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**Philippine Women Journalists In The Late 80s
And Towards The Early 90s**

By

E S Bernal

Journalists
Women -
Philippines

Philippine Women Journalists in the
Late 80s and Towards the Early 90s

E.S. Bernal*

That journalism is a man's job has long been a perennial issue in the print media. The major argument is that there are more male journalists than females (Amigo 1987). However, one cannot just ignore the presence of women journalists in the country, who, like the male journalists are also performing well in their respective journalistic endeavours. This was proven in Amigo's 1987 study which revealed that sex had nothing to do with the performance of both the male and women journalists. Hence knowing more about women journalists and how they actually fair in the field of journalism as well as the factors and problems that make and unmake them as journalists are therefore of paramount importance. Below is a brief profile of women journalists as summarized from Amigo 1987 and Santos 1988 studies and based from an actual survey conducted by the writer.

Profile of Philippine Women
Journalists

1. Women journalists are mostly single and young ranging from 19-30 years old.
2. They have earned college degrees but not all are related to journalism.
3. Women journalists are receiving monthly salaries of ₱1,400 and below.
4. Their journalistic experience range from 2 months to 5 years.
5. Most are only moderately confident on their security of tenure, which means that some are not.
6. Women journalists are usually given beats on Features, Education, Religion and Entertainment for these are the beats they are believed to be efficient with.

*A seminar paper presented during the Advanced Editorial Workshop for Senior Women Journalists held at AMIC, Singapore from February 8-17, 1989.

7. At present, women journalists face the following problems:

a. Lack of experience and journalistic skills

Because of the extremely demanding and hectic profession that journalism is, only young women flock into the profession in the Philippines. Although young journalists edged out older journalists in terms of aggressiveness and fearlessness in reporting facts, they are usually inexperienced and possess insufficient journalistic skills.

One factor contributing to this problem is their being graduates of degrees not related to journalism.

b. Male Chauvinism

This has been an age-old problem by women journalists which is deeply rooted from a belief that men are superior than women. Thus, it is pegged with a conclusion that since journalism is an extremely demanding profession men will therefore make more efficient journalists.

Consequently, several other problems cropped up from this belief which the Philippine women journalists are still facing today as follows:

b.1. Failure to be elevated to managerial positions

b.2. Women journalists are usually given soft beats like features, lifestyle and entertainment compared to men who are usually given the so called hard beats like police, sports, military, political and business. This is because editors still believe that women simply don't have the stamina and guts to be good journalists.

b.3. Low employment market

b.4. Insecurity in job tenure

b.5. Preference of editors for male journalists rather than female journalists.

b.6. Less job fulfillment

c. Low salaries

Receiving low salaries is a problem also shared by men journalists. As revealed in both Santos (1988) and Amigo (1987) study majority of the Philippine journalists only receive a monthly salary of ₱1,400 and below.

Primarily causing this situation is the notion and observation that newspapering is the dumping place of those who cannot find a job and what one might term as free loaders or free lancers. The errors and abuses committed by many newsmen likewise contribute to this dismal circumstance.

d. Conservative position of the Filipina Women

Generally, Filipino women are expected to be conservative, modest, prim and proper. So, while it is socially acceptable for women in western countries to go out with men with or without attached relationships, in the Philippines it is not. A Filipina is expected to "date" with her boyfriend alone and not just with any single or the least with any married man. Thus it won't look too good if a Filipina reporter will be seen dining with a male news source, more so, if he is married. This therefore prevents the Filipina journalist from getting good beats.

e. Inability to cope with dual roles (wife and journalist)

Facing this problem are married women journalists. Being married means spending more time with their husband and family and observing just the 8:00 to 12:00 and 1:00 to 5:00 office hours in the Philippines which do not normally apply to a journalist job as sources of information usually set the most convenient time that they are available for interview. This therefore adversely affect the efficiency and effectiveness of the female journalists job.

f. Sexual Harassment

While married women jouranalists have exclusive problems, single women journalists have problems of their own also. Some emerged as victims of sexual harassment. However, they failed to mention as to by whom; whether it is by male news sources or by male editors.

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3. Results of the Actual Survey Conducted By The Author of this Paper.