

**WHO
MAKES THE
NEWS?**



BHUTAN

Global Media Monitoring Project 2015

National Report



GMMP
Global Media
Monitoring Project
WACC

Acknowledgements



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GMMP 2015 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 2015 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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Global Context

- As newsroom staff around the world went about their day on 25 March 2015, hundreds of volunteers located in over 100 countries gathered to monitor their news media as part of the Fifth Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP).
- 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 fourth GMMP in 2010 attracted the participation of 108 countries. Some progress in women's presence in the news was evident.³ Women made up 24% of the people in the news. While this 3% increase in the preceding five years was statistically significant, the overwhelming results showed women's continued near invisibility in the news. Only 13% of all stories – focussed specifically on women. Women were rarely central in stories that comprised the bulk of the news agenda such as politics, government and the economy. Women were outnumbered by men as newsmakers in every major news topic. 44% of people providing popular opinion in the news were women – a 10% increase from 2005. As newsmakers, women were under-represented in professional categories. The fourth 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 (28%) than in stories reported by male journalists (22%). In a pilot monitoring of news online, 76 news websites in 16 countries and 8 international news websites were also monitored as part of the GMMP in 2010. The results showed only 23% of news subjects were women – indicating that women's invisibility in traditional media was mirrored in news presented online.
- The First GMMP and, as will be seen, the Fifth GMMP reveal that the world reported in the news is mostly male. Twenty years since the first GMMP, the challenges of news media sexism, gender stereotyping and gender bias are proving to be intractable across time, space and content delivery platforms. At the same time, there exist a few examples of successes towards gender-just, gender-fair media.

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

³ Macharia, Sarah, Dermot O'Connor and Lilian Ndangam, World Association for Christian Communication. *Who makes the news? Global Media Monitoring Project*. 2010

National context

- Bhutan is a small kingdom in the eastern Himalayas, situated between the People's Republic of China in the North and India in the South, with Nepal to the West. It is mostly mountainous and only 3% of the land is cultivated or considered agricultural; another 4% is meadow or pastureland, and more than 70% is covered by forest. In 2014, the population was estimated to be 745,7153 with 48 per cent as female.⁴
- Bhutan has experienced an accelerating process of change since the 1960s when it opened to the world and started the process of planned development. Bhutan became the world's youngest democracy in 2008 with the political transition from a century-old monarchy led by His Majesty the Fourth King Jigme Singye Wangchuck. The Constitution of the Kingdom of Bhutan came into effect in 2008. The first parliamentary elections were held the same year and the second round took place in 2013. Bhutan has a bicameral system: the National Council consists of 20 members each elected to represent a Dzongkhag (district), the King; the National Assembly consists of 47 members, each elected by a constituency.
- Bhutan's approach to development is shaped by the concept of gross national happiness (GNH), as mandated by the 2008 Constitution.
- Bhutan signed the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) in 1981 and further, the Bhutanese Constitution, one of the world's most progressive, as a principle of the state policy provides State protection to women and Bhutan has the Domestic Violence Prevention Act (2013) and has committed to achieve all its provisions in addition to other international and regional gender goals such as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the SAARC Development Goals (SDGs). To facilitate the achievement of these goals, Bhutan has invested in the creation of a National Commission for Women and Children and in civil society organisations such as RENEW and Tarayana which along with the government, have developed awareness programs addressing women's rights and in particular violence against women in communities across the country.
- Bhutanese women enjoy considerable benefits that have arisen from a relatively supportive legal and social structure. Bhutanese laws prohibit sex discrimination and promote gender equality. Bhutan's government has always maintained a gender-neutral position in the formulation and implementation of its plans, policies and programmes. Bhutanese women therefore do not face any institutionalised form of discrimination-politically, socially, economically or legally and enjoy equality in almost all spheres of life. However, there are several areas where women are at a disadvantage due to subtle and indirect forms of gender disparity that exist in the society. Gender gaps are apparent in key areas such as secondary and tertiary education, national economic and political participation and among victims of domestic violence. According to the Labour Force Survey 2013, women made up 58.9 per cent of Bhutan's labour force, including 30 per cent in the agriculture and forestry jobs.
- In 2014, only 16.5 per cent of members in the Parliament and 7 per cent in Local government were women, and a woman held the position of a Minister for the first time in Bhutanese history. More than 33 per cent of the Bhutanese public service workforce was female, with women holding only 6.5 per cent in the senior executive positions.⁵ Clear gaps exist between male and female participation in political and economic circles.

⁴ *Bhutan at a Glance*. National Statistical Bureau. 2014

⁵ *Gender at a Glance*. National Commission for Women and Children. 2014

- Therefore, the development process ever since in the 10th Five Year Plan (2008-2012) has evolved from a ‘Woman in Development approach’ to a Gendered approach and in the 11th FYP, included gender responsive budget to translate political commitment into concrete action for gender equality and women’s empowerment.
- Bhutan’s information and communication space has expanded considerably after arrival of television and the internet in 1999 and with the liberation of news business license in 2006.
- The Bhutanese Constitution guarantees freedom of expression, including freedom of the press and other media, and access to information.⁶
- Although, the ‘Code of Ethics for Journalists’ issued by the Bhutan Info-Comm and Media Authority(BICMA) in 2006 and the ‘Code of Ethics for Journalists’ developed by the Journalists Association of Bhutan (JAB) in 2014 provides for the basis of responsible reporting and demands media house/journalists the pursuit of a standard of integrity proportionate to their purpose and obligation. However, given the nature and dimension of issues related to gender equality, the present code of ethics are not comprehensive enough to be able to cater and bring out professional reporting on issues related to women.
- 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.
- This is the first time Bhutan has participated in the GMMP. As a country pursuing Gross National Happiness, many women equality advocates, policy makers, observers and critics would be interested to know Bhutan’s approach to gender equity and equality. Therefore, it was crucial to be part of GMMP to understand the true picture of the existence of gender disparity in the Bhutanese society through the lens of the media and keep track of the media and its portrayal of women. The results can be used as a tool to advocate change for a more equitable representation of women in media in general and women in the news in particular.
- BMF is a non-profit civil society organisation, that was established to foster the growth of a strong, responsible media capable of playing an important role in the social, economic and political growth of the nation. It is mandated to support the wholesome development of mass media so that it can carry out its roles and responsibilities in the interest of the democracy with fear or favour.

Executive Summary

Bhutan’s approach to development is shaped by the concept of gross national happiness (GNH), as mandated by the 2008 Constitution and laws prohibit sex discrimination and promote gender equality. As per several United Nation reports and other reports from Bhutanese organisations, gender equality indicators suggest that Bhutan compares well with some but not all countries in the region. However, the news in Bhutan mirrors a wider gap between the stated gender equality policies and the states intervention to improve the gender equality. Instead, it shows a men’s world were women representation in politics and

⁶ Constitution of Kingdom of Bhutan. 2008

governing and women's concern are almost unseen. After monitoring 4 major news outlets in Bhutan, here are some of the key findings of this report:

- **Who are the newsmakers?** Men were the dominant newsmakers and the most frequent occupations in the news that day were those described as '*Government employee, public servant, etc., and government, politician, minister, spokesperson, etc.*'. In this two category 100% were male. Together these two categories make up over half of all subjects in the news that day. Obviously the numbers can be explained as reflecting the relative low percentage of women in these occupations and domination by men.
- **Women are dramatically under-represented in the news.** Only 12% of the news subjects—the people who are interviewed, or whom the news is about are female. Men were 7.3 times more likely to be featured as news subjects, and totally dominated when it came to stories about “economy,” “crime and violence,” “celebrity, arts and media and sports.” Considering women make up almost half of the population of Bhutan, women are marginalised as subjects in the news and remains consistent with the overall finding of low representation of women as subject of news.
- **Women are rarely heard in dominant news topics.** In 2015, women make up only 24% of the persons heard, read about or seen in newspaper, television and radio news. Male dominated as the sources of news and in categories like ‘Economy,’ ‘Crime and Violence’ and ‘Celebrity, Arts, Media and Sports’ women were totally absent. Even in categories where women were visible was below 30%. Women consisted of only 29% in ‘Science and Health’ and 14% in Social and legal, of all people who were named, heard or visible as characters or speakers in the news stories.
- **Women in the news mostly function as providers of personal accounts, and rarely as knowledgeable experts.** Men made up a high percentage as news subject (100%), spokesperson (96%), expert or commentator (100%). On the other hand women were sought after for their personal experience (36%).
- **Only 8% of all news stories have women as a central focus.** Moreover, when stories about issues that concern women were included, they were more likely to be covered by female reporters. In total, 22% of the stories with women as a central focus had women reporters while males did not cover at all.
- **Overall, news stories were dramatically more likely to reinforce gender stereotypes rather than to challenge them.** Gender stereotype was explicitly visible throughout the topics covered. News stories on gender (in)equality were almost non-existent. Very few stories challenged gender stereotypes with 17% in celebrity arts, media and sport, 10% in economy. Notably, when articles did address this issue, they tended to be covered by women.
- **Less women reporters than men.** A total number of 42 reporters and presenters were making the news. Out of the 42, only 18 were female, which represents only 43% of the total.
- **More Women reporter in Television.** There were, however, a few positive trends worth noting such as a stronger number of female reporters in television media (61%) and a healthy number of women reporting on national news stories (67%).

A DAY IN THE NEWS IN BHUTAN

- **March 25 2015.** It was like any typical day in Bhutan and in the Bhutanese media not a single headlines was an attention grabber. The news represented more of development journalism. This might be a reflection of the peace and tranquility that Bhutan enjoys and the pace of development in Bhutan. The headlines were dominated by economy (26%) followed by science and health (24%), social and legal issues (21%), and the much beloved royal family (16%) of Bhutan. There was no particular story that dominated the news and nor was there an explicit representation of gender bias.

THE CONTEXT

- **Country background:** Bhutan became the world's youngest democracy in 2008 with the political transition from a century-old monarchy. Bhutan's information and communication space has expanded considerably after arrival of television and the internet in 1999 and with the liberation of news business license in 2006.
- Bhutan has a mixed system of media with a state supported public broadcaster, the Bhutan Broadcasting Service, and a newspaper-Kuensel which has 51% share of the government and also range of private media companies.
- The first public information gazette was published in 1967 by the government. This gazette evolved to become the first newspaper-'Kuensel' in 1986. Later in 1992, a royal edict de-linked Kuensel from the government and made it an autonomous corporation to allow for the professional growth of the media. From a weekly paper Kuensel went daily since 27 April 2009. It covers wide range of issues and is published from Monday to Saturday.
- Television and Radio is the most effective media in the country and reaches the largest audience by far. Bhutan Broadcasting Service (BBS) is the national public service broadcaster. BBS Radio (then known as Radio NYAB) was started in November 1973 by young volunteers belonging to the National Youth Association of Bhutan. In 1986, with the commissioning of a 10 KW short-wave transmitter and a small broadcast studio, Radio NYAB was renamed as Bhutan Broadcasting Service. BBS radio broadcasts for 24 hours in four languages (Dzongkha, Sharchop, Lhotshamkha and English), on both shortwave and FM frequency as well as online.
- The coming of private newspapers in 2006 ushered in an era of pluralism in reporting of news and views, resulting in the most vibrant media the country has ever seen. The advent of private radio stations soon after private newspapers in 2006 added to the media's diversity.
- As of July 2015, Bhutan's major media comprise of the following: One daily newspaper; One bi-weekly newspaper; Eight weekly newspapers; Five radio stations and One television station. They are increasingly playing the roles once played by family, community, religion and formal education: not only disseminating information and knowledge, but also shaping values and norms, moulding attitudes and behaviour, and influencing the very process of living.
- **Media monitored:** Two newspapers, one daily (Kuensel) and a weekly (Bhutan Today) were monitored for print. In the radio and TV, the state broadcaster, Bhutan Broadcasting Service

(BBS) was monitored. 38 news items were coded in total; 22 for print, 7 for radio and 9 for TV.

- **The monitors:** Five people who all work for Bhutan Media Foundation participated in the GMMP 2015 and Television and radio broadcasts were recorded on monitoring day and analysed later.

TOPICS IN THE NEWS

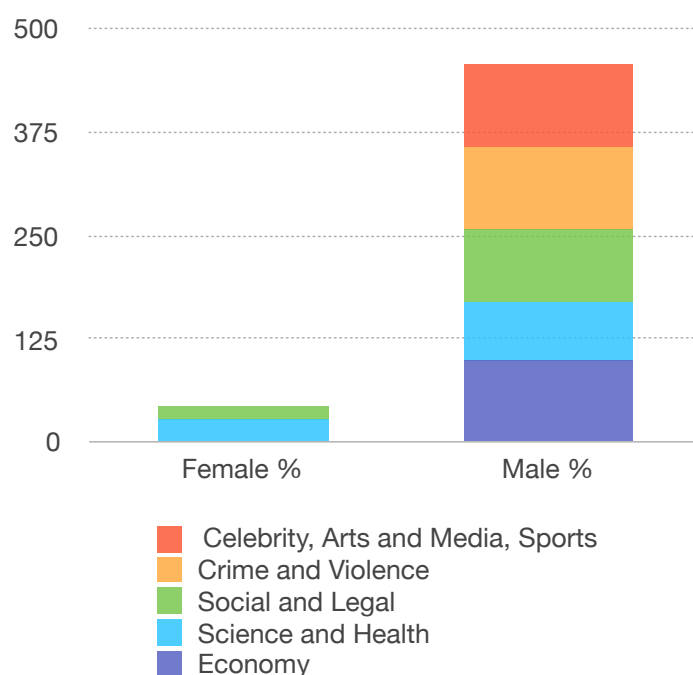
- **Topics in the news:** On the monitoring day the majority of news stories across traditional mass media were on economy (26%) followed by science and health (24%), social and legal issues (21%), celebrity, arts, media and sport (16%) and, finally, crime and violence (13%). It is interesting to note that there was no news on Politics and Government.
- There were fewer women reporters covering the 5 major topics. Although it seemed that there was a 44% of female reporters covering economy and 33% covering science and health it is nonetheless covered by fewer women reporters.

THE NEWS

Overall presence of women and men in the news in your country as news subjects: In 2015, women make up only 24% of the persons heard, read about or seen in newspaper, television and radio news. Male dominated as the sources of news and in categories like 'Economy,' 'Crime and Violence' and 'Celebrity, Arts, Media and Sports' women were totally absent. Even in categories where women were visible was below 30%. Women consisted of only 29% in 'Science and Health' and 14% in Social and legal, of all people who were named, heard or visible as characters or speakers in the news stories.

Overall Presence of Women in News

TOPIC	FEMALE %	MALE %
Economy	0	100
Science and Health	29	71
Social and Legal	14	86
Crime and Violence	0	100
Celebrity, Arts and Media, Sports	0	100



- **Presence of female and male news subjects in your country by medium-radio, TV and newspapers:** Female sources appeared most often in newspaper stories, making up only 17% of sources and in Radio it was only 9% and in the least frequent in TV with only 6%. Whereas, male dominated in all the three traditional media with print (83%), radio (91%) and TV (94%).
- **News Sources:** Female were less likely to be News sources by scope about local and national affairs (8% and 16%) and totally absent from international stories. However they are more likely to be quoted as sources with 75% compared to 79% males.
- **Who are the newsmakers?** Looking at the results, men were the dominant newsmakers in economy, science and health and social and legal issues. The most frequent occupations in the news that day were those described as '*Government employee, public servant, etc. government, politician, minister, spokesperson, etc.*'. In this category 100% were male. Together these two categories make up over half of all subjects in the news that day. Obviously the numbers can be explained as reflecting the relative percentage of women in these occupations and domination by men.
- **Function of female and male news subjects:** Men made up a high percentage as news subject (100%), spokesperson (96%), expert or commentator (100%). On the other hand women were sought after for their personal experience (36%).
- **Constructing 'victims' and "survivors" in the news:** Victimisation is an important trope used in news, which works to establish social norms and expectations about women's roles, power and authority. However, during the monitoring day, women were portrayed both as victims and survivors of accident, natural disaster (100%).
- **Identity and family status in the news:** Women are often portrayed through their familial roles such as wife, daughter or mother. The result of the monitoring showed that 33 percent of the women as news subjects were identified in terms of the familial role, while not a single male was mentioned through their familial role.
- **Images in the news:** There was not a single woman present in the news appeared in photographs or had their images. 5% of men were visible in the news irrespective of whether they are news subjects or news source or picture story.
- **Overall reporters and presenters:** A total number of 42 reporters and presenters were coded with 16 for print, 8 for radio, 18 for television. There were more male reporters covering news in the print media with 56% for male reporters to 44% for female reporters. However, for radio announcers, they were totally male with 100%. As for television, female were 61% compared to 39% male and therefore reinforces that the medium of television has traditionally valued the physical appearance and perceived sexual attractiveness of women as TV news anchors and reporters and further majority of them were under the age group of 19-34.
- **Reporters, by scope and major topic:** Female reporters and announcers covered mainly the local (33%) and national (67%) issues whereas news of international scope were covered only by male reporters (14%). There were fewer women reporters covering the 5 major

topics. Although it seemed that there was a 44% of female reporters covering economy and 33% covering science and health it is nonetheless covered by fewer women reporters. From the result, there were only 9 female reporters reporting major topics in the news compared to 14 male reporters on news day.

Reporters, by sex on major topics, by region				
	Female		Male	
	%	N	%	N
Politics and Government	0%	0	0%	0
Economy	44%	4	36%	5
Science and Health	33%	3	36%	5
Social and Legal	11%	1	14%	2
Crime and Violence	11%	1	14%	2
Celebrity, Arts and Media, Sports	0%	0	0%	0
Other	0%	0	0%	0
	100%		100%	

GENDER AND THE NEWS

- **Women's centrality in the news:** In total, women as central focus was only 8% of the news and of this women constituted 17% of the celebrity, Arts, media and sports followed by science and health (11%) and economy (10%) and totally absent in the other topics.

Stories with Women as a central Focus by major topic

TOPIC	FEMALE %	MALE %
Economy	10	90
Science and Health	11	89
Social and Legal	0	100
Crime and Violence	0	100
Celebrity, Arts and Media, Sports	17	83

- **Challenging or reinforcing stereotypes?** Gender stereotype was explicitly visible throughout the topics covered. Very few stories challenged gender stereotypes with 17% in celebrity arts, media and sport, 10% in economy. Notably, when pieces did address this issue, they tended to be covered by women.
- **Stories that highlight issues of gender equality or inequality issues:** Of the variety of stories taken up by news media, the subjects of gender inequality were raised in stories on consumer issues, consumer protection, fraud, etc and non-violent crime, bribery, theft, drugs, corruption. Of these two topics, women reporters did the story on consumer issues, consumer protection, fraud, etc and the male reporters did the story on non-violent crime, bribery, theft, drugs, corruption.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The results of the monitoring reveals that out of the 38 items of news analysed in the traditional media show that there was a dismally low percentage of women in the news. Since this was the first time Bhutan was participating in the monitoring, we don't have a baseline to understand the improvement or regression from GMMP 2010 to GMMP 2015.

However, without much deliberation, the overall, conclusions reached from this GMMP study finds that the presence and place of women in the news is dismally low compared to men. The core findings for Bhutan include that:

1. Women are under-represented and the stereotyping of women in news is both systemic and systematic
2. The most telling representation of this is that the overall presence of women in news was only 12% and further, only 8% focused on women as a central focus in news.
3. Gender disparities are also present with respect to the overall number of female reporters, which came in at 43%.
4. There were, however, a few positive trends worth noting such as a stronger number of female reporters in television media (61%); a healthy number of women reporting on national news stories (67%).

ACTIONS IN THE POST-2015 ERA: A five-year plan

In order to see a change in the next five years and bring gender equality and equity in the media, concrete steps must be made at different levels:

1. Awareness and capacity building programs on gender discrimination, equality, and equity has to continue at media organisation level, working journalists level and editors level.
2. Media agencies should adopt guidelines and mentor younger employees to be gender sensitive.
3. Best practices, educational programs, and policies need to be shared between the GMMP countries and media institutions.
4. Resources for media companies should also be identified and provided in order to able them to perform their own monitoring to asses their stories impact and understand their shortcomings on gender.
5. Civil society groups, nonprofit organisations, educational institutions must be encouraged and funded to continue their work on gender and the media.
6. Training of trainers has to be implemented in all GMMP participating countries to encourage more participants in the next GMMP.

Annex 1. Methodology

Each participating country was assigned a specific number of newspapers, radio and television newscasts, online news sites and twitter feeds to monitor based on the national media density. This was done to ensure global results represented 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 was practiced 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. Country teams could opt into the online and twitter news monitoring based on their knowledge of the importance of these channels for news delivery to local audiences.

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 managing and processing the monitoring data.

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 2015*.

Annex 2. List of Monitors

1. Mr. Dawa Penjor, National Coordinator
2. Ms. Sonam Tshomo
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