



## BARRIER ANALYSIS

### INSPIRING THE NEXT GENERATION OF INDEPENDENT MEDIA IN PAKISTAN

JULY 2021

Munazza Fatima

Arooj Goheer

**Asad Jan**

*Executive Director*

**Search for Common Ground**

Address: Islamabad Pakistan

Phone: +92-300-8541166

Email: [ajan@sfcg.org](mailto:ajan@sfcg.org)

**Shahid Raheem**

*Senior Manager – Program*

**Search for Common Ground**

Address: Islamabad Pakistan

Phone: +92-333-9090486

Email: [srahim@sfcg.org](mailto:srahim@sfcg.org)



## Table of Contents

List of Figures: .....	3
Acknowledgements .....	4
Abbreviations.....	5
Executive Summary.....	7
1. Introduction .....	10
2. Literature Review.....	13
3. Methodology .....	18
Development of Questionnaires .....	19
Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) .....	19
Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) .....	20
Survey Design .....	20
Data Analysis and Outputs.....	21
Ethical Considerations.....	21
Limitations .....	22
4. Analysis of Data & Findings .....	23
Current Status of Women Participation.....	23
Professional Practice .....	23
Professional Education .....	24
Barriers to Women's Participation in Media.....	25
Structural Barriers/Legal and Policy level Barriers .....	25
Social Barriers .....	26
Cultural Barriers .....	28
Professional Barriers .....	30
Economic Barriers.....	33
Political Barriers .....	34
Workplace Barriers .....	41
5. Conclusions and Recommendations.....	43



Conclusions.....	43
Recommendations.....	45
6. Appendices.....	48
Annex 1: Study Tools.....	48
1. Focused Group Discussion (FGD) Guide for Members of Press Clubs .....	48
2. Focus Group Discussion (FGD) Guide for Students of Journalism in Partner Universities .....	50
3. Key Informant Interview Tool for Press Club Chair(s) .....	52
4. Key Informant Interview Tool for Head of Department Partner Universities (Media and Communication Department).....	54
5. Key Informant Interview Tool for Media House Editors.....	57
6. Key Informant Interview Tool for Current & Former Journalists (Male, Female) .....	60
7. Key Informant Interview Tool for Journalists (Male, Female) who abandoned their career .....	63
8. Survey for Students from Media and Communication Department(s) of targeted Universities.....	65
Annex 2: Urdu Translation of Executive Summary.....	71
Annex 3: Terms of Reference .....	76

## List of Figures:

Figure 1:Effect of Social Barriers on Pursuing Journalism Career .....	27
Figure 2 Restricting Factors for Practice of Journalism.....	27
Figure 3: Career Perceptions for Female Journalist Students.....	29
Figure 4: Perception of Journalism Students' about Women's Social Media Usage .....	37
Figure 5: Summary of Barriers to Practice of Journalism in KPK and Balochistan.....	42



## Acknowledgements

---

We are grateful to the entire journalist fraternity in Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa provinces of Pakistan for its participation in the online survey and research interviews conducted for this study. We are in awe of the courage, resilience, and integrity of these and many more men and women journalists in Pakistan who continue to perform their professional duties despite facing the worst forms of violence, threats of physical harm, adverse cultural norms steeped in violent patriarchy, and the poor financial state of the media industry. We express our earnest appreciation to them for their endeavors to promote independent media and their undeterred freedom of expression and speech. We also express deepest gratitude to Search for Common Ground Pakistan team at regional and national level for its guidance, technical support for the finalization of data collection methods, tools for data collection and the orientation of this report. We are thankful to the field team of the SFCG which remained involved with us during the data collection process, especially coordinating with universities and focal points in the times of Covid-19 and strict lockdown.



## Abbreviations

---

APJU	All Pakistan Journalists Union
BS	Bachelor of Science
CPDI	Centre for Peace and Development Initiatives
CPIJ	Committee to Protect Journalists
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
DI Khan	Dera Ismail Khan
DG IPR	Directorate General of Information & Press Relations
FOE	Freedom of Expression
FGDs	Focus Group Discussions
FNF	Friedrich-Naumann-Stiftung für die Freiheit
HRBA	Human Rights Based Approach
IPA	Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis
KII	Key Informant Interviews
KPK	Khyber Pakhtunkhwa
MS	Master of Science
NMDs	Newly Merged Districts
PECA	Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act



PID	Press Information Department
PFUJ	Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists
RTI	Right to Information
SCGP	Search for Common Ground Pakistan



## Executive Summary

---

*Women in the media face far greater challenges than men in Pakistan. While the number of women in media has grown with the expansion of the media sector since 2002, there are clear barriers to entry. Working conditions for journalists in Pakistan, on the other hand, have never remained conducive especially when it comes to sensitive or conflict reporting apart from geographical and gender-related considerations. These factors demand the attention of stakeholders to promote the participation of women as journalists.*

*The current study aims to investigate the barriers at different levels that result in restricted entry and working for women in journalism in Balochistan and the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa provinces of Pakistan. The conceptual framework of this research is drawn from an extensive literature review, given research objectives by Search for Common Ground, Pakistan (SCGP), and the resulting research questions. This research is aimed at assessing the status of women and girls' participation in media in the target areas, social norms, values, culture, and other barriers to women's participation in media (specifically journalism university programs, press clubs, and media houses) and furnish strategies and actions for promoting women's safe and secure participation in media in Pakistan, especially in target provinces.*

*A mixed-method approach was used to study different structural, economic, and safety and security, level barriers to practicing and aspiring women journalists. An inductive and deductive approach was used at the time of developing tools for research, as well during analysis and interpretation of data. The sampling frame of this research was guided by the Terms of Reference shared by SCGP, resulting in a very rich sample consisting of a wide variety of stakeholders of journalism practice to be included in this research. A survey was conducted with university students from three major universities of Balochistan and KPK using a structured online survey on SurveyMonkey. Interviews were conducted with current and former journalists, presidents of the press, heads of media houses, and the heads of departments of the surveyed universities. This data was further enriched by the focus group discussions with the members of press clubs. Conscious efforts were made to ensure the participation of women in all forms of data collection to get a gender-informed perspective on research questions. Considering that the research was focused on studying the barriers to entry and working of women journalists, gender was included in all the research activities. Data were analyzed using NVivo 11.*





*Barriers to women's entry into the journalism profession are very diverse and include social, cultural, professional, as well as legal, and policy level barriers. Analysis of data collected from quantitative and qualitative sources and as well as secondary sources shows that:*

***Structural barriers** are the most dominant form of barriers restricting the entry of women into the profession of journalism. The current research found that it is the lack of laws and relevant policies that hinder practicing journalism by both men and women journalists. Even if there are laws such as the Protection Against Harassment of Women at Workplace Act (2010), and Protection of Journalists Act (2014), they are not supported by appropriate policies at both national and professional practice level, worsening the working conditions for journalists in Pakistan.*

***At the social level,** findings reveal that the perceptions of society about women entering the media sector pose a major barrier. Society does not support the idea of women working with men as required in journalism as the social norms do not approve of women working with men, sharing a workspace, and be seen in public with stranger males. Similarly, the issue of women appearing in front of the camera, working late hours, and engaging with strangers are socially unacceptable, leading to the majority of women leaving the profession. These barriers affect more women than men. If women decided to go against these norms, they are subject to social harassment and, even punishments, by the so-called local leaders of informal ethnic and social structures.*

***Cultural barriers** are a result of pressure that families of women journalists face. Notwithstanding such pressures, many women journalists abandon their profession. These barriers are a result of ethnic and tribal culture. Cultural barriers are derived from and strengthened by the society at large which supports the idea that women should stay at home. Combined with the social barriers, these result in hindering entry and participation of women in journalism as a profession.*

*Such factors are further intensified by **professional barriers**, including structures that require women to be present and available 24/7 in some cases. Lack of safe and gender-sensitive facilities such as public transport, make it even more difficult for women to continue journalism as a profession.*

***Economic barriers** including low salaries, lack of job security, and very few prospects in the field of journalism are some barriers that pose a problem for both men and women journalists. The minimal opportunities available in far-flung areas of both Balochistan and KPK pose serious challenges to women's working, especially when these women aspire to work as*





*journalists only to support their families financially. This situation is more prevalent in Balochistan as the absence of mainstream media in the province leads to strong provincial-level competition for the very few positions available. Such factors leave little margin for negotiation with the employer and result in brain drain from journalism. Further, the ongoing Covid-19 Pandemic has affected the journalism profession severely as many journalists, including women, either lost their jobs or are affected by massive reductions in their salaries.*

**Political barriers**, though present and prevailing in the field of journalism, were only indirectly mentioned by the journalists, and often overlapped with security issues. Lack of freedom of speech was a commonly recurring theme in surveys, interviews, and focus group discussions. Political interference in coverage of sensitive issues was reported as the most common form of political barriers faced by journalists, both men, and women.

However, workplace harassment remains one of the topmost concerns shared by women journalists when it comes to personal safety and security. Despite having the laws against sexual harassment at the workplace, a large majority of both journalism students, and practicing journalists, both male and female, expressed that sexual harassment at the workplace is one the reasons women end up quitting their aspiration to be a journalist.

**Key Recommendations**, based on these findings, include:

- *Provide training and mentorship programs for journalism students, novice journalists, as well as for the seasoned journalists who need to upgrade their skillset categorizing the needs according to their role.*
- *Develop linkages of universities with media houses and press clubs to reduce the skill demand and supply gap.*
- *Create a platform for developing public- private partnerships with universities to arrange for Career Counselors/Advisors.*
- *Promote a safe working environment for women journalists through training programs, creating social set-ups for women journalists to voice their issues, and revise policies of press club, and media houses where possible.*
- *Develop strategies and programs to enhance awareness about the roles and significance of journalism, especially the role of women journalists through the presence in national mainstream media and utilizing social media platforms of universities, press clubs, and SFCG Pakistan itself.*
- *Advocate and lobby with government agencies/authorities and policymakers to develop conducive working policies for journalists, especially for women.*
- *Organize focused dialogue and lobby for women's recruitment by media houses and ensure provisions for their safety and security*



## 1. Introduction

---

Despite the Constitutional provision of Freedom of Expression (FoE), Right to Speech and Right to Information (RTI), Pakistan ranks 145 out of 180 countries in Freedom of Press Index<sup>1</sup> in 2020 as compared to 142/100 in 2019, scored 26 out of 100 on Freedom of Net Index<sup>2</sup> and was declared “partly free” scoring an overall 38/100 in Freedom House report of political and civil liberties, 2020. The country also ranked 8/13 on Global Impunity Index<sup>3</sup> in 2019 which clearly highlights the deteriorated condition of the country's constitutional commitments towards these indicators, especially for journalists. In one of its reports, the Committee to Protect Journalists declared Pakistan as one of the most dangerous countries for journalists practicing the right to speech and freedom of expression online and offline.<sup>4</sup> Media workers and academics have suffered wrongful criminal cases<sup>5</sup> and arrests<sup>6</sup> for their expression, and are being targeted with malicious social media campaigns<sup>7</sup> to discredit their work. Dissenting voices are drowned out by a coordinated online abuse<sup>8</sup>. These pressures are increasingly forcing individuals, especially women journalists, to practice self-censorship<sup>9</sup> as one mode of restrictive journalism. Meanwhile, news organizations are struggling to report freely and independently, and the government has expressed its interest in establishing a converged media regulatory body that could also police the online space<sup>10</sup>.

Violence against journalists is becoming a matter of routine in Pakistan. The conflict-affected regions of the country. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province, North and South Waziristan, Newly Merged Districts (NMDs) and Balochistan Province are hotspots of journalists’ killing and kidnapping. In tribal areas within the Peshawar border region of Pakistan and along the border with Afghanistan, investigative journalists confront fatal safety threats. Pakistan’s journalists are not only at risk of organized crimes in the conflict areas, but they also face diverse safety risks in the country’s major cities including Karachi, Islamabad, Lahore, Peshawar, and Quetta.

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://rsf.org/en/ranking#>

<sup>2</sup> <https://freedomhouse.org/countries/freedom-net/scores>

<sup>3</sup> <https://cpj.org/reports/2019/10/getting-away-with-murder-killed-justice/>

<sup>4</sup> Committee to Protect Journalist – 2017

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.dawn.com/news/1476622>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.rferl.org/a/pakistan-arrests-journalist-academic-critical-of-authorities/29761091.html>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.digitalrightsmonitor.pk/drm-investigates-twitter-accounts-behind-the-hashtag-arrestantipakjournalists/>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.dawn.com/news/1483248>

<sup>9</sup> <http://digitalrightsmonitor.pk/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/report-1.pdf>

<sup>10</sup> <https://digitalrightsfoundation.pk/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Legal-Analysis-Harm-Rules-1.pdf>



Consequently, the Pakistani journalists are not able to practice their right to freedom of expression and they are unable to work safely<sup>11</sup>.

Women in the media face far greater challenges than men in Pakistan. While the number of women in media has grown with the expansion of the media sector since 2002, there are multiple barriers to entry resulting in women representing less than five percent of the estimated 20,000 journalists in Pakistan.<sup>12</sup> Not only do they face challenges entering the sector, but once they have joined, they face high risks to their safety and security. Female journalists face threats of sexual violence and harassment, including via social media.<sup>13</sup> A survey of women journalists found that 38 percent fear for their physical security and 35 percent have experienced intimidation, threats, or abuse concerning their work.<sup>14</sup> The lack of support from within the sector, colleagues, and managers, as well as strong cultural norms that support patriarchal power structures, leaves women vulnerable to these threats both in the field and in the workplace. These risks impact not only women's capacity to partake in the sector but also result in available media content reflecting fewer voices and perspectives of women, particularly in the realm of current affairs.<sup>15</sup>

Working conditions for journalists in Pakistan, on the other hand, have never remained conducive especially when it comes to sensitive or conflict reporting apart from geographical and gender-related considerations. According to various studies carried out by national and international researchers, Pakistan is said to be one of the most dangerous countries for journalists to work independently on sensitive reporting.<sup>16</sup> Released in October 2020, Committee to Protect Journalists' global impunity index declared Pakistan to be the 9th worst country for the journalists as they are slain, and their killers are set free. Pakistan could only rise to one place from 2019 when it was 8th on the index list. Between 2010 to 2020, 35 journalists were killed in Pakistan during dangerous assignments, fell prey to crossfire, or murdered<sup>17</sup>. As the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) only provides data on journalists' killings in the field with "motives confirmed" i.e. cross-fire, dangerous assignments, and murders, none of the female journalists could make it to the list as the Committee does not collect data on female journalists' murders in any category they are killed in i.e. cultural and social conflict because the motives are usually said to be

<sup>11</sup> JAMIL, S. (2017). Freedom under pressure? Threats to journalists' safety in Pakistan. In: C. Carlsson and R. Pahari, Assault on journalism. Gothenburg, NORDICOM.

<sup>12</sup> Adnan Rehmat (2017) *Life as a Woman Journalist in Pakistan: Threats, Harassment, and Rejection*

<sup>13</sup> US Department of State (2019) *2018 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Pakistan*

<sup>14</sup> Solidarity Centre/Civic Action Resources (2016) *Survey Report: Working Conditions of Women Journalists in Pakistan*

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Committee to Protect Journalists – 2017

<sup>17</sup> [https://cpj.org/data/killed/2020/?status=Killed&motiveConfirmed%5B%5D=Confirmed&type%5B%5D=Journalist&typeOfDeath%5B%5D=Crossfire&typeOfDeath%5B%5D=Dangerous%20Assignment&typeOfDeath%5B%5D=Murder&gender%5B%5D=Male&cc\\_fips%5B%5D=PK&start\\_year=2010&end\\_year=2020&group\\_by=location](https://cpj.org/data/killed/2020/?status=Killed&motiveConfirmed%5B%5D=Confirmed&type%5B%5D=Journalist&typeOfDeath%5B%5D=Crossfire&typeOfDeath%5B%5D=Dangerous%20Assignment&typeOfDeath%5B%5D=Murder&gender%5B%5D=Male&cc_fips%5B%5D=PK&start_year=2010&end_year=2020&group_by=location)



unknown and their murders are treated as intimate partner violence and categorized under domestic violence.

The non-conducive working environment for women journalists does not allow many women to compete on a career path with men, not permitting them to find their way to sensitive reporting through effective representation in media houses and press clubs. This is coupled with other reasons such as cultural barriers, social challenges, lack of career counseling, capacity challenges, acceptance at press club level and willingness of women to join district level press clubs, coupled with lack of opportunities, political challenges, and hostile environment in the said field. In one of its studies on press clubs of Pakistan, Friedrich-Naumann-Stiftung für die Freiheit, collected data from 86 press clubs out of which 69 press do not have women members across Pakistan, while women continue to work as a freelancer with different media houses<sup>18</sup>. This does not only reflect the gender imbalance, as in the membership of the press clubs, but also an outcome of social conditions that are hostile to women forming opinions, in general. Coupled with other manifold reasons, women's exclusion from the basic institution of journalism i.e., the press clubs, leads to exclusion of women journalists from mainstream media.

The study in coming sections will shed light as to how socio-cultural, economic, political, safety and security-related barriers and, capacity-related challenges hinder women's inclusion and progress in independent journalism.

---

<sup>18</sup> [https://www.individualland.com/downloads/the\\_press\\_clubs\\_of\\_pakistan.pdf](https://www.individualland.com/downloads/the_press_clubs_of_pakistan.pdf)



## 2. Literature Review

---

Women's entry into the journalism field dates to the 19th century. It started within the areas of writing, editing, and publishing while their work was mainly labeled as social reformers. These early women writers wrote about the topics which were seen and categorized as "misled by alien cultural influence". Across South Asia, as different studies of time reveal, women entering this field were looked at as 'bizarre beings', vilified, and ridiculed. Within this social framework, women in nurturing and caregiving roles, such as those of teachers, physicians, nurses, and para-medical staff, have earned acceptance as it is considered an extension of their traditional family responsibilities (P. 156).<sup>19</sup>

With the expansion of electronic media in Pakistan since 2002, the barriers to entry into journalism for women shifted to barriers to maintenance. This mainly revolves around job stagnation and discrepancies of salaries for women journalists in media, disparities between men and women in the distribution of job role, workplace harassment, challenges to key management/senior/leadership positions, family and work-life balance, and understanding of sensitive journalism.

*"The challenges for a woman to become a journalist begin at home"* stated a Pashton trainee in a training program conducted by Thomas Foundation – the definitive reason as to why a large proportion of Pakistani female students passing out of Media and Communication Departments across the country are not found in the mainstream media<sup>20</sup>.

With very few female journalists in Pakistan, the media industry has always remained unrepresentative to inform public opinion on women's issues. One of the reports published by the Diplomat in 2018, with insights from different surveys conducted in 2017, highlighted the serious problems women journalists face in different media outlets. Although sexual harassment by immediate line managers and other co-workers surpasses various other challenges, women

---

<sup>19</sup> Sakha, T., and Shah, N. A. (2019). Challenges faced by women in journalism: An analytical case study of the situation in Pakistan. Pakistan's Journal of Women's Studies: Alam-e-Niswan, 26(2), pp. 149-172.

<sup>20</sup> <https://www.thomsonfoundation.org/latest/challenges-of-becoming-a-journalist-in-a-restrictive-society/>



journalists shared that the social pressure of being stigmatized as “bad women” because of their career choice is no less of a challenge in a male- dominated society. Their character is explicitly questioned, while families mostly remained upset with women for entering a “traditionally male-dominated” world of media. Women respondents of various surveys covered under this report mentioned having family support/or support by a man in their family without which they would have rather given up on their dreams. The survey also revealed that women were expected to adopt masculine traits to compete in the sector and to work “side-by-side” male journalists. Lack of women- friendly policies i.e., maternity leave, transportation for women working in night shifts, equal remuneration, and benefits for the same job/level were significant challenges highlighted by women journalists in the survey<sup>21</sup>.

Women Media Center through a study in 2009 revealed that electronic media has successfully opened new possibilities for young women and many women are gradually adopting journalism as an occupation. Yet the challenges and problems they face in starting their career in this field have no boundaries<sup>22</sup>.

Another research conducted by Shabir et al. (2009) unveiled restrictions on women in some sectors of journalism like crime, violence, and so on where they faced many complications and limitations<sup>23</sup>.

A study conducted by Women Media Centre in 2015 with 70 women journalists in Karachi stated that no representation from Baloch women is found in mass media in Karachi whilst a very few numbers of women out of four million Pashton population in Karachi are found in the media<sup>24</sup>.

Similarly, a survey conducted by Solidarity Centre uncovered that, in both electronic and print media, an estimated number of women of all the journalists is only around 750 across the country (P. 9)<sup>25</sup>. The survey with a sample of 250 female journalists revealed the disparaging working conditions for female journalists including but not limited to lack of membership in the national body of the journalists (PFUJ), working without a contract which limits right to any benefits provided by the concerned media houses, discrimination in remuneration/salary and benefits, availability of sufficient supply and equipment for assignment purposes, promotion to leadership positions while only 8% of the targeted women journalists for the survey shared to have received

<sup>21</sup> <https://thediplomat.com/2018/07/the-challenges-of-pakistans-female-journalists/>

<sup>22</sup> <http://www.wmcpk.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/Women-In-Journalism.pdf>

<sup>23</sup> Shabir, Ghulam, Aqdas, Naveed and Iqbal, Zafar, 2009. “Women Journalism in Pakistan”. Pakistan Journal of Social Sciences, 29 (2): 365-376.

<sup>24</sup> <http://www.wmcpk.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/Women-In-Journalism.pdf>

<sup>25</sup> Journalists registered with different press clubs of the country and Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists (PFUJ)





any sort of physical security, digital security, and source protection (P. 8)<sup>26</sup>. 71% of the respondents from the same survey mentioned that they have not received any kind of training for their career growth and professional development.

*Life as a Woman Journalist in Pakistan - Threats, Harassment and Rejection* (2017) compiled by Freedom Network for International Media Support, as index details the self-narrated stories of 50 women journalists as to what they follow through their professional lives. The stories of these 50 women highlighted harassment from colleagues as well as social and structural constraints while all women journalists involved in the study testified that they were likely to be threatened for their journalism work in the field, along with persistent sidelining and intimidation in their offices. Throwing women into soft news beats was said to be the most effective method in the hands of media houses to keep women journalists from moving up on the job promotional scale, argued all fifty women journalists<sup>27</sup>.

Apart from the studies conducted to highlight the existing challenges faced by women journalists globally, studies conducted in individual countries of South Asia add further harrowing details concerning women journalists. Sasikala et al. (2013) conducted a study in Tamilnadu, India which uncovered that the profession of media and journalism creates an imbalance in the family life due to extra workload as women are often unable to perform their household chores. The study suggested having a transport facility for women working in the night shifts with a forwarding recommendation to have women assigned with issues of more importance i.e., politics, foreign affairs, and crime without any discrimination.

A similar study conducted in Bangladesh uncovered that women journalists, in addition to their work-related discrimination, are also victimized by their intimate family members, including worsening marital life challenges. “A double workload – unshared domestic work and long working hours at the office –leave women in a quagmire”<sup>28</sup>

Not only in Asian societies, women in under-developed regions like Sub-Saharan Africa encounter the identical issues with less or more intensity at different levels. A study conducted by African Women in Media – an international organization (2020), in its analysis of motivations and aspirations presented that less than half of the women enter media with the passion they had for joining media. The ones who do not enter with an already aspired role, they struggle through the ladder of progress within their career with a clear set of timelines in many cases. This may take an

<sup>26</sup> <https://www.solidaritycenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/Pakistan.Women-Journalist-Survey-Report.12.15.SC-and-CAR.pdf>

<sup>27</sup> Rehmat, Adnan. 2017. *Life as a Woman Journalist in Pakistan. Threats, Harassment and Rejection*. Freedom Network, Pakistan. *Life as a Woman Journalist in Pakistan: Threats, Harassment ..* [www.fnpc.org](http://www.fnpc.org) > [life-as-a-woman-journalist-in-pakistan-threats-harassment](http://www.fnpc.org/life-as-a-woman-journalist-in-pakistan-threats-harassment)

<sup>28</sup> Safa and Akter. 2015. “Challenges of Female Journalists in Bangladesh”. *Humanities and Social Sciences*, 3 (5): 207-214





average 1-5 years of journalistic career to reach the aspired goal. Family relationships and domestic partnership (in the said region)<sup>29</sup> said to have an impact on the career for 33.6% respondents of the study while having children was reported to be a negative impact for career growth by the 17% population of the study (P 42)<sup>30</sup>.

A study conducted in Nigerian context gathered insights of women for the effects of their career choice on their marital life. 69.5% of the participants shared that they will not be bothered if their journalistic career interfered with their marital life. Interestingly, all of them were single at the time of study. The other respondents (only 5) stated that the effects of their career choice affecting their family life bothers them<sup>31</sup>. Another study conducted by Melki and Mallat (2016) involved survey of 50 journalists and individual interviews of 26 journalists. The study revealed that the respondents (male journalists) from different levels of hierarchy blatantly shared that the women journalists make ‘glass ceiling’ harder for themselves as they enter ‘safer’ roles of getting married and having children<sup>32</sup>. This highlights the manifestation of barriers for women in a society when culturally set gender roles interfere with the women’s work and career choice. This also sheds light on the inequalities in the journalism sector that denies women of their rightful role in the media despite all the efforts they make because of their perceived gender/cultural role.

Harassment in the newsrooms is not a new phenomenon to the world which results in intimidating women in the workplace and discourages them. Some leave their career; some continue without complaining yet with the fear of intimidation remains there. As far as reporting of the problem is concerned, women largely do not report due to the fear of ‘victimization and retaliation’<sup>33</sup>. The study was one of the largest surveys of its kind and presented harassment at the workplace as one of the contributory reasons which either promote this type of environment because of women’s silence, or women leaving journalism as a career. *“Sexual harassment has always affected me negatively since I have gone through this in all the media houses I have worked for. Sometimes I would feel like quitting”* (P 39) (stated a journalist who was part of a study in Sub Saharan Africa conducted by African Women in Media in collaboration with FOJO: Media Institute in 2020)<sup>34</sup>.

<sup>29</sup> A form of marital relationship in Sub-Saharan Africa

<sup>30</sup> <https://fojo.se/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Barriers-to-Women-Journalists-In-Sub-Saharan-Africa5.pdf>

<sup>31</sup> Emeyeonu, N. 1991. “Motivations For Choice Of Course And Career Preferences Of Nigerian Female Students”. *Africa Media Review* 5 (2): 71-83

<sup>32</sup> Melki, Jad P., and Sarah E. Mallat. 2016. “Block Her Entry, Keep Her Down And Push Her Out”. *Journalism Studies* 17 (1): 57-79. doi:10.1080/1461670x.2014.962919.

<sup>33</sup> North, Louise. 2014. “The Gender Of “Soft” And “Hard” News”. *Journalism Studies* 17 (3): 356-373. doi:10.1080/1461670x.2014.987551

<sup>34</sup> <https://fojo.se/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Barriers-to-Women-Journalists-In-Sub-Saharan-Africa5.pdf>



Apart from harassment at workplace, women journalists are prone to online harassment, trolling and coordinated campaigns of online threats<sup>35</sup> which result in self-censorship. Self-censorship in journalism has traditionally been viewed in connection with censorship and State-led direct controls on the news media. Individual motivations for self-censorship might include physical safety, job security, maintenance of friendly terms with official sources, ideological loyalty, and financial compensation while organizational motivations might include the safeguarding of the media owners' business or political interests, reduction in threat of forced closure, avoidance of legal or regulatory sanctions, and increased likelihood of getting advertisements<sup>36</sup>. Based on in-depth interviews and focus groups discussions with Pakistani female journalists, Jamil (2020)<sup>37</sup> found that most of the women had faced sexual harassment, psychological abuse, verbal abuse at their news organizations<sup>38</sup> (workplace), discrimination in recruitment and wages, and online threats. The likelihood of experiencing workplace harassment was higher among women journalists working for television channels, than other media outlets. The respondents identified their bosses, male colleagues, and members of religious organizations as the three abusers at the workplace or while on assignment.

A survey of 100 Pakistani female journalists by International Center for Research and Development revealed that most women faced gender-based discrimination by their male colleagues and seniors and at their news organizations (workplace) and the discriminatory practices affected their journalism work<sup>39</sup>. The examples of workplace harassment and discrimination identified by the women journalists in the study included inappropriate advances by male colleagues, the use of insults and sarcasm to demean or downplay women's news work, threats of job termination for refusing sexual favors, and not considering women journalists for important news assignments.

It is evident from the literature that women in journalism field, around the world, face discrimination enveloped in different forms and types. The situation deteriorates where women traditional roles counter their job choices, traditional patriarchal environment does not let them thrive and opportunities are not ample for them to flourish in this field.

<sup>35</sup> <https://www.rferl.org/a/30792594.html>

<sup>36</sup> Elbaz S., Magal T., Nets-Zehngut R., Abutbul G. (2017). Self-Censorship of Narratives of Political Violence in the Media. In: Bar-Tal D., Nets-Zehngut R., Sharvit K. (eds) Self-Censorship in Contexts of Conflict. Peace Psychology Book Series. Springer, Cham. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-63378-7\\_6](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-63378-7_6)

<sup>37</sup> Jamil, S. (2020). Suffering in silence: the resilience of Pakistan's female journalists to combat sexual harassment, threats and discrimination. *Journalism Practice*, 14(2), pp. 150-170. DOI: 10.1080/17512786.2020.1725599

<sup>38</sup> This is a widely used term for media houses and news agencies in media research

<sup>39</sup> Hussain, M. S. (2013). Women in media face discrimination; a critical study on the issues of Pakistani female journalists. *Proceedings of Women's Studies*. International Center for Research and Development, Sri Lanka. Accessed at <http://bit.ly/34sdSLB>



### 3. Methodology

---

Desk research and review of existing studies on the lived experiences of Pakistani journalists, and the barriers to entry in the journalism profession was conducted at the initial stage of this research. This initial data provided a theoretical understanding of the contextual information and informed development of different set of questionnaires for the groups involved in the study i.e., Press Club Chairpersons, Press Club members, Media House representatives, current male and female journalists, university mass media department heads, students who have abandoned the career of journalism after completing their respective degrees in both provinces (Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan). The data and analysis were used to frame the focus of subsequent interviews and focus group discussions as well as the survey conducted with university students. This further ensured that the study addresses the limitations of previous studies yet did not replicate the existing research conducted on the subject matter.

While the study intends to analyze the overall working environment of the media and journalism sector focusing on the barriers to women in the sector, research questions were elicited around the research objectives which are as follows:

- Status of women and girls' participation in media
- Social norms, values, and cultural barriers to women participation in media
- Strategies and action for promoting women's safe and secure participation in media

These research objectives were split into fifteen (15) smaller categories, followed by the manner of questions, based on which the research instruments were prepared. The results of the study are combined with phenomenological approach<sup>40</sup> that seeks to discover some of the underlying structure or essence of that experience through the intensive study of the targeted phenomenon with an addition of quantitative survey to establish the rigor of the data received from the field. The purpose of using a combined approach was to minimize the chances of situational biases, as well as to provide strong data analysis applying both methods. In social sciences research, phenomenology explores how people make sense of experience, especially to elicit shared

---

<sup>40</sup> [Speziale HS, Carpenter DR. Qualitative Research in Nursing: Advancing the Humanistic Imperative. Wolters Kluwer health; 2011.](#)



meaning<sup>41</sup>. For this research “barriers” of all types were the phenomenon under consideration to develop deeper understanding about the key barriers’ women face upon entry and practice of journalism. Besides, this approach was also used to identify the common experiences of women journalists who have faced these challenges (as drawn in the research objectives). This form of inquiry is best suited for phenomenological research<sup>42</sup>.

While phenomenological research relies on in-depth interviews with people who have directly experienced the phenomenon of interest, the study developed different tools for such an in-depth analysis while categorizing the population of interest.

Following methodology was adopted for the research to gather in-depth data from both provinces with relevant populations.

### Development of Questionnaires

In total, 9 research tools (8 for qualitative data collection and 1 for quantitative data collection) were developed for the overall study keeping in view the study population and the needs of data which was required from each group. The qualitative questionnaires were developed to gather the lived experiences of the individuals who were divided into different categories whereas the quantitative tool was administered to engage students from targeted universities.

### Key Informant Interviews (KIIs)

As the study intended to gather the lived experiences of the individuals (male and female journalists), this was the most wide-ranging part of the research. The study conducted 6 KIIs of Press Club Chairs (3 in KPK and 3 in Balochistan), 8 KIIs of Media House Heads/Bureau Chief(s) (4 in KPK, 4 in Balochistan)<sup>43</sup>, 12 KIIs of current and former journalists (6 in KPK and 6 in Balochistan)<sup>44</sup>, 3 KIIs with Head of Media and Communication Department from targeted universities (2 in KPK, 1 in Balochistan), 7 KIIs with the students who abandoned the field of journalism and media after completion of their degree (3 in KPK, 4 in Balochistan)<sup>45</sup>. In total, 36 interviews were carried out against the total 38 which was planned at the initial stage of the

<sup>41</sup> Patton, M. Q. (2001). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods*. (3rd Ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

<sup>42</sup> Cresswell, W. J. (2013). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches*. (3rd. Ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage

<sup>43</sup> Originally 3 in KP and 5 in Balochistan were proposed yet the situation of media working, journalists strike and working conditions in Balochistan only allowed 4 interviews (even those with great difficulty). The backlog was covered from KP with the equal division in both provinces.

<sup>44</sup> Originally 7 in Balochistan (3 males, 4 females) and 5 in KP (2 males, 3 females) were planned. However, only 1 female was available for an interview in Balochistan (all others refused) – the backlog was covered from KP. Even though, less women participation was seen in KP interviews too as women journalists were reluctant and refused for the interview. In total, only 4 females (3 from KP, 1 from Balochistan) were interviewed under this category.

<sup>45</sup> Originally 8 interviews were planned from both provinces. 2 female students and 1 male student were interviewed in KP while the researcher could engage with only 4 male students as none of the female students (from the data provided by the university department) agreed to an in-person or telephonic interview.



research. The interview questions focused on the research questions under three different categories i.e., current working environment, barriers (structural, economic, political, and safety and security), to further explore the strategies and actions which may be applied to promote independent media in both provinces with increased women participation. 34 interviews were conducted in-person whereas 2 were conducted via phone, recorded, and transcribed.

### Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)

6 FGDs were arranged with the members of press clubs (male and female journalists) in KPK (Peshawar, DI Khan and Orakzai) and Balochistan (Quetta, Sibbi and Pishin) provinces. Each FGD engaged 7-10 members of the respective district press clubs<sup>46</sup>. 6 Women were part of Peshawar Press Club FGD whereas 1 woman participated in DI Khan FGD. In Quetta, FGD was conducted with limited number of journalists due to the enforcement of 144 and restrictions on social gathering (3-4 people), however, 5 journalists of the press club participated in the discussion – it was ensured that the group practices SOPs (social distancing, use of mask and hand-sanitizer). Although women are members of the press club in Quetta, none of them participated in the FGD. In Sibbi, Pishin, and Orakzai, however, there are no women representation in the press clubs and women are not seen in the field of journalism either as independent journalists or associated with any media house.

### Survey Design

A survey was designed to engage students from the targeted universities. The survey was developed on Survey Monkey and the link was shared with a focal person (nominated by Search for Common Ground Pakistan) for sharing with students in different University Groups. In total, 75 students completed this survey (12 from University of Peshawar, 16 from Gomal University and 45 from University of Balochistan). In total, 46 female students (63%) and 27 male students (37%) filled the survey questionnaire; 1 skipped the response. All the students were from BS Program 8th Semester (49%), and Master/MS Program 4th Semester (51%)<sup>47</sup>.

<sup>46</sup> Initially, a focus group discussion was planned with students of one of the targeted universities, yet the lockdown situation in both provinces did not allow to gather students for this purpose.

<sup>47</sup> Initially the survey was planned to be carried out by the engagement of enumerators in each University. However, due to Covid-19 related restrictions and lockdown immediately before the data collection process which hindered the intended process. Link of the questionnaire was shared with university focal persons in each university and multiple follow-ups were made with the universities to complete the process.



## Data Analysis and Outputs

The methodology of the study combined two different methods of data collection i.e., Quantitative and Qualitative, Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) was carried out to present findings. For social sciences and behavioral studies, IPA is widely used to provide detailed examinations of personal lived experience. It is explicitly idiographic in its commitment to examining the detailed experience of each case in turn, prior to the move to more general claims.

As the study suggested various research questions, a hybrid coding technique was adopted for analysis for which deductive themes were developed. While the development of FGD and KII tools were guided by the research questions, the initial list of deductive coding was also derived from research questions which were then split into broader categories of barriers and strategies to cope up with these barriers. The theming process went through three levels of coding i.e., open, axial, and selective. However, only the initial process was done manually where data transcribed from the KIIs and FGDs was arranged in the already developed themes. NVivo 11 was used for advanced coding and arrangements of data at the second stage of data analysis.

Quantitative data which came from SurveyMonkey was analyzed and interpreted to understand the students' perspective on their opportunities and challenges to entry into this field.

Qualitative data was cleaned and coded in NVivo 11. A mind map was developed based on the analysis of data and the data was further subjected to thematic analysis to classify the barriers faced by women journalists. The categorization and coding not only helped to identify the strongest and the most prevalent barriers, but it also informed the development of recommendations that are based on ground level realities.

This report has been organized according to the themes that emerged from the coding. The main emerging themes surrounding barriers for women participation in journalism found in this study were Structural Barriers which include Social and Professional Barriers, Economic Barriers, Political Barriers and Barriers related to Safety and Security.

## Ethical Considerations

Given the sensitive nature of the study, topics and experiences shared, all participants have been anonymized. While the KIIs and FGDs were recorded, this was solely for the purpose of transcription and analysis by the researcher. All the data was stored after anonymizing it, in password protected computers to which only the researchers have access.





To meet ethical guidelines of Do No Harm, HRBA, Confidentiality and Anonymity, the recordings' viewing permissions were limited access and kept private. Similarly, transcripts were anonymized. Quotes used in this study include the location and role of the participant in the media. Where the content of the quote holds greater risk of identification, only the role, gender and locations have been mentioned as the study requires this for building insights from both provinces. Informed consent was sought from all participants and the data was collected entirely on a voluntary basis.

### Limitations

Although a sufficient range of participants (male, female) were involved in the data collection process from six districts of both provinces, the study highlighted that there are vast differences in the context, understanding, challenges as well as patterns of structural inequalities which incumber the role of women in independent media. For example, the press clubs in provincial capitals have participation of women (Quetta and Peshawar) whereas no women are found in other district press clubs. Even a woman journalist present in the FGD in DI Khan was not a member of the press club. Level of education, security situation, socio economic and socio-cultural aspects pose different levels of threats to women engagement in media and the press. This is one reason that the study has proposed different set of recommendations for different groups of stakeholders based on the data collection process so that each level of inequality may be addressed.

It is also important to note that the study was conducted in the period of Covid-19 lockdown situation in both provinces. Quetta was under Section 144 and social gatherings of any types were prohibited under the law. Difficulties were also faced in arranging FGDs in other parts of the provinces apart from the provincial capital. There were number of women who refused to be the part of research, some were interviewed on phone and some were skipped due to the need of extensive travelling involved in far-flung areas of the provinces which is why their views and stories could not be captured especially of the female students in Balochistan who abandoned their career.

The Survey was conducted in English language. Although the sample was university students at both universities, it must be noted that English is third language in both provinces with the sequence of Balochi/Pashto, Urdu, and English and some of the students might not have understood the questions with the same spirit as it was made part of the research. In future, such surveys may be translated into national language for a better understanding of the group involved.





## 4. Analysis of Data & Findings

### Current Status of Women Participation

#### Professional Practice

While journalism in Pakistan is a tough field to follow, women find it even harder to pursue a career in journalism. According to careful estimates, women represent less than five percent of the total 20,000 journalists of Pakistan<sup>48</sup>. A national level survey on working conditions of women journalists rendered the total number of women journalists in Pakistan to be 750, making 3.75% of the total population of journalists<sup>49</sup>. The absence of women from the basic yet the most important institution of journalism speaks about the barriers and difficulties which these far-flung districts are exposed to for the engagement of women participation.

As one goes to the provincial level, this dearth of women participation in journalism gets even more alarming. In 2017, in Balochistan, the number of journalists was reported to be seven, less than one percent of the total journalists in the province<sup>50</sup>. Geographically speaking, these journalists are concentrated in the provincial capital, Quetta, with no women journalists in rest of the 31 districts<sup>51</sup>. Whereas in KPK, no data about number of women journalists is available. However, following is the distribution of women in the Press Clubs included in this study.

*Table 1: Situation of Gender Distribution of Journalists*

District	Male	Female
Peshawar	500	30
DI Khan	32	2
Orakzai	27	0
Quetta	142	3
Sibbi	22	0
Pishin	9	0

These numbers give a clear idea of appallingly low level of women participation. Where the proportion of women in press clubs is higher in KPK, i.e., 30 (5%), this number is 3 (2%) in

<sup>48</sup> <https://www.mediasupport.org/blogpost/journalists-in-pakistan-push-to-end-abuse-of-women-in-media/>

<sup>49</sup> <https://www.solidaritycenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/Pakistan.Women-Journalist-Survey-Report.12.15.SC-and-CAR.pdf>

<sup>50</sup> <https://tribune.com.pk/story/1425881/dearth-female-journalists-balochistan>

<sup>51</sup> Ibid



Balochistan. As highlighted in the literature, the trend of geographical distribution of women journalists has been found consistent with the meagre literature available. It should be noted that this geographical distribution is same for men and women but becomes more pronounced for women journalists who already have very low levels of participation. It is evident that the number of practicing women journalists is only in fractions in both KPK and Balochistan.

This scarcity of female journalists was also proven by primary data collected from the field.

*“There are only a few females in the Press Clubs. The ones who are members, do not hold any positions. There are only a few opportunities for progress [in terms of career progression].”*

(Current Journalist, Female, KPK)

*“We do not have a single female member in the press club here.”*

(President Press Club, Pishin, Balochistan)

The trend varies geographically with the provincial capitals having comparatively more women journalists. However, the situation is far worse in the far-flung areas of both provinces. This information was shared by different stakeholders:

*“In urban areas of Balochistan like Sibbi, Quetta, Lorelai and Jaffar Abad where education ratio is higher and people are sensible and educated, females have no/less issues to work in journalism. On the contrary, in areas like Deraa Bugti, Sui, Kohlo and other similar areas, people do not support women to work, and women cannot work in journalism.”*

(President Press Club, Sibbi, Balochistan)

Hence, where there is a general lack of female journalists at national and provincial level, there are also stark intra-provincial differences. Upon further investigation, it becomes clear that such differences have deep roots and originate at journalism education level.

## Professional Education

In terms of education, universities in both KPK and Balochistan are offering Bachelor and master's degree programs in journalism. However, it is the enrollment in these programs which can be used as a proxy indicator for assessing inclusivity of women in Professional Journalism Education. Apart from the quantitative data gathered from the universities to see the enrollment in the programs offered by media and journalism departments, analysis of qualitative data also shows that enrolment of women is much lesser than the men students in the degrees related to journalism.

Quite a few practicing and non-practicing journalists endorsed this:



*“Around 50 to 60 students passed out from the Media and Journalism Department when I was studying journalism. Although the number of female students was very less, not even one or two of them joined this profession.”*

(Current Journalist, Male, Balochistan)

A former journalist who left this profession, affirmed the fact that women journalism students have higher dropout rates.

*“Currently a very low ratio of women participation in journalism is observed in Balochistan. Although females are getting admissions and studying journalism at university level, in the practical field 99% of women are not associated with this profession.”*

(Journalist who abandoned his career, Male, Balochistan)

Results of quantitative survey with journalism students provide further insight into these statement from perspective of students. 66 (90%) stated that they chose to study journalism by choice, while 7 (10%) reported that they chose to study journalism by chance, and it was not a planned decision. In face of such a high interest in journalism studies, it is ironical that these students leave their journey of journalism at the education stage only and do not continue practicing journalism.

This abysmally low participation of women journalists is a result of structural, economic, political, and personal safety and security barriers that bar them from practicing this challenging profession.

On a question related to the current provincial scenario supporting students to participate and practice journalism, 57% students (of those responded – 72) shared that there are no chances for them to practice journalism in the field. 43% however, responded positively. It is noteworthy that 63% (46 of 72) were female respondents in this survey and only 26% (19 of 72) female students mentioned that they are hopeful to practice journalism.

## **Barriers to Women’s Participation in Media**

### **Structural Barriers/Legal and Policy level Barriers**

The constitution of Pakistan guarantees equal rights for men and women in every field of life. Not only the constitution of the country, international commitments and national legal framework designed to support and confer rights to women also secure equal status of the women as to men. In the field of journalism, the country recognizes freedom of expression and speech and right to information of every individual through national and provincial laws. However, the domains of policy/law development and implementation are a far cry of what is intended to provide through these policies. It is the lack of legal framework supported by relevant policies that intensifies the existing barriers faced by journalists, especially women, in Pakistan at national and local levels.



At national level, legal instruments such as Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act (PECA) (2016) put limits on freedom of expression among journalists. Designed in the aftermath of Army Public School massacre in 2014 in the light of National Action Plan, the aim of PECA (2016) was to regulate content on electronic media, especially social media, to avoid spread of hate speech and extremist content<sup>52</sup>. However, with passage of time, legal tools like PECA, and regulatory bodies like PEMRA and Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) started working on political lines and became instruments of the state to control media and journalists alike<sup>53</sup>. On the other hand, laws such as Protection of Journalists Act (2014) is an example of laws that need better implementation to reduce the barriers faced by Pakistani journalists. Protection Against Harassment of Women at Workplace Act (2010) is example of another law which is far from being implemented in several workplace settings in Pakistan, while media houses, press clubs and other professional journalism settings are no exception.

On an operational level, it is the total lack of conducive policies that pose hindrance to journalists and makes it even more difficult for women journalists to work in the field. Health insurance coverage, security, and protection policy<sup>54</sup>, and maternity leave policy are examples of such policies the absence of which in the field of journalism makes working conditions difficult. Hence it is not the policies that are posing barriers to journalists, or women journalists, that are barring entry and practice of women in journalism. Rather, it is the lack of conducive policies that are making practice of journalism tough for women.

## Social Barriers

Two aspects can be further considered when it comes to women participation in media and journalism (i) the institutional culture is very limited in the media houses for providing conducive environment for women which holds on to the belief that women's responsibilities at home as a wife/mother will limit them from working as efficiently as men; (ii) strong socio-cultural barriers which are cloaked in prejudice, pre-occupied perception against women, lack of trust on their ability, and cultural interpretation to restrict women to participate in mass media because it is traditionally associated to be a male dominant sector.

To understand social barriers from students' point of views, they were asked what social restrictions they think might prevent them from practicing journalism. Out of 73 students/respondents, 38 (52%) students mentioned that there are restrictions and identified family, society, culture, and social pressures as the restricting factors affecting their choice to continue

<sup>52</sup> Media Matters for Democracy. (2020). *White Paper on Reforms for Prevention of Electronic Crimes act (2016)*.

<sup>53</sup> <https://foreignpolicy.com/2021/06/03/pakistan-press-freedom-journalism-media/>

<sup>54</sup> Jamil & Appiah-Adjei (2020)



journalism practice, whereas 35 (48%) students disagreed with the statement. Out of these 38 students, 11 (29%) were males and 27 (71%) were females.

Figure 1: Effect of Social Barriers on Pursuing Journalism Career

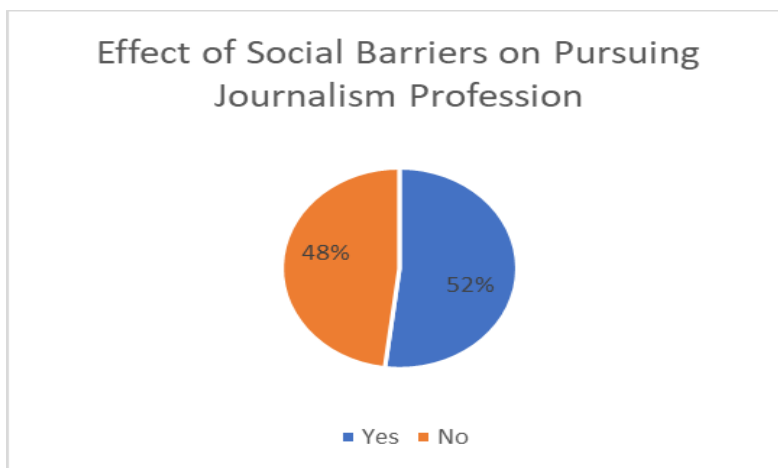


Figure 2 Restricting Factors for Practice of Journalism

Q45 What are some of those restrictions?

restrictions Social job think culture people family value  
Society pressure media women

Family is one example of social institutions that exert their power to influence career choice and experience of women journalists. Resulting from a range of factors, family itself bars women from pursuing journalism as a profession. Starting with concerns about personal safety and security, to the pressure of what other society members will think and say (social pressure and stigma), to low economic compensation, and changes in family responsibilities, family pressure takes different forms and creates barriers for women journalists. This factor was quoted equally by the male and female participants of the research, with females having more personal experience of this barrier.

One student who did not pursue her career in journalism after completing master's degree in journalism highlighted the value of family support in following words:

*"One issue is culture and the other is family. If your family supports you, you can go to the field and work. But even if family allows, society does not accept you. I belong to a village. People talk*



*about it (in a negative manner). Thus, I did not dare to choose journalism as my professional career”*

(Journalist who abandoned her career, Female, KPK)

However, it should be noted that families are part of larger social systems and structures, and these social barriers are intricately mingled with the cultural barriers. Such family pressures are exacerbated by systematic professional barriers in journalism that are not gender sensitive and gender responsive.

### Cultural Barriers

Cultural barriers stay at the top of the list among the factors that keep women journalists from practicing their profession. This point of view was shared by a vast majority of respondents, both students who took part in the survey, and the professional stakeholders. It is also interesting to note that both men and women journalists are aware of the limitations that culture puts on their participation in journalism.

*“Cultural restrictions are present as most cultures think women working in the media is not good.”*

(Student, Female, Balochistan<sup>55</sup>)

*“In the tribal system, the public dealing of women is not considered decent.”*

(Journalist who abandoned his career, Male, Balochistan)

Local cultural norms do not allow women to take up field jobs that require them to work with men<sup>56</sup>. These cultural norms originate mainly from the social structures, and to some extent by religious teachings. As journalism jobs require women journalists to go to the field, interact with the public, face cameras and be in the public eye, women are strongly discouraged. This response was common among current and former students, and practicing professionals alike, with a vast majority of practicing professionals mentioning cultural barriers as a cause of low women participation in journalism.

*“Tribal culture, cultural values do not allow women to even come out of their houses for any functions, gatherings, social work-related activities – journalism and working with media is entirely a different debate in such culture based on these things.”*

(President Press Club, Pishin, Balochistan)

---

<sup>55</sup> This quote is taken from the survey qualitative responses. Students were not directly interviewed in any university.

<sup>56</sup> <https://www.thomsonfoundation.org/latest/challenges-of-becoming-a-journalist-in-a-restrictive-society/>



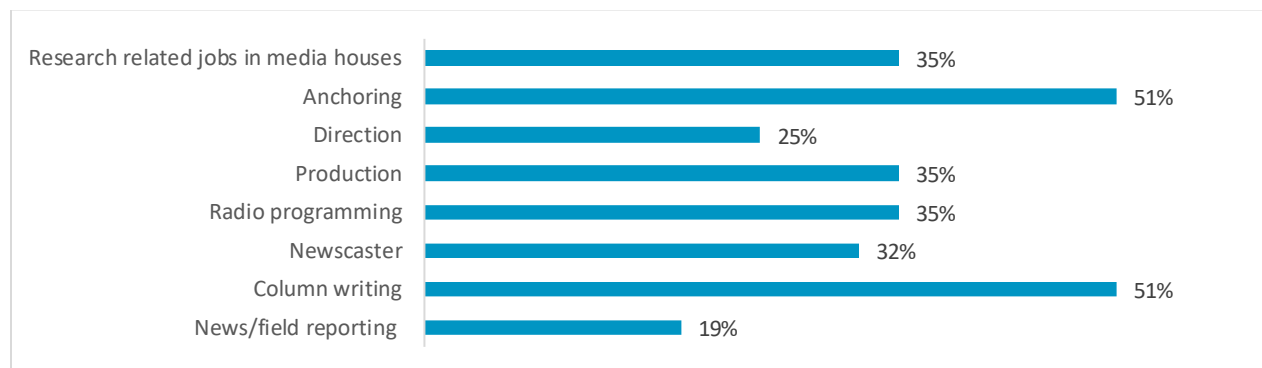
It should be noted that families are a part of societies and tend to comply with the culture. Statement of the first female journalist in Orakzai district of KPK confirms this fact.

*“Due to strong religious ties the local mashraan (elders) strongly opposed female participation in any co-profession job.”*

(Press Club Member, Orakzai, KPK).

In addition to the qualitative investigation, quantitative survey with journalism students also highlighted that there is a marked difference between suitability of journalism as a profession for men and women.

*Figure 3: Career Perceptions for Female Journalist Students*



Female students are perceived to take-up journalism jobs that involve them to stay at office and engage in office-based work. Survey results among students of three major universities of KPK and Balochistan show that anchoring (51% or 35 students) and column writing (another 35%) stood at the top of the list for careers that women should follow when they complete their degree. Similarly, 24 (35%) reported research related jobs in media houses, 24 (35%) mentioned production jobs, 24 (35%) mentioned radio programming, 22 (32%) mentioned newscasting as the job suited for women. The data shows that news/field reporting was the least preferred (19%) media jobs among all. This clearly shows that the students prefer to choose those specific areas of journalism which do not require them to go out of their workspace and can be done from their home or other safe spaces.

The students' choice of column writing alongside radio programming as safe options for female journalists, was also contemplated by the remarks of a journalist in KPK who felt more secured while working with radio.





*“Women in radio programming can change their names, their voices are usually unrecognizable, and they feel more secure to open up about the problems they and their fellow being face”*

(Current Journalist, Female, KPK)

*“Radio programs can play an important role as it is rather easier for women as in our culture women do not to show their face or we can say they are not permitted to be on the screen. In this case, radio programs support them as they can perform well while remaining unidentified.”*

(Current Journalist, Anonymous)

Cultural barriers manifest in several forms, each affecting a different aspect of professional practice of journalism. Ranging from role of family in influencing individual choice, to the tribal cultural norms that prevent women from taking on professional roles, cultural barriers restrict, and even bar the women journalists to practice their profession. The few women who manage to rise above the cultural barriers, face the professional level barriers and a professional environment that is not very conducive for women journalists.

## Professional Barriers

Challenging working conditions in journalism make practicing the field a challenge for women in the given cultural context. Issues like shared working spaces including washrooms, late working hours, and lack of supportive facilities and infrastructure like safe transport intensifies the social pressures on women journalists. This is coupled with the embarrassment which women face at societal level.

Sharing a workspace and personal use facilities like washrooms is one of the most widely quoted infrastructural challenges faced by women journalists. Their male counterparts also supported this idea.

*“There is no separate space for women journalists to sit. There is no separate washroom either. It is the same in offices. Even the large newspaper offices do not have a separate women’s room. When we requested a separate room for women journalists, the request was not entertained.”*

(Member of Press Club, Peshawar, KPK)

*“We have asked many times for a separate space for women but our men colleagues mock saying that you sit with us, eat with us and you are like us, what do you need a separate space for?”*

(Member of Press Club, Peshawar, KPK)



*“Protected and safe environment will definitely encourage women participation in media while media houses can give them anchoring opportunities – while males can be engaged as reporters in the field, so the women are less exposed to direct field dealing which is the first and foremost fear of the families. Specific job roles can promote professionalism in women. If they are given a particular area of sitting in offices that can be a supportive gesture in the working environment. But few people also misinterpret this as it has the likelihood of restricting them to a certain area. When women will have a separate space and do not sit side by side with male colleagues, this may limit their exposure.”*

(Journalist who abandoned his career, Male, Balochistan)

This shows a lack of understanding of women needs by their male colleagues in an environment where such support is a dire need.

Late working hours is the second work condition that hampers the participation of women journalists. In absence of social approval and family support, working late is considered difficult for both men and women journalists, but women journalists must be more cautious of this fact.

*“You cannot send a female journalist to cover the results of the elections at 11 pm in night. She will say I have transport issues and my family does not allow it. These are genuine issues which become limitations of female journalists.”*

(Media House Editor, Peshawar)

This trend goes beyond professional working and extends to membership of professional bodies like Press Clubs.

*“Press club membership requires its members to be present in the meetings, seminars arranged by the press-clubs while women usually prefer their homes and perform their socially constructed roles which is why they do not prefer membership and sometimes cannot undergo the overall scrutiny process which press club has before giving membership to any journalist.”*

(Current Journalist, Male, Balochistan)

Lastly, lack of transport adds to these problems as this increases public interaction of women journalists and may expose them to risk especially late at night.

*“A male reporter will go on bike and will cover the story which is convenient for the media house whereas for a female reporter, the media house will have to arrange transport especially at night. Women, deliberately do not participate or take lead in a story which is likely to continue till late”*

(Media House Editor, Male, KPK)



Limited capacity building opportunities further increase the limitations of young women journalists who are not prepared to face the harsh realities of the field. The missing link between journalism theory and practice makes it difficult for young women journalists to perform their duties, while there are no professional capacity building initiatives by the employers in the field.

*“Overall media in Pakistan has no custom of providing capacity building support to journalists at institutional level. These trainings are usually arranged by private organizations, NGOs. There has been no training arranged by media channels and media houses.”*

(Current Journalist, Male, Balochistan)

*“There is no institution for their (women journalists’) capacity building and support for the awareness in the relevant field.”*

(Member Press Club, Quetta, Balochistan)

On one hand, these findings point towards the room for improvement in education-profession linkages, and on the other hand they highlight the potential role for civil society organizations to bridge this gap.

Investment by national media (bigger news channels, and newspapers with head offices in Federal Capital and sub-offices in metropolitan cities) in local media was highlighted as a barrier which ultimately limits the capacity and exposure of local journalists towards a wider and independent media work. They have limited understanding, training and capacity building opportunities and are exposed to monotonous reporting.

*“The lack of investment creates a gap between the capacities of local and national media houses due to which the journalists working in local media cannot make their way to upper positions as national media relate them as untrained people.”*

(Current Journalist, Male, Balochistan)

Coupled with these findings, the survey results also highlighted that the students do not have any practical exposure to the field. As 52 (72%) students mentioned that they have never been sent to an exposure visit by the universities. Those students who had been on exposure visits by the universities stated that they were sent to press-clubs to attend meetings, media houses newsrooms, and private TV channels.

A clear lack of integration between the educational and professional institutions is evident through discussion on professional level barriers. With majority of respondents highlighting professional barriers because of work demands and structure, and lack of technical skills in the young journalism graduates, overcoming professional level barriers requires close coordination between the academics and professional bodies of journalists. This shall create more opportunities for budding journalists and may serve to reduce economic barriers faced by journalists.



## Economic Barriers

Economic barriers to practice of journalism refer to the financial constraints faced by journalists due to factors like low salaries, very few professional opportunities because of absence of independent and established media houses, and no or low job security.

Survey of students studying journalism revealed that a vast majority of them are dependent on their family for their educational expenses. 53 (73%) respondents stated that they used family support to cover their educational expenses. 11 (15%) stated that they cover their educational expenses by working, 7 (10%) were using loans, and 2 (3%) used loans from their respective universities. This means parents expect them to earn good salaries after completing their degree.

Professional journalists expressed an advanced form of these concerns, with some journalists reporting that they abandoned their career because of low financial returns in journalism.

*“Even if I am the topper of my department, I am unable to find a job of my choice. I mean I should be getting paid a good salary. I remember I got the internship offers from different media houses after my master’s degree, but they were just paying 5000 rupees per month which did not even cover my transportation expenses.”*

(Journalist who abandoned her career, Female, KPK)

*“A woman who is sitting at her home in a secure environment while her expenses are borne by her family would not put herself in any awkward and security threatened situation for the money media houses offer these days as salary packages. When a woman works, the family requires an output (monetary value of leaving home).”*

(Media House Editor, Male, Balochistan)

*“In our area families are struggling with financial challenges. My family also complained to me that ‘you have done a master’s degree in journalism and are struggling to find a job. If you would have studied something else, maybe it would be easier for you to get a decent job’. Family was greatly affected and forced me to leave this profession.”*

(Former Journalist, Male, Balochistan)



Exploitation by the employer in this regard plays a significant role and is a leading discouraging factor for journalists to leave the field.

*“Due to financial cuts, journalists are asked to work either for free or are terminated, we have got no benefits, not enough remuneration and packages to work in the field, no fuel is provided by the media house for our vehicles, you can imagine that how come these working conditions can support women engagement in the media.”*

(Current Journalist, Male, Balochistan)

Effects of COVID-19 on journalism are worth mentioning at this point. Although these effects were mentioned only sparingly, journalist community became more vulnerable physically, psychologically, and financially. Stories of first-hand experiences of journalists<sup>57</sup>, also show that COVID-19 made the already vulnerable journalist community more prone to physical stress. With no training on how to report in a pandemic, the journalists had minimal protection equipment<sup>58</sup>. This risk exposure was topped aggravated with lack of health insurance provided to these journalists. On a personal level, the already under-paid journalists faced loss of jobs<sup>59</sup> and further reductions in their salary<sup>60</sup>, making practicing journalism a difficult road to follow.

According to Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists (PFUJ), around 159 Pakistani journalists were tested positive for Covid-19 from March to May 2020 only. At least 5 of those who suffered from Covid-19 died<sup>61</sup> while many lost their jobs due to this.

It is crucial for policy makers and lobbyists for free, transparent, and independent media to advocate for competitive financial compensation for journalists to attract and retain human resources in this field.

## Political Barriers

### *Independence of Media*

Free and fair media is the foundation stone for effective governance. When asked if the prevailing provincial situations shall affect their practice as journalists, 9 (32%) respondents of the survey responded in affirmative, while 19 (68%) respondents negated this statement. It is evident that majority of respondents feel that they shall not be able to continue independent professional practice due to the political situation in their province. Practicing journalists were of the same opinion (though expressed subtly) as they mentioned lack of freedom of speech, and inability to report on sensitive issues such as honor killing.

<sup>57</sup> <https://ethicaljournalismnetwork.org/in-pakistan-the-pandemic-exacerbates-precarious-conditions-for-journalists>

<sup>58</sup> <https://thediplomat.com/2020/12/pakistan-reporting-in-a-pandemic/>

<sup>59</sup> <https://ethicaljournalismnetwork.org/in-pakistan-the-pandemic-exacerbates-precarious-conditions-for-journalists>

<sup>60</sup> Jamil, S. & Appiah-Adjei, G. (2020) Battling with infodemic and disinfodemic: the quandary of journalists to report on COVID-19 pandemic in Pakistan, Media Asia, 47 (3 -4), 88-109.

<sup>61</sup> <https://www.digitalrightsmonitor.pk/covid-pakistan-journalists-pandemic-risks/>



*“There is a lack of freedom of speech. We want to talk about so many issues but are afraid of the consequences.”*

(Current Journalist, Female, KPK)

Review of news reports makes it clear that several journalists have faced direct and indirect interruption from state, state-sponsored, and non-state political actors while performing their duties. As many as ten (10) journalists were killed, and a similar number of journalists were tortured what they reported news based on “*unknown sources*”<sup>62</sup>. Threats, abductions, judicial and extra-judicial political influence/pressure on media and journalism have been common across all types of government. In previous eras of military dictatorship, there has been significant influence on journalists to censor the kind of reporting they can and cannot do in terms of criticism on military government<sup>63</sup>. A recent example of this phenomenon was online harassment of women journalists instigated by political motives. As many as 16 well-known journalists shared that they were targeted online by people who had ‘affiliations with the ruling political party’. This happened when these journalists criticized government actions. This harassment included threats of physical and sexual violence<sup>64</sup>. Such interference is a constant and continuous phenomenon, and clearly affects the quality of reporting by both men and women journalists.

*“Formal and informal restrictions are imposed on independence of journalism by various state and non-state actors. Even a small news related to an issue i.e., electricity, gas shortage bears attention by the authorities and journalists/news channels, and media houses bear the brunt. Journalists are tagged with violations by the relevant authorities for the reporting of such ordinary issues.”*

(Media House Editor, Male, Balochistan)

*“I cannot write if there is an incident of honor killing in my village, I cannot write on issues related to sectarianism and religion. We are not free and independent as journalists.”*

(Current Journalist, Male, KPK)

29 out of 73 students (40%) mentioned that working in KPK and Balochistan context involves “politicized and conflict sensitive” media reporting which is more likely to hinder the process of independent media. Impunity and hostile working conditions were also found to be on the top of this trend. The survey data and the qualitative data determines that the political conditions for the journalists are stringent for independent media reporting especially for women journalists.

*“After every story report, we “have” to make sure to convince a political representative, a government officer and anyone who thinks this story goes against them that the story is not about*

---

<sup>62</sup> <https://www.ucanews.com/news/pandemic-and-state-pile-pressure-on-pakistani-journalists/91236#>

<sup>63</sup> Siraj, S. A. (2009). Critical analysis of press freedom in Pakistan. *Journal of Media and Communication Studies*, 1(3), 043-047.

<sup>64</sup> <https://www.dawn.com/news/1574031>





*the person but about the systematic inequalities that exist. After all this “pakad dhakar” (hide and seek), we are doing the left-over journalism which you may call independent or not”*

(Current Journalist, Male, Balochistan)

*“Balochistan is itself a challenging area and difficulties prevail in the whole province. Particularly in our profession women participation is very low. Male journalists face threats from political parties and influential personnel regarding the reporting on sensitive issues. These threats involve families, life risk and many other sensitive aspects of life. So, you can imagine how a female journalist could survive in this scenario. Rule of law and policy support can reduce these obstacles.”*

(Journalist who abandoned his career, Male, Balochistan)

*“There was a time when a journalist used to practice independence in his/her reports and that is the core of a news – ‘Independence and beyond any influence’. Presently, it is very difficult in Balochistan, since 40-45 journalists have been targeted, the journalism as occupation is very risky now, and now the journalists are very careful and cautious about every word and topic of news reporting, so journalism is much difficult in present era due to manifold reasons especially political influence”*

(Current Journalist, Anonymous)

These political barriers result in safety issues at large, where the life of the journalists gets at risk. Due to no support mechanism available for the journalists in field for any issue related to political reporting, many journalists are fired, media houses announce disconnect from the journalists as well as their job is terminated with immediate effect.

### ***Role of social media***

As many as 75% of the female journalists in the world face online harassment, 20% of such attacks lead to physical harassment<sup>65</sup>. The situation is not very different in Pakistan, and findings of this research support the fact that women journalists face harassment in online settings.

Out of 72 university students, 49 (68 %) noted that social media shapes the image of women journalists differently than male journalists, 23 (31%), however said that it does not. 33 (67% of 49 students who responded positively) of these respondents were females. A research study on the impact of social media harassment showed that 9 of 10 respondents had faced harassment on social media and stated that it had impact on their ideas of continuing journalism as a profession<sup>66</sup>. This

<sup>65</sup> <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2297775/harassment-of-female-journalists>

<sup>66</sup> <https://digitalrightsmonitor.pk/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Hostile-Bytes.pdf>

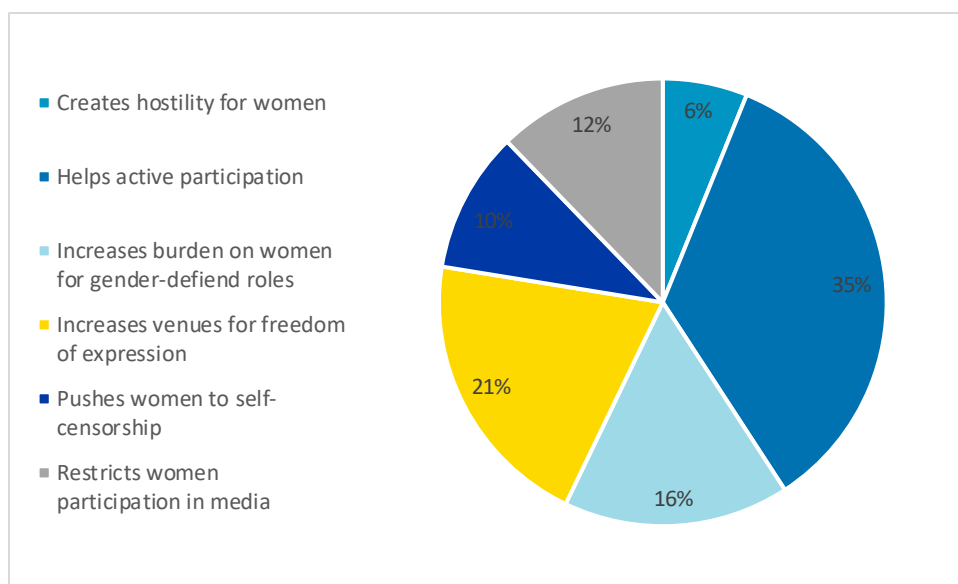




data points towards the fact that women students are more vulnerable towards differential treatment of women and men on social media.

Further investigation into responses of the 49 university students revealed following modes of effects of social media on women users:

*Figure 4: Perception of Journalism Students' about Women's Social Media Usage*



It is important to note that the students, i.e., 17 (35%), consider that social media helps in active participation of women in emerging forms of media. 10 (21%) respondents stated that use of social media increases venues of freedom of expression. 8 (16%) stated that increases burden of gender-roles on women as women are expected to maintain their social media presence following norms the society puts on them even on social media. 6 (12%) stated that presence on social media restricts women's participation in media. 5 (10%) respondents stated that presence on social media pushes women to the concept of self-censorship. 3 (6%) students reported that using social media creates hostility for women.

However, there is significant variation in point of views about the importance of social media for women participation in journalism. Some respondents highlighted the value of social media as an awareness tool. One respondent stated that:

*"Social media can be a powerful tool to raise awareness among people regarding women's role in journalism and media."*

(Current Journalist, Male, KPK)



Another respondent emphasized the need of control on social media so that its effectiveness can be increased for women.

*“A balance of sensitive news and use of social media needs to be maintained through proper terms and conditions. Defamation through social media is one important issue which is now allowed for anyone and usually people disrespect others through its use. It needs to be monitored effectively so the issues of defamation for everyone may be effectively tackled (especially for women).”*

(Current Journalist, Male, Balochistan)

*“Although social media plays a significant role in shaping image, women journalists usually face challenges of defamation of any story they report through social media, people use abusive language not only on the content but also threaten in private chat messages especially when the report is about a certain political intervention.”*

(Current Journalist, Female, KPK)

Use of social media comes with the cost of defamation and harassment. While both men and women face such types of difficult situations on social media, a female respondent shared her experiences as follows:

*“I have started a YouTube Channel to raise awareness among masses about different social issues, I received positive and negative both remarks but all I can do is to continue my work despite all negativity people want to induce using harsh and derogatory comments and remarks in the comment section of the videos I upload.”*

(Current Journalist, Female, KPK)

This harassment and ill-treatment of women in the social media world was also reiterated by the practicing journalists. A wide variety of stakeholders knew social media is a double-edged sword which needs to be used with great caution, especially if the user is a woman.

*“Social media is a war of information; people use the information for their benefits which sometimes affects other people negatively. The information through proper means helps raise awareness. Since there is no monitoring of what people are saying and how they are using the social media platforms, it often cultivates negativity which affects media independence, especially in a sensitive context.”*

(Media House Editor, Male, KPK)

*“Media trolling has significantly reduced freedom of expression amongst female journalists. I personally know many of them who have either given up their career or have started censoring the*



*content because they do not want to lose the job. Political trolling has increased against female journalists who state anything against any political party (either ruling or opposition) and the culture of social media is going beyond the decline of moral values.”*

(HoD Media & Communication Department, Male, KPK)

This is very interesting to note that even the key stakeholders of the media i.e., Press Club Chairpersons, University Head of the Departments except 1, and Media House Editors except 2 did not mention the negative impacts that the social media has caused over the last 10 years to prevent women independently working as mentioned in other studies at national level which also involved women journalists from these provincial capitals. This shows a serious lack of understanding of national and provincial context and how freedom of expression is hindered for women journalists through coordinated harassment campaigns against them. They are threatened and abused online. Several studies<sup>67</sup> have highlighted the negative impacts of social media trolling and abusive remarks against them while social media itself states a lot when a woman anchor/resource person shares a story either on twitter or Facebook<sup>68</sup>. An already dwindling working space for women is further declining day by day due to negative effects of social media. Although very few of the journalists interviewed emphasized the concept of self-censorship, it becomes very important that the journalists can identify the structural inequalities and risks before they are directly exposed to it.

This limited space for women journalists has been linked to the political motives, with online harassment being traced back to government officials and similar actors. A few practicing female journalists have expressed their concerns that the online harassment attempts, including death and rape threats, are politically motivated. Such comments on their social media handles, the women journalists say, are from accounts that are managed by political and state actors<sup>69</sup>. Such attacks make the online workspaces even more unsafe for women journalists, who face safety and security barriers not only in the online world, but also in the field.

<sup>67</sup> US Department of State (2019) [2018 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Pakistan](#); Solidarity Centre/Civic Action Resources (2016) [Survey Report: Working Conditions of Women Journalists in Pakistan](#), and [https://cpj.org/data/killed/2020/?status=Killed&motiveConfirmed%5B%5D=Confirmed&type%5B%5D=Journalist&typeOfDeath%5B%5D=Crossfire&typeOfDeath%5B%5D=Dangerous%20Assignment&typeOfDeath%5B%5D=Murder&gender%5B%5D=Male&cc\\_fips%5B%5D=PK&start\\_year=2010&end\\_year=2020&group\\_by=location](https://cpj.org/data/killed/2020/?status=Killed&motiveConfirmed%5B%5D=Confirmed&type%5B%5D=Journalist&typeOfDeath%5B%5D=Crossfire&typeOfDeath%5B%5D=Dangerous%20Assignment&typeOfDeath%5B%5D=Murder&gender%5B%5D=Male&cc_fips%5B%5D=PK&start_year=2010&end_year=2020&group_by=location)

<sup>68</sup> <https://www.dawn.com/news/1574031>

<sup>69</sup> <https://rsf.org/en/news/pakistani-government-orchestrated-cyber-harassment-women-journalists>



### *Safety and Security*

Although security risks prevail equally for both men and women, women journalists see it as a huge barrier. These range from lack of physical protection in the field, and lack of mechanisms to address issues such as harassment.

At field level, barriers to journalism have been highlighted time and again by all the stakeholders of journalism practice, irrespective of their location and gender.

*“Women journalists cannot handle the kind of journalism environment we have here in KPK. You cannot send female journalists to South Waziristan [because of lack of security].”*

(Press Club Member, Peshawar)

*“Often our female journalists get injured, including me. I was reporting on 6 February 2016 about suicide attack on FC and during this I got severely injured, and on 8th August, a blast took place in civil hospital just 30 seconds after I left the hospital and one of our camera men got martyrdom. Situations like this can be faced by male and female reporters in Balochistan and this is the fear which horrifies families resisting to send their daughters in this field.”*

(Current Journalist, Anonymous)

*“The environment in Balochistan is not suitable for female reporters to work.”*

(Current Journalist, Male, Balochistan)

*“Balochistan remained a high-risk area for a long time and is still struggling with security issues. There are areas in the province which are under these crises. Balochistan is the only province where male or female have not been given specified reporting areas. So, we can observe that if a reporter is covering an exhibition in the morning, he/she may be reporting a blast in the evening. In this scenario if a woman reporter reports a crisis, she is exposed to different conditions. Often our female journalists get injured.”*

(Current Journalist, Anonymous)

*“Threats and security issues against females are more serious and frequent in Balochistan than the rest of the country. Lack of awareness and social acceptance for women as a journalist and lack of respect are contributing as limiting factors for women's engagement in journalism and sensitive reporting.*

(Journalist who abandoned his career, Male, Balochistan)



## Workplace Barriers

In offices, harassment is the most discouraging factor for women journalists to continue practice. This concern was raised by all the stakeholders, however women participants expressed stronger consequences of such issues on their practice.

*“For me it is not that easy to deal with such people because it will be very difficult to share a workspace with such people where you feel harassed in every corner of that place on a daily basis.”*

(Journalist who abandoned her career, Female, KPK)

*“Harassment also exists in the workplace and reporting against it is discouraged. People say it would not have happened if you were not there in the first place.”*

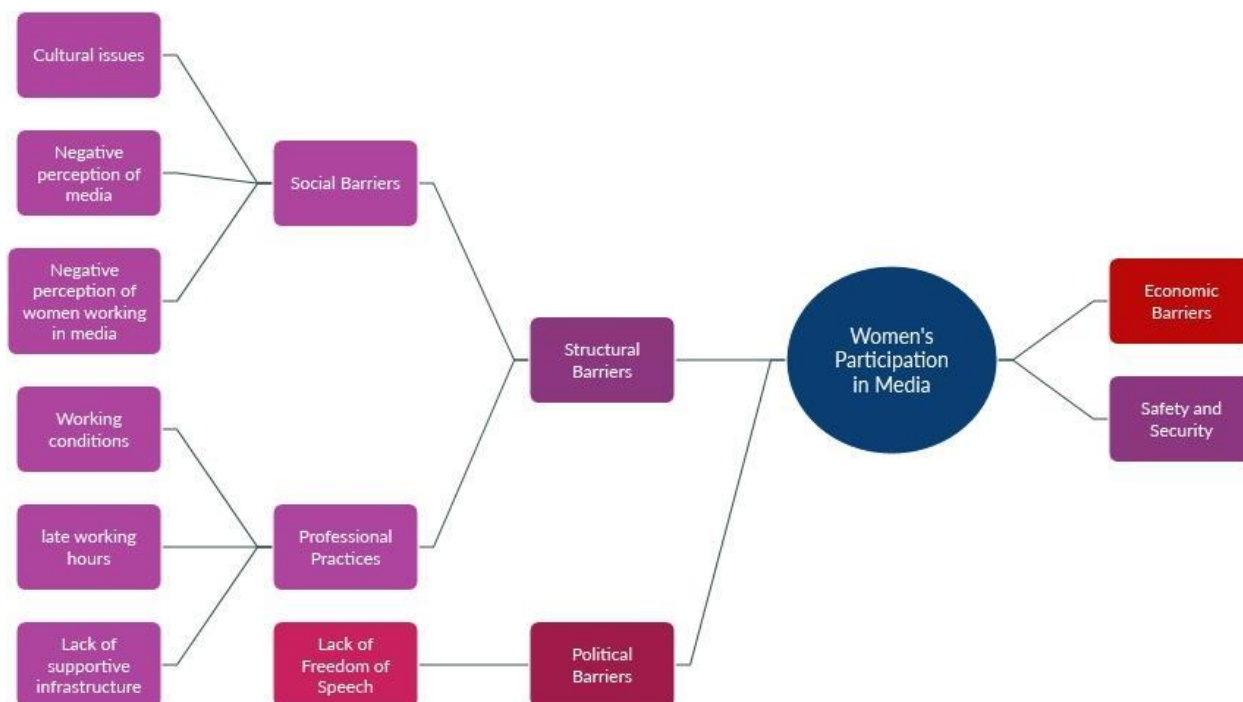
(HoD, Media & Communication Department, Male, KPK)

These responses make it clear that workplace harassment exists in journalistic settings, making it difficult for women to perform their duties. As a result of such phenomena, which feed in to the social and cultural barriers, many aspiring and practicing journalists may end up leaving the profession. It should also be noted that where laws exist to curb such social and professional issues, it is the implementation of these laws which is the problem.

To sum up, all these barriers pose serious challenges to women journalists specifically. A careful analysis of all these barriers also shows that none of these is a standalone issue, with every barrier being a result of the other, and each barrier reinforcing the other. In such a situation, there is a need for a multipronged approach to encourage women participation in journalism to address all these overarching barriers. The figure below gives a summary of the barriers faced by women journalists.



Figure 5: Summary of Barriers to Practice of Journalism in KPK and Balochistan



The list of these barriers is long and diverse, ranging from the social structures to tribal norms, and prevailing professional practices that are not gender sensitive. What is more interesting to note is that both men and women journalists are aware of these barriers and some of these barriers are further strengthened by men journalists, but they are not doing anything to change these behaviors. As evident from the figure, structural barriers are the most elaborated form of barriers faced by women journalists.

Where the structural barriers affected women journalists more, economic, and political barriers were mentioned to the same degree by all the participants of this research, irrespective of their role and gender. However, considering the sensitivities that out more boundaries to women, such barriers can be truly considered to affect women in a more intense manner as compared to men journalists and need multi-pronged interventions by all stakeholders to make the fourth pillar of democracy more gender inclusive.





## 5. Conclusions and Recommendations

---

### Conclusions

The purpose of this research was to conduct a barriers analysis of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan provinces of Pakistan. This aimed at assessing the status of women and girls' participation in media in the target areas, social norms, values, culture, and cultural barriers to women's participation in media and furnish strategies and actions for promoting women's safe and secure participation in media in Pakistan, especially in target provinces.

The report describes the current working conditions from the direct field data as well as lived experiences of men and women journalists demonstrating various ways in which they experience barriers in a systematic order. This study proves that these barriers exist at various points in the professional and personal aspects of life. The main barriers of entry faced by the respondents in this study include:

**Structural Barriers** prevail for legal or institutional barriers which bar freedom of expression and speech in the first place. Legal instruments are also used against the journalists (men and women) to curb freedom of expression and independent media reporting. The current research found that it is the lack of laws and relevant policies that hinders practicing independent journalism by both men and women journalists. Even if there are laws to protect women from harassment at the workplace, in general, they are not supported by appropriate policies at both national and professional practice levels, worsening the working conditions for journalists in Pakistan.

**Social Barriers** prevail through socially established gendered roles that contradict their profession in both provinces based on the social norms and practices resulting from the local context. It is worth noting that these challenges are not only highlighted by women journalists but also by their men counterparts. Family pressure, strong religious ties connected with tribal culture, the social stigma associated with working in public and a field related to media, social misinterpretation attached with journalism as a field of media are a few themes that are highlighted in these challenges.

**Economic Barriers** affect men and women journalists in both regions. The overall findings on economic barriers present a wider range of perceptions for media and journalism as a “well-paying” field. However, the reality is different given the contextual challenges as highlighted by several journalists in the field. Budget cuts on the advertisement, the state-led political interference with media houses which leads to termination of journalists in major cases, mass level restructuring, and low financial returns for precarious jobs for journalists makes it difficult for them to continue working. The struggle of journalists for income generation in this field and



exploitation by the media houses in terms of salary and benefits is categorized as one of the leading discouraging factors for men and women journalists to continue their practice in this field. Economic barriers are identified as discouraging factors for entry-level journalists too who aspire to enter this field in leading roles for suitable earning yet find it difficult to make their way to good positions. Women are more prone to leave this profession due to economic insecurity, discrimination in salary packages with limited or no benefits attached to their job. Several journalists (current and former) reported that women journalists leave this career in the beginning due to economic insecurities and join other fields (education, NGOs) where income is sustainable, and benefits are higher than this field. Further, the outbreak of the COVID-19 Pandemic has also brought severe impact on the economic dimension of journalists with the termination of their employment or salary cuts by the media houses citing the impact of Covid.

**Political Barriers** are more likely to hinder the process of independent journalism in these security threatened regions while men and women journalists are affected by the consequences equally. These barriers tend to interfere with journalistic duties more in the field of reporting in both regions. Students and current journalists (in different categories) mentioned that the political instability in both provinces does not allow them to work independently in the media. Self-censorship, restrictions on sensitive reporting (honor-related crimes), and relative consequences do not allow to report independently on any issue. The news reports targeting political scenarios and involving performance level issues tend to put a journalist at risk as well. These political barriers result in safety issues at large, where the life of the journalists gets at risk. Due to no support mechanism available for the journalists in the field for any issue related to political reporting, many journalists are terminated, media houses announce disconnect from the journalists as well as their job is terminated with immediate effect. Social media is also categorized as a tool to restrict freedom of expression and independent media using campaigns against journalists. It is however surprising to note that despite the abundance of literature to highlight the coordinated campaigns of harassment and abuse leading to self-censorship among men and women journalists, very few of the journalists mentioned this barrier in the interviews (probably this is too obvious to mention). This is also categorized under lack of awareness and participation in the mainstream media as most of the journalists who reported to have been harassed through social media by any political party are currently working in the mainstream media houses.

**Safety and Security related barriers** while male journalists face safety and security-related risks during the field reporting, women are excluded from sensitive reporting as they are termed weak and are considered good enough to handle household chores mainly in a traditionally male-dominant society. While women also face security risks, the angle of their risks is a little different than of men and is directly related to the workplace in many cases. Although security risks prevail equally for both men and women, women journalists see it as a huge barrier. These range from lack of physical protection in the field, and lack of mechanisms to address issues such as harassment. In offices, harassment is the most discouraging factor for women journalists



to continue the practice. This concern was raised by all the stakeholders, however, women participants expressed stronger consequences of such issues on their practice.

On the question related to addressing these barriers at the university level, students widely mentioned **capacity building, equal opportunities for women students in field exposure, context- specific journalistic opportunities by developing stronger linkages with media houses and press clubs, appropriate working environment, development of updated course outlines, harassment control with greater accountability and punishments, and special provisions for female students.**

Similarly, **government engagement** and **mainstream media** engagement to promote independent media in both regions lack to a grave extent. **Equal working opportunities for women** lack in far-flung districts, a **shift of cultural ideologies** through awareness raising, use of **radio programming** for raising awareness, **media houses support** for journalists, **transport facilities** for women, **women engagement in reporting other than soft-beats, capacity building**, trainings and **refreshers on periodic basis, conducive working policies, psycho-social support** in sensitive reporting for male and female journalists, and **making key management of media houses, and press clubs accountable** where barriers to women participation are not addressed appropriately.

The collated responses demonstrated that a joint effort is needed to address these barriers. Therefore, all stakeholders are a part of the solution. However, among the significant questions, the biggest question is whether the key stakeholders (press clubs, universities, media houses, government, and mainstream national media) are willing to make the change that is proposed.

## Recommendations

Based on the findings, following recommendations are furnished to SCGP to engage with each group according to the needs described by each stakeholders' groups at different level. These recommendations are exacted to help SCGP identify relevant actors to work and devise strategies and actions to promote a safer media field for all journalists, working as well as aspiring women journalists in Pakistan in general, those from target provinces.

### *Media and Journalism Departments in targeted universities*

It is recommended that SCGP may exploit the venue of three target universities to enter the mainstream media which can be done in the following manner:



- Designing of specific training modules followed by early entry training and mentorship programs for the students.
- The training program for early entry journalists should be focused on gender equality, leadership beyond tokenism, harassment at workplace, policy level understanding and contextual reporting in both regions as well as conflict sensitive reporting ensuring freedom of expression should be steered and implemented.
- Advocacy with media houses, press clubs should be directed to institutionalize such trainings into their system through collaboration with other NGOs and respective government institutions such as DGIPR, Press Information Department (DIP).
- A comprehensive partnership strategy should be developed with each university targeted by the project to engage with press clubs and media houses so that the placement gap may be decreased.
- Explore a public private partnership with the targeted universities to arrange for Career Counselor/Advisor on rotational basis from project funds and consistent efforts to functionalize this role in universities.

### *Role of Press Clubs and Media Houses*

- Design and impart training to current journalists (male and females) in both provinces considering different stages of career i.e., entry level, journalists with intermediary experience in the field and senior journalists.
- Develop training content targeting the aspects of gender bias in journalism and coping strategies, women leadership promotion within journalism and media, safety and security, harassment at workplace with special focus on strategies to avoid self-censorship and editorial cuts.
- Engage with journalists who actively advocate women rights from different platforms of civil society or media (independently) through their writings and day to day engagement in the journalism. This advocacy should be focused on women recruitment by media houses and provision of safety and security for these women journalists.
- Furthering the avenue of advocacy, these women (or men) advocates should be made part of the media campaigns through their messages, live sessions on social media handles, consultative workshops to promote women inclusion and engagement.
- SCGP should partner with Press Clubs and Media Houses of the provinces to focus on the policy gaps at press club and media house level which restrict women journalists (at all levels of careers) to work in an independent and secure environment. This should be done with all district level press clubs and Bureau offices of media houses.
- Coupled with policy revisions of the media houses (context specific), lobbying should be done for any new gender friendly policies prioritizing gender pay gap, maternity benefits for women as per law, travel allowance for male journalists, travel arrangements for women



journalists, provision of safe spaces for women in hard-area/sensitive reporting and psycho-social support for the journalists working in sensitive streams.

- SCGP should partner with mainstream TV and Radio Channels in both provinces to raise awareness on women inclusion in journalism through periodic prime-time programs.
- Organize mass media campaign to promote policies for creating a conducive working space for women in media houses and press clubs. Key institutions at ground level i.e., Press Club and Media Houses should be made part of these series of programs on TV or Radio.

### ***Role of Civil Society and Human Rights Defenders for Advocacy & Lobbying***

- SCGP should partner with other like-minded organizations, i.e., Media Matters for Democracy (MMfD), Pakistan Press Foundation, Center for Peace and Development Initiatives (CPDI), InterNews and other key agencies to form synergies for promotion of a safe working environment for women journalists especially at entry level.
- Collaborate with the civil society organizations (CSOs) to launch a Women Journalist Chapter for Balochistan. This can be done by highlighting the lack of women journalists in Balochistan, coordinating with the Coalition for women in Journalism, local NGOs and press clubs in the province. The most critical aspect of this link is to engage with women journalists who are currently active in the field in Balochistan.
- Work with civil CSOs to extend advocacy efforts with Press Information Department(s) and/or provincial Directorate General of Information and Public Relations (DGIPR) for an exclusive fund and creation of conducive working environment for women.
- Organize activities to celebrate International Days of significance for journalists i.e., 'International Day to End Impunity for Crimes against Journalists' and 'Press Freedom Day', in collaboration with sector partners and journalists' groups and advocacy drives (campaigns, walks, consultative sessions inviting key national media representatives, provincial journalists' union(s) and Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists (PFUJ) to highlight the gravity of women exclusion from independent and sensitive media and its impacts) should be extended to both provinces.
- Collaborate with Journalists Unions (such as APJU, PFUJ) across the project life to sensitize the unions and media houses about the need for women journalists' representation in these bodies.
- Given the short period of the project and availability of funding for a given time, the policy drive should be extensively followed on through monitoring the targets set under these partnerships so that a conducive environment for deliberation on policy development and revisions can be created.



## 6. Appendices

### Annex 1: Study Tools

#### 1. Focused Group Discussion (FGD) Guide for Members of Press Clubs

Facilitator Name:	Date of FGD:
Professional Affiliations or Years of Experience in Journalism: (Range for the group)	Number of people involved: Male _____ Female _____
Start Time:	End Time:

What is the general composition of members of your press club?

*(Ask for men and women as members, and level of participation of women in the press club)*

What is the process of getting membership in the press club?

*(Ask for the length of registration and renewal, processes, any fee involved, engagement with news/TV agencies)*

What is the current state of women's participation in journalism in Pakistan, especially in the target provinces and locations?

What are the opportunities (for education and professional engagement) for journalism in Pakistan/target areas, especially for women?

How do you describe the status of women journalists applying for membership in this press club?

What challenges do they face for participation in the media?

*(Ask for a possible divide in women and men applying for membership, what are the reasons for this divide? Do women even apply for the membership? What are the procedures? Do they get membership if they apply?)*

Please explain the motivations that lead aspiring journalists to enter into the media profession?

*(Probe separately for men and women)*

What do you think of the current situation of girls/women journalists in media (consider all type of media in respective region)

*(Probe for the security related issues, layers of inequality for women journalists, glass-ceiling in media print and electronic both, workplace harassment, social media mocking, women journalists and double bind)*

What are some of the reasons you can think of for women's lack of participation in the media, in general, and the press club(s), in particular?

*(The question will be asked if the current number of women in the press club is lesser than the ratio of men – probe into lack of opportunities, social acceptability, and safety and security issues for journalists especially women and religious bars)*





Do you know some journalists (especially women), who have given up their career aspirations due to the discouraging factors? If yes, what led them to give up their career?

(Do not take names and places into account, only listen to the story and probe for information if needed)

What is the likelihood for some journalists leaving the journalistic field/media at an early stage?

(Probe for men and women separately)

Please describe some factors which make women more prone to exclusion from the media?

(Probe for social, economic, capacity related and security related challenges)

What do you think can be changed to stop women exclusion from the media? and why do you think it is important?

Do you recall any specific steps taken to encourage young journalists, and especially women to stay engaged with their professional aspirations?

(Probe for Special incentives for membership, gender sensitivity considered in work allocation, provision of safe environment)

How can the exclusion of men and women journalists be stopped?

(What steps can be taken? Probe separately for men and women and the range of media channels available in the region! Who needs to be involved?)

What steps have been taken in the past to increase women participation in media at your press club level?

(Probe for specific steps for women – considering different stages of women's lives)

Please mention if the strategies worked well for increasing the participation of women in media?

(Who were the key stakeholders, what strategies were applied, what impact did it create?)

How can the safety and security of independent journalists be increased in the target areas, especially that of female journalists?

(Note recommendations with specifically targeting women in these areas, inequality and discrimination for women journalists)



## 2. Focus Group Discussion (FGD) Guide for Students of Journalism in Partner Universities

Facilitator Name:	Date of FGD:
Level of Education in Journalism: Bachelor Masters Masters of Philosophy Ph.D.	Participants' Number: <u>it is to make sure that number of female students is more than male students</u>  M (Male)  F (Female)
Start Time:	End Time:

What is the current state of women's participation in journalism in Pakistan, especially in your province?  
*(Probe into women representation, participation, and positions in different media-outlets, entry and chances of growth in journalism, challenges, options, success, etc. separately for men and women)*

What are the opportunities (for education and professional engagement) for journalism in Pakistan/target areas, especially for women?

What was your motivation behind studying journalism? (Probe into social, economic and political value of journalism)

How do you describe journalism as a field for men and women? (Ask separately for men and women)

*(Probing points: stereotypes associated with women working in the fields involving public and political dealings and sensitive issues)*

What are your plans regarding practicing/pursuing journalism/media after completion of degree?  
*(Probe for all media related channels i.e. newspaper, TV, freelance and also ask what are the aspirations for considering specific field of study, also discuss about the people who are not qualified journalists yet are in the field – v-loggers, bloggers, online media story-tellers etc.)*

How often have you heard of someone who did not pursue the journalism field after completing a degree? What discourages them to continue journalism as a profession?

*(Probe into lack of opportunities, lack of social acceptability, safety and security issues for journalists, religious unacceptability)*

Do you know some students, especially girls' students, who have given up their career aspirations due to the discouraging factors? What led them to give up their career?

*(Do not take names and places into account, only listen to the story and probe for more information where needed)*

What prevents women from taking journalism as a career? Please highlight social, economic, political, cultural/religious barriers

*(List down all the causes and norms which have the likelihood of restricting women safe entry into journalism)*



What do you think the current situation of participation/non-participation of men and women journalists in sensitive journalism will help or restrict you from practicing journalism?

*(Probe into the situation related responses and ask for students own perceptions about those situational issues helping or restricting their involvement in media)*

How (i) culture and (ii) religion play a role in shaping women's participation in media as journalists especially in your region?

*(This is very sensitive question and should be asked in a way that no one feels offended, may be link it to the current situation and then put up question with the students - Break the question in two parts, ask for culture and religion separately and do not insist if they don't want to respond to one of the parts)*

How availability/unavailability of career counselling in your University will affect your understanding of the media sector when you enter into a media related job ?

*(The students are likely to mention availability and unavailability; whatever applicable – probe into both options)*

How the current security situation affects your decision to choose journalism as a career when you pass-out?

*(Probe into the seriousness of the events which take place with journalists in both regions – link it with gender inequalities, and impunity)*

What are some specific steps to be taken to encourage students, especially girl students, to stay engaged with their professional aspirations as journalists ?

*(Admission quotas for girls, gender sensitivity issues included in curriculum, provision of safe environment, industry linkages/internships for girl students – do not mention rather add the list with these possible steps)*

Given the situation and trends of women engagement in journalism, how do you think the situation can be changed and who needs to be involved?

*(Probe into capacity support, career counselling, exchange visits, fellowships, gender sensitive media and journalism, involvement of press clubs and media houses, engagement with other programs in the region and any other possible options)*

What benefits do the mentioned preventive actions entail in them?

*(Probe into each listed activity and seek more responses against each of them)*

What risks do you assume preventive actions entail in them with respect to continuance of students into media and journalism and how these risks can be minimized?

*(Probe into each risk mentioned and ask for prevention strategies contextually – try to bring a realist perspective into the responses)*

How can the safety and security of independent journalists be increased in the target areas?

*(Note recommendations with specifically targeting women in these areas, inequality and discrimination for women journalists)*



### 3. Key Informant Interview Tool for Press Club Chair(s)

Interviewer Name:	Date of KII:
Designation of Key Informant in the Press Club:	Key Informant Years' of Service at current designation:
Years of Experience in Journalistic field :	Number of Press Club active members:  Males  Females
Start Time:	End Time:

What is the current state of women's participation in journalism in Pakistan, especially in the target provinces and locations?

*(Probing points: security driven environment, independent media, freedom of speech, men and women engagement in independent media whether in electronic or print media, trends of freelance, validity of news, blogging and use of electronic media, hate speech, national and provincial laws contextualizing independent journalism)*

What are the opportunities (for education and professional engagement) for journalism in Pakistan/target areas, especially for women?

What status do women journalists hold in practicing journalism in this district?

*(Probing points: role and participation in press club, membership with press club, women in leadership in press-club/news agencies/media houses, radio programming, private/freelance journalists, soft-media e.g. social media/blogging/v-logging/article and column writing)*

What are some of the steps which have been taken by the press club to ensure women representation in the press club? Can you quote some examples?

*(Probing points: easy access to membership, capacity support and access to training programs, nomination in key positions, safe working spaces, recognition of the work and validation through different channels, constitutional changes in the press club for women safe presence, any other)*

How do you think women inclusion/participation in journalism is considered in this region?

*(Probing points: socially acceptable/unacceptable, religiously barred to enter into official field of journalism, excluded from mainstream media, limited to soft-journalism, women contributing to the media body or research, women journalists and double bind – exposed to violence, intimidation and threats for their work)*

*What are the opportunities (for education and professional engagement) for journalism in Pakistan/target areas, especially for women?*

What are some of the key reasons/factors which constitute limitations and restrict women entry/safe working into independent journalism?



(Probing points: women considered fragile to work on sensitive and independent media, security driven environment, socially and culturally established values and set standards for women, stereotypical thoughts of women and home, lack of orientation on participatory journalism programs, level of education, lack of training and career support, lack of implementation of state protection programs for women, lack of career counselling, religious aspects i.e. Pardah, women movement, women dealing with men in public, and other key misinterpretations, economic barriers etc.)

What are some obstacles women, particularly in your region, face when they work as journalists?  
(Probe into access to information, restrictions based on women social status, religious misinterpretation, cultural values, social isolation, access to mainstream media channels/means, access to and control over resources for career growth, access to means validating the information as news, any other)

Do you think that the obstacles women face have the likelihood to affect women engagement in independent media and journalism on the whole?

What can be done to reduce these obstacles and encourage women to work in independent media?

How secure is the press (electronic and print) for women participation as reporter and journalists?  
(Probe into acceptance of women as well as space press club provides for women participation and membership in the press club, and provision of different means which help women build their career as journalists, women status and independence in newsrooms etc.)

How do you think women engagement in media can be increased at district level?

What measures can the press club take to include more women journalists' members?

What are some reasons due to which women do not prefer membership of press clubs?  
(Perceived pressure, perceived susceptibility of exclusion, hostile working environment, lack of implementation of press club policies, timelines of the activities and odd working hours, pressure of meetings and reporting)

How can press club (actively) contribute to overcome the obstacles women face to enter and continue journalism as a profession? ?

(Probe into action related discussion – what press club can do?)

How can the press club(s) facilitate women's representation and participation in press clubs?

(Probe into the support mechanism led by state, media itself, partner organizations, engagement with universities, registering more members, increasing women membership, funding support to press clubs, forming synergies, exposure visits, constitutional changes in press club seats/membership, holding elections for bringing women into leadership role at press club)

In your opinion, what can be some positive and negative consequences of this facilitation in your region?

(Probe into negative and positive consequences separately- relate them to culture, social, religious barriers, and economic opportunities that the participant(s) have mentioned in response to above questions)

How do you think radio programming can be used to promote women participation and their active involvement in media?

How does social media shape opinion for women journalists and their working in the field of media?

What are some of the strategies which can be utilized to ensure a safe and secure environment for independent journalists – male and females both?



#### 4. Key Informant Interview Tool for Head of Department Partner Universities (Media and Communication Department)

Interviewer Name:	Date of KII:
Designation of Key Informant in the Department: (preferably Head of the Department)	Key Informant Years' of Service at current designation:
Date of Establishment of Department:	Active Programs at the Department: (tick all relevant)  BS (Hons)  M.Sc.  Ph.D.
Number of students currently enrolled in all active programs  Male  Female	Number of Faculty members  Male  Female  Active journalists faculty members (male ____ female ____)  Former journalists in the faculty (male ____ female ____)
Start Time:	End Time:

Additional information: the department is requested to provide data of the last five years for the students who have passed out from different programs. This data will solely be used for the research purpose to analyze the number of students passed out from the partner universities under different programs and students currently practicing journalism correlating it with the press clubs' information. The data will also support the research in terms of finding students who did not pursue journalism as a career.

What is the current state of women's participation in journalism in Pakistan, especially in the target provinces and locations?





What are the opportunities (for education and professional engagement) for journalism in Pakistan/target areas, especially for women?

What, in your opinion, is the current situation of students' interest in journalism?

*(Probe for ratio of male to female ratio in journalism studies)*

How journalism is perceived as a career for men and women separately?

*(Probe for gender stereotypes associated with women pursuing certain careers, social set-up, and cultural context of the region)*

What are some reasons/aspirations due to which female students opt for studying journalism?

What are the motivating factors which lead female students to practice journalism?

How does the department prepare male and female students to work as independent journalists after completing their studies?

*(Probe into equal educational and career counselling opportunities, exposure to direct field, media houses, reporting events, exchange programs, training and capacity support programs for male and female students, updated course outlines according to the requirements and needs of current media pace)*

Are there any specific steps taken to encourage students, and especially girl students to stay engaged with their professional aspirations as a journalist?

*(Probing points: Admission quotas for girls, gender sensitivity issues included in curriculum, provision of safe environment, scholarships for girls students, Industry linkages/internships for girl students)*

What are some of the factors which constitute female pass-out students disengagement from the journalistic career?

*(Probe into lack of opportunities, hostile working environment in media, lack of capacity support and career counselling, lack of exposure, safety and security issues for journalists, social unacceptability, religious and cultural reasons women considered fragile to work on sensitive and independent media, socially and culturally established values and set standards for women, stereotypical thoughts of women and home, lack of orientation on participatory journalism programs, lack of training and career support, lack of implementation of state protection programs for women, religious aspects i.e. Pardah, women movement, women dealing with men in public, and other key misinterpretations, economic barriers etc.)*

What reasons do you think can lead to students leaving their passion for journalism after passing out of the school? What makes them more prone to this exclusion?

*(Probing points: HEC stringent policies, large number of students passing out every year with limited job opportunities in field, outdated curriculum, lack of economic opportunities, career/capacity support, social pressure, religious bars for women to enter into media, access to and entry into press clubs/media houses as members and employees, far-flung areas, understanding of journalism as full-time career, hostile environment in media for women especially, security related issues attached to media and reporting, any other)*

How these reasons can be minimized for students coming from far flung areas and investing a good number of years in education?

What specific role can university relevant departments play in maintaining an educated journalistic fraternity intact with media and journalism? What strategy can be developed in this regard?



(Relate this question with the reasons that lead to students leaving the field as well as how these factors can be minimized)

Who do you think can support different strategies which university relevant departments develop to promote women students involvement in independent media and journalism?

What are some of the positive and negative consequences of these strategies to increase women engagement in media?

(Probe into negative and positive consequences separately- relate them to culture, social, religious barriers, and economic opportunities that the participant(s) have mentioned in response to above questions)

How do you think radio programming can be used to promote women participation and their active involvement in media?

How does social media shape opinion for women journalists and their working in the field of media?

What are some of the strategies which can be utilized to ensure a safe and secure environment for independent journalists – male and females both?



## 5. Key Informant Interview Tool for Media House Editors

Interviewer Name:	Date of KII:
Designation of Key Informant in the Media House	Key Informant Years' of Service at current designation:
Date of Establishment of Media House	Number of Male and Female Employees:  Male  Female
Number of Freelance journalists associated with media house  Male  Female	Coverage area of the Media House
Start Time:	End Time:

What, in your opinion, is the current situation of media and journalism in your district/province?

*(Probing points: security driven environment, independent media, freedom of speech, men and women engagement in independent media whether in electronic or print media, trends of freelance, validity of news, blogging and use of electronic media, hate speech, national and provincial laws contextualizing independent journalism)*

What status do women journalists hold in practicing journalism in this district?

*(Probing points: role and participation in independent media, membership with media houses, and trends of freelance, safety and security of women journalists, women in leadership in press-club/news agencies/media houses, radio programming, private/freelance journalists, soft-media e.g. social media/blogging/v-logging/article and column writing)*

What are the opportunities (for education and professional engagement) for journalism in Pakistan/target areas, especially for women?

What are some of the steps which have been taken by the media house to engage more women journalists? Can you quote some examples?

*(Probing points: conducive employment opportunities/policies, capacity support and access to training programs, nomination in key positions, safe working spaces, recognition of the work and validation through different channels, safe working environment, any other)*

How do you think women inclusion/participation in journalism is considered in this region?



*(Probing points: socially acceptable/unacceptable, religiously barred to enter into official field of journalism, excluded from mainstream media, limited to soft-journalism, women contributing to the media body or research, women journalists and double bind – exposed to violence, intimidation and threats for their work)*

How do you think privatization of media has helped/restricted women into mainstream media?

*(Probe into number of women employees at media house against number of men employees, participation of men at different level – research team, lead anchors, lead writers, content production, equal remuneration benefits, safe working environment led by institutional policies, training opportunities, synergies and industry linkages)*

What are some of the key reasons/factors which constitute limitations and restrict women entry/safe working in independent journalism?

*(Probing points: women considered fragile to work on sensitive and independent media, security driven environment, socially and culturally established values and set standards for women, stereotypical thoughts of women and home, lack of orientation on participatory journalism programs, level of education, lack of training and career support, lack of implementation of state protection programs for women, lack of career counselling)*

What are some obstacles women, particularly in your region, face when they work as journalists?

*(Probe into access to information, restrictions based on women social status, religious misinterpretation, cultural values, social isolation, access to mainstream media channels/means, access to and control over resources for career growth, access to means validating the information as news, any other)*

Do you think that the obstacles women face have the likelihood to affect women engagement in independent media and journalism on the whole?

What can be done to reduce these obstacles and encourage women to work in independent media?

How secure is the press (electronic and print) for women participation as reporter and journalists?

*(Probe into acceptance of women as well as space press club provides for women participation and membership in the press club and provision of different means which help women build their career as journalists)*

How do you think women engagement in media can be increased at district level?

What measures media houses can take to include more women journalists' employees?

What are some reasons due to which women do not prefer memberships of press clubs and adopt freelance journalism or employment at media houses?

*(Perceived pressure, perceived susceptibility of exclusion, hostile working environment, lack of implementation of press club policies, timelines of the activities and odd working hours, pressure of meetings and reporting)*

How can media houses (actively) contribute to overcome the obstacles women face to enter and continue journalism as a profession?

*(Probe into action related discussion – what media houses and news agencies can do?)*

How do you think the proposed role of media agencies (private) and media houses will be achieved to increase women representation and participation in independent media?

*(Probe into the support mechanism led by state, media itself, partner organizations, engagement with universities, employee more women, increasing women workforce, funding support to women journalists, forming synergies, exposure visits, linking women with sensitive journalism, discuss women soft role and domestic news-coverage)*

In your opinion, what positive and negative consequences do these proposed strategies can bring to women's independent engagement in the media ?

*(Probe into negative and positive consequences separately)*



How do you think radio programming can be used to promote women participation and their active involvement in media?

How does social media shape opinion for women journalists and their working in the field of media?

What are some of the strategies which can be utilized to ensure a safe and secure environment for independent journalists – male and females both?



## 6. Key Informant Interview Tool for Current & Former Journalists (Male, Female)

Interviewer Name:	Date of KII:
Gender of the interviewee Male _____ Female _____	Years of experience in Journalism:
Key affiliation in journalistic experience	
Current engagement with media:	Area of news coverage (sensitive reporting, soft reporting) _____-any other
Start Time:	End Time:

What is the current situation of media and journalism in your district/province?

*(Probing points: security driven environment, independent media, freedom of speech, men and women engagement in independent media whether in electronic or print media, trends of freelance, validity of news, blogging and use of electronic media, hate speech, national and provincial laws contextualizing independent journalism)*

What do you think of the current and past trends of male and females' engagement in media?

*(Probing points: difference in reporting techniques, access to advanced research methods, access to online media, social media, state policies, access to training programs, what is not different from past, women journalists' engagement still a questions, no social protection policies, women in soft media rather than actual news etc.)*

What are the opportunities (for education and professional engagement) for journalism in Pakistan/target areas, especially for women?

Given the current dynamics of news and media reporting, how difficult do you think women engagement in sensitive reporting is and what are some of the reasons behind this?

*(Probing points: women journalists and double bind, women role in society, cultural and social barriers – try to identify those, online media harassment, journalistic ethics, hostile working environment, uncertainty of the political situation in Pakistan, political influence, women considered sensitive to conflict driven environment, any others)*





What were the factors that motivated you to pursue journalism in the first place and have those factors come along until now? And Why?

*(Probe into aspirations, reporting field, exciting opportunities, freelance working, and social-identification as journalists etc.)*

What was the role and reaction of your immediate family members when you decided to join journalism as a profession? For Male and For female?

What obstacles did you face which limited your/other women's engagement in sensitive media (for women journalists)? And why?

*(Probing points: press club membership, freelance journalism, less economic opportunities, safe working environment, journalism a 24/7 job, women and social pressure, women social role, social acceptability, any incidents, hostile field of working, life risk, intimidation and threat, violence through online means, double bind, political influence on media)*

Why do you think women journalists face obstacles in pursuing sensitive/conflict reporting? What are some of those key obstacles (for men journalists)?

*(Probing points: environment of this field, social acceptability, cultural restriction, hostile situations in sensitive reporting, media trust/biases on women with respect to sensitive reporting, politically influenced media, threats and intimidation through online and social means, violence against women journalists, media institutions not backed up by strong policies for women, press club memberships, any other that arises during discussion)*

What are some reasons due to which women do not prefer membership of press clubs?

*(Perceived pressure, perceived susceptibility of exclusion, hostile working environment, lack of implementation of press club policies, timelines of the activities and odd working hours, pressure of meetings and reporting)*

What are some factors that lead to women either excluding themselves from mainstream media or limit their scope of working?

*(Probing points: social, cultural, religious, economic, gender discrimination, stereotypes associated with women gender roles)*

How does social media shape opinion for women journalists and their working in the field of media?

What impact, do you think, will the media face in coming 5-10 years if women remain excluded from the mainstream media/sensitive reporting and restricted to soft-reporting? How severe this impact can be?

What do you think can be done to decrease the severity of women exclusion and ensure women inclusion in the media by different stakeholders? Who needs to do what?

*(Probe into the roles of Press Clubs, Media houses, Media and Communication Departments in relevant universities, Sector partners (NGOs working with journalists))*



What may be some of the positive/negative attributes of this engagement with key stakeholders to ensure women inclusion in mainstream media?

How do you think radio programming can be used to promote women participation and their active involvement in media?

How does social media shape opinion for women journalists and their working in the field of media?

What are some of the strategies which can be utilized to ensure a safe and secure environment for independent journalists – male and females both?



## 7. Key Informant Interview Tool for Journalists (Male, Female) who abandoned their career

Interviewer Name:	Date of KII:
Gender of the interviewee Male _____ Female _____	Years of experience in Journalism:
Key affiliation in journalistic experience	Area of news coverage (sensitive reporting, soft reporting) _____-any other
Type of exclusion from journalistic field: Partial _____ Whole _____	
Start Time:	End Time:

What is the current state of women's participation in journalism in Pakistan, especially in the target provinces and locations?

What are the opportunities (for education and professional engagement) for journalism in Pakistan/target areas, especially for women?

What were the factors which motivated you to study journalism and obtain a degree in the field?

For how long did you pursue this field as a career and what were the key factors due to which you decided to leave the field? If you did not pursue the career at all after completing a journalism degree, what was the reason behind this decision?

What are the factors that compelled you to quit journalism as a career? Please focus on identifying and understanding social, cultural/religious/ethnic, economic, political and security factors

What role did these factors play in your professional life as a journalist and in your personal life? Which factor(s) was/were the most prominent and why?



What was the role of your immediate family members in joining or abandoning the career in journalism?

How could these factors be minimized to have allowed you to continue working in this field? Who needs to do what?

What safety and security related challenges do men and women journalists face in this region when it comes to sensitive/conflict reporting? And how these challenges can be minimized?

What are some of the barriers which prevent women journalists from practicing independent journalism and sensitive/conflict reporting?

What are some of the reasons/barriers due to which women do not prefer membership of press clubs? How do male dominated press clubs deal with or treat women journalists?

*(Probe into: Perceived pressure, perceived susceptibility of exclusion, hostile working environment, lack of implementation of press club policies, timelines of the activities and odd working hours, pressure of meetings and reporting)*

What is the importance of the gender sensitive environment of media for women participation in mainstream media and continuance of their work as journalists?

What are some positive and negative attributes of these strategies?

What do you think of women engagement/participation through radio programming for increased women representation in the field?

How does social media shape opinion for women journalists and their working in the field of media?



## **8. Survey for Students from Media and Communication Department(s) of targeted Universities**

### **Section 1: Demographic Information**

- 1. Name of the University**
  - University of Peshawar
  - Gomal University
  - Balochistan University
- 2. From which province do you belong?**
  - Balochistan
  - Khyber PakhtonKhwa
- 3. Which district of Balochistan are you from?**
  - List down all districts and choose one from the multiple choice
- 4. Which district of Khyber Pakhtonkhwa are you from**
  - List down all districts and choose one from the multiple choice
- 5. Gender**
  - Male
  - Female
- 6. Marital Status**
  - Single
  - Married
- 7. Academic Program**
  - BS Program 8<sup>th</sup> Semester
  - Masters'/MS Program 4<sup>th</sup> Semester
- 8. Does the university have a quota system for students (female, underprivileged areas' students, people with different abilities)?**
  - Yes
  - No
- 9. Did you secure admission on the basis of merit or on quota delegated for your region?**
  - Yes
  - No
- 10. Does the university offer Morning and Evening both programs (Skip Q11 if the answer is No)**
  - Yes
  - No
- 11. Are you enrolled in a morning or an evening program currently?**
  - Morning Program
  - Evening Program
- 12. Are you currently doing some other job other than studies? Skip Q13 if the answer is No.**



- Yes
- No

**13. What is this job?**

- Govt. job
- Private job

Others \_\_\_\_\_ (Question 6 is mandatory if the student is currently doing a job with studies)

**14. Why are you doing a job with your studies**

- To bear educational expenses
- To support the family needs,
- To get an additional job experience other than degree,
- To spend additional time in a positive manner
- 

**15. Are you a day scholar or accommodating in the hostel? (Skip Question 16 and 17 If the student has a hostel accommodation in university hostel and go to question 18 in case of Private Hostel Accommodation)**

- Day Scholar
- University Hostel Accommodation
- Private Hostel Accommodation

**16. How do you travel to University**

- Through university bus
- Personal conveyance
- Local travel (through a cab, rikshaw or local bus)

**17. How much time does it take you to reach university**

- 30 minutes
- An hour
- More than an hour

**18. How far is your hostel from University**

- 2-3 km
- more than 3km

**19. How do you commute to and from University (for Private hostel accommodation only)**

- On-foot,
- Through university bus,
- Personal conveyance)

**20. Does the university offer scholarships for your academic program? Skip Q and If the Answer is No.**

- Yes
- No

**21. Have you ever secured any scholarship in your respective program (Skip Q8 if the answer is No)**

- Yes
- No





- 22. Did this scholarship cover your tuition fee for the whole semester? Skip Q9 if the answer is Yes**
- Yes
  - No
- 23. How did you pay the other expenses of the semester if the scholarship did not cover the complete semester expenses? Q10 is mandatory for all options selected**
- Family support
  - Additional Job
  - Study Loan from University
  - Support by some charity
  - Loan with/without interest) –
- 24. Do you think you will be able to complete your education with the support you mentioned above? Skip Q25 if the answer is Yes**
- Yes
  - No
- 25. How would you manage the expense of this semester other than the support you mentioned above?**
- \_\_\_\_\_ (Open ended)

## **Section 2: Study Aspirations for Journalism**

- 1. How would you define your admission in Media and Communication Program**
  - By Chance
  - By Choice
- 2. What inspired you the most to pursue a degree in journalism (Check all applicable)**
  - Personal Interest in media and journalism
  - Secured admission in this department only
  - Inspired by any individual in the media or family
  - Securing an exciting job after completion of degree
  - Working for the uplift of certain group in the media
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Any other
- 3. Are you currently a member of a journalists' community within/outside of the university? Skip Q4-Q7 if the answer is No.**
  - Yes
  - No
- 4. How did you get in contact with this Group/Community**
  - With university support
  - Additional activities pursued by student
  - Mandatory part of study program
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Any other
- 5. What does this journalist community work on? (The answers will vary based on the students' engagement with different journalists/media groups)**



- \_\_\_\_\_ Open Ended
- 6. Do you want to be engaged with this journalist' community when you complete your studies?**
  - Yes
  - No
- 7. How do you want to be engaged with this journalists' group or community?**
  - Part-time,
  - Full time job,
  - Supporting the cause by doing job somewhere else,
  - Only by socializing with these groups
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Any other
- 8. What job do you want to pursue in journalism after completion of degree?**
  - News/field reporting
  - Column writing,
  - Newscaster,
  - Radio programming
  - Production
  - Direction
  - Anchoring
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Any other
- 9. Did the university ever arrange an exposure visit for the students? Skip Q10 if the Answer is No.**
  - Yes
  - No
- 10. Where this visit was arranged**
  - Press-club meetings
  - Media houses' newsrooms
  - TV Channels (Private or National)
  - \_\_\_\_\_ any other)
- 11. Did the university ever arrange a talk/seminar/discussion with media icons in your department?**
  - Yes
  - No

### **Section 3: Perceptions, Barriers & Coping Strategies**

- 12. What are some of the issues and current trends in journalism and media that you are aware of? (Tick all applicable)**
  - political crisis journalists face,
  - impunity,
  - digital security threats,
  - difficulty for women in getting a job in sensitive reporting,
  - news-room reporting,
  - harassment at workplace,



- hostile working conditions for women,
- women confined to soft-reporting,
- journalism a full-time job with low income,
- less economic opportunities,
- women self-censorship,
- politicized conflict sensitive media reporting,
- lack of training opportunities to freelance journalists,
- Social pressure on women for their inclusion in media
- \_\_\_\_\_ any other)

**13. What job do you think should women students pursue after completion of their degree?**

- News/field reporting
- Column writing,
- Newscaster,
- Radio programming
- Production
- Direction
- Anchoring
- research related jobs in media houses
- \_\_\_\_\_ any other)

**14. Do you think social media shapes the image of women journalists differently than men journalists? Skip Question 15 if the answer is No**

- Yes
- No

**15. How do you think social media does this?**

- Helps women active participation,
- restricts women participation in media,
- creates hostility for women,
- increases venues of freedom of expression and right to speech for men and women,
- pushes women to self-censorship,
- increases burden for women – dual role
- \_\_\_\_\_ any other)

**16. Do you think the current provincial scenario will allow you to practice independent job in media?**

- Yes
- No
- May be

**17. If Yes, Why do you think so?**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Open ended

**18. If No, What would you do to practice journalism after completion of degree?**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Open ended



- 19. Are there any restrictions (social, cultural, religious) which will not let you pursue your career? Skip Q25 if the response is No**
- Yes,
  - No
- 20. What are some of those restrictions?**
- \_\_\_\_\_ Open Ended - list all restrictions
- 21. What can you do to minimize the extent of these social, cultural and religious restrictions so you may pursue your career in independent media and journalism?**
- \_\_\_\_\_ Open Ended - List all such strategies students mention)
- 22. Do you think your university/department can do something to minimize the issues you have mentioned?**
- Yes
  - No)
- 23. What can be done by the university to**
- a. reduce social, cultural and contextual barriers for women students to pursue a career in journalism after passing out the respective program – Open ended (Enter manually)
  - b. increase students' capacity to understand the diverging trends in journalism and conflict sensitive reporting – Open ended (Enter manually)
  - c. increase access to the resources for students to better understand the needs of the field and pursue a competitive career – Open ended (Enter manually)
  - d. Promote career counselling – Open ended (Enter manually)
  - e. Link students with relevant job market – Open ended (Enter manually)
  - f. increase women work-force in the media and link them with press-clubs of respective districts – Open ended (Enter manually)
- 24. What are some of the challenges and risks which women can encounter when they pursue their career as journalists?**
- \_\_\_\_\_ Open ended - Enter manually
- 25. What can you do as an individual to keep yourself intact/safe in the field of media and journalism and continue to practice it professionally?**
- \_\_\_\_\_ Open ended - Enter manually
- 26. Is there a Career Counselling department linked with your department in the university? Skip Q38 if the answer is No.**
- Yes
  - No
- 27. How does this Career Counselling Centre/Department will help you find a relevant job in your field?**
- \_\_\_\_\_ Open Ended - enter manually



## Annex 2: Urdu Translation of Executive Summary

### انتظامی خلاصہ

میڈیا انڈسٹری میں خواتین کو مردوں کی نسبت کہیں زیادہ مسائل کا سامنا ہے۔ اگرچہ ۲۰۰۲ء کے بعد میڈیا کے شعبے میں توسیع کے بعد خواتین کی تعداد میں اضافہ ہوا ہے لیکن تاحال اس شعبے میں خواتین کے داخلے کے حوالے سے واضح رکاوٹیں موجود ہیں۔ دوسری جانب پاکستان میں صحافیوں کے لیے کام کرنے کے حالات کبھی بھی سازگار نہیں رہے، بالخصوص جغرافیائی اور صنفی تحفظات کے ساتھ ساتھ حساس معاملات اور تنازعات سے متعلقہ رپورٹنگ کے ضمن میں معاملات خاصے پیچیدہ ہیں۔ یہ عوامل بطور صحافی خواتین کی شمولیت کو فروغ دینے کے لیے شراکت داروں کی توجہ کا مطالبہ کرتے ہیں۔

زیر نظر مطالعے کا مقصد صوبہ خیبر پختونخواہ اور بلوچستان میں خواتین کی صحافت میں شمولیت اور کام کرنے کے حوالے سے مختلف سطحوں پر حائل رکاوٹوں کی تحقیق کرنا ہے۔ اس تحقیق کا تصوراتی فریم ورک وسیع لٹرچر ریویو، سرچ فار کامن گراؤنڈ پاکستان کے تحقیقاتی اہداف اور اس کے نتیجے میں پیدا ہونے والے تحقیقی سوالات سے اخذ کیا گیا ہے۔ اس تحقیق کا مقصد سماجی روایات، اقدار، ثقافت اور دیگر رکاوٹوں کی موجودگی میں خواتین کے بطور صحافی کام کرنے کی حیثیت کا جائزہ لینا (بالخصوص یونیورسٹیوں کے صحافتی پروگرامز، پریس کلبز اور میڈیا ہاؤسز میں خواتین کی شمولیت) اور پاکستان میں خاص طور پر ہدف والے صوبوں میں میڈیا میں خواتین کی محفوظ اور مستحکم شرکت کو فروغ دینے کے لئے حکمت عملی اور اقدامات کی تشکیل شامل ہے۔

پہلے سے میدان صحافت میں مصروف عمل، اور صحافت میں آگے بڑھنے کی متمنی خواتین صحافیوں کی سرگرمیوں اور ترغیب کے راستے میں حائل مختلف ساختی، معاشی، سلامتی اور حفاظتی سطح کی رکاوٹوں کا مطالعہ کرنے کے لئے ایک مخلوط طریقہ کار اختیار کیا گیا۔ تحقیقی آلات، نیز تجزیہ اور اعداد و شمار کی تشریح کے دوران، استقرائی اور اختراعی طریقہ کار کا استعمال کیا گیا۔ اس تحقیق کے لیے نمونہ سازی فریم ورک تیار کرنے کے لیے سرچ فار کامن گراؤنڈ پاکستان کے اشتراک کردہ حوالہ کی شرائط سے رہنمائی لی گئی، جس



کے نتیجے میں ایک زرخیز نمونہ اس تحقیق میں شامل کیا گیا جو صحافتی سرگرمی کے متعدد اسٹیک ہولڈرز پر مشتمل تھا۔ سروے منگی پر مرتب کردہ آن لائن سروے کا استعمال کرتے ہوئے بلوچستان اور خیبر پختونخواہ کی تین بڑی یونیورسٹیوں کے یونیورسٹی طلباء کے ساتھ ایک سروے کا انعقاد کیا۔

موجودہ اور سابق صحافیوں، پریس کلب کے صدور، میڈیا ہاؤسز کے سربراہان، اور سروے شدہ یونیورسٹیوں کے محکمہ جات کے سربراہان کے ساتھ انٹرویوز کیے گئے۔ حاصل شدہ آراء و معلومات کو پریس کلبوں کے ممبروں کے ساتھ با معنی گروپ مباحثہ جات کے ذریعے مزید تقویت ملی۔ تحقیقی سوالات پر درست صنفی نقطہ نظر کے حصول کی خاطر اعداد و شمار جمع کرنے کے تمام ذرائع میں خواتین کی شرکت کو یقینی بنانے کے لئے باضابطہ کوششیں کی گئیں۔ اس بات کو مد نظر رکھتے ہوئے کہ تحقیق میں خواتین صحافیوں کے شعبہ صحافت میں داخلے اور کام کرنے میں رکاوٹوں کا مطالعہ کرنا بنیادی مقصد ہے، انہیں تمام تحقیقاتی سرگرمیوں میں شامل کیا گیا۔ اعداد و شمار کا تجزیہ این وائیو 11 کا استعمال کرتے ہوئے کیا گیا۔

صحافت کا پیشہ اختیار کرنے کیلئے خواتین کے راستے میں متعدد رکاوٹیں حائل ہیں جن میں سماجی، ثقافتی، پیشہ ورانہ رکاوٹوں کیساتھ ساتھ قانونی اور پالیسی سطح کی رکاوٹیں شامل ہیں۔

مقداری و معیاری ذرائع سے حاصل کردہ اعداد و شمار کیساتھ ساتھ ثانوی ذرائع کے تجزیے سے سامنے آیا کہ:-

تمام تر رکاوٹوں میں سے ساختی رکاوٹیں عورتوں کے صحافت بطور پیشہ اختیار کرنے کی راہ میں غالب ثابت ہوتی ہیں۔ حالیہ تحقیق سے معلوم ہوا کہ قوانین اور متعلقہ پالیسیوں کی کمی دراصل وہ وجوہات ہیں جو خواتین اور مردوں کے صحافت کی راہ میں رکاوٹ بنتے ہیں۔ حتیٰ کہ مقام کار پر خواتین کو ہر اسان کرنے کیخلاف تحفظ کا قانون (2010) اور تحفظ صحافت کا قانون (2014) جیسے قوانین کی موجودگی کے باوجود قومی و پیشہ ورانہ صحافتی سرگرمیوں میں انہیں درست اور موزوں پالیسیوں کی مدد فراہم نہیں کی جاتی؛ نتیجتاً (ایسی صورت حال) پاکستان میں صحافیوں کے کام کے حالات مزید ابتر کر دیتی ہے۔





سماجی سطح پر، یہ اخذ کیا گیا کہ خواتین کی میڈیا میں موجودگی کے متعلق معاشرے کا تصور اور نظریہ ایک بڑی رکاوٹ پیدا کرتا ہے۔ معاشرے میں خواتین کا مرد حضرات کیساتھ مل کر صحافت میں کام کرنے کے تصور کو عمومی طور پر درست نہیں مانا جاتا ہے۔ سماجی اقدار، خواتین کے مردوں کیساتھ مل کر کام کرنے، ایک ہی دفتر میں شرکت کرنے، اور مجمع میں اجنبی مردوں کی نظروں میں آنے کی حمایت نہیں کرتے۔ اسی طرح، خواتین کا کیمبرے کے سامنے نمودار ہونے کا مسئلہ، اور اجنبی افراد کیساتھ گھل مل جانا سماجی طور پر ناقابل قبول امور ہیں، جو کہ خواتین کیلئے صحافت کا پیشہ ترک کرنے کا محرک بنتے ہیں۔ یہ رکاوٹیں، بہ نسبت مردوں کے، خواتین پر زیادہ اثر انداز ہوتی ہیں۔ اگر خواتین ان اقدار کی خلاف جانے کا ارادہ کر لیں، تو انہیں سماجی ہراسانی کا نشانہ بنایا جاتا ہے۔ یہاں تک کہ اس "جرم" کی پاداش میں غیر رسمی نسلی اور سماجی اقدار کے نام نہاد مقامی ٹھیکیداروں کے ہاتھوں سزا بھی دی جاتی ہے۔

ثقافتی رکاوٹیں اس دباؤ کا نتیجہ ہیں جس کا سامنا خواتین صحافیوں کے اہل خانہ کو کرنا پڑتا ہے۔ اس طرح کے دباؤ برداشت نہ کر پانے کے باعث بہت ساری خواتین صحافی اپنا پیشہ ترک کر دیتی ہیں۔ یہ رکاوٹیں قبائلی ثقافت کا نتیجہ ہیں۔ ثقافتی رکاوٹیں بنیادی طور پر اس نظریے سے اخذ ہوتی ہیں اور تقویت پاتی ہیں، کہ خواتین کو گھر پر رہنا چاہیے۔ معاشرتی رکاوٹوں کے ساتھ مل کر، اس سب کا نتیجہ صحافت میں خواتین کی بطور پیشہ شمولیت اور حصہ لینے میں رکاوٹ کے طور پر سامنے آتا ہے۔

پیشہ ورانہ رکاوٹوں کے ذریعہ اس طرح کے عوامل کو مزید تقویت ملی ہے، بشمول ایسے ماحول کہ جس میں خواتین سے بعض معاملات میں موجود رہنے اور چوبیس گھنٹے دستیاب رہنے کا تقاضا کیا جاتا ہے۔ محفوظ پبلک ٹرانسپورٹ اور صنف سے متعلق حساس سہولیات کا فقدان، خواتین کے لئے بطور پیشہ صحافت کو جاری رکھنا مزید مشکل بنا دیتا ہے۔

معاشی رکاوٹیں جن میں کم تنخواہ، ملازمت کی حفاظت کا فقدان، اور صحافت کے میدان میں مستقبل کے بہت کم امکانات کچھ ایسی رکاوٹیں ہیں جو مرد اور خواتین صحافیوں دونوں کے لئے پریشانی کا باعث ہیں۔ بلوچستان اور خیبر پختونخواہ کے دور دراز علاقوں میں



دستیاب کم سے کم مواقع خواتین کے کام کرنے کے سلسلے میں سنگین چیلنجز کا باعث بنتے ہیں، خاص طور پر جب یہ خواتین بطور صحافی محض اپنے کنبے کی مالی مدد کرنے کی خواہاں ہیں۔ یہ صورت حال بلوچستان میں زیادہ پائی جاتی ہے کیونکہ صوبے میں مرکزی میڈیا کی عدم موجودگی صوبے میں بہت ہی کم مواقع پر مضبوط مسابقت کا باعث بنتی ہے۔ اس طرح کے عوامل آجر کے ساتھ بات چیت کے لئے تھوڑی سی گنجائش بھی نہیں چھوڑتے ہیں اور اس کے نتیجے میں اہل اور قابل افراد صحافت سے نکل جاتے ہیں۔ مزید برآں جاری کووڈ-19 وباء نے صحافت کے پیشے کو بری طرح متاثر کیا ہے کیونکہ بہت سارے صحافی، بشمول خواتین، اپنی ملازمت سے محروم ہو گئے یا اپنی تنخواہوں میں بڑے پیمانے پر کمی کا سامنا کر رہے ہیں۔

صحافت کے میدان میں اگرچہ پہلے سے موجود اور حالیہ سیاسی رکاوٹوں کا تذکرہ صحافیوں کے ذریعہ محض بالواسطہ طور پر کیا گیا جبکہ یہ وجوہات سیکیورٹی کے امور سے اکثر آکر متراکب ہو جاتی ہیں۔ سروے، انٹرویوز اور گروپ مباحثہ جات کے دوران اظہار رائے کی آزادی کی کمی کو عام طور پر بارہا ذکر کیا گیا۔ حساس معاملات کی کوریج میں سیاسی مداخلت کو صحافیوں، مرد اور خواتین دونوں ہی نے درپیش سیاسی رکاوٹوں کی سب سے عام شکل قرار دیا ہے۔

تاہم، جب ذاتی حفاظت اور سلامتی کی بات کی جائے تو خواتین صحافیوں کو کام کی جگہ پر ہر اسل کیا جانا اولین خدشات میں سے ایک ہے۔ کام کی جگہ پر جنسی ہراسانی کے خلاف قوانین موجود ہونے کے باوجود، صحافت کے طلباء، اور فیلڈ میں موجود صحافی، جن میں مرد اور خواتین دونوں ہی شامل ہیں، کی ایک بڑی اکثریت نے اس بات کا اظہار کیا کہ کام کی جگہ پر جنسی ہراساں کیا جانا ہی ایک وجہ ہے جس کی وجہ سے خواتین صحافی بننے کی خواہش چھوڑ دیتی ہیں۔

ان نتائج کی بنیاد پر مرتب شدہ کلیدی سفارشات میں مندرجہ ذیل عناصر شامل ہیں:-

صحافت کے طلباء، نوخیز صحافیوں کے ساتھ ساتھ اپنی پیشہ ورانہ مہارت کو بہتر بنانے کے خواہاں تجربہ کار صحافیوں کے لئے بھی تربیت اور رہنمائی کے پروگرام مہیا کیے جائیں۔



مہارت کی طلب اور رسد کے فرق کو کم کرنے کے لئے میڈیا ہاؤسز، پریس کلبوں اور یونیورسٹیوں کے مابین آپسی رابطے قائم کیے جائیں۔

کیریئر کونسلرز / مشیروں کا بندوبست کرنے کے لئے یونیورسٹیوں کے ساتھ عوامی نجی شراکت داری کو فروغ دینے کے لئے پلیٹ فارم تشکیل دیے جائیں۔

خواتین صحافیوں کے کام کرنے کے محفوظ و موزوں ماحول کو فروغ دینے کے لیے تربیتی پروگرامز کا انعقاد کیا جائے، نیز خواتین صحافیوں کو اپنے مسائل پر آواز اٹھانے اور جہاں ممکن ہو وہاں پریس کلب اور میڈیا ہاؤسز کی پالیسیوں پر نظر ثانی کے لیے سماجی سیٹ اپ تشکیل دیے جائیں۔

صحافت کی اہمیت اور کردار سے متعلق شعور اجاگر کرنے کے لئے حکمت عملی اور پروگرام تشکیل دیے جائیں، خاص طور پر مرکزی میڈیا میں موجودگی کے ذریعہ خواتین صحافیوں کے کردار کو اجاگر کیا جائے، اس ضمن میں یونیورسٹیوں، پریس کلبوں اور خود سرچ فارکامن گروئنڈ پاکستان کے سوشل میڈیا پلیٹ فارم کو استعمال کرنا بھی ان سفارشات میں شامل ہے۔

سرکاری ایجنسیوں / حکام اور پالیسی سازوں کے ساتھ صحافت کے فروغ، خاص طور پر خواتین کے لئے کارآمد پالیسیاں تیار کرنے کے لئے وکالت اور حمایت حاصل کرنا۔

خواتین کی بھرتی کے لئے میڈیا ہاؤسز کیساتھ پر مغز اور نتیجہ خیز مذاکرات کیے جائیں اور صحافتی ماحول میں خواتین کی حفاظت و سلامتی کے لیے موثر انتظامات کو یقینی بنایا جائے۔



## **Annex 3: Terms of Reference**

### **Terms of Reference (TOR)**

**Project: Inspiring the Next Generation of Independent Media in Pakistan.**

---

*Analysis to determine the overall working environment for journalists and the barriers to women in the media sector, with a focus on the specific context in Baluchistan and KP provinces, Pakistan.*

## **OVERVIEW**



Search for Common Ground, Pakistan is looking for a consultant(s) researcher or a research institution to carry out a barrier analysis in selected provinces of Pakistan.

This barrier analysis is an important and basic part of the two-year project “Inspiring the Next Generation of Independent Media in Pakistan” by Search for Common Ground Pakistan. This study can analyze and determine the overall security and safety of the journalists, the needs and requirements of journalists in the profession generally, and specific barriers that prevent women from working in independent media in the target regions. It will include social, cultural, religious, and economic barriers from the perspective of local women, as well as potential entry points and opportunities to overcome the barriers identified. Overall, the analysis will aim to uncover barriers to gender inclusivity, to strengthen women’s voices in independent media.

The consultant’s research proposal should include a plan to analyze existing barriers and potential avenues for transforming social norms (i.e. attitudes and perceptions) surrounding these barriers, and identify the steps needed to encourage independent journalists and how to make the environment of press clubs and media houses conducive for women journalists. The shifts in social norms should be analyzed across location, sex, age, and other demographics. The candidate’s team should have experience in researching norms to explain the connection between the overall environment and barriers to gender inclusivity.

The findings from the barrier analysis will also be shared with the project partners (universities and press clubs) through different workshops and meetings, to inform their work more broadly as well as their participation in the project. This study will also help us to design the capacity building/ training program for the target journalists.

## **1. CONTEXT**

### **The Organization**

Founded in 2013, Search for Common Ground Pakistan (SCGP) is a local nonprofit organization based in Islamabad. SCGP’s mission is to transform the way the world deals with conflict, away from adversarial approaches, and towards collaborative solutions. Working with actors from all parties, ranging from grassroots organizations to top-level leaders, we develop locally-adapted responses to a wide range of conflict issues, using a toolkit that includes capacity-building, mediation and alternative dispute resolution, community dialogue, arts-based approaches, and mass media to advance conflict prevention and resolution. We do this through an inclusive approach, engaging government, civil society, media, and traditional and community actors, with a particular focus on women and youth, to become agents of peace in their communities and their country. In Pakistan, SCGP’s programming generally has focused on three areas of work: (1) strengthening media capacities to manage conflict, (2) facilitating women’s participation in local politics, and (3) empowerment of youth leaders to actively prevent violence and promote peace in Karachi, Baluchistan, and KP.

### **The Project**



SCGP launched the “*Inspiring the Next Generation of Independent Media in Pakistan*” project in September 2020 in partnership with Search for Common Ground. This **24-month project** aims to support the growth of independent and diverse media in **Baluchistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP)**, by increasing the capacity of young journalists, particularly young women, in independent and conflict-sensitive reporting; and fostering an enabling environment for the professional advancement of women in media. Working with local universities and press clubs, the project focuses on building sustainable initiatives that can be institutionalized in these bodies to support the next generation of independent journalists. The overall goal of the project is ***to advance women- and youth-led independent media in KP and Baluchistan***. This goal is supported by the following objectives and corresponding outcomes:

**Objective 1:** Promote the practice of conflict-sensitive journalism by young journalists and university media departments in KP and Baluchistan.

- **Outcome 1.1:** Targeted local universities institutionalize conflict-sensitive journalism in their media department curricula.
- **Outcome 1.2:** Young journalists in the target districts have increased access to resources and capacity building to champion conflict-sensitive journalism in their work.

**Objective 2:** Foster an enabling environment for the professional advancement of women in independent media KP and

- **Outcome 2.1:** Targeted local independent media actors better support women in media.
- **Outcome 2.2:** Independent women journalists in the target districts feel more confident and safer in their workplaces.

## 2. GEOGRAPHIC LOCATIONS

The project coverage area is spread over the following target districts in Baluchistan and KP provinces. The project will partner with three universities and also work closely with press clubs and media houses working in these districts.

Target Districts by Province		Key Partners
Balochistan	Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP)	Universities





1. Quetta	7. Bajaur	1. University of Peshawar
2. Qilla Saifullah	8. Dera Ismail Khan	
3. Pashin	9. Khyber	2. Balochistan University
4. Khuzdar	10. Kurram	
5. Chaghi	11. Mohmand	3. Gomal University
6. Sibi	12. Orakzai	
	13. Peshawar	
	14. North Waziristan	
	15. South Waziristan	

### 3. Goal and Objectives of the Barrier Analysis.

A barrier analysis will be carried out at the beginning of the project to inform the project activities. This research will determine the barriers that prevent people from working in independent media in the target regions, with a focus on women and gender issues. It will include social, cultural, religious, and economic barriers from the perspective of local women, as well as potential entry points and opportunities to overcome the barriers identified. Overall, the analysis will aim to uncover barriers to gender inclusivity, to strengthen women's voices in independent media.

These findings will serve as the basis for the development of Search's training program for journalists, students, aspiring women journalists, mentorships, and gender training and workshops for press clubs and media actors. This will ensure the project responds to the real and specific challenges the journalist community and specifically women are facing in the region. These findings will be shared with project partners and inform the specifics of all activities to be implemented through actionable programmatic recommendations.

To support the upcoming media activities, the barrier analysis has three (3) key objectives:

1. Assess the current status of women and girls' participation in media in the target areas.
2. Assess the social norms, values, culture, and cultural barriers to women's participation in media (specifically journalism university programs, press clubs, and media houses).
3. Furnish strategies and actions for promoting women's safe and secure participation in media in Pakistan, especially in target provinces.

### 4. Key Questions of the Barrier Analysis

The key research questions will be the following:



1. What are the factors that motivate the engagement of women to practice journalism as a profession?
2. What are the obstacles or constraints that limit female engagement in journalism?
3. How can we promote the participation of women in radio programming and their active involvement in journalism as a profession?
4. Perceived susceptibility: Does the participant feel as though they or someone they know are vulnerable to exclusion from the media sector?
5. Perceived severity: Does the problem seem serious enough to take initiative?
6. Perceived action efficacy: Do preventative actions have a positive impact on the problem?
7. Perceived self-efficacy: Is preventative action easy? What are the biggest obstacles?
8. Cues for action: Do participants and media institutions remember the significance of enacting gender inclusivity? What are examples of this?
9. Perceived social acceptability: Is women's involvement in the media socially acceptable?
10. Perception of divine will: Is female exclusion part of God's will?
11. Positive and negative attributes of the preventive action: What are the advantages and disadvantages of including women in the media?
12. How can the safety and security of independent journalists be increased in the target areas?

## **5. Methodology and Data Collection Tools**

The analysis should use a qualitative rapid assessment tool that seeks to understand behavior and perception of women in journalism through interviews and focus groups. This will include conducting key informant interviews (KIIs) and focus group discussions (FGDs) in KP and Balochistan with: (1) current and former male and female journalists; (2) media and journalism university students; (3) members of press clubs; (4) editors and heads of local media houses; and (5) male and female journalists or journalism students that abandoned their pursuit of this career path.

The details of this methodology and tools will be developed by the consultant and finalized with the support of SCGP. The tools and approach utilized, and the means of analysis should be determined based on what is necessary and relevant to the project, and a justification for this should be included in the submitted proposal. Each specific tool/method should then be listed with the justification of its use, intended target groups for the tool, and numbers of each target group to be reached. Please include the sampling strategy and approach to the analysis for the study in your proposal. Also, to Do No Harm strategies, any proposed deliverables for sharing the findings of the study should be included in this section of the proposal.

**Note.** SCGP is specifically looking for approaches that are innovative and participatory.

## **Deliverables**

SCGP expects the following deliverables from the external consultant(s) as they correspond to the timeline and budget:



- An inception report detailing the methodology, data collection tools, and timeline for review by Search;
- A literature review of existing analysis on women's participation in media in Pakistan
- Any necessary training of data collectors or set-up of systems for data collection;
- Supervision and participation in data collection;
- Oversight of data coding and analysis;
- All original data submitted to Search;
- A final report (in editable MS Word format) in English (30 pages max in length, excluding annexures) consistent with SCGP branding and standards. Besides, an executive summary in "URDU" is required. The report:
  - Uses the SCGP template following this general structure:
    - i. Cover pages (Cover page, acknowledgements, abbreviations and acronyms, table of contents)
    - ii. Executive summary (Brief context derived from the Literature review, brief introduction, brief methodology, key findings, key recommendations in bullet points)
    - iii. Introduction
    - iv. Literature review
    - v. Methodology
    - vi. Scope and limitations
    - vii. Analysis of Findings
      1. Current status of women's participation
      2. Barriers to women's participation in Media
        - a. Structural barriers
        - b. Economic barriers
        - c. Political barriers
        - d. Social norms, culture/religion,
        - e. Safety and security
      3. Strategies and actions required to promote women's participation
    - viii. Conclusions and recommendations
      1. Conclusions
      2. Recommendations
    - ix. Annexes
  - Fully explains the objectives and research questions of the study, limitations, and methods chosen for analysis,
  - Findings are structured around the main objectives of the study and are presented about the intended target groups. It should explain adaptations that occurred during the project and their impact on results.
  - Recommendations should have a clear audience and be specific, accessible, and actionable.
  - Appendices should include detailed research instruments, a list of interviewees, terms of references, and consultant(s) brief biography.

## Logistical Support

Consultant(s) will be responsible for organizing their logistics for data collection (travel, vehicles, fuel, and drivers), and this must be budgeted into the study. SCGP can provide support in arranging logistics as



agreed upon based on the consultant's proposal. No SCGP staff member will be available to support data collection; SCGP can however support initiating connections with relevant stakeholders for interviews and logistics in the country as needed.

## Ethical Considerations

The consultant(s) must clearly outline key risks of conducting the study and the steps to assure Do No Harm and Conflict Sensitivity and inclusion principles (ie. gender, age, ethnicity, religion, etc.). In addition, the consultant is required to respect the following Ethical Principles:

- **Comprehensive and systematic inquiry:** *The consultant should make the most of the existing information and the full range of stakeholders available at the time of the review. Consultants should conduct systematic, data-based inquiries. He or she should communicate his or her methods and approaches accurately and in sufficient detail to allow others to understand, interpret, and critique his or her work. He or she should make clear the limitations of the review and its results.*
- **Competence:** *Consultant should possess the abilities and skills and experience appropriate to undertake the tasks proposed and should practice within the limits of his or her professional training and competence.*
- **Honesty and integrity:** *The consultant should be transparent with the contractor/constituent about any conflict of interest, any change made in the negotiated project plan and the reasons why those changes were made, any risk that certain procedures or activities produce misleading review information.*
- **Respect for people:** *Consultant respect the security, dignity, and self-worth of respondents, program participants. The consultant has the responsibility to be sensitive to and respect differences amongst participants in culture, religion, gender, disability, age, and ethnicity.*

## 6. Data Quality Assurance and Management.

Proposals submitted must clearly define methods for assuring the data is recorded and stored in a high-quality manner. All studies will be reviewed and approved by our country office, Asia's Regional Office, and global Institutional Learning Team before acceptance of the final product.

## 7. Timeline

SN	Activity	Date
1	Proposal submission	January 8, 2021



2	Interview	January 18-22, 2021
3	Signing the contract	January 25, 2021
4	Inception report	January 31, 2021
5	Data collection	February 8-19, 2021
6	Submission of draft report	March 12, 2021
7	Review of the draft report by Search	March 19, 2021
8	Submission of final report	March 26, 2021

## 8. Budget

A detailed budget should be provided as part of the financial proposal, including daily rates for personnel, and costs related to data collection (per total number of people sampled, sites for collection, etc.), analysis, and production of deliverables. A **maximum of 25 total person days** is expected for the project.

## 9. Requirements of Consultant

The following skills and experience are expected by SCGP for our evaluator for this project:

- High level of written and spoken proficiency in English and Urdu Language, knowledge of Pashto is a plus;
- 5 years of experience in qualitative research, including collecting deep data through FGDs and KIIs and
- High level of understanding of gender dynamics and conflict sensitivity in Pakistan, especially in the target provinces.
- Experiences of doing research in highly sensitive conflict zones
- Proven track record of carrying out strong analysis of qualitative data and excellent report writing
- Proven track record of carrying out literature review and summarizing and contextualizing them in relevant research work.
- Experience in conflict analysis and working with universities, media, and civil society sectors;
- Experience working with international organizations;
- Experience conducting gender work and/or barrier analyses is a plus;
- Familiarity and experience with contextual challenges in the geographic location(s) where the study will take place.



#### 10. Selection Criteria.

Consultant proposals will be selected for:

1. The relevance of the proposed methodology to the goal, objectives, and research questions for the project.
2. Quality of proposed methods, conflict sensitivity approaches, and quality control measures.
3. Qualifications of the candidate(s).
4. The proposed budget, methodology, deliverables, and team.
5. Timeline for proposed activities.

#### 11. Deadline and Procedure for Applications

To apply, interested candidates (individuals or teams) are requested to submit the following two documents by **January 8, 2021**.

- Curriculum vitae of the applicant(s); (Not more than 3 Pages).
- A **technical proposal** proposing a methodology for the barrier analysis together with a **detailed financial proposal** for the completion of the deliverables and a short cover letter. (Not more than 7 Pages)
- A copy of a research report completed by the applicant(s) in English within the last two years

**Note:** Only two documents can be submitted, so the technical and financial proposals must be combined, along with the short cover letter. Please send the copy of the research report to the email given below.

Please submit your application along with the required documents to

**srahim@sfcg.org** with **sdhungana@sfcg.org** in copy. Phone calls or inquiries intended for influencing selection decisions are highly discouraged and would form the basis for disqualification.