

Life as a woman in Pakistani journalism

THREATS, HARASSMENT and REJECTION



A book of testimonies from women journalists in Pakistan about key professional hazards including safety, opportunities and acceptance

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ADNAN REHMAT

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This book has been produced by **Freedom Network** (www.fnpk.org), a Pakistani civil liberties group working on freedom of expression and access to information issues. This is a book of testimonies from women journalists from across on the threats, harassment and rejection they face. Testimonies from all provinces, federal capital and other territories of Pakistan are included in the book produced in 2017. Freedom Network has been supported in this endeavor by the **International Media Support** (www.mediasupport.org), a Europe-based media development organization. Freedom Network would also like to thank all the courageous journalists who have shared their stories. Thanks are also due to those who made it possible to collect the testimonies, including **Xari Jalil**, **Myra Imran** and **Farzana Ali**, who are themselves amazing journalists and media development expert **Iqbal Khattak** for their inputs in producing this book. Neither Freedom Network nor its supporters necessarily endorse the contents of this book.



Key Challenges of Women Journalists in Pakistan – A Book of Testimonies

Less than 5% of the estimated 20,000 journalists in Pakistan are women, according to the Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists. That makes it less than 1,000 women practicing journalism in the country in 2017. Many argue this number is too small and yet in 2002, when the airwaves in the country were opened up for private ownership – in the shape of independent television channels and radio stations – there were less than 2,000 journalists in total and the number of women in journalism estimated at less than 100. In the years hence there has been a manifold increase in their numbers.

The upside is that there are more women overseeing news operations for current affairs shows and reporting for TV channels, radio stations and newspapers than ever. The downside, however, is that there are not enough women editors and news editors in newspapers, news directors, chief reporters and bureau heads for TV channels that reflect even the hugely disproportionate numbers of practicing women journalists. There are reasons for this. The working conditions for journalists in general are far from ideal – Pakistan is one of the deadliest countries to practice journalism, as annual press freedom and safety indexes in recent years prove – but for women media practitioners, they can offer additional challenges such as harassment from colleagues to social and cultural constraints.

As this book of testimonies from about 50 women journalists from across Pakistan amply prove, everyday life in journalism for them is not easy. In addition to the harsh conditions to practice journalism for all genders in the country, being a female brings forth an additional set of challenges and frustrations to tackle. These include threats and warnings from a wide variety of threat sources for their journalism work to sexual harassment at the workplace to engendered misogyny that prevents women journalists from taking a linear ladder up the career path. Women journalists in Pakistan are as likely to be threatened for their journalism work in the field to persistent sidelining and persecution in the office, according to these testimonies.

What these courageous testimonies reveal is an ongoing story of threats, harassment and rejection for women in journalism in Pakistan. In recent years the expanding media space in Pakistan may have provided opportunities for women to join up in greater numbers but the space for women in current affairs, which influences policy, is not easy to capture and retain due to policies in practice that do not encourage more women in leadership positions. The result: even as media pluralisms have multiplied but the voices and perspectives of women in the world of news and opinion have not increased in the same proportion. Likewise, thematic expertise of media has improved, but not professionalism on gender issues. Reporting on gender issues, in general, is not a priority for media in Pakistan while priority of reporting on gender disparities is even lower. The Pakistani media, in general, is usually not interested in women's perspectives on any issue. Also, gender perspectives are, in general, considered the domain of female journalists, not their male counterparts' job. This general environment of misogyny and apathy translates into hostility for the women already in media by side-lining them into to 'softer' reporting beats, as the testimonies reveal, and worse, harassment that discourages upward mobility and forward movement for women.

This book is not a research book. It simply asks a few questions of all these women journalists about their everyday life in journalism and allows them to emerge from the shadows as persons of substance. Stories of courage and inspiration emerge and in their stories emerge true life heroes. They don't seek the limelight or any gratitude – indeed we keep the identities of most of them confidential for security reasons, in keeping with their requests. But we are grateful to them for their important, selfless and inspirational work and for their willingness to share their private fears, hopes and dreams. They open up a window on a world not often seen or appreciated in Pakistan. We hope this book aids the cause of free speech protections by helping us better understand the world of Pakistan's women journalism practitioners. These testimonies are courageous – this is the first time they are available from a broad range of women journalists from across the country and come from journalists who have been in the profession from a few years to a few decades and therefore represent a wide enough perspective to portray the key challenges women in Pakistani journalism face. They also serve as a wake-up call for the urgency required in addressing these serious challenges. Pakistani women journalists deserve much better. More power to them!

Adnan Rehmat

Media development expert

Islamabad, Pakistan

Maleeha Hamid*

Lahore

Q1: For how long have you been working as a journalist?

I joined journalism in 2011.

Q2: Have you ever been threatened verbally in person as a result of your journalism work (news report, video, article, feature, photo, etc. that you produced)? If yes, please give a short description of the nature of threat.

Yes, I have experienced verbal threats related to my work. Details are given below.

Q3: Have you ever been threatened digitally (on phone, or social media, on email, messenger, SMS, etc.) as a result of your journalism work (news report, video, article, feature, photo, etc. that you produced)? If yes, please give a short description of the nature of threat.

While working for a well-known magazine, I did a story on how media organizations treat employees, and the head of one particular organization was super upset about this. His son called and harassed me for a few days, through phone calls and text messages. I took the issue to my management, which was on fairly decent terms with the harasser's father and the issue ended after they were sent photocopies of my story-notes. Apart from this there have been instances when I have been labelled an Indian / RAW agent by various people in comment boxes on stories (I only know this because I was moderating comments for a while at one of my jobs). Also, it has been my experience that after a story does well, I often get a bunch of Facebook "other messages" asking me, variously, where I get my information from, do I even verify it, am I stupid, why do I hate Pakistan, why are so many of my stories 'anti-Pakistan,' why can't I do any good stories, etc. I just ignore them and it usually ends.

Q4: Have you ever been attacked physically (hit, pushed, slapped, groped, etc.) as a result of your journalism work (news report, video, article, feature, photo, etc. that you produced)? If yes, please give a short description of the nature of physical attack.

I have never been physically attacked for journalism work that I have already produced. But I have been attacked a few times while reporting – for some reason always and only in Punjab; never in Sindh or Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, where I have reported from often. And also never in Balochistan where I've reported from twice.

Q5: What kind of threats and attacks have you faced (example: threat to murder, attack, kidnap, sexual harassment, blackmail, loss of job, etc.)?

I lost my job for my journalism work for one of the instances mentioned in the answer to Question 3 above.

Q6: What kind of threat actors or threat sources have you faced threats from (example: militants, politicians, political activists, government officials, security personnel, law enforcement agencies, religious groups, mafias, feudals, criminals, private citizens, unknown sources, etc.)?

I have had some unpleasant experiences. After a daytime conversation on the phone or a meeting, for a story, government officials, including officials with security background, often call back late in the night and ask what I'm doing or if I need more help. Sometimes they will comment on "your sweet, sweet voice" or "the size of your eyes was unforgettable." I block such numbers, which is sad because this means they are no longer my information sources. It is extremely difficult to find good long-term male sources who don't end up taking a non-professional interest in you. My personal favorite – meaning, most disgusting – experience was this man who headed a key department of a national government agency where citizens can report cybercrimes and cyber sexual harassment, in 2011. He called back at least 10 times and continued messaging me "compliments" for days. This was one of my first stories, so I had no idea back then I could have just blocked his nauseating calls or simply told him off, which is what I do now.

Q7: Have you ever faced sexual harassment at the workplace? If yes, what kind of harassment have you faced (example: messages, phone calls, verbal, physical, psychological, etc.)? How frequent have you faced this problem?

In one of the media houses I worked at, the head of the human resources department was notorious for harassment. The stories are endless. He would comment on our clothes, body shape, and how tired or fresh we looked. But for me, I was very young, and I didn't even understand that by telling him off, or complaining about him, I could end it. One day he complimented a senior journalist for looking good who then simply told him she would throw him out of the window if he ever spoke to her about her hair again. It was a magical moment for me after which I realized how insane and inappropriate his comments were and which should not be tolerated.

Q8: Have you ever faced discrimination in your career because of your gender? If so, please list the categories of discrimination – for example official designation, duties, assignments, promotion, salaries, maternity and other leaves, allowances, perks and privileges, etc. Briefly describe one or two examples that illustrate the discrimination.

In terms of salaries, female journalists always face discrimination. That's my experience and observation. Men doing the same job as me, or sometimes even less work, always got paid more. I have worked at three of the country's largest-circulated English and Urdu newspapers and it was the same experience in all three places. In terms of work assignments, editors are often far more apprehensive of sending female journalists out of city than sending males. They imply this is because it will be more nerve wracking and more costly to ensure the security of females. But I suppose, every time I have wanted to go badly enough, I have fought hard for it. The difference appears to be that men don't often have to ask and argue to go – they just get assigned while I have often had to prove and explain that I could handle the assignment or event before I am sent.

Q9: Generally, how safe and secure, or insecure do you feel as a working female journalist in a male-dominated profession of journalism in Pakistan? Briefly explain why?

This is a difficult question to answer. I don't know how to separate journalism from my daily life. Does walking to and fro the parking lot to my office count as work, or life? Because I get harassed daily, twice a day. Once while walking to my office from the parking lot. And once while on my way back. Public spaces in Pakistan are unfriendly for women and as a journalist I often find myself in public spaces. So it is definitely neither pleasant nor safe. But as long as your life isn't in danger, you keep at it, I suppose. But within controlled spaces such as workplaces, the environment can definitely be better.

Q10. How, in your opinion, can journalism become a more female-friendly profession and how can female journalists overcome the work-related and gender-related challenges they face in this profession?

We need to actively encourage older and more experienced female journalists be open and share their experiences. No one does this. It should be mandatory. We can learn so much from the women that went before us. They would know so many tricks and tips. Also, the human resource departments need to check in with employees as a matter of policy and ask if everything is okay, from time to time. For now, in Pakistan, things can be so bad that this would be considered an absurd notion because the human resource people are anything but a source of help. So maybe editors should check in from time to time and ask us if all is well? Apart from this we need to make public spaces safer in general.

**Name changed on request for privacy and safety reasons*

Shaista Seham*

Islamabad

Q1: For how long have you been working as a journalist?

I have been working as a reporter with several print and electronic media organizations for 10 years. Currently I am producing and hosting current affairs program on a radio station.

Q2: Have you ever been threatened verbally in person as a result of your journalism work (news report, video, article, feature, photo, etc. that you produced)? If yes, please give a short description of the nature of threat.

Yes many times. Once I filed a story on harassment against women in Pakistan Tehrik-e-Insaf party. The PTI president for Rawalpindi threatened me of dire consequences. The story was published after which they stopped inviting me to their events. In another episode, I did a program on harassment by a shemale doctor who used to abuse women physically. As a result, the shemale was made OSD [officer on special duty]. An inquiry board was announced but the doctor used her influence and was reinstated. The shemales did a press a press conference against me and announced a head money for me. I felt really insecure after that. I received messages and calls from unknown numbers. Nothing happened practically but I suffered mental torture for one year.

Q3: Have you ever been threatened digitally (on phone, or social media, on email, messenger, SMS, etc.) as a result of your journalism work (news report, video, article, feature, photo, etc. that you produced)? If yes, please give a short description of the nature of threat.

Yes, there was reaction against some of my stories on social media. As a result of story on PTI, the workers started abusing me on social media. Once I did a story against a major retail store chain revealing that it ran afoul of its environmental responsibilities. This generated abuse against me on social media.

Q4: Have you ever been attacked physically (hit, pushed, slapped, groped, etc.) as a result of your journalism work (news report, video, article, feature, photo, etc. that you produced)? If yes, please give a short description of the nature of physical attack.

I have never been attacked physically but I have received death threats.

Q5: What kind of threats and attacks have you faced (example: threat to murder, attack, kidnap, sexual harassment, blackmail, loss of job, etc.)?

I have received threats of serious consequences and murder through phone and social media. On social media, I was accused of doing yellow journalism and taking bribes for stories. As a result of one of my stories that I filed, I received life threats. Some of my colleagues also blamed me.

Q6: What kind of threat actors or threat sources have you faced threats from (example: militants, politicians, political activists, government officials, security personnel, law enforcement agencies, religious groups, mafias, feudals, criminals, private citizens, unknown sources, etc.)?

I have received threats mainly from religious groups and political parties, as well as from individuals.

Q7: Have you ever faced sexual harassment at the workplace? If yes, what kind of harassment have you faced (example: messages, phone calls, verbal, physical, psychological, etc.)? How frequent have you faced this problem?

Yes - a lot of times. It was both psychological and verbal. The editor of one of the newspapers once invited me to a room he had reserved for taking rest saying that we can talk about professional issues in a relaxing environment. I refused. I was removed for filing a complaint. My stories were stopped to punish me for refusing sexual advances.

Q8: Have you ever faced discrimination in your career because of your gender? If so, please list the categories of discrimination – for example official designation, duties, assignments, promotion, salaries, maternity and other leaves, allowances, perks and privileges, etc. Briefly describe one or two examples that illustrate the discrimination.

Yes, many times. In one instance my boss gave me a task but he designated a male reporter to supervise me despite the fact that I was fully capable of completing the assignment. All soft beats and less useful trainings are given to women reporters, which I have also experienced.

Q9: Generally, how safe and secure, or insecure do you feel as a working female journalist in a male-dominated profession of journalism in Pakistan? Briefly explain why?

I feel insecure in this field as active women journalists are generally labelled of having “a bad character.” I have heard comments such as “they come to this field because no one is ready to marry them.” We are not considered professional even if we are more competent than men.

Q10. How, in your opinion, can journalism become a more female-friendly profession and how can female journalists overcome the work-related and gender-related challenges they face in this profession?

More women should be given managerial posts within the media. The environment for women can be improved through awareness, education and sensitization of men on gender issues. Unless they realize that we are professionals, not only women, the environment in media for women will not improve.

**Name changed on request for privacy and safety reasons*

Zeeba T Hashmi

Lahore

Q1: For how long have you been working as a journalist?

I have been contributing as an opinion writer for some publications and also for some blogs, but I am not a full-time journalist by profession. My career as a reporter started in 2007, but it was on a limited scope as I was working for a Pakistan mission to the UN briefly. There was a pause until I held my pen again in 2011 when I started contributing my columns to *Spokesman Daily*, *Daily Times*, *The Nation* and have had my work featured in *Newsline*, *Pique*, *Laalain* and *Express Tribune* blog. Journalism per se is not my career as my focus mainly remained on education and development here in Pakistan.

Q2: Have you ever been threatened verbally in person as a result of your journalism work (news report, video, article, feature, photo, etc. that you produced)? If yes, please give a short description of the nature of threat.

I don't recall ever been verbally threatened at my work place. However, I have been insulted many times by colleagues when they didn't agree to some of my journalism work – but this was not in a formal journalistic set-up, as I worked in education and development field.

Q3: Have you ever been threatened digitally (on phone, or social media, on email, messenger, SMS, etc.) as a result of your journalism work (news report, video, article, feature, photo, etc. that you produced)? If yes, please give a short description of the nature of threat.

Indeed I have faced some threats online and received all kinds of hate mail, including my character assassination. For example, I had written a piece which didn't go well with some people who started a slanderous campaign against me by deeming me anti-Islam or anti-Pakistan, which I am not, of course. I also received death threats as, and on one occasion someone told me that all I have to do is wait for three days because after that, I'm finished. I never took it seriously though, because I never could tell how serious the threat is.

Q4: Have you ever been attacked physically (hit, pushed, slapped, groped, etc.) as a result of your journalism work (news report, video, article, feature, photo, etc. that you produced)? If yes, please give a short description of the nature of physical attack.

No I have never been attacked but I have been groped, hooted at or pushed in public sometimes.

Q5: What kind of threats and attacks have you faced (example: threat to murder, attack, kidnap, sexual harassment, blackmail, loss of job, etc.)?

I have faced harassment online that were also sexual in nature, over my views which they considered unacceptable—especially whenever I wrote in favor of feminism or against discrimination of minorities. Most dissenting views are not easily comprehended by many, which unleashes hate speech oftentimes. I, among many other women in media and elsewhere, am not alien to this kind of harassment. In fact it is very common, and it can be scary.

Q6: What kind of threat actors or threat sources have you faced threats from (example: militants, politicians, political activists, government officials, security personnel, law enforcement agencies, religious groups, mafias, feudals, criminals, private citizens, unknown sources, etc.)?

Because most of the hate mail or threats I received were online, I cannot easily say who were behind it. In fact, there was a police official who used extremely abusive and sexual language towards me, but I could not really tell if that was his real profile. There have been other such incidents as well, that included a lawyer who passed sexist comments on me because of my views on laws pertaining to minorities and women that do not click well with conservatives here.

Q7: Have you ever faced sexual harassment at the workplace? If yes, what kind of harassment have you faced (example: messages, phone calls, verbal, physical, psychological, etc.)? How frequent have you faced this problem?

I have been fortunate enough to not face any sexual harassment at the places where I worked. However, I have faced discrimination and psychological abuse because of my gender many a time and sexual harassment in out-of-workplace contexts due to my views or journalism.

Q8: Have you ever faced discrimination in your career because of your gender? If so, please list the categories of discrimination – for example official designation, duties, assignments, promotion, salaries, maternity and other leaves, allowances, perks and privileges, etc. Briefly describe one or two examples that illustrate the discrimination.

I have faced discrimination and faced psychological abuse multiple times. Because of my expressed views about gender equality, I was deliberately sent on missions that required extensive manual labor, despite their knowing about my health problems. One of my last work places was primarily male dominant, so they didn't quite feel comfortable with a woman having a position that's ranked higher in hierarchy. Sometimes, they would not provide me any assistance to which I was entitled, or my work assignment would be sabotaged behind my back to make me look bad before my seniors. I would be denied honoraria and bonuses because they felt that was unfair to male colleagues – by giving the justification that they are the bread winners of the families, hence they deserved it more.

Q9: Generally, how safe and secure, or insecure do you feel as a working female journalist in a male-dominated profession of journalism in Pakistan? Briefly explain why?

I think it mainly depends on the nature of stories women are covering here on the field. Usually, the mindset is that women are not able to cover hard stories, which is quite unfair to women

who have as much potential as any of their male counterparts. I had wanted to pursue a professional career as a journalist, but my interest had been to cover issues of militancy, discriminatory laws, but the security concerns kept me from writing on them. Initially, when I started writing here for different publication, I had made exposure visits to cover on the issue of missing persons in Swat, or visited and interviewed members of communities of some religious minorities in Lahore. Sometimes, I felt supported by my contacts and family but I had always felt the hesitance of the authorities in cooperating. I was denied access or was made to feel intimidated while covering issues which they found to be security sensitive. For instance, I had sought official permission to visit Kurram Agency of the Tribal Areas, but was denied —despite my making contacts with a few parliamentarians, the Political Agent there, local leaders and families. I was then told I could make the visit without having to inform the military, as many usually do, but I declined because I felt insecure. Over the years, I have stopped writing extensively on such issues because my family got very concerned eventually. And I know that many women journalists share the same dilemma here as me.

Q10. How, in your opinion, can journalism become a more female-friendly profession and how can female journalists overcome the work-related and gender-related challenges they face in this profession?

I am not sure if there is any profession that is female-friendly here, with a few exceptions maybe. It depends on situations. From my experience, except for one or two occasions, I was generously allowed to meet families, children and women for my stories — mainly because they felt more comfortable with a female asking them questions than a male, who is usually denied such access. I think, there is a potential for women here, but when it comes to seeking support from authorities, colleagues or even your own family, you may be denied it instantly. I think the only way we may overcome our challenges is by calculating the risks well beforehand, use precaution where it is necessary and by also being mentally prepared to face the consequences before we decide to head out with our pursuits. In order to be prepared, women should be equipped with knowledge on ways to protect themselves in their work environment, or how they may seek legal redress for harassment or violence they face and on ways to approach authorities with such complaints effectively. I think, in this age and time, it is a must for women to know how to protect themselves online and report abuse officially. Also, we don't have a concept of it here, but self-defense training for women, whether one is a working woman or not, can help them prevent situations that can be dangerous for them be it at home, at workplace, at schools, in public places or on private properties. While there are many other ways a woman can adopt to minimize her risks, I believe that ultimately, it is only her confidence that can help her beat discrimination, violence and every other obstacle they face while pursuing their goals.

Hira Shah

Peshawar, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

Q1: For how long have you been working as a journalist?

I have been working as a journalist since 2012

Q2: Have you ever been threatened verbally in person as a result of your journalism work (news report, video, article, feature, photo, etc. that you produced)? If yes, please give a short description of the nature of threat.

No, I've never been threatened verbally.

Q3: Have you ever been threatened digitally (on phone, or social media, on email, messenger, SMS, etc.) as a result of your journalism work (news report, video, article, feature, photo, etc. that you produced)? If yes, please give a short description of the nature of threat.

No, I've never been threatened digitally.

Q4: Have you ever been attacked physically (hit, pushed, slapped, groped, etc.) as a result of your journalism work (news report, video, article, feature, photo, etc. that you produced)? If yes, please give a short description of the nature of physical attack.

No, I've never been attacked physically.

Q5: What kind of threats and attacks have you faced (example: threat to murder, attack, kidnap, sexual harassment, blackmail, loss of job, etc.)?

I've never been subject to threats or attacks.

Q6: What kind of threat actors or threat sources have you faced threats from (example: militants, politicians, political activists, government officials, security personnel, law enforcement agencies, religious groups, mafias, feudals, criminals, private citizens, unknown sources, etc.)?

I've never been subject to threats or attacks.

Q7: Have you ever faced sexual harassment at the workplace? If yes, what kind of harassment have you faced (example: messages, phone calls, verbal, physical, psychological, etc.)? How frequent have you faced this problem?

No, I've never been subject to sexual harassment at the workplace.

Q8: Have you ever faced discrimination in your career because of your gender? If so, please list the categories of discrimination – for example official designation, duties, assignments, promotion, salaries, maternity and other leaves, allowances, perks and privileges, etc. Briefly describe one or two examples that illustrate the discrimination.

Yes, I have face discrimination because of my gender. But not all of it is negative. On some I have been spared field duties where crowd coverage is required to protect me from possible violence. I have experienced positive discrimination by being facilitated. However, media offices do not usually have separate spaces for women, which affects our work sometimes.

Q9: Generally, how safe and secure, or insecure do you feel as a working female journalist in a male-dominated profession of journalism in Pakistan? Briefly explain why?

I have generally felt safe and secure – both within the office and in the field. But I feel uneasy in congested locations in the field as people usually start congregating to watch a female journalist at work, which feels intimidating.

Q10. How, in your opinion, can journalism become a more female-friendly profession and how can female journalists overcome the work-related and gender-related challenges they face in this profession?

There should be written policies for safety of women and gender sensitization of all staff in all media houses so that all women can feel safe and more women can join the media.

Saeeda Kamal

Lahore, Punjab

Q1: For how long have you been working as a journalist?

I have been working as a journalist since 2013.

Q2: Have you ever been threatened verbally in person as a result of your journalism work (news report, video, article, feature, photo, etc. that you produced)? If yes, please give a short description of the nature of threat.

No, I've never been threatened verbally.

Q3: Have you ever been threatened digitally (on phone, or social media, on email, messenger, SMS, etc.) as a result of your journalism work (news report, video, article, feature, photo, etc. that you produced)? If yes, please give a short description of the nature of threat.

No, I've never been threatened digitally.

Q4: Have you ever been attacked physically (hit, pushed, slapped, groped, etc.) as a result of your journalism work (news report, video, article, feature, photo, etc. that you produced)? If yes, please give a short description of the nature of physical attack.

No, I've never been attacked physically.

Q5: What kind of threats and attacks have you faced (example: threat to murder, attack, kidnap, sexual harassment, blackmail, loss of job, etc.)?

I've not been threatened or attacked but I have been the target of character assassination and have faced passive-aggressive bullying that has affected me emotionally and psychologically.

Q6: What kind of threat actors or threat sources have you faced threats from (example: militants, politicians, political activists, government officials, security personnel, law enforcement agencies, religious groups, mafias, feudals, criminals, private citizens, unknown sources, etc.)?

I have not faced abuse of attacks from external sources but have experienced intimidation from within the workplace such as undue criticism and character assassination.

Q7: Have you ever faced sexual harassment at the workplace? If yes, what kind of harassment have you faced (example: messages, phone calls, verbal, physical, psychological, etc.)? How frequent have you faced this problem?

No, I have not faced sexual harassment at the workplace.

Q8: Have you ever faced discrimination in your career because of your gender? If so, please list the categories of discrimination – for example official designation, duties, assignments, promotion, salaries, maternity and other leaves, allowances, perks and privileges, etc. Briefly describe one or two examples that illustrate the discrimination.

I have experienced, as well as my female colleagues, subtle gender-related pressure. It is surprising how many male colleagues make passes at us and use humor to make us feel uncomfortable. Unnecessary references are made about our gender.

Q9: Generally, how safe and secure, or insecure do you feel as a working female journalist in a male-dominated profession of journalism in Pakistan? Briefly explain why?

Generally it is safe. I have not faced any situation wherein I have felt any threats related to my physical security. I have seen that male colleagues tend to respect female colleagues who define limits of intimacy.

Q10. How, in your opinion, can journalism become a more female-friendly profession and how can female journalists overcome the work-related and gender-related challenges they face in this profession?

We need to have gender policies and sensitization of male colleagues. I have noticed that the older male colleagues have an unhealthy view of working women as sex objects. The younger ones generally do not. Maybe it is a generation gap issue.

**Name changed on request for privacy and safety reasons*

Meena Rahim*

Karachi, Sindh

Q1: For how long have you been working as a journalist?

I have working as a journalist since 2007.

Q2: Have you ever been threatened verbally in person as a result of your journalism work (news report, video, article, feature, photo, etc. that you produced)? If yes, please give a short description of the nature of threat.

No, I have not been threatened verbally.

Q3: Have you ever been threatened digitally (on phone, or social media, on email, messenger, SMS, etc.) as a result of your journalism work (news report, video, article, feature, photo, etc. that you produced)? If yes, please give a short description of the nature of threat.

No, I have not been threatened digitally.

Q4: Have you ever been attacked physically (hit, pushed, slapped, groped, etc.) as a result of your journalism work (news report, video, article, feature, photo, etc. that you produced)? If yes, please give a short description of the nature of physical attack.

No, I have not been attacked physically.

Q5: What kind of threats and attacks have you faced (example: threat to murder, attack, kidnap, sexual harassment, blackmail, loss of job, etc.)?

I have not faced any serious threats or attacks.

Q6: What kind of threat actors or threat sources have you faced threats from (example: militants, politicians, political activists, government officials, security personnel, law enforcement agencies, religious groups, mafias, feudals, criminals, private citizens, unknown sources, etc.)?

I have not faced any serious threats or attacks.

Q7: Have you ever faced sexual harassment at the workplace? If yes, what kind of harassment have you faced (example: messages, phone calls, verbal, physical, psychological, etc.)? How frequent have you faced this problem?

No, I have not faced any overt sexual harassment at the workplace.

Q8: Have you ever faced discrimination in your career because of your gender? If so, please list the categories of discrimination – for example official designation, duties, assignments, promotion, salaries, maternity and other leaves, allowances, perks and privileges, etc. Briefly describe one or two examples that illustrate the discrimination.

My experience and observation is that men and women are discriminated on the basis of their genders, especially when it comes to salaries and privileges. We don't get the same pay for the same work. The media offices tend to think men have greater responsibilities and should be paid more whereas women have greater responsibilities and have to work twice as hard for half of the pay.

Q9: Generally, how safe and secure, or insecure do you feel as a working female journalist in a male-dominated profession of journalism in Pakistan? Briefly explain why?

I have generally felt safe and secure in the workplace. But this may not necessarily because the office has safety policies but because women have to be on their guard to not give the impression that they are easygoing. We have to work for our safety.

Q10. How, in your opinion, can journalism become a more female-friendly profession and how can female journalists overcome the work-related and gender-related challenges they face in this profession?

Women are as responsible and capable as men, if not more so. However, women would benefit if media houses have gender policies and men are sensitized on gender safety elements.

**Name changed on request for privacy and safety reasons*

Waheeda Sheikh *

Lahore, Punjab

Q1: For how long have you been working as a journalist?

I have been a journalist since 2011.

Q2: Have you ever been threatened verbally in person as a result of your journalism work (news report, video, article, feature, photo, etc. that you produced)? If yes, please give a short description of the nature of threat.

Though there haven't been very direct threats but in a few instances they have been indirect in nature where the person approached for a comment or story resorted to threaten to use influence if I proceeded with my story and reporting.

Q3: Have you ever been threatened digitally (on phone, or social media, on email, messenger, SMS, etc.) as a result of your journalism work (news report, video, article, feature, photo, etc. that you produced)? If yes, please give a short description of the nature of threat.

I have experienced threats on the phone. Once someone called me and threatened to have me sacked using his influence with the management.

Q4: Have you ever been attacked physically (hit, pushed, slapped, groped, etc.) as a result of your journalism work (news report, video, article, feature, photo, etc. that you produced)? If yes, please give a short description of the nature of physical attack.

No, I have never been attacked physically.

Q5: What kind of threats and attacks have you faced (example: threat to murder, attack, kidnap, sexual harassment, blackmail, loss of job, etc.)?

I have been threatened with the loss of my job.

Q6: What kind of threat actors or threat sources have you faced threats from (example: militants, politicians, political activists, government officials, security personnel, law enforcement agencies, religious groups, mafias, feudals, criminals, private citizens, unknown sources, etc.)?

I have often experienced direct and indirect threats from government sources for having reported on them. Some of my information sources have also faced threats because of my reporting.

Q7: Have you ever faced sexual harassment at the workplace? If yes, what kind of harassment have you faced (example: messages, phone calls, verbal, physical, psychological, etc.)? How frequent have you faced this problem?

I was once harassed sexually and it had an adverse psychological impact on me.

Q8: Have you ever faced discrimination in your career because of your gender? If so, please list the categories of discrimination – for example official designation, duties, assignments, promotion, salaries, maternity and other leaves, allowances, perks and privileges, etc. Briefly describe one or two examples that illustrate the discrimination.

I have faced subtle discrimination because of my gender but it has so far not affected my career trajectory.

Q9: Generally, how safe and secure, or insecure do you feel as a working female journalist in a male-dominated profession of journalism in Pakistan? Briefly explain why?

While I do feel safe working as a female journalist in a profession that has so far been largely dominated by males, there is a discernable lack of understanding on how the gender debate plays into and affects the professional work of journalists. Women reporters at times still struggle to be given a chance to prove their mettle. Then there are those who when they do manage to move past various barriers are target of indirect harassment based on their gender. Workplace ethics need to be revised. The top tier of journalists, involved in decision making and running organizations, should be made to understand the need for a healthy environment where gender in itself does not decide merit and quality.

Q10. How, in your opinion, can journalism become a more female-friendly profession and how can female journalists overcome the work-related and gender-related challenges they face in this profession?

There is a need to understand that journalists, whether male or female, are professionals and that gender should not be a major part of the debate within newsrooms in terms of professional work. Stronger editors and desk heads can ensure a gender balanced work environment where it should not only be the responsibility of male colleagues but even female members of the staff to work in a fashion that allows professional interaction and quality work that would merit for a greater focus on the objective output regardless of one's gender.

**Name changed on request for privacy and safety reasons*

Saima Salim *

Peshawar

Q1: For how long have you been working as a journalist?

I have been practicing journalism since 2001.

Q2: Have you ever been threatened verbally in person as a result of your journalism work (news report, video, article, feature, photo, etc. that you produced)? If yes, please give a short description of the nature of threat.

I am a health reporter and I have often faced abuse and threats from hospital staff when I have gone to cover the affairs of medical institutions. They don't want doing negative stories about them.

Q3: Have you ever been threatened digitally (on phone, or social media, on email, messenger, SMS, etc.) as a result of your journalism work (news report, video, article, feature, photo, etc. that you produced)? If yes, please give a short description of the nature of threat.

Yes – I have received several threatening SMS messages from unknown numbers and also on my social media accounts and email warning me against negative reporting.

Q4: Have you ever been attacked physically (hit, pushed, slapped, groped, etc.) as a result of your journalism work (news report, video, article, feature, photo, etc. that you produced)? If yes, please give a short description of the nature of physical attack.

Yes – I have twice been physically attacked. Once a security staffer at a hospital tried to slap me but I managed to evade it by holding his hand and was saved by another staffer. Another time I was rushing to cover a bombing incident in public when unidentified men stopped our car and dragged me out of the car but luckily a policeman came by and came to our help. This was a traumatic experience.

Q5: What kind of threats and attacks have you faced (example: threat to murder, attack, kidnap, sexual harassment, blackmail, loss of job, etc.)?

I have faced all kinds of threats – threats of sexual violence, blackmail and threat of the loss of my job.

Q6: What kind of threat actors or threat sources have you faced threats from (example: militants, politicians, political activists, government officials, security personnel, law enforcement agencies, religious groups, mafias, feudals, criminals, private citizens, unknown sources, etc.)?

I have faced threats and attacks by officials of government departments as well as some of my own colleagues.

Q7: Have you ever faced sexual harassment at the workplace? If yes, what kind of harassment have you faced (example: messages, phone calls, verbal, physical, psychological, etc.)? How frequent have you faced this problem?

Yes, I have faced sexual harassment through phone messages, verbal innuendos and attempts at physical contact from some of my own staff members.

Q8: Have you ever faced discrimination in your career because of your gender? If so, please list the categories of discrimination – for example official designation, duties, assignments, promotion, salaries, maternity and other leaves, allowances, perks and privileges, etc. Briefly describe one or two examples that illustrate the discrimination.

Discrimination because of my gender is pervasive. I have often been discriminated in relation to salaries, promotions, duty assignments and privileges.

Q9: Generally, how safe and secure, or insecure do you feel as a working female journalist in a male-dominated profession of journalism in Pakistan? Briefly explain why?

There are times I feel safe but there are times when I feel threatened because male attitudes and behavior can be unpredictable. I have experienced some really uncomfortable moments in my own office due to this.

Q10. How, in your opinion, can journalism become a more female-friendly profession and how can female journalists overcome the work-related and gender-related challenges they face in this profession?

We need strong anti-gender discrimination policies and string enforcement of these policies. I feel that males can get away with some outrageous acts. We need to punish such indiscretions and bad behavior.

**Name changed on request for privacy and safety reasons*

Tahira Shahzad*

Islamabad

Q1: For how long have you been working as a journalist?

I have been working as subeditor since 2007.

Q2: Have you ever been threatened verbally in person as a result of your journalism work (news report, video, article, feature, photo, etc. that you produced)? If yes, please give a short description of the nature of threat.

Yes. A few years ago I typed a TV news ticker that did not go down well with the Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM) political party. We immediately received a phone call threatening that a gunny bag was ready to stuff the body of the person who had produced the ticker. I was terrified by our news controller handled the situation, apologized to the caller and removed the ticker.

Q3: Have you ever been threatened digitally (on phone, or social media, on email, messenger, SMS, etc.) as a result of your journalism work (news report, video, article, feature, photo, etc. that you produced)? If yes, please give a short description of the nature of threat.

No, I have never been threatened digitally.

Q4: Have you ever been attacked physically (hit, pushed, slapped, groped, etc.) as a result of your journalism work (news report, video, article, feature, photo, etc. that you produced)? If yes, please give a short description of the nature of physical attack.

No, I have never been attacked physically.

Q5: What kind of threats and attacks have you faced (example: threat to murder, attack, kidnap, sexual harassment, blackmail, loss of job, etc.)?

I received a death threat related to the news ticker about MQM.

Q6: What kind of threat actors or threat sources have you faced threats from (example: militants, politicians, political activists, government officials, security personnel, law enforcement agencies, religious groups, mafias, feudals, criminals, private citizens, unknown sources, etc.)?

I received a threatening call from a political party.

Q7: Have you ever faced sexual harassment at the workplace? If yes, what kind of harassment have you faced (example: messages, phone calls, verbal, physical, psychological, etc.)? How frequent have you faced this problem?

Many women face sexual harassment at the workplace. This can take the shape of inappropriate remarks, staring, phone messages and even attempts at physical contact. Once I passed an employment test and qualified for a job at a television channel. When I joined, the controller news called me in his office said that I could easily become an anchorperson as I had “a beautiful face and smile.” He said he would help me become one if only I smiled at him daily. He also offered to take care of my logistics issues and some other facilities. I rejected the offer and was immediately shifted to a monitoring desk.

Q8: Have you ever faced discrimination in your career because of your gender? If so, please list the categories of discrimination – for example official designation, duties, assignments, promotion, salaries, maternity and other leaves, allowances, perks and privileges, etc. Briefly describe one or two examples that illustrate the discrimination.

Discrimination on the basis of gender is widespread in media organizations. Those women who agree to certain demands are given better salaries, positions and perks. Ordinarily whenever men are given a raise in salaries women always get disproportionately smaller raises. The same is the case in allowances, privileges, promotions and assignments. I have faced this several times.

Q9: Generally, how safe and secure, or insecure do you feel as a working female journalist in a male-dominated profession of journalism in Pakistan? Briefly explain why?

No place is totally safe. I have faced not just discrimination but also insecure because of the proclivity of some men to take liberties with me and other women in the office. Our patriarchal system is to partly blame for this and partly because there is no justice and men can get away with some shameful acts.

Q10. How, in your opinion, can journalism become a more female-friendly profession and how can female journalists overcome the work-related and gender-related challenges they face in this profession?

Journalism can become better for women if there are proactive gender-affirmative policies and if there is job security, transport facilities, implementation of law against harassment, day shifts and day care facility for women.

**Name changed on request for privacy and safety reasons*

Noreen Shams
Karachi, Sindh

Q1: For how long have you been working as a journalist?

I have been working as a journalist since 2009.

Q2: Have you ever been threatened verbally in person as a result of your journalism work (news report, video, article, feature, photo, etc. that you produced)? If yes, please give a short description of the nature of threat.

I have never faced any threats as a result of my work but I have certainly received uncomfortable comments on social media for my views.

Q3: Have you ever been threatened digitally (on phone, or social media, on email, messenger, SMS, etc.) as a result of your journalism work (news report, video, article, feature, photo, etc. that you produced)? If yes, please give a short description of the nature of threat.

Yes, I have been subject to some abuse on social media for my work.

Q4: Have you ever been attacked physically (hit, pushed, slapped, groped, etc.) as a result of your journalism work (news report, video, article, feature, photo, etc. that you produced)? If yes, please give a short description of the nature of physical attack.

No, I have never been attacked physically.

Q5: What kind of threats and attacks have you faced (example: threat to murder, attack, kidnap, sexual harassment, blackmail, loss of job, etc.)?

No, I have never been threatened or attacked.

Q6: What kind of threat actors or threat sources have you faced threats from (example: militants, politicians, political activists, government officials, security personnel, law enforcement agencies, religious groups, mafias, feudals, criminals, private citizens, unknown sources, etc.)?

Mostly it is individuals who have sometimes attempted to harass me on social media.

Q7: Have you ever faced sexual harassment at the workplace? If yes, what kind of harassment have you faced (example: messages, phone calls, verbal, physical, psychological, etc.)? How frequent have you faced this problem?

No, I have never faced sexual harassment at the workplace.

Q8: Have you ever faced discrimination in your career because of your gender? If so, please list the categories of discrimination – for example official designation, duties, assignments, promotion, salaries, maternity and other leaves, allowances, perks and privileges, etc. Briefly describe one or two examples that illustrate the discrimination.

Yes, I have experienced at time blatant discrimination in terms of designation and salary. Like for instance I was in working for a TV service where I was a producer but the cameraman was being given more salary than me.

Q9: Generally, how safe and secure, or insecure do you feel as a working female journalist in a male-dominated profession of journalism in Pakistan? Briefly explain why?

I have not felt physically insecure but I have often felt some of my male colleagues trying to push me back because I wanted to assume greater responsibilities and do serious journalism like them.

Q10. How, in your opinion, can journalism become a more female-friendly profession and how can female journalists overcome the work-related and gender-related challenges they face in this profession?

While gender policies are important as is sensitization of men, I feel women need to improve their game also and tackle the mindset that deserve special treatment because they are female. They can definitely do more to help themselves and also help men respect them for their work than for their gender.

Fehmida Faheem*

Peshawar

Q1: For how long have you been working as a journalist?

I have been a journalist since 2015

Q2: Have you ever been threatened verbally in person as a result of your journalism work (news report, video, article, feature, photo, etc. that you produced)? If yes, please give a short description of the nature of threat.

Yes. Once I was assigned to interview a widow. While interviewing her one of her relatives suddenly appeared on the scene started threatening us. He forced us to delete the footage and leave the place. He warned us against returning or contacting the woman again.

Q3: Have you ever been threatened digitally (on phone, or social media, on email, messenger, SMS, etc.) as a result of your journalism work (news report, video, article, feature, photo, etc. that you produced)? If yes, please give a short description of the nature of threat.

No, I have never been threatened digitally.

Q4: Have you ever been attacked physically (hit, pushed, slapped, groped, etc.) as a result of your journalism work (news report, video, article, feature, photo, etc. that you produced)? If yes, please give a short description of the nature of physical attack.

No, I have never been physically attacked.

Q5: What kind of threats and attacks have you faced (example: threat to murder, attack, kidnap, sexual harassment, blackmail, loss of job, etc.)?

I have faced mild threats but have never been attacked.

Q6: What kind of threat actors or threat sources have you faced threats from (example: militants, politicians, political activists, government officials, security personnel, law enforcement agencies, religious groups, mafias, feudals, criminals, private citizens, unknown sources, etc.)?

Only by individuals but nothing serious.

Q7: Have you ever faced sexual harassment at the workplace? If yes, what kind of harassment have you faced (example: messages, phone calls, verbal, physical, psychological, etc.)? How frequent have you faced this problem?

Once I received a few calls with an attempt at sexual harassment, which caused me mental distress some psychological stress. But I managed to handle it.

Q8: Have you ever faced discrimination in your career because of your gender? If so, please list the categories of discrimination – for example official designation, duties, assignments, promotion, salaries, maternity and other leaves, allowances, perks and privileges, etc. Briefly describe one or two examples that illustrate the discrimination.

I don't have a long career in journalism. So far I have not felt specifically discriminated against based on my gender.

Q9: Generally, how safe and secure, or insecure do you feel as a working female journalist in a male-dominated profession of journalism in Pakistan? Briefly explain why?

I have not felt insecure at the workplace but sometimes my interaction with people and public in the field worries me as people can feel threatening.

Q10. How, in your opinion, can journalism become a more female-friendly profession and how can female journalists overcome the work-related and gender-related challenges they face in this profession?

There needs to be a better recognition that women are as good as men. They need to be given the same assignments as men so that the impression that they may not be able to do the job is dispelled. There also need to be training for women so that they are equipped with the appropriate skills to become better journalists.

**Name changed on request for privacy and safety reasons*

Samina Alishah*

Lahore, Punjab

Q1: For how long have you been working as a journalist?

I have been practicing journalism since 2009.

Q2: Have you ever been threatened verbally in person as a result of your journalism work (news report, video, article, feature, photo, etc. that you produced)? If yes, please give a short description of the nature of threat.

No, I have never been threatened verbally.

Q3: Have you ever been threatened digitally (on phone, or social media, on email, messenger, SMS, etc.) as a result of your journalism work (news report, video, article, feature, photo, etc. that you produced)? If yes, please give a short description of the nature of threat.

No, I have never been threatened digitally.

Q4: Have you ever been attacked physically (hit, pushed, slapped, groped, etc.) as a result of your journalism work (news report, video, article, feature, photo, etc. that you produced)? If yes, please give a short description of the nature of physical attack.

No, I have never been threatened digitally.

Q5: What kind of threats and attacks have you faced (example: threat to murder, attack, kidnap, sexual harassment, blackmail, loss of job, etc.)?

I have been once threatened with the loss of my job because of a story I was a fixer for. It wasn't my story but I had to cut off my association with it because I felt threatened.

Q6: What kind of threat actors or threat sources have you faced threats from (example: militants, politicians, political activists, government officials, security personnel, law enforcement agencies, religious groups, mafias, feudals, criminals, private citizens, unknown sources, etc.)?

I have never been threatened directly and none by the categories outlined here.

Q7: Have you ever faced sexual harassment at the workplace? If yes, what kind of harassment have you faced (example: messages, phone calls, verbal, physical, psychological, etc.)? How frequent have you faced this problem?

No, I have never faced sexual harassment at the workplace.

Q8: Have you ever faced discrimination in your career because of your gender? If so, please list the categories of discrimination – for example official designation, duties, assignments, promotion, salaries, maternity and other leaves, allowances, perks and privileges, etc. Briefly describe one or two examples that illustrate the discrimination.

The wage differential between men and women in the workplace within the media industry is systemic and endemic. I am a victim of this circumstance too.

Q9: Generally, how safe and secure, or insecure do you feel as a working female journalist in a male-dominated profession of journalism in Pakistan? Briefly explain why?

The very task of reporting, for women journalists in Pakistan, is daunting and forbidding – I always feel insecure when out reporting in public places. Being ogled at, catcalled and groped are only a part of a whole set of problems I have to deal with when I'm out in the field. It can be incredibly demeaning and disorienting.

Q10. How, in your opinion, can journalism become a more female-friendly profession and how can female journalists overcome the work-related and gender-related challenges they face in this profession?

Media houses in Pakistan must provide reliable transportation for women journalists. Most women, regardless of whether they're married to someone who owns a car or are posted on senior positions in media organizations, do not mostly own a means of transport of their own. Considering that Lahore does not have a reliable public transport system and the aggregate cost of using rickshaws and ride services every day is prohibitive, women journalists must get a leg up – it needs to be a gender-affirmative policy with appropriate good working conditions. The wage differential issue must be addressed and wages determined, not on the basis of what a woman earned at a previous job, but on a par with any man working at that post. At the media houses, considerations must be made for women running entire households or those who are on their own.

**Name changed on request for privacy and safety reasons*

Shaima Nazir *

Islamabad

Q1: For how long have you been working as a journalist?

I have been working as a journalist since 2004. I work for TV, write blogs and articles for online publications too.

Q2: Have you ever been threatened verbally in person as a result of your journalism work (news report, video, article, feature, photo, etc. that you produced)? If yes, please give a short description of the nature of threat.

Yes, I have been threatened verbally. It was after I wrote a blog against a member of the National Assembly of a religious party who frequents prime time TV channels. I received a threatening call from his men after that and faced difficulties.

Q3: Have you ever been threatened digitally (on phone, or social media, on email, messenger, SMS, etc.) as a result of your journalism work (news report, video, article, feature, photo, etc. that you produced)? If yes, please give a short description of the nature of threat.

Yes, I have been threatened digitally as well. I wrote an article about the sit-in in front of the Parliament in 2016 by the followers of Mumtaz Qadri, the guard who assassinated Punjab Governor Salman Taseer. In response, his followers abused me on social media. Some of them even threatened me to harm me.

Q4: Have you ever been attacked physically (hit, pushed, slapped, groped, etc.) as a result of your journalism work (news report, video, article, feature, photo, etc. that you produced)? If yes, please give a short description of the nature of physical attack.

No, I have never been attacked physically.

Q5: What kind of threats and attacks have you faced (example: threat to murder, attack, kidnap, sexual harassment, blackmail, loss of job, etc.)?

On a few occasions I have been exposed to disturbing verbal abuse, sexual harassment and threat of serious consequences for my journalism work.

Q6: What kind of threat actors or threat sources have you faced threats from (example: militants, politicians, political activists, government officials, security personnel, law enforcement agencies, religious groups, mafias, feudals, criminals, private citizens, unknown sources, etc.)?

On a few occasions I have been threatened by religious groups for expressing my views about them in blogs and articles that have been published online.

Q7: Have you ever faced sexual harassment at the workplace? If yes, what kind of harassment have you faced (example: messages, phone calls, verbal, physical, psychological, etc.)? How frequent have you faced this problem?

Yes, I have faced psychological and verbal harassment that was sexual in nature. Once, someone tried to get physical with me but I thwarted him and he failed. Another time I was offered perks, privileges and opportunities in exchange for a sexual relationship. Another time I filed a complaint against a supervisor. An inquiry committee was formed but the harasser used his contacts as he was friends with higher management, which pressurized the committee into absolving the harasser saying the harassment was “just in the form of gossip, not real”.

Q8: Have you ever faced discrimination in your career because of your gender? If so, please list the categories of discrimination – for example official designation, duties, assignments, promotion, salaries, maternity and other leaves, allowances, perks and privileges, etc. Briefly describe one or two examples that illustrate the discrimination.

Yes, I have faced, like I have seen other female colleagues, a lot of discrimination in promotions and allowances. Whenever we women in the media sector demand equal opportunities, the usual defense against it by our male colleagues is the pathetic allegation that “girls never work properly” or that their input is “never substantial.”

Q9: Generally, how safe and secure, or insecure do you feel as a working female journalist in a male-dominated profession of journalism in Pakistan? Briefly explain why?

This profession is insecure because there is less space for women. There are hardly any women on managerial posts. In my opinion, there is no merit for girls but friendship with men.

Q10. How, in your opinion, can journalism become a more female-friendly profession and how can female journalists overcome the work-related and gender-related challenges they face in this profession?

It can become a female friendly profession with equal job opportunities, equal pay scales and better security at work place.

*Name changed on request for privacy and safety reasons

Sidrah Roghay

Karachi

Q1: For how long have you been working as a journalist?

I have been working in journalism since 2011.

Q2: Have you ever been threatened verbally in person as a result of your journalism work (news report, video, article, feature, photo, etc. that you produced)? If yes, please give a short description of the nature of threat.

Yes, I have experienced intimidation. I have received phone calls from people threatening to sue me for my reporting.

Q3: Have you ever been threatened digitally (on phone, or social media, on email, messenger, SMS, etc.) as a result of your journalism work (news report, video, article, feature, photo, etc. that you produced)? If yes, please give a short description of the nature of threat.

Yes – once I was trolled on Twitter for a story I did on schools which had stopped playing the national anthem. It was an unpleasant experience.

Q4: Have you ever been attacked physically (hit, pushed, slapped, groped, etc.) as a result of your journalism work (news report, video, article, feature, photo, etc. that you produced)? If yes, please give a short description of the nature of physical attack.

No, I have fortunately never been physically attacked.

Q5: What kind of threats and attacks have you faced (example: threat to murder, attack, kidnap, sexual harassment, blackmail, loss of job, etc.)?

I have not faced any serious threats or attacks.

Q6: What kind of threat actors or threat sources have you faced threats from (example: militants, politicians, political activists, government officials, security personnel, law enforcement agencies, religious groups, mafias, feudals, criminals, private citizens, unknown sources, etc.)?

My experience of intimidation has been mostly from private citizens.

Q7: Have you ever faced sexual harassment at the workplace? If yes, what kind of harassment have you faced (example: messages, phone calls, verbal, physical, psychological, etc.)? How frequent have you faced this problem?

Yes I have faced sexual harassment but it has been through receiving anonymous SMS and Facebook messages.

Q8: Have you ever faced discrimination in your career because of your gender? If so, please list the categories of discrimination – for example official designation, duties, assignments, promotion, salaries, maternity and other leaves, allowances, perks and privileges, etc. Briefly describe one or two examples that illustrate the discrimination.

My experience and observation has been that sometimes women are taken less seriously than men are. However, I have been lucky enough to be given enough chances to prove myself in the field and haven't been seriously discriminated against.

Q9: Generally, how safe and secure, or insecure do you feel as a working female journalist in a male-dominated profession of journalism in Pakistan? Briefly explain why?

Not a great deal insecure but one has to sometimes be chaperoned by a male colleague while visiting areas off limits to women. In this case it becomes, basically, an extraneous factor designed to provide a layer of security.

Q10. How, in your opinion, can journalism become a more female-friendly profession and how can female journalists overcome the work-related and gender-related challenges they face in this profession?

Journalism in Pakistan can become a more female-friendly professional only if more women join and continuing to be part of the workforce. This will change attitudes and improve environment. Newcomers need role models to look up to and this is as true for females who newly join the profession as males do. We need to strengthen the institution of mentoring, which will improve institutional environment.

Fouzia Zeb

Peshawar

Q1: For how long have you been working as a journalist?

I'm relatively a newcomer; I have been a practitioner of journalism since 2014.

Q2: Have you ever been threatened verbally in person as a result of your journalism work (news report, video, article, feature, photo, etc. that you produced)? If yes, please give a short description of the nature of threat.

I have not been threatened verbally so far.

Q3: Have you ever been threatened digitally (on phone, or social media, on email, messenger, SMS, etc.) as a result of your journalism work (news report, video, article, feature, photo, etc. that you produced)? If yes, please give a short description of the nature of threat.

No, I have not been threatened through digital means so far.

Q4: Have you ever been attacked physically (hit, pushed, slapped, groped, etc.) as a result of your journalism work (news report, video, article, feature, photo, etc. that you produced)? If yes, please give a short description of the nature of physical attack.

No, I have never faced any physical attack so far.

Q5: What kind of threats and attacks have you faced (example: threat to murder, attack, kidnap, sexual harassment, blackmail, loss of job, etc.)?

I have never faced harassment at the workplace but have experienced mild forms of harassment from strangers when I'm out in the field on duty.

Q6: What kind of threat actors or threat sources have you faced threats from (example: militants, politicians, political activists, government officials, security personnel, law enforcement agencies, religious groups, mafias, feudals, criminals, private citizens, unknown sources, etc.)?

Whatever forms of intimidation I have faced have been when I'm out in the field – it is usually private citizens who, it appears, aren't used to the concept of women reporting from public places. While I've never faced any physical intimidation in the field, I have often experienced people staring at me and interfering with my private mental and psychological space. This tends to affect the work of female journalists who are out in the field on duty.

Q7: Have you ever faced sexual harassment at the workplace? If yes, what kind of harassment have you faced (example: messages, phone calls, verbal, physical, psychological, etc.)? How frequent have you faced this problem?

No, I have never faced harassment at the workplace. Whenever I have faced it, it has always been in the field.

Q8: Have you ever faced discrimination in your career because of your gender? If so, please list the categories of discrimination – for example official designation, duties, assignments, promotion, salaries, maternity and other leaves, allowances, perks and privileges, etc. Briefly describe one or two examples that illustrate the discrimination.

It has been both my experience and observation that female journalists get an unfair deal – they usually face discrimination when it comes to duties and assignments. We females often don't get the best reporting subjects and certainly get less paid than our male counterparts for the same level of effort although we are exposed to more risks.

Q9: Generally, how safe and secure, or insecure do you feel as a working female journalist in a male-dominated profession of journalism in Pakistan? Briefly explain why?

Every day it is clear to me that it is a male dominated society where people often judge females not due to their abilities but due to their physical features and personality. This can make the workplace seem awkward and uncomfortable and sometimes even lead to a sense of insecurity. This, in turn, affects morale and makes us curb our enthusiasm and even our ideas and opinions.

Q10. How, in your opinion, can journalism become a more female-friendly profession and how can female journalists overcome the work-related and gender-related challenges they face in this profession?

There are far fewer women than men in journalism. So we need to improve this disproportionality by encouraging more educated females to join the profession, which will improve the general environment. We also need to develop and implement official policies that discourage discrimination, promote ethical behaviors and attitudes, and offer equal chances to excel and progress to all female journalists.

Humera Riaz*

Islamabad

Q1: For how long have you been working as a journalist?

I have a background in editing and have been working as a journalist since 2002.

Q2: Have you ever been threatened verbally in person as a result of your journalism work (news report, video, article, feature, photo, etc. that you produced)? If yes, please give a short description of the nature of threat.

No, I haven't been threatened verbally – perhaps because I work within an office, in the Newsroom. We don't interact much with people from outside the office.

Q3: Have you ever been threatened digitally (on phone, or social media, on email, messenger, SMS, etc.) as a result of your journalism work (news report, video, article, feature, photo, etc. that you produced)? If yes, please give a short description of the nature of threat.

No, I have never had such an experience.

Q4: Have you ever been attacked physically (hit, pushed, slapped, groped, etc.) as a result of your journalism work (news report, video, article, feature, photo, etc. that you produced)? If yes, please give a short description of the nature of physical attack.

No, I have never been attacked physically.

Q5: What kind of threats and attacks have you faced (example: threat to murder, attack, kidnap, sexual harassment, blackmail, loss of job, etc.)?

I have experienced none of these.

Q6: What kind of threat actors or threat sources have you faced threats from (example: militants, politicians, political activists, government officials, security personnel, law enforcement agencies, religious groups, mafias, feudals, criminals, private citizens, unknown sources, etc.)?

This does not apply in my case.

Q7: Have you ever faced sexual harassment at the workplace? If yes, what kind of harassment have you faced (example: messages, phone calls, verbal, physical, psychological, etc.)? How frequent have you faced this problem?

Yes, I have experienced sexual harassment at the workplace, if we consider being stared at often and meaningful sentences with double entendre thrown my way. Actually, this is virtually an

everyday reality. I face psychological harassment almost every day. The stares follow me and my other female colleagues wherever we go, which makes me feel very uncomfortable. It's stressful at times.

Q8: Have you ever faced discrimination in your career because of your gender? If so, please list the categories of discrimination – for example official designation, duties, assignments, promotion, salaries, maternity and other leaves, allowances, perks and privileges, etc. Briefly describe one or two examples that illustrate the discrimination.

Discrimination on the basis of gender is rampant, especially when it comes to salaries and promotions. Female journalists are invariably paid less for the same kind of work and level of effort and we hardly get a promotion even if we work harder and are more productive than our male colleagues, in general.

Q9: Generally, how safe and secure, or insecure do you feel as a working female journalist in a male-dominated profession of journalism in Pakistan? Briefly explain why?

In general, journalism is an insecure profession for females because there is a lot of harassment which affects female journalists psychologically. It is astounding how often opportunities for promotion for females are linked to encouraging physical relationships with men, especially at the higher levels.

Q10. How, in your opinion, can journalism become a more female-friendly profession and how can female journalists overcome the work-related and gender-related challenges they face in this profession?

We need proper anti-discriminatory and anti-harassment policies that are officially implemented and monitored for strict implementation. Otherwise, the journalism workplace is bleak for women.

**Name changed on request for privacy and safety reasons*

Saiqa Hussain*

Karachi

Q1: For how long have you been working as a journalist?

I have been working as a journalist since 2013, which includes the last two years in Pakistan.

Q2: Have you ever been threatened verbally in person as a result of your journalism work (news report, video, article, feature, photo, etc. that you produced)? If yes, please give a short description of the nature of threat.

I have not experienced any threats coming my way.

Q3: Have you ever been threatened digitally (on phone, or social media, on email, messenger, SMS, etc.) as a result of your journalism work (news report, video, article, feature, photo, etc. that you produced)? If yes, please give a short description of the nature of threat.

No, I have not experienced any threat to my person through any digital medium.

Q4: Have you ever been attacked physically (hit, pushed, slapped, groped, etc.) as a result of your journalism work (news report, video, article, feature, photo, etc. that you produced)? If yes, please give a short description of the nature of physical attack.

I have never been attacked physically.

Q5: What kind of threats and attacks have you faced (example: threat to murder, attack, kidnap, sexual harassment, blackmail, loss of job, etc.)?

I have not been threatened but I have experienced hacking attempts on my work email and social media accounts. I am not sure if these related to my work or to my person, though.

Q6: What kind of threat actors or threat sources have you faced threats from (example: militants, politicians, political activists, government officials, security personnel, law enforcement agencies, religious groups, mafias, feudals, criminals, private citizens, unknown sources, etc.)?

None of the above as far, as I can make out.

Q7: Have you ever faced sexual harassment at the workplace? If yes, what kind of harassment have you faced (example: messages, phone calls, verbal, physical, psychological, etc.)? How frequent have you faced this problem?

I have faced some harassment at the workplace but I will choose to categorize it as psychological. This has involves staring and unnecessary preference over others. Not a day goes by when I'm

not aware of my gender and body because of my work and my profession, whether I am at the office or in the field.

Q8: Have you ever faced discrimination in your career because of your gender? If so, please list the categories of discrimination – for example official designation, duties, assignments, promotion, salaries, maternity and other leaves, allowances, perks and privileges, etc. Briefly describe one or two examples that illustrate the discrimination.

I have not faced any discrimination on the basis of gender related to career mobility.

Q9: Generally, how safe and secure, or insecure do you feel as a working female journalist in a male-dominated profession of journalism in Pakistan? Briefly explain why?

I think it works both ways. Sometimes I feel I'm not taken seriously because I am a female journalist. At other times I feel I'm able to get my hands on information because of my gender that would not have been available to a male journalist. I do feel insecure though. I'm alert and conscious of my body and how covered/uncovered I am at all times. This happens to the point where it can be extremely draining and agitating.

Q10. How, in your opinion, can journalism become a more female-friendly profession and how can female journalists overcome the work-related and gender-related challenges they face in this profession?

This problem is not so much about the profession of journalism as it is about society and its attitudes in general. I think some solutions are the same as any workplace trying to combat harassment such as having support from your boss and transparency in official interactions – is your work good, can it use improvement, what does a female journalist lack, where does she need to work harder – and so on. Be willing to learn from the experiences of females in the workplace and open conversations about her work could be beneficial for women. I also think that support, encouragement and a staff that is willing to listen can go a long way so that women can be given a space where they are allowed to speak up. Part of the problem also starts from our homes and society – every time we females step out, we are reminded that we are women and therefore unsafe because of this fact. This keeps our minds and hearts alert to potential trouble. Another way for women to overcome some of these barriers is to remember that their strengths lie in empathizing, nurturing. As draining as it can be to fight this fight every single day, we women are much stronger than society makes us out to be. If we use our strengths to reach out to other women and men who are willing to use their male privilege to put the spotlight on women, we will see some change.

**Name changed on request for privacy and safety reasons*

Anisa Ahmed*

Islamabad

Q1: For how long have you been working as a journalist?

I have been associated with various print and electronic media organizations since 2005. Currently, I am working as a reporter for a daily based in Islamabad.

Q2: Have you ever been threatened verbally in person as a result of your journalism work (news report, video, article, feature, photo, etc. that you produced)? If yes, please give a short description of the nature of threat.

No, I have never been threatened verbally.

Q3: Have you ever been threatened digitally (on phone, or social media, on email, messenger, SMS, etc.) as a result of your journalism work (news report, video, article, feature, photo, etc. that you produced)? If yes, please give a short description of the nature of threat.

No, I have never been threatened digitally.

Q6: What kind of threat actors or threat sources have you faced threats from (example: militants, politicians, political activists, government officials, security personnel, law enforcement agencies, religious groups, mafias, feudals, criminals, private citizens, unknown sources, etc.)?

I have never faced threats from these categories of actors.

Q7: Have you ever faced sexual harassment at the workplace? If yes, what kind of harassment have you faced (example: messages, phone calls, verbal, physical, psychological, etc.)? How frequent have you faced this problem?

Fortunately I have never faced sexual harassment or felt uneasy on this count.

Q8: Have you ever faced discrimination in your career because of your gender? If so, please list the categories of discrimination – for example official designation, duties, assignments, promotion, salaries, maternity and other leaves, allowances, perks and privileges, etc. Briefly describe one or two examples that illustrate the discrimination.

I have been working for over a decade now and there have been some instances where I have been discrimination against in salaries, promotions and leaves.

Q9: Generally, how safe and secure, or insecure do you feel as a working female journalist in a male-dominated profession of journalism in Pakistan? Briefly explain why?

There are its disadvantages but generally I think journalism is a secure field for women. The problems they may face here can be faced in any other profession as well.

Q10. How, in your opinion, can journalism become a more female-friendly profession and how can female journalists overcome the work-related and gender-related challenges they face in this profession?

The environment for women in media can further improve if general societal attitudes change. I think proactive policies that emphasize and practice fairness, merit and capability, this will benefit women who are as good, if not better, than men.

**Name changed on request for privacy and safety reasons*

Hira Shah

Peshawar

Q1: For how long have you been working as a journalist?

I have been practicing professional journalism since 2012.

Q2: Have you ever been threatened verbally in person as a result of your journalism work (news report, video, article, feature, photo, etc. that you produced)? If yes, please give a short description of the nature of threat.

No, I have never been threatened verbally.

Q3: Have you ever been threatened digitally (on phone, or social media, on email, messenger, SMS, etc.) as a result of your journalism work (news report, video, article, feature, photo, etc. that you produced)? If yes, please give a short description of the nature of threat.

No, I have never been threatened digitally.

Q4: Have you ever been attacked physically (hit, pushed, slapped, groped, etc.) as a result of your journalism work (news report, video, article, feature, photo, etc. that you produced)? If yes, please give a short description of the nature of physical attack.

No, I have never been attacked physically.

Q5: What kind of threats and attacks have you faced (example: threat to murder, attack, kidnap, sexual harassment, blackmail, loss of job, etc.)?

I have never experienced specific threats or attacks.

Q6: What kind of threat actors or threat sources have you faced threats from (example: militants, politicians, political activists, government officials, security personnel, law enforcement agencies, religious groups, mafias, feudals, criminals, private citizens, unknown sources, etc.)?

I have, thankfully, never had the experience of facing any threats from these sources.

Q7: Have you ever faced sexual harassment at the workplace? If yes, what kind of harassment have you faced (example: messages, phone calls, verbal, physical, psychological, etc.)? How frequent have you faced this problem?

No, I have never faced sexual harassment at the workplace.

Q8: Have you ever faced discrimination in your career because of your gender? If so, please list the categories of discrimination – for example official designation, duties, assignments,

promotion, salaries, maternity and other leaves, allowances, perks and privileges, etc. Briefly describe one or two examples that illustrate the discrimination.

There has been some form of discrimination related to my gender now and then. Sometime I was stopped from covering a public event but this meant to not punish me but protect me since protests and rallies in Peshawar can turn violent. While I have not faced discrimination against my own person, it would be good to have a dedicated space for women in office.

Q9: Generally, how safe and secure, or insecure do you feel as a working female journalist in a male-dominated profession of journalism in Pakistan? Briefly explain why?

Any sense of security or insecurity I have felt while practicing journalism hasn't come from the workplace but rather in terms of societal attitudes. The people, in general, stare at women journalists in the field, which is an uncomfortable feeling. In crowded areas, especially, there are chances of increased insecurity.

Q10. How, in your opinion, can journalism become a more female-friendly profession and how can female journalists overcome the work-related and gender-related challenges they face in this profession?

I have personally not faced either a hostile work environment or any specific discrimination but I think there is always room for improvement. The roles of men and women need not necessarily be the same. Respect and facilitation are important.

Yusra Salim

Karachi

Q1: For how long have you been working as a journalist?

I have been working as a journalist since 2012.

Q2: Have you ever been threatened verbally in person as a result of your journalism work (news report, video, article, feature, photo, etc. that you produced)? If yes, please give a short description of the nature of threat.

Yes, once an official threatened me after I reported on the sad state and poor conditions of his department.

Q3: Have you ever been threatened digitally (on phone, or social media, on email, messenger, SMS, etc.) as a result of your journalism work (news report, video, article, feature, photo, etc. that you produced)? If yes, please give a short description of the nature of threat.

I experienced threats digitally twice – a threatening phone call each from two different officials. One of them threatened to take the matter to the owners of my newspaper for my news report while the other one mentioned himself as a relative of a renowned political figure and the results I could face of him being “very influential.”

Q4: Have you ever been attacked physically (hit, pushed, slapped, groped, etc.) as a result of your journalism work (news report, video, article, feature, photo, etc. that you produced)? If yes, please give a short description of the nature of physical attack.

Yes I have been pushed and attacked physically a few times while covering some protests in public spaces. One time some young boys started harassing me when I tried taking their version during a protest on a weekend morning in front of the Karachi Press Club. Unfortunately, I had to abort my assignment and leave the site for my safety.

Q5: What kind of threats and attacks have you faced (example: threat to murder, attack, kidnap, sexual harassment, blackmail, loss of job, etc.)?

I have faced several threats. All the threats were verbal and were clearly intended to scare me and force me to step back from my reporting on their departments and their performance. Most of these threats related to my losing my job if I persisted in my reporting.

Q6: What kind of threat actors or threat sources have you faced threats from (example: militants, politicians, political activists, government officials, security personnel, law enforcement agencies, religious groups, mafias, feudals, criminals, private citizens, unknown sources, etc.)?

Threats for my work have mostly emanated from government officials and some from feudals.

Q7: Have you ever faced sexual harassment at the workplace? If yes, what kind of harassment have you faced (example: messages, phone calls, verbal, physical, psychological, etc.)? How frequent have you faced this problem?

No, not at all. The organization I work for has a strict policy against sexual harassment and also my colleagues have always been professional.

Q8: Have you ever faced discrimination in your career because of your gender? If so, please list the categories of discrimination – for example official designation, duties, assignments, promotion, salaries, maternity and other leaves, allowances, perks and privileges, etc. Briefly describe one or two examples that illustrate the discrimination.

Yes, discrimination is nearly always in the air for females. Being a journalist I have never considered myself a 'female first' but rather a 'reporter first.' Inside the office the discrimination relates to assignments and work. I usually do not get the chance to undertake certain assignments for fear I may face problems because of my gender and sometimes the decision makers think I may not be able to perform the same way my gender counterpart would. Out in the field I feel more discrimination when other reporters ask me why I am there at a protest or at a political party's beat, implying that this is not a 'girl's job'. For example, the authority figure at the office would not send me to cover a fire incident because he feels it would be difficult for me to report there. The authorities and fellow journalists inside and outside the office need to understand – and respect – the fact that I can and will cover any event related to my beat and that my gender does not diminish me.

Q9: Generally, how safe and secure, or insecure do you feel as a working female journalist in a male-dominated profession of journalism in Pakistan? Briefly explain why?

I feel secure because insecurity accrues from within oneself and if you know what you are doing is right then let the men be insecure from your work and let your reports do the talking. I believe that men do not feel that you cannot work but they know that you can work better than them, which is why they try to temper your morale and make you feel that women are only made to do soft beats.

Q10. How, in your opinion, can journalism become a more female-friendly profession and how can female journalists overcome the work-related and gender-related challenges they face in this profession?

If men can't be supportive, women need to be stronger. If you're a woman, just do not listen to the people around you who are negative and do not engage with them in defense of your work. Just keep doing what you have been hired for and let your work do the talking. You can't make everyone happy so just focus on being professional. Reporting and journalism is the best field

and career for women if you love it so make it friendly for yourself. Of course, it would be good if there are official policies that deter discrimination and encourage merit and performance.

Xari Jalil

Lahore

Q1: For how long have you been working as a journalist?

I am an old-timer. I have been in journalism since 2000.

Q2: Have you ever been threatened verbally in person as a result of your journalism work (news report, video, article, feature, photo, etc. that you produced)? If yes, please give a short description of the nature of threat.

Oh yes. I was once in the field in Karachi doing a follow-up story of a child who had been killed in a crossfire episode. It turned out that he lived in Ranchore Lane which is an area dominated by Muttahida Qaumi Movement and Jamaat-i-Islami. When I came a little too close, the child's uncle who seemed to have an influence in the area threatened me to stop working on the story if I knew what was better for me. He said "Yahan se chalay jao aur aainda nazar na aana warna phir main jo karoonga uss ka zimmedar nahin hoonga [Leave now and don't come back or else I won't be responsible for what happens to you]."

Q3: Have you ever been threatened digitally (on phone, or social media, on email, messenger, SMS, etc.) as a result of your journalism work (news report, video, article, feature, photo, etc. that you produced)? If yes, please give a short description of the nature of threat.

I have not been threatened but I have certainly been abused digitally. I did a story on 'missing persons' of the Christian residential colony Yohanabad and investigated if this was becoming the new norm. As a result of my reports I received some terrible messages in private on Twitter abusing me with expletives and accusing me of being anti-state.

Q4: Have you ever been attacked physically (hit, pushed, slapped, groped, etc.) as a result of your journalism work (news report, video, article, feature, photo, etc. that you produced)? If yes, please give a short description of the nature of physical attack.

No, I have never put myself in such a situation where I was ever physically targeted. Otherwise I have faced all kinds of sexual harassment at work. I have also been in some conflict situations where there has been some pushing and shoving but not directed towards me.

Q5: What kind of threats and attacks have you faced (example: threat to murder, attack, kidnap, sexual harassment, blackmail, loss of job, etc.)?

I continue to receive spam and crank calls but whether it is because of my work, I do not know. They are mostly sexual in nature. Besides this I have faced not direct intimidation related to my work. I was once part of a conflict zone while reporting in Yohanabad when two groups of Christians and Muslims clashed with each other and I was trapped inside Yohanabad with reports

of all exits blocked by the Muslim group. I, along with the other Christians, were on the run looking for places to hide.

Q6: What kind of threat actors or threat sources have you faced threats from (example: militants, politicians, political activists, government officials, security personnel, law enforcement agencies, religious groups, mafias, feudals, criminals, private citizens, unknown sources, etc.)?

The nature of the threat of calling me anti-state could have been anyone who was sensitive about the Balochistan issue and seemed to have been incensed at my comparing Yohanabad with Balochistan. Seemed like a troll. Other than that it was the Karachi-based party MQM, including a reporter who was infamously supporting MQM and he did not like me asking 'too many questions' of the party's leader Farooq Sattar when he did a Meet the Press session in Karachi Press Club once.

Q7: Have you ever faced sexual harassment at the workplace? If yes, what kind of harassment have you faced (example: messages, phone calls, verbal, physical, psychological, etc.)? How frequent have you faced this problem?

I have faced sexual harassment from the first job I had which at a magazine. A man there from another department groped me because no one was around in office at that time. I threatened to tell on him and I did. In another job I was stared at constantly by this page-maker in a very sleazy manner. For some reason I ignored it. Then I was at a newspaper office when I was harassed by two crime reporters there. I was stared at and lewd comments were passed about me and my own words were twisted ambiguously to create sexual meanings and double entendres. My body was stared at openly. I have always faced sexual harassment of some kind while working in the field. In fact I was also targeted by female reporters who disapproved of my smoking and has issues with my dressing.

Q8: Have you ever faced discrimination in your career because of your gender? If so, please list the categories of discrimination – for example official designation, duties, assignments, promotion, salaries, maternity and other leaves, allowances, perks and privileges, etc. Briefly describe one or two examples that illustrate the discrimination.

Yes. At one place, when I was based in Sindh, they hesitated in giving me the crime beat because I believed I had the prowess to do the beat albeit for the first time. But they would have chosen a green male reporter to do it. There was a stress in pleasing the chief reporter by ordering tea for him, or having friendly (although non-sexual) relations with him, and by spending time with him in his office. Because many of the young reporters, both male and female, were his students also, he tried to create the same kind of environment in office also. I tried to keep a distance from this situation but that was obviously not liked. I spent a lot of time with another senior reporter who was like a mentor to me and taught me many things and introduced me to information sources. I was told by the chief reporter that my mentor was a womanizer and I should stop talking to him. I refused to listen though, because I had no cause for grief from my mentor. I was sidelined for assignments, etc., by the chief reporter due to this. When I moved to Punjab, I faced

a different type of discrimination. Being an Urdu speaking non-Lahori was bad and worse – I was a Karachiite and discriminated on the basis of my ethnicity. In my newsroom, I was not given good stories to do. I was told repeatedly that I was inept and not experienced enough while a junior reporter who had less than half my experience was given a lot more importance on basis of his glibness and sycophancy.

Q9: Generally, how safe and secure, or insecure do you feel as a working female journalist in a male-dominated profession of journalism in Pakistan? Briefly explain why?

I personally do not feel insecure as a woman. It is more annoying to me than unsafe because it is the male gender that sometimes has a problem with me. In conflict zone reporting, the entire field is male dominated and the whole crew stares me down as if I am in an odd place but I have to ignore it and carry on because it is useless to do anything else at that time.

Q10. How, in your opinion, can journalism become a more female-friendly profession and how can female journalists overcome the work-related and gender-related challenges they face in this profession?

We can improve the situation by improving the numerical profile of women in media. Less than five percent of journalists in Pakistan are women. This is too low a number. There need to be more women practicing in media and making a career in journalism. Media houses also must proactively remove all discrimination against women journalists in award of beats and assignments. Without men seeing women in all ranks and tiers in media, women journalists will always be discriminated against.

Maiza Khan*

Peshawar

Q1: For how long have you been working as a journalist?

I have been practicing journalism since 2011.

Q2: Have you ever been threatened verbally in person as a result of your journalism work (news report, video, article, feature, photo, etc. that you produced)? If yes, please give a short description of the nature of threat.

I have often faced hostility. I cover health issues with a specialization in reporting on the state of hospitals. During news coverage several times I have experienced abuse from hospital staff and even physical prevention of coverage by them.

Q3: Have you ever been threatened digitally (on phone, or social media, on email, messenger, SMS, etc.) as a result of your journalism work (news report, video, article, feature, photo, etc. that you produced)? If yes, please give a short description of the nature of threat.

Yes, I have been threatened by phone and text messages from unidentified numbers and through my social media accounts in which I have been warned to stop reporting.

Q4: Have you ever been attacked physically (hit, pushed, slapped, groped, etc.) as a result of your journalism work (news report, video, article, feature, photo, etc. that you produced)? If yes, please give a short description of the nature of physical attack.

I have been attacked physically at least two times. One time at a major hospital in Peshawar when I was reporting the security staff tried to slap me but I held his hand and with the interference of other staff the situation was defused. Another time when out in the field to cover a terrorist act, we had a road accident with a car in which a group of persons became hostile and they tried to drag me from car but with the help of police we manage to stave it off but I remained in psychological stress for several days after that.

Q5: What kind of threats and attacks have you faced (example: threat to murder, attack, kidnap, sexual harassment, blackmail, loss of job, etc.)?

I have faced sexual harassment, attempts at blackmail and also threats of loss of my job. Each time it was traumatic.

Q6: What kind of threat actors or threat sources have you faced threats from (example: militants, politicians, political activists, government officials, security personnel, law enforcement agencies, religious groups, mafias, feudals, criminals, private citizens, unknown sources, etc.)?

Most of the threats I have faced have come from government officials and a couple of times from, unfortunately, my fellow staff members.

Q7: Have you ever faced sexual harassment at the workplace? If yes, what kind of harassment have you faced (example: messages, phone calls, verbal, physical, psychological, etc.)? How frequent have you faced this problem?

I have faced verbal and physical threats as well as psychological abuse from my fellow staff members. I even received some threatening text messages on my phone.

Q8: Have you ever faced discrimination in your career because of your gender? If so, please list the categories of discrimination – for example official designation, duties, assignments, promotion, salaries, maternity and other leaves, allowances, perks and privileges, etc. Briefly describe one or two examples that illustrate the discrimination.

Discrimination is rife wherever I have worked. I experience it every single day – from discrimination in award of duties and assignments to shortchanging me on salary and staff privileges, I have faced it all.

Q9: Generally, how safe and secure, or insecure do you feel as a working female journalist in a male-dominated profession of journalism in Pakistan? Briefly explain why?

I work in a challenging environment and steel myself for it. But still often I develop a sense of insecurity because of the behavior of some of my male colleagues.

Q10. How, in your opinion, can journalism become a more female-friendly profession and how can female journalists overcome the work-related and gender-related challenges they face in this profession?

We need to have written policies on prevention of harassment and discrimination and we need to have implementation mechanisms to ensure these policies are enforced. We also need to have an open environment where all harassment and discrimination can be safely reported and the culprits duly punished.

**Name changed on request for privacy and safety reasons*

Nosheen Naqvi

Lahore

Q1: For how long have you been working as a journalist?

I have been in the field of journalism since 2004 and I have worked for both print and electronic media.

Q2: Have you ever been threatened verbally in person as a result of your journalism work (news report, video, article, feature, photo, etc. that you produced)? If yes, please give a short description of the nature of threat.

I have been threatened verbally several times throughout my career. I have worked on women's issues and have done numerous investigative reports that have resulted in me receiving threats. This is an abnormal situation but unfortunately this is normal.

Q3: Have you ever been threatened digitally (on phone, or social media, on email, messenger, SMS, etc.) as a result of your journalism work (news report, video, article, feature, photo, etc. that you produced)? If yes, please give a short description of the nature of threat.

I have experienced threats through phone calls and through text messages on my phone many times.

Q4: Have you ever been attacked physically (hit, pushed, slapped, groped, etc.) as a result of your journalism work (news report, video, article, feature, photo, etc. that you produced)? If yes, please give a short description of the nature of physical attack.

I have received many threats but fortunately not physically.

Q5: What kind of threats and attacks have you faced (example: threat to murder, attack, kidnap, sexual harassment, blackmail, loss of job, etc.)?

Once I was threatened with murder and another time I was threatened with the loss of my job. Other threats were of generic nature.

Q6: What kind of threat actors or threat sources have you faced threats from (example: militants, politicians, political activists, government officials, security personnel, law enforcement agencies, religious groups, mafias, feudals, criminals, private citizens, unknown sources, etc.)?

Most of the threats I have experienced have come from either political sources and from private citizens, usually those who have been featured in my reports.

Q7: Have you ever faced sexual harassment at the workplace? If yes, what kind of harassment have you faced (example: messages, phone calls, verbal, physical, psychological, etc.)? How frequent have you faced this problem?

I have faced sexual harassment but it has always been psychological, never physical.

Q8: Have you ever faced discrimination in your career because of your gender? If so, please list the categories of discrimination – for example official designation, duties, assignments, promotion, salaries, maternity and other leaves, allowances, perks and privileges, etc. Briefly describe one or two examples that illustrate the discrimination.

I have faced discrimination because of my female gender more times than I care to recall. As have my other female colleagues. It is especially rampant when it comes to salary, promotion and official designation and title.

Q9: Generally, how safe and secure, or insecure do you feel as a working female journalist in a male-dominated profession of journalism in Pakistan? Briefly explain why?

I have steeled myself due to which I'm not exactly insecure but it is frustrating to face threats and harassment just because of people's antiquated views about gender. But I've seen some of my other female colleagues suffer terribly.

Q10. How, in your opinion, can journalism become a more female-friendly profession and how can female journalists overcome the work-related and gender-related challenges they face in this profession?

We simply need to have many more women in media than there are at present. My own experience tells me women as good as men and there is simply no justification for the horrendous disproportionality in gender parity at the workplace within media.

Naila Rashid*

Islamabad

Q1: For how long have you been working as a journalist?

I have been associated with various Urdu print media organizations since 2007. I am currently a reporter with a newspaper in Islamabad.

Q2: Have you ever been threatened verbally in person as a result of your journalism work (news report, video, article, feature, photo, etc. that you produced)? If yes, please give a short description of the nature of threat.

I received verbal abuse and threats from unidentified persons after one of my interviews with an infamous local cleric was re-shared on Facebook by one of my colleagues. The interview was actually published a year before it was re-shared by my colleague. In his interview, the cleric had boasted that a militant group banned by the government would come to power. After that I started receiving threatening calls warning me of serious consequences. The cleric gave a fiery sermon in his mosque against me and blamed me for intentionally defaming him. I received calls from unknown numbers and was followed on my way to office. Suspicious people were found standing in front of my house to intimidate me.

Q3: Have you ever been threatened digitally (on phone, or social media, on email, messenger, SMS, etc.) as a result of your journalism work (news report, video, article, feature, photo, etc. that you produced)? If yes, please give a short description of the nature of threat.

Yes – a lot, at one time because of the incident recounted above. I received threatening and abusive messages and calls on my WhatsApp and SMS. Unknown numbers sent me videos of the cleric's sermon. I also received audio recordings of women screaming, presumably threatening me with a similar condition.

Q4: Have you ever been attacked physically (hit, pushed, slapped, groped, etc.) as a result of your journalism work (news report, video, article, feature, photo, etc. that you produced)? If yes, please give a short description of the nature of physical attack.

No, I have never been physically hurt.

Q5: What kind of threats and attacks have you faced (example: threat to murder, attack, kidnap, sexual harassment, blackmail, loss of job, etc.)?

I've been threatened with murder, kidnap and worse.

Q6: What kind of threat actors or threat sources have you faced threats from (example: militants, politicians, political activists, government officials, security personnel, law enforcement agencies, religious groups, mafias, feudals, criminals, private citizens, unknown sources, etc.)?

I've been threatened mostly by religious and sectarian groups.

Q7: Have you ever faced sexual harassment at the workplace? If yes, what kind of harassment have you faced (example: messages, phone calls, verbal, physical, psychological, etc.)? How frequent have you faced this problem?

I have never faced sexual harassment at the workplace.

Q8: Have you ever faced discrimination in your career because of your gender? If so, please list the categories of discrimination – for example official designation, duties, assignments, promotion, salaries, maternity and other leaves, allowances, perks and privileges, etc. Briefly describe one or two examples that illustrate the discrimination.

I have never faced discrimination related to my gender.

Q9: Generally, how safe and secure, or insecure do you feel as a working female journalist in a male-dominated profession of journalism in Pakistan? Briefly explain why?

I face incredible threats and abuse, as recounted above. It made me very insecure and I still feel the same.

Q10. How, in your opinion, can journalism become a more female-friendly profession and how can female journalists overcome the work-related and gender-related challenges they face in this profession?

The society has strange and abusive attitudes towards women. I think the most important thing to do is to gender-sensitize men who are policy makers. The country and its policies should be women-friendly. You can't have a normal society if its women are threatened by men.

**Name changed on request for privacy and safety reasons*

Savaira Ahmed*

Karachi

Q1: For how long have you been working as a journalist?

I have been working in the media as a journalist since 2013.

Q2: Have you ever been threatened verbally in person as a result of your journalism work (news report, video, article, feature, photo, etc. that you produced)? If yes, please give a short description of the nature of threat.

No, I have never received verbal threats.

Q3: Have you ever been threatened digitally (on phone, or social media, on email, messenger, SMS, etc.) as a result of your journalism work (news report, video, article, feature, photo, etc. that you produced)? If yes, please give a short description of the nature of threat.

Once I did a story and received a call from my cellular service center that an unknown person wanted my call log details and this happened right after I had a story on a terrorist attack in the city. Although I never got another call because I asked the service center to not share any details, it was an oddity and troubled me.

Q4: Have you ever been attacked physically (hit, pushed, slapped, groped, etc.) as a result of your journalism work (news report, video, article, feature, photo, etc. that you produced)? If yes, please give a short description of the nature of physical attack.

I have not been physically attacked. Although once, while reporting a protest out in the field, a person tried to come at me to hit me thinking I was a protester from the opposite group but checked himself in time after he saw my press card.

Q5: What kind of threats and attacks have you faced (example: threat to murder, attack, kidnap, sexual harassment, blackmail, loss of job, etc.)?

I have had no experience of explicit threats or attacks directed at my person.

Q6: What kind of threat actors or threat sources have you faced threats from (example: militants, politicians, political activists, government officials, security personnel, law enforcement agencies, religious groups, mafias, feudals, criminals, private citizens, unknown sources, etc.)?

I do not have any experience of being threatened or attacked by these sources of potential threats. However, once an inspector general of police got upset over a satire piece I penned about him, and a reporter had to calm him down.

Q7: Have you ever faced sexual harassment at the workplace? If yes, what kind of harassment have you faced (example: messages, phone calls, verbal, physical, psychological, etc.)? How frequent have you faced this problem?

Luckily I have never faced sexual harassment.

Q8: Have you ever faced discrimination in your career because of your gender? If so, please list the categories of discrimination – for example official designation, duties, assignments, promotion, salaries, maternity and other leaves, allowances, perks and privileges, etc. Briefly describe one or two examples that illustrate the discrimination.

In case of duties being assigned I feel, yes, that there is discrimination on the basis of gender because the high-ups feel I won't be able to work on that story so until and unless they get a pitch, they don't send or direct how to go about things because I am still considered comparatively new to hard news. The pitch, when eventually assigned to me, is about 'soft issues' faced by women. If there is a rally of a political party, I would be sent to cover a cultural event while a male journalist would cover the rally (even when it's not his beat). So yes, I do feel there is latent and overt discrimination on the basis of gender at play.

Q9: Generally, how safe and secure, or insecure do you feel as a working female journalist in a male-dominated profession of journalism in Pakistan? Briefly explain why?

To be honest, not just in journalism, a working woman doesn't really generally feel safe anywhere in Pakistan because misogyny is deep-rooted in our institutions. When I go to cover any assigned story, I need to make sure that the people, if they happen to be males, do not harass me in any way, i.e., by being needlessly friendly, passing sexist remarks, etc., because to get the story, one has to know the line between what's acceptable and what's not. In most newsrooms, it's a common norm to use cusswords which are sexist or homophobic in nature and although that has become acceptable, it does make women feel uncomfortable.

Q10. How, in your opinion, can journalism become a more female-friendly profession and how can female journalists overcome the work-related and gender-related challenges they face in this profession?

Journalism can become better for women by giving equal opportunities to them and helping them work through their assignments and responsibilities. The reason many women in journalism in Pakistan feel that they won't be able to work on a story is precisely because of the fear of how they would be able to face the situation that might arise. But if they are not given the opportunity to grow in their positions, how will they learn? Editors need to put their trust and confidence in female journalists with respect to their work, understand their reservations and back them up so they might be able to face challenges.

**Name changed on request for privacy and safety reasons*

Rani Safeer*

Karachi

Q1: For how long have you been working as a journalist?

I have been working in journalism since 2008.

Q2: Have you ever been threatened verbally in person as a result of your journalism work (news report, video, article, feature, photo, etc. that you produced)? If yes, please give a short description of the nature of threat.

I have never been threatened verbally in person.

Q3: Have you ever been threatened digitally (on phone, or social media, on email, messenger, SMS, etc.) as a result of your journalism work (news report, video, article, feature, photo, etc. that you produced)? If yes, please give a short description of the nature of threat.

I have never been threatened digitally.

Q4: Have you ever been attacked physically (hit, pushed, slapped, groped, etc.) as a result of your journalism work (news report, video, article, feature, photo, etc. that you produced)? If yes, please give a short description of the nature of physical attack.

I have never been attacked physically.

Q5: What kind of threats and attacks have you faced (example: threat to murder, attack, kidnap, sexual harassment, blackmail, loss of job, etc.)?

I have never been threatened or attacked for my work.

Q6: What kind of threat actors or threat sources have you faced threats from (example: militants, politicians, political activists, government officials, security personnel, law enforcement agencies, religious groups, mafias, feudals, criminals, private citizens, unknown sources, etc.)?

I have faced some abuse but it was through the phone and I could not make out who was abusing me although it was not related to my journalism work.

Q7: Have you ever faced sexual harassment at the workplace? If yes, what kind of harassment have you faced (example: messages, phone calls, verbal, physical, psychological, etc.)? How frequent have you faced this problem?

I received anonymous phone calls twice – each time it was sexually motivated.

Q8: Have you ever faced discrimination in your career because of your gender? If so, please list the categories of discrimination – for example official designation, duties, assignments, promotion, salaries, maternity and other leaves, allowances, perks and privileges, etc. Briefly describe one or two examples that illustrate the discrimination.

Women in Pakistan in the media sector are definitely paid less than the men for the same set of responsibilities. There is clear wage discrimination.

Q9: Generally, how safe and secure, or insecure do you feel as a working female journalist in a male-dominated profession of journalism in Pakistan? Briefly explain why?

I mostly feel safe. Perhaps this is primarily because I report on softer beats such as culture – fields that do not generally engender threats or harassment.

Q10. How, in your opinion, can journalism become a more female-friendly profession and how can female journalists overcome the work-related and gender-related challenges they face in this profession?

The management must actively crack down on gender based discriminatory policies. Also harassment complaints should be taken seriously and the culprits should be made an example of.

**Name changed on request for privacy and safety reasons*

Arifa Mahmood*

Islamabad

Q1: For how long have you been working as a journalist?

I have been working in journalism since 2007. I have worked with several print and electronic media organizations and news agencies.

Q2: Have you ever been threatened verbally in person as a result of your journalism work (news report, video, article, feature, photo, etc. that you produced)? If yes, please give a short description of the nature of threat.

Yes, I was once threatened by a federal minister who got upset by my question about some happenings in his ministry. He said I had messed with “the wrong person.” After that, a source in the Press Information Department of the Federal Ministry of Information and Broadcasting informed me that a senior official of the ministry had been seeking information from them about me and my work history. I felt threatened. In another episode, I wrote a story about alleged corruption in one of the federal government programs. I received a call from an unknown number saying that the executive director of the program plans to do “something against me” and I better issue a corrigendum of my story. I declined.

Q3: Have you ever been threatened digitally (on phone, or social media, on email, messenger, SSMS, etc.) as a result of your journalism work (news report, video, article, feature, photo, etc. that you produced)? If yes, please give a short description of the nature of threat.

Indeed – the phone call from an unknown number to my story against a federal government program was a proper, serious threat. Also, I received a phone call from one of the members of the Cinema Censor Board when I published a story against banning of a feature film by it. He abused me for publishing a story against their decision and warned me.

Q4: Have you ever been attacked physically (hit, pushed, slapped, groped, etc.) as a result of your journalism work (news report, video, article, feature, photo, etc. that you produced)? If yes, please give a short description of the nature of physical attack.

No, I have never been attacked physically.

Q5: What kind of threats and attacks have you faced (example: threat to murder, attack, kidnap, sexual harassment, blackmail, loss of job, etc.)?

All threats I have received warned me on unspecified by “serious consequences.”

Q6: What kind of threat actors or threat sources have you faced threats from (example: militants, politicians, political activists, government officials, security personnel, law enforcement agencies, religious groups, mafias, feudals, criminals, private citizens, unknown sources, etc.)

Most of the threats I have faced have come from government officials.

Q7: Have you ever faced sexual harassment at the workplace? If yes, what kind of harassment have you faced (example: messages, phone calls, verbal, physical, psychological, etc.)? How frequent have you faced this problem?

Yes, I have faced sexual harassment at the workplace. During one of my jobs with a news agency, there was aggressive staring, psychological harassment and hindrances in working almost every day. When I complained to the top management about the unrelenting harassment, instead of providing me relief, the editor expelled me from the job.

Q8: Have you ever faced discrimination in your career because of your gender? If so, please list the categories of discrimination – for example official designation, duties, assignments, promotion, salaries, maternity and other leaves, allowances, perks and privileges, etc. Briefly describe one or two examples that illustrate the discrimination.

I have faced gender discrimination at virtually every place I have worked. The discrimination is mainly in job opportunities, salaries, benefits distribution, credit line, promotions, allowances and perks – all men are given cars in the organization I am currently working for but not women.

Q9: Generally, how safe and secure, or insecure do you feel as a working female journalist in a male-dominated profession of journalism in Pakistan? Briefly explain why?

At least I have felt insecurity wherever I have worked in this journalism profession. Having said this it is probably one of the more 'safer' places for women. However, you have to be on your toes and your safety from harassment partly depends on your conduct. But it can be stressful.

Q10. How, in your opinion, can journalism become a more female-friendly profession and how can female journalists overcome the work-related and gender-related challenges they face in this profession?

Journalism can become a more female-friendly profession with greater gender sensitization of men, equal job opportunities, promotions on merit, women posted in managerial positions, the implementation of the anti-harassment law and provision of basic facilities such as separate washrooms, day care, maternity leave, etc.

**Name changed on request for privacy and safety reasons*

Naseem Zaheen*

Peshawar

Q1: For how long have you been working as a journalist?

I have been in this profession for quite a while now – I joined in 1999.

Q2: Have you ever been threatened verbally in person as a result of your journalism work (news report, video, article, feature, photo, etc. that you produced)? If yes, please give a short description of the nature of threat.

No, I haven't been threatened verbally ever – perhaps because my professional responsibilities are soft – no hard thematic beats.

Q3: Have you ever been threatened digitally (on phone, or social media, on email, messenger, SMS, etc.) as a result of your journalism work (news report, video, article, feature, photo, etc. that you produced)? If yes, please give a short description of the nature of threat.

I have never faced threats by phone.

Q4: Have you ever been attacked physically (hit, pushed, slapped, groped, etc.) as a result of your journalism work (news report, video, article, feature, photo, etc. that you produced)? If yes, please give a short description of the nature of physical attack.

No, I have never faced any physical attack or confrontation.

Q5: What kind of threats and attacks have you faced (example: threat to murder, attack, kidnap, sexual harassment, blackmail, loss of job, etc.)?

I have been fortunate – no overt threats or attacks.

Q6: What kind of threat actors or threat sources have you faced threats from (example: militants, politicians, political activists, government officials, security personnel, law enforcement agencies, religious groups, mafias, feudals, criminals, private citizens, unknown sources, etc.)?

I have never faced actual threat but there have been a few times when I have published stories that make me afraid and I was sure I was going to be confronted by people I reported about. But thankfully no threat materialized.

Q7: Have you ever faced sexual harassment at the workplace? If yes, what kind of harassment have you faced (example: messages, phone calls, verbal, physical, psychological, etc.)? How frequent have you faced this problem?

Sadly, yes. I have often faced harassment that has been sexual in nature. Never physical harassment, thankfully, but it has been mostly psychological and at times intimidating. It's amazing how much of this kind there can be if one has spent 18 years in this field, as I have.

Q8: Have you ever faced discrimination in your career because of your gender? If so, please list the categories of discrimination – for example official designation, duties, assignments, promotion, salaries, maternity and other leaves, allowances, perks and privileges, etc. Briefly describe one or two examples that illustrate the discrimination.

I have not really experienced gender discrimination. I have never been singled out for formal discrimination.

Q9: Generally, how safe and secure, or insecure do you feel as a working female journalist in a male-dominated profession of journalism in Pakistan? Briefly explain why?

It is difficult for women in Pakistan to feel fully safe or completely secure in any field. Women in media often face difficulties. Most of these relate to the general attitude of men and how they view women. Most males – right from the lower staff to the top management attempt to get intimate with women staffers. For women, fending off these advances is like a full-time job. At times this can get really intense and difficult.

Q10. How, in your opinion, can journalism become a more female-friendly profession and how can female journalists overcome the work-related and gender-related challenges they face in this profession?

All the problems female journalists are facing are due to predatory social norms. Men need to be gender-sensitized to understand the challenges women face. There need to be policies and guidelines that make it clear that harassment of women is a crime. Female journalists have to remain on guard.

**Name changed on request for privacy and safety reasons*

Faiza Shaheen*

Islamabad

Q1: For how long have you been working as a journalist?

I joined the field of journalism in the year 2000.

Q2: Have you ever been threatened verbally in person as a result of your journalism work? If yes, please give a short description of the nature of threat.

Yes, I was once threatened by a person of grave consequences if I tried to publish a story a boy who drowned in Soan River near Islamabad. The family of the boy alleged that he was killed by his friends involved in criminal activities. After I filed the story, I received calls from the accused who threatened me of grave consequences if I persisted with the story.

Q3: Have you ever been threatened digitally (on phone, or social media, on email, messenger, SMS, etc.) as a result of your journalism work (news report, video, article, feature, photo, etc. that you produced)? If yes, please give a short description of the nature of threat.

Yes – as mentioned above, a gang of boys called me on the phone and threatened to kill me. I had to call the government distress helpline 'Rescue 15' for help and changed my phone number.

Q4: Have you ever been attacked physically (hit, pushed, slapped, groped, etc.) as a result of your journalism work (news report, video, article, feature, photo, etc. that you produced)? If yes, please give a short description of the nature of physical attack.

Yes, one of my friends, a resident of a hostel for girls in Islamabad, was attacked for exposing a scandal in her newspaper. I had partly arranged the information for her. After the story was published, she was attacked by the hostel inmates. I went to the hostel to help her. I was also physically pushed and groped while saving her.

Q5: What kind of threats and attacks have you faced (example: threat to murder, attack, kidnap, sexual harassment, blackmail, loss of job, etc.)?

I have faced threats of murder and physical harm for my journalism work.

Q6: What kind of threat actors or threat sources have you faced threats from (example: militants, politicians, political activists, government officials, security personnel, law enforcement agencies, religious groups, mafias, feudals, criminals, private citizens, unknown sources, etc.)

I have been threatened by criminals.

Q7: Have you ever faced sexual harassment at the workplace? If yes, what kind of harassment have you faced (example: messages, phone calls, verbal, physical, psychological, etc.)? How frequent have you faced this problem?

I have fielded several calls on my phone comprising sexual innuendo and propositions. Though I was able to handle the situation professionally, it affected my performance at the workplace. Especially the ever-constant staring by men makes me very uneasy.

Q8: Have you ever faced discrimination in your career because of your gender? If so, please list the categories of discrimination – for example official designation, duties, assignments, promotion, salaries, maternity and other leaves, allowances, perks and privileges, etc. Briefly describe one or two examples that illustrate the discrimination.

Yes there has been gender-based discrimination in promotions, salaries, perks and distribution of reporting beats. Most of our male colleagues proclaim that women are not bold enough or equipped enough to handle important assignments.

Q9: Generally, how safe and secure, or insecure do you feel as a working female journalist in a male-dominated profession of journalism in Pakistan? Briefly explain why?

I have faced some difficult situations and after all these years now I feel relatively secure because I am now confident enough to deal with any situation. I understand the mentality of those around me and know now how to manage any crisis.

Q10. How, in your opinion, can journalism become a more female-friendly profession and how can female journalists overcome the work-related and gender-related challenges they face in this profession?

Journalism can become a better profession for women if they are provided with proper security at the workplace and they are encouraged for their professional capabilities and if the organization proactively pursues gender-affirmation policies.

**Name changed on request for privacy and safety reasons*

Kainat Shamir *

Karachi

Q1: For how long have you been working as a journalist?

I have been in this field since 2006.

Q2: Have you ever been threatened verbally in person as a result of your journalism work (news report, video, article, feature, photo, etc. that you produced)? If yes, please give a short description of the nature of threat.

I haven't really been threatened but since my reporting beat is politics I do receive aggressive comments sometimes from those who think that my report is against them.

Q3: Have you ever been threatened digitally (on phone, or social media, on email, messenger, SMS, etc.) as a result of your journalism work (news report, video, article, feature, photo, etc. that you produced)? If yes, please give a short description of the nature of threat.

No, I haven't.

Q4: Have you ever been attacked physically (hit, pushed, slapped, groped, etc.) as a result of your journalism work (news report, video, article, feature, photo, etc. that you produced)? If yes, please give a short description of the nature of physical attack.

No, I have never experienced physical attack for my journalism work.

Q5: What kind of threats and attacks have you faced (example: threat to murder, attack, kidnap, sexual harassment, blackmail, loss of job, etc.)?

I have never been threatened or attacked for my journalism work but I was once injured in a bombing in Karachi but I wasn't the target. However, there are other non-work related hazards that women have to guard against while in the field.

Q6: What kind of threat actors or threat sources have you faced threats from (example: militants, politicians, political activists, government officials, security personnel, law enforcement agencies, religious groups, mafias, feudals, criminals, private citizens, unknown sources, etc.)?

I haven't been threatened but have certainly faced angry or unhappy feedback about some of my reports from those who were subjects of the stories, mostly politicians.

Q7: Have you ever faced sexual harassment at the workplace? If yes, what kind of harassment have you faced (example: messages, phone calls, verbal, physical, psychological, etc.)? How frequent have you faced this problem?

No, I haven't.

Q8: Have you ever faced discrimination in your career because of your gender? If so, please list the categories of discrimination – for example official designation, duties, assignments, promotion, salaries, maternity and other leaves, allowances, perks and privileges, etc. Briefly describe one or two examples that illustrate the discrimination.

I have never faced discrimination in my career as I proved myself as good as any male journalist. And luckily I worked with some of the most reputed TV channels of Pakistan.

Q9: Generally, how safe and secure, or insecure do you feel as a working female journalist in a male-dominated profession of journalism in Pakistan? Briefly explain why?

For me there is no male or female – only journalist. This attitude has helped me in a male dominated profession with relative comfort.

Q10. How, in your opinion, can journalism become a more female-friendly profession and how can female journalists overcome the work-related and gender-related challenges they face in this profession?

Journalism can only become a more female-friendly profession if women in this field feel themselves only journalists and are ready to take on the challenges of this profession like men. Once women stop thinking themselves inferior, then men things will change for them.

**Name changed on request for privacy and safety reasons*

Rahima Ansari *

Lahore

Q1: For how long have you been working as a journalist?

I have been active in journalism since 2005.

Q2: Have you ever been threatened verbally in person as a result of your journalism work (news report, video, article, feature, photo, etc. that you produced)? If yes, please give a short description of the nature of threat.

For me it has been somewhat of a routine, getting verbal threats from officials of government department whenever an investigative or critical analysis of their department has been done by me and published in newspaper or magazine, or a program I have done for radio. Some departments even banned my entry in their organizations due to my reports and news pieces.

Q3: Have you ever been threatened digitally (on phone, or social media, on email, messenger, SMS, etc.) as a result of your journalism work (news report, video, article, feature, photo, etc. that you produced)? If yes, please give a short description of the nature of threat.

Yes. I once received some phone calls when I worked on a rape story and later my reporting team took up the matter and our crime reporter did more detailed follow-ups. I got blamed for starting it all.

Q4: Have you ever been attacked physically (hit, pushed, slapped, groped, etc.) as a result of your journalism work (news report, video, article, feature, photo, etc. that you produced)? If yes, please give a short description of the nature of physical attack.

No, I have never been attacked physically.

Q5: What kind of threats and attacks have you faced (example: threat to murder, attack, kidnap, sexual harassment, blackmail, loss of job, etc.)?

I have never faced physical threats but there have been a lot of psychological threats like: "You did not do well by opening up this matter and now you will have to face the consequences." Or, "We will talk to your seniors about your absurd work." Or, "You do not actually do journalism," etc.

Q6: What kind of threat actors or threat sources have you faced threats from (example: militants, politicians, political activists, government officials, security personnel, law enforcement agencies, religious groups, mafias, feudals, criminals, private citizens, unknown sources, etc.)?

Most of those who have been threatening me have been government officials and sometimes unknown people.

Q7: Have you ever faced sexual harassment at the workplace? If yes, what kind of harassment have you faced (example: messages, phone calls, verbal, physical, psychological, etc.)? How frequent have you faced this problem?

Yes. I have faced critical psychological harassment at the workplace because I resisted aloud on physical harassment. While I did not get much help, it has shattered my confidence somewhat. Character assassination through rumor mills is common against most women in media.

Q8: Have you ever faced discrimination in your career because of your gender? If so, please list the categories of discrimination – for example official designation, duties, assignments, promotion, salaries, maternity and other leaves, allowances, perks and privileges, etc. Briefly describe one or two examples that illustrate the discrimination.

Definitely – the salary packages are smaller for women than for our male colleagues. Men have a free hand making women uncomfortable. If we oppose ideas or strategies, men take it personally rather than as a discussion with alternative perspectives. It is intimidating.

Q9: Generally, how safe and secure, or insecure do you feel as a working female journalist in a male-dominated profession of journalism in Pakistan? Briefly explain why?

Journalism is a field of expression and helps communities and societies find the answers. If society is a ship then journalism is its rudder and journalists its sailors and managers. My own experience is that a lot of the journalists are not professional and are even corrupt in terms of morals and ethics. Journalists should be helping people find solutions to problems, not problems to solutions. I can write a book on this topic based on my experiences.

Q10. How, in your opinion, can journalism become a more female-friendly profession and how can female journalists overcome the work-related and gender-related challenges they face in this profession?

Not until journalism becomes a formal profession like medicine, engineering, law and accounting with its strong qualification criteria and their own ethical frameworks and service structures. I have never seen a male journalist wanting his daughter becoming a journalist. This profession needs to promote gender affirmation and bring more women into managerial and leadership positions.

**Name changed on request for privacy and safety reasons*

Riffat Anjum

Peshawar

Q1: For how long have you been working as a journalist?

I have been a working journalist since 2010.

Q2: Have you ever been threatened verbally in person as a result of your journalism work (news report, video, article, feature, photo, etc. that you produced)? If yes, please give a short description of the nature of threat.

Yes, I have, at an early stage of my journalistic career. I did a story on the deteriorating of my childhood school. The attention this brought the school did not please its principal who asked me why, of all schools, I chose to focus on the one he was managing. He warned me against focusing on the school again.

Q3: Have you ever been threatened digitally (on phone, or social media, on email, messenger, SMS, etc.) as a result of your journalism work (news report, video, article, feature, photo, etc. that you produced)? If yes, please give a short description of the nature of threat.

Yes, I have received a threat by the phone. I did a story about Cyril Almeida, the *Dawn* newspaper reporter who was himself under pressure for a story he did, and I received a call from an unidentifiable number from an unknown source unknown. This nameless caller wanted to know about who I was, why I did the story and warned me against reporting on the subject again.

Q4: Have you ever been attacked physically (hit, pushed, slapped, groped, etc.) as a result of your journalism work (news report, video, article, feature, photo, etc. that you produced)? If yes, please give a short description of the nature of physical attack.

No, I have never been threatened physically.

Q5: What kind of threats and attacks have you faced (example: threat to murder, attack, kidnap, sexual harassment, blackmail, loss of job, etc.)?

I have been warned against reporting on certain subjects, as explained above.

Q6: What kind of threat actors or threat sources have you faced threats from (example: militants, politicians, political activists, government officials, security personnel, law enforcement agencies, religious groups, mafias, feudals, criminals, private citizens, unknown sources, etc.)?

Once it was a school principal and another time from someone I did not know.

Q7: Have you ever faced sexual harassment at the workplace? If yes, what kind of harassment have you faced (example: messages, phone calls, verbal, physical, psychological, etc.)? How frequent have you faced this problem?

No.

Q8: Have you ever faced discrimination in your career because of your gender? If so, please list the categories of discrimination – for example official designation, duties, assignments, promotion, salaries, maternity and other leaves, allowances, perks and privileges, etc. Briefly describe one or two examples that illustrate the discrimination.

Most women journalists are discriminated against. The most common refrain is, “You can’t do this hard beat, so stick to the soft beats.” In the past, as a reporter, I persistently faced this unfair discrimination.

Q9: Generally, how safe and secure, or insecure do you feel as a working female journalist in a male-dominated profession of journalism in Pakistan? Briefly explain why?

Despite the general lack of encouragement, yes I feel secure in general because I am always fighting for my rights as a career journalist and pursuing creative journalism.

Q10. How, in your opinion, can journalism become a more female-friendly profession and how can female journalists overcome the work-related and gender-related challenges they face in this profession?

Things have become slightly better now because there is a greater realization that without women, journalism would not quite be journalism. Media cannot operate without women. But more needs to be done. More women should be encouraged to join the media and despite the many problems women journalists should never waver in pursuit of professionalism. That’s how they can beat their male colleagues: greater professionalism.

Gonila Hassnain

Lahore

Q1: For how long have you been working as a journalist?

I have been a journalist since 2005.

Q2: Have you ever been threatened verbally in person as a result of your journalism work (news report, video, article, feature, photo, etc. that you produced)? If yes, please give a short description of the nature of threat.

Yes I have been threatened a few times. Some people think women journalists can be shouted down.

Q3: Have you ever been threatened digitally (on phone, or social media, on email, messenger, SMS, etc.) as a result of your journalism work (news report, video, article, feature, photo, etc. that you produced)? If yes, please give a short description of the nature of threat.

Yes I have experienced intimidation by the phone.

Q4: Have you ever been attacked physically (hit, pushed, slapped, groped, etc.) as a result of your journalism work (news report, video, article, feature, photo, etc. that you produced)? If yes, please give a short description of the nature of physical attack.

No, I have not experienced any physical attack.

Q5: What kind of threats and attacks have you faced (example: threat to murder, attack, kidnap, sexual harassment, blackmail, loss of job, etc.)?

I have been threatened with murder and sexual violence.

Q6: What kind of threat actors or threat sources have you faced threats from (example: militants, politicians, political activists, government officials, security personnel, law enforcement agencies, religious groups, mafias, feudals, criminals, private citizens, unknown sources, etc.)?

I have faced intimidation from a variety of sources including religious groups, feudal lords, politicians and even private citizens.

Q7: Have you ever faced sexual harassment at the workplace? If yes, what kind of harassment have you faced (example: messages, phone calls, verbal, physical, psychological, etc.)? How frequent have you faced this problem?

Yes – a few times. I have received suggestive messages, verbal approaches and phone calls.

Q8: Have you ever faced discrimination in your career because of your gender? If so, please list the categories of discrimination – for example official designation, duties, assignments, promotion, salaries, maternity and other leaves, allowances, perks and privileges, etc. Briefly describe one or two examples that illustrate the discrimination.

I have often faced discrimination based not just on my gender but also my religion – I am a member of a religious minority community, which increases my vulnerability.

Q9: Generally, how safe and secure, or insecure do you feel as a working female journalist in a male-dominated profession of journalism in Pakistan? Briefly explain why?

After more than a decade in journalism feeling insecure is now a routine. Women face this not just in journalism but in all walks of life.

Q10. How, in your opinion, can journalism become a more female-friendly profession and how can female journalists overcome the work-related and gender-related challenges they face in this profession?

More women in journalism is the answer. Better organizational gender policies is another. I am sure that with the number of female journalists increasing in journalism can help their cause and strengthen each other.

Nazahat Khan

Karachi

Q1: For how long have you been working as a journalist?

I started my career in 2013 as a news reader from a FM radio station in Karachi and later joined a TV channel as a reporter.

Q2: Have you ever been threatened verbally in person as a result of your journalism work (news report, video, article, feature, photo, etc. that you produced)? If yes, please give a short description of the nature of threat.

Never in my professional work have I ever been threatened verbally, or in any other form.

Q3: Have you ever been threatened digitally (on phone, or social media, on email, messenger, SMS, etc.) as a result of your journalism work (news report, video, article, feature, photo, etc. that you produced)? If yes, please give a short description of the nature of threat.

No, I have not.

Q4: Have you ever been attacked physically (hit, pushed, slapped, groped, etc.) as a result of your journalism work (news report, video, article, feature, photo, etc. that you produced)? If yes, please give a short description of the nature of physical attack.

I have never been attacked physically.

Q5: What kind of threats and attacks have you faced (example: threat to murder, attack, kidnap, sexual harassment, blackmail, loss of job, etc.)?

I have never been threatened or attacked.

Q6: What kind of threat actors or threat sources have you faced threats from (example: militants, politicians, political activists, government officials, security personnel, law enforcement agencies, religious groups, mafias, feudals, criminals, private citizens, unknown sources, etc.)?

This is not applicable as I have never been threatened or attacked.

Q7: Have you ever faced sexual harassment at the workplace? If yes, what kind of harassment have you faced (example: messages, phone calls, verbal, physical, psychological, etc.)? How frequent have you faced this problem?

Yes, I experienced it once on my official number through some messages but one shut-up call and all harassment came to a stop.

Q8: Have you ever faced discrimination in your career because of your gender? If so, please list the categories of discrimination – for example official designation, duties, assignments, promotion, salaries, maternity and other leaves, allowances, perks and privileges, etc. Briefly describe one or two examples that illustrate the discrimination.

It is relative – depends on an individual how she deals with an adverse situation. If I talk about myself being a female reporter, many a times on field you actually get extra attention and extra help. So, it also depends on where you work.

Q9: Generally, how safe and secure, or insecure do you feel as a working female journalist in a male-dominated profession of journalism in Pakistan? Briefly explain why?

I feel really blessed to be affiliated with organizations that have helped me feel secure. When I am in the field reporting we have a 3-member team – a reporter, a cameraman and a driver. I haven't ever felt insecure.

Q10. How, in your opinion, can journalism become a more female-friendly profession and how can female journalists overcome the work-related and gender-related challenges they face in this profession?

This can happen by first knowing one's boundaries. Second, never compromise on self-respect. Third, surround yourself with positive people. Cut out negativity. Fourth, keep making sincere efforts and work hard irrespective of reward or appreciation. Fifth, self-motivation is a must. It really works!

Saba Rani

Peshawar

Q1: For how long have you been working as a journalist?

I have been working as journalist since 2013.

Q2: Have you ever been threatened verbally in person as a result of your journalism work (news report, video, article, feature, photo, etc. that you produced)? If yes, please give a short description of the nature of threat.

I basically cover religious minorities, women's issues and human rights so once when I was doing a story on minorities' compensation package, an elder of a religious minority community threatened me verbally.

Q3: Have you ever been threatened digitally (on phone, or social media, on email, messenger, SMS, etc.) as a result of your journalism work (news report, video, article, feature, photo, etc. that you produced)? If yes, please give a short description of the nature of threat.

No, I have never been threatened digitally.

Q4: Have you ever been attacked physically (hit, pushed, slapped, groped, etc.) as a result of your journalism work (news report, video, article, feature, photo, etc. that you produced)? If yes, please give a short description of the nature of physical attack.

I have never experienced a physical attack.

Q5: What kind of threats and attacks have you faced (example: threat to murder, attack, kidnap, sexual harassment, blackmail, loss of job, etc.)?

Usually people harass women journalists not because of our work but because of our gender. Sometimes women face sexual harassment and sometimes they lose their job for resisting it.

Q6: What kind of threat actors or threat sources have you faced threats from (example: militants, politicians, political activists, government officials, security personnel, law enforcement agencies, religious groups, mafias, feudals, criminals, private citizens, unknown sources, etc.)?

Law enforcement agencies have threatened me twice in my career for having attended meetings at the consulate of a foreign diplomatic mission, along with several other journalists. Most of us, as well as me, received calls from unknown law enforcement agencies unhappy at us having attended the meeting. Another time they called us to their office and accused us of wanting to be agents of these countries.

Q7: Have you ever faced sexual harassment at the workplace? If yes, what kind of harassment have you faced (example: messages, phone calls, verbal, physical, psychological, etc.)? How frequent have you faced this problem?

No, I have never faced sexual harassment at the workplace.

Q8: Have you ever faced discrimination in your career because of your gender? If so, please list the categories of discrimination – for example official designation, duties, assignments, promotion, salaries, maternity and other leaves, allowances, perks and privileges, etc. Briefly describe one or two examples that illustrate the discrimination.

In general, gender discrimination is pervasive. I have often faced it myself. I got so disillusioned by it that I left electronic media, as I was not allowed to work openly and discriminated against.

Q9: Generally, how safe and secure, or insecure do you feel as a working female journalist in a male-dominated profession of journalism in Pakistan? Briefly explain why?

It is really difficult to work as journalist if you are a woman not because of external threats related to your journalism work but because of male chauvinism within the industry. In that sense it is neither safe nor secure. Men have a tendency to treat us as 'merely' women rather than as journalists. In the street you can face this unfairness but within the journalistic community, how can you?

Q10. How, in your opinion, can journalism become a more female-friendly profession and how can female journalists overcome the work-related and gender-related challenges they face in this profession?

We can do this by providing equal opportunities to females, by equal wages and by equal footing.

Safia Seemab*

Islamabad

Q1: For how long have you been working as a journalist?

I have been a journalist since 2010 and have worked for both radio and television.

Q2: Have you ever been threatened verbally in person as a result of your journalism work (news report, video, article, feature, photo, etc. that you produced)? If yes, please give a short description of the nature of threat.

No, I have never been threatened verbally.

Q3: Have you ever been threatened digitally (on phone, or social media, on email, messenger, SMS, etc.) as a result of your journalism work (news report, video, article, feature, photo, etc. that you produced)? If yes, please give a short description of the nature of threat.

Yes, actually. I was threatened and blackmailed when someone wanted me to share some information.

Q4: Have you ever been attacked physically (hit, pushed, slapped, groped, etc.) as a result of your journalism work (news report, video, article, feature, photo, etc. that you produced)? If yes, please give a short description of the nature of physical attack.

No, I have never been attacked physically.

Q5: What kind of threats and attacks have you faced (example: threat to murder, attack, kidnap, sexual harassment, blackmail, loss of job, etc.)?

I have been threatened and blackmailed. But it's not always hard intimidation. It doesn't have to be verbal always. You get the gestures, the double entendres – the kind of psychological torture that increases job insecurity. Even the managers of the organization you are working for can harass you making your work most difficult if you did not agree to what they want. One such case happened to me and in its aftermath I decided to never tolerate this again.

Q6: What kind of threat actors or threat sources have you faced threats from (example: militants, politicians, political activists, government officials, security personnel, law enforcement agencies, religious groups, mafias, feudals, criminals, private citizens, unknown sources, etc.)?

In different ways, pretty much from people of any fraternity.

Q7: Have you ever faced sexual harassment at the workplace? If yes, what kind of harassment have you faced (example: messages, phone calls, verbal, physical, psychological, etc.)? How frequent have you faced this problem?

Oh yes. Phone calls, WhatsApp shares, messages – it's shameless and it's complete mental torture.

Q8: Have you ever faced discrimination in your career because of your gender? If so, please list the categories of discrimination – for example official designation, duties, assignments, promotion, salaries, maternity and other leaves, allowances, perks and privileges, etc. Briefly describe one or two examples that illustrate the discrimination.

At least on this count I haven't faced discrimination. At the two places I have worked as far as I know the salary structure is the same for men and women.

Q9: Generally, how safe and secure, or insecure do you feel as a working female journalist in a male-dominated profession of journalism in Pakistan? Briefly explain why?

To be honest, it is paradoxically both safe and unsafe – it varies from person to person. Some people were immensely cooperative and respectful of me and helped me in dark times whereas some others were real weirdos and downright predators and hazardous.

Q10. How, in your opinion, can journalism become a more female-friendly profession and how can female journalists overcome the work-related and gender-related challenges they face in this profession?

There needs to be equality. Only when laws are implemented effectively to this effect can journalism become better for women. Sadly laws are not implemented and people think they can get away with pretty much everything. If women are made safer through stringent policies and regulations and people made accountable for their actions things will improve.

**Name changed on request for privacy and safety reasons*

Naseem Ahmed *

Islamabad

Q1: For how long have you been working as a journalist?

I have been working as journalist since 2007 and I have worked in both print and electronic media.

Q2: Have you ever been threatened verbally in person as a result of your journalism work (news report, video, article, feature, photo, etc. that you produced)? If yes, please give a short description of the nature of threat?

I have never been threatened for my written stories from outside my office.

Q3: Have you ever been threatened digitally (on phone, or social media, on email, messenger, SMS, etc.) as a result of your journalism work (news report, video, article, feature, photo, etc. that you produced)? If yes, please give a short description of the nature of threat.

No, I have never faced any threats over the phone or through other electronic communications.

Q4: Have you ever been attacked physically (hit, pushed, slapped, groped, etc.) as a result of your journalism work (news report, video, article, feature, photo, etc. that you produced)? If yes, please give a short description of the nature of physical attack.

No, never.

Q5: What kind of threats and attacks have you faced (example: threat to murder, attack, kidnap, sexual harassment, blackmail, loss of job, etc.)?

I have certainly faced threats but these have related not to my journalism work but to my gender – the gender imbalance in terms of respect and equality has affected me too, just like most of the women, a social ill prevailing in our society. A lot of this transforms into sexual harassment.

Q6: What kind of threat actors or threat sources have you faced threats from (example: militants, politicians, political activists, government officials, security personnel, law enforcement agencies, religious groups, mafias, feudals, criminals, private citizens, unknown sources, etc.)?

The single biggest source of threats I have faced has been, sadly, my male co-workers.

Q7: Have you ever faced sexual harassment at the workplace? If yes, what kind of harassment have you faced (example: messages, phone calls, verbal, physical, psychological, etc.)? How frequent have you faced this problem?

Yes, often. This is the most frequent threat I have faced. Once I had to face intimidation by my male supervisor who kept torturing me mentally on the pretext of my political views – it was a camouflage for sexual harassment, which is what it was. He made me psychologically stagnant. I could not even work properly. Another time I was harassed by another male co-worker who kept sending me suggestive messages, phone calls, emails, even porn text and images.

Q8: Have you ever faced discrimination in your career because of your gender? If so, please list the categories of discrimination – for example official designation, duties, assignments, promotion, salaries, maternity and other leaves, allowances, perks and privileges, etc. Briefly describe one or two examples that illustrate the discrimination.

Yes. It almost always happens to all women. Sometimes I despair that gender discrimination will never be eliminated from our society. All prestigious reporting beats like diplomatic corps, defense, prime minister, president, interior ministry and many other are given almost always to men. Women, if they get one of these, are actively hindered and frustrated against succeeding. Everything is rigged against them.

Q9: Generally, how safe and secure, or insecure do you feel as a working female journalist in a male-dominated profession of journalism in Pakistan? Briefly explain why?

I do not feel secure. Neither in terms of job, nor professionally, or as a woman. They keep women repressed at the workplace in media. I can't even complain about these because then they get an excuse to formally start hounding you.

Q10. How, in your opinion, can journalism become a more female-friendly profession and how can female journalists overcome the work-related and gender-related challenges they face in this profession?

There need to be better policies and anti-harassment systems. Women need to be bold and take initiatives and bring forth the discrimination they face. And all men in media need to be sensitized about gender discrimination and gender affirmation issues.

**Name changed on request for privacy and safety reasons*

Nida Tahseen

Lahore

Q1: For how long have you been working as a journalist?

I have been in journalism since 2001.

Q2: Have you ever been threatened verbally in person as a result of your journalism work (news report, video, article, feature, photo, etc. that you produced)? If yes, please give a short description of the nature of threat.

No, I haven't experienced any verbal threats for my work.

Q3: Have you ever been threatened digitally (on phone, or social media, on email, messenger, SMS, etc.) as a result of your journalism work (news report, video, article, feature, photo, etc. that you produced)? If yes, please give a short description of the nature of threat.

Yes, I have. I once wrote a blog on a religious figure and I got a threatened and abused via email by a follower of that mufti.

Q4: Have you ever been attacked physically (hit, pushed, slapped, groped, etc.) as a result of your journalism work (news report, video, article, feature, photo, etc. that you produced)? If yes, please give a short description of the nature of physical attack.

No, I haven't.

Q5: What kind of threats and attacks have you faced (example: threat to murder, attack, kidnap, sexual harassment, blackmail, loss of job, etc.)?

There have been instances of attempted blackmail and even a threat to murder me but they were online.

Q6: What kind of threat actors or threat sources have you faced threats from (example: militants, politicians, political activists, government officials, security personnel, law enforcement agencies, religious groups, mafias, feudals, criminals, private citizens, unknown sources, etc.)?

My threat sources have mostly been religious groups, private citizens, political activists and militants.

Q7: Have you ever faced sexual harassment at the workplace? If yes, what kind of harassment have you faced (example: messages, phone calls, verbal, physical, psychological, etc.)? How frequent have you faced this problem?

Yes, I did – I faced sexual harassment twice in different organizations. One was physical (groping) and the other verbal.

Q8: Have you ever faced discrimination in your career because of your gender? If so, please list the categories of discrimination – for example official designation, duties, assignments, promotion, salaries, maternity and other leaves, allowances, perks and privileges, etc. Briefly describe one or two examples that illustrate the discrimination.

Yes – the salary pay gap for men and women is conspicuous. The time of annual increments was upon us and my immediate boss was given the duty to divide a certain amount increment between me and my male colleague. He divided it with a 40:60 ratio because my male colleague had “a family to look after” and while I was “single” and a woman.

Q9: Generally, how safe and secure, or insecure do you feel as a working female journalist in a male-dominated profession of journalism in Pakistan? Briefly explain why?

I have learnt a lot from the unfortunate incidents, so now I know how to handle such situations. Firstly, in office I don't face unsafe but being a woman I have stay more vigilant in use of my language, behavior and other official activities as I strongly believe that the people around view female employees with a certain lens and in order to survive and avoid unwanted attention one has to follow certain parameters, even if it is against their nature.

Q10. How, in your opinion, can journalism become a more female-friendly profession and how can female journalists overcome the work-related and gender-related challenges they face in this profession?

It's a fight. First of all women need to get out of their comfort zone and volunteer for relatively tougher assignments. Second, news organizations have to hire more and more female employees. I don't believe in quota system, but in current circumstances, there should be a 40% quota for female employees in order to encourage them and promote this profession for women. There should also be more collaboration between news organizations and education institutions in order to promote female aspiring journalists. Only if we have more females in the organization, it will become safer for them. So security is mandatory. Sexual harassment policies should be implemented. And gender pay gaps should be strongly discouraged and demolished.

Sadia Qasim Shah

Peshawar

Q1: For how long have you been working as a journalist?

I have been a professional journalist since 2003.

Q2: Have you ever been threatened verbally in person as a result of your journalism work (news report, video, article, feature, photo, etc. that you produced)? If yes, please give a short description of the nature of threat.

I have never been openly threatened during the course of my professional career but there were instances when I was contacted by aggrieved persons but they could not abuse me I guess because of the organization that I work for or perhaps my reports were not sensational and based on facts. I work for a foreign broadcaster so at times there were threats from militants because of which we were told to 'stay low' as that is all we could do. One of our colleagues in the Tribal Areas was also killed at his home. So from time to time we do get threats from militant groups but that is a hazard for all my colleagues, not just me.

Q3: Have you ever been threatened digitally (on phone, or social media, on email, messenger, SMS, etc.) as a result of your journalism work (news report, video, article, feature, photo, etc. that you produced)? If yes, please give a short description of the nature of threat.

The threats from militants is usually digital, often an email but that it to colleagues working in tribal areas or adjacent areas. I have personally never been threatened digitally or directly. Once I received a message from militant claiming to have attacked a health worker and telling me to report it but I ignored the call and message and simply changed my mobile number. Otherwise, I knew a threat would be next step.

Q4: Have you ever been attacked physically (hit, pushed, slapped, groped, etc.) as a result of your journalism work (news report, video, article, feature, photo, etc. that you produced)? If yes, please give a short description of the nature of physical attack.

No, I have never been physically attacked.

Q5: What kind of threats and attacks have you faced (example: threat to murder, attack, kidnap, sexual harassment, blackmail, loss of job, etc.)?

I have definitely faced harassment. Once an official bad-mouthed about me but I went over to his office and gave him a piece of my mind after which I never heard anything bad. I keep my professional interactions limited which is a hurdle perhaps in journalism because I don't make as many sources for news that I would like but after that incident I made it a principle to give preference to my dignity over a story/source.

Q6: What kind of threat actors or threat sources have you faced threats from (example: militants, politicians, political activists, government officials, security personnel, law enforcement agencies, religious groups, mafias, feudals, criminals, private citizens, unknown sources, etc.)?

Usually it has been threats from militant organization but to our organization. I was never singled out.

Q7: Have you ever faced sexual harassment at the workplace? If yes, what kind of harassment have you faced (example: messages, phone calls, verbal, physical, psychological, etc.)? How frequent have you faced this problem?

I have not faced sexual harassment at the workplace. This is perhaps due to the fact that I have been working for the same organization for over a decade now – from internship to current status as senior staff reporter – so there is a familiarity / respect with each colleague. The reason I have stayed so long despite other offers of employment is the fact that my office has the best kind of working environment.

Q8: Have you ever faced discrimination in your career because of your gender? If so, please list the categories of discrimination – for example official designation, duties, assignments, promotion, salaries, maternity and other leaves, allowances, perks and privileges, etc. Briefly describe one or two examples that illustrate the discrimination.

I feel that knowingly or unknowingly discrimination on the basis of gender is often there, especially when it comes to a reporting assignment. A woman reporter is rarely asked to collect points and file a report on conflict and militancy issues. Similarly, I don't see why women can't do crime beat but it is an open discrimination that they are not even considered for it. I can't complain because I have not asked for the beat. These beats are assigned by the bureau chief or editor with somewhat consent of the reporters. Women are given from the very beginning softer beats like education, health and women's rights. Militancy, crime reporting and field-work stories are expected to be the domain of men. I feel women have proved over time they can do these beats too as well as any man. But still there is a long way to go before this discrimination dissipates. I feel all beats are important and it depends on what the newspapers give importance to. I also hope for a time when health, education and human rights stories will also make headlines. Women are underestimated due to their gender, not their journalism. I do have this feeling that while giving assignments, the bosses keep gender and culture in mind. The result is that women rare are able to test their true mettle.

Q9: Generally, how safe and secure, or insecure do you feel as a working female journalist in a male-dominated profession of journalism in Pakistan? Briefly explain why?

I feel secure – very secure, while working in my office .But journalism is not a desk job. You have to go out, meet people, talk to public in the street and attend public protests. It is there where women in our part of the world have little acceptability as a journalist. I have been asked several

times who are you? “A reporter,” I reply. And some people just don’t absorb the fact that women here too can be reporters. It is hard as a woman at times to hold a mike or record something when all men are surrounding a celebrity/politician for comment. As a woman journalist I feel harassment – not just staring but sometimes it feels like men are scanning with their eyes. It is the worst experience and enough to make one insecure about oneself. Sometimes even politicians or bureaucrats, while giving a comment, don’t take a woman as a reporter seriously. They rarely confide in or trust a woman journalist as they do male journalists. These politicians and bureaucrats see you as a woman, not as a journalist.

Q10. How, in your opinion, can journalism become a more female-friendly profession and how can female journalists overcome the work-related and gender-related challenges they face in this profession?

More women and more courageous women in media can bring change. It is a fact media is not an easy field for women – not only single women but for married women too. The life of a media person is not normal. Late working hours – in fact no specific working hours – make it a challenging profession for men, let alone women. It is a different and more challenging field for women. The reasons are based in how our society views women and their status in society. If society changes its views towards women only then real change will come. Working in the media for women in places like Peshawar and Quetta is tough. Media outlets should have strict non-discrimination policies and implement them to protect women from harassment. If the organization gives women equal opportunity to complete an assignment and work in a tension-free environment it would create an incentive for men to respect them. More media education options for women, offices with strict laws to curb harassment, job security and equal assignment allocation can embolden women in media. The organizations should stop looking at their women reporters as just “lady reporters” but give them assignment as “reporters.” The presence of such women in media doing different reports would itself act as catalyst to bring a social change towards how we see women in media.

Veera Sattar*

Karachi

Q1: For how long have you been working as a journalist?

I have been practicing journalism since 2008.

Q2: Have you ever been threatened verbally in person as a result of your journalism work (news report, video, article, feature, photo, etc. that you produced)? If yes, please give a short description of the nature of threat.

Reporting or writing by women can elicit hostility at times. I have never been threatened directly but I have faced hostility for taking progressive stance over hard issues in Sindh and Balochistan provinces. To me these indirect warning signs are more dangerous than direct threats because you are aware of the source of a direct threat. You can't see the source of an indirect threat and that is frightening.

Q3: Have you ever been threatened digitally (on phone, or social media, on email, messenger, SMS, etc.) as a result of your journalism work (news report, video, article, feature, photo, etc. that you produced)? If yes, please give a short description of the nature of threat.

Yes. I cannot name the threat sources but I have often faced threats on the phone whenever I write columns or reports on religious issues or even political issues. The political and religious parties do not like us to criticize them. For instance, I once worked on the issue of forced religious conversion of girls of minority faith in Sindh. In return I have gotten allegations of being anti-state. I received a barrage of threats and abuses for a publication I authored.

Q4: Have you ever been attacked physically (hit, pushed, slapped, groped, etc.) as a result of your journalism work (news report, video, article, feature, photo, etc. that you produced)? If yes, please give a short description of the nature of physical attack.

No, I have not been attacked physically. But I'm always expecting it.

Q5: What kind of threats and attacks have you faced (example: threat to murder, attack, kidnap, sexual harassment, blackmail, loss of job, etc.)?

I have faced threats and abuse but have not experienced any bodily harm.

Q6: What kind of threat actors or threat sources have you faced threats from (example: militants, politicians, political activists, government officials, security personnel, law enforcement agencies, religious groups, mafias, feudals, criminals, private citizens, unknown sources, etc.)?

Mostly religious groups but also some political groups.

Q7: Have you ever faced sexual harassment at the workplace? If yes, what kind of harassment have you faced (example: messages, phone calls, verbal, physical, psychological, etc.)? How frequent have you faced this problem?

There have been such instances but I have learnt to deflect advances and sidestep attempts.

Q8: Have you ever faced discrimination in your career because of your gender? If so, please list the categories of discrimination – for example official designation, duties, assignments, promotion, salaries, maternity and other leaves, allowances, perks and privileges, etc. Briefly describe one or two examples that illustrate the discrimination.

My women colleagues and I have faced gender-based discrimination often, particularly advice to avoid reporting on political issues. For example, once when I started working on some political interviews, one of my male colleagues bluntly told me I should “prefer to write on soft issues because you are a woman.” Stereotyping is rampant in society and our male colleagues bring this into our circle of journalism. We women always face discrimination.

Q9: Generally, how safe and secure, or insecure do you feel as a working female journalist in a male-dominated profession of journalism in Pakistan? Briefly explain why?

As a working female journalist, we do work in the field and cover many stories. I have observed male journalists rarely appreciate our work and if they do it then it is always a qualified appreciation like “The girl has really done this story” – as if women can never do stories. I feel that the male-dominated profession of journalism still hardly accepts female journalists what to speak of equally good female journalists.

Q10. How, in your opinion, can journalism become a more female-friendly profession and how can female journalists overcome the work-related and gender-related challenges they face in this profession?

To me, a more female-friendly journalism profession will take time because male-dominated approaches need to change and it cannot be changed overnight. However, our organizations should adopt gender affirmation policies. Indeed it is the responsibility of organizations to gender-sensitize their entire staff. We also need support networks where women journalists support each another.

**Name changed on request for privacy and safety reasons*

Maryam Rafi

Lahore

Q1: For how long have you been working as a journalist?

I have been in this profession since 2013.

Q2: Have you ever been threatened verbally in person as a result of your journalism work (news report, video, article, feature, photo, etc. that you produced)? If yes, please give a short description of the nature of threat.

Oh yes – there have been several instances when I have been threatened by people that they will talk to my supervisor to stop or stall the report I am working on. Some even threaten directly.

Q3: Have you ever been threatened digitally (on phone, or social media, on email, messenger, SMS, etc.) as a result of your journalism work (news report, video, article, feature, photo, etc. that you produced)? If yes, please give a short description of the nature of threat.

No, I haven't been threatened digitally.

Q4: Have you ever been attacked physically (hit, pushed, slapped, groped, etc.) as a result of your journalism work (news report, video, article, feature, photo, etc. that you produced)? If yes, please give a short description of the nature of physical attack.

Yes, I have faced physical attacks. Once in 2013 I was attacked by the staff of a major hotel when I reported about an accident at their premises. Another time I was attacked by the supporters of Pakistan Tehrik-e-Insaf party at one of their protest rallies. There are other instances too.

Q5: What kind of threats and attacks have you faced (example: threat to murder, attack, kidnap, sexual harassment, blackmail, loss of job, etc.)?

I have been physically attacked and threatened with a loss of job.

Q6: What kind of threat actors or threat sources have you faced threats from (example: militants, politicians, political activists, government officials, security personnel, law enforcement agencies, religious groups, mafias, feudals, criminals, private citizens, unknown sources, etc.)?

I have faced threats and attacks from different sources, including political activists and corporate officials.

Q7: Have you ever faced sexual harassment at the workplace? If yes, what kind of harassment have you faced (example: messages, phone calls, verbal, physical, psychological, etc.)? How frequent have you faced this problem?

Sadly, sexual harassment at the workplace is routine for women. Unwanted offers of 'friendship,' 'an outing for tea,' 'a long drive' – you name it, it's all there. I have received all these offers and rejected them.

Q8: Have you ever faced discrimination in your career because of your gender? If so, please list the categories of discrimination – for example official designation, duties, assignments, promotion, salaries, maternity and other leaves, allowances, perks and privileges, etc. Briefly describe one or two examples that illustrate the discrimination.

So many times that it seems like a routine. It's amazing how many times men say I can't do something because I'm a woman.

Q9: Generally, how safe and secure, or insecure do you feel as a working female journalist in a male-dominated profession of journalism in Pakistan? Briefly explain why?

I don't feel insecure – but as a female working journalist I am constantly reminded of my gender.

Q10. How, in your opinion, can journalism become a more female-friendly profession and how can female journalists overcome the work-related and gender-related challenges they face in this profession?

Journalism by its very nature in a social milieu like Pakistan is a difficult environment for women. But women can face all challenges and overcome them. If it is men's job to think women are not fit for journalism, it is our job to excel at it and ignore them.

Saira Inam*

Islamabad

Q1: For how long have you been working as a journalist?

I have been working in the print media since 2007.

Q2: Have you ever been threatened verbally in person as a result of your journalism work (news report, video, article, feature, photo, etc. that you produced)? If yes, please give a short description of the nature of threat?

Yes, I was once threatened by someone who wanted me to speak against an NGO and that if I did not take her side she would talk against me in the media.

Q3: Have you ever been threatened digitally (on phone, or social media, on email, messenger, SMS, etc.) as a result of your journalism work (news report, video, article, feature, photo, etc. that you produced)? If yes, please give a short description of the nature of threat.

Yes – once there was a smear campaign in the social media against my friends and me when we decide to set up a professional platform for fellow-colleagues. There were threats and fake news against me.

Q4: Have you ever been attacked physically (hit, pushed, slapped, groped, etc.) as a result of your journalism work (news report, video, article, feature, photo, etc. that you produced)? If yes, please give a short description of the nature of physical attack.

No, I haven't faced physical attack.

Q5: What kind of threats and attacks have you faced (example: threat to murder, attack, kidnap, sexual harassment, blackmail, loss of job, etc.)?

Various threats – including blackmail, threats of loss of my job and harassment.

Q6: What kind of threat actors or threat sources have you faced threats from (example: militants, politicians, political activists, government officials, security personnel, law enforcement agencies, religious groups, mafias, feudals, criminals, private citizens, unknown sources, etc.)?

I have faced threats from various groups.

Q7: Have you ever faced sexual harassment at the workplace? If yes, what kind of harassment have you faced (example: messages, phone calls, verbal, physical, psychological, etc.)? How frequent have you faced this problem?

I have not faced sexual harassment at workplace. But I have received weird and troubling messages and calls on the phone from unknown numbers. I block the numbers but it never ends.

Q8: Have you ever faced discrimination in your career because of your gender? If so, please list the categories of discrimination – for example official designation, duties, assignments, promotion, salaries, maternity and other leaves, allowances, perks and privileges, etc. Briefly describe one or two examples that illustrate the discrimination.

Yes, gender discrimination is pervasive. Especially there is a big difference in pays and perks given to men and women in journalism.

Q9: Generally, how safe and secure, or insecure do you feel as a working female journalist in a male-dominated profession of journalism in Pakistan? Briefly explain why?

I have been threatened but I feel generally secure. There is a support network. Also, sometimes it is the people who are afraid of the fact that I belong to media. They talk to us carefully.

Q10. How, in your opinion, can journalism become a more female-friendly profession and how can female journalists overcome the work-related and gender-related challenges they face in this profession?

There is a need to speak out about the issues faced by women journalists. A complaint mechanism can be developed where women journalists can take their complaints and the issues are addressed. Better training and exposure opportunities for women, especially those who work for Urdu media, can enhance their capabilities and can encourage them to excel. Women leadership trainings can help them to take lead and resist any discrimination in an effective way. Free legal help for women can also encourage them to go to court in case of any injustice meted out by the organization or an individual.

Sanna Ejaz

Peshawar

Q1: For how long have you been working as a journalist?

I have been a journalist since 2013 and have worked for print, radio and television media.

Q2: Have you ever been threatened verbally in person as a result of your journalism work (news report, video, article, feature, photo, etc. that you produced)? If yes, please give a short description of the nature of threat.

Yes, I was once threatened when I was pursuing my news source on social taboos as he was himself a model and had videos on Facebook but his family didn't want his story reported. His family, some of them armed, surrounded me and threatened me and asked me to leave the area at once. Another time after I returned from a visit to India and reported about a youth exchange program, I came on the radar of security agencies.

Q3: Have you ever been threatened digitally (on phone, or social media, on email, messenger, SMS, etc.) as a result of your journalism work (news report, video, article, feature, photo, etc. that you produced)? If yes, please give a short description of the nature of threat.

Yes, I have received offensive and threatening messages – I was once called a '[foreign] agent' after a visit to Afghanistan and news stories based on the visit. Several other stories of mine have generated adverse and threatening comments digitally.

Q4: Have you ever been attacked physically (hit, pushed, slapped, groped, etc.) as a result of your journalism work (news report, video, article, feature, photo, etc. that you produced)? If yes, please give a short description of the nature of physical attack.

No, I have never been physically attacked.

Q5: What kind of threats and attacks have you faced (example: threat to murder, attack, kidnap, sexual harassment, blackmail, loss of job, etc.)?

I have faced blackmail attempts and labeling of being a foreign agent and threatened and warned about my journalism work.

Q6: What kind of threat actors or threat sources have you faced threats from (example: militants, politicians, political activists, government officials, security personnel, law enforcement agencies, religious groups, mafias, feudals, criminals, private citizens, unknown sources, etc.)?

There have been threats aimed at me from unknown sources, private citizens and apparently security agencies.

Q7: Have you ever faced sexual harassment at the workplace? If yes, what kind of harassment have you faced (example: messages, phone calls, verbal, physical, psychological, etc.)? How frequent have you faced this problem?

Yes – this can be an occupational hazard. I have faced verbal sexual harassment, catcalling, troubling posts or messages and character assassination. I have also faced identity theft issues, bullying and harassment online. Women frequently face these ugly practices everywhere and it is done in a structured way.

Q8: Have you ever faced discrimination in your career because of your gender? If so, please list the categories of discrimination – for example official designation, duties, assignments, promotion, salaries, maternity and other leaves, allowances, perks and privileges, etc. Briefly describe one or two examples that illustrate the discrimination.

Yes – I have faced gender discrimination when it comes to getting professional journalism assignments while attitudes of the bosses are also an issue for me sometimes.

Q9: Generally, how safe and secure, or insecure do you feel as a working female journalist in a male-dominated profession of journalism in Pakistan? Briefly explain why?

I do not feel too secure, as going in the field and conducting investigation for my journalism work and even going online for this can often mean harassment. And covering sensitive topics also often lead to threats. This is what I fear.

Q10. How, in your opinion, can journalism become a more female-friendly profession and how can female journalists overcome the work-related and gender-related challenges they face in this profession?

To start with, we need effective enforcement of the law against harassment in the workplace. There should be other regulations and mechanisms that encourage more women to join the media and policies in place that protect them and mechanisms that allow them to report harassment and discrimination.

Saher Nazar*

Nowshera

Q1: For how long have you been working as a journalist?

I have been working as a journalist since 2005.

Q2: Have you ever been threatened verbally in person as a result of your journalism work (news report, video, article, feature, photo, etc. that you produced)? If yes, please give a short description of the nature of threat.

Yes, I have been threatened for my journalism work. Once while covering a family courts story and another time while doing a story about *swara* – a tribal custom of settlement of disputes through an exchange of girls. When I did this story one of the *swara* families threatened me first through the phone and then came to my office to intimidate me but with the help of my colleagues we resolved this issue.

Q3: Have you ever been threatened digitally (on phone, or social media, on email, messenger, SMS, etc.) as a result of your journalism work (news report, video, article, feature, photo, etc. that you produced)? If yes, please give a short description of the nature of threat.

I have been threatened through phone calls and messages several times. Once I faced a lot of pressure this way when I did a story about Central Jail Peshawar. Some jail officials did not like my story and I had to face a difficult time.

Q4: Have you ever been attacked physically (hit, pushed, slapped, groped, etc.) as a result of your journalism work (news report, video, article, feature, photo, etc. that you produced)? If yes, please give a short description of the nature of physical attack.

No, I have never been physically attacked.

Q5: What kind of threats and attacks have you faced (example: threat to murder, attack, kidnap, sexual harassment, blackmail, loss of job, etc.)?

Most of the threats have been verbal or through the phone.

Q6: What kind of threat actors or threat sources have you faced threats from (example: militants, politicians, political activists, government officials, security personnel, law enforcement agencies, religious groups, mafias, feudals, criminals, private citizens, unknown sources, etc.)?

I have mostly faced threats from private citizens and some government officials – for instance as a result of my story about the Central Jail Peshawar.

Q7: Have you ever faced sexual harassment at the workplace? If yes, what kind of harassment have you faced (example: messages, phone calls, verbal, physical, psychological, etc.)? How frequent have you faced this problem?

No, I haven't.

Q8: Have you ever faced discrimination in your career because of your gender? If so, please list the categories of discrimination – for example official designation, duties, assignments, promotion, salaries, maternity and other leaves, allowances, perks and privileges, etc. Briefly describe one or two examples that illustrate the discrimination.

Yes there is some discrimination when it comes to distribution of reporting beats and duties. There is a general perception that women can't handle certain reporting beats. Because of this there is favoritism to contend with.

Q9: Generally, how safe and secure, or insecure do you feel as a working female journalist in a male-dominated profession of journalism in Pakistan? Briefly explain why?

I do not feel insecure.

Q10. How, in your opinion, can journalism become a more female-friendly profession and how can female journalists overcome the work-related and gender-related challenges they face in this profession?

The media houses and representative associations of working journalists such as unions and press clubs should all proactively facilitate and promote a more conducive environment for women journalists.

**Name changed on request for privacy and safety reasons*

Aleema Raheel*

Peshawar

Q1: For how long have you been working as a journalist?

I have been working as a journalist since 2013.

Q2: Have you ever been threatened verbally in person as a result of your journalism work (news report, video, article, feature, photo, etc. that you produced)? If yes, please give a short description of the nature of threat.

No, I have never been threatened verbally.

Q3: Have you ever been threatened digitally (on phone, or social media, on email, messenger, SMS, etc.) as a result of your journalism work (news report, video, article, feature, photo, etc. that you produced)? If yes, please give a short description of the nature of threat.

No, I have never been threatened digitally.

Q4: Have you ever been attacked physically (hit, pushed, slapped, groped, etc.) as a result of your journalism work (news report, video, article, feature, photo, etc. that you produced)? If yes, please give a short description of the nature of physical attack.

No, I have never been attacked physically.

Q5: What kind of threats and attacks have you faced (example: threat to murder, attack, kidnap, sexual harassment, blackmail, loss of job, etc.)?

I have been fortunate – I have never faced threats for my journalism work.

Q6: What kind of threat actors or threat sources have you faced threats from (example: militants, politicians, political activists, government officials, security personnel, law enforcement agencies, religious groups, mafias, feudals, criminals, private citizens, unknown sources, etc.)?

Not applicable in my case.

Q7: Have you ever faced sexual harassment at the workplace? If yes, what kind of harassment have you faced (example: messages, phone calls, verbal, physical, psychological, etc.)? How frequent have you faced this problem?

Yes, I have been harassed through messages, particularly in the early period of my career as a journalist. I had to face a hostile environment.

Q8: Have you ever faced discrimination in your career because of your gender? If so, please list the categories of discrimination – for example official designation, duties, assignments, promotion, salaries, maternity and other leaves, allowances, perks and privileges, etc. Briefly describe one or two examples that illustrate the discrimination.

Yes, I have faced gender-based discrimination. I was kicked out from my previous job due to the maternity leave that I required.

Q9: Generally, how safe and secure, or insecure do you feel as a working female journalist in a male-dominated profession of journalism in Pakistan? Briefly explain why?

The workplace is as safe as there are men who can behave. Women have to face double jeopardy as the job security situation is worse for women. Most media outlets either do not have a code of conduct that can safeguard women journalists this is not enforced.

Q10. How, in your opinion, can journalism become a more female-friendly profession and how can female journalists overcome the work-related and gender-related challenges they face in this profession?

There should be gender-affirmation practices. Journalism can be more female friendly if every organization has at least 30% quota of journalists for females. This would quantitatively and qualitatively improve the environment for women in journalism and media industry. The organizations should also have a staff code of conduct, drafted in consultation with women, which should include an enforcement and complaints mechanism. This will bring more women to journalism.

[BACK COVER OF BOOK]

ABOUT THIS BOOK

Key Challenges of Women Journalists in Pakistan – A Book of Testimonies

Less than 5% of the estimated 20,000 journalists in Pakistan are women, according to the Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists. That makes it less than 1,000 women practicing journalism in the country in 2017. The working conditions for journalists in general are far from ideal – Pakistan is one of the deadliest countries to practice journalism, as annual press freedom and safety indexes in recent years prove – but for women media practitioners, they can offer additional challenges such as harassment from colleagues to social and cultural constraints.

As this book of testimonies from about 50 women journalists from across Pakistan amply prove, everyday life in journalism for them is not easy. In addition to the harsh conditions to practice journalism for all journalists, being a female brings forth an additional set of challenges and frustrations to tackle. These include threats and warnings from a wide variety of threat sources for their journalism work to sexual harassment at the workplace to engendered misogyny that prevents women journalists from taking a linear ladder up the career path. Women journalists in Pakistan are as likely to be threatened for their journalism work in the field to persistent sidelining and persecution in the office, according to these testimonies.

ABOUT FREEDOM NETWORK

Freedom Network (www.fnpk.org) is a registered Pakistan-based civil liberties watchdog. The organization's core value is to protect freedom of expression, including freedom of the press and Internet, and access to information and promote an informed society that sees media as a key partner in a democratic and pluralist Pakistan. It has the following mandate:

- To serve as a watchdog on the right to freedom of expression, including freedom of the press and Internet and of civil society
- To promote an ethical and professional media
- To serve as an advocate for freedom of expression and access to information as fundamental rights

