

Technical Knowledge Development of Women Journalists in Bangladesh

Empowering Women in Journalism





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1. Introduction

News Network, with support from The Asia Foundation and the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO), is implementing a 3-month project titled “*Technical Knowledge Development of Female Journalists*” under the Promoting Effective, Responsive and Inclusive Governance in Bangladesh (PERI) Programme. This initiative aims empower women by enhancing their technical skills and encouraging their participation in the field of journalism in Bangladesh.

Founded in 1994, News Network is a non-governmental and non-profit organization based in Dhaka, committed to promoting gender equality in the media industry. Despite ongoing efforts, Bangladesh's media sector remains significantly gender-imbalanced. According to the 2022 global study report titled ‘*Gender Equality and Media Regulation Study Bangladesh*’¹, only 10 percent of total media employees are women, and just about 6 percent are engaged in reporting roles. The survey covered 18 media houses across the country.

- Out of 5,950 employees across 18 media houses, only 41 were women.
- Among 302 employees in decision-making positions, only 41 were women.
- Only 14% of senior content creators were women.
- Women represented just 5.7% of reporters, out of a total of 909 reporters

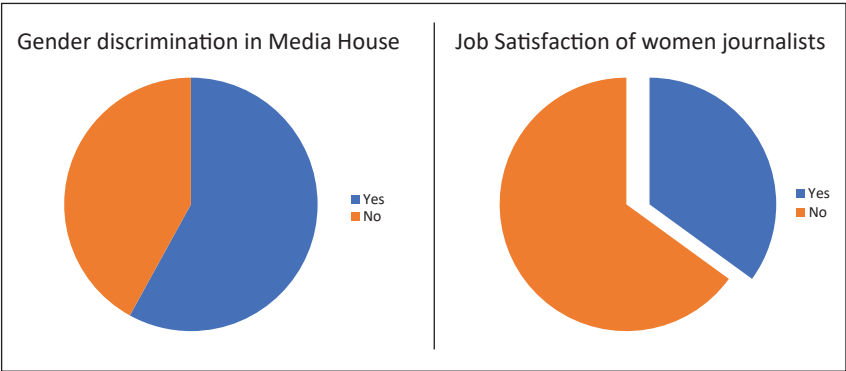
source: Gender Equality and Media Regulation Study Bangladesh, 2022

¹ Gender Equality and Media Regulation Study Bangladesh: Management and Resources Development Initiative (MRDI) and Fojo Media Institute

This training initiative was taken to address this imbalance by using strategies like changing societal attitudes, improving recruitment and retention of women journalists, providing training, and creating a safe work environment

2. Challenges Faced by Women Journalists

Women journalists in Bangladesh face a range of challenges. These challenges stem from cultural norms, societal expectations, safety concerns, and institutional support gaps. According to a 2023 survey of 120 female journalists across television, online, and print media in Bangladesh, women experience a range of difficulties, including family pressure, societal problem, pay-allowances, gender discrimination, sexual harassment and even lack of workplace². Additional barriers such as limited institutional support, lack of flexible work arrangements, and mobility constraints further hinder women’s full participation in journalism. These issues are particularly acute in field-based roles and investigative journalism.



Source: Prospects for Women in Journalism in Bangladesh, 2023

3. Overview of the initiative

The initiative aligns with the UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity, and draws upon findings from The

² Prospects for Women in Journalism in Bangladesh <https://galacticamedia.com/index.php/gmd/article/view/293/247>

Chilling , a global study documenting the scope and impact of online violence against women journalists. The training also addresses the spread of misinformation, disinformation, fake news, and the need for effective fact-checking.

In response to these challenges, News Network has developed a training program in close consultation with women journalists, media experts, and trainers. This program focuses on building the technical and professional capacities of women journalists, helping them to navigate the evolving media landscape and overcome barriers they face in the field.

Through tailored training materials and resources, the initiative seeks to equip women journalists with the necessary skills to excel in investigative journalism, online reporting, and safety protocols.

Ultimately, this program aims to empower women journalists, enabling them to not only improve their professional competencies but also contribute to social change and gender equality in the media industry.

4. Training Content and Methods

It is a 3-day residential training program, where selected participants will engage in hands-on sessions facilitated by experienced journalists, trainers, and media professionals.

The key topics of the training:

- Core journalism principles and practices
- Identifying risks and safety of women journalists
- Online reporting and introductory investigative techniques
- Story planning, journalism ethics
- Countering misinformation, disinformation and fake news
- Fact checking
- Secure communication and protection of digital devices (e.g., computers, laptops, smartphones, cameras)
- Password management

³ <https://www.unesco.org/en/safety-journalists/un-plan-action>

⁴ <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000377223>

These training sessions aim to enhance participants' confidence, professional skills, and social responsibility. By focusing on safety protocols and technical skills, the project will ensure women journalists are better equipped to report ethically and effectively, contributing to social change through quality journalism. News Network will provide guidance and support to the participants as needed, even after the project concludes.

5. Expected Impact

- Improved understanding and application of safety protocols, including digital security and prevention of harassment
- Enhanced technical and reporting skills to support effective investigative journalism
- Increased contributions from trained women journalists, helping to raise awareness and reduce gender disparity in the media.
- A ripple effect, as trained women journalists mentor their colleagues and peers, inspiring more women to pursue careers in journalism

6. Sustainability

- Program materials, including training manuals, will serve as long-term resources for future capacity-building efforts
- Trained women journalists will mentor emerging professionals, fostering a peer support network
- Partnerships with media organisations will help promote inclusive hiring practices
- The initiative will continue to contribute to the growth of gender equality journalism profession in Bangladesh

7. Replication Potential

- The training manual is adaptable and can be replicated in other regions across Bangladesh
- Learnings and outcomes can be shared with national and international stakeholders promoting women's participation in media

The learning can inspire trained women journalists to explore the existing investigative reports and initiate individual endeavours through replication.

