Beyond Representation: Media, Law and the Transformation of Gendered Narratives: A Socio-Legal Inquiry into Women's Empowerment, Equality and Leadership

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ABSTRACT

Women's participation in research is crucial for knowledge advancement, innovation, and inclusive social development, despite the fact that persistent gendered narratives, institutional injustices, stereotypes and socio-legal barriers continue to restrict women's opportunities, professional advancement and leadership. Given this, the current study, "Beyond Representation: Media, Law and the Transformation of Gendered Narratives, A Socio-Legal Inquiry into Women's Empowerment, Equality, and Leadership," critically examines how media representations and dominant gender narratives impact women's standing in research communities. The study looks at how a variety of interconnected problems, such as gender bias, inadequate institutional support, low recognition and barriers to leadership, affect women's involvement and career advancement in research. It also examines the ways in which legal and institutional frameworks can be employed to fight discriminatory practices and create more. It explores the role of institutional and legal frameworks in order to counteract discriminatory practices and create a more equitable research ecosystem. By adopting a socio-legal stance, the study seeks to go beyond the representation issue and drastically change the research environment. It provides a framework for levelling the playing field through inclusive policies, institutional accountability, equitable access to research opportunities, mentorship, leadership development and gender-responsive practices. Additionally, the project aims to generate new ideas and remedial actions to improve women's participation, output, visibility, and leadership in research. Ultimately, it fosters a research environment free from institutional barriers and discrimination based on gender, where women's intellectual contributions are recognized, protected, and valued equally. This encourages a research culture that is more diverse, inclusive, and innovative.

Keywords: Women in Research; Gender Equality; Media Representation; Socio-Legal Framework; and Women's Empowerment.

INTRODUCTION

Women's Innovation, Women's academic and research careers are still impacted by gender-based stereotypes, institutional injustices, unequal recognition, restricted access to opportunities and obstacles to leadership, despite notable advancements in women's participation in school and the workforce. These difficulties are linked to larger societal narratives that shape and assess women's abilities, positions, and professional identities; they cannot be regarded as purely individual or institutional disadvantages.

An crucial background for analyzing these issues is the continued existence of gender inequality in India. According to the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), 4,48,211 cases of crimes against women were registered in 2023, compared with 4,45,256 cases in 2022. The major reported categories included cruelty by husband or relatives, kidnapping and abduction of women and attack on women with purpose to offend modesty. Crime statistics offer a crucial socio-legal background for analyzing the ongoing structural issues affecting women's safety, dignity, and participation in public life, even though they are unable to prove the causes of gender disparity or media effect on their own.

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The media plays a significant role in the creation and dissemination of gendered narratives within this larger framework. Contemporary media does not only carry information; it also engages in moulding social perceptions of gender, professional identity, authority and leadership. Conventional expectations about women's social roles may be reinforced by representations that typically show women as reliant, submissive, domestic, vulnerable or sexualized.

Therefore, a closer look at the connection between media representation and women's involvement in research is necessary. Beyond entertainment and public conversation, gendered narratives may permeate attitudes about leadership, professional competence, educational options and institutional authority. Social recognition of women's accomplishments and skills may be impacted by the underrepresentation or stereotyped representation of women in knowledge-intensive occupations. On the other hand, more widespread perceptions of women as respectable leaders and participants in scientific, academic, technological and research settings can result from fair and significant representation.

In the fields of STEM and knowledge creation, where gender stereotypes about scientific aptitude and professional authority continue to garner scholarly attention, the problem is especially important.

The significance of dispelling gender preconceptions and establishing institutional frameworks that allow women and girls to fully engage in science, technology, research and innovation has been emphasized in international policy and research literature. Therefore, it is important to include recognition, agency, professional advancement, institutional support and access to leadership in addition to numerical visibility when evaluating women's participation.

The legal aspect is just as important. Equality, non discrimination, dignity and equal opportunity are established as fundamental principles in the Indian Constitution. Articles 14, 15, 16 and 21, coupled with related Directive Principles, legislative initiatives, judicial decisions and institutional processes, establish a normative foundation for eliminating discrimination and fostering women’s equal participation. However, structural inequality is not always eliminated by the presence of formal legal guaranties. Institutional practices, implementation strategies, societal attitudes, opportunity access and women's practical ability to exercise their rights are all necessary for the successful realization of equality.

Women in research are especially affected by this disparity between nominal and substantive equality. Women may formally possess equal rights to education, employment, research participation and professional advancement while continuing to encounter barriers relating to access to research resources, mentorship, institutional recognition, career progression, work environments and leadership opportunities. Therefore, a socio-legal analysis must look at both the institutional and social frameworks that support women's legal safeguards as well as the legal protections themselves.

The question is whether women's professional media looks at how women are portrayed, how their contributions to academia and the workplace are acknowledged, what institutional obstacles prevent them from participating and progressing and how legislative and regulatory frameworks might support real equality and leadership. These characteristics are conceptualized in the study as interrelated rather than separate issues.

Research Gap

Women's depiction in the media, gender stereotypes, discrimination, violence against women, women's involvement in science and research and the efficacy of institutional and legislative procedures addressing gender inequality have all been the subject of previous studies. But these domains are often studied separately. The relationship between media-generated gender narratives, institutional practices, socio-legal frameworks and women's leadership and involvement in research and knowledge production has received relatively little attention.

The research deficit consequently rests not merely in the underrepresentation of women but in understanding the structural relationship between representation, recognition, opportunity, institutional support, legal protection and leadership. Through an interdisciplinary socio-legal framework that incorporates media

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studies, feminist viewpoints, gender studies, law, sociology and research-policy analysis, the current study aims to close this gap.

According to the study, a change from visibility to substantive engagement is necessary for meaningful gender equality. Women should have equal opportunity to engage, contribute intellectually, be acknowledged, grow professionally, access institutional resources and take on leadership roles in research and professional institutions.

In light of this, the study, "Beyond Representation: Media, Law and the Transformation of Gendered Narratives: A Socio-Legal Inquiry into Women's Empowerment, Equality and Leadership," looks at how media representation, gendered narratives, institutional structures, legal protections and women's involvement in research are all interrelated. It aims to identify obstacles that hinder women's career and research paths and to create institutional and socio-legal policies that can support women's leadership, equality, empowerment and acknowledgment.

The research aims to:

- Analyze how gender narratives are shaped by modern media and how women are represented, acknowledged and given leadership roles in academic and professional contexts.
- Determine the institutional and legal obstacles that hinder women's leadership, equality and participation in research, and make recommendations on ways to improve their empowerment.

Research Question

- What impact do modern media have on gender narratives and how women are seen and acknowledged in academic and professional contexts?
- What legal and institutional constraints affect women's involvement, equality and leadership in research and how may these hurdles be addressed?

LITERATURE REVIEW AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Historical Evolution of Women's Status in India

The complicated interplay between social institutions, cultural customs, economic systems, caste, and power dynamics is reflected in the historical status of women in India. Women's social status varies over historical eras, geographies, communities, and socioeconomic settings; historical study does not provide a consistent explanation of either equality or subjugation. Ancient Indian textual traditions, particularly narratives connected to individuals like Gargi and Maitreyi, contain references to women's intellectual and social participation. These textual depictions, however, should not be regarded as definitive proof of social autonomy or universal gender equality (Altekar, 1938; Thapar, 2002).

Women's access to school, marriage, property, family life and involvement in public institutions were all impacted by later changes in social and economic systems (Kosambi, 1965). Child marriage, prohibitions on widow remarriage, purdah, sati and the Devadasi system are examples of customs that functioned in various historical and local contexts and have been studied within larger frameworks of social and gender inequity. Chakravarti (2003) provides more evidence of how caste and patriarchy interact to control women's sexuality, marriage, labour and social agency.

Following that, social reform movements, women's education, organized political participation and legislative intervention significantly changed the status of women. The growing involvement of women in education, social change, nationalism and public life is documented by Forbes (1996). These historical changes offer a crucial context for comprehending the later constitutional acknowledgment of women as citizens with equal rights.

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Therefore, it is incorrect to view the historical development of women's standing as a straight line from subjugation to equality. Instead, it symbolizes a continuous change in which formal legal rights, social structures, cultural norms and women's representations all continue to interact. Examining the link between the constitutional media and media representation.

Constitutional and Legal Foundations of Women's Equality

The Preamble of the Constitution establishes the constitutional commitment to justice, equality of status and opportunity and the dignity of the individual. While Article 15 forbids discrimination on some grounds, including sex, Article 14 guaranties equality before the law and equal protection under the law. Additionally, the State may establish particular provisions for women and children under Article 15(3). While Article 21 safeguards life and individual liberty, Article 16 ensures equality of opportunity in areas of public employment.

Directive Principles and Fundamental Duties serve to strengthen the constitutional structure. While Article 42 acknowledges the significance of fair and humane working conditions and maternity relief, Article 39 instructs the State to secure equal livelihood possibilities and equal remuneration for equal work. Citizens are required by Article 51A(e) to abstain from actions that diminish the dignity of women. When taken as a whole, these clauses create a constitutional framework that goes beyond nominal equality to include genuine participation and dignity.

Through the concepts of equality, autonomy, privacy, dignity and non discrimination, constitutional jurisprudence has further broadened our understanding of women's rights. Women's constitutional status must therefore be evaluated in relation to their successful involvement in education, employment, research, governance, the media and other areas of public life in addition to the existence of formal legal protections.

Because freedom of speech and expression under Article 19(1)(a) must be taken into account with the allowed constraints under Article 19(2) and the constitutional ideals of equality, dignity and individual liberty, the constitutional framework is especially pertinent to modern media. This establishes a crucial socio-legal framework for analyzing gendered media portrayals while preserving a suitable equilibrium between human liberties, artistic freedom and justifiable regulatory objectives.

Women's Representation in Contemporary Media and Digital Platforms

The proliferation of digital technology, Over-The-Top (OTT) platforms, and online entertainment has revolutionized the production, distribution, and consumption of media material. Women now have more opportunity to participate and be visible thanks to these changes, yet visibility does not always translate into meaningful or substantial representation. Through sexualized characterization, objectification, conventional gender roles and narratives that restrict women's representation as independent social, professional, and political actors, contemporary media may continue to perpetuate gender stereotypes.

According to feminist media studies, representation involves more than just visibility; it also involves the meanings associated with gendered narratives and images. According to this viewpoint, it is important to examine how gendered representation and objectification occur when women are consistently reduced to specific domestic, relational or sexualized roles.

These representational dynamics are made more difficult by the commercialization of digital entertainment. OTT platforms operate within competitive ecosystems in which audience engagement, viewing, subscriptions and platform exposure can impact content generation and delivery. As a result, provocative characterization, sensationalized stories and sexualized images may be used as audience-engagement tactics. The ethical obligations of content producers and the governance duties of digital platforms are called into question by such behaviours, even while artistic expression and creative freedom continue to be significant aspects of democratic media culture.

Additionally, audience data, algorithmic curation, recommendation systems and interactive interaction mechanisms set digital platforms apart from traditional broadcasting. These characteristics have an impact

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on material exposure and circulation, which raises regulatory issues with regard to classification, age-appropriate access, content moderation, transparency, grievance redressed and platform responsibility.

However, care should be used when examining the connection between media exposure and gender-based behaviour. Without sufficient empirical data, it would be methodologically incorrect to establish a clear causal link between exposure to specific media portrayals and the conduct of gender-based offenses. Rather, the pertinent socio-legal investigation focuses on the ways in which recurrent depictions could help create, uphold, or challenge gender norms and societal attitudes.

As a result, the examination of modern media ought to go beyond the simple existence of sexual or unusual topics. The context, narrative structure, representational patterns, distribution methods, and institutional obligations related to digital content need to be given more consideration. This viewpoint makes it possible to analyze media as a significant social institution where gendered narratives are created, disseminated, contested, and changed rather than just as an entertainment sector.

Women's Empowerment, Leadership and Participation in Public Life

Women's growing involvement in political institutions, the judiciary, science and technology, sports, defence, education, and other spheres of public life is another indication of how their standing has changed. The increasing institutional participation of women in modern India is demonstrated by the presence of women in positions of professional leadership and constitutional power.

(President of India) Increasing representation in constitutional and legal institutions is also demonstrated by women's involvement in the judiciary. Justice B. V. Nagarathna is one of the current female judges in the Supreme Court of India. Women continue to participate in India's top court, as evidenced by the Court's present judicial roster. (Science India)

Another significant aspect of modern empowerment is the contribution of women to scientific and technological growth. According to the Indian Space Research Organization, around 100 female employees directly contributed to the conceptualization, design, testing, mission operations, navigation and other technical aspects of the Chandrayaan-3 project. (ISRO)

These illustrations show how women's empowerment increasingly includes leadership, professional success, scientific knowledge and institutional authority. Individual accomplishments, however, shouldn't be interpreted as proof that systemic gender inequality has been eradicated. Instead, they underline the ongoing importance of social attitudes, institutional frameworks and opportunity access while also offering significant signs of women's growing engagement and public representation.

This distinction is very crucial for the current study. The growing number of women in successful and powerful roles contrasts with media portrayals that still rely on constrictive gender norms. By analyzing this conflict, the focus of the analysis is shifted from women's visibility alone to the quality, context and social implications of their portrayal.

Synthesis of Literature and Research Gap

According to the examined literature, women's status in India has changed as a result of interrelated historical, constitutional, social and representational factors. Feminist media scholarship emphasizes the importance of representation, objectification and gendered narratives; constitutional scholarship establishes equality, dignity, autonomy, and non discrimination as fundamental principles; and historical scholarship shows how women's status has changed over time and in various social contexts.

Gender stereotypes, constitutional equality, women's representation and digital platform regulation are often discussed as distinct fields of study.

By analyzing modern media representation using an interdisciplinary socio-legal framework, the current study fills this gap. It analyzes how gendered narratives are created and disseminated in modern digital contexts by tying feminist media viewpoints to constitutional ideas and platform-governance issues.

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METHODOLOGY

This study is based on a qualitative legal research design. It looks at how gender narratives, women's representation and recognition, modern media and institutional and legal hurdles to women's participation and leadership in research are all related.

Constitutional provisions, statutes, court rulings, government reports, policy documents, scholarly publications and peer-reviewed journal articles are among the secondary sources used in this study. The literature was chosen based on two overarching themes: (I) gender narratives and media representation; and (ii) institutional and legislative constraints that impact women's participation, equality, and leadership in research.

The doctrinal analysis evaluates pertinent constitutional provisions, legislation, court decisions, and institutional frameworks relating gender equality, dignity, non-discrimination and women's involvement. The socio-legal approach takes into account the ways in which these legal frameworks interact with institutional practices, gender stereotypes, social norms, and career chances.

Gender representation, recognition, stereotypes, participation, institutional impediments, leadership, equality and empowerment were the main topics of the thematic analysis of the chosen literature and legislative sources. The study does not attempt to show a causal association between media exposure and social behavior, nor does it employ primary surveys or interviews. Rather, it looks at how institutional structures and media narratives might influence how women are perceived and given opportunities.

The study, which is qualitative and desk-based, combines legal, media and socio-institutional viewpoints to pinpoint major obstacles and offer solutions for enhancing women's involvement, acknowledgment, equality and leadership in academic and professional contexts.

RESULT ANALYSIS

Women's empowerment goes beyond their numerical representation in leadership, politics, the workforce, education and the media. Effective access to autonomy, security, economic independence, legal protection, digital resources, and institutional assistance is necessary for meaningful empowerment. Women's involvement, career promotion, research engagement and leadership are nevertheless impacted by interrelated impediments notwithstanding social and constitutional advancements. Restrictive societal norms, unequal care obligations, economic reliance, legal implementation gaps and stereotyped media portrayals are some of these. Therefore, an integrated socio-legal approach is necessary to address these hurdles.

Intersectional, Cultural and Social Inequalities

Social conventions such as son preference, mobility constraints, early marriage, unequal care obligations and gendered expectations for education and jobs all contribute to gender inequity. Different experiences of disadvantage may result from the intersections of these limitations with caste, class, age, disability, education, geography and digital access. Therefore, recognizing women's unequal prospects and avoiding treating women as a homogenous group require an intersectional perspective.

It is solely in terms of their labour and in terms of their political representation. The essential concern is whether women have the freedom, security, health, economic independence, legal protection, internet access and institutional support necessary to truly exercise agency. Despite major constitutional, legal, technological and social gains, women in India continue to face interconnected barriers that restrict their ability to learn, work, engage, lead and contribute to research and nation-building.

The challenges are not unique. Social stereotypes can limit education; insecurity can limit mobility; unequal care responsibilities can limit employment; economic dependence can limit decision-making; insufficient legal implementation can weaken access to justice; and stereotypical media narratives can replicate the very

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social attitudes that maintain these disparities. Therefore, changing gendered narratives requires a multimodal socio-legal approach.

Intersectional, Cultural, and Social Inequalities

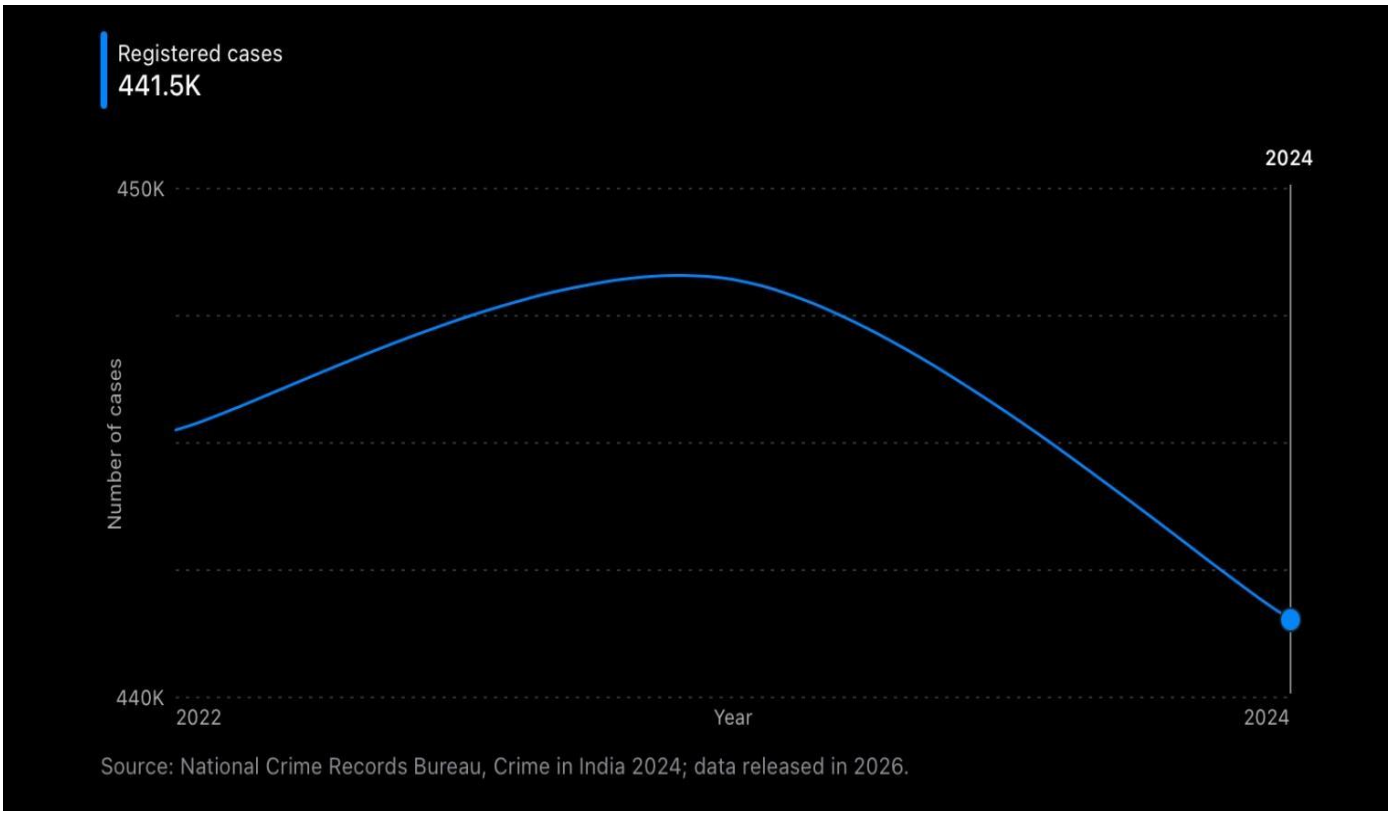
Gender inequality often originates inside the family and community through gender stereotypes, son preference and restrictions on girls' mobility, early marriage, social surveillance and expectations for women's education, careers, marriage and family responsibilities. Even before they enrolll in professional or educational institutions, these societal standards may limit women's freedom.

Women's experiences also vary by income status, age, education, handicap, caste and community, rural or urban location and digital access. An intersectional approach is necessary to understand the different and overlapping forms of disadvantage that women experience.

Legal, Justice and Institutional Gaps

India has built a robust constitutional and legal framework to defend women’s equality, dignity, safety, and participation. However, effective access to justice is still hampered by implementation problems. Women's ability to exercise their rights may be hampered by a lack of legal knowledge, social pressure, fear of reprisals, procedural delays, reporting obstacles and insufficient institutional assistance. The Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023 indicates ongoing legislative growth, but continuous enforcement and easily accessible, gender-sensitive institutions are necessary for successful protection.

Accordingly, the effectiveness of women-centred laws should be measured not just by their presence but by their accessibility, execution, and capacity to give meaningful remedies. NCRB data further reveals the continuing extent of crimes against women, supporting the need for robust legislative safeguards and institutional responsibility.

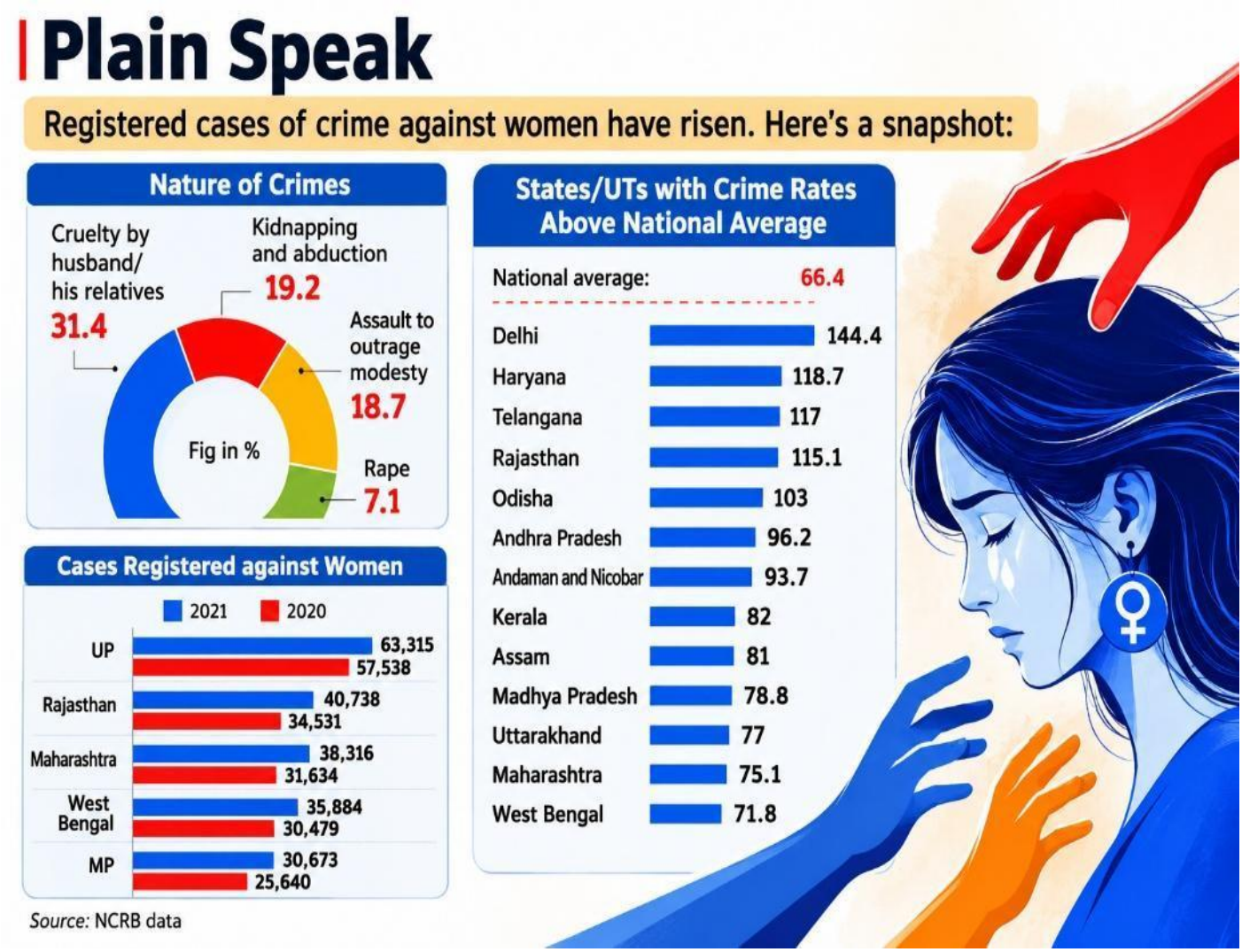


Violence, Safety and Harassment

Substantial equality requires freedom from harassment and violence. Women's mobility, confidence, involvement, and career advancement can be hindered by sexual harassment, domestic violence, stalking,

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human trafficking and harassment at work or in public. These issues are especially pertinent in professional networks, labs, workplaces, academic institutions and field research. Consequently, women's should be seen as a welfare as a welfare as a welfare as a welfare as a welfare as a welfare as a welfare as a welfare as a welfare as a welfare as a welfare, employment.



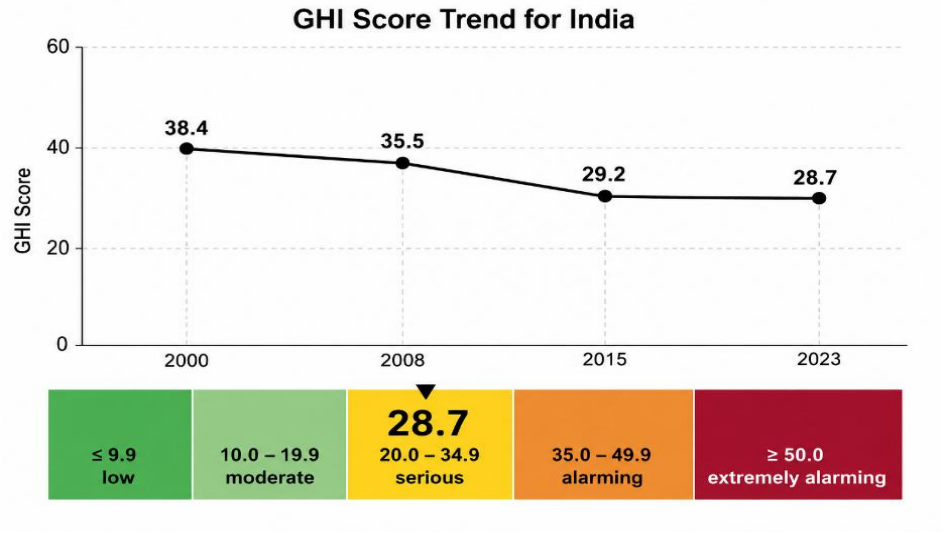
Health, Well-being and Care Responsibilities

Women's substantive empowerment depends on their health and well-being. Women's education, employment, research and leadership can be impacted by poor nutrition, reproductive health issues, inadequate healthcare, mental health issues, and stress at home or at work. Time restrictions and professional engagement are further limited by women's disproportionate responsibility for unpaid domestic and care labor. Therefore, key elements of gender equality include childcare, flexible work schedules, mental health assistance, accessible healthcare and acknowledgment of unpaid care work.

Economic and Workplace Inequality

Women's autonomy, negotiating power and ability to make decisions are all strengthened by economic independence. Unequal access to income, property, credit, employment and productive resources can increase economic dependence. Professional engagement is further hampered by workplace injustices such as occupational segregation, unequal compensation, career disruptions, limited advancement, poor infrastructure and obstacles to leadership. Therefore, gender-responsive institutional policies ought to support fair compensation, respectable employment, financial stability, professional growth, and equal access to leadership and decision-making possibilities.

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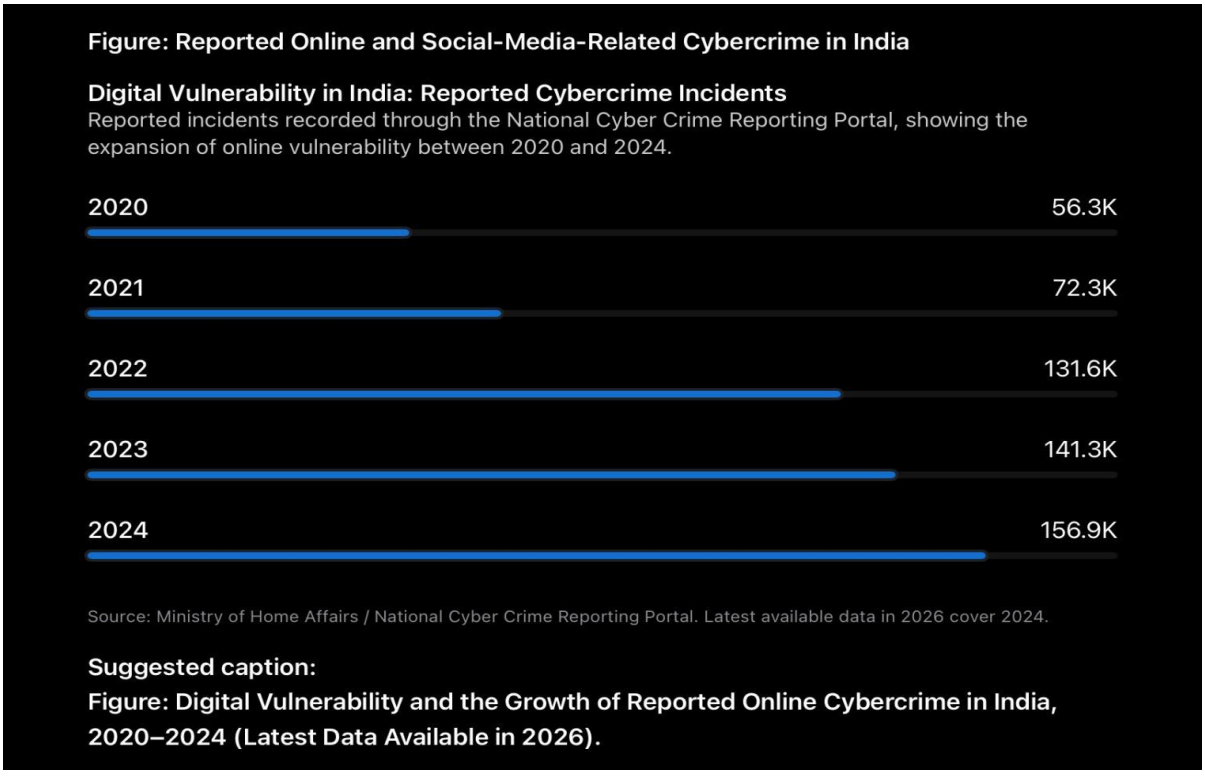


Educational, Digital and Research Inequality

Equal participation in research, innovation and career development has not always followed from increased educational access. Women researchers may be disproportionately impacted by financial limitations, institutional cultures, a lack of mentorship, family obligations, mobility limitations, unequal access to research funding, professional networks, and career disruptions. Through unequal access to devices, connectivity, digital skills, privacy, cyber security, and secure online environments, digital inequality exacerbates these obstacles. Therefore, equal access to professional networks, digital technology, research resources and education is necessary for meaningful empowerment.

Media Representation, Digital Narratives and Online Vulnerability

Modern conceptions of gender are greatly influenced by media and internet platforms. Stereotypes may be perpetuated by sexualisation, objectification, victim-blaming, and constrictive gender narratives and existing disparities may be strengthened by women's low visibility as scientists, researchers, professionals, entrepreneurs, professors and leaders. Cyber stalking, online harassment, impersonation, threats and unauthorized exposure of personal information are among the digital concerns that women must deal with. Therefore, in order to ensure women's safety, autonomy and involvement in digital public spaces, gender-responsive media governance should go beyond visibility to substantial and dignified representation.



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Leadership, Agency and the Representation–Reality Gap

Equal authority, agency and decision-making ability are not always guaranteed by women's institutional presence. Advancement may be hampered by gender bias, social expectations, a lack of mentorship, unequal professional networks, limited access to institutional resources and leadership stereotypes. As a result, women may be represented but not heard, educated but not given equal chances, or legally protected but not given adequate remedies. In order to ensure equal access to opportunity, safety, dignity, autonomy, voice and institutional decision-making, meaningful empowerment necessitates a progression from representation to participation, agency, leadership and structural transformation.

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

Media Representation and Gendered Narratives

According to the investigation, gender narratives and views of women are significantly shaped by modern media. Women's representation as scientists, researchers, academics, professionals, inventors and leaders helps dispel preconceived notions and increase awareness of their abilities and agency. On the other hand, depictions that are objectifying, sexualized, or stereotyped may perpetuate narrow ideas about the roles and capacities of women.

But greater visibility does not always translate into equal recognition. Women may be prominent in media and professional environments without obtaining commensurate recognition of their intellectual achievements, authority or leadership. The results thus point to a gap between visibility and recognition, implying that meaningful representation necessitates not just visibility but also dignity, agency, and acknowledgment.

Barriers to Women’s Participation and Leadership

The investigation identifies many legislative and institutional hurdles limiting women’s participation and advancement in research. These include gender stereotypes, limited mentorship and professional networks, unequal access to research opportunities and resources, career disruptions, unequal care obligations, institutional bias and limited access to leadership roles.

These appointments may be formal posts. There are a number of professional development possibilities for professional development opportunities. Therefore, equal participation, recognition or leadership are not always guaranteed by numerical representation.

Legal and Institutional Protection

India have a legal system. These safeguards offer a crucial starting point for resolving gender-based disparities. However, institutional backing and appropriate implementation are necessary for their efficacy.

The efficacy of formal safeguards may be diminished by a lack of legal knowledge, inefficient grievance procedures, procedural delays, insufficient institutional responsibility and limited access to remedies. Therefore, the results show that good institutional implementation is necessary to support legal equality.

Measures for Women’s Empowerment

According to the analysis, formal legal protection is not enough for women's empowerment; supportive institutional conditions are also necessary. Women's engagement and progress can be strengthened through mentoring, leadership development and fair access to research resources, professional networks, flexible work schedules, childcare assistance, safe workplaces and open promotion procedures. Therefore, concerted attention to institutional procedures, media coverage and strong legislative protection are necessary to strengthen women's status in research.

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The current study comes to the conclusion that understanding women's empowerment in research and professional institutions requires more than just numerical representation. Although women's participation and visibility have improved, substantive equality is still lacking because gendered cultural narratives, institutional practices, unequal opportunities and socio-legal barriers continue to affect women's professional experiences. There are stereotypes that are stereotypes that are stereotypes that are perceptions. Even in cases where legal requirements seem gender-neutral, these narratives frequently act indirectly, establishing impediments.

CONCLUSION

The study comes to the conclusion that achieving women's substantive empowerment requires more than just formal legal equality and numerical representation. The analysis shows that gendered media narratives, societal norms, institutional practices, unequal access to opportunities and restrictions on the application of legislative safeguards continue to influence women's participation and leadership.

Contemporary media can contribute both to the reproduction and modification of gender narratives. Stereotypes can be dispelled and the acceptance of women's competence and agency strengthened by the representation of women as researchers, scientists, academics, professionals, innovators and leaders. On the other hand, restricted views of women's roles and capacities may be strengthened by stereotypical, sexualized or objectifying depictions.

The study further finds that women’s participation in research is affected by institutional barriers, including unequal access to research resources, professional networks, mentorship, leadership opportunities and decision-making spaces. Legal and constitutional protections provide an important foundation for equality and dignity; however, their effectiveness depends on institutional accountability, accessible remedies, effective implementation and gender-sensitive procedures. The gap between formal legal protection and its practical implementation therefore remains an important concern.

Accordingly, women’s empowerment demands a move from representation to participation, participation to recognition, recognition to agency and agency to leadership. This calls for fair research opportunities, open funding and promotion procedures, leadership development and mentoring, supportive care arrangements, secure workplaces, efficient grievance procedures and institutional accountability.

In the end, the study makes the case that true empowerment is attained when women have a meaningful opportunity to participate, contribute, influence choices and lead rather than just being present in institutions. Therefore, the application of legal safeguards, institutional practices and media narratives must all be changed to create a more equal research environment. In this regard, equality ought to establish circumstances that allow women to do research communicate, make decisions, take the lead and contribute without being restricted by their gender.

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