Gender Diversity In The Media

Diversity has a wide range of definitions associated with it. The main component to diversity is difference. The United States has been a melting pot for all genders, races, and religions to integrate and operate in society, especially in the media. The media has been a huge element contributing to people's everyday lives. As mass media has been developing over time, gender diversity and inclusion in news media hasn't progressed for women as the existing number of women are underrepresented compared to their male counterparts.

The media has a very powerful effect on culture. There are many forms of media such as television, radio, newspapers, movies, and advertisements. Evidentially, women are far less likely to be seen in the media than men, as well as their issues and leaders included with it. Women were severely underrepresented in newsrooms, film production, and obtaining ownership of various media outlets.

In the past, women not being represented in news production first arose "through the U.N. Decade for Women (1976-1985), with leaders pushing the United Nations to fund women's news and feature services in the 1970s and 1980s to increase global news flow from progressive women's perspectives," (Byerly, Moore, Mesce, 2012). This program mainly focused on women and their development in society. There were three major conferences held in Mexico City, Nairobi, and Copenhagen. The program also raised money for research for women to conduct their own research.

The Brussels-based International Federation of Journalists and the World Association of Christian Communicators (WACC) and the International Women's Media Foundation in the United States are two examples of two media-based organizations that conducts research on women's progression in the media profession and recognizes female journalists for their bravery in news reporting with the "Courage in Journalism" award. These groups extensively teach media professionals how to incorporate diverse angles when reporting certain point of views.

The lack of gender diversity arose a problem in various newsrooms and media outlets. Women's accomplishments in media are often overlooked since their male counterparts' accomplishments are well documented. It has been proven that in both newsrooms and reporting articles, men are paid more, they spend more time on screen and are often producing more stories than women. "When women do show up in the news, it is often as 'eye candy,' thus reinforcing women's value as sources of visual pleasure rather than residing in the content of their views," (LaFrance, 2016). It shows a vast difference for how women are treated in news reporting compared to men since a man isn't being defined for their looks when they are working in this profession. As Adrienne LaFrance, a writer for The Atlantic, conducted a small amount of research where she looked at gender names in her work; out of the 2,301 names that appeared in her work in 2015, 1,839 of those names were men. It gives the suggestion that when she mentioned women in her stories, she unconsciously gave men more space in her work.

Women have infamously been discriminated against and harassed in various workspaces. In

Faragher v. City of Boca Raton (1998), Beth Ann Faragher resigned from her job as a lifeguard and brought an action against her immediate supervisors “alleging that the supervisors had created a sexually hostile atmosphere by touching, remarking, and commenting.” Faragher declared that inappropriate conduct “constituted discrimination in violation of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964,” (Faragher v. City of Boca Raton, 2019). For the conclusion of the case, the District Court saw that her supervisors wanted to keep her in the abusive working environment, so as a result the court held the employer is liable for their actions. Even though this specific case wasn’t centred around news media, Faragher v. City of Boca Raton brought a public awareness to

In a male dominated industry, it is very hard for women to be considered as an equal to their male coworkers in sports journalism. With sports journalism being one of the most relevant career paths for journalism majors, there is a huge gap in diversity that comes along with it. The two main diversity flaws that are present in sports journalism are the ratio of women to men and the ratio of people of colour to white men. This is a topic of discussion that has been talked about for a while now, but there seems to never be an actual solution to it because the statistics remain the same when applied to gender and race. According to an article in the Daily News there are numerous accredited sports journalism sources such as The Athletic which is a fairly new sports source that are still “seeing the same old hiring practices in a new space” which has been a “gut-punch to women and people of colour in sports journalism” (Phillips, 2018). A lot of minority journalists, especially women, are expecting for there to be some type of change with the hiring but there is little to no hope as the disappointing numbers prove it.

According to the Daily News, their number are very high when the race and gender factor comes into play for their sports journalist/columnist positions. Carron J. Phillips is a columnist for The New York Daily News and he admits while him and another sports editor of colour by the name of Eric Burrow are in “positions of prominence” even their staff of editors designers and producers were basically made up of 89 per cent of white men. There are some numbers that supports his claims, “85 per cent of the sports editors, 76.4 per cent of the assistant sports editors, 80.3 per cent of the columnists, 82.1 per cent of the reporters, and 77.7 per cent of the copy editors/designers are white,” (Phillips, 2018). ESPN, one of the most credible sports sources in the world has been the overall leader when it comes to hiring women and people of colour to their editing and columnist positions, with 30 per cent of assistant sports editors are women and 21.6 per cent are male columnists.

Additionally, the fight for female representation in news media continued in 1978 with Melissa Ludtke. She was a female sports reporter for Sports Illustrated magazine who filed a civil rights action against Major League Baseball Commissioner Bowie Kuhn, American League President Leland MacPhail, and three city officials. Since she was the only woman who was assigned to report the 1977 World Series game, Kuhn had her banned from the team’s locker room because of her gender. Consequently, Ludtke took the MLB to the federal court, creating Ludtke and Time, Inc v. Kuhn. Eventually, the judge “set legal precedent that had protected women sports reporters against infringement of their Constitutional right to perform their jobs as the men do,” (Ludtke, 2019). Since the Yankees did not have a specific policy for visitors in their clubhouse which made each team in the MLB to make a policy for reporters, regardless of the gender. Since then, Ludtke paved the way for many female sports journalists to be treated the same as men in their profession.

Interviewee Margaret Sullivan, professor at Northwestern University, spoke on her experience

teaching a journalism class and her experience in the classroom and professional field. She noticed how much classes are mostly dominated by women with an overwhelmingly different ratio of men to women. According to Sullivan, women make up two thirds of journalism graduates, yet men outnumber women in the actual field of professional journalism by a lot, there are some female journalists but they're not the majority in this case. Writer Catherine York goes on to explain the toll this phenomenon is doing to women, where it is causing them to not want to take part in their journalistic careers due to the fact that it is a male dominated industry.

The Women's Media Center made a bar graph to show the gender distribution of journalists at selected newspapers in the United States as of November 2017. According to the graph, men made up the majority population of journalists at popular newspaper outlets such as The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, the Los Angeles Times, USA Today, and the Chicago Tribune just to name a few. At USA Today, 69 per centper cent of journalists working there are male while the remaining 31 percent are female. For the San Jose Mercury News, only 38 per cent of journalists are female, and 62 per cent are male. These newspaper companies' statistics has proven the male dominance in news media.

Cristal Williams Chancellor, the director of communications at the Women's Media Center summarized the gender-based disparities women of colour face in the newsroom. Only 32 per cent of reporters in the newsrooms are women, but for women of colour, the percentage is a lot scarcer. The dipping pool of talent many hiring officials choose from isn't diverse. Many female journalists must acquire many years of experience just for them to seriously be considered in the competitive atmosphere. Williams Chancellor was not shocked at her findings given the numerous challenges women of colour must face to build up their credibility in the newsrooms.

In conclusion, women are underrepresented in news media because of the challenges they ought to face in order to be considered on the same level as their male counterparts. Various court cases have proven women have been harassed, shunned, and taken for granted in the workplace. Gender imbalance in news media exhibits how much women need to work twice as hard to be in the same positions as men.