

**TRENDS IN NEWSPAPER COVERAGE OF WOMEN
IN ELECTIONS IN KENYA- THE CASE OF 1997,
2002, 2007 GENERAL ELECTIONS**

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
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DECLARATION

This research project report is my original work and has not been published or presented elsewhere for any examination for an award of any degree in any institution.

Signature:  Date: 28/11/08

Dulo Faith Apondi

This project has been submitted for examination with my approval as the University Supervisor.

Signature:  Date: 03/12/2008

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DEDICATION

To my 'baby' Diana Awino for always looking up to me as a role model and keeping me on toes.

To all the women who courageously continue their battle against gender bias and discrimination and of course work tirelessly for women's empowerment, equal rights & social justice.

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Last but not least, I cannot forget the love and care of my best friend, Rosemary Nzuki Wambari. Thank you for everything.

ABSTRACT

There is no doubt that media messages and images are a powerful tool in shaping attitudes, perceptions and values concerning women in the society. This research was done to establish how the media especially the newspapers accord coverage to female political aspirants in Kenya.

The *Nation* and the *Standard* newspapers were picked as the population as they have a wide reach and readership. These newspapers were studied, analyzed and inferences drawn out of them.

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The findings strongly point out that women are indeed accorded the least coverage compared to their male counterparts. Content analysis of the two dailies revealed that for a woman to be accorded favorable coverage, then she needs to fight it out with the male opponents and prove beyond doubt that she is indeed the best. Others who received significant coverage were either in political rallies called by male politicians or were associated in a way with male politicians, already considered tough.

It is the hope of the researcher that the findings will specifically enhance and support gender equality activities by highlighting weaknesses in the newspapers in their portrayal of female political aspirants and by proposing practical solutions to these weaknesses.

The results of the study will help gender scholars to look into practical ways of correcting this imbalance.

CHAPTER ONE: GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

The participation of women in the decision making processes, whether at the local or international level in Kenya has been minimal¹. This can partly be attributed to institutional biases, negative socio-cultural norms and beliefs as well as inhibitive statutory provisions, which hinder serious participation and recognition of women in political leadership in Kenya.

According to the Women Exit poll conducted by Strategic Public Relations and Research firm (SPRR)² for International Republican Institute (IRI) ³ during the last general election, women in Kenya are consistently facing the challenge of non acceptance as leaders in a male dominated society that barely believes women can deliver for their political parties. Most of Kenya's political parties are dominated and owned by men and this makes it even more difficult for female aspirants to actively participate and influence political decisions in major political parties in Kenya (IRI, 2007).

Women should have equal rights and entitlements to human, social, economic and cultural development, and an equal voice in civil and political life. It therefore follows that the exercise of these rights and entitlements leads to outcomes which are fair and just and which enable women to have the same power as men to define the objectives of development (Maina and Mbugua, 1996).

¹ Africa Women's development Network (femnet@africaonline.co.ke)-African Women's participation in politics and decision making in a Globalizing World

² One of the leading pollsters and research companies in Kenya.

³ An organization funded by the US Government that conducts international political programmes.

Critically, the level of control women can wield in politics depends on the mass media as it influences public opinion. Since the mass media can reach a great number of people, it can be used to disseminate various messages targeting various groups. In this, the media thus plays a great role as a change agent determining what reaches the public and what does not (Siebert et al, 1956).

The culturally defined traditional gender roles that reinforce male dominance and female subordination can, and more often than not, do quite easily find their way into the mass media. It is therefore probable that the mass media can become a barrier rather than a facilitator to the envisaged social change.

This study is set out to analyse the portrayal and coverage of political female aspirants during the political campaigns of the 1997, 2002 and 2007 general elections in Kenya.

In particular, the study is aimed at determining the extent of gender bias in the coverage and portrayal of women aspirants' achievements, abilities and potential, as well as the writers' opinions on the likelihood of a candidate to win the elections over time. Through its portrayal of women as incapable of political leadership and its failure to give the necessary emphasis on leadership abilities of female aspirants, the media can intentionally and unintentionally frustrate the fight for gender equality.

1.2 Background of the study

The issue of women's position in society was certainly debated publicly in Greece in the fifth and fourth centuries BC. For instance, the work of Euripides in his tragedies debate on the role of women in society is an indication of a definite concern with gender issues.

Gender role differentiation is structurally and culturally defined in ways that create and reinforce relationships of male dominance and female subordination. Ideas of what patterns of behaviour and activities are appropriate or inappropriate for women and men are largely social and cultural in origin and they are socialized into different roles on the basis of sex. They are rewarded when their behaviour is seen as sex appropriate and ridiculed or reprimanded when they deviate from the established culture norms (Ere in Gallagher, 1981).

It is not surprising therefore that the portrayal of women in the media is characterized by biases and stereotypic representations. Even in developed North American and European countries, women are underrepresented in media coverage and depicted predominantly in domestic and maternal roles as beautiful or sexual objects in passive relationships with men and are likely to be in service occupations rather than positions of authority (Gallagher, 1981).

According to the 1995 Global Media Monitoring Project report, women appear in the news media in a narrow and mostly negative range of roles as victims as mothers and as 'eyes candy'⁴ (UNDP, 2003).

When women go to parliament, the knowledge about them is weighted towards the causes of under representation and not the consequences of their presence there. Women tend to work more behind the scenes rather than on direct challenges. They are more loyal to their party lines. A study conducted in Rwanda after the genocide found out that women considered themselves to have a greater concern with the grassroots politics. Women are likely to raise issues of equality, education, women's relatively poor economic position, childcare, violence against women and integration of gender into the issues of employment and pay. In terms of policy agenda, gender issues seem to have been established as part of the agenda. It concludes that an increase in the number of women in parliament may be influential in comparison with a government committed to develop legislation that promotes women rights.

Studies in Kenya found that women were commonly portrayed as victims (of war, rape), care providers in the household and as objects of art, war and famine (Lukalo and Goro, 1995). This has however not changed much even though women have assumed more leadership roles in the society. In this case, for instance, the number of women in the August House has been on the increase. Moreover, a study by Wagaki Mwangi (1991) that compared Kenyan newspapers for the years 1970s, 1980s and 1990s found an

⁴ 'Eyes candy' in this context refers to women being displayed for others to see. They are to be seen ornamentally decorating the male-dominated rallies.

increase in the negative portrayal of women. The study also found that 76 % of rural female characters were portrayed as criminals or victims.

The Convention of the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) is largely regarded as the main international instruments that emerged from the decade of women (1975-1985).⁵ This convention is considered a milestone in the gender debate in the sense that it advanced the objectives of the Gender and Development approach⁶. CEDAW's origin can be traced to the Declaration of the Elimination of Discrimination against women drawn by the Commission on the status of women in 1963 and adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations in 1967(AWC Features, 2004).

Global and national changes in the view of gender issues have led to a considerable improvement in the coverage and portrayal of women in the media over the last decade. None the less it is evident that coverage of women is still low and their portrayal is stereotyped (Nzomo, 1992).

⁵ The UN observed 1975 as International Women's year and held the first conference on Women between June 19th –July 2nd in Mexico City. 22 Governments and 22 NGOs all headed by the Canadian Government adopted the World Plan of action. This provisional agenda underlined the status of women in society-actual, potential and ideal-and the obstacles to be overcome in attaining equal rights, opportunities and responsibilities. This action was later adopted by the UN General Assembly. The second conference was held at mid-decade in 1980 in Copenhagen. The World Conference to Review and appraise its achievements was held in Nairobi Kenya (15-27 July 1985). The fourth and last conference was held in Beijing China in 1995 and it was declared the declaration platform.

⁶ Works on practical and strategic levels to bring about change in gender relations; work in participatory way with men and women making sure to involve men since it takes both men and women to change gender relations; takes broader, historically informed view of gender relations and its social context.

These biases are most pronounced in the political field which the society, and by extension, the media considers a male domain. As Prof Nzomo (1992) puts it, Kenya's record of women's participation in politics and other decision making processes is pathetic by any standards.

The attitudinal cultural and structural impediments that ostracize women especially in their quest for upward political mobility which emanate out of our cultural backgrounds, which are patriarchal in nature encompass numerous gender stereotypes. These explain why despite the electorate in Kenya being more female than male, women do not elect their own to parliament to reflect the dominance. Economic disparities, which favor men, are also inhibiting factors bearing in mind that political campaigns are really very expensive and so only the rich are able to afford them.

The historic political transition in Kenya following the 2002 General Election which saw the exit of Kenya African National Union (KANU)⁷ after 40 years in power brought good tidings for the country's women. Nine (9) women were elected to Parliament while eight (8) were nominated by the ruling National Rainbow Coalition (NARC)⁸ and KANU bringing the total to seventeen (17). For the first time in Kenya's history, seven (7) women were appointed to ministerial posts – three (3) as full cabinet ministers and four (4) as assistant ministers. In the civic elections, ninety six (96) women captured seats. In

⁷ The political party that ruled Kenya for nearly 40 years after its independence from British colonial rule in 1963 until its electoral loss at the end of 2002.

⁸ In preparation of the 2002 elections, National Alliance Party of Kenya allied itself to Liberal Democratic Party to form it. It won a landslide victory over KANU in the General elections.

the 2003 by-election, another woman won the seat left vacant by her husband, bringing the number of women MPs to eighteen (18) (AWC Features, 2004).

Under KANU, the performance of women in politics had been consistently poor. But as the wind of democracy swept the country in the run up to the elections, women saw many political avenues being created for them. The parties that merged to form NARC were more receptive to the idea of men sharing political power with women.

Most women candidates aligned themselves with NARC, the then party of the moment which was seen as being more progressive than KANU. Its campaigns were on the platform of social service improvement, with a promise of free education, free health care and improvement of the infrastructure. KANU on the other hand pegged its campaigns to providing a youthful leadership while the other key party, FORD PEOPLE⁹, focused on improving the economy. It was mainly under NARC that most women were elected.

The 2007 General Elections saw twenty one (21) women elected as legislators, a slight margin of improvement from the previous elections. However, the death of Lorna Laboso (Sotik) and Kipkalya Kones (Bomet) in an air crash reduced the number to (20). Following this, Orange Democratic Movement (ODM)¹⁰ a leading party nominated women contenders for the by-elections for both constituencies.

⁹ The Forum for the Restoration of Democracy-People is a political party in Kenya. It won 14 out of the 212 elected seats in 2002. It is currently part of the newly created Party of National Unity.

¹⁰ Refers to a political party in Kenya, which originated as a single party that was formed as a result of the 2005 Kenyan Constitutional Referendum. The party is a union of those who opposed the referendum at that time.

Historically, a woman was first elected into Kenyan Parliament in 1969 ie six years after Independence while another one was nominated into the parliament along with eleven male members. Except for the period 1974 to 1979 which recorded six and five respectively showing a slight improvement in women representation, the general trend had been that of marginalization of women in political decision making at the national level. A woman was appointed to the cabinet for the first time in 1974, ie more than ten years after independence as an assistant minister and only in 1995 did Kenya have the first woman minister.

The mass media has a critical role to play in helping Kenya achieve gender balance in the political front. This is because it is viewed as a credible source of information on all spheres of life. Women's views are solicited mainly in the framework of 'average citizens and rarely as experts, and that were political or economic success stories overwhelmingly masculine. Politically active women are often disparaged and stereotyped by the media (AWC Features, 2004).

During a workshop on 'Taking Women's political agenda on Board,' it emerged that the low representation of women has profound consequences on whether or not the women are perceived as competent leaders. In this case for instance, when women appear in news where they are portrayed as victims of violence or as physical objects and rarely as experts, resources or leaders, then they will not have any impact on the society as a whole. Authority is not recognized by the media content. It is created by the media content.

The changing political climate favors women in Kenya's future, but though increased democratization has opened space and opportunities for them, the positions in important decision making levels in parliament is still limited.

1.3 Problem Statement

The number of women seeking parliamentary seats increased from fifty (50) in 1997 to about eighty (80) in 2002 but despite concerted efforts by advocacy groups dealing with gender issues in the country, Kenyan women failed to make a great impact during the polls. The 222-member parliament in 2002 had only eighteen (18) women while the 2007 General Elections yielded twenty one (21) women out of the 222-member parliament.

To the extent that political representation is a crucial antecedent to gender-sensitive development approaches owing to its advocacy and legislative implications, an analysis of media biases in the coverage and portrayal of women candidates in the run up to the General Elections is crucial.

This study endeavors to find out how women-who constitute majority voters, 52 percent of the total voters¹¹, both in the parliamentary and civic elections-featured in the media. Of interest here is how media helped or otherwise hindered efforts at addressing gender imbalance in political representation and women's attempt to enter the political arena.

The study thus seeks to highlight weaknesses in the mass media that need to be addressed as an important step towards creating a more rational and gender sensitive environment for campaigning and consequent political participation by all Kenyans.

¹¹ Africa Women's development Network (femnet@africaonline.co.ke)-African Women's participation in politics and decision making in a Globalizing World

It also seeks to find out the extent of gender bias in the coverage and portrayal of female aspirants by the *Standard* and the *Nation* which are the two main dailies in Kenya.

To achieve this goal, the study compared the extent of prominence given to articles on women candidates, the contents of such articles as well as the number and prominence given them during the run up to the elections.

1.4 Research Questions

- What has the trend in the newspaper coverage of women political aspirants been?
- What was the nature of media coverage?
- What was the quality level in coverage in terms of balance and bias?

1.5 Objectives of the study

Overall objectives

- The overall objective of this study is to establish the trend of media coverage provided to women political aspirants and their overall participation in political campaigns and subsequent elections.

Specific objectives

- To determine the trends in the coverage of women political aspirants in the two main dailies in Kenya
- To determine the nature of media coverage in terms of number of articles, their size, type, placement, prominence.
- To determine the quality of coverage in terms of balance.

- To establish bias if any in the coverage accorded women candidates.

1.6 Theoretical framework

Despite their educational or other advances, women continue to face obstacles in entering all levels of political life and decision making resulting in the neglect of women priorities at all levels by everyone.

Based on experiences of past democratic development within and outside Africa, there is almost an agreement that the desired goals of efficiency, transparency and accountability, at the local leadership levels will not be assured unless institutions are subject to public scrutiny and review. It will not be assured without greater public participation, women and men, young and old, in decision making.

In 2007, the need for greater inclusion of women into positions of leadership has been mentioned as part of political rhetoric of the incumbent government and competing political parties. In most cases it makes sense to appear to be advancing the women's course and in what has become a cliché, most political leaders conjure up these issues in times of campaign to capture the very rich women suffrage.

This study thus will emphasize the empowerment model which maintains that women have to challenge oppressive structures and situations simultaneously at different levels. In addition it is going to adopt Agenda Setting Theory.

1.6.1 Agenda-Setting Theory

Traditionally, agenda setting theory explores the relationship the news media has on the perceived salience of key political issues. The media has the ability to influence what issues people think about even if it doesn't tell people what to think of those particular issues. According to McCombs, the press presents the public with a continuous stream of clues about the relative importance of various issues and events through its patterns and selection of news. This in turn thereby sets the agenda for the society (Tan, 1985).

Agenda setting research has shown that there is a correlation between what the media deems important and salience in the public mind. In simpler terms, agenda setting claims that what the media finds important will eventually be mirrored in what people think are important. It is important to note that the notion of agenda setting is positive association between the media and the audience (Cohen, 1963).

According to Walter Lippman, people have limited opportunities to observe important events first hand. They thus depend upon the press to provide them with information of those events. The role of the press therefore is to provide the readers with views from the world outside from which they can form pictures in their minds (Tan, 1985).

1.6.1.1 Origins of Agenda-Setting Theory

Traditionally, Agenda-Setting theory explores the relationship the media has on the perceived salience of key political issues. McCombs and Shaw empirically tested this theory during the 1972 presidential campaign between Helms and Hunt. They wanted to try and show that the media has the ability to influence what issues people think about even if it doesn't tell people what to think of those particular issues¹². According to the two above, the transfer of salience from both news and advertising to the public mind can be demonstrated.

From agenda setting stems the formation of public opinions and the distribution of pros and cons of a particular issue. Agenda setting shifts the focus of attention away from immediate effects on attitudes and opinions to longer term effects on cognitions. The notion of agenda setting thus relies on the transfers of issues from the media to the public.

1.6.1.2 Core Assumptions and statements

Agenda setting is the creation of public awareness and concern of salient issues by the media. Agenda Setting assumes that the press and the media do not reflect reality but rather, they filter and shape it. It also assumes that the media concentration on a few issues and subjects leads the public to perceive those issues as more important than others. Agenda setting thus helps us understand the pervasive role of the media.

¹² McCombs, M & Shaw D.L. (1972) The Agenda Setting function of the Mass Media. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 36, 176-185.

No wonder, Bernard Cohen (1963) stated that 'the press may not be successful much of the time in telling people what to think, but it is stunningly successful in telling its readers what to think about.'

1.6.1.3 Critique

Agenda-setting theory comes from a scientific perspective, because it predicts that if people are exposed to the same media, they will place importance on the same issues. According to Chaffee and Bergers (1997) criteria for scientific theories, Agenda setting is a good theory. This is because it has explanatory power since it explains why most people prioritize the same issues as important,. It also has predictive power as it predicts that if people are exposed to the same media, they are likely to feel that the same issues are important. It is also easy to understand and it helps organize existing knowledge of media effects. Moreover, it is a springboard for further research.

It is also worthy to note that if people aren't exposed to the same media then they won't feel the same issues are important.

In this case for instance, the media was ever present during the campaigns and subsequent elections. The placement of articles, the use of color and top stories on news programming made it clear that citizens should have these events as important issues. If they chose to accord a particular candidate more coverage then people would tend to view the candidate as important while others would also think otherwise.

Therefore the media isn't extremely successful; in telling the audience what to think of issues, but most of them would believe that the highlighted persons or events are more important for along period of time.¹³

1.7 Hypotheses of the study

- Gender portrayal of women candidates in the media during the campaign periods prior to 1997, 2002, 2007 General elections was biased in terms of quantity and quality.
- During the campaigns prior to the 2002 general Election and in the subsequent elections, the media judged female contestants negatively in terms of probability of winning the election.
- In 2007 General Election campaign period, it is the women who were associated with male politicians perceived stronger in the elections who received much coverage.

¹³ McCombs M & Shaw D.L. (1972) The Agenda Setting functions of the Mass Media. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 36, 176-185.

1.8 Justification of the study

Like in many other parts of the world the problem of gender discrimination in Kenya is deeply engraved in the culture and the practice of patriarchy. The proponents of gender insensitivity have found this as a reason to say this is how things have always been and so should remain. There is no clear indication of commitment by either the government or other institutions to promote gender equality and participation of both men and women in politics (Maina et al, 1996).

If women are to fully participate in policy making and implementation it is important that impediments which limit their participation in politics are eliminated. Given that the mass media has a central role to play in shaping peoples' views, beliefs and behaviors, it follows that an understanding of media portrayal of women is crucial in designing practical solutions to challenges of gender imbalance.

Over the years, women's participation in politics has been at its bare minimum. Prior to the 2002 general elections, very few women if any held ministerial or parliamentary positions. In fact, the KANU regime undermined the role of women in politics by failing to appoint women to ministerial positions. The coming into power of NARC after the December elections ushered in a new era in terms of female representation in Parliament. This was mainly due to the fact that the new coalition party, NARC, was more receptive to the idea of equal political opportunities for both men and women. The new government also appointed women to ministerial positions in recognition of their contributions in edging out former ruling party KANU from power.

It is hoped that this study will increase the understanding of the role of the media in advancing women's political empowerment. It will also seek to enhance and support gender equity by highlighting weaknesses in the mass media in terms of editorial policies in its portrayal of female political aspirants and if possible propose solutions to the same. If the editorial policy for instance of a particular media house projects that women are accorded more coverage then it is likely to emerge that the women would be well known to other people they would want to reach out to.

In addition, this study will help gender scholars to look into practical ways of correcting the gender imbalance and not just look at the complaints about the inadequacies of media coverage.

1.9 Scope and Limitations of the study

The study will be confined to the Print Media and in particular the two main daily newspapers namely the *Nation* and the *Standard* Newspapers. This restriction was necessitated by financial constraints on one hand and the need for deep analysis on the other hand as well as time constraints.

It is worthy to note that a great emphasis has been given to 2002 elections. This is because since independence, it is in 2002 that the highest presence of women legislators in the August House in Kenya's political history was felt for the first time. It was a sure upward movement even though still an embarrassing representation compared to other parts of Africa. This year recorded a total of 18 out of the total number of 222 members. Uganda and Tanzania for instance had 75 and 61 women parliamentarians respectively by that time.

However, the other two General Elections monitored helped in establishing the trend of coverage.

The researcher was not able to compare print to electronic coverage to give a wholesome picture on how the media covered the female political aspirants.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

Generally, the mass media greatly influences people's perceptions and opinions because of the belief they have in it (Tan, 1985). By singling out some topics and issues for emphasis and prominence, mass media increases the saliency and importance of such topics to the audience leading to increased discussion of topics through interpersonal channels. If one person gets to hear about something from the media then he/she is able to tell others about it and this forms the basis of discussion for a number of people (Maina and Mwangi, 1994).

Democracy and good governance are founded upon the basic tenet of participation of all the people irrespective of sex, religion, ethnicity or any other distinction. Until this is met, there can never be any reasonable measure of democracy (Okolo, 1994).

In Kenya the participation of women in politics both as aspirants and voters has for a long time been regarded as a privilege rather than a right (Maina and Mwangi, 1996). As such, the weight and importance of women participation in the governance of their country has been lessened. This calls for women empowerment. The media can help in this as it is capable of informing the society about women and their issues. In turn, this will help the society appreciate and look at women in a different perspective since they will now have understood the women.

During the reintroduction of multiparty politics in Kenya, the media played a major role by sensitizing people on the need of good governance. It also offered the requisite political education to facilitate agitation for multi party democracy. This it was able to do by highlighting in the various channels the need to vote and the fact that the vote shapes the future.

The most crucial role of the media in Africa is the establishment of open, democratic and stable societies. However this is encumbered by many hurdles including political interference, poor financial base and inadequate human resource (Ochillo, 1993).

This section seeks to review the relevant previous studies on portrayal of women aspirants in the mass media i.e. where they appear and of course the effect that this has on them, with coverage in the political arena forming the core of the review.

2.2 The Concept of Mass Media Effects

The media has a strong social and cultural impact upon society. This is posited upon its ability to reach a wide audience which often sends a strong and influential message. It is through the persuasiveness of the media that it reaches its target audience. The mass media thus affects how their audiences think and consequently behave.

Denis McQuail's Uses and Gratifications model places emphasis on why audiences consume media. Firstly, audiences have the need to reinforce their own behavior by identifying with roles and values presented in the media. Secondly, the audience needs to

feel some kind of interaction with other people. Thirdly, there is need for security in the audience's lives. The media offers a window to the world that allows education and the acquisition of information. Fourthly, there is need for entertainment in terms of emotional release such as laughter. In essence, the audience is an active receptor of media content which in turn changes their perception.

2.3 Women in politics

It is clear that women are a majority of the voter population though eventually they turn out to be the under represented. Women have often been socialized into believing that the political arena is for men only. Thus their participation in the political and elective office is at low level. Although some women have attempted to enter the political field, the numbers of women members of Parliament are still very few.

Politics is still a hostile terrain for women the world over. Women have been socialized to occupy private spaces. In fact politics is the most public of public places (Mucai et al, 1995).

It is only until a couple of decades ago that voices of women were heard. However, there is no significant change. In fact as it is now, women are hardly represented in institutions of governance (Norwegian Church Aid, 2004).

Although there is no law in Kenya that bars women from participating in the politics, the women have a lot of hurdles in their bid to realize their right to political participation. The culture of patriarchy in Kenya has ensured male domination in both political and public life (Ibid). In return women have not had equal opportunities to contribute to

society especially in decision making and leadership. In some communities for instance, male politicians do not face any competition from a woman for elective positions as it is deemed a taboo.

These cultural barriers explain why there is little correlation between women's level of education and their political participation. Personal empowerment does not translate into political empowerment for women because society is not ready to accept women in these roles. There appears to be a tense relationship between women in politics and the media that is seen to reinforce societal stereotypes about women not belonging.

Politics in Kenya is characterized by violence as well as threats of violence and verbal abuse. More often than not, they are aimed at women on purpose to discourage them from venturing into politics. Moreover, women are physically more vulnerable and culturally more damaged by character assassination. Again, they are less likely to survive economic loss (AWC Features, 2004).

During the nomination exercise in November 2007, women aspirants were subjected to physical beatings and rape, abductions and even deliberate delay and hijacking of the nominating exercises in order to cause conflict with women's other gender role performances. In September, Florah Igoki Terah, an ODM Kenya Parliamentary candidate in North Imenti Constituency in Meru, was attacked and tortured near her home. Ms Alice Onduto, a parliamentary aspirant for Lugari constituency who lost in the nominations was shot dead while on her way home in Nairobi's South B Estate on

December 1. Such violence intimidates the female voters and deny hem opportunity to support the candidates of their choice. The aspirants themselves are so traumatized psychologically and physically intimidated into giving up on the quest for elective positions (Ogada, 2007).

In December 1992 for instance, Kenya held its first multiparty elections since the re introduction of multiparty politics. This General Election was held against a backdrop of politically instigated violence in Rift Valley, Western and Coastal regions in which hundreds of people were killed and thousands displaced. There were many reported cases of rape and other forms of violence targeted at women voters and aspirants.

Over time, violence has marred elections in Kenya, making it harder for women to participate fully (Norwegian Church Aid, 2004).

In the last general election, Julia Ojiambo, though a veteran politician had an uphill task in her bid to win the ODM-K nomination. She did not cause the impact many would have expected her to make. No one felt her presence even during the campaign trail. She had former Vice President, now Deputy Prime Minister Musalia Mudavadi to contend with in her native Western Province. While launching his presidential vision, Musalia asked Prof Ojiambo to step down for him to increase his chances of winning the ticket to State House. This is a clear indication that Mudavadi considered Ojiambo 'not fit' in the race for the top post.

Charity Ngilu, the first woman in Kenyan History to run for presidency took so long to declare her stand during the same period. It is only Justice and Constitutional Affairs Minister Martha Karua who proved that if given chance women have what it takes to be leaders in the political field. She has recently declared her stand to vie for the 2012 presidential election, a move that shows women cannot just be mere spectators and cheerleaders if their male counterparts in politics.

Apart from politically instigated violence during electioneering period, there is the issue of commercialization of elections and subsequent corruption. Politicians buy votes as others give handouts and yet others make promises that are directly linked to their vast resources. Since women do not have resources and/or will not buy votes they are prone to lose. Again it is quite expensive to vie for a seat (Ibid).

Kenya's pervasive patriarchal culture ostracizes unmarried women who seek elective positions. In fact single women face an additional and severe disadvantage in the presidential and national elections.

Political participation is a human right, recognized in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Article 21(1)).¹⁴ Despite their educational and other advances, women still face major obstacles in entering senior positions in society. They are poorly represented at all levels of political life and decision making, leading to the wide spread neglect of women's priorities at all levels by politicians and bureaucrats. Figures

¹⁴ Everyone has the right to take part in the Government of his country, directly or through freely chosen representative.

published in 1999 in the Human Development Report show that women held only 12.7 percent of the world's parliamentary seats, and only 8.7 percent of those in the least developed countries (UNDP, 1999).

In the past, women parliamentary aspirants have often been accused of taking a back seat neglecting active participation in politics and the fight for political space. The Exit Poll on the popularity female political aspirants conducted just before the 2007 General Elections indicated that women favorability as potential political parliamentary contenders is quite low. In spite of this, more women were determined to get into parliament than before. To face and overcome these challenges, it is important for the women to understand what the electorate thinks about them and their popularity at the constituency level. They therefore require information empowerment that will help them understand the pertinent issues at the grass roots level better in order to craft out well informed campaign strategies for any other elections (IRI, 2007).

So far, there has been little impact from the women representatives in Parliament. In the Ninth Parliament, it is only Njoki Ndung'u, a nominated MP, who came up with the Sexual Offences Bill.

An article by Martha Musee ¹⁵argues that even if women were given these posts, they have very little influence or contributions in Parliament. Suggestions have been made to improve women representation in parliament such as affirmative action. Unfortunately, this measure tends to benefit only the wealthy, prominent and those affiliated to

¹⁵ Lack of Economic muscle may dim women's prospects in polls.

prominent figures. A case at hand is the 'Maendeleo ya Wanawake' elections where only the prominent features and won major seats.

Since Independence, women representation in Parliament has been minimal. The table below shows that the percentage of women in Parliament has hardly ever gone beyond 4 percent. 2002 however saw a 4.4 percent with the most recent election, 2007, scooping a whopping 9.46 percent.

Women representation in Parliament since independence

Year	Women	Men	Total	Percentage of women
1963	0	124	124	0.0
1966	0	28	28	0.0
1969	2	168	170	1.2
1974	6	164	170	3.5
1979	5	165	170	2.9
1983	4	166	170	2.4
1988	3	197	200	1.0
1992	7	193	200	3.5
1997	8	214	222	3.6
2002	18	204	222	8.1
2007	21	200	222	9.46

Source-The Electoral Commission adopted by African Women and Child Information Network-Gender Monitoring Report.

It is however worthy to note that following the by elections done in Bomet and Sotik following the deaths of Kipkalya Kones and Lorna Laboso, the number of Women Legislators has increased from 21 to 22 thereby making it a 9.91 percent.

Being the majority voters, constituting 52 percent of the total population in Kenya, women can vote in candidates who are sensitized to their needs if they are mobilized

properly. However, studies have shown that even though women are aware of such candidates, they are either manipulated by other candidates or their husbands giving them no free choice in the voting (Mucai et al, 1995).

The concept of women's political empowerment has not been well articulated with clear indicators of empowerment as well as mechanisms for continuous monitoring and evaluation. Participation of women in political and public decision making is critical to the actualization of gender equality. Women must thus command real political power if their concerns are to be prioritized meaningfully in the national agenda.

2.4 Kenya's policy on women

Kenya has ratified several international human rights instruments that affect women's human rights, namely the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) to which Kenya acceded to in 1984, the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women of 1993 and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action of 1995¹⁶. However these laws have not been incorporated into Kenya's Municipal laws, except of the Beijing one. Very little has been done to ensure that Kenya's domestic law conforms with International standards in respect to women's human rights. Women continue to be unsubordinated as there is no legal binding to do otherwise (Nzomo, 92).

¹⁶ Women's equal participation in decision making is not only a demand for simple justice or democracy but can also be seen as a necessary condition for women's interest to be taken into account. Achieving the goal of equal participation of women and men in decision making will provide a balance that more accurately reflects the composition of society and is needed in order to strengthen democracy and promote its proper functioning.

On a positive note, it has emerged that with the social, cultural and economic changes sweeping Africa today, more opportunities have opened for women to move into positions from which they can have an impact on the content of news coverage.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY OF DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

3.1 Introduction

This research employed content analysis. It combined both qualitative and quantitative approaches. This chapter contains the population, sampling design, data collection techniques, data processing and analysis.

3.2 Population

This study utilized data from the main local dailies, *Nation* and *Standard*. This is because of their wide reach.

3.3 Sampling Design:

This study employed purposive sampling design. It sampled the *Nation* and *Standard* Newspapers as they are widely circulated and fairly objective. All the issues under the period of coverage were exhaustively analyzed.

3.4 Data collection techniques:

This research combined both qualitative and quantitative methods to collect data. An exhaustive content analysis of the two main dailies was done.

3.5 Data processing and analysis:

A code sheet was designed and used to record the coverage of all the issues ie under study, of the two Newspapers. The code sheet was used to show whether the coverage

was biased, negative or positive. All articles however small were listed as coverage. Ms Excel computer package was used to store the data and draw the charts and graphs.

The quantitative analysis dealt with the descriptive data which had been used to summarize the information. It involved the measurements of frequency with which the aspirants are mentioned, amount of space allocated to them, placement of the news items. The qualitative analysis basically looked at the assessment of whether coverage was positive or negative. This was in terms of context-the way the story is framed and the content-overt facts and tone of the story.

3.5.1 Unit of analysis

Frequency: Number of articles

Space: This is defined in terms of squared centimeters allocated to articles..

Type of article: This is defined as News, Features, Commentary, Editorial, Letter, Cartoon, and Picture

Placement: Defined as Front Page, Back Page, Inside Page, Feature/Magazine Section

Prominence: Defined as Edition lead, Page lead, bold text, boxed/colored article, enhanced/reversed headline, picture illustration, main editorial, special commentary

Origin: This is defined as local, foreign, international syndicated

Source: This is defined as who/what/where article came from

Subject: Theme focused on the story

Balance: This is defined as very balance, balanced, average, biased, very biased.

Portrayal: This basically refers to the representation of the whole article

3.6 Research Design:

This study employed Content Analysis. This is because it is popular with mass media researches as it provides efficient way to investigate the content of the media as well as being a valuable tool in answering the many mass media questions (Wimmer and Dominick, 1983).

Content Analysis has various advantages. It is a systematic replicable technique for compressing many words into fewer content categories. It is also unobtrusive and useful in dealing with large volumes of data (Berelson, 1952).

As pointed out, content analysis is normally employed for various purposes which include describing communication content, hypothesis of message characteristics, comparing media content to the real world, assessing the image of particular group in society and establishing a starting point for studying mass media effects.

Variables

Dependent variable:

Quality of presentation and Quantity of appearance

- Quality emphasizes in the presentation, when it appears, where in the newspaper, perceived probability of winning.
- Frequency of appearance of both articles and photos.

Independent Variable:

Gender of the candidate

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This study set out to find out the trend of media coverage and consequently portrayal of female parliamentary aspirants in general elections in Kenya. Of interest here was whether there had been gender biases in the overall media coverage of the same. This chapter thus presents the main findings of the study. It is divided into two broad sections: The first section presents the trends and patterns in the coverage while the second section deals with the nature of the media coverage in terms of frequency, amount of coverage, article type, space allocation, placement, prominence as well as balance.

Since the *Nation* and the *Standard* receive the most readership in Kenya, an analysis of the two is presupposed to be readily applicable and acceptable in the formulation of media strategies in political advancement of women. The stories in these newspapers were read, measured, analyzed, categorized and coded for the purpose of description and analysis.

4.2 Trends and Patterns of coverage of women candidates in newspapers

Although women were generally given little attention by the two newspapers, the quality of coverage varied from candidate to candidate. Over the period, it emerged that those women who are well known and have been MPs were treated differently from those who were contesting for the first time. Towards the end, it also emerged that women associated with perceived strong male politicians were accorded significant coverage. The following section gives a detailed description of these patterns and the candidates

comprising the above. The main issue here is to establish the level of emphasis the female candidates are given in terms of space allocation and placement.

4.2.1. Coverage of front, inside and back page

Distribution of Articles in the *Nation* and the *Standard* by gender of candidates

The following tables (Table 4.1-4.11) and figures (Fig 4.1-4.11) show appearances of parliamentary candidates by gender in the *Nation* and the *Standard* newspapers during the whole period under study.

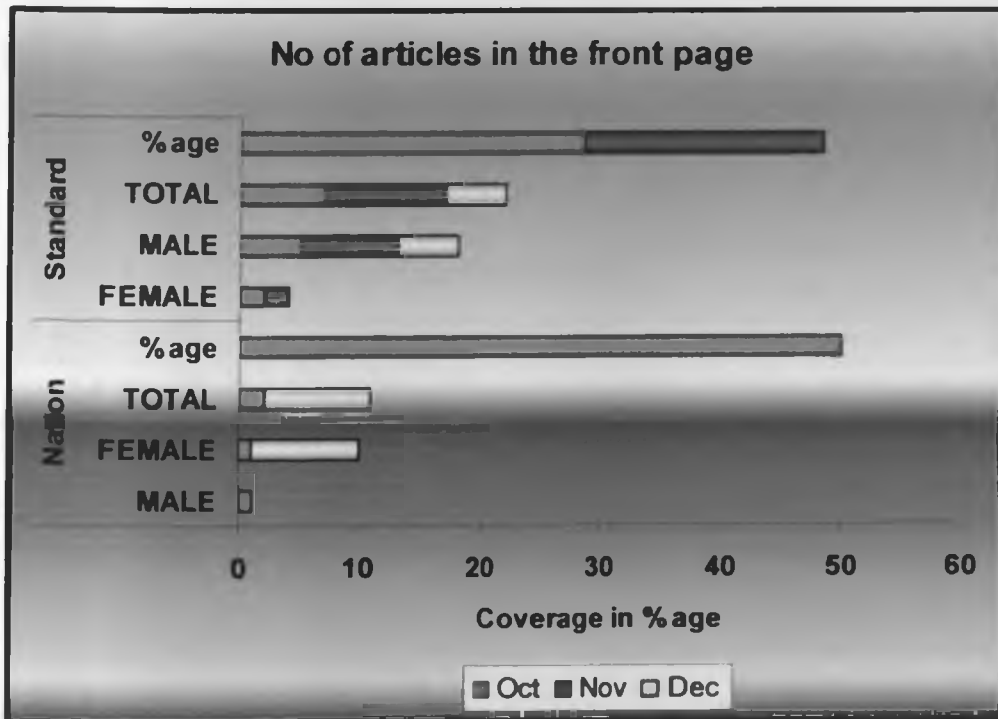
Table 4.1-4.3 and Fig 4.1-4.3 show the number of articles in the covered on the front page, while Table 4.4-4.6 and Fig 4.4-Fig 4.6 show the coverage in the inside pages.

Table 4.7-Table 4.9 and Fig 4.7-Fig 4.9 show the coverage on the back page

Table 4.1 Distribution of articles in the front page by gender of candidates in 1997

Year-1997	Gender	No of articles on the front page		
		Oct	Nov	Dec
The Nation	Female	1	0	0
	Male	1	0	9
	Total	2	0	9
	%age of female	50	0	0
The Standard	Female	2	2	0
	Male	5	8	5
	Total	7	10	5
	%age of female	28.57	20	0

Fig. 4.1 Distribution of articles in the front page by gender of candidates in 1997

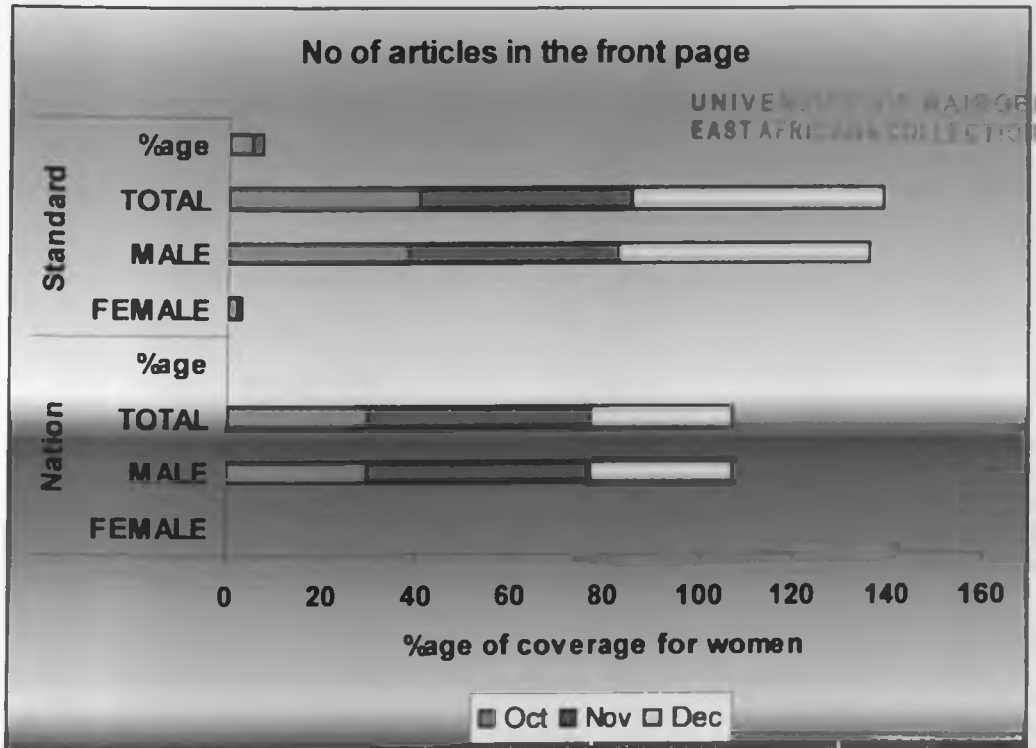


As represented in the graph above, men took a clear lead dominating media coverage during the entire period. In the *Standard*, out of the total 22 mentions, women only managed to get 4 mentions. The *Nation* is not spared either with a mere 2 mentions out of a possible 11 mentions.

Table 4.2 Distribution of articles in the front page by gender of candidates in 2002

Year-2002	Gender	No of articles on the front page		
		Oct	Nov	Dec
The Nation	Female	0	0	0
	Male	30	47	30
	Total	30	47	30
	%age of female	0	0	0
The Standard	Female	2	1	0
	Male	38	45	53
	Total	40	46	53
	%age of female	5	2.17	0

Fig 4.2 Distribution of articles in the front page by gender of candidates in 2002

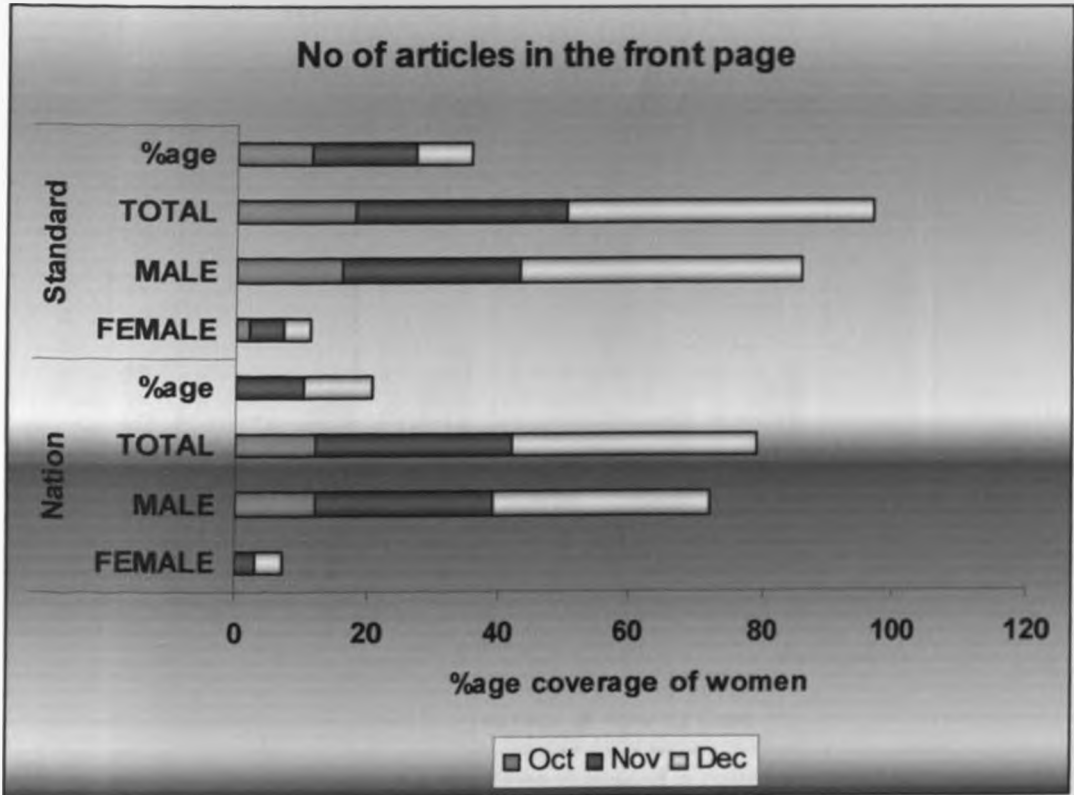


Here, women did not get mentioned at all in the front page in the *Nation* newspapers. The *Standard* only managed to have a dismal figure of three mentions over a period of three months on aspiring women parliamentarians.

Table 4.3 Distribution of articles in the front page by gender of candidates in 1997

Year-2007	Gender	No of articles on the front page		
		Oct	Nov	Dec
The Nation	Female	0	3	4
	Male	12	27	33
	Total	12	30	37
	%age of female	0	10	10.81
The Standard	Female	2	5	4
	Male	16	27	43
	Total	18	32	47
	%age of female	11.11	15.63	8.51

Fig 4.3 Distribution of articles in the front page by gender of candidates in 2007

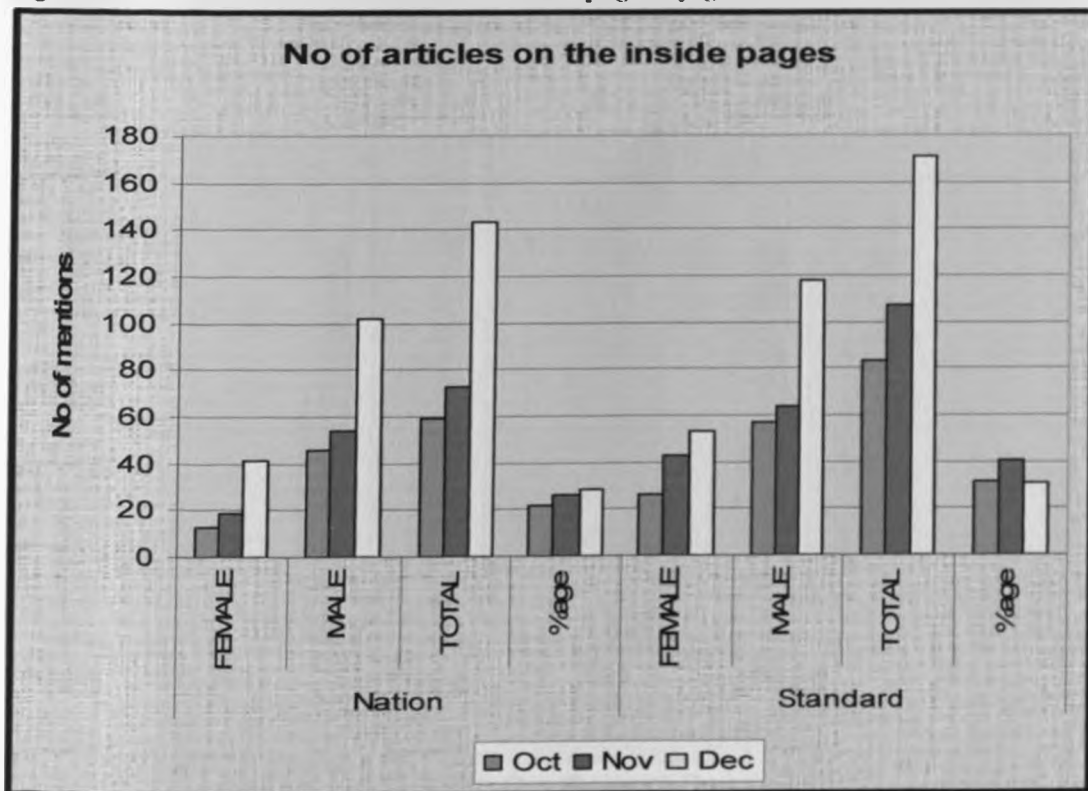


Just as the last two election years, men still continue to dominate media coverage during elections. They get extremely high number of mentions compared to their women counterparts. The *Nation* recorded seven mentions for women out of the 72 reported. The *Standard* was not spared either; it only had 11 mentions on women.

Table 4.4 Distribution of articles in the inside pages by gender of candidates in 1997

Year-1997	Gender	No of articles on the inside pages		
		Oct	Nov	Dec
The Nation	Female	13	19	41
	Male	46	54	102
	Total	59	73	143
	%age of female	22.03	26.03	28.67
The Standard	Female	26	43	53
	Male	57	64	118
	Total	83	107	171
	%age of female	31.33	40.19	30.99

Fig. 4.4 Distribution of articles in the inside pages by gender of candidates in 1997

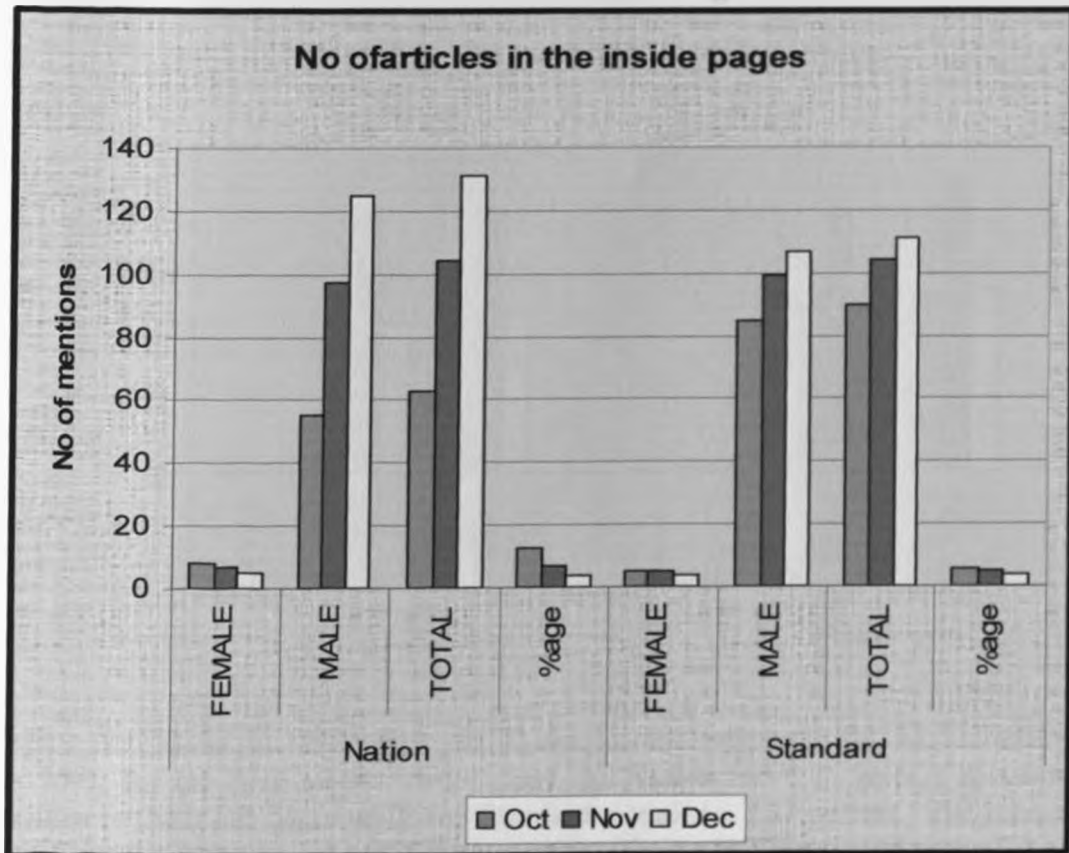


In the month of October, women candidates managed a coverage of 22.03 percent in the *Nation* while the *Standard* recorded a 31.33 percent on the articles in the inside pages. These percentages increased dismally but steadily with the *Nation* recording 26.03 percent and 28.67 percent for the months of November and December respectively on women coverage. The *Standard* on the other hand recorded 40.19 percent in November but went slightly low in December recording a 30.99 percent for women.

Table 4.5 Distribution of articles in the inside pages by gender of candidates in 2002

Year-2002	Gender	No of articles on the inside pages		
		Oct	Nov	Dec
The Nation	Female	8	7	5
	Male	55	97	125
	Total	63	104	131
	%age of female	12.7	6.73	3.82
The Standard	Female	5	5	4
	Male	85	99	107
	Total	90	104	111
	%age of female	5.56	4.81	3.60

Fig. 4.5 Distribution of articles in the inside pages by gender of candidates in 2002

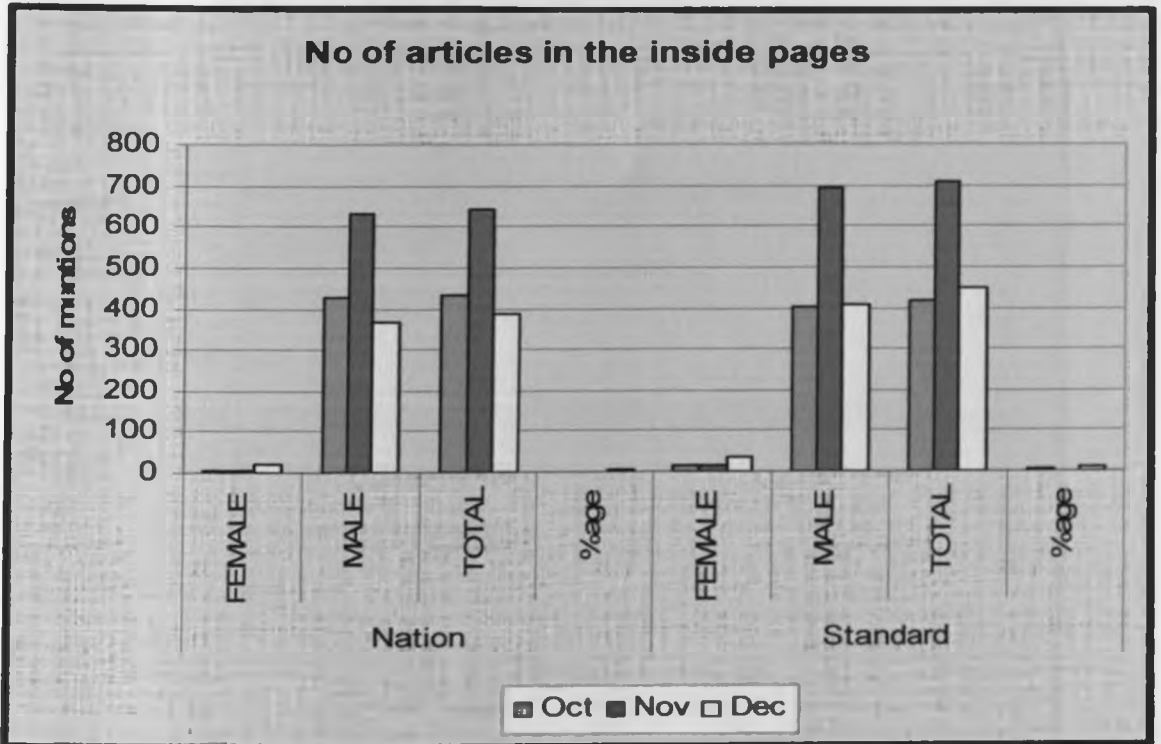


As was the case in 1997, here the percentage coverage declined as the months went on. The *Nation* recorded a 12.7 percent, followed by a 6.73 percent and finally a 3.82 percent coverage for women. The *Standard* followed the same trend as well starting from 5.56 percent to 4.48 percent and finally to 3.60 percent.

Table 4.6 Distribution of articles in the inside pages by gender of candidates in 2007

Year-2007	Gender	No of articles on the inside pages		
		Oct	Nov	Dec
The Nation	Female	5	7	19
	Male	427	634	367
	Total	432	641	386
	%age of female	1.16	1.09	4.92
The Standard	Female	14	16	38
	Male	402	691	409
	Total	416	707	447
	%age of female	3.37	2.26	8.50

Fig. 4.6 Distribution of articles in the inside pages by gender of candidates in 2007

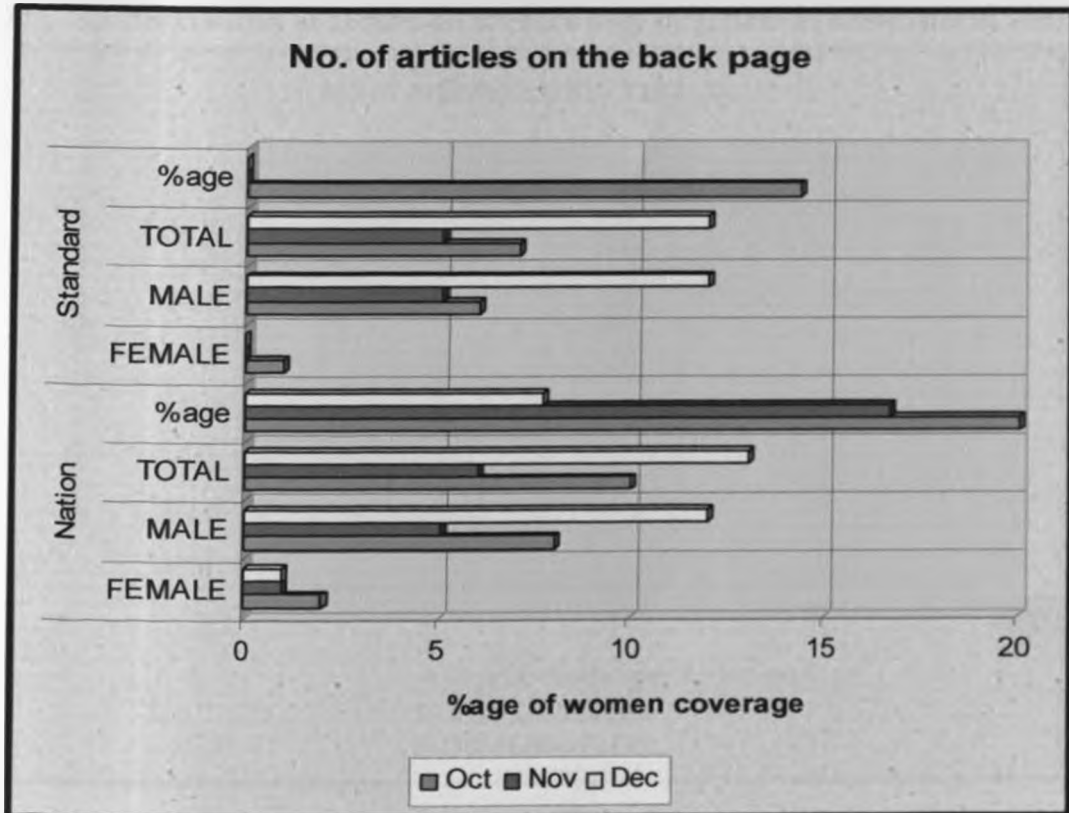


In 2007, for the three months under study, the *Nation* had 1.16 percent coverage of women in the inside pages while the *Standard* recorded a 3.37 percent. The margin of improvement was very slow and by December, *Nation* had just gained a small margin and recorded a 4.92 percent while the *Standard* had 8.50 percent for women coverage.

Table 4.7 Distribution of articles on the back page by gender of candidates in 1997

Year-1997	Gender	No of articles on the back page		
		Oct	Nov	Dec
The Nation	Female	2	1	1
	Male	8	5	12
	Total	10	6	13
	%age of female	20	16.67	7.69
The Standard	Female	1	0	0
	Male	6	5	12
	Total	7	5	12
	%age of female	14.29	0	0

Fig 4.7 Distribution of articles on the back page by gender of candidates in 1997

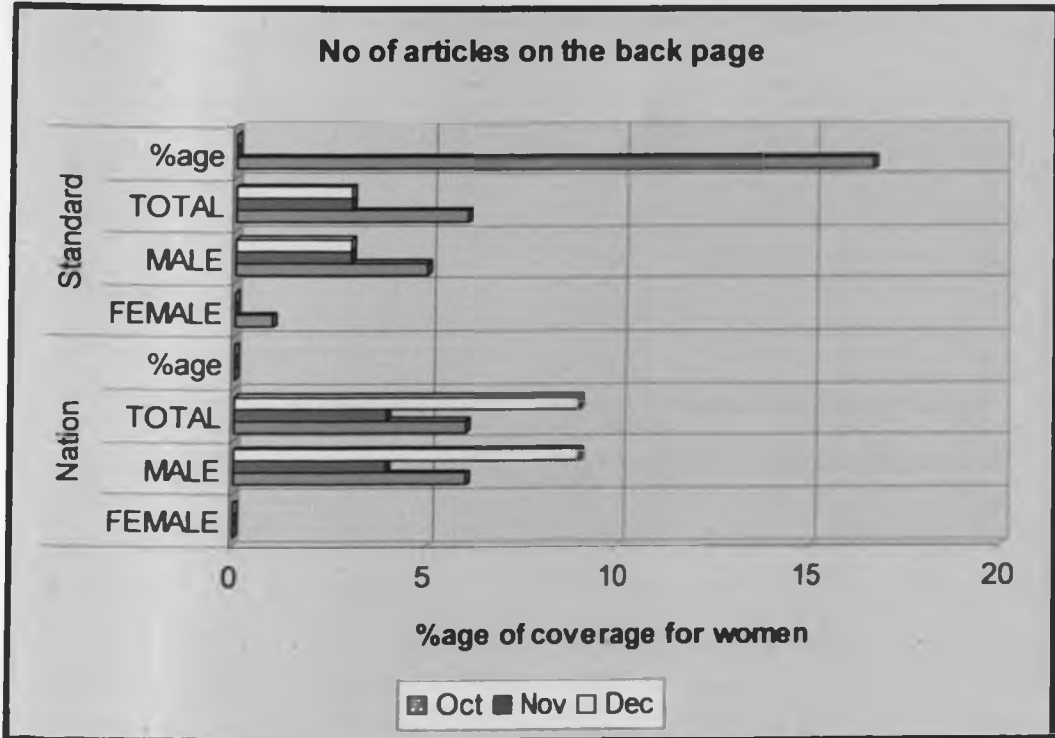


As had been realized in the inside pages, the *Nation* Newspaper had a declining trend again in the coverage of women on the back page. In October 1997, the women managed a 20 percent. This was followed by a 16.67 percent in November and a 7.69 percent in December. The *Standard* did not have coverage in November and December but managed to record a 14.29 percent in October on women.

Table 4.8 Distribution of articles on the back page by gender of candidates in 2002

Year-2002	Gender	No of articles on the back page		
		Oct	Nov	Dec
The Nation	Female	0	0	0
	Male	6	4	9
	Total	6	4	9
	%age of female	0	0	0
The Standard	Female	1	0	0
	Male	5	3	3
	Total	6	3	3
	%age of female	16.67	0	0

Fig. 4.8 Distribution of articles on the back page by gender of candidates in 2002

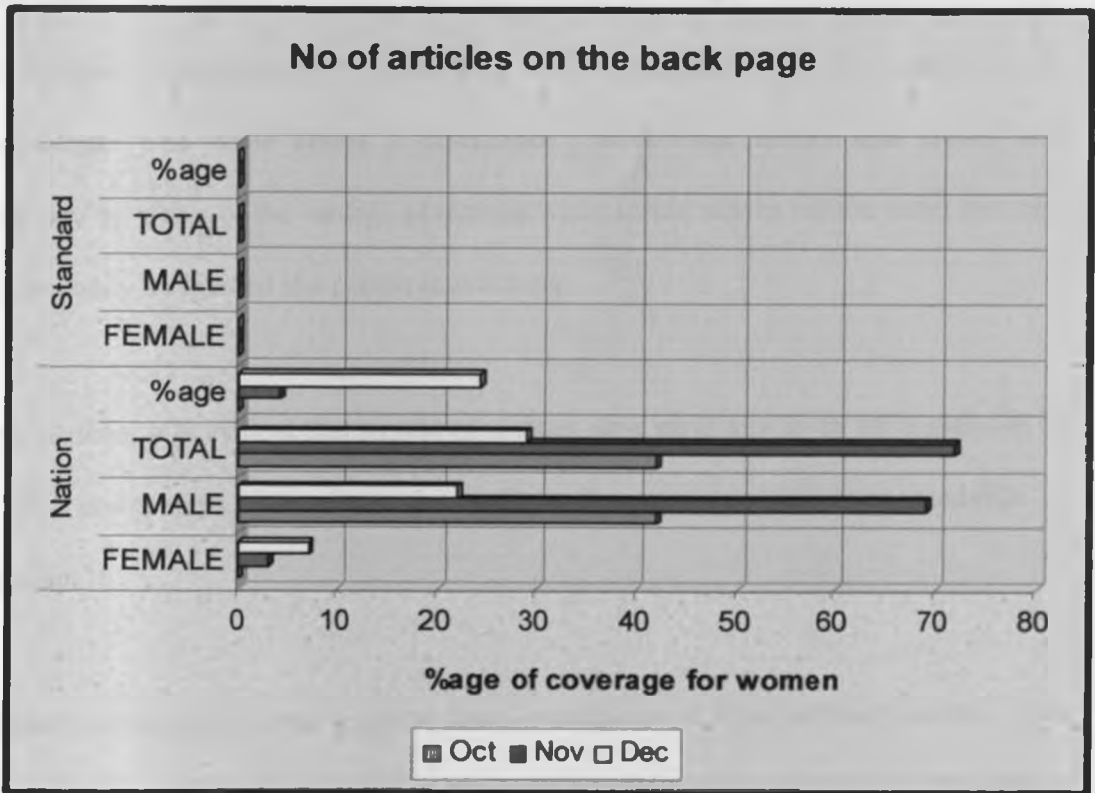


In 2002, the *Nation* did not have any coverage on women on the back page whereas the *Standard* only registered a dismal coverage of 16.67 percent in Oct and not any more.

Table 4.9 Distribution of articles on the back page by gender of candidates in 2007

Year-2007	Gender	No of articles on the back page		
		Oct	Nov	Dec
The Nation	Female	0	3	7
	Male	42	69	22
	Total	42	72	29
	%age of female	0	4.17	24.14
The Standard	Female	0	0	0
	Male	0	0	0
	Total	0	0	0
	%age of female	0	0	0

Table 4.9 Distribution of articles on the back page by gender of candidates in 2007



Source-Research (2008)

Note that in 2007, the Standard dedicated its back page to Sports News

In 2007, the *Nation* newspapers did not have any coverage of women on the back page. However, in November, it recorded a 4.17 percent and a 24.14 percent in December a move that showed an upward trend even though it is dismal.

It is noteworthy that women candidates were given very minimal coverage. In fact, they were almost invisible compared to their male counterparts with regards to the size of the newspaper coverage they attracted.

It clearly emerges that the quality of coverage with respect to amount of details on female candidates' leadership ability and the writers' assessment of the candidates probability of winning the election depended mainly on the candidates' standing in the political arena.

Story placement, one of the most prominent ways of setting the agenda by the Print Media helped in the analysis of the content. A front page story is a must read story for most people who come across a newspaper. Back Page stories also attract high readership by virtue of the vantage placement while inside stories require some keenness and can easily be ignored if a person is in a hurry.

Over the time, it is evident that female candidates were generally given little attention by the two newspapers. However, the quality of coverage varied from candidate to candidate.

Women's participation in the political arena is not accorded equal treatment as men. The media does not view women as being equal news makers and news sources compared to their male counterparts.

There has been a lot of physical and verbal abuse reported in the media targeting women participation in politics in a bid to intimidate them.

Women have generally not been as aggressive as the men on the campaign trail. Many of them are indeed campaigning for male candidates and since they are associated with power, they are accorded more media coverage.

4.3 Placement and Prominence of photographs

4.3.1 Placement

Just as in coverage of articles, women received very minimal coverage in terms of placement of their photographs. For instance, in both 1997 and 2002, no woman was given coverage on the back page and 2007 recorded just a mere nine. Table 4.10 and Fig 4.10 show placement of photographs on front page, inside pages and back page in the *Nation* and *Standard* for the period under study.

Table 4.10 Placement of photographs in the *Nation* and *Standard* in 1997, 2002, 2007 elections

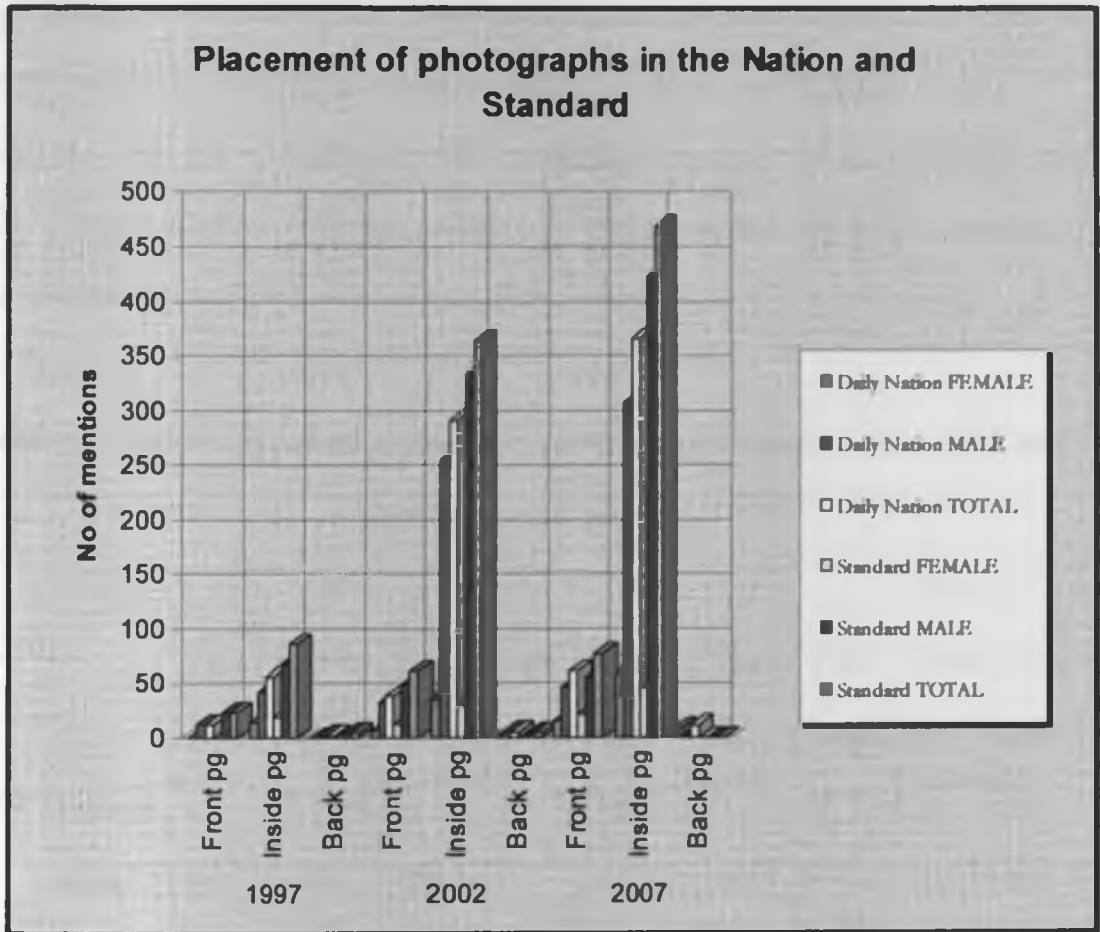
Total number of coverage										
	Gender	1997			2002			2007		
		Front Pg	Inside Pg	Back Pg	Front Pg	Inside Pg	Back Pg	Front Pg	Inside Pg	Back Pg
D/N	Female	0	14	0	6	36	0	15	59	9
	Male	12	42	2	32	255	5	46	307	2
	Total	12	56	2	38	291	5	61	366	11
Std	Female	0	19	0	12	30	0	21	46	0
	Male	23	67	4	49	334	4	56	423	0
	Total	23	86	4	61	364	4	77	469	0

Key:

D/N-Daily Nation

Std- Standard

Fig 4.10 Placement of photographs in the *Nation* and *Standard* in 1997, 2002, 2007 elections



In 1997 and 2002, no woman was featured on the back page of the two dailies. It is only in 2007 that women got back page coverage of 81.8 percent in the *Nation*, the highest women ever got during the whole period under study. They were given slightly more coverage in the inside pages throughout the entire period in both the dailies. In 1997 the *Nation* had 25 percent of coverage while *Standard* had 22.09 percent. In 2002 the coverage for both dailies went down with *Nation* having a 12.37 percent and *Standard* even lower with 8.24 percent. It did not improve a great deal in 2007 where *Nation* recorded a 16.12 percent against *Standard's* 9.81 percent.

4.3.2 Prominence

The findings demonstrate that female aspirants were again ignored in terms of prominence given to their photograph throughout the entire three campaign periods.

Table 4.11 and Fig 4.11 show the distribution of photographs for the 1997, 2002 and 2007 General Elections campaign period in the *Nation* and the *Standard*. It shows the prominence in terms of full photographs, close ups and passport size photographs.

Table 4.11 Distribution of photographs in the *Nation* and *Standard*- 1997, 2002, 2007

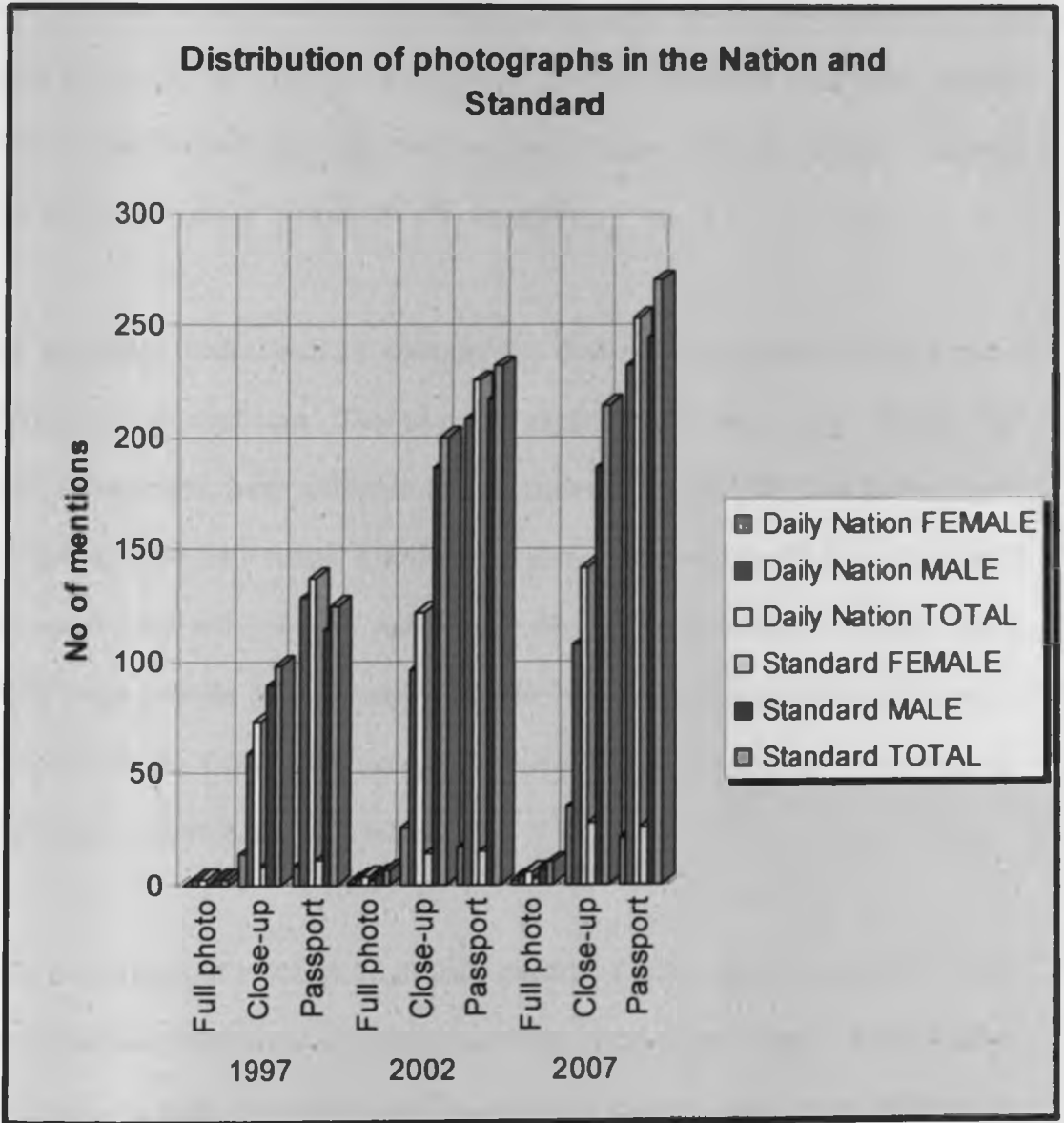
Total number of coverage										
	Gender	1997			2002			2007		
		Full photo	Close up	P/port size	Full photo	Close up	P/port size	Full photo	Close up	P/port size
D/N	Female	0	14	9	1	26	17	2	35	21
	Male	3	59	128	3	96	208	4	107	232
	Total	3	73	137	4	122	225	6	142	253
Std	Female	0	9	11	2	14	15	3	28	26
	Male	3	89	114	5	186	217	7	186	244
	Total	3	98	125	7	200	232	10	214	270

Key:

D/N-Daily Nation

Std- Standard

Fig 4.11 Distribution of photographs in the *Nation* and *Standard*- 1997, 2002, 2007



It is apparent that female candidates' coverage through photographs was mainly in full photographs throughout the entire period even though in 1997, they did not feature. In 2002, women scored 25 percent of the total photos in the *Nation* with *Standard* reaching 29 percent. The trend was repeated in 2007 with *Nation* recording 22.5 percent coverage for women and *Standard* scooping a mere 30 percent. In both dailies, women candidates were poorly represented by the use of passport size photographs. Overall, the *Nation* accorded women candidates' 12.95 percent coverage in terms of photos while the *Standard* managed just a 9.32 percent.

4.4 Coverage of male candidates

So as to compare the quality of coverage of both male and female candidates in the media, this study also analyzed the articles on male parliamentary contestants. Results obtained indicated that male incumbents as well as former MPs attempting a comeback received more coverage compared to the rest of them.

Over the period under study, it emerged that there were no explicit patterns in the coverage of male candidates. They were also gauged on their own merit. Just like their female counterparts, party affiliation had an impact in the kind of coverage they were accorded. In 2002 for instance, it is likely that some of the male candidates were covered more extensively and positively just because they belonged to either the ruling party KANU or the popular NARC Party at the time. The same is true of the 2007 general Elections with the ODM wave sweeping across the country, resulting in it having the most number of MPs in the 10th Parliament.

While the patterns of coverage of all male candidates seems to be more objective and disproportionately more extensive than that of their female counterparts, it is interesting to see how the male candidates were treated in the media. Newcomers affiliated to NARC in 2002 such as Peter Kenneth, Raphael Tuju and Kivutha Kibwana were given favorable coverage. In 2007, when the ODM wave was sweeping across the country, most giants in the political arena were left out as they were affiliated to the 'wrong' parties. Again it emerged that political party affiliation is a key component with regards to media coverage.

Coverage of male aspirants showed no clear patterns beyond the observation that the presidential candidates from the dominant parties-NARC and KANU in 2002 and PNU and ODM in 2007-received wide coverage. Once a candidate secured nomination on a party perceived to be popular, then he enjoyed wide coverage in the print media.

Comparatively, a conclusion can therefore be drawn that female newcomers have had to fight first and prove beyond doubt that they are capable so as to get noticed by the media, while a good number of male newcomers did not have to accomplish hard feats so as to be noticed and accorded positive coverage.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSIONS AND SUMMARY

Coverage of female candidates in articles by these two main dailies is not comparable to that of their male counterparts. Through the entire period under study, women only appeared on the headlines at most once per month. Similarly, they were not given prominence in photographs nor other sections of the newspapers.

Again, it is worthy to note that over the whole period under study, sitting female MPs as well as women (not politicians) associated with dominant male candidates were given highly positive coverage. Some of the sitting MPs such as Martha Karua (Gichugu) Beth Mugo (Dagoretti) Charity Ngilu (Kitui Central) were more often than not considered better leaders than their male counterparts. However, the rest who were new aspirants were generally ignored by the media and were given attention only after they appeared to win the race or were involved in gender violence incidents. Examples include Orié Rogo Manduli and Florah Terah.

The findings suggests that for a woman to be noticed then she has to first win, a sorry state of affairs given that the media ought to be an avenue through which women candidates can gain the much needed exposure. In both the articles and photographs, women rarely appeared on the front page.

In relation to the quality of coverage of candidates, the study realized interesting patterns. Female candidates who had been to parliament before as well as incumbents were given very positive coverage. Their abilities were well presented with writers passing positive

judgment concerning their probability of winning the elections. Additionally, they were viewed as better candidates than their male opponents.

Given that for most of the popular female candidates who received relatively higher coverage were in the popular parties, it is probable that they did receive coverage not only because of their standing but also because of the popularity of the parties that they were affiliated to.

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSIONS

Over the three successive general elections, female candidates were accorded less coverage compared to their male counterparts.

It emerged that the media does not give coverage to women aspirants unless they appear to be popular yet the media is supposed to highlight them so as to become popular.

The media accorded more coverage to those who had already established their political niche leaving the new ones who really needed the coverage out of the question. This in turn rendered the new aspirants invisible. It is only when the latter became popular and showed that they were capable of winning that the media came out of its cocoon to highlight them once again.

Traditional attitudes towards gender equality in political leadership remain a major barrier to the election of women to legislative office even with the introduction of prior structural and institutional controls. This has been heightened by the fact the exposure to the news media has helped to shape these attitudes.

It is important to identify the problems that hinder women's active participation in politics and offer recommendations to help alleviate the dismembering of women from the national Assembly and their marginalization from decision making role once they enter into parliament. Only women can fight hard against those problems they are going to ascend to power and be able to articulate their grievances.

It is time the electorate looked at development through the gender lens with a view to correcting existing imbalances. A society that disenfranchises more than half of its productive membership from participation in its political, social and economic development is a threat to itself.

CHAPTER SEVEN: RECOMMENDATIONS

It is apparent that the media in Kenya has a long way to go in terms of coverage for female political aspirants. The media may have the capacity to function as an important accelerant of cultural change, eroding social stereotypes and traditional values. There is thus need for a complete change in the media portrayal of female aspirants. The Editorial Policy in each of the Media houses should be designed to embrace an affirmative action.

Media should learn to be objective in their coverage. The media practitioners should not wait for female candidates to be popular first before highlighting them. The reverse should be true. The media houses should declare in their editorial policy that it is important to cover women issues and allocate a percentage if possible.

Women candidates/aspirants should contribute articles to the mainstream media to sell their policies to the electorate. Through this, they establish a rapport with their would be-constituents as the latter would feel some attachment to the incumbents.

It was established that women's role and participation in the political arena is not accorded equal treatment as their male counterparts. The media does not view the women as equal newsmakers and sources. Women are grossly underrepresented in all crucial decision making, policy formulation and eventually implementation organs of the government. The Government should set aside a certain percentage of seats for women to occupy in crucial decision making organs. This in turn will make them air their views as well and have them tackled.

Government and political parties must thus take drastic measures to ensure that women are included in all arms of administration. Women in politics and of course in decision making positions can contribute to redefining policies, placing items on the agenda which address women's gender specific concerns, values, experiences and provide perspectives on mainstream issues such as poverty eradication.

The non democratization of political parties and lack of practical policies to address gender issues inhibits women from ascending the ladder in political parties leadership which sponsor candidates. The structure and agenda of Kenya political parties need to be scrutinized for chances of improvement.

Parties need to have a legislative agenda that eliminate some of the existing barriers and to create an enabling legal environment where their issues would be solved amicably. Discrimination on the basis of sex should be eliminated. This legislative agenda should be strengthened in order to accommodate and support women.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX ONE

SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITIES

Activity	Duration	Deadline
Literature Review (Revision)	1 week	August 4 th 2008
Sampling and development of data collection instrument	1 Week	August 11 th 2008
Pilot testing, review of instrument	4 days	Aug 20 th 2008
Data Collection	2 weeks	Sept 8 th 2008
Data Analysis	2 weeks	Sept 22 nd 2008
Report Writing	1 week	Sept 29 th 2008
Review and Final Report	2 Weeks	Oct 9 th 2008

Source- Researcher (2008)

**APPENDIX TWO
BUDGET**

Item	Cost (shs)
Correspondence and Communication	3,000
Stationery	7,000
Word Processing	6,000
Research Assistants	12,000
Secretarial Services	3,000
Printing	6,000
Miscellaneous	3,000
Total	<u>40,000</u>

Source: Researcher (2008)

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