

State of Gender Diversity in *Media*

August 2023



Research Background: *Setting the context*



The Business Case for Diversity: Women adding “Values” to business performance



Commercial

45%

improvement in market share and success in new markets reported by companies that are highly ranked on DEI reported

Source – Harvard Business Review, How Diversity Can Drive Innovation



Workforce

71%

of HR leaders say remote work has helped their organizations hire and retain more employees from diverse backgrounds

Source – McKinsey, Women at Work



Innovation

60%

companies that push for gender equality in leadership, mentioned that they are more innovative than competitors

Source – IBM's Institute for Business Value (IBV), Leadership and the Priority Paradox

Research Objective

Diverse representation in the workforce has proven to benefit businesses, products, and audiences. However, the Indian media industry lacks representation of gender, diverse communities, and sexual identities.

To gain an ecosystem perspective and capture challenges and potential solutions, Google supported an in-depth research study on gender representation issues across the entire media ecosystem (print, broadcasters, digital natives), languages, and verticals (editorial, tech, product, business). The study used both secondary and primary research.

Key questions answered through the research:

1

What is the proportion of women employees in media organizations?

2

Is there any difference across Print, Broadcast & Digital media organizations? What all are leading to the differences?

3

How does lack of gender diversity impact Women employees in media organizations?

4

What are the expectations of women employees from media organizations?

5

What initiatives can lead to a better representation in media organizations?

Research Approach



Desk Research

Kantar conducted desk research on **41 media groups**, using LinkedIn, Glassdoor, and other sources to analyse the gender representation

In total, covered **6900+** employees to identify key trends and insights



In-depth Interviews

Conducted 1:1 in-depth interviews with HR & Business Leaders across leading media houses

Inputs from **21 eminent leaders** corroborating the desk research findings & sharing their POV



Employee Survey

An online survey was also conducted amongst **548 women employees** working in media organisations, across locations and different roles/seniority level to understand their challenges & opinions

Executive Summary



Despite the need for diversity in media organizations, the current state is not yet diverse

28% Women representation at an overall level in Media

12% Women representation at C-Suite level

<25% Women representation across product, operations, finance, technology divisions –HR leading with 51% representation

75% of women employees feel they have **ALWAYS** faced **inequality** at workplace

Women have cited key concerns along the lines of –

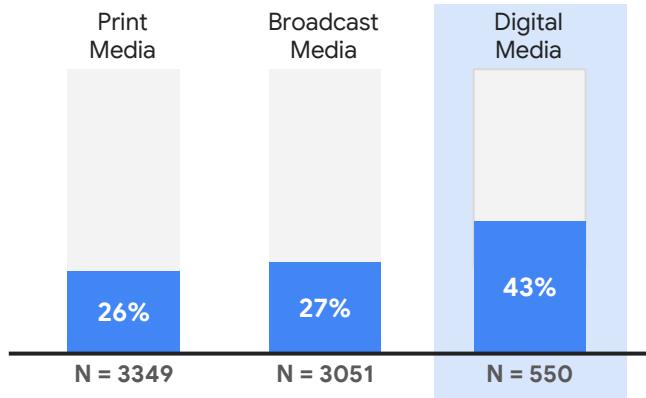
“Culturally controlled” Mindset

- **75%** of women felt “**Lack of a safe/secure work environment**”
- **75%** of women cited “**Societal pressure/norms**” to be a key hindrance
- **74%** of women mentioned “**Stereotypes**” as challenge

Restricted Opportunity– **75%** of women agreeing to “Limited career advancement / progression (to leadership roles) for women”

Poor sustenance as **77%** of women having felt the “Lack of role models” in media houses that doesn’t attract new talents

Digital organizations have higher women's representation than print & broadcasters



Digital newsrooms offers more facilitation compared to Print/Broadcast through:

- ✓ Structurally different job-roles
- ✓ Existing socially-alert workforce
- ✓ Absence of stereotypes
- ✓ Reduced circumstantial hindrances
- ✓ Rise in women entrepreneurship

Assessment of current need gaps reveals the critical need to improve women representation through...



Culture

Driving cultural change to promote equality



Transparency

Fostering collective accountability



Renewal and Resilience

Sustaining diversity through collective ownership

1

Gender diversity -

Importance in Media



Diversity is core to the media because it leads to...



Minimising Biases

through sensitization and awareness creation

Better decision-making

through structured & inclusive thinking

Creating role-models

that attracts woman talents

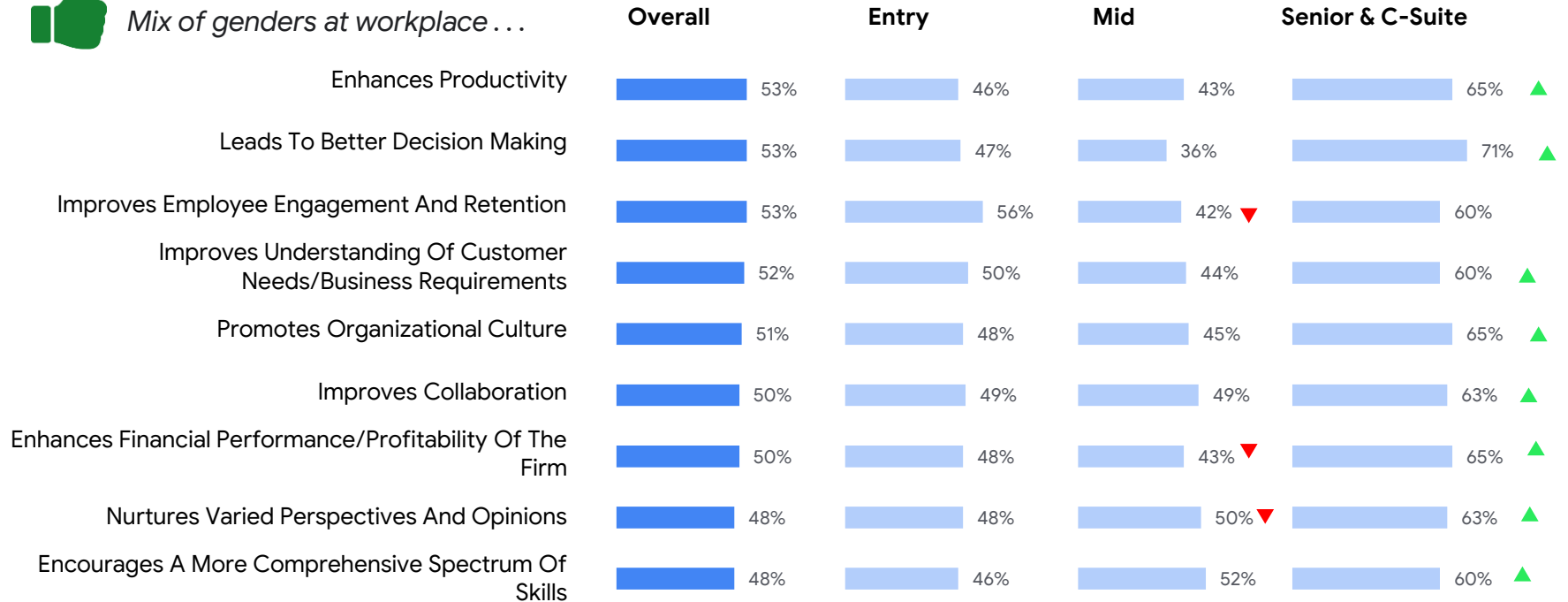
Security

a sense of safety and inclusion at workplace

Unanimous agreement on diversity benefits, especially among senior employees



Mix of genders at workplace . . .



Source: Kantar Survey with Women Employees in Media

Base: 548

Entry/Mid/Senior & C-Suite – 238/180/130

Q: Here is a list of statement pertaining to gender representation at workplace. For each of the statement, please rate your level of agreement 5-point scale – 1-Strongly Disagree, 2 – Somewhat Disagree, 3 – Neither Agree nor Disagree, 4 – Somewhat Agree, 5 – Strongly Agree



Significantly higher than overall at 95% CI
Significantly lower than overall at 95% CI

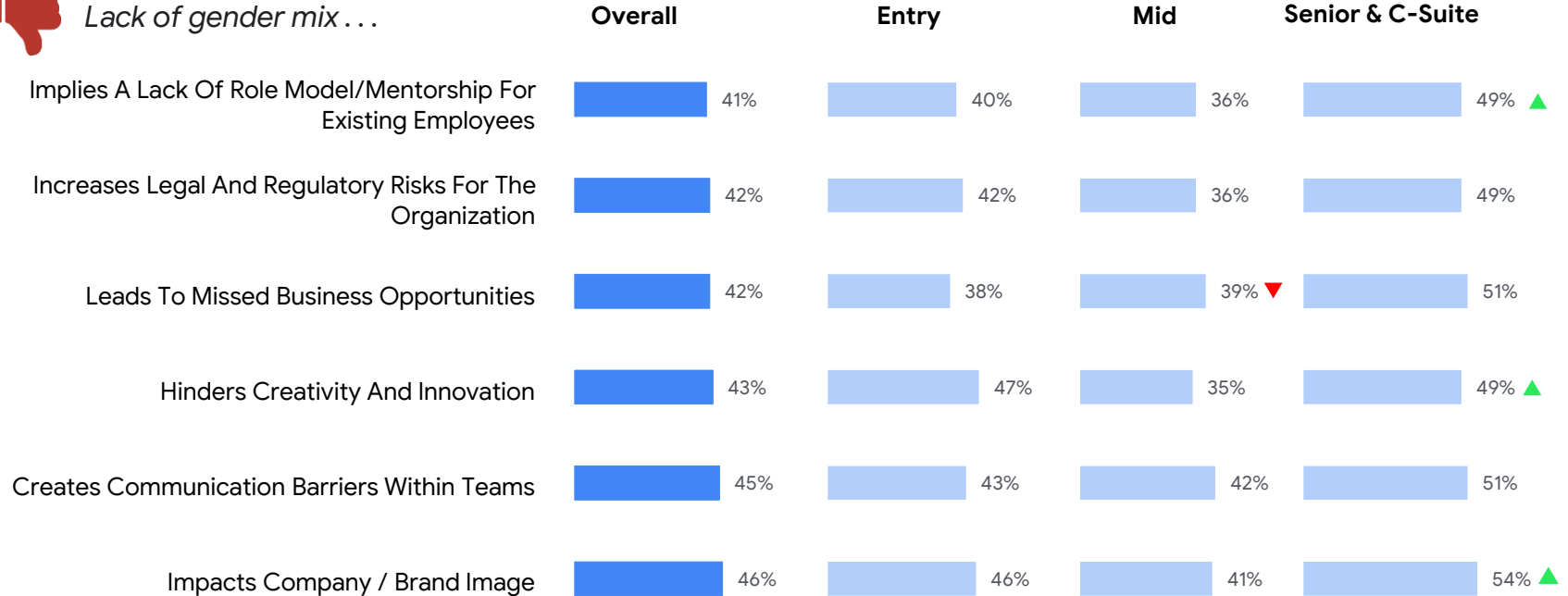


Data indicates Top Box numbers on a 5-point scale

Skewed representation not only results into 'lack of role models', but also impacts the business



Lack of gender mix . . .



Source: Kantar Survey with Women Employees in Media

Base: 548

Entry/Mid/Senior & C-Suite – 238/180/130

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Data indicates Top Box numbers on a 5-point scale



Leader's perspectives...

"...once a media house either excludes or misrepresents a community, **it would lose trust amongst the community.** We will not be able to have nuanced conversations ideation..."

Editorial Head, Digital, English

"... there is **diversity even in the news gathering and news producing** teams, when we have diversity in team ..."

Chief Digital Director, Broadcast, English

"... With women leaders in the senior level - **acknowledgement and acceptance of issues is easier.** Often, women are more pertinent about working on or even addressing concerns that are not mostly talked about ..."

Lead Editorial, Digital, Hindi

"...I think it **builds better camaraderie in the workplace.** So that certainly helps. Whether you're male or you're female second, I think the quality of ideas that emerge out of teams that are well represented are far better..."

CEO, Print, English

"... employees should be made to feel secure about the place where they'd be spending most of their time during the day. **Enough women around instils that security** as orgs will then have policies ..."

Editorial Head, Print, Hindi

"... **Role models are crucial for younger girls,** in order for them to idolize and develop a liking and interest for the industry. Organizations need to consider promoting better representation of women across senior levels, to allow them to lead by example..."

HR Head, Print, Hindi

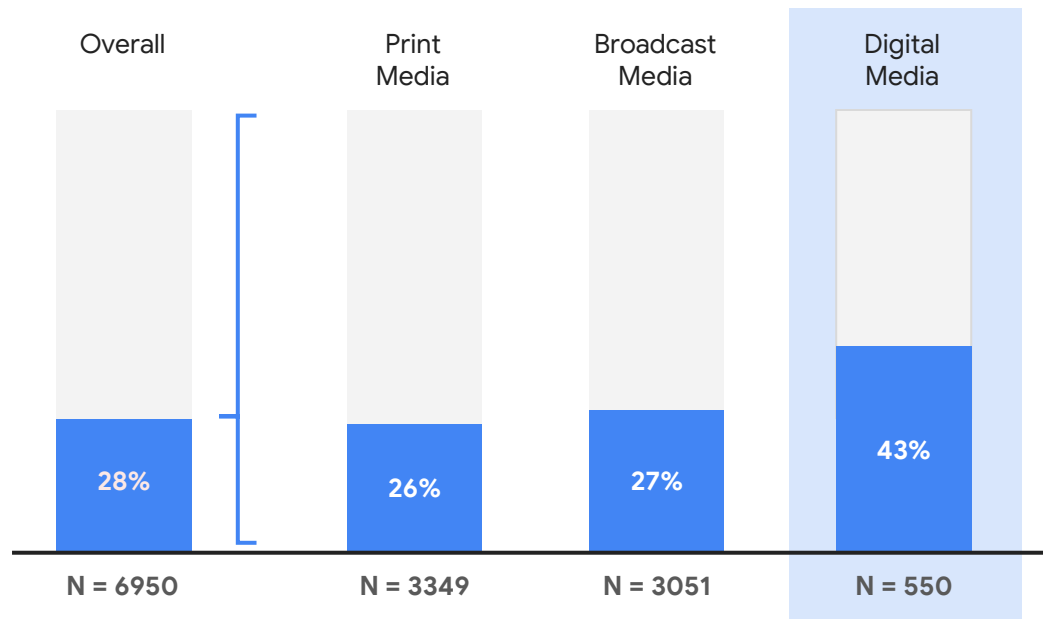
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Diversity in Media

Current lay of the land



While Digital stands out, representation in Print & Broadcast Media is far from being called equitable



"...Traditional media is still an 'All boys club'; there is a certain "bro culture" as a part of these newsrooms..."

Lead – Editorial, Digital, English

"...the shift in print and broadcast started happening about 8-10 years ago – it will take few years to seeing more women moving into significant roles..."

Co-founder, Digital Native, Hindi

"... the reason digital has seen influx of women is primarily because "9 to 5" is not a necessity in digital format – this facilitated numerous women to join who would otherwise have not..."

Chief Manager - HRBP, Broadcast, English

XX% - Women representation

Source: KANTAR Research - N = Number of Employees

Digital media implements different practices that differentiate and create a welcoming environment for women workers



Structurally different job-roles

More “leniency” offered through various work policies –

- Flexible work timings
- Limited travel requirement
- More “desk jobs”



Existing socially-alert workforce

In Digital newsrooms of today, Gen-Zs and Millennials make up for most of the target audience for Digital media. Hence, Digital newsrooms ensure fair mix of genders in order to –

- produce content that would cater to their consumers
- Increase audience engagement



Reduced circumstantial hindrances

Women in media (especially in traditional media) have been subject to unwarranted hazards –

- Sexual harassment – on field while ground reporting
- Safety concerns – at workplace, especially during night shifts



Absence of stereotypes

Relating to –

- women’s capabilities specific to domains (Crime, Business),
- commitment to work timings
- appearances

hinder a lot of potential talent from evening opting for Media as a choice of career



Women Entrepreneurship is on the rise

Eminent women from media have started their own Digital ventures – giving rise to inherently better culture in their startups through –

- Gender alert policies in place
- Conscious hiring strategies
- Encouraging inclusivity of all types



Differences exist between Digital and Print/Broadcast...

"...Printing is a very traditional media they cannot work with the leniency that Digital has to offer work, in digital one can have the facility to work from home, Print cannot thrive on this opportunity..."

Editorial Head, Print, Hindi

"...we are constantly on the move, often without access to even basic security, but that's the core nature of our job – the reason why most women don't even pursue media as a career..."

Deputy Editor, Broadcast, Tamil

"...Interestingly digital is much better, compared to broadcast, because Digital is more about millennials. Broadcast is still traditionally rooted; it will take a little bit of time to change there and break the stereotype barrier..."

Co-founder, Digital Native, Hindi



Digital setting the standards...

"...in our organisation, we try to make it diverse from the hiring process itself – we make allowance for women from less privileged and lesser represented communities as well..."

Co-founder, Digital Native, English

"...I think the new-age Digital newsrooms, have people who are socially alert and 'woke' – they cater to the youth of the country and content production needs people like them to cater to young masses..."

Lead – Editorial, Digital Native, Hindi

"...we have women like Faye D'Souza and Barkha Dutt, who were very prominent in media and yet set out to venture into independent journalism through their own digital enterprise..."

Co-founder, Digital Native, Hindi

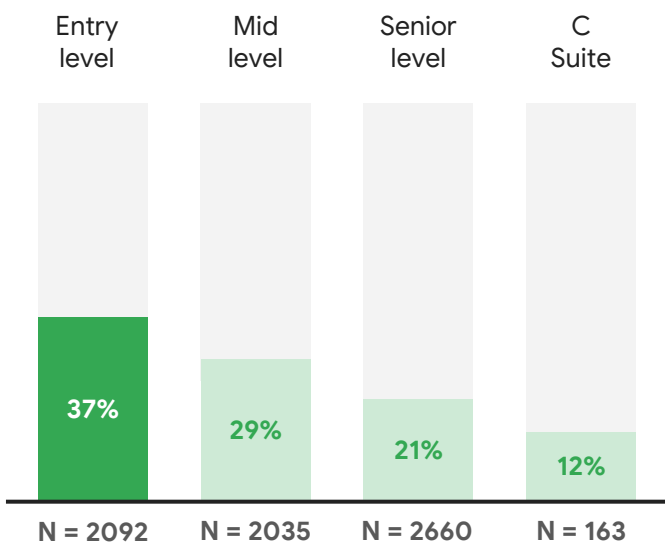
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Impact of Lack of Diversity

Understanding the multi-fold impact



Despite strong women representation in the entry level workforce, few women advance to positions of authority



Roadblocks to women representation at senior roles include:

- ✓ Conservative mindset
- ✓ Lack of role-models / mentorship
- ✓ Familial constraints or commitments
- ✓ Lack of mandates

“...our direct approach is first to have brilliant boxes of men and that is stemming from the perspective that if it’s a guy, he would make more sense, he would probably more qualified. It’s a **systemic prejudice** that we have all been said and therefore now we believe...”

Editorial Head, Print, Hindi

“...it has been 18 years, and yet I am still one of the very few female Leads to host primetime political debates, there is still a serious dearth of women here If one doesn’t see enough representation like themselves, the natural outcome is to opt out of it...”

Deputy Editor, Broadcast, Tamil

Societal norms and conservative mindset fuel inequality in women's representation in senior roles

"... woman moving up the ladder is very less; it is not just because of the patriarchal systems within the organization itself. But the industry itself is a demanding one, right, you have longer work hours, people don't expect you to have a private life, you have to work 24/7, so mostly women and their families will not agree ..."

Co-Founder, Digital Native, English



Conservative mindset

that questions –

- Women's decision-making skills
- Skills for managing large teams
- Making impactful business decision

often hinders career growth for women into leadership roles



Familial constraints or commitments

relating to –

- marriage,
- maternity
- Caregiver responsibility

that make most women to step aside from senior role progression, since there's no relaxation given in terms of supportive policies



Lack of role-models / mentorship

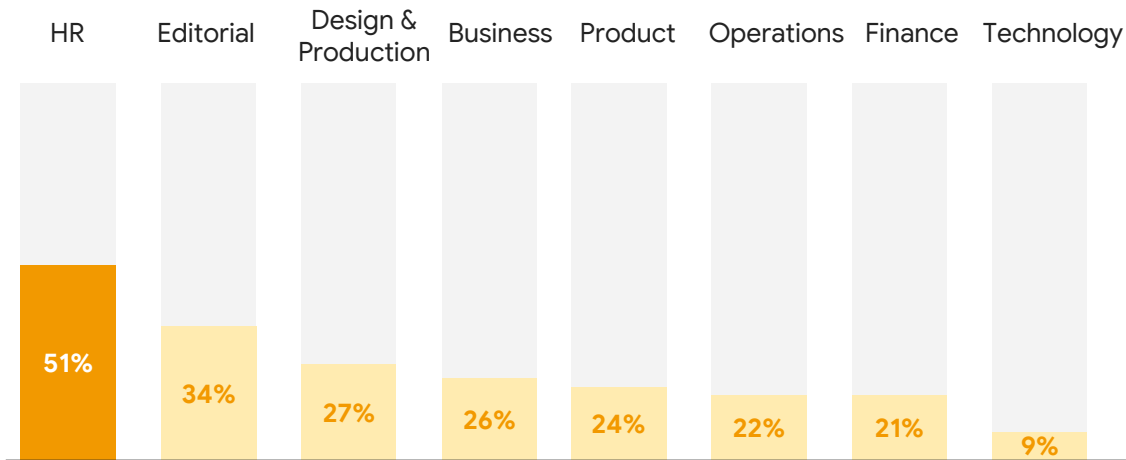
results into lack of aspiration among the entry/mid-level women in media as there is not enough representation of women at decision making levels,



Lack of mandates

with respect to compulsory representation of women in boardrooms are currently not prevalent across all media houses

Gender stereotypes restrict and limit women's career choices



Departmental disparity could be attributed to:

- ✓ **Stereotypical psyche** questioning women's capabilities and fitment across different functions
- ✓ **Inherent lack** of women applying to technical job-roles

"... there's not a single woman in my technology team which is fairly big. I feel it's a talent pool thing as very seldom do I come across a woman CV for technology. maybe it's a legacy thing, and that keeps getting reinforced..."

Chief Digital Officer, Broadcast, English

"...even a few years back, departments like Editorial also was male-dominated, a woman's functional capabilities have always been under scrutiny..."

Lead – Editorial, Digital Natives, Hindi

Lack of Women representation intensifies in regional media houses as one has to navigate through cultural differences and lack of norms/policies

Apart from the fact that the **talents move to Metros and Tier 1s**, leaving behind a dearth of potential workforce, issue of low representation in regional media houses are because of:

✓ Cultural restraints

- Lack of familial encouragement for women to apply for Media jobs
- Preconceived negative notions about lifestyle, demeanour of typical women in Media

✓ Archaic organisational policies

in regional media houses, as compared to the English newsrooms/ones in urban metros – with inclusive policies

✓ Absence of Digital-led diversity

since most digital ventures have emerged from the metros, regional media lack the digital-driven influx of women

✓ Disparity in Pay

especially across the leadership levels, disincentivises potential talent pool to join the vernacular media

“...majority of the women-friendly policies that legacy media houses in Mumbai / Delhi offers for years, are still not prevalent in regional media, especially down South...”

COO, Broadcast, Malayalam

“...People who have been in the field for 30 years had a last drawn salary was Rs. 60,000 – which is very low compared to what English legacy media would ideally pay...”

Deputy Editor, Broadcast, Tamil

“...Family background is also a crucial factor in regional media. They believe women in media come home late at night, have numerous friends, and engage in questionable activities...”

HR Director - People and Culture, Print, Marathi

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Roadblocks and Restrictions

*Current issues and underlying
reasons*



Almost 2/3rd of the women employees facing inequality at workplace

75%

of media women employees feel they have **ALWAYS** faced inequality at workplace

While Print/Broadcast employees' voices echo strongly on the topic of inequality, Digital has significantly lower concern on the same

Gen Zs entering the workforce are more vocal

Inequality felt strongly by regional media employees as compared to English/Hindi media houses

Source: Kantar Survey with Women Employees in Media

Overall Base: 548

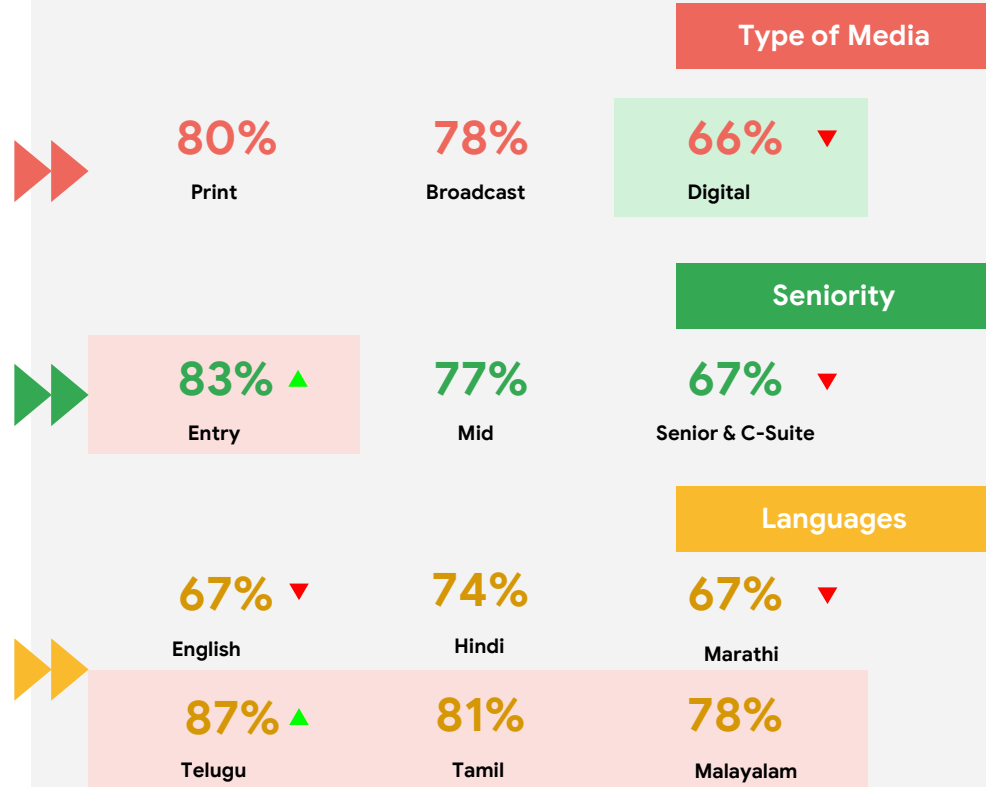
Print/Broadcast/Digital – 182/182/184

Entry/Mid/Senior & C-Suite – 238/180/130

English/Hindi/Tamil/Telugu/Malayalam/Marathi – 92/93/90/90/91/92

Q6: How often do you experience/have you experienced gender inequality at workplace?

5-point scale – 1-Never, 2 – Rarely, 3 – Sometimes, 4 – Often, 5 – Always



Significantly higher than overall at 95% CI



Significantly lower than overall at 95% CI

Data indicates Top Box numbers on a 5-point scale

Women in media have strongly voiced out concerns that are leading to poor representation

75%

of women have mentioned **“Lack of a safe/secure work environment”** as a key concern

74%

of women mentioned **“Stereotypes”** to be a strong contributor in skewed gender representation

75%

of women have mentioned **“Societal pressure/norms”** to be a key hindrance

74%

of women mentioned the lack of diversity has an **“Impact on mental health & well-being”**

75%

of women agreed about **“Limited career advancement / progression (to leadership roles) for women”**

74%

of women agreed to the current dearth and **“inadequate women in decision-making roles”** in Media

77%

of women strongly felt the **“Lack of role models”** as a key disincentive for lesser representation in media

75%

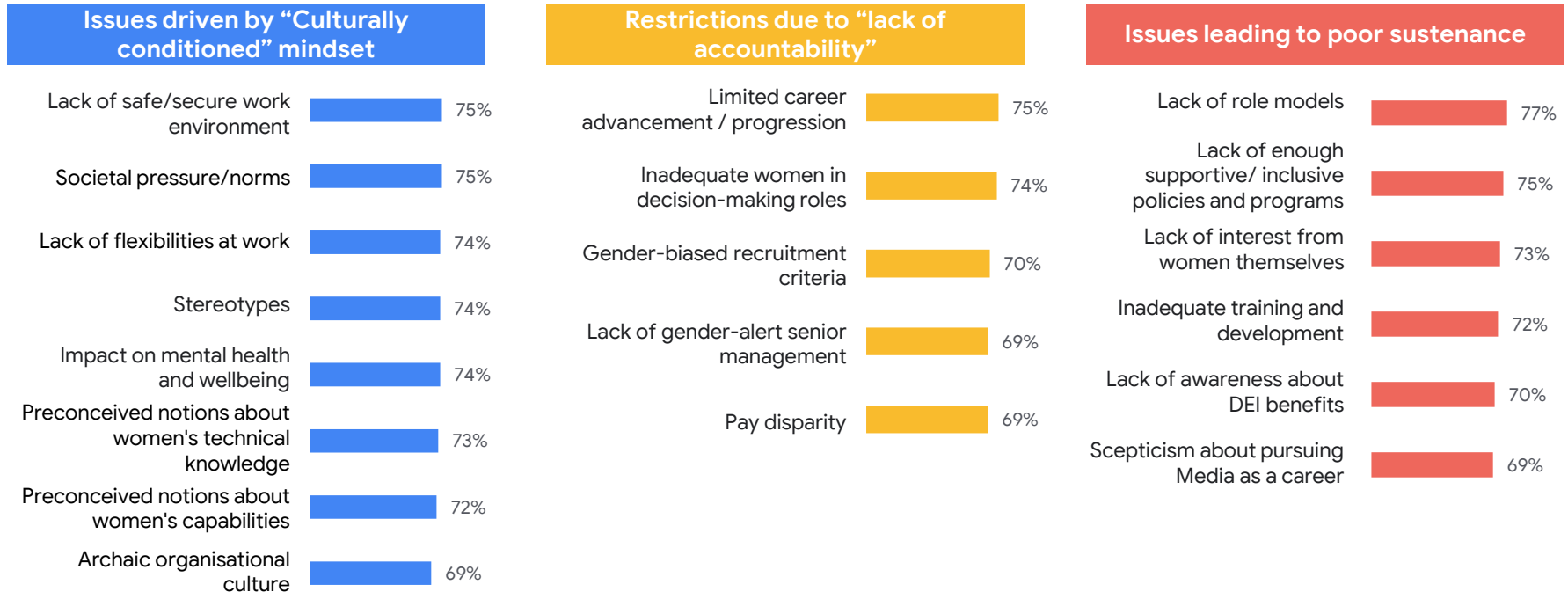
of women felt **“Lack of enough supportive/ inclusive policies and programs”**

Source: Kantar Survey with Women Employees in Media
Overall Base: 548

Q. Please rate your level of agreement to the following as potential reasons for lesser women representation in your industry
5-point scale – 1-Strongly Disagree, 2 – Somewhat Disagree, 3 – Neither Agree nor Disagree, 4 – Somewhat Agree, 5 – Strongly Agree

Data indicates Top Box numbers on a 5-point scale

Women employees feel that their career growth is restricted by culturally controlled mindset and lack of initiatives to nurture and retain women talent



Source: Kantar Survey with Women Employees in Media

Overall Base: 548

Q. Please rate your level of agreement to the following as potential reasons for lesser women representation in your industry
5-point scale – 1-Strongly Disagree, 2 – Somewhat Disagree, 3 – Neither Agree nor Disagree, 4 – Somewhat Agree, 5 – Strongly Agree

** Statements have been shortened to allow readability
Data indicates Top 2 Box numbers on a 5-point scale

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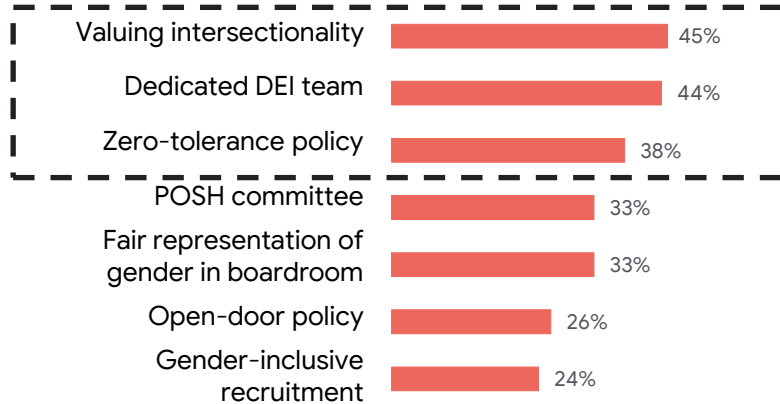
Way Forward

*Understanding the expectations
and gaps*

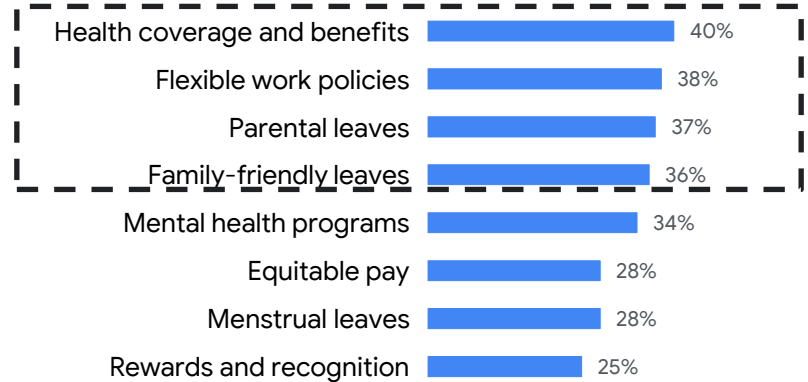


Women in media seek fair treatment through inclusivity, flexible work culture and support in their career progression

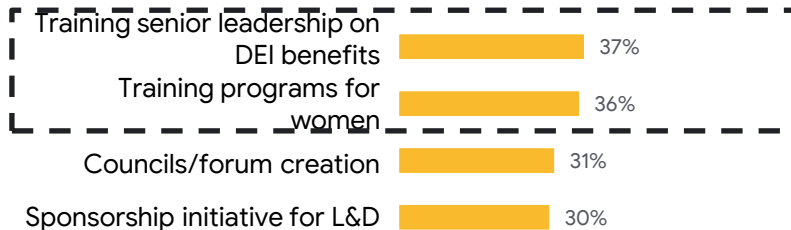
Inclusivity through policies



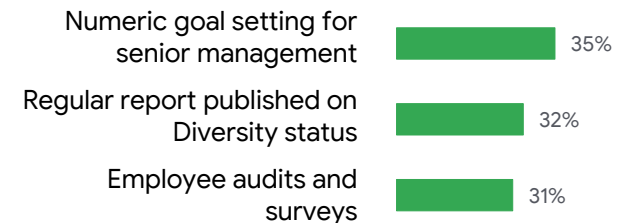
Flexibility to 'balance' work & life



Support through Training and Development



Tracking progress through Data



Current need of the hour is to create a diverse workforce by fostering an inclusive culture, transparent systems and sustained efforts

By enhancing work **culture** that promotes diversity...

"...it is absolute necessity to know how they're feeling around the culture in workplace; whether they're being able to gel into the ecosystem and raise concern if not..."

Editorial Head, Print, Hindi

By providing **transparency** that ensures clarity...

"...if not mandate, at least there should be government driven audits, that would itself help in taking cognizance of gender issues starting from the hiring level itself as a part of general policy..."

Lead – Editorial, Digital Native, Hindi

On how **sustenance and renewed efforts** are necessary...

"...Inclusivity is something that we keep reminding ourselves and our teams - it is often the small changes that we bring in culture, that have the more longer lasting impact..."

Lead – HR Practices, Print, English

"...even before devising initiatives, is necessary to sensitize existing cohort on the importance of diversity at an individual level as well, HRs should have this in their onus..."

Head – HR Practices, Broadcast, Telugu

"...It's crucial to set the simpler things right – women need to feel there is genuineness and fair play - that's something which has to come from a management perspective..."

COO, Broadcast, Hindi

"...It's not only about a single separate team who is advocating it, but everybody across the organization also has to internalize this..."

Co-founder, Digital Native, Hindi

Voices of change: A few media organizations are already embracing the spirit of diverse workforce

*"...the reason for our healthy diversity ratio is because we made **conscious decisions at hiring itself** – I have women representation from marginalised sections, we hired them and groomed them to be industry-ready..."*

Co-founder, Digital Native, English

*"...we have implemented this **KPI driven initiative**, that mandates every HOD to have minimum representation of women within their teams; we have seen much more proactivity and collective efforts of leaders working towards this as a result..."*

Head – HR Practices, Broadcast, Telugu

*"...Over and above the regular policies, we offer an **8-to-8 crèche facility** for young working mothers' in-house system who are coming in with their babies and little ones; it facilitates them to work with peace of mind and without having to care about their children's safety..."*

Chief Manager - HRBP, Broadcast, English

*"...we have FOP, it is the **first day of period leave**. Every month, women employees are entitled to one leave additional to all the other leaves that are there; it was done with a thought of enabling women employees to liberally access provisions made specifically for them without having to fear judgement..."*

HR Director, Print, Marathi

*"...we are coming up with an initiative which would be **exclusive to those women who are resuming their career post sabbatical, maternity or even a career gap** – to facilitate potential talent to join the workforce..."*

Chief Manager - HRBP, Broadcast, English

*"...one of our key systems is we have **regular employee feedback** survey, and as a resultant, one critical outcome that comes across is that our employees feel they are "heard" enough – which currently is still a rare occurrence in Media..."*

Lead – Editorial, Digital Native, Hindi

Breaking systemic barriers to bring change

Driving initiatives across core pillars - Culture, Transparency and Renewal & Resilience



Culture

Driving cultural change to promote equality by:

- ✓ Awareness creation through sensitization drives
- ✓ Comprehensive leaves and health benefits
- ✓ Flexible work policies
- ✓ Harassment prevention mandates



Transparency

Fostering accountability through:

- ✓ Conscious and inclusive hiring
- ✓ Training, workshops and mentorship programs
- ✓ Transparent compensation policies
- ✓ Cohesive employee feedback mechanisms



Renewal and Resilience

Sustaining diversity through collective ownership to mitigate:

- ✓ Mandated audits and surveys to track progress
- ✓ Dedicated DEI councils
- ✓ Celebrating achievements
- ✓ Upskilling opportunities for marginalized women

Facilitating a woman's journey in Media through strong initiatives

Culture

- Conducting **training sessions, workshops**, and resources for decision makers
- Reinforcing revised **employee benefits through supportive policies**– Family-friendly policies (paternity/maternity leaves, child-care leaves etc.) and wellness leaves (menstrual leaves)
- **Facilitations** like night travel allowance, flexible work modes/hours
- **Zero-tolerance policy**
- Dedicated **POSH** committee
- Create **ERGs** (Employee Resource Groups)

Transparency

- Use of **gender-neutral, inclusive language & balance** in job posting
- Implementing **sponsorship** programs for underrepresented women
- **Promotions** based on merit requirements, irrespective of women on maternity breaks, career level
- **Feedback mechanisms** to share experiences as well as voice concerns
- **Regular pay equity audits**
- **Sustained discussions** at authoritative level regarding diversity

Renewal and Resilience

- **Employee Audit surveys** to measure key diversity metrics regularly and benchmarking
- **Sharing stats/insights** on current representation status, areas of improvement
- **Dedicated DEI councils** to identify key concern areas, devise policies
- **Recognition and rewards** for individuals and teams for achieving professional, personal and diversity milestones
- **Training and development programmes** for candidates from marginalised community
- **Courses** for women resuming work right after breaks/sabbaticals, to facilitate upskilling them

Thank you!