



Breaking
Gender Stereotypes

Gender in Myanmar News

NEWS CONTENT ANALYSIS FROM A GENDER PERSPECTIVE

NOVEMBER 2017



This report has been carried out by Myanmar Womens Journalist Society (MWJS) and International Media Support & Fojo Institute in Myanmar.

MWJS is a Yangon-based trade association created to represent and promote the interests of female journalists in the media sector. They are committed to building the capacity of female journalists in Myanmar and advocating for gender equality both in the profession and in news media content.

International Media Support and Fojo Media Institute (IMS-Fojo) have been engaged as partners in supporting media development in Myanmar since 2011. Their current programme strives to contribute to the development of a professional, independent and accountable media in Myanmar, which provides equal opportunities for all men and women to engage in democratic reform.

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INTRODUCTION

The media is a tool for both advancing democracy and promoting gender equality. Conversely, gender bias in media content can harm the development of democratic and peaceful societies. Despite this being widely acknowledged by the international media and development community, global studies of news coverage show that the portrayal of men and women in the media continue to be biased towards traditional stereotypes of masculinity and femininity, which serve to reinforce the status quo and the gender gaps seen in many other aspects of society such as politics, business, sport and entertainment (Macharia, 2015).

Generating further evidence of these harmful stereotypes – and finding examples of news that challenge them – helps raise awareness of current practices in news reporting and advocating for change. We need policies and initiatives that promote new ways of “being a man” and “being a woman”. Socially driven changes in attitudes and behaviour can contribute to closing the gender gaps.

To date there have been no detailed studies of Myanmar news content to identify the trends and patterns of gender representation in the media. This landmark study sheds light on the imbalance of female and male voices in Myanmar news, covering the diversity of the current media landscape across different mediums, types of ownership, geographic regions, languages, frequencies of publication, and political affiliations. It has been a timely exercise to undertake as the media sector is professionalizing and maturing in the transition to democratic rule.

The study has been carried out with a view to being replicated and repeated each year, as a way of tracking media’s progress on this issue. The objective is to see Myanmar participate in the next ‘Global Media Monitoring Project’ (GMMP) in 2020, which is a worldwide media monitoring, research and advocacy project implemented collaboratively with women’s rights organizations and researchers across the world. GMMP affords the opportunity to assess how far the vision for media gender equality has been achieved, and identifies persisting and emerging challenges. Other participating Asian countries include Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Mongolia, Nepal, Pakistan, and Vietnam.

The results of the Gender in Myanmar News study aim to fill a gap in the media development process in Myanmar, and assist with building capacity among media professionals and institutions to promote gender equality in and through the media.

BACKGROUND

Gender and journalism ethics

Media play many important roles in society. They report on current events, provide frameworks for interpretation, mobilize citizens with regard to various issues, reproduce predominant culture and society, and entertain.

However, media also shape what we think is important and how we view the world. While news media professionals aim to collect and edit information based on the ethical principles of accuracy, fairness and balanced representation, news is rarely objective, unbiased and complete (WACC, 2005). In the context of time and logistical constraints placed on journalists and editors to report news as it happens, the selection of which news gets published means deciding which events and issues are more important than others. This process of deciding whose voice should be shared involves making judgements that are based on social and political values and worldviews (Macharia, 2015).

Media professional ethics comprise core standards central to the practice of journalism. According to the Ethical Journalism Network (EJN) five themes resonate across any set of media ethics: Truth and Accuracy, Independence, Fairness and Impartiality, Humanity and Accountability. The EJN notes that respect for the values of professional journalism puts journalists “in a position to provide leadership about what constitutes ethical freedom of expression” (Ethical Journalism Network). As the process of source and news selection is inevitably influenced by the personal values of journalists and editors, it is important that where possible these ethical principles are kept at the forefront of any decision making process to avoid partiality.

By determining who has a voice in these debates and who is silenced, which issues are discussed and how they are framed, the media have the power to maintain the status quo or challenge the dominant order. The news media – also known as the watchdogs of society and defenders of the public interest – have a duty to try and reflect the experiences, concerns and opinions of diverse sections of the population, including the female half of the human race. Both within the media working environment (in terms of employment and promotion of female staff at all levels) and in the representation of women and men (in terms of fair gender portrayal and the use of neutral and non-gender specific language) media has the power to challenge stereotypes and biases that perpetuate gender inequality in society.

Gender in Myanmar

Gender refers to the way society assigns characteristics and social roles to women and men. These roles are learned; they vary between cultures and they can change over time. In most

societies around the world there is a gender hierarchy which gives greater value to men than women, creating unequal gender power relations which perpetuate discrimination against women. Gender equality is the platform for promoting equal opportunities and treatment for women and men in society.

In Myanmar, a discourse about the high-status of women and gender inequality as a “non-issue” has been pervasive in society since the colonial period (GEN, 2015). To support this argument proponents have cited reasons such as women’s historic participation in the economic sphere, the presence of equal legislation around inheritance and land ownership, and a history of influential queens in pre-colonial times. When comparing the situation of Myanmar women to that of women in neighboring countries such as India and China, this argument becomes even more enhanced.

In addition to this popular thinking, when gender differences are acknowledged in Myanmar they are often justified with cultural and religious arguments. There is a perception that differential treatment of men and women originates in religious doctrine. Such as the Theravada Buddhist concept of “hpon” which is assumed to be a natural and abstract quality of men, giving them higher authority and religious status (GEN, 2015). This belief informs a bias that men are superior leaders and decision makers, whether in the public or private sphere. Women are also made to feel inferior in terms of their ability to become enlightened. Only men can be monks and only monks can become Buddha, the epitome of enlightenment. So, for a woman to become enlightened she must first be reborn as a man in her next life, automatically giving men superior status in a religious context.

The reality is that gender inequality in Myanmar exists, as it does everywhere in the world, on a spectrum and varies depending on class, ethnicity, religion, geography, sexual orientation, disability and all other categories of identity. Not all women in Myanmar experience discrimination in the same manner or to the same degree, but plenty of statistical data now available shows that there are many gender gaps.

Myanmar gender gaps

To begin with, the CEDAW committee highlighted that the 2008 Constitution is incompatible with the CEDAW Convention, to which Myanmar is a signatory. The constitution provides a loophole for discrimination under Article 352 which states “nothing in this section shall prevent the appointment of men to positions that are naturally suitable for men only”. Hence we see women systematically excluded from the military, once of the most powerful institutions in the country. Furthermore, there is currently no legal framework for the prevention or protection of violence against women. The 150-year-old Penal Code does not address marital rape, or enable women or men to seek restraining orders. In matters of identity, Myanmar women and men are identified in relation to their father on official papers, whether he is the head of their household or not.

Childbirth remains the most prominent cause of death for women in Myanmar (the second highest among ASEAN countries) (ADB, 2017). This indicates the low value women's health and wellbeing is given in public policymaking. Healthcare relating to sexual and reproductive health lacks gender-based policies. As a result, 25% of women have an unmet need for family planning and 16% of married women have an unmet need for contraception (MoHS and ICF, 2017). Abortion is illegal, even in the case of rape or the mother's life being at risk and a Myanmar woman cannot access sterilization unless her husband approves.

Domestic violence is a major problem as violence against women is somewhat normalized (GEN, 2015). One in seven women (15%) have experienced physical violence from anyone and one in five (21%) married women have experienced violence from a partner (MoHS and ICF, 2017). Shockingly, 51% of women and 49% of men believe wife beating is justified under certain circumstances, demonstrating the socialized¹ nature of violence against women. Among women who have experienced physical or sexual violence and sought help, only 1% went to the police; a further 2.5% and 3% sought help from lawyers and social work organizations, respectively.

Despite the so-called "high status" of women in society, men continue to dominate decision-making roles and positions of power. Only 3% of Burmese conglomerates have female CEOs (MoIP, 2015) and 14.5% of the Union Parliament (excluding the seats set aside for the military) seats are filled by women. Daw Aung San Suu Kyi remains the only female minister in cabinet. At the President's Office, women make up 53% of total employees, but only 10% of management level positions and in the Ministry of Mines, 42% of the workforce is female, but only 10% of its senior level positions are held by women (ADB, UNDP, UNFPA, UN Women, 2016). From 1967 to 2015, the country had no female ambassador. In 2015, Daw Yin Yin Myint was appointed ambassador to Germany, becoming the country's second female ambassador ever.

Gender representation in the media

The Global Media Monitoring Project² conducted every five years since 1995 aims to measure the quantity and quality of female representation in the world's news. Results from the latest

¹ Gender socialization is the process of learning the social expectations and attitudes associated with one's sex.

² Media monitoring is an effective tool for measuring and tracking the existence of social and cultural norms. The Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP) began in 1995 as an outcome of the international conference of 'Women Empowering Communication' in Bangkok in 1994. It comprises a one-day study of the representation of men and women in the world's news media. It is conducted every five years and is coordinated by the World Association for Christian Communication (WACC). Participation increased from 71 countries in 1995 to 114 in 2015, demonstrating a

study in 2015 showed extremely slow progress in improving the representation of women's voices through the news media. Globally, women make up 24% of the people heard, read about or seen in print, TV and radio news, showing no change from the 2010 study (Macharia, 2015). As newsmakers, women are under-represented in professional categories also. When women do make the news, it is primarily as 'stars' or 'ordinary people'. As authorities and experts, women only represent 19% of sources. The GMMP 2015 revealed persistent and emerging gaps in gender portrayal and representation in not only traditional (print and broadcast) media, but also in new electronic media forms. Based on this, it can be concluded that internet news is a magnifying lens through which gender biases, established through traditional news mediums, become even more visible.

Locally in Myanmar, there have been some brief studies monitoring media for gender issues, many of which have been conducted by the Gender Equality Network (GEN). GEN analyzed a small sample of nine mainstream print media using a modified version of the UNESCO framework for gender sensitive indicators for media (GEN, 2015). Research found that women make up 20-31% of people represented in this medium, with weeklies (journals) representing slightly more diversity (31% female) over dailies (22%). Even in the publications directly targeting a female audience, women's representation averaged at 56%. Consistent with the GMMP findings, this brief study showed that women most often appear as sources of information or "ordinary citizens", rarely referenced as spokespersons or experts. Not only were women found to be underrepresented but a lack of social inclusion in general meant an absence of poor, rural and working class perspectives in reporting. This resulted in the vast majority of representation being of wealthy, male, elites, with the exception of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. In political content sampled, women's voices were heard in only 14% of cases.

In another study, GEN also examined print media coverage of women candidates during the pre and post-election period in Myanmar in 2015 (GEN, 2016). The analysis suggested that news stories about the female candidates were generally of little importance to media during the election, representing 1.12% of the topics covered. Where mentioned, they were typically done so by women candidates and decision-makers, or local and international NGOs, observers or activists working for women and gender-related issues. Only 16% were cited or referred to by male candidates and decision-makers demonstrating an attitudinal problem of men recognizing and valuing women's contribution to politics.

A more qualitative study of the media sector in Myanmar from a gender perspective was undertaken by Article 19 and published in 2015 in their report *Censored Gender* (Article 19,

growing interest to engage with issues of gender in the media. While many countries in the Asia region have taken part including Vietnam, Bangladesh and Malaysia, the Myanmar media is yet to be represented in this global study.

2015). The report identified a number of gaps in the experiences of men and women as newsmakers, as decision-makers in media, as subjects of news and in relation to access to gender-specific information. It finds similar conclusions to the GEN study in that gender-based stereotyping is rife across the media, which commonly portrays a “good” women as being obedient, domestic and only defined by her sexuality and marital status. Older women tend to be portrayed as mothers or housewives and younger women are presented as symbols of beauty and virginal purity. In both the Article 19 study and the GEN study, researchers found that programming targeting female audiences generally reinforced traditional gender stereotypes, usually covering only gender-related subjects such as beauty, fashion, health or personal hygiene.

Access to information

Women are also disproportionately affected by limitations in their access to information, argue Article 19. While there is no law that protects the right to freedom of information for anyone – on the contrary, information is treated as the property of the state and numerous legislation greatly prohibits the sharing of state-held information. The nature of state control of what should be public information has a direct impact on women and their ability to make informed decisions. For example their ability to fully understand gender-specific issues such as sexual and reproductive health and their corresponding rights. According to Article 19, some of the barriers to information about concerns such as maternal health, family planning, safe sex, STDs and HIV include the absence of appropriately adapted information for different female audiences, women lacking awareness about their right to information, women lacking necessary financial and time resources, female illiteracy (or not having the information available in her native language) and controls on women’s mobility. They also argue that the absence of women’s voices from decision-making in politics and civil society contributes to women’s access to information being a low priority on the public agenda.

Gender in the newsroom

Another study by Fojo Media Institute (Handunnetti & Nang Phyu Phyu Lin, 2016) brings to light the situation and specific challenges for female journalists in the media sector, almost at all levels of the profession. The study reveals both structural and cultural barriers to the advancement of female journalists in the sector. Women often have to give up their job as a journalist’s when they get married and/or have children, due to a lack of policies and initiatives to facilitate re-entry, despite maternity leave being compulsory under the law. This is a consequence of women being stereotyped as primary care givers and the social expectation that they should put their reproductive work before their careers. The study also identified a lack of policies and political will to create the conditions for women to be able to report news any time anywhere the way men are expected to do, mainly due to perceptions of her lack of willingness (due to concerns about her safety) as well as cultural norms that serve to control her mobility. Interestingly, the study revealed a significant gap in opportunities and experiences between women working in Yangon and women working in the regions, with regional journalists reporting higher rates of discrimination, prejudice and sexual harassment.

Gender and conflict-sensitive journalism

The Kvinna till Kvinna handbook on *Gender and Conflict Sensitive Journalism* (Ahlsen, 2015) describes conflict sensitive reporting as “a tool for journalists and others who strive to understand conflicts in a larger context”. The choices journalists make when they are reporting about war and peace affect not only our understanding of the conflict, but also what we perceive to be the solution. This in turn affects the creation of possible solutions to the conflict. Global media monitoring studies show that only 13% of conflict reporting includes women as subjects/sources, often portraying them as nameless, passive victims. In contrast, men are displayed as active figures, engaged in all sorts of activities from armed combat to political debate. In reality women and men play important roles in both how conflict folds out and how it can be resolved. This is highlighted by the four pillars of the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (UN Women, 2015). Furthermore, reporting conflict through a gender sensitive lens has the potential to transform the social norms and attitudes that act as a barrier to women’s participation in the peace process (Ahlsen, 2015). In terms of intersecting themes, conflict sensitive journalism will be highlighted in the study in the context of gender representation.

METHODOLOGY

This study has been modelled on the validated methodology of the Global Media Monitoring Project, which has been implemented and tested in over 100 countries over 20 years. It was modified to consider additional indicators from the *UNESCO Gender sensitive Indicators for Media* and then adapted to the Myanmar context.

Objectives

Overall Objective

Establish a gender monitoring tool to assess quantitative and qualitative gender representation in the Myanmar news media.

Primary Objectives

1. To monitor and measure quantitative gender representation in print, broadcast and online news.
2. To evaluate and analyse the existence of gender based stereotypes in the news.

Secondary Objectives

1. To build local capacity for gender media monitoring in Myanmar with the aim of participating in global media monitoring studies in the future.
2. To generate quality research to inform evidence-based media development policy from a gender and diversity perspective.

Questions

1. How are men and women represented as sources and subjects in Myanmar news?
2. What gender stereotypes are pervasive across the different variables (medium, ownership, regional base, topic)?

Methods

This research involved a mixed methods approach including quantitative data collection using a survey of questions to capture information about how gender is represented in a sample of print, broadcast and online newscasts. It was followed up by a qualitative analysis of a selection of news stories for a more nuanced understanding of gender representation in the news media as well as to support the results of the study with specific examples.

News collection and selection

News was collected over the period of one month, 1 to 30 June 2017. The research aimed to sample news across different frequencies of publication - daily, weekly, bi-monthly, monthly – but it was also necessary to avoid a concentration of the same news stories reported on over consecutive days. As such, each media were monitored every other day, comprising 15

editions of news for each daily media, two editions of news for each weekly, and one edition for each monthly. To further spread out the content collected, print and online news were monitored on alternate days to TV and radio.

For each media outlet media monitors examined 10-12 news reports in the general news section of each edition monitored. Monitors were instructed to exclude editorials, commentaries, letters to the editor, documentaries or reports from specific thematic sections (e.g. sports, business, entertainment) as the aim was to capture gender representation in general news reporting only. Monitors were also instructed to select the 10-12 stories most relevant to the study – those that had sources and/or were about a news topic linked to the scope of the study (e.g. gender identity, women's issues, political participation, gender-based violence, peace and conflict). In cases where fewer than 10 reports were included in the general news section, researchers monitored the entire section.

Selection of media houses

The study aimed to capture the national landscape of gender portrayal in the news media therefore it was necessary to include a selection of media houses that represent a broad range of variables: medium, media ownership, geographical scope and origin, language and ethnicity, frequency of publication, circulation, popularity, political angle, and target audience.

While collecting news published in Yangon or broadcast free-to-air was straight forward, creativity had to be employed to obtain copies of news published outside Yangon. Strategies included collecting from Yangon distribution centres, downloading digital versions, or liaising with regional contacts to send newspapers by post. While we aimed to be balanced in our scope, logistical challenges of obtaining or recording media not readily available in Yangon meant that not all ethnic languages could be represented and in some cases only one media house from a state/region could be included in the study.

In most cases the media house did not know we were monitoring their news until after the fact. Exceptions included some ethnic/regional media where we asked for their assistance to provide editions of their June publications.

Qualitative analysis

In the data entry process particular stories were flagged for further analysis, to qualify examples of good or bad news reporting in terms of gender representation. These formed the basis of case studies to explore in richer detail what it means for journalism to be gender-aware or gender-blind.

Monitors were asked to classify whether a story was gender aware or gender blind using the following criteria³:

Gender Blind

- Articles in which there is a lack of gender balance (and therefore of diversity) in sources, resulting in only one perspective being given on an issue.
- Articles that lack a gender perspective in every day issues such as elections or the budget, depriving these stories of new and interesting angles, such as how cuts in grants affect poor women.
- Articles or images in which women are presented in stereotypical roles such as victims or carers.
- Articles or images in which men are presented in stereotypical roles such as businessmen or leaders.
- Articles in which women are referred to according to personal relationships that have no relevance to the story; e.g. a woman minister is referred to as the wife of someone.

Gender Aware

- Articles that have a gender balance of sources; demonstrating different perspectives/impact on women and men including through use of gender disaggregated data; for example how many women and men receive certain types of grants; what they use them for and why cuts may have different kinds of impact.
- Articles and images that challenge stereotypes and prompt debate on topical gender issues from a human rights perspective, such as female pilots or male care-givers.
- Gender specific: Articles that concern inequality between women and men; structures, processes; campaigns to advance gender equality such as glass ceilings in certain types of occupation.

Quality Assurance

A number of steps were taken to ensure the accuracy of research design, data collection and data analysis, especially in the instance that this was the first study of its kind. Various media partners and stakeholders were pursued throughout the process with the aim of ensuring that international standards and processes (upon which the study is based) were also relevant to the Myanmar context. Through a participatory process including working media professionals a sample of media houses that reflect the diversity of the existing media landscape was defined.

Alongside the data processing phase approximately 20% of survey responses were reviewed and corrected where errors occurred. Errors were recorded in detail and feedback given to

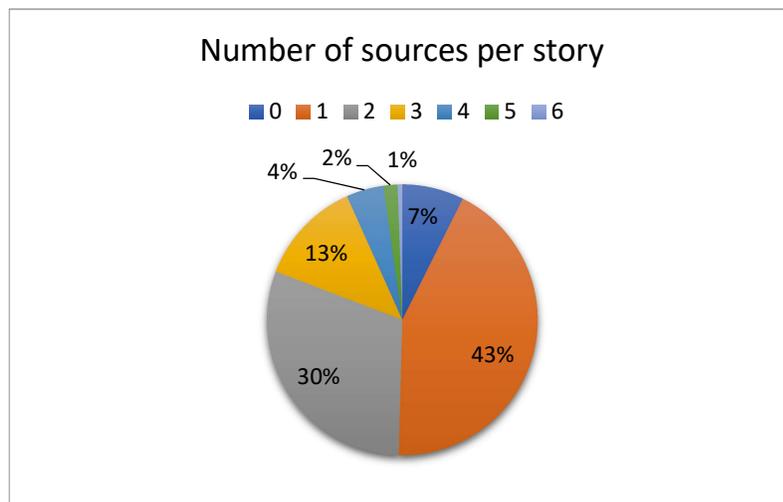
³ Definition taken from the methodology of the Global Media Monitoring Project (Macharia 2015).

monitors for application in subsequent data processing. Ongoing training on the conceptual elements of the study was provided to the research team to continually test and clarify understanding. As a result it is expected that the quality of gender analysis improved over time.

In addition, a multi-stakeholder steering committee comprising national and international members verified the validity of the methodology and also reviewed and provided feedback on the research results prior to publication.

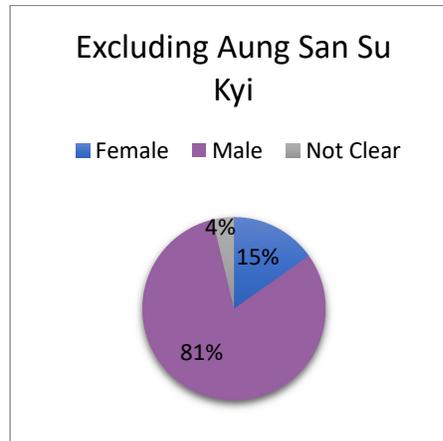
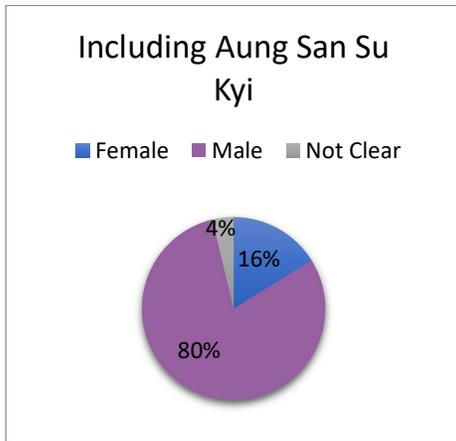
Results

We begin by identifying that 43% of news stories monitored for this study had only one source, and 7% had zero sources. This demonstrates a general lack of diversity in the number and type of sources included in stories as part of a common standard of journalistic practice in Myanmar. This alone is a concern, as a professional standard of journalism requires a variety of viewpoints from a variety of sources (Lacy & Rosenstiel, 2015). There is not scope in this report to identify the trends in Myanmar reporting styles that lead to a large proportion of news reports only having one or no sources, but it would make for an interesting research piece in the future.

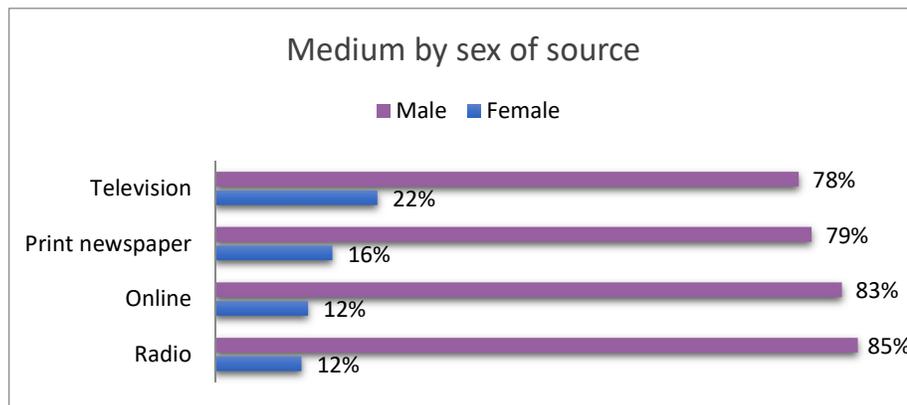


People in the News

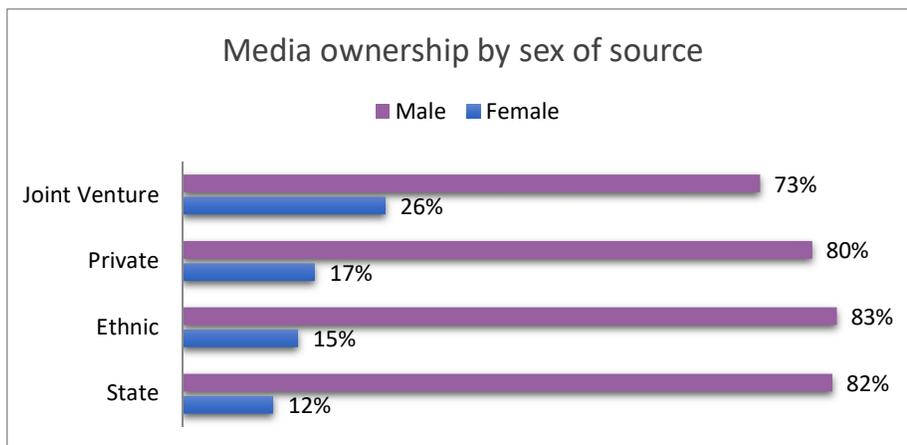
Sex segregated data shows that women represent **16%** of the voices portrayed in the media, while men represent **80%**. As Aung San Su Kyi is an exceptional female figure in the country and often dominates the news, especially among state-owned media, the study was tailored to identify when she was the source or subject mentioned. Naturally, when we remove Aung San Su Kyi as a source/subject the proportion of female voices reduces but only slightly to **15%**, which is a considerable impact for one person to make in gender representation but does not skew the figures in a substantial.



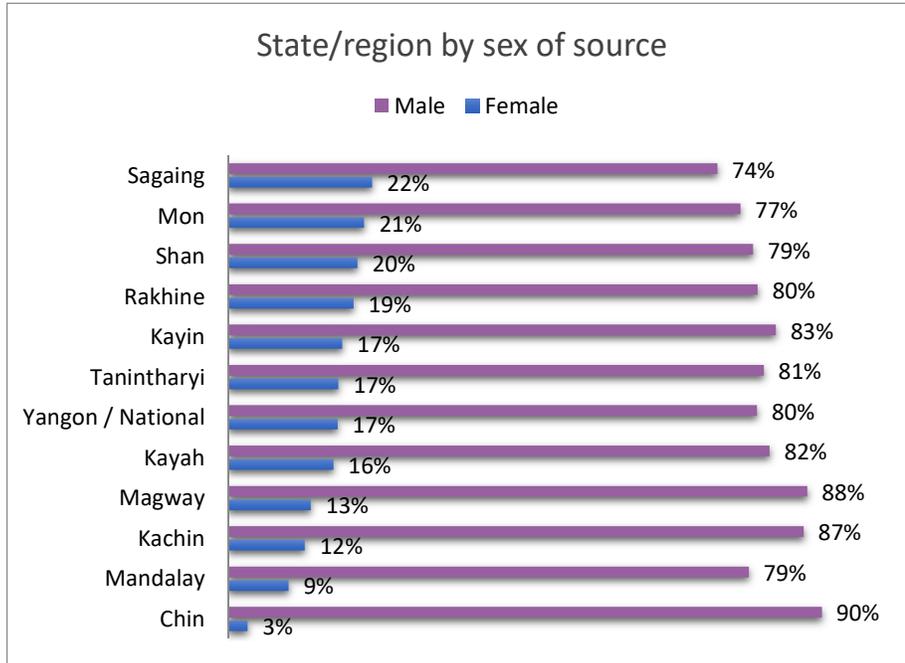
In terms of medium, lowest female representation is found in radio news at 12%, while the highest is in television at 22%.



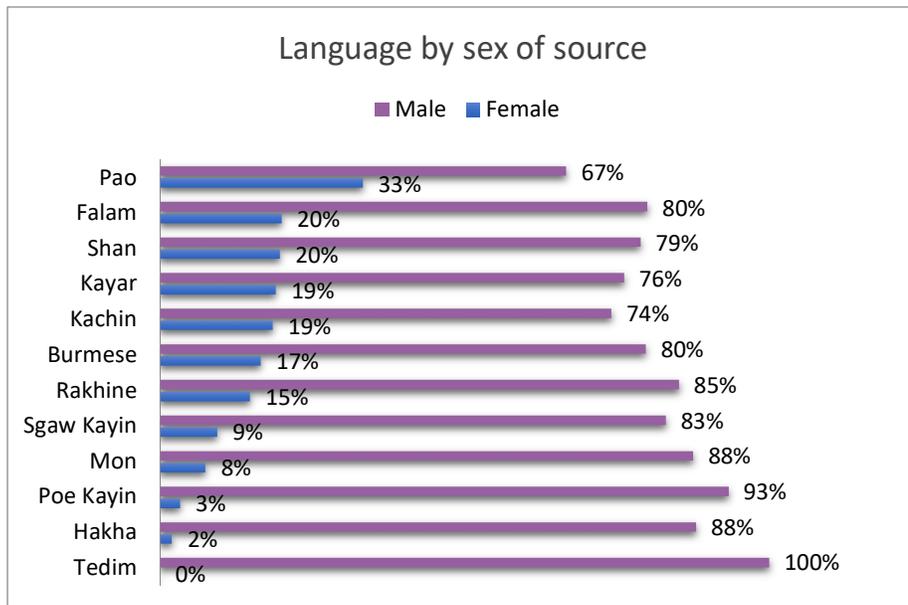
The media with the lowest number of female sources and subjects is owned by the state (12%), while joint-venture owned media shows the highest number (26%).



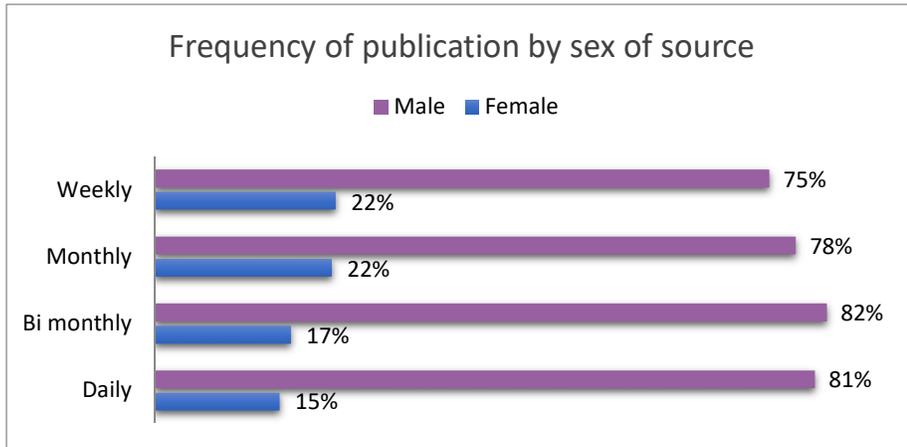
The State/Region with the lowest female representation is Chin State (3%) while Sagaing (22%) has the highest. Mon, Shan, Rakhine, Kayin and Tanintharyi are all above the national average.



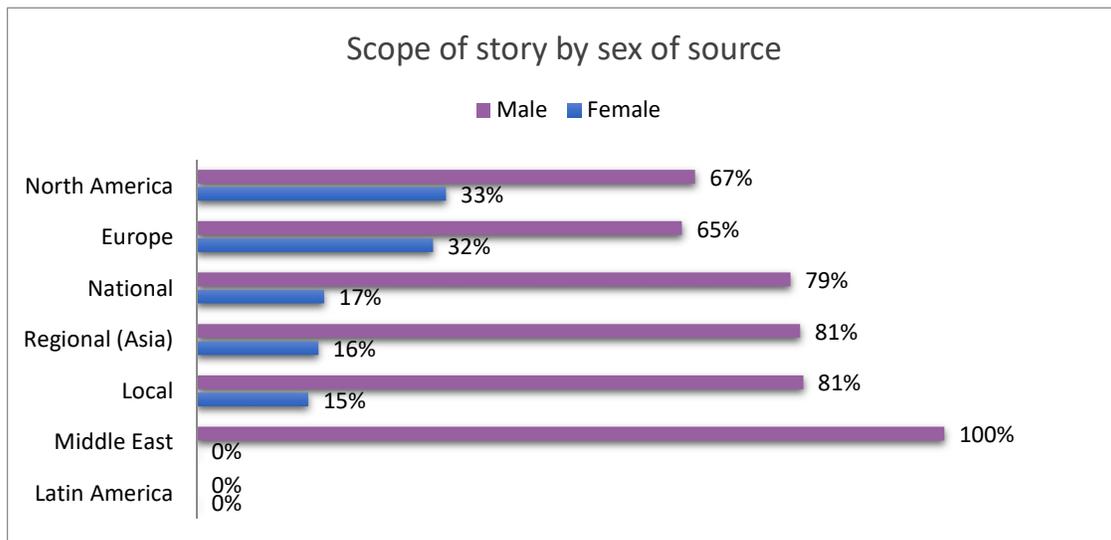
Female voices in the news are most common in Pao-language media (33%) and least common in Tedim-language media (0%). Falam, Shan, Kayar and Kachin are all above the national average.



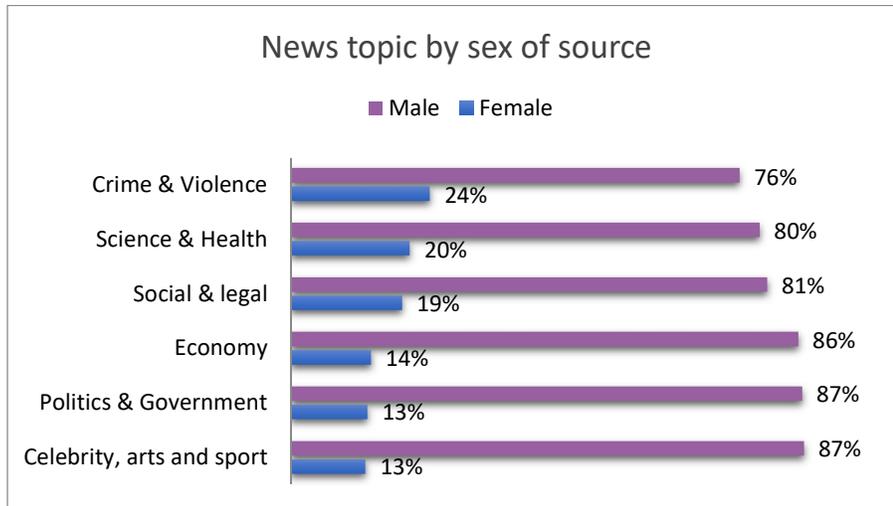
Daily news publishes the lowest proportion of women’s voices (15%) while weekly and monthly news publish the highest (22%).



News stories about North America and Europe tend to have more women sources while stories about the Middle East have fewer. In Myanmar, national stories have a slightly higher representation of women sources (17%) than local stories (15%).

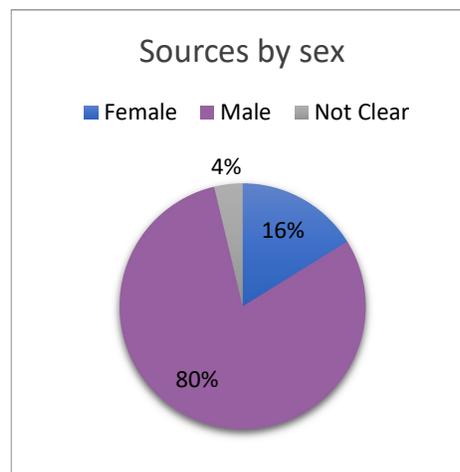
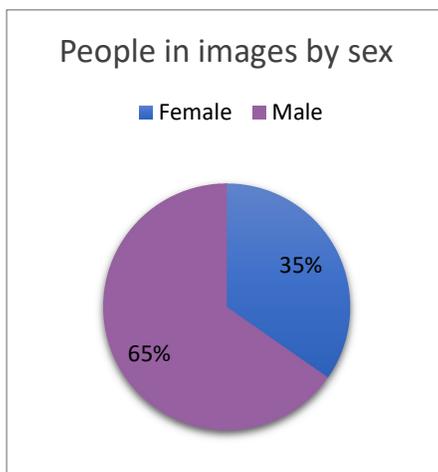


The most common type of stories to include female voices are those about crime and violence (24%), which is supported by the fact that women make up more than 50% of gender-based violence news subjects and sources. Politics (13%), Arts & Sport (13%) and Economy (14%), are the news topics with the lowest female representation.

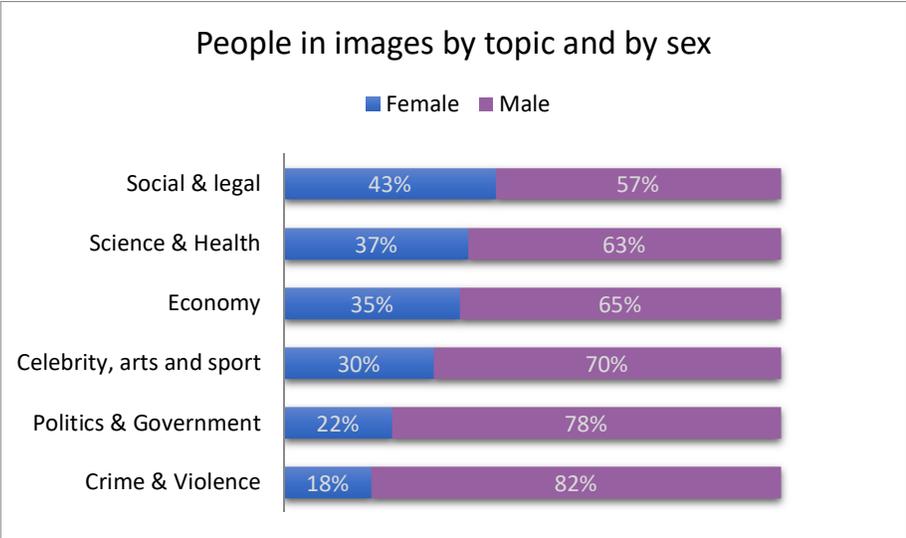


Images

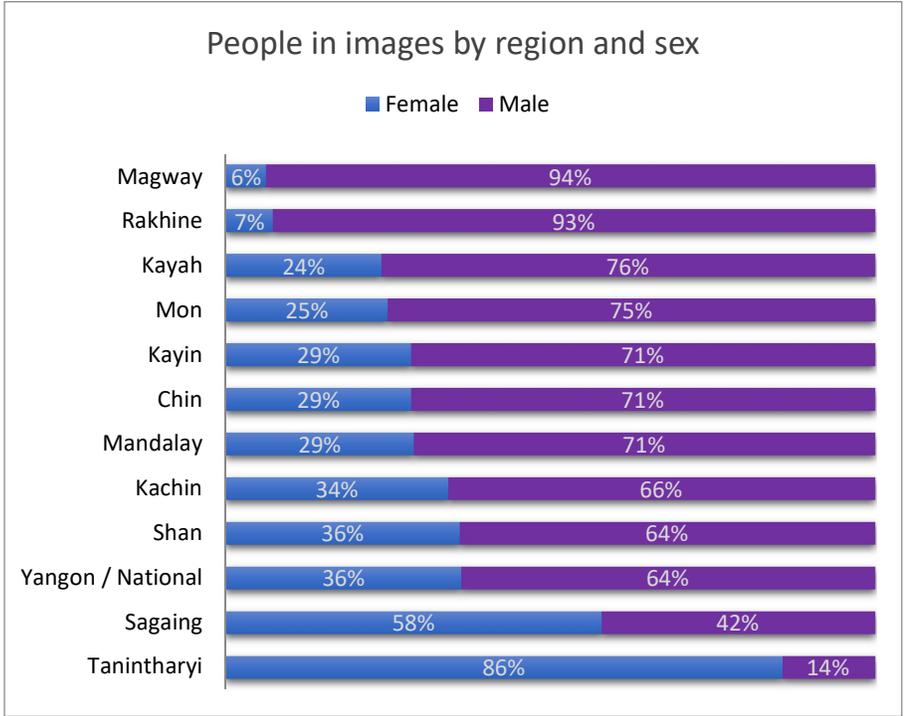
Women represent 35% of the people in images, more than twice as many female sources and subjects. It shows that reporting does not always reflect the event or situation in terms of gender representation, if the image shows women but they are not sourced in the story. This may indicate that women are more valued for their physical presence than their ideas or experiences as sources



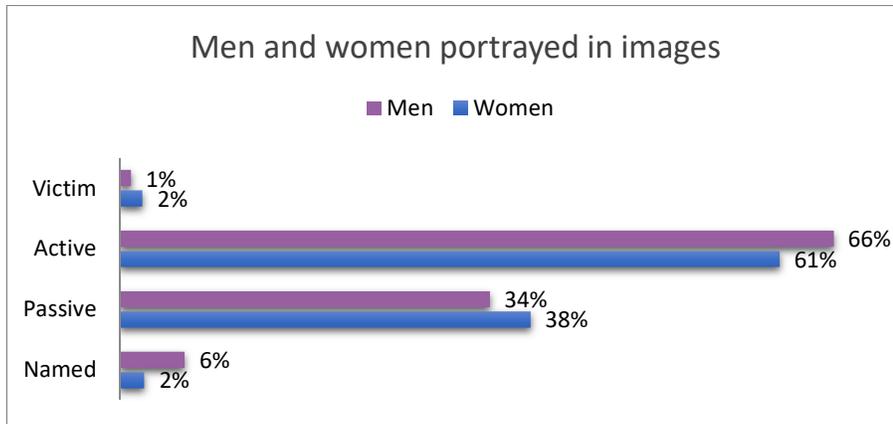
Women are represented in images most frequently in stories about Social & Legal topics (43%) while men are most likely to appear in images accompanying stories about Crime and Violence (82%) followed by stories about Politics & Government. Women are least likely to appear in images with stories about Crime & Violence in contrast to data showing they are most likely to appear as sources in these stories.



In general, female representation in images in the state and region-based newspapers is below the national average, with the exception of Sagaing (58%) and Tanintharyi (84%).

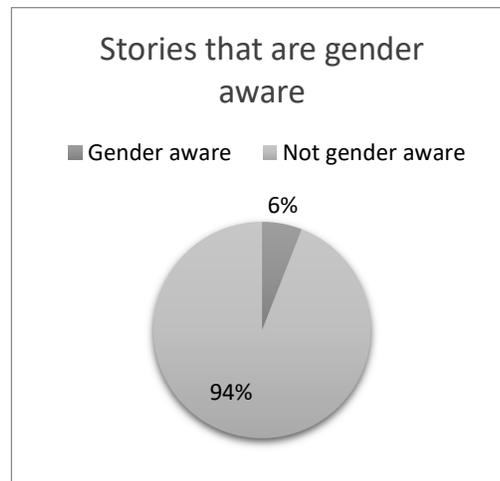
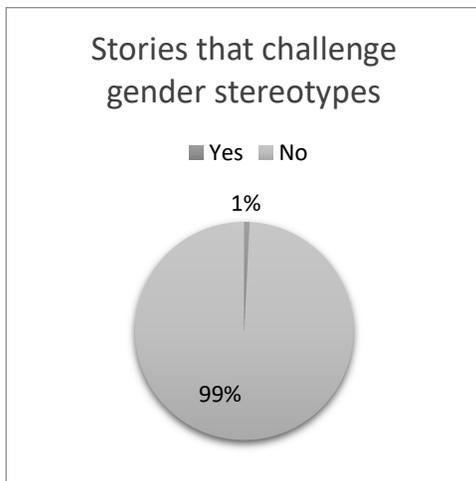


In general, images of men and women adhere to the gender stereotypes. Women are twice as likely to appear like victims, are less likely to appear active and more likely to appear passive. And men are three times as likely as women to have their name mentioned in the bi-line, which attributes visibility and importance to those men while doing the opposite for women.

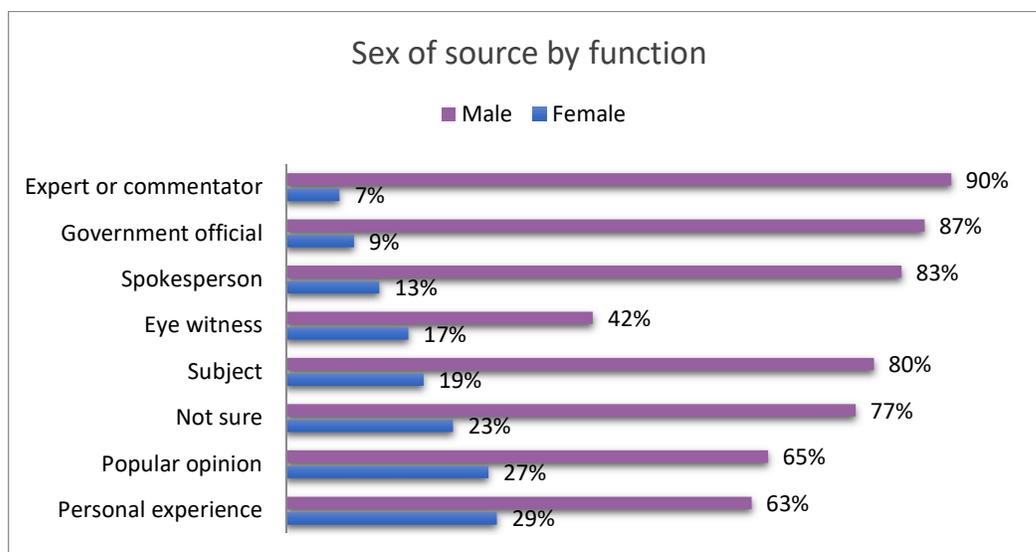


News Quality

Only 1% of stories challenge gender stereotypes and only 6% of news stories are considered to have gender awareness. Gender awareness means they either: 1) have a gender balance in sources, 2) challenge gender stereotypes or 3) address a gender issue in their content.



In terms of the function of the source, we see very few women sourced as experts (7%), government officials (9%) and spokespersons (13%) compared to men. This is a common practice globally that reinforces the notion of male authority on most news topics relative to women. The functions with the highest percentage of female representation are personal experience, (29%) and popular opinion (27%).



When looking at how function is distributed within each gender category, the majority of sources are spokespersons, with 54% of male sources and 40% percent of female sources filling this role. In both cases the occupations of spokespersons are most likely to be activists or representatives of the government. Subject is the next most common function for both women (33%) and men (28%). While male subjects are likely to be of a high status like government official, politician, minister, MP etc., the occupation of female subjects is often not stated. It is to say, when a woman is a subject of the story her profession is not relevant, perhaps because she is being defined as a victim, a mother, a witness etc. This corresponds to the tendency for women to be sourced for their personal experiences rather than their expert opinions.

The only occupational categories where female sources outnumber men are domestic worker, home maker, child and factory worker. While the first two are unsurprising and support the stereotype of women belonging to the domestic sphere, women as factory workers reflects the reality of the high number of women working in the garment industry and other low-skilled labor sectors. Women as religious figures, police/military, unemployed, sportspersons and scientists/engineers appear in less than 1% of cases, indicating that these are symbolically male-dominated fields in Myanmar, even though they may not reflect reality. For example, more women graduate from science and technology courses than men, and 47% of the working-age female population are unemployed compared to 19% of men.

Occupation of source	% of sources that are female
Domestic worker	100%
Home maker	100%
Child, young person	83%
Factory worker	67%

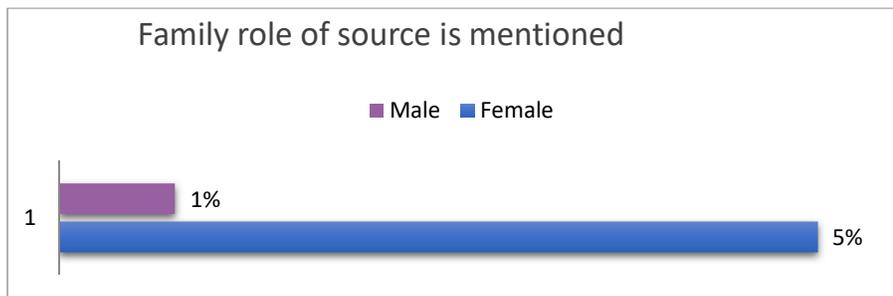
Student, pupil, school child	49%
Not stated. Story does not describe the person's occupation or position.	39%
Villager or resident (community member)	37%
Academic expert, lecturer, teacher	35%
Youth	33%
Doctor, dentist, health specialist	32%
Tradesperson, artisan, labourer, truck driver	31%
Celebrity, artist, actor, writer, singer, TV personality	27%
Activist or worker in civil society organisation, NGO, trade union	17%
Business person, exec manager, stock broker	17%
Agriculture, mining, fishing, forestry	14%
Health worker, social worker, child care worker	13%
Media professional, journalist, film maker	12%
Government politician, minister, spokesman, Member of parliament, councillor ,mayor	11%
Government employee, public servant	11%
Leader/Representative of ethnic organisation	10%
Lawyer, judge, magistrate, legal advocate	10%
Criminal or suspect	10%
Retired person, pensioner	9%
Other, write in below	7%
Religious figure/ traditional figures	1%
Police/military, para-military	0%
Unemployed	0%
Sportsperson	0%
Scientist/ technology/ engineer	0%

The most common occupational categories of male sources all fit the stereotypes of high-status leaders in the public domain – government officials, politicians, civil society representatives, police, military and business men. Three out of five of the top occupations for women are high status, in contrast the other two are very low status – no occupation stated and villager. Where no occupation is stated (14% of cases) this is usually when the woman is the subject of the story, usually as the victim of a crime. In summary, when a woman is a spokesperson, she is likely to be representing an NGO or CSO, or government. When a woman is a subject, she is likely to be a victim.

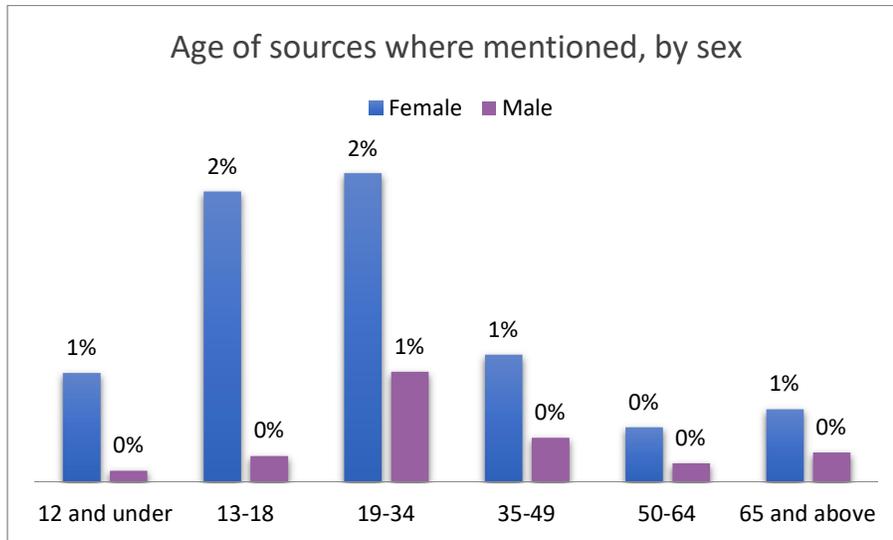
Top 5 Occupations for Women and Men According to the News

Female	Male
1. Activist or worker in civil society organisation, NGO, trade union (16%)	1. Government politician, minister, spokesman, Member of parliament, councillor, mayor (23%)
2. Not stated. Story does not describe the person's occupation or position (14%)	2. Government employee, public servant (21%)
3. Government politician, minister, spokesman, Member of parliament, councillor, mayor (14%)	3. Activist or worker in civil society organisation, NGO, trade union (16%)
4. Government employee, public servant (12%)	4. Police/military, para-military (7%)
5. Villager or resident (community member) (8%)	5. Business person, exec manager, stock broker (5%)

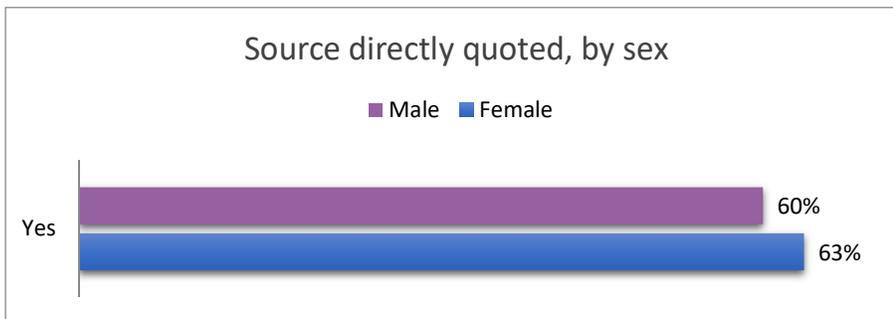
While it is not a common practice to mention a source's family role in the Myanmar news, female sources are five times more likely than male sources to have their family role (wife, mother, daughter etc.) mentioned in the story. This reinforces the stereotype of inextricably linking women to the domestic space as opposed to the public space.



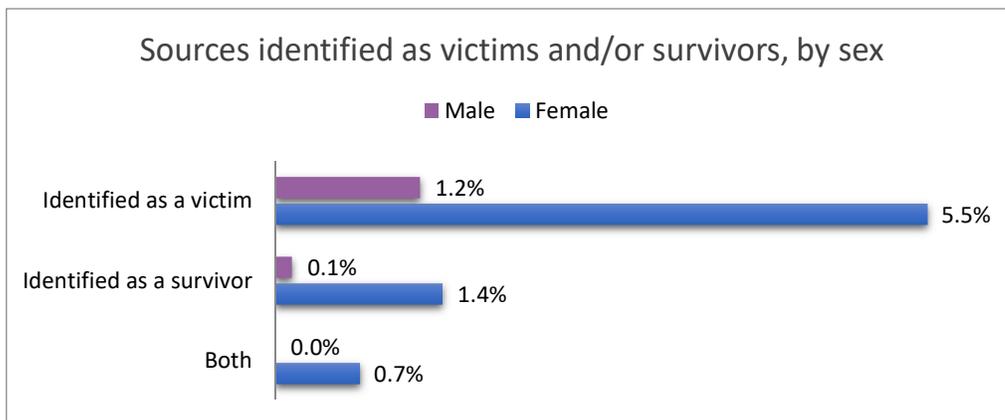
While the incidence of mentioning a source's age is low overall, 7% of female sources have their age mentioned compared to 2% of male sources. Female sources under the age of 18 are ten times more likely to have their age mentioned than male sources of the same age group. Over 90% of the stories that women under-18 appear in are about crime and violence.



There appears to be no gender bias when it comes to directly quoting sources. Rates are similar for both males and females, with female sources slightly more likely to be directly quoted.



Women are eight times more likely to be labelled a victim/survivor than men: 7.6% of female sources versus only 1.4% of males. While 5.5% of female sources are labelled victims, it is rare that they are called survivors (1.4%) and for male sources even more rare (0.1% of cases).

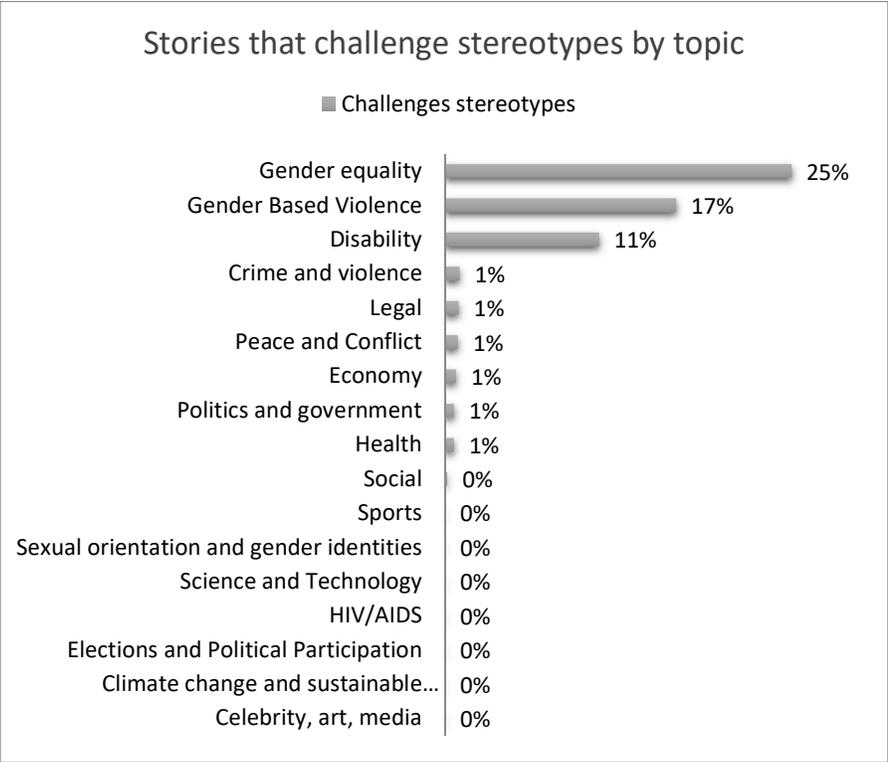


As victims, women are most likely to be portrayed as victims of sexual violence (27%) or victims of non-domestic crimes (27%) in contrast to men who are most likely to be portrayed as victims of war (42%). When described as survivors, however, men are most likely to be named survivors of an accident or a disaster (44%), while women are most likely to be called survivors of war (44%), presumably in the condition of refugees since there are very few women in combat in Myanmar conflicts.

Identified as a victim of ...	Female sources	Male sources
Victim of non-domestic sexual violence, rape, assault, etc. (sexual violence only)	27%	15%
Victim of other non-domestic crime, robbery, murder etc.	27%	20%
Victim of an accident, natural disaster, poverty	15%	21%
Victim of war, terrorism, vigilantism, state violence	15%	42%
Victim of domestic violence, rape, murder, etc.	10%	4%

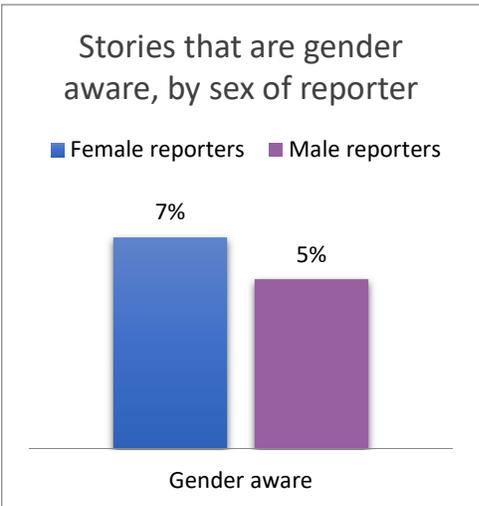
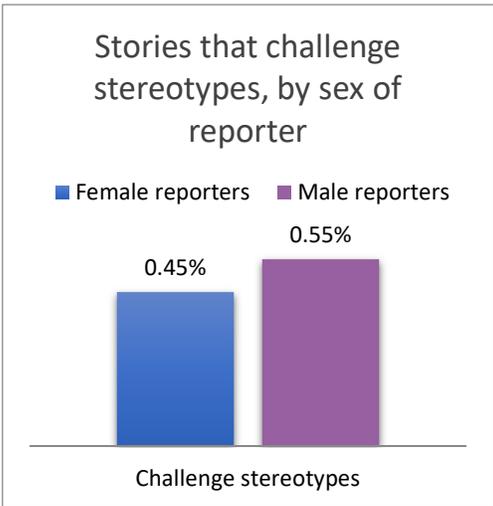
Identified as a survivor of ...	Female sources	Male sources
Survivor of war, terrorism, vigilantism, state violence	44%	25%
Survivor of an accident, natural disaster, poverty	36%	44%
Survivor of non-domestic sexual violence, rape, assault, etc. (sexual violence only)	8%	13%
Survivor of other non-domestic crime, robbery, etc.	8%	13%
Survivor of domestic violence, rape, murder, etc.	4%	3%

The only news topics where we see content that challenges gender stereotypes are those about gender equality (25%), gender-based violence (17%) and disability (11%). The remaining topics are 1% or lower.

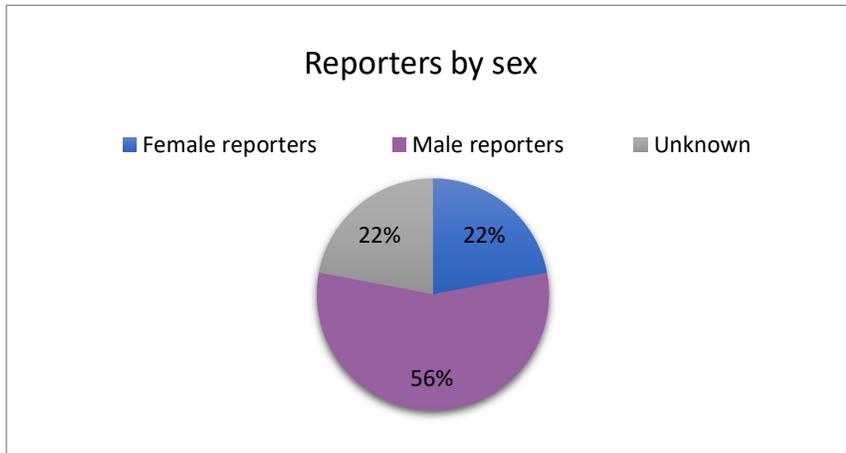


Reporting and Presenting

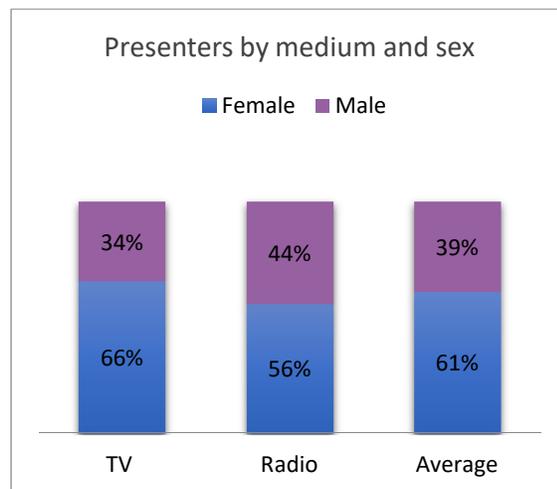
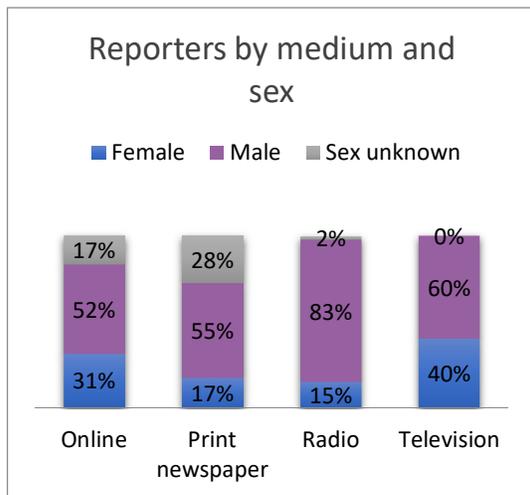
There is almost no difference between female and male reporters when it comes to stories that challenge stereotypes, both rate very low with 0.45% and 0.55% of their stories, respectively. Female reporters are slightly more likely (7% of stories) than male reporters (5% of stories) to report in a style that is gender aware. These statistics indicate that just by the virtue of being female, does not automatically mean a reporter is gender-aware.



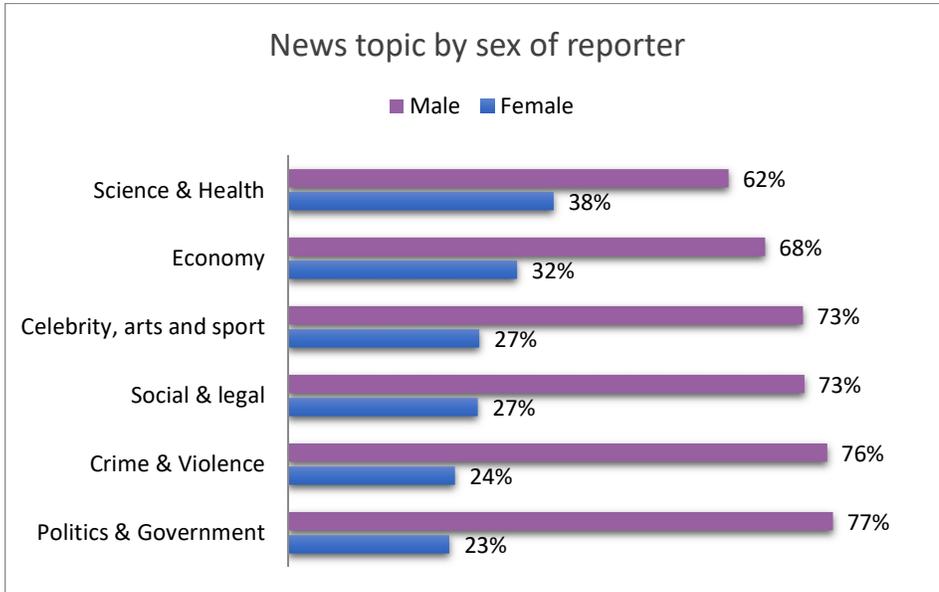
While the sex of 22% of reporters is unknown, 22% of reporters are women, compared to 56% men. When the sex is known this comprises 28% female and 78% male. More women are seen to be reporting in television (40%) and fewer in radio (15%).



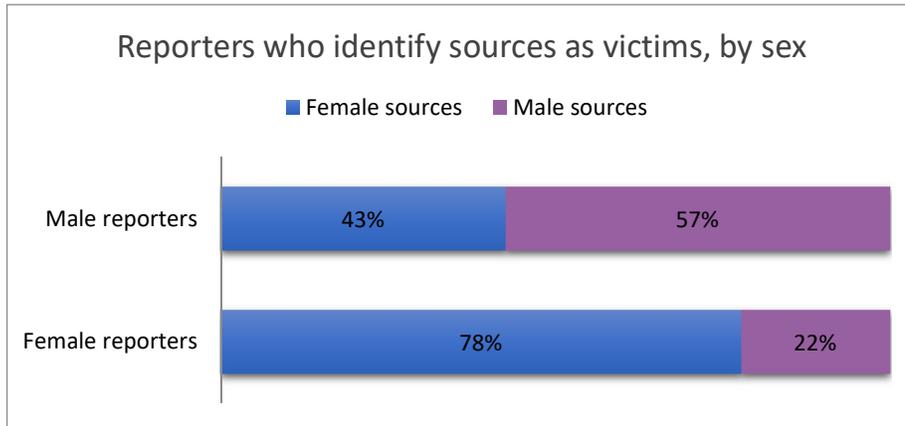
Interestingly, female presenters outnumber male presenters at 61%. Positions in presenting news are better paid than reporting, therefore they are more competitive, for both genders. Thus there appears to be a greater demand for female presenters rather than a bias in supply (i.e. more women interested than men). This reflects society's emphasis on women's appearance, considering them to be more attractive than men, even their voices.



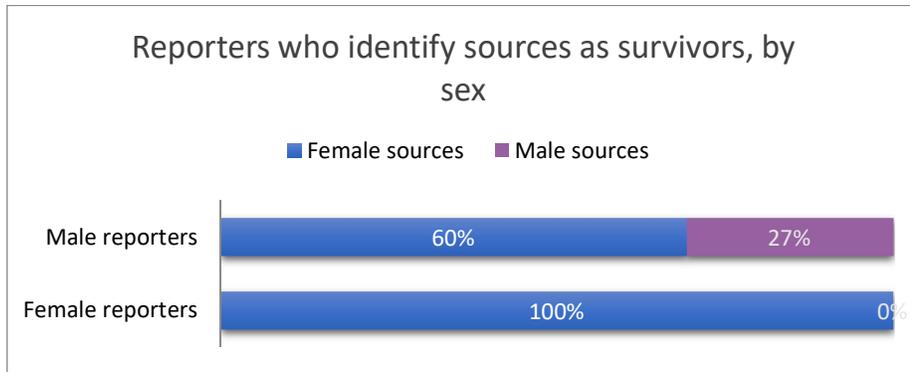
Female reporters are most commonly assigned to stories about Science & Health (38%), and least commonly report on Politics & Government news (23%). Science & Health stories represent 8% of all stories monitored, the second lowest on the media agenda after Celebrity, Arts and Sport (3%).



Of the sources female reporters label victims, 78% are female and 22% are male. Interestingly, male reporters are more likely to label male sources (57%) as victims than female sources (43%).



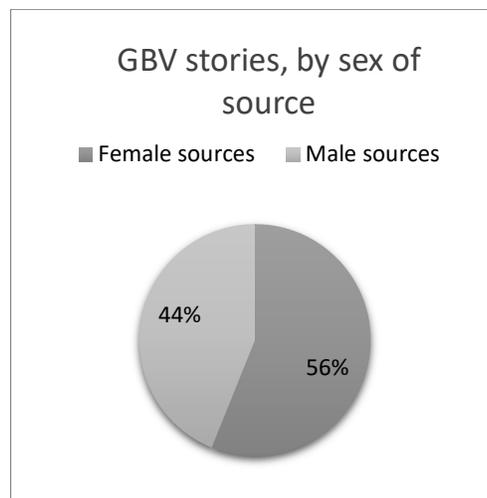
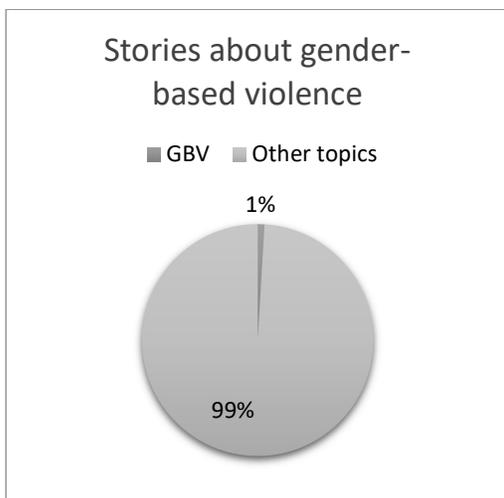
Male sources are much less likely to be labelled survivors, either by male reporters (27%) or female reporters (never).



Specialised topics

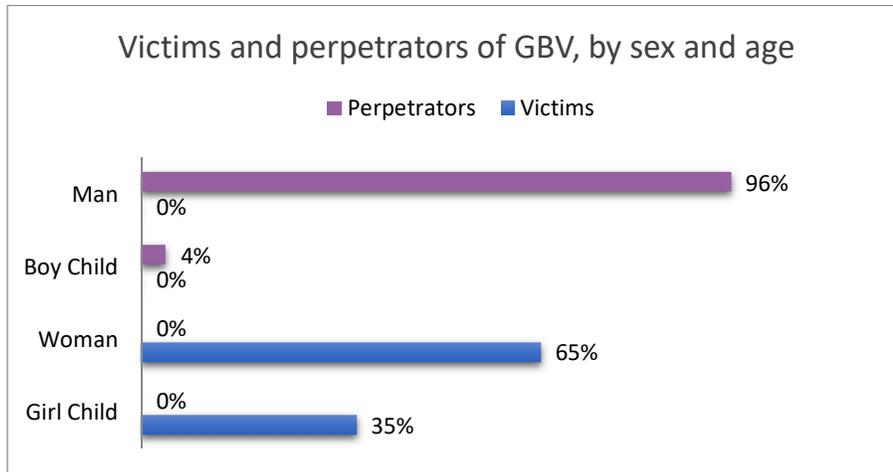
Gender based Violence

Stories about gender-based violence (GBV)⁴ only make up 1% of all news stories. Female representation in GBV stories is quite high at 44%. Unfortunately, this is because in all cases the victim of GBV is a girl or a woman.

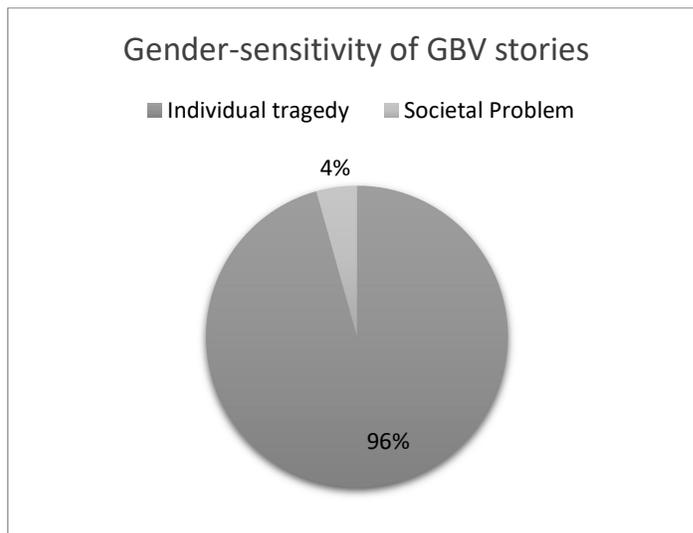


The data shows that 65% of victims of gender-based violence are women and 35% are girls. While 96% of perpetrators are men and 4% are boys.

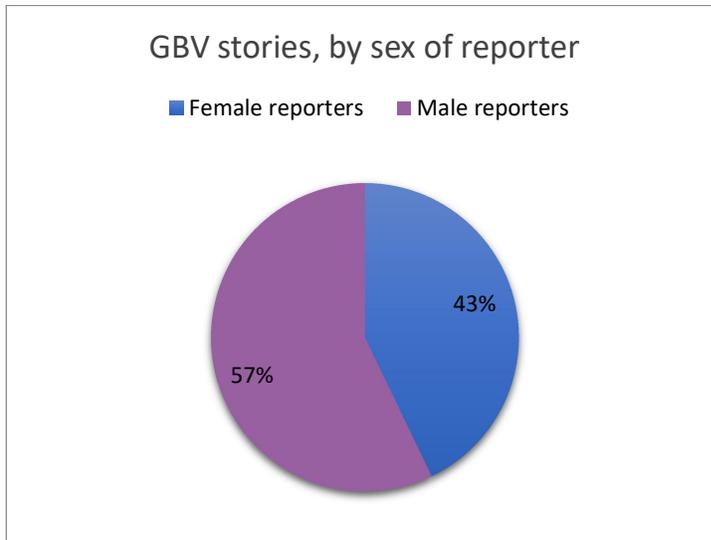
⁴ Any act that results in, or is likely to result in physical, sexual, psychological, economic harm, or suffering based on gender of a person (NGO Gender Group. Gender Glossary).



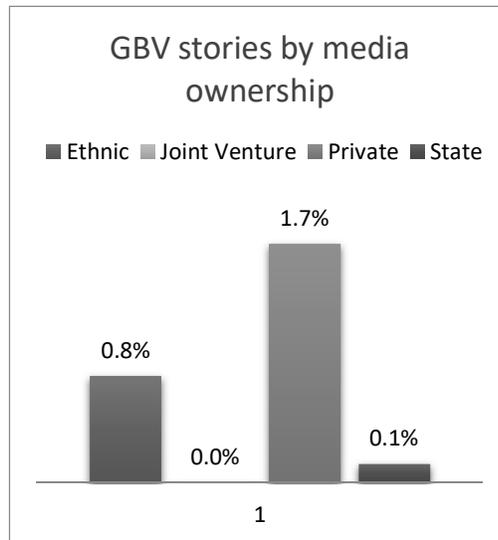
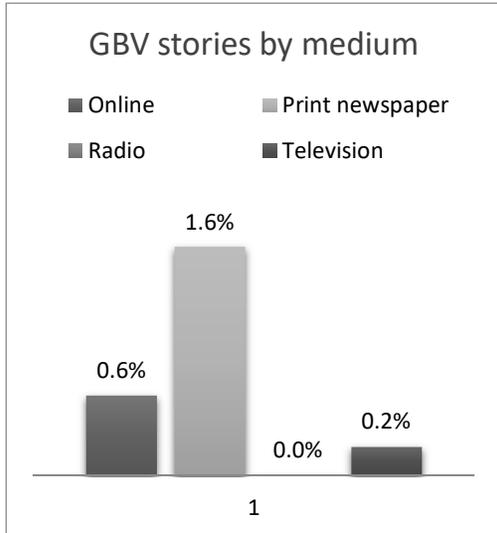
Only 4% of stories acknowledge that gender-based violence is part of a wider social problem of gender inequality. The vast majority report on it as an individual tragedy, ignoring the fact that women across the country are disproportionately affected by gender-based violence (Refer to *Myanmar gender gaps*, page 6). Nor do reporters acknowledge the power dynamics intrinsic to Myanmar gender relations as a result of social and cultural expectations around masculinity and femininity.



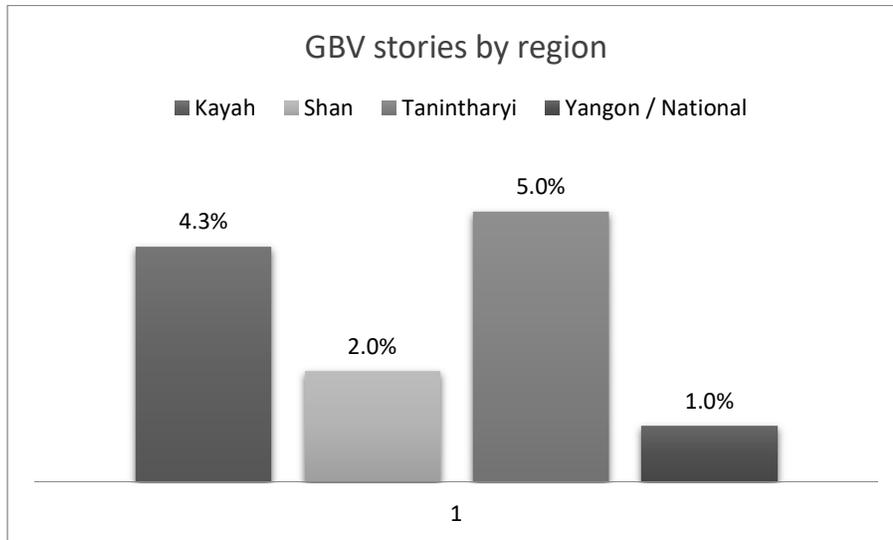
The rate of women reporting on GBV is higher than the average of news reports by women (28% when sex is known) at 43%, but these stories are still dominated by male reporters at 57%.



GBV reporting is most common in newspapers (1.6% of stories) and never reported in radio news. In terms of media ownership, stories on this topic are most commonly found in privately owned media (1.7% of stories) and never in joint-venture media. This is surprising since joint-venture media has the highest percentage of female sources among media ownership categories. Consequently, these women are not subject-victims as is the common portrayal of women but most often spokespersons (57%) on social and economic topics.

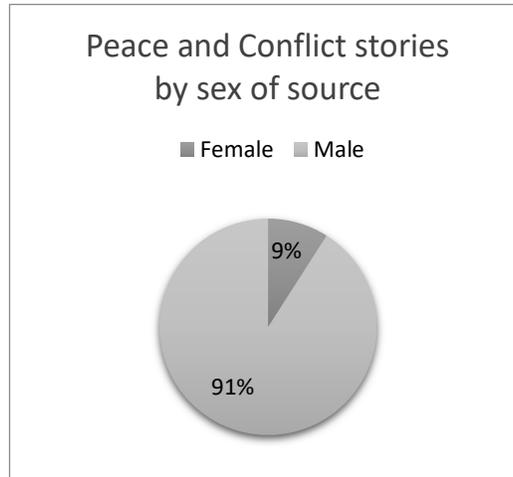


Only three areas outside of Yangon/Nationally based media reported on GBV – Kayah State (4.3%), Shan State (2%) and Tanintharyi Region (5%), all more frequently than the national average of 1%. All stories reported were in Burmese language.

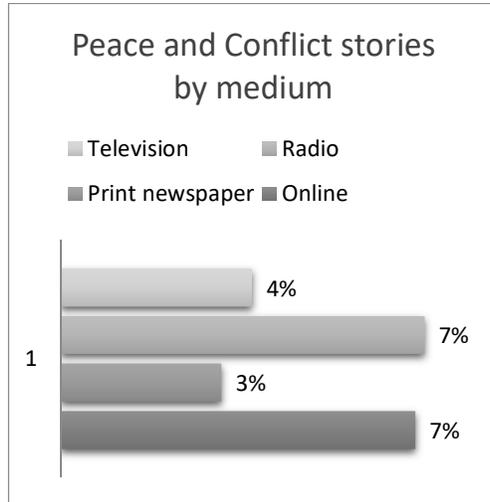
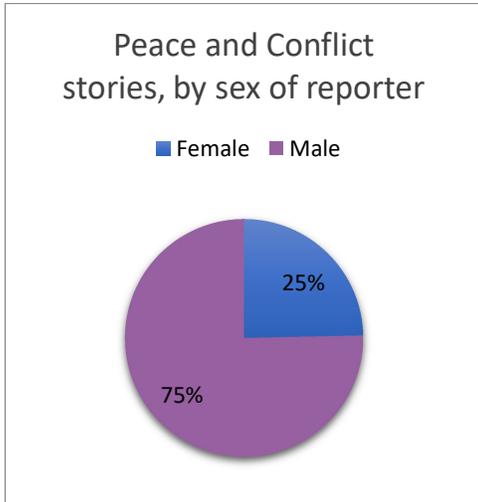


Peace and Conflict

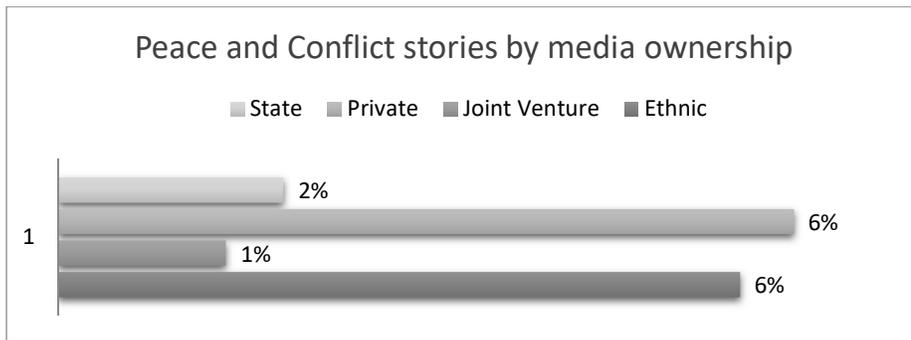
Stories about Peace & Conflict make up 4% of stories reported. In terms of sources, women make up 9% of voices represented in these stories, much lower than the average of 16%.



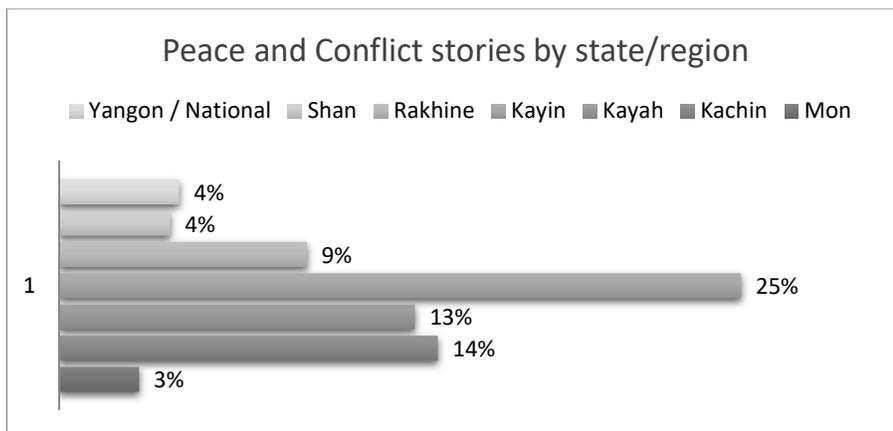
Peace and Conflict stories are in most cases covered by male reporters (75%). The medium that most commonly reports on these stories is radio news (7.1% of their topics) followed closely by online (6.1%).



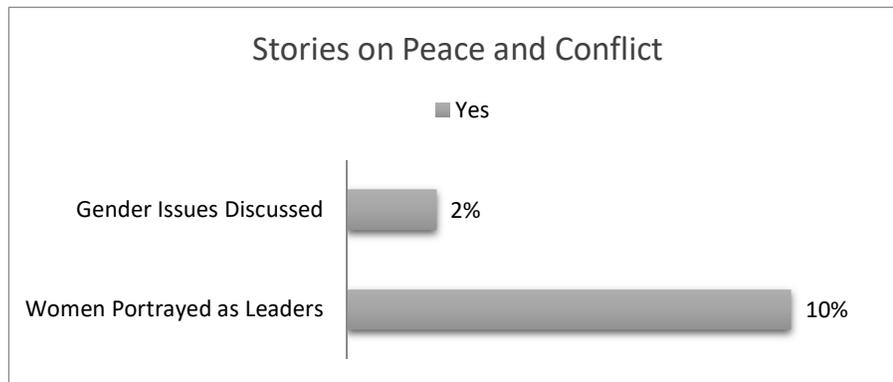
Privately owned media and ethnic media cover Peace and Conflict the most, making up 6% of their news topics in both cases.



While Chin, Magway, Mandalay, Sagaing and Tanintharyi did not publish any Peace and Conflict stories during the monitoring period, some States covered this topic at a much higher rate than average, namely Kayin (25%), Kachin (14%), Kayah (13%) and Rakhine (9%).



Only 2% of stories on peace and conflict raise gender issues related to the conflict or peace process. Likewise, only 10% of these stories portray women as leaders in conflict or the peace process.



CASE STUDIES

Following quantitative data analysis, it is necessary to identify specific examples of stories that support the quantitative results. This section aims to capture how a gender perspective in news can be analysed across a diversity of topics. Some cases relate to news stories where women are central, such as gender based violence or women in the peace process. However, gender balanced reporting principles apply to *all* news topics that contain news sources, therefore a gender analysis is provided on these types of stories also.

Each example is given a grade of gender awareness, from A to D:

A indicates a high level of gender awareness which includes a gender balance in the number (quantity) and function (quality) of sources. A-grade stories also challenge stereotypes or address issues related to gender equality in an educational and balanced way.

B indicates that the story has a gender balance in the number of sources but not necessarily the quality of sources, for example the male expert appears before the female expert. B-grade stories may either challenge gender stereotypes or address a gender equality issue in an informative way.

C-grade stories may have a gender balance in the number of sources or a balance in the function of sources. However just because there is balance in sources, they may still reinforce stereotypes or miss the opportunity to explore an issue from a gender perspective, such as the labour force or the HIV.

D means the story has a very low level of gender awareness. There is no balance in sources, but rather a reinforcement of stereotypes such as the male authority figure or the female victim.

The diagram below visualises the grading matrix.

Challenge Gender Stereotypes

Gender Balance in Sources

A

There is a balance in the number of male and female sources.

There is a balance in the function of male and female sources.

The article challenges stereotypes about gender roles and identity.

AND/OR

The article effectively educates the public about a gender equality issue.

C

There is a balance in the number of male and female sources and/or there is a balance in the function of male and female sources.

The article does not challenge stereotypes about gender roles and identity.

The article does not educate the public about a gender equality issue.

B

There is a balance in the number of male and female sources but there is an imbalance in the function of male and female sources.

The article aims to challenge stereotypes about gender roles and identity.

AND/OR

The article somewhat educates the public about a gender equality issue.

D

There is an imbalance in the number of male and female sources.

There is an imbalance in the function of male and female sources.

The article reinforces stereotypes about gender roles and identity.

AND/OR

The article misses the opportunity to educate the public about a gender equality issue.

No Gender Balance in Sources

Reinforces Gender Stereotypes

Headline: *Charges filed against married officer in Shwepyithar for sending girlfriend to KTV lounge massage parlour after a short cohabitation*

Medium: Newspaper

Media: Standard Times

Date: 4 June 2017

Topic: Crime – Human Trafficking

Grade: D

Summary: A Yangon police officer had an affair with a young woman and she became pregnant. Since the man is married he tried to deal with the pregnancy by handing the girl over to his mother who eventually sold her to another woman in Rakhine who owns a karaoke and massage parlour. The pregnant woman was forced to work in the establishment without pay and was eventually rescued after one month when she was able to make contact with her family. The story gives a summary of events followed by a lengthy direct quote from the victim about her experience in Rakhine. It concluded with a quote from the police station commander who was investigating the case.

Analysis: The headline of this article clearly demonstrates the gender blindness of this story. Instead of focusing on the deplorable crime of human trafficking that was committed, the angle centers on the moral dimension of the circumstances surrounding the case. Implicit in the terms “married officer”, “girlfriend” and “short cohabitation” is the idea that the infidelity and pre-marital cohabitation were the most important crimes committed. The term “sending girlfriend” downplays the criminal element even though further down the article it explicitly states that the police officer’s mother “sold the woman for 100,000 kyats”.

The female victim is depicted as a naïve and passive character in the story, who allows herself to be wooed by a married man, get pregnant, then be passed on for the mother to deal with and subsequently trafficked to another part of the country. Her personal statement describes her working conditions in brief but does not inquire what she dealt with the trauma of being cheated and betrayed by the father of her child, which could give some insight into her character. The mother of the police officer is also stereotypically obedient to her son, covering up his dishonest behaviour and being an accessory to his crimes.

The typical statement from the police captain gives no impression of the police force’s approach to solving trafficking crimes or the seriousness of a police officer being implicated in such a crime.

Conclusion: The reporter pays no attention to the gender-based violence issue of human trafficking or the social power dynamics that allowed the young women to be exploited by the police officer and his mother. The story misses the opportunity to educate the public on how some women are vulnerable to this exploitation and how to avoid it happening to others.

Headline: *15 year-old girl's pregnancy uncovered after admission in a clinic. Father raped daughter in Myeik*
Medium: Newspaper
Media: Standard Times, Newspaper
Date: 10 June 2017
Topic: Crime – Gender-based violence
Grade: D



Summary: The story is about a 15-year-old girl who is found to be seven months pregnant after her mother took her to the clinic. The girl admitted that she had been raped by her father when they were alone fishing and he was drunk. The girl's mother reported the crime to local police. The perpetrator was found hiding in his mother's house when the police arrested him. Sources include the mother of the victim, the victim, the perpetrator and a member of the local police force, who is the only person directly quoted.

Analysis: In the headline the use of the expression “pregnancy uncovered” suggests that the teenage girl was trying to cover it up, that she had been dishonest. It puts the blame on the victim for keeping the rape and subsequent pregnancy a secret. While the police officer quoted acknowledges that she did not tell anyone of the rape out of fear of social castigation, the reporter does not probe this fact. That the victim has a greater incentive to avoid the social stigma of being a rape victim than report the crime, suggests something very wrong about the society's norms around gender-based violence. The absence of journalistic inquiry here perpetuates the stereotype of the victim being responsible for her own rape.

The only directly quoted source in the story is the member of the police force. The sex of this source is unclear in the article. The reporter missed the opportunity to report the opinion of the survivor's mother or third parties that could open up the discussion of how rape is occurring at high levels around the country and is a social problem linked to the unequal status of men and women in Myanmar culture.

Although the reporter omits the name of the survivor, the perpetrator's photo, name and township are included, which automatically identifies the victim given the unique relationship of father-daughter. Therefore, it would be easy for people in the community to recognize who she is, making the survivor vulnerable in her environment. This is especially insensitive of the reporter considering the knowledge that the survivor was clearly concerned about the social stigma of being a rape victim.

The statement from the police “as she is not married, her mother asked her what happened” implies that marital status, not age, is the most important requirement for a woman in order to become pregnant. It links pregnancy with male ownership rather than the ability and maturity of a woman to make decisions about her own body.

The mention of a “drunk father” who rapes his own daughter once again relieves the perpetrator of some responsibility. Alcohol is not an excuse to commit rape in any case and the reporter makes no attempt to try and explore how an abhorrent crime could occur.

It is a short article however the reporter still includes information about how the perpetrator was hiding out in his mother’s house, who was clearly willing to protect her son. This constructs the stereotype of the biased mother of a son, always available to provide unconditional support regardless of what he has done wrong.

Conclusion: This is a clear case where a crime of gender-based violence is not acknowledged as part of a broader social problem of unequal power relations between men and women. While the perpetrator was reportedly arrested, the description of the crime deflects direct blame from him towards alcohol, and even implicitly to the victim. Furthermore, the identity of the teenage girl is poorly protected putting her at risk of being ostracized by her community.

Headline: *Lawyer faces three charges for throwing slipper at judge*

Medium: Newspaper

Media: 7 Days Daily

Date: 3 June 2017

Topic: Legal

Grade: D

Summary: A male lawyer is charged in Mandalay for throwing his shoe at and swearing at a female judge in court. The barrister was in court defending himself against criminal charges of submitting false documentation on behalf of a client. He allegedly threw the shoe at the judge because she revoked his bail and issued a warrant for his arrest. The story takes up half a page and goes into detail about the events leading up to this trial, mainly from the perspective of the lawyer. Very little information is provided about the judge. There are four sources, two male legal professionals who are interviewed and directly quoted, and the female and male subjects of the story (lawyer and the judge), who are not quoted.

Analysis: This report is dominated by male perspectives even though the event central to the story involves one male and one female. Even though neither of the two subjects are interviewed or quoted, compared to the male lawyer, the female judge is almost invisible to the narrative of the story. The lawyer is named in the second paragraph of the article and continues to be named nine more times. In contrast, the female judge is not named until the fourth paragraph and is not mentioned again by name, but only by “she”, “her” and “the judge”.

The other two sources are both male, one spokesperson of the court and a colleague of the lawyer who speaks in his defence. The colleague is referred to as a “disciple” symbolically elevating the lawyer to a level of great leader. The final paragraph also supports his character mentioning his social justice work, while no additional information is provided about the judge.

Summary: In Yangon, over 1,000 garment factory workers from a foreign-owned backpack factory went on strike, in protest to unlawful working conditions such as long hours, no penalty rates on Sundays, and no access to sick leave and casual leave. The reporter interviewed two sources, one male protest leader and one female workers' leader.

Analysis: The subject matter of this story is important and promotes the discussion of consistent application of the law to protect human rights, in this case worker's rights. However, the report completely ignores the gendered aspects of this topic referring to the "1000 workers" in general terms when 90% of the garment factory workforce is female. And this is substantiated by the image of the "protesters" who are 100% women.

The reporter misses the opportunity to delve into the gender-gap intrinsic to the troubled garment industry. It is known to be a highly exploitative industry for its low wages and draconian working conditions. It is also typically a female dominated workforce given the symbolic relationship between dressmaking, domestic work and women's work. Due to the invisible nature of unpaid domestic work, when it transitions to the market it tends to have low status and be poorly remunerated. As a female dominated sector this contributes to the gender wage gap.

There is no exploration of the impact of foreign investment of this kind on working conditions for women and men and how it drives both economic and gender inequality.

While there is a gender balance in the number and function of sources, a male and a female representing the worker's point of view, the male is quoted first giving his voice prominence and priority. This sends a message that even when an issue predominantly affects women, men speak first.

Conclusion: This gender blind report ignores the statistical data that allows further analysis into the gendered nature of this labour rights issue. The reporter chooses instead to keep the discussion within the confines of non-gendered "workers", and gives prominence to the male perspective on what is clearly a protest of women demanding their rights.

Headline: *Discussion about gender equality in Myitkyina, Kachin*

Medium: TV

Media: DVB Kachin

Date: 16 June

Topic: Gender Equality

Grade: B

Summary: The TV report is the second newscast in the program and goes for more than three minutes. It explains about an event held in the capital of Kachin State to raise awareness among women and men in the community about women's rights. A female representing the organizing NGO of the event is interviewed for the camera. Other footage includes shots of a

room predominantly filled with women listening to speakers including government and police officials.

Analysis: The early position of this story gives it status as an important story in the program. It promotes the importance of providing spaces for the exclusive discussion of issues that disproportionately affect women such as forced marriage, human trafficking and domestic violence. It does so in the framework of civil society partnering with institutions such as the police force and immigration department to find integrated solutions to these problems, rather than blame the victims.

The interviewee is a young confident woman who speaks clearly about the objectives and outcomes of the event, serving as a good role model. The report would have benefited from capturing the perspective of one of the male participants or speakers to reinforce the idea that men play an important role in tackling these types of gender-based issues, not just women.

Conclusion: by giving this story prominence at the beginning of the report shows the issue of gender-based violence is considered an important social justice issue. However it does verge on repeating the stereotype that gender-based violence is only a women's issue not a community issue.

Headline: *Myanmar needs to enable more women to enter the labour force*

Medium: Online

Media: Irrawaddy Online

Date: 24 June

Topic: Economy

Grade: B

Summary: This story covers the release of a statement by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) about the need to facilitate the entry of more women into the workforce. The story includes some of the sex-segregated statistics from the Department of Population which have formed the basis of the UNFPA statement. The three sources in the story include a male spokesperson of the International Labour Organization (ILO), a female spokesperson from UNFPA, and a female representative of a civil society organization which advocates for factory workers, in that order.

Analysis: The report highlights the reality of economic participation of men and women in the country from a holistic perspective. It notes the value a rise in female employment would have on the economy, but recognizes the access barriers women tend to have based on their condition as women. It calls for equal social, economic and political rights as an integrated approach to addressing both issues of an underdeveloped economy and gender inequality.

The article rightly recognizes the absence of the mostly female domestic worker population from this assessment due to the invisibility of their work and the need to support their inclusion in the formal economy. However it does not mention or explore the fact that many women

already work in an unpaid capacity in the home. Excluding women's unpaid reproductive work from the analysis, which usually comprises a double burden of paid and unpaid work, runs the risk of using women merely as a tool for economic growth without considering the impact formal work would have on her daily roles and responsibilities.

Two female experts are sourced representing both international and local organizations, however unfortunately their comments follow the single male expert who represents not the lead organization involved in the analysis but rather a third party UN agency.

Conclusion: This is a well-structured and investigated story that highlights some of the broader discussion around economic growth and women's participation in the economy. However it leaves out analysis of how unpaid domestic work affects women's access to paid work. In addition, the positioning of source quotes follows the stereotypical standard of female follows male.

Headline: *Myaing Gyi Ngu IDP camp in immediate need of a new building*

Medium: Newspaper

Media: Karen Information Centre

Date: 22 June 2017

Topic: Peace & Conflict - IDPs

Grade: B

Summary: This story from an ethnic news agency reports the problem of shelter and scarcity of other basic resources available to internally displaced persons (IDPs) at a refugee camp in Kayin state. The story has two sources: a male camp official who explains the poor condition of housing in the camps, as well as the problem of food shortages; a second source is a single mother who lives in the camp, who explains that she has no-one to help her collect materials for shelter so she has to choose between buying food or buying building materials. Both sources are directly quoted.

Analysis: The story covers important content about the reality of life for marginal groups like the IDPs. There is a gender balance in the quantity of sources, and incorporates two contrasting perspectives from those managing the camp and those living in the camp.

However, through the selection of sources and their quotes subtle gender stereotypes are portrayed. The male source is a spokesperson and the only person speaking as an authority on the issue. He generalizes the situation of "families who don't have anyone to support them", ignoring that it is a problem that disproportionately affects single mothers with young children.

The female source's statement brings to life the reality of the situation for those vulnerable "families" and an intelligent reader should be able to make the link. But the reporter misses an opportunity to explore further the different impact of under-resourced refugee camps on men and women which could be done with statistics or commentary from a civil society or humanitarian expert.

Conclusion: This is an important story and highlights the challenges of vulnerable refugees and has a quantitative balance in sources. But the sources are not equal in quality as they stereotypically present the male as the expert and the female as the victim. Further, it does not clearly depict the different realities of men, women, boys and girls living in the camps nor does it explore the dynamics of conflict that leave single mothers in a particularly vulnerable position.

Headline: *Workshop held on women's participation in peace process and peace implementation*

Medium: Newspaper

Media: Thazin Pen Khine Journal

Date: 20 June 2017

Topic: Peace & Conflict

Grade: B

Summary: This story covers an event held in Rakhine State published in an ethnic media journal. The event was organized by the Rakhine Women's Network as a measure to complement the peace process being coordinated by the Union government. The aim was to raise greater awareness among women from different communities in the state about the peace process and start a dialogue about gender-specific issues such as protection and participation. The story has two female experts as sources, both directly quoted, and closes with some statistics of women's participation in the formal peace process mechanisms.

Analysis: This is an inclusive piece as the issue of women in the peace process is often ignored by the mainstream and other ethnic media. There is a diversity of perspectives included, such as a statement from the organizers, a female gender expert as well as statistics to support the fact that women are drastically underrepresented in the peace process. It also mentions the strategy of having quotas for women's participation, an affirmative action to temporarily address the historical exclusion of women from formal political and military decision making.

The story does not have a gender balance in sources, however it does challenge the stereotype of male interviewees as experts as the two female sources appear as experts. This is appropriate since the subject matter deals directly with a gender inequality issue where women are traditionally excluded from the peace process. It would have been more balanced and refreshing to hear the perspective of a male also – a peace process expert or a government official – giving his view on women's inclusion in the peace process. Unfortunately, without this side of the story the topic remains separate from the broader discussion around peace.

Another missing element that could make this more gender sensitive would be to explore the reasons for women's traditional exclusion from the peace process, for example the burden that domestic work puts on women's ability to participate in community leadership, and traditional gender roles that consider women unfit for decision making, especially around topics of politics, peace and conflict.

Conclusion: This news story highlights an important issue on the Myanmar women's agenda in a reasonably gender balanced way. It includes the rare voices of female experts and provides statistics to demonstrate how women are excluded from the peace process. It would benefit from including a male perspective on the issue and exploring the gender dynamics behind women's traditional exclusion to broaden the discussion, rather than contain it to the single perspective of a "women's issue".

Headline: *Teacher from Kyaiklat receives 40-year sentence in rape case*

Medium: Newspaper

Media: 7 Days Daily

Date: 1 June 2017

Topic: Crime – Gender Based Violence

Grade: A

Summary: This story reports a crime case of a male teacher who was charged and convicted for raping two of his students, aged 14 and 15 years. The reporter includes sources from the legal, personal and gender perspective to provide a diverse number of female and male views on the case. After a statement from a women's rights activist, some government statistics are provided on the number of rape cases reported in the previous year.

Analysis: This is a good example of gender-sensitive reporting on gender based violence. The reporter does not sensationalize trivial details about the "who" or the "what" of the case, but instead remains respectful to the privacy of the victims and their families and includes points about the broader problem of rape in the community.

The angle of the story focuses on the very heavy sentence of 40 years which the legal expert source says is the "first time a maximum penalty has been given in a statutory rape case". This emphasizes the growing intolerance the legal sector has for rape in the community. The father of one of the victims is also quoted, relieved that justice was served and highlighting the need for improved sex education in schools. This is quite a progressive attitude, identifying the value education can have in improving awareness among young people of their rights and in preventing abuse.

The third source is a creative addition to these type of crime reports, a women's rights activist interviewed to provide her professional opinion on the issue of rape more broadly. She refers to heavy sentences being a deterrent and the need to provide safe environments for children. The inclusion of statistics of rape at the end of the story demonstrated how this is not an isolated incident but part of a national problem where women and girls are especially vulnerable. The story would have benefited from deeper exploration of cultural power dynamics between women and men that can lead to violence against women.

Conclusion: This story is gender balanced in the quantity and quality of sources – male and female professional and personal points of view. It also zooms out from the individual case to highlight that rape is a societal problem.

CONCLUSION

The study shows that very little time and space is given to women as news sources and subjects in Myanmar media. The overall figure of 16% representation across all mediums, can be interpreted as an established practice of media to defer in most cases to the male source. Female and male sources are most frequently sourced as spokespersons of an organization or group. In this case it is the organization or group being represented, not the reporter, who is choosing who is interviewed. This indicates that 1) the high proportion of male sources in news reflects the concentration of men in high-status positions in society, and 2) reporters make little effort to interrupt this systematic representation of male voices, when actually they can make a difference through their other choices of sources.

The fact that half of news stories only have one or no sources indicates a considerably low quality of journalism, therefore major challenges exist to increase the diversity and equity of media content.

The following is a summary of some of the patterns that can be found through the results of the study.

PEOPLE IN THE NEWS

Myanmar news representation is dominated by male voices

Women only represent 16% of the persons heard, read about, or seen in the newspaper, television and radio. Men on the other hand make up 80% of the voices portrayed in the media. The gender gap is narrowest in television (22%) and highest in radio (12%). **State-owned media** has the lowest number of female voices (12%) and **joint-venture** has the highest (26%). **Daily news** has the lowest proportion of women's voices (15%) while **weekly and monthly news** publish the highest (22%). The most common type of stories to include female voices are those about crime and violence (24%). **Politics** (13%), **Arts & Sport** (13%) and **Economy** (14%), are news topics with the lowest female representation.

Regional differences: The gender gap is largest in Chin media and lowest in Sagaing media

Chin State has the lowest female representation (3%). Sagaing (22%) has the highest. Mon, Shan, Rakhine, Kayin and Tanintharyi are all above the national average. Female voices in the news are most common in Pao-language media (33%) and least common in Tedim-language media (0%). Falam, Shan, Kayar and Kachin language media are all above the national average.

Images of men and women adhere to gender stereotypes

Women are twice as likely to appear like victims, are less likely to appear active and more likely to appear passive. Men are three times as likely as women to have their name mentioned in the by-line, which attributes visibility and importance to those men while doing the opposite to women. In contrast to the very low number of female sources, women are more than twice as likely to appear in newspapers images (35%) than as sources in articles.

NEWS QUALITY

Only 1% of stories challenge gender stereotypes

Almost none of the stories monitored in the study challenge gender stereotypes. Only 6% of news stories are considered to have gender awareness. The only news topics where we see content that challenges gender stereotypes are those about gender equality (25%), gender-based violence (17%) and disability (11%). The remaining topics are 1% or lower.

Most issues are never investigated from the perspective of gender. Especially topics related to the economy, peace and conflict and gender-based violence

Very few women are sourced as experts (7%), government officials (9%) and spokespersons (13%) compared to men. This is a common practice globally that reinforces the notion of male authority on most news topics relative to women. Compared to men, women are most commonly sourced for their personal experience (29%) and popular opinion (27%).

Men are typically sourced as high-status subjects or spokespersons representing government, business or civil society

While male subjects are defined by their work, the occupation of female subjects is often not stated. This corresponds to the tendency for women to be sourced for their personal experiences rather than their expert opinions. The most common occupational category of male sources all fit the stereotypes of high status leaders in the public domain – government officials, politicians, civil society representatives, police, military and business men.

Women tend to be stereotypically linked to the domestic space as opposed to the public space

The only occupation where female sources outnumber men are domestic worker, home maker, child and factory worker. While the first two are unsurprising and support the stereotype of women belonging to the domestic sphere, women as factory workers reflects the reality of the high number of women working in the garment industry and other low-skilled labour sectors. The dominance of girls over boys as sources (subjects) relates to the higher incidence of girl victims of abuse.

Women as religious figures, police/military, unemployed, sportspersons and scientists/engineers appear in less than 1% of cases, indicating that these are symbolically male-dominated fields in Myanmar, even though in reality they are not always. For example,

more women graduate from science and technology degrees than men. And 47% of the working-age female population is unemployed compared to only 19% of men.

While it is not a common practice to mention a source's family role in the Myanmar news, female sources are five times more likely than male sources to have their family role (wife, mother, daughter etc.) mentioned in the story. This reinforces the stereotype of linking women to the domestic space as opposed to the public or professional spaces.

Women are eight times more likely to be portrayed as victims than men, most commonly a victim of sexual violence

When a woman is a subject of the news, she is likely to be a victim. Women are eight times more likely to be labelled a victim/survivor than men: 7.6% of female sources versus only 1.4% of males. As victims, women are most likely to be portrayed as victims of sexual violence (27%) or victims of non-domestic crimes (27%) in contrast to men who are most likely to be portrayed as victims of war (42%). When described as survivors, however, men are most likely to be named survivors of an accident or a disaster (44%), while women are most likely to be called survivors of war (44%), presumably in the condition of refugees since there are very few women soldiers in Myanmar.

REPORTING AND PRESENTING

Just by the virtue of being female, does not automatically mean a reporter is gender-aware

Female reporters have 25% more female sources than do male reporters. However, there is almost no difference between female and male reporters when it comes to stories that challenge stereotypes. These statistics indicate that just because a reporter is female, it does not automatically mean she is gender-aware. Both female and male reporters rate very low when it comes to stories that challenge stereotypes, 0.45% and 0.55% of their stories, respectively

Women are favoured when they become visually presented

Twenty-eight per cent of stories are reported by women, compared to 72% reported by men (when the sex of reporter is known). More women are seen to be reporting in television (40%) and fewer in radio (15%). Thus, there appears to be a greater demand for female presenters. This reflects society's emphasis on women's appearance, considering them to be more attractive on television. This data correlates with the higher presence of women in newspaper images (35%) than in newspaper articles (16%).

Female reporters cover science, health and the economy

Female reporters are most commonly assigned to stories about Science & Health (38%), and least commonly report on Politics & Government news (23%). Science & Health stories represent 8% of all stories monitored, the second lowest on the media agenda after Celebrity,

Arts and Sport (3%). However stories on the economy are also a common news topic for female reporters (32%).

Male reporters almost twice as likely to label their female sources victims

Male reporters label 7% of their female sources as victims while female reporters label 4% of their female sources as victims. Of the victims sourced by female reporters, 78% are female, a much higher rate than the proportion of male reporter's victims who are female (43%). This reflects the division of news topics, where men cover more stories on conflict, accidents and disasters in which male victims also appear.

RECOMMENDATIONS⁵

To reporters and editors

1. Seek out a variety of sources from a variety of perspectives, including female and male sources.
2. Seek out experts/spokespeople of both sexes – refer to the Breaking Gender Stereotypes Female Experts database www.genderinmyanmarnews.org
3. Be consistent in how you quote male and female sources – directly or indirectly.
4. Be consistent in mentioning the age of male and female sources.
5. Be consistent in mentioning the family role of male and female sources.
6. Portray men and women as survivors where possible (rather than victims).
7. Investigate whether the issue/event affects men and women differently. Look at sex-segregated data.
8. If there are differences, ask why an issue affects women and men differently.
9. Be consistent with questions about men and women's professional and private lives - If you ask a successful career woman how she manages to get so far with kids, ask the same question to a successful career man.
10. Look for sources who challenge the stereotypes about men and women.
11. Where relevant to the story, try to inclusively represent groups of varied ethnicity, class, age, sexual orientation, religion and physical ability.

To media houses

1. Develop a gender policy and gender aware ethics and practice codes, with action plans and targets for implementation.
2. Provide gender-awareness training to staff at all levels and gender-balanced journalism training to reporters and editors.
3. Engage with community media organizations and citizens' media networks to advance gender equality in content production.
4. Establish gender quotas for senior posts and board positions and monitor progress against targets.
5. Publish gender equality plans and mechanisms for monitoring progress; gender-disaggregated data on job applications, shortlisting and appointment by level.

To the Myanmar Press Council

1. Finalise the participatory process of making the Myanmar Code of Conduct gender sensitive, and distribute it to all media.
 2. Require media houses to adopt and enforce a gender policy and guidelines for gender-sensitive reporting.
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⁵ Adapted from Ending Media Sexism Campaign 2020 (Macharia 2015)

3. Provide templates for developing gender-sensitive policies and guidelines to media houses according to international standards.
4. Include, in media evaluation criteria, issues of gender balance and demonstrated adherence to the gender-sensitive Code of Conduct.
5. Impose meaningful fines on media houses found liable for sex discrimination, sexist content or other actions of non-compliance with the Code of Conduct.
6. Build capacity of staff responsible for hearing cases on media non-compliance with the gender-sensitive Code of Conduct.

To media professional training institutions

1. Engage with community media organizations and citizens' media networks to demonstrate and use the Gender in Myanmar News results in training.
2. Incorporate gender dimensions in all modules of journalism training curricula.
3. Build capacity of news journalists about gender sensitive news reporting during training at sectoral and tertiary levels; Increase journalists' understanding of the impacts of biased reporting.
4. Build journalists' skills to navigate the structural barriers that impede gender responsive reporting.

To civil society

1. Advocate for gender policies to be incorporated in editorial policies of all media organizations.
2. Lobby editors to apply the gender policy.
3. Urge media to make women visible and to increase the proportion of female sources interviewed.
4. Develop issue-based campaigns twinning gender with other axes of discrimination such as ethnicity, religion, disability, age, sexuality and class.
5. Lobby governments for media reform to require attention to gender equality and women's freedom of expression interests.
6. Actively make complaints about media sexism and other acts of non-compliance with gender policy.
7. Boycott media which regularly denigrate women through objectification and sexualisation.
8. Lend support to journalists and media engaged in struggles against political influence, and for gender equality and public interest agendas.
9. Strengthen alliances with national women's machineries and work together to regularise national media monitoring.
10. Institute media awards to recognize good practice as well to call out media that outputs sexist content. Use tools such as the Gender in News Media as a public accountability scorecard to assess media outputs, and then make the results public.
11. Increase audience awareness of sexist and misogynistic content by offering critical media literacy training.

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ANNEX 1

Definition of terms related to the methodology

Subjects

People who the story is about, the “main character”, even if they are not interviewed or quoted. The subject of the story is usually mentioned in the headline or first two paragraphs/comments. If they are not mentioned at the beginning the story is not “about” them.

Sources

Sources are people interviewed by journalists to give their views and perspectives on the news events and current issues of the day. Sources may be quoted directly, or they may be paraphrased (quoted indirectly).

Sources are chosen by reporters because of:

- Their specialist knowledge on the issue or event (‘experts’);
- If they are among those greatly affected by the event or issue (women and men living with HIV should be among those interviewed in stories on access to anti-retrovirals, for e.g.);
- If they are the ‘subjects’, or ‘main actors’ of an event or issue.

Function of sources

- **Subject:** this is if the person appears in the headline or the first two paragraphs of the story. The story is about them. If the person has more than one function including being the subject, choose subject.
- **Spokesperson:** speaking on behalf of a person, a group, a party or a committee. This person is directly or indirectly quoted.
- **Government official:** someone from government who is speaking (directly or indirectly) but not on behalf of the government, committee or political party (maybe they are just commenting on a situation, process or event).
- **Expert or commentator:** the person provides additional information, opinion or comment, based on being a specialist. If they are an expert from the government you should select Spokesperson or Government Official.
- **Personal experience:** the person provides opinion or comment, based on individual personal experience;
- **Eye witness:** the person gives testimony or comment, based on something they have seen or witnessed.
- **Popular opinion:** the person gives their opinion on a public issue. This is usually “voxpop” style where the reporter asks random people in a public space what they think about a particular issue in the media, e.g. the new bus system or changes to the cost of a public service like water or electricity.

Victims and Survivors

These are not necessarily sources or subjects. Any person mentioned as victims or survivors (for example of a flood, a plane crash, a terrorist attack, a robbery) are counted as victims or survivors.

Victims are people in the news who are described specifically as a 'victim', or if the news implies that the person is a victim- e.g. by using language or images that evoke particular emotions such as shock, horror, pity for the person.

Survivors are people in the news who are described specifically as a 'survivor', or if the news implies that the person is a survivor- e.g. by using language or images that evoke particular emotion such as admiration, courage or respect for the person.

Passive and Active in Images

Active means the person is central to the image. Even if the person is sitting down (a passive activity) if there are people around them clearly listening to the person seated, that person looks active in the picture. It all depends on what the photography is giving prominence in the framing of the photo.

ANNEX 2

Full List of Media Sample

National Print

1. 7 Day Daily
2. Crime News Journal
3. Myanmar Alinn
4. Myawaddy Daily
5. Pyi Myanmar
6. Standard Time
7. The Myanmar Times (Weekly)
8. The Voice Daily
9. Weekly Eleven News

Regional Print

1. MGY Journal
2. Monwya Gazette
3. The Tanintharyi Weekly
4. The Yadanarbon

Ethnic Print

1. Hinthar
2. Hsenpai News Journal
3. Kantarawaddy Times
4. Karen News (KIC)
5. Khamsae Voice (People's Voice)
6. Khonumthung News
7. Myitkyina Journal
8. Thazin Pen Khine
9. The Hakha Post
10. The Marnagar Journal
11. The Than Lwin Times
12. Tongsan

TV

1. BBC
2. Channel-7
3. DVB (Burmese)
4. DVB Ethnic TV
5. MNTV
6. MRTV
7. MRTV-4
8. MWD
9. RFA
10. VOA

Radio

1. BBC
2. Cherry FM
3. Mandalay FM
4. MRTV (national)
5. MRTV Ethnic Radio
6. RFA (Burmese)
7. RFA Ethnic Radio
8. VOA

Online

1. Irrawaddy
2. Kachin Wave
3. Mon News Agency
4. Narinjara
5. Panglong

Breaking Gender Stereotypes

Myanmar Women Journalists Society

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IMS-Fojo in Myanmar

Insitut Francaise Birmanie, 340 Pyay Rd San Chaung Township, Yangon, Myanmar

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