


Chapter 1

Discrimination, Gender Disparity, and Safety Risks in Journalism: An Introduction

Sadia Jamil

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0524-7355>

Khalifa University, UAE

Gifty Appiah-Adjei

University of Education, Ghana

ABSTRACT

International media monitoring organisations have continually called for commitment of critical actors of free expression and media freedom to ensure the safety of journalists in their strive for open societies. Another dimension to this call is the need to draw attention to the issue of gender-based threats and discrimination in the media industry and its implications for free expression and media freedom. This chapter explores discrimination, gender equality, and safety risks in journalism.

INTRODUCTION

Free expression and media freedom are critical to the roles journalists play to report the truth, expose the wrongs and hold governments and the powerful accountable in democracies (Jamil & Muschert, 2020; Jamil, 2019a, 2017b, 2015b, 2014; UNESCO, 2015, 2014). As a result, international media monitoring organisations have continually called for commitment of critical actors of free expression and media freedom to ensure the safety of journalists in their strive for open societies (Freedom House, 2019; Committee to Protect Journalists, 2019; Reporters without Borders, 2019). Another dimension to this call is the need to draw attention to the issue of gender-based threats and discrimination in the

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-7998-6686-2.ch001

media industry and its implications for free expression and media freedom. In this regard, International organisations like the UNESCO, International Women's Media Foundation (IWMF), Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP) and others have spearheaded the need to address gender discrimination and disparities that dominated the media industry globally.

GENDER EQUALITY IN JOURNALISM

Women and girls represent half of the world's population; and therefore, also half of its potential. However, today gender disparity persists everywhere and stagnates social and economic developments. Inequalities faced by girls can begin right at their birth and follow them all their lives. In many developing countries, girls are deprived of access to health care, proper nutrition, educational opportunities. Disadvantages in education translate into a lack of access to skills and limited opportunities in the labor market. Thus, women's and girls' empowerment is essential to expand economic growth and promote social development.

Gender and journalism has been a major area of concern for gender equality since the Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA) by the United Nations in 1995 (Vega Montiel, 2014). Actors of media and gender have particularly focused on gender inequality in the journalism practice because it is a form of gender discrimination (Claudia et al., 2018). According to IACHR, gender discrimination includes "any difference in treatment made on the basis of sex, which intentionally or in practice, places women in a disadvantageous situation and impairs the full recognition of their rights in the public or private spheres" (IACHR, 2011, para. 18). Therefore, "gender-based violence against women is a form of discrimination against women and a violation of their human rights" (Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, 2017, para. 14). This underscores the reason that gender-based violence in media has become one of the core focuses of research.

Evidence submits a long trajectory of gender inequalities involving the media which exposes the journalism practice as "a system where inequality between women and men can easily lead to abusive behaviors" (Padovani, Raeymaeckers & De Vyust, 2019, p.160). Male domination has characterise "the processes, practices, images and ideologies of journalism – and its power distributions" (Ruoho & Torkolla, 2018, p. 67) because historically, journalism evolved as a male dominated field (Davytan-Gevorgyan, 2016; Ross & Carter, 2011; Torkolla & Ruoho, 2011; Djerf-Piere, 2007). Over the years, increase of females into journalism training and the profession has been recorded (Fröhlich & Lafky, 2008). The increase came with the expectation that the needed critical mass of female journalists in various newsrooms across the globe to balance the existing gender inequality that will be realised yet progress towards equality has been slow (Haworth, 2000). However, issues regarding gender disparities in pay gaps, participation in decision making roles, representation and attacks against journalists persist and have been explored and critically analysed in literature (Carter, Steiner & McLaughlin, 2014; McLaughlin & Carter, 2013; Ross, 2013; Byerly, 2012).

Recent evidence of pay disparity has been established in the United States by Women's Media Center. The 2019 report on the *Status of Women in the US Media* by the organisation revealed that "female reporters earned \$2,700 less a year than their male colleagues at the Associated Press" (Women's Media Center, 2019, p.44). Another evidence of pay disparity has been found at the BBC. The organisation was unlawfully continuing an unequal system of gender pay gap for years. Therefore for many years,

5 more pages are available in the full version of this document, which may be purchased using the "Add to Cart" button on the publisher's webpage:

www.igi-global.com/chapter/discrimination-gender-disparity-and-safety-risks-in-journalism/267624

Related Content

Impact of Occupational Stress and Job Burnout on the Health of University Teachers

Krina Anadkatand Meeta Joshi (2022). *Promoting Inclusivity and Diversity Through Internet of Things in Organizational Settings* (pp. 150-170).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/impact-of-occupational-stress-and-job-burnout-on-the-health-of-university-teachers/311817

Afghan Women Authors' Discourses of Resistance: Contesting Interplay Between Gender, Place, and Identity

Garima Singh (2022). *Gender, Place, and Identity of South Asian Women* (pp. 152-177).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/afghan-women-authors-discourses-of-resistance/301441

Decolonising Special Education Using Ubuntu Lens

William Chakabwataand Ronilka Mumbire (2024). *Decolonizing Inclusive Education: Centering Heartwork, Care, and Listening* (pp. 82-106).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/decolonising-special-education-using-ubuntu-lens/346923

Teacher Education for Black Lives: Liberatory Approaches in Teacher Professional Development

Salandra Grice-Johnson (2025). *The Reclamation of Black Lives Matter in Education* (pp. 363-388).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/teacher-education-for-black-lives/382402

Thinking Language Awareness at a Science Centre: Ipads, Science, and Early Literacy Development with Multilingual Kindergarten Children in Canada

Danièle Moore, Maureen Hoskynand Jacqueline K. Mayo (2018). *International Journal of Bias, Identity and Diversities in Education* (pp. 40-63).

www.irma-international.org/article/thinking-language-awareness-at-a-science-centre/193676