

# 6% Female Byline *in* 9 National Dailies

A REPORT ON GENDER CONTENTS MONITORING

April-June 2017





## Background

It is again the continuation of the monitoring of media contents to find the presence of women in significant newspapers published from the capital city. The monitoring has gained relevance also in the background that the country is engrossed in local level elections ensuring remarkable participation of women. As the empowerment of women and their presence in State agencies and other sectors has long been an issue of advocacy, Freedom Forum's attempt to generate evidences and make recommendations to the concerned media outlet is certainly to draw the attention from the stakeholders. The monitoring period this time is three months from April to June 2017. Compared to the reports prepared in previous quarters, this report shows slight improvement with the rise of female journalists in news byline and as news sources. Although overall presence is not much different from the previous ones, the data from the individual newspapers shows some improvements.

The study is undertaken by adopting the tools and methodologies provided by Free Press Unlimited (FPU). FF monitored the same nine national dailies (Kantipur, Nagarik, Annapurna Post, Naya Patrika, Gorkhapatra, The Rising Nepal, The Kathmandu Post, Republica and The Himalayan Times) during the recent three months and prepared a comparative and analytical report revealing male and female in bylines and news sources. This activity is carried out with the financial support from Free Press Unlimited (FPU), a foundation based in Amsterdam, the Netherlands, working in freedom of expression issues across the world.

## Objective of the study

- To extract data as number of male/ females bylines and number of male/ female news source in the news contents of main news pages.
- To conduct a comparative analysis on percentage representations of males and females in Nepali media contents.
- To briefly analyze the nature of news stories as for perpetuating or challenging stereotypes against men or women.
- To find out whether the less represented women cover news related to politics/ government or social/legal issues.

## Limitations of the study

- The study does not cover all the bits such as entertainment, economics, technology, etc. of the national dailies.
- The study only picks eight main news stories from each newspaper once in a week as representative samples.
- The study report does not describe overall presence of men/ women in the respective media houses.
- The report is based only upon the contents scanned according to the methodologies.

## Key Points:

- Male bylines (53%) outnumbered female bylines (6%) and the unknown bylines as well (41%)
- The Annapurna Postdaily scored the highest- 82% male bylines among newspapers studied, while the Kantipurdaily contained 13% female bylines (highest of all).
- Among total news monitored, 80% contained men, 9%female and 11% the secondary sources.
- Among total females, the Kantipur contributed to the maximum reporters (23%) and sources (16%).
- 60% of 1,080 news titles fall under Politics and Government followed by 20% social and legal news.
- 51% of females reported on Politics and government whereas, only 25% of females reported on social and legal issues on the main news pages.
- Among the total, 47% news stories warranted further analysis thus, challenging stereotype and highlighting (in) equality.

The data in the report showed considerable increase in women's participation as both news reporters and sources on all the nine media outlets.

## Methodology

As done in the previous study and analyses, the contents are picked from the same nine national dailies: Kantipur, Nagarik, Annapurna Post, Gorkhapatra and NayaPatrika in Nepali language and The Kathmandu Post, The Rising Nepal, The Himalayan Times, and Republica in English language. Those outlets were selected on the basis of their wide circulation, strong public reach and content diversity.

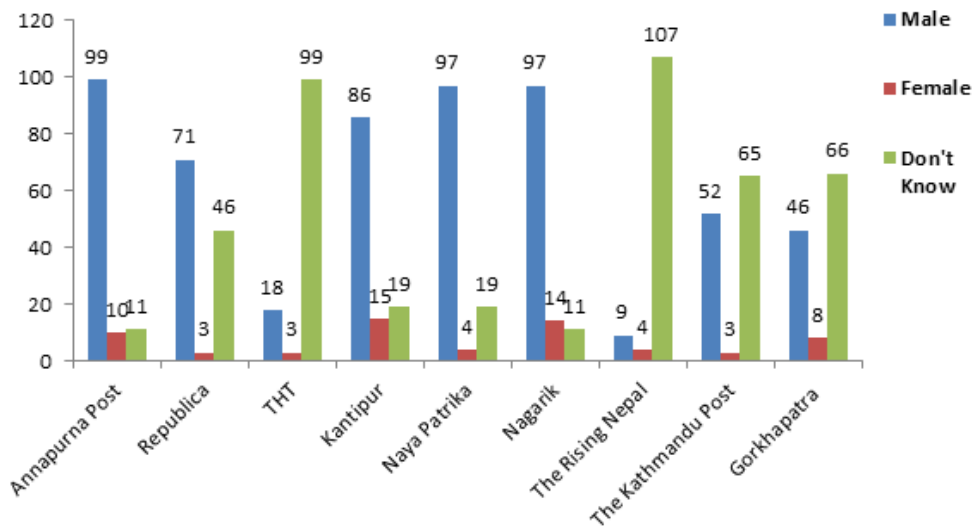
Eight news stories from main pages (1, 2, 3, 4 or 6) of each newspaper were randomly selected and scanned for derived variables once in a week (different days in different weeks); however, stories with named bylines were given first priority. The variables were recorded into a coding sheet provided by FPU. Figures derived in the coding sheet were then entered into Microsoft Excel and processed for presentation and tabulation.

Data were processed for comparing male versus female presence in news byline and sources, topic-wise distribution, stories showing gender (in) equality. Similarly, percentage of females reporting on political and social issues was also recorded.

## Results

### 1. Journalists (Who are talking in the media)

This study period observed relatively improved status of gender balance in byline contents of Nepali media. Among the media outlets monitored, The Rising Nepal still contributes to be have the least bylines followed by The Himalayan Times, Gorkhapatra and The Kathmandu Post whereas, Annapurna Post and Nagarik constituted maximum number of bylines. Annapurna Post scored the highest (82%) male bylines among others whereas, Kantipur contained 13% female bylines (highest of all) and The Rising Nepal contained 89% unknown bylines.



The news stories without specific names contained Himalayan News Service, RastriyaSamacharSamiti (RSS), Kantipur Reporter, NayaPatrika, Nagarik Reporter, Staff Reporter, Post Report, Gorkhapara Reporter, etc. in the bylines.

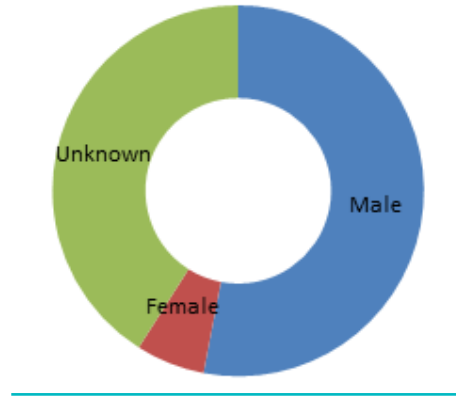
Similarly, among those containing male bylines Annapurna Post (AP) stood first being followed by Nagarik and NayaPatrika (NP) sharing same, then Kantipur, Republica, The Kathmandu Post (TKP), Gorkhapatra, The Himalayan Times (THT) and The Rising Nepal (TRN) containing the least.

The highest female representation was found in Kantipur, followed by Nagarik, AP, Gorkhapatra, TRN, NayaPatrika, and Republica, THT, and the TKP.

Amongst all, male bylines (53%) outnumbered female (6%) and unknown (41%). Looking back to the data from January-March, where THT, TKP and NP had 1, 0 and 1 female bylines; this time they have come up with 3, 3 and 4 respectively.

## 2. Sources (Who are talking in the stories)

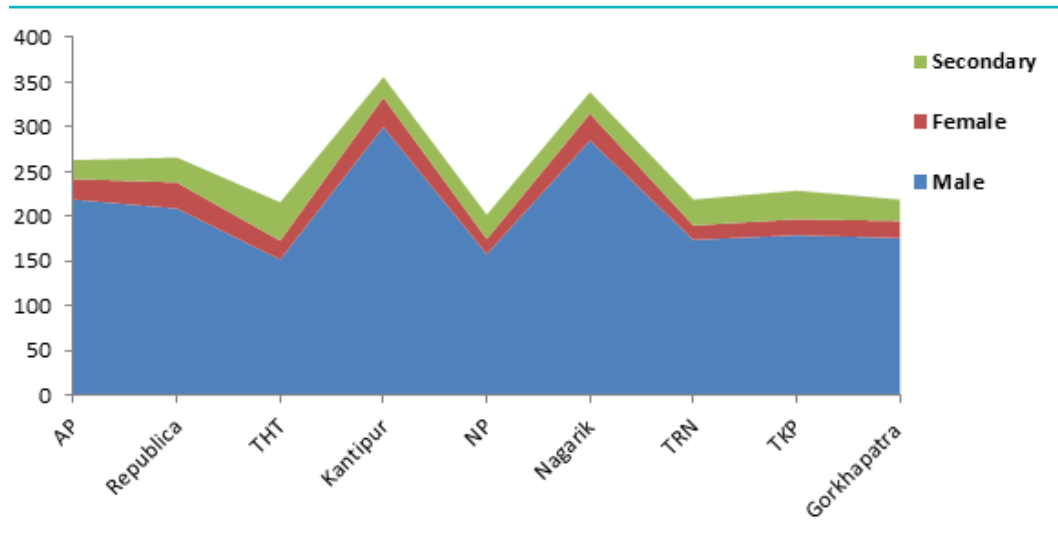
The data revealed that main news of the Nepali media outlets still prefer male news sources to their female counterpart resulting 80% male sources in contrast to 9% and 11% female and secondary sources respectively. Among all, Kantipur and Nagarik dailies contributed to the highest peak for all kind of news sources; men, women or secondary.



Secondary sources refer to data, reports, proposals, statements, amendment bills, court bills, orders, press releases, manifesto, etc.

This time, Kantipur tops the list followed by Nagarik, for covering maximum number of both male and female sources. Though overall data on women sources is considerably low; comparing to the previous reports, it looks progressive. Increase in the participation of women in the news stories may be linked to the current political atmosphere of Nepal- it is in course of shaping the local level by holding the local level elections.

THT contained maximum number of secondary sources (17%) amongst all. Similarly, in case of primary sources, Kantipur contained 16% men and 16% women quoted as news sources securing maximum among others.



### 3. Topic-wise distribution of News stories

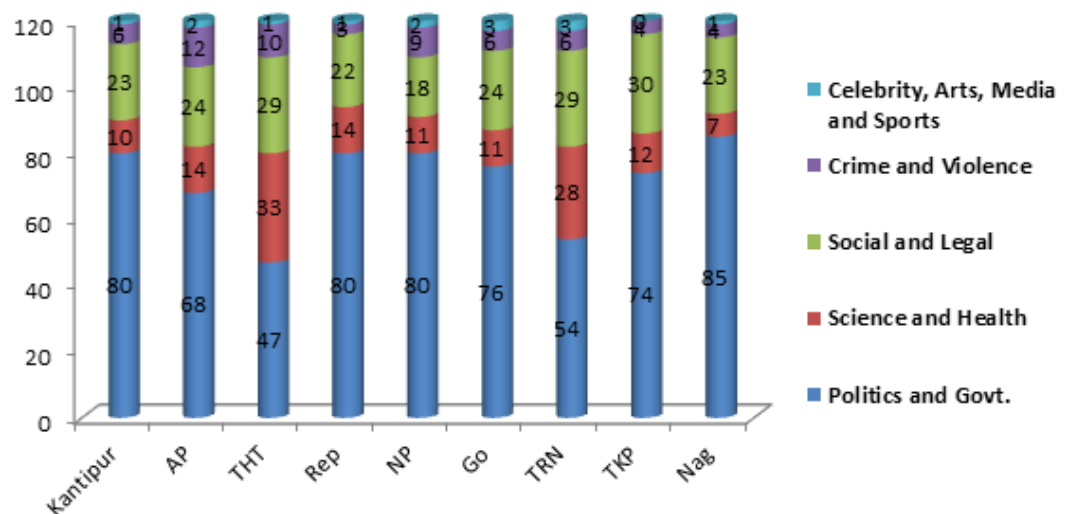
After coding the titles of the selected news stories as per the methodologies provided by FPU, the stories were assembled so as to differentiate their category. After tabulation, study team found 60% of 1,080 news titles falling under Politics and Government category. Among remaining categories, Social and Legal category contained 20% followed by Science and Technology 13%, while Crime and Violence 6% and Celebrity, Arts, Media and Sports only 1%.

Maximum number of political news stories on main news pages is the reflection of local level poll during May and June. Similarly, legal cases such as impeachment motions, reconstruction and other developmental activities added to the Social and Legal category.

Along with the ongoing election activities, news on crime and violence also were on rise. Hence this time, such news too found significant place on the main pages after those of science and technology. However, news on entertainment sector still lags behind any other on those pages.

The Nagarik daily reaches highest value of news under Politics and Government followed by Kantipur, Republica and NayaPatrika sharing same, whereas, THT contained least of all. Similarly, THT contained maximum news on science and technology while, TKP covered social and legal news the most after political ones.

Upon the analysis on gender divide on the basis of topic of news stories, 68% of males and 51% of females reported on Politics and Government, while only 19% of males and 25%



of females reported on Social and Legal issues following others. The data clearly reflects election fever and political activities of the country during the study period.

### *Visit to media houses*

In course of the preparation of this report and learning the responses of concerned media houses on previous reports, FF team visited the newspapers offices and garnered editors' feedback.

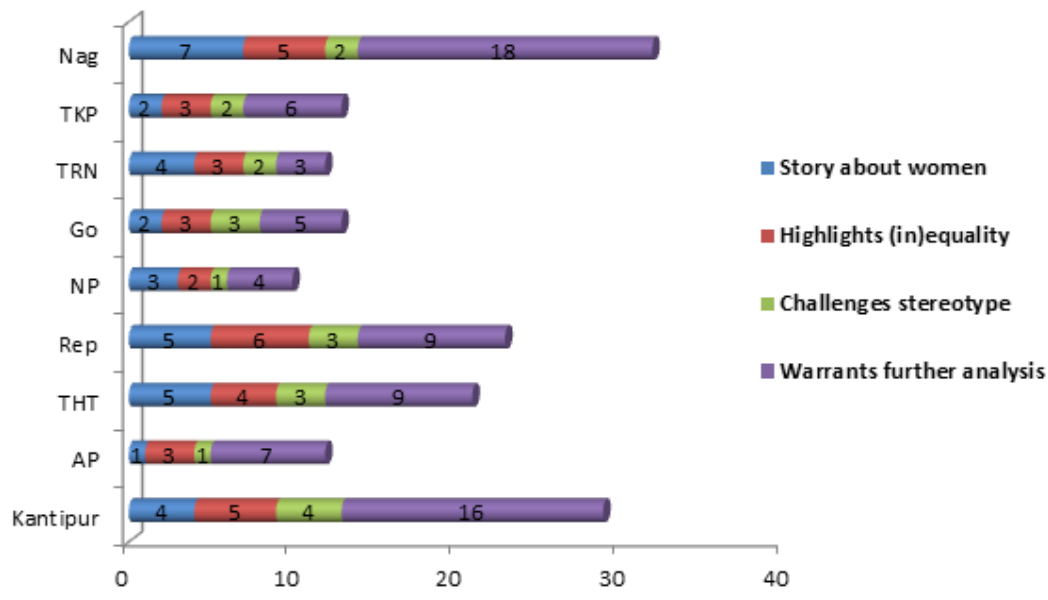
Almost all editors admitted that their media had comparatively less number of females. However, they were univocal for increasing women journalists in their media.

They pointed out the limited human resource in the media fraternity behind existing gender disparity in entire Nepali media.

### *4. Stories warranting further analysis*

This section contains the news stories which demand further analysis under gender inequality and gender stereotype. Here, stories throwing light upon gender issues were categorized into four sections as shown in the figure below.

Among 165 gender biased stories, 34 were coded under Highlights (in) equality, where, less than 50% showed equality upon sources quoted. Similarly, 33 stories were about women and 21 challenged stereotype for men and women; one challenged stereotype of men too. It is interesting that the story challenging stereotype of men is written by female reporter and is about women's issues.





The figure shows that Kantipur and Nagarik dailies contain maximum number of stories which warrant further analysis. These stories which are about women, show inequality in quoted sources and challenge stereotype have been coded under this section.

Maximum number of stories under warranting further analysis correlates to media containing maximum number of political news. Hence, this signifies political news lack significant number of women as source.

### ***5. Brief analysis of the stories showing gender inequality (biasness)***

The news stories typically about women, showing inequality, and women in challenging or submissive roles have been coded under this title. Below is the brief description on why those stories have been coded under the title.

*a. Dhaulagiri's only women candidate (NayaPatrika, April 17, Parbat):* The story says that only a woman candidate has given her candidacy for the first phase local level poll from one of the municipalities of Parbat district. Filing of candidacy by single woman challenges stereotype and together shows our society is gradually moving towards gender equality.

*b. Nuwakot DAO denies 3 siblings citizenships in mother's name (The Kathmandu Post, April 6, Nuwakot):* Despite Constitution's provision to confer citizenships on children in their mother's name, the news describes about the case where 3 children of Rajani Thapa from Nuwakot district were denied citizenship certificate in mother's name. Her husband has been missing for 14 years. Even though Rajani is a Nepali citizen and has been living in Nepal, she has to prove that her husband too is Nepali. This depicts poor status of single mothers who, in case, are unable to prove their husbands' identity are getting their children subjected to deprivation of fundamental rights in their own country. Hence, the story draws sheer inequality.

*c. Women still ignorant about safe abortion laws (The Rising Nepal, June 2, Kathmandu):* Lack of awareness and information about laws and availability of abortion services, life of women needing to undergo abortion have been havoc, reads the news. The story describes two cases where women had to face dreadful condition following unsafe abortion where one of them lost her life. One of the experts is quoted that only 38% women know that abortion is now legal in Nepal. Hence, this draws serious concern over illiteracy and perpetuating stereotypes among rural females in some parts of the country.

*d. Politics to end discrimination (Kantipur, May 17, Lalitpur):* The news is based on commitments of a dalit woman Ranju Tilangi who has been elected as municipal member. She said that she would fully dedicate her time to work against social discrimination. The story depicts gender equality and challenging stereotype of female after this local level election

where there is the constitutional provision to mandatorily allocate two of the candidacies for females.

*e. Women fill in for men in quake reconstruction (Republica, May 26, Hetauda):* After the devastating earthquake, women in the rural areas have been actively working for reconstruction of houses. The news also says that husbands of those women even laughed at them for taking over construction responsibilities but still they carried out their jobs skillfully and willfully thus, making their life financially secure. Hence, the story clearly challenges stereotype of women even in the rural areas.

*f. Males also face restrictions when women menstruate (The Himalayan Times, June 13, Kathmandu):* When women menstruate, even in urban educated areas they are isolated considering impure, says the news story. It also says that when women menstruate, not only the concerned women, but also male members of the family along with other members suffer at home. During this period, males are responsible to carry out household works in the kitchen and in most cases; important rituals and functions at home are even cancelled. Hence, the story challenges stereotype of males as looking after household jobs.

*g. Wish of 86-year old rural municipal member (Nagarik, May 17, Dhading):* This local level poll even elected an octogenarian woman from Dalit community in Dhading who wishes to work for the community of elderly people and their benefits. She was able to defeat her 25- year old competitor. More than being a politician she is a social worker, reads the news. Hence, during this poll many more women got opportunity to come forth and show their ability towards society transformation which clearly challenges stereotype about women in the society.

*h. Order to stop Impeachment (Annapurna Post, May 5, Kathmandu):* The news story is about a female Chief Justice Sushila Karki who has been filed impeachment motion because of which she had to be suspended of her job for few days. However, the Supreme Court later issued an order to continue her job at the same position. The impeachment motion was filed against her for her decision on appointment of Inspector General of Police. Registering the impeachment motion against judicial values and Chief Justice's activities depicts how women's works are portrayed in the society thus, showing inequality.

*i. Kanwar community women deprived of voting without citizenship (NayaPatrika, June 20, Jhapa):* The news is about a marginalized community where women do not have their own citizenship. While asking about election, they said that election is about voting but why and who to vote is a question for them. This depicts how poor and backward are they regarding social education and their basic rights. In some cases, even their husbands are not ready to go for the process for getting them citizenship. Hence, the news shows gender inequality as well as perpetuates stereotype for both male and female.

*j. Constitution amendment to make it inclusive:* Deuba (Gorkhapatra, April 29, Lalitpur): The news covers press meet of a political party where four male politicians' voices are heard and quoted but lacks women's voice. Despite presence of few women in the party, their voices were not presented in the news drawing question of gender equality. It is the inequality witnessed in the news sources.

## Conclusion

The three-month-long study of the contents has revealed gradual improvement on the representation of women in Nepali media contents. Among total 1,080 news scanned, 77 warranted further analyses upon gender perspectives. Women journalists and news sources comprise only 6% and 9% respectively. Even though, overall data result same as it was, data in the individual newspaper show increase of women journalists as well as women as news sources in all selected media. Overall, news on politics and government was found dominant. During the first and second phase of local level polls in the country, most of the stories are related to political and governmental issues; they still lack adequate women's participation and views. Among the nine dailies, Kantipur replaced Annapurna revealing maximum inclusion of females as both reporters and sources this time. Almost 51% female journalists reported on political and governmental issues whereas, only 25% reported on social and legal issues. Conclusively, in comparison to the previous reports considerable changes have been witnessed in the contents and representation of women.

## Recommendations

- Stories about women and those containing women in the pictures should also include their opinions and views.
- Even in the political and other social stories, search for new and appropriate sources should be widened through emerging new resources and women participations in multiple sectors.
- Incorporating the byline names of journalists may decrease unknown list and also reveal participation of more men and women journalists thus, deviating the curve.
- As the circumstances are tilting towards gender equity, news rooms and media house policy should also be designed so as to reflect equality, and reporting format should be changed towards throwing light upon the cases where men also replace women at their work.
- Once the editors take concrete initiatives to translate their verbal commitments they made with the FF team into action pertaining to the earlier reports, it would help increase female presence in the journalism.

Freedom Forum is an independent, non-governmental and not-for-profit civil society organization working for the cause of social accountability, democracy and human rights focused on press freedom, freedom of expression and right to information in Nepal. Incepted in 2005, Freedom Forum has emerged as a prominent national organization in promoting access to information and freedom of expression through dialogue, research, training, public advocacy and campaign and programme implementation. Currently, the organization is working on the issues of public finance management, budget transparency, open data and aid governance, political and parliamentary accountability, freedom of expression online and open government partnership (OGP) based on its on-hand experience and learning.



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