

MEDIA COVERAGE OF  
**GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE**  
DURING THE COVID-19 PERIOD



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## ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

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AI	Artificial Intelligence
CA	Communications Authority
CoK	Constitution of Kenya
DCC	Digital Content Creators
GBV	Gender Based Violence
JHR	Journalists for Human Rights
KCSE	Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education
LDA	Latent Dirichlet Allocation
MCK	Media Council of Kenya
NCRC	National Crime Research Centre
NLP	Natural Language Processing
NPU	Natural Language Understanding
NGEC	National Gender Equality Commission
PhD	Doctor of Philosophy
WACC	World Association of Christian Communication
STATA	Software for Statistics and Data Science
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
VWGRs	Voice for Women and Girls' Rights
WEF	Women Enterprise Fund
WWWF	World Wide Web Foundation
WAGG&GS World	Association of Girl Guides and Girls Scouts

## PREFACE



Creating awareness and disseminating objective information on Gender-Based Violence (GBV) remains an important function media ought to do frequently. While it is appreciated that GBV in societies such as Kenya with a patriarchal setting was previously accepted as part of societal norms, things have changed over the years.

Besides, helping the society understand the vice, including the need to respect the rights of all irrespective of gender, and the need for living in a safe, peaceful, and secure environment, remains a key responsibility of the media as a way of addressing Gender-Based Violence.

Kenya as a country is very progressive and has some of the best laws and policies that address and help manage Gender-Based Violence. However, because of limited public education and awareness, knowledge of these laws and policies, as well as their implementation, remains the biggest challenge. This remains an impediment on how members of communities understand and address cases of Gender-Based Violence as well as how they interpret their minimum knowledge of the law. Poverty has also paid a key role seeing as most families that are affected by the violence tend to accept small tokens in order to drop cases that are as serious as rape, murder and defilement.

Gender equality lies at the core of human rights approach to development. Gender inequality arises out of the roles and responsibilities that society ascribe to women, and which are held fast in place because of the existing power relations.

For this reason, media must be deliberate in creating an environment that prioritises national debate/conversation on gender including other forms of violence and traditional harmful practices that continue to perpetuate human rights violations on gender lines. There is, therefore, urgent need for candid discussions on GBV with more focus on messaging for social behaviour change. As a moulder of both individual and collective mindsets of a nation, the media finds itself in all possible approaches to dealing with the vice. This includes gender responsive, integrative, and collaborative, as well as preventive approaches in their reporting.

Lockdown and other containment measures associated with Covid-19 saw a spike in GBV cases across the country according to a report by Human Rights Watch. Worse still, a report released in 2014 shows that about 41 percent of women reported having experienced physical or sexual violence from their husbands or partners in their lifetime. This was way before the outbreak of the pandemic. Another reported conducted among journalists by Media Council of Kenya (MCK) in partnership with Article 19, and quoted elsewhere in this report denotes of a dire situation for female journalists. This calls for synergised efforts to fight the social menace. The role of the media cannot therefore be overemphasized because it plays a vital role in increasing awareness about GBV. A collaborative approach that combines sensitive reporting together with advocacy, sensitisation and support for media is essential in curbing this humanitarian crisis.

David Omwoyo Omwoyo  
**Chief Executive Officer and Secretary to the Council**

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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The COVID-19 pandemic caught many countries unawares. Strict measures were put in place to curb its spread which included lockdowns, working from home measures, and closure of non-essential services that led to many people losing their livelihoods. A report released by Human Rights Watch in September 2021 documented various forms of violence against women and girls in Kenya including sexual abuse, beatings, being thrown out of the home, being forced to marry, and being forced to undergo female genital mutilation (FGM) during the first three months of the pandemic. Most of the abuses according to the report happened in the home and attackers were close family members including husbands while other abuses happened in the communities perpetuated by neighbours. The purpose of this report was to look at how the media covered these crimes and human rights abuses.

Journalists for Human Rights and the Media Council of Kenya wish to sincerely thank everyone who took part in the development of this report. This report would not have been possible without the generous funding from Global Affairs Canada, through the Journalists for Human Rights project in Kenya, Canada World: Voice for Women and Girls' Rights.

Special thanks MCK CEO Mr David Omwoyo Omwoyo for the all-rounded support and wisdom granted throughout the entire process. The success of the survey was made possible by Media Training & Development Directorate led by Director, Mr Victor Bwire who gave his invaluable guidance in the process. He was instrumental for drafting the literature review. Timothy Mutunga undertook the data analysis and is highly appreciated.

We would also like to express our sincere gratitude to the MCK staff led Leo Mutisya, Manager, Research Planning and Strategy for his enormous contribution in the whole process in ensuring success of the report. His role in the development of the tool and quality control was insurmountable. We can never forget the crucial task of editing the report that was ably executed by Julius Sigei, Senior Officer Training Standards & Curriculum Development.

Sincere thanks to the team of media analysts and their supervisors for their technical input, led by Jacob Nyukuri – Senior Officer, Research, Planning & Strategy, Eric Ndung'u and Vera Origa.

We would like to acknowledge JHR team for their invaluable support of this report. We are particularly grateful to Aicha Toure, the International Program's Manager for her leadership and critical comments that helped to shape the research tools; Sammy Muraya the JHR Kenya Project Manager, for providing the logistical support towards this work; The Journalism Team Lead, Mustapha Dumbuya and the Gender Lead Winnie Syombua for providing invaluable feedback to the research data.

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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Media coverage of Gender-Based Violence (GBV) in Kenya remains insensitive, lacking in depth and seems not prioritized by mainstream media as it is with digital platforms. Journalists need to pay more attention to matters relating to GBV, considering the increasing cases reported and the human rights violations involved. Concern about media reporting of GBV lies within the larger thinking that gender equality lies at the core of human rights approach to development.

There was lack of in-depth reporting on GBV during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdowns. The reporting also lacked sensitivity even as more stories on GBV ran digital platforms compared to those on mainstream media. Use of inappropriate language in the coverage of GBV, leading to double trauma on victims also went a notch higher even as victims were left exposed. This, especially, applied to underage and rape victims. There was also a lack of centralised statistics/data to analyse the trend, or map out hot spots for sensitization.

According to the study, 26.2 per cent of the total responses hinged on the lack of follow-up on GBV cases or day two, in-depth stories by the media. Specifically, the study established that journalists rarely did follow-ups on any interventions/treatment on GBV cases, especially in the rural areas. Action taken against the perpetrators was not always reported.

Additionally, the study that 23.8 per cent of the total responses reported biased reporting of GBV. Specifically, it was noted that while women, women with disability, girls, and children are the most vulnerable and were the most affected by GBV during the Covid-19 pandemic, boys and men did not get coverage proportional to their plight.

23.5 per cent of the respondents indicated that there was victim shaming in the coverage of GBV during the COVID-19 pandemic. Particularly, it was established that general victim exposure, bullying and shaming on digital platforms of both the victims and perpetrators increased during the pandemic. Whenever a story of GBV was published online, Kenyans drew mixed reactions, with many being less supportive. They tended to blame the victim and such comments were not flagged or turned off. More critically, even as victim shaming/blaming and invasion of privacy of the survivors (such as in their exposure and that of their relatives) perpetrators were in some cases depicted as heroes for their acts and revealing of GBV victims together with their families.

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## CHAPTER ONE

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### 1.1 UNDERSTANDING GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE FROM A MEDIA PERSPECTIVE

Since the outbreak of COVID-19, emerging data, and reports from such organisations as Human Rights Watch, have shown that all types of violence against women and girls, has intensified. As COVID-19 cases continue to strain health services, essential services such as domestic violence shelters and helplines, have reached capacity according to organisations such as UNWOMEN.

This plight has not been limited to Kenya. Other East African Community members have reported a sharp increase in the number of Gender-Based Violence (GBV) cases. Ministries responsible for Gender across the region have reported up to 48% increase in the Gender-Based Violence cases as received by Police or through GBV toll-free lines. The containment measures to respond to COVID-19 further exacerbated risk factors for vulnerable populations such as women, young people and persons living with disability (PWDs) as they were be locked in homes with their abusers.

The Government of Kenya raised concerns regarding increased cases of Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and domestic violence in the Country since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. It reported that between January and December 2020, a total of 5009 cases were recorded through the National GBV toll-free helpline 1195. This was an increase of 36% from previous year. Government data indicates that Nairobi, Kakamega, Kisumu, Nakuru and Kiambu counties reported the highest cases of GBV. Following the concern, the President Uhuru Kenyatta directed the National Crime Research Centre to conduct a study to establish the causes of the increased cases of GBV.

The findings of the study established that the number of GBV cases recorded between January and June 2020 had an increase of 92% compared with previous year (2019) period. The study highlighted factors contributing to GBV as alcohol, drug and substance abuse; poverty; family/domestic disputes; retrogressive cultural beliefs and practices; poor parenting/upbringing and moral decadence; identity crisis among the youthful population as well as an inadequate social support system.

The most common forms of GBV identified in the study were, physical assault, rape/attempted rape, murder, sexual offences, defilement, grievous harm, physical abuse, child marriages, psychological torture, and child neglect.

The rise of Gender-Based Violence (GBV) cases and the attendant media coverage in Kenya continues to raise serious concerns across all quarters of life and dimensions. The media plays a very vital role in shaping the attitudes, perceptions, and knowledge of their audiences. Attitudes inform the perpetration of this violence, shape victims' responses to victimisation, and influence community responses to violence against victims of gender-based violence. The prevailing narrative is that the media is impartial and objective and that journalists are guided mostly by the code of conduct in their reporting of all issues including GBV. However, as this study will show, it is not always the case.

While the gender equality debate in Kenya has mainly centered on the appointments in the public service and party politics, media coverage of the issue has not been effective. Modest steps have been made by the media in shaping the gender debate even as the sector struggles to mainstream gender issues within its internal processes. While the media has highlighted the widening gender imbalance, the sector itself has proved to be indifferent in the way it treats women, both in terms of distributing leadership positions and in allocating space for coverage. Further, there have been reported cases of high prevalence of sexual harassment in the industry.

Kenya has made significant progress in terms of policies to ensure that the girlchild has a fair access to opportunities, with the establishment of National Gender Equality Commission (NGEC) being one of the most notable. The Commission derives its mandate from Articles 27 and 43, as well as Chapter 15 of the Constitution and section 8 of NGEC Act (Cap. 15) of 2011, with the objectives of promoting gender equality and freedom from discrimination.

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## CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATURE

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### 2.1 DEFINING AND CONTEXTUALISING GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

According to United Nations Population Fund, gender-based violence refers to harmful acts both physical and emotional directed at an individual, based on their gender. It is implanted in gender inequality, the abuse of power, harmful norms, and societal beliefs. GBV includes sexual, physical, mental, and economic harm perpetrated in public or in private. It may also include threats of violence and manipulation. Gender-based violence knows no social or economic boundaries hence affects all gender regardless of the social-economic background (United Nations Population Fund). The major forms of gender-based violence entail; violence against women and girls, violence against LGBTQ individuals, domestic violence, indirect or structural violence, intimate partner violence, and sexual violence.

An interim study report entitled “Media Coverage of Gender-Based Violence during the COVID-19 Period” jointly done by the Media Council of Kenya and Journalists for Human Rights’ Voice of Women and Girls Project, notes there was and has been lack of sensitivity in covering GBV by the media.

The report noted that more stories on GBV on digital platforms use inappropriate language in coverage of GBV leading to double trauma to victims, who are left exposed. According to this study, 26.2% of the total responses hinged on the media’s lack of follow-up on GBV cases or day two stories (Bwire, 2021). The study established that journalists rarely do follow-ups on any interventions or treatment on GBV cases by those who reported them, especially in the rural areas relating to the action taken against the perpetrators. Such is the situation of GBV in Kenya today, and there is more than the media needs to do to participate fully in the fight against it. Further, more is required to establish the trends, gaps, and perceptions on how the media covers GBV.

### 2.2 THEORETICAL REVIEW/CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Globally, 35% of women have experienced either physical or sexual intimate partner violence or non-partner sexual violence. 7% women have been sexually stricken by someone other than a partner and 38% of murdered women are done by an intimate partner and over 200 million women have experienced female genital mutilation. (World Bank 2019).

A UNICEF (2000) report indicates that between 20 and 50 percent of women in the world have experienced at least one form of male violence i.e., rape. A more recent report, again by UNICEF (2010) reveals that 32 percent of female and 18 percent of male undergo sexual violence before the age of 18.

### 2.3 PERSPECTIVES AND GAPS IN MEDIA REPORTING

Media scholars, practitioners, humanitarian enthusiasts, education researchers, and the public are all interested in the topic of gender-based violence and how the media covers it. Everyone has started recognising the seriousness of gender-based violence and the involvement of the media. First, it is critical to comprehend what credible organisations illustrate gender-based violence parameters.

The media plays a critical role in how it covers any form of gender-based violence, though it is perspective of GBV is intertwined with the societal view. Media content presents women as emotional, sensitive, and fragile beings, on the other hand, the male counter parts are shown to be more superior and independent. Studies have shown how media content promotes sexist stereotypes that connects male identities to violence, independence, power, and dominance whilst women are subjected to emotions, dependency, sensitivity, and vulnerability. (Elasmar, Hasegawa, and Brian, 1999; MC Ghee and Frueh, 1980; Thompson and Zerbinos, 1995).

During news reports of GBV, women are victimized and blamed in equal measure for the violence while the perpetrators are usually spared and if featured, the media (either on social media or during talk shows) will find a reason to depict the female character responsible for the act in. Gender-based violence is not shown as a problem that results in inequality between women and men in the society but as a day-to-day domestic challenge. (Diez 2002; Vega Mointel 2007.)

With the advent of new technology three quarter of women have been exposed to some form of online abuse. “Offline or online violence, consist of vandalism, phone calls and physical assault, what was once a private affair can now be instantly broadcast to billions of people across digital word.” (Broad band commission for digital development, 2015:7).

Even then journalists are also victims of GBV. The Media Council of Kenya (MCK) in partnership with Article 19 released a survey report in 2020 which revealed that outside the newsroom journalists are affected by various forms of GBV. 73 percent of the respondents spoke of high likelihood of being sexually harassed by sources, news subjects and colleagues in the field.

Nearly 49 percent of the journalist respondents indicated that they were uncomfortable to speak about sexual harassment to their supervisors or persons in authority because of many factors; sometimes their supervisor is the perpetrator; fear of embarrassment, normalisation of the vice and victimisation.

Besides, among identified forms of sexual harassment noted were receiving emails or text messages with sexual content, discussing sexual relations/stories/fantasies at work, outside work, or in other inappropriate places, non-verbal conduct such as staring or gestures, jokes premised on sexual or gender issues, and sexual advances. Others included someone displaying sexually explicit pictures in your space or a shared space, and suggestions that sexual favours may further a person's career, or that refusal of such may hinder it.

Certainly, these experiences will affect how such a journalist would report and or cover on GBV matters.

## 2.4 TRENDS IN MEDIA REPORTING

An attempt to establish the trends of media coverage of GBV and no violence against women and children is presented by Gemma Harris (2005). The study analyses the strengths and weaknesses of the media coverage of a 16 Days of Activism Campaign. It also critiques the quality of media articles, the degree to which comprehensive analysis of GBV issues are dealt with in the press, and whether the media coverage adds new information to the debates around gender-based violence.

The authors explain the current media representation of gender-based violence and the changes needed to ensure that GBV issues are covered more substantially by the media.

Editorial Policy has a greater way of powering the presentation of gender roles in the media. Slobodanka Dekic (2017) in *Media Coverage of Gender Based Violence Handbook* narrates the Editorial Role in reporting GBV. Editors, to some extent, may attempt to make sensationalistic and brutal texts that incline toward horror stories and later publishing them in crime columns. The overall result is leaving the audience wonder whether gender-based violence is addressed as a social problem or as a horror story.

A research project by Carolyn Nyambura (2014) looks at print media coverage of gender-based violence in Kenya, and the role mass media plays in creating awareness and educating people on GBV. Guided by two theories, priming and agenda-setting, the report claims that print media plays an important role in the struggle by creating an awareness on all issues; thus, priming and agenda-setting of these articles is crucial in bringing to the fore issues that society need to deal with (Nyambura, 2014).

The data for the study was collected through a content analysis of the Daily Nation for one year, from January 1 to December 31, 2013. The themes and priming of these articles were identified. The results indicated that there are ten types of GBV as reported during the period of analysis with the most prominence given to physical violence and FGM while those given the smallest space were on rape, child abuse, physical violence, and FGM, which appeared under letters to the Editor and on News. The report concludes that there is a need for Kenyan journalists to participate in the solutions in the fight against GBV.

The study further notes that a shift in headlines/top story reporting from controversial headlines to headlines encouraging investigative stories is also a trend that has positively toned down the indignation of GBV reporting in media. Instead of directly focusing on fatal outcomes of these cases, investigative journalism covers different aspects of GBV as opposed to the portrayal of men as macho protectors and women as the victim.

Gender equality lies at the core of human rights approach to development; however, the media continues to portray gender stereotypes that are detrimental to women and that can impact negatively on the attitudes towards inequality and violence against women. Nonetheless, because mass media communications reach and influence large numbers of people, they also have the potential to play a positive role in the struggle against violence against women.

The vital role played by the media in the society is of pivotal importance in confronting GBV. There are many avenues and platforms that are being used by the media in this instance. For example, creating awareness, in this case, issues to do with gender-based violence in the society; the media also updates the readers on what is currently going on, for example, FGM and what is being done to do away with the vice in the society. Another role of print media is to reflect the public opinion on broad issues, mostly through the letters to the editor. Readers can let known how they feel about GBV and how the government can deal with them.

UNESCO notes that Media (newspaper, radio, television) and new technology are a part of culture and society. It is widely accepted that media are transmitters of culture and engines behind globalising cultures. In countries of high media density, there is no aspect of society on which media have not had an impact, albeit to varying degrees. Media can also be framed as social actors in and of themselves, with the power to give impetus to social development.

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## CHAPTER THREE: OBJECTIVES, METHODOLOGY AND FINDINGS

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### 3.1 STUDY OBJECTIVES

The study objective was to establish trends, gaps, and perceptions on how the media covered gender-based violence in Kenya during COVID 19.

### 3.2 STUDY DESIGN

The research design chosen was hybrid quantitative-qualitative methods which offer broad understanding of trends and underlying gender issues in Kenyan media. The media training and development division of the Media Council of Kenya, in consultation with JHR's Kenya office, developed the study instruments – questionnaires, in-depth interviews, and overall plan for undertaking the study.

The survey tool was created using Google forms, employed for data capture and storage. In order to reduce human contact due to the spread of Covid-19, the tool was administered via a link to the emails of the target respondents. The link to the questionnaire was also publicized via MCK's social media platforms. The tool sought both qualitative and quantitative feedback.

Desktop review was also conducted to analyse literature and variables related to gender-based violence. This is presented herein in form of a literature review.

### 3.3 SAMPLING DESIGN

The study adopted stratified random sampling, a method which assured journalists working in both print and electronic media from eight regions (old administrative areas) in Kenya were probabilistically surveyed. In this study, both the traditional media and new media were considered for inclusion namely newspapers, televisions, radio stations and social media.

### 3.4 DATA ANALYSIS

From the Google forms, the datasets were downloaded into an excel format which was then transferred to Microsoft Power BI and the Python programming language where descriptive and inferential data analytics were conducted.

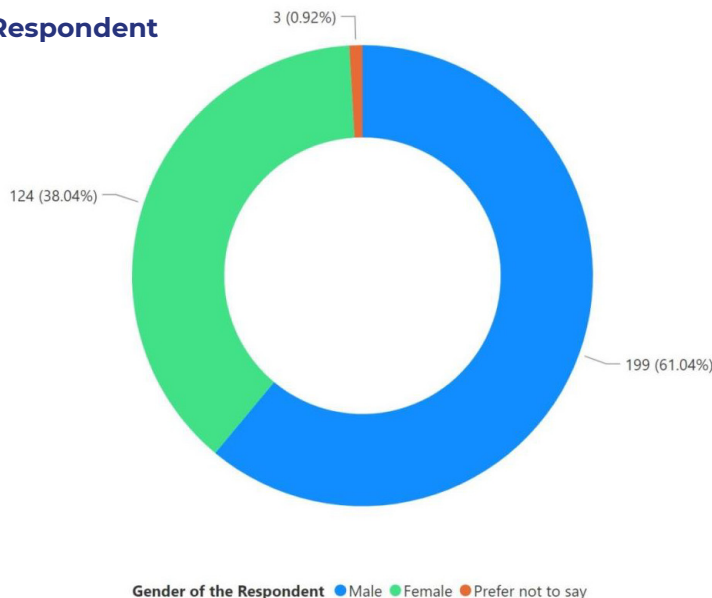
Further, thematic analysis using Natural Language Processing was conducted to recognise and quantify the themes captured in the qualitative data on salient professional issues that participants noticed on the coverage of GBV at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. AI's Natural Language Processing (NLP) and Natural Language Understanding (NLU) architectures were leveraged to perform intent recognition and modelling, and unsupervised learning Topic Modelling of the latent themes through the Latent Dirichlet Allocation (LDA) model.

## CHAPTER FOUR: SURVEY FINDINGS

This survey polled 326 participants.

### 4.1 PERSONAL DATA

#### 4.1.1 Gender of the Respondent



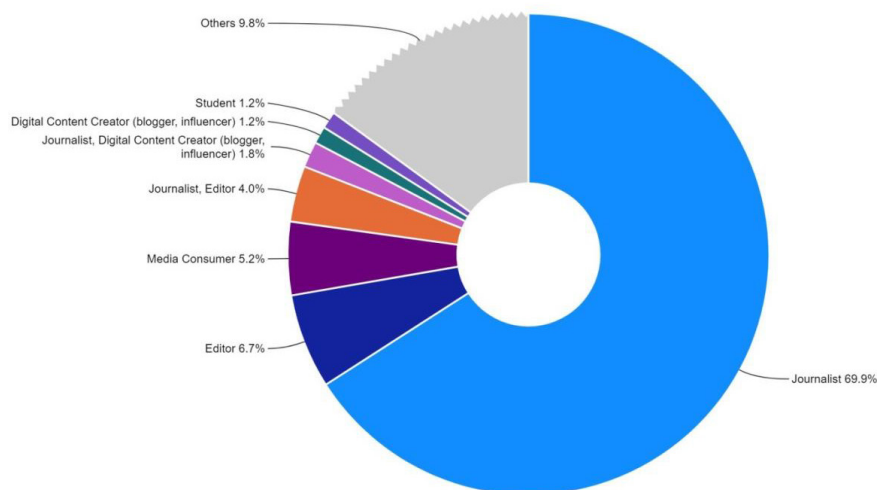
Pie Chart 1: Gender Count

The distribution of the Gender of the respondent is presented in Pie Chart 1.

During the study period, out of the total 326 participants, 199(61.04%) were Male, 124(38.04%) were Female while 3 (0.92%) did not wish to disclose their gender status.

### 4.2 AFFILIATION

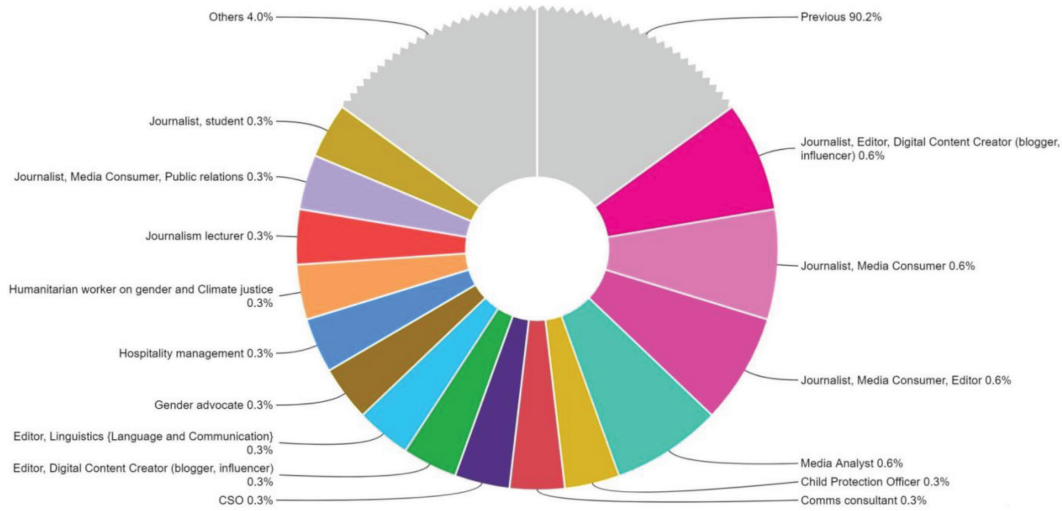
As indicated in Pie Chart 2, over the study period, 69.9% of the total participants were journalists, 6.7% were editors, 5.2% were media consumers, 4% were both journalists and editors, 1.8% were journalists and digital content creators (bloggers, influencers etc) at the same time, 1.2% were digital content creators (bloggers, influencers etc), another 1.2% were students while other categories that individually had less than 1% of the total participants, collectively accounted for 9.8% of the total participants.



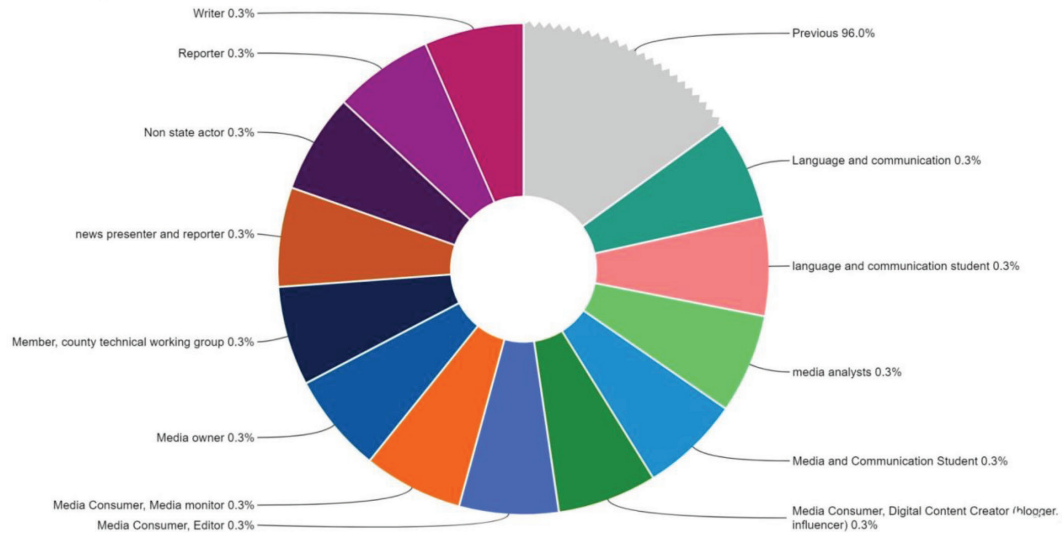
Pie Chart 2: Participant’s Affiliation

Furthermore, 9.8% of the total respondents representing 'others' category is presented in Pie Charts 3 and 4.

Note that in Pie Charts 3 and 4, 0.3% represents 1 participant while 0.6% represents 2 participants of the total study respondents.



Pie Chart 3: Other Affiliation Categories



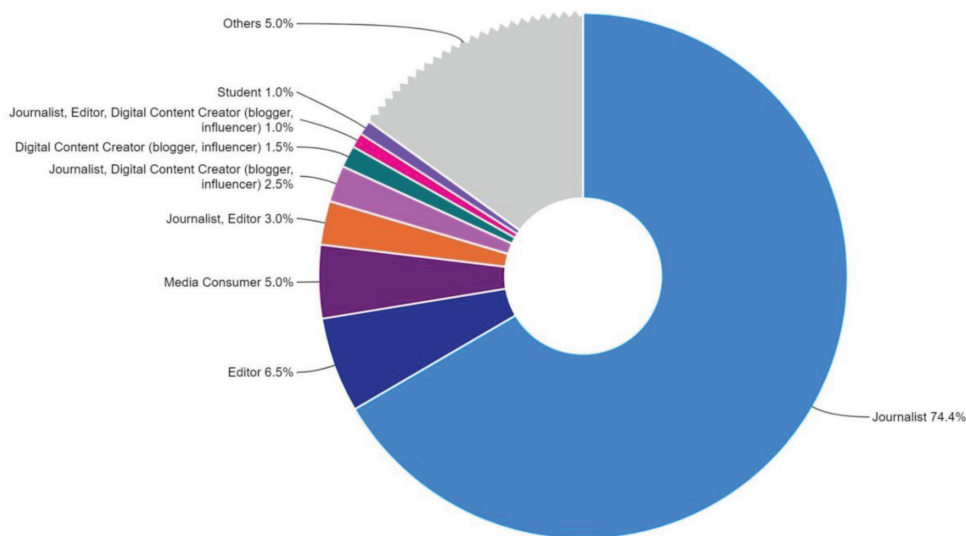
Pie Chart 4: Other Affiliation Categories

Further analysis of the participants' affiliations across gender categories was performed.

For the male respondents, the distribution across Affiliation categories is presented in Pie Chart 5.

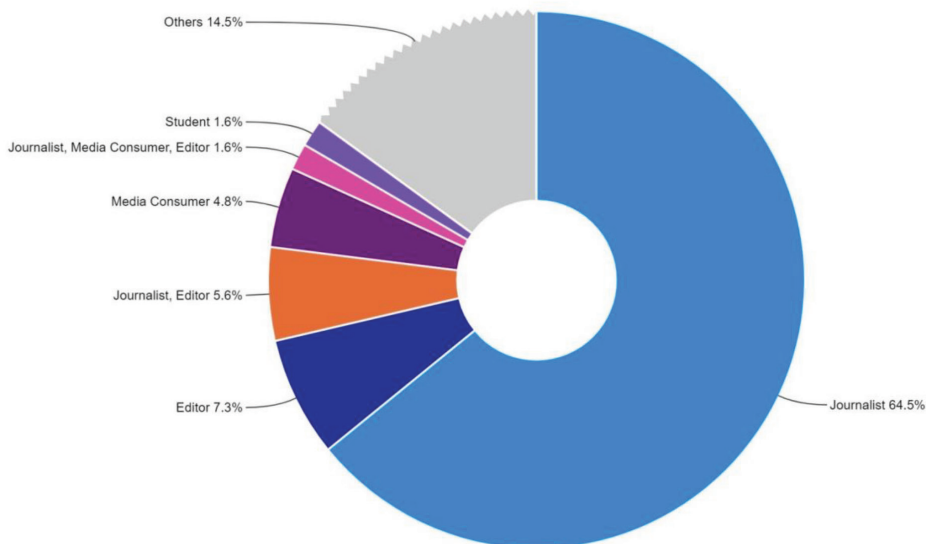
For the Female respondents, the distribution across Affiliation categories is presented in Pie Chart 6.

For the participants who did not specify their gender, the distribution across Affiliation categories is presented in Pie Chart 7.



**Pie Chart 5: Affiliation for Male participants**

As indicated in Pie Chart 5, over the study period, 74.4% of the 199 male participants were journalists, 6.5% were editors, 5% were media consumers, 3% were both journalists and editors, 2.5% were journalists and digital content creators (bloggers, influencers etc) at the same time, 1.5% were digital content creators (bloggers, influencers etc), 1% were journalists, editors, and digital content creators another 1% were students while other categories (See Pie Charts 3 and 4) that individually had less than 1% of the total participants, collectively accounted for 5.0% of the total participants.

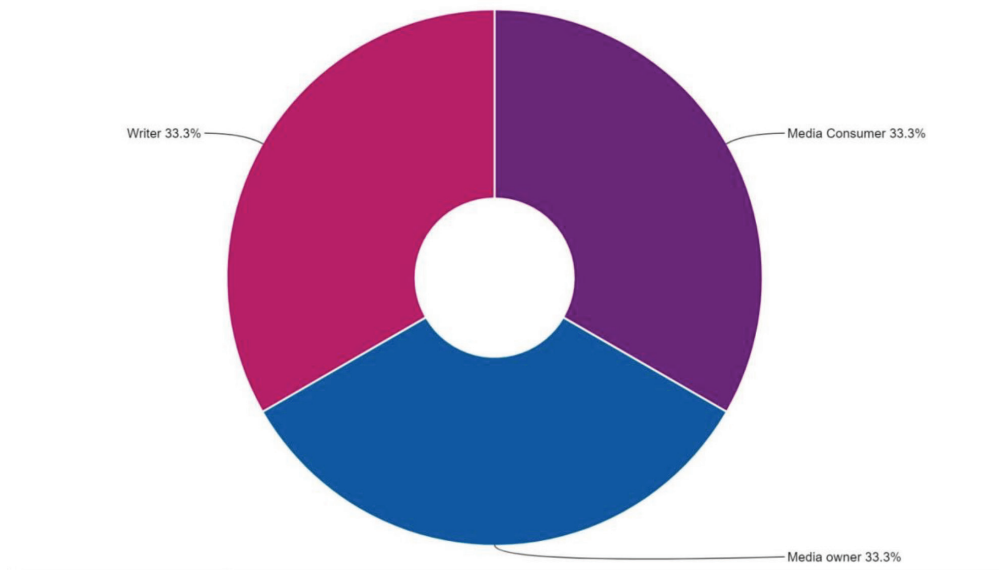


**Pie Chart 6: Affiliation for Female Participants**

As indicated in Pie Chart 6, over the study period, 64.5% of the 124 female participants were journalists, 7.3% were editors, 5.6% were both journalists and editors, 4.8% were media consumers, 1.6% were journalists, media consumer and digital content creators (bloggers, influencers etc) at the same time, and another 1.6% were students. Other categories (See Pie Charts 3 and 4) that individually had less than 1% of the total participants, collectively accounted for 14.5% of the total participants.

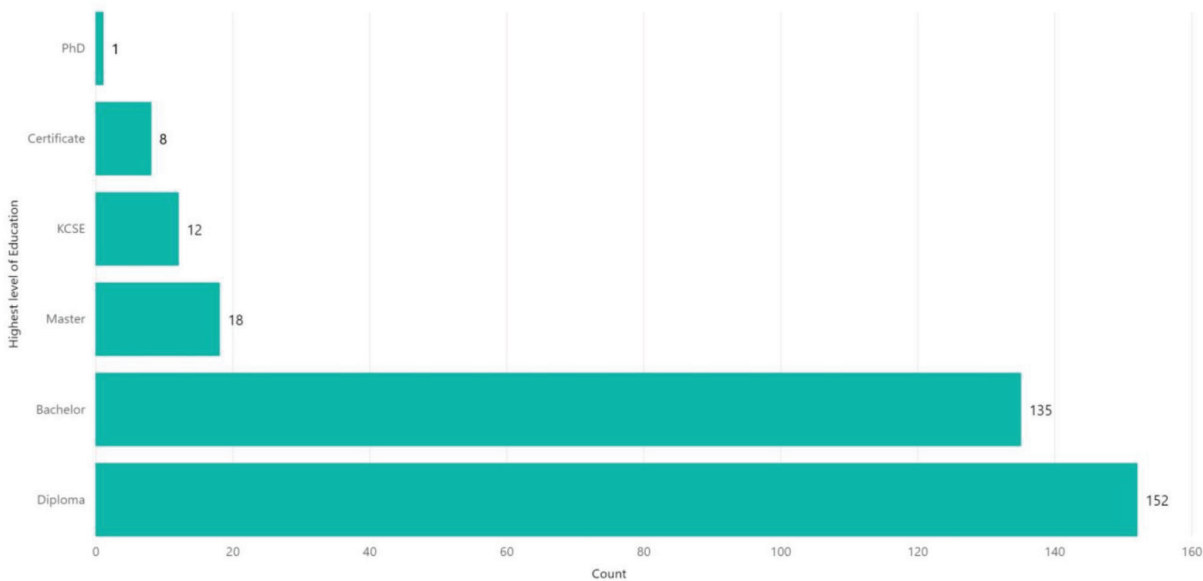
As indicated in Pie Chart 7, over the study period, there was one participant in each of the three categories- Writer, Media Consumer and Media Owner - accounting for 33.3% of the 3 respondents who did not specify their Gender status.





*Pie Chart 7: Affiliation for unspecified gender*

### 4.3 HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION



*Figure 1: Highest level of Education*

As indicated in Figure 1, out of the total 326 participants, 152 (46.6%) were diploma holders at the time of the survey, 135 (41.4%) were bachelor's degree holders, 18 (5.5%) were master's degree holders, 12 (3.7%) were KCSE certificate holders, 8 (2.5%) were Certificate holders while 1 (0.3%) was a PhD holder.

The distribution across gender is presented in Figure 2:

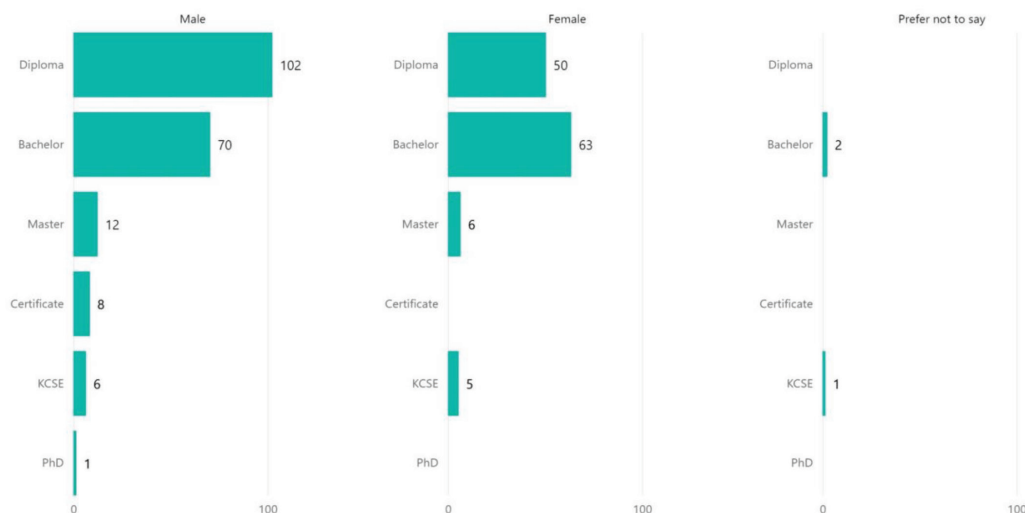


Figure 2: Highest level of education.

As indicated in Figure 2, out of the 199 male participants, 102 accounting for 31.3% of the total participants in the survey were diploma holders at the time of the survey, 70 accounting for 21.5% of the total participants in the survey were bachelor’s degree holders, 12 accounting for 3.7% of the total participants in the survey were master’s degree holders, 8 (2.5% of the total participants) were certificate holders, 6 (1.8% of the total study participants) were KCSE certificate holders, while 1(0.3% of the total participants) was a PhD holder.

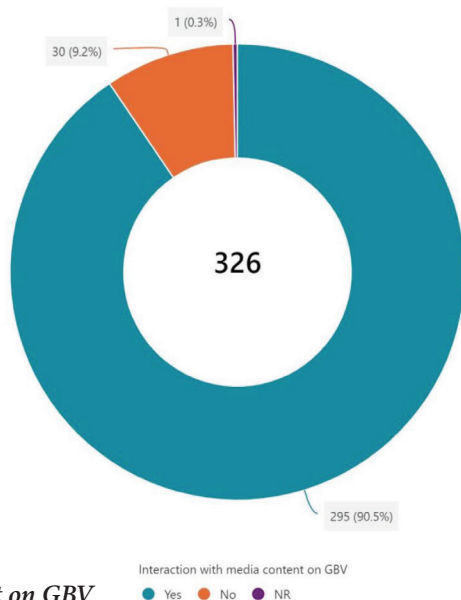
Out of the 124 female participants, 50 (15.3% of the total participants in the survey) were diploma holders at the time of the survey, 63 (19.3% of the total participants in the survey) were bachelor’s degree holders, 6(1.8% of the total participants in the survey) were master’s degree holders, while 5 (1.5% of the total study participants) were KCSE certificate holders.

Out of the 3 participants who did not wish to specify their gender, 2 (0.6% of the total participants in the survey) were bachelor’s degree holders, while 1 (0.3% of the total study participants) was a KCSE certificate holder.

#### 4.4 INTERACTION WITH MEDIA CONTENT ON GBV

This study sought to examine if participants had interacted with any media content on gender-based violence over the study period and if so to what extent.

This analysis is presented in Pie Chart 8.

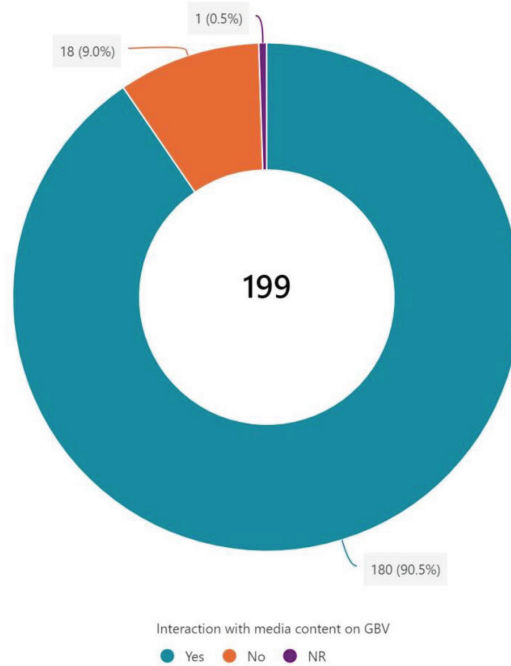


Pie Chart 8: Interaction with media content on GBV

Out of the 326 total respondents, 295 (90.5%) indicated that they had interacted with some media kind of content on gender-based violence over the study period, 30 (9.2%) indicated that they had not interacted with any kind of media content on gender-based violence while 1(0.3%) respondent did not give a response to this specific question.

This analysis was further carried out across both genders.

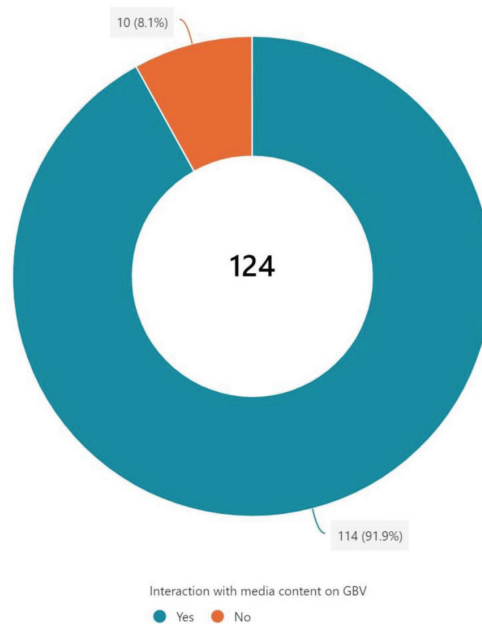
For the Male respondents, the results are presented in Pie Chart 9.



**Pie Chart 9: Interaction with media content on GBV for Male respondents**

Out of the 199 male respondents, 180 (90.5% of the male respondents) indicated that they had interacted with media content on gender-based violence over the study period, 18 (9% of the male respondents) indicated that they had not interacted with any kind of media content on gender-based violence while 1(0.5% of the male participants) respondent did not give a response to this specific question.

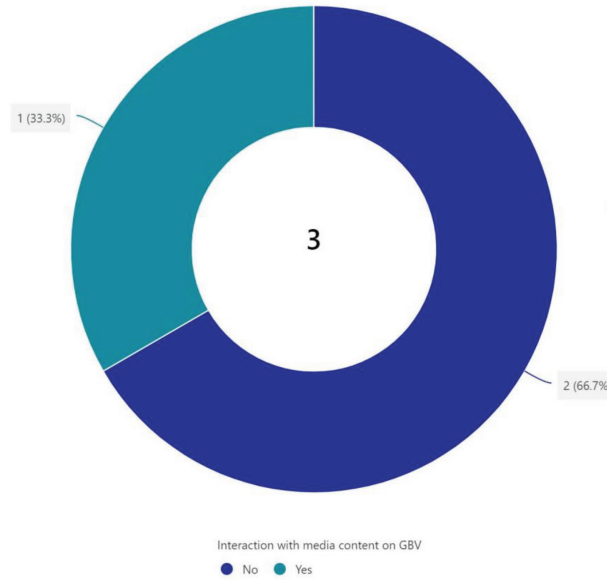
For the female respondents, the results are presented in Pie Chart 10.



**Pie Chart 10: Interaction with media content on GBV for female respondents**

Out of the 124 female respondents, 114 (91.9%) indicated that they had interacted with some kind of media content on gender-based violence over the study period while 10 (8.1%) indicated that they had not interacted with any kind of media content on gender-based violence.

For the three respondents who did not disclose their gender, the results are presented in Pie Chart 11.

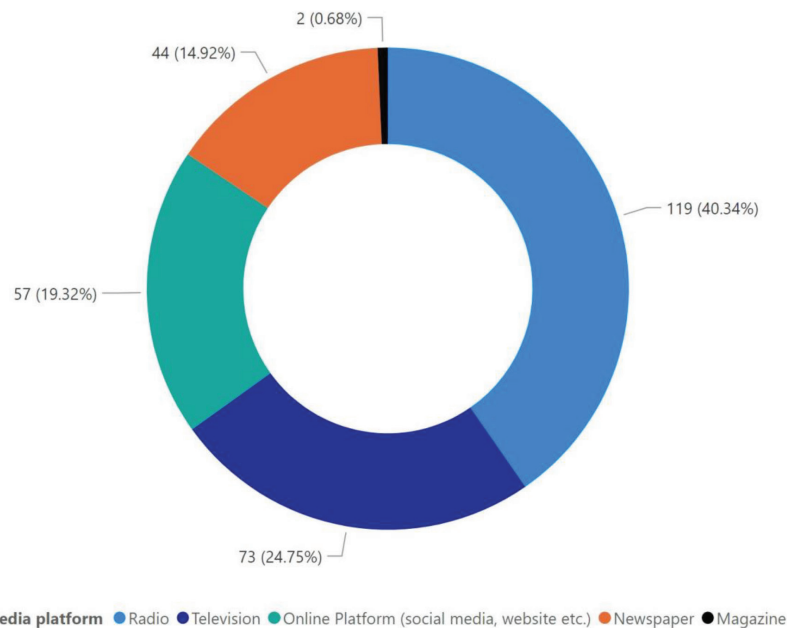


Pie Chart 11: Interaction with media content on GBV for undisclosed gender respondents

Out of the 3 respondents, 2 (66.7%) indicated that they had interacted with some kind of media content on gender-based violence over the study period while 1 (33.3%) respondent indicated that they had not interacted with any kind of media content on gender-based violence.

#### 4.5 MEDIA PLATFORMS WITH CONTENT ON GBV

Out of the 295 (90.5% of the total study respondents) who indicated that they had interacted with some kind of media content on gender-based violence during the study period, an assessment of the kind of media platform from which they interacted with was done. The results are presented in Pie Chart 12.

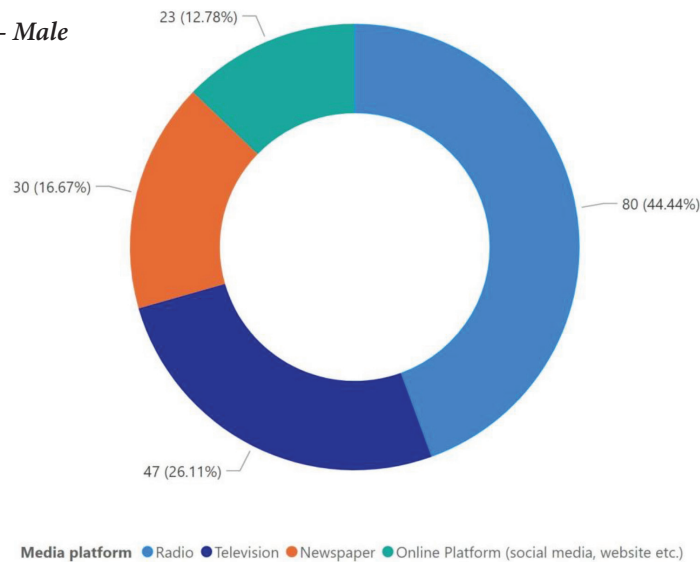


Pie Chart 12: Media Platform

As indicated in Pie Chart 12, close to half 119(40.34%) of the total participants indicated that they had interacted with some kind of media content on gender-based violence through the Radio during the study period. 73(24.75%) of the total participants indicated that they had interacted with media content on gender-based violence through the TV while 57(19.32%) of the total participants indicated that they had interacted with media content on gender-based violence through Online Platforms (social media, websites etc). 44(14.92%) of the total participants indicated that they had interacted with media content on gender-based violence through Newspapers, and 2(0.68%) of the total participants indicated that they had interacted with media content on gender-based violence through Magazines.

This analysis was further extended to the three gender categories. The results are presented in Pie Charts 13-15.

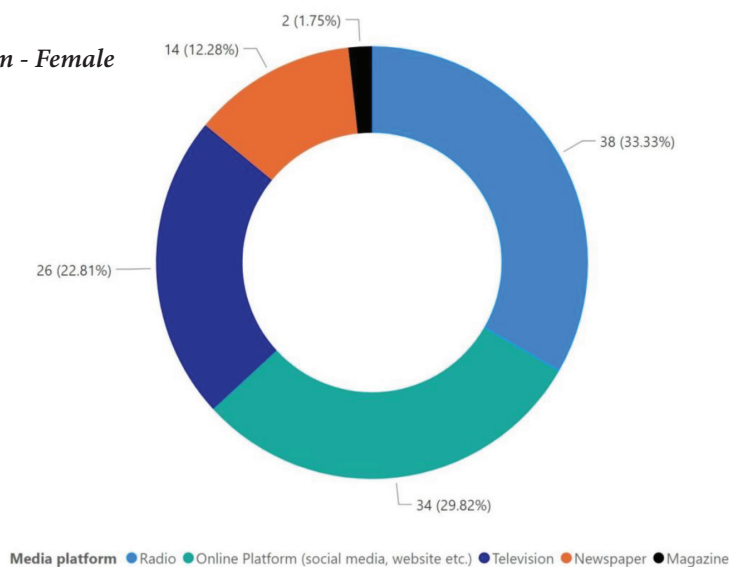
**Pie Chart 13: Media Platform - Male**



Out of the 180 male respondents who indicated that they had interacted with media content on gender-based violence, close to half 80(44.44%) of the total male participants indicated that they interacted with some kind of media content on gender-based violence through Radio during the study period. 47(26.11%) of them indicated that they had interacted with media content on gender-based violence through the TV while 30(16.67%) of them indicated that they had interacted with media content on gender-based violence through Newspapers and 23(12.78%) of them indicated that they had interacted with media content on gender-based violence through Online Platforms (social media, websites etc) while none of the male participants indicated that they had interacted with media content on gender-based violence through Magazines.

Out of the 115 female respondents who indicated that they had interacted with media content on gender-based violence, 38(33.33%) of the total female participants indicated that they had interacted with media content on gender-based violence through Radio during the study period. Nearly an equal number, 34(29.82%), of them indicated that they had interacted with media content on gender-based violence

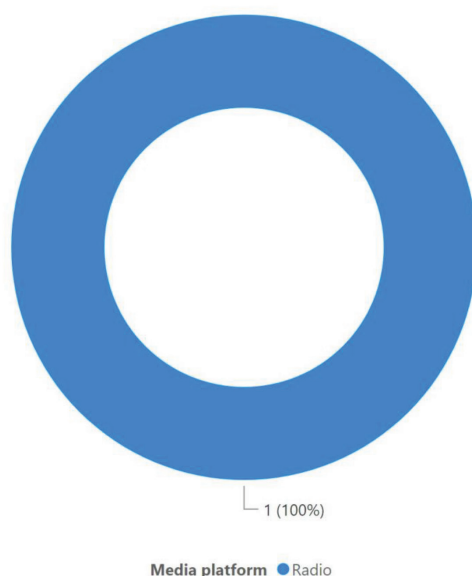
**Pie Chart 14: Media Platform - Female**



violence through Online Platforms (social media, websites etc) while 26(22.81%) of them indicated that they had interacted with media content on gender-based violence through the TV. 14 (12.28%) of them indicated that they had interacted with media content on gender-based violence through Newspapers while 2(1.75%) of them indicated that they had interacted with media content on gender-based violence through Magazines.

Notably, both genders interacted more with media content on gender-based violence through the Radio. However, female respondents appeared to interact more with media content on gender-based violence through Online Platforms (social media, websites etc) which ranked second for them. On the other hand, their male counterparts had Online Platforms (social media, websites etc) ranking last. Additionally, all the participants that interacted with media content on gender-based violence through Magazines were female.

One participant who did not disclose their gender and indicated that they had interacted with media content on gender-based violence, said they did so through Radio as indicated in Pie Chart 15.



Pie Chart 15: Media Platform – Gender undisclosed

#### 4.6 FREQUENCY OF MEDIA FOCUS ON GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF COVID-19

A further analysis was conducted on the extent of media focus on gender-based violence within the context of COVID-19 for the 295 (90.5% of the total study respondents), participants who indicated that they had interacted with some kind of media content on gender-based violence during the study period.

The results to this analysis are presented in Figure 3.

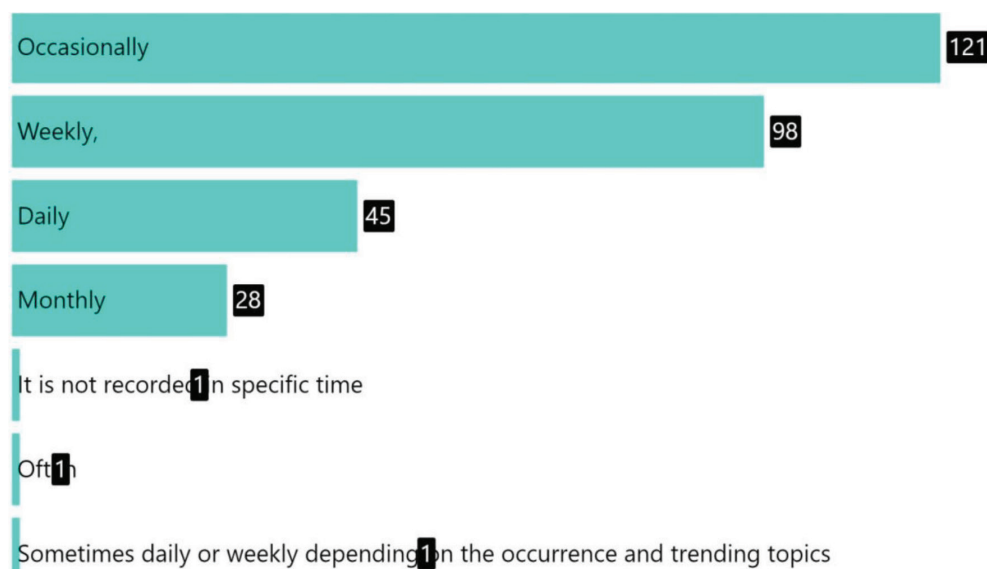
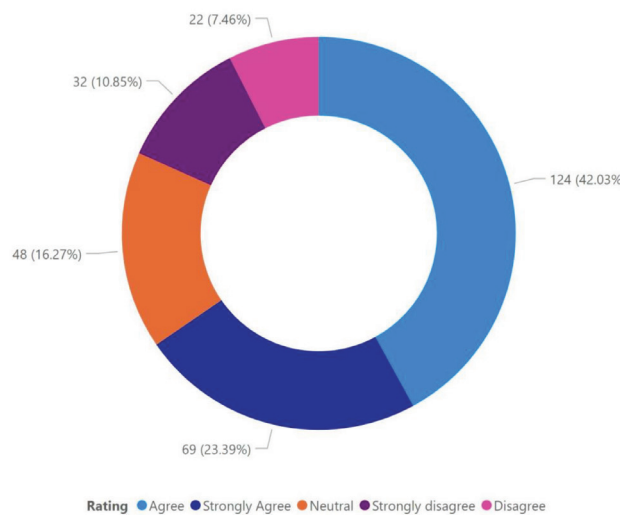


Figure 3: Frequency of media focus on gender-based violence within the context of COVID-19

As indicated in Figure 3, 121(41.02%) of the 295 respondents indicated that the media occasionally focused on gender-based violence within the context of COVID-19. 98(33.22%) of the 295 respondents indicated that the media focused on gender-based violence within the context of COVID-19 on a weekly basis while 45(15.25%) of the 295 respondents indicated that the media focused on gender-based violence within the context of COVID-19 on a daily basis. 28(9.49%) of them indicated that the media focused on gender-based violence within the context of COVID-19 on a monthly basis while 1(0.34%) respondent indicated that it is not recorded in specific time how much the media focused on gender-based violence within the context of COVID-19. One (0.34%) participant indicated that the media often focused on gender-based violence within the context of COVID-19 while 1(0.34%) more participant indicated that the media focused on gender-based violence within the context of COVID-19 on a daily or weekly basis depending on the occurrence and trending topics.

#### 4.7 RATING

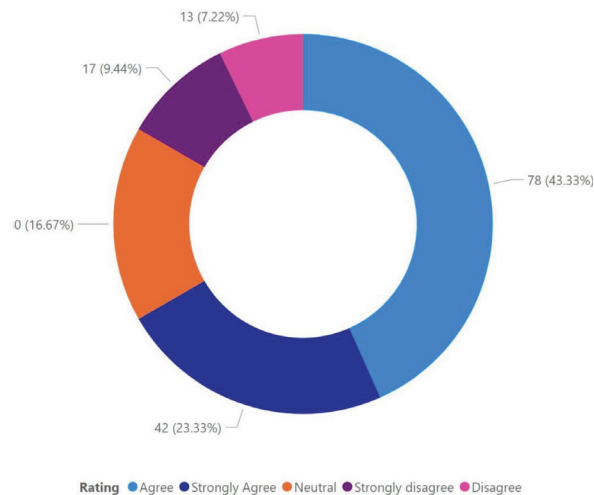
Moreover, for this group of participants, a rating on the extent to which they agreed with the statement that gender-based violence was a key issue in coverage of the COVID 19 pandemic was sought. The results to this analysis are presented in Pie Charts 16-18.



*Pie Chart 16: Rating*

As indicated in Pie Chart 16, during the study period, close to half 124 (42.03%) of the total participants who indicated that they had interacted with media content on gender-based violence Agreed that gender-based violence was a key issue in coverage of the COVID 19 pandemic, 69 (23.39%) of them Strongly Agreed that gender-based violence was a key issue in coverage of the COVID 19 pandemic while 48(16.67%) of them were Neutral as to whether or not gender-based violence was a key issue in coverage of the COVID 19 pandemic. 32 (10.85%) of them Strongly Disagreed that gender-based violence was a key issue in the coverage of the COVID 19 pandemic, while 22 (7.46%) of them simply Disagreed that gender-based violence was a key issue in the coverage of the COVID 19 pandemic.

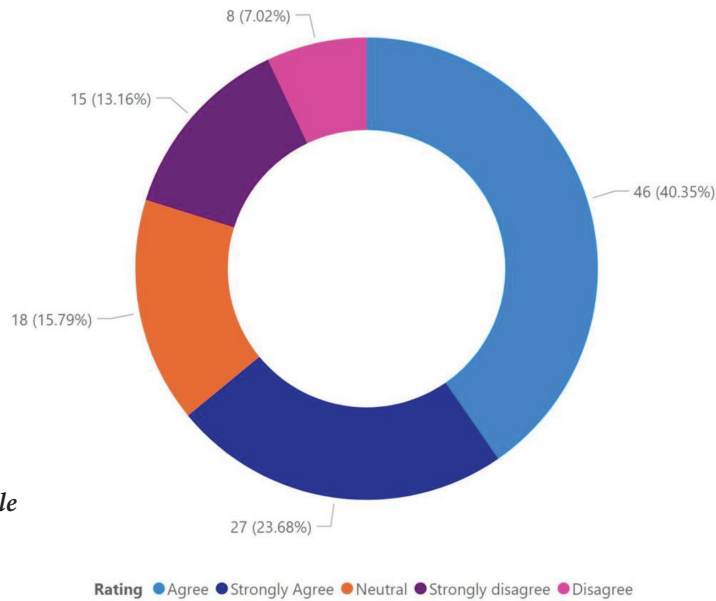
This analysis was further extended to the three gender categories. For the male participants, the results are presented in Pie Chart 17.



*Pie Chart 17: Rating - Male*

As indicated in Pie Chart 17, during the study period, close to half 78 (43.33%) of the total 180 male participants who indicated that they had interacted with media content on gender-based violence Agreed that gender-based violence was a key issue in coverage of the COVID 19 pandemic while 42 (23.33%) Strongly Agreed that gender-based violence was a key issue in the coverage of COVID 19 pandemic. 30(16.67%) of them remained Neutral as to whether gender-based violence was a key issue in coverage of the COVID 19 pandemic while 17 (9.44%) of them Strongly Disagreed that gender-based violence was a key issue in coverage of COVID 19 pandemic. 13 (7.22%) simply Disagreed that gender-based violence was a key issue in coverage of the COVID 19 pandemic.

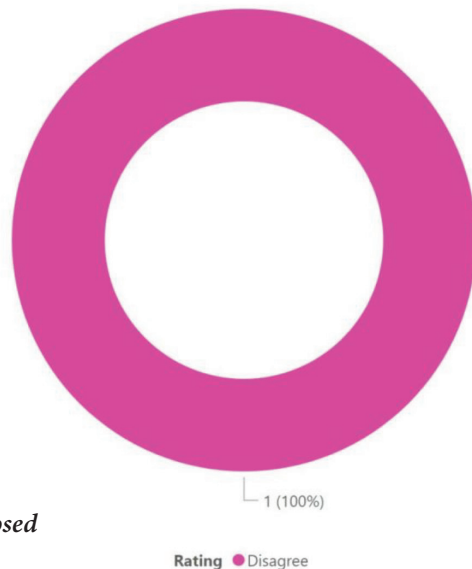
For the female respondents, the following results were obtained as presented in Pie Chart 18.



**Pie Chart 18: Rating - Female**

As indicated in Pie Chart 18, over the study period, close to half 46 (43.33%) of the total 115 female participants who indicated that they had interacted with media content on gender-based violence Agreed that gender-based violence was a key issue in the coverage of COVID 19 pandemic while 27 (23.68%) Strongly Agreed that gender-based violence was a key issue in coverage of the COVID 19 pandemic., 18(15.79%) of them remained Neutral as to whether or not gender-based violence was a key issue in the coverage of COVID 19 while 15 (13.16%) of them Strongly Disagreed that gender-based violence was a key issue. 8 (7.02%) of them simply Disagreed that gender-based violence was a key issue in coverage of the COVID 19 pandemic.

One participant who did not disclose their gender and indicated that they had interacted with media content on gender-based violence, Disagreed that gender-based violence was a key issue in coverage of the COVID 19 pandemic as indicated in Pie Chart 19.



**Pie Chart 19: Rating - Gender Undisclosed**

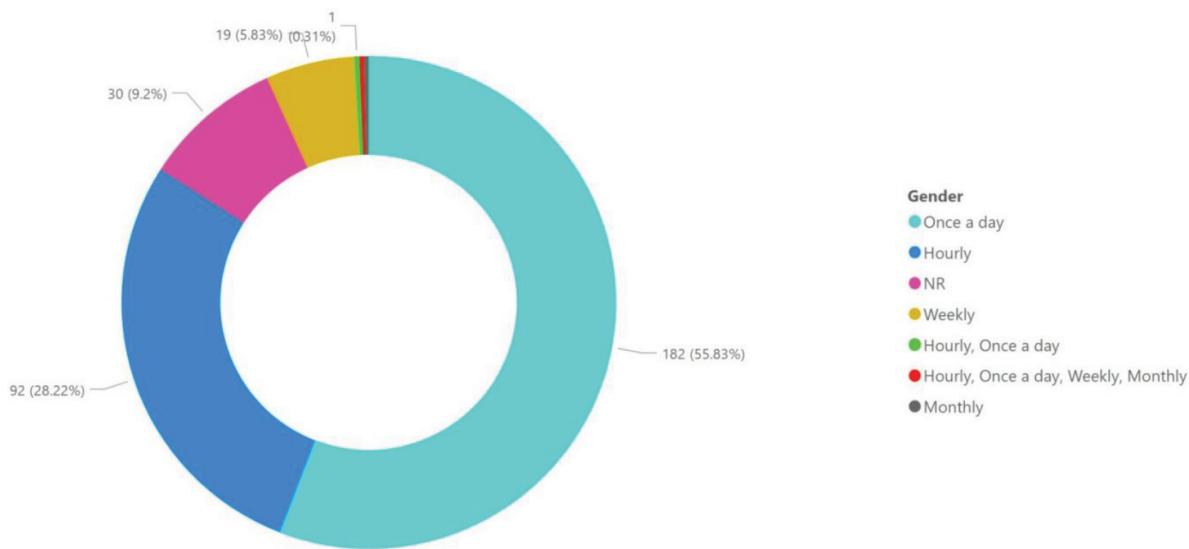


### 4.8 FREQUENCY OF WATCHING/READING/LISTENING NEWS ON COVID-19

This research study generally sought to establish how often a participant watched/read/listened news on Covid-19.

The results are presented in Pie Chart 20 and Figure 4.

As shown in Pie Chart 20, over the study period, more than half, 182(55.83%) of the total participants reported that they watched/read/listened to news on Covid-19 once a day while 92(28.22%) of them reported that they watched/read/listened news on Covid-19 on an hourly basis. 30(9.2%) of them did not respond to the question on how often they watched/read/listened to news on Covid-19 while 19 (5.83%) of them reported that they watched/read/listened to news on Covid-19 on a weekly basis. One (0.31%) participant reported that they watched/read/listened news on Covid-19 on an hourly basis or once a day while another (0.31%) participant reported that they watched/read/listened to news on Covid-19 on an hourly basis or once a day or weekly or on a monthly basis (what does this mean? 1(0.31%) participant reported that they watched/read/listened news on Covid-19 on a monthly basis.



Pie Chart 20: Frequency of watching/reading/listening news on Covid-19

A further analysis across gender categories is presented in Figure 4.

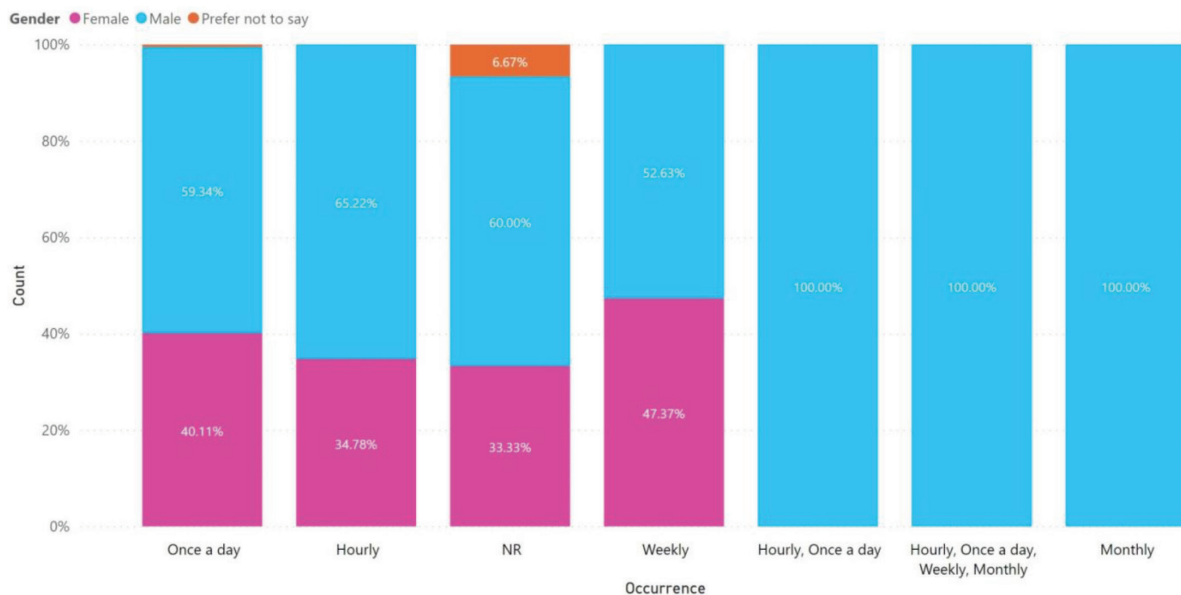


Figure 4: Frequency of watching/reading/listening news on covid-19 by Gender

Out of the 182(55.83%) of the total participants who reported that they watched/read/listened news on Covid-19 once a day, 40.11% were female, 59.34% were male and one participant (0.55%) did not disclose their gender.

Out of the 92(28.22%) participants who reported that they watched/read/listened to news on Covid-19 on an hourly basis, 34.78% were female and 65.22% were male.

Out of the 30(9.2%) participants who did not respond to the question on how often they watched/read/listened to news on Covid-19, 33.33% were female, 60.0% were male and two participants (6.67%) did not disclose their gender.

Out of the 19 (5.83%) participants who reported that they watched/read/listened to news on Covid-19 on a weekly basis, 47.37% were female and 52.63% were male.

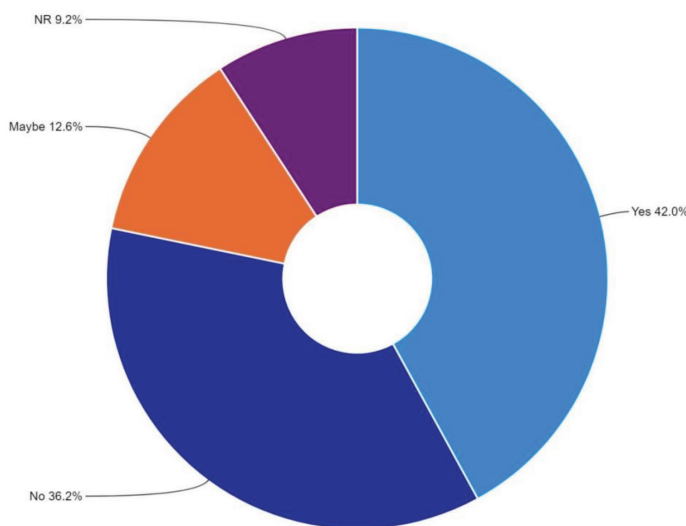
(What does this mean?) One (100%) male participant reported he they watched/read/listened to news on Covid-19 on an hourly basis or once a day. Similarly, one (100%) male participant reported he they watched/read/listened to news on Covid-19 on an hourly basis or once a day or weekly or on a monthly basis. Lastly, one (100%) more male participant reported that he watched/read/listened to news on Covid-19 on a monthly basis.

**4.9 OPINION ON MEDIA FOCUS/ATTENTION ON GBV DURING COVID-19. OPINIONS ACROSS GENDER ARE PRESENTED IN FIGURE 4.**

The study also sought the participants’ opinions on whether they thought the media gave enough focus and attention to Gender-Based Violence since the onset of COVID 19.

The general results of this analysis and across gender are presented in Pie Chart 21 and Figure 5.

Out of the total 326 participants in the study, close to half, (42.0%) thought indeed the media gave enough focus and attention to Gender-Based Violence since the onset of COVID 19 while 36.2% did not think that the media gave enough focus and attention to Gender-Based Violence since the onset of COVID 19. 12.6% thought maybe the media gave enough focus and attention to Gender Based Violence since the onset of COVID 19 while 9.2% did not respond to whether they thought the media gave enough focus and attention to Gender-Based Violence since the onset of COVID 19. (See Pie Chart 21)



*Pie Chart 21: Opinion on Media focus/attention on GBV during Covid-19. Opinions across gender are presented in Figure 4.*

#### 4.10 OPINION ON MEDIA FOCUS/ATTENTION ON GBV DURING COVID-19 BY GENDER

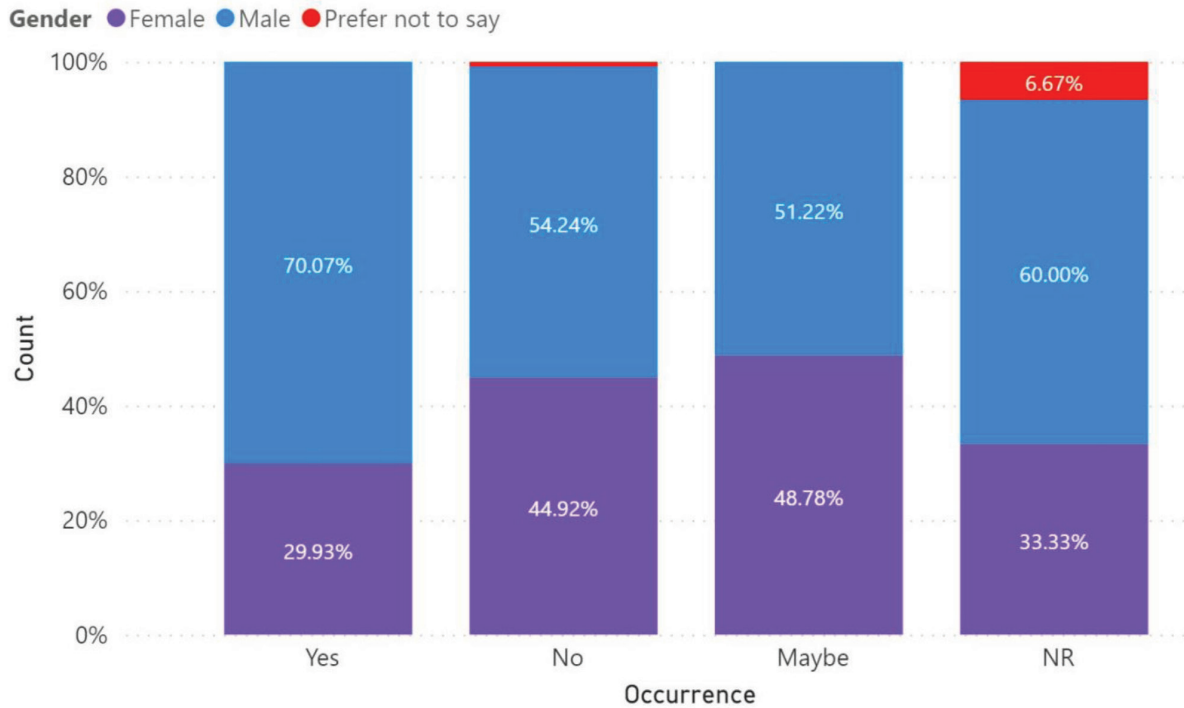


Figure 5: Opinion on Media focus/attention on GBV during Covid-19 by Gender

Of the participants who thought indeed the media gave enough focus and attention to Gender-Based Violence since the onset of COVID 19, 29.93% were female and 70.07% were male.

Out of those who did not think that the media gave enough focus and attention to Gender-Based Violence since the onset of COVID 19, 44.92% were female, 54.24% were male, while 0.85% did not disclose their gender.

Out of the total participants who thought maybe the media gave enough focus and attention to Gender-Based Violence since the onset of COVID 19, 48.78% were female and 51.22% were male.

Lastly, out of all the respondents who did not respond as to whether they thought the media gave enough focus and attention to Gender-Based Violence since the onset of COVID 19, 33.33% were female, and 60.0% were male while 6.67% did not disclose their gender status.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### 5.1 THEMATIC ANALYSIS

Thematic analysis using Natural Language Processing was conducted to recognise the themes captured in the qualitative data on salient professional issues that participants noticed with the coverage of GBV during the COVID-19 pandemic. We leverage AI's Natural Language Processing (NLP) and Natural Language Understanding (NLU) architectures to perform intent modelling and unsupervised learning Topic Modelling of the latent themes through the Latent Dirichlet Allocation (LDA) model.

We set the “adjust relevance metric” (lambda) at 0.65. Adjusting lambda to values close to zero highlights potentially rare but more exclusive terms for the selected topic. Larger lambda values that are closer to 1 highlight more frequently occurring terms in the document that might not be exclusive to the topic. Sievert & Shirley (2015) found in a user study that a lambda  $\lambda$ , value close to 0.6 was optimal for interpreting topics/themes. We set a lambda level of 0.65. The visualization by default shows the 30 most salient terms.

The following four key themes were identified.

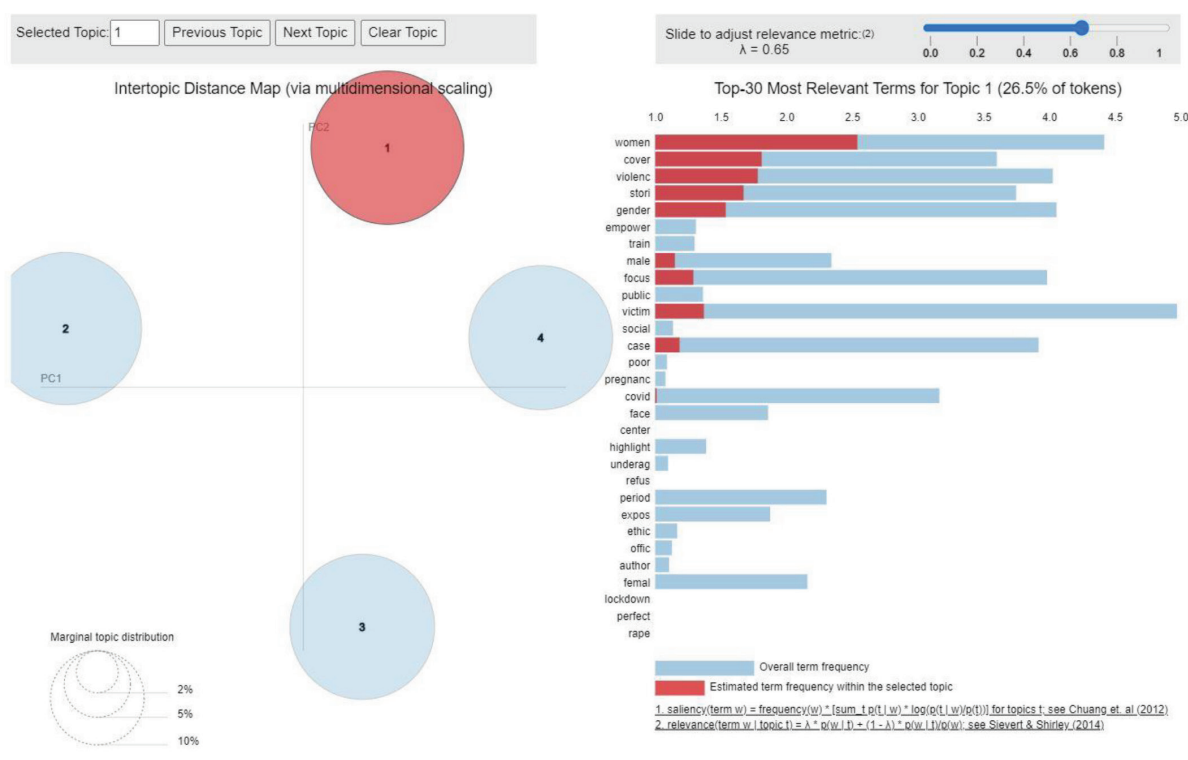


Figure 6: Theme 1(GBV coverage shortcomings)

As indicated in Figure 1, 26.5% of the total responses hinge on GBV coverage aspects of the salient professional issues noticed in the coverage of GBV during the COVID-19 pandemic. Some of the issues raised revolving around this theme are listed below.

1. There was a sharp increase in GBV during the COVID-19 pandemic with mainstream media lagging behind social media in covering these acts.
2. In some cases, participants felt there was lack of in-depth reporting on GBV during the COVID-19 pandemic. Most stories lacked informative content.
3. There was lack of sensitivity in covering GBV in some cases. There is need for journalists to use appropriate language in coverage of GBV to avoid double trauma of victims.
4. Incidents were covered casually; shallow, sometimes with victims left exposed. Journalists did not infuse accountability from authorities and these abuses were not recast against the issue of human rights!
5. Journalist also seemed to lack adequate appreciation of the abuses' connection to either emerging trends or culture.

6. There is lack of statistics/data to analyse the trend, or map out hot spots for sensitization purposes on the part of media houses.
7. Some participants felt that exposing identities of victims especially underage and rape victims by reporters/ journalist was inappropriate.
8. Some participants felt that GBV was covered as a by-the-way and not as one of the main stories.
9. There is lack of sufficient resources by the journalists/media houses to facilitate the coverage of GBV cases across the country.
10. The society has not been fully informed on GBV hence the need for more coverage on such cases.
11. One participant felt there was lack of willingness in both media houses, relevant authorities such as chiefs and male journalists in covering GBV cases, curfew hours and corruption amongst police officers.
12. One participant reported that there was no professional issue other than the fact that media houses did not do enough to raise awareness and cover extensively about gender-based violence

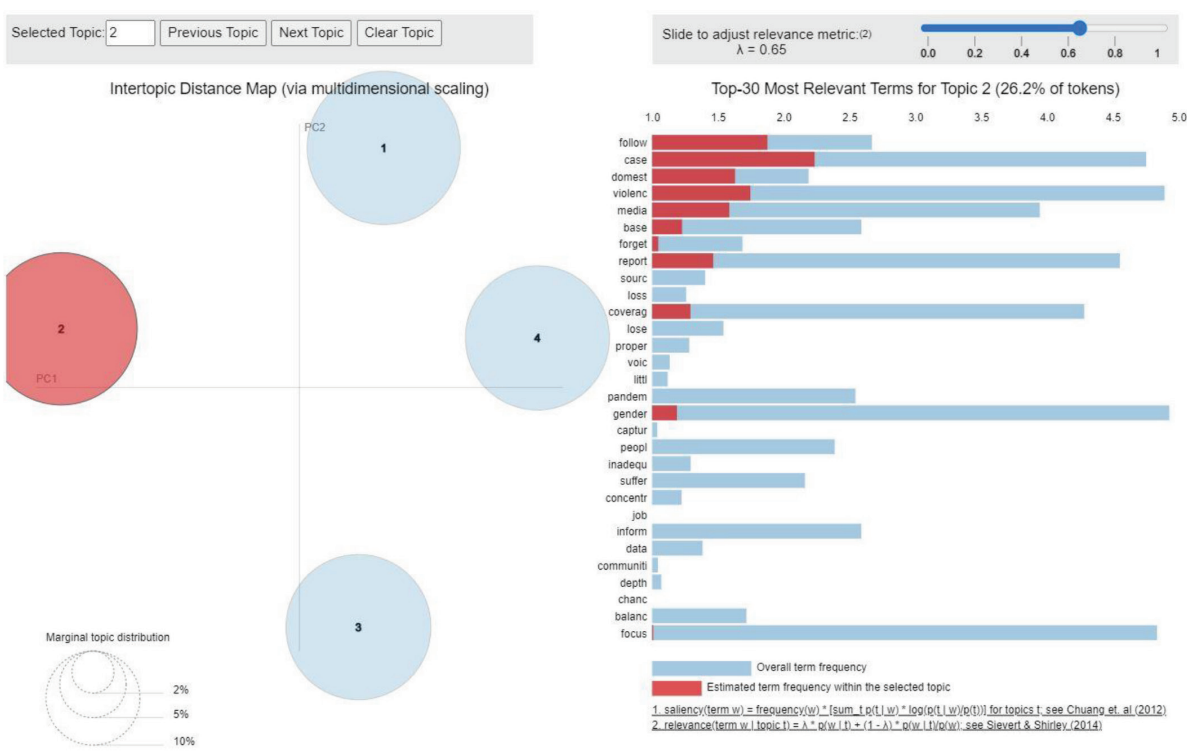


Figure 7: Theme 2 (Follow up on domestic violence cases)

As indicated in Figure 2, 26.2% of the total responses hinged on the lack of follow-up on GBV cases. Below are some of the sentiments expressed.

1. There was no follow-up on any interventions/ treatment on GBV cases by those who reported them.
2. There were no follow-up stories after reporting GBV cases when they occurred, especially in the rural settings on the action taken against the perpetrators.
3. GBV was mainly covered in news with a focus on victims rather than survivors (what is the difference?) There was little follow-up on the stories which need to be solution-based and offer hope.

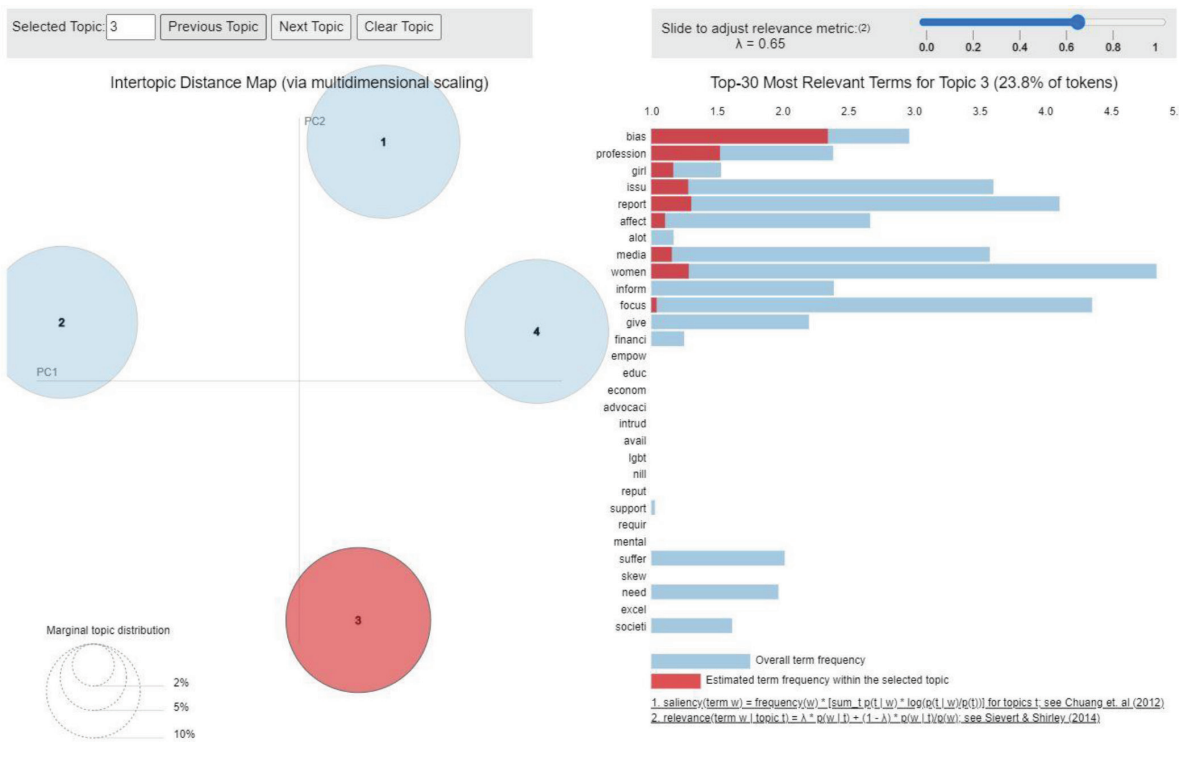


Figure 8: Theme 3 (Gender bias in GBV coverage)

As shown in Figure 3, 23.8% of the total responses hinged on biased reporting of GBV. The issues raised indicated that:

1. Women, women with disability, girls, and children are the most vulnerable and were the most affected by GBV during the COvid-19 pandemic. This notwithstanding this weight, there was a disproportionately high coverage of women and girls as victims of GBV compared to men and boy victims.
2. There was stigmatization and bias against men and boys on matters domestic violence.
3. Few participants in this category felt that there was high professionalism in packaging of the content and reporting of GBV.

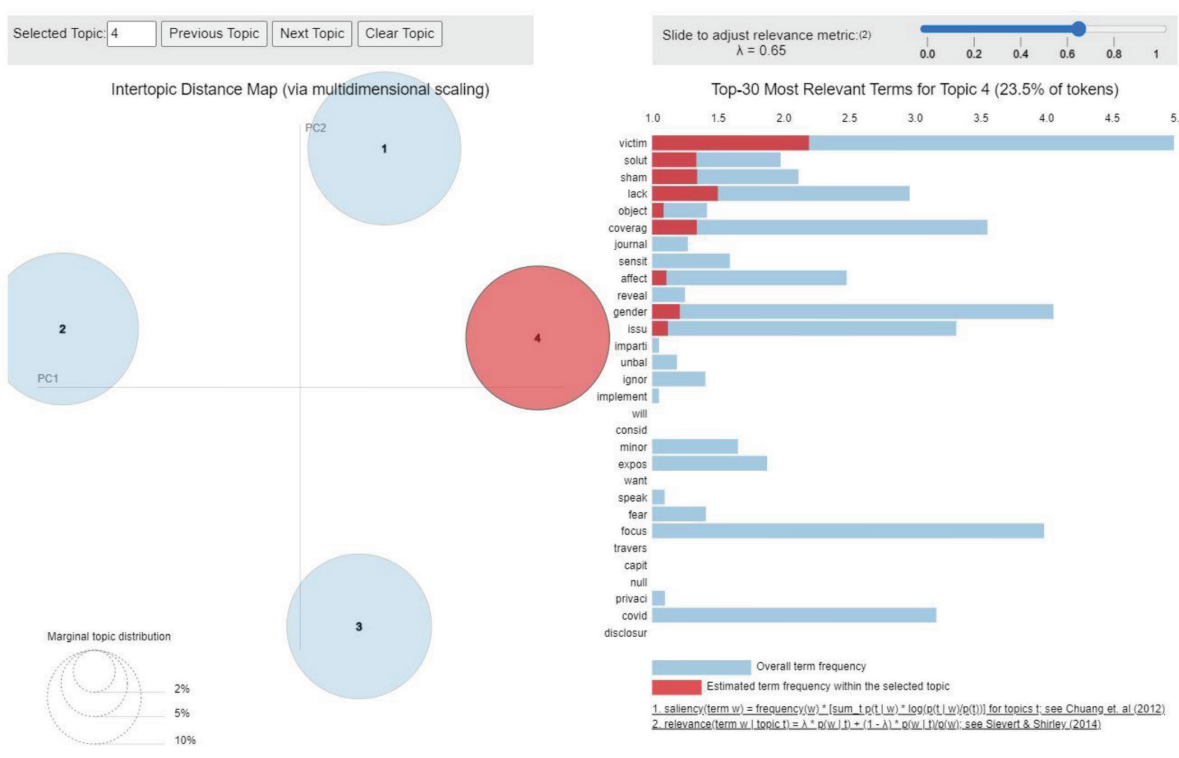


Figure 9: Theme 4 (Victim Shaming)

As shown in Figure 4, 23.5% of the total responses indicated that there was victim shaming in the coverage of GBV during the COVID-19 pandemic. Particularly there was:

1. General victim exposure/ shaming.
2. There was increased bullying and victim shaming on Twitter to both the victims and perpetrators. Whenever, a story of GBV was published online most reactions tended to be less supportive, with many blaming the victim and such comments were not flagged.
3. Some shaming was so specific, zeroing down to body shaming.
4. Perpetrators were depicted as heroes for their acts.
5. Exposing GBV victims together with their families was noted.

## 5.2 ANNEX 1

The Media Council of Kenya and Journalists for Human Rights are conducting a study to establish trends, gaps, strengths and perception on how the media covers gender-based violence in Kenya.

1. Name

2. Gender

3. Choose your relevant affiliation.

Journalist

Media Consumer

Editor

4. Have you interacted with any media content on gender-based violence?

5. On which media platform?

Newspaper (print)

Radio

Television

Online Platform

6. If your answer above is yes, to what extent did the media focus on gender-based violence within the context of COVID 19?

a) Daily

b) Weekly,

c) Monthly

d) Occasionally

7. To what extent do you agree with the following statement: Gender-based violence was a key issue in coverage of the COVID 19 pandemic

a) Agree

b) Do not agree

c) Slightly agree

d) Strongly agree

e) Strongly disagree

8. How often do you watch/read/listen news on Covid 19?

a) Hourly

b) Once a day

c) Weekly

d) Monthly

9. Do you think media gave enough focus and attention to Gender-based Violence since the onset of COVID 19?

10. Are there any salient professional issues you noticed with the coverage of GBV during the COVID 19 pandemic?



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