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Women in Media and the challenges they face in their Work Environment: A Case Study of NBS, NTV, Vision Group, and STV in Kampala District, Uganda

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ABSTRACT

With a focus on NBS, NTV, STV, and Vision Group in particular, this study examined women in the media and their working conditions in a few chosen media firms in the Kampala District of Uganda. The line of investigation aimed to ascertain the ways in which the work environment and obstacles faced by women in media organizations influence their viewpoints, accomplishments, and performance. Several information sources, including scholarly works, journals, articles, websites, and secondary surveys on women in the workplace, were employed in this study. The study became necessary because, in spite of international organizations' global projects and efforts to promote women in the media, stereotypes about women persist and their struggles are frequently unreported, which hinders their ability to progress in their media careers. According to the results of the anonymous surveys, it appears that despite the rise in the number of women working in the media and occupying senior positions within their organizations, these women still feel that they need to prove their worth, are still viewed as the weaker sex, are rigid, and are still objectified sexually. This study therefore suggests that women should be seen as a work force that has worth and can take on duties and tasks with as much aggression and ambition as their male counterparts in an effort to achieve equality and equity in media businesses.

Keywords: Women, Media, Television, Workplace, Vision group, Kampala

INTRODUCTION

Despite their enormous contributions to newsrooms and departments within the media, women are often underappreciated in their places of employment. Women are significantly less likely than men to be visible in the media, claims Rattan [1]. According to a 2015 study, just 19% of specialists quoted in news articles and 37% of reporters worldwide were women. Women are shown inaccurately, objectified sexually, and stereotyped as weak people who can only perform easy, uncomplicated activities. According to a survey, because of simple roles and prejudices, many women prefer entertainment to management responsibilities in current affairs. This is because women are misrepresented in the media, with a greater representation of women on television than radio.

Statement of Problem

Women still confront obstacles such low representation in news discourse, a lack of prestigious roles, and a dearth of senior positions within media firms, notwithstanding advancements in their representation and professional growth in the field. Just one in three reporters, one in five specialists questioned, and one in four media decision-makers are women [2]. In spite of advancements in the domains of equality, representation, and human rights, women continue to experience sexual harassment and objectification at work.

More women need to be represented in the workplace in order to change the narrative and dispel the stereotypes surrounding women in top management and other important areas of the workplace. Additionally, open channels of communication that allow women to express discomfort without fear of retaliation need to be strengthened and maintained. Women will be given chances and jobs based on merit rather than gender as a result of this [3].

Study's main objective

The goal of the study was to highlight the difficulties faced by women in the media and offer solutions for resolving the issues that were found. As a case study, NBS, NTV, STV, and Vision Group were chosen.

Specific Objectives

1. To learn about the difficulties faced by women who work in the media.
2. To raise awareness of the difficulties faced by women in the media in their workplaces.
3. To come up with solutions for problems that arise when working for media companies.

Research Questions

1. What difficulties do women who work in the media industry face?
2. Is the public aware of the difficulties faced by women in the media at work?
3. What are the solutions to problems that arise in media organizations where one works?

Literature Review

Women in the media are objectified and sexualized

The objectification and sexualization of women in the media has been greatly aided by the mass media, and this perception has permeated the workplace and work surroundings of women in the media [4]. Without taking into account the interests of the women portrayed, this exploitation uses mass media, including television, movies, advertising, etc., to present women as objects to enhance the attraction of media products. It involves presenting women as objects of desire and establishing ideals of beauty that women should aspire to and maintain. To be hired in the mass media, TV presenters and news anchors are expected to have a pleasing physical appearance. According to Oliviel Nakalembe of NBS TV, women frequently have to fulfill the physical requirements of their media companies in order to work in their establishments. Additionally, one needs to have good looks in order to occupy specific roles, particularly "anchoring." Many women's careers and efforts in media organizations have been hampered and impeded by this egregious portrayal of women [5]. Not only are women in the media misrepresented, but they are also underrepresented. Women were labeled as breaking away from their conventional household responsibilities when they wanted equitable treatment from media sources. In addition to the exclusion of women's problems and leaders from the media, biased reporting about women was also done. In newsrooms, radio stations, television stations, and film production, women are notably underrepresented. NTV's Olivia Komugisha claims that occasionally she needs to "fight" for articles on women to be published in the media. In other cases, we discover that women's issues receive less attention in the media due to their underrepresentation. She claims that it is difficult for her to get stories about women's issues published and that she frequently needs to put more thought and care into how she delivers her pitch. Only 24% of those heard, seen, or read about in the news worldwide are women, according to Inter News.

The disparity between genders in terms of leadership and jobs in the media

In the context of mass media, gender roles pertain to how duties are assigned within media organizations, taking gender into consideration. Women are overwhelmingly underrepresented in the media; according to a thorough study, men hold 73% of top managerial positions while women hold 27% of same positions. Men make up approximately two thirds of reporters, while women make up 36% of the workforce; however, among senior professionals, women are almost equal, accounting for 41% of occupations that involve gathering, editing, and writing news [6]. Women are portrayed in most media content as victims, homemakers, or models, among other conventional positions. Women are consistently portrayed as objects of admiration and nothing more, which discourages them from being as assertive and ambitious in the media or at work. Men are depicted in the media as ambitious and diligent, with the emphasis being on their professional abilities and ideas, whereas women are more likely to be referred to by appearance, age, attire, and marital status. This keeps the media's representation of people inequitably. Owing to this conventional portrayal of women in the media, women are frequently left out of more demanding and lucrative professions inside media companies. The "hardcore" tasks are assigned to men, whereas lighter or easier tasks that are deemed more appropriate for women are allocated to them. Statistics indicate that men still occupy the majority of positions of power in the media, even if the proportion of women in the industry is rapidly rising. Research indicates that men are more prone than women to discuss "serious" subjects. The Bechdel test, which was developed initially to assess how women are portrayed in popular fiction and other media, reveals that many women work but do not have equal access to speech. For example, men are hired to cover politics and social concerns on radio, while women are hired to cover topics like weather and culture. Some women have been inspired to work harder to dispel prejudices about women as a result of gender imbalances in media organizations, while others have been discouraged from assuming significant and leadership responsibilities in their employment.

Women are sexually harassed in the media

Sexual harassment of women in the media is a common occurrence that receives very little thought or attention. The objectification of women in the media has led to a culture that encourages and promotes sexual harassment of women employed by media companies. Wikipedia defines sexual harassment as any form of harassment that includes the use of overtly sexual language, whether explicit or implicit, as well as the unwanted or inappropriate offering of compensation in exchange for sexual favors [7]. A variety of behaviors are classified as sexual harassment, ranging from verbal offenses to physical or sexual assault. A lot of women don't know what constitutes sexual harassment or what behaviors fall under this category. NBS employee Oliviel Nakalembe believed that for something to be considered sexual harassment, there had to be a physical infraction, despite the fact that her work chauffeur frequently made inappropriate sexual remarks about her appearance. Despite the fact that certain newsrooms and media companies have anti-harassment rules in place,

some victims of workplace harassment choose not to disclose the abuse due to its negative effects on their personal and professional lives. One of the female employees at NBS claims that she had frequent sexual harassment at her previous job, which led to her being forced to resign even though she reported it to management and received no response. Most of these forms of intimidation and harassment were directed against women, and they were frequently committed by male coworkers, managers, and employers. Despite the fact that the majority of the women who experienced these events had psychological effects, the bulk of them were never reported. Uninvited remarks on their appearance and attire are the most frequent acts, according to the majority of female employees in media companies [8]. Because sexual harassment at media outlets is so subtle, most incidents go unreported, and when they do, the absence of "serious" evidence often leads to the accusations being written off as idle complaints or attention-seeking screams. A female employee at New Vision spoke about her experiences, claiming that a coworker had been sexually harassing her by touching her inappropriately and using very suggestive language and remarks. She was told to "man up" and that the discomfort was not severe enough to warrant taking legal action against the offender when she reported it. An American journalist said that she was the one who was taken home and relieved of her regular duties after reporting sexual harassment and intimidation. Her bosses then revealed embarrassing details about her personal life. There are a few examples, but reporting sexual harassment to media organizations has helped some female employees. The offenders received prison sentences or reprimands in addition to being fired from their jobs. Sadly, these incidents have frequently caused women to resign from their positions or avoid engaging in particular work-related activities. Many female employees claim that they have ignored sexual harassment because they have grown numb to it because it seems to be accepted as the standard response to subtle acts of harassment, particularly explicit verbal hints [9]. Not only do women in the media experience sexual harassment at work, but they also encounter it from the general public. Women who work as news anchors, presenters, or reporters frequently face sexual harassment from the public on social media platforms. Here, they may encounter unwanted, sexual remarks or attention to their body image.

METHODOLOGY

Design of research

According to the University of Southern California, the research design combines study elements to answer research issues. The difficulties faced by women in media work environments in Kampala district media companies were examined in this study using a descriptive correlation design.

Study population

In Kampala, Uganda, 40 female media workers were the target population for this study, with 10 respondents from each media outlet. These women were selected for reliable data collecting because of their vast knowledge and experience in media organizations. They also have a lot of experience in the media.

Sample Quantity

For a balanced, objective study, the researcher chose 10 respondents from 4 media houses across 4 departments. This ensured that the data was applicable, relevant, accurate, efficient, cost-effective, and time-bound, resulting in 40 respondents.

Procedure for sampling

Given the variety of obstacles that women in the media encounter, the study used basic random sampling to choose respondents from a range of media outlets.

Research Tool

Surveys: Using self-administered questionnaires, the researcher gathered primary data from the respondents, who were female employees of particular media organizations. Both open-ended and closed-ended questions were included in the surveys.

The research instrument's validity

The degree to which a research instrument was employed to measure an attribute for which it was especially developed is known as the instrument's validity. The degree to which a research instrument produces consistent data or outcomes after multiple trials is known as its reliability [10]. By splitting the replies into two halves and computing a correlation coefficient, the researcher and supervisor evaluated the validity of the pilot questionnaire using the Split half technique.

Methods of research

The researcher requested an introduction letter from Kampala International University's College of Humanities and Social Sciences. In order to obtain authorization to carry out the research study, the researcher sent the letter to the organization's authority. The researcher was assisted and supervised in contacting the respondents in accordance with the organization's plans for a successful data collection effort.

Data interpretation

The data collected from the respondents was presented by the researcher using statistical techniques. Bar graphs and pie charts were employed. Pie charts were utilized to display the respondents' age and the percentage split of their questionnaire responses.

Ethical Aspects to taken into account

The respondents' privacy and confidentiality are the primary ethical considerations for this study. The researcher took the following actions to protect privacy: the questionnaire never listed the respondents' names. Before the study was carried out, consent from the relevant parties was initially obtained.

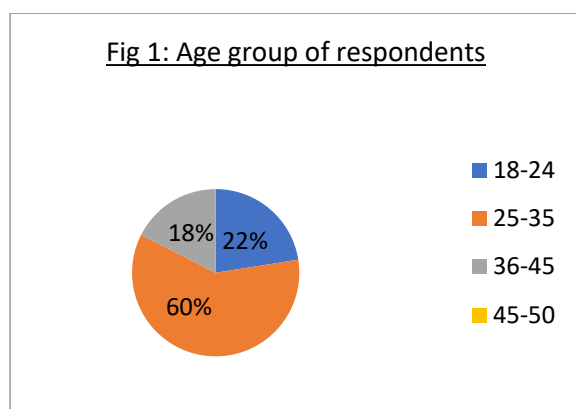
Results analysis, presentation, and discussion

Background data

The responders were asked to provide their age and position within the media organization, among other background information.

Table 1: Age group of the respondents

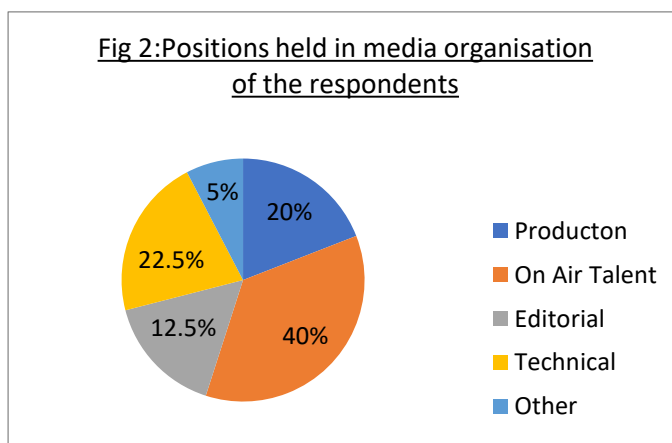
Age group	Frequency	Percentage
18-24	9	22.5 %
25-35	24	60.0 %
36-45	7	17.5 %
45-50	0	0.0 %



Demographic of respondents show that a large percentage of women working in media are between the ages of 25-35. This is generally young and can be ascribed to the assumption that most women quit their media careers as they get older for either more lucrative ventures or family duties.

Table 2: Position held in media organisation

Position held	Frequency	Percentage
Production	8	20.0%
On Air Talent	9	22.5%
Editorial	16	40.0%
Technical	2	5.0%
Other	5	12.5%

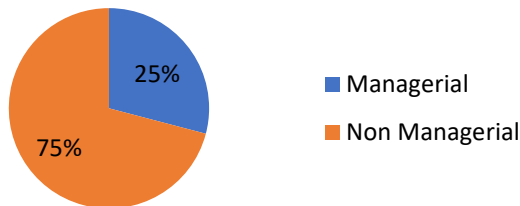


This Pie chart shows positions and departments in which women in media work. A bigger percentage of women in media are hired as on-air talent owing to their physical appearance and not their intellectual acumen and skills.

Table 3: Level of Positions held in media organisation

Level of position	Frequency	Percentage
Managerial	10	25.0%
Non Managerial	30	75%

Fig.3: Level of Position held within the media organisation by respondents

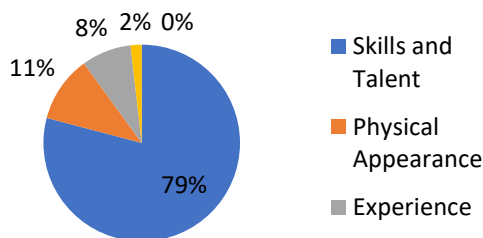


A large percentage of women do not occupy managerial or positions of power in media organisations due to the male dominated industry of mass media. Most women experience several challenges that hinder them from growing in the ranks.

Table 4: Opinions on hiring criteria of women in media organisations

Hiring Criteria	Frequency	Percentage
Skills and talent	33	82.5%
Physical appearance	3	7.5%
Experience	3	7.5%
Connections	1	2.5%
Other	0	0

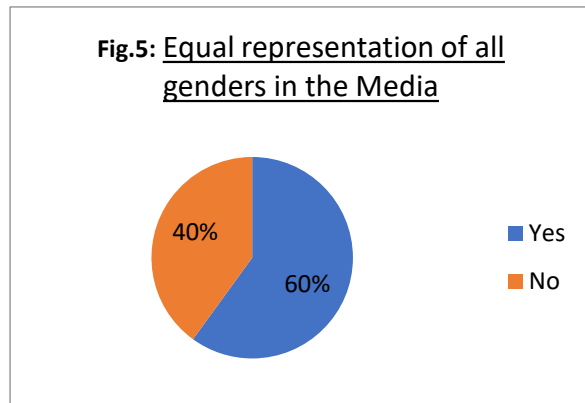
Fig.4: Hiring Criteria of Women in Media



Over the years, the Mass Media industry is growing in the number of women hired based on their skills. A higher percentage of respondents believed that women are now hired based on skills but maintained that physical appearance was largely considered for on-air talent.

Table 5: Respondents opinion on whether all Genders were represented equally in the media

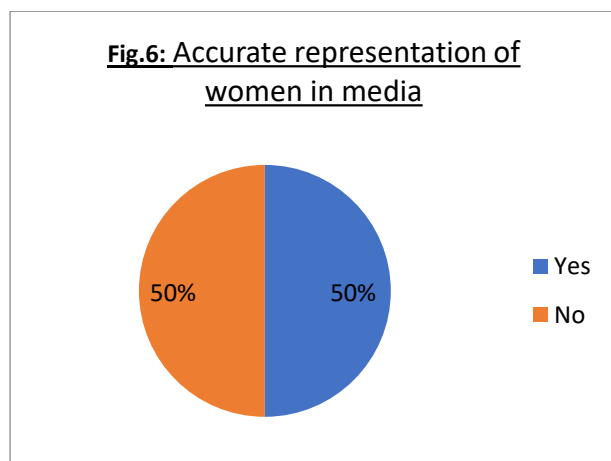
Equal Representation	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	24	60.0%
No	16	40.0%



A higher percentage of women in media organisations believed that there was equal representation of women and men in media albeit women being stereotyped and misrepresented

Table 6: Respondents opinion on whether women were represented appropriately and accurately in the media

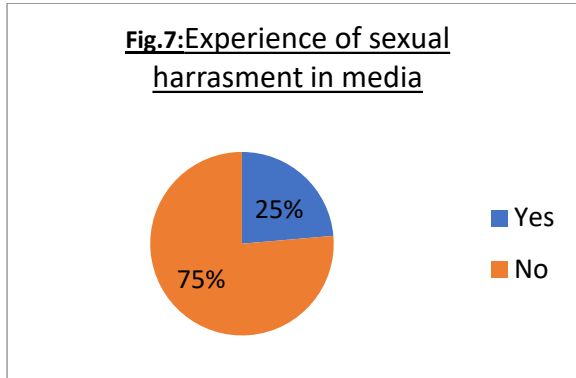
Accurate representation	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	20	50.0%
No	20	50.0%



There is a strong divide on whether women were presented accurately by the media. A section believed that women were still being misrepresented while another section believed that women who had broken out in the media field spoke out and used their platforms to voice and give accurate representation of women.

Table 7: Respondents on sexual harrassment in the media

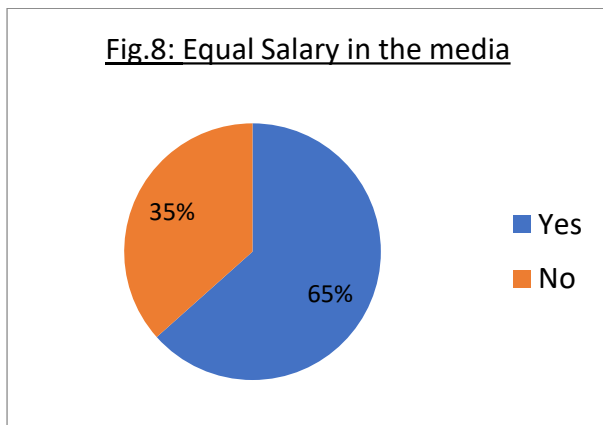
Sexual harrassment in media	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	10	25.0%
No	30	75.0%



Sexual harassment in the media does not appear rampant but it is still present as 25 percent of women said they had faced sexual harassment while doing their job at workplace. Many respondents said that explicit verbal sexual harassment was the most common form of harassment in the media.

Table 8: Respondents on equal salary with male counterparts in the media

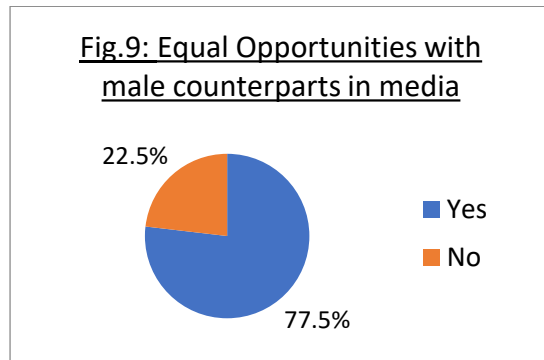
Equal Salary	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	26	65.0%
No	14	35.0%



Denial of equal remuneration to women workers is a common practice worldwide that amounts to denial of their human and labour rights. 37% said that they received less salary than their male counterparts owing to the perception that men had tougher roles. Some respondents said salaries were not up for negotiation while others said they were not sure since salaries were confidential.

Table 9: Respondents on women getting equal opportunities with male counterparts in the media

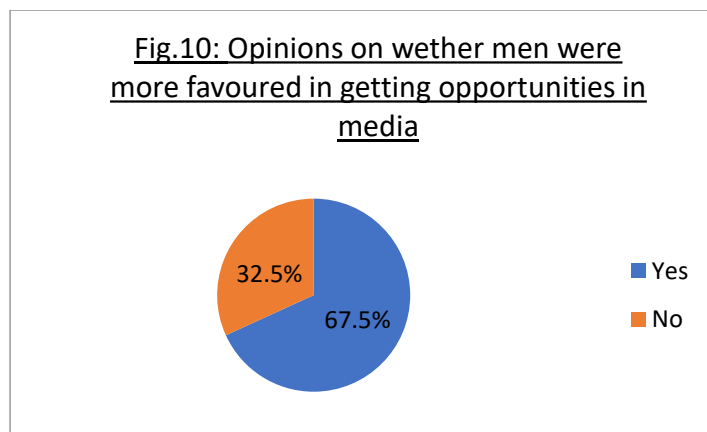
Equal Opportunities in media	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	31	77.5%
No	9	22.5%



A percentatge of women workers feel that a glass ceiling exists in media that hinder them from rising to the upper ranks of the ladder, regardless of their qualifications or achievements. 23 percent of women workers said women did not enjoy equal promotion opportunities with men.

Table 10: Respondents on wether men were more favoured in getting opportunities in the media

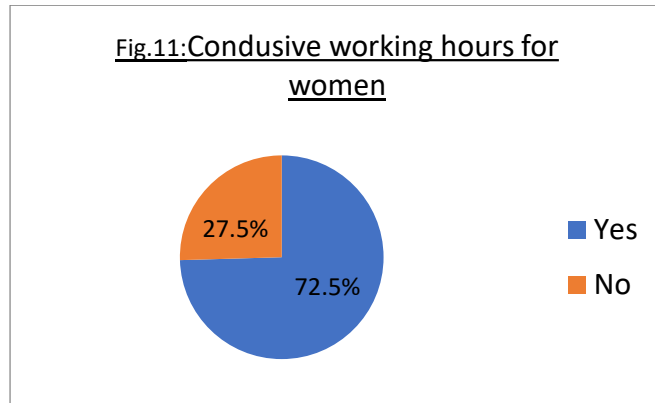
Men more favored in getting Oppotunities	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	27	67.5%
No	13	32.5%



A large percentage believed men were favoured more in getting opportunities in media organisation owing to their hardworking and flexible nature. They were fronted by their leaders most.

Table 11: Respondents on whether media houses provided conducive working hours for women.

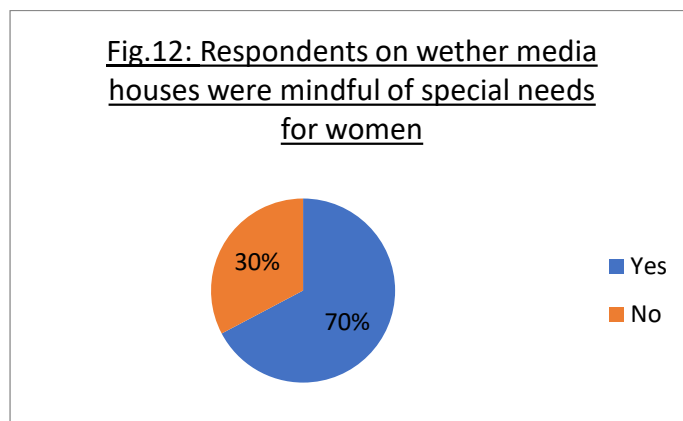
Conducive working hours	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	29	72.5%
No	11	27.5%



Due to cultural constraints, family needs and security issues, most women workers want flexible working hours. A large majority of women felt that they were provided conducive working hours by their media organization. However, 25% felt that this was not the case.

Table 12: Respondents on whether media houses were mindful of special needs for women

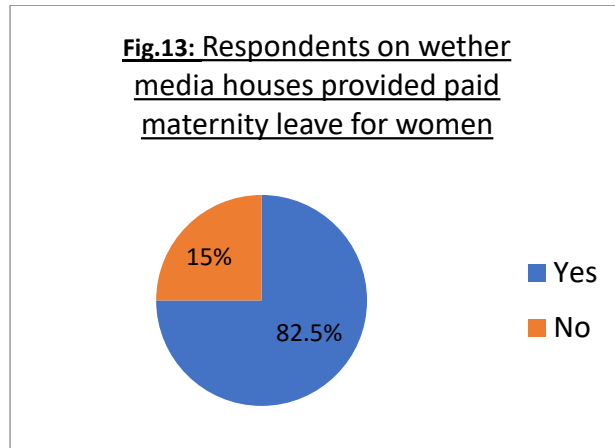
Special needs for women	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	28	70%
No	12	30%



A conducive work environment that caters to their special needs is important for women to focus on their work without worrying about such small issues like going to a toilet or looking after a child. 33 percent of women said their organization was not mindful of special needs of women.

Table 13: Respondents on whether media houses provided paid maternity leave for women

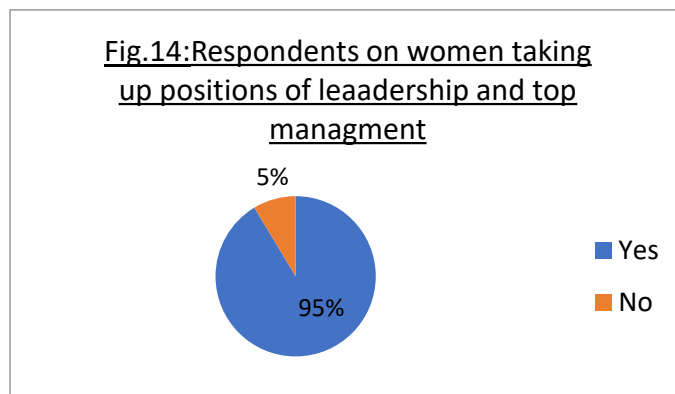
Paid Maternal Leave	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	33	82.5%
No	6	15.0%



Raising a family is a cherished goal for many working people. Yet pregnancy and maternity are an especially vulnerable time for working women and their families. Expectant and nursing mothers also require protection to ensure that they will not lose their job simply because of pregnancy or maternity leave. The results of the survey show that paid maternity is available to 75 percent women in media while 25 percent women are denied this right.

Table 14: Respondents on women taking up positions of leadership and top management

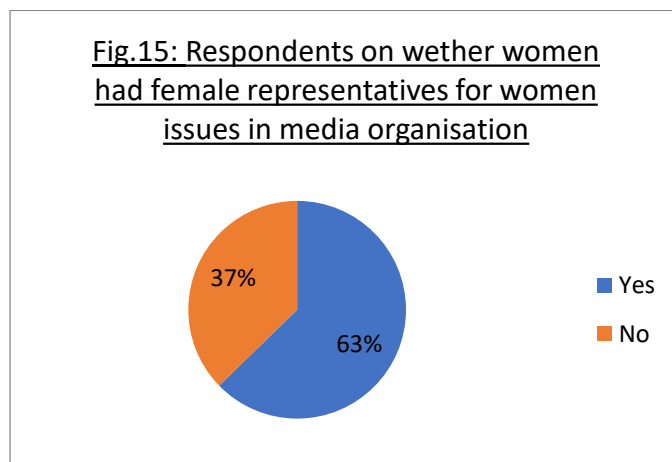
Leadership	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	38	95.0%
No	2	5.0%



The results of the survey show that a large percentage 91 percent said women were taking up more of leadership positions although 9 percent felt that women in leadership positions had very little power or voice in their media organisations.

Table 15: Respondents on whether women had female representatives for women issues in media organisation

Women representatives	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	24	60.0%
No	16	40.0%



As a result of difficult and trying experiences, many media workers are exposed to events which have a psychological effect on them. The harm that this causes is not readily quantifiable and therefore not easy to measure, yet the results can be just as devastating. Stress counselling can help female journalists cope with such situations and guard against further psychological harm. 63% women journalists said they were provided stress counselling by their media house.

DISCUSSION

It is impossible to study women's representation in the media and their role in creating messages that are distributed by it without taking into account the larger socioeconomic, political, and cultural environment of the period. The way women are portrayed in the media is ultimately the product of multiple factors influencing social reality. The mass media is one of these social factors [10]. The purpose of this study was to identify the obstacles that women in the media encounter, such as those related to equal opportunity, compensation, sexual harassment, representation in the media, violence, and threats. It also sought to identify workable solutions to these problems and increase awareness of these problems in media work contexts. Here, a summary of the results is provided in line with the goals of the study. Finding out what obstacles women face in today's media was the first goal. It was found that women in the media faced obstacles in a variety of ways, including those related to equal opportunities, equal compensation, sexual harassment, under representation in the media, violence and threats, safe working conditions for women, and women in leadership and upper management. Raising awareness of the difficulties faced by women in the media at work was the study's second goal. The difficulties faced by women in their media organizations are highlighted in this research study. The third goal was to identify solutions for the problems that women in media organizations and their workplaces face. This report discusses these issues and offers a few workable solutions.

CONCLUSION

The study revealed that women in media face challenges hindering their growth within organizations. Solutions include creating open communication channels for sexual harassment, attracting more women to the industry, and encouraging existing professionals to pursue more significant positions to improve working conditions for women.

RECOMMENDATIONS

This study sheds light on the obstacles that women in the media encounter and emphasizes the necessity for the media to promote gender equality by using self-regulation and gender-sensitive content. Female media workers' safety is a top concern, and we need to foster a culture of safety. Women can develop with the assistance of encouraging female mentors and a network of other women working in the media. Online advocacy efforts can benefit from more women in leadership roles inside media organizations and decision-making processes. It is imperative that women's issues be covered in news stories, and that senior management and the newsroom physically represent women. Gender equality cannot be achieved until women are given the self-assurance and career advancement opportunities they deserve. Lastly, as the gender pay gap is a sign of media inequality, establishing and advancing equal pay is essential.

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