



9.76% Women Sources *in* 1,080 News

A REPORT ON GENDER CONTENTS MONITORING

October-December 2017



9.76% Women Sources In 1,080 News

Nepal held three tiers of election- federal, provincial and local levels- witnessing sizable number of females elected as people's representatives (40.55%). Nepali media too, played significant role on peaceful completion of polls except few untoward incidents. It is worth mentioning that the elections proved to be a solid ground for women empowerment. In this context, Freedom Forum's media monitoring report on gender contents- bylines and news sources of major nine national dailies for the months of October to December also depicts better picture of gender equality in terms of news authors and news sources.

The monitoring is aimed at collecting concrete evidence and quantitative results on the gender (male/female) participation in media contents and providing relevant recommendation to respective media houses so as to contribute towards inclusive Nepali media.

The activity is carried out with the financial support of the Free Press Unlimited (FPU), a foundation based in Amsterdam, the Netherlands, working on freedom of expression issues across the world. The evidence-based report which is prepared by following the tools and methodologies provided by FPU is published every three months.

In the previous report, FF observed among 653 working journalists from 8 mainstream broadsheets only 18.22% are females. The report somehow supported that data stating only 63 out of 1,079 bylines were by female on the main news stories.

The study, however, does not cover all the beats as op-eds, entertainment, economics, and technology of the national dailies. It has picked only 8 main news stories from each newspaper once in a week as representative ones.

KEY POINTS (OCT-DEC 2017)

- Male bylines (53.82%) outnumbered female (5.61%), while unknown (40.57%)
- Annapurna Post and Naya Patrika scored the highest (99) male bylines among others, while Nagarik daily contained 16 female bylines (highest of all).
- Among total 1,080 news monitored, 79.83% quoted men, 9.76% women and 10.41% secondary sources.
- Nagarik recorded maximum female bylines (16), while the Himalayan Times had maximum female sources (39).
- 60.28% news titles fall under Politics and Government followed by 20.83% social and legal news. 15 news stories with female bylines and 9 stories about women were recorded on the first pages of broadsheets.
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Glimpses from the previous report (July-Sept 2017):

- Male bylines (53.94%) outnumbered female (5.84%), while unknown (40.22%).
- Nagarik daily scored the highest (101) male bylines among others, while Annapurna Post daily contained 17 female bylines (highest of all).
- Among total 1,076 news monitored, 79.75% contained men, 10.38% women and 9.88% secondary sources.
- Among total females, Annapurna Post and Kantipur contributed to the maximum reporters (26.98%) and quoted sources (20.08%) respectively.
- 53.06% news titles fall under Politics and Government followed by 27.32% social and legal news.
- Nine news stories with female bylines and stories about women (9) were published on the first pages of monitored broadsheets.

METHODOLOGY

As done in the previous study and analyses, the contents are picked from the same nine national dailies: Kantipur (Kan), Nagarik (Nag), Annapurna Post (AP), Gorkhapatra (Gopa) and Naya Patrika (NP) of Nepali language and The Kathmandu Post (TKP), The Rising Nepal (TRN), The Himalayan Times (THT), and Republica (Rep) in English language. Eight news stories from main pages (1, 2, 3, 4 or 6) of each newspaper were randomly selected and scanned once in a week (different days in different weeks); however, stories with named bylines were given first priority. The variables were recorded into a coding sheet provided by FPU. Figures derived in the coding sheet were then entered into Microsoft Excel and processed for presentation and tabulation.

Data were processed for comparing male versus female presence in news byline and sources, topic-wise distribution, stories showing gender (in) equality. Similarly, number of females reporting on political and social issues was also recorded.

RESULTS

1. Journalists (Who are talking in the media)

This time resulted in minor decrease in the female bylines with sharp rise in unknown bylines. Among the broadsheets monitored Nagarik contributed to the highest number (16) of female bylines followed by Annapurna post (15) and Gorkhapatra (10). It is noticeable that coming to the last phase State owned media secured third position on female bylines.

Among the total 1,080 bylines monitored, Annapurna and Naya Patrika constituted maximum (99) male bylines, whereas The Rising Nepal again contributed to maximum (118) unknown bylines.

Those news stories with unknown bylines were- Himalayan News Service, Rastriya Samachar Samiti (RSS), Kantipur Reporter, Naya Patrika, Nagarik Reporter, Staff Reporter, Post Report, Gorkhapatra Reporter, etc. in the bylines.

Annual trend shows English editions of the broadsheets contain less number of named bylines than their Nepali editions.

Overall data show clear gender disparity. However, substantial increase was observed during the study period. Gorkhapatra and Nagarik show increasing bar for female bylines (fig 1.2).

Similarly, annual data yet shows underrepresentation of women in all the monitored dailies contents. Among 4,330 bylines recorded over a year, 5.4% were by female.

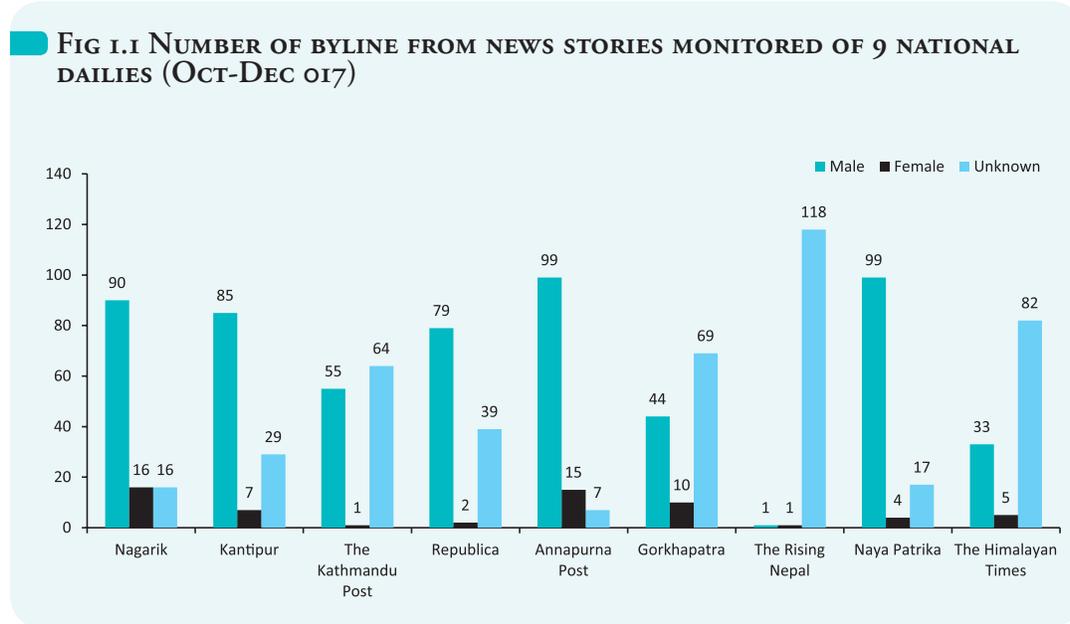


FIG 1.2: FEMALE BYLINES TREND FOR A THE YEAR 2017

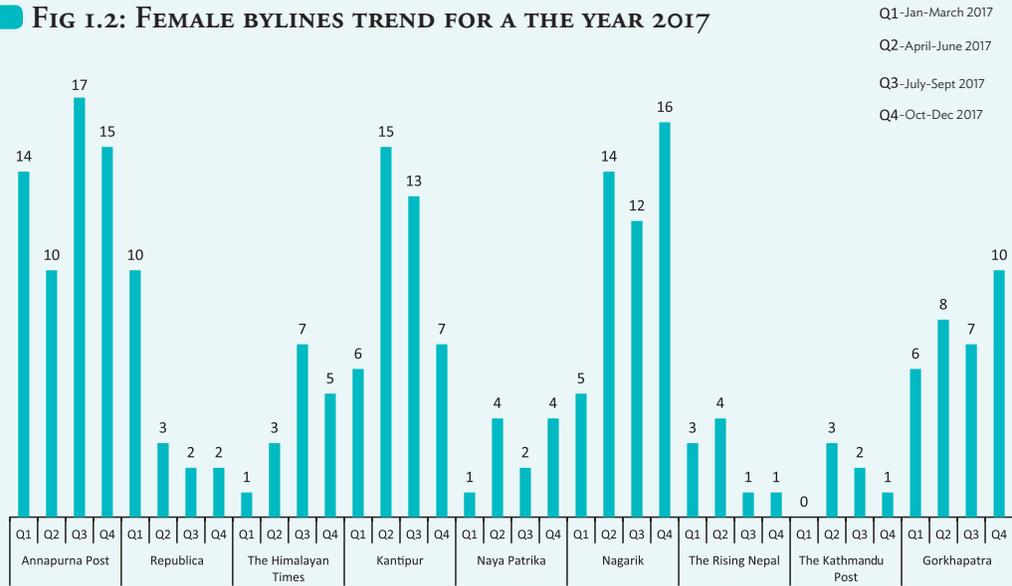
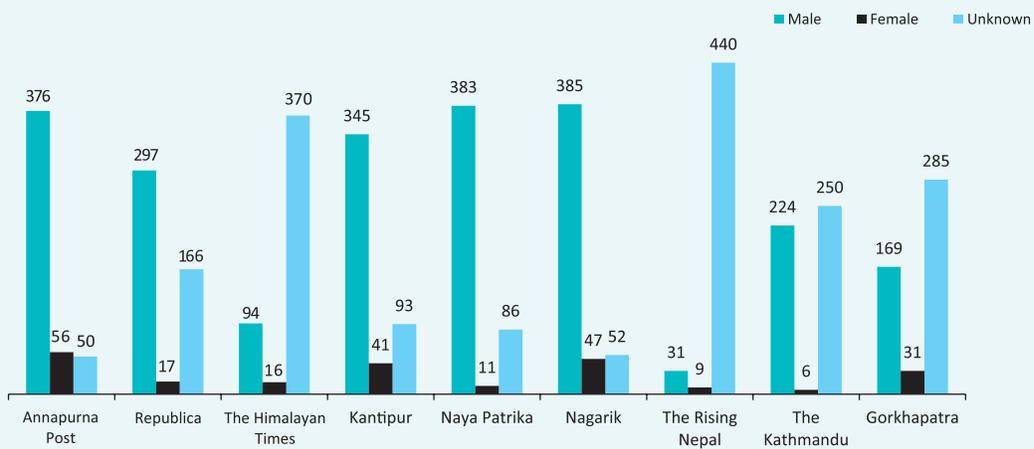


FIG 1.3: BYLINE DATA RECORDED FROM JAN-DEC 2017 FROM NINE BROADSHEETS



2. Sources (Who are talking in the stories)

Compared to bylines, women are visibly quoted as sources but still less than men.

Among 2,172 sources quoted in the news contents monitored from October to December, only 212 are women comprising 9.76%.

Those three months, THT topped the list for female sources (39) being followed by Kantipur (34) and AP (32) whereas, again Kantipur exceeds others for male bylines (248). Similarly, Nagarik and Republica both quoted the highest number of secondary sources (33).

Secondary sources refer to data, reports, proposals, statements, amendment bills, court bills, orders, press releases, manifesto, etc.

However, annual data records Kantipur quoted the highest number of both female (150) and male (1090) as sources in its main news contents.

Annual trend(Fig 2.2) shows THT with ascending order of number of female sources from first to fourth quarter.

Annual data state 9.59% females were quoted as sources among total 9,024 news sources. Increase in the participation of women in the news stories can be attributed to the increasing nominated/ elected women representatives during three phases of elections over the year.

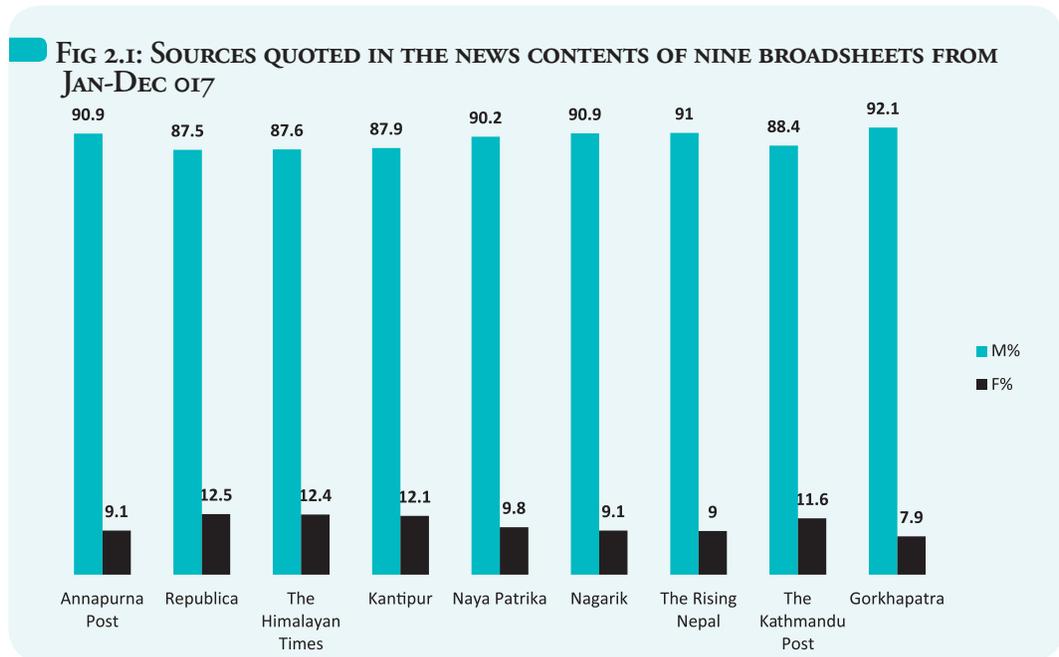
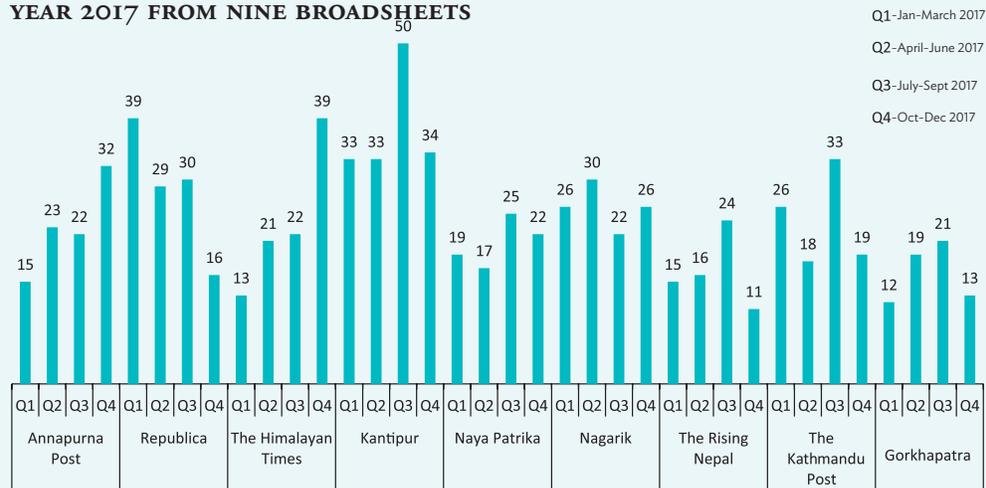


FIG 2.2: ANNUAL TREND OF WOMEN AS NEWS SOURCES DURING THE YEAR 2017 FROM NINE BROADSHEETS



3. Topic-wise distribution of the news

With an aim to extract data for mainstream media, FF monitored news contents from main pages because those sections cover main news from any sectors. This three-month too, political news (60.28%) dominated the news contents monitored on the main pages. The result is obvious as the country held three-tiers of elections.

Amongst all, Nagarik (327) constituted maximum number of news under Politics and Government category, whereas THT (41) constituted maximum news under Social and legal issues.

Similarly, 23.2% news stories were on social and legal issues while 56.9% news on Politics and Government. The annual data show increasing trend of political news which is attributed to the historic elections of the country.

Linking with the news topics, FF also recorded 48.29% percentage of female bylines on the political and governmental news category followed by 25.21% social and legal news (fig 3.2).

The annual trend also shows increase in the number of female bylines on political news in the last quarter while decrease in social news bylines.

As the main pages of media outlets address major State affairs, those pages feature political news the most, stakeholders say.

FIG 3.1 TOPIC WISE QUARTERLY DISTRIBUTION OF NEWS



FIG 3.2: TOPIC WISE FEMALE BYLINES(OCT-DEC)

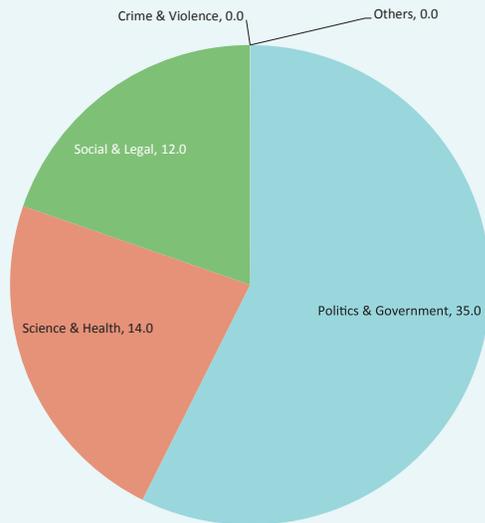
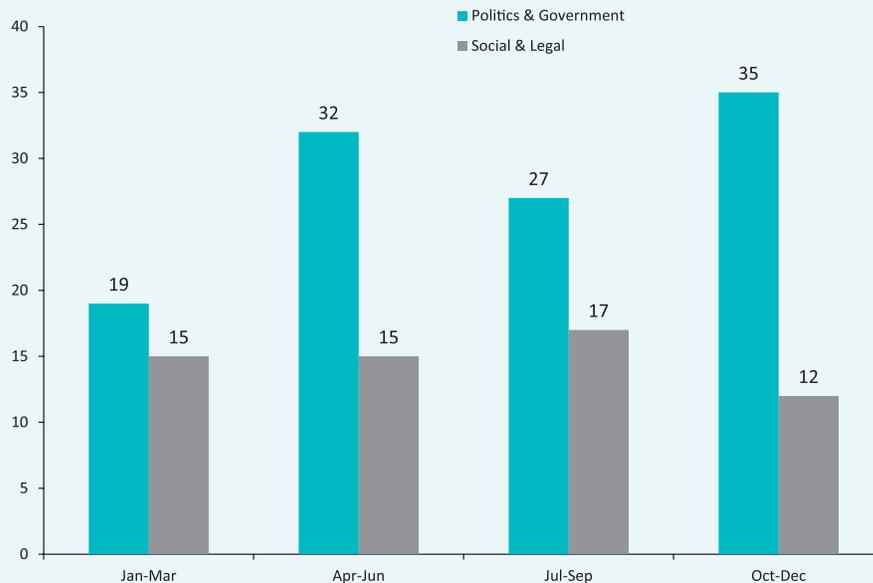


FIG 3.3 QUARTERLY TREND OF FEMALE BYLINES UNDER TWO MAJOR NEWS TOPIC CATEGORIES



4. Stories warranting further analysis

This section contains the news stories which show gender inequality in terms of news sources and perpetuate or challenge gender stereotype.

Among 241 stories noted under this category, 29 stories were about women among which 9 were published in the first pages of the monitored media. Total 80 news stories monitored contained more than 3 male and 0 female sources whereas, 26 contained equal number of male and female as sources.

Annual data shows Republica daily has maximum number of stories about woman.

Some examples for the stories warranting further analysis are:

A) Women candidate few and far between in NC (The Kathmandu Post, November 1, Kathmandu)

The news story published on the first page describes how a political party had to face severe criticism due to very low representation of women in election candidacy. Although the constitution mandates that 40.4% of all nominees seat be reserved for women, the political parties were reluctant to field women candidates. Leaders of the party faced criticism for fielding women candidate only after senior male leaders. Hence, the news perpetuated stereotype in politics as well.

B) Breaking Barriers (Republica, December 8, Kathmandu)

The news is about a woman raised from indigenous community who started playing musical instrument and performing on the stage since the time women were not allowed to touch the musical instruments. Surpassing the stereotype, Nani Chori Bajracharya became the first woman in Nepal to learn Dhime baja according to the reporter Swasti Gautam. Short clip of the news was published on the first page as cover story. Hence, the story clearly challenges stereotype.

C) Still difficult to get citizenship from Mother's name (Kantipur, December 26, Kathmandu)

The news story by a female reporter describes the plight of the people who are facing difficulties to get citizenship from mother's name in absence of father. The story explains that a 25 year old was denied acquisition of citizenship for lack of father's citizenship (who had left them year ago). Although the constitution has the provision to grant citizenship from the names of either father or mother, the district administration's act clearly perpetuates stereotype for single mothers.

D) Violence against women continues (The Himalayan Times, November 25, Kathmandu)

The news is about celebration of International Day to Eliminate Violence against Women along with a report published by INSEC Nepal. The study recorded 2,202 cases of domestic violence, 222 cases of polygamy, 242 rape cases, 94 cases of attempted rape, 37 cases of sexual abuse; seven attempted trafficking in persons and 34 witchcraft accusations with no significant decline compared to the previous year. The data clearly depicts perpetuating stereotype with worrying number of domestic violence against women.

E) Girls meet in Baitadi (The Rising Nepal, October 12, Baitadi)

The news covers District Girls' Conference to form a District Girls' Network which will accelerate the children's campaign of reducing child marriage in the district. The campaign clearly challenges stereotype where girls stand together to fight the social taboo. Nepal still stands top on child marriage in Asia. Hence, the courage of girls obviously challenges stereotype and the news worth of analysis.

F) Interesting competition in Chitwan (Gorkhapatra, December 1, Bharatpur)

The news is about the candidates nominated for Provincial and Federal elections and their opinions before election. The reporter was able to collect six voices from male candidates but failed to include any female voices. It has therefore perpetuated the stereotypes, shadowing the female.

G) Documents packed in public office (Annapurna Post, October 24, Kathmandu)

The news is about unmanaged filing and poor documentation system in government offices. It specifically reports sorry state of the documentation at Department of Civil Personnel Records. Due to this, old reports get damaged and their re-recording has become a hectic task, according to sources quoted. The news has quoted five male. Hence, the news shows inequality in term of sources, thereby perpetuating the stereotype.

CONCLUSION

The monitoring report featured slight increase in the women representation in Nepali media as a whole. Maximum news stories (48.29%) were found under political category which depicts surged political activities of the country.

The study carried out from Jan-Dec 2017 concluded that main news pages of Nepali media were still dominated by news on politics and governmental affairs (56.9%) followed by social and legal news (23.2%).

Among total 4,317 news stories monitored from nine main national dailies, a total of 2,538 named (known) bylines were recorded; among which only 9.22% were females.

Again, out of 9,024 news sources (quoted in the contents monitored) 82.5% were male whereas, only 9.59% were female sources.

Female bylines and female sources during the year comprise 5.40% and 9.59% respectively. Annapurna Post recorded highest number of female bylines, whereas the Kantipur daily constituted the highest number of female as news sources.

Nepali media is still slow off the mark on gender mainstreaming in its contents. The yearly data revealed very poor representation of female compared to male- be it on bylines or as news sources.

In addition, interface meetings held three times with media stakeholders during the last year produced factual concerns on why female were poorly represented in their contents.

According to the editors, due to their interest, beat reporting and socio-economic construct, and retention of female journalists is the major concern. On the other hand, female journalists argued that they were ready to work during odd hours if the organizations ensured their safety and security issues. Also, lack of sustainable plans and policies for journalists especially female was learnt to be the major constraint on their longer stay in media.

To this concern, Director at Department of Information had pointed out the need of adopting a policy to mandatorily appoint 33% female in media as practiced already in the government service.

Regarding news sources, reporters claim that male sources are more easily available and expressive than females. However, concern for the mainstream news contents is that most of the state authorities have male spokespersons leaving no option at all to reach to female news source.

Increase in the number of stories about women and female byline news stories on the first pages of media are positive improvements noted during the study besides minimal increase in women's presence in the media contents coming from January to December 2017.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Linking to year- long monitoring of news contents from nine national dailies and the finding, following recommendations have been made to concerned stakeholders-

1. Government

- Encourage and facilitate media houses to create positive environment for meaningful participation of female journalists for producing gender balanced news contents,
- Take concrete steps to ensure safety and security of female journalists.

2. Media houses

- Formulate and implement gender guidelines and policies,
- Ensure safety and security of female journalists and create gender friendly working environment

3. Editors and Chief Reporters

- Promote gender friendly editorial initiatives by assigning female reporters to important beats and increasing their visibility through bylines in the news,
- Direct their reporters to quote possible female sources thus, making gender friendly news contents,
- Ensure at least 30% inclusion of female and marginalized groups as opinion writers/ columnists; this initiative increases their visibility as experts.

4. Female reporters

- Be proactive and confident to report on the mainstream beats like parliament court, foreign, political affairs, etc.,

5. Other State agencies

- State agencies like Department of Information, National Women's Commission, and National Human Rights Commission should take practical and encouraging initiatives to promote female journalists in Nepali media.

6. Development and Donor agencies

- Support capacity development activities like training, fellowships, scholarships and special safety and security training to female journalists for their sustainability in profession.

7. Civil Society Organizations

- Organizations working for media development should also conduct gender content monitoring activities to cover more Nepalese media.

8. Freedom Forum

- Expand content monitoring at local/ regional level newspapers, major online news portals and electronic media (Radio and Television) as well.
- Adopt more informal dialogues strategy with editors and media managers to convince their important role to promote visibility of female journalists and sources.

Freedom Forum is an independent, non-governmental and not-for-profit civil society organization working for the cause of social accountability, democracy and human rights focused on press freedom, freedom of expression and right to information in Nepal. Incepted in 2005, Freedom Forum has emerged as a prominent national organization in promoting access to information and freedom of expression through dialogue, research, training, public advocacy and campaign and programme implementation. Currently, the organization is working on the issues of public finance management, budget transparency, open data and aid governance, political and parliamentary accountability, freedom of expression online and open government partnership (OGP) based on its on-hand experience and learning.



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