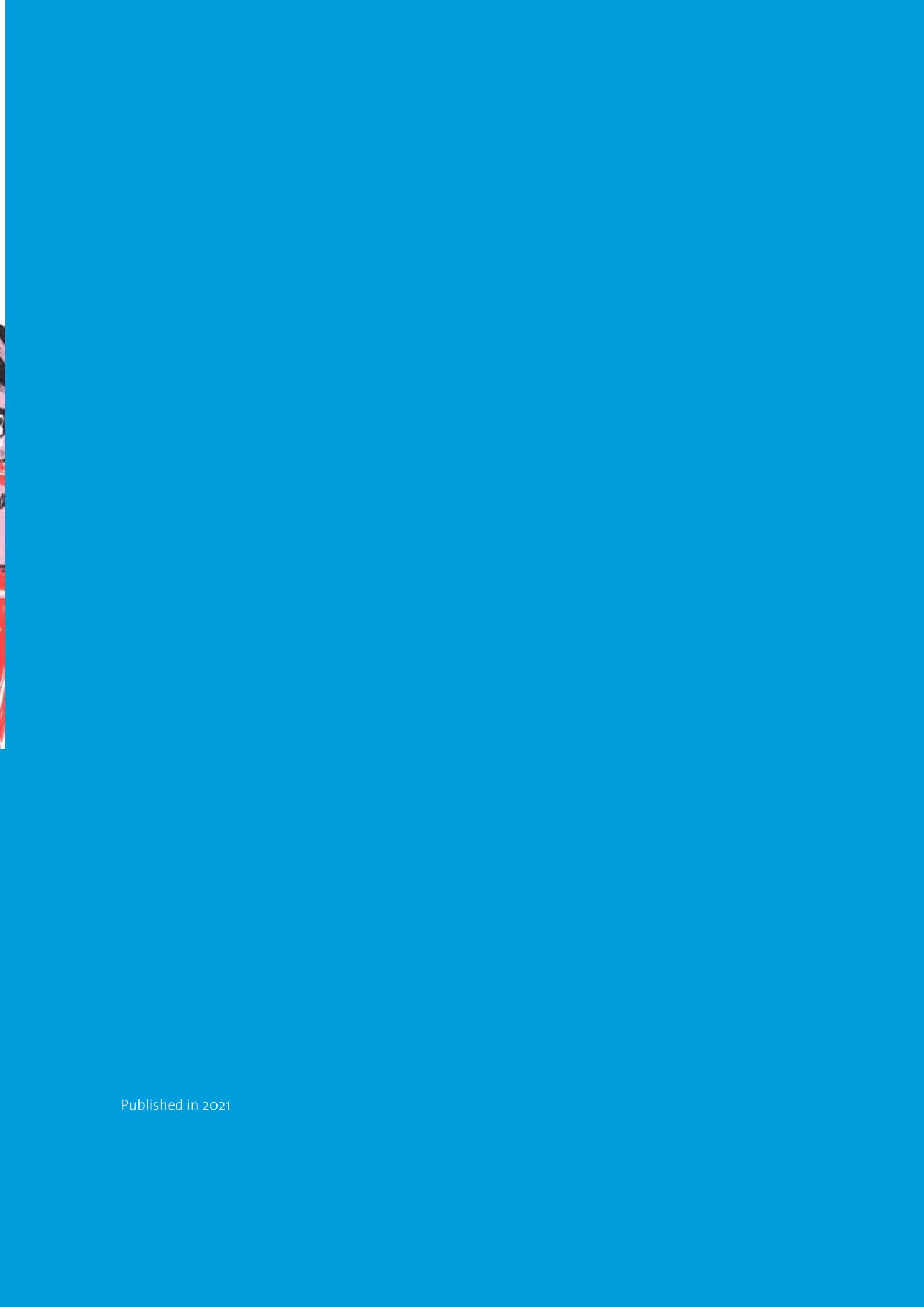




GENDER REPRESENTATION IN INDIAN NEWSROOMS



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Women in Television Newsrooms

- Only one in five panellists across prime time debates in English is a woman. Half the debates have male-only panellists.
- One in ten panellists across prime time debates in Hindi is a woman.
- Gender representation on English Prime Time TV has decreased from 2019 to 2020.
- There has been no change or progress in terms of gender representation of panellists on Hindi News Debates between 2019 and 2020.
- On English and Hindi TV news, women's voices were missing on COVID-19 discussions.
- When discussing sports, panels across English channels were male; women were best represented in human interest and culture and entertainment discussions.
- Women were most likely to be on the panels on Hindi TV News discussing human interest or culture and entertainment issues.
- When it comes to expertise on defence, politics or even religion, English TV debates were missing the voices of women. On Hindi TV debates, women experts were most likely to have a legal, civil society or NGO professional background - experts on other domains were mostly just men.

Gender Representation in Print Media

- Across newspapers, three in every four news articles are authored by a male journalist
- Most publications saw an improvement in the share of women-authored news stories from 2019 to 2020, but a dip in the number of women writing these.
- The highest share of women-authored news stories was on business pages, and the least on sports pages.
- There was meagre coverage of gender issues, and women wrote 44 percent of those news articles.
- 18 percent of all articles analysed were related to Covid-19; 36 percent of these were authored by women.
- Among topics with higher coverage, there were none where women's share in the by-lines was half or more.
- A disproportionate amount of co-authored articles were male-only collaborations.

Gender Representation on Digital Portals

- Gender representation of women is far better for online portals as compared to newspapers or television debates.
- Women author less than a fifth of all articles on Sports.
- Majority of articles with a gender focus are written by women.

INTRODUCTION

Early in the 1990s, there were so few female employees that newsrooms didn't feel the need to have ladies toilets. The women had to go to neighbouring buildings or restaurants to use the facilities.

Early in the 1990s, there were so few female employees that newsrooms didn't feel the need to have separate toilets for women. The women had to go to neighbouring buildings or restaurants to use the facilities.

But in a short span of three decades, things have changed significantly. Many newsrooms - especially in metropolises - see representation from all non-male genders. Women are certainly integral to almost all newsrooms. This is often held up as inclusion.

Yet, when a woman journalist is out reporting from the field, it is not unusual to see raised eyebrows; women TV anchors are often patronised and opinionated, women journalists are frequently trolled on social media, with the intention of having a chilling effect.

This dichotomy is the reason we felt the need to do primary research on gender representation in Indian newsrooms. Our attempt was to understand where women journalists are in the larger media landscape. What is the kind of work they do? How much of the power strings do they pull? And, how do they impact output?

It is difficult to underestimate the impact media has on our society and politics. Therefore, studies like ours, we believe, will help raise critical questions about the news creators themselves. In this report,

we try to analyse if newsrooms have a balanced composition of all non-male genders but our specific focus is on women. And the impact such a newsroom composition has on the eventual output. Though, we refrain from analysing the content itself.

News media is at the brink of a tectonic change - advertising revenues need not be the main reason for newsrooms to stay afloat. We might be moving towards a subscription-based model or a membership model in the near future. With the fundamentals of news media changing, it is time we brought about more inclusion and diversity.

Last year, *The Media Rumble's* report on gender representation in Indian media had reflected certain trends. This year, we took our study a step forward. We have spoken to journalists to acquaint ourselves with their views on gender balance in the newsrooms, implementation of the PoSH Act and the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on salary cuts and job losses.

However, it is important to continue this annual exercise as trends and patterns do not reveal themselves in a short span of time.

Even after several waves of feminism and women's movements, positions of power across the world are still male bastions. Indian media is no exception, as our report highlights. Change is overdue.

METHODOLOGY

This report is based on the analysis of two sets of data -- the first is byline count, and the second is from a survey of those working in the Indian media.

A dataset was built by collecting information of news stories across newspapers, TV and digital media outlets for a one year period between August 2019 and July 2020. For text stories, byline count by the gender of authors was used to arrive at the representation - this was applicable to newspapers and digital news outlets. For television news, the gender of news anchors and of the experts who appeared as panellists on prime time news debates was tracked.

For our purposes, we stuck to identifying male and female genders only from publicly available sources and social media. Lack of time and resources kept us from identifying all non-male genders through a detailed ethnographic research. It is also worth mentioning that the representation of other genders in the Indian media is woefully low, if not non-existent.

In addition to the dataset, a questionnaire collecting information from journalists was disseminated over various digital platforms. Responses collected were used to understand how gender impacts an individual's experiences in the news industry including sexual harassment, newsroom composition and individuals' perception of gender-based discrimination. Information was also collected to understand if and how the Covid-19 pandemic impacted journalists of different gender identities.

The following sections explain the methodology in greater detail:

News Sources

Data for news content was collected for English and Hindi newspapers, television news channels and digital news publications. The list of all the sources for which data was collected is provided in annexure.

We selected seven English and four Hindi newspapers based on readership numbers as per Indian Readership Survey 2019 Q4 data, and based on availability of online archives. In case of the English newspapers, we used editions from cities where they had the highest circulation or where they were headquartered. Since most of the Hindi newspapers did not have national editions, we looked at their city editions from various Hindi-speaking states. News stories that appeared on the front page, sports page(s), editorial/opinion page(s) as well as the business/finance page(s) were taken into consideration.

Seven English and seven Hindi news channels were selected based on Broadcast Audience Research Council India ratings. Since the channels broadcast news 24x7, debate shows that aired during prime time (8pm to 10.30 pm), which has the maximum viewership were chosen for this analysis. Programmes from evening slots were selected for a few Hindi channels if these did not broadcast debate shows during prime time. Within primetime shows, data was collected from one news debate per channel. News debates that are the most regular and where archives were easily available were selected.

News debates on Indian TV typically involve one to two news anchors, and a large number of panelists who discuss the various aspects of a topic every night. Some channels could have multiple debates each night, while others might have one for each day, or even one per week (as was the case with NDTV India).

For digital media, 10 news portals were selected. Alexa ratings were largely used to arrive at the list of most popular websites. Data for the websites was collected via scraping Mediacleoud.org.

Time Period

Data for news stories and debates between August 2019 and July 2020 was collected. In order to collect data for a longer period, within the limited time and resources, data for alternate dates was collected. For odd numbered months (January, March, May, July,

September, November), data for odd number dates was collected, while for even numbered months (February, April, June, August, October, December), data for news on even numbered dates was collected.

A total of 2,280 debates from 14 television channels, 21,988 articles from 11 newspapers and 10,473 articles from 10 digital portals were collected for the entire period.

Data Categorisation

For each news story, data for the following parameters was collected:

Newspapers: Newspaper name, date, page number, page name, author's name, author's gender, whether it was authored by a single/multiple writers.

Television: Channel name, date, programme name, name of anchor, debate title, time slot, panellists' name, panellists' gender

Digital: Publication name, date, author's name, author's gender

Authors' and panellists' gender was determined based on their names as well as via publicly available information about them (including their social media accounts).

For the sake of arriving at a richer analysis, data collected was also categorised on certain parameters. News stories were tagged thematically from among 16 themes. The reason for this classification was to understand if there was any variation in gender representation based on the broad theme of discussion. In addition to the themes, each story was also tagged with up to three topics (from a list of more than 50 topics). This was done with the intent of identifying patterns of representation on very specific topics and issues within the larger themes.

While the 16 themes were broad, limiting their number allowed for easier and more pointed analysis, and having a larger number of topic tags ensured that the nuance was not lost. Thus, this two-level classification of each story into one theme, and up to three topics helped capture the

details, while allowing for identification of larger trends.

In addition to categorising stories by thematic categories, experts who appeared on TV panel discussions as well as those who write on opinion pages of newspapers were categorised into 14 expert specialities. For this, publicly available information about individuals on their social media accounts as well as how they were introduced on the shows/in the columns was used to determine the expertise. The intent of this categorisation was to understand who are newsrooms calling to debates and to write on their opinion pages.

This is an important indicator to understand newsroom commitment to gender representation since whose voice is being given space to is a choice newsrooms and editors make. (An exception is party spokespersons where parties may be deciding on who represents them in the media).

News debates and stories that had a gender angle to them were also flagged separately. Stories that had a link to Covid-19 were also flagged. This data was analysed to see who are the journalists and experts writing on them in terms of gender.

Survey data

To understand how gender plays out in newsrooms beyond byline counts, a survey was designed and disseminated to journalists over digital platforms, including email, WhatsApp, Facebook and Twitter. The questions asked respondents to share more details on their newsroom compositions, mechanisms in place to address sexual harassment in the newsroom they worked for, support systems

in place to enable more women to participate in the workforce as well as the impact of Covid-19 on their work. A version of the survey was also designed for freelance reporters, who do not work as an employee of a newsroom.

While 184 responses were achieved, incomplete surveys were excluded and the final analysis is based on 81 responses.

In addition to the questions, respondents were also given the option to share their contact details in case they were interested in sharing more about their experiences. Those who did so were contacted by the report team and they were interviewed in detail telephonically.

The report team also contacted editors and senior staff at various newsrooms and conducted detailed interviews over the phone on gender representation in their organisations.

Women-led newsrooms

We recognise the sheer perseverance required to be a media entrepreneur and therefore, we have dedicated some pages in listing the commendable work that women-led and women-founded newsrooms are doing.

These were selected based on our knowledge of English and Hindi media. However, we would like to mention the path-breaking work by all-women newsrooms such as Chittoor-based Navodayam. If we have missed documenting them, it is purely because of lack of resources and language-skills.

Quality Checks

The data was collected by a team of 20 interns. All data collected was checked twice for errors and gaps. Since the classification of themes and topics was subjective, a second round of quality check was conducted to identify stories where this classification was contested. There were 8-10% stories where there was a difference in opinion on thematic classification. While this was addressed and all efforts were made to ensure objectivity, the report team is mindful that some room of subjectivity might persist due to the nature of the data despite all efforts at standardisation and quality checks.

Research Limitations and Challenges

The task of indexing and analysing such a huge body of information was indeed daunting. There were quite a number of variables which were derived by the interns from the raw information available on Youtube videos (from where the television data was collected) and online archives of newspapers and digital portals. Although the team endeavoured to make the method as objective as possible, the subjectivity of individuals and how they see the world around them would indeed have slipped through in the report.

This report seeks to paint a detailed picture of gender representation in Indian news media and does it by comparing different news sources which might have different and unique structural characteristics. The format of debate shows on primetime television varies a lot, whereby some channels host multiple debates with more than six panellists each in a single debate programme whereas others host detailed discussions on a single topic with a few panellists. In still other cases, debates are handled 'innovatively' with multiple anchors conducting a debate. Such differences need to be kept in mind while reading the report. People already familiar with the media landscape will find this report a useful supplement to their research.

Newspapers carry many articles without bylines and which are mostly written by copy desk writers - positions held by women in large numbers working behind the scenes in the India news media industry. Since their identities remain anonymous, it becomes difficult to assess their contribution. Similarly, it becomes quite difficult to gauge the gender composition employed in a newsroom without getting the organisations on board.

Lastly, with the increasing polarisation of Indian socio-political sphere, questions of representation without control itself have become quite vexed. With the increasing centralisation of command and control in the boardrooms across media houses, complexities of representation can appear to be bypassed by ideological considerations, with individuals merely standing as placeholders to articulate certain points of view. A more equitable gender representation in the lower or middle ranks might not be enough till the glass ceiling at the industry level is broken.

GENDER REPRESENTATION ON PRIME-TIME TV DEBATES

Introduction

Television viewership in India is massive. BARC estimates that India has more than 760 million TV viewers, and as of 2019, each household in India watched 5 hours, 11 minutes of TV every day. Covid-19 seems to have only pushed it further, with TV viewership having jumped more than 200 percent during the early days of the lockdown. News remains a massively popular category among viewers.

One of the most striking aspects about TV news in India is the debate and discussion panel. Across channels, star anchors typically host debates, inviting a range of experts (whose number can go up to double digits at time) to dissect, debate and discuss various topics. This analysis of gender representation in TV news is based on these debates aired during primetime hours (8-10 pm) on the popular news channels. Evening slots were taken for some Hindi channels which did not have a debate programme in the primetime hours. One regular debate programme was selected at random for each of the channels in case more than one was broadcast. A list of all the channels and debate programmes is given in the annexure.

Primetime debates across seven English and seven Hindi channels were analysed for the period August 2019-July 2020. Among the debates analysed, there was a near parity among the anchors who moderated primetime debates. India TV, a Hindi channel had no woman anchor, India Today TV had only one woman anchor against four men. Mirror Now, on the other hand, had only women anchors. However, it could be the case that the randomly selected programme had a male or a female star anchor which might have affected the statistic.

In addition to debate anchors, data for individuals who appeared as panellists on the debates was collected and was categorised under thematic and expert categories. The panel composition is important because the collage of multiple faces,

each of whom is considered to be an expert/representative of an important perspective on an issue, is a striking feature of Indian TV news. This is also where representation becomes glaringly skewed in favour of men.

Various studies and surveys have previously documented and reported the dismal representation of women on such TV debates. This report finds that those gaps continue to persist across channels. In fact, instead of progress, worryingly, an initial assessment of the data collected shows that gender representation on Indian TV news debates has only become more skewed in the past one year.

Debates with at least two panellists are considered in the following sections.

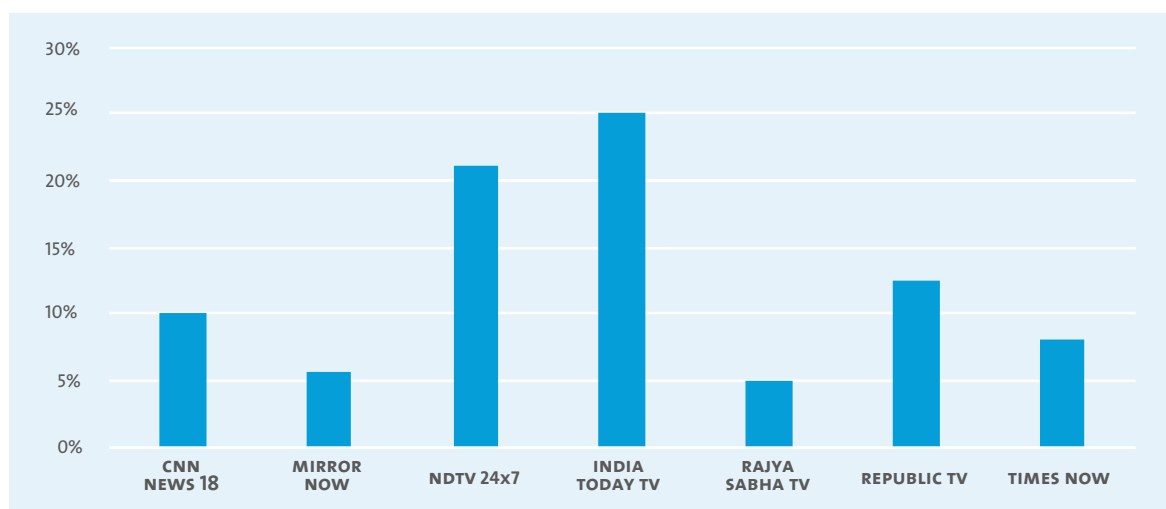
Panellists appearing most frequently on TV debates are men.

Most TV channels call a select group of experts quite frequently to discuss various issues. The panellists were divided into 10 groups - or deciles - depending on the number of times they appeared for debates, such that each group represented the same number of debates but different numbers of panellists.

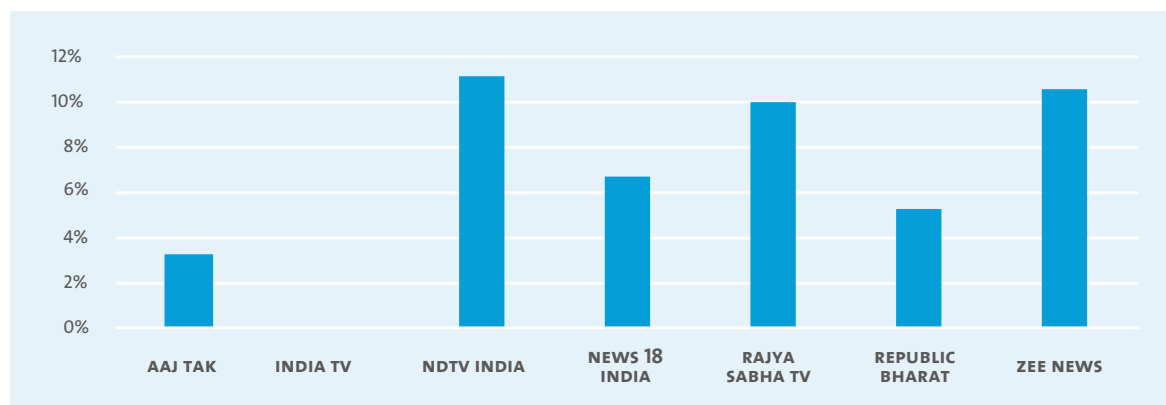
The panellists in the top decile are specifically analysed here. The experts appear most frequently on debates related to a diverse range of topics.

NDTV 24x7 (25 percent) and Mirror Now (21 percent) had the highest number of women panellists in the top decile group among the 14 channels in our study. Half the channels had less than one tenth women in this group of most frequently called panellists. India TV had 12 men and no women in the top decile group

Female Representation in Top Decile Group - English Channels (%)



Female Representation in Top Decile Group - Hindi Channels (%)

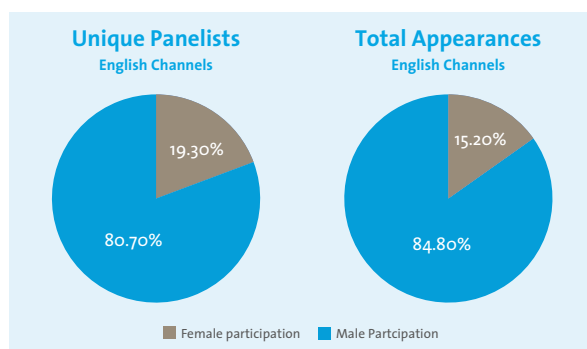


Only one in five panellists across primetime debates in English is a woman. Half the debates have male-only panellists.

Many of these experts have become household names due to their frequent appearances on television. While some individuals in this group are spokespersons for different political parties, many others are experts in other areas.

There were 6,467 panellists spread over 1,295 debates during this period -- 85 percent of whom were men. Since the same individual often appeared as a panellist on multiple debates on

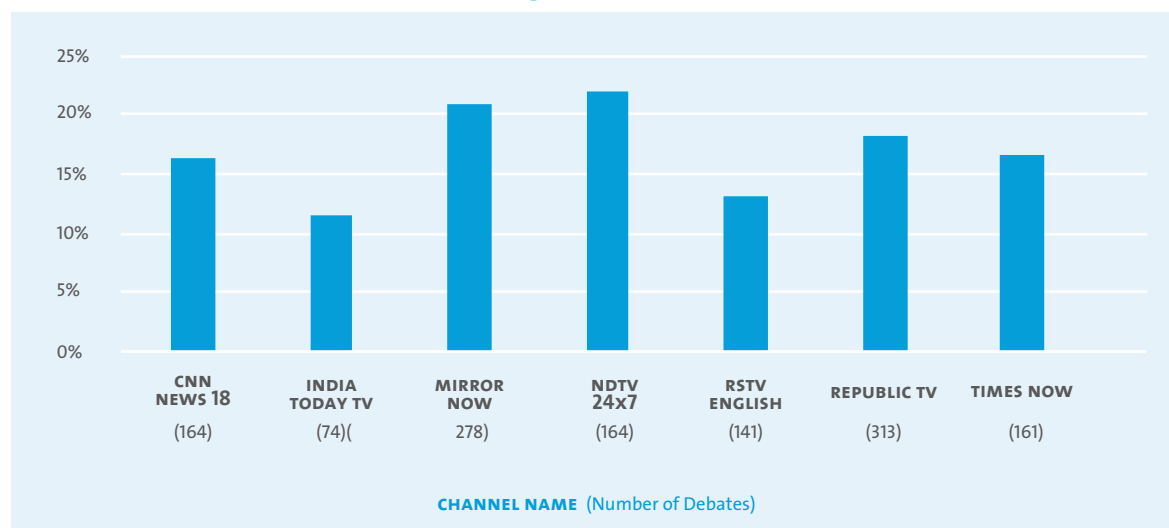
TABLE 1



The figures above present a picture at an overall level, where channels with more number of debates and panellists are overrepresented. Looking at the figures for each channel, we find that women participation is the lowest for India Today TV and Rajya Sabha TV (Table 2).

TABLE 2

Unique Female Participants - English Channels

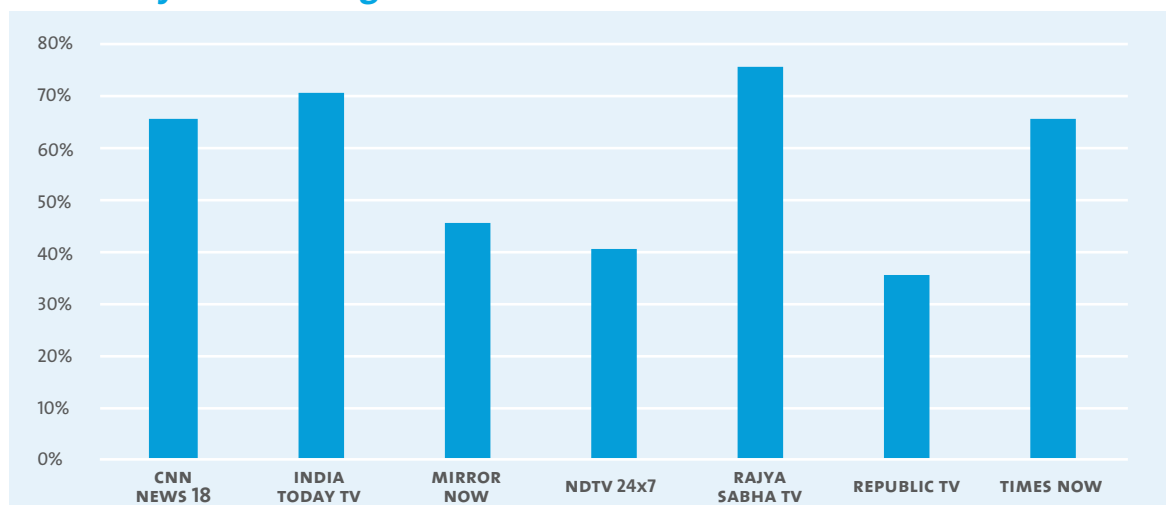


In addition to this, when considering panels which had at least two discussants in the debate, it was found that there were 673 panels that had only men. In contrast, female-only panels were an exception, with just 6 debates consisting of

only women as speakers - with NDTV 24x7, Mirror Now and Republic TV having 3, 2 and 1 such panels respectively. Three of these six were related to discussions about sexual harassment. (Table 3)

TABLE 3

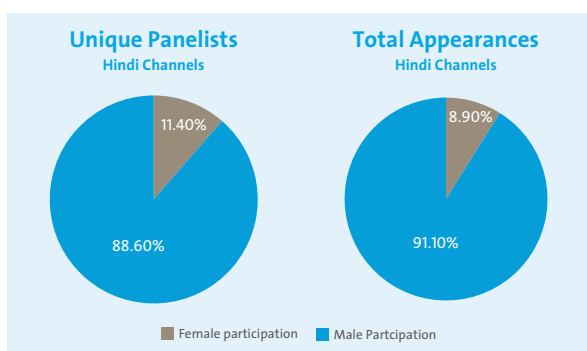
Male-only Panels - English Channels



The gender representation was more skewed on Hindi news channels, where women made up only 9 percent of all panellists in the 985 debates for which data was collected (Table 4). A total of 1,426 individuals appeared as panellists across these shows, which included 163 women (11 percent of all

unique panellists). Women were barely visible on TV debates throughout the year, with at least nine of every 10 panellists being men, on an average. There was no representation of trans-persons on Hindi news debates either.

TABLE 4



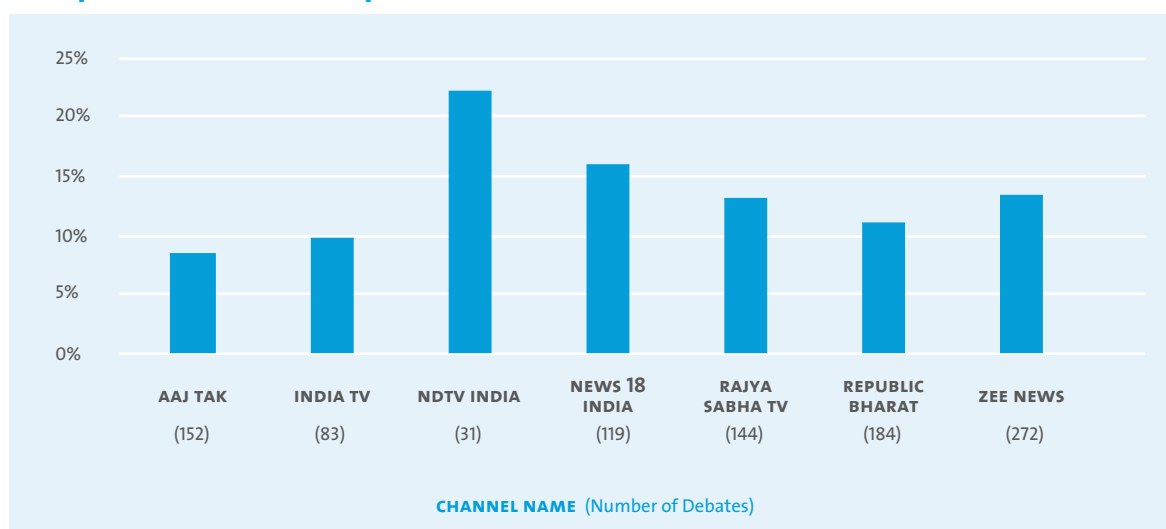
One in 10 panellists across primetime debates in Hindi is a woman

At the level of individual channels, Aaj Tak and India TV did not even have women participation in double digits (Table 6). Muqabla - a weekly programme broadcast on NDTV India - was selected for this study since there were no regular debate-based programmes throughout the period of study. Due

to this, the sample size for this channel was smaller as compared to other channels.

TABLE 5

Unique Female Participants - Hindi Channels

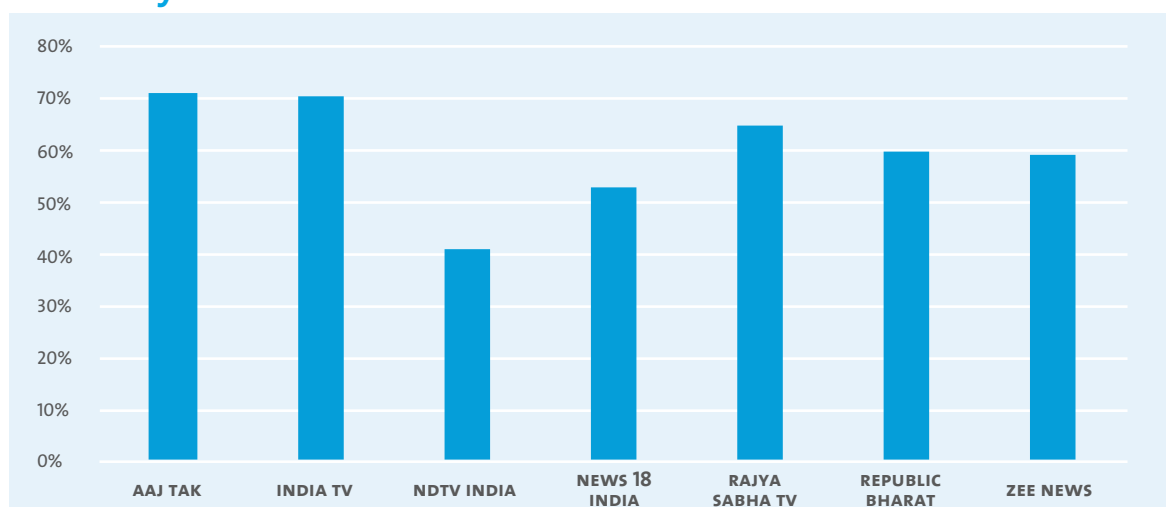


A large share of panels on Hindi TV debates comprised only men. Across the data analysed, more than two-thirds of all panels were male-only panels, or “manels”. Among channels, Aaj Tak had the highest share, with around 80 percent of all panels having only men on them, while NDTV India

had the least such panels at 45 percent (Table 6). There were just eight women-only panels in total, with three each on Rajya Sabha TV Hindi and Zee News, and two on Republic Bharat. Seven of these were on discussions about issues on sexual violence and legislation related to reproductive choices.

TABLE 6

Male-only Panels - Hindi Channels



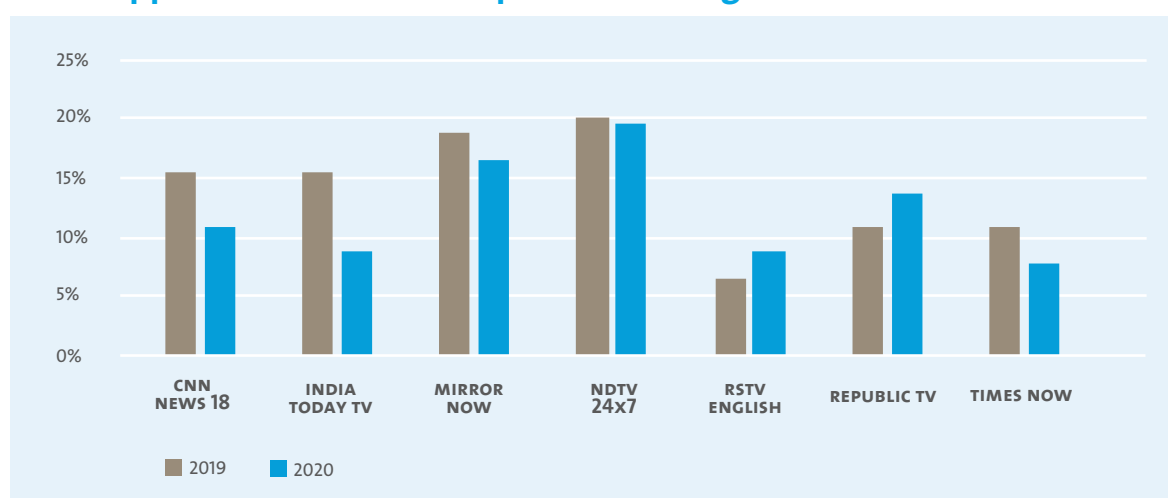
Gender representation on English Primetime TV is not just dismal, it has decreased in the past year

Overall, the gender representation on TV debates remains similar to last year. However, some channels reported a decline in the share of women panellists. While women comprised around 18

percent of all panellists on CNN News18 last year, they made up just 12.5 percent of panel members this year. India Today TV also reported a similar trend - from around 18 percent women panellists in 2019, to 10 percent this year. Rajya Sabha TV and Republic TV showed marginal improvements, while NDTV 24x7 and Mirror Now had similar patterns as last year - among the highest among all channels. (Table 7).

TABLE 7

Total Appearances of women panellists - English Channels



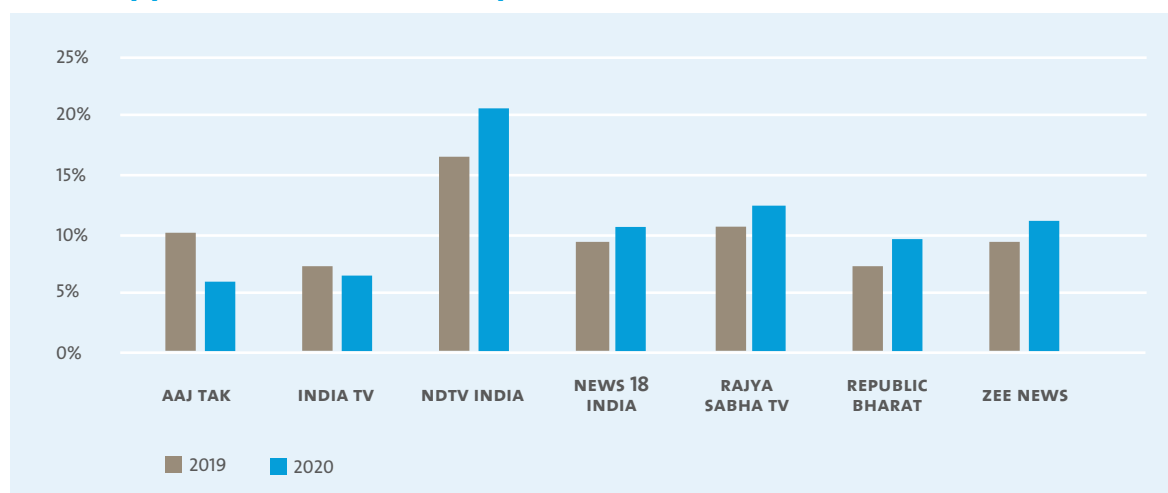
There has been no change or progress in terms of gender representation of panellists on Hindi news channels since the past year. Overall, the gender breakdown of all panels across debates and channels is similar to the patterns that had emerged in the previous year's analysis. However, there were some variations for specific channels.

The gender representation declined when it came to Aaj Tak, and India TV while it improved marginally for all other channels. The best representation

of gender on debates among the channels was on NDTV India, but the channel had just under 19 percent of women panellists across all debates (Table 8). This might have been due to a smaller sample from NDTV India with just 33 debates analysed as against a combined average of 100 debates analysed for all the other channels.

TABLE 8

Total Appearances of women panellists - Hindi Channels



On English and Hindi TV news, women's voices were missing on COVID-19 discussions and they were best represented on panels discussing a gender issue

While there were more than five men for every woman who appeared as a panellist across channels and debates, how did this vary when the debates had a gender focus, or when discussions were related to COVID-19?

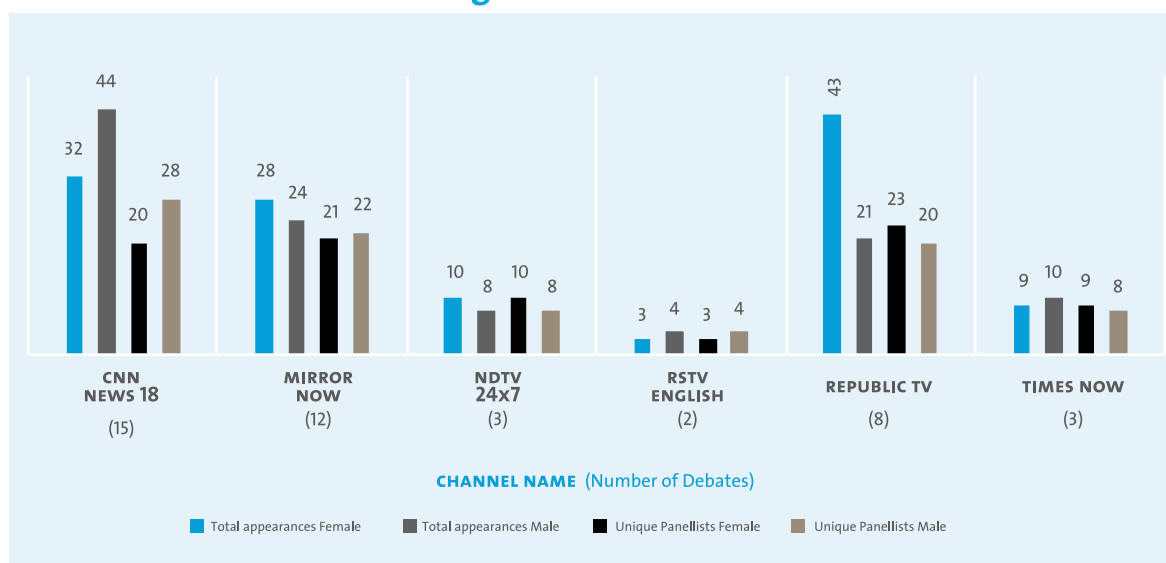
A total of 236 panellists appeared on the 43 debates that focussed on gender in the English news channels assessed in this study. 53 percent of these were women. Many channels had a female-to-male ratio of more than one i.e. for every man that appeared as a panellist on a debate with a gender focus, there was more than one woman panellist on an average. Republic TV had the highest female-to-male ratio of 2:1 for these debates. However, CNN

News 18 stood out with more male panellists on debates related to gender issues (Table 9). In terms of the total pool of panellists, however, there were almost an equal number of unique men and women who appeared as a panellist across all debates that had a gender focus through the year.

While more than 80% of these debates were related to crimes against women, there were just a handful of exceptions: a debate on redefining contours of masculinity on CNN News 18; On Mirror Now a debate about legislation related to transgender rights and another which focussed on a senior politician's insensitive comments; and a discussion with gynaecologists on Republic TV.

TABLE 9

Gender Related Debates - English Channels

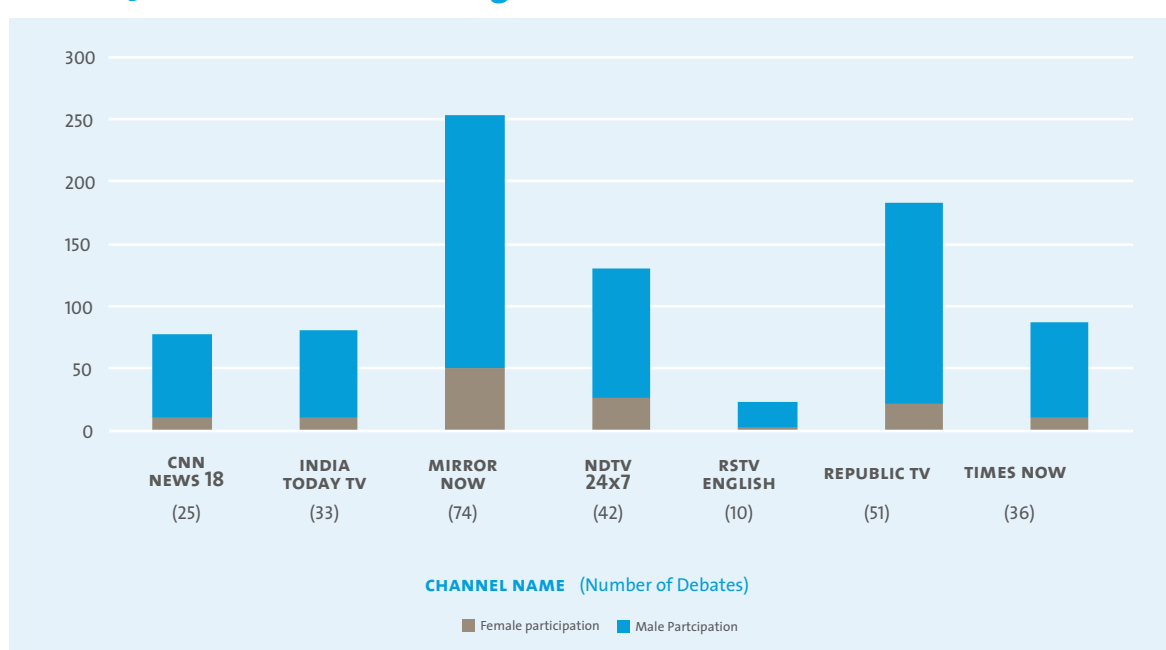


The picture was very different when it came to discussions related to the Covid-19 pandemic. In the 271 debates analysed for this report, there were a total of 1,300 panellists, only 14 percent of whom were women. Among the 838 unique individuals

who appeared as panellists, around 16 percent were women. All channels had a skewed gender ratio, with Mirror Now and NDTV 24x7 faring marginally better than the others at 20 percent women. (Table 10)

TABLE 10

Covid-19 Related Debates - English Channels

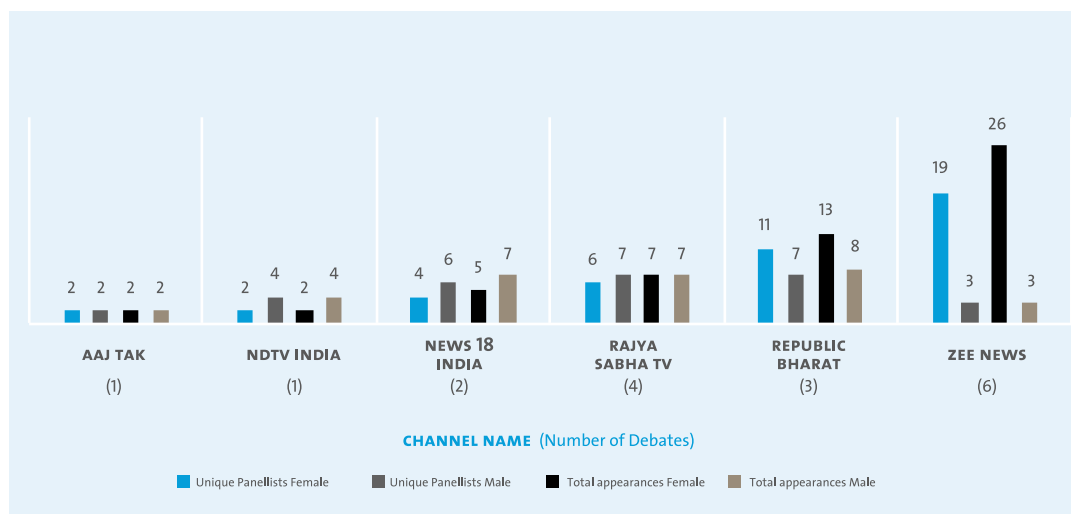


When it came to Hindi TV news, there were only 17 debates that had a gender focus across all channels. Sixty percent of the 73 unique panellists in these debates were women. However, this figure was highly inflated by Zee News and Republic Bharat which had 19 and 11 women with 3 and 7 men on the

panel respectively. For other channels, there were more men than women in each of the debates. India TV did not have a single debate on the issue of gender. For all the channels, most of the debates were related to crimes against women. (Table 11)

TABLE 11

Gender Related Debates - Hindi Channels

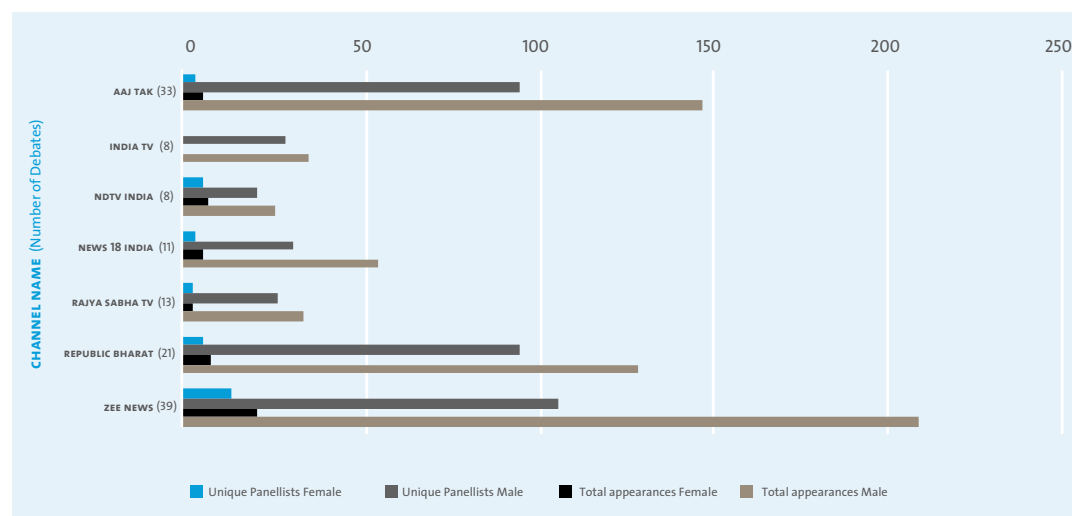


Covid-19 had more discussion panels -- 125 panels across all channels in the dataset have been analysed for this report. Women's representation on those remained significantly low at 8 percent. NDTV India had the maximum representation with 22 percent of panellists being women. The female-to-male ratio remained close to 0.1 for many channels. India TV did not have a single women panellist on these debates (Table 12). Some Hindi

news channels, including India TV, shifted from a debate-based broadcast to a reportage-based one during prime time in the months after COVID outbreak. Kurukshetra, the debate programme we analysed for India TV, did not have any panellist from May to July. Wherever data was available for debate shows on Hindi news channels, the female-to-male ratio remained dismal for discussions related to COVID-19.

TABLE 12

Covid-19 Related Debates - Hindi Channels



When discussing sports, panels across English channels were 'manels'; women were best represented on human interest and culture and entertainment discussions

While primetime debates discuss a broad range of topics, for the sake of analysis, shows for which data was collected were categorised into 16 broad themes. Overall, the maximum number of debates were related to government policy, electoral and party politics, and law and order. The three corresponded to about half of all debates on English news channels.

Did gender representation vary with the theme of discussion? It did, even though the overall

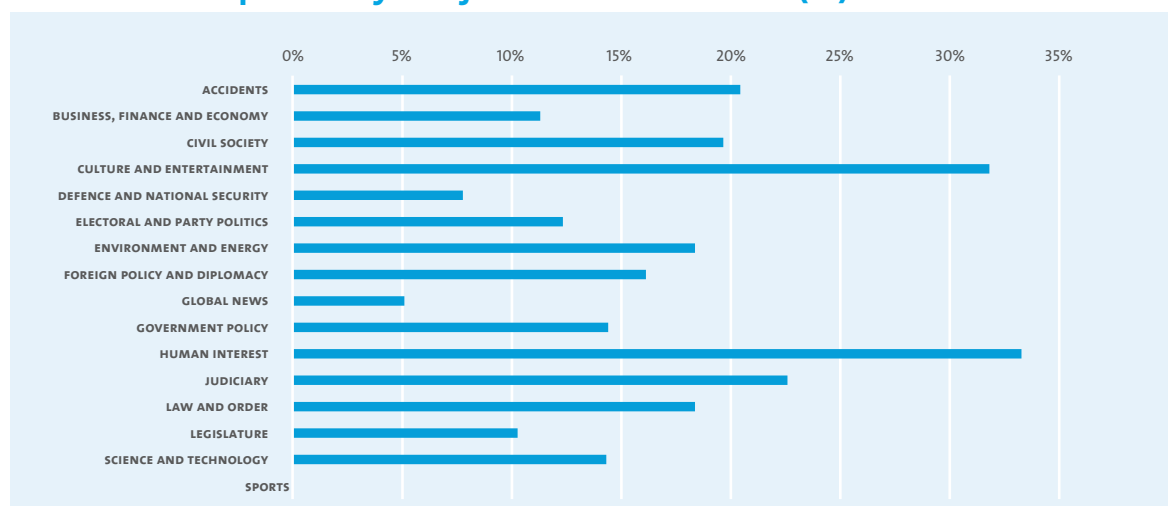
representation remained skewed in favour of men across themes.

Women were most likely to appear as panellists when the theme was a human interest story. Here, women made up a third of all panellist appearances. Culture and entertainment was next in order in terms of representation of women panellists, with 32 percent being women. Both these topics constituted a small minority of total debates (Table 13).

Only men were invited as panellists across debates when it came to discussions on sports. Discussions related to global news, defence and national security, as well as legislative matters were also heavily skewed with more than 90 percent panellists across all debates and channels being men.

TABLE 13

Female Participation by Subject Matter Debated (%)



4 This was in comparison to 11 themes from last year's report. This enabled the team to give a better weightage to different themes as the theme categorised as 'Politics' itself included more than 40% of all debates. The average number of debates as per the themes selected in last year's report were: Business and Economy (2.4%) , Crime and Accident (7.2%) , Culture and Entertainment (1%) , Defence and National security (8.3%) , Environment and Energy (1.9%) , International affairs (4%) , Politics (43.5%) , Public Life (9.1%) , Science and Technology (0.1%) , Sports (0.7%) , and State and Policy (21.9%)

Similar trends emerge even when one looks at unique panellists, and not total appearances. Human interest and culture & entertainment are the themes with the best representation of women at 34 percent and 32 percent respectively. Law and order also saw 22 percent women panellists, even though women made 18 percent of appearances across all debates.

Among channels, India Today TV had no women panellists for debates related to global news, foreign policy and culture and entertainment. On Mirror Now, on the other hand, women comprised 44 percent of all panellists when it came to debates on foreign policy and diplomacy. While CNN News 18 had more women speakers on issues related to energy and environment (53 percent), Rajya Sabha

TV and Times Now had no women on the same area of discussion.

Women were most likely to be on the panels on Hindi TV news discussing human interest or culture and entertainment issues

Compared to English channels, debates on Hindi channels have even lesser variation in terms of gender representation. Men made up a disproportionate share of panels - often more than 90 percent - on nearly all themes. Women were most likely to be on the panel when the discussion was either a human interest story or a culture and entertainment one. Barring both these thematic areas, women comprised less than a fifth of the panellists on all other discussion areas. The same trends emerged even for unique panellists and not just based on number of appearances.

All channels had at least one thematic area where women's voice was missing completely, with some such as Aaj Tak and India TV omitting women on the maximum number of areas of discussion.

Women's voices were even less represented on topics of frequent discussion

What were some of the most discussed topics across these TV debates and how many female voices did they include?

On English TV, the largest share of panellists appeared on discussions on topics related to health, Covid-19 lockdown, the Citizenship Amendment Act and National Register of Citizens (CAA-NRC), religion, Kashmir and Pakistan. Among all, the share of women panellists was between 11-16 percent. Debates on Education, Universities and Colleges were likely to have higher representation. (Some topics where the gender representation was less skewed were not accounted for to arrive at this conclusion because the number of debates were too few). There were more debates on the issue of the death of a Bollywood actor in two months than debates related to floods and cyclones in different parts of the country in the entire year. Women representation was better in the former case.

On Hindi TV too, the maximum number of panellists appeared on debates on similar topics, though in a slightly different order - religion, followed by CAA-NRC, Kashmir, Pakistan, health and lockdown. Across these panels, and across channels, women did not even make up 10 percent of the panellists. Women

were missing from Hindi news debates, and the gap widened on the most discussed topics.

Women were best represented (even though the represented did not touch/cross 30 percent) on debates on education, unemployment and land rights but these were also topics which had very few debates and only on some of the channels.

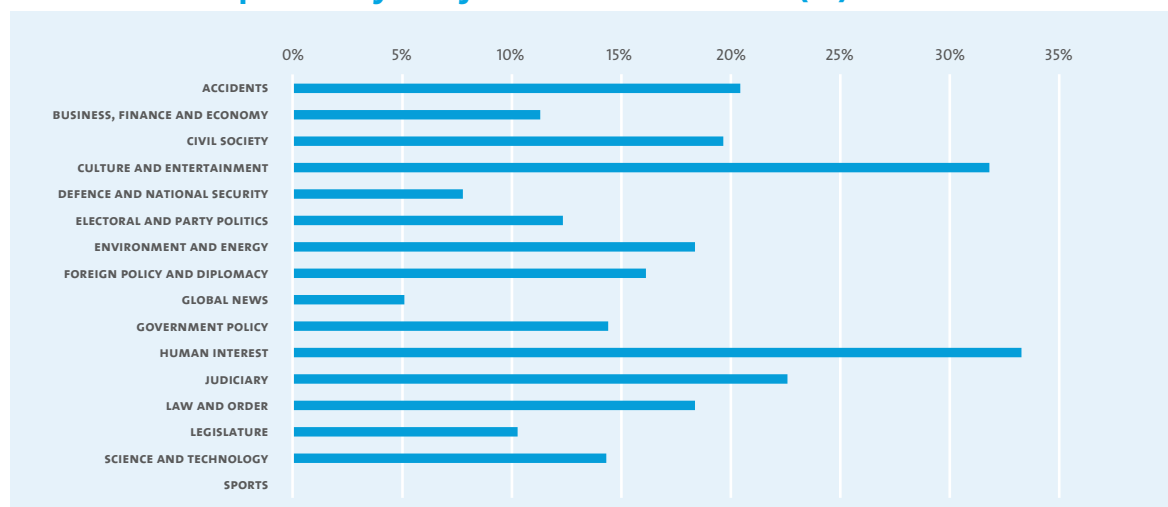
When it comes to expertise on defence, politics or even religion, English TV debates were missing the voices of women

The analysis also looked into the expertise of those appearing on panels to see if and how it varied by field of expertise. Panellist expertise was based on how they were introduced by the debate anchor or by information available in the public domain where required. In the former case, the expertise of a panellist was taken to be the one by which s/he was introduced the maximum number of times across different channels. The panellist expertise was assessed to understand who news channels typically consider experts, especially since this is an active choice they make. (An exception being political parties, where the expert may be determined by parties instead of news channels).

Panellists were assigned one of 14 expertise fields - there was gender parity in none of them. The least skewed representation was when it came to experts who represented members of civil society - here, 31 percent of panellists were women. About one in four panellists who represented non-governmental organisations and who worked as academics, were also women. The media field had a similar representation - 28 percent of panellists who came as media experts were women and 72 percent were men (Table 14).

TABLE 14

Female Participation by Subject Matter Debated (%)



The starkest disparity was at display among experts classified as “defence” specialists. There were no women defence experts among 312 panellists across the debates on all channels. Men also made up more than 98 percent of all independent political experts and religious experts.

Women comprised 9 percent of all business experts across channels. CNN-News 18 and Rajya Sabha TV, however, had no woman business expert in any of the debates analysed for this report. Similarly, no women bureaucrat was called on CNN-News 18 and India Today TV. More than half of the experts from media and academia on NDTV 24x7 were women.

On Hindi TV debates, women experts were most likely to have a legal, civil society or NGO professional background - experts on other domains were mostly just men

Among the various expert fields that panellists were categorised into, there were almost no women who were from business, defence, or religious experts across Hindi channels. The expertise fields which had the highest representation of women on all panels was bar and bench (33 percent) followed by members of civil society (23 percent). However, several individual experts appeared on multiple panels in the dataset. Among the unique individual experts, women comprised 25 percent each of members of civil society and bar and bench and 10 percent of political spokespersons.

Within channels, Zee News had no businesswomen or women working in think tanks. All other channels had multiple expertise areas where all experts were only men.

GENDER INCLUSIVITY IN PRINT MEDIA

Introduction

Each year, millions of Indians subscribe to and read various newspapers in different Indian languages. In April 2019, it was estimated that there were 425 million readers of print news in India .

As the news media has evolved over the years, the viability of print news has often come into question. As more and more people read news online or watch it on TV, questions have been raised about the very sustainability of newspapers as a medium. However, despite this, print news continues to command trust and credibility. Writing in Mint earlier this year, Tewari and Tandon (2020) argued that marketers also found print to be the most effective medium to promote brands and build trust. Print media is also considered the most credible source of news, reported The Economic Times in September 2019. This is not true just of India, but has been corroborated in several global studies and reports too.

As a result, representation of a diverse set of voices takes an important meaning in this medium. Seven English and four Hindi newspapers were studied for this report. While there were no online archives of another three Hindi newspapers that were proposed to be studied at the beginning of the study, only two of the Hindi newspapers had archives for the entire 12 month period. For Dainik Bhaskar, only three months of archives – May to July - were available; for Punjab Kesari, the online archives were available only starting mid-January, 2020.

Therefore, in addition to readership, availability of online archives was an important criterion for selection of news sources. While newspapers typically span anywhere between 10 and 20 pages (or even more), the analysis collected data for four pages – the front page, the opinion/editorial page, the business or economy page and the sports page. In addition to these, some pages unique to specific newspapers such as the ‘Explained’ page for Indian Express, ‘Nayi Zameen’ for Amar Ujala and ‘All that

matters’ for The Times of India were also included in the analysis under opinion/editorial pages category.

Journalists who report a story are credited via bylines that mention their names. A count and analysis of these bylines form the basis of the findings in this section. However, there are two things that this method misses. First, newspapers often source some of their stories from newswires such as the Press Trust of India, Reuters and IANS. These articles do not have a byline. Hence, all such articles were excluded from the dataset analysed in the report. A larger proportion of Hindi newspapers have articles which are not bylined as compared to English newspapers. The average number of bylined articles on business pages in Hindi newspapers, for example, were about one tenth as compared to English newspapers.

Second, several individuals work on the final published news story – the copy desk, news editors – but the byline only credits the reporter. Hence, the representation figures arrived at by the byline-count method only represents reporters and not necessarily all journalists working in the publications.

Across newspapers, three in every four news articles are authored by a male journalist

Across the 11 publications, data for 21,988 articles between August 2019 and July 2020 was collected and analysed. About 25 percent of all articles were authored by a female reporter, while 74.5 percent were written by men. It was not possible to determine the gender identity of the author in 0.5 percent of

the articles. The share of women-authored articles across the seven English newspapers was 26.2%, while it was only 14% for the four Hindi newspapers (Table 1).

Within newspapers, the highest representation of women among bylined articles was in The Times of India (31 percent), followed by Amar Ujala (29 percent) and the business paper Business Standard (28 percent). The share of bylines by gender was the most skewed in Hindi publications Punjab Kesari (7 percent authors were women), Prabhat Khabar (8 percent authors were women) and English daily, The Telegraph, where the corresponding share was 11 percent.

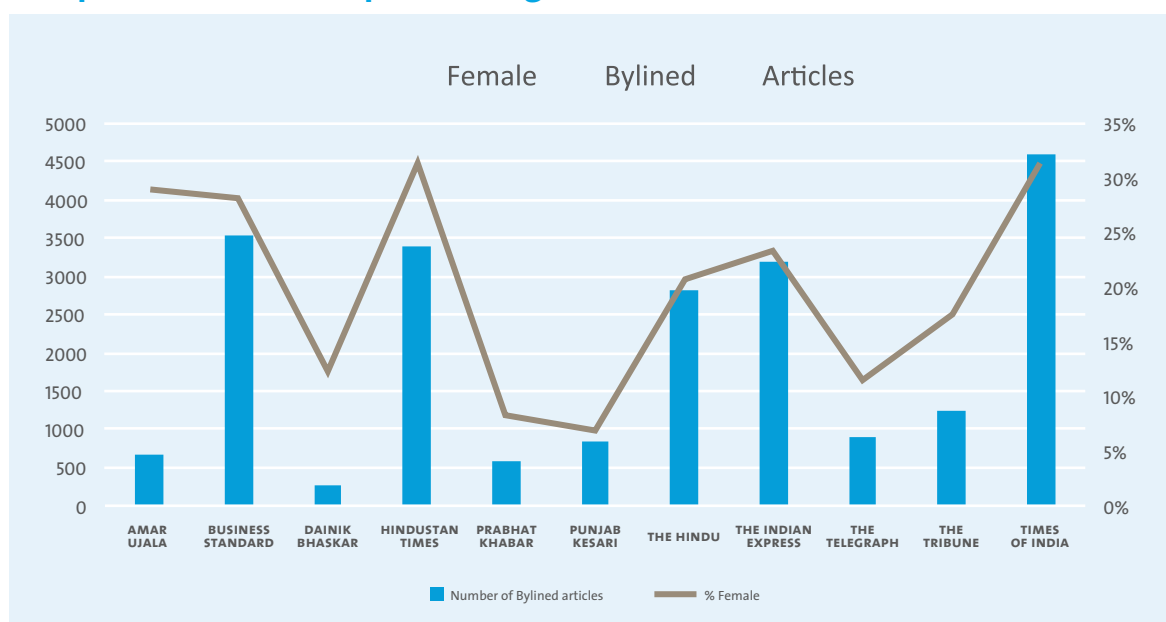
It's common for journalists and writers to write multiple stories in an edition, and over time. Hence, in addition to the total articles, the report also analysed the share of unique men and women who

wrote all the bylined articles for which data was collected. This was to assess if there is diversity in the pool of writers or if the overall gender representation is due to a few women writing a large number of articles.

For most publications, this share was more or less similar to the share of all articles. However, two publications had a large disparity. Women reporters/writers at The Times of India made up just 21 percent of all unique authors, as compared to 31 percent of all stories. That is, fewer women have been writing more stories in this newspaper. For The Telegraph, this was the opposite. There were 19 percent women in the total pool of reporters, but women authored only 11 percent stories.

TABLE 1

Unique Female Participants - English Channels



Most publications saw an improvement in the share of women-authored news stories as compared to the previous year, but a dip in the number of women writing these.

Most publications for which the data was collected saw an improvement in the share of women-authored news stories as compared to the previous year. While Amar Ujala had 18 percent bylined articles written by women last year, this year, the share went up to 29 percent. For The Times of India, the share went up from 20 percent last year to 31 percent this year. Hindustan Times, The

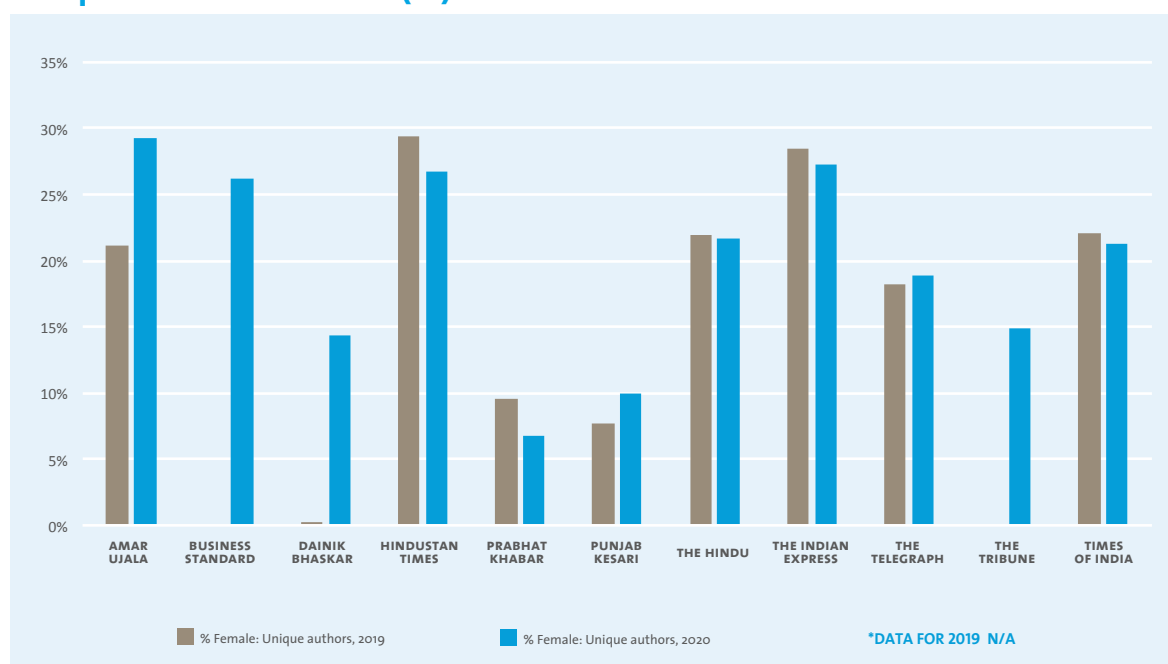
Hindu, Punjab Kesari and The Indian Express also saw improvements while Prabhat Khabar and The Telegraph reported a marginal decrease. The share remained the same for Dainik Bhaskar at 12 percent.

How did this vary when it came to unique journalists? The trends paint a different picture here. Amar Ujala saw an improvement in the share of unique

individual women who authored articles from 21 percent to 29 percent. Both Punjab Kesari and The Telegraph reported a marginal improvement on this metric (the latter in complete contrast to how it fared in terms of total articles authored by women). The Times of India reported a marginal decline, again contrary to the trend on total authored articles (Table 2).

TABLE 2

Unique Female Authors (%)



The highest share of women-authored news stories was on business pages and the least on sports pages

The share of women in bylines on the business pages of English newspapers was marginally higher than the share across all the pages analysed. Here, 29 percent of all bylined articles were written by women journalists. The Times of India had the least skewed gender representation on its front pages, with 46 percent of bylined articles authored by women. The Hindu came in next with women having written 32 percent of all bylined front page stories. As compared to last year, there is a marginal improvement in the stories written by women in business pages from 27 percent to 29 percent (Table 3).

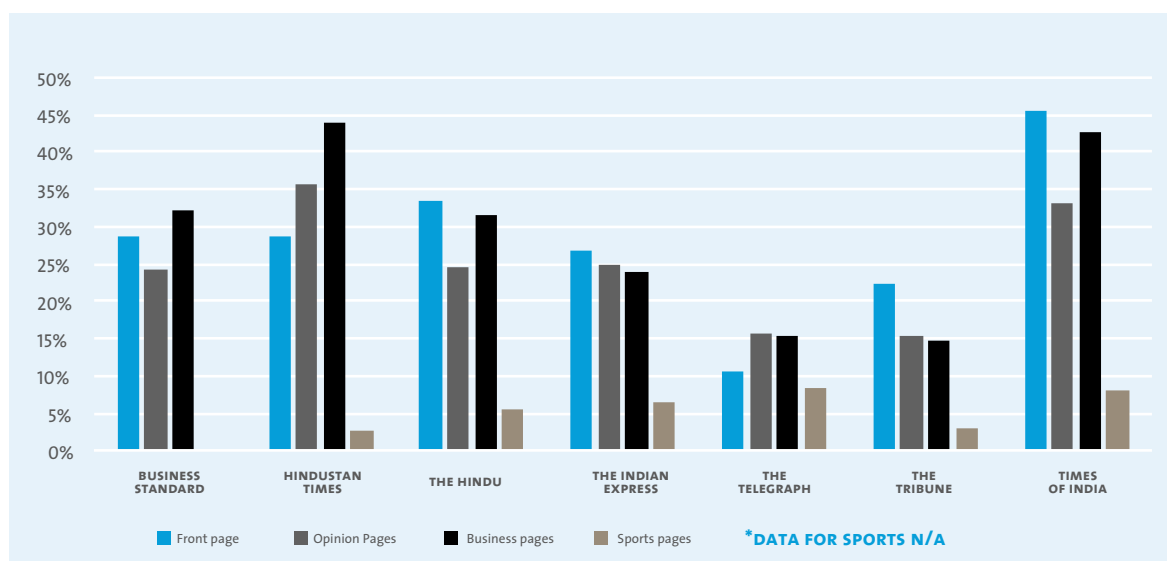
Editorial and opinion pages are important markers of representation. These pages typically reflect the newspaper's own stand on issues as well as give space to experts and public "intellectuals", and opinion and editorial pieces also aim to influence popular narrative on pressing issues of times. Having diverse and representative voices on these pages, thus, become all the more critical.

However, across newspapers, 75 percent of all articles on editorial and opinion pages were written by men. The Tribune and The Telegraph performed poorly with only about 15% of the articles on these pages written by women.

When it comes to sports reportage, women's voices become the scantiest. Less than 6 percent of all sports stories across the seven English newspapers were written by women journalists.

TABLE 3

Female Authors by Page Type (%)



The front pages of Hindi newspapers appear to be entirely written by men. Ninety-nine percent of all bylined articles in Prabhat Khabar were written by men. There were 77 individual men and just one woman with a front page byline in this newspaper. Overall byline figures for Punjab Kesari and Amar Ujala were between two and five percent. Dainik Bhaskar looked much better in comparison with close to 14 percent of all front page stories by women.

The number of bylined articles on business and economy pages in Hindi newspapers was very less. There were only 85 articles on these pages in all the four Hindi newspapers combined, of which, only six were written by women. In comparison, five of the seven English newspapers had more than 300 such articles each. All the articles on business and economy pages in Punjab Kesari and Amar Ujala were written by men, while only one article in Prabhat Khabar was written by a woman.

The number of bylines women had on the sports pages was also very few. Of the 76 total articles, only four were written by women. While Dainik Bhaskar and Prabhat Khabar had none, Amar Ujala and Punjab Kesari had two each written by women.

Editorial and opinion pages had the highest number of bylined articles of all the pages in Hindi

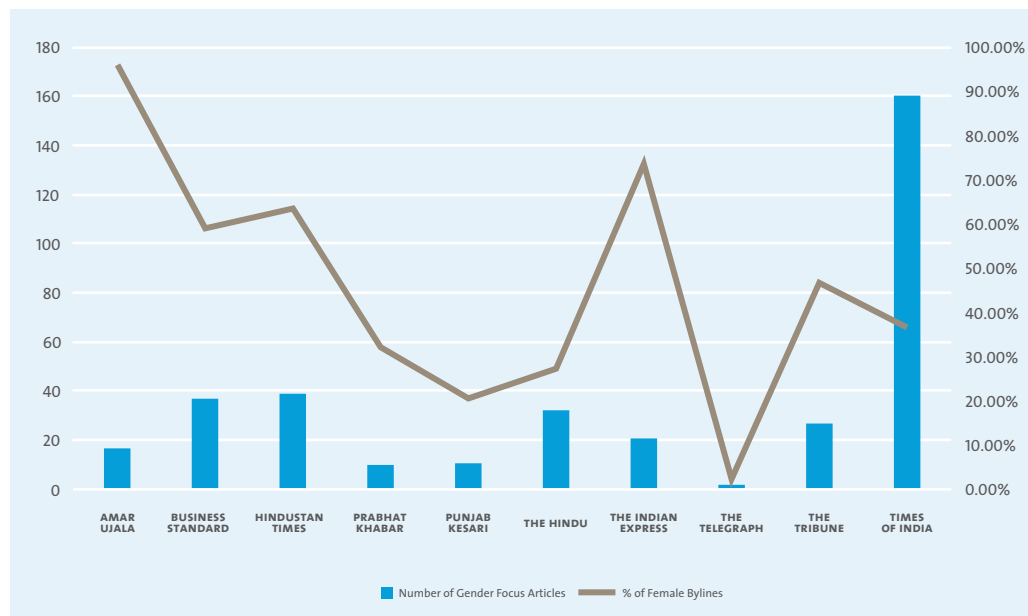
newspapers surveyed in this study. Of the total 2,343 bylined articles, more than two third were in these pages. While Punjab Kesari, Dainik Bhaskar and Prabhat Khabar published between 10 and 14 percent of write-ups by women, Amar Ujala was far ahead with more than 31 percent of articles written by women in editorial and opinion pages.

There was meagre coverage of gender issues and women wrote 44 percent of those news articles

In more than 21,000 bylined articles across publications for which data was collected for this report, only 356 (2 percent) were those which had a gender focus. Close to 45 percent of these articles were published in The Times of India. Considering gender-focused articles in all the 11 newspapers, women wrote 44 percent of these articles. This varied – in Amar Ujala, women had authored 16 of the 17 articles on gender, while in The Telegraph, there were two articles, both authored by men (Table 4).

TABLE 4

Gender Focus Articles



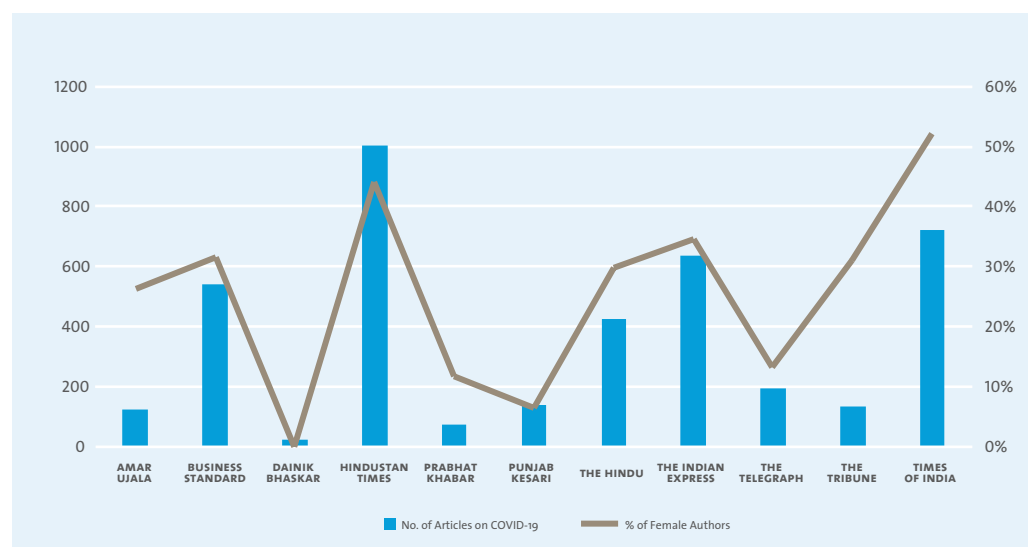
18 percent of all articles analysed were related to Covid-19 and women authored 36 percent of these

In comparison to gender, Covid-19 had substantially higher coverage. There were 4,025 bylined articles (18 percent) with a Covid-19 angle in the news reports for which data was studied. On a weighted average,

36 percent of these were authored by women. While 52 percent of all Covid-19 articles analysed in The Times of India were written by women, none of the 24 articles on Covid-19 in Dainik Bhaskar was written by women (Table 5).

TABLE 5

Covid-19 Focused Articles



There were more women authors in the top decile of articles as compared to the overall data

When it comes to the top decile of all articles, the representation by gender is much better as compared to the overall numbers for five of the 11 newspapers. This means that top journalists, considering the number of bylines, have better representation of women than the overall numbers.

However, this is not true for all the newspapers. Among the four Hindi newspapers studied, three had less than 10 percent of women in the top-decile group, while Amar Ujala had women constituting a fourth of the most bylined journalists. Dainik Bhaskar had no women in the group. Business Standard, Hindustan Times and The Times of India had more than a third women in the top-decile group. The Telegraph and The Tribune had less than eight percent women in their top-decile groups (Table 6).

When it came to representation by gender among the top-most deciles, authors in newspapers have more diversity than panellists on television, according to the data collected for this report.

TABLE 6

| NP NAME | % FEMALE IN TOP DECILE GROUP | % FEMALE IN ALL GROUPS |
|--------------------|------------------------------|------------------------|
| AMAR UJALA | 26.5% | 29.0% |
| BUSINESS STANDARD | 34.0% | 28.1% |
| DAINIK BHASKAR | 0.0% | 12.3% |
| HINDUSTAN TIMES | 39.0% | 31.4% |
| PRABHAT KHABAR | 8.0% | 8.2% |
| PUNJAB KESARI | 8.7% | 6.8% |
| THE HINDU | 22.2% | 20.7% |
| THE INDIAN EXPRESS | 20.5% | 23.3% |
| THE TELEGRAPH | 7.7% | 11.5% |
| THE TRIBUNE | 6.5% | 17.5% |
| TIMES OF INDIA | 39.4% | 31.4% |

While more women being present in the top-decile group is indeed a positive attribute, more context sheds better light on the gender representation. For example, although close to 40% of authors at The Times of India in the top-decile group were women,

the bottom decile had less than 18% of women authors. Most of these authors wrote one or two articles each in the entire period of study.

Considering the authors in the bottom-decile group for The Times of India, and only those who did not share a byline with another author, 179 male authors wrote an article each on editorial and opinion pages as compared to 35 women authors. A total of 49 male authors had a byline on the front page as compared to nine women authors. While the former shows the much higher number of male authors whose contributions are selected as opinion pieces, the latter shows (probably upcoming) journalists who got a chance to appear on the front page of a major newspaper. In either case, men were far more likely to appear on these pages as compared to women.

Environment & energy, culture & entertainment articles had the best representation of women. Sports and defence & national security related had articles the worst.

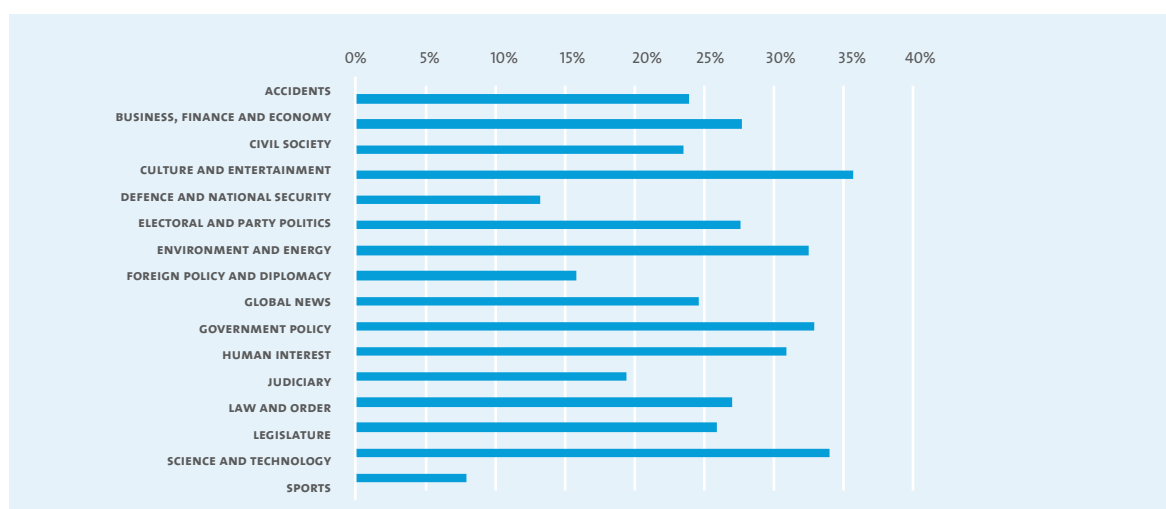
News stories for which data was collected were classified into 16 themes, and this thematic categorisation was analysed by gender, to understand if men and women are more/less likely to be reporting on specific themes. Since newspapers might not publish a similar number of articles on each of these themes, a weighted average adjusted to the proportion of articles written on different themes was used to calculate the number of articles that were written across themes.

Close to a third of the articles on the topics of environment & energy, culture & entertainment, science & technology and stories related to human interest were written by women. Although the women representation was high.

The overall percentage of 25%, for certain themes, men continue to write a large majority of articles. Only 7 percent of sports stories, and 13 percent of defence and national security related articles were authored by women (Table 7).

TABLE 7

% Female Authors by Theme - English Newspapers



There was great variation among newspapers. The Times of India, for example, had a higher share of women-bylined articles on issues related to culture and entertainment (61 percent), accidents (62 percent) and parity when it came to reporting on government policy (50 percent). For Business Standard, only a fifth of articles on culture and entertainment and a tenth on defence and national security were written by women. In the case of articles related to foreign policy and diplomacy written by women, The Hindu and The Times of India fared the best with 40 percent and 35 percent respectively, while The Tribune, The Telegraph and Business Standard had less than 3 percent women bylined articles each. While Hindustan Times had 40 percent of the articles on judiciary written by women, The Hindu had only 9 percent.

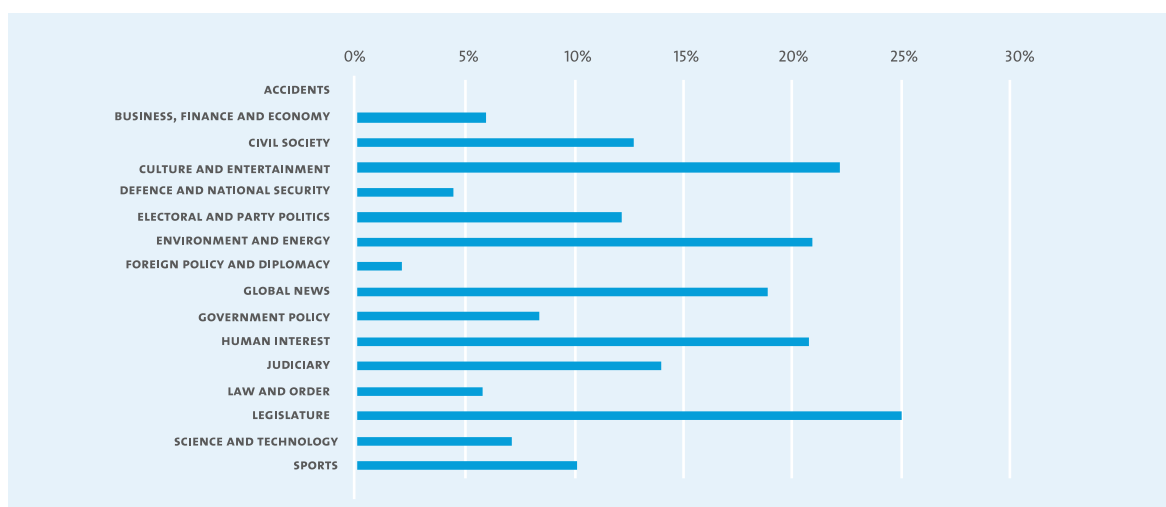
Interestingly, a third of all articles in Hindi newspapers were categorised as human interest

stories. In addition, possibly due to a lack of data of 12 months for all the four Hindi newspapers, there were very few articles under some of the themes. The share of women bylines was dismal across the board.

Women wrote no articles on foreign policy and diplomacy, law and order and sports in Dainik Bhaskar and Prabhat Khabar. There were only eight stories on Legislature in all the four newspapers combined, two of which were written by women. Amar Ujala performed the best in publishing articles related to global news (50 percent) and human interest (36 percent) written by women. There were no stories written by women on defence and national security issues in Dainik Bhaskar and only one each in Amar Ujala and Dainik Bhaskar (Table 8).

TABLE 8

% Female Authors by Theme - Hindi Newspapers



Among topics with higher coverage, there were none where women's share in the bylines was half or more

The team tagged each article with up to three event-specific tags in addition to categorising each story under a theme as discussed in the last section. Representation across specific stories varied widely, although among the topics which had at least 100 stories written on them across all publications through the year, there were none where women's share in the bylines was half or more.

A total of 42 stories were written in English newspapers on topics related to natural disasters, including floods and cyclones across the country. Women wrote a third of these articles. As compared to broadcast media, a very small number of stories (7) on the pages under consideration covered the alleged suicide of a Bollywood actor. A total of 377 stories across English newspapers covered CAA/NRC protests, with 93 of these written by women. Of the 15 stories related to land rights, six were written by women. Women wrote close to a fourth of all stories related to migrant labour distress, majority of which covered events after the start of the pandemic. Of the 616 articles discussing Kashmir, men wrote 506 articles. Women wrote less than a sixth of all articles related to the US and China.

There were 204 articles related to health and/or infrastructure in Hindi newspapers. While men wrote 144 of these, women wrote only 21 (the gender of other authors could not be discerned). Women wrote merely 20 of the 140 articles related to the lockdown that was imposed by the state during the pandemic. There were 84 stories related to Pakistan in all the Hindi newspapers, a fifth of which were written by women.

A total of 1,141 articles were identified as those authored by editors/editorial teams across all the 11 newspapers. While it was difficult to ascertain the gender of the authors, the topics which these were most commonly written about included health, Covid-19 lockdown, corporates and business companies, the Reserve Bank of India and economic crisis.

A disproportionate amount of co-authored articles were men-only collaborations

The analysis has considered each author as bylining a single article, not considering the fact that more than one author might share authorship of an article. More than 1,500 articles were authored by more than one journalist/author across the newspapers. The numbers were analysed for how many of these were written by only-women authors, by only-men

authors and how many were jointly written by men and women.

There was a wide disparity among newspapers, but overall, when it comes to shared bylines, co-authors belong to the same gender, and more often, such articles are written by men.

Prabhat Khabar had no articles that were co-authored by only women. Four percent of all shared bylines were by women and 44 percent by men in Punjab Kesari. Nine of the total 12 shared bylined articles in Dainik Bhaskar were co-authored by men.

English newspapers had a bigger percentage of articles where both men and women share bylines, although men co-authored more than three times the number of articles co-authored by women in six of the seven English newspapers. The Times of India performed the best with nearly a third (32 percent) of shared bylines authored by only women, another

third (34 percent) authored by only men and the remaining third (34 percent) jointly written by both genders (Table 6).

TABLE 9

| NP NAME | ONLY FEMALE | ONLY MALE | BOTH |
|--------------------|-------------|-----------|------|
| AMAR UJALA | 3 | 6 | 8 |
| BUSINESS STANDARD | 40 | 159 | 152 |
| DAINIK BHASKAR | 1 | 9 | 2 |
| HINDUSTAN TIMES | 62 | 185 | 189 |
| PRABHAT Khabar | 0 | 10 | 1 |
| PUNJAB KESARI | 2 | 20 | 23 |
| THE HINDU | 17 | 70 | 69 |
| THE INDIAN EXPRESS | 29 | 178 | 144 |
| THE TELEGRAPH | 3 | 30 | 8 |
| THE TRIBUNE | 1 | 6 | 4 |
| TIMES OF INDIA | 36 | 39 | 39 |

GENDER REPRESENTATION IN ONLINE NEWS PORTALS

News consumption has seen a drastic change in the last decade or so. With an increase in mobile phone penetration in the country, smart phones have become the primary source of news consumption for close to two thirds of Indian users . More people rely on social media for news than ever before .

Traditional media houses have established a formidable online presence as digital advertising became a \$ 2.2 billion industry . Digital provides a new model of disseminating news and opinions with a mix of print, audio and video-based delivery. For this report, we considered digital-only news portals, although digital avatars of traditional news sources often score higher in terms of popularity for news consumption. In addition, only articles written on these platforms were considered. As video becomes the more established source of engaging with the audience for these portals, future editions of the report will need to analyse those resources as well.

The portals were largely based on Alexa ratings. Few portals which had high Alexa ratings but were frequently considered as publishing disinformation and violating other journalistic standards have been left out .

Articles sourced from other news agencies constitute a significant portion of the articles published on online portals. Such articles mostly provide event-based news stories from a variety of news agencies. Apart from these articles, most digital portals publish a substantial portion of articles from freelancers and other experts. With an unlimited space present online, such articles constitute a far higher number as compared to similar articles in opinion and editorial pages of newspapers. Due to such a structural difference, it appears that digital portals present a parity between men and women authors. Although it needs to be noted that due to the same structural differences,

digital portals have been able to rely on a business model that lets them have a low-bench strength in terms of employees while taking contributions from independent freelancers.

As compared to newspapers and television debates, the digital appears to be a space where women get better representation, often writing more articles than men in some portals. Some of these points are highlighted in another chapter of this report which underlines the role of women-led newsrooms in the digital space.

We analysed 10,473 articles from nine digital portals. Data was extracted from mediacloud.org.

Gender representation of women is far better for online portals as compared to newspapers or television debates

Out of the total 10,473 articles under consideration, 4,304 or 41 percent of the articles were written by women. Although this is a far better percentage figure for gender representation than is seen in either newspapers or television debates, it varies across digital portals. While The Print had 61.4 percent of all articles written by women, this figure stood at only 14.7% for Swarajya. (Table 1).

Considering the individual authors writing articles rather than the absolute number of articles written, we find that around 38.5 percent of 3,711 authors were women. This number is slightly less than the simple average of unique authors for each portal as

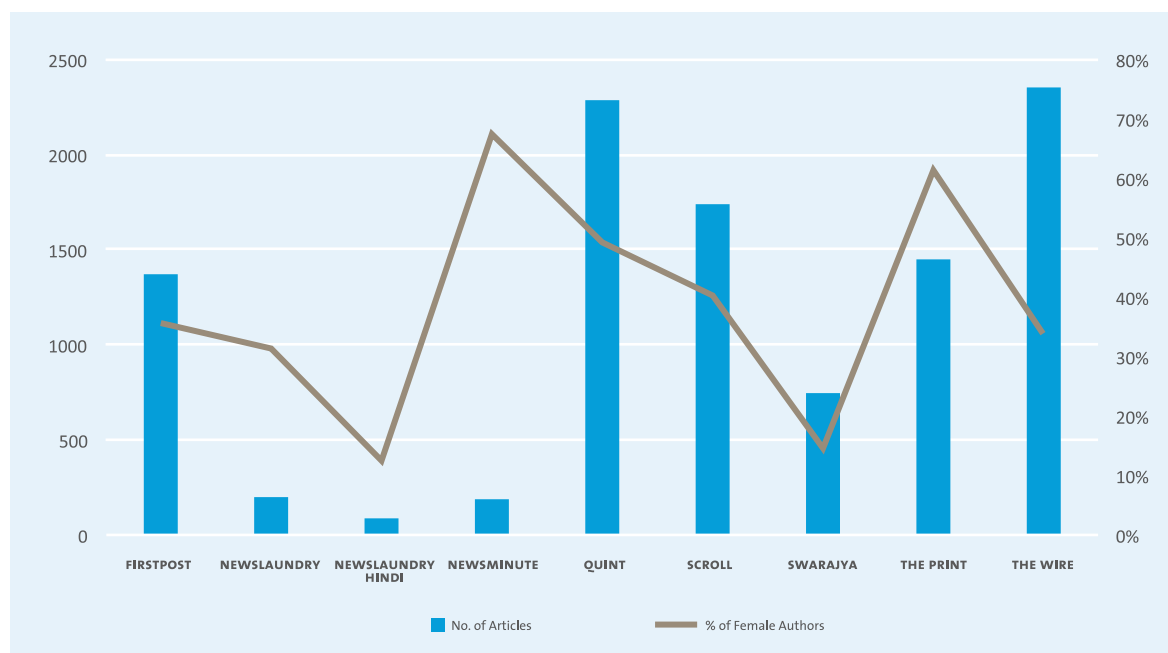
it accounts for the articles written by same people across different portals as well.

The variation in this figure across portals is more interesting. While 31.4% of all articles written in Newslandry were by women, the percentage of unique women authors was 44.4%. This means that

women wrote far less frequently than men. In fact, more articles were written by seven men than the 32 women combined. These figures are almost reversed in the case of The Print. In this case, although women constitute only 35.5% of all authors, they write more than 60% of all articles. The top-decile group for The Print had 34 women and nine men.

TABLE 1

% of Female Authored Articles



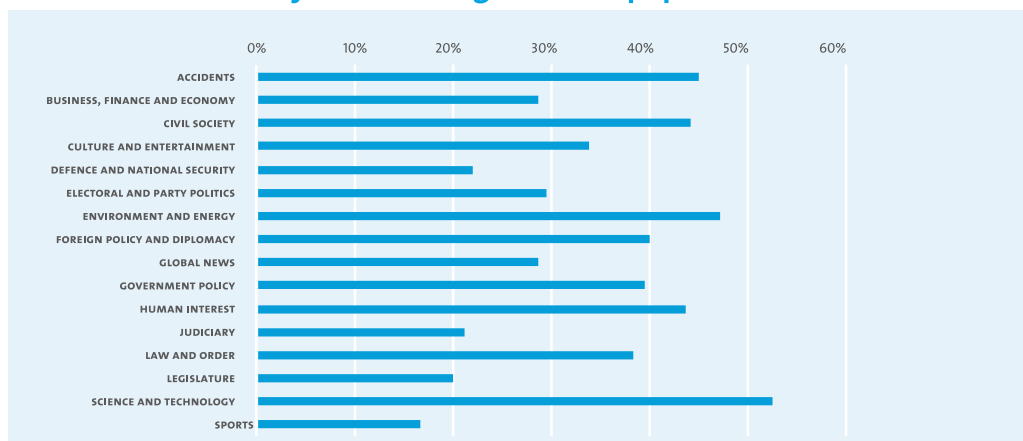
Last year, due to the large number of articles in most digital portals, only those authors were considered who had written at least five articles. Analysing similar authors for this year, it was found that the gender representation has improved almost across the board. Except The Wire, Scroll and Swarajya, where the proportion of unique women authors has decreased by eight, four and two percentage points respectively, all other portals have shown significant improvement in the ratio of unique women authors. Close to two third of all unique authors who wrote a minimum of five articles this year in The Print were women. Women author less than a fifth of all articles on sports.

Articles written on topics related to accidents, civil society and human interest have a high representation of women, close to 45 percent. Men and women write almost the same number of articles related to environment and energy and

science and technology. For articles under all other themes, women representation is less than men.

Although women write more articles related to specific themes in online portals as compared to newspapers, the number of women authors writing on sports is dismal. Only a fifth of all articles on sports are written by women. This is further attributed to the fact that barring tennis and badminton, there were very few articles written on individual women athletes or women teams. Generic articles written about a sport often tended to assume that only men played that sport, an example being an article on the role of defenders in hockey that was entirely focused on the men's national team. Across all three mediums under our study - newspapers, television, online news portals - women are represented far less than men for discussions and opinions related to sports.

TABLE 2

% Female Authors by Theme - English Newspapers

Majority of articles with a gender focus are written by women

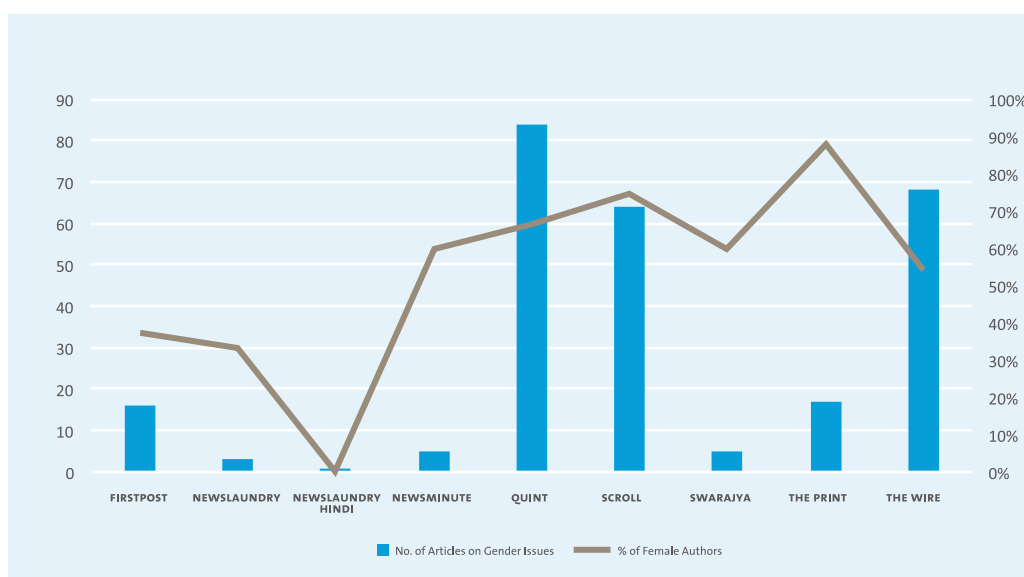
Close to two thirds of all the articles related to gender issues were written by women. For The Print, women authored close to 90 percent of all such articles, while the figures were 67 percent and 75 percent for The Quint and Scroll respectively. Although articles that revolved around gender issues were just 3 percent, the number was more compared to articles in newspapers or debates on television (Table 3).

In the case of articles related to Covid-19, women wrote about half the total 2,160 articles. While women wrote more than 60 percent of articles

related to the pandemic in The Print, The News Minute and The Quint, the figures were merely 7 percent and 14 percent in Swarajya and Newslaundry Hindi respectively.

There were 86 articles written on issues around caste on all the portals combined. Fifty of these were in The Wire alone, with women authoring 19 of the articles. Eight of the 10 articles on caste issues in Swarajya were written by a woman. There were 11 articles which were indexed as having an intersection of both caste and gender across the digital portals, with eight of these written by women.

TABLE 3

% of Female Authors on Gender Issues

WHO OPERATES RADIO STATIONS

For decades, the government has dominated airwaves in the country. Even now, only state-run All India Radio (which covers 99% of India's population) has control over news broadcast. For a large, diverse, less literate population, radio can be the game changer. It can bring about actual change, help communities hold their authorities accountable and ensure efficient information dissemination.

Commercialisation of the airwaves and bringing in larger corporations to do entertainment programming on the radio has not helped the medium as they have all been limited to larger cities - more importantly, have not included public interest programming.

Citizens groups and non-profit organisations in India have been pushing for a wider share of the radio pie. Finally, in December 2002, the government approved the grant of licences for setting up community radio stations to well-established educational institutions. Four years later, they granted licences to NGOs.

Community radio caters to the interests of a specific area, broadcasting material that has relevance to a particular local community, most importantly by the community itself. Therefore, this medium is considered to be more democratic.

With more than 300 community radio stations across the country, this medium has become one of the most engaged-with in the country.

Ideosync Media Combine, a development media platform, works with over 150 community radio stations across India. They circulated a survey among community radio stations, to which, 36 stations from across the country responded (Table 1).

[These 36 radio stations broadcast 15 hours of daily programming on an average.](#)

Among the stations that responded, about 250 people were employed in staff positions.

TABLE 1

| STATE | NUMBER OF STATIONS THAT RESPONDED |
|----------------|-----------------------------------|
| BIHAR | 3 |
| HARYANA | 2 |
| JHARKHAND | 1 |
| KERALA | 8 |
| MADHYA PRADESH | 1 |
| MAHARASHTRA | 2 |
| ODISHA | 7 |
| RAJASTHAN | 1 |
| TAMIL NADU | 8 |
| UTTAR PRADESH | 2 |
| UTTARAKHAND | 1 |

Almost the same number of men and women were employed, with women having a slight edge. Ideosync Media found that 75% of the station managers, though, were men. So, even as community radio employs women, the power to decide programming is largely held by men.

However, a lot of the community radio work is carried out by 'volunteers' from the community. In many community radio stations, several members of the community do regular programming, for which they are not paid.

Of around 700 such volunteers, 350 were women. Even though men run the stations, in many cases, voices of women from the community are being heard.

“The stations run 50 hours to 300 hours of content on women and gender. All stations have at least two dedicated programmes surrounding the theme,” according to Venu Arora of Ideosync Media. Stations such as Mount Abu’s Radio Madhuban have dedicated gender-based programming such as Pank mile adhikaron ke, which plays as a conversation between two women over laws on gender-related issues such as domestic violence, maternity leave and so on. Radio DC from Thiruvananthapuram

broadcasts specific health-based programmes for women such as Women and Tuberculosis, Science for Women, and modified their programming during COVID-19 to include a section on effects of COVID-19 on pregnant women. Baat Behano Ki (Radio Rimjhim, Gopalganj) and Vanitha Vani (Janvani FM, Kannur) are some of the programmes that regularly broadcast women and gender-related issues.

“This suggests that the programmes created by community radio stations are oriented towards the traditional requirements of the community but are also constantly evolving their own programme narratives to suit all ages of listeners, including women,” says Arora.

TABLE 2

| RADIO STATION | BIG FM | RADIO CITY | RADIO MIRCHI | RED FM | CITY TOTAL |
|---------------|--------|------------|--------------|--------|------------|
| BANGALORE | 3,3 | 2,2 | 3,1 | 3,2 | 11,8 |
| BHOPAL | 2,0 | NA | 4,3 | 1,2 | 7,5 |
| CHANDIGARH | 1,2 | NA | 3,1 | 3,3 | 6,6 |
| CHENNAI | NA | 2,3 | 3,2 | NA | 5,5 |
| DELHI | 2,2 | 2,5 | 2,3 | 2,5 | 8,15 |
| GUWAHATI | 2,1 | NA | 3,2 | 3,2 | 8,5 |
| HYDERABAD | 3,2 | 1,3 | 2,0 | 1,4 | 7,9 |
| KOLKATA | 1,3 | NA | 3,7 | 1,4 | 5,14 |
| LUCKNOW | 1,1 | 2,5 | 2,2 | 2,2 | 7,10 |
| MUMBAI | 1,3 | 4,7 | 4,3 | 2,3 | 11,16 |
| PATNA | 1,2 | 2,2 | 3,2 | 2,4 | 8,10 |
| CHANNEL TOTAL | 17,19 | 15,21 | 25,21 | 20,31 | 77,92 |

Commercial radio stations

We also analysed four commercial radio channels across 11 cities in the country to look at the gender composition of radio jockeys working there. Due to the unavailability of archives for radio broadcasting, we weren’t able to analyse the gender composition of the guests who are called on radio channels. In addition, details about the programming schedule of these radio stations was not available in all the cases. As a result, for our analysis, we ended up considering all the radio jockeys on a par with each other irrespective of the duration or time of the broadcast.

The gender composition of radio jockeys across the board appears to be broadly equitable with only a few radio channels in Delhi, Kolkata and Mumbai

bucking the trend (Table 2). In fact, upon analysis of the broadcast schedule information wherever it was available, it was found that there were a few radio jockeys who appeared only for a couple of hours for the entire week to host a special programme (say on crime, on Sundays) which might have skewed the gender representation figures in some cases. The daily radio broadcasting appears to have an equal representation of men and women. With daily shows like Ladies First on Radio City hosted by RJ Barkha in Patna, there are some women-focused programmes broadcast every day as well.

There were a few radio programmes broadcast across the entire network of a particular radio station, due to which, the total numbers for a particular station might not match with a simple summation of numbers from each city in the table.

NEWSROOM COMPOSITION AND WOMEN-LED MEDIA ORGANISATIONS

In the last 20 years, journalism schools have mushroomed across the country. They come armed with thousands of graduates every year to populate newsrooms with. Many of the students are women, consequently, most of those who land jobs in newsrooms are also women.

In the last 20 years, journalism schools have mushroomed across the country, flooding thousands of graduates in newsrooms every year. Many of the students are women, consequently, from anecdotal experience most of those who land jobs in newsrooms are also women.

However, this only slightly disturbs the balance of power that men hold in newsrooms. Most newsrooms are pyramids, with fewer people in power at the top. This is especially true of the big newsrooms. “When you peep into our newsrooms, you will see many women on the desk. Fewer women are on the field as reporters,” said a staff member from a Hindi newspaper, who requested not to be identified. “Moreover, women are almost non-existent in editorial positions. From large cities to small towns, it is the same story,” she added.

In 2011, the International Women’s Media Foundation and UNESCO collaborated in a global research partnership to promote the voice of women in the news-gathering and news-dissemination process, this culminated in the publishing of a report on women in the news media. More than 150 researchers interviewed executives at more than 500 companies in 59 countries. Overall, the study identified glass ceilings for women in 20 of 59 countries, commonly visible in middle and senior management positions. In India, it was found that even within the very few ‘governance positions’ held by women (21%), the selection of women was often

made based on familial ties ‘rather than their ability to secure the positions through advancement’ (234).

Exceptions to this rule are smaller digital-only newsrooms like The News Minute. With a staff of around 30, 65% of them are women. The News Minute offers extensive coverage from all five states of South India. The news website was co-founded by Dhanya Rajendran, a TV journalist with extensive experience of covering southern Indian states.

In 2018, Rajendran was named one of ‘India’s best entrepreneurs’ in Fortune India’s 40 Under 40. She is also the chairperson of Digipub, an organisation of digital-only news publications.

The Quint, co-founded by Ritu Kapur, is another digital-only news platform with wide readership. The Quint engages in serious journalism, targeting young adults and the youth. It is one of the few newsrooms which has a dedicated investigations team, headed by a woman journalist.

Faye D’Souza ran three weekly shows on business news channel ET Now and then became the anchor of Mirror Now’s primetime show, The Urban Debate, where her pointed, ethical questions brought her credibility and fame.

Moving on from the Times Group, D’Souza began engaging with her audience on social media. She does regular programmes on her YouTube channel, where she invites distinguished guests. Her Instagram and Twitter accounts are where her

meaningful journalism is now carried out. She has a huge following of 800,000 on Instagram and one million followers on Twitter.

Seema Mustafa is the editor-in-chief of The Citizen. Mustafa is also the president of the Editors Guild of India. She founded The Citizen in 2014 and since then, the website has lent a voice to several voiceless sections of the society.

Since digital publishing requires lesser capital investment, it opens up doors for women to secure their place online. Breaking the glass ceiling in the media business – traditionally dominated by male editors – these women are taking the opportunity in the digital news space head-on.

Women who shake up the badlands of Bundelkhand

- Khabar Lahariya is an independent feminist grassroots news network. It has achieved international fame for its fearless reportage.
- Working out of 13 districts in the Bundelkhand region of Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh, Khabar Lahariya works on local socio-economic issues and does investigative journalism, keeping the authorities accountable.
- Their all-woman team of reporters and editors are headed by Kavita Devi, a Dalit who was educated in non-formal educational systems. The team has representation from Dalit and other marginalised communities.
- Not only has Devi contributed a great deal to the journalistic ethos of the region, she says she learnt the skills on the job. “We are out in the field to change the perspectives of the people about women, about the media and about women in the media,” she says.

Barkha Dutt spent several decades in television journalism and was one of the pioneers of television news reporting in the country. After moving on from NDTV, Dutt set up MoJo Story. “We believe that the news media, especially television, is going through a crisis of credibility and quality and that the future belongs to robust, reporting driven, independent

digital platforms,” reads the about section on its Youtube channel.

MoJo Story made news during the Covid lockdown when over four months, at the height of the pandemic, they reported from across the country travelling around 24,000 kilometres.

WORKING FOR INDIAN NEWSROOMS : RESPONSES FROM SURVEY

The survey for this report was divided into three sections. The first section asked the respondents to fill in personal details such as gender, religion, caste and education. This was to ascertain a map of the demographic backgrounds of the people working in newsrooms. The second section focused generally on the subjective experiences of the respondents as workers at news organisations. The last section focused on the impact of Covid-19 in the news media industry.

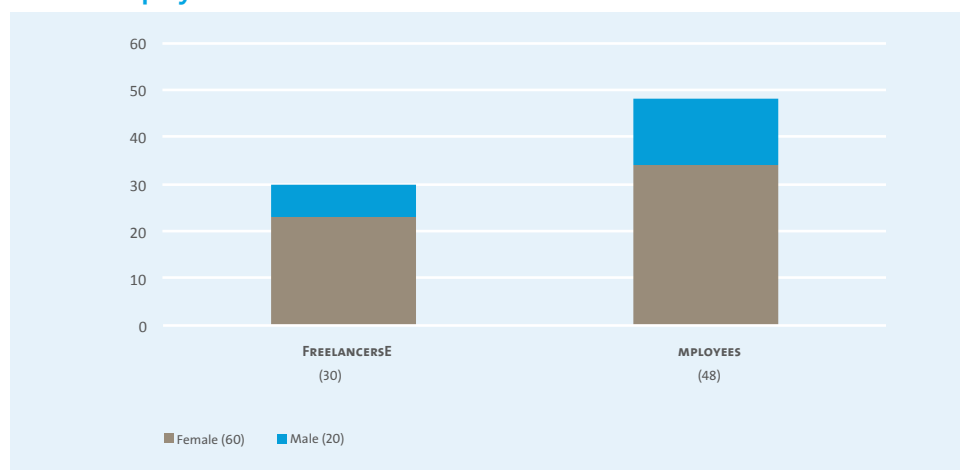
The respondents were asked to identify if they worked at an organisation or if they were working as freelancers. Different sets of questions were asked to them along the lines of the three sections mentioned above depending on their current employment status. A separate set of questions was asked from the people who were working as freelancers after being sacked from their jobs since the pandemic broke out.

After giving a brief account of the demographic account of the respondents, this chapter discusses the questions related to the subjective experiences of the employees and freelancers as workers of

news media organisations. The following two chapters deal specifically with the question of sexual harassment in newsrooms and the impact of Covid-19 on employment of mediapersons.

We circulated the survey randomly on social media channels and obtained 81 responses in the 28-day period from November 2 to November 30. There were about an equal number of responses that were not entirely filled, which have not been included for the sake of continuity in the analysis. We spoke to a few respondents who volunteered to talk to us as well.

TABLE 1 Employment Status



Demographic details of the respondents

Most of the respondents who filled the survey were women. Among the staffers, 34 were women respondents while 14 were men. And among freelancers, 23 were women. It goes to show that when a survey is about gender representation, the chances of women taking it are higher than the men. Three women respondents said they were fired from their news organisations, citing financial restrictions owing to the pandemic. Fifty-one of the respondents were staff members in newsrooms while 30 were freelance journalists (Table 1).

Thirty-three respondents reside in the media hub of Delhi NCR, while 48 were scattered across the country. This also highlights the limitations of the professional circles of those working on this report and who all we could reach out to. The team forwarded the surveys on various social media websites as well as some journalists' groups via email. In addition, a few journalists were called and requested to fill the survey. Most of the employees were working in different organisations in the print and digital media (Table 3).

TABLE 2 Responses by Age

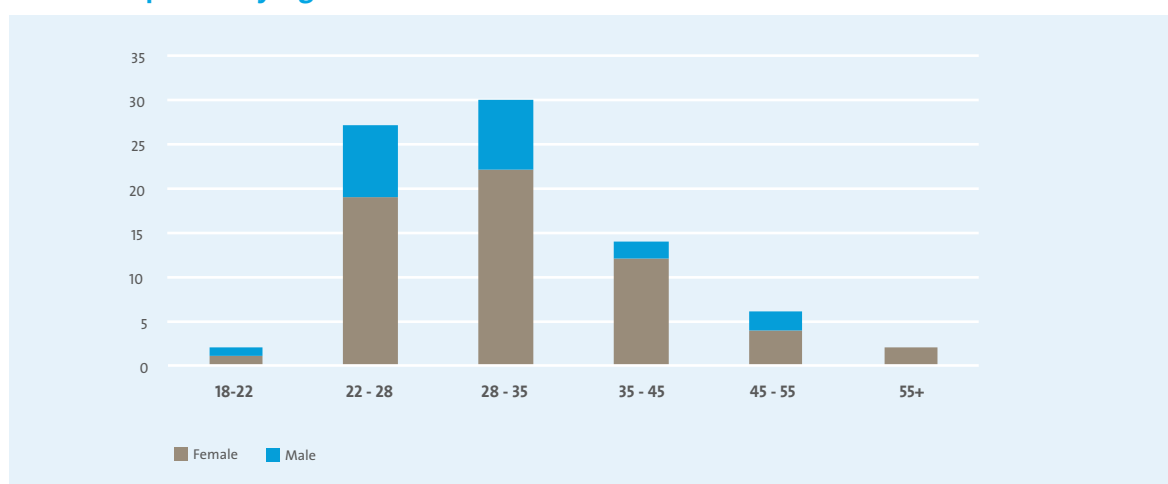
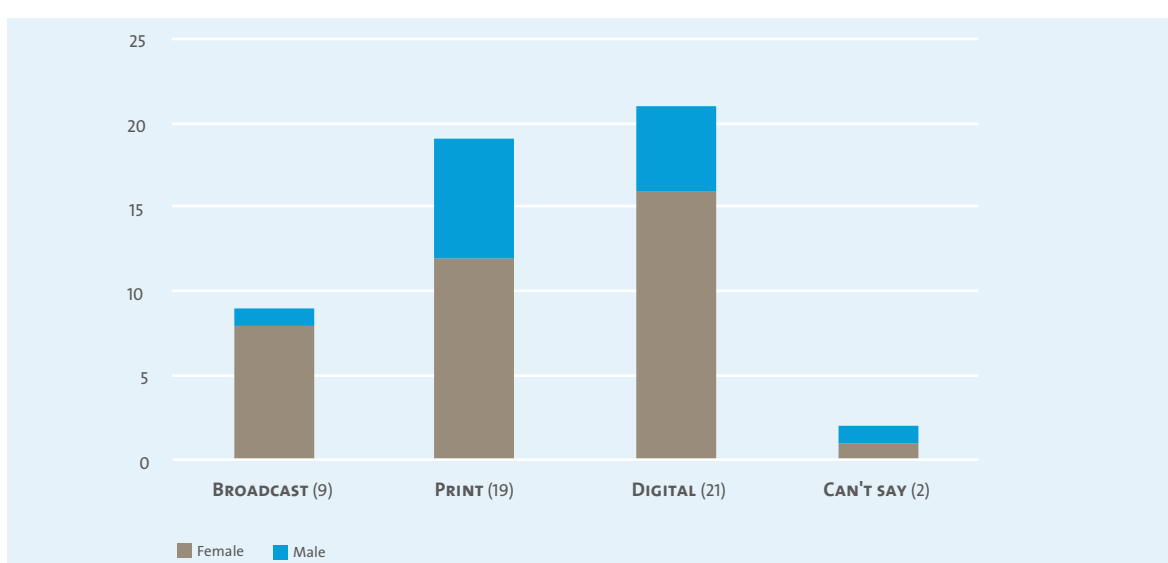


TABLE 3 Employment by distribution format



More than 90 percent of the respondents had been working in the news media industry for more than two years (Table 4).

There wasn't any significant difference between the highest level of education of the employees and those working as freelancers. Most of the respondents had a postgraduate degree (Table 5).

At least two-thirds of the respondents said they were born in Hindu families. Twelve percent of the respondents either chose not to answer or chose the option 'No religion' (Table 6). All but one respondent chose the same religion they currently identified with and the one they were born into, while there were many who did not identify with any religion.

TABLE 4 Years of Experience

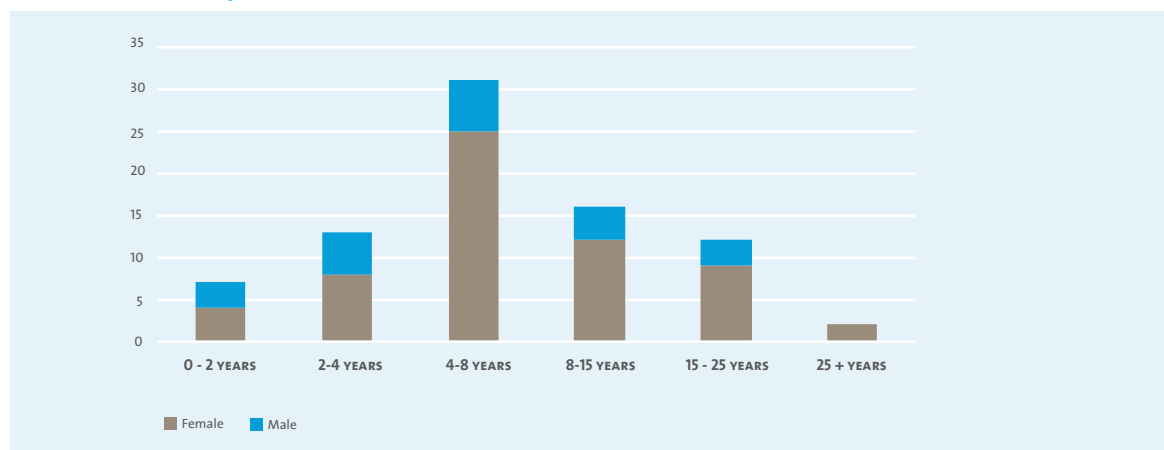


TABLE 5 Religion Wise Responses

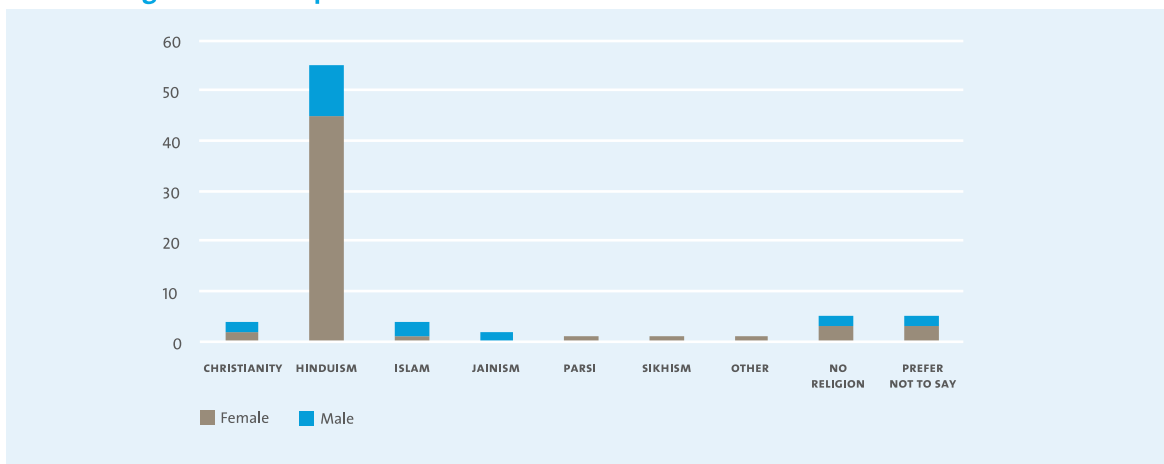
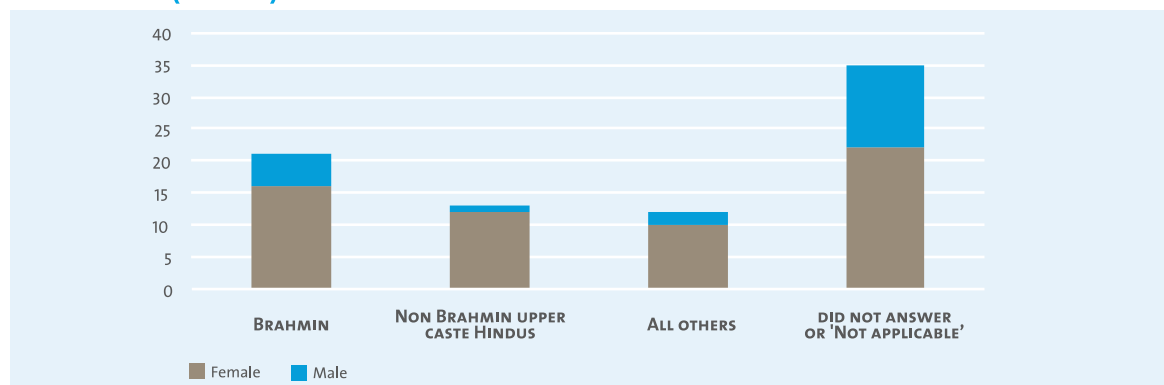


TABLE 6 Caste (born in)

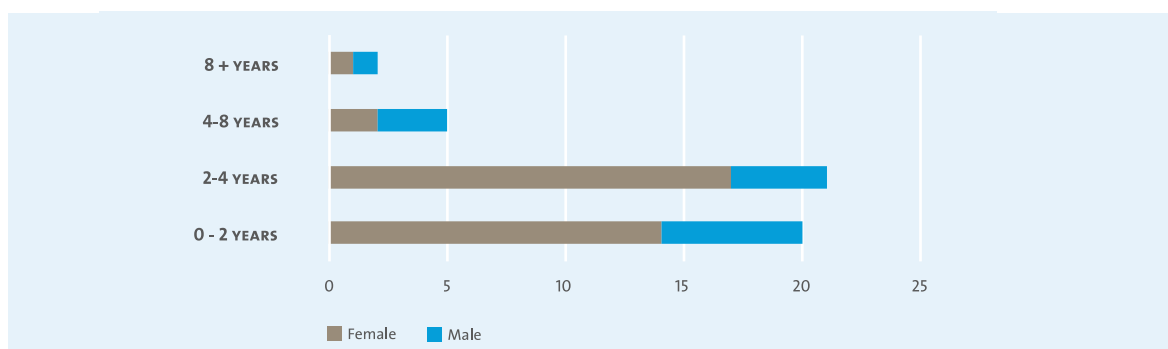


Of the people who filled the caste group in which they were born, most respondents wrote Brahmin (Table 7). 'Non-Brahmin upper caste Hindus' involved respondents who identified themselves as Baniya, Kayastha, Kshatriya, Maratha, Rajput and Vashishtha. 'All Others' included respondents who wrote Hindu, Mixed Caste, Naidu, Rafiqi, Vaishya, Raju, Devanga Chettiar and Syrian Catholic. Two

respondents wrote OBC while one wrote Chamar. These three responses were also included in the 'All Others' category. Since this was a text-based question rather than a multiple-choice one, the team could categorise the responses into separate buckets for analysis only after receiving the responses.

This categorisation was made with an understanding that it is difficult to match caste names with legal

TABLE 7 Years in Current Organisation



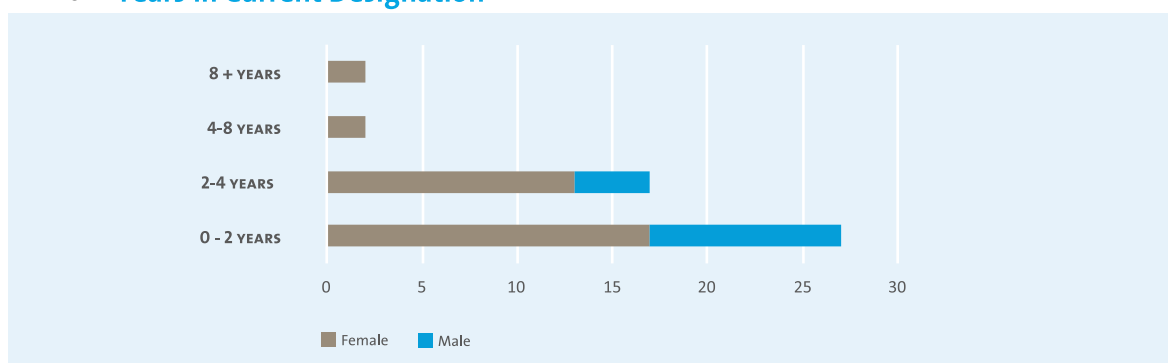
Employees at news organisations

We got responses from people holding various designations in the newsroom. Some of these included assistant editors, news producers, senior reporters, special correspondents and chief reporters.

Of the 48 respondents, six men and 14 women said they were working in the current organisation for

less than two years. While this amounts to close to 40 percent of the respondents to the survey, close to 55 percent of the respondents said they had been working in the same designation for up to two years. (Table 8)

TABLE 8 Years in Current Designation



Thirty of 48 people did not get a promotion in two years, with 17 did not get a hike. While 20 women claimed to have had an increment in salaries in the past two years, 11 said they had had no salary hike. Among men, eight said they had got a salary hike and six said they had not (Table 9)

However, when we asked ‘how likely are you to get recognition for your work’, answers from both

genders seemed to be more or less the same. About 50 percent of them said they were less likely to be recognised, this included respondents from both genders (Table 10).

When asked how many stories they file in a week, 11 women said they file between zero and four stories while five men said they file the same number of stories (Table 11).

TABLE 9 No. of Salary Increments

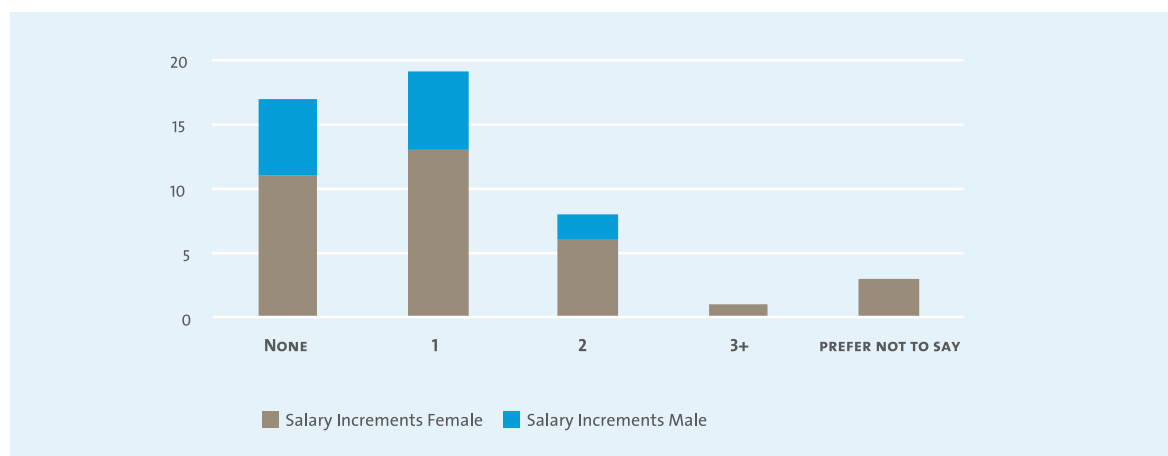


TABLE 10 No. of Promotions

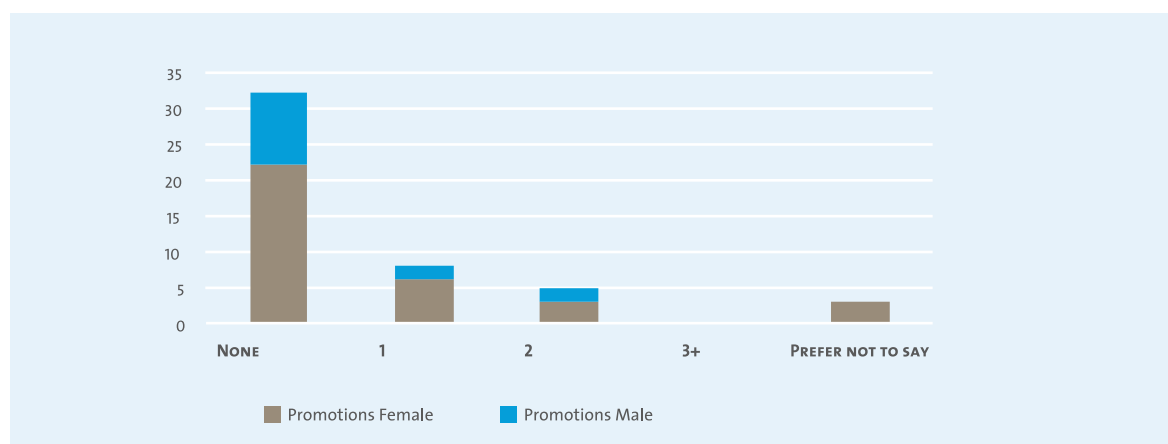
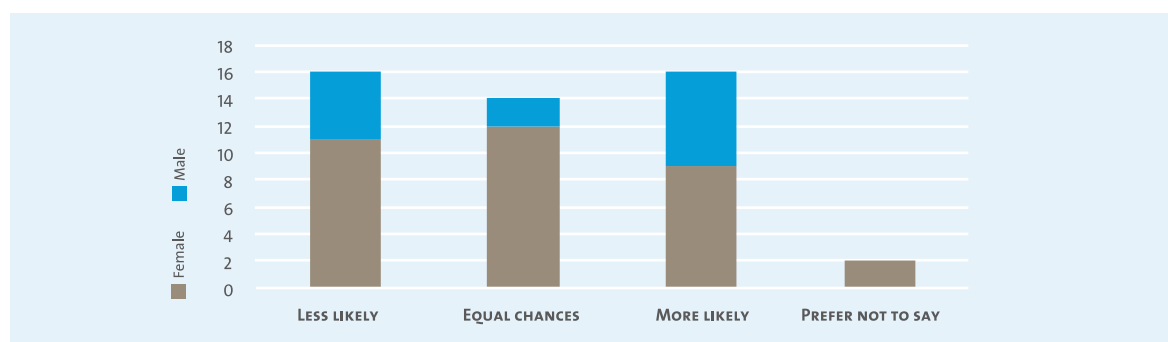


TABLE 11 Recognition for your work



We asked respondents how well they thought all genders were represented in their organisation.

Forty percent of the respondents said all genders were ‘very well represented’.

These numbers were especially high for people who worked at digital media organisations where more than two-thirds of the respondents chose this option. But the devil always lies in the details. While none of the respondents said that all the staff were of the same gender in their organisation, when we asked if all senior staff belonged to the same gender, five respondents said yes.

The number of respondents who felt the senior positions were well-represented across genders dropped from 40 percent to 23 percent (Table 12). About 43 percent women and 27 percent men had women bosses. Eleven of the 13 male employees worked with men bosses.

Freelancers working for news organisations

Of the 30 freelance journalists who responded, 24 said they had been employed in news organisations before. Only 20 percent respondents were not employed in the past. The stability and benefits offered to an employee are absent in freelance work. Given the travails of freelancing, most respondents, 12 females and five males, said they are interested in finding a staff position in an organisation. Eight respondents said they were not sure about the response to this question.

Most of the respondents - 26 out of 30 - said they reported in English. In addition, respondents also wrote in Assamese, Hindi, Kannada, Odia, Punjabi and Tamil. When asked how long they had been working as freelance journalists, 43 percent of the respondents said they had started recently and had only been working between 0-2 years. Almost a third had been freelancing for 4 to 8 years (Table 13).

TABLE 12 Number of Stories

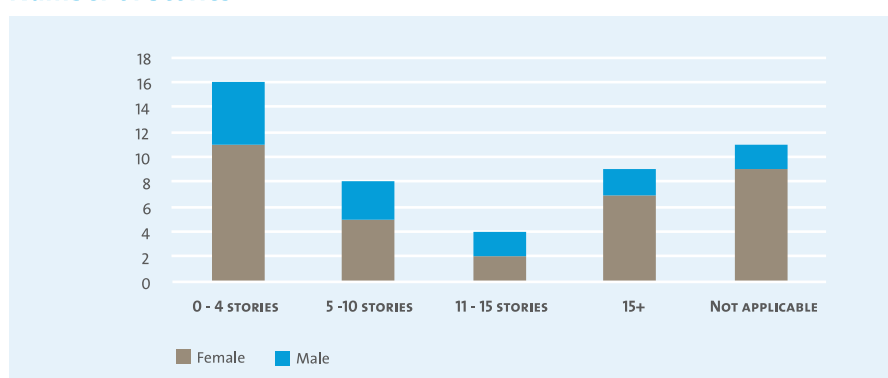
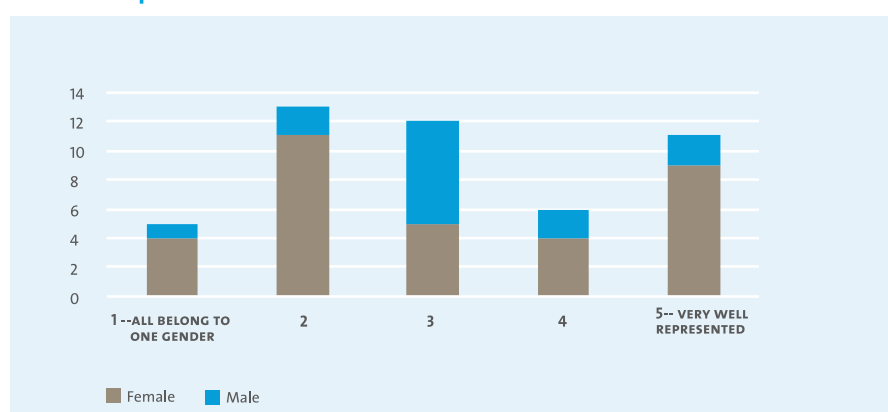


TABLE 13 Gender Representation in Senior Positions



The reasons why the respondents chose freelance work were varied. Top of the charts was the autonomy that freelancing lent to their work lives. Flexible timing was a close second with 40 percent respondents choosing that. About 30 percent said

that they had been freelancing as they could not land a staff position in any organisation. Only two respondents said they chose freelance work as an additional source of income to their existing or other incomes (Table 14).

TABLE 14 Gender Representation in the Organisation

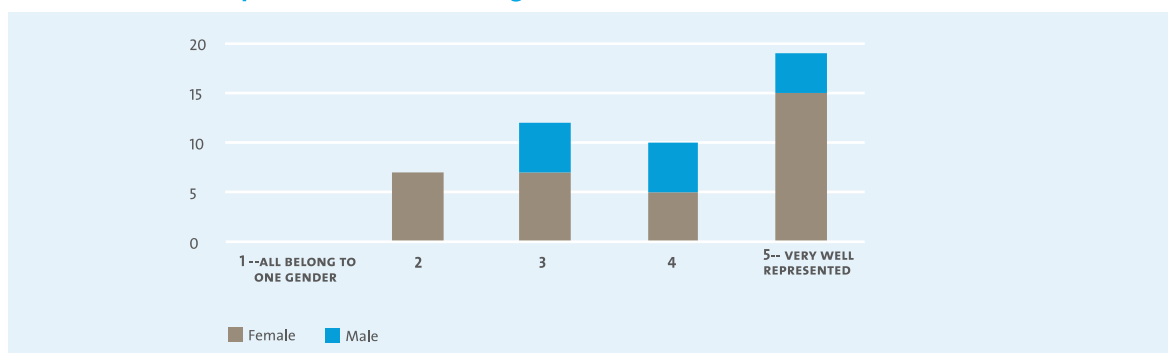


TABLE 15 Years as Freelance Journalist

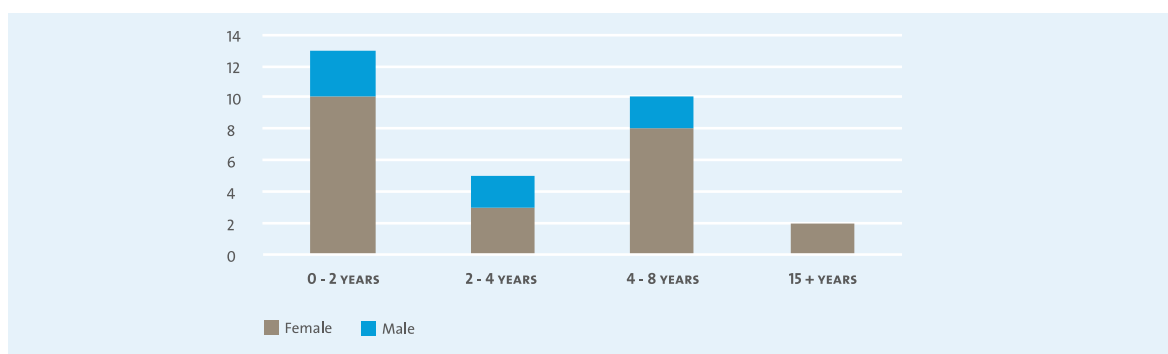
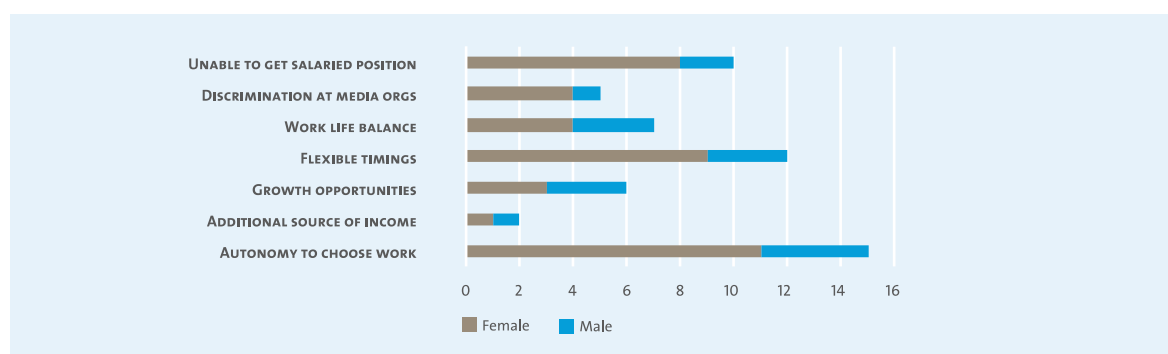


TABLE 16 Reasons for Freelancing

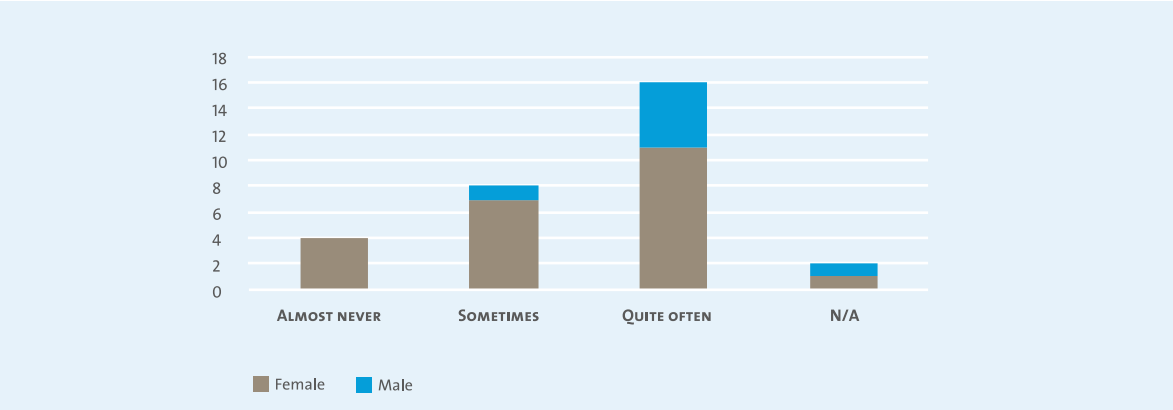


Around 50 percent of the journalists admitted that they had to go to the field for reporting (Table 15).

While the number of freelancers has been steadily increasing in the past few years owing to cuts in salaried positions, it appears that the remuneration given to them does not always lead to freelancing as a dependable source of earning. Half of the respondents mentioned that their payments are regularly delayed by the organisations they work

for. Only 16 percent said they never experienced any delay. Half of the respondents said that they have to take up work beyond journalism to keep a steady flow of income. Fifty percent said they are not paid a fair wage for their freelance work. Incredibly, 58 percent of the women respondents and a third of the men respondents said their incomes from freelance work have decreased in the past two years.

TABLE 17 Field Reporting as a Freelance Journalist



NEWSROOMS AS SAFE WORKPLACES

Sexual harassment at the workplace is an assault on women's right to equality, life and liberty. Not only is it a violation of basic human rights, but also of Articles 14, 15 and 21 of the Indian Constitution – which provide for equality under the law and prohibit discrimination on basis of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth, and protection of life and personal liberty.

Predatory behaviour in the workplace creates insecurity and a hostile work environment, which discourages women's participation in work. Therefore, it became important to give sexual harassment in the workplace a prominent position in a report on gender representation.

When the powerful exert their influence to put pressure on junior employees, the unequal and unjust nature of the game is evident. This is where it becomes the duty of the news media to speak for the voiceless. However, the media is woefully short of tending to this matter in its own workplaces, let alone holding other workplaces to account.

The Supreme Court observed the need for a legislation against sexual harassment at the workplace in 1997. In the absence of any law at that time, it framed guidelines to be followed in workplaces, until a legislation was enacted for the purpose. The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act was enacted only 15 years later in 2013.

Defining sexual harassment in the workplace

As per the law, 'sexual harassment' includes unwelcome sexually tinted behaviour, whether directly or by implication, such as

- (i) physical contact and advances,
- (ii) demand or request for sexual favours,
- (iii) making sexually coloured remarks,
- (iv) Showing pornography, or
- (v) any other unwelcome physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct of a sexual nature.

Presence or occurrence of circumstances of implied or explicit promise of preferential treatment in employment; threat of detrimental treatment in employment; threat about present or future employment; interference with work or creating an intimidating or offensive or hostile work environment; or humiliating treatment likely to affect the lady employee's health or safety could also amount to sexual harassment.

The question of the lack of execution of the law in other institutions is a far cry when women in newsrooms fight to get it implemented in their own workplaces first even now. This is why the #MeToo movement initially gained strength within the news media, eventually to only fizzle out.

#MeToo in Indian newsrooms

Taking a cue from women all over the world, #MeToo gained steam in India in October 2018. Many women named their perpetrators, others described incidents without naming anyone and some others described their experiences of harassment and assault anonymously. While some of these incidents were many years old, others were recent.

Out of this mixed bag of complaints and 'outing', the case of MJ Akbar stands out.

Around 25 women journalists accused former editor, MJ Akbar, then minister in the Union government, of sexually harassing them. The predatory behaviour had been reported throughout his career as a journalist. News website, Article 14, co-founder Priya Ramani was facing a criminal defamation case against her for speaking out against Akbar's conduct in the workplace. She was acquitted in February 2021.

There were several allegations against men journalists in positions of power. But, MJ Akbar was quick to return to the public domain. Similarly, although Prashant Jha stepped down from his position as Hindustan Times' political editor and Delhi bureau chief after several allegations against him, he was reinstated by the newspaper as the associate editor.

"There is an unspoken 'bro code' in most newsrooms I have worked in," admitted a senior reporter in an English news channel, who has been a journalist for about 25 years. "That means, most men have an informal understanding that sexist behaviour is acceptable," she said. As such behaviour gains more and more acceptance, it becomes the norm.

The silent signal to women in many newsrooms is that if they complain about harassment, their careers will stall. "I felt like I had to do my job with one hand tied behind my back," said Kate Havard, a reporting intern at The Washington Post, who quit journalism after seeing wide-spread predatory behaviour.

On the condition of anonymity, a 28-year-old said she had to quit journalism after five years of being employed in a Hindi newspaper's digital wing. "My boss made it clear that I had to pay heed to his advances if I wanted to rise in the hierarchy," she said.

Before the Vishaka judgment that led to the first guidelines on workplace sexual harassment in 1997, women did not have the language to address the problem, according to Kalpana Sharma, a senior journalist. Sharma has written about her experience as one of the only women in the newsrooms in the late 1980s and early 1990s. She says many women were asked to take sexual harassment in their stride and consider it an occupational hazard.

With the passage of the Prevention of Sexual Harassment (PoSH) Act, newsrooms are expected to set up Internal Complaints Committees and make them easily accessible to all employees.

The Internal Complaints Committee

- Any establishment employing 10 or more employees is required to constitute an ICC by an order in writing by the employer.
- In this regard, it must be noted that the definition of employee under the PoSH Act is broad, and encompasses persons employed on a temporary, ad hoc or daily wage basis, and includes apprentices, trainees, volunteers and persons employed at a workplace through an agent or contractor. The term employer has also been defined in the context of governmental organisations, private sector organisations and households.

Presiding Officer

The chairperson of an ICC, referred to by the nomenclature presiding officer, shall be a senior-level female employee.

External Member

The ICC should include an external member, a person familiar with issues relating to sexual harassment or from a non-governmental organisation or association committed to the cause of women.

Employee Members

The ICC should also include two or more members from its employees, preferably individuals having legal knowledge, experience in social work, or committed to the cause of women.

The PoSH Act prescribes that failure by an employer to constitute an ICC is an offence punishable with fine for an amount of up to Rs 50,000. Further, an employer convicted for the same offence at the second instance may be punishable with a fine for twice such amount as well as be liable to cancellation or non-renewal of its business licences, registrations or approvals by the government or local authorities.

We circulated a survey on social media between November 2 and November 30, 2020. We received 81 responses, of which, 51 were employed as staff in newsrooms and 30 were freelance journalists. We dedicated a section on redressal mechanism for sexual harassment in the newsrooms.

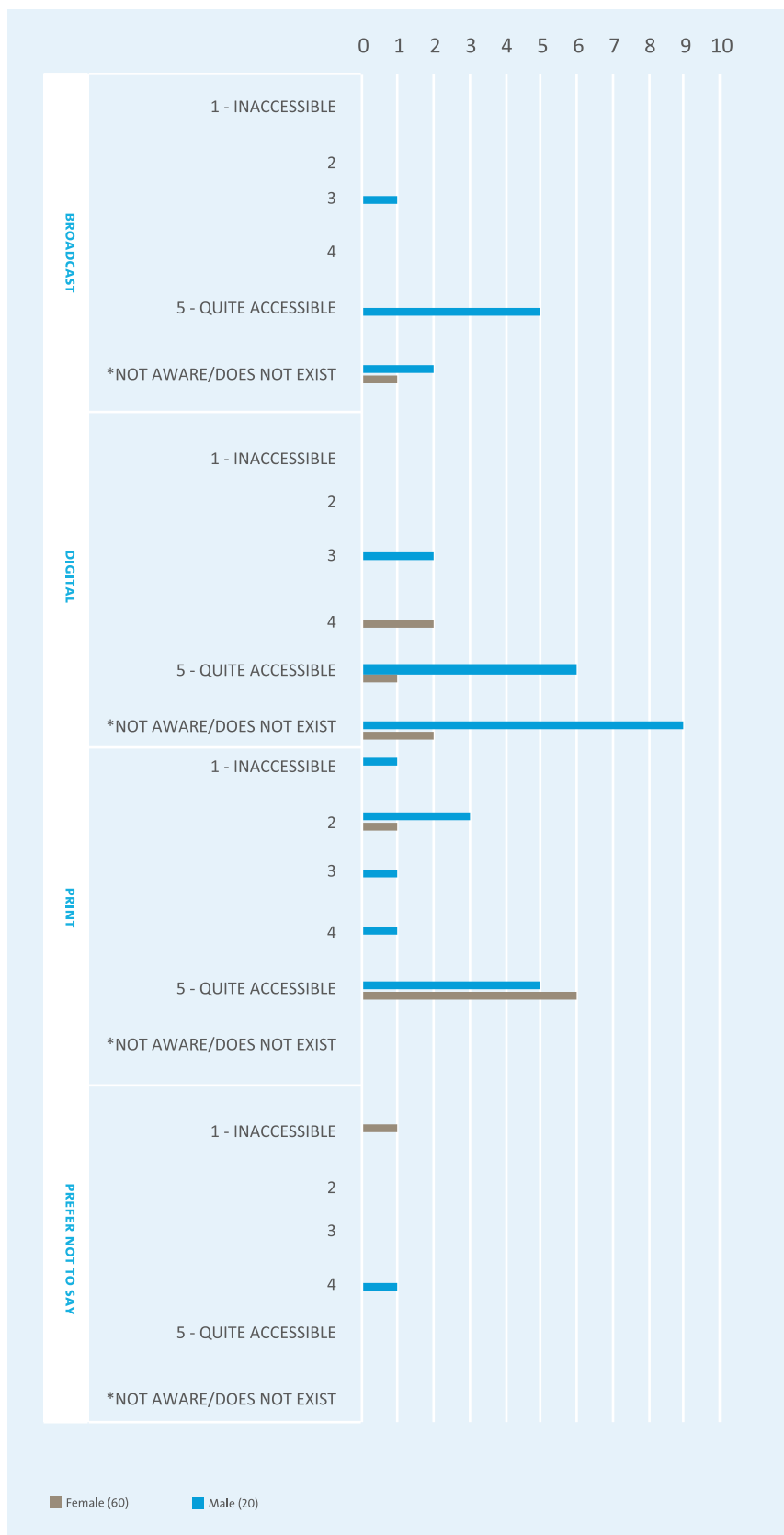
This section began by asking how accessible the ICC was and about 27 percent of the respondents said they were not aware of the existence of the ICC. Of those who were unaware of the existence of the ICC,

close to 80 percent worked in digital newsrooms. This is an ironical development, given the many pieces of journalism on #MeToo movement in various digital news platforms. Twenty-three respondents, that is about 45 percent, said that the ICC was “quite accessible” in their newsrooms. Since ICCs were hurriedly set up in most newsrooms after the #MeToo movement, this statistic in our survey can be directly attributed as a success of the movement. (Table 1)

TABLE 1 Employment Status

| OPTION | FEMALE | MALE | TOTAL |
|--|--------|------|-------|
| A session was conducted at the time of induction, but never again. | 2 | 2 | 4 |
| A workshop was conducted post the #MeToo movement | 7 | 1 | 8 |
| At least one session was conducted in the past one year | 6 | 4 | 10 |
| I am not aware of any such workshops/sessions | 9 | 3 | 12 |
| No such workshops have been conducted in the past two years | 9 | 3 | 12 |
| Regular sessions are conducted every year | 5 | 1 | 6 |

TABLE 2 **Accessibility of Internal Complaints Committee**



We went on to ask – How frequently does your organisation conduct sexual harassment training? Close to 50 percent of our respondents said they were either not aware of any such training or that no such training happened in the past two years. Interestingly though, about 20 percent of the respondents said that at least one session was conducted in the past one year. Fifteen percent of the respondents said a session was conducted after the #MeToo movement came to light. Again, one is tempted to attribute this finding to the awareness that the #MeToo movement brought forth. While this is a huge success for the women who came forward during #MeToo, one should not lose sight of the fact that only 10 percent respondents said their organisations held regular sessions on a yearly basis. (Table 2)

When asked how often they faced predatory behaviour in the newsrooms, close to 60 percent said they never faced it. However, it is concerning that more than 40 percent respondents face such behaviour either sometimes or often. Interestingly, not a single male employee said he had faced sexual harassment at the workplace (Table 3).

We sought to assess if supervisors or senior persons were seeking additional work done from their junior employees which went beyond the scope of mandated work, eight female employees responded

that it happened quite frequently. No male respondent chose this option (Table 4).

Among the respondents, 32 said their organisations had the policy of paid maternity leave of six months while 12 said their organisation offered paid paternity leave of three months. Only three respondents said they had period leave in their organisation. While close to 60 percent were provided transportation by their organisations for working late hours, only 11 percent said their organisations had day care for children (Table 5).

We also asked questions related to gender discrimination to the freelancers, who also get in touch with newsrooms in various capacities. While none of the men said they had faced any discrimination at a news media organisation because of their gender, a third of the female freelancers said they faced gender discrimination 'Quite Frequently' (Table 6).

TABLE 3 Frequency of Additional Work/Tasks Given

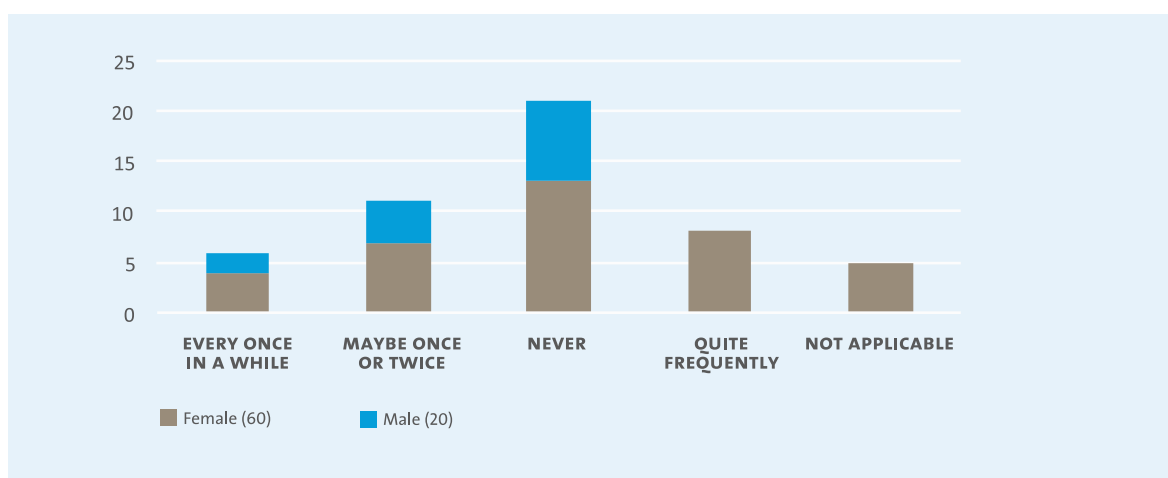


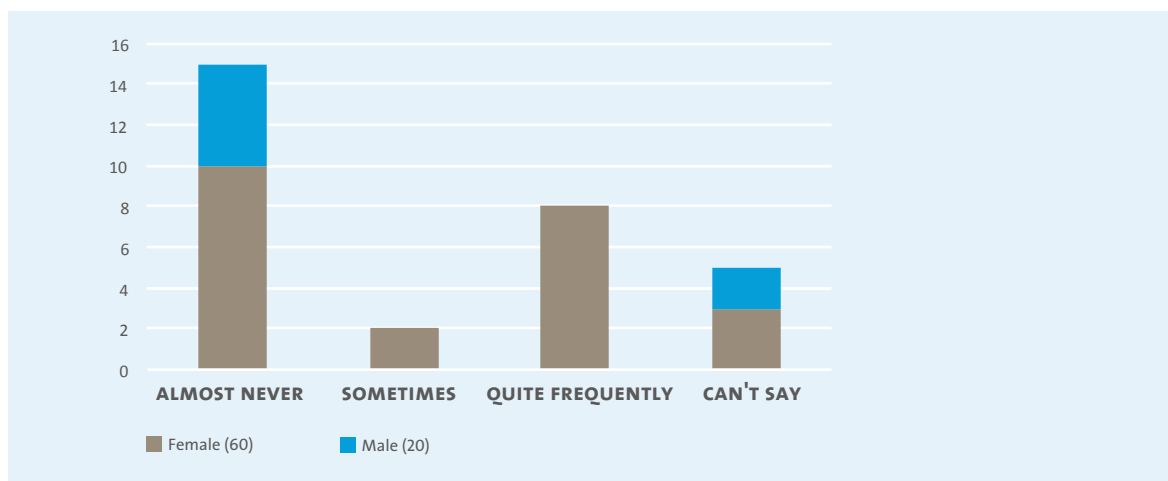
TABLE 4 Organisational Policies



When we asked the freelance journalists if there were adequate grievance redressal mechanisms to address sexual harassment, about 70 percent female respondents said no, while 24 percent were unsure. Only three of the 21 female respondents felt

there were adequate redressal mechanisms. About an equal number of men were either not sure about such mechanisms or felt they weren't enough.

TABLE 5 Discrimination faced by freelancers



IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON EMPLOYMENT IN INDIAN NEWSROOMS

Since the beginning of the 'internet age', business models of the media have been broken the world over. News consumers were enticed by free content online and paying subscribers reduced significantly. Big legacy media gradually put their content behind paywalls. While some like the New York Times and Financial Times have succeeded in attracting enough subscribers to sustain their businesses, most others have not.

In India too, the crisis in the media has existed over the years. On one hand, they are unsure of how to remain financially independent and, on the other, Indian news companies are forced to explore a transformation to digitisation.

For years, media companies were rolling down this slippery financial slope. The pandemic pushed them off the cliff.

Splice, a self-funded media startup based in Singapore, conducted a survey of the financial conditions of media companies around the world in April 2020. They had 59 respondents across several countries. The results were not jaw-dropping. Most respondents said they relied heavily on advertising, which was affected by Covid19-induced economic downturn. As a result, about 40% would have to cut jobs sharply in the next six months.

The story is similar in India. Between April and August, a slew of Indian newspapers, TV channels and news websites announced salary cuts, furloughs and job cuts.

The dipping economy only made matters worse. According to the Reserve Bank of India, independent India's economy is likely to enter a recessionary phase for the first time ever between July 2020 and September 2020, with the Gross Domestic Product expected to contract by 8.6%.

In India, digital advertising saw a drop of anywhere between 15 percent and 20 percent. To an already weakened news media industry, this is a body blow.

At times like these, the absence of a strong public-funded media is felt strongly.

Prasar Bharati is India's largest public broadcasting agency. Although it is statutorily autonomous, it is funded by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. In 2016, the Ministry cut its budget by a quarter.

Unlike the US, India does not have a law against cross-ownership in the media. This means, if an entity owns a newspaper or a television channel, more often than not, the same person or entity owns business in another industry as well.

For instance, according to Reporters Sans Frontiers' Media Ownership Monitor, DB Corp Limited, which publishes one of the highest circulating Hindi newspapers, Dainik Bhaskar, also has a significant presence in real estate, online education and retail sectors.

When the pandemic hit, supplementary businesses were significantly weakened, which in turn affected fund flow into media ventures.

All the above reasons combined worsened the employment situation in the news media.

Despite journalists being given the “essential worker” status -- signifying that the work they do is crucial to the functioning of the society, several hundreds of them lost jobs during the lockdown.

In May and June alone, about 400 journalists were laid off, according to some estimates .

This year’s report on gender representation in Indian news media would be incomplete without a look at the impact of the pandemic.

We asked respondents how the pandemic affected their respective organisations. We also tried to ascertain the impact of the salary cuts and job losses on gender representation in newsrooms. Out of the

81 respondents, 51 were employed by newsrooms in staff positions and 30 were freelance journalists.

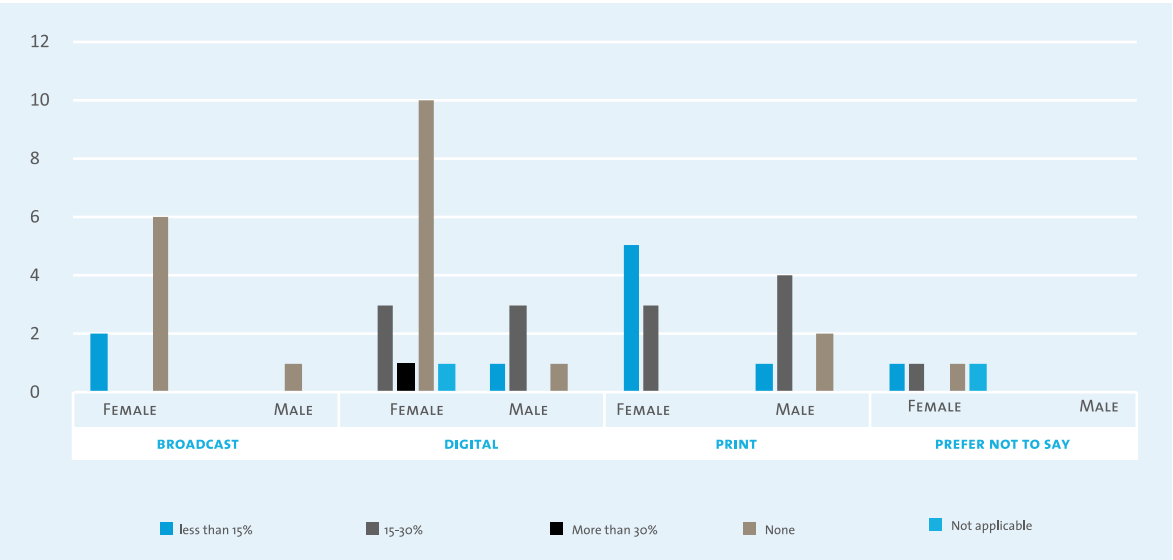
Three of our respondents said they were fired from their positions because of COVID-induced cutbacks.

Employees

We asked the most obvious question to begin with -- how much was the salary cut? Thirteen out of 15 people who responded for print said their salaries were cut upto 30%. More than 50 percent of those working for digital-only publications were not asked to take any salary cuts (Table 1).

TABLE 1

Salary cut as a result of COVID-19



When we asked if their promotions were denied because of the pandemic, answers were divided into three almost-equal portions. Close to a third of the people answered in the positive while a third answered in the negative. However, among those who said their promotions were denied, those employed in print media were the highest in number (Table 2).

The novel coronavirus outbreak is a once in a lifetime story that all media houses covered extensively. There are very few aspects of human lives that

the virus does not alter. Audiences also demand more information about the pandemic. Moreover, newsrooms were shrinking so the burden was squarely placed on those who were retained as employees.

In such a scenario, it is obvious that journalists had to work more. Our survey reflected that. About 80 percent of the respondents said that work had increased since the pandemic broke out (Table 3).

TABLE 2 Impact on Promotions as a result of COVID-19

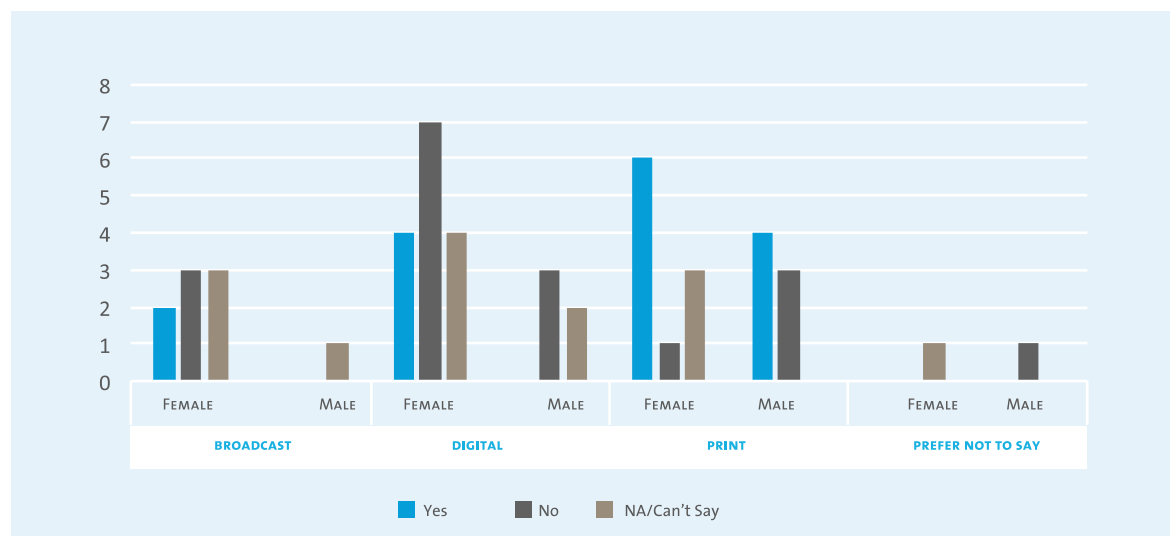
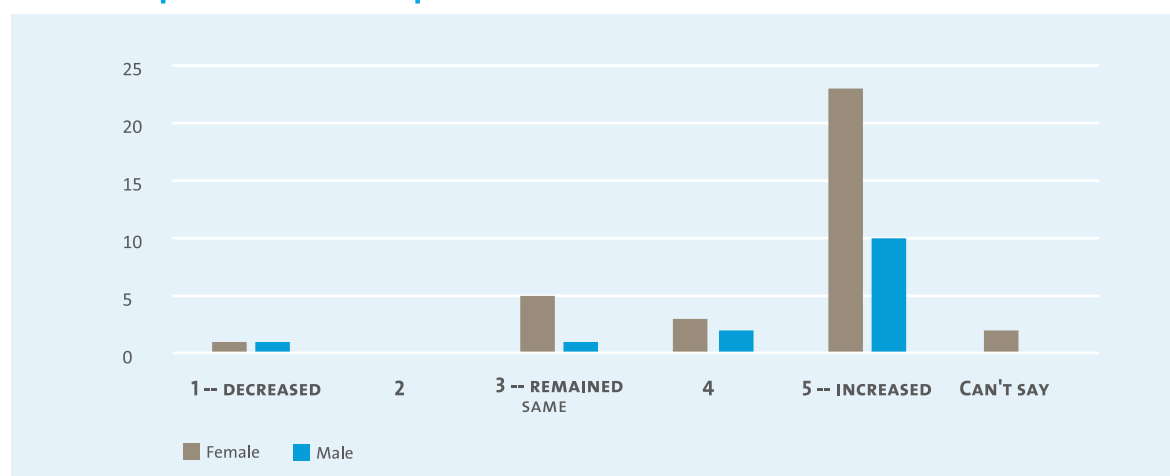


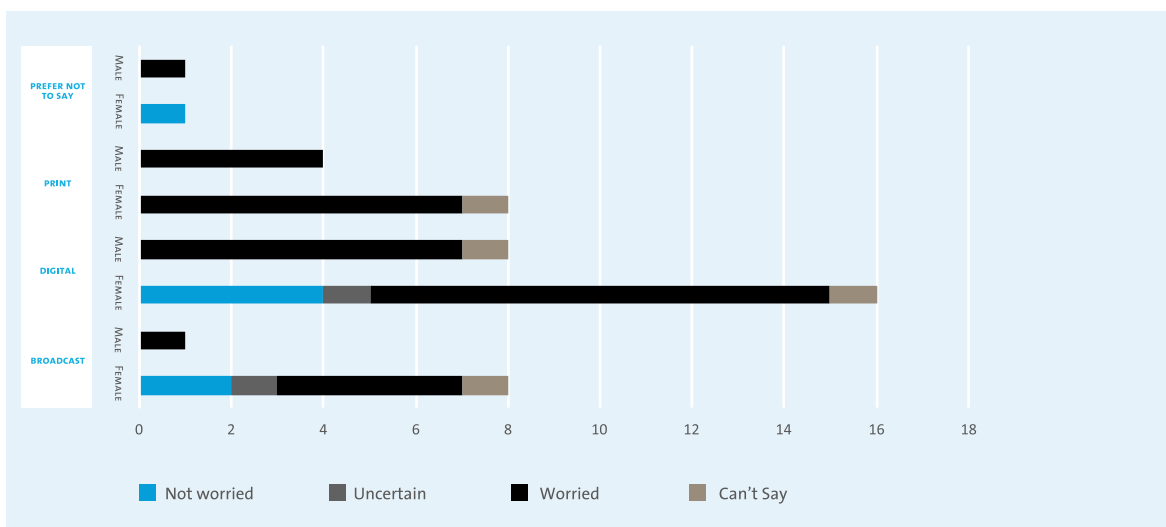
TABLE 3 Impact of work output



Almost everyone admitted they were worried about losing their jobs after COVID outbreak. “We work 12 hours a day and work on weekends as well,” admitted a senior journalist in an English language newspaper. “We do all of it just to keep our jobs,” she added.

Employees across the board appear to be worried about losing their jobs. Close to 73 percent of the respondents admitted to being worried. The numbers were most distinct for people working in print media. More than 90 percent of the respondents said they worried about losing their jobs (Table 4).

TABLE 4 Future of Work



Of the people fired from the jobs due to post-pandemic financial restraints, two were asked to leave their jobs in May 2020 while the third was asked to resign in October. Two respondents were now working as freelancers while one was looking for a salaried position at a news media organisation.

Freelancing in times of the pandemic

Over the years, as the news media became financially weaker to support full-time staff, the phenomenon of freelance journalism strengthened. Needless

to say when the pandemic rendered several staff members of newsrooms jobless, they opted to freelance, adding to the number of freelancers already in the market.

When asked if they had to look for additional work to support themselves during the pandemic, only 20 percent freelancers said no. When we asked if remuneration for their work was affected since the pandemic broke out, about 57 percent of the respondents, who chose to answer, said that compensation had decreased (Table 5).

TABLE 5 Freelancing work during COVID-19 pandemic

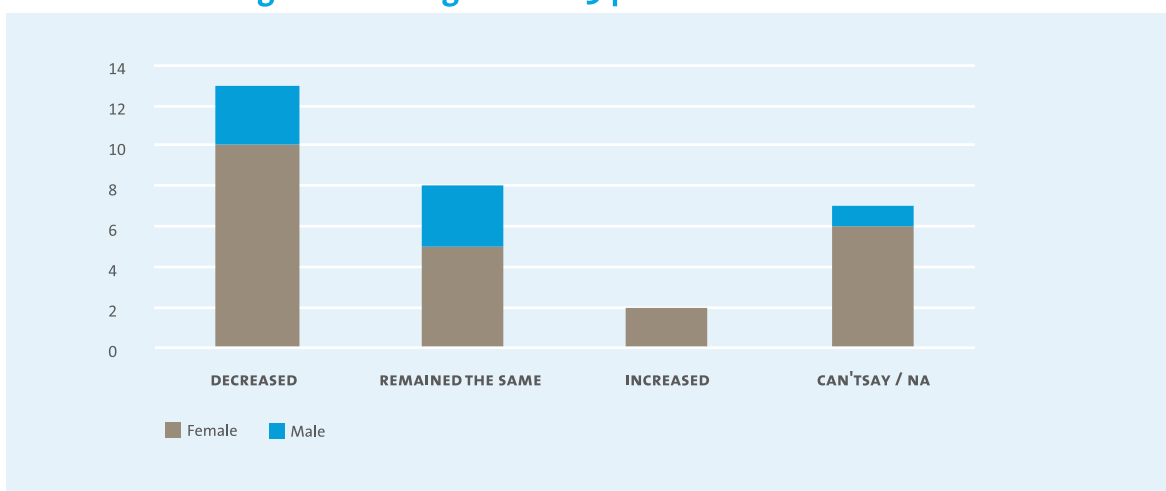
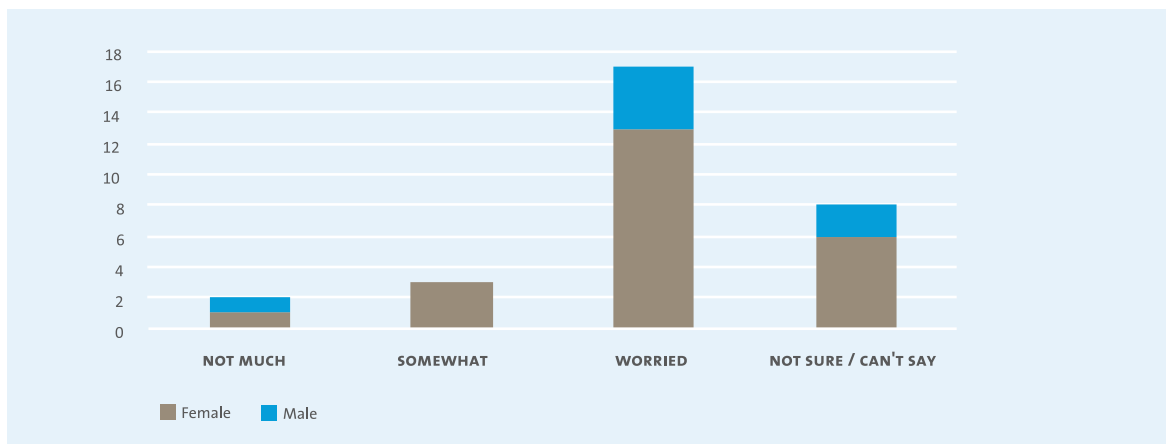


TABLE 6 Career prospects as a Freelancer



We asked if freelance journalists were worried about their career prospects because of the pandemic and an overwhelming number of them - about two third - admitted to being worried (Table 6).

SURVEY RESPONSES :

NEWSLAUNDRY EMPLOYEES

The survey was sent to Newslaundry employees before it was finalised. This was to take an internal audit of the organisation as well as to ask for feedback from the employees about the questions in the survey. Employees were also encouraged to inform their contacts working in the news media industry once the survey was finalised.

More than 35 employees from Newslaundry responded to the survey but including the results from this survey in our analysis would have heavily skewed the results of the 81 survey responses we received. Therefore, the results of the responses received from Newslaundry employees are presented in this section.

Important note: The team working on the report was hired by Newslaundry, making Newslaundry a part of the research as well as having an influence on the research itself. In addition, the employees at Newslaundry who responded to the survey were

also aware of the organisation conducting the survey on gender representation. It is possible that the employees might have restrained themselves from answering the questions, especially the ones related to their subjective opinions about the organisation. Although the research team was not asked by anyone at Newslaundry to undertake any research question that could influence the objectivity - or the objective - of the research, the present section needs to be read with a disclaimer of probable bias in mind.

TABLE 1 Employees by Age

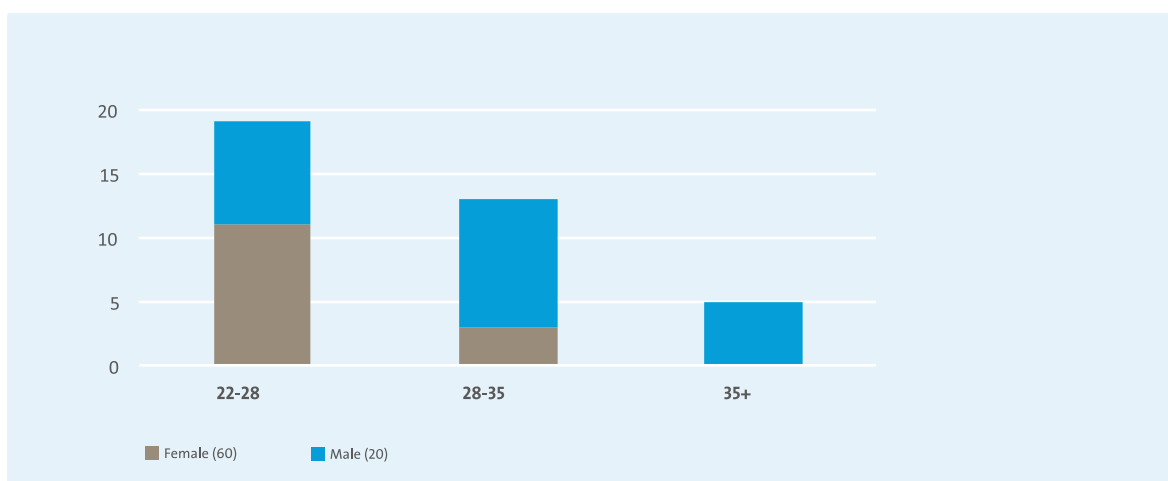


TABLE 2 Employees by Years of Experience

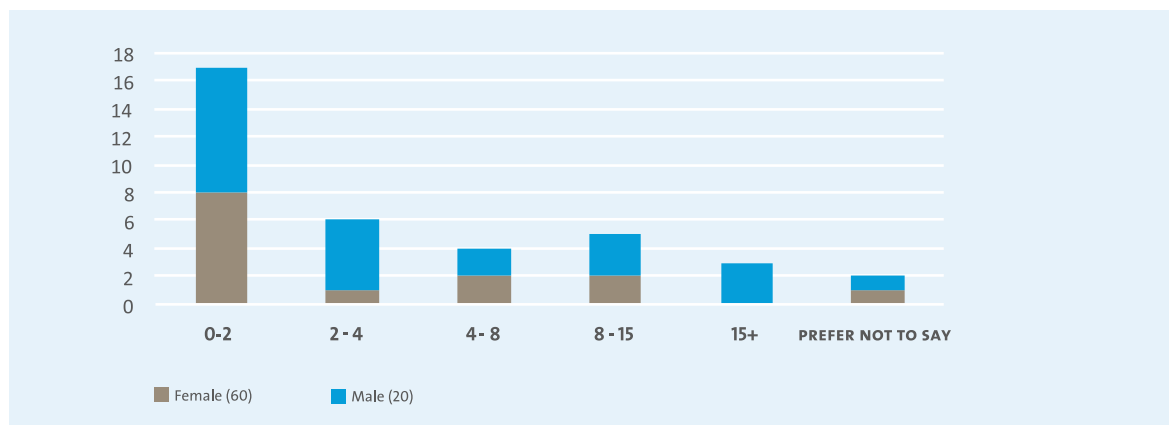


TABLE 3 Highest Level of Education

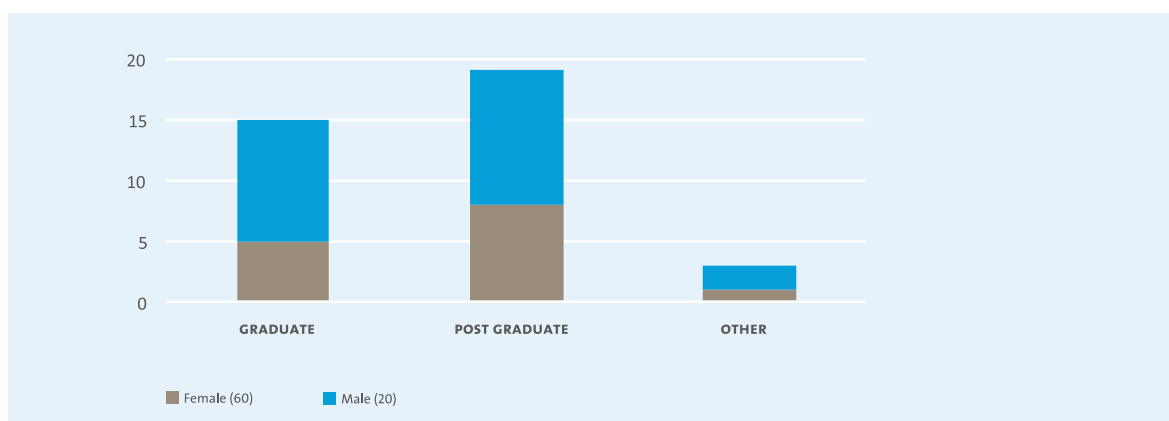


TABLE 4 Employees by Religion Born As

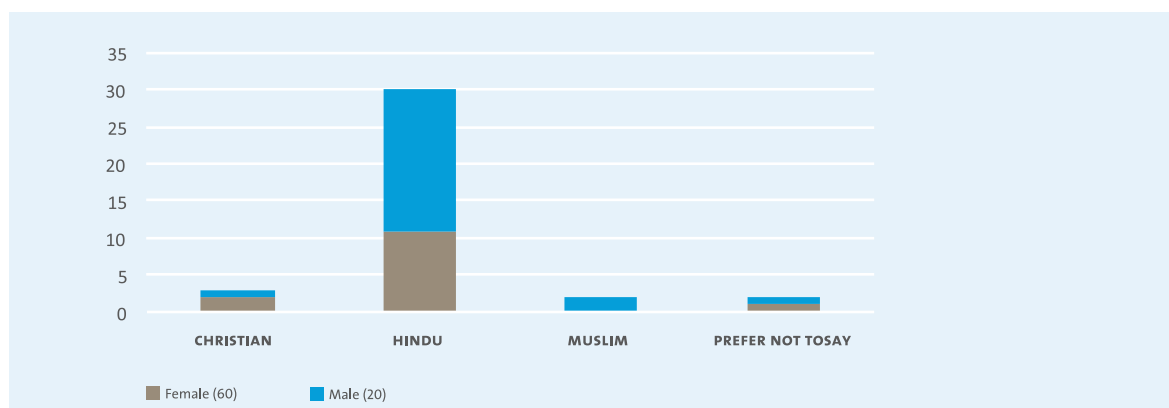


TABLE 5 Employees by Caste

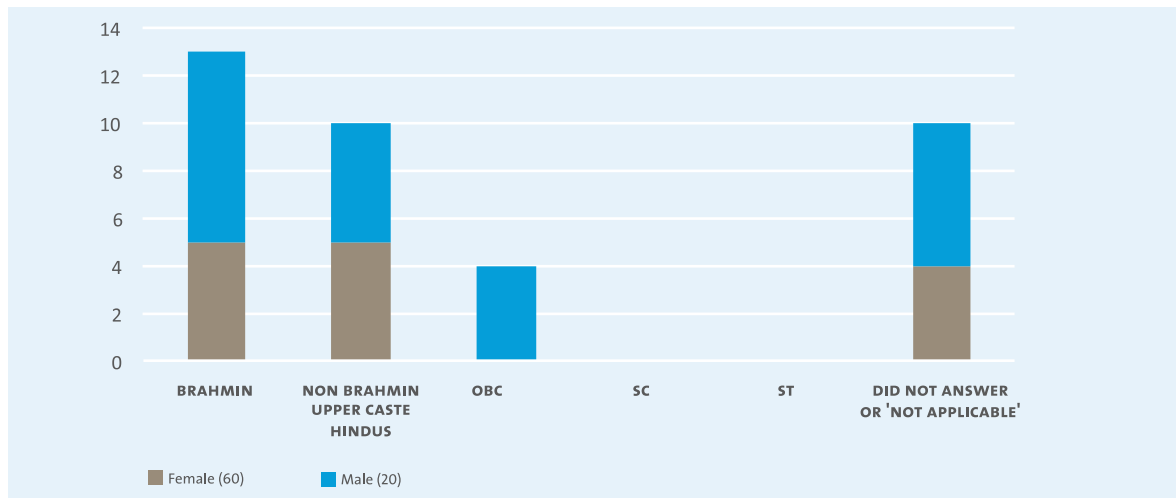


TABLE 6 Years in Current Designation

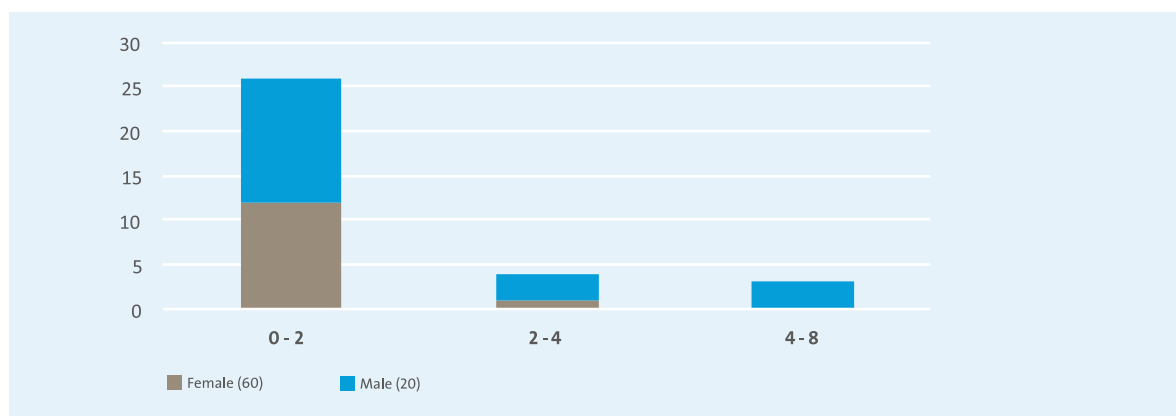


TABLE 7 Years at Newsdesk

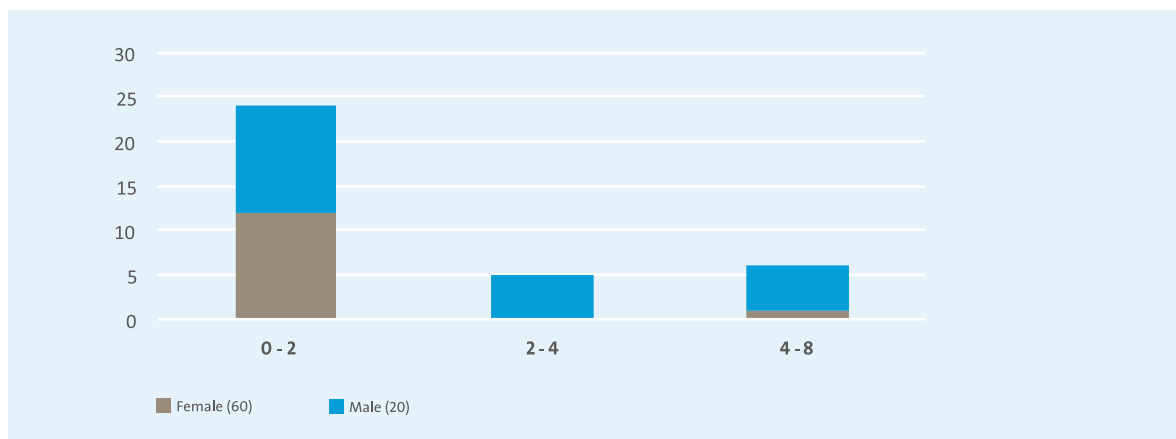


TABLE 8 Number of salary increments in the last two years

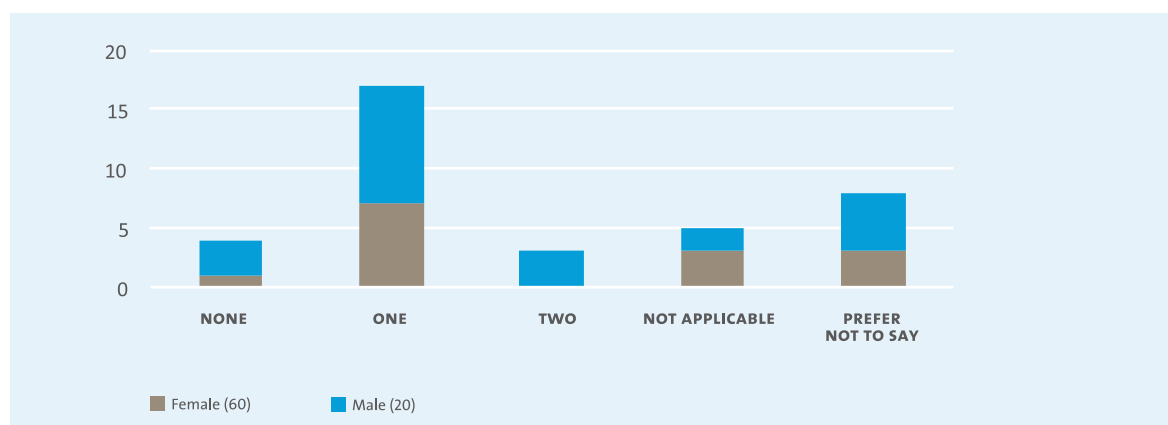
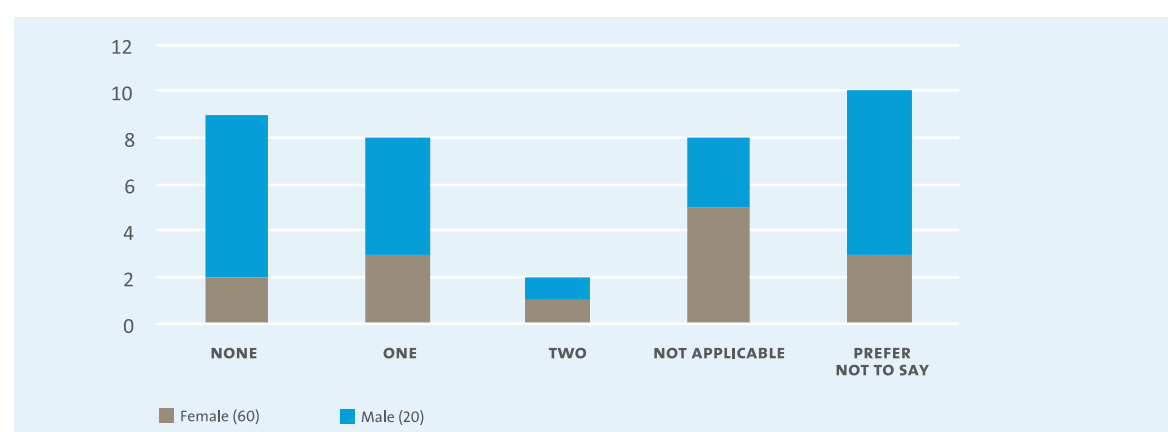


TABLE 9 Number of promotions in the last two years



Only two employees -- a woman and a man -- felt they were less likely to get recognition for their work at the organisation. All the other employees felt they had equal to great chances to get recognition.

in the under 40-member organisation, it appears the middle management roles have been largely taken up by men. Twelve out of 14 women and 21 out of 22 men have male bosses.

Almost all the employees felt in varying degrees that all genders were well-represented in their organisation. The highest point on the seven-point scale, signifying very well-represented was chosen by five employees, all males.

Although the CEO of the organisation is a male and some employees might be directly reporting to him

Half of the women at the organisation said 'Yes' to the question 'Is there an internal complaints committee against sexual harassment at your workplace?', while the other half said they were 'Unaware' about its existence. Fourteen employees out of the 37 who responded to the survey said there was no internal complaints committee, or they were unaware of its existence. All but four of these 14 employees had been working in the organisation for

less than a year. Interestingly, of the 23 employees who said they were aware of its existence, 20 said it was accessible. It appears that the organisation does not inform the employees about the existence of ICC at the time of hiring.

To the question 'How frequently does your organisation conduct training against sexual harassment or other gender sensitisation sessions?', nine employees said it never does, while 11 did not answer. Four employees, all men, chose the options closer to once every quarter on a seven-point scale to answer the question.

Ten of the 14 women employees and 20 of the 23 men employees said they had never faced any discrimination at the organisation because of their gender. Rest of the employees chose the options close to 'never' on the seven-point scale. A total of 23 employees - 10 females and 13 males - said they were never asked by their seniors to take up any additional responsibilities beyond their work, while four employees - one woman and three men - said they were asked quite frequently. Two female and

six male employees said they were asked to take up such tasks, but it was not very often.

Two male employees said they were denied a promotion due to Covid-19. A female employee said she was denied a promotion as well as asked to take more than 30% salary cut due to the pandemic. Another woman employee was asked to take a salary cut between 16% and 30%.

Fourteen employees - nine women and five men - felt their work had not been affected due to the pandemic, while another 14 - two women and 12 men - felt their work had increased in various degrees in the same period.

A majority of the employees - seven women and 14 men - said they were not worried about losing their jobs due to the pandemic, while another 11 -- five women and six men employees - said they were only slightly worried.

CONCLUSION

Our report is a very small attempt at highlighting the gender disparity in positions of power in Indian newsrooms. Lack of time and resources kept us from doing content analysis, which, we are sure, will reveal more insights into the problems of inclusion in newsrooms.

The process of examining the composition of Indian newsrooms has left us convinced that news media needs to undergo a process of introspection.

Indian newsrooms can start by trying to build inclusive newsrooms with sufficient representation of all genders, castes, economic backgrounds and sexualities. They can begin by thinking about the gaps in their hiring process, have open and honest conversations in the newsrooms.

Before newsrooms became a place where news was to be relayed at breakneck speed, it was a place for deliberation and discussion. A return to that model along with a diverse set of people would make the media do their duty towards the society better.

ANNEXURE

List of Prime-time TV news channels

Aaj Tak: Dangal

CNN News 18 : The Right Stand

IndiaToday TV : Newstrack with Rahul Kanwal (Data from Jan to Jul 2020)

India TV: Kurukshetra (No debates from May to July 2020)

Mirror Now : The Urban Debate

NDTV 24*7: Left, Right, Centre

NDTV India : Muqabla (Weekly debate show)

News 18 India: Aar Paar

Republic Bharat : Puchta Hai Bharat

Republic TV: The Debate with Arnab Goswami

RSTV English : The Big Picture

RSTV Hindi: Desh Deshantar

Times Now : India Upfront

Zee News: Taal Thok Ke

List of themes along with criteria for categorisation

- **Business, finance and economy:** Macroeconomic indicators, Stock market, individual businesses, India's domestic and global trade
- **Law and order:** Stories related to petty crime, law and order 'situations' such as bandhs, lockdown enforcement, (excluding opinion pieces on interpretation of law which are under Judiciary), corruption (including political corruption) and fraud. Note: excluding law and order situations related to internal security (Kashmir, Naxalism, Insurgency)
- **Defence and national security:** India's internal and external security. Opinion pieces where the subject is geopolitical military scenario with respect to India. Internal security situations - Kashmir, North Eastern insurgency et al. included here.
- **Environment and energy:** Climate change, weather, conservation, natural disasters, energy focused news - coal, solar etc.
- **Global news:** International developments, International organisations, Global economy, including news not focused on India.
- **Foreign policy and diplomacy:** India's foreign policy and international developments related to India, bilateral affairs, treaties, dignitaries' visits. Note: Military action not included in this theme.
- **Electoral and party politics:** Elections; manifestos; statements by politicians (not related to those part of the govt announcing govt schemes and policies) either in govt or otherwise, at centre or otherwise; politicians switching parties or commenting on events
- **Legislature:** issues discussed in parliament and state assemblies, parliamentary standing committees, law making

- **Government policy:** Statements by politicians (PM, ministers, CMs, etc - basically those in centre/state governments) related to govt policies and schemes, announcements by ministries (other than related to finance, foreign affairs which are covered in other themes), administration, bureaucracy
- **Judiciary:** Statements, verdicts by judiciary (SC, HC, lower courts) , matters related to constitutional interpretation including opinion pieces
- **Civil society:** Protests, dissent, demonstrations, social unrest, state action against political dissent, rights framework
- **Science and technology:** Inventions , discoveries, explainers.
- **Sports:** tournaments, awards, sports scandals
- **Accidents:** road accidents, building collapses, industrial accidents, mishaps
- **Culture and entertainment:** Films, music, art, dance, book reviews, awards, literary festivals
- **Human interest:** stories/opinions related to everyday life

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