

WOMEN IN POLITICS SUPPORT UNIT



MEDIA ANALYSIS REPORT JULY-SEPTEMBER 2007

INTRODUCTION

Women's participation in elections has largely been covered at the level of voting and campaigning for men. Very few women have been able to break the glass ceiling and make it into positions of decision-making. Currently, there are only 48 women MPs (i.e. 22%) in the Zimbabwean Parliament, a far cry from the minimum of 50% as set by the SADC Declaration on Gender and Development. Whilst the barriers to women's participation are many and varied, the most fundamental one lie around the media's inability to make women newsworthy.

Often times women are viewed, as passive recipients of information and can not speak for themselves in the media. Without a means of communication, women are not participating in governance; instead their male counterparts who have the greatest outreach as they are covered and given voices in the media are making the political decision

We all experience the power of the mass media over our decisions due to its massive outreach. Yet we know that no democracy can survive where a few men have such immense political power relative to others. (Donna Allen and Danna Densmore, 1997).

It is very disturbing to note that often times, when a woman's voice makes its way into the news, she is most likely to be a beauty contestant, sex worker or homemaker. These three occupations are the only categories where women's views dominate.

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 women's voices and issues are regarded as important.

In order to conduct a systematic analysis of how women are covered in the media, taking into consideration the fact that, the ownership and management of the media, wherever you go remains a patriarchal area, 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.

SCOPE OF THIS ANALYSIS

The media monitoring initiative covered the local daily and weekly newspapers from both the independent and state media. The newspaper is The Herald, 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 really negligible. This analysis covered the period April to June 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 them 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	July	August	September	Total
Sekesai Makwavarara	0	5	1	6
Prisca Mupfumira	0	0	0	0
Viola Chasi	0	0	0	0
Faina Machakaire	0	0	0	0
Stars Matshe	0	1	0	1
Total	0	6	1	7

The table shows the statistical results of the findings during the Media Monitoring Period. The print Media was monitored everyday from the 1st of July to the 30th of September 2007 and Weekly Papers were monitored on Weekly basis.

Table 1 does not show *any* improvement in the Coverage of Female Councilors .The same Female Councilor, Ms Sekesai Makwavarara the former Chairperson of the Commission running the Affairs of the City of Harare received a lot of Coverage and is the only one with more than **one** article under the councilors' category with a total of **6** stories which is a significant coverage in comparison to the other female councilors who did not receive any coverage at all.

The information above shows that the former Chairperson of the Commission that runs the City of Harare was the most newsworthy woman politician. She was the only woman Chairperson of the commissions that are running urban councils in Zimbabwe. **6** of the **7** articles published in all the weekly and daily papers involved her.

Number of stories Covering Women Parliamentarians

Member of House of Assembly	July	August	September	Total
1) Min Flora Bhuka	0	0	0	0
2) MP Abigail Damasane	2	0	0	2
3) MP Aqualinah Katsande	0	0	0	0
4) MP Nomalanga Khumalo	0	0	0	0
5) MP Thokozani Khupe	1	2	3	6
6) MP Shuvai Mahofa	0	1	0	1
7) MP Angelina Masuku	1	0	0	1
8) MP Editor Matamisa	0	0	0	0
9) MP Thokozile Mathuthu	0	0	0	0
10) MP Mabel Mawere	0	0	0	0
11) MP Enita Maziriri	0	0	0	0
12) Min Oppah Muchinguri	1	5	1	7
13) Min Olivia Muchena	0	3	2	5
14) MP Sabina Mugabe	0	0	1	1
15) VP Joice Mujuru	6	10	6	22
16) MP Priscilla Misihairabwi	1	0	1	2
17) MP Paurina Mpariwa	0	0	0	0
18) MP Nyauchi Esther	1	0	0	1
19) Min Sithembiso Nyoni	1	0	0	1
20) MP.Celine Pote	0	0	0	0
21) MP Satiya Canisia	0	0	0	0
22) MP Gwachiwa Cecilia	0	0	0	0
23) MP Trudy Stevenson	1	1	0	2
24) MP Zinyemba Margaret	0	2	0	2
25) Sen. Pres Edna Madzongwe	2	1	2	5
26) Sen. Chikawa Betty	0	0	1	1
27) Sen. Chimbudzi Alice	0	0	0	0
28) Sen. Chimhene Mandi	0	0	0	0
29) Sen. Dete Agnes	0	0	0	0
30) Sen. Dube Grace	0	1	0	1
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	1	1
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 Viginia	0	0	0	0
41) Sen. Mukusha Stefania	0	0	0	0
42) Sen. Mutinhiri Tracy	0	1	0	1
43) Sen. Muzenda Tsitsi	0	0	0	0
44) Sen. Mwashita –Muchicho Vivian	0	1	0	1
45) Sen. Ndlovu Rittah	0	0	0	0
46) Sen. Rungani Anna	0	0	0	0
47) Sen. Themhani Sabina	0	0	0	0
48) Sen. Alma Mkwebu	0	0	0	.0
TOTAL	17	27	18	62

General Overview of Coverage

Below is a statistical analysis of the coverage:

- A total of **68** articles were published in the **3** months under review.
- **63** stories covered Members of Parliament including the Vice President, President of the Senate, Ministers/ Deputy Minister and the Governors.
- **7** stories covered women Councilors
- **13** out of the **24** Members of Parliament were covered
- **6** out of the **24** Senators were covered including the Senate President Hon. Edna Madzongwe.
- **2** out of the **305** urban women Councilors were covered

Analysis

Out of all the Rural and Urban Female Councilors only **two** Councilors were covered in both the Daily and weekly print Media. The Table also Shows that the Female Councilors Covered are Urban Councilors only. Which shows that journalists tend to think that Councilors from, the Rural Councils do not make news?

Sekesai Makwavarara continues to be at the top of the list because she was getting a lot of Media attention, Sekesai is leading with a total of **6** stories.

Sekesai is the only one who has more than **one** story in the councilors' category and was covered in **six** stories, whilst the other Councilor got **one** story only. It is therefore not surprising to note that she attracts a lot of media attention as she was occupying an influential position in Zimbabwe's Capital city.

What does the Table show about the coverage of Women in Politics?

The table shows that the coverage of Women politicians has declined from **74** stories last quarter to **68** stories. The table significantly shows that the Vice President Joice Mujuru is the one who is leading with a total of **22** stories, which is a significant improvement from the previous quarter, which carried only **10** articles on her. The Minister Women's Affairs Gender and Community Development received a total of **seven** stories from the previous quarter's total of **eight** stories. There was A tie between the Chairperson of the then Commission running the Affairs of the City of Harare and the Vice President of the opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) who came second with a total of only **six** from the previous quarter, which carried **eight** and **10** stories respectively. Followed by another tie between the Senate President Edna Madzongwe and the Minister of Science and Technology Olivia Muchena who received only **five** stories each.

Posts and Titles In Which Female Parliamentarians Were Covered

The women parliamentarians can be divided into four broad categories, i.e. Ministers and Deputy Ministers, Governors, the Vice President, and Members of Parliament who do not hold other posts.

Title	July	August	September	Total
Ministers	4	9	3	16
Parliamentarians	4	8	7	19
Vice president	6	10	6	22
Governors	1	0	0	1
Senate President	2	1	2	5
Total	17	28	18	63

This quarter saw the daily and weekly papers carrying more stories on The National V.P followed by the female Ministers, the V.P of the opposition party and the finally the Parliamentarians

The two female Provincial Governors Thokozile Mathuthu and Angelina Masuku got coverage of only **one** and **zero** stories each from last quarter's **3** and **0** stories respectively.

What does the table show about the coverage of women in politics?

The above table shows that women politicians are not being given enough coverage. The Vice President is the only one who is being given a better coverage followed by female Parliamentarians who are doubling as Ministers which therefore shows that women in their capacities as Ministers and leaders usually officiate at a number of meetings and that is likely to attract media attention, than women MPs without portfolios. More than **24** female politicians have not been covered in the print media at all.

Female MPs who do not occupy influential positions did not get 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.

WHAT DOES THE STATISTICAL DATA SHOW ABOUT THE COVERAGE OF WOMEN POLITICIANS IN THE MEDIA

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 Women being very few and occupying inferior political positions where they are unlikely to attract a lot of media attention.

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

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

- **19** of the **68** articles referred to the female Parliamentarians.
- **07** of the **68** articles referred to the female councilors in Zimbabwe.
- **22** of the **68** articles referred to the Vice President
- **16** of the **68** articles referred to **4** Ministers and the Deputy Minister in their official capacity
- **01** of the **68** articles referred to the **2** Governors.
- **06** of the **68** articles referred to the Chairperson of the Commission that runs the City of Harare.
- **01** of the **68** stories referred to a female councilor.

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 Governor), in relation 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 work and positions.

Number of stories covered by the newspapers per month

Paper	July	August	September	Total
Herald	14	19	13	46
Zimbabwean Independent	0	6	1	7
Financial Gazette	2	3	2	7
Standard	1	2	1	4
Sunday Mail	0	0	4	4
TOTAL	17	30	21	68

The Table just like last quarter shows that the Herald continues to comparatively carry more news items on Women politicians with **46** articles, which however is a major

decline from the previous quarter's **58** stories. The table clearly indicates that all the **5** papers dropped in their female politicians' coverage this quarter. The weekly papers Zimbabwe Independent, Financial Gazette, The Standard and The Sunday Mail have a total of **7,7,4 and 4** stories respectively and show a significant fall from last quarter's **8,2,5** and stories respectively. 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 Herald published **46** out of **68**, i.e. **67.6%**
- The Zimbabwe Independent published **7** out of **68** i.e. **10%**
- The Financial Gazette Published **7** out of **68**, i.e. **10%**
- The Standard published **4** out of **68**, i.e. **5.8%**
- The Sunday Mail published **4** out of **68**, i.e. **5.8%**

There is a great challenge for the 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. Even for the Sunday papers, The Standard, and The Sunday Mail the figures (**4 and 4 out of 68**) articles are not impressive because it shows that the papers hardly published articles 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.

Recommendations

The analysis of the media reports show that there is need for a lot of work to be done for women politicians to be reported on more often and in a positive manner that will bring out the fact that they are able and effective 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 women are challenging media houses to stop the current polarization in our society to divide women and begin to report accurately on women politicians and women's issues. It is a great challenge to the media houses in this country.
- ❖ A lot of work really 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.

- ❖ 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.