

INTRODUCTION

The media plays a significant role in determining how women in politics and decision-making are viewed and perceived by society in general. The media does not only play an important role in shaping the values of society but also reflects those values. The media is a chronicler of events, an informer, an educator, a transformative space and a tool to change society. It has the capacity to make a very positive contribution towards social change.

In order to conduct a systematic analysis of how women are covered in the media, Women in Politics Support Unit, WiPSU, initiated an internal data capturing process where a daily monitoring of newspapers would be conducted and any article on women Parliamentarians and councilors would be collected. The articles are analyzed to give an overview of how women are portrayed and the implications of that portrayal on women and women's issues in Zimbabwe.

There cannot be a real democracy if the voices and issues of **52%** of the country's population are ignored or sidelined. This media analysis will assist in determining whether or not women's voices and issues are articulated to the public as matters of importance. It can also be used as a basis for assessing what could be done to ensure that woman's voices and women's issues are regarded as important.

SCOPE OF THIS ANALYSIS

The media monitoring initiative covered the local daily and weekly newspapers from both the independent and state media. The newspapers are The Herald, The Daily News, The Daily Mirror, The Sunday Mail, The Weekly Standard, The Independent and The Financial Gazette. The variety of papers would make it possible to analyze the coverage from a comprehensive perspective. Great care and effort were taken such that the margin of error is negligible. This analysis covered the period January to March 2007

In order for a report to qualify it has to have reference to a particular woman in elected public office. This means a woman Parliamentarian or Councilor. It would not be adequate for an article to merely refer to Parliamentarians or Councilors without linking it to a particular woman or women specifically. An article covering a woman in her capacity as Minister or Governor would qualify because in the current Constitutional framework, Ministers and Governors are members of Parliament. In some cases women Ministers are in fact elected parliamentarians. These articles would also assist in determining if women receive more coverage as Ministers or Governor as compared to their capacity as Members of Parliament, Senators or Councilors.

Number of stories Covering Women Councilors (Table 1)

COUNCILOR	JANUARY	FEBRUARY	MARCH	TOTAL
Sekesai Makwavarara	11	4	14	29
Viola Chasi	0	0	0	0
Alice Nkomo	0	0	0	0
Faina Machakaire	0	0	0	0
Theresa Mutandadzi	0	0	0	0
Bessie Nhandara	0	0	0	0
Juliet Machiba	0	0	0	0
Stars Mathe	0	0	0	0
Bybit Tsomondo	0	0	0	0
Marah Dongo	0	0	0	0
Sarina Ncube	0	0	0	0
Dep. Mayor Govera Charity	0	0	0	0
Mildred Bimha Chikwekwete	0	0	1	1
Total	11	4	15	30

The table shows the statistical results of the findings during the Media Monitoring Period. The print Media was monitored everyday from the 1st of January to the end of March 2007 and Weekly Papers except for the Sunday Mirror were monitored on Weekly basis.

Table 1 shows a slight decrease in the coverage of female Councilors .The same Female Councilor, Ms Sekesai Makwavarara who is currently the Chairperson of the Commission running the Affairs of the City of Harare received a lot of Coverage in the Last Quarter, that is the period from October to December 2006, is the one who is still leading in the current quarter under review with a total of **29** stories

The information above shows that Sekesai Makwavarara who runs the City of Harare is the most newsworthy woman in the Local Government. She is the only female Chairperson out of all the commissions that are running urban councils in Zimbabwe. About **29** of the **30** articles published in all the weekly and daily papers involved her, This is a major decrease from the previous quarter's **56** out of **58** stories.

Number of stories Covering Women Parliamentarians

Names of Women In Politics	JANUARY	FEBRUARY	MARCH	Total
1) Min Flora Buka	0	1	1	2
2) MP Abigail Damasane	0	0	0	0
3) MP Aqualinah Katsande	0	0	1	1
4) MP Nomalanga Khumalo	0	0	0	0
5) MP Thokozani Khupe	0	0	1	1
6) MP Shuvai Mahofa	0	1	0	1
7) MP Angelina Masuku	0	1	1	2
8) MP Editor Matamisa	0	0	0	0
9) MP Thokozile Mathuthu	0	1	1	2
10) MP Mabel Mawere	0	0	0	0
11) MP Enita Maziriri	0	0	0	0
12) Min Oppah Muchinguri	2	1	3	6
13) Min Olivia Muchena	2	2	0	4
14) MP Sabina Mugabe	0	0	0	0
15) VP Joice Mujuru	9	9	16	34
16) MP Priscilla Misihairabwi-Mushonga	0	2	0	2
17) MP Pauline Mpariwa	1	0	2	3
18) MP Esther Nyauchi	0	0	0	0
19) Min Sithembiso Nyoni	4	5	2	11
20) MP.Celine Pote	0	0	0	0
21) MP Satiya Canisia	1	0	0	1
22) MP Gwachiwa Cecilia	0	0	0	0
23) MP Gertrude Stevenson	0	0	3	3
24) MP Margaret Zinyemba	0	0	1	1
25) Sen. Pres Edna Madzongwe	0	2	2	4
26) Sen. Chikava Betty	0	0	0	0
27) Sen. Chimbudzi Alice	0	0	0	0
28) Sen. Chimene Manditawepi	0	1	0	1
29) Sen. Dete Agnes	0	0	0	0
30) Sen. Dube Grace	0	0	0	0
31) Sen. Gava Chiratido	0	0	0	0
32) Sen. Goto Rosemary	0	0	0	0
33) Sen. Gumbura Livai	0	0	0	0
34) Sen. Mahere Sheila	0	0	0	0
35) Sen. Makono Egneti	0	0	0	0
36) Sen. Mohadhi Tambudzani	0	0	0	0
37) Sen. Moyo Eunice	0	0	0	0
38) Sen. Moyo Josephine	0	0	0	0
39) Sen. Muchengeti Clarissa	0	0	0	0
40) Sen. Muchenje Vignia	0	0	0	0

41) Sen. Mukusha Stefan	0	0	0	0
42) Sen. Mutinhiri Tracy	0	2	0	2
43) Sen. Muzenda Tsitsi	0	0	0	0
44) Sen. Mwashita Vivian	0	0	1	1
45) Sen. Ndlovu Rittah	0	0	0	0
46) Sen. Rungani Anna	0	0	0	0
47) Sen. Thembani Sabina	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	19	28	35	82

General Overview of Coverage

Below is a statistical analysis of the coverage:

- A total of **112** articles were published in the **3** months
- **82** stories covered Members of Parliament including the Vice President, President of the Senate, Ministers/ Deputy Minister and the Governors.
- **30** stories covered women Councilors
- **15** out of the **24** Members of Parliament were covered
- **4** out of the **24** Senators were covered including the Senate President Hon. Edna Madzongwe.
- Only **2** urban women Councilors were covered

Analysis

Out of all the Rural and Urban Female Councilors only **2** councilors were covered in both the Daily and weekly print media, this however is a significant decrease from the **3** female councilors who were covered in the previous three months. The Table also shows that the female councilors covered are Urban Councilors only and this leaves a lot to be desired.

This quarter Vice President Joice Mujuru is taking the lead with a total of **34** stories. V.P Joice Mujuru is leading with **5** stories more than Sekesai who has **29** stories. Sekesai is the only one who has more than **1** story in the councilors' category and was covered in **29** stories, whilst the other Councilors got between **0** and **1** stories each. It is therefore not surprising that she attracts a lot of Media attention as she is occupying a high and influential position in the council of Zimbabwe's capital City.

What do the Tables show about the coverage of Women in Politics?

The table shows that the coverage of Women politicians has declined from **165** stories last quarter to **112** stories. The VP is leading with a total of **34** stories only, which is a significant decrease from last three months' total of **43**. However it is so sad to note that she did not receive the expected media attention despite the fact that she is the V.P of Zimbabwe.

The Chairperson of the commission running the city of Harare was followed by the Minister of Small to Medium Entrepreneurs Sithembiso Nyoni who had a total coverage of **11** stories from the previous quarter's **13** stories. This quarter saw the daily and weekly papers carrying more stories on the female Vice President of Zimbabwe, Joice Mujuru followed by the Harare town Council's Chairperson and the female Ministers Sithembiso Nyoni, Oppah Muchinguri, Olivia Muchena, and Flora Bhuka who got **11,6,4, and 2** stories from the previous quarter which carried **13, 10, 9, and 2** respectively. The ministers were mainly covered on issues pertaining to their Ministries.

The two female Provincial Governors Thokozile Mathuthu and Angelina Masuku got coverage of a total of only **2** stories each from last quarter's **3** stories each.

Female MPs who do not occupy influential positions did not receive a significant coverage, which clearly shows that, either Women in their capacity as Parliamentarians are not considered newsworthy or women being very few and occupying fewer political positions are unlikely to attract media attention.

Posts and Titles In Which Female Parliamentarians Were Covered

The women parliamentarians can be divided into six broad categories, i.e. Ministers and Deputy Ministers, Governors, Vice President, Chairperson of the commissions and MPs and Senators who do not hold other posts.

Title	JANUARY	FEBRUARY	MARCH	Total
Ministers /Deputy ministers	8	11	6	25
MPs and Senators	2	4	9	15
Vice president	9	9	16	34
Chairperson of the commission and Deputy Mayor	11	4	15	30
Governors	0	2	2	4
Senate President	0	2	2	4
Total	30	32	50	112

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The above table shows that women politicians are not being given enough coverage. It also clearly shows that the Chairperson of the commission that is running the affairs of the capital city of Harare and the Vice President are the only ones who are being given more coverage followed by female Parliamentarians who are doubling as Ministers. More than **20** female parliamentarians have not been covered in the print media at all. Only **21** female politicians were given coverage in the three months under review.

The statistical data above which shows women in politics and decision making only having been covered in very few articles is a sad reflection of the state of affairs in Zimbabwe.

There are two possible explanations for this scenario:

- *Either that women in whatever capacity are not considered newsworthy OR*
- *Or women being very few and occupying inferior political positions they are unlikely to attract a lot of media attention.*

What is interesting is that the majority of articles covered women in their capacities as leaders and Ministers. What this seem to suggest is that the more women in these influential positions like Ministers and governors the more coverage they will receive, as they will be considered important people whose official and unofficial duties are newsworthy.

The women in their capacities as Ministers, Governors, Chairpersons of Commissions running urban Councils and leaders usually officiate at a number of meetings and that is likely to attract media attention, than women MPs and Senators without portfolios.

The statistical information on the coverage in relation to these broad categories is as follows:

- **82 of 112** articles referred to the female Parliamentarians.
- **15 of 112** articles referred to Parliamentarians who do not hold other portfolios.
- **34 of 112** articles referred to the Vice President
- **25 of 112** articles referred to **4** Ministers and the **2** Deputy Ministers in their official capacity
- **4 of 112** articles referred to the **2** Governors.
- **30 of 112** articles referred to the Chairperson of the Commission that runs the City of Harare and the Deputy Mayor of Marondera
- **0** out of **112** stories covered councilors.

The reports' focus was wide and varied. The women were covered in relation to their official duties, (this relates more to the V.P Ministers and the Governors), in comparison to their constituency work, in Parliamentary debates, in their personal lives, and in relation to their political parties but leaves a lot to be desired in terms of their constituency based positions.

Number Of Stories Covered By The Newspapers Per Month

NAME OF PAPER	JANUARY # Of articles	FEBRUARY # Of articles	MARCH # of articles	Total
Herald	16	15	21	52
Daily Mirror	6	8	5	19
Zimbabwe Independent	1	1	6	8
Financial Gazette	4	1	2	7
Standard	3	4	7	14
Sunday Mail	1	1	0	2
TOTAL	31	30	41	102

NOTE: *The Daily Mirror Stopped publishing early March*

The Table just like in the previous quarter shows that the Herald continues to comparatively carry more news items on women politicians with **52** stories however this has declined from last quarter's total of **73** stories compared to the other Daily paper .The Daily Mirror had only carried **19** from the 1st of January to the time of its closure i.e. early March.

The weekly papers Zimbabwe Independent, Financial Gazette, The Sunday Mail, The Standard and have a total of **8,7,2** stories respectively shows a significant fall from last quarter's **11,10,14** respectively except for the Standard Paper which made a great and noticeable improvement of carrying **14** stories on the period under review from last quarter's coverage of only **4** stories.

However, there is need for the media to cover more women Parliamentarians especially the rural Senators and rural Councilors, who remain unknown because they are not given enough coverage and space in the media.

All the newspapers cited above published reports on the women politicians. The breakdown of the reports according to the papers is:

- The Daily Mirror, published **19** out of **112**, i.e.**16.7%**
- The Herald published **52** out of **112**, i.e. **46.4%**
- The Zimbabwe Independent published **8** out of **112**, i.e. **7.1%**
- The Financial Gazette Published **7** out of **112**, i.e. **6.3%**
- The Standard published **14** out of **112**, i.e. **12.5%**
- The Sunday Mail published **2** out of **112**, i.e. **1.8%**

There is a great challenge for papers to report more on women and for those who have not, to question their own internal policies, integrity and their views on women and their political participation and be proactive enough to seek out women especially those based in the rural areas and give them a voice. The Sunday Mail, the figures (**2 out of 112**) articles are worrisome and unimpressive because it shows that the paper hardly published

an article on women in politics and decision-making in the three months under review. Women's issues still have a long way to go before they are realized to be of national importance.

Categories In Which Female Parliamentarians Were Covered

<i>Paper</i>	<i>Scandals</i>	<i>Economic and land policies</i>	<i>Social & national issues</i>	<i>HIV & health</i>	<i>GBV & women empowerment</i>	<i>Development & donations</i>	<i>Corruption</i>	<i>Cartoons & pictures</i>	<i>Letters & official openings</i>	<i>IWD</i>	<i>Others</i>	Total
Herald	8	5	5	3	6	10	1	5	2	2	11	58
Daily Mirror	2	1	1	1	1	4	0	3	1	0	3	17
Zimbabwe Independent	2	1	0	0	0	1	0	2	1	0	2	9
Financial Gazette	3	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	2	0	0	7
Standard	5	2	0	1	0	0	0	1	2	0	4	15
Sunday Mail	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	2
Total No. Of stories	20	9	6	5	7	17	1	13	8	2	20	108

What were the issues discussed?

Scandals

The analysis shows that the category that was given so much attention in the media was the **Scandals Category**. The media gave excess attention to all the scandals that included female politicians. Attention and prominence was given to these scandals to the extent of having some of the scandals making the headlines and also getting follow up stories almost on daily basis. Out of a total of **20** scandal stories published by the six Papers, The Herald came in first with a total of **8** articles, followed by The Standard, Financial Gazette, Zimbabwe Independent, Daily Mirror and The Sunday Mail, which carried 5,3,2,2 and 0 respectively.

Development and Donations

The second category that was given fair attention by the media is that of **Development and Donations**. The category had a total of **17** stories from all the weekly and daily papers. The Herald was leading with a total of **10** stories followed by, The Daily Mirror, The Sunday Mail, FinGaz, Zim Ind and The Standard that had **4, 1,1,1 and 0** respectively

Cartoons and Pictures

The **Cartoons and Pictures** category proved to be popular is the. Of the **108** reports, **13** of them were just cartoons and Pictures with captions of the women highlighted. The Herald came in first with a total of **5** articles, followed by the Daily Mirror, Zimbabwe Independent, The Sunday Mail, The Financial Gazette, and The Standard, which carried 3,2,1,1 and 1 story respectively. This category is interesting as pictures give prominence and in this case the photographs in the newspapers make the article more eye-catching and appealing to the reader. It also gives a face and profile of the person concerned.

Economics and Land policies

It is very interesting to note that female politicians were also covered fairly in stories to do with the economics and Land issues. The table shows that the papers recorded a total of **9** stories covering women in this category. The above coverage clearly shows that women are getting involved in economic issues and can now be heard commending or criticizing the country's economic policies. Interestingly the media is also giving much attention to female politicians talking about land, probably because the Minister of land is a woman.

However, Women politicians were not given enough coverage on profiles and letters carried **8** stories, letters and Official openings **8** stories, gender based violence Women empowerment had **7** articles, social and national issues had 6 stories, HIV/Health issues **5** stories, the corruption carried only **1** article and finally the International Women's Day only got a coverage of **2** stories from **1** paper out of all The Daily and weekly Papers respectively in the three months under review. They were covered on these issues but were not given thorough analysis.

The analysis of the media reports shows that there is need, for a lot of work to be done for women politicians to positive media attention. Reporting positively on women politicians will show that women are able and effective leaders.

Recommendations

The analysis of the media report shows that there is room for increase and improvement in reporting on women's issues. By being proactive the media can give women a chance to show case their capacity as effective and able leaders.

- ❖ The challenge lies with the media to begin to recognize women politicians, their voices, their contributions in decision-making, their highlighting of women's issues and the work they are doing in their capacities as representatives of communities.
- ❖ There is need to highlight the women Councilors and the nature of women's political participation, which is greater and relevant at local government level.
- ❖ The media houses should stop the current polarization in our society to divide women and begin to report accurately on women politicians and women's issues. This is a challenge to the media houses in this country.
- ❖ A lot of work needs to be done by media. There is need to cover more women in politics especially the Rural Senators and Rural Councilors, who remain unknown because they are not given enough coverage and space in the media and yet their constituents are key to the development of Zimbabwe.
- ❖ There is need also for the print media to expand its geographical scope by including rural areas and women in politics in those areas in their coverage.
- ❖ The media should also focus on the work being done by women in their elected roles for example Parliamentarians or Councilors.
- ❖ Finally, the media should recognize and celebrate women politicians and the gains made in the emancipation of women.



*Providing Support to Women in Parliament & Local Government in Zimbabwe and
Aiming to Increase Women's Qualitative & Quantitative Participation and Influence in Policy &
Decision-making*

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