



ኅብረት ለምርጫ (CECOE)
የኢትዮጵያ የሰላም ማህበራት ፎርም
Coalition of Ethiopian Civil Society
Organizations for Elections

Netherlands Institute for
Multiparty Democracy



Funded by the
European Union

Media Monitoring Report

*Analyzing Representation and Portrayal of Women in
Selected News
(August 2023 - March 2024)*

December 2024





Media Monitoring Report

*Analyzing Representation and Portrayal of Women in
Selected News*

(August 2023 - March 2024)

December 2024



ኅብረት ለምርጫ (CECOE)
የኢትዮጵያ የሲቪል ማህበራት ድርጅቶች ኅብረት ለምርጫ
Coalition of Ethiopian Civil Society
Organizations for Elections

Netherlands Institute for
Multiparty Democracy



Funded by the
European Union

Tabel of Contents

- About CECOIE 1
- Executive Summary 2
- Background 3
- Legal Framework 4
 - Media Proclamation No. 1238/2021..... 4
 - Hate Speech and Disinformation Prevention and Suppression Proclamation No 1185/2020 4
 - Mass Media Policy 4
 - Advertisement Proclamation Proclamation No 759/2012 4
- Methodology 5
 - Sampled Media Platforms.....5
 - Collection Methods.....5
 - Media Monitoring Guide.....5
 - Key Indicators..... 5
 - Categories Analyzed..... 6
 - Data Analysis..... 6
 - Quantitative Analysis 6
 - Qualitative Analysis..... 6
- Background of Monitored Programs..... 6
 - Radio..... 6
 - Television.....7
 - Web- based Online Media7
 - Newspaper.....7
- Findings 8
 - Monitored Programs8
 - Coverage of Women8
 - Tone of Coverage 9
 - Type of Coverage10
 - TV Ads Monitoring: Portrayal of Women in TV Ads..... 11
- Summary of findings and Recommendations12
 - Summary of findings 12
- Recommendations13
- References.....14

About CECOE

The Coalition of Ethiopian Civil Society Organizations for Elections (CECOE) is a coalition established in 2019 comprising 176 CSOs focused on elections, human rights, and democracy. A key goal is coordinating Ethiopian CSO efforts in election observation, monitoring, voter education, and post-electoral conflict prevention. A highlight of CECOE's work was the meticulous monitoring of media outlets during the 2021 elections through its Media Monitoring Unit (MMU). This crucial media monitoring measured electoral coverage, identified news bias, and assessed media access with additional attention to women's participation. The outcomes yielded critical insights into imbalances in the coverage and portrayal of women across print, broadcast, and social media. The coalition has published a Media Monitoring Report for the June 2021 parliamentary elections in Ethiopia², along with voter education and media monitoring assessment reports. Overall, CECOE remains committed to promoting democratic values through election observation, media monitoring, voter education, and elevating women's voices in the political sphere.

Executive Summary

This report provides an analysis of media coverage and portrayal of women across various Ethiopian media platforms from August 2023 to March 2024. Employing a mixed-methods approach, including quantitative and qualitative techniques, the monitoring encompassed radio, television, print, and online media. The media monitoring used content analysis to examine media messages and themes, selecting twelve diverse media Programs for detailed review.

The findings indicate a persistent underrepresentation of women, with limited airtime dedicated to their stories. The overall tone of coverage remained predominantly neutral, with over 90% of content maintaining an objective stance. Instances of positive and negative portrayals of women were infrequent; however, positive coverage saw an uptick during events like International Women's Day. Media coverage was largely focused on women in governmental roles, lacking diversity in other areas such as experts, leadership, and women's issues. Programs occasionally challenged traditional gender roles but missed many opportunities to address and dismantle stereotypes.

In response to these findings, the report presents several recommendations. Media outlets should increase airtime for stories featuring women and addressing women's issues, with a focus on highlighting positive narratives that break down stereotypes and showcase women in leadership, innovation, and influence. Additionally, media organizations are encouraged to adopt inclusive content strategies that actively seek and feature diverse women's voices. Ongoing monitoring and reporting on the representation of women in media is essential to track progress and identify areas needing improvement.

Background

In recent years, Ethiopia has made progress in advancing women's political presence such as appointing women as half of the cabinet ministers and the President in 2018. However, women still face significant challenges and barriers in accessing and influencing positions of power and decision-making at different levels of government such as legal discrimination, socio-economic inequalities, cultural stereotypes, violence and harassment, and lack of support and resources.¹

The media wields considerable influence in molding public opinion, operating in various ways, particularly within the realm of women's empowerment.² Through the dissemination of information, education, and entertainment, the media sets the agenda for public discourse. Thus media can either facilitate or hinder women's societal and political empowerment, depending on how it covers and portrays women in both social and political spheres. Key Factors include the portrayal of their visibility, credibility, diversity, achievements, challenges, and opinions. Problematic media portrayals that reinforce gender stereotypes in society can influence public perceptions of women as political actors. It is important to analyze media representations of women across social and political contexts to identify systemic biases.

That being said, the media is not neutral or objective but rather a reflection and reproduction of the existing power structures and relations in society, which are often biased against women and marginalized groups.³ To improve media practices on women's political participation and overall positive representation, it is essential to monitor and analyze the media's coverage and portrayal of women. This will help identify gaps, biases, and challenges that women face in the media sphere and provide evidence-based insights and recommendations.

This media monitoring activity aims to show how different media platforms in Ethiopia cover and portray women's participation in both social and political spheres. Identifying biases and stereotypes will inform advocacy efforts with media regulators and platforms to develop policies and guidelines for more gender-sensitive coverage.

Monitoring media representations is an essential step in dismantling systemic gender bias and bolstering women's societal and political empowerment. This cross-platform analysis aims to spur reform in media practices to amplify women's voices and realize a more inclusive public discourse. The goals of the monitoring exercise was to assess:

- *The extent of the overall coverage provided to women*
- *The tone used in providing coverage of women*
- *Types of women featured*
- *Stereotypes and Biases against women*

1 Enguday Alemayehu. (2018). Gender in Ethiopian media landscape: A baseline study. Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung. <https://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/aethiopia/14793.pdf>

2 Santos, Í., Carvalho, L. M., & Portugal e Melo, B. (2022). The media's role in shaping the public opinion on education: A thematic and frame analysis of externalization to world situations in the Portuguese media. *Research in Comparative and International Education*, 17(1), 29-50. <https://doi.org/10.1177/17454999211057753>

3 Haraldsson, A., & Wängnerud, L. (2019). The effect of media sexism on women's political ambition: Evidence from a worldwide study. *Feminist Media Studies*, 19(4), 525-541. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14680777.2018.1468797>

Legal Framework

Media Proclamation No. 1238/2021

In this proclamation, the definition of “information diversity” specifically encompasses the concept of gender inclusion.⁴ It emphasizes that achieving diversity in information isn’t just about presenting a variety of perspectives or topics but also ensuring that gender representation is both balanced and proportional. Public service broadcasting licensees are also obliged to provide news and programs that reflect the country’s gender diversity. Additionally, they are obliged to provide specialized programs for women.⁵ The proclamation requires community service broadcasting license holders to specifically address and cater to the gender-related needs and concerns of the community.⁶ Furthermore, it prohibits language and content that contributes to gender hostility and violence on online media.⁷ Moreover, it explicitly prohibits the production, publication, and dissemination of content that encourages child grooming and cyberbullying.⁸ The proclamation prohibits content that fosters hate or contempt based on gender.⁹ To promote gender equality in politics, the media authority is obligated to distribute airtime fairly among all political parties during elections. The amount of airtime allocated to each party is proportional to the number of female candidates they have fielded.¹⁰

Hate Speech and Disinformation Prevention and Suppression Proclamation No 1185/2020

The proclamation prohibits hate speech, which is defined as any language that intentionally targets individuals based on their identity, such as gender, and seeks to incite hatred, discrimination, or violence against them.¹¹ The proclamation also prohibits discrimination, which is defined as any act that targets individuals based on their gender or other protected characteristics and seeks to harm or exclude them.¹²

4 Media Proclamation, Proclamation No 1238/2021, Fed. Negarit Gazeta 27th Year No. 22, Addis Ababa, 5 April 2021. Art. 1 Sub. 35

5 Ibid Art. 56 Sub. 1(a and m)

6 Ibid Art. 59 Sub. 1(g)

7 Ibid Art. 61 Sub. 1

8 Ibid Art. 61 Sub. 6

9 Ibid Art. 68 Sub. 2(e)

10 Ibid Art. 71 Sub. 4(c)

11 Ibid Art. 2 Sub. 2

12 Ibid Art. 2 Sub. 5

on their gender or other protected characteristics and seeks to harm or exclude them. This proclamation seeks to establish standards that prohibit individuals from using language that targets others based on their gender and promotes hatred or discrimination against them.¹³

Mass Media Policy

The mass media policy mandates that administrative assignments and employment in the media sector reflect gender diversity. To ensure universal access, media services must be provided equitably and justly to all members of society. Community, commercial, public, and print media outlets should strive to meet the needs of the Ethiopian people while prioritizing marginalized groups through specialized programming tailored to their unique requirements. The government is committed to supporting these initiatives to ensure that all Ethiopians have access to diverse and inclusive media content.¹⁴

Advertisement Proclamation Proclamation No 759/2012

The primary purpose of the Ethiopian Advertisement Proclamation is to regulate the advertising industry and ensure that advertisements are conducted in a manner that contributes to the country’s proper economic, social, and political development. The proclamation encourages advertisers to create advertising content that reflects the diversity of Ethiopian society, including both men and women. This helps to challenge traditional gender roles and stereotypes.¹⁵ The proclamation prohibits advertising that portrays women in a manner that is degrading, objectifying, or harmful. This helps to protect women’s dignity and prevent the perpetuation of harmful gender stereotypes.¹⁶

13 Hate Speech and Disinformation Prevention and Suppression Proclamation, Proclamation No 1185/2020, Fed. Negarit Gazeta 26th Year No. 26, Addis Ababa, 23 March 2020. Art. 3 Sub. 1

14 Federal democratic republic of ethiopian mass media policy

15 Advertisement proclamation, Proclamation No 759/2012, Fed. Negarit Gazeta 18th year No. 59, Addis Ababa, August 27, 2012.

16 ibid Art. 7 Sub. 1

Methodology

This media monitoring utilizes both qualitative and quantitative methodologies to examine the coverage and portrayal of women and women's issues. Content analysis serves as the primary framework for this evaluation.

Sampled Media Platforms

The media monitoring team used a purposive sampling method to select media platforms based on two primary criteria: popularity and accessibility. Popularity was determined by viewership and listenership, while accessibility referred to the ease of obtaining content across different platforms.

The media monitoring includes a selection of ten media outlets, covering both state-owned and privately-owned media:

- *Television Stations: EBC, EBS, and Kana*
- *Radio Stations: Sheger 102.1*
- *Print Media: The Reporter, The Reporter Amharic, and Fortune.*
- *Online News Platforms: Wazema Radio, Addis Standard, and Ethiopian Insider*

This selection ensures a diverse representation of media types and ownership structures. According to Statista¹⁷, EBC, EBS, and Kana are among the top three most-watched television stations in Ethiopia. Sheger FM is a popular radio station with high listenership. Online platforms like Addis Standard and Ethiopian Insider feature in the top 20 news websites, as per AllaboutEthio's metrics.¹⁸ The selected media outlets also provide readily accessible content across multiple platforms. The inclusion of both television and radio ensures coverage of urban and rural demographics, as radio remains a crucial medium for reaching rural areas where the majority of Ethiopians live.¹⁹

The data collection process primarily focuses on sitcoms and Infotainment programs, as well as news articles published in print and online media.

Collection Methods

The primary focus of data collection was on news programs aired on television and radio, as well as news articles published in print and online media.

To facilitate systematic data gathering, CECOIE developed a media monitoring guide incorporating both qualitative and quantitative analysis indicators. The monitoring team developed structured questionnaires designed to capture specific indicators related to women's coverage and portrayal in media. These questionnaires were administered through Google Forms, enabling efficient data entry and storage.

Media Monitoring Guide

This monitoring team employed a structured checklist that serves as a data collection instrument to record and analyze relevant quantitative and qualitative information from the sample of Ethiopian media outlets under examination.

Key Indicators

1. **Coverage Time:** To assess the coverage of women and women's issues in media, the total duration of news programs and the specific time dedicated to women's topics were recorded. For TV and radio, this involved using a stopwatch to measure segments featuring women. In newspapers and web news sites, the placement of stories related to women was counted to determine their visibility. This data allowed for a comparison of coverage dedicated to women's issues versus overall news content.
2. **Type of Coverage:** This methodology tracks the types of roles and issues women are featured in. By categorizing stories (politics, civil society, etc.), the analysis identifies which domains provide greater visibility for women. For example, it may reveal if women government officials receive more coverage than women in academia.
3. **Tone of coverage:** The tone of media coverage was categorized as positive, negative, or neutral to assess how women and women's issues are portrayed. Positive tone highlights women's achievements, capabilities, and contributions using empowering language and imagery. For example, a news story celebrating a female scientist's groundbreaking research. Negative Tone downplays women's achievements or portrays them in an unfavorable light, often reinforcing stereotypes.

¹⁷ Statista. "Ethiopia: TV stations audience share." Statista. Accessed August 15, 2023

¹⁸ All About Ethiopia. (n.d.). 20 of the Best Ethiopian News Websites. Retrieved from <https://allaboutethio.com/20-best-ethiopian-news-websites.html>

¹⁹ BBC News. (2011, May 6). Ethiopia profile. Retrieved from BBC News

This could include focusing on a female politician’s appearance rather than her policies. Neutral Tone presents information objectively, without overt bias or judgment. This might involve reporting factually on a woman’s leadership role and her implemented policies.

4. **Stereotypes:** This analysis evaluates media coverage for reinforcement, challenge, or neutrality toward gender stereotypes using a structured set of yes/no questions to identify harmful biases. Key areas include traditional roles, such as depicting women as caregivers or highlighting marital and family status; emotional and rational characteristics, where women may be labeled as overly emotional, irrational, or indecisive; and leadership and competence, assessing portrayals of women as weak, unqualified, or dependent on luck rather than merit for success. The findings will reveal trends in stereotyping and whether negative portrayals are perpetuated or opposed in the coverage.

Categories Analyzed

Category	Description
Women in Politics	Including elected officials, political party members, and activists.
Women in CSOs	Women working in civil society organizations.
Women in Academia	Women in research and educational institutions.
Women Commenters	Women providing perspectives as private citizens.
Women as Experts	Women invited to give their expert opinions.
Women’s Issues	Topics specifically addressing women’s concerns and rights.

Table 1: Categories of Women Featured in Media

Data Analysis

Our analysis framework combines quantitative and qualitative methods to provide a holistic understanding of the coverage and portrayal of women in the media:

Quantitative Analysis

- Coverage Time
- Type of Coverage
- Tone of coverage

The quantitative data was processed using Google Sheets, allowing for statistical analysis and the creation of visual representations to illustrate the numeric measurements of coverage dedicated to women and related issues.

Qualitative Analysis

CECOE employed content analysis to examine the nuances of how women are portrayed and depicted in media coverage. This approach allowed us to identify and analyze:

- Stereotypes (reinforced or challenged)
- Problematic portrayals
- Positive Portrayals

The qualitative analysis provided depth to the quantitative metrics, offering insights into the contextual and subjective aspects of women’s representation in media. By triangulating findings from both quantitative and qualitative methods, CECOE aimed to produce a comprehensive and nuanced understanding of women’s representation in Ethiopian media. This mixed-methods approach enhances the validity and reliability of our findings, providing a robust foundation for addressing the research objectives.

Background of Monitored Radio

Fana FM 98.1 radio has grown into a leading corporate media outlet in Ethiopia. Broadcasting news, entertainment, and educational programs in multiple languages, it reaches over 6 million listeners weekly via its extensive radio networks and online platforms. Fana FM is especially known for its coverage of political, social, and economic news related to Ethiopia. It also strives to improve citizens’ lives through community-oriented programming. After expanding its partnerships in 2023 with Russian state news agency Sputnik, Fana FM continues increasing its reach and influence.

Another popular radio voice is Bisrat FM 101.1, launched in 2016 by veteran journalist Mesele Mengistu. With diverse programming and the slogan “Favorite, Chosen, Full of Options,” Bisrat FM provides music, news, sports, and more. A highlight is the Asham program, airing four times a week. Asham covers topics ranging from world affairs to Ethiopian culture and narrative stories, aiming to reinforce national values.

Television

On television, Fana TV has rapidly expanded since its 2012 founding by the state-owned Fana Broadcasting Corporate. Providing news and information in multiple languages, Fana TV launched full high-definition capabilities in 2017. Its content across digital platforms and concise news capsules showcase Fana TV’s technical innovation and growth.

The Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporation (EBC) TV has a long history tracing back to its 1962 launch with British assistance. After reorganizing in 1991 into a more independent broadcaster, EBC TV continues informing and entertaining viewers.

The Ethiopian Broadcasting Service (EBS TV) is a television network based in Ethiopia. Established in 2008. The network broadcasts primarily in Amharic and features a range of entertainment content, including talk shows, game shows, movies, and dramas.²⁰ The channel aims to promote Ethiopian and African values, cultures, and traditions globally.²¹

Meanwhile, Kana TV has quickly risen to become Ethiopia’s most popular satellite channel since starting in 2016. Owned by Moby Group, Kana TV is acclaimed for its voice-over translated foreign programs and Turkish serial dramas. Its short but compelling Kana Zena Kemsha news segments further drive Kana TV’s growing audience engagement.

Web-based Online Media

Wazema Radio is an independent media outlet founded by Ethiopian exiled journalists in 2014. Initially based outside Ethiopia, it has since established a presence in Addis Ababa. Wazema Radio is known for its critical and investigative journalism, focusing on current affairs, politics, and social issues. The platform offers daily news updates, special briefings, and in-depth discussions through its website, social media channels, and podcasts.

Addis Standard is a well-regarded independent media outlet based in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Established in 2011 by Tsedale Lemma, it publishes content in English, Afaan Oromoo, and Amharic, catering to a diverse audience. The platform is known for its comprehensive coverage of politics, social issues, economics, and culture, providing in-depth analysis and investigative journalism.

Despite facing challenges, including a temporary suspension by Ethiopia’s media regulator in 2021, the outlet continues to be a critical voice in Ethiopian media, offering insightful perspectives on national and regional issues.

Ethiopian Insider is another influential online media outlet founded by Tesfalem Waldyes. It focuses on delivering news, analysis, and features on various topics relevant to Ethiopia and the surrounding region. The platform provides breaking news, in-depth analysis, and features on politics, social issues, and entertainment.

Newspaper

Addis Zemen is one of Ethiopia’s oldest and most widely read newspapers, published in Amharic. The platform is known for its comprehensive coverage of national events and government policies.

As a state-owned publication, Addis Zemen often reflects the official stance on various matters, making it a key source for understanding governmental perspectives.

Reporter English is a prominent English-language newspaper in Ethiopia, known for its comprehensive coverage of national and international news. It provides in-depth analysis and reports on various topics, including politics, economics, social issues, and culture. The newspaper caters to the English-speaking population in Ethiopia, including expatriates, diplomats, and business professionals. Reporter English is recognized for its balanced reporting and commitment to journalistic integrity, making it a reliable source of information for its readers.

Reporter Amharic is the Amharic-language counterpart of Reporter English, serving a broader Ethiopian audience. It covers a wide range of topics, including local news, politics, business, and entertainment. Reporter Amharic is known for its detailed reporting and insightful commentary on issues affecting Ethiopia.

²⁰ “EBS TV (Ethiopia),” Wikipedia, accessed January 2, 2024,

²¹ Smith, J. (2024). Breaking the Glass Ceiling: The EBS TV Story. Her Campus. Retrieved from <https://www.hercampus.com/school/vcu/breaking-glass-ceiling-ebs-tv-story/?form=MG0AV3>

The newspaper plays a crucial role in informing the public and fostering informed discussions on national matters. Its commitment to high journalistic standards has earned it a reputation as a trusted news source in Ethiopia.

Findings

This section presents the findings of a comprehensive analysis of media coverage related to women and women’s issues in Ethiopia, compiled from an 8-month media monitoring conducted from August 2023 to March 2024. The monitoring encompassed a diverse range of media outlets, including radio, television, print, and online platforms. The monitoring aimed to analyze the representation and portrayal of women across various media platforms in Ethiopia, providing valuable insights into the current state of gender representation in the country’s media landscape.

Monitored Programs

Media Type	Stations/ platform	Programs/ Articles Monitored	Focus
Radio	Fana FM 98.1, Sheger FM 102.1, and Bisrat FM 101.1	261 News Programs	Evening news (6-7 pm) on Fana & Sheger; Asham (1-2 pm) on Bisrat
Television	EBC, Fana Broadcasting, EBS TV, Kana Zena Kemsha, TV Ads	826 News Programs, 30 Ads	News programs and Television Ads
Print Media	Addis Zemen, The Reporter (Amharic & English)	1,625 Articles	News articles in print media
Online Media	Ethiopia Insider, Wazema Radio, Addis Standard	490 Articles	Online news articles

Table 2: Monitored Program Summary: August 2023 - March 2024

Coverage of Women

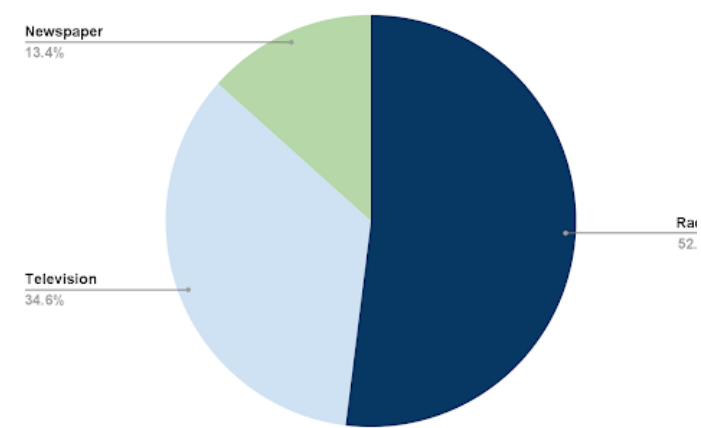


Figure 1: Number of Programs Featuring Women in Monitored Radio and Television News Programs and Newspaper articles

- Frequency vs. Airtime Disparity:** A recurring finding across all broadcast media types was the contrast between the frequency of women’s appearances and the actual airtime dedicated to their coverage.
- Radio:** Women were featured in an average of 65% of programs across the monitoring period. However, they received only 7-8% of the total airtime. This disparity was particularly pronounced in August 2023, where women appeared in 70% of programs but received 7% of airtime with a slight improvement noted in March 2024 (9-15% airtime).
- Television:** The disparity was even more obvious in TV coverage. While women appeared in an average of 45% of programs, they received 2-8% of the total airtime. The highest representation was observed in March 2024, coinciding with International Women’s Day celebrations. This trend remained consistent throughout the monitoring period, with a notable low in January 2024, where women featured in 28% of programs but received only 2% of airtime.
- Print Media:** The trend continued in print, with women featured in 14-26% of articles but often receiving minimal in-depth coverage.
- Online Media:** Coverage of women’s issues varied widely across online platforms. Some months showed minimal representation, while others provided more substantial coverage, particularly around specific events or issues. For the most part, online platforms showed similar patterns, with women’s issues often assigned to brief mentions rather than substantial articles.

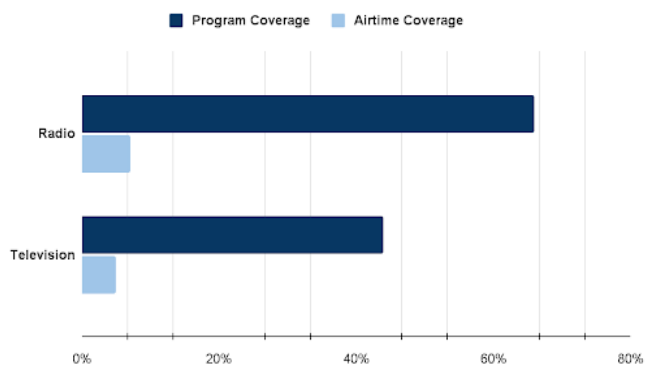


Figure 2: Program Coverage Vs Airtime Coverage on Monitored Radio and Television News Programs

1. Fluctuations on Special Events

Coverage time for women’s issues showed notable fluctuations, often correlating with specific events or observances. A significant spike in coverage was observed in March 2024, coinciding with International Women’s Day. During this month, radio, television, and print media coverage of women’s issues increased significantly.

2. Platform Variations

Different media platforms showed varying levels of commitment to women’s coverage:

- Radio consistently provided more airtime to women compared to television, with Sheger FM often leading in terms of representation. Radio programs were more likely to feature diverse topics related to women, including women’s issues and women in leadership roles, not just politics.
- TV coverage of women was generally lower than radio and was heavily skewed towards women in political roles, sometimes reaching 98% of women’s coverage.
- Print media, especially the Amharic edition of Reporter, maintained a relatively stable coverage for women’s issues. Print media tended to have a more balanced representation of women in different roles compared to TV, though still dominated by political coverage.
- Online media, particularly Addis Standard, showed more consistent coverage of women’s issues throughout the monitoring period. Coverage often focused on specific issues like gender-based violence, policy impacts on women, and high-profile appointments. Wazema Radio and Ethiopian Insider had more sporadic coverage, with some months having very few or no articles about women.

Tone of Coverage

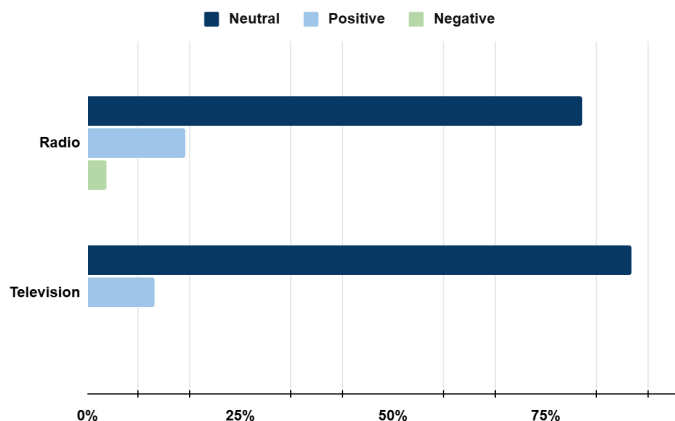


Figure 3: Tone of Coverage on Monitored Radio and Television News Programs.

1. Predominance of Neutral Tone

Across all media types, the tone of coverage was predominantly neutral, reflecting a general trend toward objective reporting:

- Radio: An average of 85% of coverage maintained a neutral tone. However, there were notable exceptions, such as in December 2023, where 23% of coverage was positive and 7% negative.
- Television: TV coverage showed the highest consistency in neutral tone, with over 90% of coverage being neutral throughout the monitoring period. This peaked in January and February 2024, where 100% of the coverage was reported as neutral.
- Print and Online Media: These platforms also maintained a neutral tone. Online coverage had slight positive shifts during March, influenced by International Women’s Day.

2. Positive Coverage Spikes

While neutral coverage dominated, there were notable instances of positive coverage. Noticeable increases in positive coverage were observed during International Women’s Day celebrations or high-profile appointments of women to governmental positions. For example, March 2024 saw a significant increase in positive coverage across platforms, particularly in radio, where 50% of the coverage was positive.

3. Negative Coverage

Negative coverage was relatively rare but present in some instances: Fana FM radio had instances of negative coverage, particularly in December 2023, where 7% of coverage was negative, often related to traditional gender stereotypes.

Type of Coverage

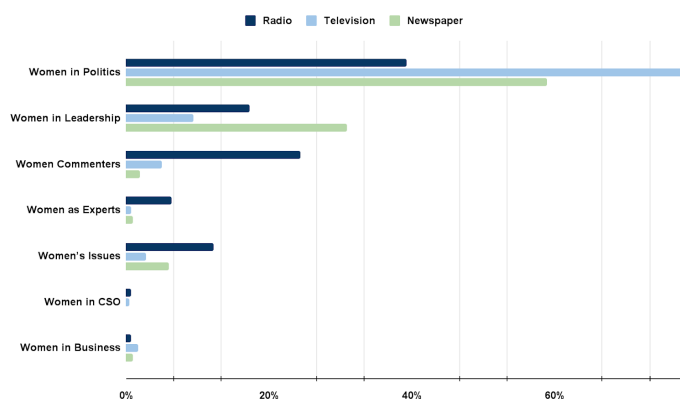


Figure 4: Types of Coverage in Monitored Radio and TV News Programs and Newspaper Articles

- 1. Dominance of Political Representation:** Across all media types, women in political roles received disproportionately high coverage:
- 2. Television:** Political coverage of women peaked over 80% in some months, such as November 2023.
- 3. Print Media:** An average of 60-65% of articles featuring women focused on political roles.
- 4. Radio:** Political coverage was less dominant in radio but still significant, averaging around 45-50% of women-related content.
- 5. Limited Diversity in Representation:** The monitoring revealed a lack of diversity in the types of women covered. Women in leadership roles outside of politics were the second most covered category, but at a much lower rate, typically around 20-30% across platforms. Coverage of women experts was also low, often below 5% in print media and rarely featured in broadcast media. Women in business, academia, and as experts were underrepresented across all media types. Coverage of women's issues was also on a lower range.
- 6. Focus on Women's Issues:** Coverage of women's issues, as opposed to women in specific roles, varied significantly. Radio showed the most balanced coverage, with women's issues receiving up to 33% of coverage in some months. Online media, particularly Addis Standard, covered women's issues, especially regarding gender-based violence and policy impacts. Print and TV media showed less focus on women's issues, often prioritizing coverage of women in official capacities.

Stereotypes

1. Reinforcement of Stereotypes

The programs generally avoided reinforcing harmful stereotypes, maintaining a neutral stance in most coverage. While overt stereotyping was not widespread, subtle reinforcement of gender norms was observed. Some radio programs occasionally reinforced traditional gender roles in discussions about family and societal expectations, such as framing childcare as primarily a mother's responsibility or discussing women's roles in terms of domestic duties. For instance, one of Fana's December news stories discussed Somali marriage traditions, particularly "telefa" or marriage by abduction, with one host mentioning it in a positive light without proper context. He explained that 'telefa' sometimes involves a man abducting a woman due to lack of parental approval, followed by elders attempting to gain the family's consent. This discussion lacked consideration of the woman's perspective and the inherent coercion in such practices, failing to address the harm to women.

Some coverage on Television presented a contrasting portrayal of gender stereotypes, with some stories challenging negative stereotypes while others reinforced problematic narratives.

For instance, EBC's March coverage had some problematic framing in their stories. One story featured a woman who worked as a driver for EBC. While the job is typically seen as a 'male dominated field' the coverage continued to refer to it as 'man's job' instead of the previous more neutral way to call it. In the same program, the journalist teasingly asked the driver if she could make a traditional coffee ceremony. Her response, that while she does "a man's job" outside she fulfills a woman's role at home, these narratives could reinforce certain stereotypes particularly those her career defies. These instances highlight the counterproductive nature of strict gender roles and the need for framing that supports diverse paths for women without confining them to traditional domestic responsibilities.

Another EBC story featured a Ugandan woman's struggle with societal pressure to conceive. Despite her perseverance through multiple failed IVF treatments and miscarriages, the coverage could have delved deeper into the issues of women's fertility but instead leaned towards focusing on the successful IVF treatment of the women and suggested that medical advancements make pregnancy "easy." There is a missed opportunity to explore the societal obligation for women to have children and misses addressing the

deeper issue of stigma and discrimination faced by women who can't conceive. The story of the women should have prompted a deeper examination of the roots of this stigma, rather than what the coverage showed.

2. Efforts to Challenge Stereotypes

Several positive instances of challenging stereotypes were noted. In March 2024 across all media types, there were increased efforts to challenge stereotypes, coinciding with International Women's Day. This included special programs or articles featuring women breaking barriers in various fields. For instance on Fana's September news coverage one program challenged traditional gender stereotypes by highlighting a woman entrepreneur in the livestock business. The host profiled her success in this non-traditional career path for women, going against the expectation that women should stick solely to domestic roles like housewife and caregiver. Showcasing women excelling in diverse occupations defies restrictive gender roles and provides positive examples of women pursuing their talents beyond their homes.

Similarly on Television, EBC's March news coverage challenged stereotypes of women, for instance coverage of Etege Tayitu's leadership during the Adwa war celebrated her strategic mind and many achievements, defying stereotypes that diminish women's roles in warfare and leadership positions. Similarly, the coverage of women's contributions as active participants during the Adwa victory, from providing food to serving as soldiers and spies, highlighted their bravery and diverse roles. This portrayal challenged misconceptions about women's capabilities and showcased them as capable and influential actors, rather than passive bystanders.

3. Missed Opportunities in Challenging Stereotypes

Some programs, especially in radio and television, missed chances to actively challenge gender stereotypes or promote gender equality, often adopting a passive, neutral stance instead. September's Fana News program and Asham program missed chances to critically examine gender assumptions. Some discussions overlooked openings for nuanced dialogue. For instance, on the Asham program when discussing the topic of single mothers, the topic was framed negatively, claiming that declining marriage rates were due to modernized marriages. During the discussion the host suggested reverting to traditional marital values and principles rather than addressing factors

behind rising single motherhood rates. Additionally, the coverage revealed issues with the biased terminology used to discuss family structures. References to "single mothers" carried implicitly negative judgments, while lacking any counterbalancing mention of "single fathers."

While these programs offered chances to challenge existing stereotypes, many of these opportunities were missed. Instead of critically examining and confronting gender stereotypes, the coverage often fell short. Stories that had the potential to provide nuanced perspectives were left underexplored, missing the chance to delve deeper into the complexities of gender issues.

TV Ads Monitoring: Portrayal of Women in TV Ads

This report presents an analysis of the portrayal of women in Ethiopian TV advertisements, focusing on the primary roles and activities given to women. This analysis included 30 advertisements airing on various television channels. Of the 30 ads, 54 % featured women in caregiver roles, such as mothers and homemakers. In contrast, 21% of the ads showcased women in professional roles, depicting them as doctors, nurses, business professionals, and realtors. Additionally, 25% of the ads portrayed women as consumers of household items, fashion, and beauty products.

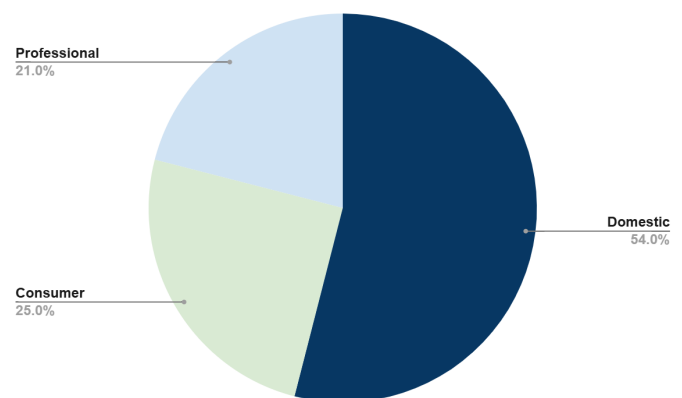


Figure 5: Role of Women in the monitored TV AD's.

When examining the documented activities, the trend becomes even more pronounced. A large sum of the ads depicted women involved in domestic activities such as cleaning, cooking, and taking care of the home.

Summary of findings and Recommendations

Summary of findings

This report presents an eight-month analysis, spanning from August 2023 to March 2024, of the representation and portrayal of women in Ethiopian media. The monitoring included a comprehensive examination of radio, television, newspapers, and online platforms, utilizing both quantitative and qualitative methods to provide a nuanced understanding of how women are featured across various media outlets. The media monitoring focused on multiple Ethiopian media outlets, including Fana FM, Sheger FM, Bisrat FM, EBC, KANA, Addis Standard, Wazema Radio, and Ethiopian Insider. Data collection involved monitoring broadcasts, articles, and online content to evaluate the extent, tone, and nature of women's coverage. Both quantitative metrics (e.g., percentage of airtime, number of articles, diversity of roles,) and qualitative assessments (e.g., stereotypes, representation of issues) were employed to ensure a thorough evaluation.

1. *Underrepresentation and Limited Airtime*

Across all media types, women were underrepresented. While women were mentioned in a some percentage of programs, the actual airtime dedicated to women's coverage remained minimal. For instance, even though women appeared in 60% of TV programs in February, only 6% of the airtime was allocated to their coverage. This trend was prevalent in the monitored radio news programs as well.

2. *Predominantly Neutral Tone*

The tone of coverage was largely neutral across all media platforms, with over 90% of the coverage maintaining an objective tone. While some positive stories highlighted women's achievements, these were exceptions rather than the norm. Negative coverage was rare but did occur, particularly in the context of traditional or biased portrayals on certain radio programs.

3. *Lack of Diversity in Representation*

The roles women occupied in media coverage lacked diversity. Women in governmental positions received the highest coverage, followed by women in leadership positions outside of politics. However, women as experts, commentators, or representatives from various professional and social backgrounds were underrepresented.

The analysis of TV advertisements highlights a varied but predominantly traditional portrayal of women. While some ads show women in professional roles, the majority continue to reinforce conventional gender roles, emphasizing domestic responsibilities.

4. *Missed Opportunities*

While there were some positive examples, such as features on influential women or those challenging traditional roles, media coverage generally missed opportunities to critically examine and challenge gender stereotypes. Stories that could have provided nuanced perspectives often were left without much exploration.

5. *Positive Highlights*

Despite overall trends, positive stories about women appeared across all media types with some variations. The positive stories highlighted women's achievements and the barriers they overcame, serving as inspirational examples. Some coverage addressed important women's issues such as gender-based violence, conflict, human rights, and trafficking. While these stories were not frequent, they effectively showcased specific problems women face.

Notably, on International Women's Day (March 8, 2024), monitored programs, particularly on TV and radio, featured predominantly positive, uplifting, and empowering stories about women. This coverage emphasized that recognizing women's contributions should not be limited to a single day but should be an everyday practice. Although this positive focus on March 8 was commendable, it's important to maintain this tone in other programs and on other days as much as possible. The media monitoring activity suggests that the monitored programs and articles could do more to promote the diverse representation of women. While objectivity is important, a more proactive approach to challenging gender roles and stereotypes could lead to more balanced and inclusive portrayals.

Recommendations

To address these findings and enhance the representation and portrayal of women in Ethiopian media, the following recommendations are proposed:

- 1. Increase Airtime for Women's Coverage:** Media outlets should allocate more airtime and space to stories featuring women or addressing women's issues. This can be achieved by either creating dedicated segments for women's issues in the news programs or ensuring their integration into regular programming.
- 2. Diversify media representation:** Media coverage should feature a wider range of women. This includes showcasing women in various roles, such as experts offering opinions, professionals from different fields, academics, and members of local communities. A more diverse representation will provide a fuller picture of women's contributions and experiences.
- 3. Enhance Positive and Empowering Narratives:** The media should aim to highlight more positive stories that showcase women's achievements and break down stereotypes. This involves featuring stories that challenge traditional gender roles and present women in leadership, innovation, and influence.
- 4. Develop Inclusive Content Strategies:** The media should adopt inclusive and proactive content strategies that actively seek out and highlight diverse women's voices. This includes collaborating with women's organizations, experts, and communities to ensure a wide range of perspectives are represented.
- 5. Regular Monitoring and Reporting:** Continuous monitoring and reporting on the representation of women in the media will help track progress and identify areas for improvement. Media outlets should commit to regular reviews of their content to ensure ongoing enhancement of women's portrayal. By implementing these recommendations, Ethiopian media can play a pivotal role in promoting gender equality and empowering women, contributing to a more balanced and inclusive society.

References

1. Addis Fortune. (n.d.). Addis Fortune. Retrieved November 26, 2024, from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Addis_Fortune?form=MG0AV3
2. Advertisement proclamation, Proclamation No 759/2012, Fed. Negarit Gazeta 18th year No. 59, Addis Ababa, August 27, 2012.
3. BBC News. (2011, May 6). Ethiopia profile. BBC News. Retrieved from <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-13349398>
4. Enguday Alemayehu. (2018). Gender in Ethiopian media landscape: A baseline study. Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung. <https://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/aethiopien/14793.pdf>
5. Haraldsson, A., & Wängnerud, L. (2019). The effect of media sexism on women's political ambition: Evidence from a worldwide study. *Feminist Media Studies*, 19*(4), 525-541. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14680777.2018.1468797>
6. Hate Speech and Disinformation Prevention and Suppression Proclamation, Proclamation No 1185/2020, Fed. Negarit Gazeta 26th Year No. 26, Addis Ababa, 23 March 2020.
7. Media Proclamation, Proclamation No 1238/2012, Fed. Negarit Gazeta 27th Year No. 22, Addis Ababa, 5 April 2021.
8. Santos, Í., Carvalho, L. M., & Portugal e Melo, B. (2022). The media's role in shaping the public opinion on education: A thematic and frame analysis of externalization to world situations in the Portuguese media. *Research in Comparative and International Education*, 17*(1), 29-50. <https://doi.org/10.1177/17454999211057753>
9. Smith, J. (2024). Breaking the glass ceiling: The EBS TV story. Her Campus. Retrieved from <https://www.hercampus.com/school/vcu/breaking-glass-ceiling-ebs-tv-story/?form=MG0AV3>
10. Statista. (2023). Ethiopia: TV stations audience share. Statista. Retrieved August 15, 2023, from <https://www.statista.com/statistics/910279/ethiopia-tv-stations-audience-share/>
11. Wikipedia contributors. (2024, January 2). EBS TV (Ethiopia). In Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia. Retrieved from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/EBS_TV_%28Ethiopia%29?form=MG0AV3

In August 2023, CECOE launched a media monitoring initiative to analyze the representation and portrayal of women in selected media outlets. Over the monitoring period, 262 news programs on radio, 826 news programs, and 30 ads on television, 1,625 articles in print media, and 490 articles on web-based platforms were analyzed.

The findings highlight that women are underrepresented in the media. Coverage tends to focus on women in governmental roles, with less attention given to women in leadership, expertise, and advocacy. However, the analysis also highlights a bright spot—on International Women’s Day, women’s stories took center stage. Across platforms, their achievements were acknowledged and celebrated, demonstrating that amplifying women’s voices is not only possible but impactful. This moment of visibility underscores the potential for sustained, proactive efforts to elevate women’s narratives year-round.

This analysis calls for a transformative shift in media content, urging outlets to elevate women’s voices and celebrate their achievements. CECOE advocates for the media to embrace inclusive content strategies and actively feature diverse women’s perspectives. By doing so, we can pave the way for a more balanced and equitable representation in the media landscape.

Join CECOE in this crucial journey to ensure that women’s stories are not just heard but celebrated, enriching every corner of our media with the vibrant and varied experiences of women.



ኅብረት ለምርጫ (CECOE)
የኢትዮጵያ የሲቪል ማህበራት ድርጅቶች ኅብረት ለምርጫ
Coalition of Ethiopian Civil Society
Organizations for Elections

Netherlands Institute for
Multiparty Democracy



Funded by the
European Union

Address

**Bole Brass Heritage Plaza in front of Century
Real State 3rd floor office number 511**

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Tel.:+251 11 811 1455

Email: info@cecoe.org

[@cecoeeth](https://www.instagram.com/cecoeeth)



[Cecoe.org](https://www.Cecoe.org)