

# **A Report on Gender Justice in Media Contents**

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**Freedom Forum**



**2017**

### ***Background:***

Giving continuity to the last three months' monitoring of media contents and byline in terms of women's presence, Freedom Forum, in the recent three months – January, February and March – of the year 2017, went through a total of 1080 news items from different nine daily newspapers including five Nepali and four English published from the capital city.

The objective of the monitoring is to draw data as number of female bylines, number of male bylines and number of male/female as news sources. The data reveals the representation of women in Nepali media. Also, the news stories categorized as stereotypical and challenging stereotypes are briefly described here. This report, however, does not give comprehensive picture of male-female representation in Nepali media since it has looked on two points- nameless byline and news contents.

Importantly, it draws the comparison between the male and female in byline and news sources, which can be a point for further analysis and research to explore truth as to why female presence is lower in Nepali media.

This activity is conducted with the financial support from the Free Press Unlimited (FPU), a foundation based in Amsterdam, the Netherlands, working on freedom of expression issues across the world.

At a time women empowerment has emerged as an important matter of advocacy by various sectors in Nepal, FF hopes this report provides evidences for the media to further their efforts for increasing participation of women in media, one of the most vibrant arenas that help bring forth women's opinion and views in the fore front.

The previous report highlighted meager representation of women in comparison to men in the major media outlets. Women journalists and quoted sources in the news contents comprised only 13.4% and 10.4% respectively. However, data in this report is expected to depict almost equal share for both men and women.

### **Key points:**

- Among the news contents monitored, 92% contained male and only 8% female journalists in byline.
- Nagarik daily constituted highest number of male names in byline whereas Annapurna Post contained the highest number of female names.
- On quoted news sources, 91% were men and only 9% were women.
- Republica comprised maximum number of women as news sources while Gorkhapatra took maximum number of men as sources.
- News coverage on political and governmental issues was found to be 55% contrary to only 2% on entertainment.

- Almost 59% male and 41% female journalists reported political and governmental affairs whereas, only 22% males and 33% females reported social and legal issues.
- Total 52 stories warrant further analysis among which 22 were stories about women and 20 challenged stereotype.

### **Methodology:**

Freedom Forum conducted the weekly monitoring of nine national dailies namely: five Nepali (Kantipur, Nagarik, Gorkhapatra, Annapurna Post and Naya Patrika), and four English (The Himalayan Times, Republica, The Rising Nepal and The Kathmandu Post). These dailies were selected on the basis of their wider circulation, strong public reach and content diversity. The monitoring was conducted once in a week but on different days in each week considering the need to capture classified media content. First, the contents from nine national dailies were ticked and scanned through gender lenses as how balanced the news are in terms of source, news reporter, reported news/content etc. Eight main news stories from page number first, second, third, fourth and sixth in some outlets were selected from each newspaper and all those news stories were studied to derive variables chosen for the study report. This time, news was selected randomly, but priority was accorded to those with byline names within the selected page numbers. Initially, gender of the journalist writing the news (as mentioned in byline) was noted, then the whole story was scanned for appropriate sources; either primary (person) or secondary (reports, data).

If the news contained primary source, both the male and female sources were noted. After that, the story was critically examined whether it dealt with gender (in) equality or stereotypes. In the second phase, all those data were entered into the coding sheet according to the procedures prescribed by FPU. Data were again entered into Microsoft Excel program for further presentation and comparative analysis. This report is prepared on the basis of the analyses of the data derived from tabulation.

### **Limitation**

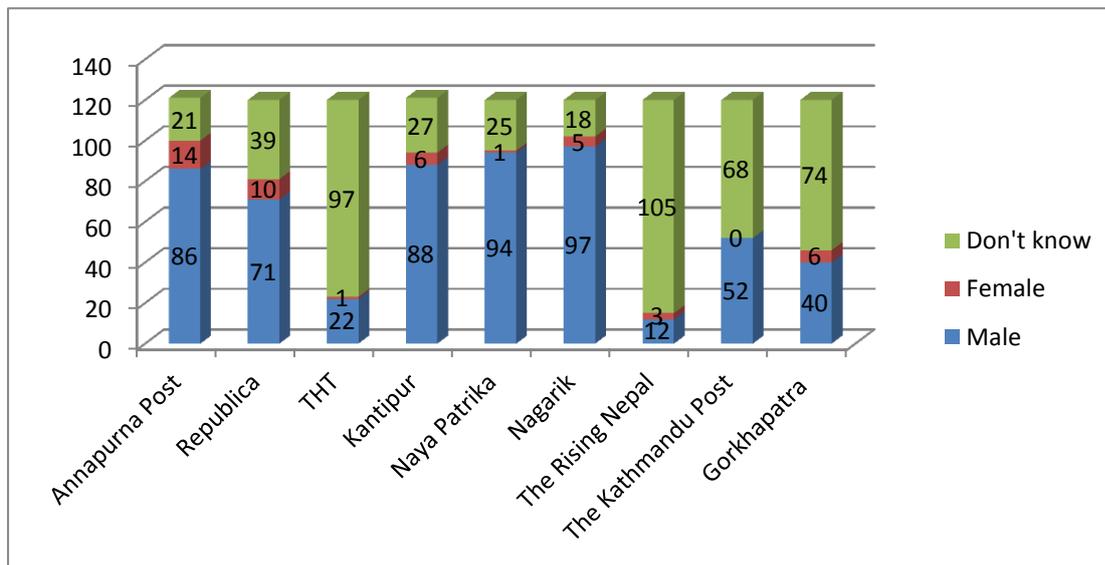
The study report does not give a comprehensive picture of women's presence in the selected media. It however observes the news stories (once every week from selected newspapers, eight news items from each, totaling 120 from each newspaper during the period of three months (January to March 2017) in terms of news writer (male, female, unnamed byline), and the news sources. Presence of women as employee in the media house is not incorporated in the report, *but, the presence of women in news byline and news source*. Similarly, how the women are presented in any news story- stereotypically (submissive, dominated, weaker, traditional role) or not is another point we observed in the particular news stories.

### **Figures with brief analysis**

#### **1. Journalists (Who are talking in the media)**

Among the media outlets monitored for the byline representation of reporters, Nagarik daily constituted highest number of male names followed by Naya Patrika,

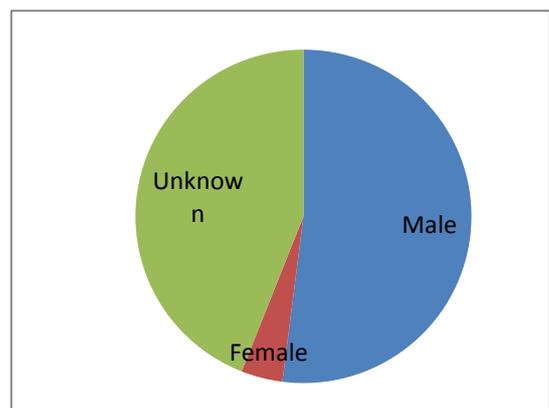
Kantipur, Annapurna Post, Republica, The Kathmandu Post, Gorkhapatra, The Himalayan Times (THT) and The Rising Nepal.



Among the media outlets monitored for the byline representation of reporters, Nagarik daily constituted highest number of male names followed by Naya Patrika, Kantipur, Annapurna Post, Republica, The Kathmandu Post, Gorkhapatra, The Himalayan Times (THT) and The Rising Nepal.

Similarly, Annapurna Post contained the highest number of female names in its content followed by Republica, Gorkhapatra and Kantipur sharing the same, while the Nagarik, the Rising Nepal, and lastly THT and Naya Patrika sharing the same digit. However, The Kathmandu Post failed to include any female reporter's name.

Compared to the previous report, THT which did not have any byline female names contained one this time ("*Red Tika challenge takes internet by storm*", Anita Shrestha, Kathmandu, February 20) while, Annapurna Post contributed highest of all this time as well.



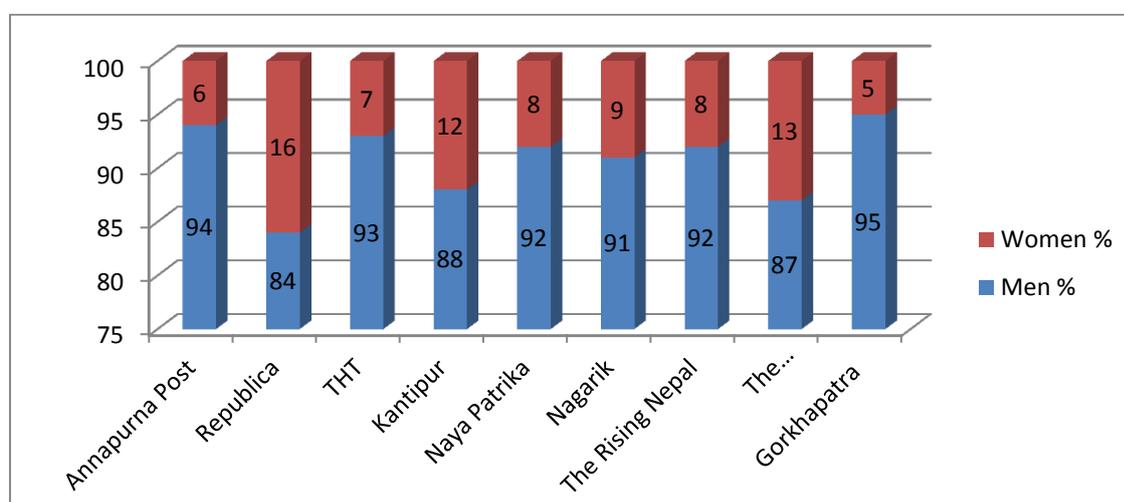
Furthermore, among the nine monitored dailies The Rising Nepal contains maximum number of unknown names in its content as a reporter with the Nagarik contributing to the minimum. Unknown names have been coded as "*don't know*" in the diagram. This signifies Nagarik includes most of the reporter's name to its contents as byline. Amongst all, male on byline was found to be 52% and females 4% where, remaining 44% contents contained bylines like: Annapurna Post, AFP, Republica, Reuters,

Himalayan News Service, Rastriya Samachar Samiti (RSS), Kantipur Reporter, Naya Patrika, Nagarik Reporter, Staff Reporter, Post Report, Gorkhapara Reporter, etc.

## 2. Sources (Who are talking in the stories)

Men outnumbered women with 91% among the total sources quoted in the news stories monitored. According to the individual data, Gorkhapatra constituted maximum percentage of male quoted as source whereas, Republica had maximum percentage of female quoted as sources. However comparing in group, Nagarik carried maximum both male and female sources.

As the atmosphere for election is being created gradually, most of the stories are related to political and governmental affairs. However, they lack women's participation and their views. Either in the news on political dialogue, events or story about women, and any social issues, majority of the stories lacks women's quotes.

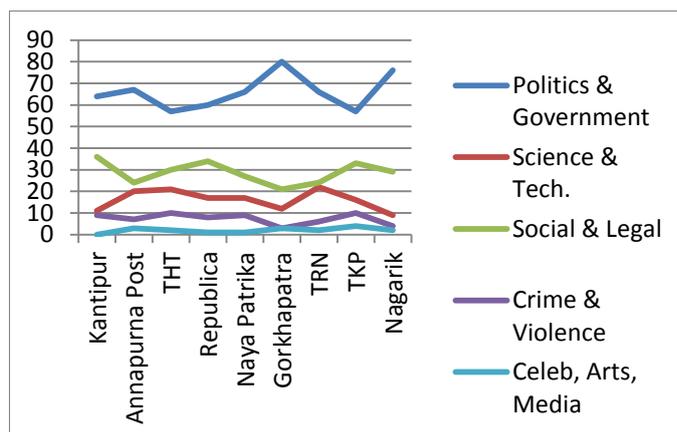
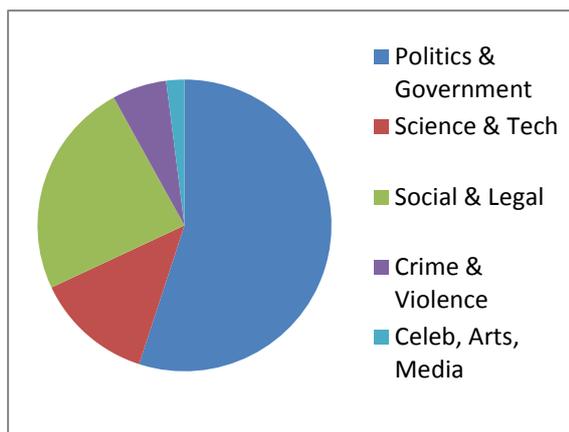


As compared to the previous three-month report, Gorkhapatra replaced Republica with maximum men as news sources, whereas, the Republica amazingly contributed to the maximum women as sources in comparison to the least coverage on previous report.

Similarly, some news content were also based on secondary sources like reports, data, appeal, press releases, agreements, bill, constitution provisions, etc.

## 3. Topic wise distribution:

The monitoring period being at the high time of the Election preparation local government restructuring time of Nepal, most of the media outlets covered news based on politics and government the most. However, news on social and legal issues also secured significant position on the main news pages. Because most of the papers contain separate column on entertainment, news on arts, events, celebrities were also found at the lowest proportion.



Among total 1080 news scanned during three months, those relating to politics and government outnumbered other topics by almost 55%. News scanned from the main news pages of the outlets covered social and legal issues to the next followed by science and technology, crime and violence and media, the least. In comparison to the previous report, this time Gorkhapatra being a National newspaper covered almost 81% of the political news.

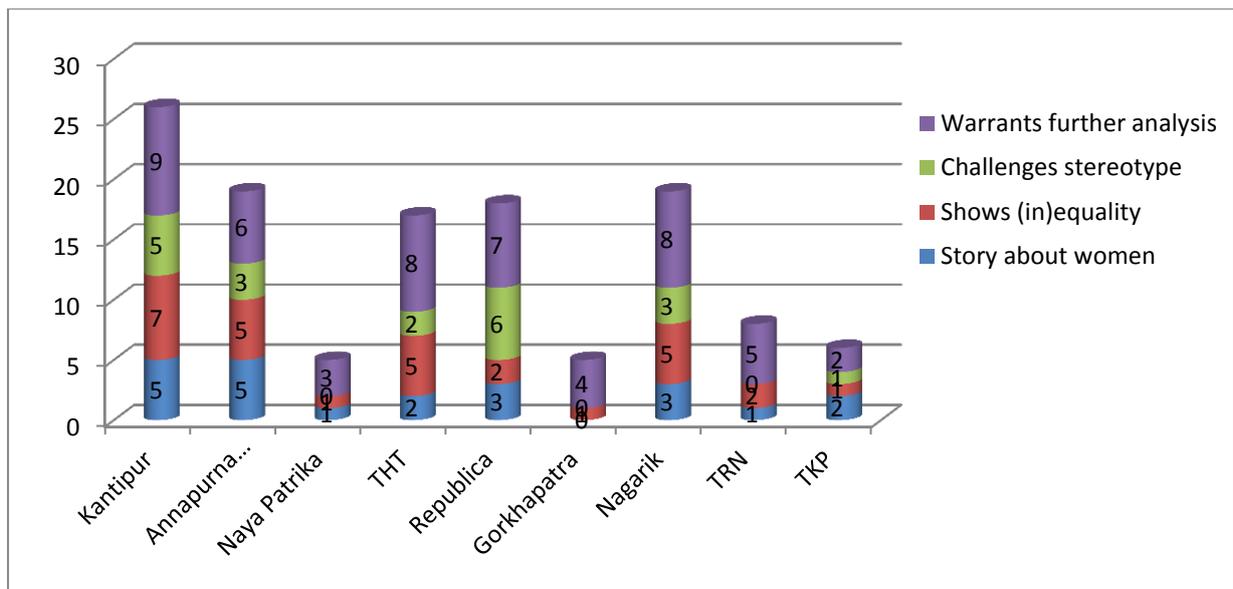
On the list, amongst others Gorkhapatra (80) covers maximum news from Politics and Government affairs followed by Nagarik. Under the topic social and legal issues, Kantipur (36) covers maximum news among others, similarly under science and technology The Rising Nepal covers maximum and under crime and violence THT and The Kathmandu Post share equal but maximum among others.

Almost 59% male and 41% female journalists reported on political and governmental affairs whereas, only 22% male and 33% females reported on social and legal issues.

**4. Stories related to gender issues:**

During the monitoring period, new stories demanding gender justice were noted in this section. The news which were found balanced/ imbalanced in terms of quoted sources, displaying gender stereotypes and worth further analysis were noted under various four categories as depicted in the chart below.

Even though, most of the stories coded under contents monitored showed inequality among the quoted sources, at least 5 stories showed equality with equal number of men and women sources. The newspapers containing women in the photographs still lack their opinions and views. Stories containing more than 3 only male sources have also been coded under stories warranting further analysis. Similarly, the news about women victim, violence, their achievement, voices, rights have also been coded under the same category.



Though the circumstances are changing towards gender equity, male stereotypes are the most dominant hence; women's stereotypical challenges have been focused in this study.

According to the data, Kantipur tops the list of stories requiring warrant further analysis followed by THT and Nagarik. In some cases, even though stories challenged stereotype, they did not warrant analysis, as for example: speech of women President, House speaker, candidates, etc. Among total, 22 news stories were about women and their stories where 20 challenged stereotype of women (explanation included below on the next section) and 29 showed (in)equality.

### **5. Stories those warrant further analysis:**

News stories being coded on the basis of gender imbalance were further analyzed through four gender perspectives as specified above. Few of the stories have been described here below:-

#### **Headlines:-**

##### **a. Youths celebrate International Nepali Topi Day (THT, Kathmandu, January 1)**

The story is about Nepali youths celebrating Topi Day wearing Nepali cap (Dhaka Topi). In the story we can see a picture of young girls and boys wearing cap but neither of them have been quoted in the story itself but yet we can find 4 men sources. Hence, the news shows inequality in terms of sources.

##### **b. Agricultural tractors misused as carriers on Chure excavation (Nagarik, Siraha, January 1)**

The story is based on duty free vehicles provided under Government quota to the farmers which have been used as carriers of sand, stones in Chure excavation. It is

based upon the illegal excavation of the area and misuse by businessmen in Siraha. The story has 7 male sources but no any women source hence, draws attention towards further analysis.

**c. Family with 6 blinds: (Republica, Rajbiraj, January 6)**

The story is about a poor family of Rajbiraj in Nepal where 6 of the members are blind and cannot do anything for raising the family. Besides, the family's responsibility is being undertaken by Sukumaridevi, a female who is also disabled but not blind and hence, is a sole bread winner of family. In such a poor and deprived family, a disabled woman earns for their living which clearly challenges stereotype and hence, warrants further analysis.

**d. Community schools premier (Kantipur, Bara, January 18)**

The news is about a school in Kapilvastu which also provides computer education for female guardians at school after student's class. Elderly housewives of the remote place being educated with computer seem to clearly challenge existing stereotype of women.

**e. Pregnant woman earning through beating stones (Annapurna post, Ilam, February 8)**

The story is about the miserable condition of a 19 yr old pregnant SangitaPanchkotiwho is compelled to breaks stones for 6 hours daily to earn the living. She got married early, lives in a slum and works along with her father-in-law because they do not have any other way of earning. Such a condition of a pregnant woman who deserves utmost care depressingly addresses stereotypical notion.

**f. Missing girl, 7, found murdered (The Kathmandu Post, Kapilvastu, February 14)**

In the news, a 7 year old girl who was found dead was suspected to be murdered after being raped. Even though locals later protested demanding probe into the matter and Police is ongoing investigation, such insecurity for even a minor female in the society is an alarming condition which clearly depicts gender stereotype and inequality.

**g. NC has responsibility to hold polls: Deuba (The Rising Nepal, Kathmandu, March 13)**

The news covers speech from various political leaders during an event where words of 6 politicians have been incorporated but no any women politicians have been quoted. Despite presence of women in the politics, news fails to include their voices. This clearly shows inequality from gender perspective.

**h. 70 yr old Chepang woman receives nepali citizenship (NayaPatrika, Gorkha, March 9)**

In this news, an elderly woman belonging to the excluded group (Chepang) receives Nepali citizenship from CDO. It was her husband who helped to provide her citizenship who was scared of coming into public and facing other. Without citizenship they cannot receive old-age allowance, but the woman can now get all facilities of a citizen because of her husband. Hence, the story though perpetuated stereotype also focuses on status of Chepang woman.

#### **i. Traffic jam in kalanki (Gorkhapatra, Kathmandu, January 1)**

The news is about traffic jam and dust in the Kalanki area which has been worsen due to sewage leakage on the roads. Regarding the pollution and difficulties being face by the locals, more than 4 men have expressed their views but no any women's voice has been included in the news. This also shows inequality among the quoted sources.

#### **j. Red Tika Challenge takes internet by storm (THT, Kathmandu, February 21)**

The news is based on changing the mentality of social stigma towards widows that they should not wear colorful dresses and do make-up. The story describes about a campaign 'Red Tika challenge' organized by widows where they should wear a red tika and post pictures on the Facebook page which had received immense response. Hence, the story clearly challenges stereotype where women themselves are aware of their interests and rights and can transform societal taboos.

#### **Opportunities and Learning:**

Through monitoring content of media outlets on gender issues, Freedom Forum has built strong base on advocating for gender equality on media. Previously, the tool was provided by FPU and was used under its project but even after completion of the program FF has been continuously monitoring thus, capacitating its organizational objectives. As per the review and suggestions received from the previous report, most of the media houses have considerable women as working journalists but this analytical report would be a helpful tool in realization of maintaining gender equality in media contents too.

#### **Recommendations:**

- Stories about women and those containing women in the pictures should also include their opinions and views.
- Even in the political and other social stories, inclusion of women's voice/quote will bring forth their perspectives as well as depict equality as the number of women.
- Incorporating the byline names of journalists may decrease unknown list and also reveal participation of more men and women journalists thus, deviating the curve.

- As most of the news, still perpetuate gender stereotype either for male or female, reporting format should be changed deviating towards throwing light upon the cases where men also replace women at their work.

**Conclusion:**

The three month study of the contents revealed meager representation of women in Nepali media contents. Among total 1080 news scanned, only 52 warranted further analyses upon gender perspectives. Women journalists and source comprise only 8% and 9% respectively. Overall, news on politics and government was found dominant. During the election preparatory phase of the country where most of the stories are related to political and governmental issues, they still lack women's participation and views. Among the nine dailies, Annapurna revealed maximum inclusion of females as reporters and Republica revealed maximum inclusion of female as sources. Almost 59% male and 41% female journalists reported on political and governmental issues whereas, only 22% male and 33% females reported on social and legal issues. Conclusively, in comparison to the previous report considerable changes have been recorded in the contents representation of gender.

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