



2% FEMALE BYLINES IN 978 STORIES OF PROVINCIAL DAILIES

A REPORT ON GENDER CONTENTS MONITORING

January-March 2018



Introduction

With the federal system in place in Nepal, huge attention is paid to the activities in the provincial and local governments and the people there. Federalism is therefore hailed as a system to bring to fore the issues and concerns of the people living outside the capital city, from where the country ruled for long as the unitary system. As media is the mirror of society, the contents brought by them is essentially a topic to study to know more about local contexts. Although media does not fully cover the issues, the reflection of scenario is obviously found there.

With this reality on the one hand and the background of the monitoring of national newspapers for two years on the other, Freedom Forum has expanded the monitoring of media contents to find the representation of women in major provincial newspapers. It is a representative study.

The monitoring is supported by the Free Press Unlimited (FPU), a Netherlands –based organization working on press freedom in various continents. This report includes data generated after monitoring 21 newspapers, each of three from seven provinces from January to March 2018. Four main news stories were selected from all the newspapers and scanned for their bylines, news sources and stories about women. Data generated with the monitoring are entered into MS-Excel and further analyzed to observe presence of male and female in media contents.

However, the study is limited to only main news contents ignoring international news, advertisements, op-eds and other dedicated news pages.

NAME OF THE MEDIA OUTLETS MONITORED

Province 1- Blast Times, Udghosh and Purwanchal daily

Province 2- Krishna, Prateek and Janakpur Today

Province 3- Kayakairan, HetaudaSandesh and Parsdarshi

Province 4- Samadhan, AdarshaSamaaj and lokvaani

Province 5- Dainik Nepalgunj, Butwal Today and Nayayugbodh

Province 6- Malika Post, Hamro Akhabar and Paribartan daily

Province 7- Sundaranchal, Hill Times and Paschim Today

Key findings

Among a total of **978 news stories** monitored, only 22 were by female and 231 by male.

Province 7's Hill Times daily contained maximum number of female bylines compared to others.

Only **183 among 1,794 sources** quoted in the news contents monitored are female. Dailies monitored from Province 3 showed the highest number of both male (287) and female sources (40).

Media outlets from the seven provinces too, are dominated by the political news similar to those of national dailies.

Notably, **maximum number of female byline and source** is found in the news related to **social and legal issues**.

NEWS BYLINES

From 21 dailies, a total of 978 news stores were scanned during three months. Among 978 news contents monitored, only 2.25% and 23.62% were written by female and male respectively and remaining 74.13% had no byline (Figure 1). Those news with no bylines mentioned Today reporter, Sandesh reporter, Paschim Today, Sundaranchal reporter, Butwal today reporter etc.

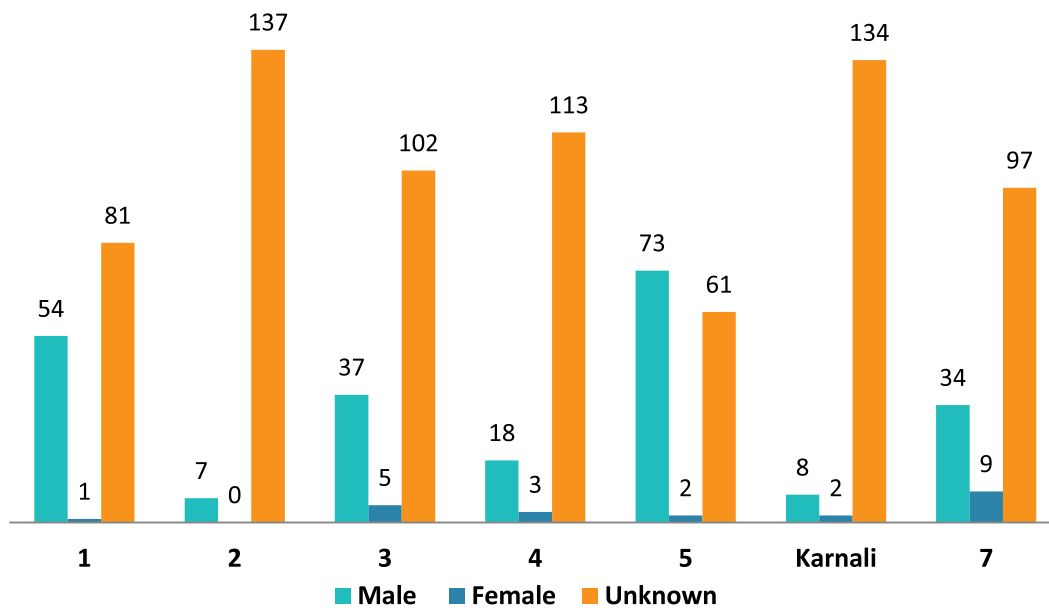


FIGURE 1
Number of bylines recorded from 7 provinces

Amongst all, news contents from Province 7 showed the highest number of female bylines (9) while, those of Province 5 showed the highest number of male bylines (73). Observing individually, Hill Times daily from Province 7 showed maximum 8 female bylines followed by 3 female bylines from Kayakairan daily of Province 3.

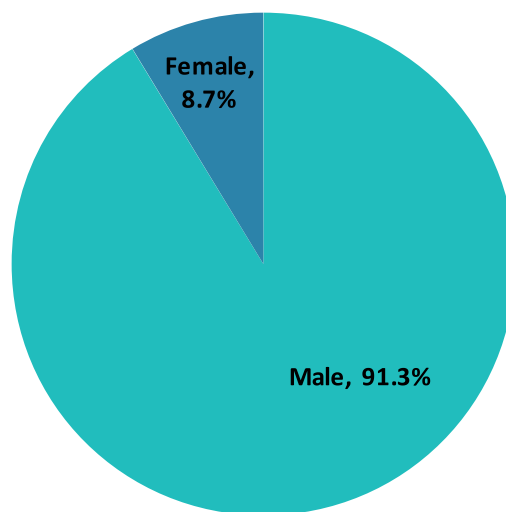


FIGURE 2
Proportion of Bylines

Among 253 bylines recorded, 8.7% are of female and are of male 91.3%

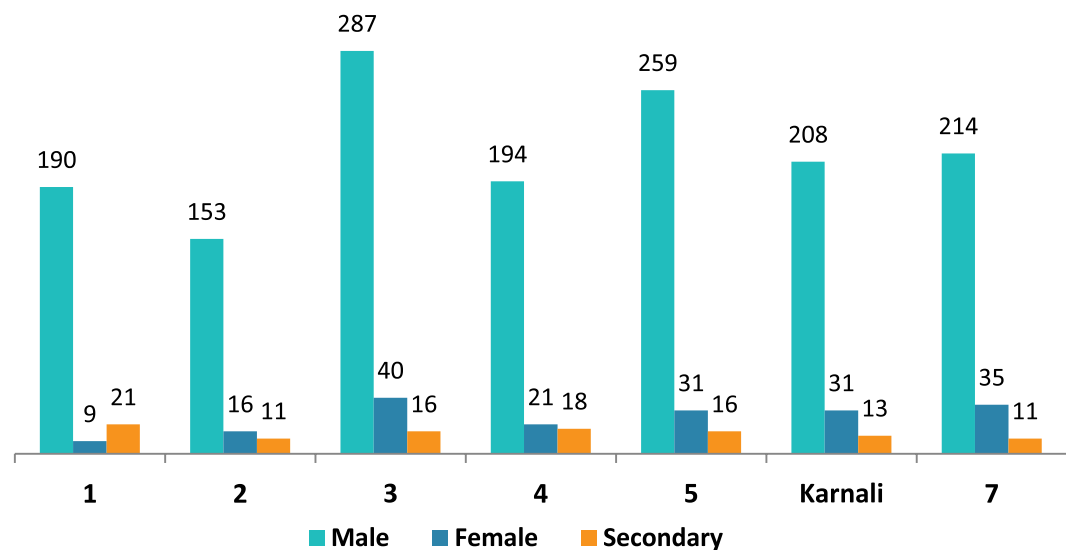
Similarly, maximum male bylines (33) were recorded in Butwal Today published from Province 5 and Krishna daily published from Province 2 showed the least bylines of all.

NEWS SOURCES

While scanning for sources quoted in the selected 978 news, FF recorded 10.2% women and 83.29% men as news sources. Dailies monitored from Province 3 showed the highest number of both women (40) and men (287) as news sources.

The highest number of male (120) and female(23) sources was recorded from Kayakairan Daily among 21 newspapers.

FIGURE 3
News Sources
Quoted in the News



TOPIC WISE NEWS DISTRIBUTION

As was of national dailies, political news dominated the provincial newspapers. Data show the highest 28.43% news was about politics and government issues followed by Social-Legal issues (22.6%) and Economic issues (18.40%).

Comparatively, Province 2 revealed maximum number of news on politics and governmental issues followed by that of Karnali Province. Besides political news, provincial media showed considerable share of economic news after social and legal news on the first page.

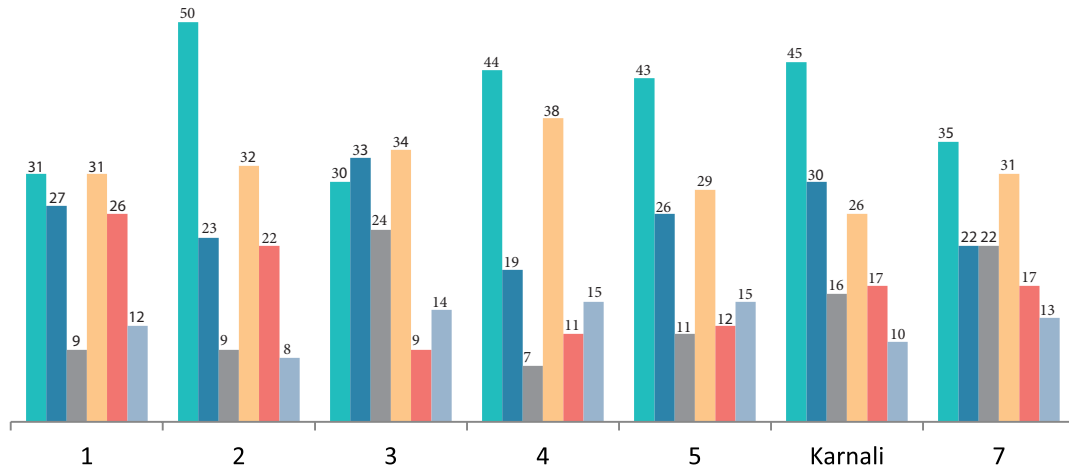


FIGURE 4
Topic-Wise Distribution of the News

- Politics
- Economy
- Science
- Social
- Crime
- Other

TOPIC WISE SEGREGATION OF FEMALE BYLINES AND SOURCES

While the data revealed least presence of women in bylines and as news source in the media, their relation with news headlines was also derived as shown in the figures 4 and 5.

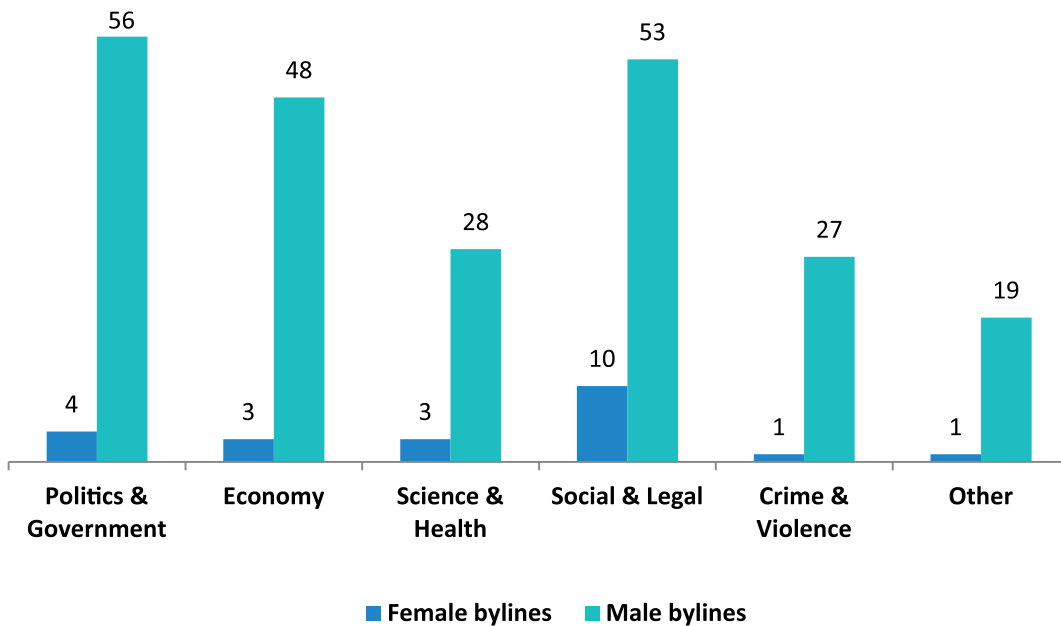
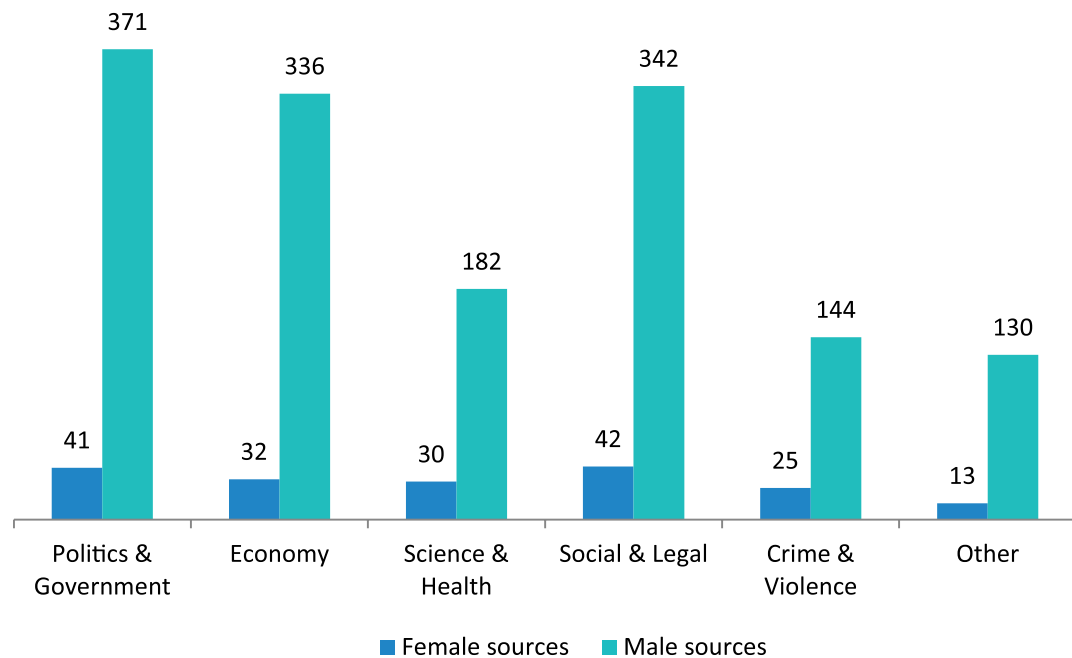


FIGURE 5
News Bylines and Headlines

According to figure 4, highest number female bylines were found under social and legal section, whereas highest number of male bylines was found under politics and government section.

FIGURE 6
Source Quoted and
News Topics



Similarly, in case of sources quoted in news (figure 5) the highest number of male source is found under politics and government and that of female source is found under social and legal section.

SOME STORIES WARRANTING ANALYSIS

- 1. Rampari in trouble after her family members fall sick (Krishna, January 18, Rajbiraj):** The story published on the first page of the daily describes the pathetic condition of a family where four members become mentally sick. Rampari is facing difficulties in raising the family after her four children and husband were diagnosed Schizophrenia. She is also unable to buy medicines with her low earning. Even though, the story shows poor status of Rampari, her role as a breadwinner challenges the stereotype.
- 2. Up to 80-year old involved in rape (Kayakairan, February 9, Hetauda):** The news story collects voices from various women rights activists about increasing incidents of rape in the city. The story describes physical and mental problems faced by the victim, which is irreparable. In most of the cases, criminals are left unpunished due to lack of evidence. Hence, the story highlights inequality where women are victimized and are seeking for justice.
- 3. Asha's life and Civil War (Aasarsha Samaaj, February 15, Pokhara):** The story published on the first page of the daily is a biography of Asha Koirala, Member of Parliament from Province 4. She was also actively involved in the people's war as a combatant in Nepal. The story challenges stereotype describing about her role.
- 4. Sanitary pads distributed to female jailbirds (Hamro Akhbar, January 9, Surkhet):** The story is about the distribution sanitary pad and awareness program on menstrual hygiene provided to women in jail. According to the news, the program is helpful for those women who live in the unhygienic environment of jail. The sources quoted in the news not only showed concern upon women, their health but also committed to helping them. Hence, the story challenges stereotypes about women for raising their issues in public and providing support.
- 5. A female foetus terminated (Hill times, January 9, Achham):** The story describes dreadful fact of the place where expecting mothers are forced to terminate their pregnancy if the foetus is identified female. Sources in the story also say they need a son instead of daughter as sons will be their descendants. Also, women use harmful contraceptive to abort the female foetus. Hence, the news contents clearly highlight gender inequality and warrant further analysis.

CONCLUSION

The three month long monitoring of 21 dailies representing the seven provinces of Nepal revealed under-representation of females in the main news contents. While the study included main news contents only, variable studied were bylines, sources and their relation with the news headlines.

The monitoring showed that only 2% of the bylines are of female against 23.62% of males from total 978 news scanned. Moreover, only one in approximately nine bylines are of female, and one in around 11 person sources quoted in the news are female.

Media from Province 2 failed to show any female bylines.

Similarly, news contents monitored in the study revealed 10% women quoted as news sources against 84% male sources from all the provincial dailies.

The number of female in byline and as news sources is maximum in the news contents related to social and legal issues.

RECOMMENDATION

- Media houses should formulate and implement inclusive gender policies,
- Editors and Chief Reporters should promote gender friendly editorial initiatives
- The reporters should be directed to quote possible female sources thus, making gender friendly news contents
- Female reporters themselves should be proactive and confident to report on the mainstream beats like parliament court, foreign, political affairs, etc.

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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