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NATIONAL REPORT

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2025

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MONITORING MEDIA UNDER REPRESSION

Myanmar Women Journalists Society

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This 2025 Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP) national report for Myanmar was carried out by the Myanmar Women Journalists Society (MWJS), serving as the national coordinator of the study.
MWJS is a Yangon-based professional association established in 2016 by eleven female journalists to promote gender equality and strengthen the role of women in the media sector. Since its founding, MWJS has worked to build the professional capacity of female journalists and advocate for fair and equal representation of women in news content and newsroom leadership.
Following the February 1, 2021 military coup, Myanmar's independent media environment collapsed under repression. The majority of journalists and news organizations, including MWJS members, were forced to flee the country due to threats, arrests, and imprisonment. During detention, journalists—especially women—faced interrogation, harassment, and sexual violence, forcing MWJS to relocate its operations abroad. Today, its leadership and members continue their research and advocacy from Thailand, the United States, and Australia, maintaining networks with exiled and in-country journalists.
Challenges in Conducting GMMP 2025 Research
Conducting media monitoring in Myanmar under the current political conditions presented major obstacles:

- Censorship and Information Blockades: The military regime tightly controls or cuts off internet access, making it extremely difficult to collect data from news media and online sources.
- Criminalization of Journalism: Most independent outlets have been declared illegal, and journalists risk arrest for their reporting. This restricted communication with news sources and prevented accurate identification of their gender.
- Security Constraints: Journalists had to conceal bylines or operate anonymously for safety, limiting visibility of women's participation in news production.
- Cultural Barriers: Traditional gender norms in Myanmar still portray women primarily as victims rather than leaders, influencing both news coverage and gender representation.

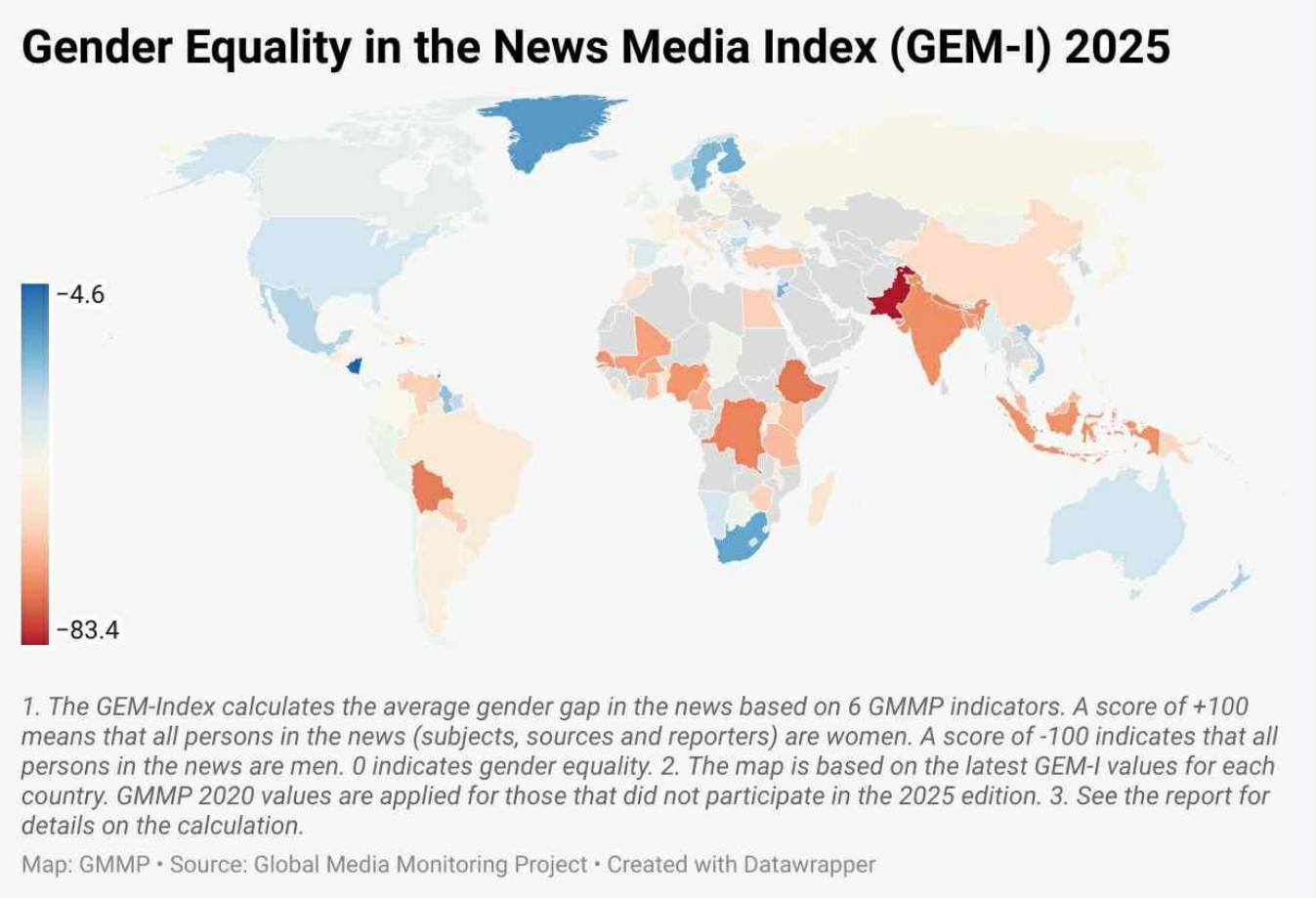
Despite these conditions, MWJS coordinated the GMMP 2025 research with perseverance and solidarity across borders. This report represents not only a set of data but also a testament to the courage of Myanmar's journalists—especially women—who continue to uphold the principles of free, ethical, and gender-responsive journalism in the face of systemic violence and censorship.

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PREFACE

Myanmar participated in the Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP) for the first time in 2020. This 2025 Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP) national report for Myanmar was carried out by the Myanmar Women Journalists Society (MWJS), serving as the national coordinator. Participation in a study assessing journalism quality through a gender-sensitive lens required specific enabling conditions. These included a degree of press freedom, the professionalization of journalism in alignment with international standards, and the presence of sufficient resources and institutional infrastructure to support a cohort of gender-aware journalists capable of conducting the research.

MWJS is a Yangon-based professional association established in 2016 by eleven female journalists to promote gender equality and strengthen the role of women in the media sector. Since its founding, MWJS has worked to build the professional capacity of female journalists and advocate for fair and equal representation of women in news content and newsroom leadership.
Following the February 1, 2021 military coup, Myanmar's independent media environment collapsed under repression. The majority of journalists and news organizations, including MWJS members, were forced to flee the country due to threats, arrests, and imprisonment. During detention, journalists—especially women—faced interrogation, harassment, and sexual violence, forcing MWJS to relocate its operations abroad. Today, its leadership and members continue their research and advocacy from Thailand, the United States, and Australia, maintaining networks with exiled and in-country journalists.

Undertaking media monitoring in Myanmar amid the prevailing political environment of 2025 posed significant methodological and operational challenges

- Censorship and Information Blockades: The military regime tightly controls or cuts off internet access, making it extremely difficult to collect data from news media and online sources.
- Criminalization of Journalism: Most independent outlets have been declared illegal, and journalists risk arrest for their reporting. This restricted communication with news sources and prevented accurate identification of their gender.
- Security Constraints: Journalists had to conceal bylines or operate anonymously for safety, limiting visibility of women's participation in news production.
- Cultural Barriers: Traditional gender norms in Myanmar still portray women primarily as victims rather than leaders, influencing both news coverage and gender representation.

Despite these conditions, MWJS coordinated the GMMP 2025 research with perseverance and solidarity across borders. This report represents not only a set of data but also a testament to the courage of Myanmar's journalists—especially women—who continue to uphold the principles of free, ethical, and gender-responsive journalism in the face of systemic violence and censorship.

Following the partial political transition that began in 2011, Myanmar experienced a period of relative media liberalization. Pre-publication censorship was abolished, licensing regulations were eased, telecommunications access expanded, and ethnic as well as multilingual media outlets flourished. However, this progress was abruptly reversed on 1 February 2021, when the military seized power through a coup d'état. The event marked a profound regression in press freedom, ushering in renewed censorship, surveillance, and repression of independent journalism.

As of early 2025, more than 200 journalists and media workers have been arrested since the coup, with approximately 51 remaining in detention. Independent media continue to operate under extreme pressure, facing forced closures, digital surveillance, funding shortages, and constraints

imposed by the ongoing civil conflict.

Gendered risks within the media sector are particularly acute. Women journalists encounter systemic discrimination, sexual harassment, and an elevated risk of persecution or exile. Women's representation within news production remains limited, with comparatively fewer women working in ethnic media organizations and fewer women's voices or perspectives reflected in news content. International press freedom indices now rank Myanmar among the most repressive environments for journalists globally.

At this critical historical juncture, documenting the intersection of gender, media, and power in Myanmar is both urgent and essential. The GMMP analysis provides empirical evidence to inform advocacy for gender-aware journalism and to support the survival of independent media operating under conditions of duress.

Beyond data collection, the report captures a vital snapshot of Myanmar's media environment at a time when independent voices are under siege. It ensures that the experiences of women journalists and gender-marginalized communities are recorded, amplified, and used to inform future strategies for media freedom, gender equity, and democratic resilience.

Global findings. The highlights

The global findings are based on 29,935 news articles containing 58,321 people and 26,560 news personnel in 94 countries on the 7th global monitoring day, May 6, 2025.

1. **Thirty years ago, the report of the first GMMP called for a shift in coverage beyond the male-dominated realms of political and economic power. Not only has the hierarchy of "hard news" in legacy media persisted across time, it has also crossed over into digital outlets.**

Digitalization did not bring a radical break from the patriarchal norms of traditional journalism. Instead, it continues to reinforce and amplify a news hierarchy that privileges spheres and issues centred on power, namely, those dominated by men. The challenge is threefold. First, to dismantle the "hard news" bias, second, to integrate more intentionally spaces and issues of greater concern to women, and third, to enable visibility and voice to women present in traditionally male-dominated spaces.

2. **After a period of slow but steady improvement, progress toward gender parity in the news has flatlined since around 2010, failing to reach 50% in any media type.**

Thirty years after Beijing, women are 26% of those seen, heard, or spoken about in legacy news (29% on news websites). The needle has shifted 9 points in legacy media since 1995, and 4 points in online news during the past 10 years.
Minority groups are five points more likely to be present in digital news than in legacy media. The probability of minority women being featured in the news as the main protagonists or as interviewees is two in a hundred in traditional media (3% for men) and 4% on news websites (5% for men).

3. **Women's visibility in political and economic news has increased significantly – by 15 points each – over the past three decades.**

The severe underrepresentation noted in 1995 (7% in political news, 10% in economic news) has improved. Women's presence in sports news is abysmal, at only 15% of news subjects and sources.

4. **The proportion of women providing expert testimony has grown remarkably over the decades, showing the highest increase (+7 points) in digital news since 2015.**

In legacy media, the gender gap in authoritative roles as experts and spokespersons has closed at a slower pace than for persons providing testimony based on popular opinion and personal experience

– ordinary roles that require no specialized knowledge.

5. **Patterns of gender-biased portrayal endure despite decades of change in women's roles in the physical world**

Women have remained about twice as likely as men to be portrayed as victims since 2010. Historically, women were most often portrayed as victims of accidents or poverty. This pattern was overturned in 2025, with "other crime" and "domestic violence" (by intimate partners and family members) becoming the top victim categories.

Women depicted as survivors in legacy media were most likely to have survived "accidents, natural disasters, poverty, and disease" in previous GMMP studies. In 2025, they are most frequently portrayed as domestic violence survivors in equal proportion to accident/disaster survivors.

The over-representation of women as homemakers/parents decreased from 81% in 2000 to 73% in 2025, indicating progress although a persistent journalistic bias toward defining women by domestic roles, despite women's current unprecedented engagement in work outside the home. Underrepresentation in occupations and in positions of power has remained consistent.

The tendency to describe women by their age and physical attributes has also persisted. They have been photographed more often than men (a 7–9-point difference) over the past two decades, with qualitative analysis continuing to show patterns of sexualized portrayal.

6. **Gender inequality in the news is much more acute than in the lived experience.**

Gender equality in the news, measured by the GEM Index, is moderately correlated with gender indices in other development sectors such as the Gender Social Norms Index. Between 65% to 75% of media gender inequality cannot be explained by reality, indicating the presence of other confounding factors at play that co-mingle to produce the prevailing gendered news narratives.

7. **Women's share as reporters in stories published in newspapers and aired on television and radio has risen and stagnated in spurts since 1995.**

Globally, the proportion of women as reporters in legacy media rose 6 points from 2000 to 2005, stalling at 37% for 10 years until 2015, rising 3 points again between 2015 to 2020, and gaining just two points in the past five years. The regions approach and consistently fail to achieve parity, except for the Pacific and the Caribbean, exactly at equality, and North America just a single point below. The findings suggest most news systems are willing to absorb a certain proportion of female labor in the reporter role, but not to cede to full numerical gender equality.

In legacy news media, the gender gap in political reporting has narrowed the fastest (+13 points in 25 years) – outside the sports beat – yet it remains the topic least reported by women. For the first time in 25 years, women now constitute a majority (52%) of science and health reporters. The new tracking of sports news reveals a severely low proportion of female reporters (17%).

Women's share as reporters in national and international stories has seen significant long-term growth (+18 and +16 points, respectively).

8. **The sex of the journalist influences the gender lens in stories**

The gender lens has historically been found to be sharper in articles by women reporters. Across three decades, a consistent 5–6-point gender gap has existed in source selection, where female reporters feature more female sources than their male colleagues. This gap is even wider (9 points) in digital news. The gender-lens gap between female and male journalists is largest on the indicator regarding women's centrality in the news. The difference is just 1-2 points on other indicators measuring news quality from a gender perspective, but that it exists is an important finding.

9. **Gender-based violence is a blind spot in the news. When GBV makes the news, however, the gender lens in reporting is sharper than in stories on all other topics.**

Less than 2% of stories cover gender-based violence. This low count is at odds with the serious nature of GBV affecting one in three women and girls worldwide.

Stories on gender-based violence produced by female journalists are more likely to raise gender (in)equality issues than those by men.
While the gender lens is sharper in GBV stories compared to other major topics, there remains enormous room for improvement if news media are to participate in creating a society in which GBV is understood as deviant, criminal, and a violation of fundamental human rights.

10. The bulk of news stories remains deficient in the GMMP dimensions of quality from a gender perspective

The proportion of news stories that clearly challenge gender stereotypes rose from 3% (2005) to 6% (2010) but declined and has remained stagnant at 3-4% since 2015. This indicates an entrenchment of stereotypes in reporting and a consistent journalistic failure to produce content that disrupts stereotypical narratives.

The regional comparisons show significant variations. North American news have exceptional, clearly challenging gender stereotypes in 19% of stories, in sharp contrast to Middle Eastern news, where only 1% overturn simplistic narratives about the roles, attributes, and capabilities of people based on gender.

Gender stereotypes are most prevalent in stories about politics and the economy, both spheres where men are the majority power holders. Over time, challenging stereotypes remains largely confined to topics in which it is safer to challenge the skewed gender power relations status quo. These are celebrity/arts/media, and social/legal news. GBV stories challenge gender stereotypes more than any other news, at 17%. While commendable, this level is insufficient to transform the harmful norms that perpetuate such violence.
The likelihood of news stories to cite human rights or gender equality frameworks has fluctuated modestly, hovering between 7% and 11% over the 15 years that this indicator has been measured. A human rights lens is absent in approximately 9 out of 10 stories.
Online stories are less likely to integrate a human rights lens than those published in legacy media, but the probability of women being the central protagonists in a news story is higher in digital news (15%, compared to 10% in traditional news).
In all story topics except for GBV news, the sex of the reporter matters slightly for the integration of a gender lens. 3% of stories by women clearly challenge gender stereotypes, compared to 2% of those by men. 12% of stories by women highlight gender (in)equality issues, compared to 10% for men. 8% of articles by women adopt a human rights framing, compared to 7% of those by men. In the case of GBV stories, for instance, female reporters are more than 10 points more likely to call attention to gender inequality than those by men.

The GMMP message in 2025, thirty years post-Beijing, is a global news industry whose progress towards gender equality has reached a crossroads.
The almost standstill pace of change in the past 15 years points to a need for a radical shift in strategies by all actors in the news ecosystem to break the inertia. Under the current conditions and with the current tools, remarkable change towards gender equality is unlikely.
The negative impacts of digitalization on the news industry and gender relations online as a whole will undoubtedly make the task of securing women's rights in and through digital news more complex.

Regional Context

In 2020, Myanmar joined the Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP) for the first time. Participation in GMMP is not simply about willingness; it requires certain enabling conditions: relative press freedom, a media sector moving toward professional norms, and sufficient institutional capacity and infrastructure to support a team of gender-aware journalists capable of carrying out rigorous

monitoring. Now in 2025, this is Myanmar's second contribution to the global cycle — but the media environment in Myanmar has changed dramatically since the military seized control in the 2021 coup.

Since February 2021, the country's media landscape has been transformed by repression and restriction. According to Reporters Without Borders, the coup "obliterated the fragile progress towards greater press freedom" that had been emerging before 2021.

Myanmar has become one of the world's most hostile environments for journalism, ranked 169th out of 180 countries on the World Press Freedom Index as of 2025. The military regime has intensified control over media and information. In November 2023, for example, the junta amended broadcasting laws to seize control of the Broadcasting Council, removing one of the few institutional safeguards for independent broadcasting.

Across regions, the regime routinely blocks or suspends internet access, bans social media platforms (notably Facebook), and criminalizes use of VPNs under new cybersecurity legislation that came into force in January 2025. Freedom on the Net reports that since mid-2021, all but a limited "white list" of IP addresses remains accessible — Facebook, Twitter, and most Burmese media sites are routinely blocked.

Journalists and media outlets face serious threats. Since the coup, scores of independent media licenses have been revoked (for example, 7Day News, Myanmar Now, Mizzima, DVB) and their offices raided. Over 200 journalists have been detained in total; as of mid-2025, at least 51 remain imprisoned. (The International Center for Not-for-Profit Law)

Reporters Without Borders notes that four journalists have been killed under the regime, while many more face arrest, torture, or life sentences. In one stark case, documentary filmmaker Shin Daewe was sentenced to life in prison for "supporting terrorism." (Reporters Without Borders). Under these conditions, the nature of reporting has shifted. To preserve safety, journalists often hide or anonymize sources and avoid identifying individuals explicitly. Much of the public discourse in media now centers on conflict, displacement, and humanitarian crises — the issues that remain hardest to suppress. During the March 2025 Mandalay earthquake, for instance, international journalists were blocked from entering affected areas, and domestic media were restricted in their coverage.
Index on Censorship

Despite these severe constraints, MWJS committed to following GMMP's global methodology for this cycle. In doing so, our monitoring included not only independent and trusted ethnic or regional media, but also state-controlled propaganda outlets. We recognize that in the present environment, access to reliable news or information has dramatically declined. Internet shutdowns, social media bans (particularly Facebook), and restrictions on VPN use have made it exceedingly difficult even for those online to reach news sources.

Yet, in this context, independent media (many operating in exile) continue to strive to provide essential information amid civil war, conflict, and disaster. In preparing this national report, we hope to present an honest assessment of how gender and representation endure, shift, and suffer under repression — while also offering evidence for advocacy, reform, and renewal in Myanmar's media future.

National Context

Gender Equality in Myanmar — Key Indicators
Myanmar's Gender Inequality Index (GII) value is **0.478**, placing it at **rank 118 out of 178** countries (for the latest HDR/GII data) Human Development Reports. This reflects significant gender disparities in areas such as reproductive health, empowerment (educational attainment, political representation), and labor force participation.

These structural inequalities in gender are further manifested in Myanmar's fragile political and institutional context — which, since 2021, has become markedly more repressive, restricting space for free media and gendered voices alike.

Government Commitments: National Action on "Women and the Media" (Beijing Platform for Action)

Myanmar's national planning documents have included commitments relating to women's advancement, with a National Strategic Plan for the Advancement of Women (NSPAW 2013–2022) that aligns with the 12 priority areas of the Beijing Platform for Action — including **"Women and the Media"**.

Within NSPAW, the "Women and the Media" priority underscores the Government's intention to:

- Promote gender-sensitive media content, avoid stereotyping, and ensure women's participation in media discourse,
- Expand women's access to information, and
- Strengthen institutional mechanisms, policies, and capacity-building in media sectors for gender equality UN_FPA Myanmar.

However, implementation of NSPAW has faced challenges — including insufficient budget allocation, limited enforcement mechanisms, and overreliance on voluntary compliance. With the 2021 coup and the severe crisis in governance, the extent to which the "Women and the Media" policies have been applied, enforced, or updated has become unclear and weakened.

History of Myanmar in GMMP

Myanmar first joined GMMP in 2020. That monitoring round marked a milestone: it was the first time Myanmar participated, providing baseline data on how gender is represented in national media under relatively more open (though still limited) media conditions. In GMMP 2025, this is Myanmar's **second** participation, but under far more constrained circumstances.
Because of this contrast, comparing findings across the two cycles is not only illuminating for understanding shifts in media representation, but also for assessing how extreme restrictions reshape who is visible, how sources are named or anonymized, and which media voices survive.

Political, Media, and Information Environment
Political & Social Upheaval

In February 2021, Myanmar's military seized control in a coup. Since then, the country has descended into political instability, widespread civil resistance, armed conflict across multiple ethnic regions, and a growing humanitarian crisis. According to humanitarian projections, in 2025 around **19.9 million people** (approximately one-third of the population) will require humanitarian assistance. The environment of constant insecurity, displacement, and militarized control deeply shapes the media terrain and what stories can be told.
Media Freedom, Regulation, and Censorship

Pre-2021, some degree of press pluralism had emerged. But since the coup, the media environment has been drastically curtailed:

- Myanmar's press freedom ranking has collapsed (169/180 by RSF); the junta's consolidation of power has led to stronger censorship, surveillance, and control over media licensing.
- The military has amended broadcasting laws and taken over broadcasting authorities to enforce state control over communications.
- Internet shutdowns have become routine, and social media platforms—especially Facebook (which had been a dominant news access tool)—are blocked or suspended.
- In 2025, the **Cybersecurity Law** criminalizing the use of VPNs was introduced, further restricting citizens' ability to bypass censorship.
- Many independent news websites and ethnic/regional media platforms face blocking, domain seizures, or forced closures.

These regulations and controls significantly reduce access to independent information and force journalists and audiences into risk-laden digital paths.

Media Landscape & Journalistic Practice

The contemporary media landscape is characterized by polarization and fragmentation:

- **State-controlled propaganda media** dominate the officially approved narrative space.
- **Independent and exile media** operate under duress or from abroad, often clandestinely, reaching audiences via secure channels, social media proxies, or encrypted messaging.
- **Ethnic and regional media outlets**, often in local languages, remain critical sources of trusted information for communities in remote or conflict-affected areas — and were included in the GMMP monitoring sample to reflect ground realities.
- Print media has largely receded, and broadcast outlets are heavily regulated. Thus, digital and social media have become principal platforms for news — although these too are increasingly constrained.

Because of threats and repression, journalistic practice has changed:

- Sources and identities are routinely anonymized or hidden for safety.
- Self-censorship is widespread, especially on sensitive topics such as military abuses, gender-based violence, and women's political roles.
- Coverage is increasingly dominated by conflict, displacement, humanitarian crises, and survival stories — topics where independent outlets still try to break through.

Access to Information & Digital Barriers

Public access to reliable news has deteriorated dramatically:

- Internet shutdowns, social media bans, and DNS/domain blocking limit what information can flow.
- Citizens relying on VPNs face legal risk, unstable connections, and occasional detection or blocking of VPN services.
- During critical events — for example the **Mandalay earthquake in March 2025** — many communities were unable to access timely updates or warnings because of these information barriers. (You may insert details or cases here from your monitoring context.)
- Vulnerable groups (women in rural areas, displaced populations, ethnic minorities) face even deeper digital exclusion, widening the information divide by gender, geography, and socioeconomic status.

Relevance for GMMP Monitoring & Interpretation

Given this backdrop, the GMMP 2025 monitoring in Myanmar has a particularly fraught and consequential role. The constraints described above shape **who is visible**, **what topics are covered**,

how sources are named or concealed, and **which media platforms survive to be monitored**.
In this context:

- Monitoring included a mix of **state propaganda media**, **independent media**, and **trusted ethnic/regional outlets**, to capture both the official narratives and the alternative voices still reaching audiences.
- The extremely restricted media environment imposes that many stories are necessarily focused on conflict, crisis, and survival, rather than routine civic, political, or gender-equity themes.
- Many stories may omit direct attribution or names for safety — making analysis of voice and source attribution more complex.
- Any data deviations from GMMP 2020 should be interpreted with the recognition that media freedom, censorship, and survival strategies have shifted profoundly.

This national context section provides the structural and political backdrop necessary to understand the GMMP monitoring results for Myanmar. As you insert monitoring data (e.g. percentages of women as sources, subject representation by topic, changes since 2020), this context will help readers see not just *what* changed, but *why* those changes occurred under such restrictive conditions.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report represents Myanmar's national report for the *Global Media Monitoring Project* (GMMP). It follows nine years after the landmark *Gender in Myanmar News (GIMN)* report, which illuminated persistent gender imbalances in Myanmar's news media, particularly the under representation of women's voices relative to men's.

Since the 1 February 2021 military coup, Myanmar's media have faced intense repression. Independent outlets were banned or forced into exile, and hundreds of journalists were arrested and abused. By 2025, almost all free media operate from outside the country—mainly along the Thai–Myanmar border—while state-run outlets serve as regime propaganda. Amid this fragmented, transnational landscape, the GMMP 2025 study focused on print, television, and online media with strong reach inside Myanmar or among the diaspora, as radio operations remain suspended. Twenty media outlets were selected to reflect diverse ownership, languages, and regions. The global monitoring day was conducted on 6 May 2025, with data collected from 94 participating countries.

Historical trends show a gradual increase in women's visibility in Myanmar media, with a notable rise on the 2025 Global Monitoring Day, where women comprised 29% of news sources, up from 18% in 2020 and 17% in 2017. By platform, television had the highest proportion of women sources (44%), followed by online media (20%), while print media included no women sources.
Women's representation varied by topic and medium. In print and television, women were most visible in Crime and Violence (40%), Science and Health (38%), and Social and Legal issues (27%), but absent from Gender-Based Violence, Celebrity/Arts/Media, and Sports coverage. Online media showed higher inclusion of women in Economy (67%) and Science, Health, and Celebrity/Arts/Media (33% each), with lower representation in Social and Legal issues (15%) and none in Gender-Based Violence, Sports, or other topics.

Overall, internet media highlighted women's voices in economic and cultural reporting, while television and print emphasized health and social issues. Persistent gaps in coverage of Gender-Based Violence and political affairs indicate ongoing gender disparities in sourcing across Myanmar's media landscape.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Since the February 1, 2021 military coup, Myanmar has plunged into profound political, social, and economic crises. The abrupt termination of a decade-long democratic transition ignited a nationwide armed resistance against the military junta. This instability has dealt a severe blow to the media landscape, which had begun developing during the democratic transition.

The military regime systematically dismantled independent media, revoking licenses, unlawfully arresting and imprisoning numerous journalists, subjecting them to violence and killings, and implementing harsh censorship policies. As a result, many independent media outlets have been forced to relocate abroad or operate underground, persistently providing crucial information from remote areas to citizens facing severe internet restrictions. In Myanmar, press freedom is facing its most severe crisis in history due to the military's coup on February 1, 2021. To this day, journalists continue to face systematic oppression, imprisonment, violence, and death. At least five journalists have been killed, over 100 news media licenses have been revoked, hundreds of journalists have been unlawfully arrested and sentenced, and media owners and reporters have fled into exile abroad.

Political Background

On February 1, 2021, the military overthrew the civilian government and seized power. Immediate consequences of the coup included restrictions on communication channels, internet shutdowns, and blocking of social media platforms. Major independent news outlets, except for state-owned media, had their licenses revoked and were shut down. Many, including journalists covering protests, were unlawfully arrested and detained. Following the coup, Myanmar's political situation has descended into a state of civil war. Combined resistance from the National Unity Government (NUG), People's Defense Forces (PDFs), and Ethnic Armed Organizations (EAOs) has led to ongoing intense conflict nationwide.

The Junta's Repressive Tactics

Legal Persecution: Misuse of media and information laws, including the Cyber Security Law, accusations under counter-terrorism laws, and imposing illegal prison sentences on journalists.

Physical Violence: Journalists have been killed, unlawfully detained, tortured, and their family members threatened and coerced.

These restrictions also include requiring pre-approval for news gathering, pressure to reveal sources, and controlling the stance or messaging of news media organizations. This situation creates a double bind for press freedom, making the working environment for journalists even more complex.

The State of News Media

Exodus and Exile: Due to the junta's persecution, hundreds of journalists have fled to Thailand and other neighboring countries to escape threats to their lives.

Myanmar's political and media situation is facing its darkest period in decades. The resilient stance of independent media continues to serve as beacons of light for the restoration of democracy and the public's right to truthful information. The international community must undoubtedly provide practical and effective support for Myanmar's democracy movement and its independent media.

A DAY IN THE NEWS IN MYANMAR

May 6, 2025, news coverage in Myanmar was dominated by Social and Legal issues, Crime and Violence, and ongoing political and military developments. This reflects the wider media environment shaped by the post-coup conflict, with news agendas largely centred on armed clashes, airstrikes, arrests, displacement, and the impact of insecurity on communities. Routine civic issues, gender equality topics, or public policy debates were minimally represented across the monitored outlets.

The qualitative case studies illustrate these trends in practice. One story highlighted a woman spokesperson from an ethnic armed organization, offering a rare example of women in leadership roles within conflict reporting. Another story on education preparations featured only male officials, despite women being the majority of the teaching workforce an example of gender-blind sourcing. A third case study on press freedom included both male and female voices, demonstrating balanced sourcing in an otherwise restricted environment. Overall, the monitoring day shows a news agenda shaped by conflict and crisis, with limited visibility for women's perspectives and few opportunities for gender-aware reporting.

THE CONTEXT

Since the military coup on 1 February 2021, Myanmar's media landscape has been dominated by severe repression. Independent media outlets were banned or forced to relocate abroad, and hundreds of journalists were arrested—many enduring interrogation, imprisonment, and gender-based violence.

By 2025, nearly all free media operate from exile, mostly along the Thai–Myanmar border, while state-owned outlets function as propaganda arms of the regime.

Given these realities, the GMMP 2025 monitoring reflects a fragmented and transnational media environment. Radio could not be included due to suspended operations after the coup; instead, the study focused on print, television, and online platforms with strong reach inside Myanmar or among the diaspora.

Medium	Media outlet selected	Factors of diversity
Newspaper	Myanmar Alin	State-owned, national
	The Mirror Daily	State-owned Media
	Eleven Media Group	Private mainstream,
Internet	Myanmar Now	Independent, public interest
	Shwe Phee Myay News Agency	Independent, ethnic media, regional
	Burma VJ	Independent, public interest
	Khit Thit Media	Independent, public interest
	The Irrawaddy Burmese Version	Independent, public interest
	Mandalay Free Press	Independent, public interest
	Karen Information Centre	Independent, ethnic media
	Me Kong	Independent, public interest
	Than Lwin Time	Independent, ethnic media
	Than Lwin Khet News	Independent, public interest
	Kantarawaddy Times	Independent, ethnic media
	Western News	Independent, ethnic media
	Myanmar Pressphoto Agency	Independent, public interest
	Ayeyawaddy Times	Independent, public interest

TV	Mizzima DVB MRTV	Independent, public interest, national Independent, public interest, national State-owned (Defense), national

A total of 20 media outlets were selected to represent a diversity of ownership, language, and region, including *Myanmar Alin*, *The Mirror*, *Myanmar Now*, *Khit Thit Media*, *The Irrawaddy*, *Mandalay Free Press*, and *Karen Information Centre*.

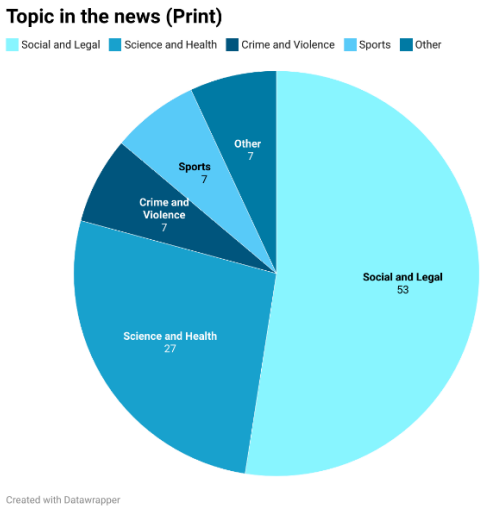
In total, 100 general-news stories were analyzed to assess gender representation in coverage.
The monitoring team comprised five female journalists, coordinated by the Myanmar Women Journalists Society (MWJS). Due to safety risks, all research was conducted remotely using secure communication tools. Despite immense challenges, this study stands as evidence of the determination and resilience of Myanmar's women journalists to uphold ethical, gender-aware journalism even in exile.

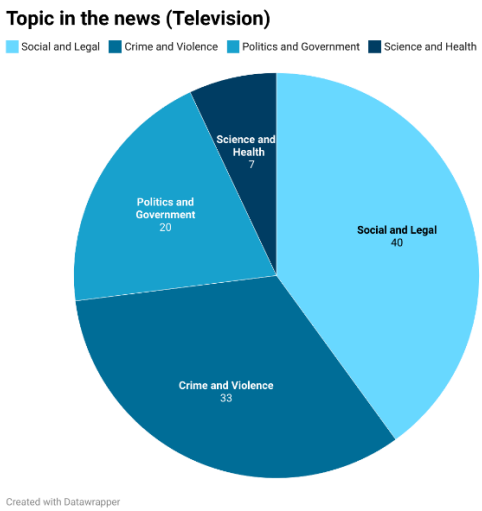
TOPICS IN THE NEWS

In print media, Social and Legal issues accounted for 53% of the stories and were the primary topic analyzed on Global Monitoring Day, followed by Science and Health at 27%.

Following the 2021 coup, the Myanmar military authorities revoked the licenses of all independent media outlets. Therefore, the print media currently operating in the country are not representative of independent journalism; instead, they primarily serve as instruments of military propaganda.

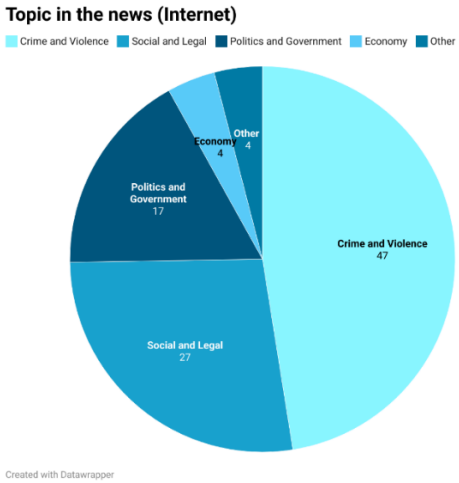
In television media, Social and Legal issues also dominated, comprising 40% of the coverage, followed by Crime and Violence at 27%, and Politics and Government at 20%.





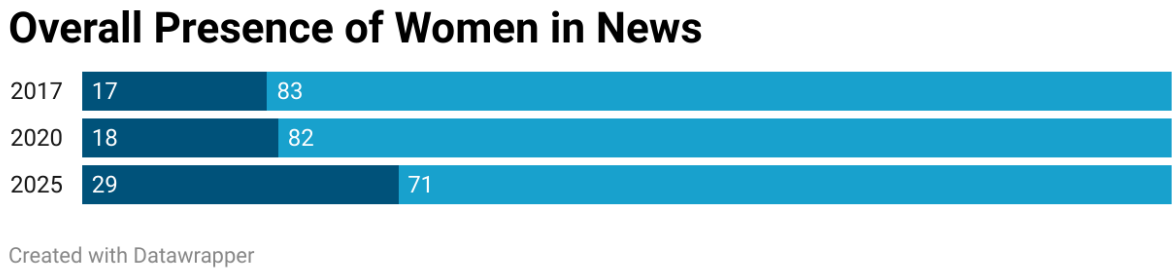
In internet-based media, Crime and Violence was the leading topic at 47%, followed by Social and Legal at 27%, and Politics and Government at 17%.

Since the coup, the media landscape in Myanmar has been largely dominated by reports related to *Crime and Violence*, *Social and Legal*, and *Politics and Government* issues, as reflected in the distribution of topics across television and internet media. Hence, the Global Monitoring Day captures a typical media pattern under current conditions.

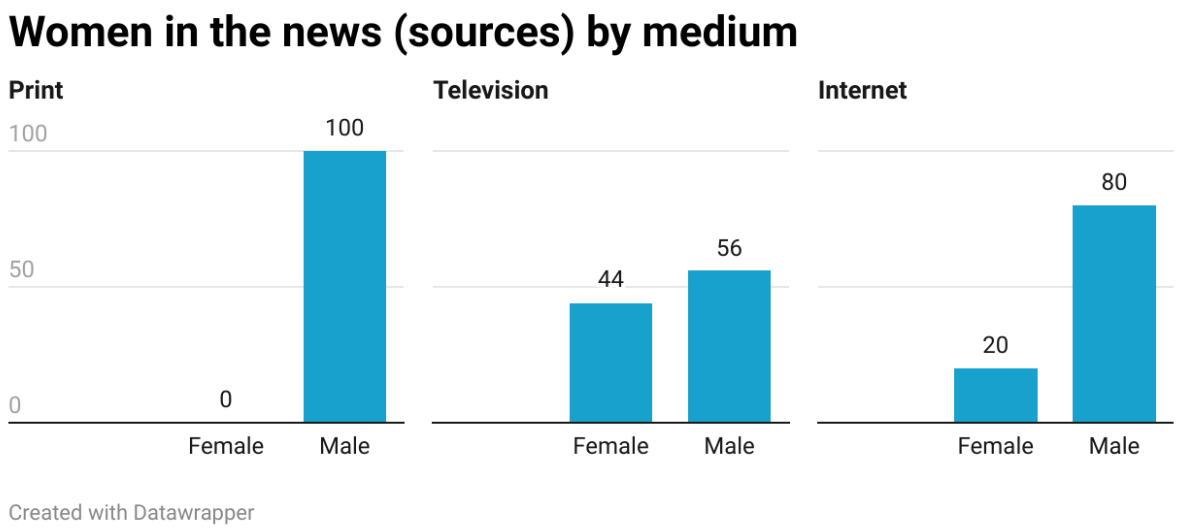


NEWS SUBJECTS AND SOURCES

Historical findings indicate that after a slow but steady increase in women's visibility and voice in the news, significant progress was observed on the 2025 Global Monitoring Day, with women constituting 29% of news sources in Myanmar media. This marks a notable rise from 18% in 2020 and 17% in 2017.



Among the media platforms, television recorded the highest proportion of women sources at 44%, followed by the internet at 20%. In contrast, there were no women sources represented in print media.

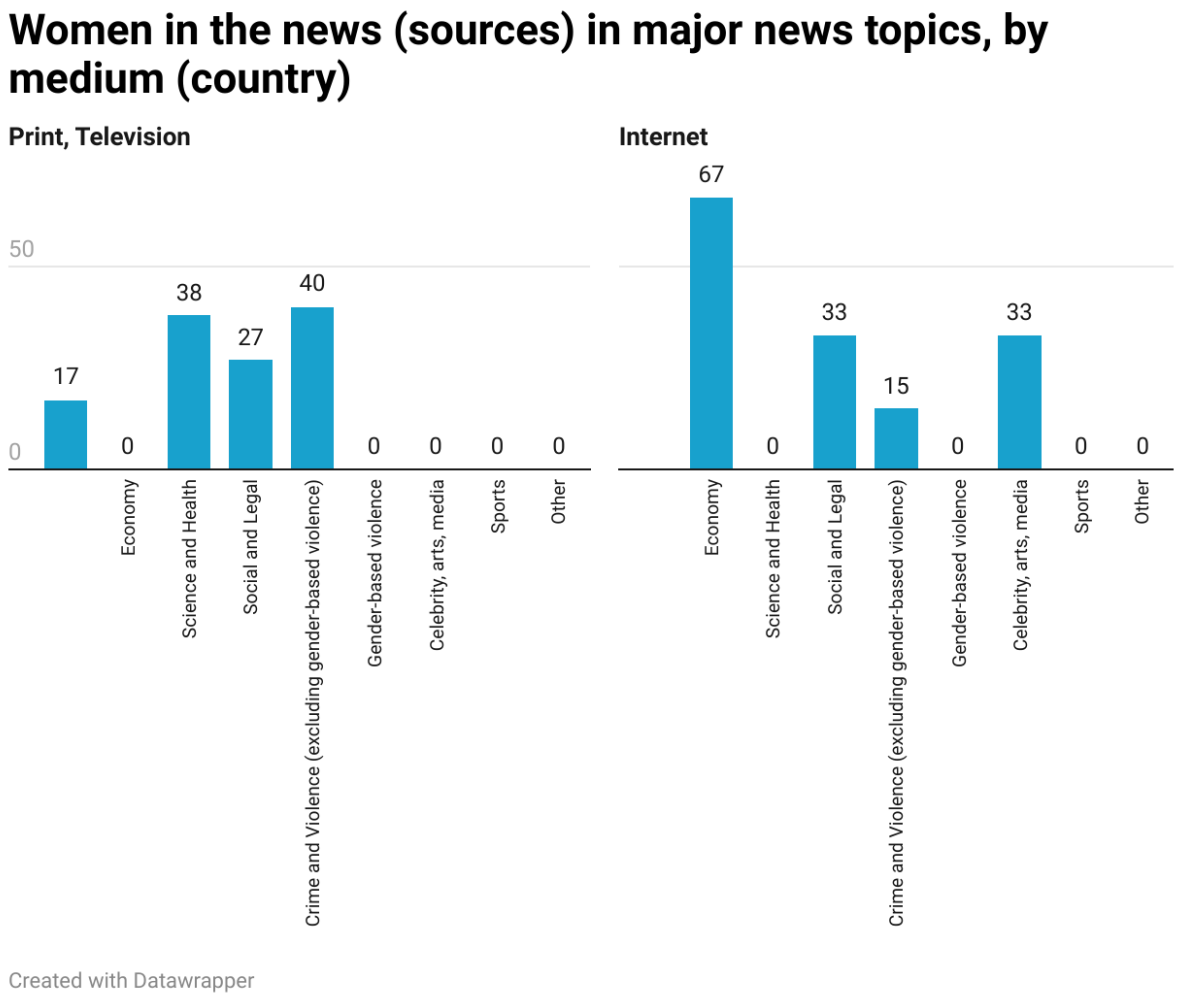


The distribution of women as news sources across different media platforms reveals significant variation by topic and medium.

In print and television media, women were most visible in Crime and Violence with 40% followed by Science and Health with 38%, and Social and Legal with 27%. In contrast, there were no women sources recorded in topics such as Gender-Based Violence, Celebrity, Arts and Media, Sports.

In internet-based media, the pattern differs notably. Women were most frequently cited as sources in Economy-related stories with 67%, followed by Science and Health and Celebrity, Arts and Media with each 33%, while Social and Legal issues featured 15% of women sources. Similar to traditional media, Gender-Based Violence, Sports, and other topics included no identifiable women sources.

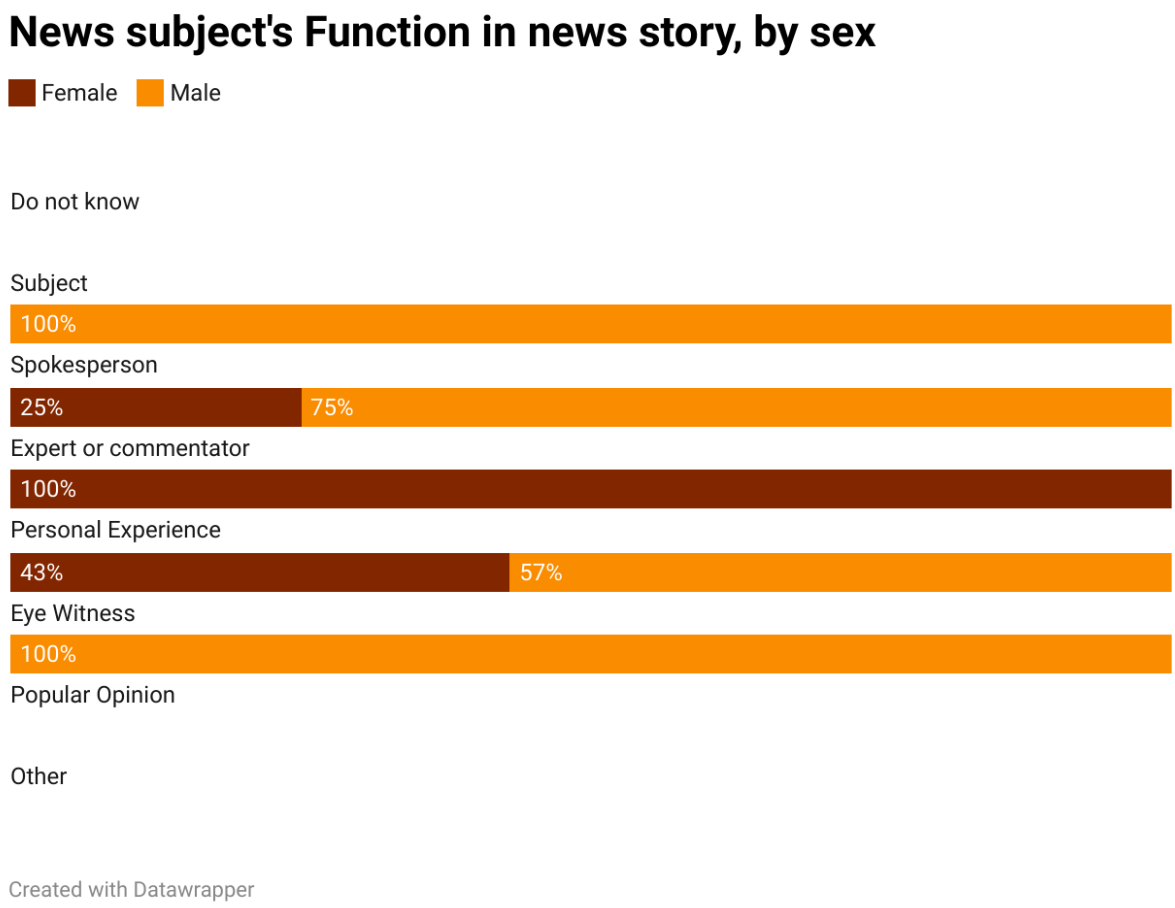
Overall, Internet media showed a relatively stronger inclusion of women in economic and cultural stories, while television and print featured women predominantly in health- and social-related coverage. However, women's absence in coverage of Gender-Based Violence and political affairs underscores persistent gender gaps in sourcing patterns across Myanmar's media landscape.



FUNCTION OF WOMEN AND MEN AS NEWS SOURCES

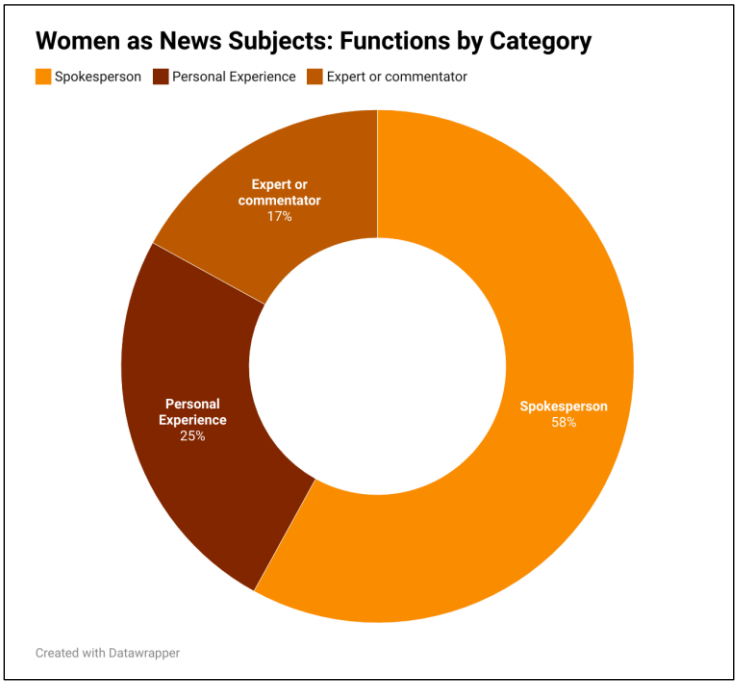
On media monitoring day of 2025 findings show clear gender differences in the functions assigned to news subjects. Men appear across almost all categories and dominate in several key roles, including spokespersons (75%) and eyewitnesses and subject (100%). Women feature more narrowly. They appear only in specific roles, such as experts/commentators (100%) and personal experience providers (43%), but are completely absent as eyewitnesses and contributors of popular opinion.

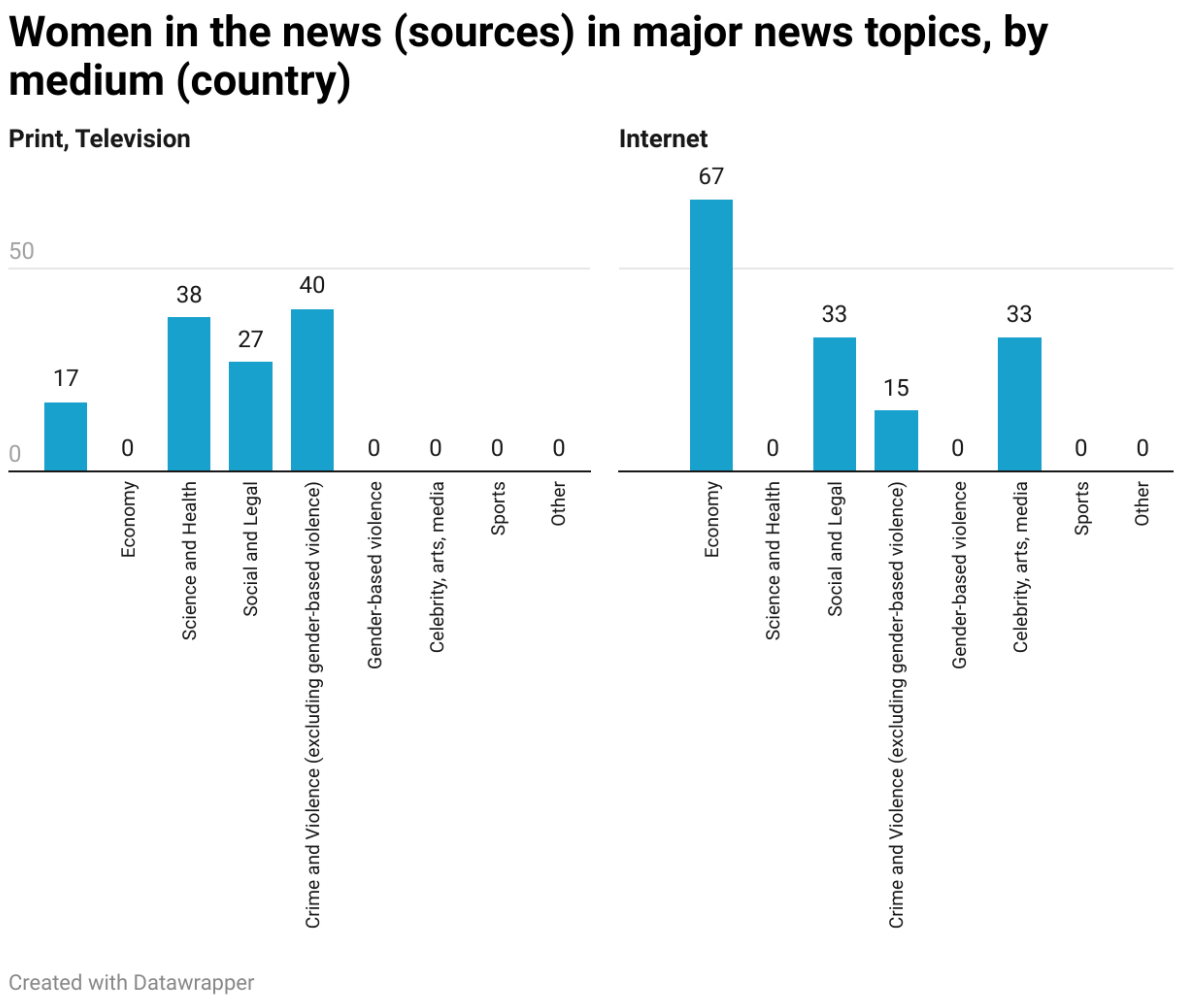
Overall, men hold a wider range of functional roles in news stories, while women's appearances are limited and concentrated in fewer categories, reflecting a continued imbalance in media representation.



Among women who appeared as news sources, their roles were concentrated in only a few functional categories. The largest share was cited as spokespersons, representing over half of all female sources. This indicates that women most often enter news stories through institutional or organizational roles rather than as central actors in the narrative.

A smaller proportion appeared to share personal experiences, showing that women are also frequently positioned as narrators of lived or emotional viewpoints. Meanwhile, only a limited number were featured as experts or commentators, underscoring the ongoing underrepresentation of women in analytical, professional, or authoritative roles within the media.

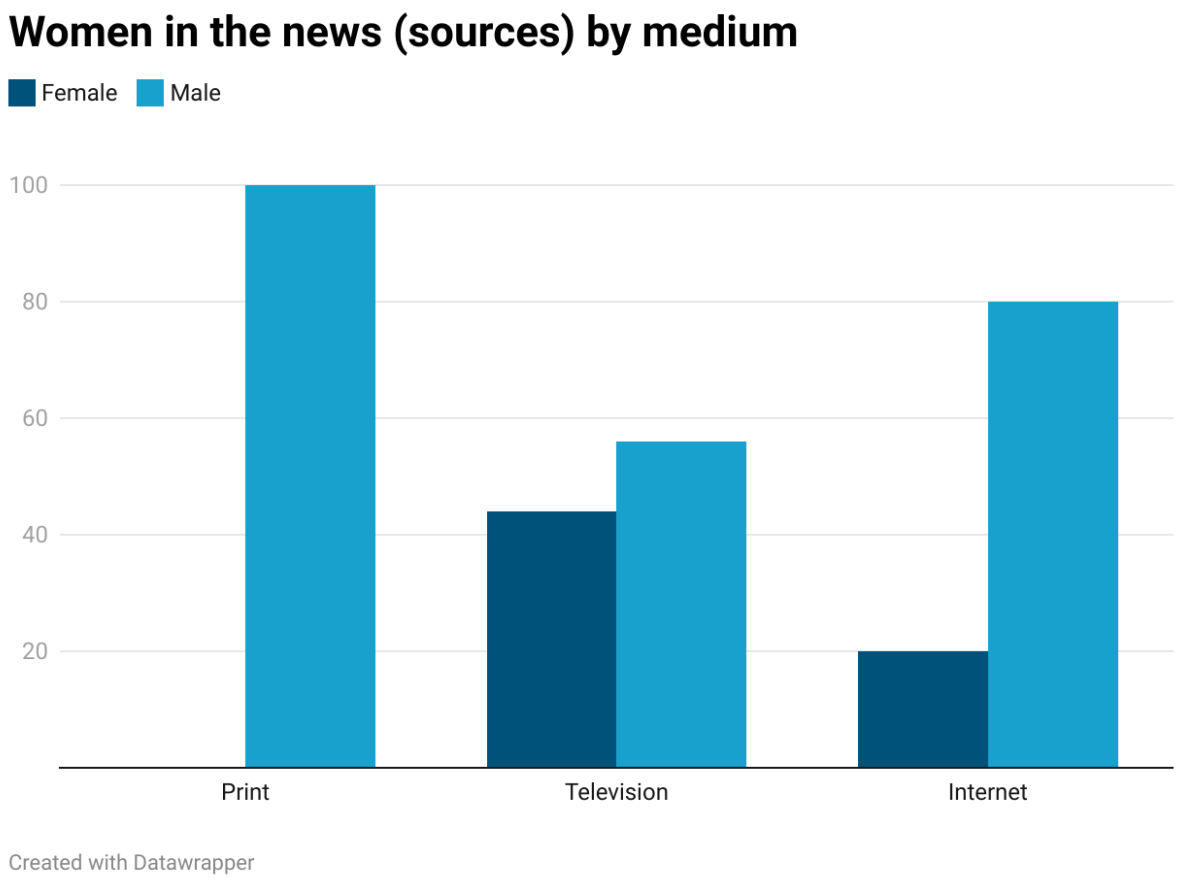




Women in the News (Sources) by Medium

The 2025 findings show wide disparities in women's visibility as news sources across different media in Myanmar. Print media records the most extreme imbalance, with women entirely absent as sources and men accounting for 100%. This reflects the post-coup media environment where all remaining print outlets are military-controlled, leaving no space for independent journalism, which traditionally featured more diverse voices. The complete absence of women in print highlights both structural exclusion and the narrowing of public discourse under state-run media.

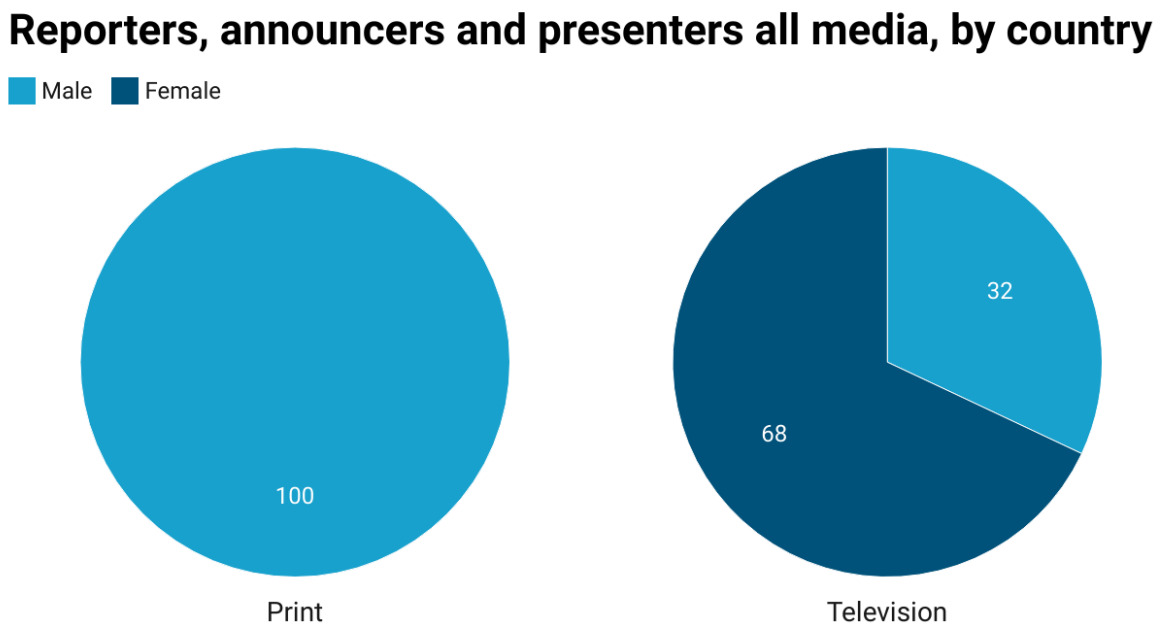
In comparison, television demonstrates the highest inclusion of women, with women representing 44% of sources, indicating relatively stronger editorial practices toward gender balance in broadcast formats. Online media shows a lower share of women at 20%, suggesting that despite the openness of digital platforms, women still face barriers to visibility and participation as experts, commentators, or eyewitnesses. Across all media, the data underscores a persistent gender gap, with television emerging as the most gender-inclusive medium, while print and online platforms continue to marginalize women's voices.



JOURNALISTS AND REPORTERS

The data shows gender imbalance in the representation of reporters, announcers, and presenters across media in Myanmar. In print, all (100%) of the monitored presenters and reporters were men, reflecting the complete absence of women in these roles within the military-controlled print sector. Television, however, presents a very different picture: 68% of presenters and reporters were women, compared to 32% men. This indicates that while print remains entirely male-dominated, television has become a significantly more gender-inclusive space.

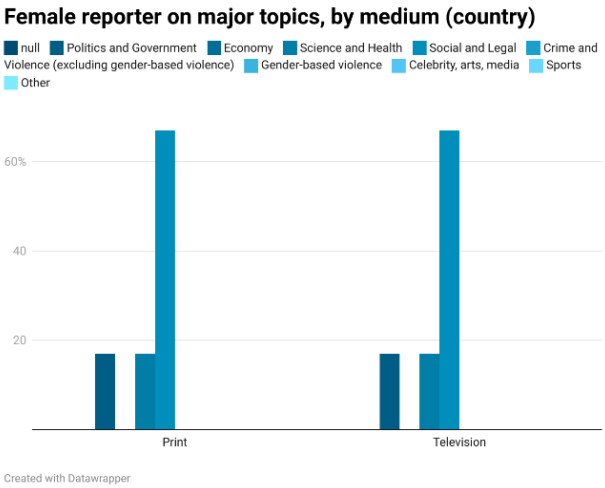
This study faced several important limitations. The availability of journalists and sources was restricted due to security concerns and the presence of ongoing armed conflict. Additionally, challenges in accurately identifying the gender of individuals—whether male or female—resulted in gaps or uncertainties in obtained information.

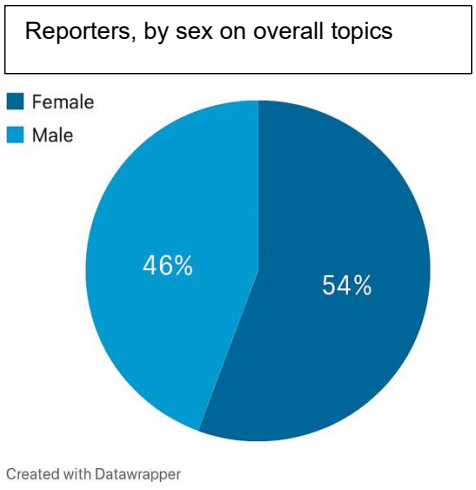


Female Reporters on Major and Overall Topics

On media monitoring day of 2025 findings show that women journalists in Myanmar are contributing meaningfully across major news topics, though their presence remains uneven by medium. In both print and television, women reporters most frequently cover **Science and Health**. This mirrors global GMMP trends where women are often assigned to health and social-issue beats. Their presence in **Politics and Government** and **Economy** remains limited at around **17%**, reflecting persistent gendered barriers to accessing hard-news and political reporting roles.

Overall, across all media and all major topics combined, **women journalist's account for 46% of topic coverage**, while **men account for 54%**. This indicates near-parity participation at the national level, despite the highly restricted media landscape.

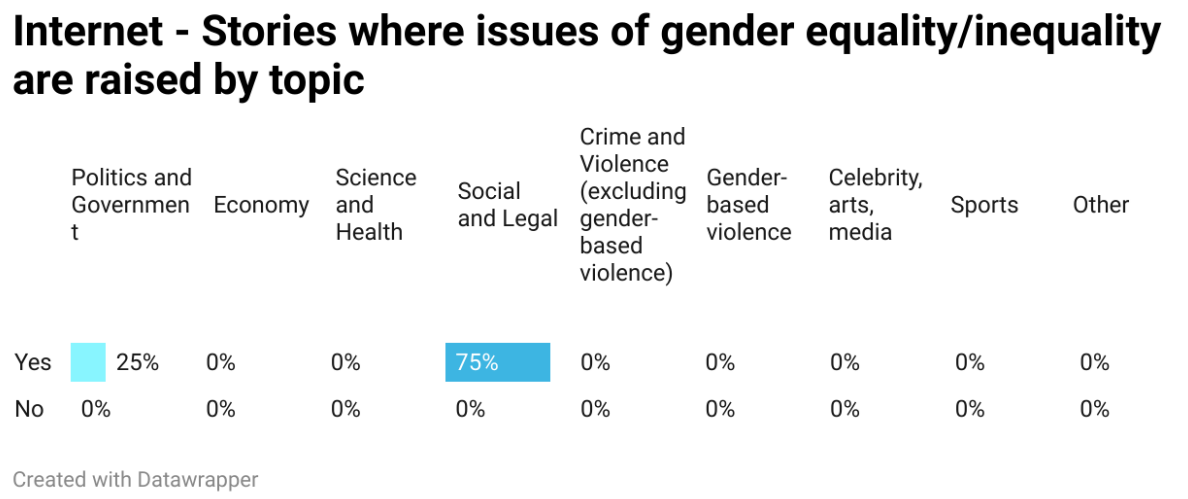




JOURNALISTIC PRACTICE: ON WOMEN'S CENTRALITY, GENDER STEREOTYPES AND RIGHTS-BASED REPORTING

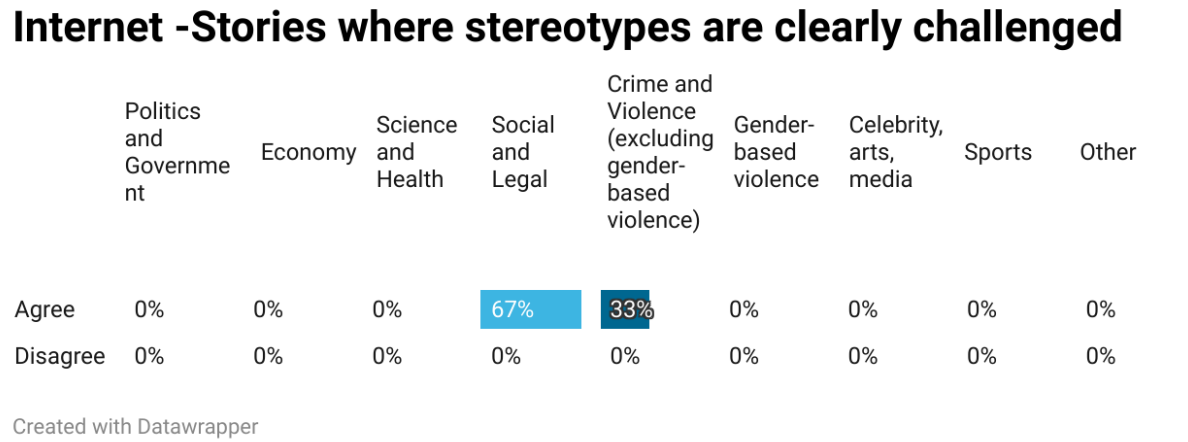
Stories where issues of gender equality/inequality are raised by topic

Online news raises gender equality and inequality issues only in a very limited set of topics. All gender-related references appeared in just two areas: Politics and Government (25%) and Social and Legal issues (75%). No gender equality concerns were raised in other major topics such as Economy, Science and Health, Crime and Violence, or Gender-based Violence itself. This pattern indicates that while some online reporting acknowledges gender dimensions, coverage remains narrow and inconsistent, with significant gaps across most news categories.



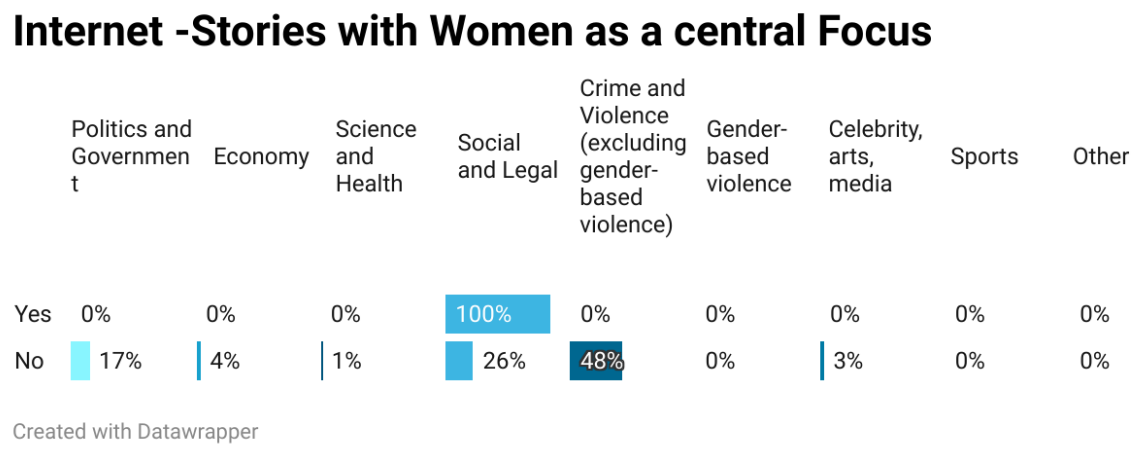
Stories where stereotypes are clearly challenged

Online news rarely challenges gender stereotypes. Only two topic areas contained stories that clearly challenged stereotypes: Social and Legal issues (67%) and Crime and Violence (33%). No stereotype-challenging content appeared in any other major topic, including Politics, Economy, Science and Health, or even Gender-based Violence. This indicates that while some online reporting attempts to confront harmful norms, such efforts are limited and not integrated across the wider news agenda.



Internet -Stories with Women as a central Focus

Monitoring data shows that women are rarely placed at the center of online news stories. The only topic where women were consistently the main focus was Social and Legal issues (100%), indicating that coverage of women online is largely confined to social-issue narratives. A smaller share of stories in Crime and Violence (48%) also featured women centrally, but no other topic—including Politics, Economy, Health, or Gender-based Violence contained any stories with women as the primary focus. Overall, this highlights a narrow thematic framing of women in online news, where their visibility is limited both in number and topic diversity.



Across online news, gender-sensitive reporting remains limited and uneven. Issues of gender equality are raised only in a small share of stories, concentrated almost entirely in Politics and Government and Social and Legal topics. Similarly, efforts to challenge gender stereotypes appear in just two areas: Social and Legal issues and Crime and Violence showing that such framing is not mainstreamed across the news agenda. Women are placed at the center of coverage only in Social and Legal stories, with a smaller presence in Crime and Violence, and are entirely absent as the main focus in all other topics.

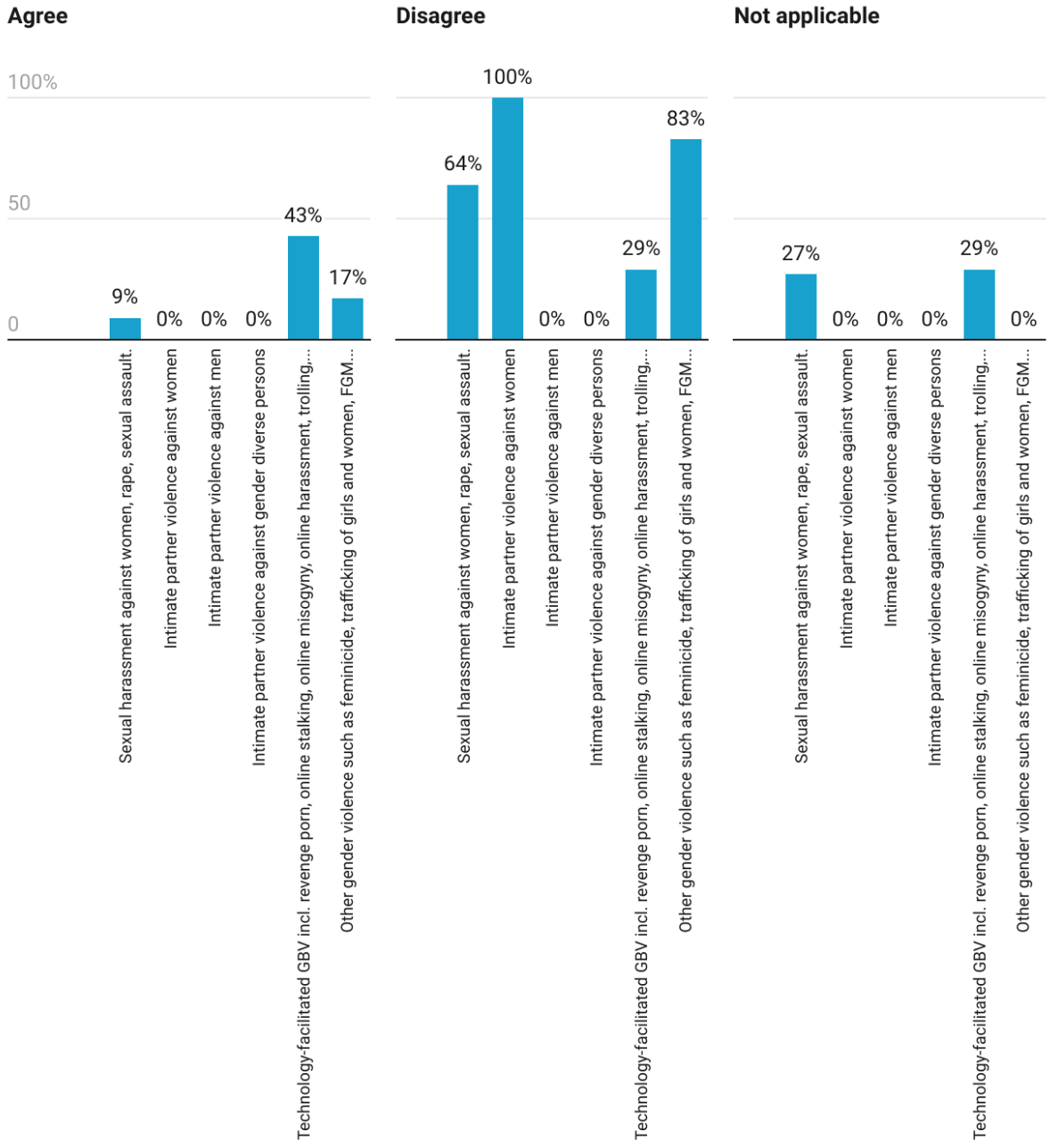
Overall, online reporting shows narrow thematic engagement with gender, with women's visibility restricted both in frequency and topic diversity.

FOCUS ON GENDER BASED VIOLENCE

In print and television news, gender stereotypes in GBV stories, by sub-topic, by medium (country)

Regarding gender issues, **sexual harassment and assault** (64%) and **other forms of gendered violence, including femicide and trafficking** (29%) also showed mostly stereotype-challenging coverage. Only a small share of stories mainly within **technology-facilitated GBV** (43%) and **other gendered violence** (17%) were coded as agreeing with gender-stereotypical portrayals. A notable proportion of GBV stories, however, were classified as **not applicable**, especially in "other gendered violence" (83%) and sexual harassment cases (27%), indicating that many reports avoided explicit framing altogether.

In Print and TV, Gender stereotypes in GBV stories, by sub-topic, by medium (country)

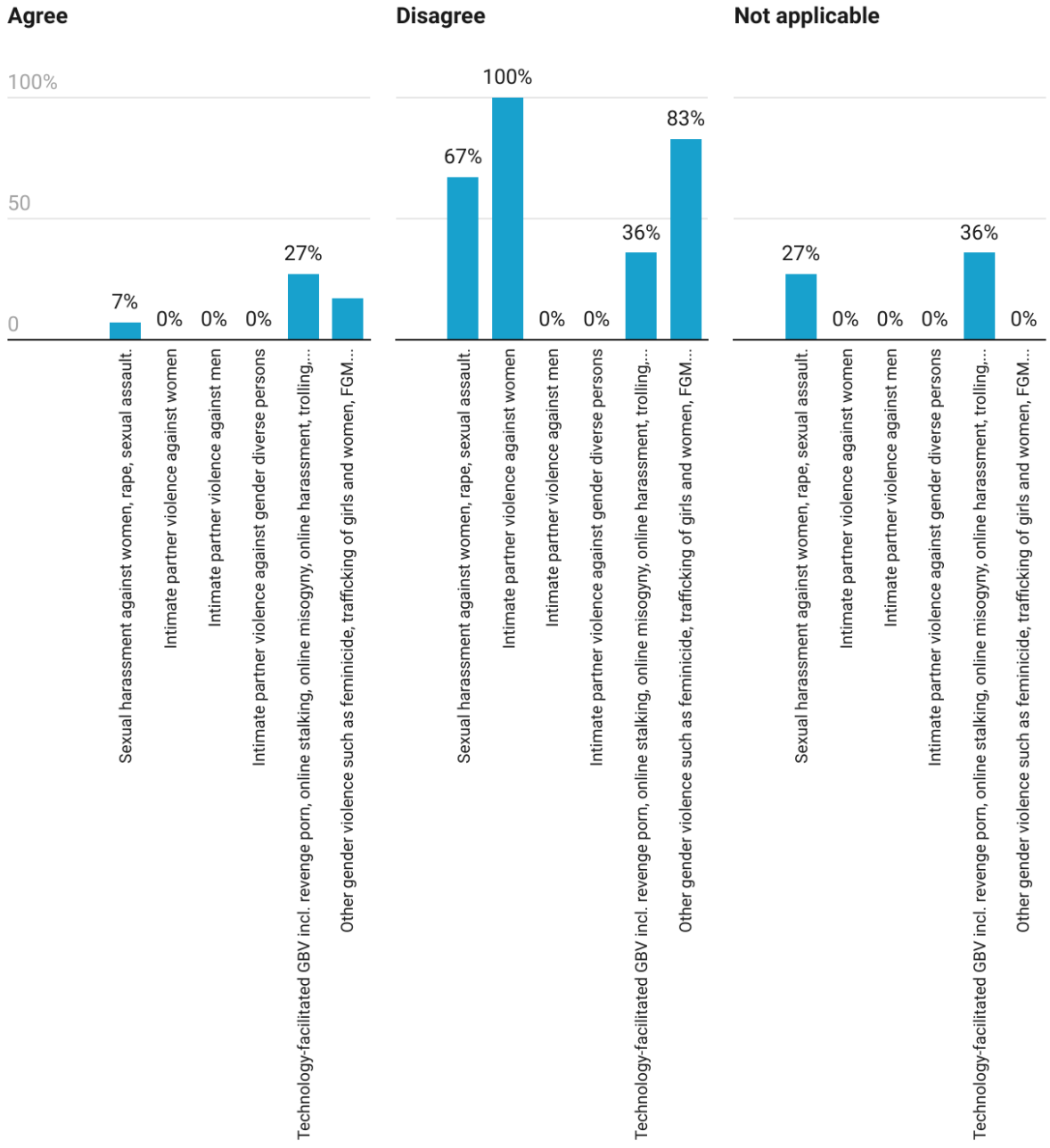


Created with Datawrapper

In online news, gender stereotypes in GBV stories, by sub-topic, by medium (country)

The data shows gender-based violence, followed by **other gendered violence** (83%), and **sexual harassment and rape** (67%). Only a small proportion of stories mainly in **technology-facilitated GBV** (27%) and **other gendered violence** (7%) agreed with stereotypical narratives.

In online news, Gender stereotypes in GBV stories, by sub-topic, by medium (country)

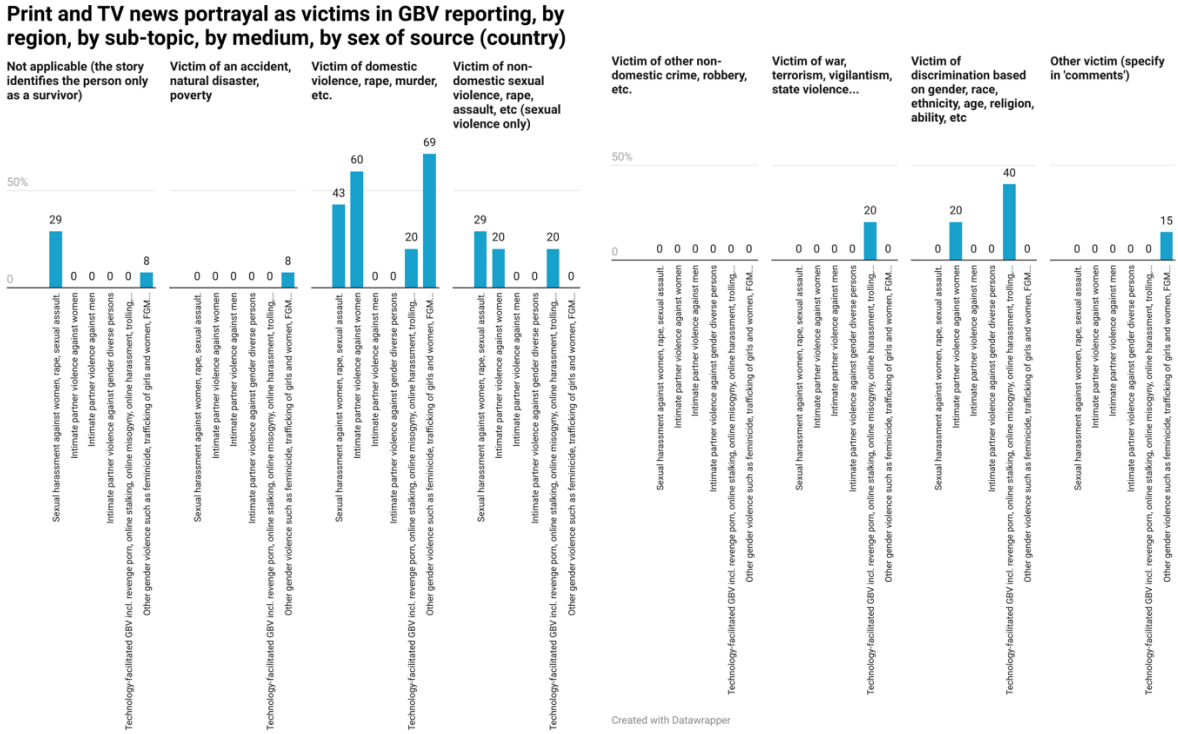


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Print and TV news portrayal as victims in GBV reporting, by region, by sub-topic, by medium, by sex of source (country)

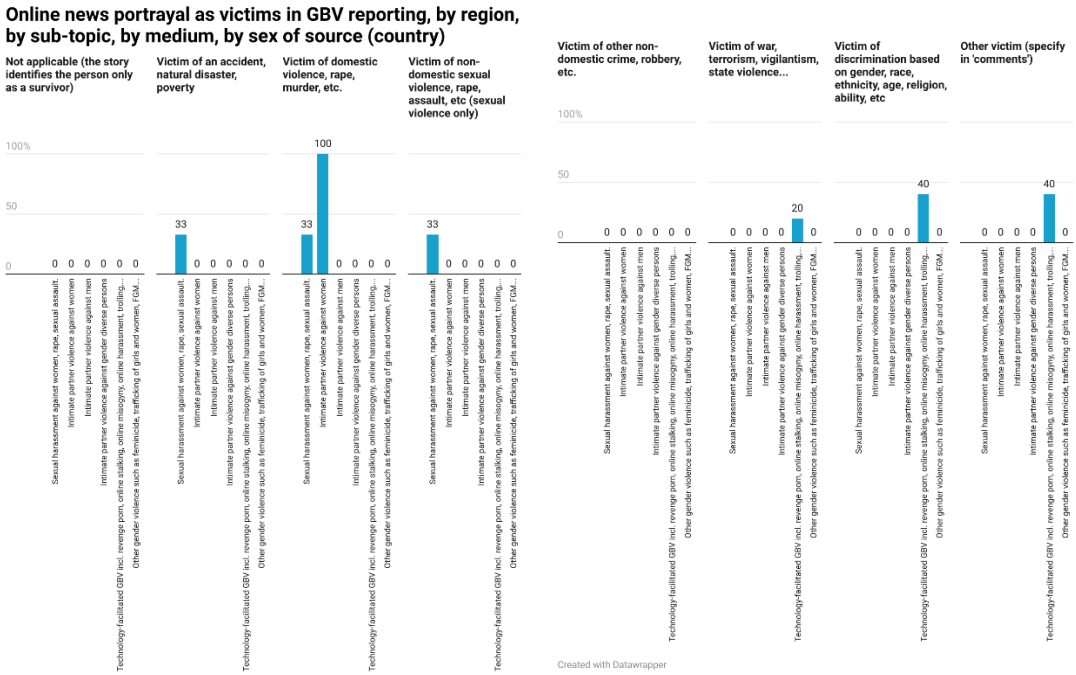
The data shows that women are overwhelmingly portrayed as victims in GBV-related reporting across print and TV. The highest rates of victim portrayal appear in domestic violence, rape, and murder, where women account for 43% to 69% of identified victims. Women are also represented as victims in non-domestic sexual violence 29% to 20%. Notably, a share of stories particularly those on sexual harassment 29% identify individuals only as “survivors” without specifying gender. Overall, the

findings reinforce a consistent pattern in which women remain the primary victims depicted in GBV coverage, while men and gender-diverse persons are largely absent from these narratives.



Online news portrayal as victims in GBV reporting, by region, by sub-topic, by medium, by sex of source (country)

Online news indicates that women are consistently portrayed as the primary victims in online GBV reporting. Women appear most frequently as victims in domestic violence, rape, and murder, where they make up 33% to 100% of identified victims across sub-topics. They are also portrayed as victims in non-domestic sexual violence 33%. Overall, the pattern shows that online GBV reporting centers almost exclusively on women as victims, leaving other gender identities largely invisible in victim portrayals.



Across both print/TV and online news, GBV reporting overwhelmingly portrays women as the primary victims especially in cases of domestic violence, rape, murder, and sexual assault while men and gender-diverse persons are almost entirely absent. Although the specific proportions vary by medium, the overall pattern is consistent: GBV narratives in Myanmar's media focus almost exclusively on women as victims, reinforcing a narrow and gender-specific victim profile across all sub-topics.

CASE STUDIES

Case Study 1. A story that is challenging gender stereotypes
Title of article: Internet News – *SAC Launched Attacks, Including Airstrikes, with Heavy Weapons on Six Towns in Northern Shan State Within a Month*
Name of media: Ayayarwaddy Times
Date: 6th, May 2025
Theme: Civil War

According to the Palaung State Liberation Front/Ta'ang National Liberation Army (PSLF/TNLA), the military council (SAC) attacked six towns in northern Shan State with heavy weapons, including airstrikes, over one month, resulting in civilian casualties and deaths.

This story challenges gender stereotypes because the spokesperson for the Palaung State Liberation Front (PSLF/TNLA) is a woman. It is a news story that highlights a woman in a leadership role.

In Myanmar society, women leaders are scarce, and most media also tend to portray women only as victims, vulnerable individuals, ordinary civilians, or mothers.



Case Study 2. A story that is gender blind
Title of article: Newspaper – Preparations for School Openings in June
Name of media: Eleven Media
Date: 6th, May 2025
Theme: Education

This news is about education and the fact that the academic year in Myanmar starts in June. It reports on the preparations for school openings, quoting only one source: the Education Minister, Dr. Nyunt Pe.

Although the majority of the teaching profession in Myanmar is comprised of women, no female sources were interviewed or featured for this story.

The news photo also portrays only men in leadership roles, while women are depicted in follower positions. Women are seen as workers in the images, but there are no women interviewed for the story.



Case Study 3. A story that is gender Aware
Title of article: Internet News – *Myanmar's Press Freedom Remains in Chains*
Name of media: Than Lwin Khet
Date: 6th, May 2025
Theme: *14 – Myanmar Press freedom.*

The news is about the situation: Reporters Without Borders (RSF) has announced that in 2025) World Press Freedom Index, Myanmar ranks 169th out of 180 countries. In 2024, it was ranked 171st, so one might assume that Myanmar's press freedom ranking has improved this year. However, journalists are reporting the news under restrictions and invisible dangers.

This story is gender aware because, in its reporting, it has selected its sources in a balanced way, featuring both female and male leaders in Myanmar media.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND ACTION PLAN 2026-2030

The GMMP 2025 findings show that Myanmar's ongoing repression and civil war continue to restrict independent journalism and limit women's visibility in the media.
Despite these challenges, women journalists and exiled media networks remain determined to promote gender equality in news and newsroom practices.

Key Recommendations

1. **Promote Gender-Sensitive Journalism**

    - Continue to embed gender awareness systematically within media training programmes and editorial decision-making processes.

    - Encourage newsroom leaders to adopt gender balance in sourcing and story selection.

2. **Support Women Journalists' Safety and Leadership**
    - Strengthen protection networks for women journalists facing harassment or exile-related risks.
    - Promote women's participation in newsroom leadership and decision-making roles.
3. **Collaboration and Knowledge Sharing**
    - The results of this GMMP study will be **shared and discussed among Myanmar media organizations** to inspire practical change.
    - Strengthen cooperation between exiled, ethnic, and women-led media groups to promote gender equality.
4. **Future Action (2026–2030)**
    - Disseminate GMMP 2025 findings and hold media dialogues (2026).
    - Implement gender-sensitive journalism training (2027–2028).
    - Conduct a mid-term review and prepare for GMMP 2030 participation (2029–2030).

5. **To reporters and editors**
    - Seek out a variety of sources from a variety of perspectives, including female and male sources.
    - Keep track of your sources by gender, age, ethnicity – keep a diary and observe any patterns of bias you might have.
    - Look for sources, subjects and news stories that challenge the stereotypes about women and men.

Annex 1. Methodology

The **Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP) 2025** maintained its longitudinal approach to assess changes in gender representation in news media over time. The methodology, indicators, and coding framework remained consistent with earlier editions to ensure comparability across the 30-year GMMP timeline.

Process

The **global monitoring day** was conducted on **6 May 2025**, with data collected from **94 participating countries**. The process involved volunteer teams who coded news stories across print, television, radio, and digital platforms using standardized coding tools developed by WACC's GMMP global coordination team.

In the period leading up to the monitoring day, a series of regional and national training sessions were organized to build a uniform understanding of the teams on the methodology and approach to coding. The teams received training on media selection, newscast and article selection, and the number of media to code.

For the 2025 GMMP, teams could choose from two possible options for the monitoring:

- **Full monitoring**, whose results provide a comprehensive picture of the status of gender equality dimensions in news media.

- **Short monitoring**, a shorter version which focuses on the key GMMP indicators, for teams who wished to participate but for various reasons could not implement the full monitoring. The Myanmar team followed the short monitoring methodology.

To ensure accuracy in the coding process, radio and television bulletins were recorded, and copies of digital and print media items were collected. Across the different media types- both for the full and short monitoring-monitors captured information about the story, its main themes and the people in the story, as journalists, as story subjects and sources. Additionally, three optional special questions, unique to each country, allowed individual countries to analyze issues of national interest. For standardization purposes, as well as the multilingual nature of this study, all responses were numerically coded from fixed lists.

In Myanmar, due to extreme restrictions following the **February 1, 2021 coup**, monitoring was conducted under highly constrained conditions. Journalists faced risks of arrest, surveillance, and censorship, forcing the research team to work remotely and securely from outside the country. The **Myanmar Women Journalists Society (MWJS)** served as the national coordinator, with a team of five trained female monitors operating from Thailand and other safe locations.

Media Sample and Data Collection

Given the collapse of domestic press freedom, the Myanmar sample excluded radio and focused on **print, television, and online outlets** that remained accessible to the public or diaspora.

A total of **20 media outlets** were selected, representing a diversity of ownership and geographic reach, including both **state-controlled** and **independent exile media**. Each outlet contributed **five general-news stories**, producing a total of **100 coded items**. Monitors were instructed to exclude opinion pieces, editorials, and entertainment content. Stories were selected if they included identifiable news subjects or sources and aligned with GMMP's gender-monitoring criteria. Data were entered electronically into the global GMMP database using WACC's online platform.

Training and Quality Assurance

Before the monitoring day, MWJS conducted online training sessions for all monitors to ensure a shared understanding of coding principles and gender indicators. Global webinars facilitated by WACC and regional partners provided technical guidance on data entry, ethical standards, and security protocols. To ensure accuracy, coding was double-checked by the national coordinator before submission to the global database.

Limitations

Due to ongoing **internet blackouts, censorship, and digital surveillance**, the Myanmar team could not access all national news sources or broadcast channels. Safety concerns prevented in-person verification or direct newsroom observation. Some stories lacked full identification of journalists or sources, reflecting broader media repression. Despite these challenges, data quality was maintained through triangulation and close supervision.

Annex 2. List of Monitors

1. Soe San Htike
2. Wai Wai

3. Mary Nyein Chan
4. Kay Zone Nway
5. Khin Nyein Thit.

Insert the logo of your organisation here.

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