Through the Labyrinth

An inquiry into the lived experiences and leadership characteristics of female leaders in Indian newsrooms

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Abstract

While India has one of the most vibrant (Sreedharan & Thorsen 2015, Ismail and Mishra 2009) and fast-growing media landscapes in the world (CRISIL 2021), concerns about the representation of women in the Indian media have been gaining momentum. In 2018, the Network of Women in Media, India found that a major concern for female journalists was the lack of women in positions of leadership within the newsrooms (NWMI 2018). Further, a 2019 report by UN Women titled *Gender Inequality in Indian Media* found that only 5% of leadership positions in newspapers are held by women, while the numbers for TV channels and magazines stand only marginally better, at 20.9% and 13.6% respectively.

This study is undertaken against this backdrop, taking an interdisciplinary approach that draws on Feminist Standpoint (FST), Gatekeeping and Leadership theories to highlight the importance of women's representation in the industry, arguing that diverse representation in the upper echelons of management is critical to a democratic and fair media. Drawing from FST, this study prioritises the lived experiences and perspectives of women in positions of leadership in understanding how women lead. Through 18 semi-structured interviews with journalists in India, focussing on 4 English language National outlets in New Delhi – 2 print and 2 TV, the study brings the lived experiences of 11 female leaders of Indian newsrooms to the fore, using thematic analysis to better understand the characteristics of and obstacles to female leadership in Indian newsrooms. Seven interviews with journalists reporting to these leaders provide follower perspectives of these women. Finally, using the data from these interviews, the study provides a list of recommendations to remove hurdles to female leadership.

This thesis finds that the women tended to favour collaborative and democratic styles of leadership, with a significant emphasis on mentorship. This corresponds with previous studies (Eagly, Johannesen-Schmidt, and Engen 2003, Eagly and Karau 2002) that found that women tend to favour more democratic leadership styles, as well as studies that show that women show a higher tendency towards transformative leadership (Eagly and Johnson 1990,

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Gipson et al. 2017). A significant finding showed the emotional labour performed by these women, and the double bind they felt in simultaneously navigating the expectations placed on them as women, and as leaders. These findings highlight phenomena like Think Manager Think Male (Schein 1973, 1975), and Heilman's Lack of Fit model (1983). The interviewees described both social and institutional barriers to their progression in the workplace, ranging from gendered expectations to the lack of daycare options.

Focussing on the lived experiences of women journalists in Indian newsrooms, this study provides a better understanding of why, despite monumental growth, the Indian media struggle with a dearth of women in positions of leadership.

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My Social Context

The Indian news media industry is dominated by women – at least, that is the belief I held as a child, well into my first foray into the newsroom.

Growing up in the 1990s, part of a comfortable middle-class urban family in post-liberalisation India, I had watched a variety of women journalists on television: Barkha Dutt during the 1999 Kargil War, with the sounds of explosives punctuating her sentences; Nalini Singh investigating stories for the Hindi programme *Aankhon Dekhi;* and the famous Christiane Amanpour from different conflict zones around the world on CNN. I watched my mother work as a journalist for years before I entered a predominantly female classroom for my Bachelors in Media and Journalism, unsurprised by the multitude of women with lofty journalistic ambitions. About two years of internships in print and TV newsrooms later, I began to see a very different picture of an industry I assumed to be 'post-gender'.

On my first day at my first internship at a leading English newspaper, I was assigned a fashion show to cover. I was taken aback and looked at the male friend I had started with, the male friend who was immediately assigned the legal beat. I swallowed what I perceived to be a slight and focussed on churning out good articles in a timely manner, taking it upon myself to pitch 'hard' stories about politics and infrastructure to prove myself. I sat at my dining table, shrugging when my mother asked if I had pitched the story I had talked about wanting to cover for a while, about the treatment of working horses in town. I was not going to be doing that story yet, it was too 'weeping heart' I still remember myself saying. I was doing what I needed to do to climb the rungs at 18, something I was very aware that my male friend was not having to do.

I entered my second internship prepared. I was in New Delhi this time, in a serious English TV newsroom and my experience was remarkably different. I was not assigned fashion - I had my choice of beats, and my first assignment was for the sports desk. In this newsroom, the chief political correspondent was a woman, the de facto head of the newsroom was a

woman, the Managing Editor of the economic channel downstairs was a woman, and my fellow interns were 70% women. I chalked my first experience at the newspaper down to being the result of a regional organisation, a region not known for its gender equality. Here, in the big-time newsroom it was different, being a woman was not held against you. And I stood firm in that belief until I began to join in during informal post-shift gatherings in the parking lot with my colleagues. These were always people higher up the ladder, from news desk newbies to important producers. My silent observations threw up some stark themes, primarily the marked differences between the experiences of women and men. The women would often gather to discuss the tight rope they felt they had to walk in order to succeed, the stories of casual sexism they encountered and the glass ceiling they could feel looming. That, juxtaposed with the laid-back conversations men indulged in stuck with me for years to come and was a key motivation in pursuing this line of research.

My interest and drive for this research is personal – as an Indian woman, as a media student, as a consumer of the media and as an ally for all women I believe firmly in the need to understand where our news comes from, to consider the experiences of women and to structure a fair and representative media to best serve the public.

It is important to acknowledge that my experiences as an Indian woman and as a journalist in India are very privileged – I had the fortune of being born into a financially and socially affluent family in a town with good infrastructure, and I was privileged enough to be educated in a good school with supportive family and teachers around me. While my experiences may not be all too common in India, the specific focus of my study is on English language newsrooms, an area that predominantly attracts people of similar privilege and experiences as mine.

Introduction

The Indian media industry is growing at more than double the rate of the global industry (PWC 2018), and is often considered a juggernaut in a world of declining media revenue (Painter 2013, Roy 2014). This growth, however, has not been equitable; the Indian media has attracted considerable criticism for its representation, or rather for the lack thereof. In particular, the under-representation of Dalits (Balasubramaniam 2011), Muslims (Narayana and Kapur 2011) and women in the media are some of the issues that crop up (Sindik 2019, UN Women 2019, Dutt 2018). The explosive growth of the Indian media industry has, in a way consistent with industries across the globe, most benefitted those already in power – upper-caste, urban Hindu men (Byerly 2011, Balasubramaniam 2011, UN Women 2018, Narayana and Kapur 2011, Dutt 2018, OXFAM 2019).

A 2019 study of 121 newsroom leadership positions in leading organisations in India found that upper-caste journalists occupied 106 of the 121 positions, with none of the positions being held by the scheduled caste or scheduled tribe communities (OXFAM 2019). A 2019 study by UN Women found that women hold a mere 5% of leadership positions at newspapers, with the number expanding slightly to 13.6% in magazines and 20.9% in TV (GGMP 2019). When looking at representation in a country as diverse and complex as India, there are a multitude of avenues to consider – the urban tilt vs the rural tilt, religion, gender, caste, region, language and sexual orientation to name a few. This study concerns itself with gender representation in Indian newsrooms, looking to answer a question that crops up repeatedly in panels and op-eds in the media at the moment – why are there so few women in higher leadership positions in newsrooms?

While women continue to graduate from journalism schools and enter the industry in large numbers (Let There Be More Solidarity 2016), there is a thinning out of numbers the higher up the hierarchy one looks. This dearth is often referred to as the 'glass ceiling' for women – the invisible barrier to success that exists for women across industries and across the globe. This study opts instead for the metaphor of the labyrinth. As explained by Eagly, the metaphor of the glass ceiling conjures images of a smooth journey to the top, where women

are then met with a limit, or a ceiling. But for women, the gendered obstacles exist from the beginning:

> "gender stereotypes that depict women as unsuited to leadership, discrimination in pay and promotion, lack of access to powerful mentors and networks and greater responsibility for childcare and other domestic responsibilities," (Eagly and Carli 2016, p. 5)

These obstacles create a labyrinth for them to navigate. Employing the metaphor of the labyrinth not only better explains the predicament of women in the workplace, but also implies that there is a solution (Eagly 2007). To carry the metaphor a step further, this study hopes to use the lived experience of women leaders in Indian newsrooms to illuminate a portion of this labyrinth, highlight the challenges women journalists can expect in the workplace.

 This insight into how women lead comes from in depth, semi-structured interviews with 11 female leaders in 4 different Indian newsrooms – 2 print and 2 TV. This study also hopes to provide an understanding of barriers to female leadership in these newsrooms, and a list of recommendations to remove these barriers. This is an inter-disciplinary study, marrying together elements of feminist standpoint theory, gatekeeping and leadership theories, to argue both the importance of women in leadership positions, as well as the need for the lived experiences and situated knowledge of women in power.

The thesis begins with an overview of the India and its media, to provide the reader with a working knowledge of the country. The thesis then moves on to discuss the importance of diversity in the newsroom, and the importance of diverse leadership, by leaning into FST, gatekeeping, and providing an overview of leadership theories.

A thematic analysis of interviews with 18 journalists, 11 leaders and 7 followers, then provides an understanding of how women lead, how they are perceived by their followers, and obstacles they have found on their path to leadership. The study then provides recommendations to addressing these identified obstacles.

The overarching aim of this study is to shed light on an understudied but very pertinent perspective of representation within the newsroom – the perspective of women who have climbed the ranks of leading organisations. The findings of this study will hopefully act as a stepping stone for future studies, particularly into those of women in rural areas, working in regional media in the country, as well as other marginalised groups.

India and its Media: An Overview

This section provides an overview of India and the media landscape within it. It's important to note at the offset that this section touches on vast and complex topics. This overview is not meant to be an exhaustive study, but rather seeks only to provide the reader with a working knowledge of the background for this study.

This section begins with a short introduction to the most relevant parts of India. It borrows official statistics on the sex ratios, literacy rates and the regional fluctuation within India. Any study against the Indian backdrop juggles a lot of variables – it's a large, heavily populated and incredibly diverse country, as the section will argue. For that reason, the overview in India delves only into the aspects of the country most relevant to the research.

Secondly, a brief history of the Indian media is provided. The vast jungle of print and television news synonymous with India today is a relatively recent phenomenon, one that has a lot of relevance to the subject matter of this thesis.

Thirdly, the history of women in the Indian media is traced. This section provides the historical context for this study and provides a rich understanding of how we got where we are today, using both accounts from female journalists at the time and future studies. It outlines some of the obstacles women encountered in the early years as journalists in Indian newsrooms.

Then, the section delves briefly into some of the criticism that the Indian media attracts. Due to the focus of this thesis, this section focuses most heavily on criticism regarding female leadership in Indian newsrooms.

Finally, a general skeleton of the organisational structure of a newsroom is provided, to offer the reader some clarity and a working knowledge of the hierarchy in a newsroom, and the flow of output.

This section in its entirety, seeks to provide the reader with a working knowledge of the Indian media, and women's place within it. It also seeks to introduce the reader to the

concern of female leadership in Indian newsrooms, which future sections will tackle in more detail.

1.1 India

India as we know it today emerged in 1947, after nearly 200 years of British rule (Rajagopal 2016). The seventh largest country in the world, it was the product of the division of territory into India, Pakistan and what is now Bangladesh (Rajagopal 2016). With a population of 1.324 billion people, India is the second largest country by population after China. According to the 2011 Census, India has 122 major languages and 1599 other languages. The country is 79.8% Hindu, 14.2% Muslim, 2.3% Christian, 1.7% Sikh and 0.7% Buddhist (Census of India 2011).

India as a nation has a literacy rate of 74.04%, though the regional variations in literacy vary greatly. For instance, the state of Kerala has a literacy rate of 93.91% while Bihar is at just 63.82%. The literacy rate on the basis of gender varies greatly again – the literacy rate for men in India is 82.14% while for women it is 65.46%. The sex ratio in India fluctuates massively on the basis of region as well; while the overall sex ratio of the country is 940 females per 1000 males, that number goes from a high of 1084 females per 1000 males in Kerala to 818 in Chandigarh.

The Indian landscape is diverse and complex, which makes it an interesting but complicated domain of research. With class, caste, regional and gender differences among others, the number of variables at play in considering any issue are significant, making specificity a key tool of research.

1.2 A Brief History of the Indian Media

Often called the world's largest democracy, India's media industry is similarly expansive. As of 2015, the RNI registered 1,05,443 newspapers in over ten languages, and as of 2017 there were 882 TV channels, 369 of which that are news channels (RNI 2015, 2017).

The Indian media has, in its evolution, played key roles in a number of political and social events across the country. The first newspaper in India, the *Bengal Gazette* was founded in 1780 (Roy 2015). Thereafter, a number of newspapers were formally and informally published and used to criticize the government policies and promote nationalism and social change (Roy 2015). A series of legislation brought out by the British Raj sought to curb the freedom of the press – legislation like the Censorship of Press Act of 1799 and The Vernacular Press Act of 1878 (Murthy and Anita 2010). These policies were heavily criticised by prominent figures of the Independence movement, but the freedom of the Indian press remained a serious concern throughout the British rule with journalists often jailed for failing to comply with regulations (Murthy and Anita 2010).

The Indian Press, after Independence, grew rapidly – restrictions on the freedom of the press were removed and radio and newspapers grew rapidly to fulfil a growing demand. India got its first television channel, *Doordarshan*, in 1959, which was a state owned private broadcasting network. By 1965, programming became daily and access to televisions multiplied.

In 1975, the Indian media faced its biggest direct threat since the British rule; as the prime minister Indira Gandhi declared a state of emergency, all Indian media were censored heavily. The Emergency lasted two years, with some media organisations famously staging their protest, like the *Indian Express* publishing a blank editorial to signify their inability to express their opinion.

The Indian media landscape faced a drastic change in 1991, when under Prime Minister Narasimha Rao the Indian economy was liberalised. While before India had just *Doordarshan*, the state-owned television group, this move opened the industry up to private and foreign channels. The Indian media, at this stage, 'exploded' (Kohli 2013), with the entrance of Star and CNN, paving the way for 882 TV channels as of 2017 (Hindu, 23 March 2017).

The mammoth of the Indian media is multi-faceted, with high consumptions of radio, print, television and online media (Hindu 23 March 2017) and also with large variations between

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regional and central media, echoing the regional diversity of the country. Regions have news in their own languages – Punjab has news in Punjabi as well as access to central news in Hindi and English, Maharashtra has Marathi news and Gujarat has Gujarati. The political concerns of each state are also echoed in their media – West Bengal was home to the longest-serving-democratically elected Communist regime in the world until 2011 (Guardian 8 April 2011) and communism remains a huge consideration in their media. Punjab and Haryana, with one of the lowest sex ratios in the country (their joint capital city Chandigarh has a sex ratio of 818, compared to Kerala's 1084) and higher reported incidents of rape (CBI June 2017) have a much heavier focus on gender than some other states (The Tribune 21 November 2017). Central media on the other hand is most often in English or Hindi and based in New Delhi.

1.3 A Brief History of Women in The Indian Media

While women were visible in journalism as early as the 18th century, with Anne-Marguerite Petit du Noyer of France writing about the Peace of Utrecht in the 18th century (Sokalski 1994) and Birgite Kuhle (Jørgensen 2012) publishing a provincial paper in Norway, it wasn't until the late 19th and early 20th century that women began entering journalism in significant numbers. Demonstrations in the United States of America and across Europe to allow women into journalism led to an increase in the number of women in the industry. Though largely relegated to sections of 'pink news' devoted to what were considered female concerns, a number of women broke through the barrier to report on politics and war – 'hard' news areas considered the domain of men (Marzolf 1977).

The prejudice against women entering journalism was significantly higher in those early days. A good example of this can be seen in the writings of Arnold Benett:

> "Of the dwellers in Fleet Street, there are, not two sexes, but two species – journalists and women-journalists – and . . . the one is about as far removed organically from the other as a dog from a cat" (Bennet 1898, cited by Bjork 1996).

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Female journalists in India entered the profession under slightly different circumstances to their western counterparts, rallying around the politics of British occupation and the freedom struggle (Das 2001). Indian freedom fighters, a number of whom were women, used newspapers and the radio as a key part of the struggle against the British. Usha Mehta, a female Indian freedom fighter, is attributed with the broadcast of the Secret Congress Radio, which as part of the 1942 Quit India movement, broadcast messages from Gandhi and other freedom fighters across India (Ganesh and Thakkar 2005). The 1930s saw the prolific photojournalist, Homai Vyarwala, document India's history under the name Dalda 13.

However, India's first professional female journalist is believed to be Vidya Munshi (The Hindu 8 July 2014), who worked as a correspondent for the Bombay periodical *The Blitz*, a publication critical of government policies. Munshi, who wrote extensively between 1952 and 1962, was an avid communist and led multiple demonstrations for women's rights in subsequent years.

Though these women entered the news media in the early 20th century, it wasn't until the 1960s that women started joining journalism in slightly larger numbers. The 1960s and early 1970s saw educational reforms, part of which saw universities start offering courses in journalism. Despite this, Usha Rai explains in her account of the time how the industry was ill-equipped for the inclusion of women in the newsroom – both logistically and mentally:

> "The only woman in the editorial of the Times of India (TOI) in the mid-sixties, I was called into the cabin of the editor and told by Mr Girilal Jain that a newspaper was no place for a woman." (Usha 2004, p. 3).

During this time women began to put forward concerns such as maternity leave, having no women's toilets on the editorial floor, etc. (Usha 2004).

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The late 1970s and early 1980s saw a third wave of female journalists in India, this time with them taking an active role in "the social and political transformation across the country" (Joseph 2000, p. 20). In the national English newspapers of New Delhi, Usha Rai writes of how:

> "it was as if the floodgates had opened. As women topped in the journalism courses of the country and their writing skills got recognition, they began to storm the male bastion. By mid-eighties, on some days you could see an all-woman shift bringing out the early editions of the Delhi Times of India." (Usha 2004, p.5).

It was in the 1990s, however, that women swarmed to news and journalism schools. This period, marked by the liberalisation of the economy was momentous not just for women but for journalism in India in itself. While until 1991 India had just one television news channel – *Doordarshan* – the New Economic Policy opened up the market to private broadcasters (Shakuntala Rao 2009, Daya Thussu 2005). This period then led to an unprecedented growth in the Indian media. This marked the beginning of what is now an industry with over 1,05,443 newspapers, 882 TV channels and over 300 radio stations (Audit Bureau of Circulations 2015). As noted by B. G. Verghese:

> "Deregulation triggered growth, burgeoning investments and a flush of advertising released a pent-up demand for more and varied media outlets in all languages and genres, one of the animators of that process was the Indian woman mediaperson who has surged ahead in numbers and professional excellence (2012, p. ix)."

Female journalists in India today, some household names and leaders in their field, often attribute their success to their predecessors. Kaveree Bamzai, editor-at-large of India Today magazine, wrote in 2015:

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"Women journalists like me stand on the shoulders of trailblazers like Coomi [Kapoor], whom I had the privilege of working with in *The Indian Express*, my home, off and on for 11 years. Slight, birdlike, always ready with a piece of advice or encouragement, *The Emergency* shows the sacrifices she made so that political journalism would no longer be a male preserve. Crime, DESU (Delhi Electric Supply Undertaking), election rallies, Coomi did it all, while having babies, living with a husband in jail and a brother-in-law on the run from an oppressive regime" (Bamzai 2015, p.1)

In a 2012 article for *Firstpost*, Barkha Dutt wrote:

"In many ways, the battles that women of my mother's generation waged to make their mark in a deeply misogynistic industry smashed the glass ceiling and made it possible for me and my contemporaries to do what we do today." (Dutt, 2012, p. 2).

While journalists like her mother Prabha Dutt, along with Usha Rai, Coomi Kapoor and the like did pave the way for women Dutt allowed in a tweet in 2015 that "women had yet to completely smash the glass ceiling" (Dutt August 15, 2015). In sync with the progress of women in the news industry, the 'glass ceiling' has been climbing progressively higher to a point where most women are relegated to stagnating in middle management positions. As Madhu Trehan, founding editor of *India Today* and *Newslaundry* explained:

"So far, no woman has really broken the glass ceiling to become… as an editor, someone who's climbed up the ranks… There's so many women I've seen who've reached number 2, reached that level, but are never given that full responsibility." (Let There Be Solidarity 2016).

This lack of women at the top – the glass ceiling, the representation of women in elite management roles, is one of the major areas of concern for critics of the Indian media. While this study prefers the analogy of a labyrinth, to a glass ceiling, the pervasiveness and

penetration of the phrase 'glass ceiling' means it is used in the study to signify the point at which most women find options at progressing to dry up.

The lack of women in positions of power is one of, but not the only criticism of the Indian media. The following section delves into some other major concerns, before devoting its attention to the concern most relevant to this research – female leadership in Indian newsrooms.

1.4. Criticism of The Indian Media
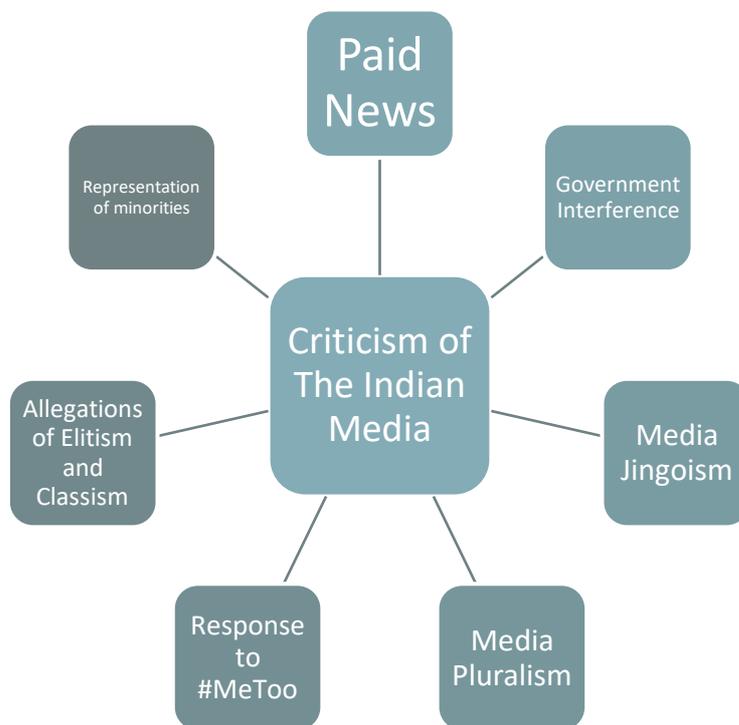
Figure 1: Criticism of the Indian Media

The Indian media draws criticism on a number of fronts, ranging from the credibility of the industry and the extent of government interference, to the coverage of minority issues and the composition of the newsroom. While these concerns span large and wide, these issues, independently and as a whole, erode the integrity and efficacy of the media, and as a result, democracy in India. Currently ranked number 142 on the Press Freedom Index (WPFI 2020), the international press and the Indian public have been growing increasingly concerned about the state of the industry in India (Kumar 2019, Goel, Gettleman and Khandelwal, 2020).

The criticism the Indian media attracts is a very broad subject, but due to the scope of this study, the focus in this section will be to provide an overview of some of the most pervasive critiques of the industry as a whole, before then focusing in more detail on the aspects of the criticism most relevant to this research. For clarity, concerns about the media have been grouped into national level concerns and institutional/organisational level concerns. While this study is directly concerned with the meso, or organisational level concerns, it is important to view these critiques through the larger perspective. A breakdown of the levels of criticism can be seen in figure 2.

Institutional
- Response to #MeToo
- Elitism and Classism
- Lack of Minority Representation
- Commercialisation

National
- Government Interference
- Media Jingoism
- Pluralism
- Paid News
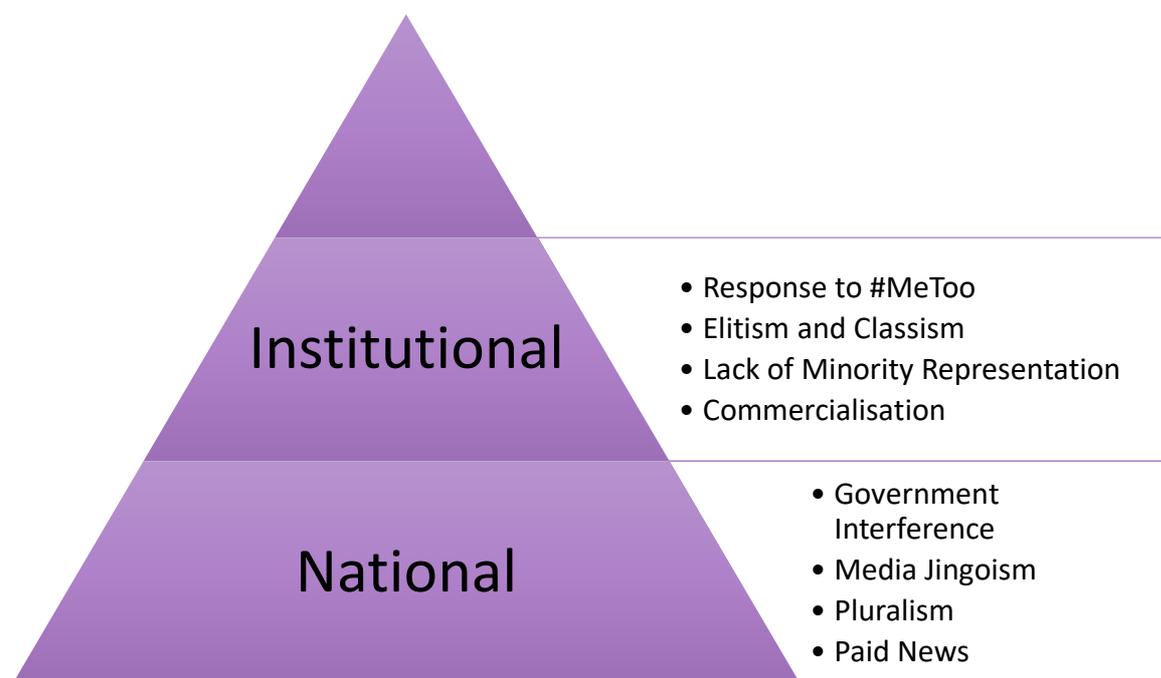
Figure 2: The levels of criticism of the Indian media

National Level Concerns

The largest, most pressing criticism of the Indian media has been the level of government interference. The Government of India (GoI) has a long history of attempting to control and silence journalists and the media (see History of the Indian Media, page 17), and India has been ranked one of the most dangerous countries in the world to be a journalist (Team, N.L. 2021). In 2021, the Indian government was suspected of hacking (and attempting to hack) into the phones of at least 40 prominent journalists using hacking software Pegasus (The

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Wire 01 August 2021), reigniting long held concerns about the level of interference by the GoI.

A 2018 sting by Cobrapost (Cobrapost 2018) showed an alleged 25 of India's leading news organisations, including *The Times of India* and The India Today Group willing to participate in propaganda for the government in power, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). This sting, corroborated in part by numerous reports by the Press Council of India (PCI 2012, PCI 2016) among others detailing similar transactions between politicians and major news outlets to publish 'favourable' news, is one of the major concerns held by critics at the current moment. In August 2018, a news anchor with ABP News named Punya Prasun Bajpai wrote an article detailing the severe degree of government control that he had experienced in his newsroom. His allegations – that he not mention Prime Minister Modi in his programs, that:

> "the government had employed 200 staff to monitor the media and send directions to editors on how to report on the PM's activities" (Bajpai 3 August 2018)

came hot on the heels of the editor of the *Hindustan Times*, Bobby Ghosh, resigning from his position allegedly due to backlash at his launching a tracker to chronicle hate crimes in India.

These allegations, when considered in conjunction with reports of the control of new TV licences, raids on news channels, prime-time debate boycotts and the withdrawal of government advertising have all led to a worry about the state of the free and fair media, the watchdog of the government. To this end, the Press Freedom Index has ranked India at 142, the second lowest ranking, and classified the media to be in a 'difficult' situation.

Media pluralism is another significant concern. India does not have an integrated media policy emphasizing media pluralism but policies guiding diversity are incorporated in the constitution or legislation, in overall national policies, in professional codes of ethics as well as in the constitutions and operational rules of particular media institutions (Prasad 2009). The Media Pluralism Monitor, developed by the EU MPM Study (KU Leuven – ICRI et al. 2009), is not utilized in India and nor does it have any similar media monitor. Within the area, some topics of concern are the increasing concentration of media ownership by large

corporate entities, the lack of transparency within news organisations (BBC 12 January 2012) as well as concerns over representation in the newsroom.

Media Jingoism is a criticism that crops us often. In the wake of an increased tension between India and Pakistan after a terrorist attack in Pulwama, Kashmir, killing 40 paramilitary Indian soldiers on the 14th of February 2019, the Indian media announced war. Arnab Goswami, anchor and Managing Editor of Republic TV, yelled on live TV "We want revenge, not condemnation… it is time for blood, the enemy's blood." (cited by Foreign Policy March 1, 2019). Fact checking, objectivity and calm made way for drama, unconfirmed details and shouting matches (Foreign Policy March 1, 2019). There has been an outpouring of criticism from national and international publications, including the *New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, The BBC, *The Guardian*, Scroll, Wire and Newslaundry about the warmongering of the Indian media, both in this instance and the past. This has, to many critics, showed the level of influence the government and its policies have over media institutions in the country, "at the cost of their integrity" (Washington Post 4 March 2019).

Organisational Level Concerns:

Meso level criticism is generally aimed at organisations and their cultures and practices. In the context of the Indian media, newsrooms draw heavy criticism for both their culture and their composition. This area of criticism is of particular interest to this study, given the scope of this research. Some of the major criticism is discussed in this section.

In terms of their culture, the most recent and high profile cause for concern has been the fallout of the #MeToo Movement. The most prominent case, that of MJ Akbar, has been embroiled in significant controversy. A number of allegations in October 2018 made Akbar, a Union Minister of State for external affairs and previously the editor-in-chief of several national dailies, including The Telegraph and the Asian Age, resign from his post. The allegations against him came from a number of women – Priya Ramani, Ruth David, Ghazala Wahab, Sutapa Paul and Suparna Sharma, who all alleged sexual assault and misconduct spanning decades. Then, on the 2nd of November 2018, Pallavi Gogoi, the chief business editor for NPR wrote an OpEd for *The Washington Post*, detailing being raped by Akbar. Akbar filed a defamation case against Priya Ramani, which on February 17 2021 was

dismissed for lack of evidence. This case, along with those of Vinod Dua and Gaurav Sawant among others were a result of the #MeToo movement, with women coming out to speak up against a number of influential male journalists has been important in the recognition of sexual harassment and assault within the workplace. However, the media has continued to draw a lot of criticism on the whole for its treatment of these cases and this movement. Nidhi Razdan of NDTV shared at a panel for women in media that:

> "it has been an underwhelming response, the old-boys club is still up and running and has closed ranks against the offenders. The media has failed in its duty, I don't want to give up hope, but there is a failure, we're failing the women, the victims, all over again." (WiM Panel 13 November 2018)

In the years following the initial #MeToo movement, most cases have had little traction other than Ramani's, and the impact on newsrooms has been, for many, lacking. A 2019 study involving 257 interviews with national and regional journalists across India found that while most journalists viewed the movement as 'good', they "did not think it influenced their environment or newswork in any meaningful manner" (Sreedharan, Thorsen and Gouthi 2019, p. 4). This criticism, both in terms of sexual harassment in the workplace and the subsequent reaction to it by organisations is of keen interest to this study and will be explored further in interviews with journalists.

Additionally, the Indian media has drawn ire over continuing to be elitist and classist, with little diversity in terms of religion, gender and especially caste. Nobel laureate Amartya Sen penned an article about the elitism in 2012, stressing how media coverage was affected by this class bias stating:

"If the first problem I referred to, that of accuracy, is one of improving the performance of the news media through better quality control, the second, transcending class bias, concerns the media's role in reporting and discussing the problems of the country in a balanced way. The media can greatly help in the functioning of Indian democracy and the search for a better route to progress including all the people — and not just the more fortunate part of Indian society" (Sen, 12 January 2012 p. 2).

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A 2019 report found that the Indian media was an upper caste fortress, saying:

> "Three out of every four anchors of flagship debates are upper caste. Not one is Dalit, Adivasi, or OBC. Only 10 of the 972 articles featuring on the cover pages of the 12 magazines are about issues related to caste. No more than 5 per cent of all articles in English newspapers are written by Dalits and Adivasis. Of the 121 newsroom leadership positions—editor-in-chief, managing editor, executive editor, bureau chief, input/output editor—across the newspapers, TV news channels, news websites, and magazines under study, 106 are occupied by journalists from the upper castes, and none by those belonging to the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes" (Media Rumble and OXFAM 2019).

The diversity of the Indian newsroom and its perspectives has been a talking point for the industry, with higher representation for Dalits, women, and more recently, the LGBTQ community repeatedly being brought up as points of concern.

A survey of the social profiles of 315 senior journalists in 37 English and Hindi newspapers and TV channels in New Delhi revealed that Hindu upper caste men, who make up 8% of the country's population hold 71% of the top decision-making jobs in the national media. Women hold between 32% of the top jobs in the English television media and 11% in the Hindi counterpart (Chamaria, Kumar and Yadav 2006).

While women in Indian news media *seem* ubiquitous, a closer look shows they are contained to a large number of high visibility positions – primarily as news presenters and reporters on television. Top positions in the industry, however, continue to be the domain of men. Though journalism courses in the country boast a high number of female students, and women in India routinely break big stories on politics, corruption and human rights, in line with the global trend, women remain under-represented in the upper echelons of editorial leadership. As Anubha Bhonsle, Anchor and Senior Editor at CNN-TV18, explained:

> "The progress that women have made as important voices in this industry notwithstanding, it's men who still hold major leadership positions, women in

the media workforce still by and large remain foot soldiers, with management and top rung editorial positions being dominated by men. These remain two realms of reality." (Tripathi 2014, p.2)

Women like Anubha Bhonsle and Barkha Dutt belong to the English television industry, where an observably larger number of women lead newsrooms (Tripathi 2014, p.1). The English language press with 16%, or a little over half as many women in power as TV, paints a more sombre picture. A 2014 study by *Newslaundry* titled *Where Are the Women?* examined four New Delhi newspapers over three months and found that 73% of the 8,681 articles were written by men. All four newspapers have male editors-in-chief, and the "editorial rooms are, in fact, overflowing with men" (NL Team 2014, p.5).

Contrasting the large number of women coming out journalism schools and the significant presence of women in newsrooms with the petering out of women as you climb the ladder, discussions of a glass ceiling, the invisible barrier to the career progression of women, have entered the conversations about the media industry. In a panel discussion, Manisha Pande, Associate Editor at *Newslaundry* said:

> "The report I'd done on *Where Are the Women* actually said that print doesn't discriminate when they hire, but something happens along the line and on the top it's just men. What happens that you don't have women reach the [top]?" (Let There Be More Solidarity 2016)

The question Pande poses is one that repeats itself across industries and countries. The gender inequality when it comes to leadership positions is a topic of concern worldwide (see Grant Thornton, 2016; Inter-Parliamentary Union 2016). Women hold less than a quarter of senior leadership positions in corporations across the globe, with a third of businesses having no women at all in senior roles (Grant Thornton 2016). This question has also attracted some academic interest, with studies on gender and leadership occupying 5% of over 165,000 studies on leadership (Gipson et al. 2017, p. 3), a significant number of which pertained to the glass ceiling.

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This study is undertaken against this background of women and the Indian media. With their rich history and contributions to the industry, conversations about why more women are not in senior editorial positions are becoming increasingly pressing. This study scrutinises the functioning of the Indian newsrooms in this context. In so doing, it aims to offer a better understanding of the experience of female journalists. It pays particular attention to women in senior editorial positions and, through the lens of their experiences and leadership approaches, will provide insights into the barriers and challenges facing female journalists in India, and solutions to build a more inclusive and equal newsroom.

Research on the under-representation of women in positions of power has been delved into across industries and across the globe (see Chapter III). This research reviews previous studies in a variety of industries and countries that highlight a number of obstacles for women in the workplace. This study then focuses on leadership characteristics and the various studies on the complex interaction of gender and leadership. This study presents an understanding of the leadership approaches of female journalists in Indian newsrooms through interviews with professionals in the industry.

1.5 The Organizational Structure of Indian Newsrooms

A study about newsrooms based on interviews with journalists is likely to be inundated with journalistic jargon. This study has identified the structure of a newsroom to be a crucial structure worth understanding. Since the study deals with hierarchies, teams and leadership, a better understanding of the various wings, posts and roles is important in understanding the workplace as a whole.

Every newsroom has a slightly unique structure – posts can have different names, some roles can be clubbed together, and some are often completely altered or discarded. As one Indian media professional explained in the pilot study for this research:

> "they may do it for uniqueness, but they'll often change titles or add a ceremonial post, but the crux of it is pretty standard" (Personal Interview C 2017).

This study has a basic skeleton of the structure of a newsroom – one that can be used as a rough guide. The basic structure of an Indian print newsroom is illustrated below:

In an Indian print newsroom, the publisher establishes the tone for the publication but is not involved in the day-to-day functioning of the newsroom. The editor-in-chief manages the actual task of generating a publication every cycle. Reporting to the editor-in-chief are the managing editor (in charge of most editing, layout, fact-checking and research), the executive editor (in charge of reporters, columnists and writers) and the creative editor (tasked with the art and photography). They have a number of people at every level reporting to them. The basic structure provided here for both newsrooms draws from information provided during the pilot research for this thesis and textbooks (Bakshi 2008). The figure is colour coded with the breakdown of structure this study will follow – with lilac positions considered the top of the hierarchy, deep purple the middle and grey the lower end.

The average television newsroom organisational structure, on the other hand, is as follows:

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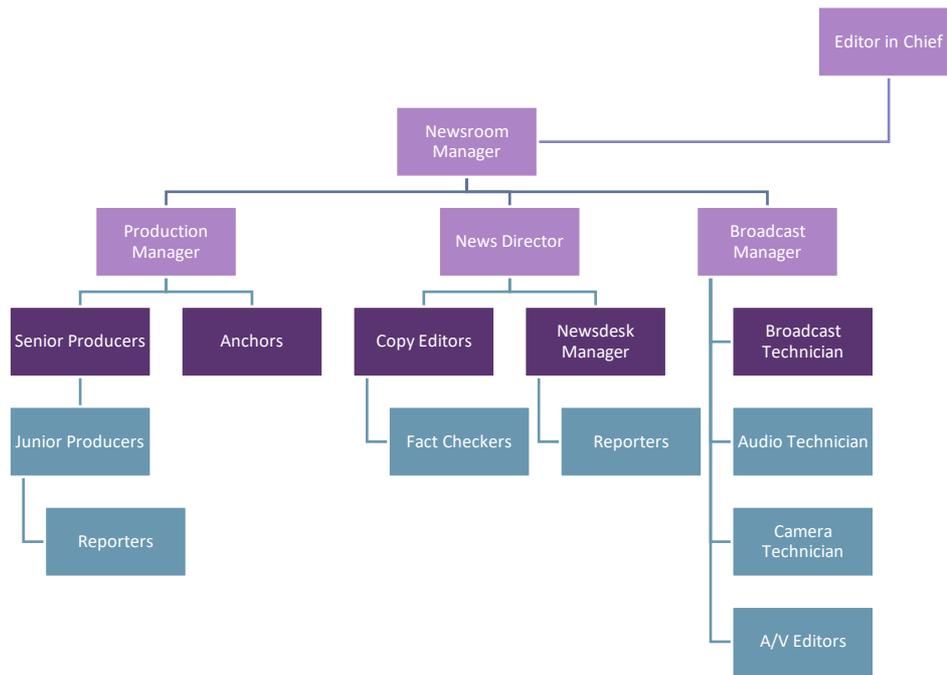
Figure 4, Structure of a TV Newsroom. Adapted from various sources and accounts, primarily Bakshi 2008.

In a television newsroom, the newsroom manager oversees the daily output with three subsidiaries. Firstly, the production manager who handles the anchors and the producers. Each show has its own producer, who oversees all aspects like the script, the anchor and the audio-visuals. The news director handles a similarly large portfolio. Reporting to him/her are the copy editors – who handle everything from the rundown to scripts and text on screen, the newsdesk manager, who keeps abreast of news developments and assigns stories to reporters. The broadcast manager, finally, ensures that the technical side of the broadcast is cared for – the cameras, the sound, the microphones, the guests, the calls, the videos on screen through the cameramen, the audio engineer, the AV editors respectively.

Some newsrooms merge large positions, some change names to slightly more vague and obscure titles. This organisational structure is provided to offer an indication of how an average newsroom would function, to allow for an understanding of some terms used subsequently.

The next section, dealing with diversity in the newsroom makes the argument for more women in positions of power. The previous figures can offer some guidance on questions of gatekeeping and leadership.

Literature Review

Diversity in the Newsroom

This section seeks to argue the relevance and the importance of diversity in the newsroom. As a study on female leadership in Indian newsrooms, this study orients itself firmly behind the position that greater representation of women and other minorities in fields like the news media is both desirable and imperative. This section aims to argue that viewpoint.

This section opens with a brief synopsis of the term 'patriarchy' and the ideas that drive it. While the term in itself may not surface in the study very often, the idea of the patriarchy underscores the entire thesis. Before the importance of diversity can be argued, the current system must be outlined – which is what this study seeks to do with the term 'patriarchy'. This section considers gender in the newsroom - what women bring to the (news)table and why their equal and unencumbered presence is important to a free, fair and democratic news media industry.

Finally, this section considers the relevance of leadership in the newsroom. It argues the pivotal role of gatekeeper that leaders of the newsroom enact, and then draws in gender to argue the importance of having women in positions of leadership in newsrooms.

This section aims to leave the reader with an understanding of the relevance and importance of the subject that this study concerns itself with.

2.1 The Patriarchy

Patriarchy is a system that positions men as legitimate and natural figures of authority, which in turn enables male supremacy at organizational and social levels (Simpson and Lewis 2005). This system, thus allows men to access and maintain positions of power and privilege (Simpson and Lewis 2005).

Understanding the patriarchy as a "system of social structures, and practices" (Walby 1989 p. 214) helps to recognize the way our organization of society and the institutions within it 'other' women (de Beauvoir, p. 136), essentially characterising them as "lacking" in relation

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to the characteristics required for the professional identity (Katila and Merilainen 1999 p. 165).

Patriarchy is useful as a tool to explain gendered relations (Pollert 1996; Walby, 1989). However, patriarchy has received criticism for being a universalizing concept, reducing ethnicity and class to minute behind the backdrop of gender. This study accepts that some mainstream narratives of patriarchy err towards 'whitewashing' (Butler 1990, p. 31) and draws caution from these criticisms (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005, Thornley and Thornqvist 2009 etc). In the Indian context, the urban woman's narrative, similarly tends to be louder than the rural woman's, the Hindu woman's more than the Muslim woman's, etc. This study proceeds with an awareness of the inherent privilege of communities, and seeks to avoid generalizing its findings beyond its specific focus.

2.2 Gender and Feminist Standpoint

Feminist Standpoint is an integral ideological leaning of this study that underlines a number of arguments put forward. FSR makes 3 principal claims:

1. That knowledge is socially situated: that different people may regard the same object or event differently based on their situation or perspective.

2. That marginalized groups are, as a result of their social situation, better placed to be aware of and question the system.

3. That research, especially research on power relations like race and gender, should begin with the lives of the marginalized.

In describing FSR, Harding once employed the analogy of a map, saying:

> "We all have maps of our cities. But if you travel the city on a motorcycle, or a car, or go through it on the train, or fly over it, or walk it, or bike it, or push a baby carriage or a walker around it, you'll have a very different map of the city in each case. You'll know different things about how to get from here to there, according to how you are able to interact with your environment as you travel… different groups gain different types of knowledge" (Harding 4 May 2016).

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The idea that women (and other marginalised groups) have this 'different knowledge', and their own issues and concerns, is critically important with regards to journalism. To use Harding's analogy once again, the media would, in an ideal world, highlight if crosswalks were notoriously unsafe for pedestrians, or the problematic lack of cycle lanes. But if the media was stacked with people who had only ever driven a car, their knowledge and prioritization of these issues would be lacking, and the focus would be more on petrol prices instead. This phenomenon is seen consistently repeated in the media across the globe.

In September 2020, during the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, the International Women's Media Foundation noted a "substantial bias towards men's perspectives in the news gathering and news coverage of this pandemic across both the global north (the U.K. and U.S.) and the global south (India, Kenya, Nigeria and South Africa)," (Kassova 2020, p. 5). The report noted that despite women being over-represented globally in frontline and caregiving jobs,

> "…women have received as little as a fifth of the attention in COVID-19/coronavirus news stories across most of the analyzed countries. For every one woman's voice, there have been at least three, four or five men's voices drowning them out, whether as experts or protagonists. News coverage has been missing women's perspectives, and has been unresponsive to women's needs, their hopes, and their worries" (Kassova 2020, p. 63).

Through feminist standpoint theory, this study aims to argue the importance of bringing these perspectives to the fore, and how, in order to have a more authentic interpretation and representation of communities, they must be represented in leading roles in the media. This idea has received significant attention and scholarship throughout the years.

Durham (1998) advocates that representations of the truth about a group depend on the reporter's social location. Drawing from feminist theory (Harding 1991) and sociological models of knowledge production (Mannheim 1952), Durham proposes the idea that since in a number of cases it is people from the dominant social order collating and interpreting data on

a group outside of their order, their accounts of events are ultimately inauthentic interpretations. She holds that an authentic narrative of events occurs when the narrative comes directly from the group in question – that the ability to accurately collect, interpret and present data involves an intimate level of knowledge and perspective that can only come from within the group.

Similarly, in the context of journalism, Glasser (1992) expresses the need for true diversity in newsrooms, so journalists from different walks of life bring with them a unique wealth of perspectives to create media that is honestly representative of the audience it caters to. Glasser's need for diversity within the newsroom, viewed from the lens of Durham's representative truth considers that having journalists from a variety of backgrounds would allow coverage of a multitude of events to be more authentic. With regard to the state of Indian media, a 2015 report by the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ), UNESCO and UN Women noted a lack of diversity among Indian journalists, with most journalists being upper caste Hindu men. In keeping with the ideas of Durham and Glasser, this would result in a newsroom culture saturated with a similar perspective of the world around us – something that, for a nation as diverse as India could be indicative of a failing on the part of the media. For instance, the coverage of Naxalism by the Indian media has drawn criticism for being partisan and alienating (Roy 2012; Sharma 2012; Thomas 2014), with Thomas proposing that the media's lack of understanding of the cause has only aggravated the problem (2014 p. 11).

Similarly, in 21st Century Journalism in India (Rajan 2007), Siddharth Narrain discusses the problem with media reportage of queer lives and says that journalists:

> "fail to comprehend the complex reality of relationships in queer communities that do not conform to the regime of heterosexist and patriarchal morality" (p. 46).

He attributes the troubling coverage to the fact that the mainstream media does not understand the world and perspective that it is attempting to cover – what Weber (1947) means when he argues that an authentic account can only achieved by a group member's

perspective, because only members of the group are considered the ultimate authority on the events of that group. While one may argue that all members of a group are not perfectly alike, each with a distinct set of variables and biases that could alter their perspective to varying degrees, it is still worth considering what an insider's perspective could bring to the narrative. However, assuming a single insider's perspective to be the most balanced, authentic, unbiased and newsworthy one would be problematic, as stories often involve multiple groups, and as a result, multiple emotionally charged representations of truth that insiders may not be able to look beyond. Weber, Glasser and Durham's arguments for the importance of representation hold in systems that account for biases and allow for and collate a wealth of inside perspectives to provide a larger, more inclusive picture.

The account by Narrain is one that is applicable to any group that is frequently the 'other'; in context of the Indian media, the other can apply to an array of groups – the economically disenfranchised communities in rural areas, the LGBTQ community, Dalits, religious minorities, women and the like. The dominance of a small community of historically privileged individuals in the Indian media (upper caste Hindu males) is troubling for an industry meant to fairly cover issues and events from a variety of communities and perspectives. The lack of representation, some consider, has led to cases where the coverage of 'other' groups does not take into account the realities and nuances of the community it covers, for instance pieces on Naxalites (Singh, 2014; Jaiswal 2019) or media coverage of the poor (Shitak, 2014). This well documented failing is something that could be challenged by the changing demographic of the Indian media.

For the purpose of this research, this study adapts FSR to Indian newsrooms, focusing on the situated nature of knowledge as well as the importance of the perspective of women in research. Further braiding in both gatekeeping theory as well as popular leadership theories, this study proposes the idea that women in positions of leadership, particularly editorial leadership, are integral to a media that is representative and democratic, and that the lived experiences of women in these newsrooms need to be highlighted.

2.3 Gatekeeping, Leadership and Gender

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For the media to address the concerns of women, as well as showcase their perspectives, women must be represented, not just in the media, but in the upper echelons of editorial leadership. As previously discussed, women occupy significant numbers of visible positions in areas of the Indian media, however, for deeper change these women must be represented in gatekeeping positions.

In assessing the importance of having a diverse set of individuals in leadership, gatekeeping theory, which as explained by Shoemaker is:

> "the process by which the billions of messages that are available in this world get cut down and transformed into the hundreds of messages that reach a person on a given day" (1991, p. 1)

This is a cornerstone approach in assessing leadership. The gatekeepers in this theory are the linchpins of newsrooms, using their personal judgement to choose news items most worthy to publish or air. The selection process, as the original proponent David Manning White found in 1950, is heavily influenced by the editor's personal "and even idiosyncratic beliefs" (Steiner, 2012; p. 214). The influence of an individual's personal beliefs on what makes the news, viewed in cohesion with how one's personal views are shaped by their social positioning (their gender, socio-economic group, religion, history, among a myriad of other variables) helps build the argument for a range of gatekeepers that best represent the diversity of people in the audience.

That gender differences would weigh in under the umbrella of a gatekeeper's personal beliefs can be considered through feminist theories suggesting that:

> "ways of thinking and knowing are highly influenced by social identity, in turn, affected by inherently gendered experiences, differences in socialisation and social history" (Steiner 2012, p. 8).

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Accordingly, one can extrapolate that a demographic change in the gatekeepers of media organisations could have a significant impact on the news – with regards to both what is considered newsworthy and how it is presented to the public.

Thus, a lack of women rising to the top of the ladder is a significant obstacle to the fair and representative role the fourth estate is meant to play. Having a larger number of women in gatekeeping positions, offering the insider perspectives of roughly half the population currently 'othered' (Durham's representative truth) and using their personal judgement (shaped by their unique experiences and values as women) would, on the basis of the argument presented, help create news that caters to the needs of a larger demographic.

This study has, by this point, demonstrated the lack of women in higher leadership positions across the media and has demonstrated through FST and Gatekeeping Theory the importance of rectifying this dearth. Before tackling questions around how women lead in Indian newsrooms, this study considers previous research on leadership and gender.

2.4 Leadership and Gender

This section considers leadership approaches and characteristics, and the interplay of gender with the same. It starts by tracing the multitude of approaches and perspectives to leadership that have existed, from the early 1900's to now. This section then explores the gender-specific research that has been done over the years.

Since this study concerns itself with how *women* lead, through their lived experiences as leaders and the perceptions of their followers, it is important to note that studies of leadership have been historically androcentric. Feminist critics have long pointed out how the vast body of leadership, management and organization theory assumes that managers and workers are male, with typically male powers, attitudes and obligations (Acker, 1990, 1998; Calas & Smircich, 1992; Hearn et al., 1989; Martin, 1990, 1994). Venegas-García (2011) called the omission of women in leadership discourse an "immeasurable void, open to many misconceptions, negative assumptions, and stereotypes about who is or can be a leader" (p. 6). It is this set of misconceptions that this study hopes to dispel through exploring the loved experiences and characteristics of women leaders in Indian newsrooms.

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This study considers the history of leadership theory in order to consider the various angles and lenses from which the concept has been explored over the years. The lack of consensus on a single way to approach leadership, combined with the androcentricism of the vast body of leadership literature, leads this study to avoid employing the use of a single approach from which to regard the leadership of women in Indian news media. Because this research is concerned with how women experience and enact their leadership, and hopes to provide rich qualitative data through semi-structured interviews, this study uses leadership literature as a 'bricolage' – using the studies to guide the researcher during the process of interviews, as well as using the approaches and vocabulary gleaned to thematically analyse collected data. This study hopes to provide, on this basis, a rich and descriptive account of women's leadership in Indian newsrooms and to place the findings within existing literature of leadership and gender.

2.5 Leadership Approaches and Characteristics

To understand the way, in this case, an Indian newsroom is lead, it's important to first understand the various lenses through which leadership can be considered. Leadership has been an area of interest to scholars and artists for centuries (Northouse 2010). Between our fascination for imperial Zeus from Greek Mythology and the ever-popular Julius Caesar, we have a huge interest in the lives of leaders – academically and in popular culture. In the current world of competition and the climate of maximising efficiency and productivity, this interest in leaders has not faded, with institutions and organisations spending time and money trying to understand various facets of leadership.

Leadership as a concept and research question, despite its popularity, lacks consensus in terms of what it actually is (Northouse 2010). A core definition of leadership holds that leadership is essentially the ability to influence a group toward the achievement of a goal (Kumar et al 2004, p.3), Beyond this common definition, different disciplines and perspectives approach, describe and study leadership in a multitude of ways – all of which contributes to the robust and varied body of literature concerned with the subject.

A significant part of the scholarship on leadership concerns itself with styles of leadership, where a leadership style is defined as a "relatively stable" set of behaviours exhibited by a

leader (Eagly & Johannesen-Schmidt 2001, p. 781). Through the years, this area of study has produced a number of different approaches on how to look at leaders. In exploring the various perspectives of leadership, it's important to note that there is no consensus on any one approach to leadership being the best. Approaches to leadership have waxed and waned in popularity over the years, with changing socio-political climates and trends in research.

To understand why women are not making it to the top leadership positions, both in the Indian media and globally across industries, it is important to consider the different ways leadership, and particularly ideal or successful leadership have been looked at over the years.

One of the first studies on leadership, conducted in 1949 followed a trait approach, wherein an organisation was viewed as a hierarchical system based on routines, stability and order (Tal and Gordon, 2015 p. 260) and regarded an individual's traits (dominance, intelligence, self-confidence and the like) as indicators of a great leader (Stogdill 1948; Lord et al. 1986). This perspective viewed leadership traits as enduring characteristics inherent in some individuals, and held that these traits create patterns of behaviour that remain consistent in different situations (Fleenor 2006, p. 830). While popular at the time, the trait approach's rigid and singular approach to leadership soon faded as subsequent research revealed a more dynamic nature to leadership – one that could not merely be viewed from the perspective of an individual leader (Johns and Moser 2001, p. 116). A 1948 study by Ralph M. Stogdill found that:

> "leadership is not a matter of passive status, or of the mere possession of some combination of traits. It appears rather to be a working relationship among members of a group, in which the leader acquires status through active participation and demonstration of his capacity for carrying cooperative tasks through to completion" (p. 66).

The trait approach then gave way to a situational approach to leadership, an approach that moved away from a sole focus on the leader and began to account for subordinates as factors in leader effectiveness. It identified basic styles for leaders (telling, selling, participating and delegating) as well as followers (enthusiastic beginner, disillusioned learner, reluctant

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contributor, peak performer). The situational approach provided a much less rigid approach to leadership, but was criticised for lacking a solid theoretical foundation of the hypothesized relationships among variables in the model (Graeff, 1983; Yukl, 1981). The ambiguity, inconsistency and incompleteness (Byrne 1986, p. 53) of the situational approach led Stogdill to conclude that while the trait approach treated personality variables in an 'atomic fashion' where leadership effects are defined by traits alone (1974), the situational approach 'denied the influence of individual differences, attributing all variation between persons to fortuitous environmental demands (Johns and Moser 2001, p. 117).

The 1960s and the 1970s saw organisation humanism dominate within the realm of managerial philosophy (Johns and Moser 2001, p. 117), with theories on multiple informal leadership beginning to emerge – collective leadership, complexity leadership and shared leadership (Tal and Gordon 2016, p. 260). These theories are based on the assertion that:

> The dominant approach to leadership research assumes that all aspects of the leadership role within a team are embodied by a single individual. In the real world, however, this is rarely the case (Friedrich et al., 2011 p. 933).

Collective leadership, a dynamic multi-level process where a leader (or a number of them) selectively harness skills and expertise available, distributing elements of the leadership role when appropriate (Friedrich et al. 2011, p. 933) has been a very popular approach. Working off the assumption that it is highly unlikely to find a leader that can adapt to every situation perfectly, or possess every trait required to be an effective leader, it offers a more realistic lens where individuals with diverse skills and expertise could collectively act as leaders when an appropriate situation arises (Mehra, Dixon, Brass and Robertson, 2006).

Shared leadership, as defined by Pearce and Conger is:

> "a dynamic, interactive influence process among individuals in groups for which the objective is to lead one another to the achievement of group or organisational goals or both" (2003 p. 1).

Shared leadership similarly prefers a decentralized approach to leadership – "property of the whole system, as opposed to solely the property of individuals" (Norton and Quinn 2004, p. 423).

While shared leadership and collective leadership have been gaining popularity, there are still areas that require exploration (Avolio et al., 2009 p. 432). For instance, potential moderators like the distribution of cultural values, task interdependence, task competence, and the environment in which teams function remain relatively unexplored (Pearce and Conger, 2003; Carson et al., 2007). Hackman and Wageman's suggestion that an external team leader could:

> "help team members make coordinated and task-appropriate use of their
> collective resources in accomplishing the team's task" (2005, p. 269)

has also been left unstudied (Carson et al., 2007; Avolio et al., 2009).

Another approach to researching leadership has been concerned with follower interactions. The transformational leader approach, one of the most popular approaches to leadership today (Tal and Gordon 2016), was developed in the 1980s. A transformational leader was considered:

> "one who articulates a vision of the future that can be shared with peers and
> subordinates, intellectually stimulates subordinates and pays high attention to
> the individual difference among people" (Yammarino and |Bass, 1990; Lowe
> et al., 1996 p. 386).

Transformational leaders have since been regarded as innovative, inspiring and nurturing, leading to the overall success of organisations (Eagly et al., 2003). With four dimensions: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation and individual consideration as the extent to which a leader engages with and meets the needs of each follower (Judge and Piccolo, 2004), transformational leadership has dominated scholarship on leadership approaches and management styles in the last three decades.

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While widely accepted as the most influential and often the most effective form of leadership (Bass, 1985; Conger and Kanungo, 1987; Shamir, House and Arthur, 1993; Derue, Nahrgang, Wellman and Humphrey, 2011; Judge and Piccolo 2004; Lowe, Kreock and Sivasubramaniam 1996), transformational leadership has received criticism about not being adequately defined, with Knippenberg and Sitkin arguing that it is "not conceptually defined but rather described in operational terms" (2013, p. 5).

While viewing the various perspectives on leadership that have emerged over the years, drawing some common denominators within these perspectives and considering the patterns on what these approaches concern themselves is helpful. Broadly, some of the perspectives one can view these years of literature on leadership styles from are task vs. interpersonal, democratic vs autocratic and transformational vs transactional. One manner of looking at leaders has been that of a task oriented approach vs. an interpersonal oriented approach. Referred to by Blake and Mouton as a concern for production vs a concern for people (1964), leaders are plotted between the two axes.

Another approach to leadership, described as an autocratic vs democratic approach looks at the level of autonomy and participation a leader offers their followers, with autocratic leaders offering little participation and democratic leaders encouraging a greater role for followers.

A third approach to leadership looks primarily at a leader's follower interactions (Bass 1990) with a transformational, transactional or laissez faire approach, considering a leader's ability to inspire, challenge and motivate his/her followers vs one's being contractual, corrective and critical (Bass 1990).

Scholarship looking into leadership styles and gender (eg. Gipson et al., 2016, Eagly & Karau, 2002, Eagly & Johnson 1992, Heilman, 1983) often consider the interaction between gender and leadership from the perspective of these approaches – interpersonal vs task, autocratic vs democratic and transformational, transactional and laissez faire. This study will lean on these 3 approaches to leadership in the framing of questions for interviews, to allow for a better understanding of how participants correspond, both with leadership theory as a whole and studies on gender and leadership.

2.6 Gender and Leadership Studies

While for a significant period of time, research on leadership and management didn't account for gender as a factor, studies in the 1970s and 1980s began to account for gender in leadership approaches and theories. Still, as Vetter (2010) explained in her introduction to a handbook examining the historical and modern contributions of women's leadership:

> It might seem odd to begin an encyclopaedia about gender and leadership by claiming that there are no feminist theories of leadership. Yet an extensive study of feminist theory scholarship reveals an alarming dearth of theoretical analysis of women as leaders. (p. 3)

The predominant view of leadership and gender held that there were 'masculine' management qualities like competitiveness, hierarchical authority, and analytical problem solving as well as 'feminine' attributes of cooperativeness, collaboration, problem solving on the basis of intuition and empathy as well as rationality (Loden 1985; Sargent 1981; Hennig and Jardin 1977). Research on the influence of gender and leadership remained ambiguous and at times, conflicted. Research was, at this time and still to a large extent today, concerned with the differences in men and women's leadership styles, which, as explained by Ospina and Foldy (2009), continued the rationale that the discipline itself established - that white men were the "standard social identity referent" (p. 888). While some insisted on significant differences between how men and women lead (Gipson et al., 2016; Eagly and Johnson, 1990; Book 2000; Rosener 1995), some noted little to no significant differences (Powell 1990).

A 1990 meta-analysis of leadership and gender collated existing literature and provided insight into the differences between how men and women lead, and the complicated relationship between the differences and gender and social role theory (Eagly and Johnson, 1990, p. 248). A 2000 study by Eagly and Johnson found that women tend to be more participative and democratic managers than men (p. 730) and further that women tend to be

more transformational leaders than men, particularly with regards to individualised consideration and contingency rewards.

A 1990 study by Judy B. Rosener in the *Harvard Business Review* corresponds with Eagly and Johnson's findings. She found that women tend to be more interactive leaders and:

> "see sharing power and information as an asset rather than a liability. They believe that although pay and promotion are necessary tools of management, what people really want is to feel that they are contributing to a higher purpose and that they have the opportunity as individuals to learn and grow. The women believe that employees and peers perform better when they feel they are a part of an organisation and can share in its success" (p. 124-125).

A 2017 meta-analysis by Gipson et al. further asserts that in terms of gender and leadership styles:

> "women leaders tend to be more likely to manifest a democratic style and elements of transformational leadership than their male peers" (p. 48)

Other differences observed were either equivocal or required further study.

Across studies, both in controlled lab studies and field work, women afforded their followers a higher level of participation in the decision-making process, coming out as more democratic in the democratic vs autocratic scale (Adam and Funk 2012; Eagly et al. 1992; Eagly and Johnson 1990, van Engen and Willemsen 2004). Similarly, women tend to be have more elements of transformational leadership (Groves 2005; Eagly, Johanessen-Schmidt and Van Engen 2003) than transactional leadership. In terms of interpersonal task and style, there were no reliably consistent differences between gender.

Previous studies on leadership and gender have existed within different contexts to this one – an Indian context, within the very specific boundaries of a newsroom could have an interplay of leadership and gender very close to previous literature but also significantly different from

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previous studies. This study, therefore, does not at this point burden itself by looking at results through one specific theory or style, but rather seeks to use the insight and vocabulary discussed in the chapter to frame questions and analyse the answers from participants. This study concerns itself with how women lead, without holding the leadership of men in the same context up as a comparison. Rather, this study addresses Blackmore's concern that "little attention is paid to women's ways of knowing and leading" (1999 p. 119), and views this lack of knowledge and understanding as a hurdle to women in leadership positions. To this end, this study seeks to address this by emphasising the experiences of women leaders in Indian newsrooms.

2.7 Gendered Obstacles to Leadership

A 2017 meta-analysis of women and leadership by Gipson et al. broke down the reasons for the lack of women in positions of power. Through the framework of selection, development, leadership style and performance, it took into account findings from the last three decades to better understand the larger picture of obstacles to female leadership.

The study narrowed down the gender specific literature into two broad categories – pipeline and discrimination/bias.
The first section looking at the under-representation of women viewed it as a supply problem – essentially looking at the lack of qualified women with enough experience and expertise to be eligible to lead. The pipeline problem considers that possibility that the reason there aren't enough women in positions of power is because they aren't qualified or experienced enough for the position.
The second category looks at the under-representation of women through the lens of bias and discrimination. The role of gender stereotypes, in particular, in shaping the behaviour, perception and progression of women leaders has attracted a lot of interest. Gender stereotypes are culturally shared beliefs that dictate expectations about how women and men are and how they ought to behave (Burgess & Borgida, 1999; Eagly & Karau, 2002). In 2002, Eagly and Karau proposed role congruity theory, which drawing from theories like Think Manager, Think Male (Schein 1973) and Lack of Fit (Heilman 1983) navigated how the perception of women in leadership positions, or seeking leadership positions is influenced by gender stereotypes. A 2011 meta-analysis looking at the extent to which leader stereotypes

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are culturally masculine found that proto-typical leader traits correlated more with masculine traits than with feminine traits (Koenig et al. 2011) These findings reinforce Schein's 1973 theory that successful leaders are perceived in ways that align with the global masculine stereotype. The Lack of Fit model draws on this by explaining how the gap between traditional perceptions of a successful leader aren't in line with the female gender role (Heilman 1983), and Eagly et al. take this further with their research showing that women are often penalised for violating traditional gender stereotypes, while men are rewarded for the same behaviour (1987).

In the context of Newsrooms, Minelle Mahtani explains how success is often linked to 'masculine' traits:

> "Equating masculinism and objectivity has forced many women journalists to attempt to adopt more masculine traits in the field of journalism in order to become more successful" (2005, p. 301).

Linda Christmas continues that line of thought by arguing that:

> "The first women to be promoted beyond the women's page ghetto had to appeal to men and were expected to carry on men's work, and to play an almost imitative role. Only with the second wave of appointments is it possible for women to acknowledge their interests can be different and far from trivial" (1997 p. 4).

The role of gender stereotypes, reflected in the accounts by Mahtani and Christmas, were explored by Eagly and Johnson through gender congruence (2000). They found that women who portrayed more 'masculine' traits – aggression and authority, for instance – were not regarded as well (Eagly, Makhijani and Klonksy 1992; Eagly and Johnson 2000, Kark, Waismel-Manor and Shamir 2012). Gender bias and stereotypes are closely aligned with being a female in a leadership position. Eagly and Johannesen-Schmidt write:

"[F]emale leaders' choices are constrained by threats from two directions: Conforming to their gender role can produce a failure to meet the requirements of their leader role, and conforming to their leader role can produce a failure to meet the requirements of their gender role" (2001 p. 786).

Gender congruity and bias, hence, are important considerations in understanding how newsrooms function. Are Indian newsrooms in fact 'pervasively masculine' (NL Team 2014, p. 3)? Do they promote a definition of success that corresponds with the global masculine stereotype (Schein 1973)? Do women leaders, then, adopt more masculine traits as Mahtani describes (2005)? How is their gender congruence (or incongruence) perceived by the rest of the newsroom? Does having a higher number of women leading a newsroom affect its culture?

This study considers the founding question of why there aren't more women in positions of power through this course of literature, and hopes to explore it through the lived experiences of women in positions of power.

This research looks at the leadership approaches of female leaders in Indian newsrooms, how they're perceived, and what barriers exist to their leadership, by considering the lived experiences of women journalists in these newsrooms. This study also seeks suggestions on how obstacles to female leadership can be minimised. Towards this end, this study proposes a list of aims and objectives that can be found in the next section.

Aims, Objectives and Research Questions

Aims:

1. To provide insight into the lived experiences of female journalists in Indian newsrooms.

2. To provide insight into how women lead Indian newsrooms.

3. To offer insight into barriers to female leadership in Indian newsrooms.

4. To generate suggestions to remove barriers to female leadership in Indian newsrooms.

Objectives:

1. To explore the lived experiences of women journalists in Indian newsrooms through in-depth interviews.

2. To understand the leadership approaches of female leaders in Indian newsrooms through interviews.

3. To explore the perception of female leaders in Indian newsrooms by their juniors through these interviews.

4. To explore barriers to female leadership in Indian newsrooms through the experiences of the interviewed journalists.

5. To offer suggestions to remove barriers to female leadership in Indian newsrooms through these interviews.

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Research Questions

To achieve the above, the following research questions are posed:

1. How do female leaders in national Indian English language TV and print newsrooms approach leadership?

2. How is female leadership perceived by followers in these newsrooms?

3. What suggestions can journalists in these newsrooms offer through their experiences to remove barriers to female leadership?

Research Focus

At this point, this study has covered the rich history of women in the Indian media (Section 1.3), the lack of women in positions of leadership in Indian newsrooms (Section 1.4)) and has argued the importance of women in leadership positions in Indian newsrooms (Chapter 2).

Drawing from all of the above, this study concerns itself with the leadership experiences and approaches of female journalists in Indian newsrooms. As explained in Section 1.1, India is an incredibly vast country with intense regional variations in terms of language, the status of women, religion and culture. As a result, to focus on the leadership approaches of female journalists in "Indian Newsrooms" would be an incredibly large project with a lot of complex variables. This study recognises the challenge of researching such a vast area and has focused itself on national English language television and print media.

By focusing on national English language media, the study geographically centres on the capital city of New Delhi. As the political centre of the country, all major publication and broadcasting in English occurs in this area and caters to the entire country. Additionally, by focusing on English language media, the study automatically lessens socio-economic variables – professional fluency in English remains a privilege of the urban, socio-economically elite (Badhauria 2012).

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While the narrow focus on English language media and the relatively homogenous talent it attracts may seem limited, this study considers it the right choice for a number of reasons. Firstly, the English language media wields huge power over the social, business and political elite of the country, allowing it a great deal of power over the decision makers (Sinha, Saraon et al. 2016). Secondly, as briefly explained in Chapter II, English language media attracted a larger number of women and continues to have a larger, more robust participation of women, with the glass ceiling for women in English language media higher than that for women in regional media. This provides a unique and interesting area for this study to explore, and could lead to perspectives and suggestions that could be considered by regional and local newsrooms to boost their representation of women in power.

Methodology

This study has a feminist research approach, grounded by an identification with subjectivism. A central tenant of this research is that an individual's social construction shapes their idea of reality, a pillar of subjectivism (Morgan and Smircich 1980; Holden and Lynch 2004). The epistemological aim is to understand the characteristics of women leaders and the perception of female leadership. This is rooted in them constructing and reconstructing their subjective realities.

An interview strategy best serves this study, consisting of 18 in depth interviews with journalists.

This study is concerned with understanding how women leaders act – something shaped by discourses, where discourses are the "social arena in which common understandings are manifest in language, social practices and structures" (Fletcher 1999, p.143). They are understood to provide "the conditions of possibility that determine what can be said, by whom and when" (Hardy and Phillips, 2004, p.301) creating truth effects (Kelan 2008).

To address the questions asked in this research, this study seeks detailed data from subjects. In a situation where there are not many other relevant studies this study also needs to remain open and explore avenues that arise during the research. Before detailing the data gathering and analysis portion of the research, it is important to consider the research paradigms along which this study aligns itself. Since all research is based on underlying philosophical assumptions about what constitutes 'valid' research, as well as what method is thus appropriate to develop that research (Kuhn 1977), understanding the philosophical backdrop helps to better understand the process and function of a study.

With the following process of thematic analysis and the framework and paradigms mentioned in this chapter, a pilot study was conducted in the summer of 2017, which formed the basis for the final study that was conducted in spring 2019. The methodology remained consistent for both the pilot study as well as the final study, however interview questions were altered to accommodate new themes, avenues and details. None of the people interviewed for the pilot were included in the final study as a result of a shift of focus and change in questions.

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The theoretical underpinnings of this research are shown in the figure below, and then discussed further in more depth.

Ontology
•Constructivist

Epistemology
•Interpretivist

Approach
•Feminist Standpoint Approach

Method
•Semi-Structured Interviews

Sampling
•Snowball

Data Analysis
•Thematic Analysis

Figure 5: An overview of the theoretical underpinnings of this research

Ontological Positioning

The ontological position, regarding the nature of the world, poses the question "What constitutes reality?" and is valuable in understanding the foundation of this work. Does this study take a positivist approach, focusing on a singular reality that can be measured and observed empirically? Or, alternatively, does the research come from the perspective that reality is subjective and not singular?

This study believes in the idea that reality is socially constructed, value laden and open to individual interpretation. Drawing from Guba and Lincoln (1994), this study takes a relativist ontological positioning and holds that:

> "Realities are apprehendable in the form of multiple, intangible mental constructions, socially and experientially based, local and specific in nature,

and dependent for their form and content on the individual persons or groups holding the constructions" (p.206).

In the context of this study, the underlying approach of relativism is key when looking at the experiences and perception of female leaders in Indian newsrooms, as it allows the consideration of the findings through the lenses of gender and culture, accepting that the realities faced by the women in these newsrooms to be distinct, valid, and constructed on the basis of their unique experiences.

Further, as outlined in chapter I, my research focus draws heavily from my own experiences as a female journalist in Indian newsrooms, my interest in gender issues and my belief in the power of a representative and strong media. Brooks and Hesse-Biber (2007) offered that a researcher ought to use their experiences to gain new insights and generate new knowledge, something that subjectivism allows me the scope to do. By being a:

> "personal, intuitive knowledge that comes from the consciousness of a knowing subject situated in a specific social context" (Ramazanoglu and Holland 2004, p.52),

 subjectivism allows for insights and understandings that emerge from this study to be authentic and allow for the narrative to be set by those who experience it – women, a minority. Subjectivism allows this study to move beyond a mere identification of characteristics into the rich area of interviewees and the researcher exploring why.

Epistemological Positioning

The dominant arms of answering the epistemological question of how we know the world (how we perceive the world) can broadly be divided into positivism and interpretivism. Positivism concerns itself with causal relationships and follows a foundational or objectivist approach, while interpretivism is:

"where truths are not fixed and where each might find their own answer ... using this approach allows for research inside such a space to be fluid and to take into account any inherent differences in culture and context" (Blair 2009, p.99).

An interpretivist approach allows, in this context, the nuances in culture and gender and allows the room for those variables to be explored on the basis of the participants' perception. A positivist approach would be misplaced in this study – with its focus on one 'truth' that is replicable.

Feminist Standpoint Research

Feminist standpoint research allows the space to examine the emerging characteristics of female leaders through the framework of gender and patriarchy that underpin society, and allows context and insights into the answers – the experiences and the constraints of women interviewees, as well as their thoughts.

This thesis considers feminist standpoint research a place that enables women to:

"speak from multiple standpoints, producing multiple knowledge, without preventing women from coming together to work for specific political goals" (Hekman 1997, p.363).

An important consideration in selecting a FSR is the specific social setting of an Indian newsroom. Borrowing from Buzzanell, FSR: "develops feminist agendas by making sense of commonalities of women's lives without denying their diversity" (1993 cited by Stanley and Wise 2003, p.56). The positionality aspect of FSR (McCorkel and Myers 2003) is a suitable approach to consider situated experiences and knowledge.

FSR acknowledges the diversity and subjectivity of women's individual experiences (Brooks 2007; Harding 2007; Brooks and Hesse-Biber 2007) which aids the creation of new knowledge that cultivates social and political change (Hurley 1999; Fonow and Cook 2005;

Brooks 2007; Crasnow 2008) to challenge the established gender social order (Knights and Kerfoot 2004).

A feminist standpoint approach allows this study to explore the gendered social order, to enable social and political change (Hurley 1999; Brooks 2007; Crasnow 2008). Tong's feminisms – liberal, Marxist, radical, psychoanalytic, socialist, existentialist and post-modern (1989) were considered but found to be bounding and limiting, making feminist standpoint theory the best fit for this study, due to its emphasis on situated knowledge. Emerging from the need to focus in the oppression rooted in women's everyday lives (Hekman 1997a), feminist standpoint theory offers a powerful lens through which women's leadership in Indian newsrooms can be investigated.

Considering criticism that FSR can veer into relativity so specific that it allows no generalisations – eliminating any political activism (Hekman 1997a), this study subscribes to the idea put forward by Buzzanell in 2003, that FSR ought to strive to make sense of the commonalities of women's lives without denying diversity.

FSR is employed in two major ways in this study. First, as a theoretical underpinning of this research, it argues the importance of having more women in positions of leadership in the media, as discussed in depth in section 2.2. Using FSR, this study argues that for a media to truly depict authentic accounts of the diverse array of people it is meant to serve, and to accurately identify and portray the issues that concern them, newsrooms must be similarly diverse, not just in the lower ranks but also in gatekeeping positions. Secondly, FSR is used with the study's focus on the situated knowledge of women in positions of editorial leadership in the Indian media. To employ, once again, the analogy Harding used for FSR (See Section 2.2), this study uses the situated knowledge gained from these interviews, to collate a map for future women to better understand and navigate their surroundings in the newsroom.

Method

In designing this study, a number of methods were considered. Instinctually, a mixed-method approach of observation and interviews seemed ideal. The idea behind this was to merge

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naturally occurring observational data with robust researcher-provoked interviews. As Heritage argues:

> "the social world is a pervasively conversational one in which an overwhelming proportion of the world's business is conducted through the medium of social interaction" (1984, p. 239).

A method of participant observation would allow the researcher to be privy to the vast interactions that occur in newsrooms – in production meetings, during a breaking news segment, and at cigarette breaks. In so doing, this research could watch the various parts of the decision-making process up close, and very importantly, watch leader-follower interactions at length, allowing for detail and nuance to accounts.

Additionally, interviews are ideal to delve into the why's. As explained by Silverman:

> "Asking people what they think and feel appears to have an immediacy, even 'authenticity', which curiously is believed to be absent in naturally occurring data. So, even when you have tapes or observations of behaviour, you are tempted to 'complete the picture' by interviewing the people concerned about what they were thinking or feeling at the time" (2013, p.316).

Interviews for this study would allow a wide array of things – self-analysis by leaders on how they lead, explanations by followers on how they would describe their leaders, reflection on leadership experiences and thoughts behind actions. While a survey could possibly yield a bullet-point list of a handful of characteristics of leaders, this study is interested in a more in-depth understanding, especially with regard to gender. As literature (see Chapter 2.2) will show, gender is often something that is 'done' or 'performed', particularly by women in traditionally masculine spaces. This study would like to allow these avenues to remain open, something semi-structured interviews are best positioned to do.

The initial idea of a mixed-methods approach, braiding together interviews and participatory observation was discarded due to issues of access. Gaining admittance to newsrooms and

unfettered access was not permitted. Thus, this study employs semi-structured interviews as its method, as illustrated in the final study. Even without the addition of observation, interviews allow for the collection of rich data. As explained by Bridget Bryne:

> "Qualitative interviewing is particularly useful as a research method for accessing individuals' attitudes and values – things that cannot necessarily be observed or accommodated in a formal questionnaire. Open-ended and flexible questions are likely to get a more considered response than closed questions and therefore provide better access to interviewees' views, interpretation of events, understandings, experiences and opinions […] when done well [it] is able to achieve a level of depth and complexity that is not able to other […] approaches" (2004, p.182).

Thus, semi-structured interviews will allow the in-depth questioning of journalists and allow the ability to clarify, probe deeper and omit irrelevant areas of questioning (Teddlie and Tashakkori 2009). They also allow the interviewer to build rapport with the journalists in question, allowing for a more comfortable interview where interviewees feel able to divulge more detail (Gujral 2009).

A pilot study conducted in spring 2018 involved Skype interviews with female journalists in India. This pilot study provided the basis for the final study. While the methodology remained consistent throughout the studies, the final study involved in person interviews, conducted in New Delhi in newsrooms. An audio recording of these interviews was taken with the participant's permission, following which the interviews were transcribed securely by the interviewer. Anonymity was offered to all participants, and 11 of the 18 participants requested to remain anonymous. As these 18 participants were from 4 newsrooms, all the interviews were anonymised and identifying features were removed from the interviews. At the request of the interviewees, the organisations have also not been identified.

Sampling

The sampling method for this study is snowball sampling – with the researcher reaching out to known contacts within the media and gaining further connections through them. Snowball sampling was the most relevant to this study due to concerns of access. While purposive sampling was considered at the onset, a lack of access to and response from journalists made snowball sampling the most effective option. A reservation with snowball sampling considered by the researcher is possible bias, with interviewees referring only those of a particular predisposition – one similar to them. The researcher has made efforts to minimise any bias from this front through diversifying sampling as much as possible.

Interviews were conducted with 18 journalists in four Indian English language newsrooms – two TV and two print. Glaser and Strauss (1967) recommend the concept of saturation for achieving an appropriate sample size in qualitative studies. The selected sample size of 18 interviews is in keeping with the guidelines provided by Creswell (1998) for optimum data collection. Out of the 18 total interviews in this study, 14 were with women and 4 with men. As mentioned previously (Chapter I), there is a lack of a female narrative in Indian newsrooms, thus interviewing more women is imperative to understanding their leadership styles and challenges they face in the newsroom. The men interviewed were all followers, and generated discussion around male perceptions of women in power.

Ten of the 18 interviewees were viewed as followers, with regard to their perception of their female leaders. Four of these ten were men, and the other 6 were women.

This study's focus on English language media is primarily to provide clearer results; English language media in India is centred primarily around New Delhi as the political hub of the nation. In a nation as socially diverse and complex as India, the focus on New Delhi mitigates some of the large discrepancies in social aspects that exist within the country. Focussing on English language media limits the scope reasonably to allow minimal variables in this respect – the English language media remains mostly within the grasp of socio-economically and politically privileged groups. The English language media also exerts a lot of influence over the decision makers of the country, and is most often consumed by them (Abraham 2009) making it an elite but influential industry.

Ethics

This study follows the core principles of ethics in qualitative research adapted from Orb et al. (2001) as follows:

1. **Respect for people**: To protect vulnerable participants, to not use people as means to an end and a commitment to ensure the autonomy of participants.
2. **Beneficence:** To commit to minimise risks to participants – especially social, psychological or institutional risks.
3. **Justice:** A fair distribution of the risks and benefits of the research.
4. **Respect for Communities:** To respect and protect the values of the community being researched.

All participants were given an information sheet with details about the research and its uses. The researcher went through this document before every interview and allowed time for questions. The interviewees then signed a consent form.

Interviewees had the option to be anonymised, and all responses were stored safely by the researcher with respect to Data Protection Laws. The researcher has taken the online ethics modules provided by Bournemouth University, and received an Ethics Board approval for the project in 2017.

Data Analysis

This study applied thematic analysis to analyse the interviews conducted. Thematic analysis was selected to allow an in-depth understanding of the data and to make identifications in patterns easier (Braun and Clark 2006). Thematic analysis allows the researcher to view often occurring themes within the data and organise them in a way that provides a clear understanding of the interviews (Thomas 2006). Considering a sample size of 18, thematic analysis allows an easier way to analyse data without being reductive of the findings (Braun and Clark 2006).

A number of other methods were considered. At first, Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) seemed an option, but due to its dual focus on the unique characteristics of individual participants as well as the patterning of meaning across participants, it did not seem a right fit. Additionally, looking at leadership approaches through IPA would produce hyper-individualised findings. In contrast, Thematic Analysis (TA) focuses mainly on patterning of meaning across participants and would allow for a broader understanding of leadership approaches, and with its flexible model, TA would also help answer questions of experience.

In their 2006 paper, Braun and Clark identified various approaches to thematic analysis. This study opts for a more theoretical and latent approach to analysing data. The theoretical or deductive approach to thematic analysis is relevant to this study as the coding process of the study is driven by existing concepts and ideas. To take a more inductive approach, in this research's view, would not facilitate the narrow area this research seeks to explore – that is how women lead, are perceived to lead, and their recommendations. An inductive approach would have yielded better results for a study that was more phenomenological in its approach than this study is, as this study is interested in how women lead as its primary RQ.

Secondly, this research aligns itself more with a latent approach than a semantic one. These two approaches are concerned with the level at which themes are identified – semantic/explicit or latent/interpretive. The latent approach in this case, goes beyond the identification of themes, and into the underlying ideas, concepts and assumptions. This study's selection of the latent approach has a lot to do with the rich area it deals with – questions of gender, stereotypes, leadership and culture are incredibly complex and interwoven. This study does seek to draw from previous research into gender and leadership and consider these findings from that perspective – ie, this study is interested in exploring the themes that arise from the interviews for their ideas, concepts and thoughts that underpin them.

The thematic analysis was be done in keeping with the phases identified by Braun and Clark (2006) as follows:
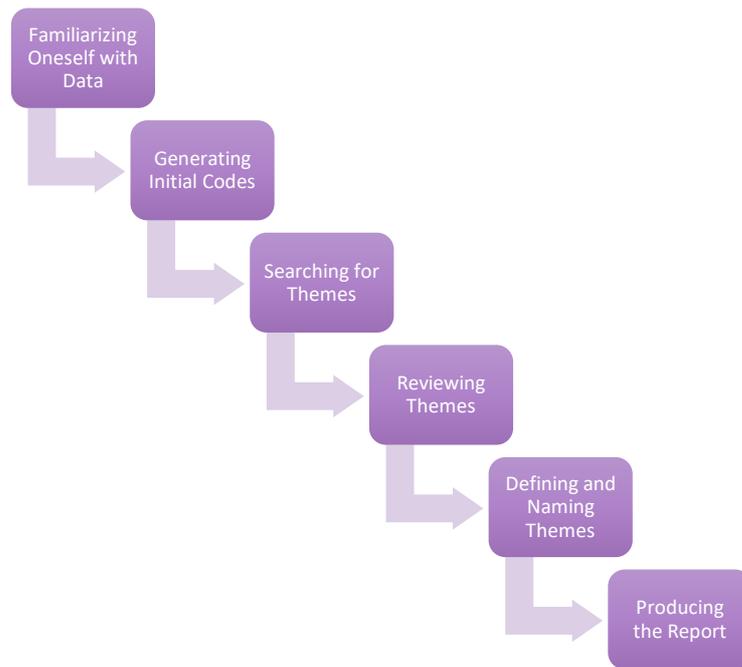
Figure 6 The Stages of Thematic Analysis. Adapted from Braun and Clark 2006

Pilot Study

In 2017, a pilot study was conducted on the basis of this framework. The pilot study involved interviews with eight media professionals in the Indian media industry. Four of those interviewed belonged to prominent English language news channels – a man and a woman in senior leadership roles as well as two journalists who report to them (one male, one female). The other interviewees were females belonging to newspapers and magazines – two senior editors and a reporter. Interviews were conducted via Skype and ranged from 30 to 45 minutes in duration.

The interviews involved semi-structured questions where the interviewees were asked to describe their organisations, their jobs, their co-workers and their bosses. They were asked questions regarding their priorities in management and their biggest concerns, and how they would act in a variety of situations. While there was a structure of questions prepared, all conversations flowed quite naturally, with interviewees often answering the next question without it being posed. The interviews were informal – due to being personal contacts of the researcher, rapport was easy to build and the interviewees were candid and forthcoming.
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The scope of the original study was slightly different from the scope of this present study. The pilot was focused on how women lead, with a particular interest in their leadership approaches; the study was more concerned with the qualities and attributes of the female leaders, and how that corresponded with studies on gender and leadership. However, in light of the incredibly rich and nuanced data that resulted from the interviews, the study moved its focus to highlighting the lived experiences of the women in question, and their struggles to make it to the top.

A large part of the shift came as a result of what the interviewees seemed most keen to discuss. Most answers would circle back to navigating gender in the newsroom, and while this was apparent during the interviews, it became pronounced enough during the thematic analysis that it felt necessary to move the scope of the research.

A lot of the current study grew out of the pilot study. While many questions did not change, some themes to emerge from the pilot study were incorporated into the final questionnaire. One of the major themes to crop up in the pilot study was that of mentorship, where the interviewees discussed the importance of mentoring and being mentored, despite not being a part of the questions. Mentorship was, as a result, a large theme of the questions posed in the final study. The pilot questionnaire and the final questionnaire shared a lot of significant questions – exploring how these leaders saw themselves, how they felt their gender played a part in the newsroom, and their priorities leading.

Another large change was a result of timing. The pilot was conducted before the Indian #MeToo movement, whereas the final interviews were scheduled in the months after. Questions around sexual harassment and newsroom culture and environment gained a lot of importance in the post #MeToo era, and were explored much more thoroughly than in the original pilot study.

As a result of the change of scope and the changed questions, the data collected during the interviews in the pilot study have not been included in the final research, and none of the people interviewed for the pilot were interviewed again.

The final study was conducted in 2019, interviewing 18 journalists in India. This is explored in the next section.

Female Leadership in Indian Newsrooms

The relationship between leadership and gender, especially women and leadership has been of increasing interest to academics since the 1980's (Loden 1985; Sargent 1981). As discussed in the literature review, questions like how women lead, how effective their leadership is, and how their gender affects their leadership, grew in importance as more women entered the workforce and began to climb the ladders of various industries. In India, where female empowerment and gender equality are one of the largest social concerns of the moment (Naik 2020), these questions have taken on a new vigour. Against the backdrop of the international spotlight on sexual violence in the country, the #MeToo movement and the representation of women in positions of power, the media industry has been having deep conversations about women in media.

Asmita Bakshi, a freelance journalist who has chaired multiple panels on the subject of the representation of women in the media in the last few years, concluded a UN Women x India Today discussion by saying:

> "In all the panels that I've been fortunate to be a part of, the underlying theme is that to address the issues – and there are a lot of issues, having that conversation and understanding of the collective experiences of women is the first step. The place we're in at the moment, however progressive it may seem when you see all these successful women here, is one where a lot of work remains to be done, and we're still only at step one" (UN Women x India Today 4 August 2018).

In April 2019, interviews were conducted with 18 media professionals in New Delhi. Sixteen of these interviews were conducted in person, in the newsrooms, and two were conducted over the phone. The interviews sought to gain insight into the leadership of women in Indian newsrooms.

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As explained in detail in the previous chapters, while India has a large number of women in English language media, and a lot of women in the most visible positions of the media, there is a lack of women in senior positions holding power. The estimates for the number of women in positions of power vary, ranging from 5% to 26%, depending on the study and organisation (UN Women with Media Rumble August 2019, Chamaria, Kumar and Yadav 2006). This study seeks to understand how women lead, looking at three specific areas: 1.) what the characteristics of these leaders are, 2.) how these leaders are perceived within the newsroom, and finally, 3.) what suggestions these women have for removing obstacles to female leadership in Indian newsrooms.

The journalists interviewed for this study were from four major news organisations in New Delhi – all national, English language news. Two of the organisations are TV news channels, and the other two print publications. Within each newsroom, an interview with a male member of staff was conducted to understand the perception of female leaders. The figure below organises the interviewees by organisation.
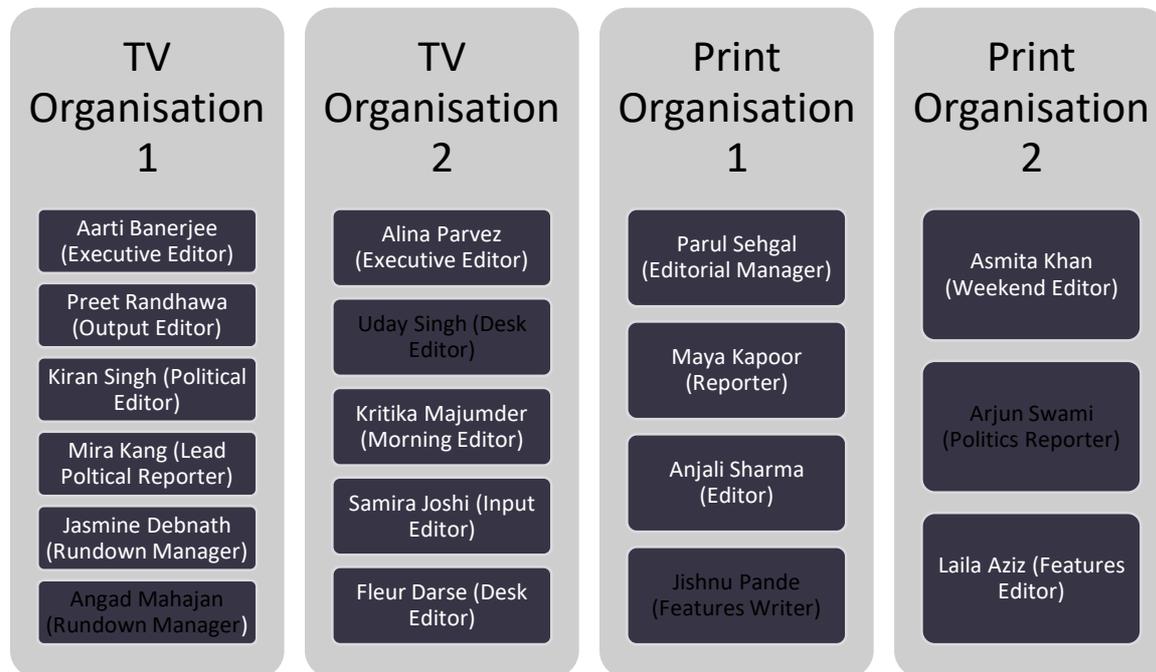

Figure 7: An overview of the interviewees, on the basis of their organization. The men are in black.

Through the course of the study, opportunities to casually observe two of the women lead their newsrooms emerged – these observations involved the women unaware of the presence of the interviewer, but continuing on with their work leading the newsroom. While these observations were not formally planned, they were included in this study for context after being authorised by the participants. As a result of this study being conducted with multiple members of the same newsroom, some of whom requested anonymity, all names of organisations have been withheld, and the names of the interviewees have been changed. The organisations are all national, English language news based in New Delhi.

How Women Lead

Aarti Banerjee is the executive editor for a large TV news channel. It's 2:50 pm, there's a story breaking, and she's in charge of the newsroom that needs to put it on live TV in 10 minutes. She stands at a long curved desk with her three line managers – all women. Her voice is calm and level, despite an uncomfortably loud and frantic newsroom around her. She gives out instructions in short, clear sentences, each beginning with the line manager's name, and when she's done she says a loud "Quiet!", her voice still calm. Her line managers have scattered to different corners with their own small clusters closing around them, but the room stills. "Head into your teams, work quickly and cleanly and I need this done in three minutes." The frenzy resumes, and she is walking from desk to desk, turning at times and calling out loudly to the other side of the room. She adds a please to every command, and says a thank you once someone completes a task. The story makes it to the bulletin in the nick of time.

Banerjee's leadership of the newsroom on the day of the interview highlighted a number of common themes that arose when tackling the question of how women lead. In the analysis of the interviews there were five major themes that emerged with respect to how women lead. The first theme was collaboration and delegation. This was an expected theme, considering previous studies on women's leadership (Wooley et al. 2011, Eagly 2014) and the unique nature of newsrooms (Rai 2008). The second theme to arise was personal relationships, and the extent to which they played a part in how the women led their teams. Previous research suggests that women are more 'people oriented leaders', focusing on the individuals and building relationships with them as part of effective leadership (Leroy 2010, Smith et al.

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2012). The leaders of these media organisations showed a similar preference for cultivating strong personal relationships with their teams. The third theme to arise was mentorship and support. During the pilot study for this research, mentorship had been a key theme. This held true for this study as well, with the interviewees stressing how important mentorship has been for them and how they view it as a vital aspect of their leadership. The last two themes to arise were of clarity and decisiveness and of calm. These two themes, particularly the one of calm, highlighted some of the pressures that women felt in the newsroom, as a result of their gender. These two themes also drew from previous literature, particularly studies showing the 'double bind' (Eagly et al, 2012) for women, where they are penalised for following gender norms as well as rejecting them. This double bind is discussed in detail in the section of this study and in section 3.6 of the literature review.

The 5 themes that arose for how women lead have been explored in detail below.

Fig 8: Identifies major themes in the approaches to female leadership in Indian newsrooms

Theme I: Collaboration and Delegation

The first theme to emerge was that of collaboration and delegation – the democratic nature of leadership described by these women. One perspective from which to view leadership styles, as explored in section 3.1, is through their degree of authoritativeness – how much a leader allows her/his subordinates to partake in the decision-making process. Literature suggests that women favour democratic styles of leadership, prioritising group collaboration and teamwork (Adam and Funk 2012; Eagly et al. 1992; Eagly and Johnson 1990, van Engen and Willemsen 2004) and eschewing more rigid top-down approaches to leadership. The findings of this study echo these themes. In this study, the interviewees described their style as heavily democratic, favouring collaboration and allowing their teams a great degree of autonomy. When asked to describe her leadership style, Alina Parvez explained:

> "My style is basically come and bounce ideas off of me, let's talk it out. TV is a team game – there is so much to do that you cannot do it alone. The key to a successful output, to a successful show or news-hour lies in teamwork, in working well together. So it's not a one man show. So how I lead is to work with my team, to know their strengths and weaknesses, who can take what and run with it. We discuss and divide, but I get the final say."

This idea of teamwork, cooperation and delegation was echoed in each of the interviews with female leaders in a similar capacity. When asked to describe how they lead their newsrooms, all seven of the television managers prominently used the words "teamwork" and "communication". The use of these two words underlines how critical these two aspects are to their leadership. "Teamwork" is a word that is inherently collaborative, moving the focus away from the individual, and highlighting a joined effort. Parvez distinctly states above that she leads by working *with* her team. In the context of the question, despite being asked for their *individual* leadership style, the interviewees all felt compelled to mention group work and group effort. Kiran Singh explained this point by saying:

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"I lead by listening – first to what my managers want from me, what I'm expected to do, and then to my team. In order to deliver on the objectives I have been given, I must know how to get it done by the people under me. TV news is constant teamwork, if you are the kind of person who can only swim, or rather, sink alone then this is not the job for you. My job is to listen to the people I have and figure out how best to use them, their ideas, their own objectives, and their strengths to deliver the channel line. My leading style is understanding my resources, and people are my resources."

Singh's response spotlights two important aspects. First, her point of leading by listening is one that underscores the 'communication' that was previously mentioned by the seven TV leaders. Singh's emphasis on the listening component of the communication exchange shows a hierarchy that is not rigid or top down, but one that allows for an openness of exchange. This is not a novel concept, with studies on management in media showing that the industry is a lot less rigid than most (Willer 2014), and women in particular favouring communication and collaboration within their teams (Wooley et al. 2011). The second important aspect to emerge from Singh's response has to do with the idea of people as resources. This idea is one that creeps up through other themes as well, particularly the second theme of personal relationships, and shows the value these leaders assign to the individual people around them.

Print managers maintained similar ideals in their description of their leadership style, but in a more muted manner. Parul Sehgal best explained the leadership style that she and her print cohorts embodied by saying:

"It's definitely a delegation and understanding game. My leadership style is to know who is best suited to what, who I can, for instance, assign this last minute long-form, who will actually get down to Srinagar and get me the story I need… The news presents itself, we have systems in place that filter the news down to us and we have a daily meeting to calibrate. That's when we prioritise the stories, and my reporters are crucial to that process of selecting what we cover. I make the final calls but it's after a sometimes very heated meeting, or

a very long email chain. After that I make the call of who does what, based on my knowledge of them."

The knowledge of her team, as emphasised by Sehgal and others, was an integral part of leadership as described by these women. This knowledge, and the idea behind it is explored more deeply in the context of the next two themes: personal relationships and mentorship.

While both the TV media and the print media seem to value openness and welcome a variety of opinions, the key distinguishing factor is the more solitary nature of a print report vs the very collaborative effort of the TV report. This difference surfaced a few times over the interviews, and was then addressed directly by Jasmine Debnath, who had a wealth of experience in both TV and Print media. She explained:

"For TV you definitely have to have a more collaborative angle. There's so much that goes into that one 30 second news story – the anchor, the researcher, the screen queues, the ticker, the script, this reporter, that reporter, the visuals, you know. It's also so fast paced – this 24-hour news business and live shows means that you need to have a million hands on deck or you won't physically be able to generate that output. I think print, at least the way it's done is a much more slow, deliberate and assignment oriented field. Basically you have one output, the maximum you'll do generally is have to work with a photographer. It's a very different field, you have distinctly different demands so you don't need to be collaborative. It's clearly defined what you have to do."

The idea of women being democratic leaders (as opposed to more authoritative ones) is one that has received a significant amount of scholastic attention (Adam and Funk 2012; Eagly et al. 1992; Eagly and Johnson 1990, van Engen and Willemsen 2004). As explained in detail previously in this study (Section 3.1), a number of studies consider women to be more democratic leaders than men (Eagly, Johannesen-Schmidt, and Engen 2003, Christmas 1997, Maseko & Prochess 2013). As previously stated, a 2017 meta-analysis by Gipson et al. suggested that "women leaders tend to be more likely to manifest a democratic style and

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elements of transformational leadership than their male peers" (p. 48). The idea of women being leaders who value a more open atmosphere at work is not a new one. A 1990 study by Judy B. Rosener in the *Harvard Business Review* found that women tend to be more interactive leaders and:

> "see sharing power and information as an asset rather than a liability. They believe that although pay and promotion are necessary tools of management, what people really want is to feel that they are contributing to a higher purpose and that they have the opportunity as individuals to learn and grow. The women believe that employees and peers perform better when they feel they are a part of an organisation and can share in its success" (p. 124-125).

When asked the question of whether they believed their leadership style to be influenced by their gender, a number of women offered interesting insights. Preet Randhawa explained:

> "It's a complicated question, and honestly it's one that I have no answer to, but I can tell you that me and a lot of other women, in this newsroom and outside it do actually discuss. The idea of gender influencing a lot of my decisions is one that I am still kind of coming to terms with – I don't think I understand it completely. But I do see men around me less concerned with the people around them. Maybe it's nothing, but I do think that perhaps women are more in tune with their teams, more supportive and basically making their teams a priority over their own career, because they are maybe due to social conditioning expected to do so. I don't know, and nobody I know knows, but we have discussed that this is in fact maybe a thing."

Randhawa's answer of wrestling with the idea of *why* a perceived pattern exists is one that cropped up repeatedly; 11 of the relatively younger interviewees articulated similar struggles with their gender and the newsroom. The idea of how much their gender was relevant, or even the idea of gender as being descriptive vs prescriptive frequently surfaced during these interviews; as one interviewee poignantly put it, "I'm not sure how much of who I am at this point is because of me, and how much is because of everyone else telling me what I should

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be" (Laila Aziz). A large part of this reckoning can be attributed to the interviewees being aware of the subject matter of the research they were being interviewed for, and therefore could have led them to consider these complex questions. But the fact that these are questions that are being actively considered and discussed by the younger guard in this study throws a light on how these issues are pertinent and being actively thought of. As Jasmine Debnath explained:

> "I think I'm quite conflicted between whether just journalism is what is causing this open-door policy or whether being a woman comes into it. I hope someone… studies this, because I would be curious. It's something we should know so we can as a media take a look at what we are. This is a, what do you call it, existentialist dilemma now. […] I think I'll leave this interview asking myself if I like chocolate because I like it, or because all chocolate ads always have women in them!"

The sentiment that Aziz, Debnath and Randhawa express, of actively thinking about the effect their gender may have on their workplace, and vice versa, makes research like this seem more timely and important. The next theme to arise was also intertwined with participants wondering if/how their gender affected their leadership. The next theme of personal relationships, surfaced early within the interviews, and for three of the participants, came out as a direct result of the conversation on the relationship between gender and the workplace. For Randhawa, it was a small and clear jump:

> "What I mean when I say that men around me are less concerned with other people, I mean that on the whole, I and the women around me go out of our way to build relationships of trust and understanding with our colleagues and our juniors, and it's a very important part of the 'the job' for us. Is that because we're women and need to be liked? I don't know."

A 2011 study by Julia Bear and Anita Williams Wooley of Carnegie Melon University found that group collaboration is "greatly improved by the presence of women in the group" (Wooley et al. 2011 p. 4). They found that the effects were explained in part by the higher

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levels of social sensitivity exhibited by women, based on their greater ability to read non-verbal cues and make accurate inferences about what others are feeling and thinking. This idea of women as more people-oriented leaders, building and prioritising relationships is one that is dominant both in literature and this study, as we will see in the second theme.

Theme II: Personal Relationships

The second theme to emerge from the interviews was the importance and prioritisation of personal relationships. Interviewees stressed that an integral part of their leadership was a close relationship with their teams, and that a strong understanding of the people they manage was key to "maintaining smooth sailing" (Parul Sehgal).

> "I think it's a sign of a bad head if the person doesn't know the people working under them. I make it my personal mission to understand my colleagues as well as the interns, because I'm in charge not only of your output, your productivity, what you do for the company, but I am also in a limited way, in charge of your well-being. And no, I don't think that you can separate the two" (Parul Sehgal).

All the interviewees, bar two, explained how building personal relationships with their teams were a key aspect of being able to lead them. While they all accepted that there would be varying levels of connection between the team members, the consensus was that the baseline ought to be a knowledge of the individual's personality, personal life and circumstances, as well as a strong comfort level. This was best explained by Alina Parvez when she said

> "I have members of my team, the people directly working under me that I know better than others, and that is to be expected. But even the person I know the least well I have a good connection with. I am aware of who he is, what he can do and what he wants to do. I know the biggest most pressing parts of his personal life, and while we aren't going out for coffee and a chat I know he will come to me if something is the matter […] and you need that. I gave him a lighter load for a few months last year because I was aware of his personal situation he was going through. And the fact that he could come up to me and talk meant a lot. It meant the trust was there. And as your leader, knowing you trust me is the biggest compliment I can get."

When asked about how they believed building and maintaining personal relationships helped them in the newsroom, their answers could be loosely grouped into two thought processes. First, that building personal relationships recognised the humanity and individuality of their staff, which was a basic tenant of leading. This idea, that a core part of leadership was focusing on the people under them, is one that crops up in a number of leadership styles, including transformational leadership, servant leadership, collective leadership, complexity leadership and shared leadership (Tal and Gordon 2016). These leadership approaches broke away from the previous focus on the characteristics of a leader and were interested in the leader-follower dynamic as a measure of leadership effectiveness. Peter Greenleaf's idea of servant leadership stemmed from what he identified as concern for the well-being of a community being replaced, or overshadowed with a desire for profit (Greenleaf 2002). He argued that leaders ought to be de-emphasised, and focus on how they can serve their colleagues, institutions, and communities. The idea of a de-emphasised leader, one who focuses on the community around them emerged during the course of this study's interviews. Interviewee Kiran Singh mentioned that she believed that the people who work for her "aren't replaceable machine parts" (Kiran Singh) and the idea that leading and building personal relationships isn't just about the job. As she went on to explain:

> "I think the biggest thing is that it isn't just about what helps you in the newsroom. Yes, having personal relationships helps you in the newsroom, but it's important to recognise that what you're doing here isn't solely about, you know, how can I make this person work more. I want to recognise that every person I work with is an individual with a past and a future, and my job is to be here to support them. So I can help someone with their break-up not just so they can get back, bounce back to the job faster, but because they are an individual who deserves to feel better. They aren't replaceable machine parts, *ke ek gaya dusra leh ao (*one breaks and you put in another)."

The overwhelming tone of all the interviews was both the community and the individual – the interviewees discussed at length the importance of team work and team building, but also stressed the importance of the individual.

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The second category had to do with work environment. Interviewees suggested that part of the reason some teams worked better than others was the environment, and consequently the morale of the group. The environment in this situation, comprises of the group dynamics and relationships. Kritika Majumder explained,

> "[…] the crux of it is that a group where people are disjointed, where the leader has not worked to understand the people in it, and then used that understanding to foster goodwill will be a group where people don't give 110%. If you want a group where people work, where people try, where they give it everything, you need to build it. There are all these group bonding tips and tricks you get from HR, you know, in the emails, but all of that is useless. Talk to everyone, know when their grandmother is sick, when their husband has his promotion meaning. If you know that, then you care, and if you care then they will reciprocate that care back to you. If they feel cared for and supported, and this is not just from the leader, but also each other, then they'll give you everything they have. Because they're happy."

The idea of happy environments fostering productivity is not a novel one. A 2019 study by DiMaria et al. sought to the study link between subjective well-being and productivity in 20 European countries. The study drew from previous literature that suggested that an individual's well-being greatly increased their productivity, by making them more pragmatic, more friendly and cooperative (Bateman and Organ 1983; Judge et al. 2001) as well as studies that suggested that happier workers were more engaged in their work, earned more money, and had better relationships with colleagues (George and Brief 1992; Pavot and Diener 1993; Spector 1997; Wright and Cropanzano 2000). The study found a strong positive correlation between the happiness and well-being of subjects and their increased work performances.

The importance these leaders of Indian newsrooms gave to their personal relationships is a trait often expected of female leaders (Gardiner, Rita A, 2015). As explored in detail in the literature section 2.4, traditionally, feminine leadership has been strongly linked to traits of

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communication, collaboration and empathy, whereas masculine leadership is linked to aggression and decisiveness (Loden 1985; Sargent 1981; Hennig and Jardin 1977). Further, research has also explored the double-bind of women in leadership positions; women are often penalised for not conforming to the socially expected form of leadership, while traditionally feminine traits of leadership are not viewed as effective (See Section 2.4, Eagly, Makhijani and Klonksy 1992; Eagly and Johnson 2000, Kark, Waismel-Manor and Shamir 2012). When asked whether they believed their gender played a role in their prioritisation of personal relationships, Asmita Khan explained:

> "I think it's impossible to know just how much your gender affects how you are – it's not possible to know the other side. But that being said, I do have some theories that come up. […] if I look at the men around me, men I work with who went to the same schooling and college as me, similarly well-off parents and all that, I can see a difference. A lot of it is individual personalities and such but I really do believe that some of it is experience. It wasn't always easy for me, as a woman, I have had cases where I've been uncomfortable in a team or with a boss and it's been a formative experience, they all have. And they've shaped how I handle things with my team. I know what it's like, I know what it's like to feel out of place almost and you know it's because of your gender or something but you can't say it. It's an uneasy feeling. That's why I put a lot of effort into it, I don't want anyone feeling that way in my team, and I don't see them do the same to that extent, maybe, […] because they have not had the experiences I did.

When team members of the leaders interviewed were asked about their boss' approach to personal relationships, Arjun Swami, who works under Asmita Khan had an interesting take:

> "The main thing about working under Asmita is that she has a good balance between being your friend, being your mentor and being your boss. […] In terms of building personal relationships, she has gone out of her way to make this team work. For some perspective, we've had a lot of very big changes in the newsroom, lots of people have left and moved around and it was chaos.

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So, in the beginning, before she took over our team it was a bit of a mess… not a mess exactly but we were okay, but not working really well. They had just sort of put us together and it didn't feel like… a collective, like a unit. When Asmita came in she worked on that as one of her first things actually, I know her and she knows me […], and she did that with the entire team to a point where we feel like a strong group, and it makes work a much more enjoyable experience. I'm actually enjoying my job a lot more now. […] I feel like we all are willing to do a lot more because of our relationship with her."

The cultivation of personal relationships in these newsrooms seems to be an important theme running through the research. A main point that came up quite often was that journalism as field is taxing and collaborative – as a 24x7 job without huge financial incentives, it's an avenue that people pursue more for passion than for prudence. In that environment, personal fulfilment, the joys of camaraderie and the ability to be a team player are all highly valued (Ryfe 2009, Cunningham 2001). As such, a leadership style that takes a keen interest in the individual and in the morale and personal functioning of the team is one that is appreciated. As Jishnu Pande, a man working under a female editor explained:

"I spend a lot of time with my colleagues, if not physically then virtually. I work on features, which is probably one of the least collaborative posts, but I'm still constantly in contact with the team for research, ideas, contacts, and then to ensure that everything we publish has the same cohesive, singular tone; the company tone. It's a consuming job, I don't have a lot of free time, and my free time is generally spent among a similar group of people and discussing similar topics. I'm not overstating how encompassing this job is, it does become your life, it isn't 9 to 5 with weekends off. […] And if you take all of that and you make it not enjoyable, you will lose all your staff. I've seen it happen, one bad boss or a particularly bad management and work environment and people are out. […] so all of this team building and personal relationships, it is critical. What my boss does for me, for the team, in terms of reaching out and keeping that personal rapport and trust is what helps all that happen. And it keeps me here. And keeps me here (laughs, pointing to his head)."

Leaders taking that extra step to familiarise themselves with their teams, and putting in the time and effort to build those relationships is something that, across the board was met with appreciation. The theme of personal relationships explored in this section is closely related to the next theme to emerge: mentorship.

Theme III: Mentorship

The third theme to emerge as a key aspect of the leadership of women in Indian newsrooms was mentorship. This research uses the definition put forward by Toland, of a mentor as an individual who guides and develops another individual (2007). This is a theme that first emerged in the pilot study of this research, and as a result was looked at carefully during these interviews. Johnson and Ridley defined a mentorship relationship as a:

> "dynamic, reciprocal, personal relationship in which a more experienced person (mentor) acts as a guide, role model, teacher and sponsor of a less experienced person (mentee). Mentors provide mentees with knowledge, advice, counsel, support, and opportunity in the mentee's pursuit of full membership in a particular profession." (2015, p. 15)

Mentorship as a concept is an old one, and the word 'mentor' is often traced back to Homer and the myth of Odysseus (Schweibert, Deck and Bradshaw 1999). Odysseus, the king of Ithaca, had to leave his son Telemachus in the care of Mentor while he fought the Trojan war. The idea of Mentor here was one of a teacher and a guide – a wise, old man who would teach Telemachus about all the different aspects of life through studying, observation and guidance. The term mentorship is still used in a similar context, and serves as a critical aspect of a lot of leadership theories. The idea of a mentor remains as a person who goes beyond the checklist of required tasks to take a personal interest in the development of their employees. In the current environment of post-industrial leadership, where the focus is leader-follower interaction centric as opposed to leader-centric, there is a keen interest in mentoring. Mentorship offers a lot of benefits, including, but not limited to: empowerment, emotional support, psychosocial development, increased confidence, validation, and advocacy on the mentee's behalf (Williams-Nickelson, 2009). These benefits are particularly pertinent to women, who struggle with confidence and people to advocate for them in the workplace (Early 2014).

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While there were questions on mentorship included within the set of semi-structured questions, in almost all the interviews, the theme of mentorship arose within the first five minutes of the interview. The theme manifested itself in two forms. First, a number of interviewees, when asked about their first foray in the newsroom, mentioned a mentor. For many of the interviewees who had been in the industry for a long time, their mentors starting out were men. They identified this as a result of the nature of the industry at the time – fewer women, and far fewer women in positions of power. Sehgal explained that her first mentor was a man, and how:

> "not a lot of women, thinking back, would have been in a position to be mentors. For print at the time, where I started, you had women, but they were not big enough to be 'mentors' if you know what I mean. […] It would have helped in a few ways though, I'm sure, but I still had and have an excellent relationship with my mentor."

The complex dynamic of gender within mentorship is one that requires attention – specifically whether woman-woman mentorships are more valued than male-woman mentorships. However, before unpacking the gender dynamics, the value of mentorship in general must be highlighted. In her interview, Banerjee talked very keenly about her experiences as a mentee, saying:

> "I started in the newsroom when I was about 23; I had a child, a husband, a family, and TV was only just starting to take off. At this point, we'd just come into the Z boom and all that, so it was the inception of TV news as we know it now, not just DD. I started off here, and I was a bit unsure, but I had a fantastic mentor. I would not be where I am today if it was not for him. From the day I started he guided me, showing me the ropes both technically and otherwise, and he taught me everything I needed to know to climb to even higher than where he was at the time. He took the time, he was almost like a father to me, and he gave me all the knowledge, all the tools, and most importantly all the confidence I would need to be where I am today."

Interestingly, everyone interviewed was able to pin-point a person – man or woman, who had mentored them at the beginning of their career. For the women currently at the forefront of their organisations, a word that cropped up repeatedly was 'confidence'. Confidence is often a positive outcome of positive mentorship, with mentees drawing a lot of self-worth from the guidance and support they receive (Yim and Walters 2013). The discussion of their mentors touched on a number of ways they felt guided and supported, including understanding and helping their child-care needs, preparing them for opportunities and then campaigning to have them considered for big promotions, and understanding exactly what their personal goals were before trying to help. The idea of mentors providing confidence and the importance of that function was explained by Parul Sehgal as:

"[…] validation, the fact that someone was taking the time to know and help me. I'm sure it could have gone very differently, been almost patronising had it not been done well, and I would have ended up stunted somehow. But I was lucky, I was mentored delicately almost, with a lot of sharp criticism when I needed it, but also lots of support, understanding and advice so I felt safe enough to reach higher."

The same interviewee, Parul Sehgal, then went on to explain how being mentored shaped her as a leader, saying:

"It was such a monumental and formative experience that my goal is as a leader, to be that person for someone else. Because I don't know where I would have ended up had I not had [mentor] to guide me, and I know that a lot of things, not just my professional accomplishments would not have been the way they are now. So, when I'm in that position, and I'm leading someone else, I want to take the time to know them, see what it is they want with their life and then do what I can to help make it happen for them. […] Some people need some confidence like I did, some people need a bit of technical support, some people need to feel seen, and it's my job as someone who has benefitted from that to help. As a leader it's my job to get you to where you want to be, to have you leave my team better than you were when you came in."

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For women in the newsroom, mentorship can offer a lot of benefits. A lot of the more experienced women interviewed for this study (with 20+ years of experience) were mentored by men, but seemed to take a particular interest in mentoring young women as they came through the doors. Aarti Banerjee, while dwelling on whether she picked more women to mentor explained:

> "My mentor was a man, and I don't think I lost out in any way because of it. I felt like he managed to be exactly what I needed, and I never have and never will wish that I had a woman as a mentor. But that raises an interesting point, because I do, to think of it, mentor more women than men. I don't think it is a conscious decision, and I don't think that I am mentoring the women at the cost of the men. I think part of the reason I am so invested in the mentoring of women is because I can see them all falling off this ladder. The number of bright women you see, who'll come in guns blazing, and they're doing an incredible amount of work, and an incredible level of work as well. But I don't think our industry or our country know how to support a working woman at this stage. […] I was very lucky, I had a lot to juggle, especially when my son was younger, but because of a supportive husband, supportive in-laws, a lot of privilege, and a boss and mentor I could depend on, I managed to get through it. And a lot of these women don't have that, and I can see what they went through because I went through it. And maybe that's why I'm trying to help them, because I don't know how many men actually understand the intense pressure that begins to go on your head. […] It doesn't matter sometimes how bright these women are, how hard they work or how much they want it. Without that support, they can't make it. And I am in a position where I can offer at least some support. Thinking out loud right now I think this is it."

In a follow-up email sent hours after the interview, Banerjee added

> "Just to quickly add about the mentorship question, as it has been on my mind. I have seen my male colleagues mentor, but they focus on mostly the men. I

think in part this is because of how intimate a relationship between mentor and mentee can get. More women enter our newsroom than men, but as you climb the ladder the numbers dwindle. So women don't get a lot of mentors who are in high positions, and I think that's partly a reason why more women aren't making it to that spot."

Banerjee, in these paragraphs, raises important points that researchers have been posing for years. Firstly, research has found that a mentor and protégé do not need to possess common dimensions of identity for a positive mentoring relationship and that the type of mentor does not have a significant impact on the mentoring relationship (Campbell et al., 2012; Early 2014). Research has also found that race and gender dynamics do not predict the success of mentoring relationships (Early 2014). Ergo, a woman being mentored by a man or vice-versa would not negatively impact the mentoring process in itself. However, there are points to be raised for women mentoring women. One of the journalists interviewed for this study had the unique opportunity to be mentored by three accomplished journalists in the industry at different points of her career. On whether she noticed any difference between the experiences, she posited:

"I had excellent experiences in all three mentorships, and they are all relationships I'm continuing to this day. Each one gave me something different, but important. But the two women I was lucky enough to have guiding me offered me a lot of advice on how to navigate the newsroom as a woman, on how to make it to the top. I was very lucky to learn from them, because that's not something many women have the opportunity to be instructed about. As they'd both done and accomplished so much they had a lot of sage advice on things I would face and how I should tackle it […] and that's something you have to be a woman to really explain. I think if you want to say that being a woman, being mentored by a woman as a woman, that is, wouldn't have any impact I think you'd have to say, or allow that being a woman in this newsroom is not a different experience to being a man. And you would find people who say that, definitely, but I'm not them. […] So I don't think it matters really, if as a woman your mentor is a man, but I think

that to give someone the best chance of sitting in a boardroom they need women who have done that already, and can tell you *bhai* watch out for all this."

The importance of mentorship was a very significant part of the interviews, with the interviewees stating and reiterating its role in their own lives and careers. The theme of mentorship also ties in very neatly with the previous themes – the focus of these leaders seems to be on the development of the individuals around them, through providing them a strong degree of autonomy, and fostering strong relationships with them. The next theme to arise focuses more on the leaders and their own lived experiences; how their experiences as women and leaders have shaped them. The next theme to arise is clarity and decisiveness. `

Theme IV: Clarity and Decisiveness

A commonly desired trait in a leader, and a trait that is generally associated with effective leadership, is decisiveness (Ashihara et al. 2020). A survey from 2014 shows that decisiveness is the third most essential trait of effective leadership, following honesty and intelligence (Pew 2014). The same survey showed that 27% of those polled believed that men make more decisive leaders than women. Other studies corroborate the idea that women are viewed as less decisive than men. A 2018 study by David G Smith et al. conducted 81,000 objective and subjective evaluations of 4000 participants. They found that while in the objective settings they could see little gender difference, the subjective evaluations told a different story. They found that the words most associated with men were analytical as a positive and arrogant as a negative, while women were most often described as compassionate as a positive and inept as a negative. They also saw that women attracted far more negative descriptors than men, one of the most common being their indecisiveness.

The women interviewed for this study emphasised the importance of decisiveness in their leadership, often explained with reference to the fast-paced and 'manic' nature of the newsrooms. As one woman explained:

> "The newsroom is manic. In time to get out a single issue, I have to assign and coordinate say 20 pieces, plus art. I have people under me, thankfully a real brilliant bunch, but in the end as I'm the top end of this chain, I need to have the answers. We're running out of space, what do we cut? This piece hasn't come in, this piece isn't what we asked for, this new thing has happened. It's a lot of decisions you need to make on the fly, and for that it's my job to a. have a clear idea of what my end goal, the big picture is, b. to communicate it as best I can, and c. to make the quick tough calls needed. The buck stops here. […] so in terms of effective leadership I would say having a clear vision and idea, and making quick, informed decisions under pressure are the gold standard." (Asmita Khan)

The decisions, as Khan explains, are made in a high-intensity, low-time, pressured environment. In order to be able to make the correct decisions in that situation, communication and organisation are key. Sehgal explained:

> "Being decisive and making that call is something you can only do if you have first completed all the other important steps – having the trust of your team, delegating, and the most important, communicating. Without strong communication, you don't have the right tools, I think, you won't have enough information to make a correct, weighed out decision" (Parul Sehgal).

And Banerjee later mused on the importance of decisiveness within the newsroom, wondering:

> "I haven't actually worked in any other fields, so I don't know whether decisiveness is as… critical as it is in the newsroom. But it is a core part of being a newsroom manager, and I wouldn't promote someone who did not have the ability, and some don't, you know? […] You have to have your head on straight. I'm not saying everyone doesn't have off days, I'm just saying you can't really afford to. Especially in something like TV, you have a very slim margin of error. As I tell my entire newsroom, we're all here because we're capable, and we have the tools to do this; we have the preparation and the knowledge. But when it's crunch time, what we need is for the stress, the adrenaline to fuel us better instead of worse. And that's where my job comes to the front – I need to make the decisions, I need to have a clear idea of the task at hand so that I can make those decisions, because they need me to make those decisions so they can carry them out. It's the real decider for us, honestly, when we're looking at promotions, because that position is not one that a lot of people can handle."

As the three themes explored previously suggest, women in Indian newsrooms tend to lead democratically, seeking collaboration, delegation and cooperation, and spend a great deal of time mentoring and establishing personal relationships with their teams. The women

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interviewed highly valued their teams along with their judgements and opinions, and were keen to allow them a large amount of input and influence. They talked favourably of delegation, of allowing people to explore their ideas and stories, and as Parul Sehgal said,

> "In a brainstorming meeting, that's in the early meetings, I don't really want to say much. I like going in, setting the tone, highlighting the key points, giving them the brief basically, and then sitting back and allowing them to talk it out, bounce ideas off each other, argue, whatever. My job is to go in and draw the boundaries, and they get to colour in the middle. I don't often have to weigh in during the early meetings, and that's how I like it. I want them to push the boundaries, to run with an idea, to wrestle it out with each other. That's what makes us really good at our jobs."

However, she then reflected how that changed as they got closer to their deadline:

> "It's a bit of a balancing act. I want them to have a high level of autonomy, but I don't think hierarchies are redundant. My being in charge does mean that I have the privilege and responsibility of making the final call. I do all I can to take everyone into account, but as we get closer to the deadline, it becomes more important for me to be the authority that says, this is what needs to be done, stop doing that, do this instead. And I don't have any qualms about that, because it's that saying isn't it, too many cooks spoil the broth. You can't have the absence of a strong leader, because then there's no clear vision, and with the media, I need a clear vision."

As Sehgal points out, leading the newsroom requires the leader to adapt to the unique situation at hand – democratic and collaborative when needed, and direct and decisive when called for. The importance of this balancing act is something all the women interviewed echoed, but the women also put forward the idea of their gender as a variable in the balancing. Parvez explained:

> "One thing is there, that as a woman there's like, […] being pulled in a few opposite directions. For me at least, I sometimes feel like I need to be strong,

decisive and organised not just because that's what I need to do for my job, but also a bit like, if I don't then someone may say it's because she's a girl or something […]. I sometimes do find myself feeling like I have to be a bit more hard or something, so nobody can push me around, but then I also feel like I have to be a bit nicer, not as strict, because they'll view me as being a (mouths the word 'bitch')."

The expectations of how they ought to act as a result of gender stereotypes was, as shown above, something that the interviewees were aware of as a factor in their leadership. While they all allowed that there was some sort of effect gender stereotypes and gendered expectations had on their behaviour, they often wrestled with how. As women, some felt that they had to work harder to fight the gender stereotypes, and prove to the people around them (their families, their friends, their colleagues) that they did have what it takes, rejecting being viewed as 'scattered' and 'indecisive' (Smith et al 2018):

"It kind of has to. I suppose we all come into this with a chip on our shoulder, we have something to prove. To me, part of that has to do with being a minority and part has to do with being a woman. I've not come from the most progressive of places – my family is, touch wood, very supportive and feminist enough but I've grown up hearing about women and the stereotypes. So whenever I do anything I have those voices in the back of my head. They don't think the women can run anything, not this newsroom anyway. […] They is society – just people in general, en masse, the ones we've all grown up with. So I suppose part of it is knowing that they think I'm going to mess it up, that I'm too weak to make hard choices, big decisions, and that gives me the strength to do it. (Khan 2019)"

On the other hand, not all the women were keen to draw a gender parallel. As Jasmine Debnath explained:

"No, I mean I don't think of my gender as I work, to be honest. It comes up sometimes, but it is not as far to the front as I know it is for a lot of people. When I make decisions I'm not actively thinking, is this because I am a woman, what do they think of me as a woman, I'm just thinking that this needs

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to be done, and I'm going to do it. It could very well be that there is a huge gender component, I'm not saying there isn't. I'm just saying I'll leave that to someone else to study. I don't think about it."

Debnath brought up an interesting point. While a lot of the interviewees were aware of the content of the research and had been keen to participate because of their own interest in the subject, some of the participants were less reflective of any possible gendered experiences. Research often shows that not all women are interested in the relationship between gender and how they live (Eagly 2012). Within the interviews of this study, there emerged sporadically a chasm between women who had actively wrestled with gender and the world around them and women who did not give it a lot of serious thought. Interestingly, there were no women who dismissed the idea that their gender played a role in their work experience. For the women who were unsure and unwilling to ponder the relationship between being a woman and their jobs, there was always a tone, similar to Debnath's implying that they were open to the idea that there was a correlation. This aspect is interesting as it shows that even among the women who were not actively engaging in the gendered examination of their workplace, the idea of gender being a factor seemed plausible. Not considering the correlation between demographic factors and the workplace is quite common, and often an 'adaptive survival tactic' for minorities (Cuddy, Glick & Fiske 2004)

The gendered expectations burdening women as a result of stereotypes creep up across interviews, subjects and research. As briefly explored in this section, how they are expected to act is often a shaping factor in how they do act, echoing the idea of gender being with prescriptive and descriptive, as explored in Section 3.6 (And Pfaff 2019, Eagly 2012, Burgess and Borgida, 1999). This phenomenon was never as apparent in this study as it was when dealing with female emotion, explored in the next section.

Theme V: Emotional Labour and Modulating Emotions

Researchers have highlighted the "double-bind" that exists for women – they're punished for adhering to gender expectations as well as not adhering to them (Rudman and Glick, 2001, Eagly, Makhijani and Klonksy 1992, Kark, Waismel-Manor and Shamir 2012, See Chapter 3.3). Women are expected to be warm and communal, displaying a high concern for others and prioritising social interactions (Heilman 2001). Women who do not adhere to this feminine ideal are met with backlash (Rudman and Glick, 2001), and women who do are not viewed as 'competent'(Heilman 1983). This creates an impossibly thin line for women to negotiate, along with the added burden of emotional labour.

Emotional labour (EL) is defined as the act of managing displayed emotions in the workplace, in service of an organization's goals or for a wage (Grandey, 2000; Hothschild, 1983). Emotional labour takes a number of forms - suppressing felt emotions, amplifying felt emotions and faking emotions (Grandey, 2000). EL most commonly involves suppressing negative emotions, and affects job performance, job satisfaction, as well as burn out. (Hülsheger, Lang, & Maier, 2010). Emotional labour disproportionately affects minorities, putting the burden of 'fitting in' on the outsider (Pfaff, 2019).

During this study, the added pressure experiences by the women in the newsroom surfaced, ballooning into the most emotionally charged portion of the interviews. As one woman who was laughing at the start of the interview explained:

> "I'll tell you one thing, I can't go storming into a room to yell at someone, I just can't. I'll be the bitch, the crazy one. I can't do it. You've heard (a male colleague) do it, I can't. It's not just anger though, I can't have most feelings, I constantly stop myself from showing emotion because I know how much that could be used against me. I would love to sometimes, but I don't have the luxury of being angry, or sad, or confused or anything. I have to hold myself back." (Asmita Khan)

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Most interviewees held the position that as a result of their gender, they felt the need to modulate their feelings and behaviour in the newsroom. They described an ideal they felt was required of them as:

> "… an almost zen state, as if I'm unshakeable. I know women who have had the audacity of showing emotion – let me actually give you a recent example. A colleague, a woman, has recently had a lot of changes made to her team. Now common practice is that the changes go through her, or that she's consulted at the very least. But she was on holiday and it didn't happen, for whatever reason. Now she came back, understandably angry and frustrated, and she was asked not to be hysterical. Hysterical! This was a few months ago, well into the so called feminist movement, that a woman is being called hysterical for speaking up for her team. What would a man be called? Spirited, bold, something along those lines." (Kiran Singh)

A common thread throughout the interviews was the idea that there was an expectation on the women to be calm in the face of adversity – a degree of calm they believed was not expected of their male colleagues. The calm expected of women is a tailoring of almost all emotions – anger, sadness, authority, compassion, etc. to an unspecified ideal. This finding relates strongly to previous research, most recently the 2018 study that found women leaders to be often described as 'panicky' and 'temperamental', while men receive no similar criticism (Smith et al. 2018, See Figure in previous section). A 2016 study by Smith and Thomas found that the double bind facing women is this: women are penalised for expressing masculine-typed emotions because they violate proscriptions against dominance for women. Additionally, when women express female-typed emotions, they are judged as overly emotional and lacking emotional control, undermining women's competence and professional legitimacy. These studies flesh out the claims made by the women interviewed for this study – that they received negative reactions when they displayed any emotions, particularly anger, and that they felt their performance reviews suffered as a result.

A 2016 study by Brescoll found that:

"gender–emotion stereotypes create two complex minefields that female, but not male, leaders have to navigate in order to be successful: (1) identifying how much emotion should be displayed and (2) identifying what kind of emotions should be displayed. Specifically, female leaders can be penalized for even minor or moderate displays of emotion, especially when the emotion conveys dominance (e.g., anger or pride), but being emotionally unexpressive may also result in penalties because unemotional women are seen as failing to fulfill their warm, communal role as women" (Page 8).

The concept of women having to walk the tight rope of emotions, displaying the right type of emotion at the right time in the right amount, points to the assumption that the newsroom is still a 'masculine' playground. An interesting finding from the interviews is that the journalists in print newsrooms reported a significantly higher level of frustration at the "emotional labour of having to mould my valid feelings into something palatable by men" (Interviewee Parul Sehgal). Print newsrooms, as explored in section 2 have a significantly lower number of women in leadership positions. As Jasmine Debnath reflected from her experience in both environments:

"Print definitely in my experience was more difficult from the gender perspective due to so many men, and also the more rigid sort of structure to the newsroom. The entire culture is different, if you go from TV to print. If I had to say I would think TV is the younger, more equal part of the media. In print, as a leader, and I am closest to women in print newsrooms, climbing up the ladder is much harder as a woman. I'm not sure why. […] Print media seems to still expect a very male standard for everything – print is older, the people in it are older, less likely to listen, have a more fixed idea of what should happen, and that's how it happened in 1980. So maybe that's why."

When pushed on how print newsrooms expected a male standard, she explained:

"It's more of a feeling, I don't know what I can point to. I mean, I never felt comfortable in the print newsroom because I felt like I wasn't what they wanted. I rose up the ranks here much quicker than I did there, much quicker.

I had one woman in a leadership position in that entire newsroom, and she was always so stressed and shut off, it was just a completely different culture. I have a friend who is still there and she keeps saying it's the most exhausting thing to spend your day arguing with men in a nice way so they don't get offended and [gestures doors shutting]. And that's probably why I think, you know, that this is male culture. I feel like most women would know what I mean but explaining is hard."

Parul Sehgal best explained how important the modulation of emotions was for women in the newsroom:

"This is important because it's something I've learned over the years and I keep telling women I mentor. The standard, the expectation, it's all different for us, and I mean honestly, it is. They cannot see you sweat, they cannot see you angry, they cannot see you cry. Because it will kill your career, you won't be seen as capable. Somehow or the other that will define you [...] I've been in the position before where I've been seen as unreasonable, a bitch, too demanding and angry, even too emotional for an assignment! It's unfair but you… And like I said, it's an entire form of emotional labour, I was just reading about this as well. But it's getting better, with every generation that passes through it's getting better."

The idea that showing emotion would make them seem less capable or credible in some way was rampant – and something women across industries and countries struggle with. The added job of constantly managing one's emotions within this double bind stems from stereotyping (Pfaff 2019, Eagly, Makhijani and Klonksy 1992), that these leaders believe is still one of the biggest obstacles to female leadership in newsrooms today.

The interviews highlighted that women in these newsrooms have an extra job than their male counterparts, one that is unseen, unheard and little recognised – emotional labour. The emotional labour women put in to navigate gendered expectations is a burden that stems from gender stereotypes, and one that requires attention (Pfaff 2019). As Sehgal explained:

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"It's not that complicated. If women feel like they have to walk on eggshells, then something is wrong, and there needs to be a conversation so that women don't have to walk 5 steps to match [a man's one]. We need to address the root of why women need this […] vigilance of feeling, and the root is really social roles and expectations, isn't it?"

These interviews with women leaders made apparent a few points. First, the women seem ready and primed to discuss gender. Not only did the participants show a keen interest in analysing their experiences from the perspective of gender, a number of them showed a lot of knowledge and inclination towards feminist concepts, literature and terminology. Even accounting for a self-selection bias of women who opted into the study, this adds to the argument that research like this is timely and necessary. Secondly, the interviews shed some light on how women in this sliver of the industry are *doing* – not just from the perspective of their ranks and titles, but from their lived experiences. The women interviewed recognised that there was a lot of work to be done in terms of gender parity, but were, to quote an interviewee, "doing a pretty badass job" (Asmita Khan) despite any shortfalls of their situation. The overall tone that remained from their interviews was that while these women feel like their experiences have been shaped by their gender, they do not feel defined by it. This goes to say that while a male dominated culture still exists within the newsroom, with added burdens, pressures and obstacles for women, "…things are much better than they are in a lot of other industries, and a lot of other countries. It's okay, and it's getting better."

The second part of this research was interested in follower perceptions of their leaders, considering how these women are perceived by their teams and newsrooms, and is explored in detail in the next chapter. The importance of follower perspective has been considered a lot within leadership literature, and for this study, the emphasis the leaders made on their followers – building relationships with them and investing in their development, makes the perception of their followers a critical aspect to understanding how women lead. Interviews with followers conducted within the same newsrooms have been explored in the next section.

The Perception of Women Leaders

An integral aspect to exploring leadership is exploring the perception of leadership – that is, to consider how the people being led view these leaders and their approaches to leadership (See sections 2.3 and 2.4). Leadership prototype theory (Lord, Foti & De Vader, 1984) suggests that followers have a mental representation of what constitutes a prototype of an ideal leader. Researchers have further argued that when leaders do not fit with this mental representation or prototype, the followers form less favourable evaluations of their leadership (Johnson, Murphy, Zewdie & Reichard, 2008). This concept, when considered in conjunction with concepts like 'Think Manager', 'Think Male' (Schein 1973, 1975) and Role Congruity theory (Eagly and Karau, 2002), both explored in Section 3, suggest that gender stereotypes and expectations can impact follower perception of women in leadership positions.

In part one, this study identified how women lead in Indian newsrooms. The importance of the group and the team was a critical part of the interviews, reiterated frequently by the women leaders. The leadership characteristics favoured by women were heavily communal, with a large emphasis on mentoring, the personal development of their teams, and working together. These factors make understanding follower perceptions all the more pertinent, which will be explored in detail in this section.

For this study, ten 'followers' were identified and interviewed, all from the same four newsrooms as before – two TV newsrooms and two print newsrooms, all national English language organisations based in New Delhi. Nine of the 10 interviewees for this section work directly under the leaders interviewed (whose experience of leadership is discussed in the previous chapter). These journalists were both male and female, being interviewed about their experiences working under female leaders.

In general, the men interviewed seemed to disregard the gender of the women leading them. For one, in stark contrast with the female followers, when asked to describe their leaders and their styles, the men favoured generic language with no explicit mention of gender. For instance, a telling example was Jishnu Pande describing his boss as "fair, intelligent, approachable and hard-working", while his female colleague Maya Kapoor described the

same boss as "a dedicated, smart, kind and inspiring woman". This small detail – the simple use of the word 'woman', the invoking of gender, was something that surfaced for five of the six women during the description stage, and for none of the men. This small detail is easy to miss or dismiss, but shows how without a question specifically about gender, the women find the gender of the leader in the forefront of their minds, while the men do not.
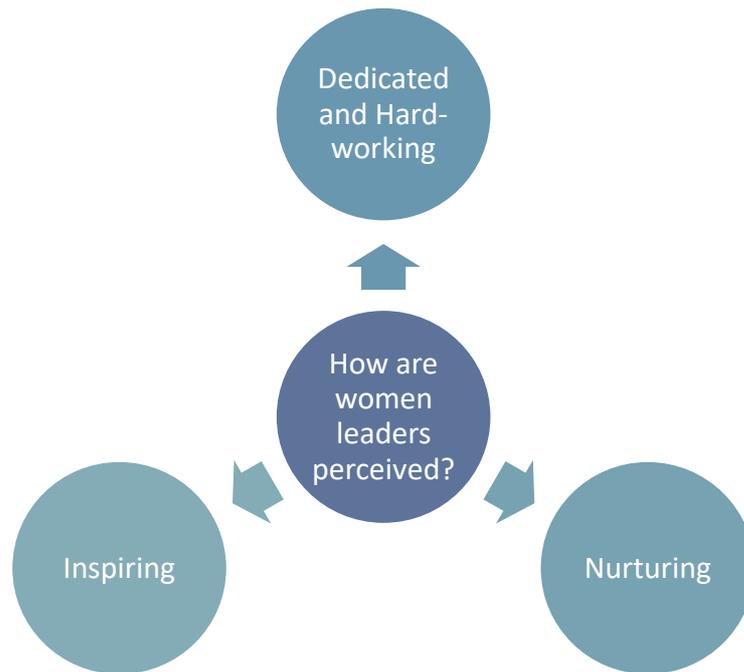

Fig 9: Themes emerging about the perception of female leaders in Indian newsrooms

Three themes emerged through the course of the interviews: dedicated and hardworking; nurturing; and inspiring. These themes are explored in detail in the following sections.

Theme I: Dedicated and Hard-Working

All 10 of the followers were in agreement on the first theme. The women leaders were perceived as hard-working, diligent and dedicated, regardless of gender. This theme was the most prominent across all the interviews, emerging first when interviewees were asked to use four adjectives to describe their leaders, and surfacing again at different points during each interview. For instance, Maya Kapoor, who described her boss as "a dedicated, smart, kind and inspiring woman" later went on to say, when asked to describe her boss's leadership approach:

> "I think the biggest thing is just how hard she works. I'm not just saying that, but I know bosses who don't do a lot of work as they progress professionally, it becomes more of like a cushy job, but she doesn't do that. She works really hard to manage us, is always online! I've emailed her at 1am and 5am and I get replies, so I'm not sure how or when she sleeps. But she's always here, and she's always got a project. It's the thing about leading from the front, my father's in the army and he always said that a good general leads from the front, and that comes to my mind now, for her. It pushes me, honestly, and I want to work more."

For Fleur Darse, the mention of her leader being diligent came up first during the 4-adjective description, and then resurfaced when she was asked what she believed made a good leader. To that, she said, using her boss as her example:

> "I think maybe being hardworking is something that people don't think of. [Her leader] is really really hardworking, she puts everything into all the programs she does. [..] It's also hard work in other ways, actually, she's on a lot of forums and panels and committees, she did one on the current distrust of the media, and she regularly does some about gender equality. She works on her days off if you count that, and I think that's what makes her such a good leader, I would say it builds respect, and it's something that I'm going to try to incorporate as I go on."

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The idea that the hard-work and dedication of their leaders helped build respect was echoed by Mira Kang. As she explained:

> "I've worked before with a boss who was almost never there, like mentally. He used to be doing god knows what in his office, and we wouldn't actually see him doing anything, and it was a joke to everyone. And that job itself felt like a joke which probably had something to do with him and his attitude. I didn't work that much there, I had no relationship with them, it was all *kaam chalau (*a minimum amount of work to get by), and that is not how I work here, and that is because my boss is so dedicated, and I respect her for it."

The idea of a boss who leads by example, working hard and thereby encouraging similar hard work from followers was a key aspect of leadership for the interviewees, a lot of whom could talk about experiences with a less hard working boss for contrast, as Mira Kang did in the previous quote. In all 5 of the examples provided by the interviewees of a "slacker" (Jishnu Pande) boss, the boss was male.

The description of women as hard workers is in accordance to previous literature; research has shown that women feel the need to work harder than men the workplace to achieve the same status. A 2019 report found that 60% of women feel the need to always work hard, vs 45% of men, and 28% of women feel the need to always deliver 'over and above' vs 19% of men (Harrison, 2019). A 2007 study in the USA and the UK similarly reported a large gap in the required work effort for men and women, with women feeling a lot more pressure to work hard (Gorman and Kmek, 2007). In line with the research and the description of women as 'hardworking', this study sought to explore whether the follower's perception of their women leaders as 'hardworking' was tied to the leaders' gender. Kang provided a consensus for the answers provided by all 6 women and one of the men, in saying:

> "I can't say definitively, but I do think because women are held to a higher standard, something I've personally experienced at this level, I would imagine that pressure just explodes at a higher level, and a lot of that may be why they work so hard. You should ask [her boss] when you interview her! I'd like to

know this as well. But the women I see around the office, the women I report to and the women I know in higher up places, they work harder than the men on average. I really do think so."

The men interviewed, apart from Pande, believed that it was a basic requirement for all leaders, regardless of gender, saying:

"I think being hard-working is something you expect from all leaders – not just women. I don't think her being hard-working has anything to do with her gender, because then all the men would be lazy by that logic. I mean I don't know why she does what she does, but I don't think, I don't really see this relationship between her gender and the amount she works" (Arjun Mahajan).

Pande on the other hand focused his answer on why he believed it was tied to gender through his experiences in and out of the newsroom:

"A lot of my view of the world is shaped by growing up with two sisters, a mother, and no father, so I think that has coloured my view, but in all my newsroom experiences, I've seen nearly all the women working really very hard, and I've seen some men work that hard. It's not a clear line, or anything, but anecdotally, if you ask, that's what I've seen, and that's in the general population as well. It was in school, in college, at home, I just think it's what happens now."

Interestingly, when the leaders of these interviewees were interviewed, they did not seem to reflect on hard-work and dedication as an aspect of their leadership; they saw it as a basic part of their jobs as journalists. The followers viewed their leaders' hard-work as an inspiring aspect of leading by example, while with the leaders it received only a passing mention, though it did come up in conjunction to proving oneself, as a woman, with Khan saying:

"… part of it as that as woman you're putting in more time and effort than your male colleagues to get to the same point. That's something that will only

resolve when we have more women getting to the top. Then it will stop feeling like such a fight I hope."

Khan's quote broadly encompasses the research in the area of women and hard-work, underlining the pressures felt to work better, faster and harder to prove your worth in an environment where you are othered. Ghorbani and Tung found that women feel the need to try harder to overcome the invisible barriers to career advancement (2007) while a 2017 study found that working harder was a coping strategy for women and other minorities - a key way for them to survive environments in which they were not a part of the status quo (Murray and Ali 2017). With the number of women at the top of Indian media organsations plummeting, using hard work as a mechanism to survive a male-dominated workplace is a strong possibility. Khan's previous musing, as quoted above, that things may improve with more women in positions of power corresponds to this literature above – while women are minorities, excluded from the upper echelons of power, they feel the need to work harder.

The followers' view of these leaders, regardless of whether or not it is gender related, as dedicated and hard-working is a positive descriptor, and one that seems to propel followers to mimic the behaviour and example set by the leaders. The idea that their hard work builds respect is another interesting one, showing how a positive relationship between the leader and follower can stem from a seemingly unrelated trait. The next theme to emerge has a direct relationship between leader and follower – the perception of female leaders as 'nurturing'.

Theme II: Nurturing

The second theme to emerge was the perception of women leaders as 'nurturing'. The theme of nurturing envelops descriptions of care, understanding, and effort put into the personal and professional development of the followers. The theme of nurturing, in this research, was one that first took shape as 'mentoring'. The decision to make nurturing the overarching theme has to do with the specific descriptions used by the interviewees. Nurturing implies a level of protection and care (Patton and Harper 2003)– it also brings with it a maternal tone that was found to be present in the answers. In a 2003 study of African American women in graduate schools, a study found a similar 'maternal' theme, explaining:

> An interesting characteristic that emerged among those engaged in mentoring relationships with African American women was the concept of mothering. Those participants felt their mentoring relationship resembled that of a mother and daughter. They referred to their mentors as second mothers or described the women as comparable to their mothers. These maternal mentoring relationships consisted of nurturing, care, concern, worry, and honesty. In additional to emotional support, the mothering role in mentoring proved to be effective in helping the participants learn survival skills such as how to maintain professionalism, dress properly, successfully navigate political environments, and reject negative stereotypes that have been traditionally used to characterize African American women (Patton and Harper 2003, page 6)

The followers interviewed talked at length about their relationships with their women leaders, going as far as to refer to them as 'mother figures'. For instance, when asked about whether she felt her boss developed personal bonds and relationships as a part of her leading the team, Anjali Sharma replied quickly:

> "Definitely, Parul [Sehgal, her boss] goes out of her way with us. It's not just about work, I think one of the most important things she does is that she forms an idea and understanding of each of us, and then takes a lot of effort. I feel like she has been there for me for not only work, but issues I've had with my

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personal life, my confidence, my English even. In that way she's like a mother figure."

Sharma's view of her boss as an almost maternal figure can be seen as a manifestation of the findings of Patton and Harper, with women in leadership positions being comparable to mothers. A large component of viewing women as maternal was tied to their nurturing styles of leadership. To Uday Singh, a Desk Editor who started as an intern, his female bosses,

"… take a personal interest in me, it almost feels like. I don't report to a single person, but if I focus just on the women who are in higher positions I feel like they care more. So, I was hired by a man who is actually in this newsroom right now, interns aren't hired by HR. Anyway he's one of the people in charge of me, and I guess I've known him the longest? But […] there's no connection. The three women I report to have all shown an interest – [a significantly senior member of staff] was in the elevator with me, and she was talking to me about how I'm fitting in and if I'm finding like I've got enough support. She also, and this is the main part, knows my name and has checked in multiple times, dropping by the desk. I met her on a smoke break […] and we chatted normally, I mentioned I have a bit of a scheduling problem and she just nodded, later I find out she's gone to fix it. The same issue I'd talked to three people officially about! It's things like that, I'm not saying the men don't care, I'm just saying, if I focus on the women in the newsroom and have to like to talk about how they're doing, and how they manage, that's the first thing that comes to mind."

The idea of women being caring and nurturing as leaders is one that has significant scholastic traction. Traditional gender stereotypes describe women in more communal characteristics, like being sensitive and caring, and men in more agentic characteristics, like being assertive, independent and confident. These stereotypes hold true in organisational settings (Deaux & Lewis, 1984; Eagly, 1987, McLellan 2014). These stereotypes, as explored in section 3.3, are prescriptive as well as descriptive – the stereotypes define our idea of how the genders should act (prescriptive) as well as how they do act (descriptive). These stereotypes also create a

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double-bind for women; women are penalized for agentic (masculine) characteristics, but are seen as ineffectual if they display stereotypical feminine characteristics (See section 2.4, Eagly and Karau 2002).

The description of women leaders as nurturing corresponds with the communal stereotype of women. The leaders interviewed for this study described themselves as mentors when interviewed, and emphasized the interest they take in the development of their followers. The perception of leaders as caring, ergo, is communicated well and received positively by the followers. When asked whether they believed these leaders to be nurturing because they were women, the consensus was that their gender did play a part, though the followers did not venture why, other than Angad Mahajan, who held:

> "I know this probably sounds like a stereotype, but women are more caring. I'm not about to assume why, but in my experience, that has always been the case. And I think that's one of their biggest strengths."

Mahajan's idea that women's nurturing was a positive aspect of a leadership hinted that women were not perceived as ineffectual as a result of this communal characteristic, something the other interviewees believed as well. All the followers felt that the act of caring and nurturing was what they would expect from a good leader, however when asked whether they viewed more agentic men as more ineffectual due to the lack of nurturing, they were less inclined to agree. Pande hypothesized:

> "I suppose that's an interesting thought. I've not viewed the men as worse leaders for not being as personally invested in me. I think it's more expected. I don't know if I would feel a woman was a worse leader for not being caring, I want to think I won't, but I can't actually say that. […] I suppose I may have a sexist expectation for how women should act, like a mummy complex, I don't know."

This theme highlighted an interesting aspect of the perception of female leaders; the leaders were recognized for communal (and stereotypically feminine) characteristics, and were often

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viewed as maternal figures, but this was viewed as a highly valued trait in their leadership. Studies have often focused around a 'female advantage' in leadership due to their higher levels of transformational leadership and prioritization of personal relationships (Hymowitz 2012, Mundy 2012, Rosin 2012). This possible female advantage has been highly debated, as the actual gender difference in leadership has not been found to be significant enough for an advantage (Eagly 2007, Eagly & Carli 2003, Hyde 2005, Vecchio 2002). It's also been argued that stressing a female advantage of that sort can potentially hurt women's leadership more than help it (Lammers and Gast 2017). But regardless of whether or not women are at an advantage due to more communal leadership characteristics, it is one that, in the context of this study, is viewed favourably by their followers. The final theme to emerge from the interviews with followers was similarly positive, with women being viewed as inspiring and as role models.

Theme III: Inspiring Role Models

The theme of inspiration was one that quickly manifested itself along gender lines. All the women subordinates interviewed viewed (at least one of) their female leaders as an inspiration, whereas the word 'inspiring' and its variants did not surface in the interviews with the men. The theme came across in a number of different forms. Firstly, when asked to describe their (women) bosses, two of the women used the word inspiring, and both used it in conjunction with a specific mention of her gender. For instance, Samira Joshi chose to describe her boss as "an inspiring, hard-working, funny and intelligent woman", while Kapoor said her boss was "a dedicated, smart, kind and inspiring woman". When asked about why she found her inspiring, Kapoor explained:

> "I think she is at a level that I want to be, and she is handling a lot of things very gracefully, something that maybe I would want to do someday. […] I think maybe what 'being inspired' is for me, is that it's almost like hope? It's feeling that maybe I can do it, because I've seen it happen. It's like when you're younger and everyone thinks that they want to be Barkha [Datt] and when you see her on the TV it feels real, like if she's doing it why not me? It's motivation. […] There's like this example in front of you, and it's a person you can see and talk to, someone who you can ask for advice, someone who knows what to do. It's inspiring. That's probably why I think that I feel inspired."

The other women used the word inspiring at different points of the interview, with Fleur Darse discussing the lack of women in positions of power:

> "We don't have a lot of role models, the higher you go the fewer there are. I attended this conference by India Today where the UN report [about women's representation in the Indian media] was discussed, and one of the main takeaways was that the way has not actually fully been paved. What I mean is that even in this day and age, there aren't a lot, or even enough women in like the boardrooms and stuff. And the reason that matters is that it is so important for women to see other women in those positions. I know for me, working

under some of the women I've met is a very large part of why I'm here, and why I'm still going. It's that element of inspiration, to see a boss a** b***h owning the newsroom. […] I'm so lucky to have [Parvez] and to have had all the other women who have been there, leading by example."

The six women interviewed viewed the 'inspiration' element of their bosses as intertwined with their gender – they were inspired by the fact that there was a woman who had broken a higher rank that they aspired to, as well as by the woman's performance and behaviour in that position. Literature has long pondered the effect more female role models has on employees. Role models are viewed as a critical part of addressing the stereotyping that is implicit – in society, at home and in the workplace, by providing evidence of an alternative path to the stereotype, allowing breaking a stereotype to feel more attainable and possible. Within the workplace, a lower-level 'attainable' female role model has been shown to have a positive effect on women; boosting their self-confidence (Hoyt and Simon 2011), increasing their leadership aspirations (Dasgupta and Greenwald, 2001, Dasgupta and Asgari, 2004) as well as providing inspiration and reassurance (Lockwood 2006). A lot of studies debate the effectiveness of 'elite' or 'unattainable' female role models, arguing that the incredibly high level women are viewed as exceptions, and do not provide the same benefits to women under the workplace, often even hindering the women's self-perceptions (Dasgupta and Asgari, 2004; Lockwood and Kunda 1997, Major, Sciacchitano 1993). For this study, all the women leaders were in direct contact with the interviewees, making them come under mid-level leaders.

The findings of this research concur with the previous findings – the women interviewed looked at these female leaders as inspirational role models, drawing confidence to aspire to their level by watching them. These women viewed the position that their female leaders had attained as an example of success and a role model. The female leaders provided hope to the other women in the office. Meanwhile, none of the four men described their female bosses as inspirational. When asked whether he viewed any of his bosses, male or female as inspiring, Pande responded:

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> "Not really, honestly. I don't think I would use the word inspiring all that much in general. I can sense that there are people who are incredibly good at their jobs, people who motivate me to do a lot, but being inspired is different to me. I'm inspired by Elon Musk? Nothing to do with my workplace, my job, or anything, but that's who I would think of as inspiring."

This difference in perception between the male and female followers draws a spotlight on how important female leaders are to women, and how newsrooms function as an extension of patriarchal society. While the men didn't describe their female bosses as inspiring, they also, when asked, echoed Pande's viewpoint that they were not inspired by any leader in the office, regardless of gender. When asked to consider how his gender played into his perceptions on the matter, Singh explained

> "It could be a lot. To me, the most likely reason is that there's this saturation of male role models. A man being editor-in-chief won't automatically make him your role model, because he is the status quo. […] I think I may be picky because I can afford to be. If you're a woman, then a woman making it is a big deal, it's like you gamed the system."

Singh, in his answer, revealed an understanding that there was a status quo that favoured men, and that women's career ascension went against the system. These ideas form the background from which to consider the importance of female role models. For the men, existing in a system that works in their favour, role models may not be as necessary within the workplace. Alternatively, for women existing in a system in which they are a minority, women who ascend the ladder are viewed as inspiring role models, providing hope and guidance. Role models can help provide guidance to women, helping them navigate the invisible obstacles on their way to senior leadership.

This portion of the study is particularly key to understanding how a higher representation of women in positions of power could affect and influence the newsroom. The women interviewed found the presence of their female bosses to be inspiring, and provided reassurance in their goals, as well as a guide to their ascent. This theme is one that is

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prominently featured in the suggestions by female leaders to remove obstacles to female leadership. These suggestions are listed and explained in the next section.

Suggestions to Remove Obstacles to Female Leadership

As was explored in the beginning of this study, and has continuously emerged throughout the research, while there are significant numbers of women in the Indian media, the number of women in leadership positions is scarce. The women interviewed, despite being well-established leaders in their field, all recognised that there was a problem preventing women from holding higher positions of power in the newsroom. Some of the obstacles these leaders brought up in their interviews have been explored in the earlier sections, including gender stereotypes and expectations and emotional labour (page 21) . The main obstacles identified by the women in the study were divided into two groups – social obstacles and institutional obstacles.
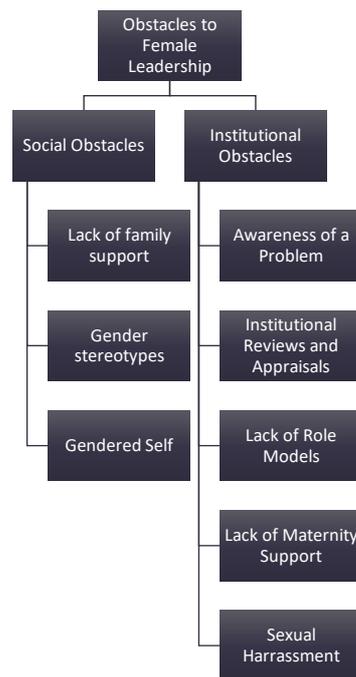

Figure 10: Obstacles to Female Leadership in Indian newsrooms

The social obstacles are those that exist outside the control of the organisation and are more societal in nature. For instance, the problem of gender stereotypes is a culturally systemic problem that exists before an individual enters the workplace, spreading across their lives

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with their family, their schools and universities, and across social interactions. As interviewee Laila Aziz explains:

> The main concerns for women start way earlier, before we're in these workplaces. It's when you're a kid and you're told that you should focus on marriage and a rich husband. It's how in all the movies it's about the right guy, you know, and he solves everything. It's not a small problem, for as long as everyone alive can remember this is how it has been, and if we want to talk about how to make it better here, we need to remember to make it better everywhere.

While this study is more concerned with specific, institutional changes that can be made to facilitate women, it is important to recognise that a majority of the work required to eradicate the obstacles for women involve pervasive and expansive changes to our societies. However, there are measures that organisations can employ to tackle these issues within their organisations. Samira Joshi suggests:

> Something I've been thinking of quite a lot lately has to do with an experience I had in 2015. I've grown up privileged, with a lot of opportunities, good schooling, supportive family, all that. I've always been aware of stereotypes about girls, and I've fought them. So like, I didn't wear pink growing up, I would go *cheee* (eww) to like cooking or other traditionally feminine things. In 2015, though, we had a seminar in the office. It was an extremely distinguished doctor from Columbia who came in to talk to us about gender. She talked about issues, it was only two hours, but she talked about gender theories and stereotypes and data and studies and it had all the men and women in this office completely, like, blown. It was mandatory attendance, which is one of those things HR does, but it was very important and has changed a lot of things in the office […] I think particularly for the men, it changed a lot of their casual behaviour at least, not for all but for quite a few. It's also helped me understand my own experience, and I've now started conversations with other women, who have

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similar experiences to me. All this I can actually trace back to that one seminar. So it's a powerful thing then, isn't it?

Joshi brought up the idea of seminars similar to the one she had attended as a way to address the underlying biases and concepts that may exist for members of the newsroom. As she explained, she felt that a lot would be gained from seminars related to gender and other social issues experienced within the newsroom. As Randhawa went on to explain:

> I think there's a lot to be said for workshops and such that aim to educate us on social issues. Especially as journalists, I think we could definitely have a larger push for events […] which could eventually create an environment, just in the office, even, of equality. […] We aren't going to solve you know, rape in Japan [with these workshops] but let's not assume we know everything, because someone somewhere will maybe learn something and things will be easier for one woman in this office. That's enough. A mind set change.

The interviewees seemed keen to address large social concerns with targeted events within the newsrooms for all men and women, with all but one seeing a significant benefit to the newsroom by having them.

Another interesting suggestion had to do with addressing the lack of social support for working women. Sehgal explained:

> I think we need to also look at the fact that not all women come from families and homes who are happy and supportive of their choices. And it is our job to somehow help them with their decisions. I'd say I think one of the ways we can do that is by offering free mental health services – I mean actual, proper, qualified mental health help. For a lot of people, I have met a lot of women in this position, they come in to work having fought with their in-laws, their husbands, to be able to work. There needs to be some support for them, because otherwise at some point they will give up, and it's the newsroom, the industry that suffers as a result.

Across the globe, research regarding women's career advancement in the workplace has often identified a lack of family support as an obstacle (Connell 2005, Barnett & Hyde, 2001, NaYeon et al. 2014, Gibson et al. 2017). The women interviewed for this study echoed the idea that there was, at some point during their careers, an overwhelming pressure to give up their jobs. Gibson et al. found in 2017 that the obstacle for women was not a pipeline problem, ie, that there were enough women entering the workforce, but a retention problem. The concerns highlighted by these women emphasise how critically important support for women in the workplace is. As Khan explained:

> I think there needs to be a recognition, first, that women are under a lot more pressure socially, especially from the family portion. And that is in addition to working here, doing the same jobs as men. First I think we need to recognise that. So women don't need special treatment, but they do need support for all this added pressure.

Research has looked at the family and social pressures existing outside of the workplace as a significant hurdle to women's ascension in the workplace (Connell 2005, Barnett & Hyde, 2001, NaYeon et al. 2014) with recommendations for family-friendly policies, in line with the recommendations of the women in Indian media interviewed for this study.

One of the family-friendly policies that the women believed to be necessary was support specifically around motherhood. Banerjee reflected from her own experience:

> "I see a lot of women come in to this newsroom, and a lot of them end up only going a short way before they have to drop out. I talk to them, but overwhelmingly the concern is that they have had a baby, and that family pressure is getting too much. They have husbands who work generally, and not a lot else by way of support. And I understand, I really do understand the situation, because I was in it, but I was lucky with a husband who could work from home and parents five minutes away, all of whom were understanding. But a lot, a lot of these women don't have that. And you can see the talent being forced out, and you have nothing, you have nothing to help them. NDTV did it first, they

had a crèche, and I think it's quite shameful that other organisations have gone this long without them. We still don't have one, and we are losing some incredible people as a result. It's a legal requirement now, to have one, but you'd be hard pressed to find a lot of facilities."

The haemorrhaging of talented women post motherhood is one that was repeated by multiple leaders as one of the biggest concerns they had. Social stereotypes and norms outside the newsrooms, in families across town are still rampant, with women being expected to give up their careers in favour of motherhood. The women interviewed accepted that, and then reiterated the role of large organisations in supporting their female stuff as much as possible to avoid having to give up their professions. The largest support was day-care, along with paternity and maternity leave. As explained by Khan:

> "Part of it is that the burden of child-raising is still socially completely on the woman. We now have legally mandated maternity leave - I think it's 26 weeks. Firstly, 26 weeks? If you do not have a strong support system, which most women don't, 26 weeks of maternity leave are not enough. And then again, why is it still just maternity leave? It may not be a legal requirement as mandated by the government, but in this day and age, we need parental leave. I had my baby and my husband, despite being in a profession that allows him a lot more flexibility than mine and actively wanting to stay home, couldn't. I, who did not want to stay home, had to be the one doing it. […] If you want to actually help women, shared parental leave is needed."

Sehgal added in with her own experience:

> "There's also the Catch-22 of these expectations that sometimes you need flexibility. Journalism is a job where you take assignments that involve two-week road trips, or staying up all night for a breaking story, or having to start your shift at 6am. These are all really challenging for mothers. I know a lot of mothers who come to me, struggling, because their kid's fallen ill and they have to go get them,

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and I give them as much flexibility as I possibly can. But I do know people who don't, I've had people come to me really upset because of how un-empathetic a lot of these people can be, not understanding just how challenging it can be to be in this position of being a good mother and a good daughter-in-law and a good journalist. And that needs to change. There needs to be an understanding. And I'm not saying I've never put my foot down and said that's enough, because I do have a job that needs doing, but your first instinct should be compassion."

Support for women, who continue to carry a disproportionate amount of the burden of childcare (Mangaldas 2018) in the form of childcare facilities is a concrete way for the industry to support women.

To target some of the concerns within the organisations and industry, Sehgal recommended starting from the basics:

Let us first recognise, at an industry level and then in every newsroom, that a problem that exists is the lack of women, and that there exists a cutoff point for women in the system. At the moment, the conversation exists in select circles, select women only circles, I should say. Until this is aired out, properly, and discussed with everyone consistently to a point where everyone knows and understands the problem, we aren't going to manage anything until that basic point has been achieved.

Sehgal's recommendation ties in with the suggestion by women for more seminars and discussions on gender in the newsroom, and Banerjee added a bit more specificity to the recommendation, stating:

Part of what we need is an, well an almost official appraisal of where we are, as a newsroom. If we can have the numbers looked at, if we can submit ourselves to be properly examined by an outside party, to see how our women are faring, how the SC/ST's [Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes] are faring, how Dalits and Muslims are faring, if we can do this, then we'll know where to actually go from there. […]

> And of course, keeping our minds open to the fact that yes, maybe we
> are flawed and have a ways to go.

Banerjee and Sehgal highlighted an important part of the obstacles against women – the fact that these are often invisible. These hurdles are not always recognised, and part of addressing the problem, as articulated by the interviewees is recognising the problem – its extent and its manifestations.

The interviewees also made a recommendation that strengthened women's abilities to navigate an invisible labyrinth – mentoring. One of the institutional shortfalls identified by a lot of the interviewees was a lack of formal mentoring programmes, which can help women support each other and learn from each other's experiences. As Samira Joshi explained:

> I had the privilege of interning, briefly, at a media outlet in New York, and one of the things I think that I took most from it was that, on day one, when I arrived, actually, even before I arrived, I was given the details of two women in the office. So one was someone who had been an intern last year, and one was a senior member of staff. They emailed me before I started so I could find them and ask any questions beforehand, and they were available for me to talk to. It sounds a bit like a school-type thing maybe, but if we had something like that here, it would make it very much easier to feel supported.

As explored in the earlier two sections, the presence of female role models and the presence of mentors are viewed as vitally important by both the mentors and the mentees, and studies have shown the benefits of mentorship, particularly for women and minorities (Williams-Nickelson 2009, Early 2014). The consensus when asked was that there was not enough support for women trying to rise up the ladder, and that this was best tackled by having a formal system of mentorship. As explained by Sehgal:

> "I think it's very important to have mentorships, and I understand the particular importance of female mentorships in an environment like this, where it is difficult to navigate. I think to invest in the women

who come in to our newsrooms, providing them with support, by matching them, not assigning, but matching them to a person who reflects their goals and who can guide them is very important. I had the privilege of being mentored, and I was mentored by a man, but I know that it was part of why I am here today. Having that added support of being mentored by a woman, just so some of the gender politics, just so I would have been told that they exist and how to handle them, would have been, it would have been good. […] That's something I urgently want to see happen here."

Another topic to arise as a problem that needed urgent addressing was sexual harassment. The interviews were conducted in the midst of the #MeToo movement in India, where a lot of high-profile journalists were sharing their stories of a culture of abuse. The topic was approached as a general discussion, and developed into an obstacle for women's leadership. Banerjee opened by saying:

"I think it's an overdue discussion. I think it's a long, long, overdue discussion. In all my years in the industry, I've dealt with a lot of women who have a lot of complaints and worries around the topic of sexual harassment, and that is within the newsroom, I'm not talking about outside. I had, only about five years ago a woman who was on the brink of quitting because of an editor that made repeated advances, making the newsroom a hostile, uncomfortable place for her. I've heard a lot of ways that women are talked about within the newsroom, and how accepted it is, and the entire movement is needed, and was needed years ago. I've been incredibly fortunate to not have met with any major experiences of sexual harassment myself, but I have dealt with enough to know that this is a widespread problem."

Khan spoke of it along similar lines saying:

"Just as a discussion of how the newsroom functions, it is definitely something that is unsurprising to me. The amount of casual sexism that

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I faced, and the amount of comments that, not flagrant sexual harassment but on that line you know, where you can't really get angry, but you know. I'm so glad that this is happening, I'm writing about this, I'm discussing this with people around me and I hope this means things are permanently changing."

During the time of these interviews, there were posters on sexual harassment – what it was, how to recognise it and how to report it, in nearly all the newsrooms visited. These posters were, interestingly, in the women's bathrooms in almost all the newsrooms, and not visible in any of the communal spaces. When asked about how the movement had altered the newsroom, Banerjee said:

"There are mandated classes now, on sexual harassment. In the beginning, it wasn't taken seriously. I've had to had stern conversations with multiple men around this office to have them take it seriously, and some of them were not young. It was shameful. […] But these classes have instilled an awareness, and it is quite obvious. There is a noticeable change in the culture, it feels more careful now. And I can see this being a game-changer."

Pande, when asked how the mandated classes were being perceived said:

"I'd like to say it's being taken on perfectly seriously across the board, but it's making a difference. That's for sure. There's no discussion of it that I'm party of at least, and it surfaces in some jokes here and there, you know, like you can't say that now, sexual harassment! [said jokingly], but overall, they're good at setting boundaries. It's good to have the lines in the sand and everything."

What has emerged from this study are some clear themes around the support mechanisms needed for women to grow in their careers in Indian newsrooms. With that in mind, a formal set of recommendations have been compiled that have emerged from the research:

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- Formal mentorship programmes, for women to connect to other women in the industry.
- Transparent assessments and reviews for promotions
- Fair and independent third party assessments on the gender equality of the newsroom
- Regular newsroom meetings on how journalists experience their gender in the workplace, and discussions on how to improve their experiences
- A push to increase gender equality in the newsroom, using data from the assessments and the contents of the meeting
- Free and reliable day-care, as legally required
- Longer parental leave (leave for either parent to use) instead of the 26 weeks required by the government
- HR seminars on how to accommodate parents, particularly mothers on flexible working.
- Regular seminars on sexual harassment
- Swift and strict review for any sexual harassment complaints

Conclusion

This study, borne of a concern for the lack of women in positions of top leadership in Indian newsrooms, sought to understand how women lead in this context. With its priority for the lived experiences of the women – their perspectives and their situated knowledge, this study relied on in depth interviews with media professionals in order to generate a rich account of not only how they lead, but how they perceive their leadership, how their leadership was perceived, as well as obstacles they've faced on the way. The study then provided, on the basis of the interviews, a list of recommendations to remove barriers to female leaders in Indian newsrooms.

The first question this study posed was concerned with how these women approach leadership in their newsrooms. This study found that how they led were consistent with a vast number of previous studies. These leaders tended to be democratic and collaborative, valuing building personal relationships and prioritising the development of their teams. Literature has shown that women tend towards democratic styles of leadership (Gipson et al. 2017, Rosener 1990), as well as transformational leadership (Eagly 2003, Lee and Chuang 2011), which, combined with the collaborative nature of news reporting, made these findings seem consistent and unsurprising.

What was found to be more interesting was the constantly circling discussion of what part, if any, gender had to play with the leadership styles displayed by women. The questioning of the interplay of gender was one that interviewees seemed to want to come back to, without prompting, after nearly every question. This was also the area that led to findings about obstacles to female leadership, which formed part of the third research question for this study. The level of introspection showed by the interviewees, often wondering out loud about the prescriptive/descriptive nature of gender and how that manifested in their lives and actions was not an aspect that had crept up to that magnitude during the pilot study. This was an incredibly deep area for this thesis to explore. These musings, and the readiness (or one would argue, eagerness) to consider different aspects of their leadership and their origins, was the area that yielded some of the richest and most remarkable findings.

This unexpected level of introspection, along with the working knowledge of feminist theory that a lot of the interviewees displayed, indicates a lot of time spent wrestling these very topics. This awareness, and the openness of interviewees to explore the gendered facets of their newsroom is a good yardstick of where the Indian media is at the moment, in terms of gender, and reiterates the importance of a study like this one.

Some of the introspection can be attributed to the fact that in 2018, the #MeToo movement hit the Indian media, with high profile men being accused of sexual harassment. This opened up a discussion on issues like harassment within the newsroom, a topic that, while not new, had not received a lot of traction before. As one of the interviewees explained,

> "The conversations on these issues have always existed, in my experience, but what is happening right now, is that the conversation has moved from a small circle of women to the wider group. […] You can say that the laundry is finally being aired, and that men, and the industry, as a result, is now finally opening up to the idea that there are concerns that women have, and that they may be valid, and not worth brushing under the carpet anymore. The conversation itself is not new, but it is finally being heard (Aarti Banerjee)."

The introspection was nowhere more apparent than when the women talked about their need to modulate their emotions and behaviour in the newsroom, and to put in the emotional labour to fulfil both the role of a good leader as well as that of a good woman. It was in these conversations that these women laid bare how apparent the differences in the path for them was to the path for men. As Parul Sehgal stated,

> "Just the fact, I suppose, that you and I are having this conversation about the emotional labour of having to act a specific way is in itself, emotional labour. How much do men think this? Do they think, oh, he's not listening to me because I'm a man? Because I can tell you, women around here think that …I mean, we're here, having this conversation, and let's be honest, it drags things, it stirs things… but I still have to compose myself and get out there, because showing that I'm angry is not something I'm really allowed… It is interesting

to me, I guess, how obvious it is, that men are here, walking up these stairs. There's effort, but it's stairs, whereas as a woman I'm on a slippy slide, like a slide with just butter on it, and I'm running up with a basket of eggs that I can't drop, and I have to smile the whole way… it is crazy how much I think about all this at the moment, about how different everything is for me, because of being a woman. And how much is me, and how much is my gender. I don't know honestly, I do have a guess, but I don't know."

Sehgal's last lines, of not knowing what was her and what was a consequence of her gender was a demonstration of the importance and the timeliness of this research. In a situation where women in the newsrooms are actively engaging in questions about gender in the workplace, studies like these bring forward a wealth of data in an area that has none, and shines a light on a labyrinth that women are crawling through in the dark.

These findings around the interplay of gender in the workplace formed a background for more specific barriers to female leadership – RQ 3 in this study. For instance, discussions about the isolation a number of women felt in their positions, as a consequence of their gender, led to them to make recommendations like gender sensitivity training and seminars during the course of the conversation.

In terms of its first research question, therefore, this study found corroboration for previous research concerning the people-oriented leadership of women, and saw how prominently their gender and the stereotypes and expectations that go with it played on their behaviour. In terms of the third research question, this study found that a lot of the suggestions that women had to remove obstacles to female leadership drew from deeply personal reflections about how their gender played a part in their experiences in the newsroom.

The second research question shifted its focus onto the teams these women led – the follower perspective. There was significant overlap between how the women saw themselves as leaders and how they were perceived by their followers. Leaders saw themselves as democratic and collaborative, as did their followers. The leaders interviewed reiterated the importance of mentorship and maintaining personal relationships with their teams, and their followers corroborated and added the value they drew from these aspects.

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The perception of these women as leaders was as expected, with them being seen as dedicated and nurturing, and role models to other women in the newsroom. These are traits often attributed to women, but the lack of negatives used to describe them was unexpected. While the perception of women, as well as their approach to leadership, remains communal and democratic, as stereotypes would suggest, this study does show the positive effect this type of leadership has on the newsroom, with collaborative and personal leaders being seen more favourably than their autocratic counterparts.

A key theme to arise from the study was the difference between how male followers saw these female leaders and how woman followers saw them, particularly with regards to the theme of inspiration. While the women saw these leaders as role models, and stressed how hard it would have been for a woman to get that far, the men interviewed not only did not mention these women as inspirations, they also lacked a more nuanced understanding of why it would be perceived as impressive for these women to have made it to where they did. As Singh said during his interview, when asked whether he had any opinions on the position his boss occupied:

> "Right, so I guess I know it's tougher for women, and I do know there is the term glass ceiling. But if I'm perfectly honest, I do not know exactly why or what or how, or anything. I know, kinda, about the difficulties women face, like I know about sex-specific abortions, female foeticide, girls education, all of these largescale problems I do know about. But I don't know about this more quiet, hard to see part. I know it's there, but I really don't know."

What Singh brought up at this point was the lack of awareness that exists about the obstacles to female leadership. Interviewee after interviewee, whether a leader or a follower, found it easy to allow or vociferously explain that there were barriers in place to the ascension of women in the workplace, but they lacked the ability to clearly often define what these barriers were. This was what the third research question for this study concerned itself with – identifying barriers to female leadership and providing suggestions to remove them.

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While a number of interviewees could and did often employ buzz words like 'glass ceiling', it took a lot of circling for them to face the issues that they felt were obstacles. These concerns, depicted in figure 9, can roughly be looked at from a number of different levels – they are macro problems, by way of being culturally pervasive and encompassing, they are meso problems, by way of being entrenched into the institutions and homes they belong to, and they are micro problems, because of how they affect each woman individually. These changes are explored in the next section.

Next Steps

A lot of the concerns and barriers in place for women stem from large, macro level concerns, called social concerns for this study, as represented in figure 9. These concerns can span issues like the higher value given to men from birth, the restrictions placed on women due to traditional gender roles and the lack of support faced by many women when they choose to follow a professional career. These concerns are pervasive, and difficult to tackle on a large national scale. However, these issues do permeate institutions and organisations like the newsrooms interviewed for this study. This macro-level stage considers the social systems and social histories that inform how epistemic biases can impact social group categorizations like media newsrooms. These institutional level manifestations of the problems are easier and more realistic to tackle. In terms of the next steps for organisations, recommendations can be grouped in two – awareness and policy, as discussed below:

Awareness

A key suggestion made by one of the interviewees of this study was that in order to improve the situation for women in leadership positions within the newsroom, an honest and fair appraisal of their current situation was important. That is to say, that in order to tackle the issues faced by women, there must first be an appraisal of what these issues really are. There are well known and relatively documented concerns like gender discrimination, stereotyping and harassment within the newsroom, yet every company must form a comprehensive idea of the issues faced by women in the newsroom, through in depth conversations with the women that belong to them. This appraisal should involve a third-party assessment as well as opening

up a dialogue within the newsroom. A first step would be, thus, to create an institutional awareness of the concerns of the women in the organisation.

A second step would be for newsrooms to look at bringing conversations about gender and other minority identities to the front. After there is a documented idea of these women's experiences and their concerns, it is important to destigmatise these concerns and bring them prominently into focus for the entire newsroom and organisation. As was suggested in the previous sections, regular seminars on gender stereotyping and harassment can help bring awareness and changes in behaviour within the newsroom. Creating an environment that actively and safely discusses women's issues can create a sense of comfort and belonging, allowing women to feel less 'othered' within the workplace (Bell and Nkono 2001). Additionally, creating a formal mentoring programme for women can, as discussed at length in the previous chapters, allow women the support and guidance they need to navigate the newsroom (Vinniconbe and Singh 2003).

Policy and Support

Along with increasing awareness and conversation about the concerns of women, altering institutional policies to strengthen the support system for women, and to create an institutional framework built to aid and address their concerns is critical. A lot of these changes are entering the larger conversation about gender equality across the globe – issues like shared parental leave, day-care services, and a clear and strict sexual harassment policy. Studies indicate that indicate that policies that

> "incentivize or encourage fathers to take time off are associated with improvements in attitudes towards women's equality in the workplace. […] incentives for paternal leave stimulates egalitarian changes in attitudes among both men and women" (Omidakhsh et al. 2020).

By introducing shared parental leave, though not a legal requirement, newsrooms extend support that is socially and institutionally lacking for women in the country. These policies also help challenge gender stereotypes by removing the burden of childcare solely from

women (Robins and Grey 2008). Introducing good day-care facilities will further support women with the balancing of child care and their career.

The suggestions provided by the interviewees are not all relatively easy to incorporate – some involving changes in newsroom culture and policy. While systemic change involves sustained effort over time, institutions must begin by formally recognising the problems at hand, and creating systems and policies to address them.

The path to positions of top leadership is not one that is straight and unencumbered for women, but is rather more a labyrinth that they must navigate, at the moment, in the dark. This study believes that emphasising the experiences and voices of women in these newsrooms, the labyrinth becomes a little more illuminated and a little more mapped, so hopefully, future generations of women will benefit from the situated knowledge available to them and navigate the labyrinth faster and more painlessly.

This study hopes that its findings act as a stepping stone for more intersectional studies concerning newsrooms – looking at representation through standpoints of caste, class, sexual orientation etc., to create a fourth estate that best encapsulate the communities it represents.

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Appendix A: Interview Questions for Leaders

Age:

Medium: TV/Print

Section I: Background

This section looks at understanding the interviewee – to have a better context of their career history, experiences and perceptions. Themes arising from this section will, to a degree, set the tone for the interview, as terms and concepts the interviewee uses to describe himself/herself, newsrooms and experiences allow for the interviewer to better understand the interviewee and what areas to probe. It's important to not guide the interviewee in this section, and allow them to talk freely.

1. Could you introduce yourself – your role/title, your career history, what type of organisation you work in?
   - Job title
   - Organisation

2. (*If not previously covered*) How many years of experience do you have as a journalist, and how many years in your current position?
   - What types of newsrooms
   - How long in each

3. If you had to explain what working in a newsroom is like to someone who has never been in one, how would you explain it?

4. Could you talk a bit about your first foray into a newsroom – an internship maybe, or your starting job?
   - When
   - Where

Section II: Leading the Newsroom

This section focuses on how newsrooms are led by these managers – looking at how democratic or autocratic, hands-off or hands-on they are, their priorities and their personal dynamic with their teams.

5. As a leader in a newsroom now, how would you describe how you lead your newsroom?

6. Do you think how you approach leadership has been influenced at all by your gender?

7. Could you explain how you ensure your newsroom runs smoothly?

8. What are your priorities when running your newsroom?

9. What are the biggest challenges you face when leading your team?

10. How important do you think it is to build personal relationships with your teams?

11. How do you think building personal relationships helps? Why do you think building these relationships is important?

12. How much supervision do you think is required when you run your team? How much autonomy would you afford your team in general?

13. How important do you believe mentorships within the newsroom to be?

14. In your experience, what's the best way to motivate your staff? *(Examples)*

15. What do you think effective leadership in a newsroom ought to look like?

16. Ideally, how would you like the people working under you to describe you as a leader?

Section III: Gender and #Metoo

This section is specifically concerned with the role of gender in the experiences of the individuals as well as their opinions of the #metoo movement. Examples in this section are of utmost importance, as well as allowing the interviewee to describe their perception, experiences and opinions.

17. Is gender relevant in Indian newsrooms today?
   - Allow general ideas – including hindi language media etc
   - Probe for any second-hand accounts as well
   - And how about in your newsroom?

18. Do you think your gender has played a role in your career? How?

19. Do you think your gender plays a role in how you lead your newsroom? Do you have any examples?

20. Do you think your gender has been a factor in how you are perceived as a journalist? How so?

21. Do you think your gender has been a factor in how you are perceived as a leader? Do you have any examples?

22. (If not already answered, drawing from perceptions) Have you ever encountered any gender stereotyping in the newsroom? Any examples of when you felt stereotyped?

  - Assigned a specific beat/story
  - Casual occurrences important – any casual remarks by someone in the newsroom?

23. Have you ever found that these gender stereotypes weigh in on how you lead?
  - Phrase using any examples of stereotyping provided – for instance, do they perhaps try to be less accommodating because of the stereotype of women being 'soft'? Do they maybe assign women the hard beats as a response to gender stereotyping they see, or may have faced?

24. Do you think your behaviour as a leader differs in any way around male/female groups and people?
  - Do you find yourself looking out for women in your team a bit more?
  - Are you more at ease with one group vs the other?
  - Do you feel the need to be firmer and more assertive with one group vs the other?

25. Were you ever under the leadership of a woman in a newsroom? What was that experience like? *(Examples)*

26. What do you think it takes to successfully climb the leadership ladder in your newsroom?
  - Nepotism?
  - Work ethic?

- Experience?

27. Do you think gender could be a factor? How?

28. Do you think that your newsroom has a level playing field for men and women when it comes to being selected for leadership positions? Why/why not?

29. Do you think that your newsroom perceives male and female leaders differently? Why/why not?

- Are either men or women judged more harshly?
- Examples, especially for women they may have worked under.

30. Can you think of any barriers that exist to female leadership in the newsroom?

31. Have you personally faced any of these barriers? *(Examples)*

32. Do you have any suggestions on changes – big and small that would help improve the situation for women in the newsroom?

- Organisational
- Educational
- Cultural

33. Moving on to the #metoo movement, has the movement had any impact on the industry? What kind?

34. Have you noticed any shift in the culture of newsrooms since the movement began?

35. In summation, what are your main concerns with being a female leader in the newsroom?

36. What would you like to see change?

37. How hopeful are you that the concerns you've highlighted and the changes you'd like will make their way into newsrooms?

- Would you like to venture a guess for how long you think it will take?

Appendix B: Interview Questions for Followers

Age:

Medium: TV/Print

Section I: Background

This section looks at understanding the interviewee – to have a better context of their career history, experiences and perceptions. Themes arising from this section will, to a degree, set the tone for the interview, as terms and concepts the interviewee uses to describe himself/herself, newsrooms and experiences allow for the interviewer to better understand the interviewee and what areas to probe. It's important to not guide the interviewee in this section, and allow them to talk freely.

1. Could you introduce yourself – your role/title, your career history, what type of organisation you work in?
   - Job title
   - Organisation

2. (*If not previously covered*) How many years of experience do you have as a journalist, and how many years in your current position?
   - What types of newsrooms
   - How long in each

3. If you had to explain what working in a newsroom is like to someone who has never been in one, how would you explain it?

4. *(Unless this is their first job)* Could you talk a bit about your first foray into a newsroom – an internship maybe, or your starting job?
   - When
   - Where

Section II: Their Leader

This section focuses on how the interviewees perceive their leaders.

5. In the newsroom now, do you have a leader, or someone you report directly to?

6. How would you describe her, in three adjectives?

7. And if you had to provide a slightly longer description of your leader?

8. What would you say are her priorities in leading the newsroom?

9. How much agency do you feel is afforded to you?

10. How much do you think building personal relationships is a priority for your leader?

11. Do you think you are given significant attention in terms of your professional development?

12. Would you say your leader's style is effective?

13. *(If relevant)* How does she stack up against other leaders you've worked under?

Section III: Gender and #Metoo

This section is specifically concerned with the role of gender in the experiences of the individuals as well as their opinions of the #metoo movement. Examples in this section are of utmost importance, as well as allowing the interviewee to describe their perception, experiences and opinions.

14. Is gender relevant in Indian newsrooms today?
- Allow general ideas – including hindi language media etc
- Probe for any second-hand accounts as well
- And how about in your newsroom?

15. Do you think your gender has played a role in your career? How?

16. Do you think your gender plays a role in how your leader acts in their position, or in their acquiring that position?

17. Do you think that your newsroom has a level playing field for men and women when it comes to being selected for leadership positions? Why/why not?

18. Do you think that your newsroom perceives male and female leaders differently? Why/why not?

- Are either men or women judged more harshly?