). The woman's family feels neglected; she loses her friends, and has to face the wrath of the entire support system (Reddy, *n.d.*).

Vigour after a busy day in office

Vigour after a Busy Day in Office refers to the poor energy level of women media professionals at the end of the day after the huge load of work in office. Women journalists experience more job burnout, leading to their leaving the profession. The higher rate of exhaustion and cynicism, and little support from their organization often leads them to leave or change the job (Krings, 2015 & Reinardy, 2009).

Balancing time with professional life and personal commitments

This means women journalists' ability to use their full potential at work despite their commitment to family responsibilities. Many women fear that if they start a family, their career will take backseat. The modern woman struggles to strike a balance between work and family, often sacrificing the latter to rise within her organization and gain social recognition (Catalyst, 2017). The two roles of a journalist and that of a woman are incompatible. Women journalists fall short of the ideal image of women and therefore, fail as wives and mothers. This prejudice is strengthened by the fact that a number of women journalists are divorced (Wijngaard, 1992).

Family and societal support for spending time for profession ahead of family responsibilities

This refers to the way family in particular and society in general reacts when a woman media professional places her work before the family. Women's familial responsibilities combined with stress at work results in life-work imbalance. Society puts a spanner on women journalists' focus on their career. It is also the primary reason for women leaving the industry (Mahajany, 1989).

Childcare facilities

These are day care or emergency care facilities for the children of employees working in an organisation. Childbirth can complicate the lives of working women. Most workplaces do not have childcare facilities. Working mothers do not get enough maternity leaves. It has an adverse impact on their performance at work as well as their personal life (Diwan, 2015). Recent mothers need childcare facilities at workplace to find relief from having a preoccupied mind, and to give hundred per cent to work. Leaving the child in the care of a domestic help or at the crèche gives the mother a lot to worry about. Media organisations should consider having child care facilities as it would create a favourable atmosphere for new and young mothers (Bhagat, 2004).

Confidence in Competency

To survive in a profession like journalism, women have to not only be aggressive and domineering, but also confident (Bhagat, 2004). Many women are too scared to take risks, fearing failure. The fear of being questioned about her abilities can hold back a journalist from showing her talent. A woman must believe that she has reached a certain position because she has the skill for it (Zambas, 2018). Women media professionals' confidence in competency depends on the factors such as feeling positive and energized about the career, confidence in job performance, competency in the profession, confidence to meet punitive measures, confidence to meet the demands of job and confidence in the fitness for the job.

Feeling of positivity and energized about the career

This refers to the feeling of positivity and energy about the career which determines the confidence level of women media professionals.

Confidence in job performance

This determines the confidence level of women media professionals in their professional performance. Strong and talented women enough to cope with any kind of news, be it 'hard news' or 'soft news'. They can also handle any posts in the newspaper organizations because they are equally capable to the male counterparts (Panya, 2004)

Competency in the profession

This refers to the confidence level of women media professionals in their competency in the profession. The gender disparity in bylines is not purely based on gender bias or sexism, but of fear of rejection and lack of confidence. Weaker sex, less tenacious, less strong and able to persevere is the problems women need to get over (Doll, 2012).

Confidence to meet punitive measures

This determines the confidence level of women media professionals to meet punitive measures such as dismissal from work. Lack of confidence holding women back at work, yet women who are too confident won't be liked by their colleagues. Maffeo (2014) cites Kay & Shipman (2014) that "Women might be fired for character issues, for being too aggressive, pushy, condescending; but a man wouldn't be (Maffeo, 2014).

Confidence to meet the demands of job

This refers to the confidence level of women media professionals to meet the demands of job. Lack of confidence is a major crisis for women in journalism. Compared to men, women do not consider themselves as ready for promotions. While men overestimate their abilities and performance, women underestimate their abilities though their performances do not differ in quality. Women feel confident only when they are practically perfect. Women's insecurity can keep them sharp (Kay & Shipman, 2014; Weiner, 2014 & Valenti, 2014).

Confidence in the fitness for the job

This determines the level of confidence of women media professionals in their fitness for their job.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Laura Mulvey's feminist theory rebels against the 1950s' concept of a perfect housewife which stereotypes women as passive and submissive, with an hourglass figure, and as attractive to their husbands. She proposed that women 'de-gender' themselves of sexuality and femininity in order to bring about a feminist society. This consisted of both the genders having legal equality, and that women could be

confident and happy with their bodies. They could use their sexuality and femininity for themselves, and play it to their advantage.

On the basis of Mulvey's argument, Linda Steiner put forward her Feminist Media Theory. It applies philosophies, concepts, and logics articulating feminist principles and concepts to media processes such as hiring, production, and distribution; patterns of representation in news and entertainment across platforms; and reception media content by varying audience.

Unlike approaches that hide politics, feminist theorizing is explicitly political. It addresses power. Feminist Media Theory takes gender seriously — as a factor that structures identity and experiences — without assuming permanent or static gender differences. An assumption that long dominated feminist media theory was this: if women controlled media production, content would be different and better. Inter-sectional theorizing on sexuality has largely ignored women of colour, sexual minorities, people marginalized by physical or cognitive (in)ability. Feminist media theories and the entire field of feminist media studies are increasingly explicit about the importance of international and multi-disciplinary work seriously addressing media convergence and globalization (Steiner, 2014).

In this study, the Feminist Media Theory was used to analyse the realities existing in the media industry in Kerala. The perspective was that empowering women in media personally, socially, politically, or culturally, will ensure a paradigm shift in media operations, which will include content creation, programming, reception and management. This, in turn, will create a shift in the power relations in the larger society.

METHODOLOGY

The objectives of the study warrant a mixed methodology since they will be perfectly met only through subjective and objective evaluation of the state of affairs. Blending qualitative and quantitative methods, the researcher delves into micro levels of the issues. As mentioned earlier, the first objective will be met with a qualitative analysis of the data because it is explorative in nature. However, in-depth quantitative data analysis is essential to test the tenability of the second and third hypotheses and to meet the corresponding objectives of the study.

Accordingly, qualitative data was collected through extensive focus group interviews. The focus group comprised 74 women journalists working in different posts and departments. The researcher interviewed them personally to elicit their insight and perspectives on issues that women journalists face at workplace. Quantitative data was elicited from 109 women journalists, who also work in different posts and departments. They were selected using random sampling technique considering the various segments of the media such as newspaper, magazine, television, radio, news portals, and so on.

Qualitative Data from Focus Group

As mentioned, for collecting qualitative data, the researcher formed an elaborate focus group. It consisted of 74 journalists from two different sectors (print and electronic) of media organizations in Kerala, which were further classified into five categories, based on the nature of media organization (newspaper and magazine for print, and television, radio and online for electronic). They were interviewed to get an understanding of their views and perspectives on the challenges faced by women media professionals in Kerala. They were referenced through a reference system that integrates the type of medium.

Respondents from the print sector included 52 women media professionals working in leading Newspaper and Magazine organizations in Kerala. Respondents from the Newspaper included 22 Reporters, 14 Sub Editors, 1 Cameraperson, 2 Senior Reporters, 4 Senior Sub Editors, 4 Chief Sub Editors, 2 Special Correspondents, 1 Joint Editor, 1 Bureau Chief, and 1 Editor of leading dailies in Kerala. Respondents from the Magazine included 4 women media professionals in which 3 were Reporters and 1 was a Features Editor in well-established magazines of Kerala.

Respondents from the electronic sector included 18 women professionals employed in various electronic media organizations such as Television, Radio and Online media. From the Television sector, respondents included a Senior Special Correspondent, a Principal Correspondent, a Senior News Editor, one Senior Sub Editor, a Senior Broadcast Journalist, 3 Reporters, and 4 Broadcast Journalists working in leading television news channels of Kerala. From the Radio, the respondents included a Programme Executive, 2 Reporters, and an announcer in the All India Radio. Online media representatives interviewed were a Reporter of an

online outlet of a mainstream newspaper organization and a Chief Editor of an online portal.

The researcher personally interviewed them to elicit their insight and perspectives on the real issues of women journalists at workplace. The journalists were contacted on phone or in offices to give details of the study and to fix appointments for the interviews. Thereafter, in-depth face-to-face interviews were conducted at a convenient venue. Each interview took an average of 30 to 45 minutes. It took two to three hours to transcribe the audio recording of each interview.

Interview schedule for focus group

Interviewees were asked about their perspective on the real issues of women media professionals at their workplace, specifically on their work environment — infrastructure, facilities, job and financial security; equal treatment — in recruitment, work distribution, promotion opportunities and sexual exploitation; life-work balance; support they get to work from the organization, senior journalists and other colleagues, family and society as a whole; and their confidence in their professional competency.

Quantitative Data from Survey

The study was conducted among women media professionals in Kerala taking the women journalists enlisted in the directory of Public Relations Department, Government of Kerala in the year 2014 as population. Data was collected from 109 women journalists through a structured questionnaire between November 1, 2015 and July 30, 2016.

The researcher contacted most of the journalists in person. The rest were surveyed by questionnaires administered to them through the journalists. Multi-stage sampling was used to collect data from all over Kerala representing four types of media — Print (Newspaper and Magazine), Radio, Television, and Online.

Quantitative data collection tool

The questionnaire consisted of three major parts. The first section of the questionnaire asked the respondents about their personal variables (Age, Marital Status, Number of Children and Family Type). The second section sought information on their professional variables (Media Type, Media Experience, Work

Sector, Job Status and Professional Qualification). The final section of the questionnaire asked women media professionals if they were satisfied on six professional dimensions — Work Environment Issues, Issues of Unequal Treatment at Work, Issues of Technological Support at Workplace, Issues of Support They Get To Work, Life-Work Balance Issues, and Issues Of Confidence In Their Professional Competency. Each category consisted of five to six items marked on a 5-point Likert Scale (very poor=-2 to very good=2) assuming that the value of 'neutral' position was 'zero.'

Work environment issues were measured using six factors — Work Environment Infrastructure, Relationship With Colleagues, and Relationship With Male Colleagues, Job Security Level, and Sense Of Security while on duty, and Financial Benefits.

Issues of unequal treatment at work were measured using six factors — Equal Promotion Opportunities For Men and Women, Equality In Salary For Men And Women, Women's Presence In Management Positions, Absence of Gender Stereotyping, Absence of Verbal Abuse and Absence of Sexual Exploitation.

Issues of Technological Support At Workplace were measured using five factors — Tech-friendly Work Atmosphere, Chance For Improvement Through Technological Awareness, Chance To Learn Technologies, Comfortable Atmosphere To Use Technology and Accessibility To Technology.

Issues of Support They Get to Work was measured using five factors — Support From Male Colleagues, Support From superiors, Support From Family Members, Support From Support Groups and Supportive Work Hours.

Life-work Balance issues were measured using six factors — Quality Time For Professional Efficacy, Quality Time With Family and Friends, Vigour After A Busy Day in Office, Balancing Time Between Professional Life and Personal Commitments, Family and Societal Support for Spending Time For Profession Ahead of Family Responsibilities and Childcare Facilities provided by organization.

Finally, Issues of Confidence in Professional Competence were measured using six factors — Feeling Positive and Energetic About The Career, Confidence in Job Performance, Competency in The Profession, Confidence To

Meet The Punitive Measures, Confidence To Meet The Demands of The Job, and Confidence of Fitness For The Job. All the dimensions were marked on a 5-point Likert Scale.

VARIABLES OF THE STUDY

The second and third objectives and the corresponding hypotheses necessitate the analysis of the quantitative data to find out the significance of the association between or among dependent and independent variables.

Independent Variables

Personal and professional variables are considered major determinants for the intensity of challenges that women media professionals experience in Kerala. Under personal variables, the researcher included Age, Marital Status, Number of Children and Family Type, while in the professional variables the researcher included Media Type, Media Experience, Work Sector, Job Status and Professional Educational Qualification. The researcher operationalized and defined the variables below.

Personal variables

The researcher elicited data the respondents' personal variables As Age, Marital Status, Number of Children, and Family Type.

Age

This is an important factor of the study, as media organizations employ many young women. Under this category, the researcher classified the samples into three groups —Below 35 years, 35 to 49 years, and 50 years and above. The chronological growth of the entry of women into journalism in Kerala is visible in their representation in news media organizations.

Marital status

Domestic responsibilities after marriage come as a major hurdle for women in journalism. Based on Marital Status, the samples were categorized into three groups — Married, Unmarried, and Widowed or Divorced.

Number of children

Women inherently like making their own families, and raising children is the cherished goal of many of them. Women in journalism are less likely to be married. Those married often they have fewer children than male journalists. Childcare throws life and work off balance for many women. So, they are forced to limit the number of children they have to reduce the complication of balancing life with work. Based on the Number of Children, the samples were classified into the following categories — Unmarried, Married and No child, One Child and Two Children.

Family type

The general trend is that nuclear families are increasing in number in Kerala. Niranjan *et al* 1998) found that over the years, the number of nuclear families was increasing in Kerala. Based on the Family Type, the samples were categorized into three — Joint, Nuclear and Single.

Professional variables

The researcher collected data from the respondents on their professional variables Media Type, Media Experience, Work Sector, Job Status and Professional Qualification.

Media type

The traditional evolution pattern is followed in the representation of women journalists in Kerala as well. Under Media Type, samples were categorized under five heads — Newspaper, Magazine, Television, Radio and Online.

Media experience

Women are not only under-represented in journalism, they also tend to leave the profession much earlier than men. They either join other well-paid jobs with their work experience, or choose more convenient and comfortable occupations. Media Experience was classified into three categories — Less than 5 years, 5 to 14 years and 15 years and above.

Work sector

Field work, or Reporting, is a glamorous and desirable work sector in journalism. But, as far as women are concerned, field work becomes a burden with personal

security and familial responsibilities, especially once they get married. Majority of the women find interest in soft story-writing, especially feature-writing. Many also prefer to edit stories, which constitutes the desk job. The work sectors of women journalists in this study are identified as Desk and Field.

Job status

Many women media professionals who leave journalism give job insecurity as the reason for their decision. Media organisations employ most journalists on contract, which results in financial and job insecurity. At the same time, many women who have permanent jobs continue working. The job status of women journalists in this study was categorized as Permanent, Contract and Others.

Professional educational qualification

Most journalists in Kerala have professional educational qualification. This study categorised their qualification under four heads — Graduation, Diploma, Post-graduation and Above, and Without Professional Education Qualification.

Dependant Variables

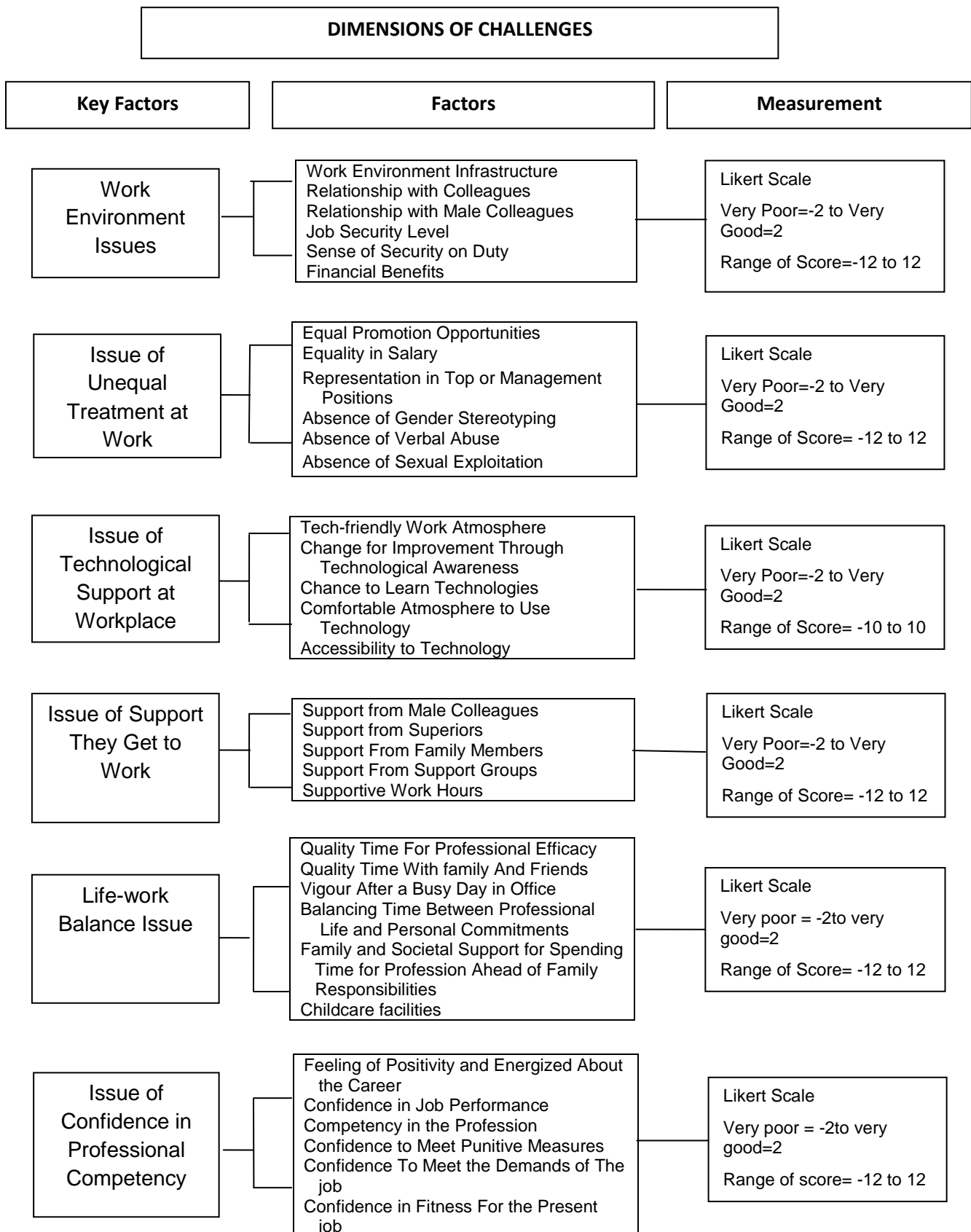
The study was envisaged under six constructs. These were concepts of the challenges faced by women media professionals in Kerala. They were titled Work Environment, Gender Equality, Technological Support, and Support For Work, Life-work Balance, and Confidence in Professional Competency. Each head had five to six factors, measured on a 5-point Likert Scale ranging from Very Poor to Very Good Responses. The researcher has operationalized these key terms.

Conceptualization and measurement of dependent variables

Based on the above descriptions, analysis of the qualitative and quantitative data collected for the study was imminent. Complementing both the data gave a comprehensive perspective to the challenges faced by women journalists. The challenges were conceptualized and measured scientifically, as represented in Figure 3.1

Figure 3.1:

Challenges Faced by Women Media Professionals



The challenges of women media professionals were constructed to have six components — Work Environment, Equal Treatment At Work, Technological Support At Workplace, Life-Work Balance, Support to Work and Confidence In Their Professional Competency with their respective contributing factors. The factors of Work Environment under investigation were Work Environment Infrastructure, Relationship With Colleagues In General, Relationship With Male Colleagues, Job Security Level, Sense of Security on Duty and Financial Benefits. Equal treatment at work was measured on Promotion Opportunities, Equality in Salary, Representation in Top Management Positions, Absence of Gender Stereotyping, Absence of Verbal Abuse and Absence of Sexual Exploitation.

Contributing factors to technological support at workplace were Tech-friendly Work Atmosphere, Chance For Improvement Through Technological Awareness, Chance To Learn Technologies, Comfortable Atmosphere To Use Technology, and Accessibility To Technology. Support From Male Colleagues, Support From Superiors, Support From Family Members Other Than Spouse, Support From Spouse, Support From Support Groups and Supportive Work Hours were the factors of the component Support For Work. Life-work Balance was measured on the factors Quality Time for Professional Efficacy, Quality Time with Family and Friends, Vigour After a Busy Day in Office, Balancing Time With Professional Life and Personal Commitments, Family and Social Support For Spending Time For Profession Ahead Of Family Responsibilities. Factors of Confidence in Professional Competency were — Feeling Positive and Energized About the Career, Confidence in Job Performance, Competency in the Profession, Confidence To Meet The Punitive Measures, Confidence To Meet The Demands Of Job and Confidence In The Fitness For The Job.

Each factor was measured on a 5-point Likert Scale ranging from 'very poor' to 'very good' responses. Thus, the range score was -12 to 12 for each construct except for Technological Support which had the range score of -10 to 10.

DATA ANALYSIS

The data analysis that was followed to meet the study's objectives describes the challenges faced by women media professionals in Kerala. Focus group interviews were used to explore the challenges faced by women media professionals in Kerala

in terms of their professional dimensions: Work Environment, Equal Treatment at Work, Technological Support at Workplace, Societal, Organizational and Familial Support for Work, Life-work Balance and Self-confidence in Professional Competency. One-way analysis of variance, or ANOVA, was used to identify the influence of the personal variables of Age, Marital Status, Number of Children and Family Type on their satisfaction with the professional dimensions. To identify the influence of Media Type on their satisfaction with the above mentioned, professional dimensions were tested using t-test and one-way ANOVA.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Globally, there are a number of studies on the status of women journalists, their challenges, gender discrimination, work environment, life-work balance and women under-representation. All the studies confirm that journalism is a male dominated profession. But there are very few studies which have examined the status and challenges of women journalists in media organizations in Kerala.

The researcher faced many difficulties and limitations in conducting the study, especially in collecting data from women journalists employed in various media organizations in Kerala. The population of the study comprised women journalists from various news media in Kerala. However, the exact count is not available. A formal list of journalists was taken from the media handbook compiled by the Information and Public Relations Department, Government of Kerala in 2014, as it is the available authentic record. 289 women journalists were identified and this comprised the population for the study.

Of the 289 women journalists, only 109 responded to the 165 questionnaires distributed, and only 74 agreed to be interviewed on direct contact. The extremely poor response rate and non-cooperation from women media personals were the most disappointing aspects of the study. Some journalists who responded to the questionnaire gave several assurances that they would give interviews, but they failed to commit any date or place for it. Many respondents admitted that they did not have the time to set aside for interviews. They not just hesitated in responding to the questions, but also in revealing the actual problems and challenges they faced, fearing for their job. They said those matters off the record.

Studies could also have conducted in various aspects like gender equality in unions, associations, clubs and organizations of journalists, other media professionals and media self-regulatory bodies, ethical codes/editorial policies in favour of gender equality in media content and gender balance in education and training.

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ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

There is an alarming deficit of research literature on the status of women journalists in India and the various aspects of their professional life. Kerala has barely produced any scientific study on this dimension of media life. At the same time, the problems of working women at large have been profusely studied from different perspectives — feminist, cultural, economic, and social. All the problems that working women face are equally applicable to women journalists, in addition to the issues that present themselves because of the profession. This study aims to contribute towards bridging the gap, and identify the challenges of women journalists in Kerala using the feminist media theory as a framework.

The fourth chapter details the result of the analysis of both qualitative and quantitative data elicited through focus group interviews and questionnaire surveys. The qualitative data is used to explore the dimensions of professional challenges that women journalists face in Kerala. The quantitative data is analysed to test the tenability of the hypotheses formulated with regard to the possible association between the challenges and the personal and professional variables of women media persons. Part I of this chapter gives an analysis of the qualitative data and Part II shows the result of the quantitative data analysis.

The study is exploratory in nature and seeks to get an insight into six major dimensions of challenges women journalists face in their professional life. The prime objective is materialized through extensive and in-depth analysis of qualitative data. For a clear understanding, the key concepts, terms, constructs and their factors have already been explained in Chapter III — Objectives and Methodology.

The quantitative data analyzed for the study is collected in line with the qualitative data. This is because further analysis is based on the women journalists' interaction with personal and professional variables. Thus, the entire study is centered on six dimensions of women journalists' possible professional challenges in the media sector in Kerala. The dimensions of these professional challenges are:

- a) Work Environment Issues
- b) Issues of Unequal Treatment at Work
- c) Issues of Technological Support at Workplace
- d) Issues of Support They Get to Work
- e) Life-work Balance Issues
- f) Issues of Confidence in Their Professional Competency

After establishing the presence or the absence of these dimensions, the researcher found out the nature of its intensity by measuring women journalists' satisfaction with each aspect of their professional life. This was executed by rigorously analysing the nature of the association between personal and professional variables with women journalists' satisfaction with the six dimensions. This constitutes Part II of the chapter. The core of this method measurement is that the lesser the satisfaction, the higher is the intensity of the challenge.

Before delving into the core issues, let's get a perspective on the fundamental aspects of the professional life of women journalists in Kerala by putting them through the wider spectrum of the media landscape in the state.

MEDIA IN KERALA

The term 'media' refers to the different channels that are used to communicate information in the everyday world. The four main types of media are print (newspapers and magazines), radio, television, and online. Media has always adapted to meet the changing needs of society and to incorporate new technologies into its fold. The entry of new media into the arena has forced the others to evolve and save themselves from becoming obsolete. The advent of information technology has given considerable push to the rapid growth of national as well as regional newspapers.

According to *Press in India 2015-16*, a report prepared by the Registrar of Newspapers of India (RNI), the print media has responded appropriately to the changing and more modernised journalistic environment by adapting to it. The number of publications is also growing. As many as 110,851 publications, including newspapers and other periodicals, have been registered in India till March 31, 2016 as against 105,443 at the end of March 2015. This is 5.13 per cent growth. Circulation of publications is also witnessing a growth. The total soared from

510,521,445 copies per publishing day in 2014-15 to 610,238,581 copies per publishing day in 2015-16. The growth in the number of registered publications as well as their circulation proves that proliferation of audio, visual and digital media has not had an adverse impact on the print media. According to the 2015 directory of the Public Relations Department (PRD) published by the government of Kerala, there are 75 dailies in Malayalam, 65 television channels, seven radio channels, and 10 news websites (Thomas, 2017).

The origin of print media in Kerala can be traced back to the 19th century. The first Malayalam journal, *Rajyasamacharam*, was published in 1847. The broadcast media came into being in the 20th century with the *Travancore Broadcasting* starting in 1943 and *Doordarshan Kendra Thiruvananthapuram* in 1985. Online media started in 1998 with *Deepika Online*.

The principal languages of publication in Kerala are Malayalam and English. As many as 1,137 Malayalam newspapers are published in the state with a total circulation of 7,668,000. The circulation of dailies is 2,263,000, while that of monthlies is 1,063,000. The leading regional dailies in Kerala are *Deepika* (1887), *Malayala Manorama* (1888), *Mathrubhumi* (1923), *Madhyamam* (1987), *Siraj Daily* (1984), *Kerala Kaumudi* (1911), *Veekshanam* (1976), *Deshabhimani* (1942), *Mangalam* (1887), *Janayugam* (1953), *Thejas* (2006), *Chandrika* (1934), *Janmabhumi* (1977), *Metro Vaartha* (2008), and *Suprabhatham* (2014). The leading English newspapers in circulation in Kerala are *The Hindu*, *The New Indian Express*, *Times of India*, *Hindustan Times*, *The Deccan Chronicle* and *The Telegraph*.

Private television started in 1994 in Kerala. *Asianet* was the first channel, followed by 24-hour news channels such as *Indiavision* (2003-2015), *Asianet News* (2003), *People TV* (2005), *Manorama News* (2006), *Reporter* (2011) and *Mathrubhumi News* (2013). Almost all the offline media outlets, starting from *deepika.com* (1997), have their own online versions. There are news portals as well — *Malayalam.indiainfo.com* started in 2000 and was later renamed *Thatsmalayalam.com*, and *weblokam.com* started in 2000 and was later renamed *Malayalam.webdunia.com*.

The major Malayalam magazines are based on health, sports, education, politics, crime, children, current affairs, women, and many more. These magazines are printed weekly, monthly, or quarterly. Some of the most popular magazines that are printed in Kerala are *Vanitha*, *Chithrabhumi*, *Madhyamam*, *Balarama*, *Kanyaka*, *Kalakaumudhi*, *Ayurarogyam*, *Mathrubhumi*, *India Today Malayalam*, *Dhanam* (business magazine), *Chithrabhumi*, *Balarama* (comic), *Thejas*, and *Bhashaposhini*.

The audio visual media started in 1943 with the radio station of Travancore Broadcasting (later AIR), AIR Kozhikode Station in 1950, and Doordarshan Kendra Thiruvananthapuram in 1985.

The All India Radio has seven centres in Kerala. These are in Thiruvananthapuram, Alappuzha, Thrissur, Kozhikode, Kannur, Kochi, and Devikulam. Besides, there is also a production-cum-transmission centre in Lakshadweep. The informative programmes are related to various topics such as agriculture, rural development, issues related to health, women and childcare apart from regular news and entertainment programmes. There are 17 private radio stations which broadcast many entertainment programmes from Kerala.

The Doordarshan has terrestrial transmission network in the entire state. Beside this, there are many entertainment and news channels which telecast programmes in Malayalam. These are DD Malayalam, DD Kerala, Asianet Plus, Soorya, Kiran, Kairali, Amrita, Shalom, Jeevan, People, Jai Hind, Kairali We, and Media One TV to name a few.

WOMEN MEDIA PERSONS IN KERALA

In Kerala, women have been in journalism for as long as they have been in Indian journalism. Men outnumber women in media organizations in Kerala as much as they do in most places in India. Kerala is a state known to have cultivated a culture of reading newspaper. The dissemination of information through printed version goes much deeper in Kerala than elsewhere in India (Ram 2011). Many talented women are working hard to prove their mettle in this industry.

Krishnakumari, 2010 (as cited in Santhosh, March 29, 2010) observes that early women writers in Kerala considered journalism an extension of their literary endeavour, or social work. *Kerala Sugunabodhini*, launched in 1885, is considered

the first women's journal in Malayalam, but *Sarada* was, perhaps, the first magazine for women in Malayalam which extensively carried writings by women. K. Thankam Menon joined the Malayalam newspaper *Mathrubhumi* in 1952 and became its News Editor in the early 1970s. She was one of the first women to rise to this position in a Malayalam newspaper. V. Parukuttiyamma, one of the first women leader-writers in Malayalam served in *Mathrubhumi* from 1968 to 1981 (Santhosh, March 29, 2010).

Today, a good number of talented women work as journalists in Kerala. They are much better represented in the audiovisual media than the print. Two decades back, women were not considered for recruitment in *Malayala Manorama*. At that time, not a single woman was employed in its office, even if it was the post of a receptionist. But the situation has changed, and now *Malayala Manorama* has women in almost all its departments. And yet, inhibitions exist in society to allow girls to join the profession. Parents are concerned about the safety of their girls as journalism is about taking risks and challenges. There are also young men who do not want marry a woman journalists (Ezhuthachan, 2012).

Although media offices have started employing women reporters, society does not like to see women outside their homes in the evenings. As a remedy, media organizations now provide vehicles to drop women home after midnight duty. Those who do not have this facility are looked down with disdain.

Gender equity in media is still far from being conceptualized in Kerala, both in terms of qualitative and quantitative representation of women. The mainstream Malayalam press had an unwritten law on not recruiting women. The ideologically strong dailies did employ a few, but all on the desk. The language dailies recruit women for the Features desk of their daily supplements (Bhagat, 2004). Women are assigned serious beats only if they prove themselves to be more competent. Typically, women prefer desk job, or write for supplements and lifestyle pages. They rarely report on crime, politics, sport stories or any hard stories. While women reporters are made to do routine news stories, men are assigned byline stories. Poor remuneration, especially for starters, exists in every media office in Kerala. The management employs journalists largely on contract basis to escape the Wage Board recommendation of paying good salary to permanent employees (Thomas, 2017).

However, women have proved their mettle and are very successful in magazines dealing with soft stories. They have sensitively, yet forcefully raised women's issues such as their abuse, exploitation, harassment, women and child relationship, and so on. These articles are written in-depth in magazines.

Today, many women occupy editorial positions across the country. India has a good number of woman reporters and anchors in television news channels. Over the years, as television journalism grew and gained prominence, so did the role of woman journalists. The professional lives of veterans like Leela Menon and Padma Shree Barkha Dutt inspire young girls who aspire to become journalists.

The present study is conducted among the women media professionals in Kerala taking the women journalists enlisted in the PRD directory, issued by the Government of Kerala in the year 2014 as population. The table given below shows the gender distribution of the women journalists in Kerala working across various types of media.

Table 4.1: Gender-Wise Distribution of Kerala Journalists by Medium

Medium	Gender		Total
	Female	Male	
Online	12 (21.05%)	45 (78.95%)	57 (100%)
Print	159 (8%)	1,840 (92%)	1,999 (100%)
Radio	10 (13%)	67 (87%)	77 (100%)
Television	108 (11.1%)	863 (88.9%)	971 (100%)
Total	289 (9.3%)	2,815 (90.7%)	3,104 (100%)

Source: Public Relations Department Directory (2014)

As per the directory, the total number of journalists in Kerala is 3,104. Of this, only 9.3 per cent, or 289, are women. They constitutes the population of this study. The new online media has accommodated many woman journalists — 21.05 per cent, while the print media as accepted the least — only 8 per cent. Whatever be the progress in women's representation and empowerment in the versatile working space worldwide, there is marked dominance of male journalists (90.7%) in media in Kerala.

The data elicited from the PRD directory gives an account of the positioning of women journalists in various media in the state.

Table 4.2: Media-Wise Distribution of Women Journalists in Kerala

Media	Frequency	Percentage
Online	12	4.15%
Print	159	55.02%
Radio	10	3.46%
Television	108	37.37%
Total	289	100%

Source: Public Relations Department Directory (2014)

Women journalists working in print media constitute the majority (55.02%) followed by those in television (37.37%), online media (4.15%) and radio (3.46%). It is to be noted that data in the PRD directory does not include women mediapersons in FM radio stations in Kerala.

The PRD directory gives details of the current designation of mediapersons in the state, which gives the researcher a clear picture of the professional and decision-making status of women mediapersons. To make an analysis the researcher has categorized these designations into three: Low, Medium and High. A detailed account of the distribution of women mediapersons in Kerala in terms of their designation and related professional level has been showed in the table 4.3.

Table 4.3: Designation-Wise Distribution of Women Journalists in Kerala

Level	Designation	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Lower	Reporter	102	35.29
	Newscaster	2	0.69
	Broadcast Journalist	7	2.42
	Cameraperson	6	2.08
	Sub Editor	53	18.34
	Copy Editor	2	0.69
	Programme Executive	10	3.46
	Assistant Content Producer	1	0.34
	Content Coordinator	1	0.34
	Regional News Coordinator	1	0.34
	Senior Content Coordinator	1	0.34
	Senior Reporter	11	3.81
	Senior News Caster	1	0.34
	Senior Sub Editor	29	10.03
	Senior Broadcast Journalist	4	1.38
	Total	231	79.89%
Middle	Chief Reporter	4	1.38
	Chief Sub Editor	8	2.77
	Chief Broadcast Journalist	1	0.34
	Senior Editor	1	0.34
	Correspondent	6	2.08
	Special Correspondent	7	2.42
	Senior Correspondent	4	1.38
	Principal Correspondent	3	1.04
	Senior Special Correspondent	1	0.34
	Coordinating Editor	1	0.34
	Producer, Entertainment and Current Affairs	1	0.34
	Total	37	12.77%
High	Deputy Coordination Editor	1	0.34
	Deputy News Editor	3	1.04
	Assistant Editor	2	0.69
	News Editor	2	0.69
	Managing Editor	1	0.34
	Chief Editor	2	0.69
	Assistant Director	1	0.34
	Assistant Station Director	1	0.34
	Bureau Chief	6	2.08
	Editor	2	0.69
	Total	21	7.24%
Total	289	100	

Source: Public Relations Department Directory (2014)

A big 79.89 per cent women journalists are working in low level positions while 12.77 per cent in middle level, and only 7.24 per cent women in high level positions. This means only a small section of women journalists has any say in determining the content selection and policy making. This may be attributed to the late entry of women in the media industry or their less sustainability in the field.

With a clear picture of the media landscape in Kerala and the status of women journalists working in different media houses, let us now explore the challenges they face in their professional life.

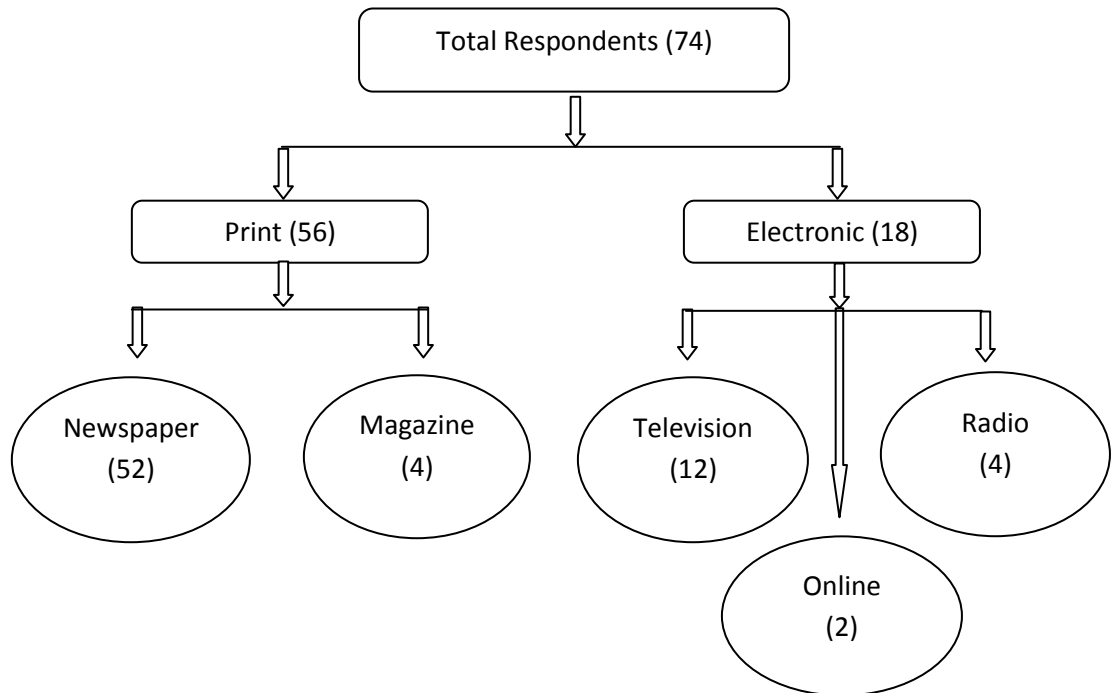
PART I

PROFESSIONAL CHALLENGES OF WOMEN JOURNALISTS IN KERALA

The new-generation journalism has brought women and their problems into focus. Consequently, many women have broken misconceptions and climbed their way to the top of the journalistic hierarchy. The number of women in media is increasing day by day, but their status at workplace is less studied.

Do media offices have women-friendly facilities? Do women feel safe at their workplace? Do they get enough support from related sources? The questions are many. It is not possible to trace all these problems from the quantitative survey method, considering the infancy of the issue in this region as well as the field manageability in collecting accurate quantitative data. The only way is to have perspectives, perceptions and the account of the experiences of working women media persons. Thus, the research formed an elaborate focus group comprising many media professionals who belong to various professional levels in different types of media houses. The focus group comprised 74 women journalists in print, newspaper and magazine, television, radio and online sectors. See Figure 4.1:

Figure 4.1: Classification of interview respondents based on the type of organization they are employed



Many respondents requested anonymity, so a coding system was developed to denote each of them. See Appendix ii for the list.

From the newspaper sector, 22 reporters, 14 sub editors, one cameraperson, two senior reporters, four senior sub editors, four chief sub editors, two special correspondents, one joint editor, one bureau chief and one editor participated in the interview. They represent *Mathrubhumi*, *Malayala Manorama*, *Deshabhimani*, *Kerala Kaumudhi*, *Mid-day*, *Kerala Kaumudhi Flash*, *Janmabhumi*, *Janayugom*, *Veekshanam*, *Mangalam*, *Thejas*, *Siraj*, *Metro Vartha*, *The Hindu* and *Deccan Chronicle*.

Three reporters and one feature editor participated from magazines. The interviewees belong to *Vanitha* (fortnightly of Malayala Manorama Group), *Grihalakshmi* (fortnightly published by Mathrubhumi Group), and *Kalakaumudhi* (weekly news magazine published by Kalakaumudhi Publications Pvt. Ltd.). Thus, 56 out of the 74 interviewees were from the print media while the remaining 18 were from the electronic media that include television, radio and online portals.

From the television, respondents included a senior special correspondent, a principal correspondent, a senior news editor, a senior sub editor, a senior broadcast journalist, three reporters, and four broadcast journalists of leading television news channels in Kerala — Media One TV, Asianet News, Jeevan TV, Manorama News and Kairali TV. Interviewees from radio included a programme executive, two reporters and an announcer from the All India Radio. From the online media, the respondents were a reporter at an online portal owned by a mainstream newspaper and the chief editor of an independent online portal.

WORK ENVIRONMENT ISSUES

To be a working woman is a serious challenge even today. Offices always prefer a man even if an equally capable woman is available for the same job. Society still considers women fit only for a certain kind of jobs. Women face persecution as a routine at their workplaces. Often, they have no option but to overlook matters to ensure that their job is not lost or jeopardized. With more and more women entering the job market, a wind of change is definitely blowing but its speed is very slow. A number of constraints hold back women from taking forward steps. To encourage more women to join journalism, it is essential that they get the true picture of the challenges women media professionals face every day in and outside workplace.

Kerala has witnessed a gradual progress in the working condition of women media professionals. But views on this are varied. There was a time when women were not allowed to get employed in media organizations. When they stepped into a career in this profession, they did not get basic facilities, even a separate women's toilet was rare. Even now, some media offices do not have a separate refreshment room for women (Tomar 2011). Adapting to the various aspects of workplace culture, such as understanding the communication pattern between the boss and co-worker, can prove to be a life lesson for women (Barati, Arab & Masoumi 2015). There are many challenges in the work environment of women media professionals. Interviewees were asked if they were satisfied with the work environment and their personal view about women media professionals' satisfaction at media organizations in Kerala. There were contradictory views on satisfaction at workplace.

Wide-ranging issues make working environment nothing less than traumatic for women media professionals. Working conditions are not comfortable. Inadequate infrastructure, ego clashes coupled with unhealthy relationship with colleagues, especially males, and insecure work environment hound women media professionals. Women are employed on contract akin to daily wagers, which results in them getting less pay. Their special needs are left unacknowledged. Maternity benefits, childcare facilities, security after working on late shifts etcetera are not paid heed to. Women need to train in self-defense for their security and face such challenges with greater self-confidence (Reddy, n.d; Barati et al, 2015 & Diwan, 2015). PN15, Chief Sub Editor in a newspaper said:

“These days, transport, night shifts, the job itself, and financial security are big issues for us. We cannot take leave to attend to our basic needs. Even on leave, we can be called from home for work. I would not advise the new generation girls to take up journalism as a profession. If they are passionate about it, they can do journalism as a part-time job along with another secure job.”

The observation clearly indicates that the nature of a job as a journalist poses many challenges for women media professionals. Night shifts, transportation at odd times, and the nature of the job itself are big drawbacks for women journalists. The reason for such a perception arises from the social conditions that are still unfriendly to working women. PN 15 also observes that women should consider journalism as a passion or service rather than a job given the difficulties involved in it, particularly financial security concerns.

Organizations should make flexible work arrangements (FWA) and use it as an effective tool to attract the best talent. This would, in fact, be a cost-saving measure that would increase turnover and productivity, while also reducing absenteeism.

Respondent PM53, from the magazine sector, also made a general view that there are many organizations that do not fulfil the basic requirements of women. PN24, Principal Correspondent in the newspaper, cited three problem areas for women journalists:

“One, we cannot have fixed timings and cannot leave office at 5 pm like in other professional offices. Second, there is no specific work area. Third, we have to meet and interact with different people daily. Due to these reasons, many perceive journalism as a risky job for women and a domain exclusively for men. The extent of the freedom offered by the profession differs from office to office. Moral policing is also frequent in this field.”

Her responses reaffirm the challenges of job security and women-friendly work environment. The nature of the profession and the social perception of women make it essential that this gender gets some flexibility in the work arrangements.

PN16, Reporter in a newspaper, was of the opinion that:

“Women do not get any special facility inside the office. We do have a separate restroom, but it lacks even the basic requirements. We also have a separate refreshment center, but it cannot be compared to that of men’s who have a plush and well-stocked facility. The organization should understand that improved facilities optimize work output.”

Here the concern is about the concept of equality, especially evaluating the mainstream corporate media offices, where basic facilities are available, but gender discrimination is visible in those facilities.

Respondent PN30 pointed to an improvement in the status of women media professionals, but felt several issues still remain unaddressed.

“I see a solid reason for the poor number of women journalists in Kerala—it is round-the-clock work with no time to think for oneself. My office has very few women, so facilities for them are low. The office does not provide transport facility. Men and women share a single bathroom. The unusably dirty bathroom does not have space even to throw used sanitary napkins! What’s more, the office does not give maternity leave. We do not have a women’s cell. There is no facility to protect victims of sexual harassment. Generally, media offices prefer women journalists because they work more and are not hard bargainers while fixing salary.”

It is pathetic that women in media are not provided even basic facilities. Many women in media organizations do not get transportation after working till late night. PN2, from the newspaper sector, said:

“The management has informed me that it cannot afford to arrange transportation or give travel allowance, as I am the only woman in my office who works during night shifts. So, I have to depend on my husband to pick me up from the office every day. When he is out of town, the difficulty level escalates. Arranging a vehicle at midnight is not always possible. We do not have separate refreshment facilities for women. There are times when my children have no guardian when I’m in office. These are the times when one requires childcare facility in office. Thoughts of quitting job recur in my mind. I sincerely hope offices open childcare facilities on the premises.”

Clearly, self-empowerment is necessary to surmount the challenges at workplace. The response reinforces the need to acquire skills such as driving to be at par with the male counterparts.

There are many media offices that have only a few women employees. Arranging a separate restroom, or transportation facility, or creating space for childcare for a handful of women is perceived as waste of office funds. Similarly, media offices are too far in action in creating childcare facilities, as social norms impose children’s responsibility on women even now. In the absence of proper childcare facilities, it is a burden for women to continue working. Respondent PN7, Joint Editor in a newspaper, said:

“To attain a comfortable work environment, it is essential that woman media professionals get the facility of crèche in offices. It is unfortunate that we do not have such a facility in any media organization in Kerala.”

Women in the electronic media get better transport and refreshment room facilities than those working in the print media. This may be attributed to the fact that most electronic media offices came up at a time when society had started to evolve and was making an effort to become more women-friendly. They had started depending on women for daily news operations. This means that a gender-specific industry need is a prerequisite for a better work environment.

ER71, Reporter in the radio, said:

“I’m in the government sector. We get transportation facilities and have a canteen to ourselves. I have been given the privilege of leaving early because I am carrying a child. Considering this, I have a comfortable job. I work six days a week and am allowed to take leave when I need to. I also get all the advantages of a government job.”

The terms and conditions of employment in public and private sectors are also vital predictors to understand the level of women-friendly environment in media houses. The absence of robust government Acts is one reason for the existing challenges.

As far as the visual media is concerned, the profession is very competitive and demanding, and does not provide flexibility in work timings. ET63 spoke about the uncomfortable work timing:

“For new mothers, morning shifts may be a requirement. But male colleagues almost always oppose this. They say the company should not discriminate by adjusting work timings. Women are compelled to work at odd hours despite poor health. Many organizations do not give leave to unmarried women. I do not get any special perks from my organization for being a woman.”

Women are largely employed on the desk for their convenience as well as that of the management. The desk is considered safe with no risk that can come with travelling. However, the desk also takes a toll on their health. ET57, Junior Broadcast Journalist at a television news channel, said:

“Women have to make more effort to prove that they are capable of reporting. To work on the desk, one must work on shifts. This changes a woman’s body clock; she loses sense of time, and is unable to follow a routine. I seldom get time to read or write.”

But ET62, a Broadcast Journalist, denied this pointing to her personal experience.

“Working hours are strictly followed so that after the stipulated work time, journalists have time to spend qualitatively. Apart from transport facility, the office also provides accommodation.”

Working on shifts can bring forth many practical problems. Many women do not opt for night shifts because of family pressure. There is a feeling of insecurity while working late. EO73, a Reporter working in the online media, pointed out the miserable working conditions of women media professionals:

“Compared to other media, newspapers have more night shifts. We also have to go alone for reporting. This may be a reason for their feeling of insecurity. Night shifts make us lose out on most of the cultural programmes. Night shifts also give is many health problems.”

Working condition in magazines is more agreeable than in newspapers or any other electronic media. PM54, a Reporter in a magazine, expressed satisfaction working in a magazine, while comparing it with the work environment at the newspaper of the same organisation where she worked.

“When the magazine became a fortnightly, I was transferred from the newspaper to the magazine. I am happier here as I can learn many things that I would not have when I was in the newspaper. Despite more workload, we get more time for ourselves than while working in the bureau or on the desk in a newspaper. It gives me mental comfort. Yet, I would not like to continue magazine journalism forever.”

In this respect, magazines are more flexible in work timing compared to newspaper or television.

Many problems faced by women are not properly addressed as organizations are mostly headed by men. Very few organizations have women in the senior management level. Work environment is better for women in organizations headed by women. PN45 said:

“It is a blessing that we have a bold woman editor. We do not have any gender policy here but we get enough leaves. The working atmosphere is also flexible. At times I even get the permission to work from home.”

Maladjustment with the work environment can lead to subtle conflicts with colleagues or superiors, which can be intensely stressful. Intrinsicly, men try to prove their superiority at work; their ego gets crushed when he has to report to a female boss. Some men do not hesitate to belittle women colleagues. Such inequality still exists. PN12, Sub Editor in a newspaper, said:

“I find myself at the centre of controversies and ego clashes without me knowing it.”

Respondent PN2, Sub Editor of a Malayalam daily, speaks about the uncomfortable experiences she and other women had in the organization at the beginning of their careers.

“I have faced harassment from seniors during my training period. Overwork and verbal abuse was nothing out of the ordinary. One of my colleagues could not bear similar trauma and quit. Senior men were in the habit of questioning the capabilities of all women in office. Many a time, women would react sharply to the verbal attacks. These outbursts were suppressed by giving the rebels insignificant and lengthy assignments. There were ego clashes as well. Men had a problem accepting women as the boss. Their ego hurt.”

Echoing the sentiment, respondent PN9, Senior Reporter in a Malayalam daily, said that senior male journalists get frustrated when a woman gets an opportunity for professional growth. She explained:

“Some people cannot tolerate women who excel in their profession. My woman colleague left job because of this attitude of seniors.”

ER69, Programme Executive in the radio sector, shared her work environment experience.

“I had to face many problems within the organization when I started my career as a radio journalist. The problems emerged primarily because I was not dependent on anyone. Men expect women to be dependent and submissive, but I was not. I became a victim of professional jealousy and ego, and there were planned attacks against me.”

These responses shed light to the social reality that men believe that women are inferior to them; that they should be obedient and submissive. These beliefs lead to widespread exploitation.

On the other hand, there are women journalists who are satisfied with their work environment and share a healthy relationship with their colleagues. PN19, Editor in a Malayalam newspaper, spoke about the relationship with her male colleagues and the support she gets from them at work.

“In the more than 30 years of my journalistic career, I have received full support of my colleagues. My male co-workers consider me one amongst them—a man in their male territory. I have done so many stories that required late night reporting. But I never faced any problem, either from colleagues or from the office.”

From the magazine sector, PM55, a Feature Editor, supported this viewpoint.

“The onus of men feeling comfortable working under women lies on us. What’s of prime importance is how we conduct ourselves with them. It would be better if we refrain from behaving like bosses. If we are able to channelize their ideas and talent, it will not matter whether the boss is a woman or a man.”

Personal and job security is another serious challenge for women at workplace. Women often fall victim to various crimes at workplace due to lack of security. They are forced to work and live in miserable conditions in the unorganized sector, both inside and outside the organization. Safety is an important factor that restrains women from joining journalism. The general perception among the older generation is that journalism is a strenuous and “dangerous” profession. Parents and guardians resist when female members of the family express their wish to join this profession.

Sub Editor PN13, who works in a newspaper, said desk is a safer work area for women in journalism than the bureau, and it involves minimal risk. Reporters are compelled to go out to cover stories which may or may not lead to security issues. PN46 felt threatened while covering news related to women issues.

PN25 said:

“My organization gives a lot of importance to our safety. We are provided with night transport. We have an active women’s cell. No complaint has been registered here till now. The management takes all preventive measures for women’s safety. I work at the headquarters. I cannot say that the situation is the same in all our offices.”

The respondents felt that security is a major problem that prevails in media organizations in Kerala. Many organizations have cells to deal with women’s issues, but some organizations still exist which do not constitute such a safety measure for women staff.

Job security is a common concern for both men and women in journalism. Inflow of journalists from media schools that run less quality programmes disrupt career prospects in the field. At present, unemployment rate is high among professionally educated journalists.

PM56, respondent from a magazine, said:

“There is poor job security in this field. We have to sign a contract before joining an organisation. This is to enable easy sacking in case we do anything contrary to their terms and policies.”

The Wage Board for Working Journalists has implemented rules specifying salaries for permanent scribes. To escape this, almost all media organizations employ journalists on contractual basis. When journalists raise a voice against discrimination, they are transferred to remote areas forcing them to quit. Often, journalists succumb to organizational interests compromising on journalistic ethics.

PN15 said:

“Political mouthpiece or not, every media organization has political leanings. In fact, many a time the management forces journalists to mold news or feature stories in favour of the party. A journalist who does not accept it, is forced to quit the job and to opt for independent journalism. Free or ethical journalism is a myth.”

This case is applicable to both men and women, but women are more subjected to such violation of professional code of conduct. Any opposition to it ends in being firing from the job.

All the respondents, except a few permanent staff members, said that media organizations provide zero job security. According to PN44, working in a newspaper,

“Job security is a big concern in the media profession. So many channels sprout every now and then, but their survival is difficult in the face of stiff competition. The era of online journalism has started and it is a big challenge for visual media. So, people in the visual media are compelled to look for other professions.”

Financial insecurity is another major challenge that women in the media industry face. Their salary is almost always the second income at home. This is because poor wage compels husbands to take care of primary expenses. Poor pay is the prime reason for women to step aside from journalism. PN1 from the newspaper sector said:

“Poor pay has become a trend in media organizations. I also work on a low salary, so my home runs mostly on my husband’s income. He is the one who controls financial matters. My salary comes as the second income at home.”

PN2, also from the newspaper sector, supports the view:

“Journalism is not a profession that gives workers financial security. My husband and I are in the same profession. Both of us just about manage life, that too because two salaries come home.”

Meagre payment is the main reason for many to quit the profession half way. Only a few big media houses recruit journalists as permanent staff with wage board salary. PN10, another respondent from the newspaper sector, said:

“This profession does not give financial security. Despite the Wage Board recommendations, hardly any media house gives good pay. Financial insecurity is a vital reason why people leave the profession half way.”

Irrespective of the insufficient salary, journalists continue in the profession only because of their passion for profession. PN9, Senior Reporter in a newspaper, said:

“Irrespective of gender, journalists in all media houses get meagre salaries. This works as a deterrent for young and prospective journalists. Their families also dissuade them from joining the profession. I have been working for eight years in the profession and am still struggling because of financial instability. I continue to work only because of my passion for the profession.”

The opinion is echoed by ER69, Programme Executive from the radio sector:

“Journalism is not a financially viable profession. People join media houses driven by passion, not by salary. Professional satisfaction is what makes us stick to the profession lifelong.”

In the visual media, where the workload is much more than in the newspaper, journalists are underpaid. ET61, Reporter in a television channel, said:

“Most journalists in the visual media are underpaid. We work for long hours every day and take many risks, but the salary we get does not compensate the efforts we make.”

Respondent PN32, Cameraperson in a newspaper, said:

“This field is not financially secure. Influx of journalism graduates beyond the demand in the industry force people to work on low salaries.”

This glamorous profession has tremendous scope to satiate journalistic passion. However, it's a struggle for journalists to sustain in the profession financially. PN38, Reporter in a newspaper, says:

“Salary is the main factor that prevents women from joining journalism. When they are still students, the prospective women journalists do not consider salary of prime importance. The poor pay packet comes as a shock.”

Apart from poor pay, there is gender gap in remuneration. This is particularly in the private sector, and irrespective of the type of media. In the public sector, equal pay is mandatory. PN36 said:

“Financial sustainability is a big issue in small newspapers. There is also gender discrimination in terms of salary in the small newspapers.”

All the responses from journalists across the media and in varying professional hierarchy reflect the gravity of financial discrepancy in journalism, which hits the women professionals hard. Financial insecurity in media is common to men and women, but women suffer more because they sacrifice more in terms of familial and personal conveniences. As they entered media late, and at a time when the logic of liberal economy was rife, the intensity of their financial insecurity was felt deeper. Simply put, the salary of most women journalists is not commensurate with the work they do. This is especially true when women are in the initial stage of their career.

Only four respondents felt that their profession was financially secure. These, too, did not agree that the condition was similar in other media organizations. The imbalance in the demand-supply ratio due to the increased influx of journalism graduates from mushrooming media schools aggravates the problem. This is applicable to both the genders.

Women in the visual media have much longer working hours than in the print media. Many girls who are passionate about journalism cannot adjust to the hectic work life. Also, there are organizations that are extremely poor paymaster. More often than not, elders in the family are unhappy with the self-motivated girls and protest when they have to travel long distances or work on the night shift. Still, women are largely getting recruited to visual media. PN27, Senior Sub Editor in a newspaper, said:

“Visual media gives a lot of recognition to talented journalists. Audiences immediately notice them and their stories. On the contrary, print journalists remain hidden from the public eye. Readers know them only by name, that too when they write special stories.”

The reason for higher number of women in visual media is the celebrity status they enjoy. New generation journalists, particularly budding women journalists, get attracted to the visual media given the celebrity status. The nature of the job, work timing, and resistance from family are major hurdles in the work. These problems lead to mental pressure and force journalists to move to better-paying professions.

PN51, Chief Sub Editor in a newspaper, identifies visual media as more insecure than print in terms of job security. Frequent recruitments in the visual media enhances the opportunities of visual media professionals, but they are not paid equal to their effort. She said:

“If we want to increase the number of women in journalism, we have to make it promising. Working conditions and payments should be improved for that.”

The above responses based on the direct or indirect experiences of women professionals in Malayalam media categorically establish the presence of various challenges related to work environment. The severe responses relate to inflexible work hours, insecure workplace, moral policing, financial insecurity, negative attitude of male colleagues and gender gap in payment and facilities. But, it is evident from some responses that the case is not consistent with all the media houses or all media professionals. The intensity of the issues and challenges vary according to the context and person.

It is also obvious from the responses that women journalists empower themselves by working on capacity-building to be at par with or above their male colleagues, and meaningfully sustain themselves in the industry. They do not expect a caring approach in all the issues, particularly those related to transportation and night shifts, and from all the organizations, especially small-scale media houses.

There were varied responses to questions regarding the relationship with colleagues. Experiences were different from person to person and from firm to firm. While some interviewees reported very positive and cooperative attitude of male colleagues, others reported male seniors' condescending attitude and belief that women must remain submissive and dependent. It is noteworthy that relationship is determined by the attitude women journalists hold towards their male colleagues. At the same time, some respondents referred to women imposing limitations upon themselves. Special considerations made for women regarding timing and other facilities are not always possible, especially in a profession like journalism. Journalists must be ready to face all kinds of situations. Many are not serious about their profession, that's why they quit it while their career graph is rising. To create a

comfortable environment where women can work efficiently, it is important that women mould their lifestyle to suit the profession.

Many respondents are of the opinion that women have to make more effort than men and have to fight to survive in the profession. Many girls who are passionate about journalism cannot adjust to the hectic work-life schedules. Frequent recruitments, a large number of opportunities, good exposure, and experience in the visual media are reported as the important reasons for the increased number of women in visual media compared to print. But, in that sector too, women face all the challenges they experience in other sectors. It points to the fact that quantitative representation will not be a remedy for the problems women face in the media industry.

ISSUES OF UNEQUAL TREATMENT AT WORK

As far as journalism is concerned, a vital question is whether gender affects work allotment and if there is resulting discrimination. Media offices suffer from occupational segregation caused by gender-based discrimination. A majority of women journalists have sound knowledge of their profession, how things work there, and what are the essentials to be good journalists. But women do not have access to all areas of the profession (Burton *et al.* 2015 & Harp *et al.* 2014).

In this study, the researcher problematized gender discrimination in work distribution because the problem is a stark reality in the global media milieu. And, it is no different in Kerala. This is validated by many journalists who responded to the researcher. From the newspaper, PN1, a Special Correspondent, said:

“Men get good assignments just because they are men. They are preferred when political beats are distributed. Women have to prove themselves to get serious assignments. If a bureau has two equally talented journalists but of different gender, the hard news would automatically fall on the male’s lap. Women get routine and less challenging assignments, while men get byline stories to work on. This is what ensures visibility for men.”

The stereotypical thought during assignment of work is that women are good working on soft news, or on art and culture. It is believed that women are incapable of handling hard core subjects, especially politics. The number of opportunities that

men get gradually increases. On the other hand, women have to prove themselves to get good stories. Some seniors have a prejudice against women. It becomes evident when they assign beats and stories. Married women with children find it difficult to cover sensitive and dangerous stories. Therefore, these are covered by men. PN30, Reporter in a newspaper, said:

“It is not unusual for women to get only soft stories to cover. We get to do hard core political reporting only when men reporters take leave, or when there is staff shortage. However, it is also a fact that the extent of gender discrimination depends upon the perception of the bureau chief about the reporter. Some bureau chiefs have stereotypical notions about women. Many times, even our existence is not important. The number of men in office is very important; we remain neglected.”

The prejudice towards women is the reason for women being denied hard news. Seniors do get priority over juniors, but women remain totally neglected. But this segregation is not rigid in television. ET58, a television journalist, said:

“(In news channels,) people get assignments on the basis of capability, irrespective of their gender. The work may or may not interest us. I may get an assignment that does not interest me. I am then, forced to work on it.”

But the situation changes fast with increasing number of women journalists in television who specialise in political reporting. PN9, a senior television reporter, supported the view:

“There is no gender discrimination in assigning of work in my organization. People get assignments on the basis of their skill and capabilities. I do not have a specialized area of reporting and report on almost all topics. However, I am more interested in handling political news.”

PN11, Senior Sub Editor in a television channel, said:

“Organizations do not stop women from doing any story or taking up any beat. Unlike earlier times, they do not have to take up risky projects. But the office does get concerned when women take up challenging stories.”

That woman knows less about current affairs is yet another skewed belief that results in the denial of hard news stories to women. PN6, Sub Editor in a newspaper, said:

“Women are rarely seen covering beats like politics and sports. The reason pointed out for this is that we do not know anything about political or sports history. The preconceived notion is that women are not sharp enough to handle such intricate stories, so these beats are assigned to men.”

Safety of women is always a burden to the management. That’s why many media organizations are reluctant to recruit women journalists. If recruited, they are not assigned risky beats. According to Reporter PN8:

“Woman journalists are usually not given night assignments. They are not sent to cover mob violence, riots, and conflicts even when they are eager to go. Men get to work on serious stories. The excuse is the concern for women’s safety. My seniors do not interfere in my stories. However, many of my stories do not get accepted.”

Safety of women is pointed out as the concern for putting women aside from reporting certain beats. Management is not ready to take risks and choose a male for the purpose. For this reason, a large number of the women journalists are employed on the desk. The bureau is considered a risky job and constitutes constant traveling, while also requiring journalists to work at odd hours.

PN25 said:

“The moment a woman is assigned travelling work, the management starts thinking about her accommodation, food, and security. Many women are also hesitant to do out-of-town assignments.”

It is a burden for the management to make safety arrangements for women, but are relaxed when the journalist is male. This is why women are usually appointed on the desk. Women, too, find it safe working on the desk.

PN46 said:

“Jobs in the media are usually assigned on the basis of merit. The nature of work in the bureau is such that adherence to work timings is not always

possible. One should be ready to take on assignments and go out at any time of the day. Women prefer desk job, as they find it more convenient to work on the day shift, or from 9 am to 5 pm. It is not practical for them to work in the bureau. Those who earnestly want to do reporting can ask for a job in the bureau.”

To change set notions about women, they should come forward, take positions in the bureau and handle difficult beats. Women must motivate themselves and take up challenging jobs. Nobody will do it for them. PN12, a Sub Editor, said:

“Nothing should stop us from taking up challenging assignments. Once we prove ourselves, opportunities will automatically open up. If our colleagues claim that we are incapable, we must show them our strengths. This is how we can stop stereotyping and misconceptions.”

EO73, from the online media, also said:

“We have to prove our talent to get opportunities to cover serious issues. Political discussions are something that women seldom get involved in. This can be overcome by a deliberate effort to get involved. Most women withdraw themselves and are satisfied by doing soft stories.”

There are preconceptions that women have an emotional approach while doing stories. PN6, Sub Editor in a newspaper, said:

“Women need to widen their learning. Arguably, only 60 per cent of the educated women know current affairs. Their knowledge of political history is poor. The topics that women discuss in their peer groups are quite different from what men discuss. The result is a totally different approach in the stories that men and women produce. We need to learn to get more involved and think in depth on the topics that we work on.”

There are many women attracted to Page 3 stories that are loaded with articles on films and beauty. PN40 said:

“It’s true that there is gender discrimination while assigning stories. Looking from men’s perspective, women also do not come forward to take up serious issues.”

There are quite a few instances where beats are allotted on the basis of merit, and not gender — Manorama's Sports Editor is a woman. However, it is men's biological nature to be more inclined toward sports, so more men end up with sports beat.

The responses show that women must prove themselves to get established. They should come to the forefront and change stereotypical notions about women. Seniors give special events mostly to men. To question this, women have to constantly prove their excellence. This requires double the effort any man makes. But the opportunities that women get to prove themselves are much less compared to men. They have to struggle and compete with male colleagues. This is a big hindrance for woman journalists' growth. The older generation doubts women's capabilities much more than the younger generation does.”

Majority of the respondents said that there was gender division of work in the profession. Many pointed to the gender discrimination that prevails in the media scene to be the reason for this. At the same time, some respondents said gender division was a consequence of women's selection of work. They confine themselves to soft stories for the sake of safety and for fear of taking risks. Many respondents chose desk work for the same reason, whereas some were assigned work on the desk against their wish. Respondents from the print media marked more discrimination than those in the electronic media.

Sexual harassment is a widespread problem for women, irrespective of their status, personal characteristics and the nature of employment. Women face sexual harassment while commuting, at workplaces, in educational institutions, hospitals, homes, and even at police stations if they have to file a complaint. Women are mostly concentrated in poor service jobs while men are their immediate supervisors. This gives men the opportunity to exploit their subordinate women and seek sexual favors from them in return of benefits and promotions. The inappropriate behaviour of such men costs the employers, as the office witnesses increased absenteeism, low productivity, and high employee turnover. Individually, the exploited women become depressed, experience anxiety, or quit jobs to avoid continued harassment (Catalyst, 2017; Diwan, 2015 & Barati et al, 2015).

The exploited women do not complain and tend to go silent. Some ignore the excesses while others put up with the humiliation to save their jobs. They are reluctant to take on the perpetrators. Some women resign from work with the belief that making a complaint would not help because the higher-ups would not support them. The strict women-protection laws hardly help because such cases are rarely reported. This is one major reason why families do not allow women to work. Many social organizations have been protesting against the harassment of women at workplace. It is time women stand up for their self-respect and fight back against vengeful men (Reddy, n.d).

Sexual harassment is palpable in most media organizations. The male-dominated profession exposes women to many risks and humiliation. Women in India and across the world face sexual harassment, including molestation and eve-teasing, in newsrooms. Often, women choose not to do anything about it (Franks, 2013). They ignore it and move on, while some fight and others quit job altogether. But recently, women are coming to the forefront to disclose their experiences regarding sexual harassments.

In India, many cases of sexual harassment have been filed against journalists. In 2013, Tarun Tejpal, Founder and Editor-in-Chief of *Tehelka* magazine, was accused of sexual assault by a woman colleague. The allegation forced Tejpal to quit as the Editor.

In 2017, a global movement began which gave women the strength to publicly speak about the sexual harassment they face, or faced at some point of their professional life. It is called the “Me Too” movement as women speak up in solidarity with other sexually harassed woman journalists. India too, is going through the upheaval. Women have come out to express their trauma they experience while working in unhealthy work environments.

Seven women have accused K.R. Sreenivas, Resident Editor, *The Times of India*, of sexual harassment. Sreenivas has been sent on administrative leave. Prashant Jha had to step down as the Chief of Bureau and Political Editor of *Hindustan Times* following allegations of sexual misconduct by a former employee of the organization. Several women journalists complained of molestation and sexual misconduct against M.J. Akbar when he was the Editor of *The Asian Age*

between 1994 and 2008. A barrage of complaints forced him to step down from the position of Minister of State for External Affairs.

In this study, the many respondents who were spoken to validated that the situation is no different in Kerala. They said that they had not experience sexual exploitation, but knew of colleagues who had experienced it. Only a small number revealed their personal experience, and preferred to say it off the record. From the newspaper sector, PN1, a Special Correspondent, said:

“Men’s attitude towards women in office exists as it does in society.”

PN14, a Reporter, echoed this:

“I have overheard my male colleagues making sexual references.”

PN40, a Senior Reporter, said:

“I personally do not have any experience of sexual abuse. I have not heard from colleagues either. But, I know that it exists everywhere.”

The responses point to the fact that sexual exploitation — anything in the form of verbal, non-verbal, physical, *quid pro quo* and hostile work environment — mirrors the attitude of men towards women in society. PN10, a Sub Editor in a newspaper, said:

“The problems that women face all around them reflect in media offices as well. Much like the society we live in, newsroom also gets its share of sexist jokes. I choose to ignore them. This is how I fight it. One must fight to survive in this field. Some women give up the fight in the middle of their career. Those who keep the fight going are the ones who succeed.”

PN35, a Sub Editor, points to the timing of the job as the main reason for sexual exploitations. PN23, a Reporter, also says that the solution to sexual harassment is evasion.

“I have faced verbal abuse from one of my seniors. I started avoiding him when he started to flirt with me. I got the chance to shift to another department, so I was able to work without any contact with him. It is difficult when a senior person misbehaves. We need to learn how to stop such

behaviour. I believe that it is best to avoid the person if his behaviour is unacceptable.”

The problem in society, and the attitude of women towards the problem is clearly reflected in media offices as well. Many women ignore harassment fearing that their job, or even their reputation, would be at stake. Some do not know how to deal with it, and a handful consider it a waste of time. The fear is that if sexual exploitation is complained, the authorities will not take necessary steps. Instead, there would be attempts to dilute the issue by a compromise, or the victim would be transferred. PN16, a Reporter, said:

“When a woman joins an organization, she becomes the topic of discussion among her male colleagues. A woman is widely objectified. I have faced many difficulties from my male colleagues without any provocation on my part. I complained to senior officials in the management, but they did not take my complaint seriously. They diluted the issue by attempting a compromise talk.”

Another respondent, PN44, a Reporter, said:

“Most victims are unaware of the ways to handle these issues as those involved are in top management. Usually, it’s the interns or fresh appointees who have to face the situation.”

The absence of an active association for women journalists adds to the problem. Women journalists do not have a platform to raise their problems and to deal with such issues. However, the Press Club and the Kerala Union of Working Journalists (KUWJ) have recommended having such cells. The existing ones are not active at all. PN2, a Sub Editor revealed:

“I have suffered verbal abuse throughout my professional life. I have learned to live with it. Many of my woman colleagues have quit their jobs because of this. Journalism is all about teamwork. A journalist cannot work in isolation and must interact with the team members to work well. So, it is not possible to avoid people who hail direct or slanted abuses each time one sees them. There are many offices that work for the welfare of journalists. But these, too,

have not taken any action to curb such behaviour. Kerala does not have an active association for woman journalists to deal with such issues.”

Similarly, another respondent, PN12, a Sub Editor raises the need for an active association to deal with women issues in the vocation of journalism:

“Sexual exploitation exists in many media houses. As a first step, women must come forward to complain to their bosses against sexual exploitation. The state urgently needs a women’s cell.”

Many media houses constitute women’s cells to deal with the issues of women employees. But no serious complaint is lodged there as women refrain from complaining against sexual harassment fearing it will affect their reputation in office.

Women must come forward to unveil such issues. If they, too, fear putting forth such issues, that too in a profession like journalism, then what is the point of women empowerment? PN7, a Joint Editor, said:

“Professional women, especially journalists, are bold enough to deal with problems such as sexual exploitation.”

A Reporter in a magazine, PM54 stated:

“Many of my friends have been victim of sexual misconduct. I think our attitude is what gives men green or red signals. If we are strong and they think that we are not easily approachable, it is natural that they will maintain the necessary distance. However, the attitude of men towards women journalists is gradually changing. I believe that in future women will get a work environment that is healthy.”

From the responses it is clear that sexual exploitation in media is perceived as an extension of the attitudes that exist in society. Most women fail to handle the situation, especially when seniors are involved. In this case also, emotional, psychological, and physical self-empowerment of women is recommended as a solution. Apart from individual empowerment, women journalists believe the presence of a collective body will help in the reduction of sexual assault cases.

During the research, the glass ceiling was found most common in the middle and senior management levels. In fact, there are many women who have decided

not to take up top managerial roles. However, the huge number of qualified women within the profession may eventually push them into decision-making positions. The ground-breaking Global Report on the Status of Women in the News Media, which examines more than 500 companies in nearly 60 countries, shows that men occupy a vast majority of management jobs and news-gathering positions in most nations (Byerly, 2011).

The term 'glass ceiling' refers to an invisible, nonetheless real barrier that affects women at workplace. So many women are well-qualified and have immense skills and experience, but they are not allowed to rise in the professional ladder. Reason: institutionalised prejudices. Even now, very few women are offered "hot jobs" that are critical for reaching the highest leadership levels. These include high visibility jobs that come with mission-critical roles and need international exposure. Women need to work much harder than their male peers to earn recognition and praise. Strangely, most workplaces suffer from an unfounded mindset that men advance faster while women are incompetent even before women workers are given the opportunity to prove their worth (Zambas, 2018). Gender stereotypes undermine women's ability to lead. They are judged as being too hard, too soft, and never just right.

Despite this, there are powerful examples of women role models at workplaces. Women have, time and again, proved their capability at work but men still occupy the top echelons of most organizations. As a result, other women employees find it difficult to emulate female leaders at workplaces. Women often feel disconnected and disoriented when they look up to men for guidance and mentorship because there is a whole world of difference in their objectivity and style of communication. Such challenges are, however, on the decline with more and more women entering the top rungs of organizations. Very soon, there would be several female leaders to inspire the coming generations of women (Reddy, n.d).

Griffin, Nieman report (2014) reasons out that shortage of women at the senior level in media organization is because women opt out of the profession more frequently than men. In the United States communication schools, women have equalled and occasionally outnumbered men since 1980. Also, as many women as men enter the industry straight out of college. However, the percentage of women

soon, but steadily declines. Only one-third of the journalists with more than 20 years of experience are women. Statistics are similar around the world.

For mediapersons in Kerala, discrimination in promotions comes mars their free and satisfied professional life. PN1, a Special Correspondent, said:

“Discrimination against women is felt when promotion and annual increment matter. This is the reason for the rare presence of women as decision-makers in offices.”

Two factors were identified as the reasons for glass ceiling in media houses — lack of confidence, and prejudice against women taking decision-making. PN7, also from the newspaper sector, remarked:

“The management does not want to fill up senior level vacancies with women. A very small percentage of woman journalists reach the top. The reasons for this are lack of family support and their own apprehensions. They settle with unambitious jobs when given responsibilities.”

There is an unwritten social rule that the care-giving responsibility of the family lies on women. This leads the management into believing that women do not have enough time to devote to take up more responsible positions in journalism. Men are preferred even if women are more qualified and capable. PN14, a Reporter, said:

“Gender discrimination is rampant when it’s time for promotions. The management is partial towards men and hesitates to choose women for senior positions. Many vibrant, sincere and experienced women do not get the designations they deserve. There is a misconception about women workers that they cannot devote time to work. The office management may have formulated some policy in this regard.”

EO73, a respondent from the online media, pointed out:

“Women are seen in decision-making posts in visual media. It is the print media that is unfriendly towards women. The visual media is still young and is more flexible. Print media has a greater heritage and is more inflexible. There

are several responsibilities that we must fulfill when we are in top positions. It will be difficult without a support system.”

According to **PN12**, a Sub Editor:

“A large number of women drop out of the profession within two to three years of working. Many women become comfortable working in mid-level positions and do not wish to get promoted beyond, perhaps, the post of Senior Sub Editor. There are cases of gender discrimination in promotions as well. It is a reflection of gender discrimination in our society. Journalism will continue to remain a profession suitable only for men as long as our society remains male dominated.”

Many women quit their job mid-way because of lack of confidence or work-life imbalances. A large number of women study professional courses, but only a few are able to become journalists. A good number of these quit the profession or choose some comfortable job after getting married or after a few years of experience. Men usually refrain from taking up domestic responsibilities, so they can reach office early and stay back till late. They have ample time to give to office. Short-lived professional life is a big reason for the absence of women in senior positions.

Senior Broadcast journalist ET67 was of the same view:

“Women cannot reach the top because they have to either take breaks their service because of domestic calling, or leave the job altogether. There are also deliberate attempts to keep women away from top positions.”

PN39 said:

“Doing a job in a senior position is demanding, not only at work but in timing as well. Women get weighed down with family responsibilities, so they hesitate to take on senior positions and lag in promotions. Men don't have such a problem.”

Work experience as well as durability in the profession aids promotion in any profession; journalism is no an exception. PN5, a Chief Sub Editor, stated:

“Many years ago, not many women were in the profession. Some of those who continued working are at the top. It took a lot of time and effort. At that time, there were many men journalists. So now we have many senior journalists who are men. To find the reasons behind the poor number of women in senior-most positions, it is important to look at history. Maybe after five years, there will be more women in senior-most positions.”

From the magazine sector, PM54, a Reporter, also pointed at this:

“Promotions are not given on the basis of gender. Increase in the induction of women in journalism is a recent phenomenon. Those who are talented do reach the top, though it takes time. However, if there are two equally talented and experienced persons — a man and a woman — the former usually gets the advantage. Compared to the print, visual media is more sympathetic towards women. This is because the visual media came into existence recently, and welcomed women into the profession.”

Office favoritism is another aspect that brings discrepancies in promotions. Another respondent, PN16, opined:

“I think people who are able to please seniors definitely reach the top in media. Men are able to strike an amiable relationship with the boss because they have ample time at hand. They can spend a lot of time with the boss and involve themselves in sycophancy. Women are bound by their domestic responsibilities and societal restrictions, so they refrain from spending time with the seniors. This is a vital reason for the minuscule number of women at the top.”

ET63, a respondent from the television sector, echoed this:

“Promotions are given on the basis of personal interests. Women hardly get promotions. So many times, in all unfairness, women interns’ training period is extended. The reason given is low performance level. The criteria used to evaluate the performance level is almost always unclear.”

According to PN30:

“Journalism is all about networking. Here, a person who does not have contacts cannot think of achieving success. Those who know a lot of people reach the top, irrespective of their gender. But when the choice is between two equally connected and qualified male and female journalists, the management blindly picks up the former.”

Presence of bold and assertive women enhances the confidence of women in this profession. Journalists like Barkha Dutt and Leela Menon inspire young girls to take up the profession. ET66, a principal correspondent, said it is rare to see women in decision-making positions in the media in Kerala.

“When I started my career, the head of the newsroom was Barkha Dutt. She did not allow any discrimination. I have such models in front of me. But in Kerala, the absence of such personalities is conspicuous. It is important to introspect why women journalists rarely break stories in a state like Kerala, which has the highest literacy rate. The invisible barrier, or the glass ceiling, has an ominous presence which must be broken. Many women are becoming journalists, they should get the chance to prove their mettle.”

Today, many women occupy editorial positions across the country. India has a good number of woman reporters and anchors for television news channels. Over the years, as television journalism grew, so did the role of woman journalists. There are instances of quantitative representation meaningfully materialized. ET68, a Senior News Editor, said:

“Top positions are available on the editorial board. In my office, three women work in top positions.”

PN34 said:

“In my organization, I became the senior-most when my superior retired. The chief of our online edition is also a woman. I do not think there is gender discrimination in choosing people for top management”.

The responses from women journalists were mixed. Some gave negative statements. They agreed that discrimination on the ground of gender exists in the

upper echelons of media offices as glass ceiling prevails. Others said women hesitate to grow beyond the designation of Senior Sub Editor, as it demands more responsibilities and confidence which come in the way of their family responsibilities.

ISSUES OF TECHNOLOGICAL SUPPORT AT WORKPLACE

Journalism is now technology driven and no journalist can work meaningfully without adequate technological support. The advent of digital technology has profoundly impacted the presence of women in all sectors of work. This is true in the case of media as well. Given the flexibility and freedom in journalism, digital technology makes workplace flexible, liberal and women-friendly. The main reason for the increased presence of women in media was the advent of visual media, particularly television, followed by online. Media in Kerala adopted global technological changes for sourcing, processing, and producing content to ensure better reach. Mediapersons equipped themselves to catch up with the latest trends, or through in-service courses facilitated by their organizations, or by media schools they graduated from.

Media in Kerala provided adequate technological support to women as validated by journalists who responded to the researcher. PN18 works as a Senior Sub Editor in a leading Malayalam newspaper. She joined the newspaper after working for 20 years in an English newspaper in Bhopal. She said:

“I was technologically superior, which created a favorable atmosphere for me in the current working media organization.”

But the general perception is that women are not technologically proficient. This holds true for Kerala as well. This is why the number of working women behind the camera is low. PN32, cameraperson working with a newspaper, pointed out that very few women are doing photojournalism. The field is still dominated by men.

“The main reason for poor representation of women in photojournalism is their approach towards technology. It is believed that women are not good at using technology. I joined this profession to serve society and I chose the camera as a vehicle to accomplish it.”

The respondents had a clear idea that media runs with latest technologies. In this digitally advanced age, newsrooms are replete with digital innovations. Journalists are given training in the initial stages of their career. There is no gender disparity here. In the much-developed age of Facebook and Twitter, journalists value these new-gen social media platforms. Newsrooms give way to computers in place of paper and pen.

ISSUES OF SUPPORT THEY GET TO WORK

Society at large wants women to get married, have kids, and take on family responsibilities. So women also take up teaching or clerical jobs. Women who think this is the life every woman should lead must not tread the journalistic path. Journalism is not at all a comfort zone for women.

Given the unique nature of the job and the attitude of society, it is an arduous task to weave a success story. To make it possible, women need a sound support system from their organisation, family, as well as society. Lack of institutional support enable women to handle their productive and reproductive roles without prejudice to either, which also forces many women out of full-time employment (Joseph, 2002).

Inadequate support from supervisors inflicts widespread absenteeism, low turnover, and job dissatisfaction in women. They often feel ignored. Supervisors who find it difficult to accept that women are as capable as men, at times block opportunities for them to succeed. Office favouritism is another big threat (Zambas, 2018). Lack of family support is often detrimental to the success of a working woman. Some families do not allow women to leave home, go to office and work late hours. This hampers their performance and promotion. A working woman has to confront close family and social protection (Barati et al., 2015).

Absence of such a support system leads to under-representation of women in media scene. Even the post-recruitment status of women is pathetic as they find it difficult to balance personal and professional lives without a proper support system. Many issues regarding support to work discourage women from continuing work. In Kerala as well, as viewed by the respondents who participated in the focus group interview, support to women journalists is inadequate, irrespective of the sources of support — family, society and organization.

From the newspaper, PN12, a Sub Editor, said:

“Women are not encouraged to do reporting, especially in sports and sensitive subjects. Seniors justify it by saying that they take care of women and ensure their safety. But the extra care and support women get is how discrimination is veiled. This is the case in all professions. When a woman commits a mistake, it is widely discussed. But when a man makes a mistake, all others support him.”

The organization, the management, or the seniors raise pointed objections in allowing women to cover all beats. Women’s safety is indicated as the reason; but clearly, it is gender discrimination at work.

PN41, a Reporter, pointed to the organizational disparity towards women:

“Before joining my organization, I worked in a newspaper for 19 years. There, everyone humiliated me. No other woman journalist would have tolerated the terrible torment. I have faced extreme mental torture and was deliberately tormented by being given night shifts without transport facilities. I have two daughters who live alone at home. When I complained to the top management, I was transferred. In the new place as well, I was given night shifts. Finally, I was forced to quit the job.”

Men consider women as robots designed to obey, and if they refuse, women are liable for severe mental torture. The management follows the general practice of not taking any action against the torture. More often than not, the accused, who is most likely a male, has the backing of the management and the senior staff. It is also seen than men are reluctant to obey a lady boss. PN23, Reporter in a newspaper, said:

“I suffer a lot of pressure from my colleagues for being at the top despite being a woman. Many of my male colleagues are reluctant to take instructions from a woman boss. I have had several negative experiences with my male colleagues in the past. I have learned to react immediately to negative behaviour.”

Men think that women are meant to be ruled and protected. They expect women to be submissive. If the reverse occurs, it crushes their ego. Many men belittle their woman bosses during office conversations.

The responses to the researcher showed that many media organisations provide support to women in their career. Yet, many women find it difficult to continue working as media offices show zero humanitarian consideration for women who have familial responsibilities. Almost all the respondents from electronic media, except ER69 from the radio sector and EO73 from the online media said they received good support from their organizations.

Absence of family support is a crucial impediment for the successful professional life of a working woman, especially a woman journalist. Many parents do not wish their daughters to become journalists because of the preconceived notion that the profession is replete with risks and challenges. Married women who do not get proper support from their family quit the profession. PN5, a Sub Editor, said:

“I joined this profession because of my passion for journalism. My parents opposed my decision because of the nature of the job and its odd timings. My mother said she wanted to see me married and settled. I was obstinate and decided to be a journalist despite the opposition. Even now, my parents ask me to quit the job and find a new one. But my husband and in-laws are very supportive.”

Women are expected to be good wives and good mothers. Parents are anxious for their daughters as they know that many men and their parents show reluctance when the prospect of marriage is with a woman journalist. The following is the essence of perceptions shared by many respondents.

PN6 pointed at the importance of family support:

“Women need a supportive family to continue working as journalists. My parents opposed my decision to become a journalist, as they wanted me to be a housewife. Now they complain about my unavailability at home. They are not able to accept me as a journalist. On the other hand, my husband is very

supportive. For a woman journalist, the biggest drawback is a non-supportive family.”

Parents’ prime anxiety is their daughter’s marriage. In our society, married women are expected to be the bearer of all family responsibilities. Balancing on the nimble shoulders these duties along with a profession like journalism is difficult. With this conviction, parents do not encourage women to take journalism as a profession.

PN8, a Reporter, stated:

“I do not get any family support when I decided to join this profession. My family complains every time there is a function to attend. The programmes mostly occur in the evenings, the time when I have to be in office and work.”

Lack of family support, especially after marriage, is a big reason why women think twice before joining the profession. The unscheduled and busy working timings, inability to attend to family needs and functions, and frequent travels, all contribute to the lack of family support. PN10, a Sub Editor, said:

“I am from a traditional Muslim family. I was brought up with the understanding that I would be married off when I grew up. But when I finished my studies, I chose this profession. Obviously, this was against their wish. They said that with a profession like journalism, Muslim women rarely get marriage proposals. When the time for admissions came, I put up a fight at home and joined a journalism course. I did not get any support from my family. My job is strenuous — continuing night shifts can take a toll on a person’s health. My husband is very cooperative. Earlier he would do the household chores. Now we manage the house with a domestic help. It is difficult to work as a journalist without family support. Cooperation of the spouse is very important for a happy family.”

Many women journalists have their parents living along with them. This way, one gets help in balancing household duties, especially those related to childcare. Others depend on maids. Without proper family support, women cannot step out of homes. PN11 said:

“Women journalists have to be ready to make several sacrifices. My parents never opposed me when I chose this profession. In fact, they supported me but my husband does not like me working as a journalist because of the night shifts. Because of problems in the family, I had once decided to resign. But my passion stopped me from doing so. However, the difficulties that come along with it are not hidden from anyone. The family life of a woman does get disrupted when they start working as journalists. We cannot blame anyone for it. The reason why many girls do not take up media job after completing their journalism course is family commitment. They get married and stop working.”

Support from husband is crucial for life-work balance. The odd working hours and night shifts shatter women’s married life. It gets worse in joint families. PN46, a Sub Editor, said:

“My husband knows the difficulties that come along with this profession. It is not possible to be at home in the evenings. Soon after we got married, we moved to a nuclear family set-up close to the office. Our parents come and stay with us at times. This is how we have managed home.”

Women journalists need a strong support system. Journalism is an ideal profession for women, but only if they are unmarried. PN31, a Reporter, noticed:

“I live in a joint family. All the family members regularly complain about my absence in important family functions. It is very disturbing. Many times, I have thought of quitting this job. Some of my married friends have turned to freelance work, while many have quit the profession altogether. The fact that my husband is a journalist and understands the nature of this job does not lessen the problems I face at home. It is upsetting.”

PN41, a Reporter, also said:

“Women journalists who have husbands working in a different profession face many difficulties. My husband has asked me to quit this profession because of the timing. He was always against my decision to work. I was stubborn and became a journalist. I did not want to confine myself to the four walls of my house.”

Social acceptance is far more when men skip family functions. The thought is that men have a very busy work schedule so it is okay for them to miss family functions. This logic turns upside down when working women miss family functions. Women have to brace themselves to face anger and dismay from kith and kin. It becomes overbearing in joint families where the woman deals with annoyance from all sides. This is why women journalists prefer either to live in nuclear families, or quit the profession altogether. No support from family brings the life-work imbalance. PN44, a Reporter, said:

“Though my family did not oppose my decision to join this profession, my friends were against it. The problems that they presented to me were the risk factors and inflexible work timings. They pointed out that since journalists do not get a peaceful life, I should become a teacher. My husband is also a journalist. He understands my situation well.”

Many of the respondent’s parents expressed concern about the risks involved in this profession. Some felt it is difficult to find a suitable match due to the prejudices about the profession. Journalist couples enjoy some sort of understanding, but mere understanding of the situation does not lessen the problem. Family responsibilities vested on women’s shoulders with no support from the family itself makes it difficult for women to balance life with work.

Social norms define the career of men and women. The general perception is that women should take on family responsibilities and lead a homely life — be good wives and mothers. If a woman wants to make a career, she should choose one which does not alter her duties at home. Women are meant to be at home before evenings, and night shifts are not meant for women. With these prejudices, women in Kerala can choose the job of a teacher or a clerk. Those who choose journalism for a career challenge all these social norms. A respondent from the television sector, ET57, who works as Junior Broadcast journalist, said:

“I live in a village area. As I work on the desk, I reach home very late in the night. My neighbours question the timings. I get apprehensive stares from many of them. It is very discomfoting.”

People, especially in small towns, perceive journalism as a license for indulgence. The older generation cannot accept the fact that the job requires

working through the day as well as night. This attitude requires a desperate change. PN9, a Senior Reporter, said:

“When people come to my office to deliver press notes, they look for men journalists. Only when they are not available do these people come to us women reporters.”

Society does not expect women to be journalists. They are considered incapable. Women reporters have shown their capability to have good sources. However, the sources are usually limited in number. This is because men can chat for long hours with the source to cull out stories. Women do not have that much of free time. PN11, a Senior Sub Editor, said:

“When a woman journalist goes along with a male photographer to cover a story, especially at night, people misread it.”

People in a conservative society see woman journalists with apprehension. ET61, Reporter in a television channel, complained about moral policing.

“When we go out to cover stories with our male colleagues in the night, common people give us questioning looks. There are times when we ourselves fail to act when problems arise. This is because we do not get enough public support. We need to be more courageous, else we will not be able to continue working.”

Society needs to be more open-minded and change its outlook towards women. It is not easy to bring about this change all of a sudden. It should start with the involvement of each individual in society. This will take time. Another respondent, PN12, a Sub Editor, said:

“Woman journalists are considered arrogant. Society has specified comfortable jobs for women. We should break this misconception and come forward to take up challenging jobs. Only then will the misconceptions and stereotyping of woman journalists change.”

Chief Sub Editor PN51 shared her experience:

“During my training period, I wanted to rent a house near the office. Hostels do not admit women who work on night shift. It was unfortunate that I could

not find any house in the area. People are not ready to accept a journalist's lifestyle and late nights."

There are so many stereotypical notions about women in society. People doubt talent in women. The discrimination in society exists in journalism as well. Sub Editor PN46 from the newspaper sector said:

"There are some people who think that journalists know everything, and can deal with any issue presented to them. There are some people who think that mediapersons are frauds, or are political mouthpieces. At the same time, there are people who know that media is for people's benefit; it exists to provide information and give opinions."

Society has created a work frame for women which have set timings. Breaking this social frame is difficult. Women try to fit into it with the value system provided by the elders. They restrict themselves because of a variety of fears. People have the tendency to generalize in case of women. However, the social situation is changing. Now, society has started accepting journalism as a profession just like any other. This positive attitude will mitigate the odd feeling shown towards women journalists.

LIFE-WORK BALANCE ISSUES

Work and family are two most important aspects of a woman's life. Balancing work and family roles is a serious issue for many women (Barati et al., 2015). A woman's personal life tends to suffer due to her work commitments and vice-versa (Zambas 2018). The woman's family feels neglected, she loses her friends and has to face the wrath of the entire support system (Reddy, n.d). This makes it important for the woman to efficiently manage her time and effort. Many women are scared to start a family with the belief that their career would suffer. The modern woman struggles to strike a balance between work and family, often sacrificing the latter to rise within her organization and gain social recognition (Catalyst, 2017).

Childbirth can get complicated for working women. Most workplaces do not have daycare/childcare facilities. Insufficient maternity leave is a major issue that working mothers face. It has an adverse impact on their performance at work as well as their personal life (Diwan 2015). Many companies openly discuss marriage

and family plans of women recruits because they are reluctant to provide maternity and other flexible benefits. Some organizations do grant maternity leaves for the first two children, but once the woman resumes work, her role may no longer be the same. She may have to start from the beginning all over again (Reddy, n.d).

As far as women media professionals in Kerala are considered, family responsibility is the biggest challenge for professional growth. Women work hard in office, but the family expects them to do all the household duties as well. Men, on the other hand, steer clear of all domestic responsibilities. The huge burden forces many women journalists to end their career after marriage. It is difficult to balance career and family — two big responsibilities. Journalism as a profession does not allow women to spend enough time with their family. Women need families that support them to pursue their career as long as they wish to.

In this study, the researcher problematized the life-work balance of women because the issue still prevails in media in Kerala. The issue is a reality and most relevant as validated by many journalists who responded to the researcher.

A journalist's job is such that strictly adhering to the stipulated work timing is difficult, working hours get stretched and includes different shifts, even night shifts. Completing an assignment at a given time is not always possible, leading to working overtime. That's the work culture. Making family commitments while managing the profession is a challenge. PN9, a Senior Reporter, said:

"We have to work for long hours in this profession. The result is that we neglect some crucial domestic duties and responsibilities. Professional life eats up our personal life. It hurts when we are unable to spend enough time with our families."

From the online media sector, EO74, a Chief Editor, said:

"It is true that I am not able to spend a lot of time with the family. Sometimes it's difficult to manage family life along with professional life. For example, we may not be able to attend all family functions. But now I have become used to it, and it also helps children in the sense that they learn to become self-sufficient. I was lucky to have a support system. While working, the

atmosphere in the family is important. We can concentrate on the job only if we are not stressed mentally.”

Unlike other professions, flexibility in work hours is not at all possible in journalism. One cannot get enough time to spend with family, relatives or friends. Especially after marriage, women find it difficult to balance both personal and professional responsibilities. PN2, a Sub Editor, said:

“When I was unmarried, balancing work and family was a smooth sail. Responsibilities that came with marriage and the stressful work timings together started giving trouble. At present, my child is small. I know that late nights become harrowing when children start going to school. So, I am looking for a job where I can work in the morning.”

Journalism is a profession that demands a lot of time. It is not a job that has strict timings. In fact, a journalist cannot be free in the evenings. A journalist has to cover important issues, even if they occur in the middle of the night. The very next morning, an appointment could be fixed for an interview — the mind is always on the go. This is the nature of the profession. Women who have responsibilities at home may find it difficult to cope with. For a family where both the husband and the wife are journalists, the situation gets worse, said PN5, a Sub Editor:

“My husband is a journalist, just as I am. Getting leave is not a difficulty but getting leave on the same days is the problem. I get the time to spend with my family, but not on festivals. My parents complain about my absence on special occasions. Despite my efforts, I am unable to be with them in these times.”

Family responsibilities, especially those of children, is the main reason why many women quit the profession half way of their career. A working woman leads a multifaceted life. This is not the problem only in journalism. In fact, every woman goes through this problem. ET68, a Senior News Editor in the television said:

“A working woman has to balance her professional and personal life. I do not get enough time to spend with my daughter. But she has adjusted to our lifestyle. Journalists either do not have children, or have only one child. This is an adjustment journalists make to balance professional and personal life. I

have felt an urge to leave this job. The only thing that haunts me is my lonely child.”

PN15, a Chief Sub Editor, said:

“I do not have time to attend to my daughter’s needs. It is painful that I cannot help her in studies. I decided to have only one child because I knew finding time to spend with children would be difficult. I feel guilty for not spending quality time with her. She is unhappy because of this.”

As a growing society, everybody talks about giving independence and strength to women, sharing domestic work, and understanding the burden and limitations women have. However, reality is quite far from this. The duty of caring for and raising the child ultimately falls on women. They have to adapt to the circumstances and change themselves as per everyone’s requirements. That’s why a lot of women stop working after their children are born.

Many working women seek assistance from parents or domestic helpers for looking after children. None of the media organizations in Kerala provide childcare facilities in office. This is a big problem for working women journalist. PN2, a Sub Editor, said:

“I live with my husband, children, and mother. I cannot manage my family along with work as it involves late night duty. My mother’s presence at home gives me tremendous relief.”

PN10, a Sub Editor, also said:

“In Indian society, family and children are the sole responsibility of women. I manage my children with help from a domestic help. Even small responsibilities such as dropping children to school and picking them up seem Herculean for a sleep-deprived person. If the family is not supportive, it is difficult to manage the profession.”

Limited time for family bonding is one big drawback of this profession. Compared to other professions, journalism does not allow enough time for the family. This brings a plethora of troubles, especially after women get married and have children. PN1, Special Correspondent, said:

“If you are passionate about your job, do not marry. It is difficult for any woman to balance personal life with profession. I am forced to skip most functions at home because of my work commitments. At the same time, I cannot use my full potential at work because of my familial responsibilities.”

Responsibility towards the family restricts women from working to the full potential in office. Excelling as a worker, a mother, wife, daughter, and a daughter-in-law becomes a difficult proposition. But for those who consider profession ahead of all other responsibilities, life-work balance is not at all a thing to be bothered about. PN7, a Joint Editor, said:

“I am very sincere towards my profession, so I try to take minimum leaves. I give much more importance to my profession than my family.”

But this is not possible for all, especially in a state like Kerala, where people are bound with certain unwritten social rules. The most difficult time for a woman is when her child is small and solely depends on the mother. It is a critical period in her life. Usually, this is also the time when women are entering a stable stage in the profession. So, it is difficult to cope with the pressure of both personal and professional lives. This leads to a dip in performance in office.

Journalism is ideal for unmarried women who are passionate about the profession. Irregular timings and difficulty in managing personal and professional lives are the main reasons that prevent married women from choosing this profession. PN13, a Sub Editor, said:

“Single women have a better professional life in journalism. The biggest challenge for a woman journalist comes after marriage. Her commitments towards the family far exceed that of the man. I work at night and sleep during daytime. I have a child to look after. I barely get time for myself to do anything creative. I keep postponing my personal as well as professional duties, assuring myself that I will do them when my child grows up and becomes independent. It is important to have a partner who is cooperative and shares home duties. It is unfortunate that in India society is not yet progressive; family members are not yet ready to accept women’s inability to fulfil all the family responsibilities.”

It's society's belief that women are responsible for household works, looking after children and the elderly. Our society has not yet grown up to think differently. Most men do not work at home and enjoy the privilege of being served by their better halves. When they reach office, they are relaxed and can work with full concentration. Women's energy gets divided between house chores and work. It is natural for their performance level to dip. As far as men are considered, night shift is convenient. PN5, a Sub Editor, said:

“Night shift is not as convenient for women as it is for men. Men return home from work, sleep in the morning and again go to work in the evening. A woman cannot sleep as soon as she reaches home, as a long list of household work awaits her. In the morning she cannot escape from the daily household chores. She can catch only a few hours of sleep. As the day ends, it's time to go to work again.”

Night duty is a problem for women not only because of the odd working hours, but also because of the household responsibilities. Be it desk or the bureau, evening is the most happening time in the print media. This is also the time when women want to be home. As men mostly steer clear of domestic responsibilities, they are available for professional work all the time. PN15, a Chief Sub Editor, said:

“I did not opt to work in the bureau because of the long hours and unexpected timings there. This is the reason why all women prefer to work on the desk.”

Kerala is not a poor state, so people tell working women, “Why do you want to struggle so much for money? Stay at home with your family.” Married working women have a dual responsibility — take care of family and work well in office. Balancing both is a humongous task. So there are many men who do not wish to marry journalists. Media organizations are also reluctant to employ married women. PN25, a Sub Editor, said:

“A lot of people are reluctant to marry women journalists. There are many preconceived notions about them.”

From the magazine sector, PM54, a Reporter, said:

“Men in Kerala are not ready to accept women who think independently. This triggers fear in the mind of parents. Women who want to lead peaceful

married life find many practical difficulties in this field. This is the main reason for the poor representation of women in media.”

From the television sector, ET63, a Broadcast Journalist, echoed this:

“Women journalists in the Muslim community seldom get marriage proposals. Society has a bad image of these women. It is shocking that questions are raised even on their chastity. People look at men and women journalists in two different ways. While men journalists are assessed as talented and efficient, women journalists are criticised and condemned for shirking family duties. In Kerala, family is of prime importance. This is why people here blend family and work responsibilities.”

Religion and culture of a society defines the amount of responsibilities a woman is burdened with. Those who are courageous enough to fight the norms, design their own lifestyle. Those who are not, struggle to balance their aspirations with the archaic social norms.

Prisoned in social norms, women are still trying to understand the right way to handle responsibilities. It is very difficult for new mothers who feed their infants. No media house in Kerala provides childcare facility. It is unfortunate that women feel more responsible towards their family than men.

Responses from the journalists interviewed clearly show that life-work balance is a major challenge for women in media. Kerala, which claims to have a high level of literacy and women empowerment, is also afflicted with life-work imbalance.

ISSUES OF SELF CONFIDENCE IN THEIR PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCY

There are two big reasons for the poor representation of women in senior positions — their low confidence and seniors’ prejudice against them. Women need to be more confident and bold in proving their mettle. For long, women have been fed with the misbelief that they are professionally inadequate. Result: even when opportunity strikes, women choose to work on soft stories rather than on hard news (Pandey, 2011). It is important for women that they learn to fight and survive. They

have to prove themselves and make their worth known. This is true not only in journalism but in all professions.

When a woman reaches the senior-most position in her organization, there is a lot of speculation on her journey to the top. Male co-workers often comment on women's "friendly" attitude, often making women quit office (Reddy, n.d). Many women are too scared to take risks fearing failure. Women cannot grow if they remain scared that their abilities will always be questioned. They must be sure of themselves and believe that they have reached the top because of their skill (Zambas, 2018).

In Kerala, women are largely underrepresented in media. However, majority of them prefer desk job as it reduces the risk of traveling to unscheduled locations and reporting from sensitive areas. A large number of women quit the profession after three or five years of work experience. The researcher problematized the confidence of professional competency of women media professionals in Kerala, the lack of which can lead to widespread side-stepping from the profession. PM53, Feature Editor in a magazine, said:

"I think women have the capacity to work excessively hard and for long hours. They also have lots of intelligent ideas. However, the new generation scribes lack the passion and confidence that journalists of the era gone by possessed. I struggled a lot to reach the position I am in today. Most of the starters in this profession will not make half the effort that I made. This is the reason they leave the profession half-way."

Many journalists who have just started their career, lack confidence or are unwilling to go through the struggles that the profession entails. These journalists take a step back and leave the profession. From the television sector, ET65, a Broadcast Journalist, said:

"Many women journalists have proved themselves. Many lag because situations do not allow them to grow. Journalism has acute shortage of people who can boost you, and encourage you to perform well. So the fight is largely one's own. Women have to come forward and do confidence-building on their own initiative."

Journalism is a very demanding profession. It requires journalists to have a passionate attitude so that dealing with odd timings and other exacting works become easy. The profession is, indeed, male-dominated. In such a situation, women have to struggle hard to succeed. PN1, a Special Correspondent, said that lack of confidence among women is one big reason for their low number in the senior and decision-making positions.

“I have always lacked confidence in myself. My profession demands not only being inquisitive and interested in everything around myself but also interaction with everyone. I hesitate to take proactive steps. It was my interest in writing that drew me towards journalism, and soon I found my way out of the predicament. I chose soft topics which I felt strongly about to work on, such as environment and women’s issues. Now I am confident about my capabilities and am among the most competent journalists in these fields.”

Intrinsically, women feel that they are not capable of dealing with hard core topics. This perpetuates gender stereotyping in the profession. Women largely select soft stories and confine themselves to desk duties. PN4, a Reporter, said:

“Most offices have a handful of seniors who are apprehensive about women’s capabilities. To an extent, they are correct. Very few woman journalists are interested in political reporting. There are some who are interested, but are not confident enough. Women should not be apprehensive about doing political stories. We should consider politics as any other beat. If we make an effort to learn, it is simple and interesting.”

The response sheds light on the fact that women need to drop their inhibitions and start working on hard stories. It is unfortunate that women do not make any effort to step out of their comfort zone and learn something different. Another respondent, ET60, from the television sector, said:

“We, woman journalists need to be confident about our capabilities. Hard work and positive thinking combine to make confident journalists.”

Lack of confidence among woman journalists is a personal, not professional problem. ET62, Broadcast Journalist in the television sector, said:

“Many women withdraw from society and confine themselves within homes. It is imperative for women to be self-independent and come out of their houses to earn. Monetary contribution to run the house, even if with a small amount, is a big confidence booster.”

There are no limitations on woman scribes. They can work just as they want to. Women have set limitations on them. However, it is a fact that some seniors have a bias against women and lack confidence in them. PN23, a Reporter, said:

“My male colleagues do not consider me at par. The reason why women are in this situation is because of their inability to fight men’s efforts to suppress them. Women have to face a number of challenges after they decide to start working. In fact, it is a big fight to continue working. It is difficult to compete with men simply because they outnumber us in almost all media organizations.”

PN42, a Reporter, said:

“These days, women are very powerful. If they have talent, nobody can belittle them. It is important that just like boys are exposed to different work opportunities, girls are also shown the many professions that exist. Women are slowly marching ahead in this profession, and will soon be at par with men. But till then, they are bound to be less confident. But things are changing slowly.”

Men and women have their own space in the profession. No one is inferior because of gender. What is required is dedication. Women are so burdened with responsibilities that vesting extra effort in the profession is difficult. PN21, a Senior Reporter, said:

“Women have to take the initiative to improve their status. When reporting, they should work hard and do special stories. These days, no one is willing to make that extra effort. I doubt if all the girls who complete journalism course are passionate about working. For many, it is just another course that women take up before getting married. These women forget about journalism as soon as they start a family.”

Reasons that are domestic as well as societal hinder women's efficiency in professional life. They lag in the competition with their men colleagues. This results in their low status in journalism. PN27, a Sub Editor, said:

"The most difficult time for a woman is when her child is small and is solely dependent on the mother. These are the times when the woman's performance shows drastic variations. At such times, we need compassion and encouragement so that we can continue working."

Media organizations seldom make an effort to develop women's talent. But when passion is at work, there are no limitations for women in any field. Respondent PN24 said:

"Three factors make journalism a difficult proposition for women — timing, work area, and interactions. Journalists do not have fixed work timings. It is not a '9 to 5 job', so returning to family in the evening is impossible. Second, there is no fixed work area for reporters. We have to meet all kinds of people every day. Because of these things, people perceive the profession to be risky and an exclusive domain of men."

Women should make efforts to prove themselves. They should not expect special attention or care. If a woman is talented, she will definitely rise in the profession. There are many girls who become journalists only because of the glamour it offers. Media institutes are thriving with girl students. How many of them make it to the media industry? This is something that needs introspection.

Women, who do not come forward confidently to prove themselves, struggle to survive. Many women have second thoughts when they are given out-of-town assignments. This attitude should be changed. PN25, a Sub Editor, said:

"Opportunities for women to prove their excellence come rarely, so proving their talent becomes difficult. A journalist's talent lies in identifying high-value news and presenting them in unique ways. The mental satisfaction that we get from our work is very essential for us. Along with that, we should demand the recognition that we deserve for our work. This will help elevate our status."

Women have to come out of the closed doors and improve their condition. More women are working on the desk of media houses. Readers or viewers or

listeners don't even know about their presence. There is no recognition to their work.

There is a misconception that men are more suited for journalism. Women should do the job if they are passionate about it and should not care about the opinion of others. If women try, they can do the job just like men do. Also, lack of thorough knowledge about the work shatters one's confidence. PN38, a Reporter, said:

“Better education can bring a positive change. There is a difference between a diploma and a post-graduation course. Post-graduation courses in most universities in Kerala revolve around theories. On the contrary, diploma courses are more practical in nature. Educational institutions should give more practical lessons to students. This will boost their confidence.”

PN45, Reporter in a newspaper, pointed to the need for proper education in journalism.

“Earlier, women in media were rare. There are many women journalists now. I see many girl trainees in the Press Club. I do not know how many of them are serious about the profession. Women must approach the profession with sincerity. The new generation has lost interest in reading newspapers. This is a serious drawback. A huge difference exists between reality and what's taught in media classes.”

Lack of sound practical education can lead to poor confidence level. It can also be the reason for women quitting the profession early in life. These days, many institutes offer diploma courses in mass communication. The number of people entering this field is increasing day by day. The quality of education offered by these institutions should be ensured. Proper education combined with talent and hard work make journalists confident. PN40, a Senior Reporter, said:

“Girls enter the profession with fancied ideas about journalism. When they join, they understand that it's entirely different, so they leave. Without total dedication, no one can stick to the profession. Women need to come forward and take bold steps to elevate their own position in journalism.”

PN52, a Sub Editor, also said:

“There should be social commitment for those who opt for a career in journalism. But this is losing its value now. Media ethics is no longer too important. Now, the only focus is on getting exclusive stories. A journalist’s prime commitment should be towards society.”

Journalism, in fact, is a job where journalists have to work with a lot of social commitment. One can do a lot for society. To accomplish that, the requirement is extreme dedication. The one who is well aware of the profession can do many things. PN46, a Sub Editor, said:

“Women should work hard and prove their talent. This way, they will acquire recognition. They must take risks, challenges and responsibilities. Journalism does not exist without these. Women should build their own aims and goals. They should understand the reality, and be courageous enough to face any challenge. If women prove themselves, even the organization will support them. Women must make a strong foundation, and then move forward.”

From the radio sector, ER71, a Reporter, said:

“Self upgradation and sharpening of skills are two important things that can elevate the status of women journalists. Women should be confident and react appropriately to situations. Since a lot of people enter the field, the demand for employees is decreasing. Journalists should always be up-to-date. They should constantly sharpen their writing and presentation skills. They should remain a student and be ready to learn new things every day.”

Prejudice against women does not exist nowadays. The presence of women in television channels has played a major role in this. As women do invigorating political reporting on television channels, people have understood the immense talent that exists in the women’s world.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The first objective of the study was to explore the challenges faced by women media professionals in Kerala in terms of their professional dimensions. Based on the explorative nature of the objective, the researcher executed focus group

interview to derive perspectives, perceptions and experiences of women media professionals. Responses from the focus group interview indicate that women media persons in Kerala face varying levels of challenges in diverse aspects of their professional life.

Lack of women friendly facilities are identified in the media organizations in Kerala. Less payment and insecure nature of job are also challenging issues for women journalists. They felt poor representation of women in the upper echelons of media houses. Gender stereotyping, unequal promotion opportunities and sexual exploitation are found to be prevailing in media houses in Kerala. But they noted adequate technological support and training in technology.

Some of the women journalists received less support from male colleagues and superiors. They experienced the ego and prejudiced treatment of these senior colleagues. Reluctance from family to accept journalism as a career for their daughters as well as the preconceptions of society towards women is perceived as challenging factors. Many women journalists opine that they struggle for life-work balance. Lack of confidence is perceived as one of the reasons for increased rate of women in the desk work, dealing with soft stories as well as quitting the job midway.

PART II: QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS

The second part of the chapter gives an analysis of data pertaining to the second and third objectives of the study, which warrant the quantitative method. This is because the hypotheses formulated on the basis of these objectives were dealt with the influence of the interaction among independent variables on dependent variable of women journalists' satisfaction with various dimensions of their professional life.

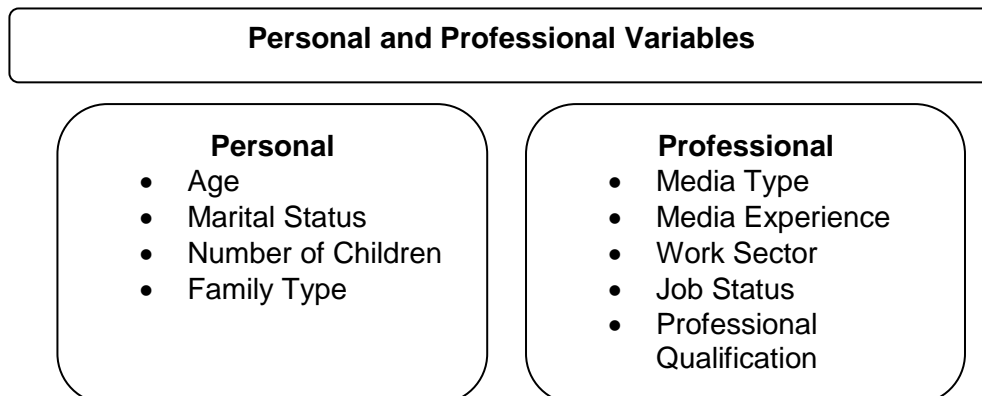
The quantitative data was collected in accordance with the qualitative data because the entire discussion is centred on the concept of the professional challenges, and their dimensions and factors. The dimensions of challenges discussed were: Work Environment, Unequal Treatment at Work, Technological Support at Workplace, Support to Work, Life-work Balance, and Confidence in Professional Competency.

Quantitative data was collected from the sampled women media professionals in Kerala. The population of the study was the women media professionals enlisted in the directory published by the Public Relations Department, Government of Kerala in 2014. A detailed account of the population is discussed in the introductory session of Part I of this chapter.

SAMPLE PROFILE

Of the total 289 women journalists enlisted in the Public Relations Department (PRD) directory, 165 were sampled for the survey. Questionnaires were administered to all 165 of them. The sample size was fixed on the basis of the criteria set in the sampling requirement proposed by Krejcie and Morgan (1970). The number of persons who responded to the survey was 109. All the respondents answered all the questions in the questionnaire. The questionnaire was statistically analysed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) after proper validation and data cleaning. The 109 respondents form 37.72 per cent of the total women journalists in Kerala. The researcher used the PRD directory to collect the population because it is the only authentic account of the basic profiles of women journalists in Kerala. The survey excludes journalists who are not listed in the directory. It does not include freelance journalists either. The survey was a systematic multi-stage exercise and ensured representation of all parts of the state and types of media.

Figure 4.2: Personal and Professional Profile of Women Journalists



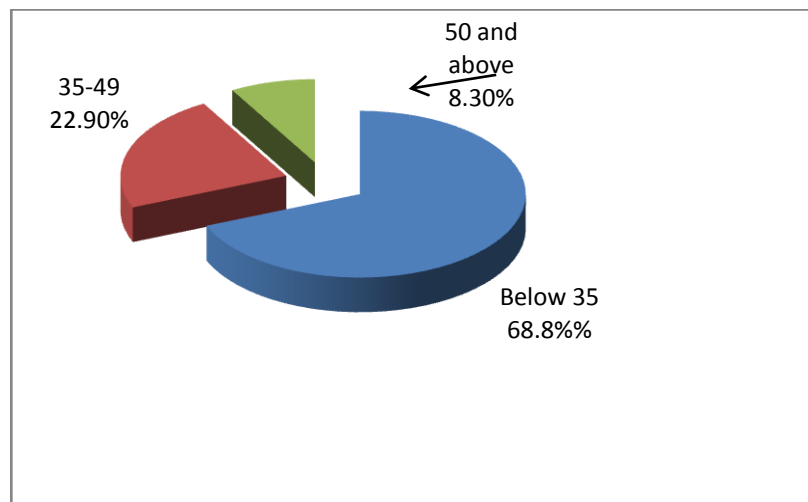
The survey focused on personal variables like Age, Education, Marital Status, Number of Children, and the Type of Family a woman journalist lived in. It

also included professional variables such as Type of Media, Media Experience, Professional Education, Status and Sector of the Job. Data was collected between November 1, 2015 and July 30, 2016. The questionnaires was distributed to the respondents mostly in person by the researcher. The basic details of the sample are given under the following sub-heads.

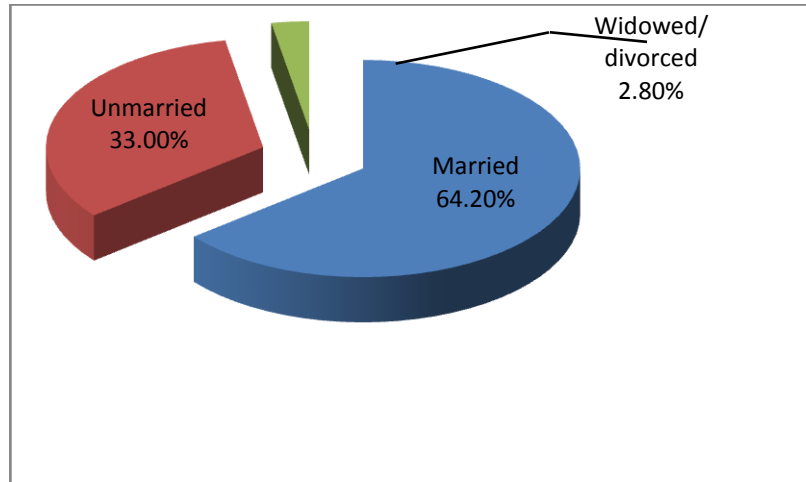
Personal Profile

The data collected reveals that the average age of women journalists in Kerala is 32 years. The fact that majority of the sampled journalists, that is 68.8 per cent, belong to the lower age group of below 35 years, ensures the demographic dividend of the women journalists in Kerala.

Figure 4.3: Age of Women Journalists

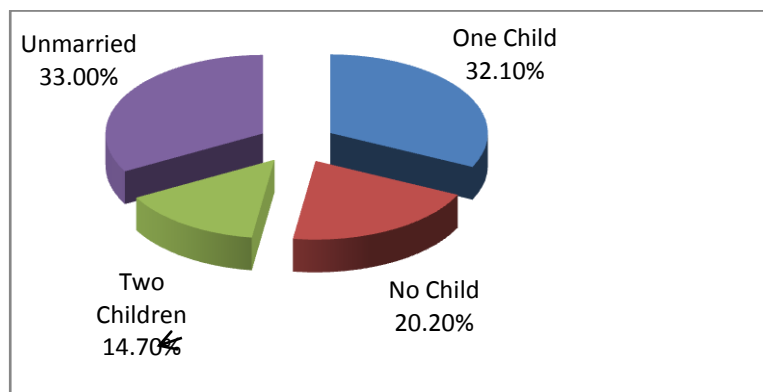


The phenomenon can be attributed to the emergence of new types of media platforms and the changing concept of the journalistic profession, particularly among women. The chronological growth of the entry of women in journalism in Kerala is clearly visible from the data. While the upper age group was represented with 8.3 per cent, the middle age group was represented with 22.9 per cent, and the lower age group with 68.8 per cent.

Figure 4.4: Marital Status of Women Journalists

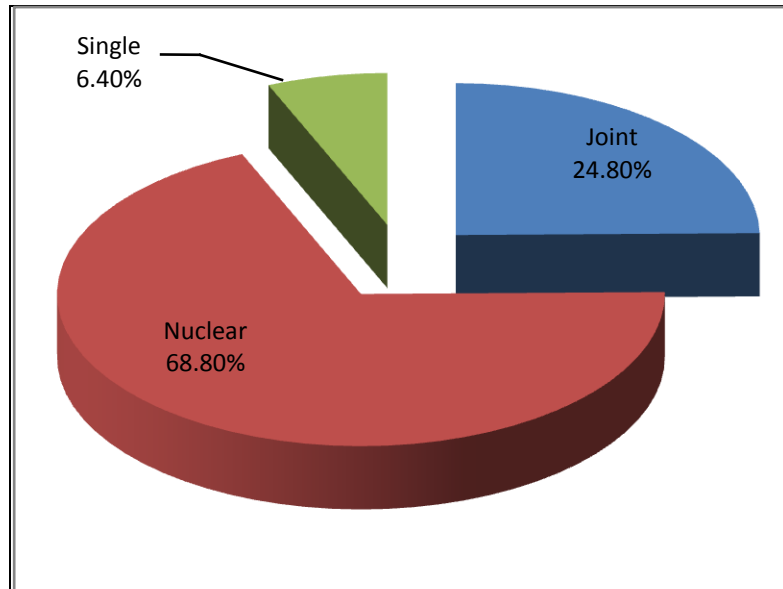
Women journalists identify domestic responsibilities after marriage as one of the biggest hurdles in showing their excellence in the profession. Data indicates that women journalists in Kerala have managed to withstand this difficulty, as most the women studied (64.2 per cent) were married and continue to work, whereas one-third of the population (33 per cent) were unmarried, and a few were either divorced or widowed (2.8 per cent).

It is generally seen that making a family and raising children is the cherished goal of most working women. They tend to become vulnerable during pregnancy because they face the pressure of balancing life with a well-protected job on the one side, and the health and well-being of their family on the other. Most often, childcare throws their life and work off balance. Many married women are forced to limit the number of children they have to reduce the complications of balancing life with work.

Figure 4.5: Number of Children of Women Journalists

Data shows that women journalists in Kerala have dared to challenge the obstacles in making a mark in their professional lives. There are 32.1 per cent women journalists who have one child, while 14.7 per cent have two children. Combined, the two groups constitute 46.8 per cent of the sampled journalists.

Figure 4.6: Family Type of Women Journalists



A good 68.8 per cent of the sampled women journalists live in nuclear families. One-fourth, or 24.8 per cent, of them live in joint families, whereas only a few, 6.4 per cent, live single. This data can be attributed to the new trend of nuclear families emerging in Kerala. Over the years, the number of nuclear families has increased in the state. According to the 1981 Census, nuclear families constituted 68 per cent of all households. The 2001 Census revealed that there are 70.4 per cent nuclear households in the country. According to the 1992-93 National Family Health Survey (NFHS), there were 50.6 per cent nuclear families and 20.6 per cent joint families. As per NFHS-2, which was conducted in 1998-1999, there were 61.30 per cent nuclear households in Kerala. NFHS-3, conducted in 2005-06, shows there are 54.8 per cent nuclear families and 45.2 per cent non-nuclear families. As per Census 2011 data on housing, household amenities and assets, 57.9 per cent constitute nuclear families whereas 38.5 per cent are joint.

Professional Profile

The researcher collected data from women journalists who work in major media houses in Kerala. Table 4.4 gives the professional profile, which includes Type of Media, Experience, Work Sector, Professional Qualification and Job Status.

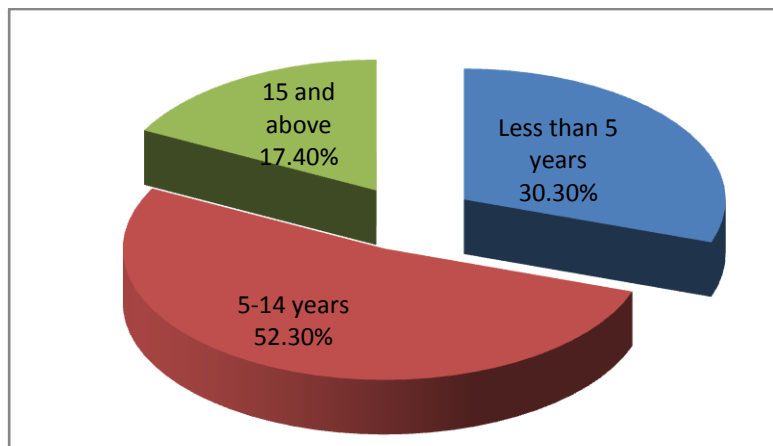
Table 4.4: Media-wise Distribution of Women Journalists

Media Type	Frequency	Percentage
Newspaper	68	62.4
Magazine	7	6.4
Television	17	15.6
Radio	7	6.4
Online	10	9.2
Total	109	100

Irrespective of the invasion and widespread acceptance of online news media, print journalism and journalists dominated the entire media scenario worldwide. This traditional pattern is evident in the representation of women journalists in Kerala as well.

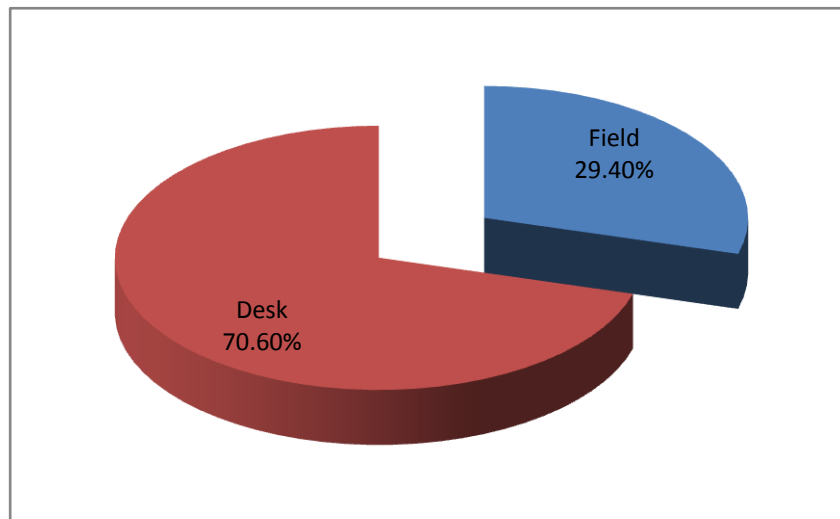
This study was conducted on women newsmen working with the Radio, Television, Newspaper, Magazine, and Online news websites and portals. Data indicated that majority of the samples include women journalists employed in newspapers (62.4 per cent) and magazines (6.4 per cent). These two groups together indicate that in proportion to the population of women journalists in media, print women journalists (68.8 per cent) constituted the majority, followed by television (15.6 per cent), online (9.2 per cent), and then radio (6.4 per cent).

Figure 4.7: Media Experience of Women Journalists

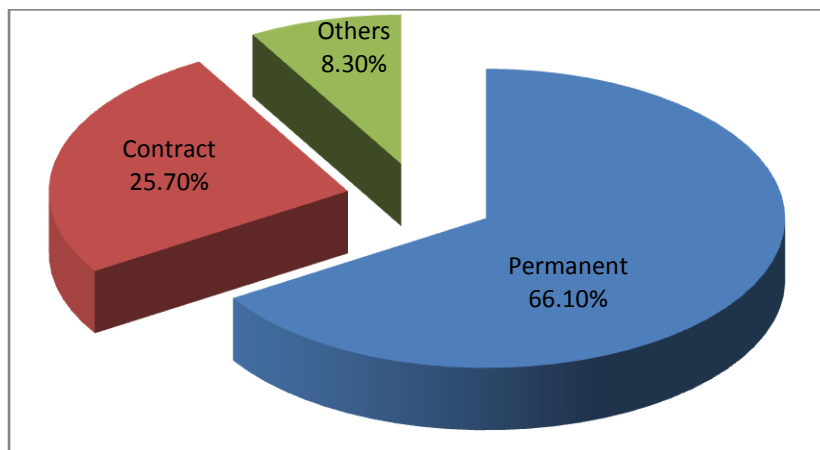


The general trend seems that women quit the job after a few years of work experience (Weaver & Willnat, 2014). They either join other well-paid jobs with the work experience, or choose more convenient and comfortable occupations. This trend was clearly visible in the data (see Figure 4.7) which showed that a minority of women journalists (17.4 per cent) were on the field for 15 or more years, while more than half of the samples (52.3 per cent) had five to 14 years of experience in the media, and nearly one-third (30.3 per cent) had less than five years of media experience.

Figure 4.8: Work Sector of Women Journalists



Reporting from the field is considered glamorous in journalism, but as far as women are concerned, field work becomes a burden due to issues like personal security and familial responsibilities, especially post-marriage. Majority of the women find interest in soft story-writing, especially feature-writing which constitutes the desk job. The work sector of women journalists in this study was identified as desk and field (see Figure 4.8). In accordance to the general trend, nearly two-fourth of the samples (70.6 per cent) do desk work, while a remarkable portion (29.4 per cent) are on the field. Though women were willing to opt field work, organisations they work for assign desk duty to them giving personal security as the reason.

Figure 4.9: Job Status of Women Journalists

Job insecurity is one of the rationales not only for women, but also for men who leave the profession. Many media organisations employ journalists on contract basis, which results in financial and job insecurity. At the same time, permanency may be the reason for women to continue the job. But as per data, women journalists in Kerala are more or less secure in their jobs. A good 66.1 per cent of them were employed as permanent staff in their organisations, whereas 25.7 per cent were employed on contract basis, and 8.3 per cent were on probation or training.

Table 4.5: Professional Qualification of Women Journalists

Professional Qualification	Frequency	Percentage
Graduation	3	2.8
Diploma	46	42.2
Post-Graduation and Above	59	54.1
No Professional Qualification	1	0.9
Total	109	100.0

Table 4.5 indicates that most women journalists in Kerala hold professional educational qualification. There are 54.1 per cent women journalists who hold professional post-graduate degree. There are 42.2 per cent women journalists with a diploma or certificate course in hand, and 2.8 per cent have a professional degree. Together, these constitute 99.1 per cent of the total samples. A minuscule 0.9 per cent of the samples were not professionally educated.

CHALLENGES OF WOMEN JOURNALISTS IN KERALA

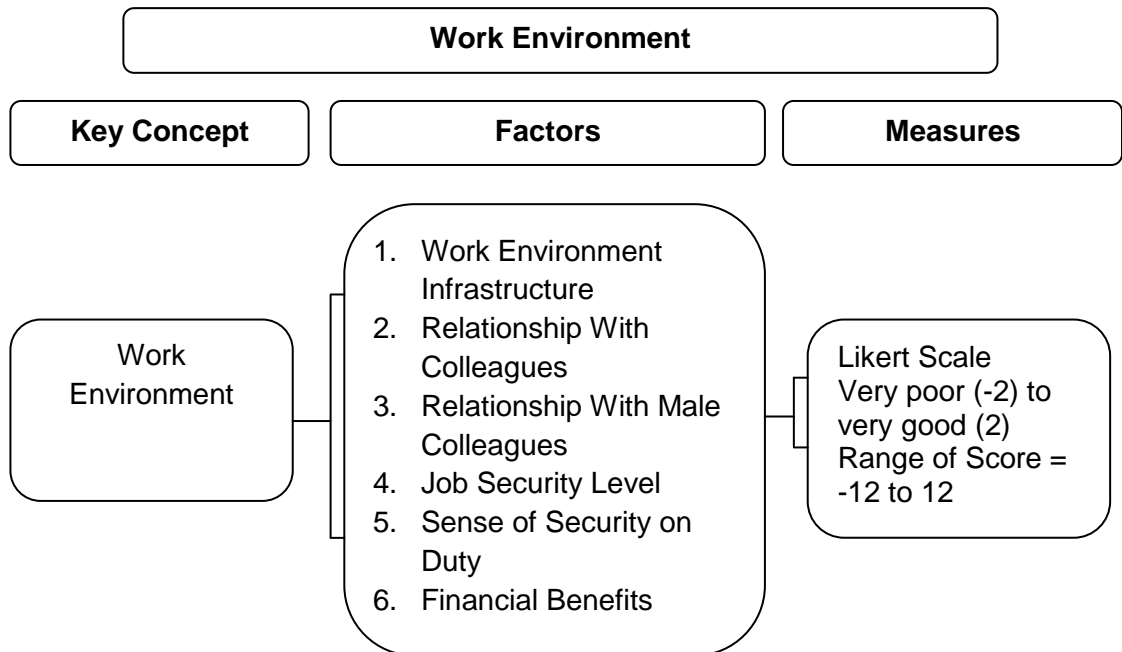
The study canters on six dimensions of women journalists' possible professional challenges in the media sector in Kerala.

- a) Work Environment
- b) Unequal Treatment at Work
- c) Technological Support at Workplace
- d) Support at Work
- e) Life-work Balance
- f) Confidence in Professional Competency

After establishing the presence or the absence of these dimensions in Part I of the analysis chapter, the researcher found their nature and intensity by measuring women journalists' satisfaction in each aspect of their professional life. The quantitative data analysis was based on these six dimensions of professional challenges, and their interaction with personal and professional variables. The key to this method of measurement is that lesser the satisfaction, higher is the intensity of the challenge. Each concept consisted of five to six factors, conceived from various previous studies, marked on a 5-point Likert Scale (very poor=-2 to very good=2) assuming that the value of neutral position is 0.

WORK ENVIRONMENT ISSUES

The rating for satisfactory work environment was measured using six factors — Work Environment Infrastructure, Relationship With Colleagues, Relationship With Male Colleagues, Job Security Level, Sense of Security while on duty and Financial Benefits. These were marked on a 5-point Likert Scale.

Figure 4.10: Work Environment

The item mean was elicited from a scale ranging from -2 to 2, while the factor mean was obtained from a scale ranging from -12 to 12.

Table 4.6: Work Environment: Component Mean Score of Satisfaction

Component	Mean	Std. Deviation
Work Environment Infrastructure	.91	.834
Relationship With Colleagues in General	1.15	.743
Relationship with Male Colleagues	1.11	.698
Job Security Level	.76	.999
Sense of Security On Duty	1.05	.672
Financial Benefits	.26	1.101
Total	5.23	5.047

The range of score in rating for satisfactory work environment is -12 to 12 and in each component is -2 to 2

The measurement determines that the least satisfying factor is the most challenging. In that sense, Financial Benefits (M=.26, SD=1.101) was found to be

the most challenging factor, followed by Job Security ($M=.76$, $SD=.999$). As indicated by the higher SD in the case of Financial Benefits, it is clear that within the gender, there was gender disparity in payments and job insecurity between the permanent and the contract staff. Work Environment Infrastructure was also unsatisfactory ($M=.91$, $SD=.834$). However, the Relationship With Colleagues in General, and with Male Colleagues in Particular, and the Sense of Security while on duty were less challenging for women journalists.

To sum up, the most challenging issues for women journalists at workplace were less payment and the insecure nature of the job. These issues are related to the new liberal market policies after the 1990s in the industry sector. Newspapers, bound by the Wage Board recommendations, found a way out to pay the employees less by employing them on contract. Other Media Types, like Online and Electronic, are not even responsible for the mandatory minimum wage system.

Given the basic reasons for the challenges, the unsatisfactory work environment for women journalists is likely to continue till the wider market policy is changed. These challenges are not confined to women journalists alone, as their male counterparts also face similar challenges. Hence, these cannot be termed as professional challenges specific to women journalists.

Influence of Personal Variables on Satisfaction with Work Environment

There are two vital questions in relation to the challenges pertaining to work environment. Are the challenges identical to all the women journalists sampled? And, does the intensity of the challenge vary according to individual? To ascertain this, the mean score of work environment satisfaction in terms of the personal variables Age, Marital Status, Number of Children, and Family Type were subjected to one-way analysis of variance, or ANOVA. Table 4.7 gives the results.

Table 4.7: Satisfactory Work Environment Score by Personal Variables

Variables and Groups	Group Statistics				ANOVA Results				
	N	Mean Score	Std. Deviation	Std. error mean	Between/ Within Group	Sum of squares	df	F	Sig
Age (in years)					Between Groups	25.257	2	1.427	.245
Below 35	75	4.95	2.866	.331	Within Groups	938.009	106		
35-49	25	5.60	3.041	.608	Groups				
50 and above	9	6.56	3.678	1.226	Total	963.266	108		
Total	109	5.23	2.986	.286					
Marital status					Between Groups	50.201	2	2.914	.059
Married	70	5.73	3.059	.366	Within Groups	913.065	106		
Unmarried	36	4.39	2.429	.405	Groups				
Widowed/ Divorced	3	3.67	5.508	3.180	Total	963.266	108		
Total	109	5.23	2.986	.286					
Number of Children					Between Groups	39.769	3	1.507	.217
Zero	22	5.59	3.065	.654	Within Groups	923.497	105		
One	35	5.54	3.475	.587	Groups				
Two	16	5.94	2.695	.674	Total	963.266	108		
Unmarried	36	4.39	2.429	.405					
Total	109	5.23	2.986	.286					
Family Type					Between Groups	16.833	2	.943	.393
Joint	27	5.70	2.972	.572	Within Groups	946.433	106		
Nuclear	75	4.97	3.013	.348	Groups				
Single	7	6.14	2.734	1.033	Total	963.266	108		
Total	109	5.23	2.986	.286					

*p < 0.05

The data clearly showed that new generation women journalists experience more challenges than their experienced counterparts. Widowed and divorced women journalists are also found to be less satisfied with the work environment. Statistically, their perception of challenge is not significant because of their personal variables. The p-value in no case is 0.5 or less.

The result showed that none of the personal variables and satisfactory work environment scores had a significant relationship at .05 level. In other words, the perceived challenges of the women media persons were not dependent on their personal variables Marital Status, Age, Family Type, or the Number of Children.

One aspect of the Second Hypothesis (H2) of the study, which is related to the intensity of professional challenges that women media persons experience from work environment, was found to be invalid.

Influence of Professional Variables on Satisfaction with Work Environment

Media Type, Media Experience (in years), Job Status and Professional Education were four variables that were subjected to evaluation against the mean score of women journalists' satisfaction with work environment. The objective was to find out whether the challenges in terms of work environment were influenced by any of these professional characteristics of women journalists. The data was subjected to t-test or one-way ANOVA, as the case may be. Table 4.8 gives the results.

Table 4.8: Satisfactory Work Environment Score by Professional Variables

Variables and Groups	Group Statistics				t-test Results				
	N	Mean Score	Std Dev	Std Error Mean	Df	t	Sig (2 tailed)		
Work Sector									
Field	32	5.38	3.309	.585	107	.327	.744		
Desk	77	5.17	2.863	.326					
Total	109	10.55	6.172	.911					
Variables and Groups	Group Statistics				ANOVA Results				
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Between/ Within Group	Sum of Squares	df	F	Sig
Media type					Between Groups	99.994	4	3.012	.021*
Newspaper	68	4.91	3.006	.365	Within groups	863.272	104		
Magazine	7	8.57	2.440	.922					
Television	17	4.76	2.635	.639	Total	963.266	108		
Radio	7	4.71	3.200	1.209					
Online	10	6.20	2.348	.742					
Total	109	5.23	2.986	.286					
Media Experience (in years)					Between Groups	77.154	2	4.615	.012*
Less than 5	33	4.55	2.647	.461	Within Groups	886.112	106		
5-14	57	5.04	2.841	.376					
15 and Above	19	7.00	3.416	.784					
Total	109	5.23	2.986	.286	Total	963.266	108		
Job Status					Between Groups	36.089	2	2.063	.132
Permanent	72	5.15	2.915	.344	Within Groups	927.177	106		
Contract	28	5.93	3.242	.613					
Others	9	3.67	2.236	.745					
Total	109	5.23	2.986	.286	Total	963.266	108		
Professional Qualification					Between Groups	24.616	2	1.378	.257
Graduation	3	6.67	4.041	2.333	Within Groups	938.051	105		
Diploma	46	5.65	2.998	.442					
Post	59	4.81	2.939	.383					
Graduation and Above	59	4.81	2.939	.383	Total	962.667	107		
No Professional Qualification	1	5.22	2.999	.289					
Total	109	6.67	4.041	2.333					

*p < 0.05

It is interesting to note that women working on the desk (M=5.17, SD=2.863) and in the field (M=5.38, SD=3.309) reported average level of satisfaction without any significant difference (p-value=.744) between them. This finding negates the common perception that field is risky and challenging for women.

Work Environment challenges varied significantly (p-value=.021) according to the type of media wherein women media persons worked. Work environment in Radio (M=6.20, SD=2.348), Television (M=4.76, SD=2.635) and Newspaper (M=4.91, SD=3.006) were found more challenging compared to Online media (M=6.20, SD=2.348) and Magazine (M=8.57, SD=2.440).

Similarly, new entrants (M=4.55, SD=2.647) in the field with less than five years of experience perceived the work environment as more challenging than their seniors. Seasoned journalists with more than 15 years of experience (M=7.00, SD=3.416) found the work environment less challenging. The difference in perception of junior and senior women journalists was statistically significant with a p-value of .012. Job Status and Professional Education were not found to have any significant implication on women journalists' perception of professional challenges with regard to their work environment.

As the professional variable Media Type had a statistically significant relation with Satisfactory Work Environment, this was followed by a post-hoc analysis (see Table 4.9).

Table 4.9: Post-hoc Test for Satisfactory Work Environment by Media Type

Media Type	N	Subset for alpha=0.05
		1
Radio	7	4.71
Television	17	4.76
Newspaper	68	4.91
Online	10	6.20
Magazine	7	8.57
Sig.		.052

The Scheffe result showed that there was slight difference in the Satisfactory Work Environment mean score of women media professionals among

five types of media groups. The score of women employed in Magazines (M=8.57) was slightly higher than women employed in the Online media (M=6.20), Newspapers (M=4.91), Television (M=4.76) and Radio (M=4.71). The score of women journalists in Magazines was the highest among the five media types, with a p-value at 0.05. This means that all the five media types had a significant and positive impact in the Satisfactory Work Environment of women media professionals in Kerala and the group Magazine had a slightly higher positive impact.

The professional variable media experience had a statistically significant relation with the Satisfactory Work Environment. So, to find out which group of media experience (in years) significantly caused variation in the Satisfactory Work Environment of women media professionals in Kerala, the data was subjected to post-hoc Scheffe test (see Table 4.10).

Table 4.10: Post-hoc Test for Satisfactory Work Environment by Media Experience

Media Experience	N	Subset for alpha = 0.05	
		1	2
Less than 5 years	33	4.55	
5-14 years	57	5.04	
15 and Above	19		7.00
Sig.		.808	1.000

The score (M=7.00) achieved by the group with media experience of 15 years and above was found to be significantly different at alpha level 0.05 from that of the less than five years of media experience (M=4.55) and 5-14 years of experience (M=5.04) as per the Scheffe test results. In other words, the score of women journalists of 15 and more years of media experience was the highest among the three groups of media experience with a p-value of 0.05. Thus, 15 and more years of experience had significant and positive impact in the Satisfactory Work Environment of women media professionals in Kerala.

This leads to the inference that work environment in mainstream conventional media like Radio, Television and Newspaper are not women-friendly, in comparison to the Online media and Magazines which offer flexible work hours.

Notably, many journalists revealed their problems due to rigid work hours in the mainstream conventional media. This result confirms their troubles.

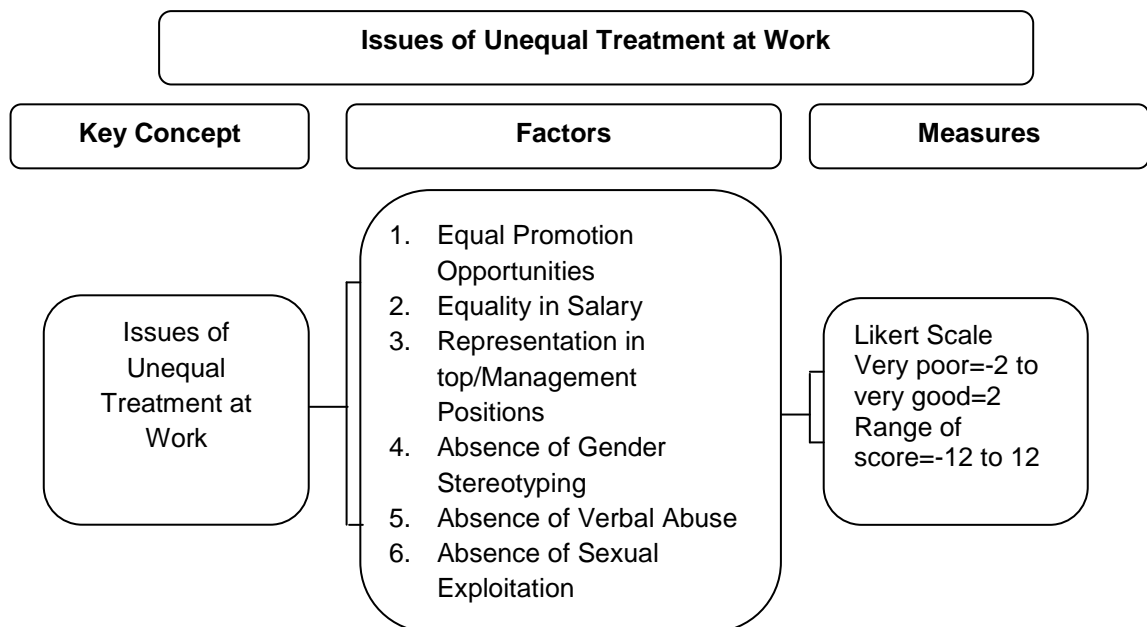
It is clear from the result that newly-appointed journalists face a lot of challenges, such as low salary and insecurity in job due to liberal market economy policy adopted by media houses, particularly newspapers and television channels. The trend that newer the journalist is to the industry, lesser is her satisfaction mean score denotes that work environment in media is fast becoming unfriendly to women journalists.

An interesting finding is that the conventional notion that Reporting is risky, challenging and uncomfortable for women has been shattered.

ISSUES OF UNEQUAL TREATMENT AT WORK

Gender equality is much discussed in the discourses on issues of women professionals. In the premises of journalistic profession, the concept is developed with six factors. These are — Equal Promotion Opportunities for men and women, Equality in Salary, Women's Representation in Management Positions, Absence of Gender Stereotyping, and Absence of Sexual Exploitation. Data on these six factors were collected from the respondents using statements for each of these factors. The respondents were asked to mark on a 5-point Likert Scale.

Figure 4.11: Unequal Treatment at Work



The item mean was elicited from a scale ranging from -2 to 2, while factor means was obtained from a scale ranging from -12 to 12.

**Table 4.11: Unequal Treatment at Work:
Component Mean Score**

Component	Mean	Std. Deviation
Equal Promotion Opportunities	.26	1.101
Equality in Salary	.95	1.031
Women's Presence in Management Positions	.35	1.197
Absence of Gender Stereotyping	-.17	1.110
Absence of Verbal Abuse	.34	1.132
Absence of Sexual Exploitation	.56	1.031
Total	2.29	6.602

The range of score in rating for gender equality is -12 to 12, and in each component it is -2 to 2

Compared to the challenges women journalists face related to their work environment, the challenges in terms of gender equality are critical. The mean scores of satisfaction with each factor in case of Gender Equality were lower than those of Work Environment. Women media professionals in Kerala experience meagre gender equality (2.29) in a positive way. Gender Stereotyping (M=-.17, SD=1.110), absence of Equal Promotion Opportunities (M=.26, SD=1.101), Verbal Abuse (M=.34, SD=1.132), poor Representation in Management Positions (M=.35, SD=1.197), and Sexual Exploitation ((M=.56, SD=1.031) were highly challenging issues that women journalists faced in terms of gender inequality at workplace. The only factor comparatively satisfactory was equity in pay (M=.95, SD=1.031). The total satisfaction of mean score for Gender Equality was merely 2.29 on a range of -12 to 12. This means gender inequality is one of the most challenging issues that women journalists in their professional life.

Issues of Unequal Treatment at Work and Personal Variables

The data was subjected to statistical analysis to find out whether the trend seen above is consistent across the personal variables. Table 41.2 presents the result of one-way Anova.

The results show that the perception of gender inequality is constant across all the personal variables, except Marital Status. Here, a significant difference was seen since the satisfaction mean score was dismal among Divorced and Widowed journalists, creating a huge gap from the rest. This means the gender inequality felt by Divorced and Widowed women media professionals was severe.

As per data, younger women media professionals (M=1.96, SD=2.911) did not experience gender equality. Whereas the two upper age groups felt more gender equality, 35-49 years old (M=3.24, SD=3.865) and 50 and more years old (M=2.44, SD=3.745). This may be because of women media professionals' continuously modified understanding of professional conditions over the years.

Table 4.12: Influence of Personal Variables on Perceived Gender Equality

Variables and Groups	Group Statistics				ANOVA Results				
	N	Mean Score	Std. Deviation	Std. error mean	Between/ Within group	Sum of Squares	df	F	Sig
Age (in years)					Between Groups	30.943	2	1.494	.229
Below 35	75	1.96	2.911	.336					
35-49	25	3.24	3.865	.773					
50 and above	9	2.44	3.745	1.248	Within Groups	1097.662	106		
Total	109	2.29	3.233	.310	Total	1128.606	108		
Marital Status					Between Groups	106.939	2	5.548	.005
Married	70	3.00	3.185	.381					
Unmarried	36	1.17	2.864	.477					
Widowed/ Divorced	3	-.67	4.163	2.404	Within Groups	1021.667	106		
Total	109	2.29	3.233	.310	Total	1128.606	108		
Number of Children					Between Groups	69.525	3	2.298	.082
Zero	22	3.00	2.600	.554					
One	35	2.71	3.659	.618					
Two	16	2.94	3.415	.854	Within Groups	1059.080	105		
Unmarried	36	1.17	2.864	.477					
Total	109	2.29	3.233	.310	Total	1128.606	108		
Family Type					Between Groups	1.962	2	.092	.912
Joint	27	2.44	3.320	.639					
Nuclear	75	2.28	3.096	.357					
Single	7	1.86	4.670	1.765	Within Groups	1126.644	106		
Total	109	2.29	3.233	.310	Total	1128.606	108		

*p < 0.05

The result clearly shows that gender inequality is one of the most challenging issues that women media persons experience in Kerala. And, single women — unmarried, widowed and divorced — are most often at the receiving end. This fact reflects the social perception of single women in general. The post-hoc test result in Table 4.13 shows that the difference within the Marital Status groups was significant.

Table 4.13: Post-hoc Test for Gender Equality by Marital Status

Marital Status	N	Subset for alpha=0.05
		1
Widowed/Divorced	3	-.67
Unmarried	36	1.17
Married	70	3.00
Sig.		.066

The Scheffe test showed that the Gender Equality mean score of women media professionals among five types of media groups was significantly different. The score of married women (M=3.00) was higher than unmarried women (M=1.17), and widowed/divorced (M=-.67). Thus, the score of married women journalists was the highest among the three groups with a p-value of 0.05. This means that the two Marital Status groups — Married and Unmarried women journalists — had a significant and positive impact in the Gender Equality of women media professionals in Kerala, and the Widowed and Divorced group had a negative impact.

Issues of Unequal Treatment at Work and Professional Variables

Table 4.14 shows that women journalists' perception of gender inequality in media is constant across all professional variables. The sampled subjects are distributed by professional variables, and the satisfaction mean score is found to be comparatively better than that when distributed by personal variables. In other words, the perception of gender equality is more positive and constant across all professional variables.

None of the professional variables — Work Sector, Media Type, Media Experience, Job Status or Professional Education Qualification — have any statistically significant relationship with the experience of gender inequality.

However, the data shows that women media professionals in Radio (M=1.14, SD=2.854) experience more gender inequality. It breaks the conventional notion that media in the public sector provides convenient working conditions for women.

Table 4.14: Influence of Professional Variables on Perceived Gender Equality

Variables and Groups	Group Statistics				t-test Results				
	N	Mean Score	Std Dev	Std Error Mean	df	t	Sig (2 tailed)		
Work Sector									
Field	32	3.06	3.775	.667	107	1.613	.110		
Desk	77	1.97	2.947	.336					
Total	109	5.03	6.722	1.003					
Variables and Groups	Group Statistics				ANOVA Results				
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Between/ Within group	Sum of squares	Df	F	Sig
Media Type									
Newspaper	68	2.26	3.203	.388	Between Groups	72.795	4	1.793	.136
Magazine	7	5.00	2.582	.976					
Television	17	2.41	3.083	.748	Within Groups	1055.810	104		
Radio	7	1.14	2.854	1.079					
Online	10	1.20	3.765	1.191	Total	1128.606	108		
Total	109	2.29	3.233	.310					
Media Experience (in years)									
Less than 5 years	33	1.73	2.637	.459	Between Groups	34.867	2	1.690	.190
5-14	57	2.25	3.324	.440	Within Groups	1093.738	106		
15 and above	19	3.42	3.746	.859					
Total	109	2.29	3.233	.310	Total	1128.606	108		
Job Status									
Permanent	72	2.60	3.231	.381	Between Groups	19.814	2	.947	.391
Contract	28	1.75	3.351	.633	Within Groups	1108.792	106		
Others	9	1.56	2.833	.944					
Total	109	2.29	3.233	.310	Total	1128.606	108		
Professional Qualification									
Graduation	3	1.33	4.041	2.333	Between Groups	3.544	3	.110	.954
Diploma	46	2.26	3.580	.528	Within Groups	1125.062	105		
Post Graduation and Above	59	2.36	2.981	.388					
No Professional Qualification	1	3.00	.	.	Total	1128.606	108		
Total	109	2.29	3.233	.310					

*p < 0.05

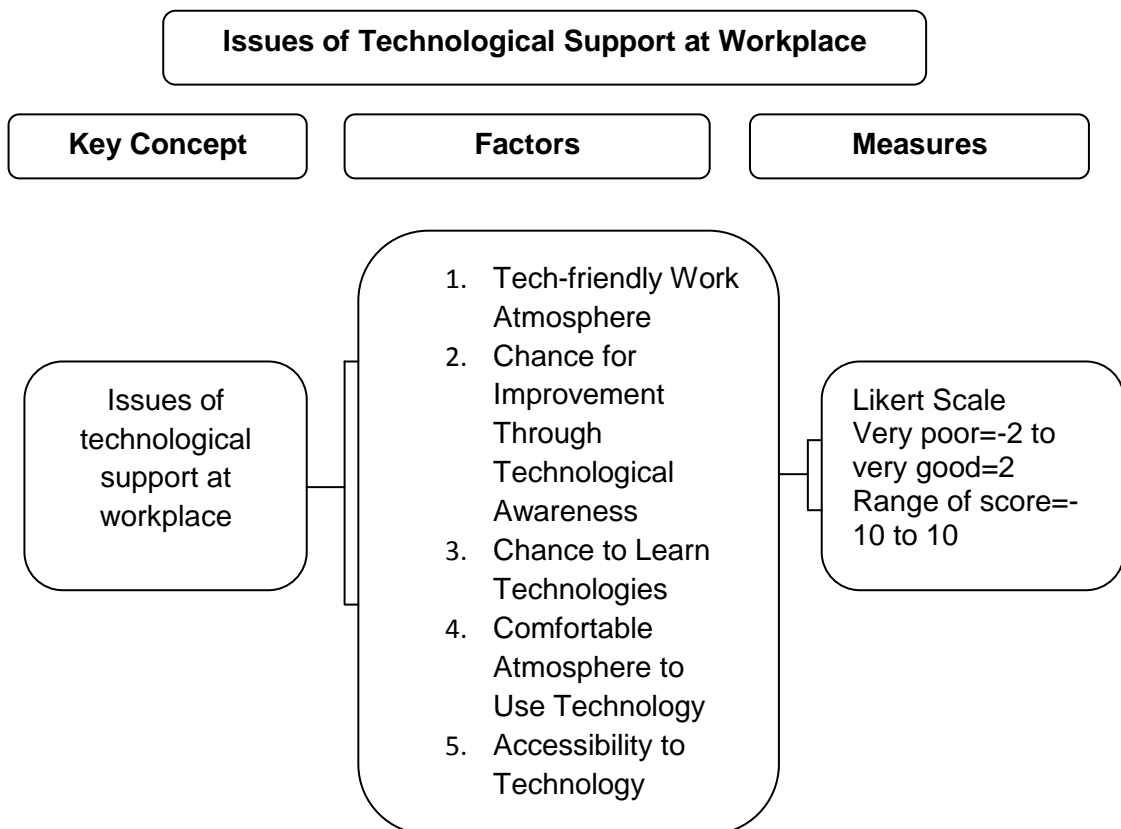
Moreover, the result reported in Table 4.14 shows that women with lower professional education (M=1.33, SD=4.041), lower work experience (M=1.73,

SD=2.637) and who are not permanent employees (M=1.75, SD=3.351 & M=1.56, SD=2.833) experienced more gender inequality. This can be attributed to journalists' adaptation of working conditions and better awareness on the rights that they acquired over the years through their professional education and experiences.

ISSUES OF TECHNOLOGICAL SUPPORT AT WORKPLACE

Technological support that women journalists get at workplace was constructed as a concept using five factors — Tech-friendly Work Atmosphere, Chance For Improvement Through Technological Awareness, Chance to Learn Technologies, Comfortable Atmosphere to Use Technology, and Accessibility to Technology. Responses to these factors were collected by framing five related statements.

Figure 4.12: Technological Support at Workplace



The statements had response options marked on a 5-point Likert scale. The item mean was elicited from a scale ranging from -2 to 2, while the factor mean was obtained from a scale ranging from -10 to 10.

Table 4.15: Technological Support at Workplace: Component Mean Score

Component	Mean	Std. Deviation
Tech-friendly Work Atmosphere	.82	.904
Chance for Improvement Through Technological Awareness	.98	.666
Chance to Learn Technologies	1.39	.576
Comfortable Atmosphere to Use Technology	1.25	.611
Accessibility to Technology	1.06	.670
Total	5.5	3.427

The range of score in rating for technological support is -10 to 10 and in each component is -2 to 2

Compared to the other dimensions of challenges, Technological Support was found to have comparatively better ratings. The factor mean score was: $M=.82$, $SD=.904$ for Tech-friendly Work Atmosphere, $M=.98$, $SD=.666$ for Chance for Improvement Through Technological Awareness, $M=1.39$, $SD=.576$ for Chance to Learn Technologies, $M=1.25$, $SD=.611$ for Comfortable Atmosphere to Use Technology, and $M=1.06$, $SD=.670$ for Accessibility to Technology. This leads to the conclusion that technological intervention in the media industry is not a challenging area for women journalists, especially against the traditional notion that women are technophobic.

In Kerala, this can be attributed to the massive introduction of digital technology in media operations, apart from the high level of technological blending into school, graduate and professional degree education in the country. Yet, the vital question that arises is, can all segments of women media persons in Kerala cope with technological trend?

Personal Variables and Issues of Technological Support at Workplace

A higher mean score in terms of women media persons' Satisfaction with Technology was reported across all personal variables but Marital Status. To compare the demographic variables — Age, Marital Status, Number of Children and Family Type in respect to Technological Support provided to women media professionals in Kerala — the data was subjected to one-way ANOVA. The result showed that Technological Support received by women media professionals in Kerala and Marital Status had a significant relationship at .05 level.

Table 4.16: Influence of Personal Variables on Perceived Technological Support

Variables and Groups	Group Statistics				ANOVA Results				
	N	Mean Score	Std. Deviation	Std. error mean	Between/ Within Group	Sum of squares	df	F	Sig
Age (in years)					Between Groups	17.505	2	1.326	.270
Below 35	75	5.24	2.525	.292	Within Groups	699.742	106		
35-49	25	5.92	2.290	.458					
50 and above	9	6.44	3.575	1.192					
Total	109	5.50	2.577	.247	Total	717.248	108		
Marital Status					Between Groups	41.710	2	3.272	.042
Married	70	5.96	2.528	.302	Within Groups	675.538	106		
Unmarried	36	4.67	2.230	.372					
Widowed/ Divorced	3	4.67	5.508	3.180					
Total	109	5.50	2.577	.247	Total	717.248	108		
Number of Children					Between Groups	41.313	3	2.139	.100
Zero	22	5.95	2.535	.540	Within Groups	675.935	105		
One	35	5.69	2.888	.488					
Two	16	6.31	2.358	.590					
Unmarried	36	4.67	2.230	.372	Total	717.248	108		
Total	109	5.50	2.577	.247					
Family Type					Between Groups	30.459	2	2.351	.100
Joint	27	6.07	2.526	.486	Within Groups	686.789	106		
Nuclear	75	5.16	2.542	.293					
Single	7	6.86	2.673	1.010					
Total	109	5.50	2.577	.247	Total	717.248	108		

*p < 0.05

The result reported in Table 4.16 reveals that the variable Marital Status had a statistically significant relation with technological support whereas Age, Number of Children, and Family Type had no significant relation with Technological Support. Between the three Marital Status groups, women journalists who belong to the Married category had the highest Technological Support (M=5.96, SD=2.528). Followed by the Unmarried (M=4.67, SD=2.230) and the Widowed/Divorced (M=4.67, SD=5.508).

The general perception is that the young generation is tech-friendly and the older generation is technophobic. But the result showed that the upper age group in media organisations was friendlier to technology. This can be attributed to adaptation to technology over years of work in media organisations. The result also

showed married women and mothers as tech-friendly. In the family type category, single women were more tech-friendly than women living in joint or nuclear families. As the variable Marital Status had a statistically significant relation with Technological Support, the researcher followed it with a post-hoc analysis (see Table 4.17).

Table 4.17: Post-hoc Test for Technological Support by Marital Status

Marital Status	N	Subset for alpha=0.05
		1
Unmarried	36	4.67
Widowed/divorced	3	4.67
Married	70	5.96
Sig.		.595

The Scheffe test result showed that technological support mean score of women media professionals among Married, Unmarried and Widowed or Divorced groups was significantly different. The score of Married women journalists (M=5.96) was slightly higher than Unmarried (M=4.67) and Widowed/Divorced women employed in media (M=4.67). The score of married women journalists was the highest among the three groups of Marital Status with a p-value of 0.05. This means that all groups — Married, Unmarried, and Widowed or divorced — showed significant and positive result to Technological Support to women media professionals in Kerala, with the married group showing slightly higher result.

An analysis of the result showed that technological support to women journalists was dependent on the demographic variable Marital Status, and not the variables Age, Family Type, and Number of Children. The Unmarried or Widowed/Divorced women journalists had less Technological Support, whereas Married women media persons were more friendly to technology.

Professional Variables and Issues of Technological Support at Workplace

The results reported in Table 4.18 showed that none of the professional variables — Work Sector, Media Type, Media Experience, Job Status or Professional Education Qualification — has any statistically significant relationship with Technological Support.

Women media professionals employed in Magazines (M=6.86, SD=1.676) and Online media (M=6.20, SD=1.989) were more familiar to technology than those in Newspaper (M=5.43, SD=2.656), Television (M=4.82, SD=2.506) and Radio (M=5.43, SD=3.309).

Table 4.18: Influence of Professional Variables on Perceived Technological Support

Variables and groups	Group Statistics				t-test Results				
	N	Mean Score	Std Dev	Std Error Mean	df	t	Sig (2 tailed)		
Work Sector									
Field	32	5.81	2.348	.415	107	.827	.410		
Desk	77	5.36	2.670	.304					
Total	109	11.17	5.018	.719					
Variables and Groups	Group Statistics				ANOVA Results				
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Between/ Within group	Sum of squares	df	F	Sig
Media Type									
Newspaper	68	5.43	2.656	.322	Between Groups	25.973	4	.977	.424
Magazine	7	6.86	1.676	.634	Within Groups	691.274	104		
Television	17	4.82	2.506	.608					
Radio	7	5.43	3.309	1.251	Total	717.248	108		
Online	10	6.20	1.989	.629					
Total	109	5.50	2.577	.247					
Media Experience (in years)									
Less than 5 years	33	4.67	2.354	.410	Between Groups	36.721	2	2.860	.062
5-14	57	5.72	2.610	.346	Within Groups	680.526	106		
15 and above	19	6.26	2.600	.596	Total	717.248	108		
Total	109	5.50	2.577	.247					
Job Status									
Permanent	72	5.62	2.656	.313	Between Groups	4.043	2	.300	.741
Contract	28	5.18	2.465	.466	Within Groups	713.204	106		
Others	9	5.44	2.455	.818	Total	717.248	108		
Total	109	5.50	2.577	.247					
Professional Qualification									
Graduation	3	5.00	2.646	1.528	Between Groups	1.451	3	.071	.975
Diploma	46	5.59	2.578	.380	Within Groups	715.796	105		
Post Graduation and Above	59	5.46	2.635	.343					
No Professional Qualification	1	5.00	.	.	Total	717.248	108		
Total	109	5.50	2.577	.247					

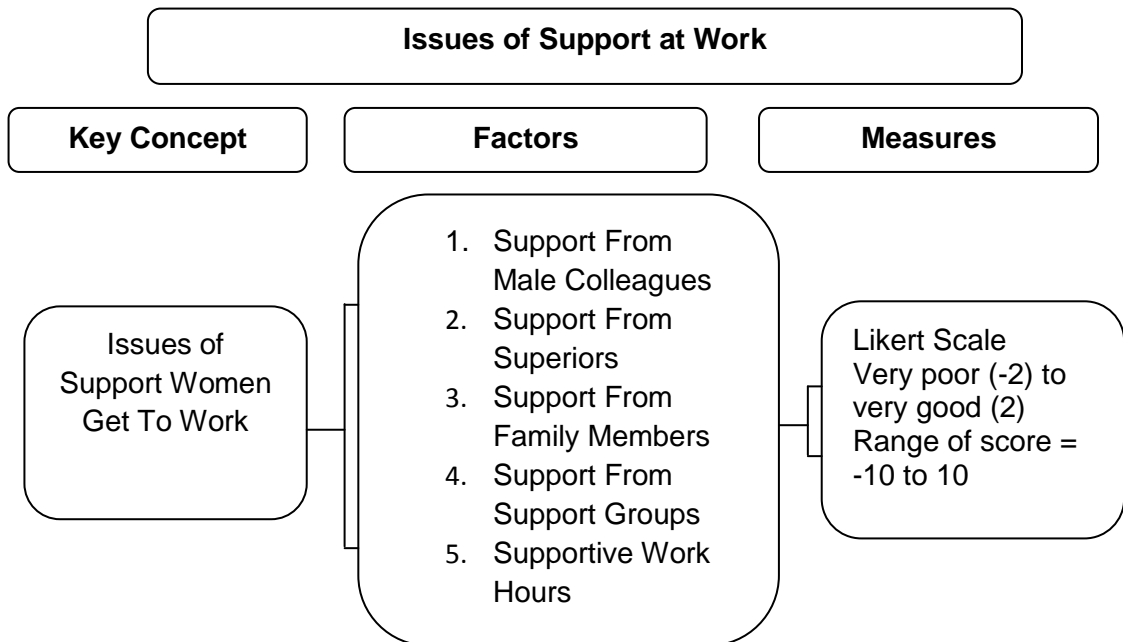
*p < 0.05

Though not statistically significant, the difference is to be reckoned with the Media Type and Media Experience. Women journalists in magazines and online media displayed confidence with technology. This can be attributed to the nature of the work, which requires graphic content. Women with 15 or more years of experience (M=6.26, SD=2.600) felt more technologically skilled than those with 5 to 14 years of experience (M=5.72, SD=2.610), higher than those who had less than 5 years of work experience (M=4.67, SD=2.354). The highly experienced women media professionals were better versed with technological support, perhaps because of their high position over the years.

ISSUES OF SUPPORT THEY TO WORK

The support that women media professionals get at work was measured using five statements — Support From Male Colleagues, Support From Superiors, Support From Family Members, Support from Support Groups, and Supportive Work Hours.

Figure 4.13: Support Women Get at Work



The related statements had response options marked on a 5-point Likert Scale. The item mean was elicited from a scale ranging from -2 to 2, while the factor mean was obtained from a scale ranging from -10 to 10.

Table 4.19: Issues of Support Women Get to Work: Component Mean Score

Component	Mean	Std. Deviation
Support From Male Colleagues	1.01	.833
Support From Top Management	1.09	.701
Support From Family Members	1.72	.771
Support From Support Groups	.21	1.019
Supportive Work Hours	.35	1.092
Total	4.38	4.416

The range of score in rating for support for work is -10 to 10 and in each component is -2 to 2

Compared to the challenges women journalists face related to the Work Environment and Technological Support, the challenges in terms of support they get to work are more critical, since the mean score of satisfaction is lower than that of these two. Support from Support Groups (M=.21, SD=1.019) and Supportive Work Hours (M=.35, SD=1.092) are highly challenging issues for women journalists in terms of the support they get to work. The only factor which marks comparatively higher satisfaction is Support From Family Members (M=1.72, SD=.771). Support From Male Colleagues (M=1.01, SD=.883) and Support From Superiors (M=1.09, SD=.701) are comparatively less challenging for women media professionals in Kerala. The total satisfaction of mean score for Support Women Get To Work is 4.38 (SD=4.416) on a range of -10 to 10.

From this it can be deduced that women in Kerala's media get moderate support to work. Women lack proper support from emotional and practical support groups such as counselling teams and employees' unions. The work hours are not supportive, which makes this profession a burden for women. Surprisingly, Family Support is registered with the highest score amid the dual responsibilities of professional and familial.

Issues of Support They Get to Work and Personal Characteristics

The data was subjected to statistical analysis to find out if the support women media professionals get to work is consistent across personal variables. For this, one-way ANOVA was executed (see Table 4.20 for the results).

The results presented in Table 4.20 showed that the support women get to work was constant across all the personal variables. This means that issues related to support to women journalists were not dependent on personal variables. The challenges were identical to all the women journalists sampled.

Table 4.20: Influence of Personal Variables on Perceived Support Women Get To Work

Variables and Groups	Group Statistics				ANOVA Results				
	N	Mean Score	Std. Deviation	Std. error mean	Between/ Within group	Sum of squares	df	F	Sig
Age (in years)					Between Groups	9.151	2	.700	.499
Below 35	75	4.45	2.309	.267	Within Groups	692.427	106		
35-49	25	3.92	3.278	.656					
50 and Above	9	5.00	2.236	.745	Total	701.578	108		
Total	109	4.38	2.549	.244					
Marital Status					Between Groups	26.568	2	2.086	.129
Married	70	4.74	2.619	.313	Within Groups	675.010	106		
Unmarried	36	3.69	2.352	.392					
Widowed/ Divorced	3	4.00	2.000	1.155	Total	701.578	108		
Total	109	4.38	2.549	.244					
Number of Children					Between Groups	35.725	3	1.878	.138
Zero	22	5.14	1.959	.418	Within Groups	665.853	105		
One	35	4.74	2.331	.394					
Two	16	4.06	3.714	.929	Total	701.578	108		
Unmarried	36	3.69	2.352	.392					
Total	109	4.38	2.549	.244					
Family Type					Between Groups	4.351	2	.331	.719
Joint	27	4.59	2.576	.496	Within Groups	697.227	106		
Nuclear	75	4.36	2.608	.301					
Single	7	3.71	1.890	.714	Total	701.578	108		
Total	109	4.38	2.549	.244					

*p < 0.05

From the data it was clear that Unmarried (M=3.69, SD=2.352), Single Living (M=3.71, SD=1.890) women between 35 and 49 years (M=3.92, SD=3.278) faced more challenges than their counterparts. However, statistically their perception of the challenge was not significant, since the p-value in no case was 0.5 or less. This slams the general perception that unmarried women are more comfortable with the support they get at work.

But it strongly supports the general notion that women struggle to continue working without a proper support system after they have children. Those who have one (M=4.74, SD=2.331) or two (M=4.06, SD=3.714) children experience more

challenges compared to those who are married and do not have a child (M=5.14, SD=1.959) in terms of the support they get to work.

Issues of Support Women Journalists Get to Work and Professional Variables

Media Type, Media Experience (in years), Job Status and Professional Education are the four variables subjected to evaluation against the mean score of women journalists' satisfaction with the Support They Get to Work. The data was subjected to t-test or one-way ANOVA (see Table No 4.21 for results).

Table 4.21: Influence of Professional Variables on Support Women Get to Work

Variables and Groups	Group Statistics				t-test Results				
	N	Mean Score	Std Dev	Std Error Mean	df	t	Sig (2 tailed)		
Work Sector									
Field	32	4.84	2.963	.524	107	1.238	.218		
Desk	77	4.18	2.349	.268					
Total	109	9.02	5.312	.792					
Variables and Groups	Group Statistics				ANOVA Results				
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Between/ Within group	Sum of squares	Df	F	Sig
Media Type									
Newspaper	68	4.01	2.696	.327	Between Groups	84.909	4	3.580	.009
Magazine	7	7.43	2.149	.812					
Television	17	3.94	1.919	.466	Within Groups	616.669	104		
Radio	7	5.29	1.496	.565					
Online	10	4.80	1.814	.573					
Total	109	4.38	2.549	.244	Total	701.578	108		
Media Experience (in years)									
Less than 5 years	33	3.52	2.706	.471	Between Groups	35.300	2	2.808	.065
5-14	57	4.72	2.555	.338	Within Groups	666.278	106		
15 and Above	19	4.84	1.922	.441					
Total	109	4.38	2.549	.244	Total	701.578	108		
Job Status									
Permanent	72	4.11	2.619	.309	Between Groups	24.360	2	1.906	.154
Contract	28	5.18	2.525	.477	Within Groups	677.218	106		
Others	9	4.00	1.500	.500					
Total	109	4.38	2.549	.244	Total	701.578	108		
Professional Qualification									
Graduation	3	3.67	6.110	3.528	Between Groups	5.505	3	.277	.842
Diploma	46	4.57	2.187	.323	Within Groups	696.073	105		
Post Graduation and Above	59	4.29	2.646	.344					
No Professional Qualification	1	3.00	.	.					
Total	109	4.38	2.549	.244	Total	701.578	108		

*p < 0.05

Issues of Support Women Get to Work vary (p -value=.009) according to the type of media in which the woman mediaperson works. Support to work is more challenging to women in the Television ($M=3.94$, $SD=1.919$), Newspaper ($M=4.01$, $SD=2.696$) and Online media ($M=4.80$, $SD=1.814$) compared to the Radio ($M=5.29$, $SD=1.496$) and Magazine ($M=7.43$, $SD=2.149$).

Considering the experience, new entrants ($M=3.52$, $SD=2.706$) felt less support at workplace compared to the other two groups — with 5 to 14 years of experience ($M=4.72$, $SD=2.555$), and with 15 and more years of experience ($M=4.84$, $SD=1.922$). Compared to the experienced workers, beginners had more work pressure resulting in lesser support. However, the difference in the perception of the Support at Work of the new entrants and that of the experienced women journalists was not statistically significant (p -value=.065).

Job Status and Professional Education did not have any statistically significant implication for women journalists' perception of professional challenges with regard to the Support They Get at Work. Yet, permanent ($M=4.11$, $SD=2.619$) or those in probation or training ($M=4.00$, $SD=1.500$) get less Support at Work than those employed on contract ($M=5.18$, $SD=2.525$). Similarly, those with less Professional Educational Qualification experience more challenges compared to the professionally qualified women.

As the professional variable Media Type was found to have a statistically significant relation with the Support They Get at Work, the finding was followed by a post-hoc analysis (see Table 4.22 for results).

Table 4.22: Post-hoc Test for Support Women Get to Work by Media Type

Media Type	N	Subset for alpha=0.05	
		1	2
Television	17	3.94	
Newspaper	68	4.01	
Online	10	4.80	4.80
Radio	7	5.29	5.29
Magazine	7		7.43
Sig.		.798	.184

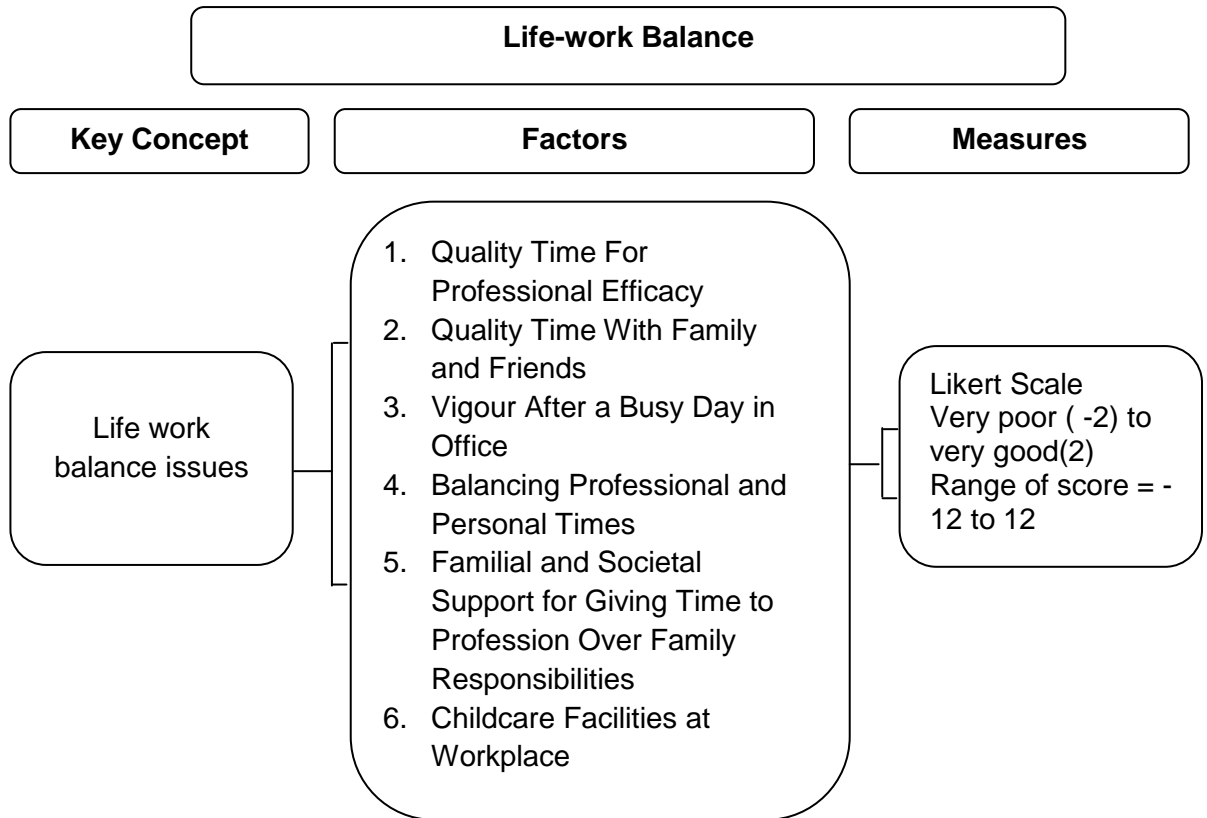
The Scheffe test result shows that there was significant difference between the Support For Work mean score for the women television journalists (M=3.94), women newspaper journalists (M=4.01), and women magazine journalists (M=7.43) when seen in association with the professional variable Media Type. In other words, the Support for Work mean score of women journalists in Radio (M=5.29) and Online media (M=4.80) was significantly lower than the score of women magazine journalists (M=7.43), but higher than the score of women television journalists (M=3.94). Thus, the score of women journalists in magazine was the highest among the five groups with a p-value of 0.05. This means that women journalists in magazines get a positive and significant support to work in Kerala.

The analysis clearly shows that women professionals in the Magazine and Radio get more Support at Work than women professionals in the Television, Newspaper, and Online media. This confirms the notion that problems arise because of inflexible work hours. The analysis also reinforces the belief that women get little help from emotional and practical support groups like counselling teams and employees' unions.

LIFE-WORK BALANCE ISSUES

Life-work Balance is a much-discussed issue among women professionals. In the journalistic profession, six factors affect women the most — Quality Time For Professional Efficacy, Quality Time With Family And Friends, Vigour After A Busy Day In Office, Balancing Professional And Personal Times, Familial And Societal Support For Giving Time To Profession Over Family Responsibilities, and Childcare Facilities At Workplace. All these factors were marked on a 5-point Likert Scale.

Figure 4.14: Life-work Balance



The item mean was elicited from a scale ranging from -2 to 2, while the factor mean was taken from a scale ranging from -12 to 12.

Table 4.23: Life-work Balance: Component Mean Score

Component	Mean	Std. Deviation
Quality Time For Professional Efficacy	.01	1.076
Quality Time With Family And Friends	-.04	1.146
Vigour After A Busy Day In Office	.23	1.102
Balancing Professional And Personal Times	-.18	1.180
Familial And Societal Support For Giving Time To Profession Over Family Responsibilities	.09	1.059
Childcare Facilities	-.94	.705
Total	-0.83	6.268

The range of score in rating for Life-work Balance is -12 to 12, and in each of the component is -2 to 2

The measurement indicates that the least satisfying area is the most challenging. So it can be deduced that all the six factors were very challenging areas for women. Childcare Facilities ($M=-.94$, $SD=.705$) was the most challenging area, followed by balancing time between professional life and personal commitments ($M=-.18$, $SD=1.180$).

As indicated by the higher SD in balancing professional time with personal commitments, there was, clearly, a huge disparity between childcare facilities and balancing professional and personal time for the unmarried, and widowed/divorced women journalists. Quality Time with Family and Friends (-0.04) was also unsatisfactory. The factors that showed meagre positivity in Life-work Balance were Quality Time for Professional Efficacy ($M=.01$, $SD=1.076$), Vigour after a Busy Day in Office ($M=.23$, $SD=1.102$), and Familial and Societal Support for giving time to profession over family ($M=.09$, $SD=1.059$). As a result, women media professionals in Kerala experienced severe life-work imbalance ($M=-0.83$, $SD=6.268$).

Influence of Personal Variables on Life - Work Balance

To ascertain the intensity of the challenge in balancing life with work, data on the personal variables Age, Marital Status, Number Of Children, and Family Type was subjected to one-way ANOVA (see Table 4.24 for results).

The results reported in Table 4.24 revealed that the personal variables Age, Marital Status, Family Type, and Number Of Children did not have any statistically significant bearing on the Life-work Balance. It can be deduced from the result that there was a high level of life-work imbalance among women media professionals, but it did not depend on the Marital Status, and had no relation with Age, Family Type, and Number of Children.

Table 4.24: Influence of Personal Variables on Life-work Balance

Variables and Groups	Group Statistics				ANOVA Results				
	N	Mean Score	Std. Deviation	Std. error mean	Between/ Within group	Sum of squares	df	F	Sig
Age (in years)					Between Groups	36.548	2	1.140	.324
Below 35	75	-.48	3.210	.371	Within Groups	1698.480	106		
35-49	25	-1.36	5.376	1.075					
50 and Above	9	-2.33	5.500	1.833					
Total	109	-.83	4.008	.384	Total	1735.028	108		
Marital Status					Between Groups	95.617	2	3.091	.050
Married	70	-.94	4.350	.520	Within Groups	1639.410	106		
Unmarried	36	-.19	2.734	.456					
Widowed/ Divorced	3	-6.00	6.000	3.464					
Total	109	-.83	4.008	.384	Total	1735.028	108		
Number of Children					Between Groups	91.394	3	1.946	.127
Zero	22	-.18	3.568	.761	Within Groups	1643.633	105		
One	35	-.97	4.349	.735					
Two	16	-2.88	5.608	1.402					
Unmarried	36	-.19	2.734	.456	Total	1735.028	108		
Total	109	-.83	4.008	.384					
Family Type					Between Groups	54.647	2	1.724	.183
Joint	27	-1.00	4.332	.834	Within Groups	1680.381	106		
Nuclear	75	-.53	3.839	.443					
Single	7	-3.43	4.117	1.556					
Total	109	-.83	4.008	.384	Total	1735.028	108		

*p < 0.05

The data showed a gradual decline in life-work balance as the age of woman journalists increases. Women aged 50 years and above experience more life-work imbalance (M=-2.33, SD=5.500) than those between 35 and 49 years (-1.36, SD=5.376), below 35 years (-0.48, SD=3.210). However, the difference was not statistically significant (p=0.324).

Regarding Marital Status, Married women had more life-work imbalance (M=-0.94, SD=4.350) compared to Unmarried women media professionals (M=-0.19, SD=2.734). It is very high for Widowed or Divorced (M=-6.00, SD=6.000) where the p-value is .050.

It was found that the number of children had a significant impact on Life-work Balance. Women with two children experienced greater life-work imbalance (M=-2.88, SD=5.608) than those with a single child (-0.97, SD=4.349) or those who did not have children (M=-0.18, SD=3.568). But the difference was not significant, with a p-value of 0.127.

Influence of Professional Variables on Life-work Balance

Four variables — Media Type, Experience in Years, Job Status, and Professional Education — were subjected to evaluation against the mean score of women journalists' satisfaction with Life-work Balance. The data was subjected to t-test, or one-way ANOVA, as the case may be (see Table 4.25 for the results).

Table 4.25: Influence of Professional Variables on Life-work Balance

Variables and Groups	Group Statistics				t-test Results				
	N	Mean Score	Std Dev	Std Error Mean	Df	t	Sig (2 tailed)		
Work Sector									
Field	32	-.69	4.795	.848	107	.246	.806		
Desk	77	-.90	3.666	.418					
Total	109	-1.59	8.461	1.266					
Variables and Groups	Group Statistics				ANOVA Results				
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Between/ Within group	Sum of squares	df	F	Sig
Media Type									
Newspaper	68	-1.38	4.489	.544	Between Groups	83.608	4	1.316	.269
Magazine	7	1.71	1.799	.680					
Television	17	-.59	3.022	.733	Within Groups	1651.419	104		
Radio	7	.57	2.507	.948					
Online	10	-.30	3.302	1.044	Total	1735.028	108		
Total	109	-.83	4.008	.384					
Media Experience (in years)									
Less than 5 years	33	-.33	3.227	.562	Between Groups	11.975	2	.368	.693
5-14	57	-1.07	3.923	.520	Within Groups	1723.053	106		
15 and Above	19	-1.00	5.416	1.243	Total	1735.028	108		
Total	109	-.83	4.008	.384					
Job Status									
Permanent	72	-1.18	4.214	.497	Between Groups	25.696	2	.797	.453
Contract	28	-.11	3.655	.691	Within Groups	1709.331	106		
Others	9	-.33	3.317	1.106	Total	1735.028	108		
Total	109	-.83	4.008	.384					
Professional Qualification									
Graduation	3	-3.33	6.658	3.844	Between Groups	60.747	3	1.270	.289
Diploma	46	-1.48	3.793	.559	Within Groups	1674.281	105		
Post Graduation and Above	59	-.22	4.022	.524					
No Professional Qualification	1	.00	.	.	Total	1735.028	108		
Total	109	-.83	4.008	.384					

*p < 0.05

The data showed that Life-work Balance challenges do not significantly vary according to the professional variables Media Type, Media Experience, Work Sector, Job Status and Professional Qualification.

The t-test result showed that the work sector had no significant influence on the Life-work Balance of women media professionals in Kerala. It is generally accepted that desk job is preferably comfortable for women, but data showed that women on desk ($M=-0.90$, $SD=3.666$) experience more life-work imbalance than those in the field ($M=-0.69$, $SD=4.795$). This can be attributed to the fact that journalists working on the desk have to do night duties and continuous shift changes. These may be affecting their family responsibilities.

Though the difference in the mean score of Media Type was not statistically significant in the Life-work Balance, women media professionals in Newspaper ($M=-1.38$, $SD=4.489$) experienced more life-work imbalance than those in Television ($M=-0.59$, $SD=3.022$), Online media ($M=-0.30$, $SD=3.302$), Radio ($M=0.57$, $SD=2.507$) and Magazine ($M=1.71$, $SD=1.799$). Women in magazines experienced more Life-work Balance. This can be attributed to flexibility in work timings and more relaxed deadlines. Interestingly, the permanent employees felt more life-work imbalance ($M=-1.18$, $SD=4.214$).

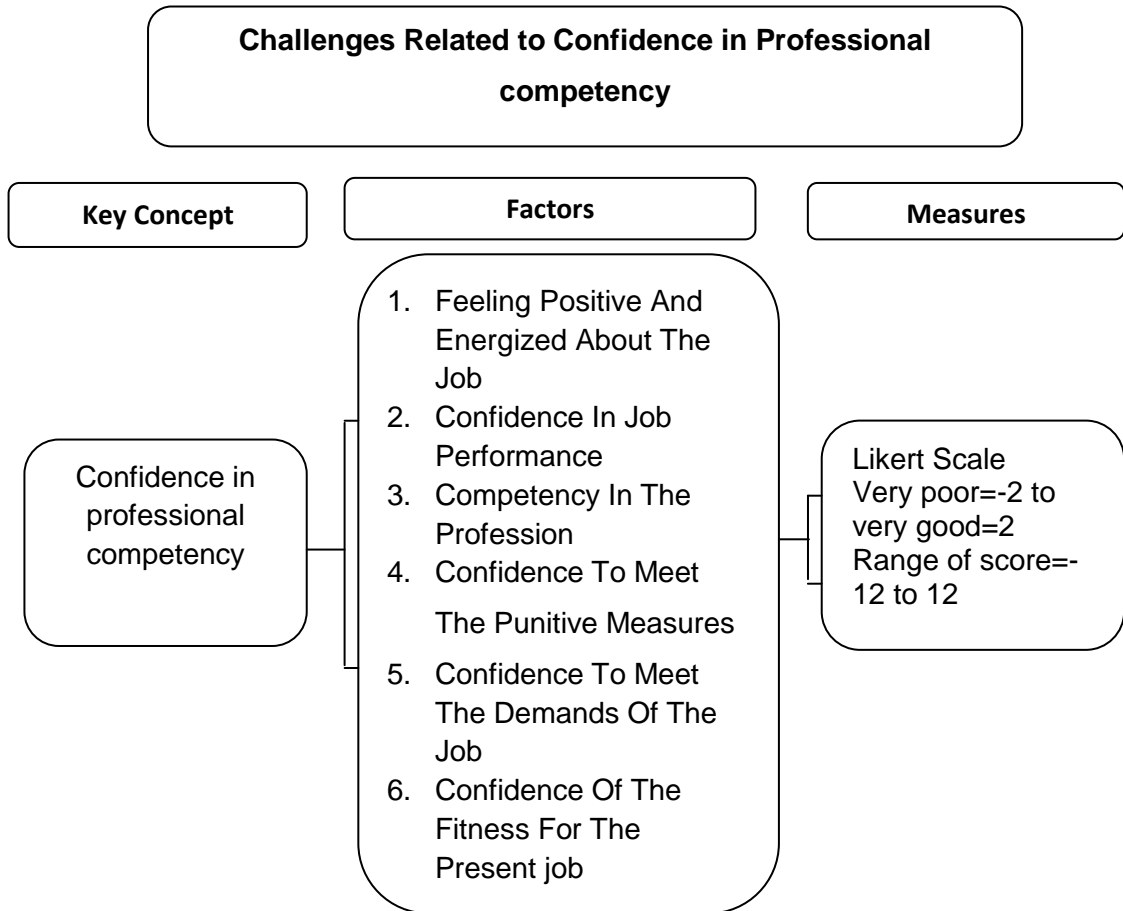
The study revealed that life-work imbalance among women media professionals was high but did not depend on personal variables. The societal norm which expects women to shoulder all family responsibilities may be the reason for their life and work thrown off balance. Women on the desk experience more life-work imbalance than those in the field. Journalists working on the desk have to do night duties and endure constant change in shifts, which may affect their family responsibilities. Women professionals in the Newspaper experienced more life-work imbalance than their counterparts in the magazine. Flexible and relaxed work times in the magazine may be the reason for this.

ISSUES OF CONFIDENCE IN THEIR PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCY

Six factors constructed the concept of Confidence in Professional Competency among women media professionals. These were — Feeling Positive and Energized About The Job, Confidence in Job Performance, Competency in the Profession, Confidence To Meet the Punitive Measures, Confidence To Meet The Demands Of

The Job, and Confidence Of The Fitness For The Present Job. These were marked on a 5-point Likert Scale.

Figure 4.15: Challenges Related to Confidence in Professional competency



The item mean was elicited from a scale ranging from -2 to 2, while the factor mean was obtained from a scale ranging from -12 to 12.

**Table 4.26: Confidence In Professional Competency:
Component Mean Score**

Component	Mean	Std. Deviation
Feeling Positive And Energized About The Job	.97	.822
Confidence In Job Performance	1.09	.740
Competency In The Profession	.89	.797
Confidence To Meet The Punitive Measures	.78	.956
Confidence To Meet The Demands Of The Job	.93	.754
Confidence Of The Fitness For The Present job	.91	.823
Total	5.57	4.892

The range of score in rating for confidence in professional competency is -12 to 12 and in each component is -2 to 2

Compared to the challenges that women journalists face related to Life-work Balance, the challenges in terms of confidence in professional competency is less since the mean score of confidence with each factor in the case of confidence in professional competency is higher than that of Life-work Balance. However, Confidence to meet Punitive Measures such as dismissal (M=.78, SD=.956) is a highly challenging issue that women journalists face in terms of confidence. This is followed by Competency in the Profession (M=.89, SD=.797), Confidence in Fitness for the Present Job (M=0.91, SD=.823), Confidence To Meet the Demands of the Job (M=0.93, SD=.754), and Feeling Positive and Energized about the Career (M=.97, SD=.822). The only factor comparatively higher is the Confidence in Job Performance (M=1.09, SD=.740). As a result, women media professionals in Kerala have more confidence in competency (M=5.57, SD=4.892) on a range of -12 to 12.

Influence of Personal Variables on Confidence in Women Journalists' Professional Competency

The data was subjected to statistical analysis to find out if the above trend was consistent across the personal variables Age, Marital Status, Number of Children, and Family Type. Execution of one-way ANOVA showed that confidence in professional competency of women media professionals in Kerala and the personal variable Age had a statistically significant relationship at .05 level.

The results reported in Table 4.27 revealed that the personal variable Age had a statistically significant relationship with Confidence in Their Professional

Competency, whereas the variables Marital Status, Family Type and Number of Children did not have any statistical relationship with the Confidence in their Professional Competency.

Table 4.27: Influence of Personal Variables on Confidence in Women Journalists' Professional Competency

Variables and Groups	Group Statistics				ANOVA Results				
	N	Mean Score	Std. Deviation	Std. error mean	Between/ Within group	Sum of squares	df	F	Sig
Age (in years)					Between Groups	98.494	2	7.110	.001
Below 35	75	5.04	2.658	.307	Within Groups	734.240	106		
35-49	25	6.16	2.718	.544					
50 and above	9	8.33	2.062	.687					
Total	109	5.57	2.777	.266	Total	832.734	108		
Marital Status					Between Groups	19.976	2	1.303	.276
Married	70	5.79	2.823	.337	Within Groups	812.758	106		
Unmarried	36	5.03	2.731	.455					
Widowed/ Divorced	3	7.00	1.000	.577					
Total	109	5.57	2.777	.266	Total	832.734	108		
Number of Children					Between Groups	51.355	3	2.300	.082
Zero	22	4.77	3.221	.687	Within Groups	781.379	105		
One	35	6.31	2.272	.384					
Two	16	6.25	2.910	.727					
Unmarried	36	5.03	2.731	.455	Total	832.734	108		
Total	109	5.57	2.777	.266					
Family Type					Between Groups	38.174	2	2.546	.083
Joint	27	5.74	2.768	.533	Within Groups	794.560	106		
Nuclear	75	5.31	2.751	.318					
Single	7	7.71	2.430	.918					
Total	109	5.57	2.777	.266	Total	832.734	108		

*p < 0.05

In terms of Age, the young generation ($M=5.04$, $SD=2.658$) experienced more challenges in terms of Confidence in Professional Competency. Women senior in age (50 years and above) showed higher confidence ($M=8.33$, $SD=2.062$) followed by the middle-age respondents (35 to 49 years) who had a mean confidence of 6.16 ($SD=2.718$). Here, the difference was statistically significant, with a p-value of .001.

The above shows that women media professionals had Confidence in Competence and it was dependent on the personal variable Age despite the Marital Status, Family Type and the Number of Children. The young journalists were short of confidence in Professional Competency, and women journalists senior in age were more Confident in Competency. This can be attributed to adaptation and understanding of the working conditions and the demands of the job over the years with advancements in the career along with work experience. But in the case of Marital Status, Unmarried women ($M=5.03$, $SD=2.731$) showed less confidence in Professional Competency than the other groups. Widowed or Divorced women journalists reported high confidence in Professional Competency ($M=7.00$, $SD=1.000$). Experiences from their personal life as a widow or a divorcee may have made them professionally confident as well.

As the personal variable Age had a statistically significant relation to Confidence In Competency of women media professionals in Kerala, the data was subjected to post-hoc Scheffe test (see Table 4.8 for results).

Table 4.28: Post-hoc Test for Confidence In Women Journalists' Professional Competency by Age

Age (in years)	N	Subset for alpha=0.05	
		1	2
Below 35	75	5.04	
35-49	25	6.16	
50 and above	9		8.33
Sig.		.441	1.000

The score (M=8.33) achieved by the age group 50 years and above was found to be significantly different at alpha level 0.05 from that of below 35 years (M=5.04), and that of 35 to 49 years (M=6.16). The score of women journalists above 50 years was the highest among the three groups, with a p-value of 0.05. In other words, women journalists in Kerala more than 50 years of age showed maximum Confidence in Competence.

From the above result, it could be summarized that Confidence in Professional Competency of women media professionals was statistically significant on the personal variable Age, but not on Marital Status, Family Type or Number of Children. The young and unmarried women living in nuclear families experienced more challenges with Confidence in Their Professional Competency.

Influence of Professional Variables on Confidence in Professional Competency of Women Media Professionals

Table 4.29 showed that women journalists' Confidence in Professional Competency was not constant across all the professional variables. It varied significantly (p-value=.001) according to Media Type and Media Experience (p-value=.000).

The table 4.29 reveals that the professional variables Media Type and Media Experience (in years) had a statistically significant relationship with Confidence in Professional Competence of women media professionals in Kerala. The categories Work Sector, Job Status and Professional Educational Qualification had no significant relation with the confidence of women media professionals.

Table 4.29: Influence of Professional Variables on Confidence in Professional Competency of Women Media Professionals

Variables and Groups	Group Statistics				t-test Results				
	N	Mean Score	Std Dev	Std Error Mean	Df	t	Sig (2 tailed)		
Work Sector									
Field	32	5.34	2.847	.503	107	-.544	.588		
Desk	77	5.66	2.761	.315					
Total	109	11	5.608	.818					
Variables and Groups	Group statistics				ANOVA Results				
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Between/ Within group	Sum of squares	df	F	Sig
Media Type									
Newspaper	68	5.15	2.918	.354	Between Groups	135.532	4	5.054	.001
Magazine	7	8.29	1.254	.474					
Television	17	4.71	1.961	.476	Within Groups	697.202	104		
Radio	7	8.43	2.299	.869					
Online	10	6.00	1.633	.516	Total	832.734	108		
Total	109	5.57	2.777	.266					
Media Experience (in years)									
Less than 5 years	33	4.70	3.067	.534	Between Groups	126.922	2	9.531	.000
5-14	57	5.32	2.465	.327	Within Groups	705.812	106		
15 and above	19	7.84	1.893	.434					
Total	109	5.57	2.777	.266	Total	832.734	108		
Job Status									
Permanent	72	5.57	2.862	.337	Between Groups	3.831	2	.245	.783
Contract	28	5.75	2.459	.465	Within Groups	828.903	106		
Others	9	5.00	3.240	1.080					
Total	109	5.57	2.777	.266	Total	832.734	108		
Professional Qualification									
Graduation	3	7.00	2.646	1.528	Between Groups	32.889	3	1.439	.236
Diploma	46	4.96	2.476	.365	Within Groups	799.845	105		
Post Graduation and Above	59	5.97	2.965	.386					
No Professional Qualification	1	6.00	.	.	Total	832.734	108		
Total	109	5.57	2.777	.266					

*p < 0.05

Among the five media groups, the lowest confidence in professional competency was among those employed in television ($M=4.71$, $SD=1.961$) followed by in the newspaper ($M=5.15$, $SD=2.918$). Women employed in online ($M=6.00$, $SD=1.633$), magazine women journalists ($M= 8.29$, $SD=1.254$) and those in radio ($M=8.43$, $SD=2.299$) had comparatively higher confidence in professional competency. Here, the difference is statistically significant, with a p-value of .001). Confidence among women journalists working in magazine and radio may be more because of flexible timings, less work pressure, and better working conditions in the media.

In terms of years of experience in media, the difference in Confidence in Competency among the three groups is statistically significant, with the p-value at .000. The least experienced women journalists, with less than 5 years of work experience, had a mean score of 4.70 ($SD=3.067$), and the lowest confidence in professional competency. Women with highest media experience (15 years and above) recorded the highest confidence ($M=7.84$, $SD=1.893$), followed by the middle group (between 5 and 14 years), had a mean confidence of 5.32 ($SD=2.465$). In other words, confidence increased with the years of experience.

The result leads to the deduction that Confidence in Competency of women media professionals depended upon the professional variables Media Type and Media Experience (in years), and not on Work Sector, Job Status and Professional Educational Qualification. Those who had more issues of confidence in their professional competency were the women employed in television and those who had lower media experience (less than 5 years).

As the ANOVA result for professional variable Media Type in respect to Confidence In Competency was significant, this was followed by a post-hoc analysis. Results are given in the table.

Table 4.30: Post-hoc Test For Confidence in Professional Competency of Women Media Professionals by Media Type

Media Type	N	Subset for alpha=0.05	
		1	2
Television	17	4.71	
Newspaper	68	5.15	5.15
Online	10	6.00	6.00
Magazine	7		8.29
Radio	7		8.43
Sig.		.850	.076

The Scheffe result showed that the mean score in Confidence in Professional Competency among women journalists employed in Television (M=4.71) was significantly lower than those of women journalists working in Magazine (M=8.29) and Radio (M=8.43). Thus, the score of women media professionals employed in Radio was the highest among the five media groups, with a p-value of 0.05. This means that women journalists employed in Magazine and Radio in Kerala were significantly confident in professional competency.

Table 4.29 reveals that the professional variable Media Experience (in years) had a statistically significant relationship with the Confidence in the Professional Competency of women media professionals in Kerala. As the result, it was followed by a post-hoc analysis. Table 4.31 shows the results.

Table 4.31: Post-hoc Test for Confidence in Professional Competency of Women Media Professionals by Media Experience

Media Experience (in years)	N	Subset for alpha=0.05	
		1	2
Less than 5 years	33	4.70	
5-14 years	57	5.32	
15 and above	19		7.84
Sig.		.652	1.000

The Scheffe result showed that the Confidence in Competency mean score (M=4.70) of women journalists who have less than five years of work experience

was significantly different (with alpha level of 0.05), from women journalists with 15 and more years of media experience ($M=7.84$). In other words, the least experienced women journalists in Kerala had least Confidence in Competency.

The analysis led to the inference that the newly-appointed journalists, especially in Television and Newspaper, faced many challenges in relation to Confidence in Professional Competency. An interesting finding was that women journalists' confidence in their professional competency was constant across their job status — the mean scores were found to be constant, whether employed as permanent staff or on contract.

Tenability of Hypothesis

Research Hypothesis 2 (H2): *The intensity of the challenges by women media persons in Kerala will vary according to their personal variables such as Age, Marital Status, Number of Children and Family Type.*

Professional dimensions of women media professionals in Kerala — Work Environment, Equal Treatment at Work, Technological Support at Workplace, Support at Workplace, Life-work Balance, and Confidence in Professional Competency — were tested for their association with women media professional's personal variables — Age, Marital Status, Number of Children and Family Type. Age was found to have a significant influence in determining the confidence in professional competency of women media professionals in Kerala and Marital Status had a statistically significant influence in determining Gender Equality and Technological Support of women media professionals in Kerala. The other variables — Number of Children and Family Type — had no statistically significant influence in determining the professional dimensions of women media professionals in Kerala. Therefore, Research Hypothesis 2 was partially invalid.

Research Hypothesis 3 (H3): *The intensity of the challenges by women mediapersons in Kerala will vary according to their professional variables such as Type of Media, Media Experience, Work Sector, Job Status and Professional Qualification.*

The results led to the deduction that the professional variable Media Type of the women media professionals in Kerala was statistically significant in terms of the professional dimensions Work Environment, Support to Work, and Confidence in

Professional Competency. Media Experience was statistically significant in terms of Work Environment and Confidence in Competency, while the professional variables Work Sector, Job Status, and Professional Qualification had no significant influence on the professional dimensions of women media professionals in Kerala. Therefore, Hypothesis 3 was also partially invalid.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

One of the objectives of this study was to understand the influence of the personal variables Age, Marital Status, Number of Children and Family Type on Kerala's women journalists' satisfaction with professional dimensions. The dimensions were: Work Environment, Equal Treatment at Work, Technological Support at Workplace, Support to Work, Life-work Balance and Confidence in Professional Competency.

The analysis elucidated that the personal variables of woman journalists in Kerala had a significant bearing on their professional dimensions. But the differences in age categories showed significant difference only in Confidence in Professional Competency. The differences in the mean score of Marital Status groups were significant. It was significantly different in the technological support that women media professionals get in Kerala.

The personal variables Age and Marital Status showed influence on the professional dimensions on women media professionals in Kerala. Number of Children and Family Type showed no significant difference in the professional dimensions. This could be attributed to the social and cultural perceptions that determine the approach women have towards media profession.

Understanding the influence of Type of Media, Media Experience, Work Sector, Job Status and Professional Qualification on women journalists' satisfaction with the professional dimensions was another objective of the study.

Focussing on the professional variables, differences across categories of Media Type and Media Experience recorded statistically significant difference with regard to the professional dimensions Work Environment, Support for Work, and Confidence in Professional Competency. This could be attributed to the working conditions, nature of the media, and the social norms deeply embedded in our culture.

FINDINGS

- In media in Kerala male journalists outnumber their female counterparts irrespective of the type of media - the print, electronic and online.
- The average age of women journalists in Kerala is 32 years. The young women below 35 years old constitute the majority of women in the journalism profession.
- Compared to other types of media, newspapers employ more women journalists. Frequent recruitments, a large number of opportunities, good exposure, celebrity status it confers and experience in the visual media are the important reasons for the increasing number of women in visual media compared to the print.
- There was a considerable progress in the inflow of women into media in the state as indicated by the data. But, recent trend is in reverse mode since the newly recruited within the last five years constitute only 30.3 percent against 52.3 percent of those with an experience of five to 14 years. More seasoned journalists with 15 years and above experience constitute 17.4 percent.
- Responses from focus group interview indicate that the rate of quitting the job midway is on the rise

Work Environment

- Many women journalists report that their organizations fail to offer women-friendly facilities and policies. Many of the media houses lack separate washrooms and child care facilities. And, they don't offer transportation facility for women who work late night and odd times. However, television firms offer these facilities may be due to the indispensable presence of women in their operation or the television houses were emerged at a time when women rights were well accepted in the society.
- Many journalists opine that the journalistic job itself poses many hurdles for women journalists and media houses. Visual media have much longer working hours than the print media. Many girls who are passionate about journalism cannot adjust to the work timing and hectic work life. Flexibility in work hours is not at all possible in journalism. It is not a job that has strict

timings. Women journalists normally avoid late night shifts given the life work balance factors and safety.

- The trend is that women are mostly employed in desk jobs. Most women, as well as management, prefer desk jobs for women. Many women journalists report that this may be due to the perception that desk jobs are comparatively safe and demand less traveling. The study validates this observation as nearly two-fourth of the samples (70.6 percent) are involved in desk work, while 29.4 percent is on the field.
- Financial insecurity is another major challenge that women in the media industry recognize. Meager payment is the main reason for many to quit the profession halfway. Apart from poor pay, there is a gender gap in remuneration, particularly in the private sector and in small-scale media houses. Only a few big media houses recruit journalists as permanent staff with wage board salary.
- To escape from the rules specifying salaries for permanent scribes implemented by The Wage Board for Working Journalists, almost all media organizations employ journalists on a contractual basis. Job security is a common concern for both men and women in journalism, but women are more subjected to such a violation of the professional code of conduct. When journalists raise a voice against discrimination, they are transferred to remote areas forcing them to quit or any opposition to it ends in being firing from the job.
- But the study reveals that women journalists in Kerala are more secure in their jobs. The majority, 66.1 percent of them were employed as permanent staff in their organizations, whereas 25.7 percent were employed on a contract basis.
- As per the study, the most challenging issues for women journalists in the workplace are less payment and the insecure nature of the job.
- The challenges identified and perceived by women media persons are common across various personal variables like Marital Status, Age, Family Type, or the Number of Children.

- Though their perception of the challenge is not statistically significant because of their personal variables, the new generation women journalists experience more challenges than their experienced counterparts.
- Widowed and divorced women journalists are also found to be less satisfied with the work environment.
- Negating the common perception that the field is risky and challenging for women, women working on the desk and in the field in media houses in Kerala reported the average level of satisfaction without any statistically significant difference between them.
- Work Environment challenges varied significantly according to the professional variable, type of media wherein women media persons worked. The work environment in Radio, Television, and Newspapers was found more challenging compared to online media and Magazine.
- New entrants in the field with less than five years of experience perceived the work environment as more challenging than their seniors. Seasoned journalists with more than 15 years of experience found the work environment less challenging. The difference in perception of junior and senior women journalists was statistically significant with a p-value of .012.
- Job Status and Professional Education were not found to have any significant implication for women journalists' perception of professional challenges with regard to their work environment.

Unequal Treatment at Work

- Women media persons recognize that only a small section of women journalists has any say in determining the content selection and policymaking. This may be attributed to the late entry of women in the media industry, lack of confidence, and prejudice against women taking decision-making, hesitation to take responsibilities of senior posts or their less sustainability in the field. Office favoritism is another aspect that brings discrepancies in promotions as recognized by women media persons in Kerala.
- Women journalists feel that their problems are not properly addressed since the organizations are headed by men. They also feel that work environments

are more women-friendly in organizations where more women serve in decision making positions.

- Women media persons in Kerala recognize that all the social conditions that are unfriendly to working women are equally applicable to women media persons in the state too. Sexual exploitation in media is not an exception to it. Many women ignore sexual harassment fearing that their job, or even their reputation, would be at stake. Many media houses constitute women's cells to deal with the issues of women employees. But no serious complaint is lodged with them as women normally refrain from complaining against sexual harassment. A some journalists consider it a waste of time to complain against these. The fear is that if sexual exploitation is reported, the authorities may not act positively. More often than not, the accused, who is most likely a male, will have the support of the management and the senior staff. There would be attempts to dilute the issue through compromising, or the victim would be transferred.
- The findings of the study show that gender stereotyping, the absence of equal promotion opportunities, poor representation in management positions and sexual exploitation were highly challenging issues that women journalists face in terms of gender inequality at the workplace. The only factor comparatively satisfactory was equity in pay.
- The perception of gender inequality is marked constant across all the personal variables, except Marital Status. The gender inequality felt by Divorced and Widowed women media professionals noticed severely. The younger women media professionals experience more gender inequality, whereas the two upper age groups (35-49 years old and 50 and more years old) felt more gender equality.
- The perception of gender equality is more positive and constant across all professional variables of women media professionals. None of the professional variables — Work Sector, Media Type, Media Experience, Job Status or Professional Education Qualification — have any statistically significant relationship with the experience of gender inequality. However, women with lower professional education, lower work experience and who are not permanent employees experienced more gender inequality.

Technological Support at the Workplace

- Media in Kerala provided adequate technological support to women. In the digitally advanced age, women media persons recognize newsrooms as replete with digital innovations, media runs with latest technologies and Journalists are given training in the initial stages of their career. They do not feel any gender disparity in these matters. But the women media persons validate the general perception that women are not technologically proficient, for very few women are working behind the camera or doing photojournalism in media houses in Kerala. The field is still dominated by men.
- Against the traditional notion that women are technophobic, the study showed technological intervention in the media industry as not a challenging area for women journalists.
- Technological Support received by women media professionals in Kerala and their personal variable marital status had a significant relationship at .05 level. Where women journalists who belong to the married category had the highest technological support followed by unmarried and widowed/divorced women journalists. The upper age group in media organizations was friendlier to technology.
- None of the professional variables — work sector, media type, media experience, job status or professional education qualification — has any statistically significant relationship with technological support. Though not statistically significant, the difference is to be reckoned with the Media Type and Media Experience. Women media professionals employed in Magazines and Online media were more familiar with technology than those in Newspaper, Television, and Radio. The highly experienced women media professionals were better versed with technological support.

Support Get to Work

- Women media persons hold that men try to prove their superiority over women as meant to be ruled and protected. At work, they expect women to be submissive; their ego gets crushed when the reverse occurs and they have to report to a female boss. Senior male journalists get frustrated when a woman gets an opportunity for professional growth. Some men do not hesitate to

belittle women colleagues. These prejudices and discrepancies lead to widespread exploitation and mental tortures.

- Women feel that some seniors have a prejudice against women. It becomes evident when they assign beats and stories. But they recognize the segregation is not rigid in television and the situation changes fast with the increasing number of women journalists in television who specialize in political reporting. Women's selection of work is also to be the reason for the gender division of work in the profession as noted by women media professionals.
- The absence of family support is felt like a crucial impediment among women media persons for the successful professional life of a working woman, especially a woman journalist. They recognize that many parents do not wish their daughters to become journalists because of the preconceived notion among the elder generation that journalism is a strenuous and "dangerous" profession. Parents are anxious for their daughters as they know that many men and their parents show reluctance when the prospect of marriage is with a woman journalist. With this conviction, parents do not encourage women to take journalism as a profession.
- Women media persons feel as there are so many stereotypical notions about women in society, that it does not expect women to be journalists. People doubt talent in women. The discrimination in society exists in journalism as well, that women are perceived as good in working on soft news, or on art and culture. It is believed that women are incapable of handling hardcore subjects, especially politics. That woman knows less about current affairs is yet another skewed belief that results in the denial of hard news stories to women. The number of opportunities that men get gradually increases. On the other hand, women have to prove themselves to get good stories.
- Society has created a work frame for women which have set timings. Women media persons point to the difficulty in breaking this social frame. Women try to fit into it with the value system provided by the elders. They restrict themselves because of a variety of fears. They felt the social situation is changing and society has started accepting journalism as a profession just like any other. They hopefully looking forward to this positive attitude mitigating the odd feeling shown towards women journalists.

- Apart from individual empowerment, women journalists believe the presence of an active collective body will help reduce harassment cases. Women journalists do not have an active platform or association to raise their problems and to deal with such issues in Kerala.
- The study revealed that women in Kerala's media get moderate support to work. Backing from support groups like clubs, unions etc. and supportive work hours are highly challenging issues for women journalists in terms of the support they get to work. Support from male colleagues and support from superiors are comparatively less challenging for women media professionals in Kerala. The only factor which marks comparatively higher satisfaction is support from family members.
- The issues related to supporting women journalists at work were not dependent on their personal variables. The challenges were identical to all the women journalists sampled. Though statistically, their perception of the challenge was not significant, the unmarried, single living, young women faced more challenges than their counterparts. But women struggle to continue working without a proper support system after they have children. Those who have one or two children experience more challenges compared to those who are married and do not have a child in terms of the support they get to work.
- Issues of Support Women Get to Work vary according to the type of media in which the woman media person works. Support to work is more challenging to women in the Television, Newspaper and Online media compared to the Radio and Magazine.
- Compared to the experienced workers, beginners had more work pressure resulting in lesser support. But job status and professional education did not have any statistically significant implication for women journalists' perception of professional challenges with regard to the support they get to work.

Life-Work Balance

- Many women media persons opine that women media professionals cannot get enough time to spend with family, relatives or friends. Especially after marriage, they report that women find it difficult to balance both personal and professional responsibilities. Women are expected to be good wives and good

mothers in our society, where married women are expected to be the bearer of all family responsibilities. The inability to attend to family needs and functions, and frequent travels, all are reported to be contributing to the life work imbalance.

- Support from the life partner is perceived as crucial for life-work balance. The odd working hours and night shifts shatter women's married life. Women of journalist couples hold to enjoy some sort of understanding, but a mere understanding of the situation does not lessen the problem. It gets worse in joint families. This is why women journalists prefer either to live in nuclear families or quit the profession altogether.
- The findings of the study are on par with the notion that the majority of sampled women journalists live in nuclear families. Only One-fourth of them, live in joint families, whereas only a few, 6.4 percent, live single.
- Women media persons consider the responsibilities of children as the main contributing factor to life work imbalance. The duty and responsibility of caring and raising a child ultimately set on the shoulders of women and women quit the profession half the way of their career in progress.
- But women journalists in Kerala have dared to challenge the obstacles in making a mark in their professional lives. There is 32.1 percent of women journalists who have one child, while 14.7 percent have two children. Combined, the two groups constitute 46.8 percent of the sampled journalists.
- Interviewees reported that many women journalists stay with their parents seeking their support in homemaking, especially the responsibilities of children. Many others depend on their maids. Lack of childcare facilities in the office was identified as a major problem. No media house in Kerala has childcare facility or a crèche.
- Women journalists in Kerala feel that they have managed to withstand the hurdles in showing their excellence in the profession despite their domestic responsibilities after marriage.
- The present study reveals that women media professionals in Kerala experienced severe life-work imbalance. Quality time with family and friends, balancing professional and personal times and childcare facilities were the

most unsatisfactory factors that contribute to their life work imbalance. And, this phenomenon is constant across personal variables, except in some cases. For example, the imbalance is less among the upper age groups. Similarly, it is higher among those with family and children. But, they were not found to be statistically significant to arrive at conclusions.

- Life-work Balance challenges do not significantly vary according to the professional variables media type, media experience, work sector, job status, and professional qualification. However, women in desks experience more life-work imbalance than those in the field. Regarding the type of media, women media professionals in the newspaper experienced more life-work imbalance than their counterparts. While women in magazines experienced more Life-work Balance.

Confidence in Professional Competency

- Lack of confidence among women is perceived as one big reason many women media persons hold for their low number in the senior and decision-making positions. Many women journalists, who have just started their career, are unwilling to go through struggles that the profession demands. These journalists take a step back and leave the profession. Many participants in the study feel it is unfortunate that women do not make any effort to step out of their comfort zone and overcome their inhibitions.
- Many women media persons feel there are no limitations for women in any field when passion is at work. No one is inferior because of gender. What is required is dedication. Men and women have their own space in the profession, but women have set limitations on them. They feel that women are not capable of dealing with hardcore topics. This perpetuates gender stereotyping in the profession. Women largely select soft stories and confine themselves to desk duties.
- Many women media persons opine lack of sound practical education leads to the poor confidence level of women. These days, many institutes offer diploma courses in mass communication. The number of people entering this field is increasing day by day. They pointed to the need for ensuring the quality of education offered by these institutions. They opine proper education combined with talent and hard work makes journalists confident.

- More than 99 percent of women journalists in Kerala professionally educated. While 54.1 percent have a professional post-graduate degree, 42.2 percent hold diploma or certificate 2.8 percent a professional degree in journalism or mass communication. Together, these constitute 99.1 percent of the total samples.
- The findings of the study reveal that women media professionals in Kerala have confidence in their professional competency. However, Confidence to meet Punitive Measures such as dismissal was perceived to be a highly challenging issue. The factor having comparatively higher confidence score is the Confidence in Job Performance.
- The personal variable Age had a statistically significant relationship with Confidence in Women Media Professionals' Competency, whereas the variables marital status, family type and number of children did not have any statistical relationship with the Confidence in their Professional Competency. However, The young journalists were short of confidence in Professional Competency, and women journalists senior in age were more Confident in Competency.
- In the case of Marital Status, Unmarried women showed less confidence in Professional Competency than the other groups. Widowed or Divorced women journalists reported high confidence in Professional Competency.
- The professional variables Media Type and Media Experience (in years) had a statistically significant relationship with Confidence in Professional Competency of women media professionals in Kerala. While the categories work sector, job status and professional educational qualification had no statistically significant relationship with the confidence of women media professionals. Those who had more issues of confidence in their professional competency were the women employed in television and those who had lower media experience (less than 5 years).

The findings of the present study supported the global trend that women still lacking adequate access to the journalism profession in many newsrooms (Byerly, 2011). The findings also supported Byerly (2011) in terms of job insecurity and less financial benefits. There is a long way to go to gender parity. The lack of women in decision making positions in the media is the ground for unequal treatment in job

segregation. Women are assigned to report stories at a substantially lower rate than men (Burton, 2015). The study is in par with Griffin, Anna. Nieman report (2014), the explanation for lack of women in the prominent positions in media is that women opt out the profession more frequently than men. Women quit the profession in the midway of career growth, the percentage of women steadily decline after communication schools and a few years of work experience in the media. The problem of sexual harassment is well established in newsrooms across the world (Franks, 2013), media in Kerala is not an exception to it. But women often choose to ignore and move on. While a few fight against it, some quit the job.

The newsroom mirrors society's attitude towards women. Women's low confidence is one of the reasons for gender disparity in bylines . it is not only based on gender bias, but also of the fear of rejection and lack of confidence (Doll, 2012). Compared to men, women donot consider themselves as capable (Kay & Shipman, 2014)

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CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

To be a working woman especially in a profession like journalism is a serious challenge even today. Talent and remarkable representation do not end discrimination against women in a male-dominated work milieu. A man is always preferred even if an equally capable woman is available for the same job and same position. It is very pathetic that society still holds a prejudice that women fit only to certain jobs. Women face persecution at their workplaces; they often have no option but to overlook such matters to safeguard their job. With more and more women entering the job market, the trend is changing though very slow. The present study is primarily an inquiry in to the challenges of women media professionals in Kerala. It also seeks to find out the nature of the interaction of women media persons' personal and professional variables with their satisfaction with various dimensions of professional challenges.

The analysis of the data indicate that wide-ranging issues make running the profession nothing less than traumatic for women media professionals; gender discrepancy occurs during enrolment to the profession itself, as well as in promotions. Moreover, working conditions are not comfortable for women mediapersons. Cases of blatant or sublime sexual harassment exist even in the industry that must work as the watchdog of society. The various dimensions of professional challenges like unsatisfactory work environment, gender inequality, insufficient familial, organizational and societal support, insufficient technological support, life-work imbalance, and lack of confidence in professional competency pester women media professionals. Not only women, but also men are largely employed on contract or as daily wagers, which makes them getting less pay. Their basic needs are left unsatisfied. Transportation facility, especially to ensure security for those who work on late shifts, maternity leaves, childcare facilities etc. are not considered hitherto (Mahajany, 1989; Wljangard, 1992; Joseph, 2002; Bhagat, 2004; Reinardy, 2009; Tomar, 2011; Ezhuthachan, 2012; Franks, 2013; Bhardwaj, 2014; Krings, 2015; Wihbey, 2015; Davidson, 2016; Belanger, 2017; Gibson, 2017; Nagodara, 2017; Steiner, 2017; Tomar, 2017; Heathfield, 2018 & Senah, 2018).

The researcher sets the objectives to identify the challenges faced by women media professionals in Kerala in fulfilling their professional and personal responsibilities and maintaining their professional competency and to measure their satisfaction with various dimensions of professional life to get an insight into the degree of the intensity of the challenges they experience. Six professional dimensions are used to explore the challenges faced by women media professionals in Kerala like work environment issues, issues of unequal treatment at work, issues of technological support at the workplace, issues of support they get to work, life-work balance issues and issues of self-confidence in their professional competency. The researcher also examined the influence of personal and professional variables on their satisfaction with perceived challenges faced by women journalists in Kerala.

To realize the objectives of the study, the researcher approached a mixed methodology, blending qualitative and quantitative methods. To explore the challenges faced by women media professionals in Kerala, the researcher went after a focus group interview. However, it is followed by a quantitative data analysis, to test how the personal and professional variables influence women mediapersons' satisfaction with perceived challenges.

Qualitative data consisted of the responses of 74 women journalists at different levels in the Kerala media scene. The researcher interviewed them personally to elicit their perspectives on the real issues women journalists face at their workplace. Quantitative data were elicited from 109 women mediapersons enlisted in Directory of the Public Relations Department (PRD), Govt. of Kerala; constitute 37.72 percent of the total women journalists in Kerala. The survey was a systematic multi-stage exercise ensuring the representation from all types of media and of all parts of the state. The survey was focused on the personal as well as professional variables like age, education, marital status, number of children, the type of family they live in, type of media, media experience, professional education status and job sector.

Challenges of women media professionals are conceived to have six components like, work environment issues, issues of unequal treatment at work, issues of technological support at the workplace, life-work balance issues and

issues of confidence in their professional competency with their respective contributing factors.

Work environment issues were under investigation on the ground of work environment infrastructure, relationship with colleagues, relationship with male colleagues, job security level, sense of security while on duty and financial benefits.

Issues of unequal treatment at work have measured on the factors of equal promotional opportunities, equality in salary, representation in top/management positions, the absence of gender stereotyping, the absence of verbal abuse and absence of sexual exploitation.

Contributing factors to issues of technological support at the workplace were tech-friendly work atmosphere, chance for improvement through technological awareness, chance to learn technologies, comfortable atmosphere to use technology and accessibility to technology.

Support from male colleagues, support from superiors, support from family members, support from support groups and supportive work hours were the factors of the component, issues of support they get to work.

Life-work balance has measured on the factors like quality time for professional efficacy, quality time with family and friends, vigor after a busy day at the office, balancing time with professional life and personal commitments, family and societal support for spending time for profession ahead of family responsibilities.

Factors of confidence in professional competency were, feeling of positivity and energized about the career, confidence in job performance, competency in the profession, confidence to meet the punitive measures, confidence to meet out the demands of job and confidence in the fitness for the job.

CONCLUSIONS

The primary objective of this study was to explore the challenges faced by women media professionals in Kerala in terms of the dimensions of professional challenges. In addition to that, the influence of personal and professional variables on the satisfaction with perceived challenges faced by women journalists in Kerala

is also examined. The major findings of the study are presented and discussed below.

However, the present study supported the findings of earlier studies (Panya, 2004; Joshi, Pahad & Maniyar, 2006; Ordway, 2017 & Bhardwaj, 2014) reveal that media is a male-dominated profession. Media in Kerala is no exception to it, which is a mirror of the perceptions of a society that women's role is at home as good wife and mother. It's not a unique problem of the journalism profession; it is there in all other professions across the world. The daily news comes through the perspectives of a male-dominated profession reflects its approach towards coverage of women issues and achievements as well (Grizzle, 2012).

Women are later adding up to the male vicinity which results in a meager representation of them in the top management positions as well. To ensure gender balance among decision makers within media organizations, equal opportunity policies should be developed within media houses for the removal of all obstacles (like company nurseries, part-time employment and transparent selection criteria for promotion) in a cooperative manner and with endorsement of staff. Implementation of specific gender quota system for representation in decision making as well as affirmative actions and affirmative action committees to increase female presence in media at all levels of the organizational structure is also the indicators for gender balance (Grizzle, 2012).

Women are well represented in small publications but less likely to have roles in bigger media offices (Heckman, 2013). The very nature of the profession poses some special requirements such as working at an odd hour, long travelling and continuous shift changes, which mark challenges for women especially for the married ones, as they have dual responsibilities that of family and profession. This can be attributed to the less sustainability of them in the profession. This can also contribute to the shunning of women in the top positions (Clare, 2003 & Kadyrkulova, 2008). The fact is that these arise from the social conditions prevail in Kerala which are unfriendly to the working women.

The emergence of new media, technological advancements, and social change comprise the increased inflow of women into the profession (Gibson, 2017 & Ordway, 2017). Women empowerment reflects in versatile fields globally, and

journalism is not an exception to it. The more empowered and confident young women dare to choose male-dominated journalism as a career. This is also relevant in the increased number of married women in the profession negating the stereotypical notion that domestic responsibilities after marriage creates a major hurdle for women in excelling in journalism. The present study supported the findings of Panya (2004) that marriage does not hamper one's profession.

Majority of women in the profession specializes in soft story writing such as art, culture, fashion, cinema, health and women issues (Panya, 2004). Specialization is not a problem, but when it becomes stereotyping, that's not favourable for the better status of women in this profession. The stereotypical notion that women can handle only the soft news will change only through such confident move that women should come forward and dare to demand hard or serious beats such as politics, and male dominant areas such as sensitive places and sports. However, the widespread acceptance of women in visual media paves way for such changes.

Many media offices lack a women-friendly work environment. Even the very basic requirement of women such as separate toilet is not available in many of the offices (Bhagat, 2004& Tomar, 2011). Many women are hesitant to use common toilets fearing infection. That itself results in health issues. The situation becomes awful during the menstruation period. Women are compelled to take leave on those days, without the proper facility to dispose of the used napkins. Many organizations do not provide transportation or accommodation for those who work at late night. As a result, a woman experiences verbal abuses, harassments and physical threats out of the offices in the late evenings. Our society boast of highest literacy and women empowerment still doubts the morality of women when she is out in late evenings.

The factors to safe work environment within media organizations are - ensuring facilities for different needs of women (like safe transport and accommodation facilities after late night duty, separate toilets for women and safety equipment for women covering war zones), as well as implementation of comprehensive prevention or redress system with regards to sexual harassment and bullying in the workplace, and implementation of other proper media policies concerning safe working environment (Grizzle, 2012)

Similarly there is not even a single day-care center or crèche in any of the media houses in Kerala. At least, press clubs can start such one in major district centers on behalf of all the media organizations. Responsibility towards children is one of the major issues of women contributing to life work imbalance. Media offices do not entertain taking children to the offices. Still, some women are forced to bring their child in unavoidable situations.

Implementation of specific policies on flexible working arrangements on collective agreements, availability and accessibility of quality childcare and support facilities for all staff members and, specific clauses and policies on maternity/paternity and parental leave for all media professionals for an adequate duration are the possible ways to tackle life work imbalance (Grizzle, 2012).

Many media organizations reject women at the recruitment process itself. The ratio of male and female is decided by the management. The need to make special arrangements for them, ensuring safety standards, and chances for quitting the profession or take a break after marriage and having children citing domestic responsibilities are pointed as the main reasons for that. When the employees are men, definitely they would work for a longer period and is more convenient in adjusting shifts and assignments along with safety arrangements.

Implementing a gender desk or a monitoring and evaluation authority in the workplace, to address the concerns of gender for gender equality is the need of the hour. Media organizations should ensure adequate gender proportion in the organization and in all levels (junior, middle and top management) as well as should ensure media policies, securing equal treatment with respect to general working conditions/environment and rights including wages and promotion opportunities. Equal conditions of employment and, benefits including pension schemes, is needed to be ensured. There should be specific actions to ensure equal gender proportions with part-time contracts, fixed-term contracts, and in reporting various news subjects especially sports, politics and armed conflicts (Grizzle, 2012).

The situation getting changed as more women are seen in the profession, especially with the massive explosion of visual media. The media offices favor increased representation of women not focusing on their efficiency at work, but because women are more manageable. Seldom do they rebel against the

management's oppressive policies. They also work at lower wages and they are used as an element to attract the audience.

The equal wage for media professionals for work of equal value irrespective of gender on collective agreement provisions, transparent pay scale and transparent pay audits on yearly basis and cyclical internal and external evaluation of wages are needed to be ensured by the organization/management (Grizzle, 2012).

Women are generally perceived as so sensitive, that's why women are supposed to cover women issues better. It is not that issues related to women are not covered; the problem is that these stories are colored by sensationalism. Media addresses news related to women's problems as per the audience's interest. So, most of the issues, especially atrocities on women get sensationalized to suit the audience's demand. Increasing the number of stories on women and representation of women in newsroom head position will not help to minimize the level of exploitation or gender stereotypes on them. The change in people's attitude towards women is the need of the hour; the media will change its stance accordingly. An adequate percentage of gender equality issues should be mainstreamed and organized by the media organizations in the compulsory and regular training for media professionals on the portrayal of gender in media content (Grizzle, 2012).

There is also a difference in the way men and women perceive news. That's why men are better adept at handling political stories. On the other hand, women excel in presenting soft stories (Bhagat, 2004 & Anyango, 2009). Women show a natural empathy towards women's issues, while men see it mechanically. The inclusion of women in all levels of this profession, especially in senior management positions will bring forth better approach towards news on women (Anyango, 2009).

The gender disparity prevails in the society that women are expected to be inferior and submissive to men leads to the widespread harassment and exploitations. The preconceived notion is there everywhere globally, at home, streets and at workplaces. Journalism is no exception to it. Women are given overload of works as they won't deny it. Women are sexually exploited worldwide with the same preconceived notion (Panya, 2004). But nowadays the extensive

acceptance of social networking sites opens platform to speak out sexual harassments.

With the technological advancements and with the proliferation of online media and social networking sites, especially facebook and twitter, the traditional media is compelled to run along with the digital advancements. The place of Paper and pen is overtaken by mobile phones and digital devices. Women are specializing in camera and photography. Many of the print media open their online versions and women are largely recruited into the online media offices. Given the training to the timely digital advancements, the traditional concept of women's inhibition towards technology is broken and bridges a gap in the gender dividend of technical posts.

The experiences of support women get from the working organization might be different from person to person and offices to offices. The inborn inhibition in women to excel in a creative and dynamic profession like journalism leaves their workplace unsupportive and hazardous. Women are therefore forced to take double of the effort taken by men for the sustainability in the profession. While, there are very positive attitude and caring towards women, in the sense of a daughter or little sister. Women of the hour are not in need of such care in the office, as cited by Patowary (2014) they need support and care as a colleague, with equal rights and talents.

A career-oriented woman should not get married. Married women find it a humongous task to balance both the responsibilities -take care of family and work at the office. Besides women journalists, their organizations and family also have to make a lot of adjustments. Married women are expected to bear all family responsibilities; as a result, women choose comfortable work arrangements in the office, which neglects their full potential for the profession. In the print sector, women are reluctant to be available at the office at a crucial point of time of production, especially in the evenings. At that time they are needed at home as well. Family and friends get frustrated when they are not available at home or friend circles in need and in attending family or any other social functions.

By coming out of their homes in gainful employment, women have broken the traditional notion that working outside is derogatory to them (Bhardwaj, 2014). But the inherent belief in women that they are inferior of gender has set limitations

on them. The poor confidence level contributes to under-representation, gender stereotyping in work, poor representation in upper echelons in media houses and increased dropping downs. Lack of quality education of practical journalism offered by many institutes which offer mass communication courses also contributes to the poor confidence level of women in this profession.

Professors of journalism universities/colleges should be given the training to integrate gender-specific content and gender equality issues in curricula and lectures. The training institutions can conduct monitoring, particularly for female journalism students' to perform during education and after graduation. The adequate proportion of both genders with a quota system should be there among the trainers as well as students attending these training courses (Grizzle, 2012).

To elevate the status of women journalists, women should be aware of their abilities and must prove their competence on their own, should not depend on others for it. Women have to take initiative to develop themselves and should be self-sufficient. They need to be strong, aware and alert every moment for their growth and development.

Whatever challenges and obstacles are reported, identified and discussed, there is a gradual but steady improvement in the representation and status of women in the media houses nowadays. Women are stepping the ladder of professional echelons in versatile fields globally in par with the social and economic change. With the proliferation of television channels and invasion and widespread acceptance of new media along with technological innovations and advancements, there is a massive increase in the opportunities for both men and women in the profession.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the researcher advances the following recommendations that may enhance the working conditions and status of women media professionals in Kerala.

- Device mechanism like reservation to ensure adequate representation of women in media organizations since better representation of women in news

rooms will have positive implications for the coverage of women issues in media and the work environments in media houses.

- Ensure proper salary (without gender pay gap) as per wage board recommendations. Underpay or mere payment is one of the serious problems not only women but also men face in the line of work. Contract mode of employment paves way for inability to raise questions regarding right for proper salary. Underpay results people of caliber quitting the profession thereby weaken quality of the output of organization itself.
- Form an internal complaint cell to deal with women issues in media and ensure its proper working. Many women are coming forefront speaking frankly about the sexual harassment and exploitation they face in the media organizations, especially through ‘#Me Too’ campaign. Government and media organizations/management should take necessary measures to ensure the safety of women.
- Digitization enables media and journalists to work more efficiently. Media technology is fast changing. So in-service training will help women journalists update their technological knowhow.
- Every organization shall have career advancement policy with gender equality as its core.
- Flexible work arrangements will enhance women media professionals’ quality of work. Arrange flexible work hours taking in to consideration of women’s other responsibilities at home and family.
- Arrange proper transportation facilities especially for women working during nightshifts. Also provide separate facilities for rest and refreshment. Arrange proper washroom and toilet facilities.
- Encourage women journalists to be very energetic and mentally comfortable with adequate leisure time. Adequate maternity leave should be included in the management policies.
- Women in the journalistic profession should take the profession as serious, understanding the nature of the profession. Despite stepping back with the

challenges in the male dominant profession, concede it as a motivation to excel in the profession. Improved self confidence and willingness to work amidst risk factors in the profession will make the vocation energetic and pleasant for women.

- Women journalists in higher positions can make use of their power to improve the women friendly work environment in the media houses. They can take strong actions against sexual harassments and other women issues. They should act wisely to avoid gender disparity and gender discrimination in the profession.
- Government should take measures to ensure the safety of journalists whether men or women who uncover the organized crimes and corruption. Threat towards women journalists' life and physical threats should be handled properly. Gauri Lankesh's murder and violence faced by women journalists in Kerala High Court from an aggressive group of advocates are the latest much discussed serious crimes against women journalists.
- Implement and ensure an active association of working women journalists to provide adequate mentoring and guidance and also to deal with the problems women face in the profession.

The recommendations are generated from the findings of the study area, media in Kerala. There is a lack of well organized and focused research on the representation and challenges faced by women media professionals in the state. The present study, constitute focus group interview of 74 and survey of 109 women journalists, out of the total 289 women media professionals in Kerala, indicates that the status of women media professionals in Kerala is not in an adequate level. However there is a slow but steady improvement in the representation and status of women in this work milieu.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX I
QUESTIONNAIRE
THE CHALLENGES FACED BY WOMEN MEDIA PROFESSIONALS
IN KERALA

Madam,

I am conducting a study on '*The Challenges faced by Women Media Professionals in Kerala*' for the partial fulfilment of Doctor of Philosophy in Journalism from the Dept. of JMC, University of Calicut. I request you to spare a little of your valuable time to respond to this questionnaire. I assure you that the responses will be kept confidential and used for academic purpose only.

Subhida E K

Personal Information

Please choose the appropriate using tick mark (✓)

Age	Younger than 35 <input type="checkbox"/> Aged 35-49 <input type="checkbox"/> Aged 50 & Above <input type="checkbox"/>
Marital status	Married <input type="checkbox"/> Unmarried <input type="checkbox"/> Widowed/Divorced <input type="checkbox"/>
Number of Children	Unmarried <input type="checkbox"/> No Child <input type="checkbox"/> One Child <input type="checkbox"/> Two Children <input type="checkbox"/> More Than Two Children..... (please specify)
Family Type	Nuclear <input type="checkbox"/> Joint <input type="checkbox"/> Single living <input type="checkbox"/>

Professional Information

Please choose the appropriate using tick mark (✓)

Media Type	Newspaper <input type="checkbox"/> Magazine <input type="checkbox"/> Television <input type="checkbox"/> Radio <input type="checkbox"/> Online <input type="checkbox"/>
Media Institution (Optional)	
Media experience (in years)	Less Than 5 Years <input type="checkbox"/> 5-14 years <input type="checkbox"/> 15 years and above <input type="checkbox"/>
Work Sector	Field <input type="checkbox"/> Desk <input type="checkbox"/>
Job Status	Permanent <input type="checkbox"/> Contract <input type="checkbox"/> Other.....(Please specify)
Professional Qualification	Graduation <input type="checkbox"/> Post-Graduation and Above <input type="checkbox"/> Diploma <input type="checkbox"/> No Professional Qualification <input type="checkbox"/>

Following are some statements regarding your experience/feelings/perceptions about dimensions of women journalists' possible professional challenges in the media sector. Please mark (✓) the option most suitable to you.

Factors of Professional Challenges	Very Poor	Poor	Neutral	Good	Very Good
<i>Contributing Factor: Work environment</i>					
Work environment infrastructure					
Relationship with colleagues in general					
Relationship with male colleagues					
Job security level					
Sense of security while on duty					
Financial benefits					
<i>Contributing Factor: Unequal treatment at work</i>					
Equal promotional opportunities					
Equality in salary					
Representation in top/management positions					
Absence of gender stereotyping					
Absence of verbal abuse					
Absence of sexual exploitation					
<i>Contributing Factor: Technological support at workplace</i>					
Tech-friendly work atmosphere					
Chance for improvement through technological awareness					
Chance to learn technologies					
Comfortable atmosphere to use technology					
Accessibility to technology					
<i>Contributing Factor: Support at work</i>					
Support from male colleagues					
Support from superiors					
Support from family members					
Support from support groups					
Supportive work hours					
<i>Contributing Factor: Life-work balance</i>					
Quality time for professional efficacy					
Quality time with family and friends					
Vigour after a busy day in office					
Balancing professional and personal times					

Familial and societal support for giving time to profession over family responsibilities					
Childcare facilities at workplace					
<i>Contributing Factor: Confidence in professional competency</i>					
Feeling of positive and energized about the job					
Confidence in job performance					
Competency in the profession					
Confidence to meet the punitive measures					
Confidence to meet the demands of the job					
Confidence of the fitness for the present job					

APPENDIX II

CODED LIST OF INTERVIEWED RESPONDENTS

Serial Number	Sector(P/E)- Media type(N/M/T/R/O)	Code
	Newspaper(PN)/Magazine(PM) Television(ET)/Radio(ER)/Online media (EO)	
1	PN	PN1
2	PN	PN2
3	PN	PN3
4	PN	PN4
5	PN	PN5
6	PN	PN6
7	PN	PN7
8	PN	PN8
9	PN	PN9
10	PN	PN10
11	PN	PN11
12	PN	PN12
13	PN	PN13
14	PN	PN14
15	PN	PN15
16	PN	PN16
17	PN	PN17
18	PN	PN18
19	PN	PN19
20	PN	PN20
21	PN	PN21
22	PN	PN22
23	PN	PN23
24	PN	PN24
25	PN	PN25
26	PN	PN26
27	PN	PN27
28	PN	PN28
29	PN	PN29
30	PN	PN30
31	PN	PN31
32	PN	PN32
33	PN	PN33
34	PN	PN34
35	PN	PN35
36	PN	PN36
37	PN	PN37
38	PN	PN38
39	PN	PN39
40	PN	PN40
41	PN	PN41

Serial Number	Sector(P/E)- Media type(N/M/T/R/O)	Code
	Newspaper(PN)/Magazine(PM) Television(ET)/Radio(ER)/Online media (EO)	
42	PN	PN42
43	PN	PN43
44	PN	PN44
45	PN	PN45
46	PN	PN46
47	PN	PN47
48	PN	PN48
49	PN	PN49
50	PN	PN50
51	PN	PN51
52	PN	PN52
53	PM	PM53
54	PM	PM54
55	PM	PM55
56	PM	PM56
57	ET	ET57
58	ET	ET58
59	ET	ET59
60	ET	ET60
61	ET	ET61
62	ET	ET62
63	ET	ET63
64	ET	ET64
65	ET	ET65
66	ET	ET66
67	ET	ET67
68	ET	ET68
69	ER	ER69
70	ER	ER70
71	ER	ER71
72	ER	ER72
73	EO	EO73
74	EO	EO74