

**WHO
MAKES THE
NEWS?**



Mauritius

Global Media Monitoring Project 2010 National Report



Acknowledgements



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GMMP 2010 is co-ordinated by the World Association for Christian Communication (WACC), an international NGO which promotes communication for social change, in collaboration with data analyst, Media Monitoring Africa (MMA), South Africa.

The data for GMMP 2010 was collected through the collective voluntary effort of hundreds of organizations including gender and media activists, grassroots communication groups, academics and students of communication, media professionals, journalists associations, alternative media networks and church groups.



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Preface

Global Context

- 10 November 2009 was an ordinary day at work for newsroom staff around the world. It was however a special day for groups in over 100 countries who gathered to monitor their news media. After months of planning, preparations and training, they brought the Fourth Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP) to life.
- The Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP) is the world's longest-running and most extensive research on gender in the news media. It began in 1995 when volunteers in 71 countries around the world monitored women's presence in their national radio, television and print news. The research revealed that only 17% of news subjects – the people who are interviewed or whom the news is about – were women. It found that gender parity was 'a distant prospect in any region of the world. News [was] more often being presented by women but it [was] still rarely about women.'¹
- Seventy countries participated in the Second GMMP in 2000. This and all subsequent GMMPs were coordinated by the World Association for Christian Communication (WACC). The research found a relatively static picture: only 18% of news subject were women, a statistically insignificant change over the 5-year period.²
- The Third GMMP in 2005 attracted the participation of 76 countries. Some progress in women's presence in the news was evident. 21% of news subjects were female. This 3% increase in the preceding five years was statistically significant. However, the overwhelming finding was women's continued near invisibility in the news. Very little news – just under 10% of all stories – focussed specifically on women. Women were rarely central in stories that comprised the bulk of the news agenda. Women were outnumbered by men as newsmakers in every major news topic. Expert opinion was overwhelmingly male with women comprising only 17% of experts who appeared in news stories. As newsmakers, women were under-represented in professional categories. The third GMMP found that the sex of the journalist made a difference in whether or not women made the news: there were more female news subjects in stories reported by female journalists (25%) than in stories reported by male journalists (20%).
- The First GMMP, and as will be seen, the Fourth GMMP reveal that the world reported in the news is mostly male. Overall, news stories were twice as likely to reinforce gender stereotypes rather than challenging them. News stories on gender (in)equality were almost non-existent.

National context

- News form part of our daily lives and keep people updated with latest trends both locally and internationally. In Mauritius, traditionally women have been represented as being homemakers while men were considered as bread winners. However, since industrial revolution in the country women have started to work but they are still considered less dependable than men in the economic field.

¹ *Global Media Monitoring Project, Women's participation in the news*. National Watch on Images of Women in the Media (MediaWatch) Inc. 1995

² Spears, George and Kasia Seydegart, Erin Research. with additional analysis by Margaret Gallagher. *Who makes the news? Global Media Monitoring Project*. 2000

Media diffuse news and create perceptions of gender in people's mind. Therefore, it is important to monitor the media to make sure that it is abiding by rules and within norms.

- The monitoring project has helped the monitors and coordinator to have a different perspective on media literacy analysis. Before the project was done, news were just viewed or read just for the sake of gathering information. However, during the special day of GMMP, monitors have been able to notice which news are gender aware, well reported, challenging stereotypes or not. The GMMP is one of a kind to bring a new sense of meaning and belonging to media literacy to our organisation and Mauritius. Monitors have been encouraged to talk about media literacy to their relatives, friends and surroundings.
- News media remain the major and most influential source of information, ideas and opinion for most people around the world. It is a key element of the public and private space in which people, nations and societies live. A nation or society that does not fully know itself cannot respond to its citizens' aspirations. Who and what appears in the news and how people and events are portrayed matters. Who is left out and what is not covered are equally important. Across the world, the cultural underpinnings of gender inequality and discrimination against women are reinforced through the media.

Some of the objectives of Media Watch Organisation-GEMSA are as follows:

- Train members and non-members with the skills to influence the media in the use of language and images in relation with gender issues.
- Challenge sexism and gender discrimination in the Mauritian media
- Sensitise media practitioners, NGOs, community leaders around gender issues by organising workshops and forum/debates.
- Build the capacity of women to speak out against negative stereotyping of women in the media and in advertisement.
- Challenge offensive, discriminatory and stereotypical use of language and images in advertisement and in the media.
- Monitor the media and use the findings to engage with media houses.
- Develop comprehensive communications/media strategies for training and networking;
 - Network with overseas organisations
 - Create critical media awareness through media literacy.

The above objectives are aligned with the Global Media Monitoring Project and key findings will help our organisation to engage with media houses and we will be able to challenge sexism, gender discrimination and offensive language in media.

Executive Summary

The Global Media Monitoring Project done in Mauritius for 2010 has been a fruitful experience of its kind. November 2010 will remain a memorable experience for monitors who realised the importance of media literacy. Media monitoring helps to define whether news are being adequately covered and how far women are represented.

Objectives of the GMMP in Mauritius:

- The GMMP is aligned with the objectives of Media Watch Organisation and key findings can be used to challenge sexism and discrimination in Mauritian media houses.
- GMMP can also challenge the media literacy in the country
- The results can be used to sensitise media practitioners, NGOs, community leaders around gender issues by organising workshops and forum/debates.

Methodology and scope of the research

The methodology (see **Annex 1**) as per the GMMP was adapted to local context and media houses had been chosen. In Mauritius, monitoring was done in 1 TV news, 3 radio and press media. Monitors did the research and the data collected was gathered and sent to WACC by the national coordinator. Being a small country, the findings were easily collected.

Key findings:

Key data from the study include:

- 59% of female reporters were in social and legal topics. However, **male reporters were present in topics like economy, celebrity, arts and media, sports by 100%**. Furthermore there were less female reporters in Politics and Government whereas in crime and violence it was the reverse.
- Presence of male news subjects dominated by **92% in TV**, 67% in Print and 57% in Radio news were recorded.
- Most men were government officials, policemen, media professionals, legal officers, business persons whereas **women voices** exceed in public servants, sex workers, medical officers unemployed and **100% home makers**.
- **70% of presenters were male** and 30% female presenters showed their dominance in media in Mauritius.

A DAY IN THE NEWS IN *Mauritius*

- **10 November 2009**

In Mauritius, 1 TV Medium, 3 Radio Media and 3 Newspapers had been monitored on November 2009. The topics were of various categories and were a good experience to test the level of media diffusion in the country.

There was the case study of a female sex worker who was abused and then killed. This was in the crime and violence category and was the most striking example from Mauritius. This news was in print and radio media. However, more male voices were heard on this topic rather than female. The police officer/inspector gave his views whereas the colleague of the victim who was a woman was not interviewed by all the media. In such cases, normally, in Mauritius, voices of women are not heard but they are more as victims. During the GMMP project, we realised that female voices amounted to 24% whereas male views were 76% in Gender based violence, harassment, domestic violence, rape, trafficking.

- **Country background:**

Mauritian media has a history that started in 1773. The following data gives a detailed overview of the background to media in the country.

During the period of censorship, after the British took over in 1810, the Franco-Mauritian elite fought for, and won, the right to a free press from the British rulers in 1832. During the 19th century, the press became an instrument/tool in the fight for political and social emancipation of different groups. In post-colonial Mauritius, the media has consolidated its position as a key player in the island's democracy (Lowe Morna et al., 2005).

The Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation TV and Radio are state media. On the other hand, all press media are privately owned company.

- **Media monitored:** Media that were monitored were TV, Radio and Newspaper.

TV: French News of MBC 19:30

Radio: Radio Plus, Radio One and Radio Maurice

Newspaper: L'express, Le Mauricien and Le Matinal

The above media were chosen while considering the target audience and their usual amount of coverage. The TV news is the mainstream one and is viewed by most Mauritians and the period it is diffused is considered as a peak one. In addition, the three radios were those of the morning 0730 news as it is a time when most of the public listen to news while going to work or doing their housework. Furthermore, we had to choose three newspapers that were of daily distribution and well read in the country.

- **The monitors:**

The monitors were two members of Media Watch Organisation and had showed great interest for this GMMP project. Materials were collected in the morning and they had been briefed two days prior to the event. They were given a copy of the GMMP manual guide and during the project; the monitors along with the coordinators monitored the news. They all monitored news manually and then the coordinator collected the manual forms and she input the data in the software and eventually this was sent to GMMP.

TOPICS IN THE NEWS

- **Topics in the news:**

For the Print media, news that were monitored were:

- Celebrity, Arts, and Media and Sports
- Crime and violence
- Social and legal
- Science and health
- Economy
- Politics and government
- Unusual case of a child

On the other hand, news that were monitored on TV were as follows:

- Science and health
- Economy
- Politics and Government

Furthermore, news monitored in Radio were:

- Crime and violence
- Social and legal
- Science and health
- Economy
- Politics and Government

The results on the percentage of stories by female and male reporters in Mauritius

- 59% of female reporters were in social and legal topics. However, it is not surprising to see that male reporters surpassed females in topics like economy, celebrity, arts and media, sports by 100%.

Furthermore there were less female reporters in Politics and Government whereas in crime and violence it was the reverse.

THE NEWS

- **Overall presence of women and men in the news in Mauritius as news subjects, reporters and presenters:**
Similarly to reporters, presence of men dominated those of women in Politics and Government and Economy. Women were still more present in social and legal cases. However, in crime and violence it was the other way round as male were 70% present while women only 30%.
- **Presence of female and male news subjects in your country by medium – radio, TV and newspapers:**
Presence of male news subjects dominated rather than female ones as 92% in TV, 67% in Print and 57% in Radio news were recorded. Although more importance were given to men topics in TV and Print, the percentage in Radio news seemed less as it was mostly covered by the rape and murder of the female sex worker.
- **News Sources:**
Results on the analysis of the number of female and male news subjects quoted as sources of information in stories about local, national and international affairs in newspapers in Mauritius showed that even in this field male voices were considered more important. The 68% male sources compared to 32% female showed that women were still overlooked.
- **Who are the newsmakers?**
Moreover, as previously mentioned women are considered as home makers while men were considered as bread bearers. Most men were government officials, policemen, media professionals, legal officers, business persons whereas women voices exceed in public servants, sex workers, medical officers unemployed and 100% home makers.
- **Function of female and male news subjects:**
The functions of male news subjects showed their level of importance in media. Their roles were eyewitness, popular opinions, spokespersons, or experts and commentators whereas roles of women were more present as victims.
- **Constructing ‘victims’ in the news:**
Male victims were mostly those from accidents whereas female victims were those who had been raped or murdered.
- **Identity and family status in the news:**
No women had been identified whereas among men 5% had been identified in Mauritius on the 10th November 2009.
- **Images in the news:**
Among the 17 women, 24% were photographed whereas among the 32 men, 24% were photographed.

WHO DELIVERS THE NEWS?

- **Overall Presenters**
70% of presenters were male and 30% female presenters showed their dominance in media in Mauritius.
- **Age of presenters and reporters:**
The age of the presenters and reporters were not indicated.

Announcers:

- Overall presence of women and news as news announcers in Mauritius's radio and TV showed how women are overlooked. The percentage of women to men was 21% to 79%.
- Female announcers were less present both in radio and TV across stories. On the monitoring date men announcers were 70% present in Radio and 100% in TV.
- At national level, there was a dominance of male announcers of 85% and 15% female ones. Overall presence of men in domestic and foreign resulted at 79%.
- In addition, in major topics men were more present in politics, government, economy, crime and violence and science and health. On the other hand women were more available in social and legal.

Reporters:

- Female reporters less than male ones in print medium by 6% whereas in radio and TV there was equal amount of female reporters.
- Concerning major story topics in Mauritius, 56% were male reporters and 44% female ones. There was predominance in economy, celebrity, arts and media and sports. However, female reporters were more present in crime and violence.
- More news sources found in stories reported by women in Mauritius are for men. The results showed 45% women news sources and 55% men news sources.

GENDER AND THE NEWS

- **Sex of reporters in stories with women as a central focus:**
Among stories where women were not in central, 65% were men and in those where women were in central, there was 71% female reporters.

Stories with women as a central focus in Mauritius were women electoral candidates, beauty contests, fashion, gender issues, legislation, deaths, and a minority in arts and government issues.
- **Stories that highlight issues of gender equality or inequality issues:**
From highest to lowest table on stories that highlight gender equality or inequality issues, there were 40% women and 60% men. Top stories were on:
 - Child abuse, sexual violence against children, trafficking, neglect.
 - Women in political power and decision-making (local, regional, national),
 - Women's movement, activism, events, demonstrations, gender equality advocacy
 - Gender-based violence, feminicide, harassment, domestic violence, rape, trafficking
- **Challenging or reinforcing stereotypes?**
Unfortunately, in Mauritius, stories that do not challenge stereotypes were more than those that challenge stereotypes, which resulted in 67% to 28% respectively. The minority 5% was for neither challenging nor reinforcing stereotypes. These percentages were extracted among 48 stories monitored in the country. The stories were:
 - Celebrity, Arts and Media, Sports
 - Economy
 - Social and Legal
 - Crime and Violence
 - Politics and Government
 - Science and Health

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

In the light of the above, it can be concluded that indeed women are still being overlooked in media coverage compared to men. Although literacy rates have been increasing in Mauritius, the mindset of women as home carers and men as bread winners still prevails. The results that have been gathered also show that women have been dramatically under-represented in news. Roles of men were as eyewitness, popular opinions,

spokespersons, or experts and commentators, whereas roles of women were more present as victims in our local news. The key findings for the GMMP 2010 in Mauritius has not changed much compared to the Gender and Media Baseline Study (GMBS) which found that women constituted 17% of news sources in Mauritius. In 2005, women's voices were virtually absent in certain occupational fields like politics, religion, police, military and science and technology. This has not altered in today's era.

In addition, gender inequality in media is one of the main reasons why the mindset of people is not changing and this is leading to other adverse impacts on our society. **The time is now**; we should develop strategies to stop the decline of women's role in media. Kofi Annan was right when he said that *“Gender equality is more than a goal in itself. It is a precondition for meeting the challenge of reducing poverty, promoting sustainable development and building good governance.”*

THE NEXT FIVE YEARS

What can be done in the next five years to promote the fair and balanced representation of women and men in the news in Mauritius?

- Media houses can start providing training and empowerment programs for female reporters
- Citizens or media consumers in Mauritius should be more active to news being read and should respond to editors on gender unequal news.
- NGOs and stakeholders should encourage media houses to produce gender-just reportage.
- Media Watch Organisations can intensify its media alerts and complaints projects to be more vigilant to gender-stereotypical adverts and those showing women in sexual poses.
- Media literacy should be given importance in media houses and even for media consumers.

Annex 1. Methodology

Each participating country was assigned a specific number of newspapers, and radio and television newscasts to monitor based on the national media density. This was done to ensure that global results would reliably reflect the distribution of the world's news media, while respecting the need to balance results from smaller countries with those of larger countries. The number and selection of media outlets monitored in each country reflects the density and diversity – audience, ownership, language – of media in each country.

Efforts were made to ensure a uniform understanding and application of the methodology across the world. Clear instructions on how to code were provided. Some regional and national coordinators benefited from face-to-face or virtual training while others and the broader global teams of volunteers developed skills in monitoring through online self-administered tutorials. In one region, national coordinators were trained by the regional coordinator via teleconference. In some countries, national coordinators provided advance training to volunteer monitoring groups.

In each country monitors coded the most important television and radio newscasts of the day in their entirety. For newspapers, 12 to 14 stories appearing on the main news pages – defined as the pages devoted to national, international and, in some cases, regional news – were coded. Internet news was included for the first time in the global monitoring on a pilot basis in a few countries selected on the basis of the importance of the Internet as a news source for local news consumers.

The quantitative research captured statistical data on news topics, women and men in the news, the types of news stories in which they appeared, and their function in the news. Media Monitoring Africa (MMA) in South Africa was responsible for the quantitative analysis.

An in-depth and more nuanced analysis of selected news stories examined the means, themes and patterns of gender in the news. This qualitative analysis took into account the role of story angle, language and visual representations in constructing and sustaining or challenging gender stereotypes.

A full discussion of the methodology, including considerations on reliability, accuracy and limitations, is contained in the global report *Who Makes the News? The Global Media Monitoring Project 2010*.

Annex 2. List of Monitors

National coordinator: Denisha Seedoyal

Monitor: Melanie Doraisamy

Monitor2: Girisha Devi Soobron

Annex 3. Reference list

Lowe Morna, Colleen, Rama Kubi, Muriungi Agnes, *My views on the news*, The Southern African Gender and Media Audience Study, final report, pp95, 2005.

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