HIGHLIGHTS OF FINDINGS

The Global Media
Monitoring Project 2015
GMMP 2015 is the world’s largest and longest-running research and advocacy initiative for gender equality in and through the news media.

Since its inception in 1995, every five years the GMMP has documented changes in relation to gender in news media content.

GMMP 2015 affords an opportunity to assess how far the vision for media gender equality has been achieved over the past two decades, and identify persistent and emerging challenges. The results are based on data gathered by volunteer teams in 114 countries, who monitored 22,136 stories published, broadcast or tweeted by 2,030 distinct media houses, written or presented by 26,010 journalists and containing 43,402 people interviewed and/or subjects of the stories.

Among the key findings, GMMP 2015 reveals that the rate of progress towards media gender parity has almost ground to a halt over the past five years.

People in the news

In 2015, women make up only 24% of the persons heard, read about or seen in newspaper, television and radio news, exactly as they did in 2010.

The gender gap is narrowest in stories on science and health, the major topic of lowest importance on the news agenda occupying only 8% of the overall news space; women make up 35% of the people in news under this topic, in contrast to only 16% in political news stories. The gap is widest in news about politics and government in which women are only 16% of the people in the stories. In fact, women are three percentage points less visible in government in which women are only 16% of the people in the stories.

Women comprise 38% of personal experience providers now giving testimony based on direct observation has stood still at 30% over the past 10 years. An insignificant two percentage point increase in women as experts was achieved during the period, leading to the current 19% share, almost similar to women’s proportion as persons interviewed as spokespersons (20%).

North American news has the highest percentage of experts in the news who are women (32%) followed by the Caribbean (29%) and Europe (23%).

Women comprise 26% of all experts appearing in the news who are women (32%) followed by the Caribbean (29%) and Europe (23%).

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Who Makes the News?

Across the six GMMP function types – or roles in which people appear in the news – the largest stride in closing the gender gap is in people interviewed based on personal experience.

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In 2015, progress towards news representation that acknowledges women’s participation in economic life remains elusive.

Globally women hold approximately 40% of paid employment while a large proportion work in the informal sector particularly in Global South contexts. In the world depicted in the news, only 20% of the total workers in the formal labour force are women, while 67% of the unemployed and stay-at-home parents are women.

The journalistic gender lens in source selection is not only male centred, but it is also skewed towards a certain kind of masculinity when selecting interviewees for all types of views, from ‘expert’ opinion to ‘ordinary person’ testimonies.

Most subjects, spokespersons and experts in the news, women and men alike, are described as senior government officials and politicians. The pattern holds for men in all function types: 12% of men providing opinion based on personal experience, 16% of male eyewitnesses and 10% of male personal opinion providers are politicians – the most populous occupational category for men under the respective interviewee types.

Patterns change for women in the remaining three function types. Female personal experience providers are most likely to be portrayed as residents/villagers (13%), female eyewitness account-givers are most often portrayed as simply residents/villagers (22%), and female popular opinion providers are most likely to be described as students (17%).

During the period 2005-2015 the only category in which portrayals of women as survivors has risen - by more than four times - is as survivors of domestic violence.

Women are more than four times more likely to be depicted as survivors of domestic violence (27%) than they were 10 years ago when the statistic was 6%.

Over the 15-year period beginning in 2000, the numbers have held more or less steady for most regions with some fluctuations. Latin America stands out for its steady and significant climb from 29% female presenters in 2000 to 44% currently, a 15 percentage point reduction of the gender gap in 15 years.

Younger presenters on screen are predominantly female, but the scales tip dramatically at 50 years old when men begin to dominate the news-anchor scene. The near-equality of presenters in such age category documented in 2010 has been replaced by a gross overrepresentation of young-er women as anchors, a severe underrepresentation of women in the 50-64 age bracket (29%) and women’s complete disappearance at 65 years old. Just under one half of reporters 19 to 34 years old and 28% of reporters between 35 to 49 years old are women. At 65 years and older, women also disappear from the screen as reporters.

Women as news reporters are most present on radio, at 41% and least in print news, at 35%.

In 10 years, women’s share as reporters has dropped on radio and television by four percentage points in both mediums.

The proportion of female reporters in news stories falls well below parity in all topics except science and health where the ratio is at par. Only 31% of stories on politics and 39% of economic news are reported by women.

Political and crime news are the two topics least reported by wom-en in most regions with the exception of Asia and Latin America. Women report 30% of political news in Africa, Europe (30%), Middle East (27%) and North America (28%) – the largest thematic reporting gender gaps in these four regions. In the Caribbean, the topic in which male reporters outnumber their female peers the most is crime news, at 28% of stories by women. This is the same for the Pacific region where women report 36% of crime stories, and following celebrity news, in Asia (24%) and in Latin America (38%).

There is a statistically significant gender difference in source selection by female and male reporters.

29% of news subjects in stories reported by female journalists are women compared to 26% by male reporters. This continues a pattern first observed in 2000 when the percentages were 24% and 18% respectively.

Statistical analysis reveals the gender difference in source selection to be extremely significant, implying that progress may be made towards closing the gender gap in news sources if the reporter gender gap is narrowed as part of a broader strategy bringing together that constellation of conditions that support equality objectives.

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**Reporters and presenters**

Only 37% of stories in newspapers, television and radio newscasts are reported by women.

This overall statistic has not changed in 10 years, despite fluctua-tions in the regional averages ranging from +7 points in Africa to -6 points in Asia over the decade. Across the 15-year period begin-nning in 2000, the gap has narrowed the most in Latin America (+14%) followed by Africa (+11%). The rest of the world has seen single digit changes apart from Asia where status quo has been maintained.

Female television presenters slightly outnumber their male colleagues. However, the overall statistic in showing the near-evenness of presenters in each age category documented in 2010, has been replaced by a gross overrepresentation of younger women as anchors, a severe underrepresentation of women in the 50-64 age bracket (29%) and women’s complete disappearance at 65 years old.

Women as news reporters are most present on radio, at 41% and least in print news, at 35%.

In 10 years, women’s share as reporters has dropped on radio and television by four percentage points in both mediums.

The overall proportion of stories focusing on women has held relatively steady at 106 since 2000.

Economic news followed by political news are least likely to focus on women, currently at 3% and 7% of stories in these topics respectively.

1.4% of stories by female reporters focus centrally on women, in contrast to 9% of stories by their male counterparts.

The gender difference has become more pronounced over 10 successive years of monitoring.

9% of stories evoke gender (inequality) issues, more than double the percentage documented 10 years ago.

The percentage of stories in which gender equality or inequality issues are raised appears to be rising steadily since 2005, despite still remaining under the 10% mark.

Asian news have the highest overall proportion of stories high-lighting gender equality concerns: 1 to 2.5 in 10 stories in each major topic raises equality issues.

Almost 4 out of 10 of social/legal stories in the Caribbean region underline gender equality concerns. Three out of 10 stories in North American news on this topic raise such issues.

Over the past 10 years the largest strides in integrating a gender equality perspective have been in science and health news (+7 per-centage points), followed by economic, and crime/violence stories (+6 percentage points).

A regional breakdown reveals greater propensity for gender difference in highlighting equality concerns in North America.

In both regions, stories by female reporters are between almost 2 to 2.5 times more likely to raise gender (inequality) issues than those by their male counterparts.

Only 4% of stories clearly challenge gender stereotypes, a one percentage point change since 2005.

Gender stereotypes have remained firmly entrenched in news media output over the past decade.

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**News quality**

Only 99% of stories overall contain reference to legal, rights or policy frameworks.

Social and legal stories make the highest contribution (12%) to the overall global average of stories referencing the frameworks, followed closely by stories on crime and violence (10%). A right-angle is present in only 8% of political stories and 7% of economic news.