

THE CURRENT SITUATION OF WOMEN IN UGANDAN MEDIA: GENERAL OVERVIEW

BRIAN MUTEBI

Gender portrayal in the media is heavily skewed in favour of men. Gender awareness and sensitivity is yet to be built into news reporting requirements. (EAJA, 2008)

Out of the five major media houses (Monitor Publications Limited, NTV Uganda, Vision Group, NBS TV, Uganda Broadcasting Corporation) only one (NTV Uganda) is headed by a woman. (ACFODE, September, 2016)

Women in the print media: Overall, in print media news women are (20%), news writers (13%), photographers (15%), news anchors (24%), appearing in photographs (28%), and being quoted (20%).

Women are less likely to write about, appear in, or have their voices heard in 'hard' news stories such as politics, defence, spirituality and the economy. They are, however, more evident in 'soft' news areas such as education, health and agriculture, but more so in the arts, entertainment and relationships. (Uganda **Media Women's Association: Gender Dimensions in Uganda's Print Media: A Case for Engendering Practitioners 2014**)

The Nigerian film industry, largely referred to as Nollywood, mostly depicts women as gold-diggers, depending on witchcraft, being unrealistic, vulnerable and dependent on male figures for strength and survival, rather than on their own sense of empowerment. Media stereotyping of women as objects and helpless beings creates very low expect-

tations for society's girls. (EASSI Policy Issue Paper No.9, 2010).

The global picture of women in the media

Eastern Africa: 20% of professional journalists are female, with 3% being on decision making organs. (EAJA, 2010).

Southern Africa: 41% per cent of women work in media houses, 28% sit on boards of directors, and women constitute 23% of top managers in media houses. (Glass Ceilings, 2010).

USA: Women are on camera only 32% of the time in evening broadcast news, and write 37% of print news stories. At the New York Times, more than 67% of bylines are male. (The Status of Women in U.S. Media 2014).

The percentage of women breaking through the glass ceiling to reach senior leadership positions was rising but at a slow pace in comparison with the overall number of women who joined media organisations. The reasons cited included lack of gender-responsive policies, skills and high professional standards, effective networking by women, and cultural factors and prejudice. (UN Department for Public Information: Beijing at 15; Online discussion on women and the media, February 2010).

Women represented only 33.3% of the full-time journalism workforce. 73% of the top management jobs are occupied by men compared to 27% by women. However, 41% of the newsgathering, editing and writing jobs are done by

women.

Americas: There is a persistent pattern of women's underrepresentation across the region. Only in Puerto Rico do women journalists slightly outnumber men. In the United States women are less than a fourth of top managers and only a third of those in governance functions.

Middle East and North Africa: Across the region, men earn three to five times as much as women in governance and top management positions.

Asia and Oceania: Men in the media outnumber women with a ratio of 4:1 across the Asia and Oceania region.

Eastern Europe: Women are in a particularly strong position in Russia, nearing parity in top management and holding around a third of governance positions.

Nordic Europe: About half of the companies surveyed have adopted gender equality and sexual harassment policies.

Western Europe: Women are nearing numerical parity with men. However, women's low representation is particularly acute in top management and governance levels, where women number only around a fourth. (IWMF: Global Report on the Status of Women in the News Media)

25% of women and 75% of men provide popular opinion;

Eight per cent of women and 92% men are eyewitnesses;

Women are more likely to be heard in the news as persons narrating their personal experience (56%) as opposed to 44% for men.

24% of content in which a central focus was on women, 76% for men.

17% of stories highlighted issues of gender equality or inequality,

30% of stories reported by women are more likely to raise issues of gender equality or inequality as opposed to 27% of stories reported by men.

Women formed 28% of the news subjects in the print media compared to 69% for males.

On television, women formed 25%, males 75%.

Women featured 13% as news subjects on radio while it was 87% for males. (Global Media Monitoring Project; Uganda National Report 2015)

Women's overall presence in the news is only 28% of news subjects.

politicians (men 74%, women 26%);

and public servants (men 75%, women 25%)

academic experts (men 87%, women 13%);

Occupations traditionally associated with power and leadership, such as the police and the military, are dominated by men (men 89%, women 11%);



There should be a shift from allocating gender-related topics to women in newsrooms. Women issues should not be confused with gender.

the media should be promoted. (Beijing Platform for Action)

There should be a shift from allocating gender-related topics to women in newsrooms. Women issues should not be confused with gender. Journalism

teachers need to give girls tough assignments that demand deeper research so that they can get out of their comfort zones. And because journalism can be a challenging field of work and male-dominated, female journalists should start out with self-confidence, think fast and be a little aggressive. (Dr Margaret Jjuuko, Ugandan Professor at the University of Rwanda, specialising in Journalism, Media and Communication)

The writer is a girls rights campaign and works with Education & Development Opportunity Uganda.



The ideal situation

For the media to accurately mirror our societies and to produce coverage that is complete and diverse, it is critical that the news reflect the world as seen through the eyes of women as well as men. (UNESCO, 2009)

A comprehensive East African regional gender-sensitive policy framework should be formulated which mainstreams gender into its structures, programmes and processes. (EASSI Policy Issue Paper No.9, 2010)

Participation of women in and access to expression and decision-making in and through all forms of the media and new technologies of communication should be increased. A balanced and non-stereotyped portrayal of women in