

Challenges Faced by the Women Journalists: A Case Study of Gilgit-Baltistan

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Abstract

Gender inequality, in the field of journalism, is a debated issue worldwide. There has been limited scholarly focus on the challenges faced by women journalists in Pakistan, particularly in Gilgit Baltistan. This qualitative study aims to bridge this research gap by examining both subtle hurdles encountered by female journalists in Gilgit Baltistan. By utilizing gender-based theories as a framework and employing analysis, researchers delve into the unequal power dynamics and gender-related aspects within their work environment and organizational hierarchies. Through the data obtained by semi-structured interviews using snowball sampling technique, researchers shed light on the obstacles faced by female journalists across all the districts of Gilgit Baltistan. These challenges encompass factors such as perceptions of media among the local population, societal and cultural pressures discouraging women from pursuing journalism careers, gender discrimination concerning promotions and salary gaps limited opportunities for professional growth as well as instances of sexual harassment. Moreover, female journalists also face indirect threats, from both the media owners creating an atmosphere of fear and intimidation. The fear of losing their jobs coupled with ingrained socio-biases further discourages female journalists from speaking out against these systemic injustices. In conclusion, this study highlights that the struggles experienced by women journalists are intricately connected to structural gender disparities. To tackle these obstacles and enhance the situation of women journalists it is vital to confront the disparities and power dynamics, between men and women, in the field of journalism. Additionally, it is crucial to advocate for education that challenges prevailing standards.

Keywords: Gender disparity, Gilgit-Baltistan, workplace dynamics, gender discrimination, societal pressures.

Introduction:

The status of women in Pakistan exhibits notable variations concerning their social and economic standing, as well as the rural-urban divide. Opinions regarding the role of women in society are diverse, women belonging to different strata experience distinct forms of hardships. Unfortunately, individual and institutional violence against Pakistani women remains a prevalent occurrence. The construction of gender roles, influenced by societal norms, impacts both males and females. Consequently, family dynamics, social interactions, and cultural values continue to exert substantial influence in shaping and outlining individual identities and gender dynamics (Ballantine et al., 2017).

The reproductive role is referred to as a biologically specified capability of women to bear children, which is physically unrealistic for males, besides a reproductive role, if women have the time, qualification, and approval of society to participate and join the workplace again, due to cultural taboos, women are not allowed to join all types of jobs. Society considers some jobs suitable for women, commonly labor intensive, less interactive with males, and low-income professions like the agricultural field, cleaning, and teaching gender-neutral careers (Fajarwati et al., 2016).

Byerly (2013) noted that women's contributions to the media profession are essential for real change in treating how issues are covered. Without females in the newsroom, the audience is missing out on half of the population's perspective on the prevalent issues.

Currently, despite an increase in the number of women entering the media industry, female representation remains significantly low, accounting for just over one-tenth of the Pakistani media sector, this underrepresentation can be attributed to deeply ingrained

stereotypes that perpetuate a mindset wherein women are frequently discouraged from performing certain duties that are traditionally associated with men. Women are consistently subjected to the belief that their ability to effectively handle such responsibilities is irrelevant and inadequate (Hussain, 2019, p. 23).

There is a lot of explicit gender-based discrimination in the field of media, female journalists deal with a variety of issues, and they frequently have fewer opportunities than their male counterparts particularly in the areas of the pay scale, prospects for advancement, and beat assignments. In addition, organizational rules for addressing the problems of gender-based harassment and discrimination are frequently absent or insufficient (Mirza, 2016; Hussain, 2013).

The ratio of men and women in the Pakistani newsroom is 5:1, and men tend to hold key positions there. A newsroom is a dynamic setting where journalists contend for space, power, and dominance, as symbolized by conflict over certain desks and stories (beats). These procedures in the newsrooms and assignment distribution show how work is divided depending on socially prevalent gender roles and stereotypes (Pasha & Saleem, 2021, pp. 199-211)

On the other hand, media in Pakistan has been influenced by many political and social groups contrarily, the Pakistani constitution provides for equal rights, the same identity, and equal rights for women. Unfortunately, media organizations' goal is to increase revenue and viewership, that's why they show women as commodities. This has a stronger influence on shaping public opinion, immoral images of women dressed in inappropriate styles that negatively affect society and children are portrayed in advertising due to these perceptions some people think that women shouldn't work in journalism, and the media has lost its claim and real image to serve the public (Huda and Ali, 2015).

The treatment and portrayal of women in the media have objectified them in all spheres. This exposes them to sexual harassment, and the inaccurate portrayal of women in the media contributes to the perception that all women in the media are immoral that's why men can victimize and target them these people are not only outside of the media but also within the media here the producers, directors, and writers blackmail women too and which demoralize them increasingly (Hafeez & Zahid, 2021).

Literature Review:

The concept that women should live in Chaardevari was confirmed in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa where the researcher collected data from both male and female journalists of Peshawar Press Club registered members of the Peshawar Press Club 380, although only 16 of them were female and when they were asked to share their experiences they indicates that they face a variety of societal issues while covering stories both inside their workplaces and during their offices these issues have a significant impact on both their personal and professional lives and making it difficult for them to carry out their duties and fairly portray the subjects they write about (Shabir, 2012). While female journalists have stated in some studies that they are perceived as bad role models for other women because women's appearance on television has sparked new debates about women's dress codes, modesty, and whether it is permissible to defy religious orders, findings also show that when female journalists return from work to their homes, their neighbors have made disparaging remarks because they spent the late night working alone with a male colleague(Sakha & Shah, 2019; Shabana et al., 2021).

The stereotypical perception is that women are weak, emotional, unassertive, and soft. The assigned work role to women was not considered serious which resulted in women did not receive much recognition. Allocation of roles in an organization emphasizes the

division of work on a gender basis (Pasha & Saleem, 2021, pp. 199-211)

Still, women's pages were overwhelmingly considered "pink ghettos" focused on subjects that weren't important enough for the front page (Kruger, 2019).

Female Journalists typically cover soft topics like education, literature, culture, women's issues, children's issues, and the newest trends in food and fashion and are rarely consulted in decision-making (Safa & Akhter, 2015; Pasha & Saleem, 2021; Sakha & Shah, 2019; Iqbal & Iqbal, 2017).

When it comes to covering a variety of social topics, female journalists are perceived as being less competent to handle subjects that are normally handled by men, including defense and the military women may choose only options that they can minimize their 'feminine' features, such as sympathy and softness to favor more masculine traits (Hermanson, 2017)

According to Khan, (2021), a study on challenges for women journalists at the grassroots level submission for the consultation on gender justice by the UN Special Rapport on Freedom of Expression highlights that in Malaysia, Central America, and Venezuela, female journalists frequently stop working in the media after having children since these regions lack a culture that encourages balancing work and family. Similarly, women in Nepal take on household tasks including childcare and cleaning. As a consequence, priority is given to male journalists who can offer more time. Additionally, most women in Nepal don't drive, which makes it harder for them to reach news sources than their male coworkers, thus this condition worsening their situation.

In our society, there are primarily two forms of abuse against females first is cultural pressure on women regarding what employment to undertake or what work is appropriate for women.

The second form of violence is men and women are paid differently, which results in gender inequality in terms of compensation or wages, which is the second main form of violence against women, there is gender prejudice in every media company where women journalists are rarely recognized as decision-makers and inadequate pay for women serves as a capitalist-patriarchal tool for the exploitation of women this injustice is also the same in the field of journalism (Iqbal & Iqbal,2017: Hussain,2019).

Similarly in the study of Hafeez & Zahid, (2021), findings show that nearly 60% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that men are paid more for the same jobs as women. They reported that despite her stronghold on print, electronic, and digital media, younger men with less experience than her are frequently paid the same as or more than her.

Sakha & Shah, (2019) explored that female journalists mostly suffer to meet their necessities of wages the organization compensated their male counterparts more than the female journalists, and this difference damages their reputation among their male coworkers.

It was also indicated that a lack of basic facilities and a lack of job security discourage women from continuing in the sector and also demotivate the professionals who want to pursue a career in news media in the future (Pasha & Saleem, 2021, pp. 199-211).

Several studies highlight sexual harassment issues which include touching, worse comments, rape, inappropriate conversations by their male colleagues in the presence of female journalists, late-night dinner offers, and singing in the office, however, the perpetrators of sexual harassments cases are mostly coworkers, staff members, the head of the department, and the cameraman, anyone in positions of authority, such as government officials and police officers (Begum & Aleem, 2022; Jamil, 2020; Zia et al., 2016).

A UN special report on freedom of expression on challenges for women journalists at the grassroots level was submitted for the consultation on gender justice the findings of this report indicate that sexual comments, improper jokes, including body shaming, and personal questions are directed at women journalists in the Philippines. Female journalists from Nepal also shared those nasty remarks concerning the appearances of women journalists are common (hair, face, and bodies). Again, in the case of Nepal, this is made worse by the fact that women typically are not able to drive and must rely on males for transportation which increases harassment cases (Khan, 2021)

The notion that females are sex objects is confirmed by many studies. Likewise, in Problems and Threats to Women Working Journalists in Pakistan analysis of women journalists in Karachi Begum & Aleem (2022) highlights that the majority of women journalists in Karachi's news organizations deal with harassment while traveling by public transportation and while doing field reporting but they do not report. Male coworkers harass women journalists by touching their hands inappropriately staring at them constantly and eye contact, and smiling at them without a reason this makes them feel uncomfortable and makes it difficult for them to concentrate on their work (Sakha & Shah, 2019).

Online harassment is a very powerful tool for silencing female journalists. UN Special Reporter on Freedom of Expression and gender justice indicated that online harassment and intimidation targeting women journalists is a most emerging problem in Malaysia particularly when covering topics like women's rights, teenage pregnancies, forced or child marriages, sexual harassment, rape culture, transgender-women and trans-rights, religious topics and underrepresented groups, such as refugee and migrant labor rights, indigenous land rights, and refugee rights while covering these topics female journalist face online abuse and threats (Posetti et al., 2020).

According to several studies, sexual harassment victims in Pakistan may be unwilling to disclose the occurrence or make a formal complaint because of the conservative society, severe religious beliefs, and fear of losing their jobs (Jamil, 2020). Due to financial constraints, women journalists who are typically the sole providers for their families cannot afford to leave their jobs (Begum & Aleem, 2022)

Another and the most painful reason exposed by the female journalists in the study of Sakha and Shah, (2019) is that it is believed in our society that only bad-character women get harassed, only women are held accountable for their harassment in male-dominated cultures so to save their reputations women have to quit their employment.

Rationale of the Study:

In the 2021 study led by Shabana et al. within the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) region, a significant portion of female participants, engaged in a research inquiry concerning challenges faced by women journalists in Malak and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, revealed that their families did not endorse their aspirations to pursue a career in the media. The study highlighted that women encountered restrictions in selecting journalism as their field of study, as their families had already predetermined their academic choices. This limitation stemmed from the prevailing belief within families that media-related professions were suitable only for men, with teaching being deemed the sole socially acceptable vocation for women.

As compared to other cities of Pakistan females in Gilgit-Baltistan have fewer opportunities than males most women are not allowed to do a job, especially in the media sector there are very few females in the field of journalism. Due to the conservative culture in G.B. women deal with a variety of issues such as in leadership and representation in society that is why women must be a part of the journalism field to highlight women's issues and convey them

to the Government. Without women in the newsroom, Byerly (2013) stated, the public is missing out on the perspective of the other half of the population. Women's contributions to the media industry are crucial for actual change in how issues are treated. It is important to explore the issues facing female journalists in the field of journalism to promote the progress of more women in the media and to create an environment where female journalists may reach their full potential. The study highlights the dangerous working conditions for women journalists in Gilgit-Baltistan and offers a few recommendations that could significantly lessen those challenges. It also informs aspiring female journalists about the potential obstacles they may encounter when they enter the field of journalism in Gilgit-Baltistan.

Objectives of the Study:

- To investigate the obstacles that discourage females from choosing a career in the media field in Gilgit-Baltistan. This objective aims to identify and analyze the various factors, such as cultural norms, societal limitations, and public perceptions that hinder women from pursuing careers in the media industry.
- To explore the challenges which impact the status of women journalists within media organizations. This objective seeks to understand the specific difficulties and barriers faced by women in their professional lives, including issues related to promotions, salary discrepancies, and unequal opportunities for career advancement.
- To evaluate the prevalence and consequences of gender-based challenges, such as sexual harassment, threats, and objectification, on the experiences and career progression of women in media organizations and society.

Research Questions:

RQ1. What are the key obstacles that discourage females from pursuing a career in the media field in Gilgit-Baltistan, and how do cultural norms, societal limitations, and public perceptions contribute to these obstacles?

RQ2. What are the specific challenges faced by women journalists within media organizations in Gilgit-Baltistan, and how do these challenges affect their professional status, including promotions, salary issues, and opportunities for career advancement?

RQ3. How do the challenges of sexual harassment, threats, and objectification face by women in male-dominated media organizations and society in Gilgit-Baltistan impact the career progression of women in the media field?

Theoretical Framework:

Gender Identity Theory was taken as a theoretical framework (Butler, 1990). The theory of gender performativity sheds light on the constraints and limitations imposed upon individuals by societal norms associated with masculinity and femininity. It serves as a guide for individuals, instructing them on how to conform to their gender roles within the binary framework. Furthermore, it examines the experiences of women in male-dominated professions, specifically within the field of journalism. Existing literature further bolsters the connections by encompassing various concepts such as socialization and gender roles, masculine culture, and patriarchal relations, which are deeply ingrained within organizations.

Methodology:

This research employs qualitative methods to conduct data collection, with the primary objective of examining the actual

challenges confronted by women journalists in the media sector of Gilgit-Baltistan.

The use of semi-structured interviews in this study allows for an exploration of the personal lives of women journalists and the specific details of their experiences. Open-ended questions were employed in order to grant participants the freedom to interpret the questions according to their own understanding and respond in their own words. Furthermore, this method facilitates the collection of sensitive data, as women journalists' willingly shared demographic information and other details about their families that were considered private, particularly in the context of Gilgit-Baltistan. The researchers were mindful of maintaining confidentiality throughout the process.

The population of this study consists of only female journalists from all districts of GB who are actively employed as professionals or practitioners in the media industry. The history of journalism in Gilgit-Baltistan reflects that there was no female journalist worker in this field at that time, the flow of women in the field of media increased after the establishment of the media department at Karakorum-international University in 2010 the ratio increased somehow.

The study's sample consists of female journalists employed in newspapers, television, news agencies, and freelance positions across all districts of Gilgit-Baltistan. The snowball sampling technique was employed to ensure the inclusion of women from various media outlets. In total, the researcher aimed to engage with 11 female journalists from all districts of Gilgit-Baltistan, and ultimately had conversations with 10 participants, as one of them expressed unwillingness to share her experiences.

Findings and Discussion:

Navigating Societal Barriers

Following is the analysis of the barriers that hinder the female from choosing the field of media in Gilgit-Baltistan. Respondents in this study mainly focused on the societal barriers that hinder females from choosing the field of media which include negative perception of media among People of G-B, patriarchal control of women including cultural and family pressure, and the lack of platforms and finance.

Main Theme: Societal Barriers hinder to choose of the field of media.		
Sub-theme	Descriptive codes	<i>f</i>
Perception of media	Relatives cut down their contact with us because these people assume the media profession is highly immoral.	6
	Our society does not consider media as a good profession for women because it is dominated by men.	5
Patriarchal control on women\ cultural &and family pressure	Most women enter this field but then they leave because they can't handle society's opposition.	
	Our inflexible cultural society does not accept that working in male-dominated professions, they do not like to see their women on screen-	10
	Women have to reach home on time when they reach home late after 6 o'clock family gets upset.	6
	We never go alone in the field for reporting. We take another journalist with us.	4
	There are very few media platforms in G-B.	9

Lack of platforms and finance	Because there are no big media channels that will give you smart money.	6
	Lack of finance is a major issue. Most women enter this field but then they leave because of low pay	10

In Gilgit-Baltistan, certain conservative cultural norms persist, contributing to reluctance among many to permit their daughters to pursue education and employment, particularly in the media sector. Despite the existence of a limited number of female professionals in media, this scarcity is not indicative of a lack of skills or aptitude among women for journalism. Female journalists in the region often find themselves associated with national and international TV channels and newspapers, but face challenges such as inadequate compensation, discouraging many from opting for a career in media. Various factors contribute to the reluctance of females to choose a path in media. The scarcity of large media industries in the region limits opportunities, and societal perceptions play a crucial role. Negative societal attitudes towards women in media, strict societal constraints, and religious considerations further hinder women from venturing into this field.

All the responses in this study show that men are freer than women and are treated differently by their parents, according to the female journalists' opinions besides the demands of her employment that she works long hours, it is socially acceptable for women to return home early after work. Women are perceived as being dependent on male authority. In many societies, including conservative ones, there are certain expectations and pressures placed on women regarding their roles and responsibilities within the family. These expectations may include being home by a certain time and prioritizing family commitments over professional pursuits. These societal pressures can affect both married and unmarried women journalists, as the emphasis on family and domestic responsibilities remains strong regardless of marital status.

Status of women journalists in media organizations

Following is the analysis of media organizational challenges for female journalists in Gilgit-Baltistan and focuses on exploring the status of female journalists in media Organizations which includes inequality in promotions, beats assigned, and salary issues.

Main Theme: Women journalists in media organizations.		
Sub-themes	Descriptive codes	<i>f</i>
Inequality in promotions.	Women were not promoted in the same manner as men in the journalism industry.	7
	Men in our society never want a woman to be succeeded.	6
	Most male colleagues are not so cooperative female journalists should obey them because women don't give orders. They feel insulted to listen to women.	5
Salary issues	Salaries are much lower in comparison with the men working in other fields.	10
	Women journalists have waited for a long to get their salaries revised.	8
Beat assign	Most women enter this field but then they leave because of low pay	5
	We cover all types of beats there is no gender difference in the beat assigned.	7
	We have to cover at least one story in every day.	4
	Women show masculine traits.	3

According to the study's findings, men and women in the journalism sector were not promoted equally. This disparity in promotions proposes a bias against women and highlights the societal reluctance to see women succeed. Male colleagues often exhibit a lack of cooperation towards female journalists, expecting them to adhere to traditional gender roles and not assert their authority. Such attitudes undermine the professional growth and opportunities for women in the field.

The data reveals that salaries for women journalists are significantly lower compared to women working in other fields. Furthermore, the revision of salaries for women journalists is often delayed, which further exacerbates the financial disparities. The low pay can be a demotivating factor for women considering a career in journalism, and it contributes to the high turnover rate as many women choose to leave the profession due to these monetary constraints.

The research findings also indicate that there is no gender difference in the assignment of beats for women journalists. They cover a wide range of beats, showcasing their versatility and competence in various areas of reporting. However, it is noteworthy that the workload can be demanding, as women journalists are expected to cover at least one story every day. This requirement emphasizes the dedication and hard work exhibited by women in the field, while also underscoring the need for work-life balance and fair distribution of responsibilities.

Overall, the results shed light on the challenges faced by women journalists within media organizations. These challenges include disparities in promotions, salary issues, and demanding workloads. Addressing these issues is crucial for creating a more inclusive and equitable environment within the journalism industry, ensuring that women are provided with equal opportunities, fair compensation, and supportive work conditions.

Impact of Gender-Based Challenges on Women's Career Progression in Male-Dominated Media Organizations in Gilgit-Baltistan

Following is the analysis of women journalists in a male-dominated field of media of Gilgit-Baltistan focused on exploring female journalists in male-dominated media profession which focused on sexual harassment issues reluctance to report, and objectification of women journalists.

Main Theme: Gender base challenges for women journalists in media.

Sub-themes	Descriptive coding	<i>f</i>
	Men want to control women through sexual harassment.	6
Sexual Harassment and threats	Most people in the field secretly take pictures of women journalists and try to blackmail them through social media.	8
	In social media public uses very abusive language & and gives threats to women journalists.	10
	Due to the fear of Sexual harassment females prefer to go into the field with any male member or female.	8
	Sometimes being a woman is a plus point to interact with male news sources.	4

Objectification of Women Journalists	Women are sexual objects in the media.	6
	Programs covered by female journalists have always highest viewership.	9
	Women are judged on the basis of their looks not on the basis of talent.	5
Reluctance to report sexual harassment.	They do not report sexual harassment issues because there is a lack of support system.	7
	They are not reported because they feel they are not encouraged by their family and society.	7
	They do not report due to the fear of threats that they face.	5
	They ignore it	9

This investigates sexual harassment as an abuse of women's bodies in a male-dominant society. It argues that pervasive gender inequalities and power imbalances contribute to the control exerted by men over women, not only in society at large but also within organizational structures. The research findings presented here shed light on the various forms of harassment experienced by female journalists, particularly in the field while carrying out their assignments. These forms include derogatory comments about their bodies, unwarranted staring, verbal abuse, and instances of blackmail. The study also reveals that the primary perpetrators of harassment are males from the general public or news sources. Interestingly, while some respondents claimed that all men attempted to harass women when questioned about experiences within their own workplaces, they stated that their male colleagues

were not involved in such behaviors. Additionally, the research highlights the prevalence of online harassment, whereby female journalists become targets of sexual harassment, threats, blackmail, and trolling on social media platforms. Disturbingly, these incidents have profound psychological effects on the victims. It is evident that the absence of a support system for female journalists in the G-B region leaves them to address these issues individually. The study further confirms the objectification of women in society, as female journalists are often evaluated based on their physical appearance rather than their talent and professional capabilities. The responses indicate the existence of a conservative society wherein many individuals discourage their daughters from pursuing careers in the media industry, despite the high viewership of programs featuring female journalists.

Discussion:

The argument of Kimmel, (2008) that gender and culture are linked, and skills are set based on culturally determined appropriateness for each sex, is applied in this research. This argument helps to investigate how cultural norms and expectations influence the skills and roles assigned to women journalists in Gilgit-Baltistan. Findings of the study confirm that the conservative cultural norms prevalent in the region create barriers for women, particularly when it comes to participating in the workforce, especially in media-related roles. These cultural constraints often discourage families from allowing their daughters to seek education or engage in employment in the media sector. The perception of media seems to be a significant barrier for women in G-B. There is a negative perception of the media profession, with assumptions of immorality associated with it. Moreover, the dominance of men in the field creates a societal belief that media is not a suitable profession for women. These perceptions result in social opposition, making it difficult for women to sustain their careers in media.

Due to the demanding nature of their jobs, women journalists in G-B frequently experience work-family issues, according to this research. It is difficult for female journalists to balance their professional duties with their familial responsibilities because the media sector requires full-time engagement and lengthy working hours. Societal expectations like the pressure to return home early after work, further limit women's ability to fully engage in their careers. Women journalists face additional challenges when it comes to fieldwork. Societal and family pressures, combined with safety concerns, restrict their ability to independently cover issues in the field. The expectation for women to be home before sunset affects both married and single women journalists, limiting their professional mobility and opportunities.

Another key aspect this study highlighted is the limited availability of media platforms and employment opportunities in G-B compared to other provinces of Pakistan. This scarcity limits the options for aspiring female journalists, leading them to associate with national and international TV channels and newspapers. However, the lack of compensation in these positions can deter women from choosing careers in the media industry. The absence of a thriving local media industry contributes to the limited professional prospects for women in this field.

Furthermore, the research underscores the influence of patriarchal structures within families, where decision-making power remains predominantly in the hands of men. This power imbalance perpetuates the disadvantageous position of women in their career choices and adds to the work-family conflicts they experience.

Overall, there is a need to address the barriers and challenges faced by women journalists in G-B. This necessitates concerted efforts to challenge societal perceptions, create more media platforms and employment opportunities, and implement policies that support work-life balance for women in the industry. By promoting gender equality and providing a supportive environment, G-B can foster

the growth and empowerment of women in the media sector, enabling them to contribute their valuable perspectives and talents to the field.

The fact that female journalists in Gilgit-Baltistan cover all types of beats without any gender-based restrictions is a positive indication of their professional capabilities. However, despite their hard work and dedication, it is concerning to note that men are often privileged and given preferential treatment in terms of promotions, regardless of merit. This aligns with Cockburn's note (1991) that because authority and power are openly characterized as belonging to men, women experience discrimination at work. The influence of family socialization on the differential treatment of men and women at work, as highlighted by Plessis and Barkhuizen (2015), further underscores the interconnectedness of gender and culture. The study suggests that cultural norms shape skill sets and assign gender-specific roles and behaviors, reinforcing the male-dominated culture of Gilgit-Baltistan where men are seen as decision-makers and superior to women.

The research also reveals that the lack of promotion opportunities and associated salary disparities affect women's earnings in the journalism profession. Female journalists in Gilgit-Baltistan reported earning lower salaries compared to women working in other fields. These lower earnings, combined with the challenging work environment, contribute to a lack of attractiveness for women to pursue careers in journalism and may lead to high turnover rates within the field.

Based on these findings, it becomes evident that gender disparities exist within the journalism profession in Gilgit-Baltistan, particularly in terms of promotion opportunities and remuneration. It is crucial for stakeholders within the industry to address these issues, promote gender equality, and provide equal opportunities for career advancement. Additionally, efforts should be made to challenge and change societal expectations regarding gender roles

and empower women to occupy positions of authority without facing excessive criticism or prejudice.

From a feminist perspective, sexual harassment in the workplace can be interpreted as highlighting the power disparities present in patriarchal societies where men and women suffer unequal relations (Franzway, 2001: 105; Samuels, 2003; Uggen and Blackstone, 2004). In addition to discussing harassment in the context of the unequal power structures that exist in society and in organizations, this study also examines how men utilize their privilege and power to control women's bodies, access to jobs, and prospects for professional success.

The discussion of women's experiences in male-dominated industries is relevant to this study which explored how women journalists in Gilgit-Baltistan navigate a traditionally male-dominated field, including the obstacles they encounter and the resistance they face from their male counterparts and the society as a whole. These research findings reveal that female journalists frequently face different forms of sexual harassment while carrying out their assignments in the field. This includes instances of body shaming, persistent staring, verbal abuse, and blackmail. The primary perpetrators identified by the respondents are males from the general public or news sources. Interestingly, when asked about sexual harassment within their own workplaces, many participants stated that their male colleagues were not involved in such behaviors.

The study highlights the additional challenges faced by female journalists in the form of online harassment. These women not only experience sexual harassment but also endure threats, blackmail, and trolling on social media platforms. The continuous exposure to such incidents disturbs their psychological well-being due to the absence of a support system for females in the G-B region, these journalists often counter these challenges independently.

The research supports the notion of Gervais et al. (2012) that women are viewed as sex objects, and women are frequently objectified in society. The responses indicate that female journalists are often evaluated based on their physical appearance rather than their professional abilities and talents. Furthermore, cultural taboos and societal discouragement contribute to the underreporting of sexual harassment incidents, as females in the G-B region hesitate to report such incidents due to cultural norms and lack of societal encouragement.

Conclusion:

Societal and familial expectations can pose challenges for women journalists when it comes to field reporting or covering stories outside their immediate vicinity. The need to go out alone to cover an issue may be met with resistance from families and communities, who may express concerns about their safety or the appropriateness of such endeavors. Consequently, women journalists may face restrictions or limitations on their mobility, which can impact their ability to fulfill their professional responsibilities fully.

It is worth noting that the extent and nature of these challenges can vary across different cultures, regions, and individual circumstances. While some women journalists face significant barriers and struggles in balancing work and family, others may find more support and flexibility in their personal and professional lives. Efforts have been made in recent years to address these issues and promote gender equality and work-life balance within the media industry, but progress is gradual and varies across different contexts.

In conclusion, this study confirms that sexual harassment in the workplace and society at large reflects the unequal power dynamics of a patriarchal system in which men assert control over women's bodies and impose restrictions on their access to employment prospects and professional success. Overall, the study

highlights the need to address the power disparities that allow sexual harassment and develop a workplace environment that is encouraging for women.

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