



PAKHTUNKHWA: (A PROBLEMS OF FEMALE WORKING JOURNALISTS IN KHYBER CASE STUDY IN PESHAWAR CITY-Pakistan)

Prof. Dr.Ghulam Shabir
Chairman Department of Media Studies,
The Islamia University of Bahawalpur-Pakistan

Abstract

Working woman in Pakistan are prone to a lot of discrimination and this is especially true in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan .This research paper investigates the Problems faced by Female Working Journalists in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, through a survey conducted using both the questionnaire and interviews form of Survey Experimental Research design .The Universe of this Research are the working female journalists in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and the population of my sample for this study are the women journalists registered with Peshawar Press Club.

For this purpose, the researcher had collected the data of registered female journalists at Peshawar Press Club. According to the data available there were a total of 380 registered journalists both male and female with Peshawar Press Club, out of which, only a mere 16 were Female.

It was revealed during the course of this research paper that the Female working journalists in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa are facing many problems during the course of their reporting in the field, from various quarters of the society, both with in the offices where they work and whilst commuting i.e. going to their offices and coming back to home. These and a host of other problems affect both their personal and professional lives to a great extent and consequently due to these problems, they are unable to do justice to their profession and portray the real picture of the issues that they cover.

Introduction

Journalism in today's modern world is an occupation where both males and female segments of society are thought to be equally represented. However, there used to be a time when journalism was considered to be entirely a male profession. Women in this profession were looked down and had to deal with issues that female journalists in today's society don't have to deal with. Currently, women in journalism from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa are still in the process of struggling to earn their equal rights and hopefully they will eventually succeed. Still it is an established fact that the early women of journalism with great difficulty paved the way for the young female journalists of today by showing males that females can be just as affective as them in the field of journalism. It is very apparent that even though women in this relatively backward region, currently have more rights than they did several decades ago as compare to other professions but, in the field of journalism they still have a long distance to go to reach equal rights. Scholars were initially of the opinion that Journalism was totally a "man's job" and that it would be too dangerous a job to be considered for any female.

Journalism in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa initially remained a man dominated profession, just like other spheres of life but it was not because of the lack of the capabilities or inabilities of the female gender in this field. Rather, it was because of strict social norms, restrictions and purely religious grounds which hindered the women strata of the society in utilizing their talent in joining this profession. The working conditions have never been encouraging for ladies to do something other than doing household jobs in this province of the country. It is an accepted truth all over the world that the women of Pakistan and particularly the female sector of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa have always experienced gender inequity in every field of life.

The Social, Cultural and Religious factors have therefore reduced the number of women entering the job market. Throughout the history of Pakistan, Muslim women have suffered a great deal of pointless restrictions due to religious misperceptions.

Women are brought up to believe they should stay within their homes and avoid any contact with men they are not related to (Working Women Problems: By ALIFAYA AUN ALI). These misconceptions are still prevalent in the society, and women, particularly working women in the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, have faced a lot of problems. As compared to other provinces of the country the Pashtoon society in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is socially and culturally very inflexible and restricted. It is worth to mention that in most of the districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, first, the women are not allowed for the jobs, but if somewhere they do jobs, then they have to face a number of problems in this rigid society. The literacy rate in this province is very low as compared to other parts of the country, and the people as a whole are very conservative and traditionally reserved.

A Brief Background of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

North West Frontier Province (NWFP) now as Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is one of the four provinces of Pakistan. Geographically the Federal Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) is situated in the West and towards the South of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province; it touches the Afghanistan border to the North West, Azad Kashmir to the East, the province Gilgit Baltistan to the North East, Punjab province and the capital of Pakistan Islamabad to the South East and Baluchistan to the South of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. It is always remained a gateway to the Central Asia. All the invaders interred to the Sub-Continent through this territory. Geographically it is a very important province of Pakistan because Pakistan is the front line ally of Western Power in the war against the terror. According to the 1998 census the population of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa was 17 million, of whom 52% is male and 48% is female. This province consists of a total area of 74521 Square kilometers.

Methodology

For the conduct of this Research paper the researcher took a survey of the female journalists who are members of the Peshawar Press Club and who are Reporters, Correspondents or representatives of their respective Media Organizations. Their total number is 16 but due to their busy schedule the researcher was successful in gathering the data of 14 respondents. The Questionnaire was designed to examine along with the variable experience of journalists, their perception about the problems faced by Female working Journalists in reporting the events and happenings in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on a number of different issues.

Table No. 1: A comparative relation of Experience of the Female Journalists and their job effects on their children and social life has been investigated.

		Does your job affect the look after of your children and your social life?		Total
		Yes	No	
Experience as journalist	less than a year	2	0	2 (14.3%)
	1 to 5 years	4	2	6 (42.9%)
	6 to 10 years	2	2	4 (28.6%)
	above 10 years	2	0	2 (14.3%)
Total		10 (71.4%)	4 (28.6%)	14 (100%)



In the above table it is quite clear that 2 (14.3%) of the 14 respondents having an experience of less than a year. Said that, yes their job affects their personal and social life, 6 (42.9%) of the total 14 respondents were having a journalism experience 1-5 years, among these 6 respondents, 4 said that their job affects their children and social life, where as 2 respondents replied it doesn't. 4 (28.6%) of 14 respondents were having an experience of 6-10 year and among these 4, 2 of the respondents declared that it affects and 2 replied that it doesn't affect their life. While 2 (14.3%) of the 14 respondents said that it affects their personal and social life. So out of total 14 respondents 10 (71.4%) of the respondents said that their job strongly affects their personal and social lives and among these 10, 4 (majority) of the respondents were having experience of 1-5 years, while 4 (28.6%) said that it doesn't affect their lives.

Majority of the respondents 10 (71.4%) of the total 14 said that their job affects their personal and social lives

Table No. 2: A comparative relation of Experience of the Female Journalists and hurdles for Female Journalists in their marriages.

		Do you thing that the job of a woman creates major hurdles in her marriage.		Total
		Agree	Not Agree	
Experience as journalist	less than a year	2	0	2 (14.3%)
	1 to 5 years	4	2	6 (42.9%)
	6 to 10 years	2	2	4 (28.6%)
	above 10 years	2	0	2 (14.3%)
Total		10 (71.4%)	4 (28.6%)	14 (100%)

The above data shows that on the basis of experience it has been investigated that how much a job creates problems in the marriage of a female.

Out of a total 14 respondents 2 (14.3%) having an experience of less than a year said that a job creates difficulties for a female in her marriage while 6 (42.9%) having an experience of 1-5 years among which 4 respondents agree that job creates problems in the marriage while 2 showed no such opinion and said that the job can never have, had something with the marriage of a female. Out of 4 (28.6%) having an experience of 6-10 years, 2 agreed and 2 did not grant that a job can create problem in the marriage of a female, while 2 (14.3%) of the total 14 respondents who were having experience of above 10 years agreed that the job of a female can creates many problems in her marriage. So, 10 (71.4%) out of the total 14 respondents replied that the job of a female create hurdles in her marriage out of which 4 (majority) respondents were having an experience of 1-5 years. Mean while 4 (28.6%) of the total 14 respondents said that it would not leave any affect on the marriage of a female.

Majority of the respondents, 10 (71.4%) out of the total 14 said that the job of female creates hurdles in their marriage.

Table No. 3: A relation between experience as journalists and causes of low induction of female in journalism

		What are the major causes of low induction of female in journalism?			Total
		Culture Rigid and restricted Pashtoon	Female themselves don't want	Females are not Properly Guided at Educational Institutions	
experience as journalist	less than a year	1	0	1	2 (14.3%)
	1 to 5 years	3	1	1	5 (35.7%)
	6 to 10 years	3	2	0	5 (35.7%)
	above 10 years	0	2	0	2 (14.3%)
Total		7 (50%)	5 (35.7%)	2 (14.3%)	14 (100%)

The above table shows the causes of low inductions of female in Journalism on the basis of experience. Out of the total 14 respondents, 2 (14.3%), 5 (35.7%), 5 (35.7%) and 2 (14.3%) were having Journalism experience less than a year, 1-5, 6-10 and above 10 years respectively and majority of the respondents 7 (50%) out of the total 14 said that it's the rigid and restricted Pashtoon culture which is the cause of low induction of female in Journalism. 5 (35.7%) of the respondents told that female themselves don't want to come to this field while 2 (14.3%) said that they are not properly guided at educational institutions.

Majority of the 7 (50%) of the total 14 respondents declared the rigid and Pashtoon culture as cause for the low induction of the female in the field of Journalism print media.

Table No. 4: A comparative relation between transport facilities the Female Journalists use while coming to office and comfort in public transport?

		While coming to Office in Public Transport, do you Feel Easy?			Total
		....	Yes	No	
What kind of transport facility you use while coming to office?	Public	0	1	10	11(78.6%)
	Private	3	0	0	3(21.4%)
Total		3(21.4%)	1(7.1%)	10(71.4%)	14(100%)

Here the relation of transport, the female journalist uses, and their comfort in Public transport has been found. Majority of the respondents 11 (78.6%) out of 14 uses the public transport and 10 (71.4%) among them said that it is too difficult for them while coming in public transport to the office and back to home while 3 (21.4%) uses private transport.

Majority of the respondents uses the public transport and 10 among them feel uneasy while using the public transport.



Table No. 5: The relation between conveyance facility of the organization and causes of not facilitating the Females with conveyance facility?

		Why your Organization did not give you conveyance facility?			Total
		....	Don't have such policy	Don't have any vehicle	
Does your organization give you conveyance facility?	Yes	3	0	0	3(21.4%)
	No	0	9	2	11(78.6%)
Total		3(21.4%)	9(64.3%)	2(14.3%)	14(100%)

The above table shows the relation of conveyance facility of the organization and if it not gives what is the cause. Majority of the 11 (78.6%) out of the total 14 said that their organization does not give them conveyance facility and majority of the 9 (64.3%) among 11 said that their organization does not have such a policy. While 3 (21.4%) of the total 14 respondents told that their organization provide them the conveyance facility.

Majority of the 11 (78.6%) out of the total 14 said that their organization does not give them conveyance facility and majority of the 9 (64.3%) among 11 said that their organization does not have such a policy

Table. No 6: A comparative relation between duty hours and Job Security of the female Journalists?

		Do you have your Job Security?			Total
		Yes	No	Total	
For how many hours you work in your Organization?	5-7	1	2	3(21.4%)	
	8-10	1	4	5(35.7%)	
	11-14	1	5	6(42.9%)	
Total		3(21.4%)	11(78.6%)	14(100%)	

The above table shows the relation of working hours of Journalists and their job security. 3 (21.4%), 5 (35.7%) and 6 (42.9%) of the total 14 respondents works 5-7, 8-10 and 11-14 hours daily, respectively. Majority of 6 (42.9%) work for 11-14 hours daily and majority of 11 (78.6%) respondents out of 14 said that their job is not secure while only 3 (21.4%) out of 14 said that their job is secure.

Table. No 7: A comparative relation between the Bureau Chief Supports in profession and the cooperation of the male colleagues working in the organizations?

		Are your male colleagues cooperative with you?		Total
		Yes	No	
Does your Bureau Chief Supports you in this profession?	Yes	4	4	8(57.1%)
	No	2	4	6(42.9%)
	Total	6(42.9%)	8(57.1%)	14(100%)
Total		6(42.9%)	8(57.1%)	14(100%)

The above table shows the problem to female journalist with in the organization, the support of the bureau chief and cooperation of the male colleagues has been found in the above table. Majority of the respondents 8 (57.1%) out of 14 said that their bureau chiefs encourage and support them in their profession while majority of 8 (57.1%) said that their colleagues are not cooperative in their profession while 6 (42.9%) told that they are cooperative.

Majority of the 8 (57.1%) said that their bureau chiefs support and encourage them but majority of 8 (57.1%) said that their male colleagues are not cooperative in their field.

Table. No 8: The comparison between the Gender Discrimination in the offices and its nature?

		To what extent?			Total
		....	To some extent	To a great extent	
Do you face Gender Discrimination and favoritism in your Office?	Yes	0	1	6	7(50%)
	No	7	0	0	7(50%)
Total		7(50%)	1(7.1%)	6(42.9%)	14(100%)

The above table shows the gender discrimination and their nature with in the offices. 7 (50%) respondents of the total 14 said that they face gender discrimination while 7 (50%) of the respondents told that they don't face such an activity and among those 7 respondents who said that they face gender discrimination 6 (42.9%) said that this discrimination is done at a great extent.

77 (50%) respondents said that gender discrimination is done and not done and among those who said that gender discrimination is done 6 (42.9%) said that its nature is very high.

Table. No 9: A comparative response between the hurdles, while reporting in public places, political gathering and rallies and its causes?

		What are the causes?			Total
		....	Staring of people	My own colleagues	
Do you face hurdles, while reporting in public places, political gathering and rallies etc?	Yes	0	8	2	10(71.4%)
	No	4	0	0	4(28.6%)
Total		4(28.6%)	8(57.1%)	2(14.3%)	14(100%)



The problems to female Journalists during reporting have been investigated in the above table and its relation was found out with the causes of these hurdles. Majority of 10 (71.4%) said that they faces hurdles and problem while covering an event in the field and 4 (28.6%) said that they do not face any problem and majority 8(57.1%) of those who face problems said that the main problem is the starring of the people while covering and event.

Majority of the respondents 10 (71.4%) faces hurdles while reporting in the field and among them majority 8 (57.1%) experience the hurdle from the people when they stare.

CONCLUSION

Analysis and interpretation of the questionnaire after the course of this research helped in evaluating the status of women journalists in Khyberpakhtunkhwa. The maximum problems that female working journalists face during the course of their duties in different places such as commuting, in their offices, on spot reporting, and also to discover the factors due to which females are reluctant to join this profession. Keeping in view the objectives of this research, a number of questions were kept in the questionnaire of this research to get maximum information about the problems of female journalists. The problems that appeared after interpretation clearly shows that most of the problems they are facing while performing their duties in their offices, in field work and reporting, in their society, and also the low induction of female in the field of journalism are because of non acceptance of the working woman in these regions.

Another objective of this research was to find out about the "Low induction of females in the field of journalism". It transpired that the social and cultural values and the rigid and restricted customs of PASHTOON Society are highly different than other provinces of the country. In PASHTOON Society "HIJAB or PARDA" is an important component in the backwardness of Pashtoon society in Khyber Pakthun Khwa as compared to the other provinces in the country. Although presently in other parts of Pakistan females have great opportunities in each and every field such as Education, Health, Defense etc, but in Khyber Pakthun Khwa the rigid customs of that tribal culture are the major hurdles in the active participation of female. So at one side are the lack of proper guidance at University level and on other side are the Pashtoon traditions and customs that do not allow and neither do they encourage females to join this profession.

The data collected in this research regarding the low induction of Female in the field of journalism shows that, when the respondents were asked about the low induction of female in this field then 50 % of the respondents were of the opinion that "Rigid Culture of Pashtoon Society was the major cause of the low induction of female in this field", 35.714 % respondents were of the opinion that "female themselves don't want to join this profession", while 14.285 % told that female are not properly guided in their Educational institutions regarding the profession of journalism.

Another major factor in the backwardness of the people of Khyber Pakthunkhawa is the low literacy rate. From the data collected from Khyber Pakthunkhawa Bureau Of Statistics, the total population of the Khyber Pakthunkhawa was 20,215,000 in 1998 census. According to the 1998 census the literacy rate of Khyber Pakthunkhawa was 37.25 % including both male and female.

It is a fact that in Khyber Pakthunkhawa the women's response towards the different fields like teaching, nursing, medical etc is positive, but there is very less attention towards the field of journalism. Due to the low literacy rate and rigid customs of the Pashtoon Society majority of the families do not want their daughters and sisters to join the profession of Journalism particularly. So in addition to the social and cultural values the low literacy rate plays a deciding role in the low induction of females in journalism.

From this study it is obvious that the working environment for female journalists is not according to even the basic requirements of a civilized society. Majority of the respondents face problems while reporting in public places due to the in different attitude of the general people and their continuous staring and passing of obnoxious remarks. The organizations in which those female journalists worked also did not give any professional training in order to polish their skills. The respondents wanted such trainings to be arranged for them on a regular basis. We thus come to know that the majority of the females were bound not to report their own but they were strictly directed by their bosses on how what and which manner to report.

REFERENCES:

- Abidi, A. (1976). Cultural and Educational Aspects. A paper presented at seminar on Role and Status of Women in Pakistan: organized by and held at Administrative Staff College, Lahore-Pakistan.
- Hafeez, S. (1983). Women In Industry: Phase 11: In Deptt. Study, Women's Division, Cabinet Secretariat, Govt of Pakistan, Islamabad-Pakistan.
- Rana, B. (2007). A paper delivered in a workshop in Nipal on Feminist Perspectives on Media: URL http://www.isiswomen.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=378&Itemid=207
- Info Refuge. Women in journalism a triumph over time: URL <http://www.inforefuge.com/>
- Khan, H. (n.d). Women in Journalism Problems and Prospects in Pakistan.,omen Media, Centre (WMC) Islamabad Pakistan..
- Makhdoom, M. (2010). Women journalists brave to take on challenges.;URL http://groups.google.com/group/PressPakistan/browse_thread/thread/8f614b183ab5afaf
- Riaz, U. (1994). Problems of female journalists in NWFP: , THESIS No 207, Journalism Department Peshawar University Pakistan, p. 59
- Kazmi, L.(2008). Women Of Pakistan. URL <http://jazbah.org/razia.php>
- Riaz, U. (1994). Problems of female journalists in NWFP: THESIS No 207, Journalism Department Peshawar University Pakistan, p.65
- Schneider, M.(1931). FIRST WOMAN OF THE NEWS: CPI Group,inc.,311 East 51st Street, New York, New York 10022.
- Who 2,Nellie Bly Journalist / Activist (2006). URL <http://www.infoplease.com/biography/var/nelliebly.html>
- Schneider, M.(1931). FIRST WOMAN OF THE NEWS: CPI Group,inc.,311 East 51st Street, New York, New York 10022.p.16
- Nellieby biography,(2001). URL <http://www.az.essortment.com/nellybybiograrsls.htm> .
- Genevieve, (2009).Female Journalists Under Fire in Afghanistan and Pakistan: URL <http://www.theepochtimes.com/n2/content/view/16984/>
- Women Media Center, (2006). one day Seminar on "Gender Discrimination in Media & Politics": held in Hyderabad Pakistan
- Sarwar, B.Women in Media: Problems and Prospects:
URL/www.sdpi.org/help/research_and_news_bulletin/Nov_Dec_2004/women_in_media.ht
- Gallagher, M.(2001). "Gender and Journalism in Industrialized Nations: An Article for the Edwin Mellen Press URL <http://www.highbeam.com/doc/1G1-82885512.html>
- Sarwar, B. Women in Media: Problems and Prospects:
URL/www.sdpi.org/help/research_and_news_bulletin/Nov_Dec_2004/women_in_media.htm