# How Zambian Newspapers Report on Women

## JULY 2017

**MONTHLY REPORT ON THE MONITORING OF PRINT MEDIA COVERAGE OF WOMEN**

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## Acknowledgements

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# 1.0. Introduction: Media and Public Opinion

The media play a critical role in building public awareness on events in the society. The media have a great impact in the construction of public belief and attitudes, thereby formulating public opinions on various issues. This creates a strong link between the media and social change. The impact of media coverage on various social issues shapes public debate and public interest on various social issues. For example, negative media coverage of certain components of the society creates negative public attitudes towards them. Similarly, positive coverage influences the development of positive attitudes. Additionally, the media in some cases constructs uncertainty around certain social issues by sending inadequate or incomplete information. This could be either due to self-censoring or due to limited knowledge of the issues at hand. Regardless of the cause for incomplete reporting, the repercussions can be dire. Public opinion would in this case be formed based on incomplete and incorrect information. It is therefore critical that the media gets the facts correct and has access to the complete picture to communicate effectively and influence public opinion positively.

Public opinion mediates and drives social integration and social change. It entails not only the tracking of the majority opinion, but also the opinion that is perceived to be majority opinion even when it is not. The different aspects of public opinion can work in different ways to influence policy makers' decisions, public attitudes and reactions as well as social trends and social change. Public opinion brings legitimacy to social trends, political discourse and policy direction. It is therefore critical that factors that influence public opinion, be nurtured to drive social change in a positive direction.

Mass media is critical in this respect as public opinion depends on knowledge about what is going on in the society. The media provides the public with this knowledge through a variety of means: radio, print journalism, television and the Internet. Through newspapers, books, magazines and sound recordings, the mass media has been influencing public opinion for a long time. In the 21st century, technology has made it easier to access the messages from the mass media.

Critical interventions with the media are therefore required, to ensure that the media comprehensively build public knowledge on positive social trends and influence public opinion positively. Interventions like media trainings, advocacy for favorable editorial policies and the like can go a long way in positively influencing the way the media carry out their mandate.

## 1.1. MEDIA, PUBLIC OPINION AND WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

In efforts to champion women empowerment and women participation, the impact of negative media coverage of women cannot be ignored. When the media churns out negative narratives about women, the public opinion forms negative attitudes towards women, question their credibility and eventually pushes women to the margins. It is important to facilitate responsive interventions for the media to promote positive reporting of women that promotes women empowerment and women's participation in leadership.

This paper presents the findings of a media monitoring study for the month of July 2017 that is aimed at generating evidence that will be used to advocate for positive media coverage of women in Zambia. This is part of a monthly monitoring of media coverage of women. The data generated is targeted at lobbying media bodies, journalists, editors and other key players in mass media to make efforts in promoting positive coverage of women as a tool for advancing women empowerment for leadership.

## 1.2.  OBJECTIVES OF THE MONITORING MEDIA COVERAGE OF WOMEN

The monitoring of media coverage of women is commissioned by Panos with the aim of determining the extent to which the quality and quantity of media reporting marginalizes women and limits their opportunities to participating in leadership.
The specific objectives of this exercise are:
  i.   To establish the quantity of coverage of women in the four major newspapers in Zambia.
  ii.  To determine the quality of coverage of women in general, and women leaders in the four newspapers in Zambia.
  iii. To determine the level of participation of women in the media as lead sources and main subjects.
  iv.  To identify the level of play of articles on women.


### 1.3. STUDY METHODOLOGY

#### 1.3.1. Design
The study is a quantitative design aimed at generating, evidence on the quantity and quality of the media coverage of women in four major newspapers in Zambia. The papers under study are:  Daily Nation, the Mast, the Times of Zambia and the Zambia Daily Mail. The newspapers were selected because they are all daily publications and this makes comparability possible. The study is expected to produce a monthly report of the findings for each month covered. A summative report will be produced at the end of the year to present a comprehensive picture of the reporting.

#### 1.3.2. Sampling
The study collected and studied all the newspapers published in the month on daily basis giving it a total of number of 120 newspapers studied in that month. This was to ensure that there is no under representation of each newspaper in the analysis.

#### 1.3.3. Data Collection
Data collection process involved the collection and logging in of each article per issue. The articles were categorized as news, feature, editorial, opinion, picture and cartoon. Using an already set questionnaire, data was collected per article, assessing how it profiled women.

#### 1.3. 4. Data Analysis and Presentation
The study used SPSS statistical package to enter and analyze data. The presentation of the findings was done by use of tables, graphs and pie charts. Pie charts are one of the most commonly used graphs to help show proportions. They have one advantage in that they are simple to visually conceptualize. Their disadvantage is the difficulty in discerning the difference in slice sizes when their values are similar. This, however, was readily remedied by clear labeling of individual slices. The article analysis focused on finding the total number of articles in the four dailies on and by women and how they have depicted female subjects. This methodology quantified the results, cross-referenced them and came up with a conclusive analysis of the findings.

# 2.0. Study Findings

Below is the presentation of the findings from the monitoring of coverage of women for the month of July 2017. The findings are presented in four main categories guided by the key objectives of the study.

## 2.1. QUANTITY OF COVERAGE

The study assessed how much coverage women received from all the papers. This was in efforts to determine whether women were marginalized by the newspapers in terms of coverage. The quantity of coverage for the month of July is as presented in the following sub-sections:

### 2.1.1. Quantity of the coverage of women as a proportion of the total media coverage of the month

In the month of July 2017, 359 articles out of 6628 articles covered women, putting women coverage at 5.4% of the total coverage across the four papers. This picture presents a picture of how severely marginalised women were by the media. The remaining 94.6% of the coverage covered men and other stories that were not related to women. An analysis of coverage by paper showed that the Times of Zambia and Zambia Daily Mail gave a better percentage of its coverage to women at 5.9% and 6.4% respectively while Daily Nation and the Mast had much less coverage of women standing at 4.7% and 3.8% respectively. Specific details are as presented in the table below:

| | ARTICLES | | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| | Articles covering Women | % of Articles covering Women | Articles not covering Women | % of Articles not covering Women | Grand Total |
| **Total** | **359** | **5.4%** | **6269** | **94.6%** | **6628** |
| Daily Nation | 99 | 4.7% | 2026 | 95.3% | **2125** |
| The Mast | 27 | 3.8% | 684 | 96.2% | **711** |
| Times of | 107 | 5.9% | 1709 | 94.1% | **1816** |
| Zambia Daily | 126 | 6.4% | 1850 | 93.6% | **1976** |

*Table. 1: Coverage of women as a percentage of the total media coverage in July 2017.*
*Source: Primary Data*

### 2.1.2. Number of articles on women per type

The study further analysed the type of articles that mostly covered women. It categorised the articles into: news, features, opinions, editorials and letters to the editor. These categories were defined as follows:

i.  **News:** A news article discusses current or recent news of either general interest or of a specific topic. A news article can include accounts of eyewitnesses to the happening event.
ii.  **Feature:** A feature article is one article in a newspaper that is not meant to report breaking news, but to take an in-depth look at a subject. An editorial is a short, persuasive essay which usually contains the writer's opinion or reaction to a timely news story or event.
iii.  **Opinion articles**: These are personal observations by the writer about a certain subject.
iv.  **Letters to the editor:** These are letters sent to a publication about issues of concern from its readers. Usually, letters are intended for publication.

It was found that the most coverage across the four papers were news articles, and proportionally, women were also mostly covered by news articles followed by pictures which in most cases were attached to the news articles. The pictures were followed by the feature articles then the letters to the editor, then the opinion and the editorial articles. The cartoons on women had the lowest frequency.
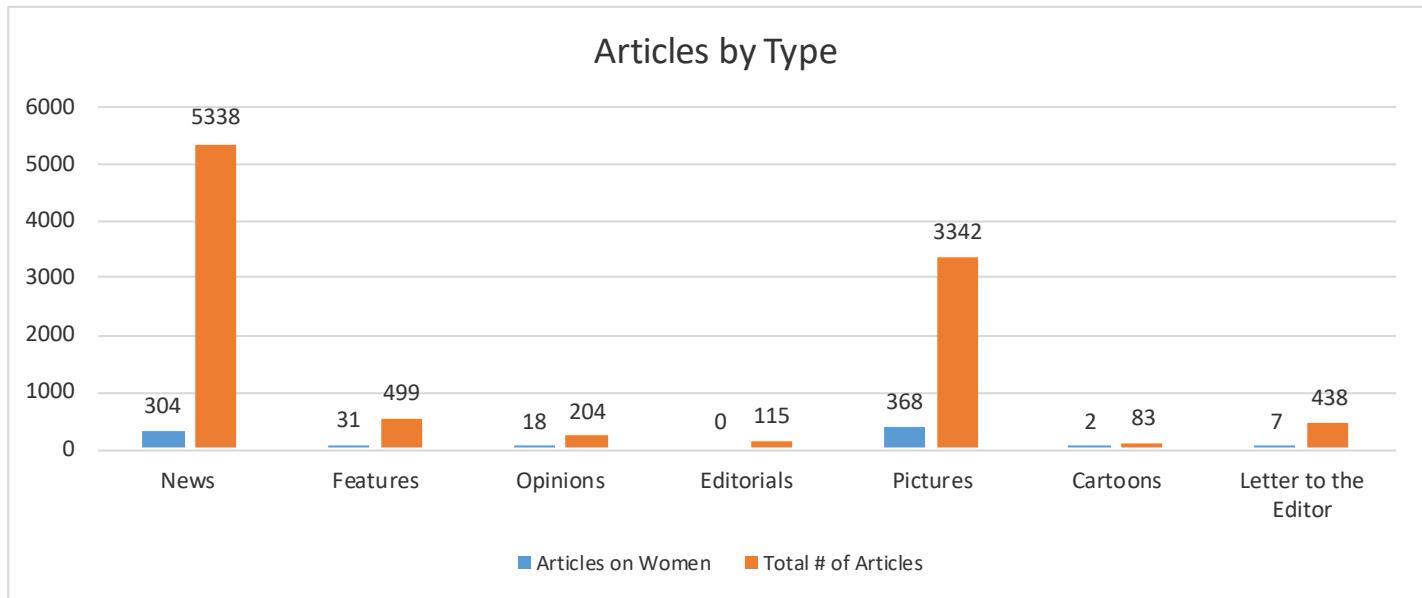
***Figure 1: Articles by Type.***
*Source: Primary Data*

Figure 1.1 below show the proportional distribution of articles covering women by type. The news articles had the highest proportion of 45%.
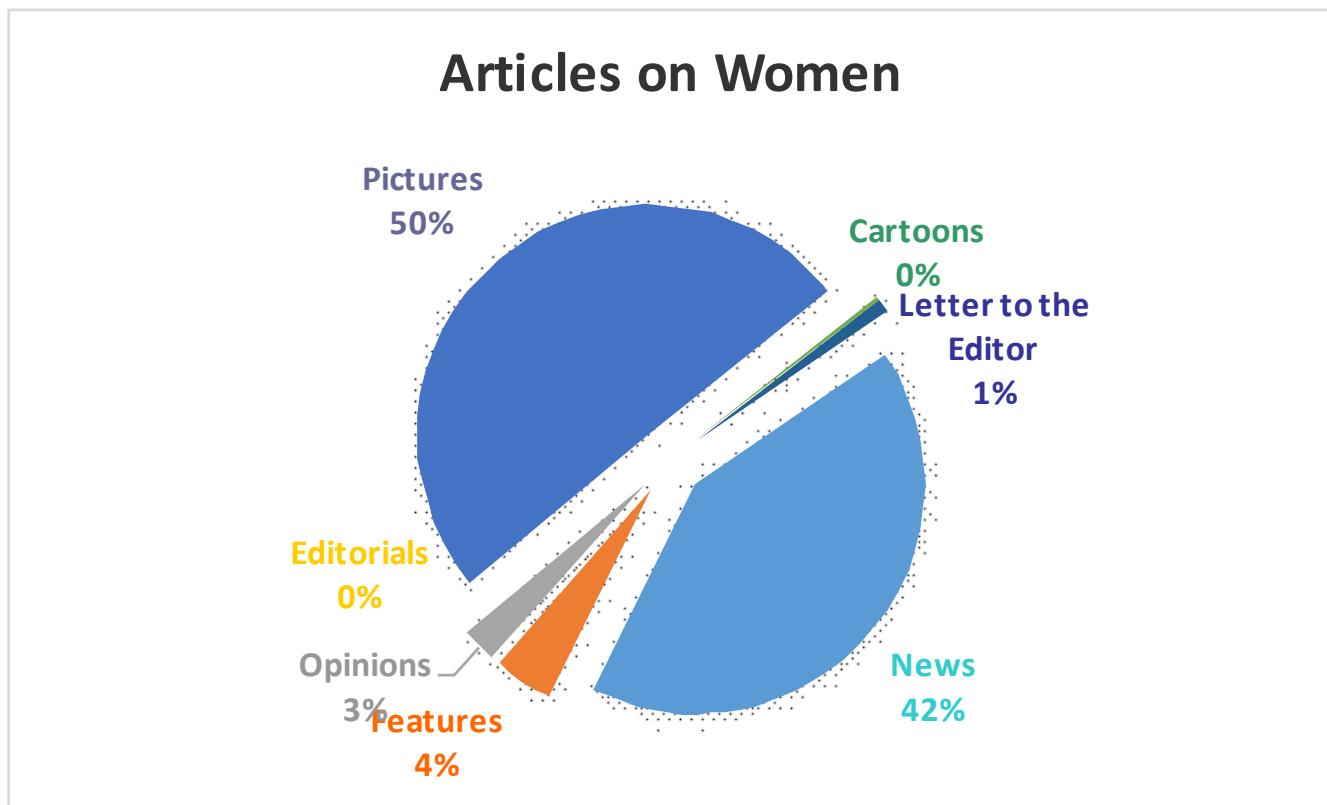


***Figure 1.1: Articles by Type (Proportions)***
*Source: primary Data*

Further, the study analysed the types of articles per newspaper and the findings were as shown in the Table below. The table 2 below shows the frequency of articles by type per newspaper. The first column represents news articles followed by feature articles then opinions, editorials, pictures, cartoons and finally letters to the editor.

| | News Paper | Articles on Women | Total No. of Articles |
|---|---|---|---|
| **News** | Daily Nation | 88 | 1590 |
| | The Mast | 27 | 650 |
| | Times of Zambia | 94 | 1514 |
| | Zambia Daily Mail | 95 | 1584 |
| **Features** | Daily Nation | 5 | 158 |
| | The Mast | 0 | 0 |
| | Times of Zambia | 12 | 248 |
| | Zambia Daily Mail | 13 | 93 |
| **Opinions** | Daily Nation | 0 | 1 |
| | The Mast | 0 | 0 |
| | Times of Zambia | 0 | 17 |
| | Zambia Daily Mail | 18 | 186 |
| **Editorials** | Daily Nation | 0 | 29 |
| | The Mast | 0 | 28 |
| | Times of Zambia | 0 | 27 |
| | Zambia Daily Mail | 0 | 31 |
| **Pictures** | Daily Nation | 89 | 1442 |
| | The Mast | 6 | 149 |
| | Times of Zambia | 70 | 920 |
| | Zambia Daily Mail | 203 | 831 |
| **Cartoons** | Daily Nation | 1 | 35 |
| | The Mast | 1 | 26 |
| | Times of Zambia | 0 | 0 |
| | Zambia Daily Mail | 0 | 22 |
| **Letter to the editor** | Daily Nation | 6 | 314 |
| | The Mast | 0 | 32 |
| | Times of Zambia | 1 | 10 |
| | Zambia Daily Mail | 0 | 82 |

*Table 2: Articles by Type (Per Newspaper).*
*Source: Primary Data*

### 2.1.3. Prominence of articles covering women

The study analysed the prominence of the articles on women to determine the extent to which articles on women were considered high value or not by various newspapers. Articles that are considered important are given more prominence. For this variable, the study only focussed on news articles. According to the study, prominence of articles concerned the following:

i.   **Location:** the location of an article in a newspaper determines how visible and attractive it will be to the reader. Newspapers tend to place articles that are considered important and significant are usually placed on the front page or the back page where they easily catch the eye of the reader while those news stories that are considered important but not significant are placed on the inside pages.

ii.  **Space:** This part focused on establishing the importance giving to news articles in relation to the space they occupy on a page. Important news articles tend to occupy a bigger space even when the content is less.

iii. **Type:** This aspect of prominence looks at importance of an article per its type, whether it is lead news, anchor or side-bar, filler or teaser.

#### 2.1.3.1. News articles prominence by location

The study found that most of the news articles on women were placed in the inside pages, the highest being between pages 2 and 7. The same applied to pictures of women. The diagrams below show the distribution of news articles on women per location, creating a picture of how prominent they were.
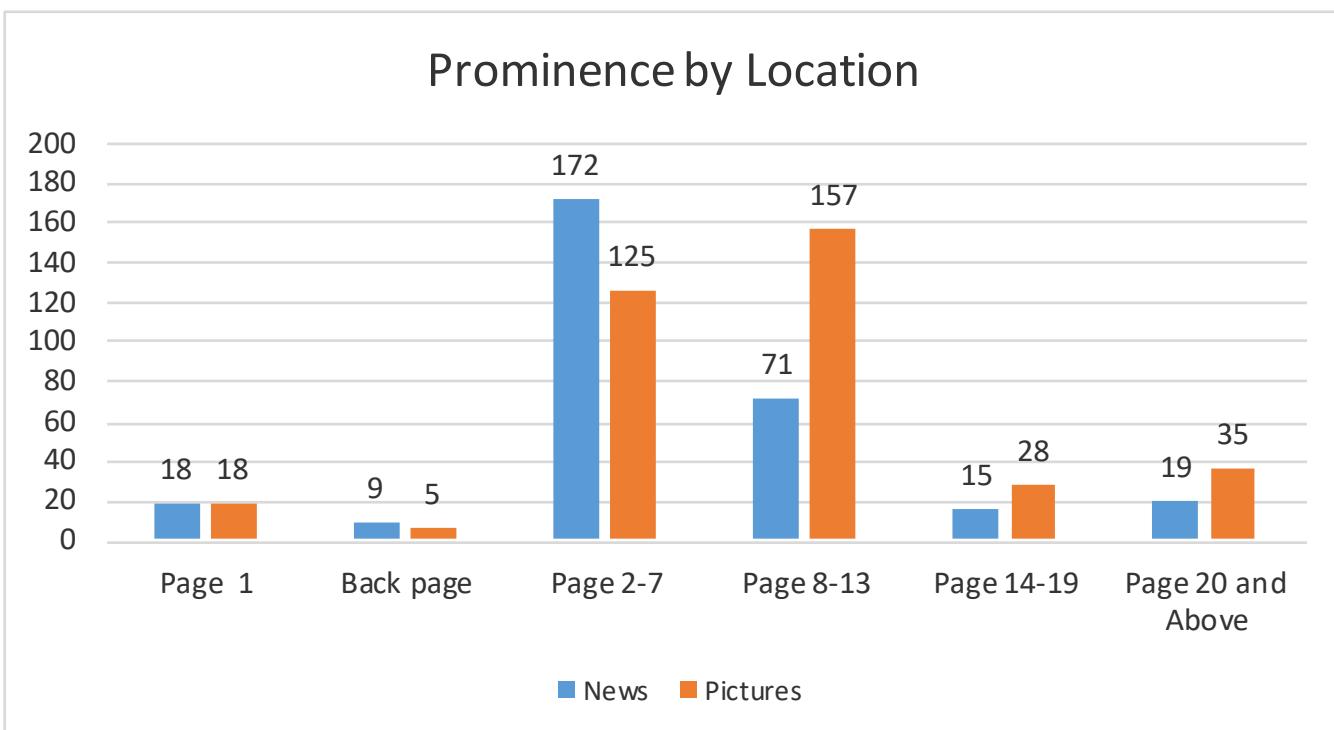


*Figure 2: Prominence by Location*
*Source: Primary Data*

Below, a pie-chart presents the distribution of articles on women per location showing that 57% of all coverage on women was in the middle pages.
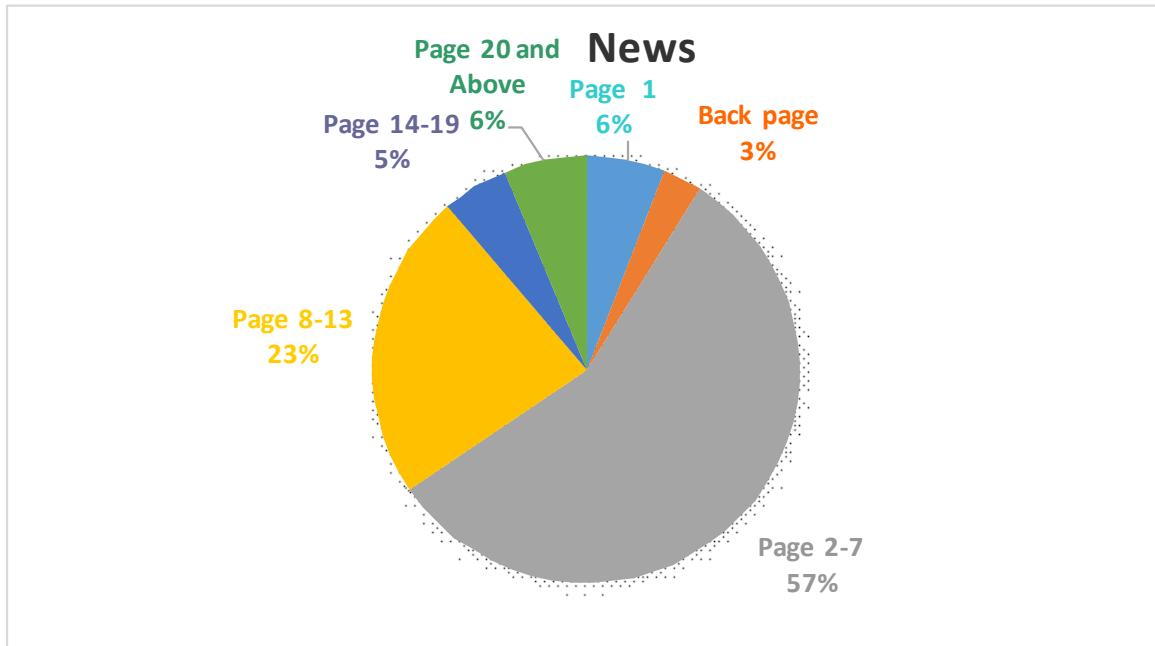


*Figure 2.1 Prominence by Location (Proportion for news Articles).*
*Source: Primary Data*

### 2.1.3.2. Pictures prominence by location

Just like news articles, pictures of women were mostly located in the inside pages as shown in the diagrams below:
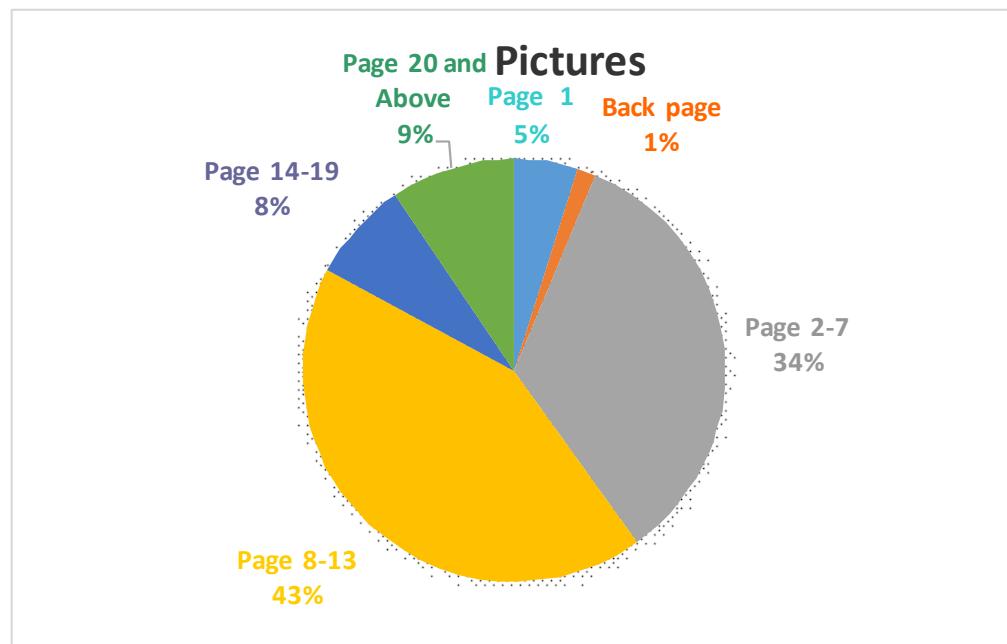


**Figure 2.2:** *Prominence by Location (Proportion for Pictures).*
*Source: Primary Data*

### 2.1.3.3. *News articles Prominence by Type*

The figures 3, 3.1 and 3.2 below show the prominence of news articles on women by type, (whether it is lead news, anchor/side-bar, filler or teaser). While the most important news articles (lead) have larger font size and are positioned so they can be easily seen by readers, the highest proportion of news articles on women were published as anchor news and/or sidebars. Anchor news and sidebars are not unimportant but the news they carry is given less importance by the newspaper compared to the lead stories.
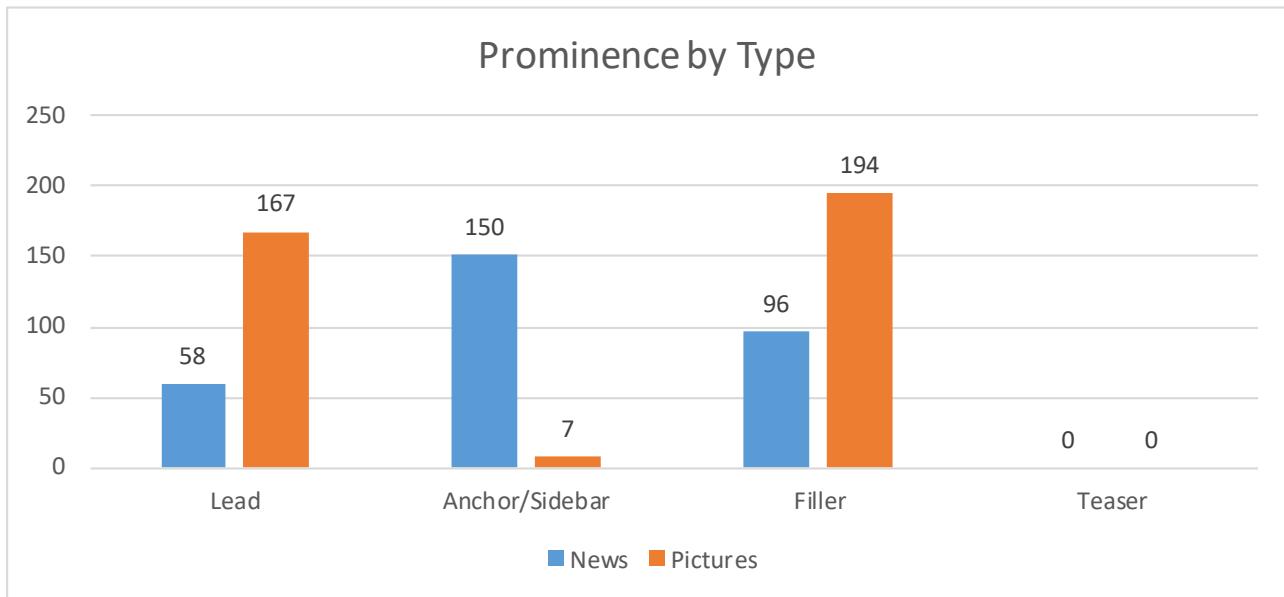


**Figure 3: Prominence by Position**
*Source: Primary Data*

Figure 3.1 below shows that the news articles that were anchors/sidebars had the highest proportion .
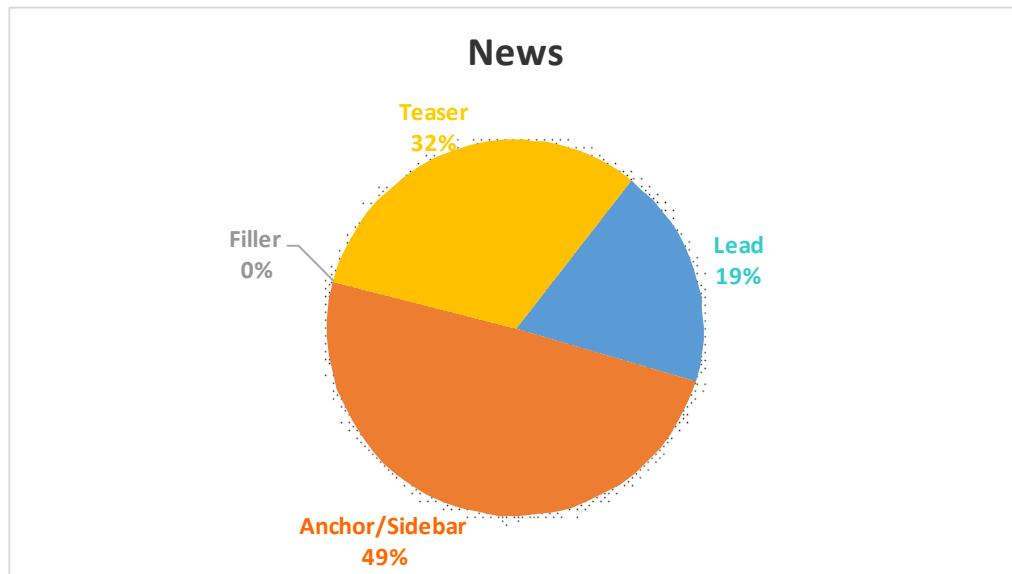


**Figure 3.1: Prominence by Type (Proportion of News Articles)**
*Source: Primary Data*

While coverage of women is low and in most cases in the inside pages, women are further marginalised by the fact that only 19% of the coverage is lead news. Below is the prominence of women's pictures per type:

### *2.1.3.4. Pictures prominence by Type*

Figure 3.2 below shows that the pictures that were corresponding with the teaser news articles had the highest proportion.
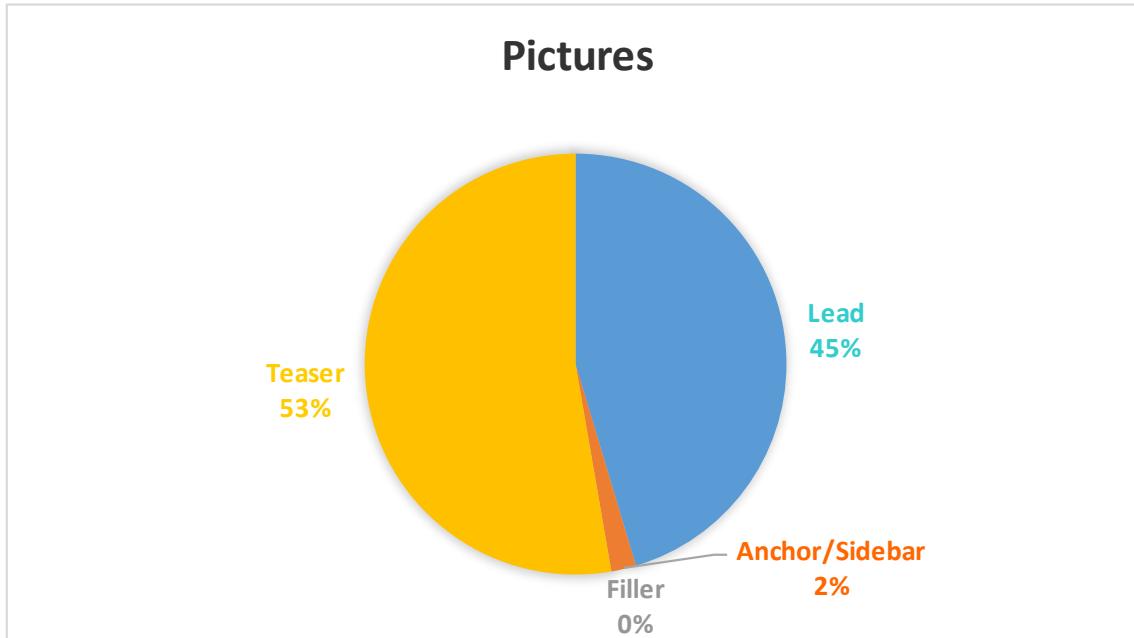


***Figure 3.2: Prominence by Type (Proportion of Pictures)***
*Source: Primary Data*

### *2.1.3.5. News articles Prominence by Space of article*

The figures 4, 4.1 and 4.2 below show the prominence of the news articles on women per the space they occupy on the page they are printed on. Most of the articles on women occupied a less than quarter page as well as their corresponding pictures.
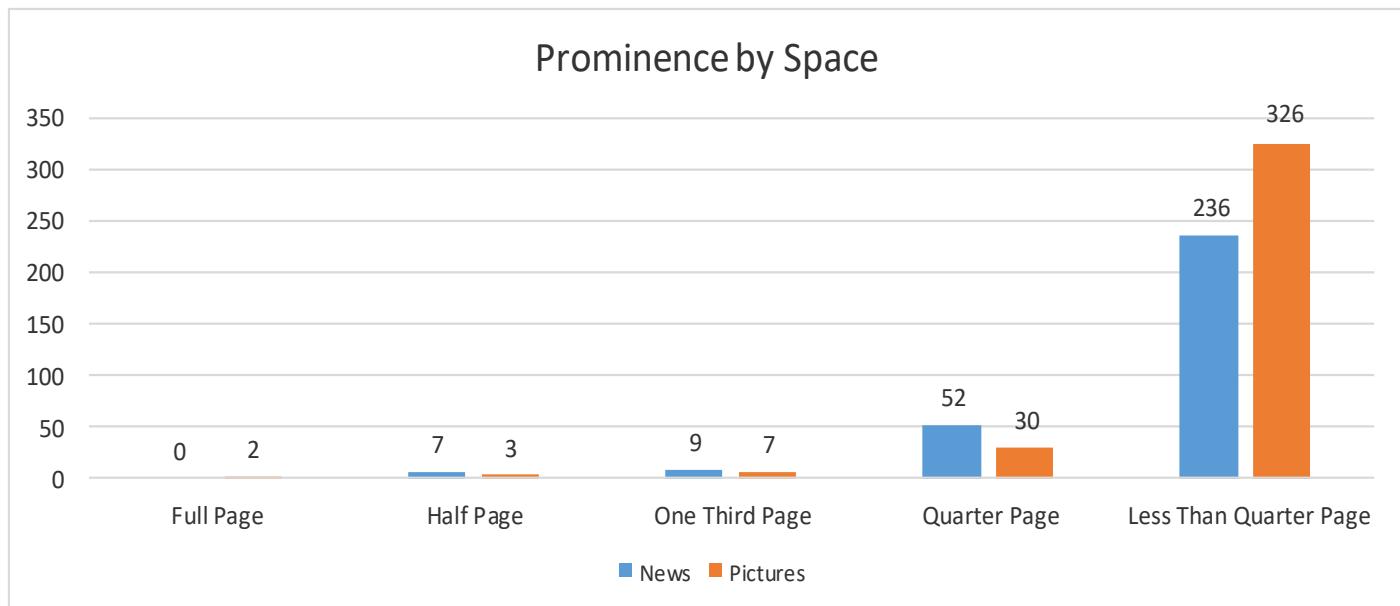


***Figure 4: Prominence by Space***
*Source: Primary Source*

This demonstrates that in terms of space, most articles on women were not highly prominent as they were either quarter page or less than a quarter page. The same applies to pictures accompanying the articles. The diagrams below present the picture:

Figure 4.1 below shows that the news articles that occupied less than quarter of a page had the highest proportion.
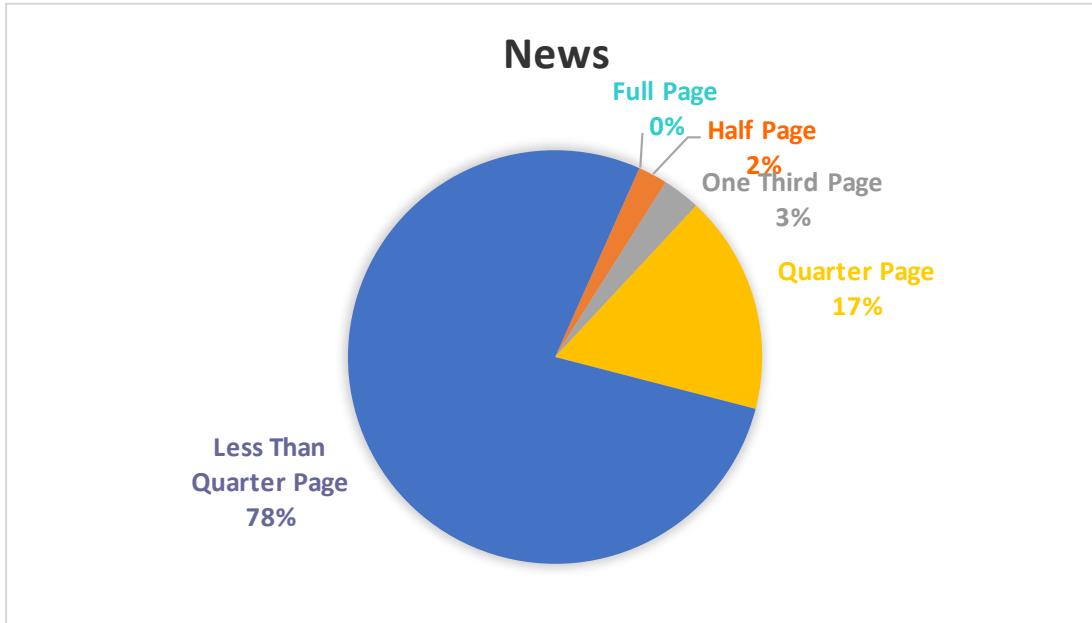


***Figure 4.1: Prominence by Space (Proportions of News Articles)***
*Source: Primary Data*

### 2.1.3.6. Pictures Prominence by space

Figure 4.2 below shows that pictures that occupied less than quarter of a page had the highest proportion.
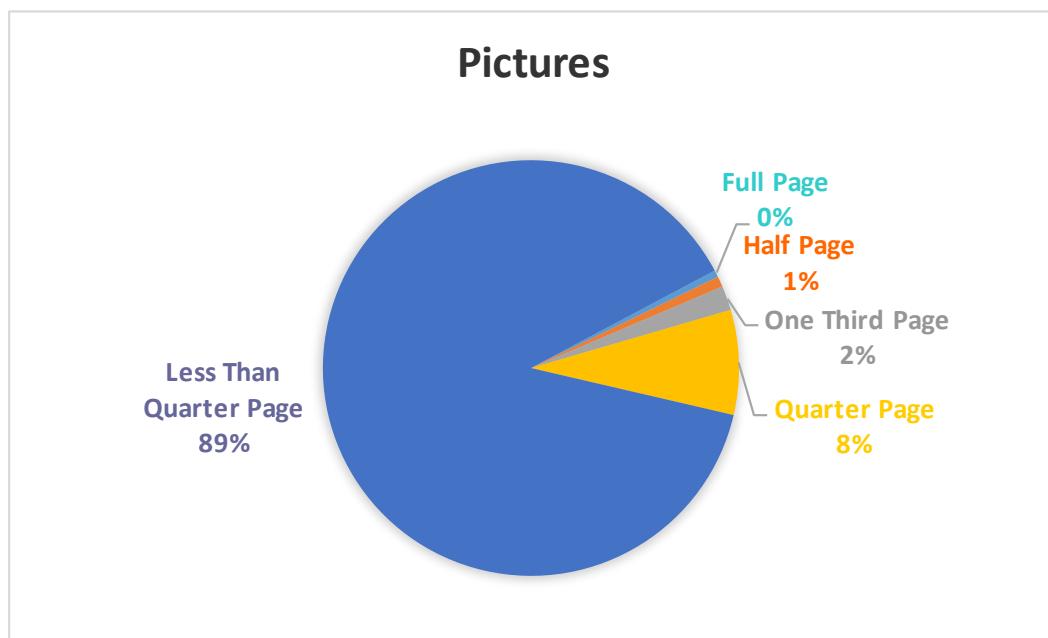


***Figure 4.2: Prominence by Space (Proportion of Pictures)***
*Source: Primary Data*

## 2.2. QUALITY OF THE COVERAGE OF WOMEN

The study analyzed the quality of the coverage of women to determine the extent to which women were positively or negatively portrayed. The study analyzed the following

i. **Profile:** This was aimed at assessing the slant of the portrayal of women's profiles – whether it's women in positive and productive activities or women in scandal and other negative circumstances or situations.
ii. **Language:** This was aimed at determining whether the language used undermined women in any way, or advanced any kind of stereotypes against women.

### 2.2.1. Slant of women's profiles portrayed in the articles

The figure 5 below shows how women were profiled in the articles published on women in the four newspapers. This aspect of the study intended to find out is how women were portrayed in terms of their character, their role in society and the images attached to women. An example of a negative profile of women was a news article published in the Times of Zambia dated 23rd July 2017, which had a headline saying, _Woman fined for trespassing on another woman's bed_. A positive profile of women is one that challenges gender stereotype of women, an example of a news story that had such attributes was one from the Mast newspaper published on the 24th of July with the heading, _Linda Kasonde wins IE award_. And finally, an example of a neutral profile of women in news articles is one story in the Times of Zambia newspaper published on the 26th of July that had a heading saying, _'I saw the hand of God,_ this story covers Zimbabwean First Lady Grace Mugabe who despite her leg being run over by her husband limousine she was still able to walk. The figure 5 below shows that the articles with a positive profile of women had the highest proportion of 45%. However, the negative profile was equally high at 31% creating a platform for the media to advance negative images of women. In order to lessen the impact of negative profiles on women empowerment, it would be critical that the margin between positive profiles and negative profile is very high, with a higher percentage of the positive profiles in order for the positive profiles to overshadow the negative effect.



### PROFILE

Neutral Profile
31%

Positve Profile
45%

Negative Profile
24%
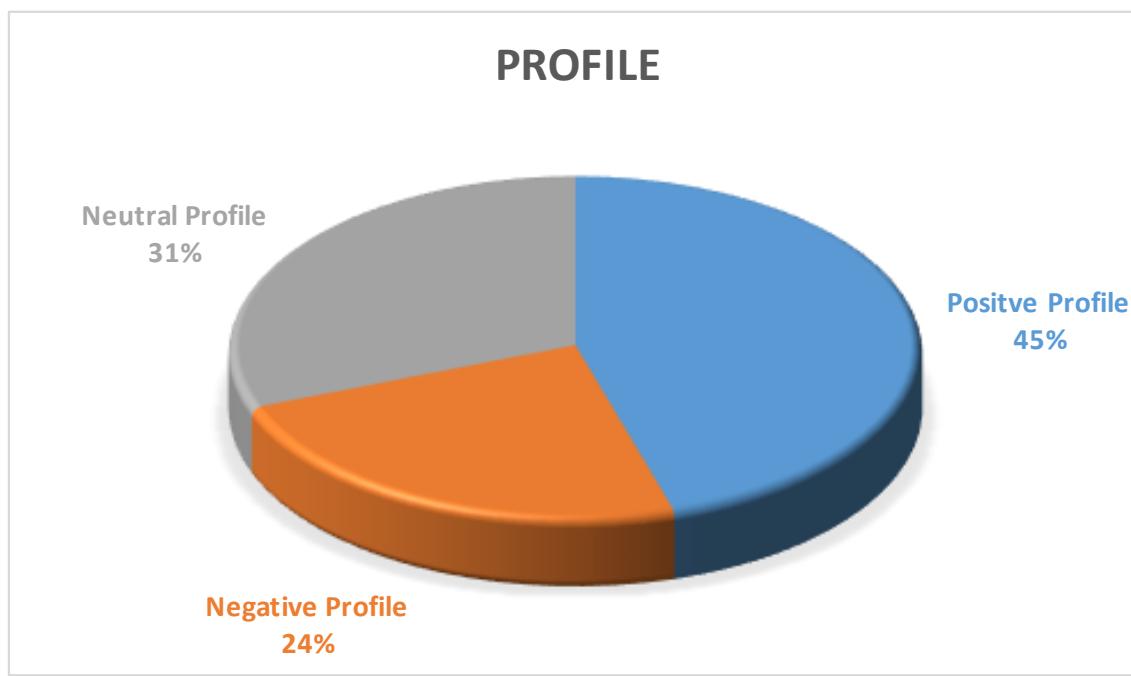
*Figure 5: Profile of Women in Articles*
*Source: Primary Data*

The figures 5.1, 5.2 and 5.3 below show how women were profiled in the articles on women from each newspaper. Figure 5.1 shows that the Times of Zambia had the highest proportion of articles that had a positive profile of women.
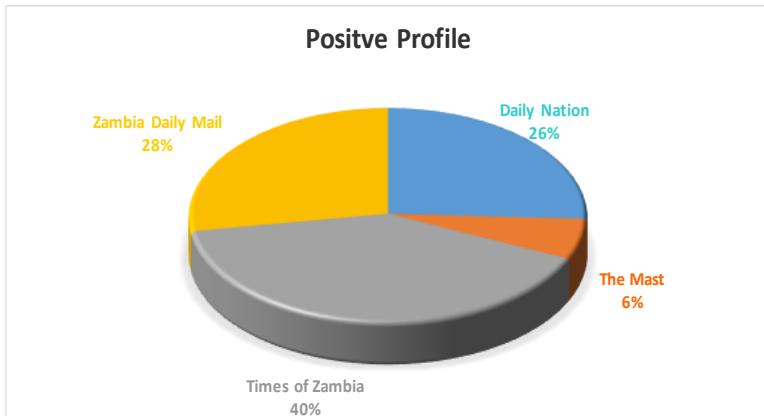


*Figure 5.1: Positive Profile of Women in Articles (Per Newspaper)*
*Source: Primary Data*

Figure 5.2 below shows that the Times of Zambia also had the highest proportion of articles with a negative profile of women.
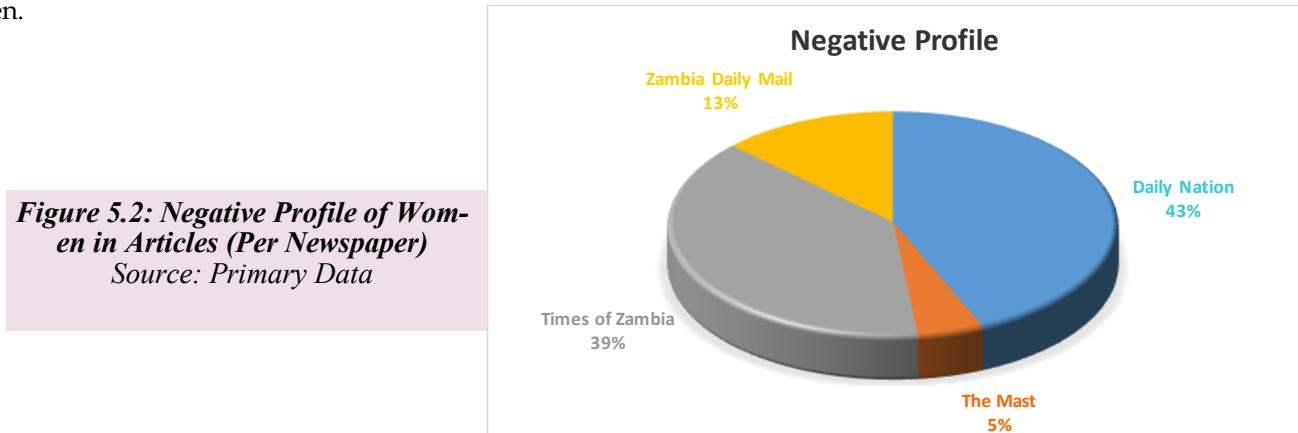
*Figure 5.2: Negative Profile of Women in Articles (Per Newspaper)*
*Source: Primary Data*



Figure 5.3 below shows that the Zambia Daily Mail had the highest proportion of articles that had a neutral profile of women. The conclusions that can be made here is that wherever women are highly covered, the proportion of negative profiles is equally high. However, the Zambia Daily Mail Newspaper had more neutral profiles of women in their coverage.
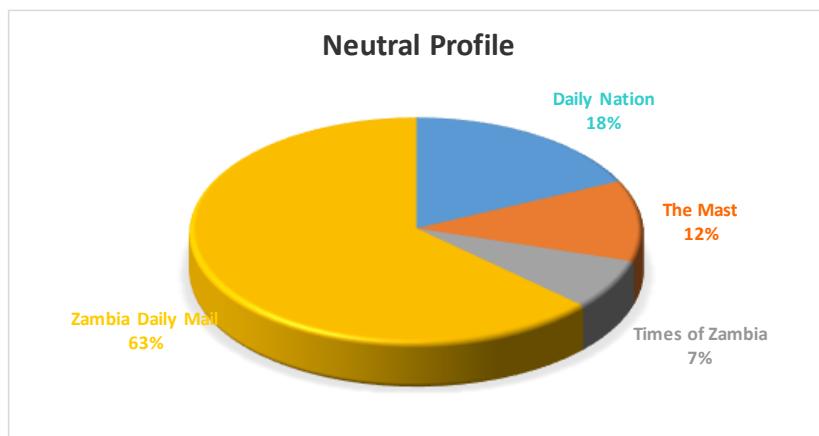


*Figure 5.3 Neutral Profile of Women in Articles (Per Newspaper*
*Source: Primary Data*

**2.2.2. Quality of language used in articles on women**

The language used in articles covering women was analyzed to determine whether coverage of women used language that advances certain negative stereotypes about women or not. Figure 6 below shows that articles with neutral language had the highest proportion.
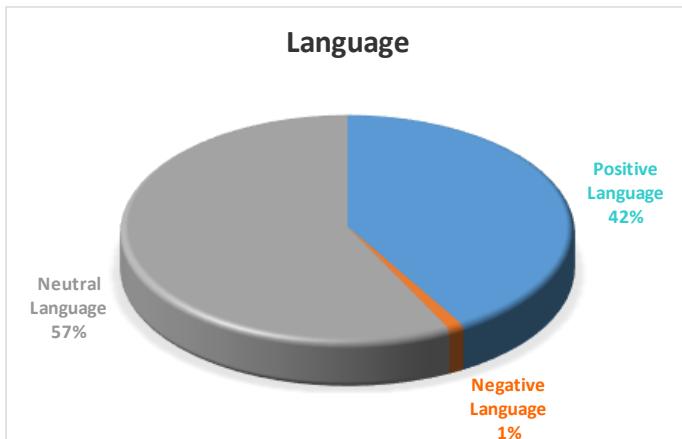


Figure 6: Language in Articles on Women
Source: Primary Data

Figures 6.1, 6.2 and 6.3 below show the frequencies of the articles in the individual newspapers that had positive, negative and neutral used in reporting. Figure 6.1 shows that the Times of Zambia had the highest proportion of articles with positive language, while Figure 6.2 below shows that the Times of Zambia had the highest proportion of articles that used negative language.



*Figure 6.1: Positive Language in Articles on Women (Per Newspaper)*
*Source: Primary Data*
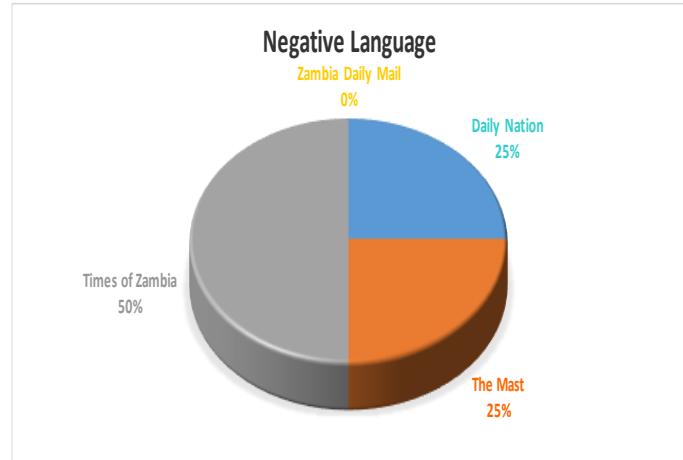


*Figure 6.2: Negative Language in Articles on Women (Per Newspaper)*
*Source: Primary Data*

Figure 6.3 below shows that the Zambia Daily Mail had the highest proportion of articles with neutral language.

*Figure 6.3: Neutral Language in Articles on Women (Per Newspaper)*
*Source: Primary Data*
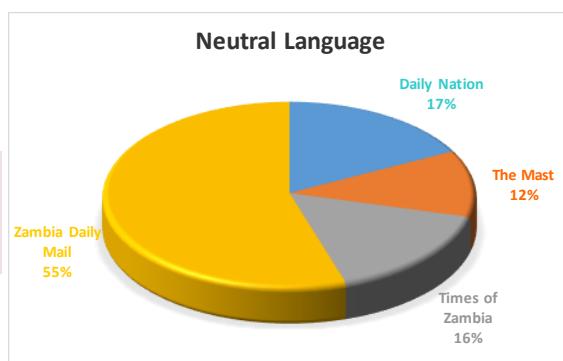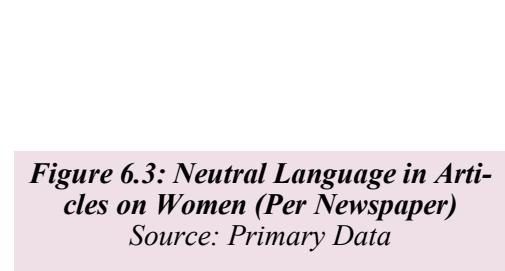
# 3.0. Participation of Women in the Media

The analysis of participation of women in the media assessed the kind of role women played in the media as follows:

i.   **Women as sources**: The study analyses how many articles feature women as main sources.
ii.  **Women as main subject**: The study further analyses how many articles feature women as main subject in the story.
iii. **Women as main subject and lead source**:  The study analyses how many articles feature women as both lead source and main subject.
iv.  **Women Leaders**: The study also analyses how many articles feature women leader as either lead source or main subject

The aim of this analysis is to determine whether women are given a voice as active participants in the media or if they are covered as passive actors. The details of the findings are as follows:

### 3.1. COMPARISON OF WOMEN VS MEN AS SOURCES IN ARTICLES ON WOMEN

The data below presents the sources for the articles on women to determine the extent to which women have a voice in articles that cover them. Figure 7 below shows that only 35% of all articles on women covered women's voices exclusively, while 56% covered both women and men sources. 9% of all articles on women only featured male voices, speaking on behalf of women.
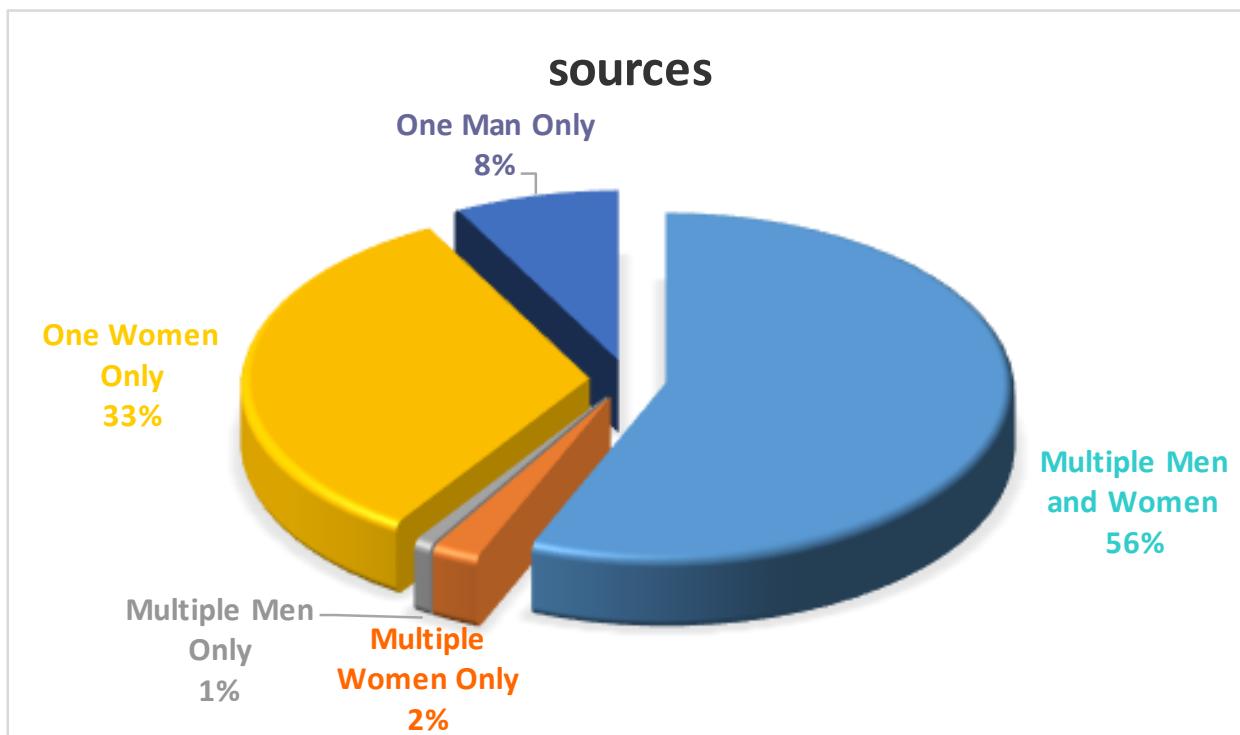


*Figure 7: Sourcing of articles on women*
*Source: Primary Data*

## 3.2. COVERAGE OF WOMEN AS LEAD SOURCES

The coverage of women as lead sources in the articles on women was an important aspect of the study. Figure 8 below shows that there were less articles on women that were obtained from women lead-sources. This represents 41% of all the articles covering women which is equivalent to 146 articles out of 359.



*Figure 8: Coverage of Women as Lead Sources*
*Source: Primary Data*

## 3.3. THEMES UNDER WHICH WOMEN GET COVERED

The study analyzed the various themes under which women mostly get covered. The themes identified were: politics, governance, public administration, civil society, religion, culture, tradition, business, economy, arts, entertainment, sports, health and education. These themes were then categorized per their relativity. Figure 9 below shows the coverage of women per themes:

*Figure 9: Themes where women are covered*
*Source: Primary Data*
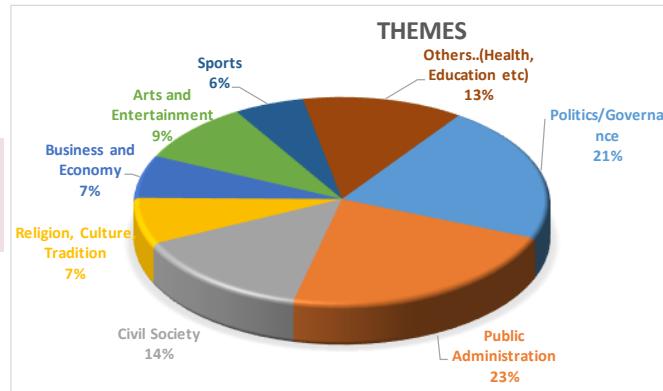


Figure 10 below focuses on the lead sources of the articles in the newspapers per the themes. Women sources were more in the articles themed around politics and governance. The articles themed around sports had the lowest frequency of women sources.
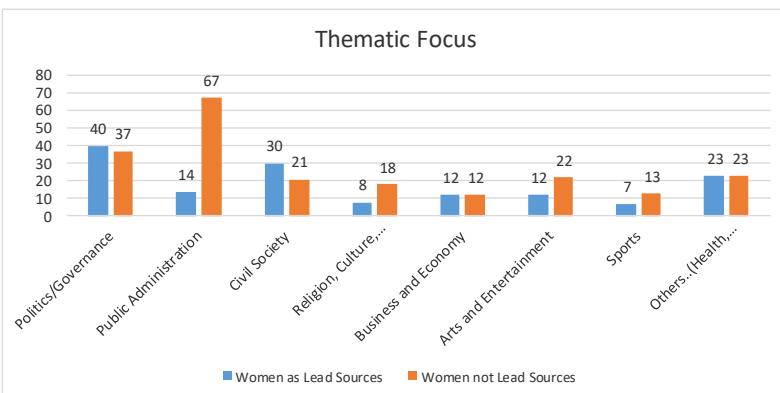


*Figure 10: Lead Sources (Based on the Themes)*
*Source: Primary Data*

### 3.4. COVERAGE OF WOMEN AS SUBJECTS IN THE ARTICLES

The study analyzed the coverage of women as main subjects in the articles on women. Figure 11 below shows that articles related to public administration had more women as main subjects while those on business, economy and sports had the least number of women as main subjects.
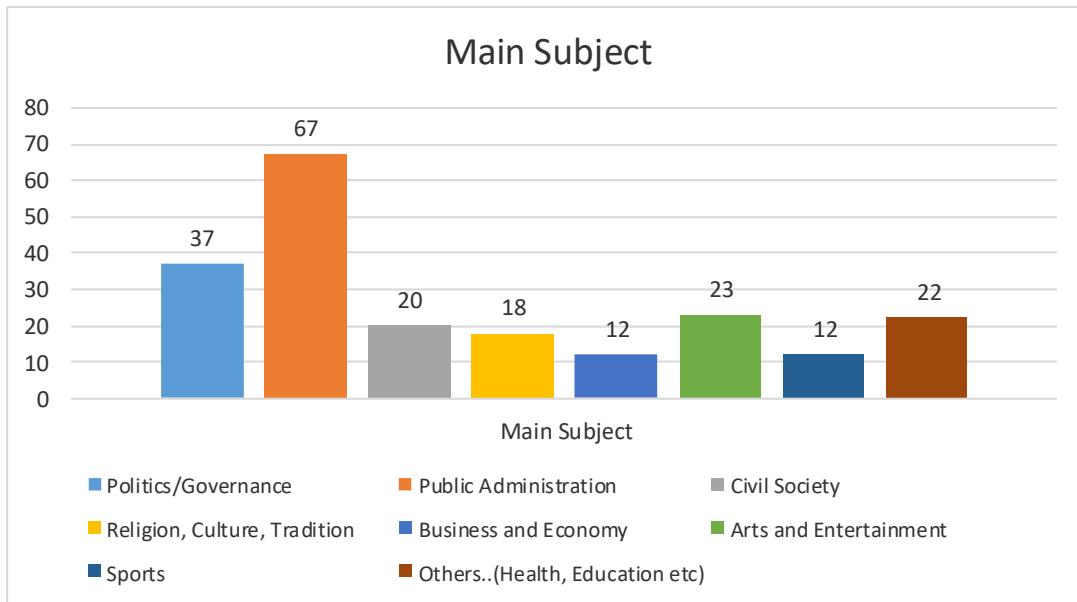


***Figure 11: Coverage of Women as Main Subject***
*Source: Primary Data*

### 3.5. THEMES WHERE WOMEN FEATURE AS MAIN SUBJECT AND LEAD SOURCES

This unit analyzes the articles the type of articles that have women as both main subjects and lead sources. Figure 12 shows that articles on civil society had the highest frequency of women as lead sources and main subjects unlike in the case of the articles that were on public administration.
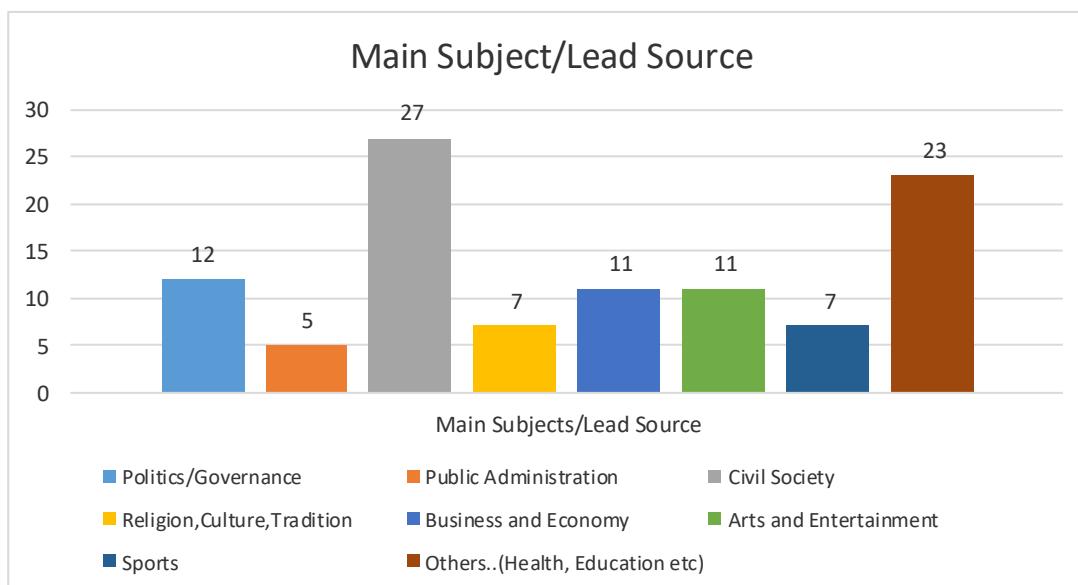


***Figure 12: Coverage of Women as Main Subject and Lead Source***
*Source: Primary Data*

# 4.0. Coverage of Women Leaders

The study analyzed the coverage of women leaders in the articles on women in all the newspapers, to determine the extent to which women leaders were covered by the media. But firstly it will look at the occupations of women in all the articles covered on women.

## 4.1. COVERAGE OF WOMEN ACCORDING TO OCCUPATION

Figure 13 below shows that most articles covered women whose occupations were not specified in the stories. In most instances these women would actually have occupations but such details were left out in the article. These were seconded by articles that covered female government officials. Traditional and religious leaders had the lowest coverage.

*Figure 13: Occupations of Women Covered in Media*
*Source: Primary Data*
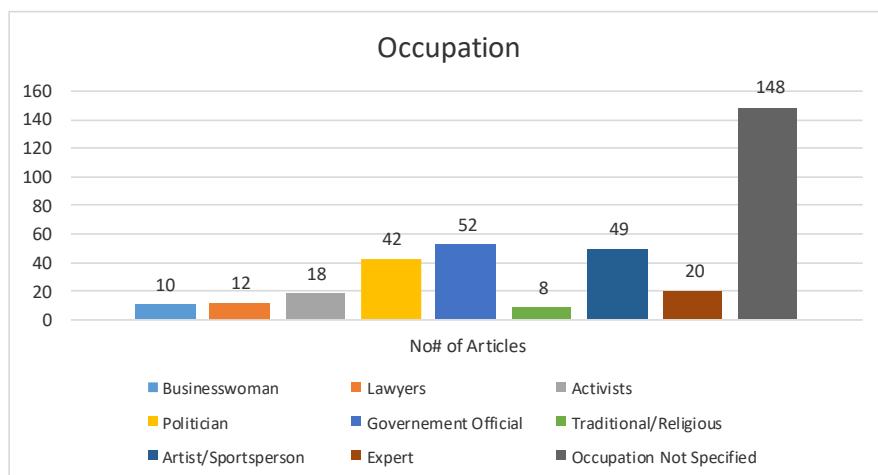


## 4.2. BREAKDOWN OF THEMES WHERE WOMEN FEATURE AS LEADERS

This sub unit analyses the stories that feature women as main subjects and lead sources. Figure 14 below shows the distribution of women leaders as main subjects and lead sources. The articles themed politics and governance had the highest frequency followed by civil society. There was no coverage of women leaders as main subjects and lead sources in the other themes.
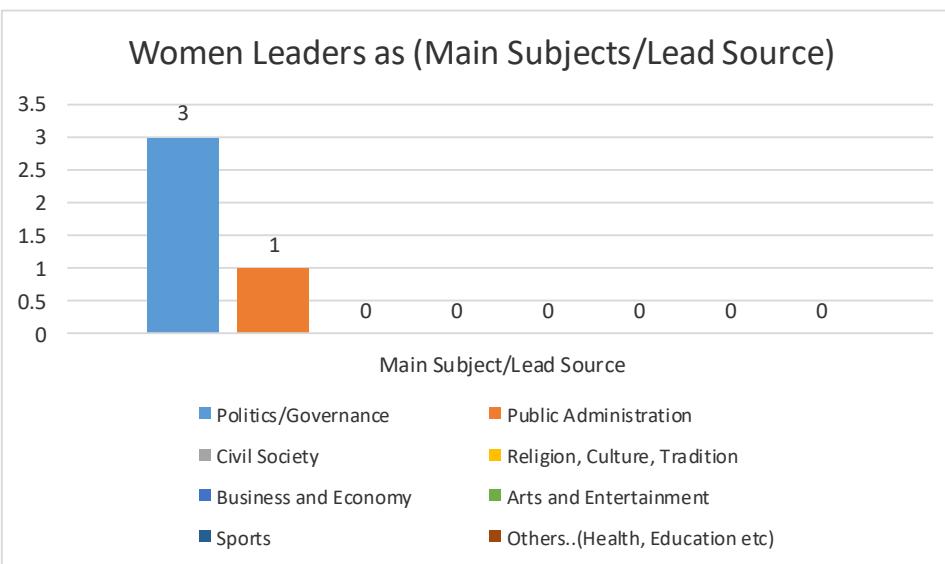


*Figure 14: Main Subject/ Lead Source*
*Source: Primary Data*

Figure 15 below shows the frequency distribution of articles that were obtained from women leaders. Those themed around politics and governance had the highest frequency of women leaders as sources. Those that are themed arts and culture had the lowest frequency.
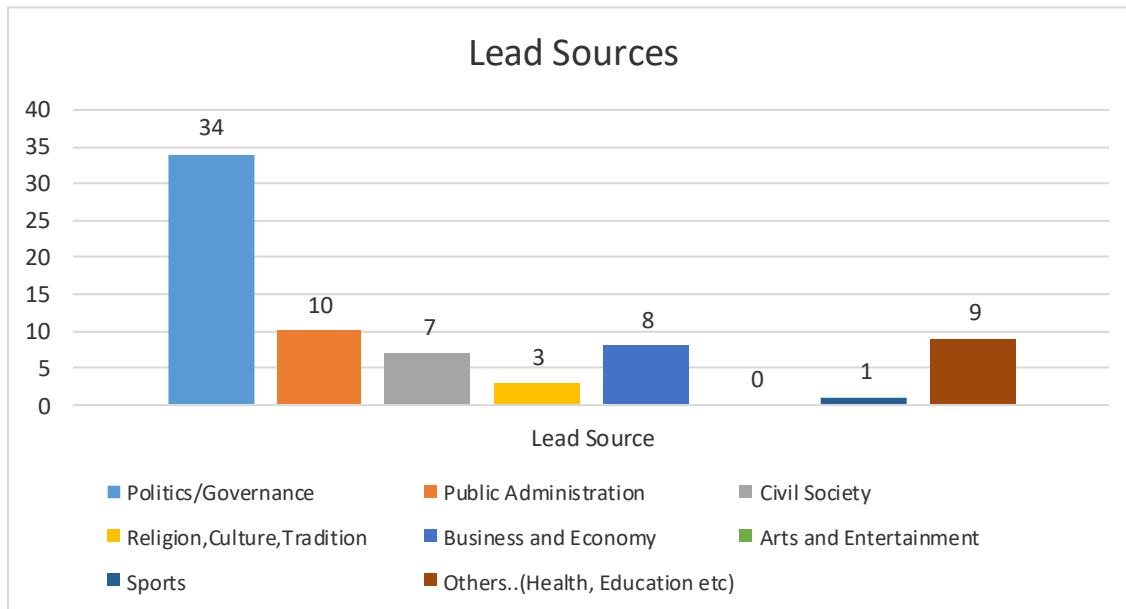


**Figure 15: Lead Sources**
*Source: Primary Data*

## 4.3. COVERAGE OF WOMEN LEADERS

The focus here is to find out how many articles feature women leaders as main subjects according to the theme of the story. Figure 16 below shows that women leaders were covered more in articles themed around politics and governance. They were no women leaders covered around articles themed around arts, entertainment and sports.
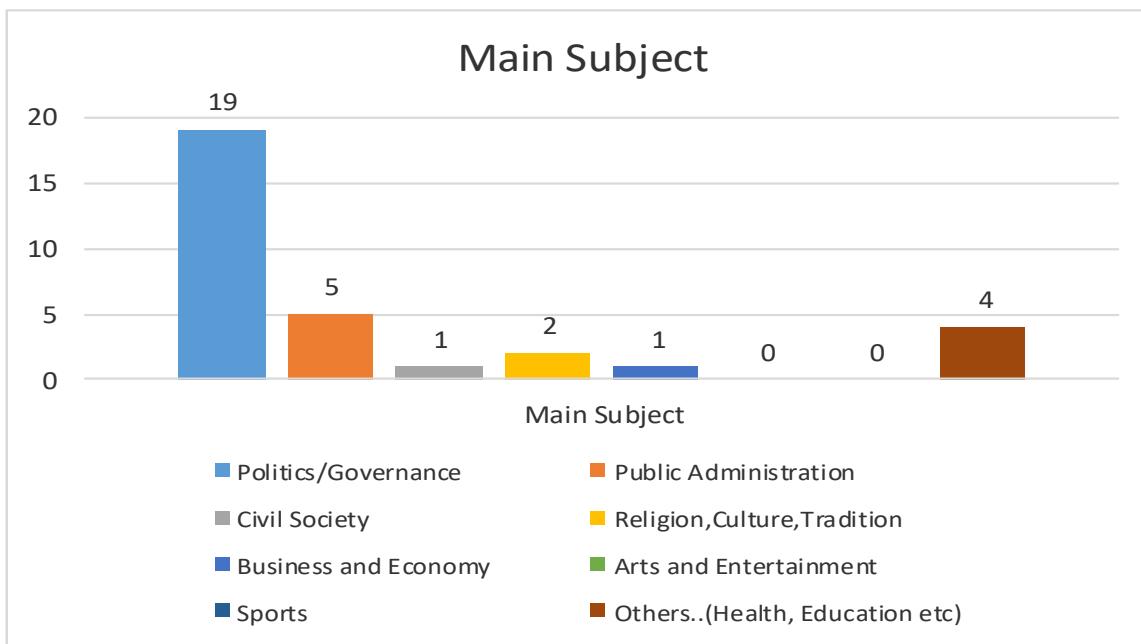


*Figure 16: Main Subject*
*Source: Primary Data*

# 5.0. Level of Play

This unit will look at the level of play of the articles on women in terms them being household/family, national/international and local/community stories .

## 5.1. REPORTAGE OF ARTICLES IN TERMS OF LEVEL OF PLAY

The analysis here focused on the level of play at which the women being covered had an influence. Figure 17 below shows that those that were in the national or international sphere had the highest proportion.
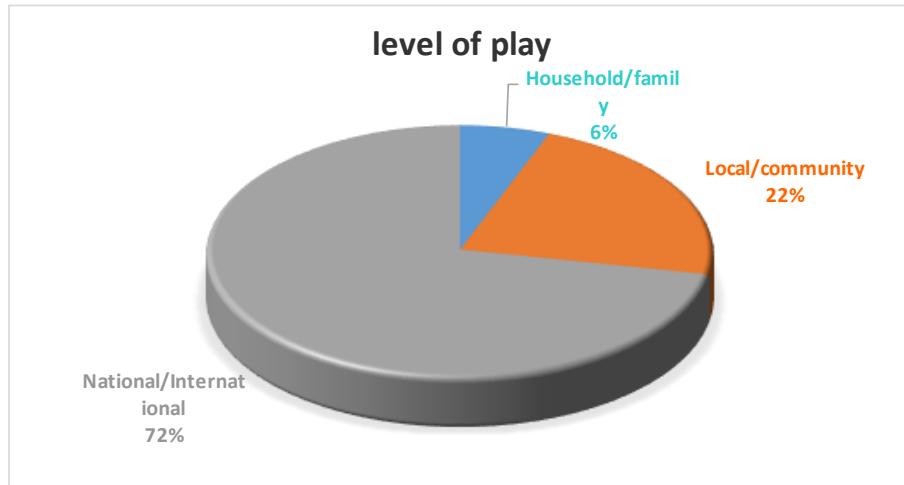


*Figure 17: Level of Play*
*Source: Primary Data*

## 5.2. LEVEL OF PLAY OF ARTICLES BY THEME

This sub unit is analyzing the level of play of stories per the themes. Figure 18 below shows that the articles with a national and international level of play had the highest frequency across all the themes. Those that have a household and family level of play had the lowest frequency across all the themes.
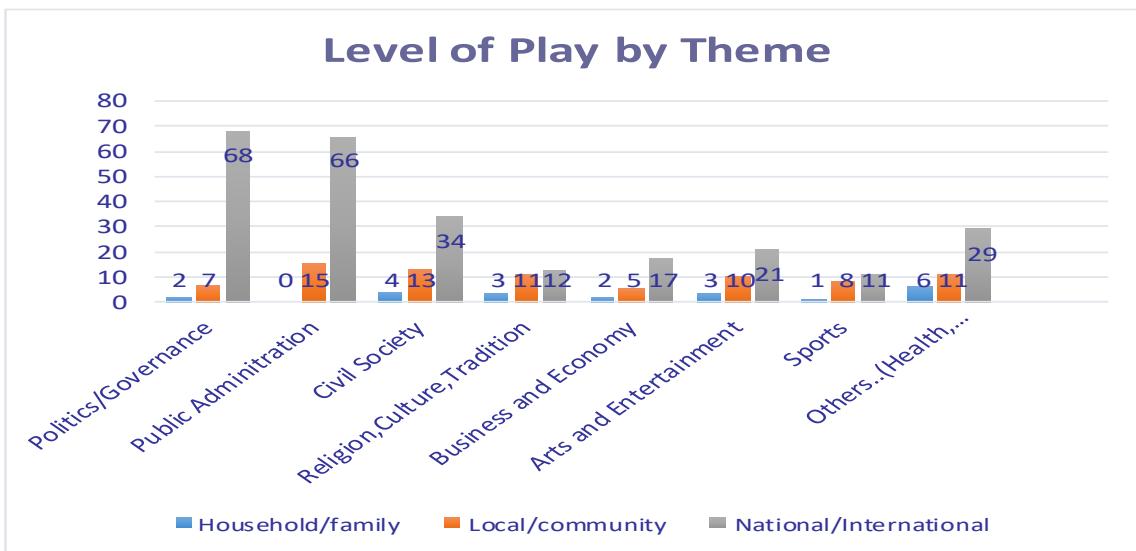


*Figure 18: Level of Play by Theme*
*Source: Primary Data*

# 6.0. Conclusion

The study set out to determine the level to which women were covered by media, and the quality of the coverage. The study found that women were gravely marginalized as they represented only 5.4% of the total coverage. In addition, women's voices were not very articulate in the media as in some cases, the articles on women used male sources to speak on behalf of the women. About 9% of the total coverage on women featured male voices exclusively, while most of the coverage used a combination of male and female voices speaking on behalf of women.

In terms of the slant, it was found that 45% of the articles on women had a positive slant which 24% had a negative slant. This raises concern as the impact of 24% negative reporting overshadows the 45% positive coverage.

It is therefore critical that stakeholders are engaged to address the negative media coverage of women, as well as to increase the media coverage of women, in order to increase credibility of women, and create more opportunities for women leaders to participate in leadership.
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Panos Institute
Southern Africa

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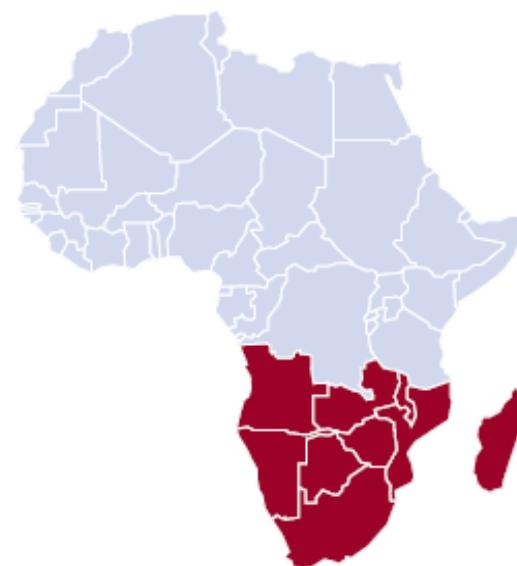
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