Although women communicators can trace their history to Dinah Nuthead, a colonial printer in Maryland in 1696, it was not until the early 1970s that a major movement took place among communication researchers to document fully and analyze seriously that history. Alleging that women were invisible in history, professor of History Ann Firor Scott Duke university urged women to remedy the situation — lecturing at the University of Michigan she said, the “male historian see what their presumptions lead them to see and they expect women to blend into the scenery. It is important for women to know something about their history in order to have some self respect”.

The 1975 James Carey urged a redefinition of communications history to broaden its scope and later in 1978 Garth Jowett continued to urge, “What we need now is the second generation of studies, those which go beyond the mere narrative details, but start to place these essential details in a meaningful social and cultural context”. He added that “very little attempt has been made to integrate into these historical studies, the vast amount of important and provocative findings from communications theory”.

Responding to plea Ann Douglas (1977) put forward an interesting hypothesis which sated Victorian alliance between women and mostly male clergy which resulted in popular literature, fostered a sentimental society and the beginning of modern mass culture – the age that gave birth to sitcoms and daytime soaps. She examined carefully the work and time of 30 women writers and journalists and 30 male ministers and found that when women moved away from being gainfully employed whether in form or factory or offices to being a mere homemaker female labour was devaluated and female identity was reconceived.

With documentation from best selling magazines and novels, Douglas showed how women began to idealize the qualities that kept them powerless (timidity piety, disdain for competition in the market place, and indulged in glamour and unrestrained consumption. Such a framework for history provided the reader with a context for the struggle of the present day towards the goal of human liberation.

The relationship between feminist press and suffrage movement is examined by Ellen Carol Dubois (1978).

In 1979 Marian Marzolf provided a compilation of the known history of women journalists from the 14 colonial women printers to the present, in her book “up from the footnote : A history of women journalists.” Her work is a survey of women currently working in the communications Media and how they feel about being a woman. Among the best of brief biographies of women in communication are those in volume 2 of Notable American women/the Modern period, edited by Barbara Sicherman and Carolyn Hurd Green (1980).
The four fold selection criteria is based on:

1. The individuals on her time or field.
2. The significance of her achievement.
3. The pioneering or innovative quality of her work.
4. The relevance of her career in the history of women.

Each is rich in factual detail, but the detail is integral to a larger sociocultural interpretation thus providing thoughtful background for the researcher pursuing more analytical historical questions.

Matilda Butler and William Paisley (1980) in ‘Women and the Mass Media’ provide a documented and statistical survey of women currently in the Media. Their findings support the general propositions that men are more likely than women to be in management, to earn higher media salaries, to obtain promotions, and to receive more desirable assignments.

“Women is Media : A Documentary Sourcebook” edited by Maurine Beasley and Sheila Silver (1977) provides a useful research tool for exploring conflicts between women employees and the media.

All the above mentioned documents are particularly Western and deal with the Western culture predominant in Europe and North America.

The studies published by UNESCO in 1981 and 1985 both remarked that although figures showing the overall proportions of women among media employees are available from certain countries there is little detailed global information about the extent and nature of women’s employment in the media industries, in the developing countries.

This was reinforced by the lack of relevant statistical data provided by government in response to a questionnaire distributed to member states of United Nations as part of review and appraisal of achievements during the UN decade for women. On the basis of the data available however it is clear that both in terms of overall number and of their distribution across and within specific occupations, women’s participation is limited. In particular and even taking into account differences of educational level, length of service and range of experience, women are disproportionately excluded from key decision making posts. This absence of a broadly based body of reliable data on women’s employment in the media has made it particularly difficult to challenge existing practices or to develop proposals for change.

However a start has been made with a series of case studies from Canada, Ecuador, Egypt, India and Nigeria, commissioned by UNESCO and published in 1987 which provide a basic statistical profile of sections of the broadcasting workforce in each country and which highlight obstacles to the movement of women into management and decision making positions.

In spite of differences in the status, size, structure and objectives of the broadcasting systems, the situation of female employees follow a similar pattern.
The almost complete absence of women from senior management and from technical jobs, their presence in spheres such as presentation and in certain production areas (educational and children's programmes) rather than others (news and current affairs) suggest that the man's World of the media is a recognisable phenomenon around the globe.

In their analyses of women's access to media management posts, all the five studies point out that an 'egalitarian gloss' within each media organisation hides a whole battery of attitudes, beliefs and organisational procedures which amount to indirect discrimination. Thus the barriers facing women are rarely overt, but nonetheless present - Invisible threads supporting a strict gender hierarchy in media production and policy making.

Association of African Women for Research and Development (AAWORD) and Zambia Association for Research and Development (ZARD) published a research pilot project on the survey of the accessibility of women to the media, in Proceedings of an International Workshop on Research Methodologies on women and the Media by Kaunda, Josie, Winnie Ndulo and Muyunda Chilwesa (1986). This constituted questionnaire and interview study of women in Zambian Mass Media, the roles they play, constrains on women's participation etc. The study showed that female media workers were few and in jobs with little chances of influencing media images of women, managers have negative attitudes towards female employees and though large no of women aspire to media careers few succeed.

These barriers are viewed from a North American angle in the book “Women in Mass Communication” 1989 by Pamela Creedon. The book documents the gradual entry of women into media professions. On the other hand the influx of women into the communication industry coincides with an overall decline in salaries and status of media professionals. It also shows that women in general earn less than men and a glass ceiling keeps them from top jobs. Creedon also stresses the need to ‘revision’ the teaching of communication so that in the future women entering the communications industry will be encouraged to question its values. But the studies in her volume indicate few signs of significant change in the media content so far.

The extent to which feminist awareness can be used to negotiate new representation of women in the mainstream media is explored further by a number of contributors of “Boxed In : Women and Television”. Though the entry of feminist awareness in the mainstream media is looked upon by scepticism by some critics, the concept of incorporation remains fundamental to feminist debate and theorising.

In the book “Employment and positive action for women in the Television organisations of the EEC Member states”. Margaret Gallgher (1987), examines the hierarchical and occupational distribution of women and men, their rates of career development, demographic differences and the role of women in management. The study includes case studies of equal opportunities and positive action policies and a set of recommendations for action.
The evolution of women broadcast journalists in the U.S. from 1920s to 1980s have been studied by David H Hosley and Gayle K Yamada (1987) in “Hard News : Women in Broadcast journalism”. The early chapters focus on individual pioneers and the later ones touch on the challenges women still face : equal pay, equal opportunity and sexual harassment.

Based on experiences of several hundred women already working in the media Anne Ross Muir 1987 combines facts and figures with women’s personal accounts and gives practical advice on the problems women are likely to encounter, in her book “A woman’s Guide to Jobs in Film and Television.

Charles Okigbo in 1988 conducted a questionnaire-based attitude study of male female journalists in Nigeria in “Sex in the Newsroom. Male-Female differences in perceptions of Media professionalism” (Communications. The European journal of communication. Vol 14 No. 1) No significant differences were found between men and women with respect to perceptions of media professionalism.

Another interesting study was conducted by Wallace B. Eberhard and Margaret Lee Myers (1988) which studied the difficulties faced by female journalists in entering the locker room as sportswriters and the discrimination faced by most of them, in their study ‘Beyond the Locker Room : women in sports on major daily Newspapers’ (Journalism Quarterly Vol. 65 No. 3).

A behind the scene look at women in U.S. broadcast journalism from the 1950s to the 1980s by Marlene Sanders and Marcia Rock (1988) was studied in the book. “Waiting for Prime Time : the women of Television News. Based on personal experience of pioneer Marlene Sanders and interviews with other key women journalists, the book explored issue of discrimination in the Television Industry and described the key legal battles which women have fought.

The year 1990 saw a proliferation of studies in these aspects of women in Mass Media.

A summery and progress report on efforts to promote equality through personnel & programme policy in Swedish Broadcasting Corporation was the focus of a study ‘Are we nearing the top of the Hill ? Notes from a decade of working towards Equality in Swedish Broadcasting’ by Ulla B. Abrahamsson. In some respects the record inspires optimism, but ‘equal opportunity’ is not enough to change ingrained sex role patterns.

In the same year Margaret Gallagher Examined the increasing commercialisation of broadcasting in Europe and the implication of this for women in her study ‘shifting focus women and broadcasting in the European community – Here examples of women’s action strategies are given and the policy of European community to promote equality in the media is described.

A Questionnaire to television staff in 1988 showed most believe that differences based on gender stereotypes predispose men and women to make programmes of different types or to be suited to specified jobs found Maciej
Morrowski (1989) in the "Socio-occupational status of Male & Female staff of Polish-Television: Gender stereotypes in practice." It was also found that within the profession women must compete 'on men's terms' and successful female broadcasters are regarded as exceptions that prove the rule.

In Peter Dahlgren and Colin Sparks (eds) "Communication and Citizenship: Journalism and the public sphere in the new media age" Liesbet Van Zoonen (1991) in the article 'A tyranny of Intimacy? Women, Femininity and Television News' found that increase in the number of women news readers on Dutch TV has coincided with a policy aimed at the intimisation of Dutch TV news. This development is explored in terms of the public-private sphere model of male-female identities which is found unhelpful to a feminist perspective on journalism.

In 1991 the report on EBU/EC conference held in Athens was published by European Broadcasting Union, and was called 'Women and men in Broadcasting; Equality in the 90s? This covered employment and programme content of women in media with contributions from Canada, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy and UK.

In 1991 another study changing Focus: the Future of women in the Canadian Film & TV industry. Fourteen essays analysed why women were under-represented in Film and Television in Canada and found out that the industry like other social institutions - has been developed by and for men. It also contains a plan of action with sixty-five recommendations drawing on consultation with women & men in the industry and in government.

In 1992 Stella Chinyere 0 Kuma in the study 'Female faculty in journalism education in Nigeria: Implications for the status of women in the Society' (Africa Media Review Vol.6) found out that only 6% of mass communication lecturers are women which in turn has implications for what is taught and thus for shaping the content of the media in which students will be employed. If issues of media portrayals are not included in the syllabus there will be no change in news gathering or trivialising women.

In another study two decades of development in women's access to the media profession. Portrayal of women in Media and the achievements of media activists are traced in Gertrude J. Robinsons 'Women & the Media in Canada: a progress report' in the book 'Our own reflections: Mass Media and Canadian identity' edited by Helen Holmes and David Taras. According to this Article the broadcast media demonstrates a 'stalled revolution' in both personnel and programme policies where female & male perspectives are not yet valued equally.

In 1995 Margaret H. Naughton studied 239 media organisations across 43 countries and noted that though number of women increased they are still not taken seriously and lacked a stronghold in the decision making positions. This study 'An unfinished story - Gender Patterns in Media employment' was sponsored by UNESCO.
THE INDIAN SCENARIO

Though in the West the amount of research on women as media practitioners is substantial the Asian, particularly Indian scenario is very bleak. For reasons stated in the earlier chapters the research in India on this subject is few and far between.

One of the pioneering and most important work in the field by S. R. Joshi (1986) who studied the participation of women at the higher decision making levels of Doordarshan, reported that out of his respondents a large no of women felt that increasing the proportion of women employees in the structure would improve programme quality and bring about a more balanced perspective and point out that facts and figures belie the widespread impression that, women are well represented in all areas of the profession and that there is no difference in the treatment of male & female employees.

In 1990 'Access of Asian women to communication Education and work in Journalism and Communication : an overview of six countries' edited by Lock Yut Kam documented finding from Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Sri Lanka. In all countries a gap exists between the number of women with access to communication education and the number working in Journalism and communication. Socio-economic, institutional and personal factors contribute to the gap. Recommendations include measurers to promote greater sharing of family and professional responsibilities.

In Media Asia 1994. Lalita Easwer Studies the impact of New Communication Technology on women as users and producer of the means of Communication. This article reports on the finding of a study on women and the media and women and technology. It would appears that women in communication though professionally trained, face the same discrimination and gender differentiation that other women in Indian society face. Their achievements are received with cynicism and rarely are they accepted as equals with male team members, eventually they come to accept this as natural hence inhibiting the progress made towards equality.

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