

Male Bastion Busted: Women outnumber men in national media, say media professionals

NEW DELHI, September 26, 2012. When it comes to women's empowerment, the one section of society that actually practices what it preaches is the media. In fact, far from being a male bastion, the Indian media today employs more women than men and the glass ceiling, for a change, is for the male fraternity.

These thoughts were expressed by eminent media persons led by **Ms. Sonia Singh, Editorial Director, NDTV**, at a panel discussion on '**Sharing Experiences by Women in Media**', organised by **FICCI Ladies Organisation (FLO)**.

Ms. Singh said that at NDTV almost 80 per cent of the workforce comprises women. "In media, the divide is not between the two genders but between a parent and non-parent. The issue that comes to the fore is that a woman who has the responsibility of a child needs to maintain a balance between her home and office which can be challenging as the working hours in the media are erratic."

Ms. Sonal Kalra, Editor HT City, Hindustan Times, pointed out that in her team of 43 members, there is only one male reporter. This in itself explains how well placed and successful women are in the media. But the most vulnerable are the young girls who enter the profession as it looks glamorous from outside, and such myths and preconceived notions need to be dispelled. The young ladies must be groomed professionally and must be backed by the support and confidence of their superiors and the company.

Ms. Sobha Menon, Senior Assistant Editor, Fortune India, said, "Behind the success of women a huge role is played by her family and husband. Women entrepreneurs are gaining ground in the media but they are dependent on family support to excel in the professional arena."

The discussion was moderated by **Mr. Anshul Chaturvedi, Senior Editor, Delhi Times & Editor of the Times of India's Supplements in North India**, who said that in media a hierarchy is followed which is – influence, visibility and money. It is seen that in the media women perform far better but their careers take a backseat in a family situation where they at times sacrifice their jobs for a male member of the family or for abiding by the decisions of the family.

Ms. Kavitha Varadaraj, FLO, President, stated, "According to a report, at leadership positions women in media earn \$20,000 more than their male counterparts and have so far performed better than the opposite sex." Today the prominent media houses have women at the highest editorial positions and are the decision makers.

Ms. Shilpi Arora, FLO Member & CMD, Garuda Advertising, emphasised that the mindset of the society needs to change with respect to women, and women must change their thought process which at times fosters narrow thinking.

MEDIA DIVISION