

Problems faced by women in advancing in newspaper management

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By

Fatimah Abu Bakar

The problems faced by a woman journalist are much the same as any working mother or wife. Whether she likes it or not, she actually has two full-time jobs, the tougher of which is most often the one at home.

Professionally, she finds that the big monster referred to as sex discrimination is not all that awesome once she joins the rat race. And, depending on how ambitious she is, she soon realises that really employers respect a hard worker, or inevitably learn to notice one, be it male or female.

So, unless it's the kadi's job she is after there really is no reason why she cannot succeed, unless of course she encounters hard core chauvinists who believe that a good woman is neither seen nor heard.

Given all the 'equal' opportunities, we now come to why it is that most working mothers and wives find it hard working on the outside.

Firstly no modern working woman can escape the traditional roles fate has laid down for her, that of mother, wife, filial daughter, sister and perpetual all-round slave.

Then times changed. We became liberated and fought the menfolk to go out and work. To be equal, we say. To be the breadwinners too. Now that must surely be a ploy we fell into for instead of exchanging roles, the office for the kitchen, we now have two jobs, one by choice, the other by fate.

Of course, if we are lucky we get the occasional good man who doesn't feel that to enter the kitchen, so to speak, he has to leave his manhood by the kitchen sink. But we can't all be lucky. So when after work he settles down to his coffee, a cigarette and a short nap, we take off our shoes and proceed to manage the home life.

So really the problems faced by women advancing in newspaper management can only be solved once society acknowledges the fact that much as women would like to be the hard driving newspaper-type executive making tough decisions daily and staying odd hours in the hours, she cannot. Not if she (and he) also want a happy home front.

There are no obstacles in gaining entrance to any one of the schools of communication like the ones in the Institute of Technology, University Sains Malaysia or the University Kebangsaan Malaysia, provided you have the qualifications. After that it depends on how good you are, irrespective of sex.

It is, therefore, good to know that given the multiple roles women have to play, we have prominent women journalists who have made their mark on journalism in the country, namely Adibah Amin, Cheong Mei Sui, Hardev Kaur, Shah Ali, Cheryl Dorall etc.

As for me, it's now 1.30 am and the only time I can have some peace to myself to write this report. Before that it was rushing home at 6.30pm, getting dinner ready, feeding the kids, getting them ready for bed, clearing up the mess made worse by the compulsory romp before bedtime, and then it's collapse time. Only I had this report to finish...

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Newspaper Management by Puan Fatimah Abu Bakar, NST.