Chapter 2

Research Methodology

2.1 Introduction

This study focuses on understanding women journalists’ lived experiences in Hindi print media in Madhya Pradesh employing qualitative research methodologies. Qualitative research offers possibilities of capturing narratives that reveal the subjective experiences of journalists. Jayaratne and Stewart (1991) write that sociologists use qualitative methods based on an understanding that women’s experience and narratives have not been articulated well under quantitative methods. Qualitative research methodology is also a more interactive research paradigm which permits women’s experiences to be expressed from their point of view.

This thesis employs qualitative methodologies and finds feminist research methods suitable to study the lived experiences of women journalists understanding their social-cultural realities in particular geographical contexts. Applying a feminist lens to understand Hindi print media provides flexibility with methods for the purpose of this research. A deeper picture of women’s conditions is largely best understood through their own experiences, particular to their contextual realities.

2.2 Conceptualizing this Research

My journalistic work experience with a reputed English newspaper in Bhopal in year 2008-09 conveyed so many aspects of journalism and its nature for me. As an insider I experienced that the journalistic workplace seldom acknowledges a woman as a professional. While working as a reporter there in an English newspaper office I realized that there is lack of healthy work environment giving little space to grow with little
freedom or choice. I was a fresh reporter there and I hardly had any opportunity to do work according to my given designation there.

I was confined to desk work whereas in those days I wanted to do reporting. I thought then that perhaps initially to start in this field it is fine to do this desk work but it was a something which did not appeal to me. I tried to do more work to get reporting assignments. However when I did some special stories which Bureau-chief of the newspaper published with his own name. This credit stealing and no bylines were common complaints from my other friends too who were working with other newspapers. I could not raise any voice against these incidents and I chose to keep quiet thinking it all as part of the process. I experienced little space to express dissent, not being able to do work of my choice, and working for long hours.

It was a bureau office of the newspaper in Bhopal where the staff was so limited, and the editor showed very little interest in the office and newspaper. Everyone was dissatisfied with his ignorance and negligence towards office. I had only one female colleague who was also made to do similar desk-bound work. She also faced similar discrimination during the job. Despite being journalists we were not free to put our views and had no space for any kind of change in the situation at workplace.

Those days of a new job in journalism made me ask: Is this the journalism we have been taught about in the class room? I was disappointed with the unhealthy environment in the newspaper office. In that office there was not even a proper separate toilet facility for women and thus my female colleague and I used to work without peeing for long hours. We both used to discuss: why is this newspaper so blind to its employees’ needs that they do not have even a proper toilet facility? At that point of my newly joined profession I was not able to understand why one journalistic workplace is discriminatory with unhealthy working environment and conditions.

Another friend who also worked with a newspaper in Bhopal had same situation of poor toilet facilities at her office and she had to go through the same struggle of not peeing for hours while being in office. I used to discuss this with her often and she said that her newspaper too had a constrained environment. As she was the only female working there
nobody paid any attention to the situation. For her it became a common thing to hear abusive language from male colleagues in office. Being the only female working there used to make her feel weird as she had no other support to voice her discomfort with such language at the work place.

This raised the question: if the situation in an English newspaper office was so disappointing what would be the scene in Hindi newspaper office? Few of my female friends who were working in Hindi newspapers shared that there they felt restricted in expressing their views even for news ideas. Commenting on women and use of sarcasm are common language used by males in office. Lack of decent toilet facility was a common issue for all of us. The eagerness to continue in journalism made us ignore these issues to an extent with plans of switching to a new job in another newspaper. Switching to a new journalistic job in other city too did not help solving the issue, as the issues changed their form but always continued.

Somewhere the fear of losing freedom earned through this journalistic job always kept me silent but observant to see Hindi journalism in Bhopal. For me, it became a concern that was constantly on my mind. Another important aspect that emerged was how journalism education institute taught us the ‘ideal picture of journalism’ which rarely or almost never exists in reality. The institute I studied at, taught us to conform to the dominant trends in journalism ignoring issues like conditions of work, women in media and how the critical perspective was missing or even silenced. Further, the syllabus taught to us during course work completely failed to teach about women in journalism which now seems like a deliberate omission where the curriculum decided your learning and skipped issues of concern in understanding media discourses. Multiplicity of caste, class and gender issues in media were rarely touched and taught during our Journalism course at University. Unknowingly, it was a method of being trained under the dominant order of values through the education-system. Though a few faculty members had some perspective to challenge our conscience and raised critical questions about society, state and used thought-provoking methods of teaching but their voice was weak as the University was quite powerful in promoting a dominant ideology. The focus remained to make students work according to the needs of the journalism as a profession with a focus
on the job market with limited resources. In reality every newspaper organization has its own set of work-culture where our formal journalistic knowledge did not help much.

My personal experience of journalistic job did not encourage me to get an exposure of the field and reporting. I could not be in news-source-network thus I could not have any other option to switch too. I was experiencing workplace hierarchy through discrimination based on gender. I had been assigned the responsibility to open the office lock as I was seen to be more responsible and punctual than the peon. An incident of story-idea stealing left me with an ethical question why there is no genuine credit and one has to fight for byline as a professional right. Now I am able to decode the experiences giving words to male-domination and language of power which reduces a woman professional to a woman only at workplace.

While doing the job I realized that it seems difficult to continue with such journalism where I am not able to freely explore the profession and experienced stagnation thus I moved out of the city with my critical questions emerged during my journalistic work experience.

I moved to Delhi for my M.Phil. education and I eagerly wanted to test my assumptions there about Hindi print media in the city. Though I was studying development studies but I could not help looking for answers in the different context of Delhi. I could not put-off the thought of exploring women’s experience in Hindi print media in this city Delhi. Being a novice at that time and filled with enthusiasm I went ahead asking whether it is only in Bhopal where women are mistreated and not considered as professionals and whether Delhi had something more to offer its Hindi women journalists.

From media point of view, Delhi is considered as the center of mainstream media. I initiated my independent empirical study on ‘Status of Women in Hindi Print media (2011)’ with my limited understanding. I did in-depth interviews with 8 women

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19 An independent field study on ‘Status of women Journalists in Hindi Print Media in India’ conducted during January 2010 to March, 2010 with women journalists working with different Hindi newspapers in Delhi. This empirical work was presented at EADI/DSA General Conference 2011 on Rethinking Development in an Age of Scarcity and Increased Uncertainty: New Values, Voices and Alliances for Increased Resilience at York, United Kingdom, September 19-22, 2011.
journalists working in different Hindi newspaper in Delhi. This study which I did to check my assumption brought results that Hindi print media lacks the professional and gender equality which makes women the weaker category in journalism. It revealed that even city like Delhi which has mainstream tag with so called national media failed to provide a healthy and conducive working environment for women in Hindi print media. This study (2011) also engaged with the assumption that Hindi print media is more patriarchal and English print media is hegemonic even as it has a comparatively better situation for women journalists. With the help of this study it came to light that women from particular caste-class are dominating in Hindi print media. This study made me reflect on the term ‘patriarchy’ in context of Hindi print media and I started exploring patriarchy existing at workplace in different forms particularly interested in Hindi print journalism in Madhya Pradesh.

I have tried to look a bit higher listening to experiences of my friends who have been working with media. I pushed myself to look for the answers with more analytical explanations to produce knowledge of experiences. Understanding Hindi journalism in Madhya Pradesh has been a quest born out of my own journalistic work experience and circumstances which are based on gendered nature of hierarchy at the workplace. For the purpose of my study lived experiences have been the core source of information and data which flow form women’s narratives to describe multiple intersecting realities in four cities Bhopal, Indore, Jabalpur and Gwalior in Madhya Pradesh.

2.3 Feminist Research Methodology

Feminist research methodology is a powerful tool to explore and inquire into women’s unheard and unseen realities. It also enables one to go beyond structured-research whereas it remains open-ended filled with subjectivities. Fonow et al., (1991) describe it as methodological strategy which utilizes situation at hand for knowledge production. Feminist research allows one to study the situation well by understanding potential

opportunities of examination in unseen or otherwise hidden processes in our surroundings which Stanley (2013, p. 12) emphasizes that feminist researcher should use every available means to investigate the ‘conditions of women in sexist society.’

Sarikakis et al., (2008) write that in communication, gender theories and feminist research have helped to be more attentive in future research. Aiming to be inclusive for making the voices heard who have been made invisible and silenced in social and historical contexts.

Sarikakis et al., (2008) quotes in her work

“Reinharz (1992) identified 10 tenets of feminist research:
1. Feminism is a perspective, not a research method.
2. Feminists use a multiplicity of research methods.
3. Feminist research involves an ongoing criticism of non-feminist scholarship.
4. Feminist research is guided by feminist theory.
5. Feminist research may be transdisciplinary.
6. Feminist research aims to create social change.
7. Feminist research strives to represent human diversity.
8. Feminist research frequently includes the researcher as a research subject and tool.
9. Feminist research frequently attempts to develop special relations with the people studied (in interactive research).
10. Feminist research frequently defines a special relation with the reader.” (p. 240) (quoted in Sarikakis et al., 2008)

The above mentioned beliefs give a strong possibility to liberate the researcher in feminist research as it allows initiating more interactive form of research which develops special relations with the people being studied and the reader too. For feminist research the women’s experiences are important to make them visible which have been ignored and silenced. Lather (1991, p. 71) quoted in Creswell (2007) writes that this ideological research is to “correct both the invisibility and distortion of female experiences in ways relevant to ending women’s unequal social position.”
Also, understanding women’s lived experiences as their individual knowledge brings the concept of Standpoint theory which validates that one’s experiences are shaped by her or his social and political experiences. Feminist standpoint is to allow that a reasonable account of the world can be given from more than one positionality from different standpoints. Feminist standpoint theorists claimed that standpoint of women provides a privileged position for knowledge.

According to Harding (2004) feminist standpoint theory intends to locate the practices of power. It traces how dominant institutions and their conceptual frameworks produce oppressive social relations and structures which are maintained too. She writes that this is done by unfolding the hierarchical social structure and its functioning. It emerges through the formation of group consciousness rather shifting perspective of an individual. Harding (1991) cited in Hekmen (2013) stresses the “strong objectivity” to recognize the social situatedness of all knowledge which also needs a critical evaluation for deciding that which social situations are likely to produce the most objective knowledge claims. Dorothy Smith (1990, cited in Hekmen, 2013) defines women’s actually live experience as a category which includes diversity of women’s live and activities. Hennessey (1995) asserts that feminist standpoint theory empowers women’s way of knowing. She argues that in existence of material forces which structure relations between social positioning and ways of knowing, feminist standpoint theories have challenged the supposition that feminist understanding of the world is assured by just simply being a woman. A feminist standpoint is significant to examine systematic oppression in society which undervalues women’s knowledge.

Haraway (1988) addresses the multiplicity and diversity of feminist subjects and life experiences brought concept of ‘situated knowledges’. She writes that one cannot expect generating a useful understanding for subjugated groups from the universalizing standpoint of the master, ‘the Man, the One God, whose Eye produces, appropriates, and orders all difference’ (Haraway, 1988, p. 193 cited in Cockburn 2015). Thus a more reliable account knowledge can be taken from below where life experiences are rooted. Dorothy Smith (1990, cited in Hekmen, 2013) defines women’s actually lived experience as a category which includes diversity of women’s lives and activities.
The experiences of women journalists are results of certain social structural forces existing around them. Mies (1991) clarifies that experience is generally equated with personal experience respective of the atmosphere, the feeling which a woman has in a certain situation. Experience means considering real life as the starting point, its subjective concreteness as well as its societal entanglements. She further adds that beginning with the challenges of our own experience comes from our frustration at the realization that women’s life, their history, their struggles, their ideas constitute no part of dominant science. The category of experience of the “subjective factor” into science, Mies (1991) argues corresponded with the slogan, “personal is political”. Subordination of the subjective factor to a concept of science is acknowledged by women but if we do not want to accept our own non-scientific being, we need to have a ‘base’ to be able to take a stand to our reality and to criticize theories which are opposed to our own. More specifically, Mies (1991) establishes that the base is our own subjective experience, our own critical self-reflection on it and the result-oriented process. It emphasizes the processes which individuals or groups have gone through in the production of their lives; it signifies their reality, their history.

In seeking to capture the experiences of women journalists working with Hindi print journalism, I found feminist phenomenology an appropriate approach for my study. Linking their experiences and understanding the processes of their experience, I looked towards feminist phenomenology for a suitable framework. Fisher (2000) quotes

“Judith Butler notes, on the surface it appears that phenomenology shares with feminist analysis a commitment to grounding theory in lived experience, and in revealing the way in which the world is produced through the constituting acts of subjective experience…” (quoted in Fisher, 2000, p. 27)

“…the feminist claim that the personal is political suggests, in part, that subjective experience is not only structured by existing political arrangements, but effects and structures those arrangements in turn. Feminist theory has sought to understand the way in which systematic or pervasive political and cultural structures are enacted and reproduced through individual acts and practices, and how the analysis of ostensibly personal situations is clarified through situating the issues in a broader and shared cultural context. Indeed, the feminist impulse…has often emerged in the recognition that my pain or my silence or my anger or my perception is finally not mine alone, and that it delimits me in a shared cultural situation which in turn enables and empowers me in certain unanticipated ways.” (quoted in Fisher, 2000, p. 28)
The notion of subjectivity is significant to understand meaning of events which are socially constructed, thus lived experiences are the base in feminist research. Phenomenology, here in this study allows for the giving of meaning to lived experiences (Creswell, 2007) of the women journalists in Hindi Print journalism which has been their professional reality. The description of their lived experiences consists of what and how they experienced it and also development of descriptions of the essence of their experiences (Moustakas, 1994 cited in Creswell, 2007). Phenomenology is not only a description, but also an interpretive process in which the researcher makes an interpretation of the meaning of the lived experiences (Creswell, 2007). Phenomenology has its origins in the work of German mathematician Edmund Husserl (1859-1938) and Heidegger, Sartre and Merleau-Ponty who further elaborated views of Husserl on Phenomenological philosophy (Creswell, 2007).

Phenomenology and feminism, have immense possibility to complement each other (Fisher, 2000) bringing the experience of being woman, importantly their lived experiences. According to Fisher (2000) phenomenology and feminism both share commonality of descriptive and experiential analysis with systematic examination of the articulation of the lived experiences attending theoretical and practical complications. Fisher (2000) writes that experiential analysis is the fundamental commonality relating Feminism and Phenomenology. Clearly, the analysis of experience did not start with phenomenology. However it has potential to assert that as a philosophy of experience, obtaining its descriptive elaboration and thematizing of lived experiences and situations does provide particular insight to feminist accounts. Thus it can be argued that phenomenology played significant role in proposing implementation of experimental analysis.

In context of my research, women journalists speak about their experiences in relation to the Hindi print journalism workplace while sharing their lived experiences of being women journalists. Describing their situation as a woman in Hindi journalism provides a scope to give meaning to their lived experiences.
Significantly, Fisher (2000) puts forward that the potential to bring phenomenology and feminism to expand further shows compatibility by implementing a phenomenological approach to frame feminist experiential discourse. Such more interactive implementation develops phenomenology of women’s experience.

Fisher (2000) mentions Simone de Beauvoir’s *The Second Sex*, where she did a descriptive analysis of the lived experiences of women and their situation. In the context of feminist phenomenology Beauvoir’s work, gives a wonderful account of women’s lived experiences with great effectiveness. This research is based on in-depth interviews conducted among women journalists which bring their narratives to understand their subjective position and location. Oakley (1981, p. 41) writes “interviewing women, at least from a feminist perspective, as a “contradiction in terms” because it involves “objectifying your sisters” where she suggests that interview is a one-way hierarchical process. Healey-Etten (et al., 2010, p. 157) writes that sociologists prefer in-depth interview method because it enables them to explore people’s subjective experiences, meaning-making, accounting processes and unspoken realities about their life and society.

There has been growing preference towards doing research particularly open-ended, in-depth interviews. Feminist researchers have contested the masculinist ‘objectivity’ about knowledge claims and they have argues for such research relationships which are more egalitarian (Oakley, 1981; Klein, 1983; Finch, 1984; Smith, 1987; Stanley and Wise, 1993 cited in Song, et al., 1995). Feminists have emphasized the need to understand women’s lives in terms of their personal lived experiences. Stanley et al., (1993, p. 228 cited in Song, et al., 1995, p. 241) argue ‘for the symbiotic relationship between ontology and epistemology’ denying that the binaries of reason and emotion and subjectivity and objectivity are binaries at all. . . .’ method of in-depth interview encourages an individual to explain how they viewed their issues and how they perceived their circumstances towards identity processes giving meaning to their life experiences. Holguín Cuádraz et al., (1999) informs that rise of feminist in-depth interviewing also moved to *The Discovery of Grounded Theory* by Glaser and Strauss (1967) enabling interviewers with a method for generating theory from the voices of lived experiences.
In my research too, in-depth interviews were conducted to address experiences of the women journalists which are in tune with feminist phenomenology. It allows implementing the experiential analysis in this methodology framework. The in-depth interviews enabled me to understand stored-knowledge of these women journalists their emotions, perceptions and experiences of working with Hindi Print journalism. As an interviewer inquiring from feminist standpoint arms to understand the subjective knowledge of variety of women’s experiences having diversity in their socio-cultural circumstances. This subjective knowledge often remains hidden and unarticulated.

In my attempt to seek answers as part of an intellectual inquiry, reflexivity has been a significant aspect in my research. As a researcher, I encountered self-reflexivity from multiple points of views as I belong to one of the cities in Madhya Pradesh selected for the study. Reflexivity, evolving from an understanding of feminist research has emerged as a significant aspect which focuses on construction of knowledge and power as an essential social process (Oakley, 1981; Ramazanoglu and Holland, 2002; Wasserfall, 1993 cited in Riach, 2009). A number of scholars have found reflexivity as self-conscious consideration relevant to individual agency. McNay (2000) writes that reflexivity is a critical awareness which arises from a self-conscious relationship with others. Giddens (1991) also argues that reflexive process must bring some kind of change because we question not only ourselves and our position to the world but we also the world itself and what we know about its reality. This research also reflects ‘multiple perspectives that correspond to the multiplicity of coexisting and sometimes directly competing, points of view’ (Bourdieu et al., 1999, p. 3 cited in Riach, 2009). I reflect on my own location as a researcher and also as a simultaneous insider and outsider to the study I engage in.

2.4 Field of the Study: Researcher’s Point of View and Research Process

I have interviewed women journalists from four cities and my efforts have been to understand the contextual realities of women working with Hindi print journalism in Madhya Pradesh. ‘City’ has been an emerging theme to be analyzed in relation to experience of women journalists. My interest is to focus on women journalists’
experience working in Hindi print journalism thus these four cities were selected which meant both commonalities and differences to the experiences of women journalists helping to avoid generalization. Also, it was a challenge to get sufficient number of women journalists in one city thus I moved from contacting one journalists to another eventually selecting these four cities Indore, Bhopal, Jabalpur and Gwalior of Madhya Pradesh.

For my research, I contacted 26 women journalists in four cities, and I managed to conduct in depth interviews with 22 women journalists. It has been a process through snowball sampling. Out of 26 contacted women journalists, 22 agreed to participate in my study. All of them have done their post-graduation and most of them have done journalism and mass communication degree courses. It was difficult to find potential respondents for the study in one city thus eventually I had to do take four cities of Madhya Pradesh and snowball sampling was preferred sampling method. These 22 women journalists are from the age group of 27 to 44 working in different Hindi newspapers in these four cities. Most of these women journalists are from upper castes mostly belonging to Brahmin community.

I would like to mention here that ideological inclination of newspapers has been an important aspect which respondents shared covertly in their narratives describing about nature of assignments, news-content and workplace. Halberstam (1979 cited in Senter et al., 1986) argues that it is the “Press Lords” who actually control the content of the media and that the interests of these powerful publishers and editors are the final arbiters of the content of the print media. Halberstam (1979) critically writes that the interest between powerful media people and dominant personalities in business and politics does not make a set of independent journalists, reporters in media. Whereas, Halberstam (1979) elaborates that press consists of workers who are dictated by an elite press lords, business people and politicians’ nexus. Critically examining location of the journalists, Tuchman’s book (1978) Making News discusses that journalists have more influence on the media content despite facing complexities of dealing between reporters and their editors, publishers for getting content into media. But this does not ensure independent press and
freedom of journalist in their profession amidst existing power hegemonic institutions like state, corporate and media nexus.

Understanding the ideological and economic interest among press lords, dominant business-people and political rule do control the process of news construction and distribution. Though in my research this aspect has not been discussed at length but narratives of the women journalists bring out how particular character and ideology of newspaper has been affecting nature of journalism in Hindi print media. Apart from this history of the newspaper and their origin too reflect nature and interest of newspapers on their ownership patterns which I have not studied in detail here. My research focuses on lived experiences of women journalists working in Hindi print journalism to analyse nature of Hindi print journalism in four cities of Madhya Pradesh.

2.4.1 Bhopal

Bhopal is the centrally located city which is north of the Vindhya mountain range in Madhya Pradesh. It is the second metropolis city as per the Census (2011) and it is the capital of the Madhya Pradesh. It has been internationally visible for the infamous Bhopal Gas disaster occurred on December 3, 1984 at Union Carbide India Limited (UCIL) pesticide plant now owned by Dow Chemical Company. Bhopal has prominent presence of the DB Corp Ltd also known as Bhaskar Group which has major publication Dainik Bhaskar, is a big business conglomerate in media in Bhopal.

I began to interview women journalists in Bhopal. Bhopal is the capital of the state which is a politically powerful city. Thus here media concentration is specifically influential because it strategically makes state-media relationship strong from political point of view.

I had to take help of a few male journalists to get in contact with women journalists which in itself was a hint for me that it is going to be a challenge to organize interviews with women journalists in four cities. Starting from Bhopal, I managed to get in touch with seven women journalists. Though there were many young journalists, newly joining
print media but to ensure a variety of respondents was also a concern. I have also tried to focus on those women journalists who are from Madhya Pradesh itself and working for a longer period so that I could receive a clear insider-perspective about Madhya Pradesh and its socio-cultural conditions in relation to print media journalism. Out of seven women journalists, I was able to interview five as part of my study. Out of these five women journalists two were single and three are married.

The two single women journalists have had rich experience of being in this field and they actually have been working while witnessing the changing-unchanging patterns in Hindi print journalism in Bhopal city. All of these seven women journalists have post-graduation degree.

I met every women journalist individually in some coffee café, restaurant avoiding their workplace to ensure freedom in conversation without any pressures. I have followed up by meeting them several times and every time I found many new emerging aspects during conversations. Especially the maximum information and rich experiences in Hindi Journalism were shared by those women journalists who have been working for more than five years, some crossing more than ten years in this field. They are able to trace the changes and discrimination based on gender with greater clarity.

There is a local hierarchy among media organizations and their editions. Rounds of conversation held with women journalists unraveled that male journalists specifically in Bhopal are mostly engaged in political reporting or all sorts of reporting close to political. Being a capital-city Bhopal has an attached power notion which attracts many journalism-aspirants to be in this field of profession. Thus ruling party and journalism (largely male journalists) share a strong nexus to be in constant proximity of power and its rule.

I have observed that being a state capital the city has immense opportunities to be a potential market from investment point of view thus the urbanization is in very fast process here too. Now the mall culture is also bringing newly emerging newsbeats with advertisement-revenue for the local newspapers thus the demand for workforce is there in
media organization. Women journalists are mostly assigned to work for the city pull-outs to cover city events bringing new urban-centric lifestyle reporting.

In Bhopal there is a well-known Journalism school which has been a prominent institute for journalism and communication education. The institute’s higher authorities and faculties have been actively engaged to highlight the nationalist character and vision of the University which is reflected in the curriculum and their celebration of events according to the Hindu calendar marking festivals and rituals. During my MA course work, I have experienced how concerned about dress morality on campus, actively engaging students for celebration of ‘Saraswati-Vandana’, a prayer dedicated to the Goddess Saraswati who is worshipped as the higher authority of knowledge and wisdom particularly in academics and other cultural activities according to the Hindu calendar year.

To my mind, it was more a feeling of studying in a closed-familial University while maintaining the hierarchy and social-moral order and producing journalists with a certain ideology. Durham and Douglas (2005, p. 7) analyzing Gramsci is relevant for my analysis here:

“For Gramsci, societies maintained their stability through combination of “domination,” or force, and “hegemony” defined as consent to “intellectual and moral leadership.” Thus, social orders are founded and reproduced with some institutions and groups violently exerting power and domination to maintain social boundaries and rules (i.e., the police, military, vigilant groups etc.) while other institutions (such as religion, schooling, or the media) induce consent to the dominant order (i.e., market, capitalism, fascism, communism and so on). Hegemony Theory for Gramsci involves both analysis of current forces of domination and the ways particular political forces achieved hegemonic authority, and delineation of counter-hegemonic forces, groups and ideas that could contest and overthrow the existing hegemony.”

Educational institutes are used as a vehicle to induce here certain ideological motives and values which largely serve the interest of particular dominant forces which have political control over University. Here it plays with double power of being a journalism and communication University having journalism students to ‘manufacture consent’ to
marginalize dissent allowing government to promote hegemonic constructions (Chomsky, 1988).

I would like to share my experience here regarding accessing the library in this institute for my PhD research work. It has been a great help to provide me certain required literature on Hindi print media in the library. During my field work and library access period I observed that now library has more books on right wing leaders, literature on Sangh Parivar, Ram Mandir-Ayodhya issues and promoting dissertations of the students studying on Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP) leaders in Madhya Pradesh and their coverage in newspapers.

By now as a PhD scholar from TISS, Mumbai I was seen as an outsider to be allowed to access the library on showing formal letter for the purpose. As an alumina of that institute, the fact that you are researching on women journalists in Hindi print media showed me the dangers of being misunderstood there at my site of study i.e, Madhya Pradesh. I realized that researching on Hindi print media does have all potential to be understood first as a nationalist supporting Hindi language journalism and Hindi nationalism too. I experienced that the politics around Hindi language makes it critical issue with embedded nationalist agenda of one-country, one-language phenomena. Issues in media rarely cover gender-issues in regional or vernacular media too. At that very moment I could not understand, later I reminded myself questionably that ‘look perhaps…you are also being seen as one propagating Hindi journalism and national cultural values, be careful.’ I tried to take an objective position where I might not be in a perceived tussle of choosing who I am and who I should be ideologically. I kept the researcher in myself alive trying to successfully conduct my research in cities and not let situations influence my work.

During field work and library access adding women journalist as remaining significant part of my research work fetched some frowning looks from male journalists. Perhaps seeing me as trespassing territory of the Hindi journalism where women cannot be a subject of research because talking about ‘gender’ might have sounded like a threat for the male-dominated Hindi media. Focusing on women journalists as core of my research further ensured that I would be seen as feminist researcher.
2.4.2 Indore

Indore is located in the southern Malwa plateau in the western region of Madhya Pradesh. It is the largest city in Madhya Pradesh it has been described as ‘commercial capital of Madhya Pradesh by Economic Times. Indore has the highest population coming under category of Million Plus UA/City. “Indore is one of the biggest trading centres of Madhya Pradesh. It is part of old Madhya Bharat and earlier was part of the Holkar ruled state” (Engineer, 1989). Indore has been economically and commercially advanced city makes media working here has enough revenue sources through advertisement with existing mall culture and urban lifestyle.

Meeting women journalists in Indore was entirely new experience unlike Bhopal. Generally these two cities are compared in regard to opportunities, resources and infrastructure. I got in touch with women journalists who have been in important decision-making position here and working for more than seven years in the field of journalism.

I was able to meet six women journalists working in Indore and out them, four journalists are single and two are married. All of them have done post-graduation and have been well-known in this field working for quite a longer period.

I met senior women journalists who are in higher position did sound gender-neutral with low critical perspective regarding gendered power-relations in media. But later in conversation they share certain experiences which actually indicate stark reality of gendered discrimination in print media.

Comparatively Indore has more women journalists who are in senior positions but not in decision-making position. I have met women journalists who are handling higher position here but remain gender-neutral with a strong sense of professional and organizational goals. Especially in Indore, I have met women journalists who have been working in this field for a fairly long period who say that they have never come across any incident of sexual harassment.
Despite working for so many years they are not critical towards male-dominance and reinforce patriarchy while saying that it’s all women’s responsibility in any field that how they want to be treated by their male colleagues. While talking to women journalist in Indore I have found they have more consciousness to achieve a professional identity while ignoring their gender in this profession as they are in senior position. Also, the senior women journalists themselves feel that during training of any female newcomer they too make them ignore their gender reminding them this profession is entirely their choice not a forced one. It is important to survive in this field entirely ignoring your gender.

For my research, Indore brought a better picture only regarding women’s presence in Hindi print media as they have been able to continue to higher positions in comparison to other cities in my study. Pankaj (2009) in his work documents the highest number of newspapers in city Indore since 1915 which must have had impact for having a number of opportunities for women journalist which helped them to reach up to the comparatively higher ladder in journalism.

2.4.3 Jabalpur

Jabalpur is located in the Mahakoshal region of eastern Madhya Pradesh. It is the third-largest urban agglomeration in Madhya Pradesh as per the 2011 census. Vinoba Bhave who is known for the ‘Bhoodan’ movement (land reform movement) called Jabalpur ‘Sanskaardhani’ meaning cultural capital (a Hindi word which means a place of cultural values) of Madhya Pradesh.

The process of meeting the journalists here began with meeting a male journalists working with English print media. I met him after having a telephonic conversation with him for planning my field work. While having a meeting with this senior journalist at an old famous Coffee House in Jabalpur city I was told by this journalist that he thought that

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20 Land Reform Movement was started by Acharya Vinoba Bhave in 1951 promoting voluntary land gift movement in India. [http://www.jabalpur.nic.in/](http://www.jabalpur.nic.in/) accessed on March 7, 2017.
some ‘old woman’ is going to come for such PhD research. Because young people don’t do such studies that too about women in media here in small cities.

After sharing briefly about my PhD research with him, I was told that it would be difficult to get women journalists in Hindi print media whereas in Electronic media it is easier but again women are few in number. He put me in touch with two women journalists. I managed to get in touch with 5 women journalists there working with different Hindi dailies in Jabalpur and one of those recently joined a channel after quitting print media. Out of these 5 journalists four are single and one is married. The single women journalists share their fear of losing career if they get married thus they are pushing it off.

Meeting these women journalists were another wonderful experience as they were so happily sharing their certain experiences and found themselves worthy as a person apart from a professional who are being interviewed. Women here acknowledged the fact that it is for the first time that they are being interviewed because of their journalistic profession. Usually these women journalists cover others’ story but there is rarely any effort to ask them their own challenges and issues in the profession. Jabalpur is a small city where presence of media has been strong as many newspapers historically started from there too.

Here women journalists, mention about their city limits and safety issues which are very much part of their professional life. While meeting them in coffee house, restaurants they told me that here I need to be careful being out after 6 in the evening and if possible avoid being out after evening. One journalist met me in her own office space and she has been so excited that her experience is being considered worthy to be part of such research work. She shared that she has been trying to highlight problems faced by married women journalists but inertia in journalism does not break at all. She has been working in this field for more than 12 years and she said that it is really difficult to raise voice in such small city’s Hindi print journalism where maximum professionals are in family-link or relatives which lack professionalism. While taking her interview at her office space because she had time constrains, She made it sure that it should be done when her editor of the newspaper is not there so we fixed meetings accordingly. Following up with these
women journalists was easier as they greeted me more as guest of theirs and they often opened up to me with their experience in an emotional way. This sense of genuine emotional experiences, I felt more strongly in Jabalpur perhaps because for them it was something new that someone was traveling to cities in order to interview Hindi women journalists.

In Jabalpur, I myself traveled for the first time to this city for my research work. My smart phone and GPS (Global Positioning System) helped me to trace the roads and find locations though small cities do have complaints of having poor internet speed which I also experienced. I found it completely different from Bhopal and Indore in terms of male outnumbering females in public spaces, roads and market. I experienced myself as an alien who is here wearing Jeans, Kurta, shoes, a bag-pack on shoulders walking on the city streets. Perhaps it was the Jabalpur city which made me conscious of my dress for the first time on field work unlike Bhopal and Indore and I tried hard to look more conventional in appearance.

After witnessing cycle rickshaw-pullers in Delhi, I got to know that Jabalpur too has rickshaw-pullers. It indicates the existing socio-economic disparity in the city which I did not know of despite belonging to Madhya Pradesh. Just to know more what does it indicate that Jabalpur has rickshaw-pullers. I found searching on Google that there is a documentary made by an Indian screenwriter and director Saeed Mirza, titled ‘Ricksaw Pullers of Jabalpur’ (1984). Just to know more what does it indicate that Jabalpur has rickshaw-pullers. I found searching on Google that there is a documentary made by an Indian screenwriter and director Saeed Mirza, titled ‘Ricksaw Pullers of Jabalpur’ (1984).21 “Rickshaw pullers are at the bottom of the socio-economic hierarchy of urban India. Many take to this profession as an alternative to farm work or unskilled labour” writes Banerjee (2010, p. 59). I found that the city Jabalpur too has critical socio-economic disparity which is reflected through the presence of rickshaw-pullers on its roads.

After every follow-up and finishing the interview I used to on foot to interview-venues while walking I noticed that that every second home in residential row-house colonies is had a Surname showing Brahmin or Thakur, Rajput on nameplates installed on their entry gates. Yes I wondered about the city that it has least presence of women in public

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spaces. I noticed it while covering distances for meeting journalists, waiting alone in coffee shops, malls in the city. Once waiting at Indian Coffee House, which is considered as the most popular venue where journalists, artists flock and discuss over coffee, I was told by a waiter to leave the place as I have been waiting alone for a respondent and for more than an hour. I had to explain to them that I am waiting here for someone and they took offense because this ‘over talked Indian Coffee House’ is understood to be a male occupied space where I was seen as an alien to the place waiting alone in such a comfort sipping rounds of coffee. I was looked at with questioning glances which suggested: who is this woman clad in Jeans, Kurta and Shoes waiting alone. When the journalist I was waiting for came, she tried to convince the waiter and literally projected me as a ‘big journalist’ coming from Mumbai to interview her. She talked to the manager sitting at the counter, he said whatever but we cannot allow you to sit here for such long hours. We had to change the venue. The respondent told me that it is not seen as a good or common thing in Jabalpur for women to come at such coffee shops particularly here as this place is taken as the hotspot for male journalists and media people.

One of the women journalists shared that men here do not show respect for women and the cases of sexual harassment and crime against women are common here in the city. Here people are cold in response and seem in deep slumber unless the situation is high alarming even that too does not bother them. The public places have male-dominance as their number is high and they are hostile towards the idea of women coming out of home. Also the city’s civic development is lagging behind; it does not have good public places where women can move out freely. There are malls in the city which has made things little better for women who move out of home. One of the respondents said that thus each and every gender sensitization and awareness workshop is held only in women’s colleges, never heard that any such workshop is being organized in any boy’s college or to sensitize men more towards gender equality.

As the city has tag of being a ‘place of values’ or ‘Sanskaardhani’ the city shows an unconscious effort of proving the tag with moral responsibility and the rule of patriarchy over woman whose mobility is controlled. Jabalpur, for me as a city despite having number of educational institutes, mushrooming medical colleges and other new urban
places are not able to challenge social barriers which have been restricting women’s mobility.

Another women journalist said that Jabalpur has been a place for number of prominent poets and litterateur thus for many male journalists it is a family legacy to be in journalism which is further converted as a family business too. She said that despite having a rich literature culture somewhere Jabalpur is more traditional and conventional especially when it comes to women and their freedom. Here still Journalism is more linked with values describing traditional values.

Jabalpur is entirely a new dimension which demands more work to be done but knowing women journalist’s lived experiences unfolds so much about the journalism in this city. Here in this city I was asked about my caste by one male journalist and women also asked me that here in Jabalpur too there are Rajputs but number of Brahmin is higher in media.

Also, being in the city for my research work gave me another sense of knowing myself where I was trying to assure myself that how degree of freedom and exploration is changing in cities and how I am struggling to be an insider known to these conventional cities and an outsider as a researcher too. Jabalpur actually gave me a little tough time to fight for being in public spaces.

2.4.4 Gwalior

Gwalior is located in the ‘Gird’, popularly known as Chambal region in north of Madhya Pradesh. This city which I have chosen for my study is another a million plus agglomeration city having a rich historical backdrop of legacy of dynasty and kingdom. Presently it has been listed as Counter-magnet city which means those towns or cities can
be developed as alternative center of growth attracting migrants to them rather than Delhi.22

Lining up interview with women journalists was totally open pitch in this city as I got only one woman journalist’s contact number and rest I had to follow up while being in the city. I had to start with this one journalist and met her at her own place where she was quite comfortable to share her experiences and treated me with rounds of tea as it was a chilly winter during my visit to Gwalior. Here also, I traveled for the first time to Gwalior as my research brought me here. I had very popular image in my mind about this city of being infamous for dacoit-infamous area thus I had to again fight my own biases about the city first of all.

The women journalist I met first here in Gwalior could not manage to put me in touch with other women journalists thus I had to move again to a male journalist who gave me another contact number of another male journalists working there with a well-known Hindi newspaper. This way I got to meet more women journalists there trying to understand the missing links among women journalists here in this city. Here I met only four young women journalists then single close to marriageable age and shared their experiences about being in journalism. These all women are young and have post-graduation degree in journalism working with Hindi dailies. I would like to mention here that these women journalists in Gwalior seemed already crossing their marriageable age. According to conventional-norms culturally early-marriage is preferred here for women as per socially suitable age defined for them.

While talking to these women journalists it came to my attention that here the nature of city is further strict about women’s mobility because of the certain dacoit-background of the city. One woman journalist mention that though things have changed a lot but still we do not take risk here and finish our work in time to get back home safely. She shared that the internal office politics is really torturous pushing woman to quit the job. Here for men it is really difficult to see women doing well in journalism and earning a name.

Another journalist I met was keen to be in the journalistic profession but convinced that after marriage she will not do this job as women are taught to look after their family rather than working. I asked her do you feel any kind of pressure and dissatisfaction for leaving your job after marriage she said ‘no’ because society will never changes and things will remain same. She added that here in Gwalior, women journalists prefer leaving their job for the sake of getting married and thus there is rarely any women journalist who stayed in the field even till marriage.

Here particularly in Gwalior, my surname ‘Tomar’ was by default understood as if I am from ‘Bhind’ or ‘Morena’ the cities dominated by ‘Tomars’ which I had to clear with every single journalist with whom I had a conversation over phone. Also this surname gave them an impression that I must be having some association from Chambal as it was recently got popular with the movie ‘Paan Singh Tomar’. During interviews, one woman journalists reassured herself that ‘Yes you cannot be from this ‘Chambal area’ because they never allow their daughters going out for such a higher study.

One of the male journalists who teaches journalism in a University in Gwalior having the same surname of mine told me that ‘as you are also a Tomar, you are one of us, let me know if you face any difficulty’. Once I was in auto going back to my place, remembering his words I asked myself that ‘Can being a Tomar save me from being raped in Gwalior in this winter’s dark evening on deserted road’. I tried to answer myself that his assurance of help is a strong male expression for an upper caste identity. My vulnerability as an outsider woman with my own fear was clashing with the unfriendliness of this city with me being there as a woman-traveler facing the risk of being out for research on women journalists. I was reminding myself that being a woman actually means that every city discriminates against you.

23 Paan Singh Tomar is a 2012 Indian biographical film based on the true story of the athlete Paan Singh Tomar. A soldier in the Indian Army, he wins a gold medal at the Indian National Games, but is forced to become a notorious bandit in Chambal Valley due to a land feud in the area.

This city has again added a new urban space as a mall is there and new shopping areas are developing which still has comparatively thin presence of women in public spaces and it is not safe. Here for few interviews I got late in the evening and it was dark. I was really scared and after Jabalpur, here in Gwalior too I was taking help of GPS (Global Positioning System) on my smart phone to trace the roads where exactly I was as it was a deserted street in winter. After Jabalpur I felt my vulnerability here in Gwalior as I could see that I am seen walking on street alone, using public transport, eating alone in restaurant and covering distance in the city to meet my respondents who told me that women do not freely come out in city spaces.

In Jabalpur and Gwalior, I had to make effort to clarify that despite being from a so called upper caste family that too in Bhopal how come I am coming all the way just to interview women journalists for my PhD research work. My caste identity made me conscious in these two cities as it was noticed by men and women both. Also I myself realized my vulnerability in these two cities more in comparison to Bhopal and Indore. Apart from this I have noticed that malls, coffee shops have been really new spaces in these cities which are giving new avenues for women mobility which again differ in Jabalpur and Gwalior in comparison to Bhopal and Indore.

2.5 Mansplaining: The Researcher’s Encounter

Working in Madhya Pradesh, begins with my own experiences and quest for exploring women’s experiences in Hindi journalism. I couldn’t escape being viewed as a transgressor as I was asked over and again why I am focusing on women as a research subject in journalism for my study. I need to mention here that my field notes reminded me of several incidents of ‘mansplaining’ as an encounter with my identity as a woman researcher. I found men were literally explaining my own doctoral research to me in an almost textbook case of ‘mansplanning’.
In a news piece Tod Perry ‘Women Are Fighting Back Against Obnoxious Mansplaining’ writes

“...when a man explains something to a woman in a patronizing way and it often begins with a man completely disregarding a woman’s opinions by interrupting her mid-sentence. Why would a man do that? Because apparently some of them feel that their masculinity automatically makes them intellectually superior to women.”

As author Rebecca Solnit points out in her essay ‘Men explain things to me’ that “mansplaining is not a universal flaw of the gender, just the intersection between overconfidence and cluelessness where some portion of that gender gets stuck.” Perhaps men’s overconfidence to explain everything from their own perspective is something which is done to silence the women basically her views and inviting gender warlike situation where a woman in conversation is pushed to be silent.

In the beginning of the field work in Bhopal, a woman journalist asked me to come to her office as it was my first meeting with her to brief her about my research. I had a very formal conversation with her and she introduced me to her newspaper editor. We both went to his cabin and sat there. She took pride while telling him that I have come from Mumbai to take her interview for my research. The editor told me that you are too young to take up PhD on such heavy topic on women in journalism. I smiled and tried to be decent as my prospective respondent was the concern for me. He asked me why I am researching on women journalist. I replied because here men never took effort to research on themselves in journalism, they only structure journalism. The editor, immediately started explaining to me that why women are treated inferior to men explaining that how society and patriarchy discriminate them with his certain self-written and translated work kept in the book-shelf nearby his huge-glass-topped table in his cabin.

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It was difficult for me to relate his question on my research and explaining patriarchy and his achievements to me which respondent had to also listen with me due situational constrain. Later when I moved out of her office, respondent came to drop me to the parking space and shared sarcastically with me that I am surprised that how he was boasting of his intellectualism for women’s status in society.

The same respondent proved to be the one with the richest narratives of her experiences critically understanding her location in Hindi journalism while working for years.

I was repeatedly asked the same question that why you are researching on women journalists from all the male journalists I got to meet. During my field-work visits I did receive a good piece of advice too that a woman should first get married before pursuing such a higher education because PhD takes your ‘age’. I was asked about my marriage plans repeatedly by few senior male journalists, specifically in Jabalpur and Gwalior. I was getting many answers without even asking questions from these males journalists also which made me think that for them its normal to enter into someone else’s personal zone just because of caste and more because of their patriarchal character. Such encounter with mansplaining actually made me think that whether being a woman researcher here triggered them to show their superiority and establishing themselves as more capable to understand my work.

While being an outsider as a researcher on women journalists and being an insider to the socio-cultural conditions I constantly had to battle many questions in Madhya Pradesh. I realized that there is not much difference even if you are highly educated woman, the socio-cultural settings are orthodox and conventional. My degrees ort my status as a PhD scholar was no protection against questions that challenged my freedom and suggested that men were more intellectual because they were men.

During one interview, the respondent asked me to come to her office and we sat in her office-lounge. Later her editor happened to come there at the spot and she got conscious and stood up to touch his feet to take his blessings. She introduced me to him that She is here doing a ‘survey’ on women journalists. I could understand her situation there and I chose to be silent abiding by her words that I am here for a ‘survey’. I felt that her
experiences sharing with me is actually a kind of threat for her which might cause a problem for her. Fortunately by that time I was almost done with interview on that day.

The senior Editor asked me that ‘why are you studying women journalists in Hindi print media, they are doing well anyways’ you should do some research on some issues in big city why small cities. His asking didn’t even give me a chance to answer as he already made it clear from his perspective that women are ‘doing well’ in Hindi journalism. I chose to be silent as my respondent’s innocent face, standing in-front of me reminded me of her situation.

By the time I was done with the interview, she was waiting for her husband to go home and insisted that I come over for lunch or dinner some time at her place. When her husband came she told me that he is also a journalist and that’s how we are able to manage personal-professional togetherness. Her husband asked me that ‘whether this research will going to produce any kind of policies because Hindi journalism doesn’t pay well even to male journalists only higher- positioned journalists get good money and there is no family life due to uncertain working hours.’ I had to clarify him that it is my Doctoral research subject so I am exploring the state-of-art in context of women and Hindi print media. He responded by saying that your research should have male’s voice too otherwise it is ‘pointless’ because in small cities men also face tougher time in journalism. I just asked myself in my mind that ‘how not adding male to my research make it pointless’. From my first experience of mansplaining I had to be silent rather than explaining my research on women journalists.

I could not differentiate between man’s telling and asking because in many incidents I felt challenged with no space of expressing my own work and its idea. Perhaps during field-work, such mansplaining kept me going ahead to seek depth in my work in small cities continue. To my mind, senior male journalists made things operating altogether through hierarchies of gender, age, caste, geography and social-cultural factors certainly to place them intellectually superior. I experienced it throughout my field work which basically shows a discomfort of male mindset with the subject area focusing woman. During field-work, I am certainly left with a one question after such encounter of me as a
researcher that ‘why men never took effort to study their own location in journalism’ but had the guts to mansplaining to me.

2.6 Researcher’s Experience in the Field: Insider- Outsider

Traveling in these four cities in Madhya Pradesh has been an exciting experience for me as I never travel this much in my own state. These four cities gave me an explorative experience completely where I have discovered that how covering these four cities are actually shaping my journey as an insider too. As an insider many a times I could relate my own experiences with these women journalists. Belonging to Bhopal was a blessed convenience and a challenge to remain objective for my research. It has been an effort to act as an outsider for the purpose of the research and because I have experienced that my belonging to Bhopal was affecting the respondents’ views and I was taken as I already know things here. I must say that my field work was more possible because of my outsider identity as a PhD scholar from TISS, Mumbai which helped me giving a clear gateway to be entitled to interview these women professionals in journalism. I knew my own city more and how it is changing and needs my detached perspective to carry on with my research work.

For my parents, Indore was still fine to go for research to the city and spending days there as it is familiar city for them too. I managed to continue my interviews while staying at a friend’s place. In Indore, it was also easier to meet journalists and they too find it unusual but stimulating that why personally meeting is more important whereas it could be done over phone or mails. But I went ahead and met them personally.

When it came to Jabalpur and Gwalior, my parents showed concern and asked me whether it will be safe or not. My father asked me whether his accompanying me will be fine to ensure my safety. As we do not have acquaintances in these two cities, even I have no friends or any connections my parents were unsure to allow me. On the other hand having relatives in Bhopal and Indore was a little discouraging familiar social factor too for me and my family as it certainly works as a conventional limitation. I lived in
Gwalior as a paying guest and there my belonging from Bhopal helped me similarly as it worked for Jabalpur. Demonstration of Purpose Phadke et al., (2011) was required while doing field-work in Gwalior and Jabalpur to the places where I lived as a paying guest, both the places I myself visited for the first time. It was considered more purposeful because ‘PhD research’ seemed a decent highly-regarded purpose for a single woman to be in city for short-duration.

I wonder that perhaps for my parents it was easier to accept by now that I have been staying alone in Delhi and Mumbai but the nature of small cities with more social pressure is different for them too. During my field-work I ritually used to do a customary-call to them ensuring my safe return to the places I lived in the cities. I experienced that being the one who has left city for higher studies created ripples in my families at many levels. Having nieces and nephews of my three elder siblings has been an extension of generational patriarchy. This extended patriarchy has the confluence of challenging its traditions by me and an expectation of keeping that patriarchy unchanged too. Aiming at those budding kids in my family could see me as an ideal for them. This aspect kept me quite in a contradictory interpretation of patriarchy in context of my family especially during my research work.

In this context, I would like to mention here that my father moved out of his native place and got a job in Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited (BHEL), a Government plant in Bhopal. His moving to this city brought us education and exposure to urbanization. His traditional mindset provided education to four siblings altogether in the city and we could get better environment than those of our cousins who live in our native rural place. By the time I reached my under-graduation my all three elder siblings got married and it was my turn, still I was consciously away from making a decision for marriage till I completed my Master Degree. Everything got changed since I joined MA in Mass Communication. My parents wanted me to get married and settle down but I chose to pursue my education depending on University scholarships. By then my father got retired from his government job. His being retired made him more concerned as he has been wanting me to decide something on marriage front. Though my father was never against education but he himself suffered from patriarchy which made him not to ignore his social responsibilities
as a head of the family too. Thus according to patriarchal norms pursuing any education must be culminated into a marriage at right age for a girl that could not happen so far and in my case I uncommonly chose to pursue PhD.

In my family I am the first in generation to pursue such higher studies out of Madhya Pradesh which has been questioned by that why a girl should not be studying much because ultimately she has to marry, manage household work. It has been a long journey coming till PhD and leaving my city and experimenting with self-made choices. Since I am out for education, my family has to face the pressure from relatives’ unwanted interference questioning ‘when she will get married’ or ‘why don’t you look for a match for her, she has already crossed her suitable marriage-age’ or ‘whether she will go for a love marriage’ all in derogatory tones. Though my family never directly questioned my choice to pursue PhD but somewhere they knew that what it means to have an over qualified daughter who has been living out for her education and how it is very much against my community. Also, among four siblings of us, we have only one brother who is elder to me. It emerged as a true color of patriarchy when relatives and many other community people indicated a comparative remark between my brother and me because he did not move out of the city and I was making a progress. I experienced comments given to my father that you never gave a chance to your only son how come you allowed your youngest daughter to move alone to some big city. While traveling to these four cities I had to be home in Bhopal frequently which really invited trouble for my parents as many relatives actually suggested them that during her stay here in Bhopal to initiate the process for her marriage.

I already knew that during my field work this will be the most possible inconvenience might be faced by my parents and I thought whether I should change or limiting my geographic location for research. For my parent PhD is something which is blocking my marriage prospects completely and if I happen to be here travelling all alone staying alone in cities of Madhya Pradesh will be seen by relatives as ‘loitering’ Phadke et al., (2011) in the name of PhD. Though my parents have been supporting amidst all odds but as my caste location suggests ‘Rajput’ patriarchal society does not find overqualified girls suitable for families. In my case I was the one who was actually upsetting the entire
community with my aging and PhD that too on women journalists. It took me so much to stay determined that being an insider to the state should not scare me from proceeding with my long-conceived research interest on women in Hindi print media in Madhya Pradesh. I gave so much of thought that what if I do only one or two city or I change entire geographic location but I knew I might be cheating myself because these four cities are important for my research work for Madhya Pradesh.

So it actually came as a fact during field-work that ‘Rajputs’ do not allow their girls for education and still there is ‘purdah’ or ‘veil’ among ‘Rajput’ community. There have been many women in my communities who were not allowed to be educated and they ended up in misery of dowry or because of giving birth to daughters. It is rarely seen that education is given importance as males also do not choose to study much and migrate for education. Perhaps owning ‘land’ constructs feudal-patriarchy among Rajputs which keeps the transfer of inheritance and traditional values intact in this manner. Going against ‘veils’ of community and roaming in the cities wearing jeans, kurta, shoes make me look like someone who is a ‘nomadic girl’ who is certainly ‘ruined’ defaming name of the community.

Fortunately, my conviction for my field-work and selection of cities made my parents cooperate with me more. They tried not to affect me in any way with any kind of relatives’ interference and disturbance to affect my work. I emphasize that my family especially my father allowed himself unlearning certain aspects of forced patriarchy on him while negotiating for my completion of PhD in his contextual reality of space and society.

During field-work I was constantly reminded of my caste location with two messages that being an upper caste I am eligible to do such research on women in Media followed by second message that being an upper caste Rajput girl I am somewhere challenging the community and its patriarchy. I have felt that my so called upper-caste surname was well appreciated by male journalists while inquiring about my family background and my interest for doctoral research. Few male journalists I talked to were not convinced that ‘women journalists of Hindi Print media could be a subject of my doctoral research’ and how my parents are comfortable about my PhD as they belong to Bhopal. I was also
asked whether ‘Rajputs’ really prefer educating their daughters to such higher degree. Perhaps it was asked to reassure that only Brahmins allow their women to pursue education. I felt challenged as after negotiating for my freedom during field-work on personal front; does it again demand a negotiation here in the field-work which is more like professional field?

During field-work, I found that every time something new is coming from respondents and I tried to understand from their experiences it was a process interacting between respondents and research broadly a dialogic interaction. England (1994) mentions about the dialogic process that

“Dialogism is Mikhail Bakhtin’s (1986) theory about encountering “otherness” through the potential of dialogue between people (or with oneself). It involves the continual interaction between meanings, each of which has the potential of conditioning the others. Dialogism turns on the notion that people’s responses are conditional and human circumstances are contingent (Folch-Serra, 1990).” (cited in England, 1994)

Some women journalists mentioned their interest to do some academic course and want to study more as here journalism does not value your work and contribution. One of the respondents asked me that why I am studying Hindi women journalists whereas I should do research on women in English media, working in Metro cities. Her question made me think that why she believes that women in metros are more important to be studied whereas these women in small cities equally need to be represented and their challenges being in Hindi print journalism. There I found that these women journalists and I have some common curiosities about other women working in big cities. Acker et al, (1991, p. 140) writes that there is a relationship between the subject and object of study which gets visible when women are researching women. Acker et al., (1991) quote Westkott (1979) “women studying women reveals the complex way in which women as objects of knowledge reflect back upon women as subjects of knowledge. Knowledge of the other and knowledge of the self are mutually informing because self and other share a common condition of being women.” My research process became a dialogue between these women journalists and me as a researcher which kept invoking more critical aspect too. Sharing about my own journalistic work experiences with respondents helped to break
the hierarchy between the researcher and researched bringing more commonalities of experiences to initiate the process of inquiry. Many a times it was a wonderful experience during research process respondents taking lead in sharing their lived experiences and trying to find a connection whether I experienced same during my journalistic work. I experienced the subject-object mutual reciprocity during interviews with the respondents.

Another respondent asked me that why are you doing such rigorous travel for your PhD in these small cities here things are not going to change ever, you could have mailed the questionnaire to journalists rather than meeting them in person. My meeting them was something unusual for many women journalists and few of them said that ‘In what ways our stories of experiences in journalism can help you in your research; you do not have even a questionnaire to be filled’. It was indicating the dominant understanding of the research which is understood more in quantitative nature which does not acknowledge ‘experiential knowledge’ at all. Relating my own position being an insider actually picks it up correctly because that is what research is understood as a survey research there in Hindi-speaking state like Madhya Pradesh.

I tried to explain them that how their experiences are important to understand the nature of Hindi journalism here and my effort is to understand your experiences, meeting you in person, your journey in this profession which are helpful to exclusively study Hindi journalism. All of them do not want to be named, they asked me whether my study will use their names and identity. Perhaps this was the pre-condition from everyone when I was trying to fix my visits to them which I followed with assuring due confidentiality for respondents of my study. I must mention here that many women journalists said that their being seen as talking to me for some research really made their senior male journalists question ‘why on earth I am researching on women journalists’. I sense that it was seen as I am here to actually look under the carpet the dirt in journalism dominantly meaning ‘anti-man’ or ‘male-haters’ research subject I took.

Before going to meet women journalists I would go with no pre-conceived notions. Knowing them from their own point of view is wonderful experience as they themselves wanted to be heard. During the conversation too, I always tried to maintain the parallel commentary of the responses coming from me, from my point of view. Interesting part
has been, once the conversation begins, it starts with so much of formality and ending up having more honest revelations and experiences of these women journalists with a request to keep certain information off record. At the end of the conversation almost every one asked me to let men know what my findings are. Maximum interviews started with a positive portrayal of journalism which later unfolded so much in the end of conversation and many women still give credit of their success to their senior male journalists which again make demonstrate men low-sense of self-esteem. In small cities there is lack of professionalism as mostly people (male) are acquainted to each other which make women journalists more conscious even being out for their work.

In an interview where I met the journalist at her office space, for almost an hour she shared so much about journalism and how she doesn’t feel any kind of discrimination here and for me it was becoming difficult how can I crack it as she is just giving a positive experiences. I was almost on the verge of losing my hope and I took a break. I asked her whether I can use toilet here in the office, she showed me the direction hesitantly. When I opened the door it was in bad shape equal to dysfunctional. I managed and it actually gave me the key unlocking her positively-coated experiences while relating with basic facility of a separate toilet in her office. After that it went for long hours to listen to her experiences. Many a times it was a challenge to deconstruct the ‘conviction of the knower’ as from their point of view many things seem well with them thus to complexity of the structure really needed a feminist standpoint inquiry.

While returning back from interviews, there has been constant discomfort in my mind. This discomfort kept burning inside me that on one hand these women are doing great work in this profession and on the other hand they are still under-self-shield to prove their capacity and worth. Somewhere they are hanging between the patriarchal boundaries and their own self struggling silently to break the structured-hierarchy. I always had a constant fight of thoughts that these women are so dedicated for their job but not allowed to act professionally empowered too. Their contribution and presence is made invisible through patriarchal society. Their faces, expression and the pleasure of meeting all of my respondents in person is a valuable lifetime experience for me. Their emotional and experiential sharing with me allows me to be a researcher valuing their audacity for
entrusting me whereas I met all of them for the first time. Meeting all these women journalists in person in four different cities has been a motivation during the research which kept my inquiry in process with a curiosity of knowing the unknown and becoming a knower too.

2.7 Conclusion

Pursuing feminist research methodology allowed space to study the lived experiences of women journalists of four cities in Madhya Pradesh i.e. Bhopal Indore, Jabalpur and Gwalior at length. Their narratives facilitate an understanding of a wider range of socio-cultural realities within the journalistic profession. Mies (1991) writes that experience is generally equated with personal experience with surrounding and feeling in a particular situation which means taking real life as a starting point. Experiences have their subjectivity and societal entanglements which led to the realization of women’s life, history of their struggle and their exclusion from dominant science. Corresponding to the subjectivity of experience as a category emerged into the slogan ‘personal is political’ Mies (1991) writes thus disagreement over woman scientific-nonbeing gives a base for a stand to theorize experiences.

Employing feminist research methodology such as feminist phenomenology facilitates the possibility of an inquiry with that has flexibility and the space for reflexivity. This study dealing with women journalists working in Hindi print journalism in four cities has been conducted in a dialogic manner of research during field work. It has been an advantage of feminist inquiry which has broader-inclusive perspective to meaningfully understand the words and expressions of the women working in Hindi print journalism Madhya Pradesh. Their lived experiences do represent in many ways the realities of particular geographical context. Responding to their socio-cultural-geographical circumstances these women unraveled patterns of hierarchies being operated through caste and gendered-relations in journalistic profession.
The relationship between researcher and researched has been a process which I have thought about carefully. This brought more interactive manner in the process basically initiating a dialogic process from different positions. Oakley (1981) suggests that the best results of inquiry are achieved when interviewer and interviewee share nonhierarchical relationship in which interviewer invests his or her own personal identity too. Oakely (1981) emphasizes that conventionally done data-collection process which is transformed into numbers must be replaced by a process of ‘interviewing women’. It enables a shared process which helps to understand lived experiences more by the researcher. Understanding women journalists’ subjectivities of their experiential knowledge have been an interactive process of knowledge production helping me to bridge the hierarchy between knower and researcher.

Reshaping questions and process with the women journalists have been part of the intellectual inquiry. The next chapters from 3 to 8 are data-analysis chapters based on lived experiences of women journalists and themes that emerged out of their narratives.