

"Growing up"

Anushka Virahsawmy



CHAPTER 9

Media, information and communication

Articles 29-31



Cynthia Moutou and Rajinibye Bhekur from the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation making their presentations at the Summit in 2013.
Photo: Ghirish Singh Abdhoosee

KEY POINTS

- Mauritius has an SGDI score of 72% and is fifth for this sector in the region. Citizens gave a score of 68% for the CSC.
- The Glass Ceilings in Southern African Newsrooms Study showed that women constitute a quarter of the top management in Mauritius; slightly higher than the regional average of 23%.
- There has been a marked improvement of women's sources at 25% as per the self-monitoring compared to 19% of the GMPS.
- Women in the Mauritian media still carry their private identity. While the regional average is 8% for women and 4% for men, the percentage in Mauritius is 10% for women and 1% for men.
- Women predominate in the home-makers and sex workers categories at 100% and beauty/fashion at 92%. There is a higher percentage of men in the model and fashion industries.
- Gender Links (GL) is working with media houses on developing Centres of Excellence in gender mainstreaming in the media.
- Institutions of higher learning are working to mainstream gender in their teaching curriculum.
- Students from these higher learning institutions acknowledge the role of gender and media literacy to improve their knowledge on gender.

Table 9.1: Media, information and communications SGDI and CSC scores

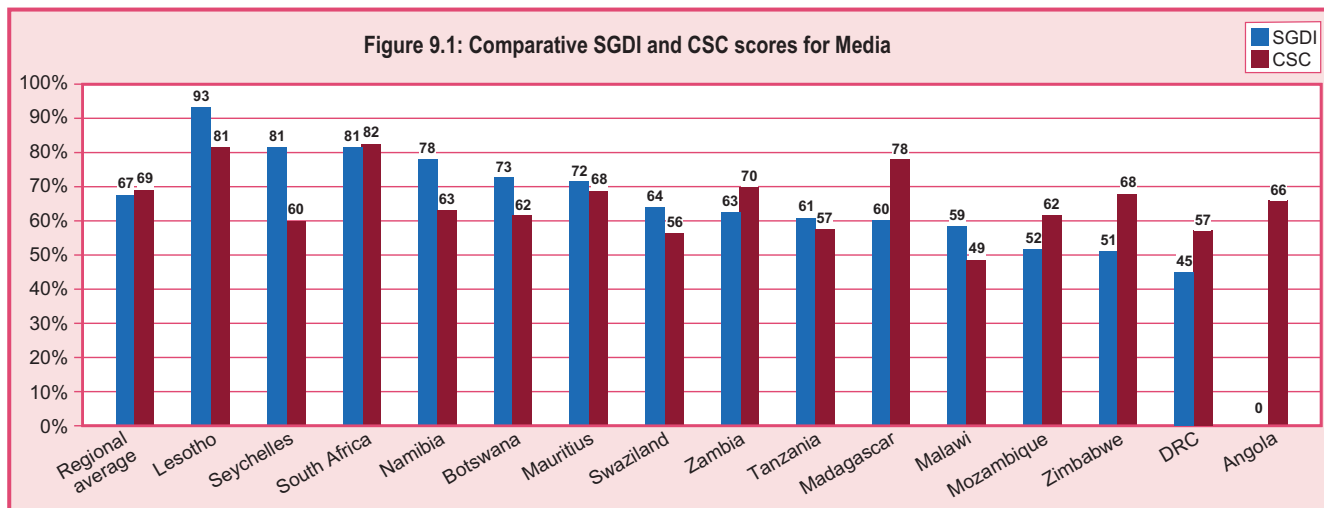
	SGDI	CSC
Scores	72%	68%
Ranks	3	1

Table 9.1 shows that Mauritius, with 72% SGDI score, is fifth in the region for the media section. However citizens were critical and gave a lower score of 68% which is average. The SGDI score incorporates women's participation in the media as employees, on the boards

of directors and in management. It also includes the proportion of women as lecturers and students in media training institutions and the proportion of women news sources in media content.

However, the CSC captures other qualitative nuances such as the sensationalism of news and gender stereotypes perpetuated in various media. Citizens' perceptions also include other forms of media, including advertising, tabloids and Information Communication Technologies (ICTs), which are not necessarily captured in the SGDI.

Figure 9.1: Comparative SGDI and CSC scores for Media



Source: SADC Gender Protocol Barometer 2013.

At 72%, the media SADC Gender and Development Index (SGDI) score for Mauritius is average and places the country in fifth position in the Southern African Development Community (SADC). The SGDI score is based on women employees as a percentage of total; women as percentage of boards of directors; women as percentage of management; women as a proportion of staff in institutions of media learning; proportion of female students in institutions of media learning and the proportion of women versus men news sources.

The limitation of the score is that it does not provide an analysis of the nature of women's participation beyond the numbers. The several indicators on representation also dilutes one of the most important indicators - women sources, a key measure of voice.

Citizens scored the country's performance on gender equality in the media at 68% which is average, the highest score being for South Africa at 82%.

In the CSC, citizens are able to assess other forms of media such as advertising, tabloids and ICTs that are not necessarily captured in the SGDI. Apart from the obvious low representation of women as news

sources, there are other qualitative nuances that contribute to the overall score.

Mauritius has over 30 titles and at least five dailies and at least seven weeklies. There are only two private radios. The Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation (MBC) which is a public media that controls 17 channels and six radio channels.

Figure 9.2: Entry points for gender in the media

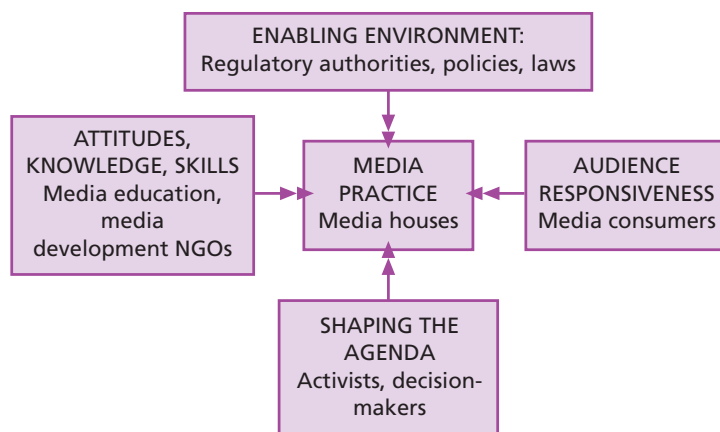


Figure 9.2 demonstrates the different entry points for gender and the media. This begins with gender aware policies and laws, implemented by regulatory authorities. Audiences and the Media Watch Organisation (MWO), through taking up complaints, make these policies and laws a reality. Media education and media development NGOs have the capacity to influence attitudes, skills and knowledge of media practitioners, particularly at entry level, but also through on-going courses. Activists

and decision-makers, especially women decision-makers, help to set the gender and media agenda through well-coordinated campaigns, and a proactive approach to the media.

Ultimately the ball is in the court of the media to change. This change needs to be within the media - that is, in its institutional make up, as well as in media content.

Mainstreaming gender in policies, laws and training



The Protocol calls on Member States to ensure that gender is mainstreamed in all information, communication and media policies, programmes, laws and training in accordance with the Protocol on Culture, Information and Sport.

Gender equality in the media begins with the policy framework. Broadcasting in the region and elsewhere is governed by statutory bodies that allocate and regulate the airwaves. The print media in most countries is governed through self-regulation but, in Mauritius, there is no self-regulation. La Sentinelle is the only group which has its own Ethics Policy and they take complaints from members of the public. As the lead agency for the Media Cluster in the SADC Gender Protocol Alliance (SGPA), GL has worked with several regulators in the SADC region. GL also manages the Gender and Media Diversity Centre (GMDC) that brings together media development organisations and training institutions that “connect, collect and collaborate” on gender in media training.

Media regulation

The Independent Broadcasting Authority (IBA) is a statutory body that regulates the airwaves. The IBA provides for a code of conduct which insists on fairness and transparency and has a Complaints Committee. The Association of Advertising Authorities (AAA) is an advertising self-regulatory body. The MWO is the first civil society organisation established to “watch the watchdogs” that has taken complaints to the IBA.

The MBC is bound by the IBA Act of 2000 and the Mauritius Broadcasting Authority Act of 1982. The Newspaper Editors and Publishers Association is the only professional media organisation in Mauritius. There have been several attempts to set up different organisations but these have collapsed for a variety of reasons such as personality clashes, rivalry between different media houses and differing agendas (*source: Africa Media Barometer - Mauritius 2010*).

The Prime Minister, Navin Ramgoolam, has expressed his desire to introduce a Media Commission Bill and during 2012 and 2013 he engaged with his advisor, Geoffrey Robertson, Queens Counsel, British Expert on the media to look into the drafting of a new legislation in this regard. Robertson met with stakeholders from various sectors, including the media and submitted a report to the Prime Minister. In April 2013, the preliminary report of Robertson on Media Law and Ethics in Mauritius was made public and citizens were invited to send their views to the Attorney General's Office. Robertson has also proposed a code of conduct for journalists on accuracy, fairness, advocacy, elections, children; privacy, misrepresentation, ethnic prejudice, confidential sources, conflicts of interest, decency and public order, advertising standards, sanctions and public interest. In his code of conduct, there is no special focus on women.

The Association of Advertising Agencies launched its revised edition of Code of Advertising Practice in 2011 which condemns discrimination based on race, sex or nationality. “The advertisement must not appeal, even indirectly, to racism and/or sectarianism and/or sexism.”

Unfortunately advertisements still show women as objects, in inferior roles and in household activities. Advertisements in Mauritius rarely challenge stereotypes.

Advertising agencies who have worked with GL have desisted from sexist advertising. P&P Link Satchi and Satchi makes it a point to give GL and MWO a radio spot and a print advertisement every year during the 16 Days campaign against gender based violence. These are aired and published during the 16 Days with the aim of sensitising the population on GBV.

Article 21 of the Code of Practice:

Advertising must take into consideration the evolution of the respective roles of women and men in society, an evolution towards a growing mixity in the activities of either sex in the family, professional spheres, leisure and purchases.

It must represent women as equally capable, responsible and independent in the conduct of their activities. In addition, neither the picture of a caricature denigrating the role of any person in a couple, or the representation of an excessive dependence of the character with respect to the products promoted must be displayed.

Advertising must respect the dignity of women and men; their image must be used in a manner that does not hurt the sensitiveness of the general public.

The idea of a woman's inferiority or the limitation of her role to matters pertaining to the household or strictly household chores, and this, in a uniquely exclusive manner, must not be put forward.

Lastly, women must not be portrayed as objects in advertising especially when her image has no direct relation to the promoted product or service."

In October 2012, the University of Mauritius invited the Chief Executive Officer of GL, Colleen Lowe Morna, to facilitate a workshop on gender and the media and code of ethics on gender for media students of Mauritius and Seychelles. Participants saw for themselves the absence of women's voices in the media and how advertisements degrade women. The attributes, expectations and categorisation of female and male in the home, community, at school, at work and in society were found to be stereotyped and sexist.

The debate on ethics in articles showed discrimination towards women on balance, fairness, all viewpoints and

objectivity. The participants were trained on how to deal with different settings and pushing the envelope when writing articles.

Soon after the workshop, the Department of Mass Communication of the Faculty of Social Studies and Humanities of the University of Mauritius launched a Gender Code of Ethics for the Media in Mauritius, a book edited by Christina Chan-Meetoo and Roukaya Kasenally on "*Enhancing Democratic systems: The Media in Mauritius a Dialogue Session*" was also launched.

Gender Code of Ethics for the Media in Mauritius

Gender equality is an integral part of freedom of expression as all gender categories have the right to be heard and seen in the public sphere as fully-fledged citizens participating in a democratic society. Gender balance is thus important in news reporting. Equally important is the need to challenge prevailing gender stereotypes.

Journalists endeavour to recognise the diversity of race, ethnicity, religion, sex, ability, sexuality, age and class. They will strive to eliminate discrimination on the basis of gender from their respective publication and pledge to put more effort to provide for more balance, fairness and accuracy in their reports. They will strive to seek a diversity of voices rather than rely solely on usual male dominant sources.

Journalists and media houses will NOT:

- use discriminatory and sexist language.
- depict women in general as inferior, secondary class citizens.
- resort to gender stereotyping of roles (e.g. loving, caring women, tough men, effeminate gays, masculinised lesbians, etc.).

- have recourse to the commoditisation of the female body and gratuitous sexualised and eroticised views of women who are portrayed in news.
- pander to lurid curiosity.
- publish the identity of rape victims and victims of sexual violence without informed consent. They will take all precautions to protect the identity of such victims so that the latter are not subjected to stigmatisation and further trauma.
- glamourise violence against women and sexual minorities such as lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender (LGBT).
- advocate hatred based on gender, nor incite to cause harm.

In the workplace, media houses will allow journalists to work across a diversity of beats, irrespective of gender category. They will ensure that selection, recruitment, career pathing, capacity building, fast tracking and promotion are devoid of gender discrimination and that there is no tolerance for sexual harassment. They will encourage friendly work practices and mutual respect between men and women.

GL, MWO and media activists have often decried the absence of media from discussions. The fact that women's voices account for only 19% of the views and voices in Mauritian media shows that there is still a refusal to acknowledge the daily gender-based censorship of large segments of the population.

Gender policies in media houses



GL's research on gender in and through the media led to the conclusion that the only way to effect change in the long term is to work directly with media houses in developing gender policies and action plans, support journalists through on-the-job training and monitor

progress through self-administered monitoring tools. GL began this journey by working with the Southern African Editor's Forum (SAEF) on the Media Action Plan on HIV and AIDS and Gender (known simply as MAP). GL managed the policy unit of MAP that succeeded in rolling out gender aware HIV and AIDS policies to 280 newsrooms or 80% of media houses in Southern Africa between 2006 and 2010. This close up engagement with media institutions paved the way for the globally unprecedented COE process.

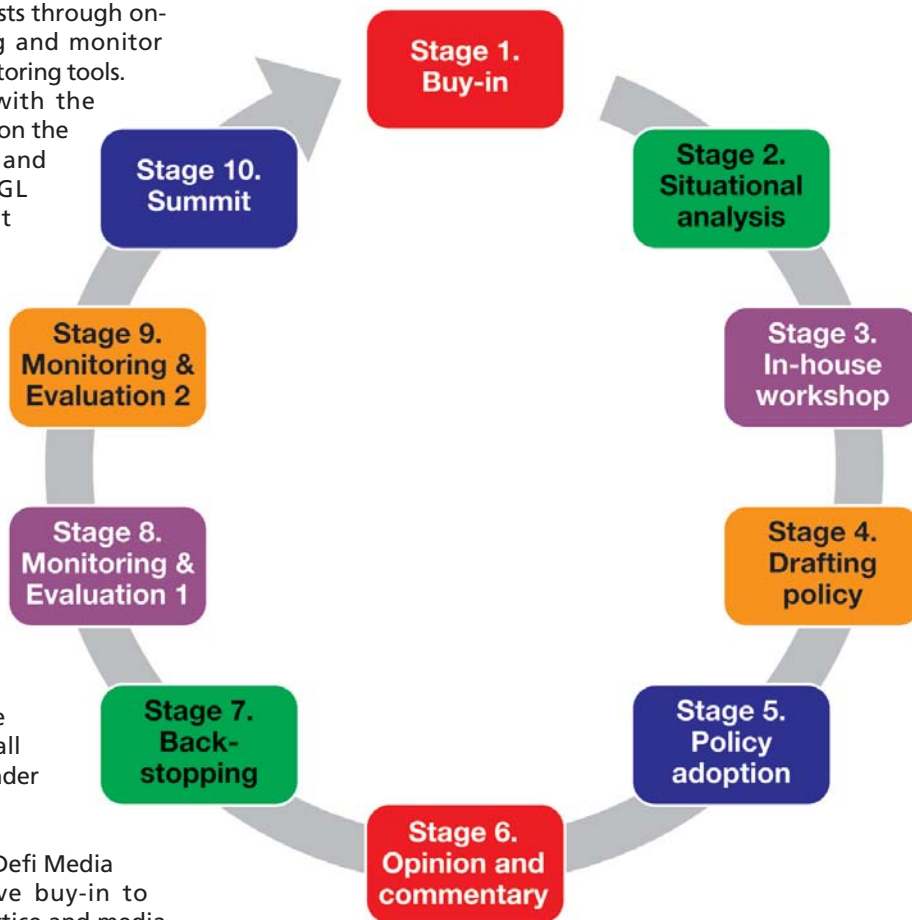
The ten-stage process involves working directly with media houses to devise gender policies and action plans, and then monitor their implementation using a self-monitoring tool. Stage seven of the project involves capacity building for journalists based on the ten thematic areas of the SGP. This ensures that the media is able to report effectively on all the provisions of the Protocol from a gender perspective.

In Mauritius the MBC, La Sentinelle, Le Defi Media Group and Le Mauricien Group gave buy-in to mainstream gender in institutional practice and media house content. These media entities have bought into the idea of a long term relationship with GL that will see them go through a ten stage COE process. So far these stations have drafted and adopted policies, and have signed an MOU with GL.

During the 2012 Sixteen Days of Activism, the media houses, which are part of the COE process in Mauritius, received training on reporting on gender based violence. In 2013 instead of giving in-house training on reporting on the 16 Days activism, journalists from these media houses were invited to join GL in workshops in five

localities of Mauritius - Moka, Curepipe, Savanne, Black River and Vacoas. The aim of the workshop was to help these localities to develop activities for the 16 Days, update their Gender Based Violence Action Plan, train them to go online to know their own gender attitudes and share the gender attitudes of their localities.

Journalists from Le Defi Media Group and La Sentinelle Group wrote stories during the 16 Days. La Sentinelle published GL's "Peace at Home" logo with a daily slogan on GBV every day during the 16 Days. The MBC ran daily programmes during the 16 Days giving voices to men to talk on GBV and inviting survivors of GBV to talk on their experiences.



The Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation has worked systematically to ensure that gender is mainstreamed into its programmes. The station has been consistent in participating in GL workshops and has found the gender mainstreaming workshops and materials to be extremely useful in their station. At a half day workshop during a GL CEO visit in Mauritius, the Director General of the MBC, Dan Callikan talked about empowering people in the mind and the need to educate the population at large. He talked about "decolonisation of the mind"

and said that gender issues are a complex matter with the effects of religious belief, economy and societal problems. Callikan said that the MBC will go along with the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development and is aiming for 50% of women's voices in content and context of the MBC. He said that there are more women than men in managerial positions in radio whilst there are more women on the Board than men. "We must build on what we have and create a conducive environment and recognise the values of each human being. Change is a complex matter but the media has a responsibility."

Change is happening at the MBC as women's voices have doubled from 2003 at 14% in the Gender and Media Baseline Study to 29% in 2010 in the Gender and Media Progress Study (GMPS). In the self-monitoring done in October 2012, women's voices were at 49% which is near the SADC Protocol target of 50%.

The MBC has a daily radio and television programme on women called "Etre Femme" as well as daily programmes on the radio on different social issues where gender is mainstreamed.

The Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation (MBC)

GL's relationship with MBC is more than a decade old. As the first institution to develop a gender policy with support from GL, the MBC has become a good example of how buy-in from the highest levels of any institution leads to effectiveness. Management signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with GL signalling its commitment to transforming gender relations in and through the media, it has gone on to ensure that every employee is aware of this commitment and that the gender policy becomes a living document.

The MBC has put in place monitoring and evaluation systems to ensure that all programming is in line with the gender policy. When the MBC developed its gender policy the proportion of women sources stood at 14%. Through continued efforts and backing by management, this rose to 28% as indicated in the 2010 GMPS. During the 2012 self-monitoring exercise, the proportion of women sources went up to 49% for TV and 58% for radio.

The diversity of Mauritius is captured in the different languages spoken in the country (Creole, English, French, Hindi, Mandarin and Bhoj puri). Creole is the language that has brought different cultural groups together as they try to forge a common Mauritian identity.

Director General Dan Callikan says, "the diversity of Mauritian culture has also contributed to the way that the MBC approaches issues of diversity, ensuring that



The MBC Director, Dhanjay Callikan sharing few words on how the MBC has implemented gender policies in the organisation.

Photo: Jody Modely

there is no prejudice." This belief in unity in diversity has seen the MBC working to show that all constituent groups in Mauritius, women and men alike, find expression at the MBC. He further adds that, "What you see at the MBC is a result of a vision of what Mauritian society is all about. Respect for the equality of all groups of the Mauritian population."

The MBC has just launched a Creole radio station, Kool FM, and a Bhoj Puri television channel. The two are run by women, which is in line with the MBC's desire to increase the proportion of women in decision-making (as highlighted in the gender policy). The MBC has made it possible for capable women to participate in decision-making.

In its operations, the MBC provides equal opportunities to women and men. The MBC is also mindful of women's dual roles, often juggling private and professional responsibilities.

Head of Programming reiterates, saying that the media house is aware of women's capabilities and that fair treatment is essential to ensure optimum results. Callikan adds "It is important for women to become aware of, and believe in, their potential. They need to have the conviction that they can do it. Once this happens then we can begin to see real change."



Training of journalist at MBC by GL.

Photo: Jody Modely

Table 9.2: Summary of key gender indicators for institutions of higher learning in the GIME research

Institution	Staff		Students		Policies		Curriculum	
	% Female	% Male	% Female	% Male	Gender	Sexual harassment	Gender considered in curriculum review	Committee/ individual responsible for gender mainstreaming
Region	36	64	61	39	28%	44%	46%	13%
Botswana								
University of Botswana	37	67	54	46	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
DRC								
Institut Facultaire des Sciences de L'information et de la Communication	18	82	77	23	No	No	No	No
Lesotho								
National University of Lesotho	67	33	73	27	No	No	Yes	No
Madagascar								
Antananarivo University	44	56	71	29	No	No	No	No
Malawi								
Malawi Institute of Journalism	29	71	50	50	No	No	No	No
Mauritius								
University of Mauritius	79	21	82	18	No	No	No	No
Mozambique								
Eduardo Mondlane	20	80	26	74	No	No	No	No
Higher School of Journalism	21	79	19	81	No	No	No	No
School of Journalism	38	62	28	72	No	No	No	No
Namibia								
Polytechnic of Namibia	50	50	58	42	No	No	No	No
University of Namibia	43	57	62	39	No	No	No	No
South Africa								
University of Fort Hare	43	57	57	43	Yes	Yes	No	No
University of Johannesburg	89	11	78	22	Yes	Yes	No	No
University of Limpopo	33	67	51	49	Yes	Yes	No	No
Stellenbosch University	33	67	62	38	No	Yes	Yes	No
University of Venda	60	40	47	53	No	Yes	No	No
University of Witwatersrand	75	25	69	31	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Swaziland								
University of Swaziland	33	67	37	63	No	Yes	No	No
Tanzania								
SJMC	30	70	60	40	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Zambia								
Evelyn Hone	36	64	65	35	No	No	No	No
University of Zambia	31	69	56	44	Yes	Yes	No	No
Zambia Institute of Mass Communication Education Trust	25	75	67	33	No	No	Yes	Yes
Zimbabwe								
Midlands State University	36	64	64	36	No	Yes	No	No
National University of Science and Technology	25	75	49	51	No	No	Yes	No
Harare Polytechnic	27	73	49	51	No	No	No	No

Source: SADC Gender Protocol Barometer 2013.

La Sentinelle has a special page once a week called "Gender" where the Opinion and Commentary articles of GL are published. The editor of this page is the Francophone Editor of GL. The gender page features

articles on both women and men who are working on gender issues, challenging stereotypes and bring a new and innovative ideas on women including women in the economy.



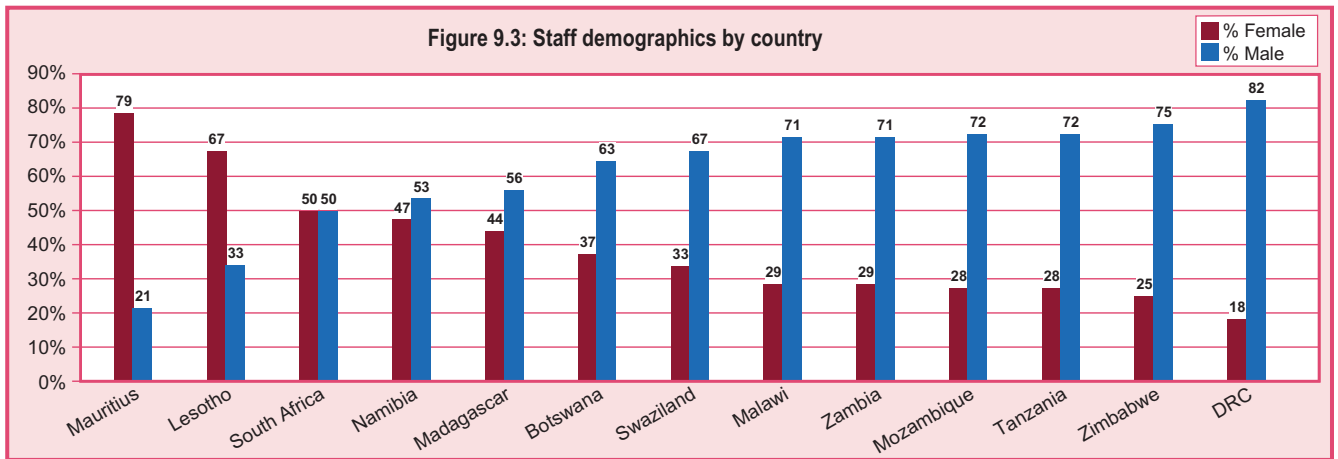
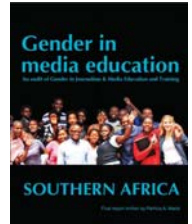
Participants during a GL training monitoring the media.
Photo: Loga Virahsawmy

Le Defi Media Group has a weekly in-depth reporting on different social aspects on gender including gender based violence, gender attitudes, economic empowerment of women; child abuse; women and ICT and violence against women and children.

Gender in media training

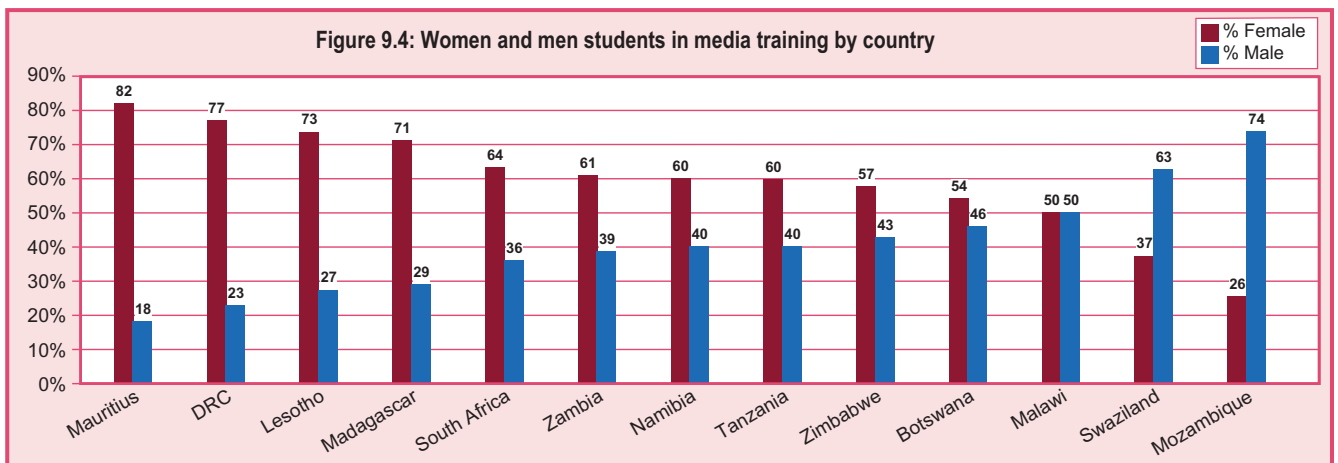
The audit of Gender in Media Education in Southern Africa (GIME) is the most comprehensive study yet undertaken of the gender dimensions of journalism and media education and training in tertiary institutions in Southern Africa.

The audit of the University of Mauritius is part of a larger GIME audit conducted in 25 institutions in 13 countries including Botswana, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe between October 2009 and April 2010. GL undertook the study through its GMDC and through a partnership between media development organisations and knowledge institutions.



Source: Gender Links GIME.

Figure 9.3 shows that at the University of Mauritius, which does not have a gender or affirmative action policy, 79% of the academic staff are women. The highest proportion of female staff in the region is at the University of Mauritius



Source: Gender Links GIME.

Figure 9.4 shows that ten of the countries in the sample have parity in the representation of female students. These include Mauritius (82%), DRC (77%), Lesotho (73%), Madagascar (71%), South Africa (64%), Zambia (61%), Namibia and Tanzania (60%), Zimbabwe (57%) and Botswana (54%).

The MBC won the Leadership and the Institution Awards at the National and Regional SADC Protocol@Work 2013 Summit.

In her presentation Rekha Sooburun, the Deputy Director General of the MBC, highlighted that the MBC operates on a 24 hour basis with six radio channels and 17 TV channels.

“The platform is for local, regional and international news. A variety of infotainment and entertainment programmes are broadcast to cater for the audience of a multi-cultural society.

The MBC has achieved gender mainstreaming with the adoption of a gender policy which includes a code of practice on sexual harassment. Gender balance and equality is fully integrated in the corporate strategy of the corporation and, where monitoring is ensured, at board level. The signing of an MOU with GL aims at creating a Centre of Excellence for gender mainstreaming and achieving gender equality as per the targets set by the SADC gender protocol.

The MBC, in its daily news bulletins, invites both men and women to talk on salient issues relating to diverse issues and fields of activities - such as medicine, economic development, finance science, the ICT sector, among others.

At the news level, women are portrayed in new roles and hold key positions and responsibilities which were previously occupied by men. More women are seen as entre-preneurs, doctors, directors/decision-makers in both private and public institutions, minister of gender equality and minister of social security.

The MBC has made a great impact on women's lives. There are now more women talking to the media as they are more confident and can express themselves more easily. This has also helped society in accepting women in these new roles - they inspire trust, compassion and are helpful. MBC believes in the capability of women and as such give voices to women and encourages them to improve and change their lives. These programmes have also shown that women are interested to be actively involved in politics.

There has been few challenges as compared to men, women are sometimes reluctant to express themselves,



Rekha Sooburun during the report back session at the Alliance validation workshop in September 2013. Photo: Jody Modely

especially on sensitive issues like sexuality, domestic violence and HIV and AIDS. To encourage women to talk, journalists and presenters use blurred images and disguised voices.

At the programme level, the MBC has continuously improved its programming on both radio and TV in coming up with innovative and interesting programmes dedicated for women.

One example is “Etre fam”, a daily radio program which focuses on diverse subjects such as domestic violence, conflict resolution, education and development, among others.

Women who are excelling in the different fields (professionals/experts) are invited to participate in these programmes and to speak telephonically to the audience so as to attend to their queries and concerns.

These programmes have helped women as they are now better informed as to where to go to seek information/solutions to their problems and concerns. They are encouraged to emerge from their “insecure zone” and voice their problems and share their experiences with other women facing the same problems. They are now more knowledgeable about their rights and provisions of the law. This has helped to develop their knowledge and skills in a variety of fields.

The MBC provides an array of programmes broadcast in different languages - some TV Channels are dedicated to the different languages spoken in Mauritius. Quite recently, the MBC launched two new channels - namely Bhojpuri and Kreole - two languages widely used by the Mauritian population.

For instance we have “nari shakti” which depicts women in an entrepreneurial role.

“100% fam” also broadcasts on TV where the successes of women are showcased. “Kahan jaat baah hamari ke samaj” in Bhojpuri - meaning where is our society leading to - depicting social issues faced by both men and women. A culinary program in French and creole, “Mangeons Sain” (Eating healthily) which not only targets the female audience of which the male audience is also interested.

Another important point to highlight is the MBC commitment to organise and produce local programs and competitions for the audience to shift from a passive role to an active one. Men, women and children are given the opportunity to participate in competitions organised in different languages to meet the aspiration of the multicultural society.

Marketing and advertising

The MBC has developed mechanisms to ensure that women are not degraded or exploited, especially in entertainment and advertising and not undermined in their role and position in society. There is a Quality Control Unit which ensures that all advertisements

comply with criteria set for commercial materials which are of broadcast quality.

Remedial actions are immediately taken by MBC management within the shortest timeframe to address gender sensitive issues.

The strength of the MBC parity at top management level including top management support. Presenters, journalists and other staff involved in the production of radio and TV programmes are well trained and professional in their respective roles. Programmes on gender issues form an integral part in the radio and television program schedules."

Representation of women and men in the media



The Protocol urges Member States to take measures to promote the equal representation women in the ownership of, and decision-making structures of the media in accordance with Article 12.1 that provides for equal representation of women in decision making positions by 2015.

The Glass Ceiling Study (2009) which explored the institutional composition of media houses in Southern Africa revealed that in Mauritius, women make up only 25% of those in top management, 22% of those in senior management and 36% of those as Board of Directors. The study also showed that women are more likely to be assigned to soft beats rather than men. Beats like political reporting, labour and courts were given to men.

To the extent that the GMPS monitored news content, it gives us only a glimpse of those who create the news insofar as they are reflected in news content as reporters, presenters and writers. However, it is useful to cross reference the findings of the Glass Ceilings research with the GMPS. This chapter also makes important links between those who create the news and content, such as whether women journalists access more women sources, and whether having more women in management and as reporters "makes a difference".



Sandra Mayotte and Nathalie Didier, the two RJ of MBC Kool FM and the programme 'Be a Woman'.
Photo: Ghirish Abdhoosee

Gender in newsrooms

There are more women presenters than women reporters in Mauritius: Women constitute 29% of all reporters (same as the regional average) but 64% of TV presenters. Women only constitute 30% of print reporters (25% in the region). This suggests that women are more valued for their physical than mental attribute.

But there are almost equal proportions of men and women radio reporters: Women constitute 51% radio reporters higher than the regional average of 30%.

There are interesting gender benders in beats: While there is still a gender division of labour in newsrooms with men predominating in hard and women in

soft beats, women reporters are now venturing into hard beats like economics where they increased from 10% to 35% and politics (22% to 33%).

Having more women in top and senior management positions does not necessarily result in more women sources: In Mauritius, women constitute 23% of those in top management positions yet women make up 19% of media sources.

But having women journalists does make a difference: The difference between the extent to which women and men reporters access women sources is marked in Mauritius. Women constitute 28% of sources in stories written by women journalists compared to 16% in stories written by men.

Gender in media content



The Protocol calls on Member States to encourage the media to give equal voice to women and men in all areas of coverage, including increasing the number of programmes for, by and about women on gender specific topics and that challenge gender stereotypes. The Protocol urges member states to take measures to discourage the media from:

- Promoting pornography and violence against all persons, especially women and children;
- Depicting women as helpless victims of violence and abuse;
- Degrading or exploiting women, especially in the area of entertainment and advertising, and undermining their role and position in society; and
- Reinforcing gender oppression and stereotypes.

The GMPS is a follow up to the GMBS conducted in 2003, as well as the *HIV and AIDS and Gender Baseline Study (2006)* and the *Franco-phone Gender, HIV and AIDS and Media Study (2008)*. Comparisons are also made where relevant with the Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP) that has been conducted every five years since the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995, with the fourth such study conducted parallel to this regional study in 2010.

Although the study concerns media content, it also examines the underlying gender dynamics within the institutional structures of the media, for example if women tend to cover certain kinds of news more frequently than men and vice versa. In this respect parallels are drawn where relevant with the *Glass Ceilings in Southern Africa Media Study (2009)* that surveyed where women and men are within the media. Another relevant study is the *Gender in Media Education (GIME)* study that ran parallel to the GMPS, and sought to establish how gender considerations are reflected and integrated in media training.

Reference is also made to the *Gender and Media Audience Study (2006)* that sought to understand if there are differences in the way that women and men access and engage with the news, and what implications these have for coverage and marketing.

The GMPS took place against the backdrop of the *SADC Protocol on Gender and Development* in August 2008 which set 28 targets to be achieved by 2015, including 50% representation of women in all areas of decision-making. The Protocol also encourages the media to ensure that women and men have equal voice in the media and that gender stereotypes are challenged. It specifically calls for gender sensitivity in the coverage of gender violence recognised as a particularly challenging area of coverage.

Some of the key findings are :

Gender equality is not given top priority: The media in Mauritius does not report much on gender equality. During the monitoring period, the total coverage of

gender equality was at a mere 0.6% compared to sports at 27%.

The proportion of primary sources in Mauritius is lower than the regional average: Primary sources make up 61% of all sources compared to overall regional average of 69%. The MBC Television tops the list with 94% primary sources followed by Le Mauricien at 91%.

A significant proportion of news sources in Mauritius are not identified by name with unknown sources making up 31% of sources.

The proportion of single source stories is higher than the regional average and worrying: Single source stories in Mauritius make up 75% of the total compared to the regional average of 67%. The fact that three quarters of stories in Mauritius rely on a single source is a source of concern and helps to explain the low proportion of women sources since, if there is only one source, the chances are high in our male-dominated society that this will be a male source.



Photo: Ghirish Abdhosee

There has been a marginal increase in the proportion of women sources from 17% in the 2003 GMBS to 19% in GMPS. This is the same as the regional average of 19%. But at 81% of all news sources, men in Mauritius still predominate in the news.

There are differences in the way that print, television and radio access women sources: At 28%, television has the highest proportion of women sources followed by radio (22%) and print (18%).

Women are more likely to be seen than heard: Women constitute 33% of all images in newspapers in Mauritius (27% in the regional study) compared to 18% of news sources in the print media.

There are differences across individual media: MBC TV (28%) has the highest proportion of women sources followed by Radio One (27%). Radio Plus and Week-End have the lowest proportions at 15% and 14% respectively.

Women's voices are most likely to be heard in "soft" areas: These include gender equality (86%), children (67%) and gender violence (46%). Women's voices are least heard in politics (9%), sustainable development, labour, economics and sport. Women's voices are missing in mining.

Mauritius has still a long way to go: Women predominate in the home makers and sex workers categories at 100% and beauty/fashion at 92%. And yet there are more and more men in the model and fashion business.

Gender biases in occupational categories are pronounced in Mauritius: Women dominate as homemaker and sex worker with no men appearing in these occupations. They are missing as religious figure while the proportion of women scientists in Mauritius declined from 7% in GMBS to 3% in GMPS.

Coverage of gender based violence in Mauritian media



The Protocol calls on the media to take appropriate measures to encourage the media to play a constructive role in the eradication of gender-based violence by adopting guidelines, which ensure gender-sensitive coverage.

The media has a role to play in changing attitudes, perceptions, and mindsets where gender violence is concerned. Over the last decade, GL has conducted training workshops with the media in 12 SADC countries and all nine provinces of South Africa. GL and GEMSA have trained gender activists on strategic communications making use of the 16 Days of Activism campaign.

While targets are in place for the reduction of gender violence, indications are that it is escalating in some communities. Although this is the case, media's coverage of GBV does not fully capture the extent of the problem. GL has conducted Violence Against Women (VAW) studies in Mauritius. The results have shown that in Mauritius 23.8% women have experienced some form of violence (emotional, economic, physical or sexual) in their lifetime and 22.9% of men admit to perpetrating some form of violence against women.

Emotional violence - a form of violence not well defined in domestic violence legislation and thus not well reflected in police data - is the most commonly reported form of violence with 16.2% women experiencing and 16.3% men admitting to its perpetration. 8.7% women in Mauritius has experienced sexual violence in their lifetime.

GL Mauritius has conducted training on how to report on GBV for journalists of Madagascar, Seychelles, Comores and Mauritius. The main objectives were to understand GBV and analyse how the media report on GBV, sensitise journalists on coverage of GBV, how to increase women's voices on GBV and how to improve articles with different sources, new angles and new perspectives as well as giving facts and figures.

The outcome of the workshop was a Code of Ethics for journalists and a special supplement with articles on GBV.

An analysis of Mauritius media coverage of GBV shows that although GBV is a problem, media has not given it the attention that it needs. According to the GMPS (2010) findings:



Aastha Gobin Chitamun from the MBC.

Photo: Kendy Mangra

Gender based violence and stories that mentioned GBV accounted for 2% of topics covered, despite the high levels of GBV in Mauritius.

Women constitute 37% of sources in stories about or that mention GBV: Men at 63%, speak for women even on issues that affect them most.

Survivors constitute slightly above a quarter (26%) of all sources on GBV: This is higher than the regional average of 19% and slightly above the proportion on perpetrators whose voices are heard (22%). The fact that voices of police/judge (27%) are the most heard means that GBV is not yet covered from the perspective of survivors and calls for more training on the coverage of the this topic.

Rape (19%) receives the most coverage followed by child abuse and gender violence and HIV and AIDS (13% each): There are no maintenance/economic stories.

More men than women report on GBV: Although women report on GBV at 44% compared to men at 56%, there is a big difference between media houses with Le Mauricien and Le Dimanche having men reporting on GBV at 100% while at Week End, MBC Radio and Radio Plus women report on GBV at 100%.

Jenilaine Moonean

I decided to write on the theme of Gender Based Violence as the situation is getting worse. The article talks about the actual situation. My objective in writing a few articles published in Le Defi Media Group is to sensitise the population on the scourge of our society and also to sensitise the general public and to keep the survivors informed so that they know that they are not alone. I wanted them to know that there are structures and associations as well as Ministries that can help them.

As a journalist I try to challenge stereotypes. The aim of the article is to contribute to reduce GBV. I have written the article to highlight women who have known violence which is a crime against women. I wanted to continue reminding the population on the subject and, as a journalist, it is my duty to write on this subject and inform survivors where they can go for help.

The aim of the article is not only for survivors but for the authorities that they all *break the silence*. Survivors must be encouraged to denounce their perpetrators.

I did my ground work by talking to experts, NGOs working with survivors, psychologists to talk on the impact of violence and the impact on the lives of survivors. I talked to sociologists so that they can explain

the extent of the problem and the rise of GBV. I also talked to men so that I have a balanced articles with voices of women and men. But the majority of voices were testimonies of women.

I received lots of telephone calls from survivors asking for more information as well as readers who congratulated me. The articles also got lots of comments on the website of Le Defi Media Group.”



Jennilaine Moonean at the Regional Summit 2013.
Photo: Ghirish Abdhoosee

Summit study visit

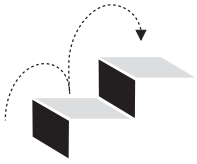
The regional participants who came to Mauritius in October 2013 as their awards for winning first prizes in the media category were all impressed by the commitment of the media for the participation of women in politics and social issues: “voices of women in the media and all is free contrary to other countries”

In her Driver of Change, Anna Mayimona Ngemba from the Democratic Republic of Congo says *“Après ce voyage, mon vœu est de changer davantage le sens de mon engagement pour la promotion de la femme et d'influencer positivement la vie des femmes, surtout des jeunes femmes et des filles autour de moi dans ma famille, dans mon travail, dans mon église, etc.*

Pour ma part, ce voyage m'a motivé davantage dans mon travail, en tant que directrice d'une organisation qui travaille pour la défense des droits des femmes. Un travail bien fait porte toujours des fruits. C'est cas de le dire avec Gender Links à Maurice. Les fruits récoltés au sein de structure comme MBC. Les hommes et les

femmes qui parlent avec fierté de bonnes pratiques qu'ils ont mises en place et qui font leur propre bonheur et la joie de beaucoup d'autres personnes au sein de la communauté.” (After this study visit, my wish is to change my commitment towards the empowerment of women and influence women positively and especially young women and girls in my surroundings, my family, my work and my church. This visit has motivated me as the Director of an organisation that works for the rights of women. A work well done brings result. This is what GL Mauritius does. The results of the work of GL, with the MBC, of men and women talking with much pride of the best practices for the happiness of the community.)

Maud Blause, on the other hand, found that the visit to La Sentinelle helped her to see “female leadership in action. That was a good thing to see! As I write this piece, I'm realising the huge need for gender mainstreaming in an academic higher institution. What I've accomplished so far feels like a drop in the ocean but it's through travelling and meeting with different people that I'll be able to share my practices and learn from those that others do. After all, we are a global village.”



Next steps

- Continue to deepen engagement with media decision-makers - taking cue from media houses that are doing well because of strong partnerships.
- Deepen and sustain media activism by civil society organisations, which has already seen many sexist adverts removed.
- The government should mainstream gender in all information, communication and media-related laws.
- Statutory regulatory authorities and self-regulatory authorities should use whatever leverage they have at their disposal to ensure gender accountability by media institutions, media houses and other bodies.
- Government should pledge to ensure that gender will be mainstreamed in media training institutions that are funded through public funds.
- Media activism needs to be strengthened in the country throughout the year, not only during the Sixteen Days of Activism
- Media Literacy training for the general public.



Loga Virahsawmy being interviewed after a meeting with the Local Government Minister, Herve Aimee, Mauritius.
Photo: Gender Links