

Gender Portrayal in the Mass Media: Analysis of Coverage by Two Newspapers in 2002 Election Campaigns in Kenya

By

Lucy Cheluget-Cherogony

UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI
EAST AFRICANA COLLECTION

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To my parents and my children, Kibet and Kimutai

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ABSTRACT

This Study focuses on increasing our understanding of the place of mass media in the fight for women's empowerment. There is no doubt that media messages and images are a powerful tool in shaping attitudes, perceptions, and values concerning women in society. The findings will specifically enhance and support gender equality activities by highlighting weakness in the mass media in its portrayal of female political aspirants and by proposing practical solutions to these weaknesses. Moreover, this study will guide aspiring women politicians to build positive relations with media houses and professionals to improve their portrayal and coverage. Finally, this study will help gender scholars to move beyond the complaints about the inadequacies of media content, and look into practical ways of correcting this imbalance.

This study utilised data from the main local dailies namely, the *Daily Nation* and the *Standard* from October to December 2002, that is, from the close of parliament to election. This duration also covered the 21 official campaign days. The two daily newspapers carried out constituency-by-constituency analyses of contestants during the campaign period hence they contained sufficient data for the purposes of this study. The two dailies were chosen at the exclusion of others owing to their wide reach.

The study concludes that in a highly patriarchal society like Kenya, deficiencies in the coverage of women's issues are significant. In all likelihood, women reporters who covered parliamentary aspirants gave both genders equal coverage but men reporters were biased against women contestants.

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CHAPTER ONE: GENERAL INTRODUCTION

“Clearly...the media do play a central ideological role in that their practices and products are both a source and a confirmation of structural inequality of women in society”.

Mary Gallagher (1981): *Unequal Opportunities: The Case of Women and the media.*

In pursuit of women’s empowerment, the **equality of opportunity** means that women should have equal rights and entitlements to human, social, economical, and cultural development, and an equal voice in civil and political life. On the other hand **equity of outcomes** means 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. This depends critically on the mass media owing to its influence on public opinions; at the same time the media can act as an agent of change. To the extent that the culturally defined traditional gender roles that reinforce male dominance and female subordination can – and often do – quite easily find their way into the mass media, it is probable that the mass media can become a barrier rather than a facilitator to the envisaged social change.

This study set out to analyse gender biases in the portrayal and coverage of female parliamentary aspirants during the political campaigns of the 2002 general election in Kenya. In particular, the study aimed at determining the extent of gender bias in the coverage and portrayal of women aspirants’ achievements, abilities, and potentialities, as well as writers’ opinions on the likelihood of a candidate to win the election. The postulate here is that the mass media can intentionally or unintentionally frustrate the fight for gender equity and equality not only, through its portrayal of women as incapable of political leadership, but also its failure to give the necessary emphasis to leadership abilities of female aspirants as well its unsatisfactory coverage of news relating to activities of female contestants.

1.1 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

The gender debate has a long history, hence to associate it only with the feminist movements of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries is to ignore the fact that it has preoccupied philosophers, social commentators and creative writers since earliest times (Gallagher, 1981). According to Gallagher, the issue of women’s position in society was certainly debated publicly in Greece in the fifth and fourth centuries B.C. For instance, the works of Euripides

in his tragedies, the satires of Aristophanes and the Platonic-Aristotelian debate on the role of women in society are indications of a definite concern with gender issues.

By and large, the emergence of gender debates as an attempt at creating equality among men and women derives from discriminatory treatment of women throughout the long history of humanity, a universal "internal colonization" that women the world over have been subjected to (Millet 1970 cited in Gallagher, 1981). Gender role differentiation is structurally and culturally defined in ways that create and reinforce relationships of male dominance and female subordination. For instance, 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 acquired through the socialization process. From the time children are born, 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 portrayal of women in the media is characterized by biases and stereotypic representations. Critical studies collated by Gallagher (1981) demonstrate that even in developed western countries of North America and Europe women are underrepresented in media coverage and depicted in predominantly domestic and maternal role, are beautiful or sexual objects in passive relationship with men, and are likely to be in service occupations rather than positions of authority. According to The Global Media Monitoring Project in 1995, women appear in the news media in a narrow and mostly negative range of roles, as victims, as mothers, and as "eye candy".

Similarly, studies from various countries in Africa demonstrate that women are portrayed negatively. According to Kyarusi (1979 in Gallagher, 1981), Tanzanian newspapers rarely consider women as a source of news for the front page. Women are also shown as inherently evil and weak. Another researcher from Tanzania found that women featured in daily news are those involved in stealing, murder, peddling drugs or selling illicit liquor (Mtambalike, 1986); studies in Zambia and Uganda showed that women are depicted as threatening to traditional values and interests (Gallagher, 1981).

Studies in Kenya found that women were commonly portrayed as victims (of war, rape etc), as care providers in the household, and as objects of art, war or famine (Lukalo and Goro, 1995). In addition, a study by Wagaki Mwangi in 1991 that compared Kenyan newspapers for the years 1970, 1980 and 1990 found an increase in the negative portrayal of women. The study also found that 76 per cent of rural female characters were portrayed as criminals or victims.

The Convention of the Elimination on All Forms of Discrimination against Women is regarded as the main international instrument that emerged from the decade of women

(1975-1985). It is considered a milestone in the gender debate in the sense that it advanced the objectives of the Gender and Development (GAD) approach. Its origins can be traced to the Declaration on 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 in Kenya. However, it is evident that coverage of women is still low, and their portrayal is not free of stereotypes. This study hypothesises that these biases are most pronounced in the field of politics, which the society – and by extension the media – considers a male domain. Indeed, “Kenya’s record of women’s participation in politics and other decision-making posts is pathetic by any standards” (Nzomo, 1992).

During the first multi-party elections in Kenya in 1992, there was a considerable increase in the number of women venturing into politics. This was partly in response to the expanded political arena in the country and the 1985 Beijing Fourth World Conference on Women, whose aim was to empower women in all sectors. The historic political transition in Kenya, following the December 2002 general elections which saw the exit of the Kenya African National Union (KANU) after 40 years in power brought good tidings for the country’s women. Nine women were elected to parliament while eight were nominated by the ruling National Rainbow Coalition (NARC) and KANU, bringing the total to 17, the largest number of women legislators since Kenya’s independence (1963). For the first time in Kenya’s history, seven women were appointed to ministerial posts – three as Cabinet Ministers and four as Assistant Ministers. In the civic elections, 96 women captured seats. In a March 2003 by-election, another woman won the seat left vacant by her husband, bringing the number of women MPs to 18 (AWC Features, 2004).

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Like the landslide victory of NARC, the markedly improved performance by women in the 2002 was a complete break with history. 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 People (Forum for Restoration of Democracy), focused on improving the economy. It is mainly under NARC that most women were elected.

As Professor Maria Nzomo (1992) asserts, "Kenya's record of women's participation in politics and other decision-making posts is pathetic by any standards". For instance, a woman was elected into parliament six years after independence in 1969 (another one was nominated into the parliament along with eleven male nominated members). On the whole, except for the period 1974 to 1979 when there was a slight improvement in women representation, the general trend has been that of marginalisation of women in political decision-making at the national level. A woman was appointed to the cabinet in 1974 – ten years after independence – as an assistant minister (Nzomo, 1992) and only in 1995 did Kenya have a woman Minister.

It is evident that Kenya has a long way to go in achieving gender balance in the political front given that despite the improvements, women still constitute less than 10 percent of MPs. The mass media has a critical role to play here because it is viewed as a credible source of information on all spheres of human life. To what extent has the media accomplished this role? Previous studies in Kenya suggest that media news on women mainly presents women as victims of disasters including war and famine, or as objects of art, war and famine – hardly as achievers in any field (Lukalo and Goro, 1995). It also puts pressure on them to marry as a requirement for entering the public arena, and rural women are largely left out despite the fact that they constitute 80 per cent of Kenya's female population (Mwangi, 1991). It is also worth noting that in 1998, as many as 30 per cent of women had no access to mass media compared to only 10 per cent of men (NCPD, CBS and MI, 1998).

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

The number of women seeking parliamentary seats increased from 50 in 1997 to about 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. Indeed, the 220-member parliament has only 18 women. 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 2002 general election is crucial.

As noted earlier, the coverage of women in the mass media has improved considerably in the last decade. The main dailies, for instance, did constituency-by-constituency analysis of all contestants in the run up to the 2002 general election. However, while some aspirants received labels such as 'prominent businessman', 'engineer by profession' 'career politician', others were only introduced by their names without any mention of their professional or social background. Did this coverage take a gendered perspective?

This study endeavoured to find out where and how women (who account for 51 per cent of the population and are the majority voters both in the parliamentary and civic elections) featured in the media. Of interest here was how the mass media helped or otherwise hindered efforts at addressing gender imbalance in political representation and women's attempt to enter the political arena. Thus, this study sought 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. In particular, the study endeavoured to find out the extent of gender bias in the coverage and portrayal of female aspirants as compared to their male counterparts by the *Daily Nation* and the *Standard Newspapers*. 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 male and female candidates during the run up to the elections.

1.2.1 Research Questions

The study aimed at answering the following specific questions:

- What was the quality and quantity of coverage and portrayal of female and male contestants?
- Were male and female parliamentary aspirants given equal coverage by the print media?
- Was there a difference based on the gender of the reporter/news writer?
- What qualities (leadership, social, biological) were emphasised for each gender?
- What are the prospects for a gender-sensitive campaign reporting in the mass media?

These were the key concerns of this study.

1.3 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1.3.1 General Objective

The general objective of this study was to analyse gender biases in the portrayal of political aspirants in the *Daily Nation* and the *Standard* during the campaign preceding the 2002 general elections in Kenya.

1.3.2 Specific Objectives

The study had the following specific objectives:

- I. To determine if the quantity of coverage of women during the campaigns in the two dailies in terms of frequency and content varied according to gender of the candidate;
- II. To establish the nature of coverage of male and female candidates in photographs during the campaign period;
- III. To analyse the quality of coverage and portrayal of women in the campaigns in terms of the characteristics of women that were emphasised by the two dailies;
- IV. To establish the association between the gender of the news writer/reporter and quality and quantity of coverage and portrayal of women contestants;
- V. To determine if male and female contestants were given equal chances to contribute articles in the two daily newspapers;

1.4 JUSTIFICATION OF THE STUDY

Empowerment of women as a strategy for ensuring gender equality and equity in all spheres of life relies heavily on political representation of women. This is because political representation creates a conducive environment for appropriate legislation and an effective avenue for advocacy for women rights. Given that the mass media has a central role to play in shaping people's views, beliefs and behaviours, it follows that an understanding of media portrayal of women is crucial in designing practical solutions to the challenges of gender imbalance.

According to a book by African Woman and Child Feature Services (AWC Features), latest statistics from the Inter Parliamentary Union show that on average, women comprise only nine per cent of parliamentarians in Africa compared to the global average of 13.4 per cent. There are marked differences in women political representation in Africa. It is should be emphasized that such differences are not a function of socio-economic development. For example, Mozambique, one of the poorest countries in the world and one with the highest illiteracy levels, has the highest representation of women in parliament in Africa, while Mauritius – Africa's "little tiger", is 29th in the same table. Kenya still staggers behind its neighbours Uganda and Tanzania. The Ugandan Parliament has 75 women out of 304 MPs while Tanzania has 81 women in a Parliament of 274.

The 2002 general elections were unique for Kenya not only because of the exit of KANU after 40 years in power but as it also marked a turning point in women political participation in the country. Women were presented with more opportunities for joining the political arena because the parties that formed the National Rainbow Coalition (NARC) were more receptive to the idea of men sharing political power with women. Even though some have claimed that the party nominations process was in some ways tougher for women than the actual elections.

The findings of the proposed study will increase our understanding of the role of mass media in the fight for women's empowerment. Specifically, the findings will enhance and support gender equality activities by highlighting weakness in the mass media in its portrayal of female political aspirants and by proposing practical solutions to these weaknesses. Moreover, this study will guide aspiring women politicians to build positive relations with media houses and professionals to improve their portrayal and coverage. Finally, this study will help gender scholars to move beyond the complaints about the inadequacies of media content, and look into practical ways of correcting this imbalance.

1.5 SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study covered the entire official national campaign period as projected in media. The study, however, confined to the print media and in particular the two main daily newspapers namely the *Daily Nation* and the *Standard*. This restriction was necessitated by need for deep analyses on the one hand and financial as well as time constraints on the other.

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CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

There is wide acknowledgement in the literature that mass media greatly influences people's perceptions and opinions because of their belief in it. It shapes their attitudes, beliefs and behaviours in a significant way as it sets the agenda for discussion. Accordingly, agenda setting theory of mass media influence posits that by singling out some topics for emphasis and prominence, mass media increases the saliency and importance of such topics to the audience, which leads to increased discussion of the topics through interpersonal channels. The effect of mass media on its audience is further explained by the cultivation theory, which postulates that repeated intense exposure of deviant definitions of "reality" in the mass media leads to perception of that reality as normal.

This section reviews relevant previous studies on portrayal of women in the mass media – where they appear and with what effect – with coverage in the political arena forming the crux of the review.

2.1 MEDIA ROLE IN GOVERNANCE

The media has a central role to play especially in the African context. According to Ochilo (1993), the transition of many African countries from one-party states to multi-party states – each of which presents the media with different possibilities and challenges – means that the media must take its rightful place for it to execute its functions. The role of media in governance is demonstrated aptly in its contribution to the reintroduction of multi-party politics in Kenya. The media sensitised people on the need for good governance and offered the requisite political education to facilitate agitation for multi-party democracy. The media has also contributed to promotion of health (for example child immunisation), and conservation of the environment.

Ansah (1992 in Ochilo, 1993) avers that media has a role to play in the political, economic and cultural transformation of any society. He further argues that the best approach is a people-centred approach, which recognises people's contribution. In essence, this approach contradicts the diffusion of innovations approach, which is considered paternalistic and elitist.

According to Ochilo, the most crucial role of media in Africa is the establishing of open, democratic, and stable societies. Achievement of this goal is encumbered by many hurdles including political interference, poor financial base, and inadequate human resource. Perhaps the greatest threat to press freedom is the state. As Wanyande (1995) argues, the relationship between the state and media in Kenya is characterised by uneasiness and conflict, a problem

that can be remedied only by commitment on the part of the state to democratic governance coupled with a vibrant civil society that is capable of safeguarding press freedom. It may be concluded that media has played a great role in the growth of democracy in Kenya.

2.2 WOMEN IN POLITICS

Politics is still a hostile terrain for women the world over, women have been socialised to occupy private spaces. Politics is the most public of public spaces. It is still a hostile terrain for women at all levels, but especially in countries that have a low representation of women in politics, where gender has not featured significantly in political discourse, and at a local level where all the tensions in the bigger society tend to be felt in a more concentrated form.

These structural 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. Societal hostility and lack of support for women in politics is reflected in certain ways. There appears to be a tense relationship between women in politics and the media that is seen to reinforce societal stereotypes about women being "out of place"

Political participation is a human right, recognized in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. 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 published in 1999 show that women hold only 12.7 per cent of the world's parliamentary seats, and only 8.7 per cent of those in the least developed countries. (*Human Development Report 1999 UNDP; New York*)

Although women enjoy higher levels of representation in the developed countries of the West especially Nordic countries, there are marked variations. In Canada, for instance, women political activists are unhappy that the recent Canadian elections have brought only 65 women into Parliament instead of the critical one-third or 104 seats they had aimed for (Randika, not dated). A recent report by the National Commission for Women says that most Indian states have a poor electoral sex ratio - millions of women are missing from the voters' list. The 2004 general elections, the first in the new millennium, could have been one in which women contested (and won) 33 per cent of the seats - had the Women's Reservation Bill been passed. Gender equality, it is clear, is still a long way away from the poll arena (Lal (not dated)).

Latest statistics from the Inter Parliamentary Union show that on average, women comprise only nine per cent of parliamentarians in Africa compared to the global average of 13.4

per cent. (AWC Features, 2004). In a book commissioned by African Leadership Forum in Nigeria, Sara Longwe and Roy Clarke state that there is “absolutely no correlation between women’s education, affluence and levels of representation in politics and decision-making.” For example, Mozambique, one of the poorest countries in the world and one with the highest illiteracy levels, has the highest representation of women in parliament in Africa. Yet Mauritius – Africa’s “little tiger”, is 29th in the same table.

Kenyan politics is characterised by violence as well as threats of violence and verbal abuse targeted at women on purpose to discourage them from venturing into politics (Martha Koome, in the *Daily Nation*, November 10, 2002). Unfortunately, women are physically more vulnerable and culturally more damaged by character assassination. On the socio-economic sphere, they are less likely to survive economic loss. This is aptly exemplified by the case of a female local authority contestant who lost her whole family through politically motivated arson. The parties also had no finances to sponsor candidates hence most of them picked richer but lacklustre male contestants in place of their poor but politically proficient women aspirants (AWC Features, 2004). Moreover, female contestants were treading an uncharted path. Kenya’s pervasive patriarchal culture ostracises unmarried women who seek elective positions. Thus, single women face an additional and severe disadvantage in the Presidential and national elections. Karen Magara an unmarried contestant admitted that her gender had been her biggest handicap.

Dealing with a society that thinks a woman should not lead is the most serious handicap. It is worse when you are young. Unlike my male colleagues who can use proxies to campaign for them I have no choice but to do all my campaigning myself. Otherwise voters will shun me, arguing that I have no stomach for the vagaries of politics.

(Wachira¹)

2.3 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 on 9th March, 1984, the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women of 1993 and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action of 1995. Except for the latter, these conventions have not been incorporated into Kenya’s municipal law. Very little has been done to ensure that Kenya’s domestic law

¹ Not dated; see web address in the bibliography

conforms with international standards in respect to women's human rights (Nzomo, 2002). This discrepancy works to reinforce male dominance and female insubordination in all spheres of life. On the other hand, Kenya's parliament has enacted The Gender Commission Act of 2003 that is considered an important instrument to foster gender equality in the country (GoK, 2003). Moreover, the draft constitution fosters affirmative action by stipulating that at least one-third of party candidates must be women. These policy guidelines are a bold attempt to mainstream gender in all aspects of development.

When the independence constitution was negotiated in London, there was only one woman in the delegation. It is not surprising that women's issues were completely ignored in that Constitution, and women continued to be discriminated against in public and private laws. According to Ghai (2002), the ongoing constitution review as guided by the Constitution of Kenya Review Act emphasises the participation of women in the review process and commits the commission and other organs of review to ensuring constitutional provisions for gender equity and gender parity.

The Act requires all organs of review to ensure the process accommodates the diversity of Kenya, including gender, and the disadvantaged and facilitates participation of all in generating and debating proposals to alter the constitution. Ghai further points out that:

At present, the spouse of a Kenyan woman is not entitled to Kenya citizenship, but the spouse of a Kenyan man is. Moreover, a child born abroad to a Kenyan becomes a citizen of Kenya only if the father is a Kenyan, a mother's citizenship does not count. These discriminatory provisions are inconsistent with the values prescribed in the Review Act, as they are within international and regional norms. They will have to be removed to give women equal citizenship rights.

Although the Bill of Rights in the present Constitution guarantees equal treatment in the law, women do not benefit fully from these provisions. Until 1997, it was perfectly lawful to discriminate on the basis of sex. Even the 1997 amendment did not fully protect women against discrimination in public or private employment. Moreover, guarantees of equality do not apply as regards personal or family law under which women generally have a subordinate position and suffer from various disabilities and humiliations.

(Ghai, 2002)

So how effective have Kenya's policy on gender concerns over the years? Nzomo asserts that Women have made some progress especially since 1992, in regard to the question of gender equity and justice. Certainly there is a higher level of awareness of gender issues than was the case some ten years ago.

Certainly there are more gender sensitive women and men than were back then. It could even be argued that women's presence in the decision-making in certain sectors and bodies has significantly improved. But I would hasten to add that such achievements have been but a drop in the ocean compared with the enormous efforts made by women as individuals and in groups during this last decade to empower themselves and to sensitise both women and men of the merits of gender equity. (Nzomo, 2002)

Measures have been taken to remove social cultural and legal obstacles for women through various efforts. This includes having a constitution that embraces affirmative action and the one-third principle that will allow both men and women to equally participate in both party and national politics. So far, the draft constitution currently under discussion makes provisions for these principles. Should they be adopted, women's representation in politics and in key decision-making positions is likely to improve dramatically.

2.4 WOMEN IN EMPLOYMENT IN THE MEDIA

Studies have found out that obstacles to reporting on women's empowerment include structural constraints within the media itself such as newsroom values and discrimination as well as harassment of women journalists by men, both within the profession and on assignment. An attempt to understand the intricacies involved in media portrayal of women is presented by a study by Stephanie Craft and Wayne Wanta which compared issues, agendas and story focus at newspapers with relatively high percentages of women in editorial positions with those at newspapers with low percentages of female editors. The study found that papers with predominately male editors contained news with a more negative focus on women while newspapers with a high percentage of female editors tended to give female issues equal emphasis with male issues. The same study showed that there are severe shortages in both the quantity and quality of news for and about women.

Women are underrepresented and misrepresented in the world's media. According to African Women Media Centre (AWMC²), the most predominant set of obstacles by women aspiring to move into the upper ranks of the news media are the cultural and the social norms they face every day. These stereotypical notions about women's abilities keep them from entering the professional world, and once there set up barriers to their success.

On a positive note, it has been argued 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. Such efforts, however,

² African Women's Media Centre: -427/" <http://www.awmc.com/pub/p - 4247/>

need support because there are still many women who are reluctant to venture out there, thanks to the education and socialization processes.

Movement of women into leadership positions, where they can influence staff management policy is crucial in the fight for acceptance of women as capable professionals (AWMC). When women attain leadership positions in the media, they in turn have the opportunity to promote women's issues and advocate for on behalf of women's leadership roles.

In a 1995 global media-monitoring project sponsored by UNESCO to explore the representation of women in 71 countries, it emerged that women made up just 17 per cent of all interviewees in the news worldwide. These female interviewees were also likely to be lay voices even on topics that were very woman-focused. Male interviewees were typically interviewed as voices of authority. About 30 per cent of all female interviewees were portrayed as victims of crime or accidents, compared with just 10 per cent of male interviewees.

Despite the apparent lack of data on women's employment patterns in the media, a study by Gallagher (1995) found that women reach 50 per cent of media workforce only in two cases – Estonia and Lithuania. At the other end of the scale is Japan, where only 8 per cent of media employees are female. In Europe, Baltic states are at the top followed by Eastern and Central Europe (45 per cent women), the Nordic states (41 per cent) with Western Europe at the bottom (35 per cent).

The idea that women can be strong and effective leaders is not reflected in the reality of women's status in the news media. Studies of some African media organisations have confirmed the perception that women are absent at the top. In 1995, UNESCO conducted a ground breaking study of the African region showing that, on average, women account for only 8.4 per cent of the highest levels in media management in broadcast and 14.1 per cent in print media.

The result of so few women in leadership positions in the media is that there is no strong voice for how their gender should be portrayed in the media and what issues should be reported. Men are left to develop stories based on their own cultural and social views. According to a study conducted by Margaret Gallagher in 1996, women appeared in just 19 per cent of all news stories in ten African countries. When women do appear in the news, they are most often portrayed as victims of violence or as physical objects and rarely as experts, resources or leaders.

During the International Association of Women in Radio and Television (IAWRT) East Africa Conference in Uganda, Florence Bonabaana, the Vice-President of IAWRT recognized the importance of women media practitioners in correcting media portrayal gender imbalances not only in the political field but also in all other aspects when she said:

Our challenge is not only to promote women's issues but in general to bridge the gap that exists between different segments of the population, men and women, rural based and urban population, young and old, privileged and disadvantaged. As women broadcasters gathered here, we bear a responsibility in providing and disseminating accurate and well-balanced gender focused information...most important to present the voices of the least heard. We furthermore need to build a partnership in the East Africa region that enables us in bringing women broadcasters together from time to time to learn from different experiences. We should encourage media ethics.

(Report of the first East African IAWRT Conference in Uganda, January 2002)

In summary, it may be argued that in a highly patriarchal society like Kenya, deficiencies in the coverage of women's issues are significant. In all likelihood, women reporters who covered parliamentary aspirants gave both genders equal coverage but men reporters were biased against women contestants.

2.5 WOMEN IN MASS MEDIA

Any consideration of gender portrayal in the media must take account of these wider issues of political economy if existing patterns of representation are to be properly understood and challenged. For as Kamla Bhasin has rightly pointed out: 'We are not just concerned with how women are portrayed in the media or how many women work in the media. We are also concerned about what kinds of lives they lead, what status they have, and what kind of society we have. The answers to these questions will determine our future strategies for communication and networking. Communication alternatives therefore need to emerge from our critique of the present world order and our vision of the future' (Bhasin 1994, p. 4).

There is no doubt that media messages and images are a powerful tool in shaping attitudes, perceptions, and values concerning women in society (Mtambalike, 1995). Unfortunately, coverage of women in mass media is replete with gender biases that range from underrepresentation to distortion of reality. According to Gallagher (1981), women are underrepresented in general and occupy less central roles. Indeed analyses of available data prior to 1981 showed that no country had more than 20 per cent of the news capturing women issues (except in socialist countries like China). Marriage and parenthood are considered more important to women than to men hence women are more often than men depicted in family roles while employed ones are shown in traditionally female occupations, most often subordinate to men, with little status of power. Further, men define news hence women issues are given peripheral status (Tuchman, 1978 cited in Gallagher, 1981).

These observations are very widespread. For instance, analyses of Scandinavian, British, and German coverage of women in media by various scholars (see Gallagher, 1981) correspond to the general trends noted in North American context. Not only are women underrepresented but are also depicted in predominantly domestic and maternal roles or as sexual objects in passive relationship with men. They are also more likely to be in service occupations. A study in Iran also found limited number of female images, which were also stereotypic in nature: The image of a perfect woman is one who performs household duties gracefully, is sympathetic and obedient.

Standing outside the mainstream, 'women's movement media' have certainly played a crucial role in women's struggle around the world. Part of a global networking, consciousness-raising and knowledge creation project, they have enabled women to communicate through their own words and images. If print and publishing have been the most widely used formats, in the past two decades other media such as music, radio, video, film and - increasingly the new communication technologies - have also been important.. Over the same period, in most regions there has been a steady growth of women's media associations and networks, and an increase in the number of women working in mainstream media (see Gallagher and Quindoza-Santiago 1994, for recent regional summaries of these developments). Yet as Donna Allen points out 'there is still a wide gap between the women who have formed networks outside of the 'mainstream' media and those women who are employed in mass media who hold the key to reaching the larger public'. The closing of this gap, she argues, 'is a crucial step toward the advancement of all women' (Allen 1994, pp. 161, 181).

The building of such alliances, and the merging of women's diverse experiences of working with and in the media, is surely one of the most urgent tasks for women struggling for a more diverse and democratic world information and communication system.

Studies from Africa demonstrate that portrayal of women is replete with negative images. Women are portrayed as inherently evil and weak. Tanzanian newspapers rarely consider women as a source of news for the front page. According to Kyarusi (1979 in Gallagher, 1981). All in all, coverage of women in Tanzania in daily news concentrates on female culprits such as those involved in theft, murder, peddling of drugs or selling of illicit liquor (Mtambalike, 1986).

In Kenya, media news on women mainly presents women as victims of disasters including war and famine, or as objects of art, war and famine - hardly as achievers in any field (Lukalo and Goro, 1995). It also puts pressure on them to marry as a requirement for entering the public arena, and rural women are largely left out despite the fact that they

constitute 80 percent of Kenya's female population (Mwangi, 1991). It is also worth noting that in 1998, as many as 30 per cent of women had no access to mass media compared to only 10 per cent of men (NCPD, CBS and MI, 1998).

Changing the Picture³: Five Strategies for the Future. At the beginning of the twenty-first century, there is little evidence that the world's communication media has a great deal of commitment to advancing the cause of women in their communities. Although the presence of women working in the media has increased in all world regions over the past two decades, real power is still very much a male monopoly (see Gallagher 1995). And while it is relatively easy to make proposals for the implementation of equality in the area of employment - and to measure progress - the issue of media content is much more problematic. Who is to decide what is acceptable in this domain? What criteria should be used to evaluate progress?

Research (and experience) has shown that purely quantitative measures are completely inadequate to describe gender portrayal in the media, much less to interpret its meaning or significance. There may be widespread agreement that certain types of media content - for example, violent pornography or child pornography - are completely unacceptable and degrading to women, and should be strictly regulated. But what about the routine trivialisation and objectification of women in advertisements, the popular press, and the entertainment media? What about the prime-time television shows, watched by millions, in which women are regularly paraded as the mute and scantily clothed background scenery against which speaking and fully clothed men take center-stage? And how many women feel uneasy, or downright fearful, if they are alone at night in a taxi, which stops at traffic lights beside an advertising poster adorned with a semi-naked, pouting female image? There are important rights and responsibilities involved here, and the conflicts are obvious. We have hardly begun to address them, much less find ways of reconciling them.

In terms of strategies for change, there are perhaps five broad areas in which simultaneous and coordinated activity could bring results.

- First, there needs to be pressure from within the media themselves. More women must be employed - at all levels and in all types of work - in the media, so as to finally achieve the critical mass of female creative and decision-making executives who could change media output. Numbers are important, if long-established media practices and routines are to be challenged. To quote the veteran American journalist, Kay Mills: 'A story conference changes when half the participants are female ... There is

³ Margaret Gallagher: Lipstick Imperialism and the New World Order: Women and Media at the Close of the Twentieth Century. A paper prepared for Division for the Advancement of women Department of Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development United Nations December, 1995

indeed security in numbers. Women become more willing to speak up in page-one meetings about a story they know concerns many readers' (Mills 1990, p. 349). There is evidence that, when they do constitute a reasonable numerical force, women can and do make a difference. For instance, in the United States a 1992 survey of managing editors of the largest 100 daily newspapers found that 84 per cent of responding editors agreed that women have made a difference, both in defining the news, and in expanding the range of topics considered newsworthy - women's health, family and child care, sexual harassment and discrimination, rape and battering, homeless mothers, quality of life and other social issues were all cited as having moved up the hierarchy of news values because of pressure from women journalists (Marzolf 1993). In their study of press coverage in India during the 1980s, Ammu Joseph and Kalpana Sharma (1994) conclude that female journalists played an important role in focusing attention on issues of crucial importance to women: dowry-related deaths, rape, the right to maintenance after divorce, the mis-use of sex determination tests, and the re-emergence of sati. But it is not just a question of introducing 'new' topics (though they are age-old concerns for women) on to the news agenda. As we know from the example of war reporting in the former Yugoslavia, women have also succeeded in changing the way in which "established" issues are covered. Similarly, in the Asian context, Joseph and Sharma note a qualitative difference in reporting of the conflict in Sri Lanka by Indian women journalists who "focused on the human tragedy unfolding in that country while also dealing with the obvious geopolitical aspects of the ethnic strife. By contrast, the latter was the sole preoccupation of most of the male journalists covering the conflict" (op. cit., p. 296).

The second need is for pressure from outside the media, in the form of consumer action and lobbying. One of the many paradoxes of the move towards the market-led media systems that are developing all around the world is that in some respects it places more power in the hands of the consumer. Not surprisingly, this was recognized long ago in North America, where strong media lobby groups already exist. In Canada for instance, MediaWatch - established in the early 1980s - has secured the removal of numerous sexist advertisements, has worked with national broadcasters and advertising associations to develop guidelines on gender portrayal, and has effectively lobbied to secure a strongly worded equality clause in Canada's 1991 Broadcasting Act. Elsewhere the Tanzania Media Women's Association (TAMWA), Women's Media Watch in Jamaica, and the Media Advocacy Group in India have all made an impact with both the media and the public. In Europe initiatives of this sort have barely started. In Spain the Observatorio de la Publicidad (created in early 1994 by the Instituto de la Mujer), and in Italy the Sportello Immagine Donna (established in 1991 by the Commissione Nazionale per la Parità) have begun to provide mechanisms through which complaints can be organised and channeled. However, these are rare examples. Strong women's media associations do exist in a many countries, but often their primary

purpose is to defend women's professional interests as media workers. There is a real need to develop monitoring and lobby groups which could organize effective campaigns and protests on a national and - when necessary - a regional and even a global level.

The third area is media education. It is astonishing how little the public in general, and even media professionals themselves, understand the subtle mechanisms, which lead to patterns of gender stereotyping in media content. This emerged clearly from recent research by the Broadcasting Standards Council in the United Kingdom. For instance, they found that women viewers had even 'no concept of the scriptwriter developing characters in a particular way and accepted with little question the presentation of women that they were offered' (Hargrave 1994, p. 21) There is a great deal of talk particularly in academic and political circles - about the portrayal of women in the media. But abstract discussions about 'sexist stereotyping' and 'negative images of women' are unlikely to promote true understanding of what is involved, much less lead to real change. What is needed are effective, practical workshops built around specific media examples. In this sense, the NOS Portrayal Department in the Netherlands is exemplary. It was launched as a five-year project in 1991, and has built up a unique collection of audio-visual examples - as well as specially produced material - which are used in training sessions and workshops with programme-makers. Media education is a key strategy. The development of national and regional banks of examples and materials, which illustrate the many ways in which gender stereotyping occurs, would be a tremendous contribution to its success.

The fourth need is for pressure from above so that, for example, media organisations are encouraged to adopt guidelines and codes of conduct on the fair portrayal of women. The media in most countries already have guidelines that govern particular aspects of their output such as the portrayal of violence, or the regulation of advertising. In some countries - for instance Canada, the United Kingdom - certain media organisations also have guidelines covering the ways in which women are portrayed (see Mariani 1994, for a review of relevant European regulations). These guidelines have been made to work, and they could work in other organisations too. Given the development of transborder and global communication systems, there is also an urgent need for regional and international codes of practice. This is a delicate matter, which would undoubtedly provoke immediate and vociferous objections from the media communities. For example, in 1995 the European Union adopted a Resolution on the image of women and men portrayed in advertising and media. As a result of fierce lobbying by the media industry, the final text is very much weaker than the initial draft. However, it is still a useful document. Despite the inevitable opposition, it is important to work towards the development of regulatory texts and codes of conduct in all countries and regions.

The final need is for international debate aimed at a reinterpretation of "freedom of expression" within the framework of a women's human rights perspective, and the subsequent development of a global code of ethics based on this new interpretation. Such an undertaking would certainly provoke controversy. Cees Hamelink points out that the pursuit of democracy in world communication has been all but abandoned because "the gospel of privatisation... declares that the world's resources are basically private property, that public affairs should be regulated by private parties on free markets" (Hamelink 1995, p. 33). Moreover the belief that a free market guarantees the optimal delivery of ideas and information means that - in a bizarre way - the terms "free market" and "free speech" have become almost interchangeable. With more and more communication channels in the control of fewer and fewer hands, it is surely time for a fundamental reinterpretation of the doctrine of freedom of speech, and the search for a new definition of this "freedom" which takes full account of the contemporary global economic, information and communication system and of women's place within it. The 1995 report of the World Commission on Culture and Development provides a lead here. The Commission points out that the airwaves and space are part of a "global commons" - a collective asset that belongs to all humankind, but which is at present used free of charge by those who possess resources and technology. It goes on to suggest that "the time may have come for commercial regional or international satellite radio and television interests which now use the global commons free of charge to contribute to the financing of a more plural media system" (World Commission on Culture and Development 1995, p. 278).

2.6 WOMEN IN ADVERTISEMENT

"The critics concur on one point: advertisement is its own force, an institution turned entity" (Lazier-Smith, 1989 p 248). Accordingly, the power of advertising has been accepted as a tool to change standards and has been recognised by scholars from a wide variety of disciplines. The same author continues to assert that advertising with regard to women has consistently been filled with stereotypes. Thus, images presented in print advertising say that a woman's place is in the home, women are dependent upon men, and do not make independent important decisions. On television, prevalent female roles are maternal housekeeping and aesthetic.

A study in the United States of America on portrayal of women in advertising by Pingre and other (1974 cited in Laiser-Smith, 1989) found 75 per cent of all ads in *MS*, *Playboy*, *Time*, and *Newsweek* to be sexist. They portrayed the woman as being less than a person and at best capable of womanly roles as mothers and wives or in "female" occupations such as secretaries, teachers, clerks and nurses. Gallagher also found that women on television

ads are more passive than men. Her assessment of evidence from Costa Rica led to the conclusion that women are portrayed in stereotypical ways such as looking after children, caring for husband and possessing good taste.

A study in Kenya by Lutta and Goro (1991) found that 63 per cent of advertisements presented women as decorative/sex objects. In exchange for beauty and youth, women are rewarded with security and status, love and romance. Female-orientated advertisement was geared towards women's fear of being rejected by men because of bad breath, excessive body sweat or dry or oily skin. On the other hand, men were depicted as pilots, doctors, scientists, and managers. The researchers also found that males took 81 per cent of voice-overs in television ads regardless of category of product, which serves to imply the over all authority of men. Another study in Kenya found that most of the products advertised by woman, place women in the home and emphasise on a woman's ability to protect the house (Keter and Miday, 2000).

In addition, women are given frivolous roles and most ads insinuate sex. In work situations, the roles given to women reinforce their traditional roles and careers. In sum, adverts in Kenya as in many other countries emphasise on the superficial part of a woman at the exclusion of other traits/characteristics.

2.7 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

From the foregoing discussions, it is evident that coverage of women in the media is replete with gender biases that range from under representation and distortion of reality, which may be responsible for the disproportionately low level of women participation in politics. Despite their educational and other advances, women still face many obstacles in entering senior positions in society. They are poorly represented at all levels of political life and decision-making leading to the widespread neglect of women's priorities at all levels by politicians and bureaucrats.

This study is propounded by the empowerment model, which maintains that women have to challenge oppressive structures and situations simultaneously at different levels. In the social production of their existence, human beings inevitably enter into definite relations, which are independent of their will, namely relations of production appropriate to a given stage in the development of their material forces of production. The totality of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society the real foundation, on which arises a legal and political superstructure and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness. The mode of production of material life conditions the general process of social, political and intellectual life. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence, but their social existence that determines their consciousness

Feminist scholars use gender as an analytical variable. Gender is a relational concept that denotes the manner in which women and men are differentiated and ordered in a given socio-cultural context. Sexuality appears as the interactive dynamic of gender inequality. Gender emerges as the congealed form of the sexualisation of inequality between men and women. So long as this is socially the case, the feelings, acts or desires of particular individuals notwithstanding, gender inequality will divide the society into two communities of interest. The male centrally features a hierarchy of control. For the female, subordination is sexualised in the way that dominance is for the male.

Gender concerns are those needs that arise because of the gender division of labour, hence examples of women's gender concerns arise from their more domestic location and their concern with childcare, and food production and preparation (Longwe, 2002). Gender inequality is a more severe type of problem because, here the gender concern is overlaid with gender inequality; typically because women have less access to facilities, opportunities and resources. Longwe further asserts that a gender issue arises when people recognize that a particular instance of inequality is wrong, unacceptable and unjust.

There has been a growing consensus in the last two or so decades that sustainable development cannot be realized without the full and equal participation of men and women (Subo, 2002). Two approaches which have been developed to guide gender studies: The Women in Development (WID) approach which, posits that women have been neglected and left out of mainstream development hence the need to fully integrate them in the development process. The main weakness of the approach was that it did not challenge the social structures that were largely determined by males. The second approach – the Gender and Development (GAD) approach which gained prominence in the late 1980s was seen as a more progressive approach to development as it moved the gender debate beyond an economic analyses to include other equally important aspect such as environmental, ethical and cultural aspects of development.

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2.7.1 The Empowerment Approach

Empowerment means individuals acquiring the power to think and act freely, exercise choice, and to fulfil their potential as full and equal members of society. The United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) includes the following factors in its definition of women's empowerment:

- Acquiring knowledge and understanding of gender relations and the ways in which these relations may be changed;
- Developing a sense of self worth, a belief in one's ability to secure desired changes and the right to control one's life;

- Gaining the ability to generate choices and exercise bargaining power;
- Developing the ability to organise and influence the direction of social change to create a more just social and economic order, nationally and internally.

The notion of women's empowerment has far-reaching consequences:

Extending the idea of human development to encompass women's empowerment and gender justice puts social transformation at the centre of the agenda for human development and progress of women and men as well as in the ideologies and institutions that preserve and reproduce gender inequality. This does not mean reversing positions, so that men become subordinate and women dominant. Rather, it means negotiating new kinds of relationships that are based not on power over others but on a mutual development of creative human energy...It also means negotiating new kinds of institutions, incorporating new norms and rules that support egalitarian and just relations between women and men.

(Department for International Development (DFID) 2002, Poverty Elimination and the Empowerment of Women)

Although the empowerment approach acknowledges inequalities between men and women, and the origins of women's subordination in the family, it also emphasises the fact that women experience oppression differently according to their race, class, colonial history and the current position in the international economic order. It maintains that women have to challenge oppressive structures and situations simultaneously at different levels.

The empowerment approach questions some of the fundamental assumptions concerning the inter-relationship between power and development that underlie previous approaches. While it acknowledges the importance for women of increasing their power, it seeks to identify power less in terms of domination over others (with implicit assumption that a gain for women implies a loss for men) , and more in terms of the capacity of women to increase their own self reliance and internal strength. This is identified as the right to determine choices in life and to influence the direction of change, through the ability to gain control over crucial material and non-material resources. It places less emphasis on the equity approach of increasing women's status relative to men, but seeks to empower women through the redistribution of power within, as well as between, societies.

According to Sara Longwe in (Gender Awareness: The Missing Element in the Third World Development Project) there are five different levels of equality as the basis for criteria to assess the level of women's development in any area of social or economic life:-

Welfare: The level of welfare of women, relative to men. In such matters as food supply, income and medical care.

Access: Women's access to the factors of production on an equal basis with men: equal access to land, labour, credit, training, marketing facilities and all publicly available services and benefits. Here equality of access is obtained by ensuring the principle of equality of opportunity, which typically entails the reforms of discrimination against women.

Conscientisation: The understanding of the difference between sex roles and gender roles, and that the latter are cultural and can be changed; conscientisation also involves a belief that the sexual division of labour should be fair and agreeable to both sides, and not involve the economic or political domination of one sex by the other.

Participation: Women's equal participation in the decision-making process, policymaking, planning and administration. Equality of participation means involving the women of the community affected by the decisions taken, and involving them in the same proportion in decision making as their proportion in the community at large.

Control: A utilisation of the participation of women in the decision-making process through conscientisation and the mobilisation, to achieve equality of control over the factors of production, and the distribution of benefits.

The potentially challenging nature of the empowerment approach has meant that it remains largely unsupported by either national governments or bilateral aid agencies. Despite the wide spread and growth of Third World groups and organizations whose approach to women is essentially one of empowerment, they remain under-funded, reliant on the use of voluntary and unpaid women's time, and dependent on the resources of the few International Non-governmental agencies and first world countries prepared to support this approach to women and development.

In summary, empowerment approach is relevant to the study of media coverage of women in the political arena to the extent that women political participation is a necessary step towards gender equity and equality. The media has a central role to play in the process of creating gender awareness in any society. There are three essential elements in gender awareness. First, the recognition that women have different and special needs; second that they are a disadvantaged group, relative to men, in terms of their level of welfare and access to and control over the factors of production; third that women's development entails working towards increased equality and empowerment for women, relative to men.

Thus, the problem in women's development is not primarily concerned with enabling women to be more productive, more efficient, or to use their labour more effectively. These

things are, or may be important, especially in special situations. But the central issue of women's development is women's empowerment, to enable women to take an equal place with men, and to participate equally in the development process in order to achieve control over the factors of production on an equal basis with men.

2.8 HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

- Gender portrayal in the media prior to the 2002 general elections was biased against women aspirants in terms of quantity and quality;
- The media amplified "feminine qualities" which did not necessarily emphasize women candidate's political leadership capabilities when covering women politicians;
- The media judged female contestants negatively in terms of probability of winning the elections during the campaign period.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY OF DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This section presents source of data, methodology of data collection and analytic methods that were used in this study.

3.2 DATA SOURCE

This study utilised data from the main local dailies namely, the *Daily Nation* and the *Standard* from October to December 2002, that is, from the close of parliament to the national general elections. This duration also covers the 21 official campaign days. As pointed out earlier, the two daily newspapers carried out constituency-by-constituency analyses of contestants during the campaign period hence they contain sufficient data for the purposes of this study. The two dailies were chosen at the exclusion of others owing to their wide reach.

3.3 SAMPLING PROCEDURES

All articles for the three-month period noted above were selected. However, for photographs of contestants, a random sample of newspapers was taken. In particular, two weeks were picked from each of the months of the study. This decision was based on three facts. Firstly, a preliminary analysis of the quantity of coverage of parliamentary aspirants in photographs during the period under study was extensive. Given that there were no systematic biases in the probability of female or male candidates' photographs appearing in any given week, that is, the likelihood of appearance of photographs for either gender is constant for any particular week, a sample of only a few weeks would therefore be unbiased hence representative of the three months being studied. Secondly, the sample taken is sufficiently large enough to represent the whole month: indeed the sample covers 50 per cent of the universe³ given that two out of the four weeks in a month were taken. And, thirdly, given the time and financial constraints confounding the study, there was need to take only a sample of the total number of photographs on condition that the sample taken was representative of the months being studied. As results in the following chapter indicate, the sample taken was appropriate and sufficient for the purposes of this study.

³ Means the total population under study

Since the interest of the study was the quality and quantity of coverage and portrayal of women which was captured through an assessment of where articles and photographs are placed in the paper, all the days of every week that was selected were covered⁴. For the sake of consistency and comparability, the two dailies were analysed in each of the sampled weeks.

3.4 DATA COLLECTION

The data was collected by use of a "Coding schedule" to record the coverage in the *Daily Nation* and the *Standard* during the time under study. The coding sheet was used to list down the instances of coverage in the two newspapers. The procedure followed for analysis of articles was simply appearance of a candidate's name as in the story headline. This strategy is insightful in that the name of a candidate also gives information on her/his gender. Next, all articles that had a female candidate's name were selected for further analysis and compared with a purposive sample of articles on male candidates (see next section for details). All photographs of candidates in the sampled weeks in the two newspapers were listed depending on where they appeared in the paper and their size.

3.5 ANALYTIC METHODS

3.5.1 Content Analysis

It will be recalled that the aim of this study is to analyse aspects of quantity and quality of coverage and portrayal of women parliamentary seat contestants during the campaign preceding the 2002 general elections. The main method of analysis for this study is content analysis. According to Hansen et al (1998), the aim of content analysis in media research has more often been that of examining how news, drama, advertising, and entertainment output, reflect social and cultural issues, values, and phenomena. They further argue that:

Content analysis is by definition a quantitative method. The purpose of the method is to identify and count the occurrence of specified characteristics or dimensions of texts, and through this, to be able to say something about the messages, images, representations of such texts and their wider social significance. (However) The relationship between the frequency with which some activity or phenomenon is portrayed and its wider social impact is far more complex than this...but this in itself is not an indictment against the practice of quantitative analysis; rather it points ... to the need for placing what is counted in content analysis within a theoretical framework which articulates...the social significance of what is being counted.

(Hansen et al 1998; p95/96)

⁴ See a sample of the coding scheme in the appendix.

These postulates concur with a definition of content analysis advanced by Berelson thus: "Content analysis is a research technique for the objective, systematic, and quantitative description of the manifest content of communication" (in Marris and Thornham, 1996; p204).

Guided by the postulates presented above, this study sought to link quantitative aspects of coverage with the content in order to tease out the social significance of such coverage. This approach, therefore, called for detailed analysis of *quantity* and *quality* of coverage. However, instead of following the traditional method of coding using inches or centimetres, this study quantified coverage by tallying the frequency of mention of women and men aspirants' names in the headings of articles in different sections of the newspapers. These issues are covered through frequency distributions and graphs. To assess the bias in portrayal and coverage of female candidates, the content articles bearing male and female aspirants' names were analysed. The guiding assumption was "that study of manifest content is meaningful ... that the content is accepted as a 'common meeting ground' for the communicator, the audience, and the analyst" (Marris and Thornham, 1996; p204)

The Analysis was centred on the following: coverage of professional, social status, and educational background of the contestants; writers' opinion on the probability of that particular candidate to win the election; and, any other details such as candidate's private life (marital status, sexual life, children, family, physical looks etc). These approaches had the advantage of adequately covering issues of quality and quantity, which are essential in an analysis of gender bias in the mass media.

3.6 VARIABLES

3.6.1 Dependent (Outcome) Variables

The outcome variables of this study are:

- **Quality of presentation** – This is a composite variable conceptualised here as: qualities emphasised in the presentation/reporting, when during the week the presentation appears, where in the newspaper the presentation appears, perceived probability of female contestant to win the election according to the writer of the article under study;
- **Quantity of presentation** – This variable denotes the frequency of appearance of articles bearing female candidates names in the headlines, and the number of photographs of female candidates compared with male contestants.

3.6.2 Independent Variables

The aim of this study is to assess if there were biases in the coverage of women and men candidates in the media during the campaign period. Thus, the key independent variable in these analyses is the gender of the candidate. Other variables of interest include gender of the article writer/photographer.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

4.0 Introduction

It will be recalled that this study set out to establish whether there was gender bias in media coverage and portrayal of parliamentary aspirants in the 2002 general elections in Kenya. The study used various analytic techniques as outlined in chapter three. This chapter presents the main findings of the study. It is divided into three main sections: the first two sections present results of quantitative analysis of articles and photographs while the third section presents results of qualitative analysis of articles on female parliamentary contestants. As noted earlier, this is not a comparative study of coverage by the two daily newspapers under study hence most emphasis is placed on emerging patterns of coverage of women in newspapers rather than on differences in such coverage by each paper. Given that the *Daily Nation* and the *Standard* are the most widely read newspapers in Kenya, an analysis of patterns of coverage renders itself amenable to generalizations and readily applicable in the formulation of media strategies in political advancement of women.

4.1 Coverage of women candidates in newspaper articles

Of interest here was the issue of adequacy of coverage of male and female contestants in the two dailies with a view to comparing the level of emphasis given to female candidate.

4.1.1 Coverage in the headline, and on front and back pages

The table below (Table 4.1) shows compares appearances of parliamentary candidates by gender in the *Daily Nation* and the *Standard* in the headline as well as anywhere in the front page and the back page in the three months under study.

4.1 Per cent distribution of articles in the Daily Nation and the Standard by gender of candidate

	Gender of candidate	Number in the Headline		
		Oct	Nov	Dec
The Daily Nation	Female	0	0	0
	Male	10	25	16
	Total	10	25	16
	% Female	0	0	0
The Standard	Female	1	1	0
	Male	17	25	23
	Total	18	26	23
	% Female	5.9	3.8	0

It is evident from the table above that no female parliamentary contender appeared in any edition headline in the *Daily Nation* for the three months compared with 51 male parliamentary contenders. The *Standard* did not perform any better: women candidates appeared only twice in the edition headlines for the three months compared with 65 appearances for male aspirants. Analyses further show that women candidates did not appear on the front page at all in the *Daily Nation* but appeared once in the *Standard*.

4.2 Per cent distribution of front page articles other than headline in the Daily Nation and the Standard by gender of candidate

	Gender of Candidate	On first page (not headline)		
		Oct	Nov	Dec
The Daily Nation	Female	0	0	0
	Male	20	22	14
	Total	20	22	14
	% Female	0	0	0
The Standard	Female	1	0	0
	Male	21	20	30
	Total	22	20	30
	% Female	4.5	0	0

On the other hand, male contestants appeared 56 and 71 times in the *Daily Nation* and the *Standard* respectively. And, finally, only one woman candidate appeared in the back page in both papers whereas men appeared a total of 30 times during the period being studied.

4.3 Per cent distribution of back page articles in the Daily Nation and the Standard by gender of candidate

		Distribution		
		Oct	Nov	Dec
The Daily Nation	Female	0	0	0
	Male	6	4	9
	Total	6	4	9
	% Female	0	0	0
The Standard	Female	1	0	0
	Male	5	3	3
	Total	6	0	0
	% Female	16.6	0	0

These findings concur with the assertion that coverage of women in mass media is replete with gender biases that range from under-representation to distortion of reality (Gallagher, 1995). Similar findings have been documented in a number of previous studies. For instance, according to Mtambalike (1995), Tanzanian newspapers rarely consider women as a source of news for the front page. Moreover, a 1995 global media-monitoring project sponsored by UNESCO to explore the representation of women in 71 countries found that women made up just 17 per cent of all interviewees in the news worldwide.

4.1.2 Coverage in other sections: page lead articles and special commentaries

Just as in the foregoing, women parliamentary aspirants featured marginally even in other sections in the two newspapers during the whole duration under study. Indeed a comparison of coverage of male and female candidates shows that women received no media attention worth talking about. The two tables below (Tables 4.4 and 4.5) show the distribution of male and female candidate by coverage in articles in other pages (and whether the article was a lead article in the page or a special commentary respectively).

Table 4.4 Distribution of articles on Male and Female Candidates in other inside pages

Gender of Candidate in article		Page lead articles		
		Oct	Nov	Dec
The Daily Nation	Female	5	6	4
	Male	36	79	77
	Total	41	85	81
	% Female	12.2	6.7	5
The Standard	Female	0	5	1
	Male	50	85	82
	Total	50	90	83
	% Female	0	5.5	1.2

Table 4.5 Distribution of articles on Male and Female Candidates in other inside pages

Gender of Candidate in article		Special Commentaries		
		Oct	Nov	Dec
The Daily Nation	Female	3	1	1
	Male	19	18	45
	Total	22	19	46
	% Female	13.6	5.3	2.2
The Standard	Female	5	0	3
	Male	35	14	35
	Total	40	14	38
	% Female	12.5	0	7.9

¹ Include special election-related analyses, interviews and commentaries as well articles by candidates

Although the *Daily Nation* fared slightly better than the *Standard*, it is apparent that women were not given much attention by the two newspapers. For instance, the proportion of page lead articles bearing a female candidates name ranges between 5 and 12 per cent in the *Daily Nation* and between 0 and 5 per cent in the *Standard* for the three months preceding the general election.

In addition, it is clear that women were ignored in relation to special election-related articles such as analyses, interviews and commentaries in the crucial three months prior to the elections. The highest rate of coverage in such areas for women was in October where articles on women accounted for slightly over ten per cent of the total in each of the dailies.

This observation concurs with previous studies. A good example is the finding by a global monitoring exercise where women from 71 countries monitored coverage in one day in 1995, and found that only 17 per cent of the people interviewed were women.

Figure 1. Page lead articles bearing Female Candidate's names as percentage of total articles

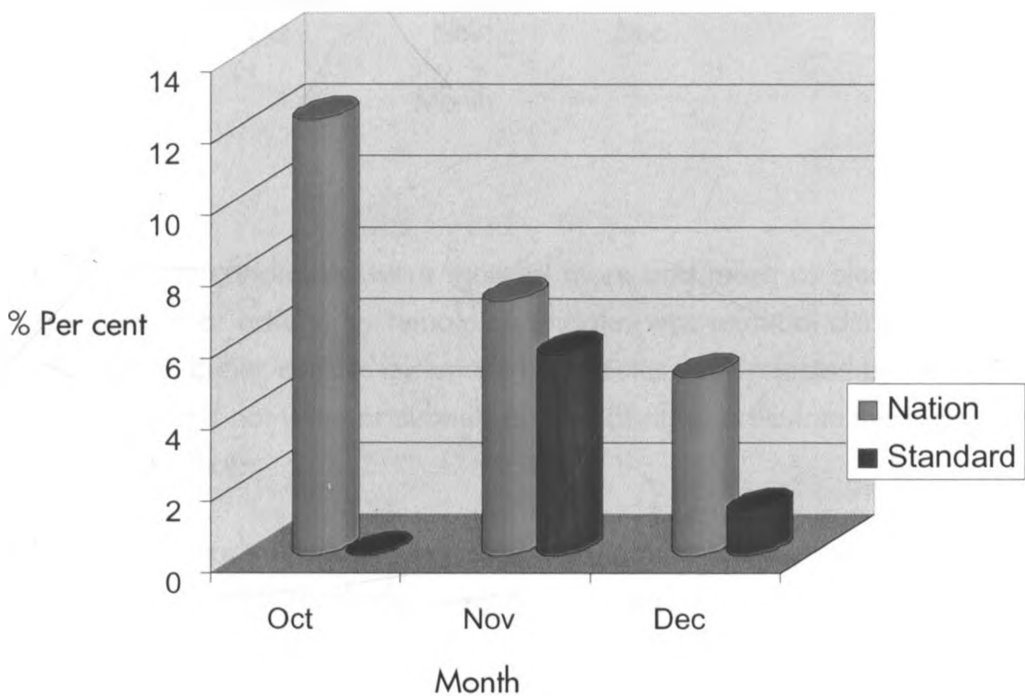
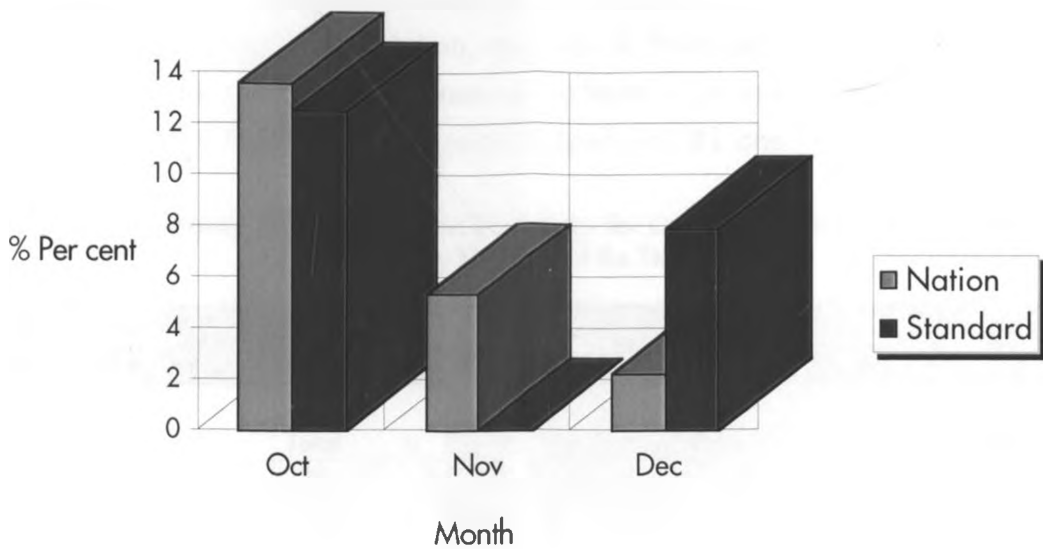


Figure 2. Special election-related Commentaries/Analysis/Interviews on Women as per cent of total



Generally, female candidates were ignored more and more as elections approached. Further, the number of articles by female candidates was minimal during the period (not shown in the table). Either, articles by female candidates were rejected by the two dailies or female candidates did not write or submit articles at all to articulate their vision – a likely phenomenon given that:

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Although thousands of women are heard every day lamenting about the problems afflicting this country, rarely does any one of them come forward to declare that they are ready to make a difference.

(the Standard, October 10, 2002)

4.2 Coverage of candidates in photographs

All the photographs in two dailies were analysed with respect to placement and size according to gender of aspirant presented with a view to finding out if the paucity of coverage indeed cuts across all aspects of the dailies. All photos of parliamentary candidates in six weeks sampled for each daily are presented in Table 4.6 to 4.8 below.

4.2.1 Placement

Just as in coverage in articles, women were largely ignored in terms of placement of their photographs in the two dailies. For example, out of the 38 photographs of candidates that appeared on front page in the Nation, only six of them were of female candidates. The Standard also under-represented women on the front page: only 12 photographs of female candidates appeared on the front page compared with 61 one for male candidates.

Table 4.6 Placement of photographs on front page for October, November and December in the Daily Nation and the Standard

Front page			
	Total	Number on Women	Number on Men
Nation	38	6	32
Standard	61	12	49

In both newspapers, women did not feature on the back page. They were given slightly higher level of coverage in the inside pages of the newspaper edition. Thus, we may conclude that the findings in other studies (see for example Mtambalike, 1995) that women and women issues are largely ignored by the media hold true for Kenyan media.

Table 4.7 Placement of photographs on back page for October, November and December in the Daily Nation and the Standard

Back page			
	Total	Number on Women	Number on Men
Nation	5	0	5
Standard	4	0	4

Table 4.8 Placement of photographs on other inside pages for October, November and December in the Daily Nation and the Standard

Other inside pages			
	Total	Number on Women	Number on Men
Nation	327	36	291
Standard	364	30	334

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4.2.2 Prominence

Analyses demonstrate that compared with their male counterparts, female parliamentary aspirants were again ignored in terms of prominence given to their photographs throughout the campaign period.

Table 4.9 Distribution of full photographs for October, November and December in the Daily Nation and the Standard

Full photographs			
	Total	Number on Women	Number on Men
Nation	4	1	3
Standard	7	2	5

Full pictures of women candidates appeared only three times in the sampled weeks compared to 11 times for men candidates. A similar trend is seen also in medium close-up photographs as well as in passport-size photographs.

Table 4.10 Distribution of Close-up photographs for October, November and December in the Daily Nation and the Standard according to size

Close -ups			
	Total	Number on Women	Number on Men
Nation	122	26	96
Standard	200	14	186

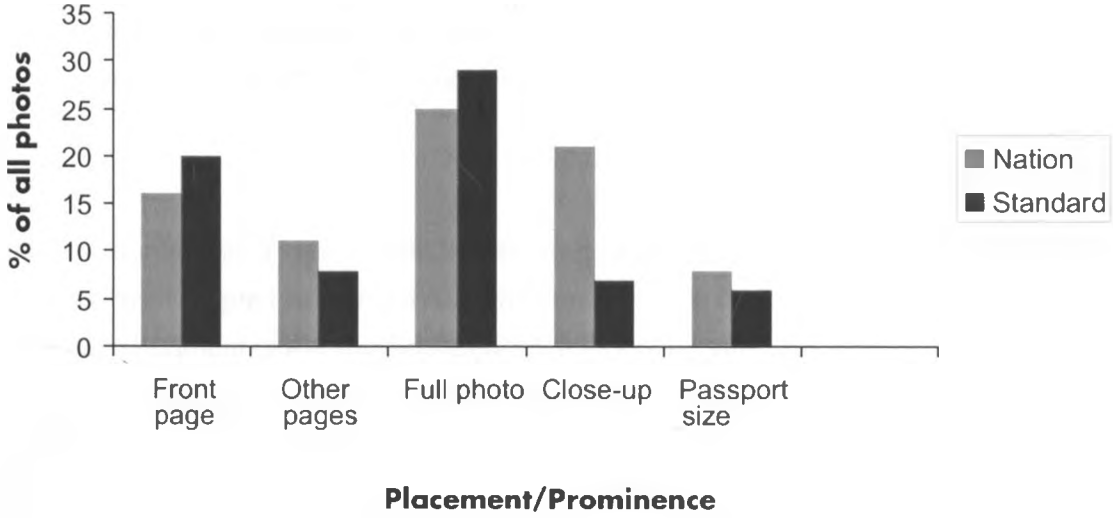
A graphic view of these findings is presented in Figure 3. below. It is apparent that female candidates' coverage through photographs was mainly in full photographs. In the *Daily Nation*, women candidate's full photographs accounted for 25 per cent of the total full photographs. The proportion reached 29 per cent in the *Standard*. They also fared slightly better in medium sized close-ups where they accounted for slightly over 20 per cent in the *Nation*. (and 7 per cent in the *Standard*). In both dailies, women candidates were poorly represented by the use of passport size photographs.

Table 4.11 Distribution of passport size photographs for October, November and December in the Daily Nation and the Standard

Passport size photos			
	Total	Number on Women	Number on Men
Nation	225	17	208
Standard	232	15	217

We may conclude that quantity of coverage of women in the two newspapers is inadequate. These findings correspond with those of similar studies that have demonstrated the paucity of media coverage of women. For instance, Lukalo and Goro (1995) in a study on *“The Images and Professional Status of Women in Kenya’s Mass Media”* found that in one channel, women got zero coverage, hence the conclusion that as achievers, women take the back seat.

Figure 3. Photographs of Female candidates as per cent of total photographs according to placement and prominence



4.3 Quality of coverage of candidates

From the preceding section, it emerged that the quantity of coverage of female candidates was measured by the frequency of appearance of female candidate’s names in article headings was simply negligible. According to the definition of biased coverage presented in the section on definition of key concepts, the paucity of coverage of female parliamentary contenders was a case of obvious gender bias. Thus, this section sets out to find out issues of biased coverage through the analysis of specific articles that appeared in the two dailies during the period under study.

A purposive sample of articles on female candidates was taken and their contents analysed according to the procedures laid out in chapter three namely: coverage of professional, social status, and educational background of the contestants; writers’ opinion on the probability of that particular female candidate to win the election; and, any other details such as candidate’s private life (marital status, sexual life, children, family, physical looks etc). More than twenty articles for each gender were sampled for analysis.

4.3.1 General issues of coverage

Before proceeding to the key themes of interest in this study, it is important to note that preliminary analyses of coverage of parliamentary candidates demonstrate that female candidates were generally given a raw deal by the two dailies: they were simply invisible. However, female candidates who were already well known prior to the campaign were actually given particular attention by the newspapers, just as did those who managed to become popular in the course of the campaign.

These findings confirm the assertion by Professor Maria Nzomo that:

Save for the well-known incumbents, such as ... Charity Ngilu, Mrs Beth Mugo, and Ms Martha Karua, the majority of the women candidates remain invisible.

(the *Daily Nation*, November 11, 2002)

Detailed content analyses of articles on women candidates demonstrate that the quality of coverage with respect to amount of details on a female candidate's leadership ability and the writer's assessment of the candidates probability of winning the election depended mainly on the candidate's standing in the political arena.

4.3.2 Dominant patterns of coverage of female candidates

It is evident that although women candidates were generally given little attention by the two newspapers, the quality of coverage varied from candidate to candidate. Thus, three quite distinct groups of female candidates can be identified according to quality of coverage defined here as coverage of professional, social status, and educational background of the contestants and writers' opinion on the probability of a particular female candidate to win the election as well as any other details such as candidate's private life (marital status, sexual life, children, family, physical looks). The groups are:

- a) The well-known incumbents and former MPs;
- b) Newcomers who build up popularity in the course of time, and;
- c) Other newcomers.

The following sections give a detailed description of these pattern and the candidates comprising each of the groups.

4.3.2.1 The well-known incumbents and former MPs

The two dailies took the adage that “if she is worth covering, she is worth coverage well”. The already well-known sitting and former female members of parliament received widespread coverage, which was also very positive and detailed. There is no evidence of gender biases in the portrayal. On the contrary, they are described as “fighters”, “go-getter”, “giants”, and assessed as likely winners in the parliamentary race. For instance, writing about Ms Martha Karua (an opposition MP then), a male reporter from the Daily Nation had this to say:

Perhaps the party card is being downplayed because *the seat is more or less gone to the opposition*⁵, specifically the National Rainbow Coalition... The person to beat is Martha Karua, a go-getter and forceful fighter, who never leaves anything to chance... The lawyer-cum-politician enters the race with the benefit of incumbency. Most importantly, she has an *impressive track record*, having initiated many development projects in the constituency, which have won her admiration among the electorate.

(the *Daily Nation*, October 30, 2002)

Again,

Gichugu constituency promises political fireworks as Ms Martha Wangari Karua goes for a third straight parliamentary term.

(the *Daily Nation*, December 17, 2002)

Similarly, Mrs. Charity Ngilu was described as an astute leader with a forceful personality who had served her constituency for two consecutive terms and enjoys fanatical following. Further, her opponent was considered to be disadvantaged as he was viewed as a *perennial loser to Ngilu*. (the *Standard*, December 17, 2002). She is also covered not only in her campaign trail but also in other election-related activities including explaining the role of religious organisations in election monitoring, among others. Mrs Beth Mugo too was given extensive coverage in the two dailies especially in her relentless fight against gender discrimination in Kenya’s political parties (see, for example, the *Standard*, December 1, 2002).

As noted earlier, former female MPs were also given positive coverage. A good illustration is Mrs Nyiva Mwendwa, who is described as a “giant” (the *Daily Nation*, December 14,

⁵ Emphasis not in original unless otherwise stated through out this chapter

2002) and “Kenya’s first woman Cabinet Minister” (the *Standard*, October 18, 2002). The candidate was also given quite some space to explain why she decamped from the then ruling party Kanu to NARC (the *Standard*, October 25; November 15). Besides, in what the media called “war for supremacy in Ukambani” between Mrs Charity Ngilu, Mr Kalonzo Musyoka and Mrs Nyiva Mwendwa, the two women are not portrayed as underdogs but as fighters. (A few exceptions to this rule exist. A good example is Ms Wamwachai, a former MP who failed to get the kind of attention that Mrs Nyiva Mwendwa enjoyed. Some probable reasons for this scenario will be presented in the last section of this chapter.)

Worthy of special emphasis is that none of the articles sampled portrayed the female candidates discussed above negatively. Moreover, there was no undue emphasis on their social lives at the expense of their political leadership ability. There is also no evidence that judgement on their suitability as leaders was based on their roles as mothers or wives; they were actually portrayed as equal with men (at least the men they were competing with), if not better. Given that all top female contenders were in NARC, could their positive coverage have been due to NARC’s popularity? The answer to this question will be attempted in the last section of this chapter.

4.3.2.2 Newcomers who build popularity in the course of time

The next category of women parliamentary contestants according to magnitude of coverage comprises aspirants who have never been to parliament before irrespective of whether they had ever contested before or not. An analysis of the changes in the coverage of this category of women offers perhaps the most useful insight into the media psyche in the realm of covering female contestants. Apparently, these women were at first ignored. Articles on or about them and their political activities were as brief as they could possibly be; they lacked in detail and consequently said nothing about their political abilities. But as they gained popularity over time, they were then accorded the “status” of the first category.

A classic example of this “metamorphosis” is the coverage of Professor Wangari Maathai who contested and won Tetu parliamentary seat. For instance, when she launched her bid for NARC nomination in November, the *Daily Nation* gave her one paragraph tacked right in the centre of the newspaper, thus:

Environmentalist Prof. Wangari Maathai launched her parliamentary bid for the Tetu seat on an Environment platform. She told crowds on her campaign trail, “Every time you see a green tree, you see me. The Green Belt movement chief is seeking the National Rainbow Coalition ticket.

(the *Daily Nation*, November 16, 2002)

Despite Prof Maathai's accomplishments in politics (she contested the presidency in 1997), in academia and in many other fields, this is all the media support she got from the most widely read newspaper in Kenya during the launch of her campaign. The aspirant did secure nomination by NARC, the party of the day. After her authority became apparent, the candidate started enjoying increasingly positive coverage. As an example, the same newspaper had this to say in December about the same candidate it had given one inspiring paragraph in November:

Tetu's National Rainbow Coalition candidate Wangari Maathai may have an easier time after the withdrawal of the Safina nominee for the race.

(Daily Nation, December 1, 2002)

On the same day, Professor Maathai received huge and highly positive coverage in the Standard. She was even judged as the most likely winner in the Tetu constituency parliamentary race, and her intellectual and leadership abilities were loudly applauded. The article does not miss out the fact that she is the first Kenyan woman to get a Ph.D and the first to become a chairperson of a University department. Moreover, the reader is treated to a detailed description of her headship of various bodies including the Green Belt Movement and the National Council of Women of Kenya. Her successful lobbying against building of a politically conceived monolith in Uhuru Park, a public park in Nairobi, is also given particular attention.

Many argue that with the Narc nomination, *Maathai's parliamentary seat is assured...* While planting trees, she has also planted authority on the ground, and that authority she carries when she decides to act. This is the woman who single-handed (sic) taken on the government and the ruling elite with daring actions that have won her accolades globally... For years she has *withstood political bashing and battering from an army of scared and cowardly male politicians...* They might soon meet on the floor of the house... Those who have been agitating for human and environmental rights see the entry into parliament of Prof Maathai as a window of freshness into Kenyan politics.

(the Standard, December 1, 2002)

It is apparent that this kind of coverage and portrayal is reserved for only a special group of seasoned women politicians especially incumbent and former MPs. Professor Maathai is presented as a fighter who is not just equal to any man, but better... much better than most. In this particular article, the fact that she is divorced is not presented as a hindrance to her political advancement. Not all women candidates, however, gather enough momentum to be noticed by the media.

4.3.2.3 Other newcomers

Some say she has an almost zero chance of beating her opponent. Others say her ambitions are good but directed at the wrong project...

These are women who have not been to parliament before although some of them have contested the parliamentary seat once or twice. For various reasons, the majority of women launched their bid for parliamentary seats in low-keyed cadence – and maintained that tempo. Unfortunately, instead of supporting them in their activities, it appears that the media waits for them to fight it out, and supporting them only when they appear to have high chances of winning. No wonder the majority of women aspirants do not get far with their political ambitions.

This category of women aspirants who do not enjoy the benefit of incumbency or of having ever been to parliament aptly exemplifies the struggles that female candidates have to go through as they venture into politics. Theirs is a dark uncharted passage devoid of any meaningful illumination or support by the media.

On the whole, women aspirants in this category are invisible in the media. Articles about them are usually tiny, and are placed in the least prominent sections of the newspapers. As one female aspirant put it,

I am going to fight against a giant and I know many people are going to dismiss me...I have to work three times as hard as male candidates in order to convince the voters that I can effectively represent them in parliament.

(Daily Nation, November 12, 2002)

Unfortunately, this assertion applies also to the media: to be given any special attention by the media, female candidates have to work “three times as hard as male candidates”.

While there were no overt gender biases in portrayal of female aspirants generally speaking, some were not so unfortunate; issues extraneous to political leadership were given more prominence and emphasis than were given the pertinent ones. These candidates remain largely unknown because nothing is said about them in the media. For example, writing about a candidate in October, the *Standard* article had the heading “Ng’eno’s wife to face four rivals”. And the article went thus,

Mrs Rachael Ng’eno faces four other candidates in the nomination for Buret Constituency on a Kanu ticket... *Mrs Ng’eno is the wife of former Cabinet Minister, the late Prof Jonathan Ng’eno...*

(the Standard, November 21, 2002)

Likewise, two wives of a former member of parliament, Kihika Kimani declared their interest in parliament seats, the *Daily Nation* ran an article on the front page (not headline) that began, "Controversial politician Kihika Kimani ... has 'anointed' two of his wives to become MPs" (the *Daily Nation*, November, 17). The article said nothing about the two women apart from the fact that they were currently in college, which helped to paint the picture of perfect political novices. All emphasis went to the 'controversial' nature of the proposition and the former MP's polygamous marriage – the article even had a photograph of Kimani with four of his eight wives.

Articles on women parliamentary aspirants in this category are tiny – the majority of them were one-paragraph briefs – uninspiring and drab. They look like a polite way of saying "Sorry, we don't write on women candidates here!" Candidates who are lucky to receive wider coverage, for example in an interview, still do not escape adverse judgement with respect to their chances of winning. For example, an interview with a woman aspirant contesting against one presidential contestant began thus,

Some say she has an almost zero chance of beating her opponent. Others say her ambitions are good but directed at the wrong project...

(the *Standard*, October 21, 2002)

Although the rest of the interview tried to paint a positive picture, its importance was undermined by those opening remarks. Notice also that obvious implication that politics is not for her kind; it is the "the wrong project".

4.4 Coverage of male candidates

In order to compare quality of coverage of male and female candidates in the media, this study also analysed articles on male parliamentary contestants. Results indicate that coverage of male contestants showed that incumbents as well as former MPs attempting a comeback received more than their fair share of coverage in the media. The coverage was not uniform even for this group.

It may be recalled that all presidential contestants in the 2002 general election were men, and all except one were former MPs. Given that the presidential race were mainly between KANU and NARC, the media concentrated on candidates from the two parties than those from other parties. (Although it was not an objective of this study to assess the nature of coverage of presidential candidates, it may be noted that the NARC candidate received wider and much more positive coverage than any other candidate. This is in line with Wanyande's (1995) observation that the print media in Kenya had evolved into a champion of public interest – and such interest largely comprised exit of KANU government.)

Besides presidential candidates, other “sensational” male candidates were also given plenty of coverage. These were mainly those with party leadership positions such as Secretary Chairpersons and Secretary-Generals.

Analyses of coverage of male candidates in the print media during the campaign period show that there were no explicit patterns in their coverage. The evidence suggests that they were gauged on their own merit although writers’ personal views cannot possibly be ruled out. Another factor that could have had an impact on the nature of coverage is the party affiliation. Given the popularity of NARC at the time, it is likely that some male candidates were covered more extensively and positively just because they belonged to the ruling party.

While the patterns of coverage for all male candidates seems to be more objective and disproportionately more extensive than that of their female counterparts, it is interesting to see how male newcomers were treated by the media. Analyses show that some male newcomers – those had not been to parliament before – were given highly positive assessment. For example, an analysis of the parliamentary race in Ndia constituency was presented thus by the *Daily Nation*:

Ndia constituency used to be known for titanic fights... Among the main contenders for the DP ticket will be Robinson Githae who has mounted an aggressive campaign since last year. Mr Githae claims to have secured the support of half of the Ndia Democratic Party sub-branch officials earlier aligned to Mr Kibicho... He comes from a prominent local family and is the son of retired senior chief Githae Githwendwe. He is the brother of exile academic Prof Michere Mugo Githae and brother-in-law of businessman S. K Macharia of Citizen Radio and Television... But so far, it looks like the race will be settled at the DP-NAK nominations...

(the *Daily Nation*, October 8, 2002)

It is not within the abilities of this study to establish why one newcomer was given such positive coverage and not the other. Probably newspapers were objective in the coverage of male contestants to the extent that they endeavoured to bring out the best candidate. Notice in the quote above how Mr Githae’s family background is used to paint the portrait of an achiever; and Githae did win the party nomination and the parliamentary race. Other newcomers who received positive coverage are Peter Kenneth, Raphael Tuju, and Kivutha Kibwana (the *Daily Nation*, November 6 and 25, 2002 the *Standard*, December 8, 2002). It is indicative that these candidates were in NARC, the most popular party at the time.

In conclusion, coverage of male parliamentary candidates showed no clear patterns beyond the observation that presidential candidates from the dominant parties – NARC, KANU and to some extent Ford-People – received wide coverage. There are some indications that once

a candidate secured NARC nomination, he enjoyed wide coverage in the print media. However, we cannot possibly determine why a particular candidate who had never been to parliament before received positive coverage even prior to party nomination as showed by the articles quoted above. One conclusion can be made from a comparison of coverage of male and female newcomers: While almost all female newcomers had to fight first and “prove” their capabilities before they were noticed by the media, a good number of male newcomers did not have to accomplish any hard feats to be noticed and covered positively by the media.

4.5 Coverage of the Gender Agenda During the Campaign Period

This study also undertook a critical analysis of articles with a gender theme with a view to coming up with important insights into the role of the media in political empowerment of women. The question here is “What else did media do to by way of supporting women candidates?” On the whole, such articles were written by gender activist/scholars and newspaper columnists. A few of similar articles emanated from women contestants themselves and appeared as part of news.

Although these articles were not frequent, it is clear that the media offered a platform for advancement of the gender agenda. A number of these articles served to give female contestants tips on how to win the race. For example, Martha Koome (then in the Federation of Women Lawyers (Fida-Kenya)) urged women to pull their efforts for poll victory, and went on to propose strategies such as lobbying and peaceful demonstrations when women’s needs are threatened (the *Standard*, December 3 and 9, 2002). Professor Maria Nzomo also urged women organisations to be more active in campaigning for women (the *Daily Nation*, November 11, 2002). Clearly, the newspapers offered a forum for protest against gender biases in the political arena.

Women continue to endure discrimination under the patriarchal system that is so entrenched in most institutions... Election violence (is) another problem for women in addition to lack of political empowerment.

(Martha Koome: the *Daily Nation*, December 10, 2002)

Another common cause of protest was the failure of political parties to adhere to the tenets of affirmative action. (None of the political parties in the race cared about gender equality in their nomination, with Kanu being the biggest culprit among the larger parties, but made amends by nominating women after elections). The newspapers also presented a chance for contestants to express their fears and concerns, which were indeed many.

When I first expressed interest in the seat, some people started questioning my marital status, saying that since I am a divorcee, I cannot lead. They say I have not been able to maintain my own home.

(the *Daily Nation*, November 17, 2002)

4.6 Discussion

The general objective of this study was to analyse gender biases in the portrayal of parliamentary candidates in *The Daily Nation* and *The Standard* during the campaign preceding the 2002 general elections in Kenya. Specifically, the study set out to do the following tasks: determine if the quantity of coverage of women during the campaigns in the two dailies in terms of frequency and space varied according to gender of the candidate; analyse the quality of coverage and portrayal of women in the campaigns in terms of the characteristics of women that were emphasised by the two dailies; establish the association between the gender of the news writer/reporter and quality and quantity of coverage and portrayal of women contestants; determine if male and female contestants were given equal chances to contribute articles in the two daily newspapers; and assess the relationship between the gender of the writer and portrayal and coverage of gender issues.

The evidence suggests that for a woman to be noticed by the media she has first to fight and win, an unfortunate state of affairs given that the media ought to be an avenue through which women candidates can gain the much needed support. As far as bias in terms of quantity of coverage is concerned, women were largely invisible in the media. Neither in articles nor in photographs do they compare with their male counterparts. Besides, in both articles and photographs, women candidates rarely appeared on the front page.

In relation to the quality of coverage of candidates, the study unearthed interesting patterns. Incumbents as well as candidates who had been to parliament before were given very positive coverage; in a number of cases, they were viewed as better than their male opponents. Besides, their abilities were well presented and the writers passed very positive judgement concerning their probability of winning. On the other hand, all newcomers were generally ignored but those who gathered enough power in the course of campaigning were accorded as much attention as the former. Those who did not turn the tide remained obscure throughout the campaign period.

Given that most of the popular female candidates – those who received relatively more coverage – were in the National Rainbow Coalition party, it is probable that they received coverage not only because of their standing but also because of the popularity of the party at that moment. In other words, since they were in the most popular party, they became popular.

The study also found that female candidates hardly wrote newspaper articles to sell their vision during the campaign period. However, it is not within the scope of this study to determine if indeed they did not contribute articles or the dailies rejected their articles.

Although the level of stereotypic representation of women was limited, these findings concur with the assertion or theory presented by Gallagher (1981) that women are underrepresented in the media. This invisibility is unfortunate given that the media is a powerful tool for shaping and changing perceptions and attitudes towards women in society.

And, finally, the study could not determine if the gender of the writer/reporter/photographer had an effect on quality of coverage because most articles and photos did not bear the name of the writer or photographer.

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary

This study hypothesised that portrayal of candidates in the media during the campaign for the 2002 general elections was biased against women in terms of quantity and quality and that the media amplified “feminine qualities” which did not necessarily emphasise women candidates’ political leadership capabilities when covering women politicians. Further, it was hypothesised that media judged female contestants negatively in terms of probability of winning the elections during the campaign period.

In the main, analyses confirm these hypotheses. To begin with, coverage of women candidates in articles by the two dailies is not comparable to that of their male counterparts. For example women candidates appeared in the headlines utmost once per month. It also emerged that they were hardly covered in other sections of the newspaper. Similarly, they were not given as much prominence as their male counterparts in photographs.

Some interesting patterns emerged with respect to quality of coverage of female candidates. Sitting female MPs as well as those who had been in parliament previously were given highly positive coverage and were often considered much better leaders than their male opponents. In contrast, the rest of women aspirants were generally ignored by the media and were given attention only after they appeared set to win the race. Generally, the extent of gender bias as exemplified by such aspects as stereotypic representation was limited.

5.2 Conclusions

This study has established that during the campaign for the 2002 election, the two most widely read newspapers in Kenya were biased in the coverage of parliamentary candidates. Women were relatively more disadvantaged in terms of attention accorded them by the two dailies. The most obvious kind of bias was under-representation of female candidates.

Another important conclusion is that the media does not cover women aspirants until they become popular yet they need to be covered in order to be popular. This presents a catch-22 situation that has serious implications for women political empowerment.

The study found that coverage of women aspirants in newspapers varied from one group of aspirants to the other. Those who already had gathered enough popularity were covered adequately but the majority (lesser known) of them (who were in dire need of media coverage to advance) were rendered invisible. What the media presents are not portraits but mere sketches of such political aspirants.

5.3 Recommendations

From the forgoing discussions, it is apparent that the media in Kenya has a long way to go in coverage women political contestants. The following recommendations are proposed:

- The media need to be enlightened on how to cover the gender issue more objectively. In particular, gender scholars and activists need to take the lead in guiding the media in gender coverage not only in terms of quantity of coverage but quality. Emphasis should be placed on the need to give "newcomers" enough attention once they declare their candidature rather than wait until they become popular.
- It is also strongly recommended that women candidates need to be encouraged to contribute articles in newspapers to sell their vision to the electorate.
- There is need for more studies to find out the role of newspaper top editors in coverage of women candidates with a view to enlisting their active support in furthering the gender agenda.
- More research is also needed to assess the impact of the gender of the writer or photographer on coverage of female candidates.

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Content Analyses: Articles

Month _____

Newspaper: _____

Edition (Include day)	Headline News*		Front page News*		Back page News*		Page lead (give no. per page)*		Analyses/Special commentary*		Other inside pages		Article by a candidate	
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