WOMEN IN THE TANZANIAN MEDIA:
A CRITICAL ANALYSIS

ЖЕНЩИНЫ В ТАНЗАНИЙСКИХ МЕДИА:
КРИТИЧЕСКИЙ АНАЛИЗ

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Research reports that indicate that women are marginalized in the Southern African and Tanzanian media call for urgent redress. In the specific instance of Tanzania, male sources dominate at 79%, while radio has the lowest proportion of female sources at 13% — women are more likely to be seen than to be heard. Female voices are heard in the "soft" areas such as gender equality and gender-based violence and less so in the fields of mining, labor and housing, each of which registers at a paltry 10%. Their voices start to disappear when they attain the age of 50. Women's commentary dominates in the categories of beauty contests, and in reports on sex workers and homemaking, and women are more likely to be identified by a personal tag. In the newsroom, women constitute only 25% of print reporters, they are more likely to feature in "soft" news beats, and women occupy just over a quarter of the top management positions and constitute 14% of sources quoted

by male reporters. This study, citing best practices, charts the way forward more even gender representation in the Tanzanian media.

Key words: Tanzania, gender, media, SADC Protocol, Africa.

Данное исследование демонстрирует, что медиа Северной Африки и Танзании маргинализируют женщин. В Танзании мужчины выступают в роли источника информации в 79% случаев, в то время как на радио женщины появляются еще реже — всего в 13% случаев. Женщин гораздо чаще можно увидеть, а не услышать. Голоса женщин звучат, когда речь идет о более «мягких» темах, таких как равенство полов или гендерное насилие, и заметны гораздо реже в дискуссиях о горнодобыче, трудоустройстве или жилищных вопросах (всего 10% в каждой из тем). Мнения женщин, достигающих пятидесятилетнего возраста, исчезают из публичной сферы. Женские комментарии преобладают под материалами о конкурсах красоты, сексуальной индустрии и ведении домашнего хозяйства; кроме того, женщины чаще склонны идентифицировать себя при помощи персонального тега. В редакциях печатных СМИ женщины составляют только 25% от числа сотрудников, чаще задействованы в создании «мягких» новостей, насчитывают всего четверть от штата топ-менеджеров. Женщины составляют только 14% от цитируемых мужчинами-журналистами источников. Автора данной работы, ссылаясь на лучшие практики, предлагает пути для нормализации гендерного баланса в танзанийских СМИ.

Ключевые слова: Танзания, гендер, медиа, протокол САДКК, Африка.

Introduction

Interest in positioning women beyond hearth and home goes way back, however progress or change in their circumstances in the media remains a sticking point (Byerly, 2014: 38–43; de Bruin, 2014; Gallagher, 2014: 12–29; Ross, 2014: 44–48). In spite of the fact that more women graduate from professional and vocational media programmes, they get stuck in middle management and rarely get into top positions in media houses (Ross, 2014: 44–48). For instance, a 59-nation study of women in 522 newsrooms, found that women hold 33% of the jobs in reporting and 25% top management and governance positions, with little access to technical positions (Byerly, 2014: 38–43).

Naturally, media contents emanating from this skewed setup are a potential disservice to women as male values and judgment predominate (de Bruin, 2014). This shows up clearly in the Southern African media. The regional average in terms of the proportion of female sources quoted in the media stands at 19%, with Zimbabwe and Zambia at the bottom of the list (14%), and Lesotho topping the list at 33 per cent (Gender Links, n.d.a).

In comparative terms, Morna (Morna, 2006) reports that SADC's proportion of female sources has improved from 17% to 19%, but that this is still lower than the global average which stands at 21%. She notes that this makes Africa second from the bottom of international ratings, alongside Asia and better only than the Middle East (15%). Rankings by regions, according to Morna (Morna, 2006), are as follows: North America and the Pacific (26%), The Caribbean (25%), Latin America (23%) and Europe (21%).

There is a slight variance between the global and regional figures as regards women's voices. Morna notes that there is no category in which female voices dominate in the global study, which featured

the following categories – politics and government, economy and business, social and legal, celebrity, arts and sports, crime and violence, science and health as well as "others". She notes that in the regional study, women dominate only in the crime/violence category, which also includes gender-based violence (GBV) as well as the social and legal categories. But "women's voices are least heard in politics and government (12% in the global and 14% in the regional study) as well as economy and business (20% in the global study and 19% in the regional study)" (Morna, 2006: 16).

When the finding is disaggregated according to medium, the voices of women are virtually absent from radio (Morna, 2006). This finding becomes starker when one notes that radio is the most accessible and the most consumed medium on the African continent (Boafo, 1985; AMDI, 2006). In newspapers and TV however, female voices hover above the 20% mark (Morna, 2006).

The Southern African Development Committee (GMAS) Protocol on Gender and Development (2008), of which Tanzania is a signatory, has specific provisions as regards the role of the news media in carrying forward the objectives of the document. State parties are encouraged to put in place measures to ensure equal representation of women in decision-making positions and ownership of the media as well as to give equal voices to men and women in all areas of coverage.

This paper focuses the searchlight on the Tanzanian media by examining coverage of women and their status in the newsroom.

Tanzanian media and the gender agenda

The media in Tanzania has gone through a number of phases. Rioba (Rioba, 1998) identifies these as, first, German and British sway over

the media that provided support for the colonial enterprise; second, the missionary press that sought to advance the Gospel; and then, in progression, the nationalist press-used to agitate for independence and self-rule; the post-colonial phase that sought to advance socialist principles; and finally the era of deregulation that saw a number of private players coming into and enriching the media space.

This resulted in a preponderance of offerings today: forty-seven radio stations, 537 registered newspapers and about a dozen TV stations (AudienceScapes, 2011). However, access is another matter. The report from AudienceScapes (AudienceScapes, 2011) paints a mixed picture: Radio has the highest audience numbers at 83%. As regards TV, 27% have household access while 41% watch weekly. Newspapers sit at the bottom of the log due mainly to poor circulation. And rural dwellers as well as women are shut out from media access and use.

This is a clear reflection of the situation on the ground, particularly in relation to women in Tanzania as they face a number of challenges. A majority are consigned to rural areas. They are regarded and treated as minors in that they do not have a say in community matters, nor can they inherit their husband's estate upon his passing; women are valued for their childbearing abilities and discriminated against if they are unable to produce children; are faced with unequal educational opportunities and employment prospects, amongst others (Mbilinyi, 1972: 371–377). Efforts at addressing these issues have galvanized a number of non-state players into action. The Tanzanian Media Women Association, for instance, has the stated mission of creating awareness with a view to addressing these challenges through the media (TAMWA, 2015), especially given that the media is an important avenue in the fight for women's rights to communicate which is, in turn, bound up in their right to participate in society (Byerly, 2014: 38–43).

A germane question would be how the Tanzanian media is faring given the dire Southern African picture? The Gender Links (Gender Links, n.d.a) Gender and Media Audience Study (GMAS) – Tanzania, found out that the news does not equally reflect the views of women and men. In fact, male sources are featured far more often than female sources (16%). Gender Links' (Gender Links, n.d.b) proportion of female sources in the SADC media study places the proportion of female sources in Tanzania at 20%, one percent more than the regional average. In the GMAS study, female respondents were of the view that male issues, such as politics and economics, dominate the news. Other respondents pointed out that women are regarded as second class citizens from the news perspective and are thus relegated to cooking and entertainment programmes. Where they feature most is in "sensational tabloids with abusive, dirty headlines and pictures" (SADC protocol on gender and development, 1998: 183).

In the index of employment, there are fewer female professional journalists (36%) compared to their male counterparts (64%) (Gender Links, 2009). Tanzania Standard Newspaper (TSN) Limited, which retains the largest staff of journalists, had only one in three females (34%) to two in three male journalists (Gender Links, 2009). The most glaring gender gaps were at Global Publishers Ltd., with 79% male journalists, and Majira, with 78%. The reasons for this skewed employment outlook, according to the Tanzanian Glass Ceiling research, were the difficult and discouraging employment conditions of the local media, a lack of trained female journalists and role models, the difficulties of juggling professional and personal responsibilities, and finally, a sense that media houses are not doing enough to recruit female journalists (Gender Links, 2009).

In terms of media management, women occupy 30% of senior management positions and make up a little over one-fifth of top

management positions (22%) (Gender Links, 2009). The Tanzanian Glass Ceiling report also notes that men (64%) are more likely to be employed in open-ended full time contracts than their female counterparts (36%). Continuing, the study also points out the high percentage of women employed on a freelance basis (59%) and male dominance in all departments - printing and distribution (100%); technical/IT (70%); advertising/marketing (68%); and production (67%). Women are rather consigned to supportive roles (including secretarial functions) in human resources, in addition to support positions in finance and administration.

Other damning employment practices in the Tanzanian media are also chronicled by the Glass Ceiling report. There are few women in the editorial departments (36%); female reporters are assigned to soft beats such as gender equality, health and human rights while their male counterparts get to cover politics, finance, business, investigative and in-depth issues; there are no specific targets for achieving gender parity; only 7% have strategies to fast track women and less than a third (29%) take gender into consideration during promotion exercises; only a few media houses (14%) had a database of female candidates and only one in five (21%) sought out female candidates specifically; only 71% offered maternity leave and a paltry 7% gave paternity leave; only 7% had a crèche in place while 57% offered flexitime and 21% each had gender and sexual harassment policies.

Discussion

The situation of women in the Tanzanian media is best approached from a critical perspective, which seeks to understand the dominant structure, systems and ideologies that regulate society,

with an emphasis on the question of whose interests are being served. Such an approach serves to reveal oppressive social conditions and power arrangements to ensure redress (Littlejohn, Foss, 2011). A critical approach usually takes the side of the oppressed and marginalized (Littlejohn, Foss, 2011). Notwithstanding the many other approaches to analysis (Treadwell, 2014), this paper takes a critical view while also being solution-oriented.

From the worrying statistics above, the Tanzanian media needs to work very hard to mainstream gender and ensure gender equality in line with the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development. It is clear from the various studies that the Tanzanian media, contrary to the provisions of the protocol, marginalizes and oppresses women, portrays women as helpless victims and undermines their role and position in society thus reinforcing gender oppression and stereotypes. Tanzania Media Women Association, even while commending the increase in reporting of gender-based violence that has drawn attention to the oppression and abuse of the women, faults the slant of the stories. "Stories that are written still lack methods of protecting survivors... causing the survivors to suffer double victimization... Stories are written with little ethical considerations such as protecting the identity of the survivors and shaming the act instead [it] creates elements of promoting the perpetrator and blaming the survivor" (TAMWA, 2013: 1).

The gender insensitivity that TAMWA has identified as a problem is in full display in the Tanzanian media. A few examples should suffice. In a story headlined "Walimu Mbeya vijijini 'walamba' mkopo wa milioni", teachers in Mbeya were urged by their area representative to utilize the loans made available by CRDB Bank Plc wisely instead of frittering away the money: "These loans should not be drank (sic) when you get to your homes or used to impress... everyone you meet... you should not imagine you can **now have every**

woman you want (emphasis added) (Gender Links, n.d.c, par. 6). An example of a blatant stereotype is conveyed in the story headlined "Warembo hawa ni Sexy 100% – The sexy 100% beauties". Ogling over and objectification of former beauty queens is indecent to say the least:

A survey done by Amani over a long period has shown that these beauties are the cause of sleepless nights for many Tanzanian men, while others [sic] swear they would give any amount of money to have them. The survey, which drew opinions from different men countrywide, established that Jacqueline a.k.a 'K-Lyin, Nancy, Wema and Lissa are the most beautiful women in Tanzania who draw double stares from the men who have seen them. "They are very appealing and sexy. Here in Tanzania, I think there is no woman [sic] more beautiful than Wema, K-Lyin, Nancy and Lissa. I would personally like to be in a relationship with Lissa but I hear she is already taken", said one man. (Gender Links, n.d.).

The fact that these attitudes thrive in a professional environment where women are underrepresented and not encouraged raises questions about whether and how this skewed coverage is likely to change. It has been proven that putting more female journalists in the newsroom will not change the course of coverage (Morna, Rama, Muriungi, 2005) for a variety of reasons, including ownership and the profit motive (Akpabio, 2007: 130–140), but it does allow more female sources to feature than if male reporters were the only ones in charge (Morna, 2006).

It must be borne in mind that the SADC Protocol actually charges state parties to ensure the implementation of the provisions, including those directly related to gender and the media. The media usually have an ambivalent attitude toward attempts by governments to regulate the industry (Frost, 2000) so the easy way out is for the media to organize their own affairs.

Fairly routine, yet critical steps toward this goal need to be taken. Media need to employ more female journalists, and to make newsrooms more favourable for this category of staff through putting in place gender and sexual harassment policies, establishing crèches in the workplace, and fast-tracking the promotion of women into top positions so that gender is mainstreamed and stories and assignments are looked at through a gendered lens, offering varied perspectives.

Morna (Morna, 2006) recommends that concerted efforts must be made to feature female voices by deliberately seeking out news stories that feature gender equality and/or women in non-traditional roles, or highlight women's roles in areas where they are usually invisible, such as production line workers in a factory that is closing or, in another vein, women's role as official spoke persons and experts. She cites the example of the Media Watch Organization in Mauritius, which developed a directory of female sources and their work with media managers in developing policies that deliberately seek out the views of womenfolk.

Worth noting in the context of Morna's recommendation is the efforts of the Tanzania Media Women Association (TAMWA) at mainstreaming gender into editorial content, which has borne a number of fruits. The former Executive Director of the Association, Ananilea Nkya, underscored this when she noted that:

Today the media is giving women a voice in various ways, [sic] we see it condemning GBV acts such as female genital mutilation, women battery, school pregnancy, child marriage, rape etc. unlike in the past where such ill acts [as] GBV was seen as part of "culture"... The media is playing their role as change agents very effectively (IPP Media, 2012).

The Secretary General of the Tanzanian Editors Forum (TEF) acknowledged the efforts of the association in training reporters,

providing media houses with news stories and enabling coverage of rural areas emphasizing that "very few media organizations engage media strategically the way TAMWA does" (IPP Media, 2012).

Moreover, there are other efforts at addressing the issues. Gender Links (GL), Gender and Media Southern Africa (GEMSA) are working with the Tanzanian media to develop a female sources' directory as well as policies that would go a long way in assisting the local media in achieving the lofty goals of the SADC Protocol as it relates to gender and the media.

Gender Links, in particular, has established Media Centres of Excellence (Media COEs) in gender mainstreaming that go beyond "the six stage gender policy process (buy in, situation analysis, inception workshop to develop a policy and action plan drafting, adoption, monitoring and evaluation) to include on-the-job training; self-monitoring and sharing of good practices at the Gender and Media Summit" (Gender Links, n.d.c). However, only 11 media houses in Tanzania are on board: Business Times, Uhuru Publications, Media Express, Mwananchi Communications Limited, Africa Media Group, TBC, Free FM, Upendo Radio, Clouds Entertainment, Radio Tumaini and Lady Band.

In specific terms, GL has set itself the explicit task of working with about 100 media houses from 2011-14 to provide "a full gender mainstreaming package that draws from all research and training conducted to date and provides options for self-monitoring" (Gender Links, n.d.c: 1). The emphasis "will be on the job support and impact assessment leading up to the 5th and 6th Gender and Media (GEM) summits in 2012 and 2014" (Gender Links, n.d.c: 2). The Gender Links and GEMSA Tanzania Facilitator (G. Munuo, personal communication, August 8, 2012) indicated that the process commences with the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between a media house and GL; familiarizing media managers and

workers with the GL Opinion and Commentary Service, a resource that they can use and contribute to and which features best practice stories; on-the-job-training in key thematic areas identified by the SADC Protocol; and monitoring and evaluation.

Administration of media house scorecards, knowledge and attitudes surveys, situational analysis forms and other monitoring and evaluation tools that can be used to measure change in the immediate, medium and long term. A newly devised self-monitoring tool will be used by media houses to evaluate performance against set targets. This will ensure participation and ownership of the project (Gender Links, n.d.c: 5).

Consequently, the expected outcomes are as follows:
- gender built into policy and practice in media houses;
- at least 30% women sources in news content in participating media houses anticipated by 2014;
- 50% women in decision making positions in SADC newsrooms;
- media houses with a quantitative and qualitative overview of their performance – in the form of situational analyses;
- an increased knowledge and awareness on mainstreaming gender in editorial content and programming in broadcast media;
- Media houses and newsrooms are empowered around these processes and take ownership of these processes, in turn creating enabling platforms for replication of this process... (Gender Links, n.d.c: 6).

Research has shown that when there are national laws in place coupled with advocacy efforts, real progress can be recorded even though women must also make determined effort to enter into policy positions (Byerly, 2014: 38–43). This can be seen clearly in East European countries where, as Byerly reports, both men and

women were educated and given entry into the workforce during the communist era. She notes that women in the Bulgarian media are thus well placed in reporting, managerial positions and governance. The SADC protocols as well as the advocacy efforts chronicled above are already a step in the right direction. There should also be a determined push into policy-making positions by women in the Tanzanian media given the present dire picture.

Conclusion and recommendations

It is clear from the evidence presented here that the Southern African media and the local Tanzanian media are remiss in their duty of upholding the provisions of the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development, specifically the gender and media aspects. To remedy the situation, this paper calls for urgent redress through media houses making concerted efforts to employ female reporters, fast track women into management positions, provide a conducive employment climate and mainstream gender into every aspect of their operations. The paper also calls on media houses in Tanzania to sign up for the Gender Links' initiative "Media COE" which is geared towards fulfilling the provisions of the SADC Protocol. The advocacy efforts of TAMWA and Gender Links as well as SADC Protocol on Gender and Development have greatly aided the cause of women.

This study, like any other, also has limitations. Some of the data used in this paper are not very current and some raise questions of methodological soundness such as two-week monitoring of the media from which generalized statements have been made. However, the data do give a snapshot of current media posture and practice. However, other researchers may want to conduct more detailed and

methodologically sound studies to disprove or confirm some of the findings reported here and to provide more up-to-date figures on gender and media in Tanzania. This is even more compelling since some of the local media houses have signed up for the Media COE.

Overall, the paper makes the important contribution of clearly indicating that, based on available research findings, Tanzanian media houses need to re-evaluate their attitudes and outlooks in order to realign with the SADC Protocol. It also provides practical ways of going about these reforms, in accord with the critical approach, which calls for redress of inequities in society.

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