



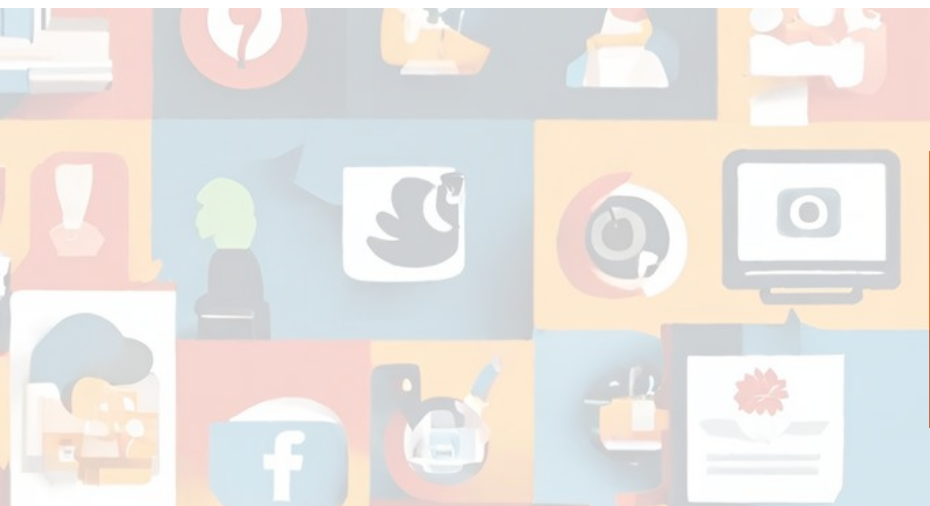
A Comprehensive Analysis: Uncovering Journalistic Perspectives on Online Gender-based Violence (OGBV)

Tanzania Context

Prepared by:

Tech & Media Convergence (TMC)
December, 2023

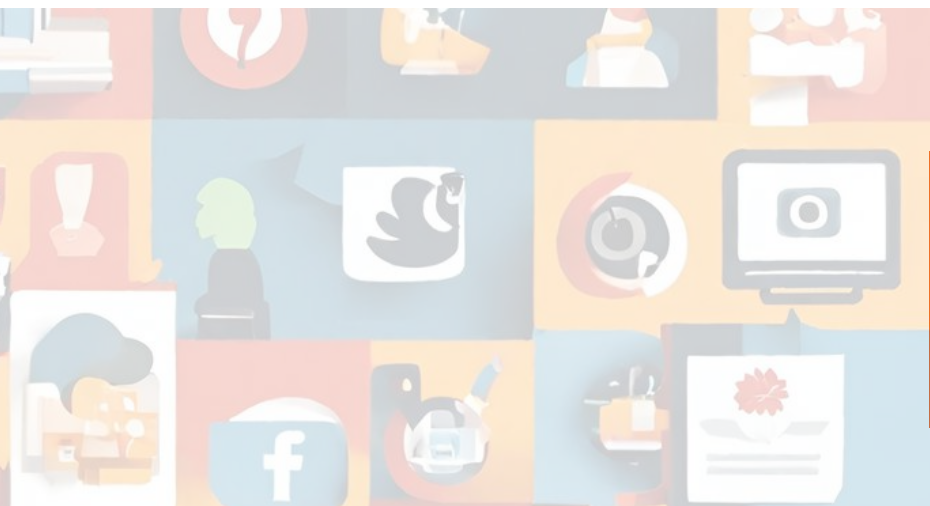




This report is brought to you as a product of the Women at Web Initiative through the capacity building mentorship programs for journalists. This one of Tech & Media Convergence's core programs. The capacity building mentorship programs would have not been possible without the partnerships with DW Akademie, funded by the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, and also Internews' Boresha Habari program supported by United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

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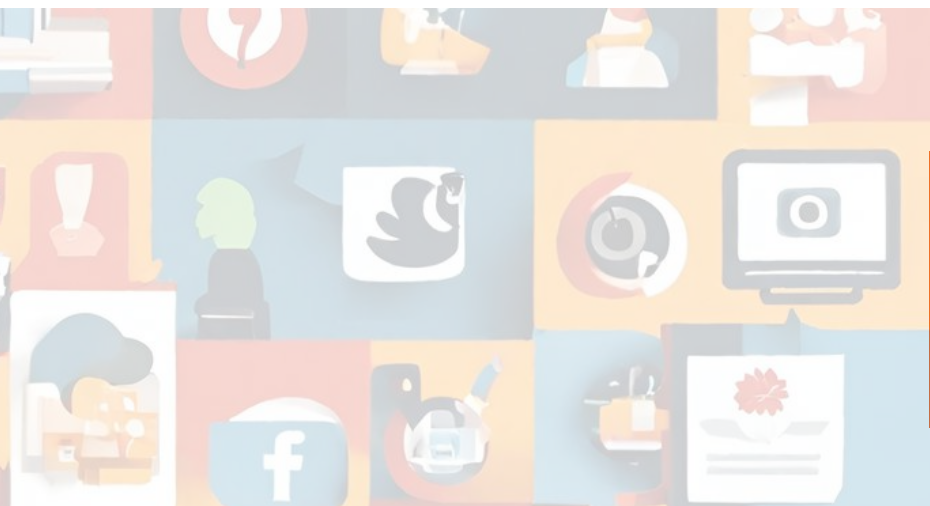


Acknowledgements

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A heartfelt thank you extends to the journalists who actively participated in our program, generously sharing their experiences, knowledge, and their unwavering dedication to the media sector. The insights gained from these sessions have served as the cornerstone of the knowledge disseminated throughout this report.

Special appreciation to the Senior Executives who were ready to be engaged with this critical OGBV matter. It was important to have the Senior Executives perspectives. We reached out and targeted the Media Actors operating very actively to promote the media landscape and making sure that the 4th estate is an effective pillar in the region. Their valuable observations and insights have significantly contributed to informed decision-making, laying a solid foundation for charting the way forward.



Sustainable Development Goals

*that aligns with the
Women at Web Program*



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List of Abbreviations

CSO	Civil Society Organization
EPOCA	Electronic and Postal Communication Act Tanzania
FM	Frequency Modulation
GBV	Gender-based Violence
IMS	International Media Support
MCT	Media Council of Tanzania
MICT	Ministry of Information, Communications & Information Technology
NCII	Non Consensual Intimate Images
OGBV	Online Gender-based Violence
OVAW	Online Violence Against Women
SOSPA	Sexual Offences Special Provisions Act
TAMWA	Tanzania Media Women's Association
TBC	Tanzania Broadcasting Corporation
TCRA	Tanzania Communications Regulatory Authority
TCRA CCC	TCRA Consumer Consultative Council
TMC	Tech & Media Convergency
TV	Television
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
UTPC	Union of Tanzania Press Clubs

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A note from the CEO

"At the core of our success lies the collaborative support that propels the Women at Web Initiative. We extend our gratitude to all our partners for their unwavering commitment, which strengthens our shared vision and amplifies the social impact for Women."



Once again, we are back with our annually released report touching on different aspects of Online Gender-based Violence (OGBV). In 2021, we published a report titled **"An Overview of Online Gender-based Violence on Women in Politics."** This report was a deliberate response to the crucial need for policymakers to comprehend, engage in discussions, and devise strategies for formulating policies that address this challenge. In 2022 we felt the need to showcase the general state of OGBV through the report, **"The State of Online Gender-based Violence in Tanzania - Drawing from Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and Telegram"**. Now, we build on where we left off with the journalists that we had the pleasure of working with, on this sensitive topic. For 2023, it was time to look at OGBV through journalistic lenses.

To further the conversation on OGBV, this time our focus is the media. Through this report, we focus on the grasp and knowledge of the journalists and how it relates to the state and reality. As you delve into the pages that follow, you will find that we uncover new perspectives of what OGBV means for journalists. It has been an interesting journey, worth sharing with the partners and stakeholders, giving us a glimpse of what should be done. Hence, this report plays a pivotal role in advancing our advocacy against OGBV this time in media, marking a significant milestone in our ongoing journey. This time around we have also clearly shown what a good support system for the victim looks like.

We are content with the progress but acknowledge there is still so much to do. We monitor our programs and agenda that we hold dear. In regards to the OGBV agenda - we can see some ripple effects of conversations, discussions, and measures being taken on the sensitive agenda. That in itself reflects how it is important and impactful to have as many actors supporting the agenda as possible. This report serves as a reflection of our commitment to enhancing Women and youth participation in safe online spaces and having access to opportunities through the Internet. As you navigate through the insights and outcomes presented here - we hope that there is something of significance and impact that you will get from this report.

I extend my gratitude to the implementing partners who made it possible to work with the journalists, also the journalists who were part of the program, the media experts who were ready to share their perspectives, and everyone who has contributed to the success of this report. Last but not least, to my team, for your dedication, excellence, and patience in making the TMC's vision a reality. We call for collaboration for stakeholders to support and join our efforts. Together, we can amplify voices, bridge gaps, and shape a media landscape that promotes safe digital spaces.

Cheers!

Asha D. Abinallah
Chief Executive Officer,
Tech & Media Convergency (TMC)

December, 2023

Foreword



The Media Council of Tanzania (MCT) works to promote freedom of the media while ensuring the highest professional standards and accountability. In fulfilling its mandate MCT undertakes a number of projects and one is *Women in the Media*, in which MCT works with partners to promote a gender sensitive and conscious media both in terms of content and institutional structures. Under this project MCT runs a mentoring programme for young and mid-career women journalists, training of senior women journalists in media management as way of preparing and equipping them to take leadership positions, promoting a gender in the media policy, and training in gender using its publication, *Training Manual on Gender and the Media*.

Of recent, there have been reported cases of Online Gender-based Violence and harassment of women journalists. What the Council has established is the sad reality that many incidents of OGBV go unreported because victims worry that reporting them can make them go viral and cause the victims to suffer twice.

A follow-up of one case at a Dar es Salaam-based TV station clearly revealed to the Council the hesitancy to talk about the matter on the side of the victim. This is because of the brutal and personal nature of the attacks themselves. Unjustified attacks online which are personal and defamatory have resulted in many women journalists being overly cautious in their activity online, and in many cases, they shy away from being active.

Online space is, unfortunately, becoming more volatile, and media practitioners should be trained on safe and protective/defensive use of the internet. They should be educated on avoiding unnecessary exposure of personal life and details online and safety measures, while personal data protection statutes have to be effectively enforced to minimize attacks.

Media owners should support their managers by putting forward resources needed, and editors should remember that they have a role to protect their reporters, and in this case, the most vulnerable, and that is female media practitioners. Targeted attacks of women online should worry us all because, at the end of the day, it discourages women from active participation online, and this has a debilitating effect on journalism and by extension the whole society that we strive to serve.

The report, ***"A Comprehensive Analysis: Uncovering Journalistic Perspectives on Online Gender-based Violence"*** comes at the right time. MCT has concluded that going forward, press violations are going to happen with more frequency online rather than physically. This is a real challenge that calls for concerted action from media regulators, owners, managers and editors, trainers, journalists themselves and law enforcement organs.

**Kajubi Mukajanga,
Executive Secretary,
Media Council of Tanzania**

December 22, 2023

About the Initiative

Women at Web, Tanzania



THE PROGRAM

One of TMC's Social Impact Program targeting Women, young girls and youth

The Women at Web^[1] initiative is a transformative movement dedicated to enhancing the lives of women through empowerment, knowledge dissemination, access to information, and the cultivation of digital resilience by promoting safe online spaces. Central to this initiative is information sharing, equipping women with the capability to make informed decisions that align seamlessly with the utilization of information technology.

Originating from the DW Akademie's Women at Web East African regional program, initially introduced in Tanzania, Uganda, Kenya, and Rwanda in 2018, the program evolved over five years, culminating in its official completion in 2023. While DW Akademie, lays off in 2023, Tech & Media Convergency intends to proceed with the program calling on other partners that support the agenda while being part of maintaining the already existing regional network of the mentioned countries that has grown over time.

TMC holds the program close at heart for it has seen through time how much it has been of impact to the Women and youth. The program has worked with a series of important actors such as Activists, Social Media Influencers, Women professionals, women entrepreneurs, women leaders in politics, lawyers, other civil society organizations, respective authorities (such as the Gender desk and cybercrime unit at the Tanzanian Police Force) and many more. Among the target participants is the featured mentorship for journalists, from which valuable insights of this report were derived.

Through the program, we have implemented a variety of impactful initiatives, including advocacy on Online Gender-based Violence and Internet Governance, Digital Capacity Building, national and regional online social media campaigns, and strategic collaborations with key stakeholders. For instance, just in the past 18 months (2022/23), the program has been instrumental in shaping conversations around OGBV.

Additionally, it has played a pivotal role in contributing to notable achievements in digital products created by journalists, sharing segmented data on OGBV victims through annually released reports, and reaching over 700 primary school students. Most importantly we nurture good citizenship by having a pool of safe online space ambassadors. While celebrating the achievements, we recognize there is still immense potential for further impact and progress.

^[1] All and further information about the Women at Web Initiative, see this link [here - https://linktr.ee/WomenAtWebTZ](https://linktr.ee/WomenAtWebTZ)

Uncovering Journalistic Perspectives on Online Gender-based Violence (OGBV)



Introduction

Online Gender-based Violence is a major issue that Tech & Media Convergency (TMC), campaigns against, investigates in greater detail in various contexts, and works to have it recognized by society as one of the agonizing and painful experiences that, despite being intangible - can nevertheless be felt.


This is implemented through one of our programs, the Women at Web Initiative. The report information we have drawn from the mentorship program implemented in late 2021 (November) to early 2023 (February). During this time, we had 6 different groups of journalists in a similar program and content. Each program consisted of 20 to 21 participants, to make sure that the results were effective. In these 6 groups we had 124 completed in the program. We made OGBV a priority in the training curriculum for journalists, along with digital skills, digital security, and digital resilience, through one of our main initiatives, the Women at Web initiative. The support was from DW Akademie funded by the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, and also Internews' Boresha Habari program supported by USAID.

We consistently champion digital adaptation and transformation, purposefully encouraging journalists to actively engage online, including on social media platforms and other digital channels. Nevertheless, In the swiftly changing terrain of the digital age, the emergence of technology has introduced unparalleled connectivity, revolutionizing the methods through which we engage, exchange, and absorb information. Amidst the vast opportunities that the online realm presents, a darker side of it has emerged — many challenges pose a threat, but one of the features is a mark of the alarming prevalence of Online Gender-based Violence.

We have always observed the Media, as one of the potential actors in the agenda, although it has been lagging towards having intentional efforts. The role of Media in the fight against OGBV was more pronounced to TMC in one of the findings in the 2022 study, ***“An Overview of Online Gender-based Violence of Women In Politics”***, from one of the focus group discussions with the members of parliament[2]. Media was mentioned as one of the amplifiers by not having community guidelines that do not address comments shared by their followers on social media platforms

OGBV encompasses a spectrum of harmful behaviors, from harassment and intimidation to the dissemination of explicit content without consent, disproportionately affecting individuals based on their gender. Our team having worked in the region (Tanzania, Uganda, Kenya, and Rwanda), there are things that we took for granted in understanding OGBV in relation to journalists.

[2] This study also influenced the formation of the coalition of Members of Parliament advocating against OGBV chaired by Hon. Neema Lugangira. News on the FGD see - <https://womenatweb.co.tz/an-fdg-advocating-against-online-gender-based-violence-to-women-in-politics/>



As a learning organization, we take pride to sharing such lessons for informed decisions by the intended partners and stakeholders.

While the majority might undermine the consequences and seriousness of OGBV in Tanzania and some of the rest of the world, there are a number of nations in the world that acknowledge the seriousness of the matter. A recent 2022, DW Akademie study[3], indicated that Online Violence Against Women (OVAW) incidents are seen as trivial by the media, including the low-priority placement of stories on media platforms, inadequate verification of evidence, and miscommunication of the gravity of OVAW. The DW Akademie study has been drawn from Tanzania, Uganda, Kenya and Rwanda. In this complex digital age, journalists stand as crucial observers and influencers, uniquely positioned to unravel the multifaceted dimensions of OGBV.

Working on this study, it has showcased how there is some polar interconnection between media and the amplification of news and information on digital media (especially social media). This comprehensive analysis digs into the heart of OGBV through the discerning lenses of journalists, exploring not only the stark realities faced by victims but also how media professionals navigate this treacherous terrain. As storytellers and chroniclers of society, journalists wield the power to shape narratives, illuminate hidden injustices, and propel conversations that can catalyze societal change apart from the other agendas that seem to be more important. Their role extends beyond the mere reporting of facts; journalists serve as architects of public opinion, constructing frameworks that either challenge or perpetuate societal norms.

It is crucial that they set OGBV and OVAW as part of the bigger agenda. As key stakeholders in the fight against OGBV, journalists hold the potential to not only shed light on the pervasive issue but also to drive conversations that lead to tangible solutions.

As we embark on this journey, it is essential to recognize that the narratives we construct today have the power to redefine tomorrow. We hope that the respective key stakeholders will embark with us on a mission to foster empathy, resilience, and ultimately, a more just society with a media landscape that identifies OGBV as a threat and worth being reported and shared on media news.

GOAL OF THE STUDY

The study aims to comprehensively analyze Online Gender-based Violence in both mainstream and digital media, focusing on journalistic perspectives and evaluating the media's role in shaping public opinion, policies, and contributing to a safer digital environment for all.

[3] Examining media coverage of Online Violence Against Women in East Africa, read - <https://static.dw.com/downloads/66795876/dwa-ovaw-study-reportweb.pdf>

- # Methodology

A qualitative content analysis method was then applied to scrutinize the data collected from the pre-surveys and focus group discussions. This approach facilitated an exploration of journalists' perspectives and experiences concerning OGBV. Furthermore, follow-up perspectives were sought from media experts and influencers within the Tanzanian ecosystem. These additional insights offered depth and context to the qualitative analysis, providing a broader understanding of the interplay between media, digital platforms, and OGBV.

The integration of pre-surveys, focus group discussions, qualitative content analysis, and expert perspectives comprised a comprehensive methodological framework. This approach ensured a thorough exploration of the challenges, experiences, and perceptions of journalists in relation to OGBV, facilitating a refined interpretation of the study's objectives and enriching the analysis with diverse perspectives.

The Journalists

Journalists participating in the study represent a diverse range of affiliations, as recorded during the application phase. The majority are affiliated with various media houses, encompassing both mainstream and digital platforms.

The study incorporates insights from a total of 124 journalists (95 female and 29 male), hailing from 21 distinct media houses, including independent freelancers.

On the mid right a session led by Dr. Rose Reuben, the Executive Director of TAMWA, while on the far bottom left is the seasoned Media Expert, Ms. Rose Mwakitwange showing the link between GBV & OVAW

The Media Houses

- Afya Radio
- Azam TV
- CGFM Radio
- Daily News
- Energy FM
- Jamhuri Media Limited
- Kings FM
- Matukio Daima
- Mlimani Media/TV
- Morogoro Press Club



- The Guardian
- Passion FM
- Radio Zoe FM
- Tanzania Broadcasting Corporation (TBC)
- Tanzania Media Women's Association (TAMWA)
- Tanzanite App
- Times Majira
- TV3 Tanzania
- Uhuru Media Group
- Utalii Popote Media
- Uvinza Community Radio

Amidst the cohort of 124 journalists,

Journalist's Metrics

76.6%

The data was gathered from a sample of 124 journalists, consisting of 95 females and 29 males.

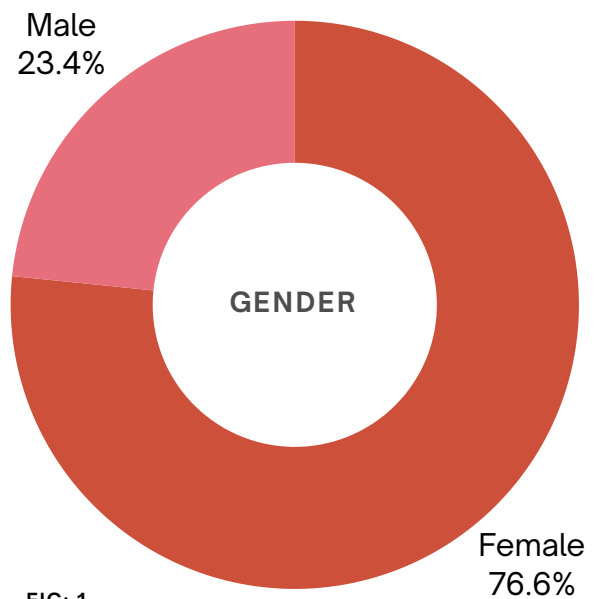


FIG: 1

The data was gathered from a sample of 124 journalists, consisting of 95 females and 29 males. These journalists were distributed across six cohorts, with three cohorts comprising entirely female participants and the remaining three featuring a blend of both male and female journalists.

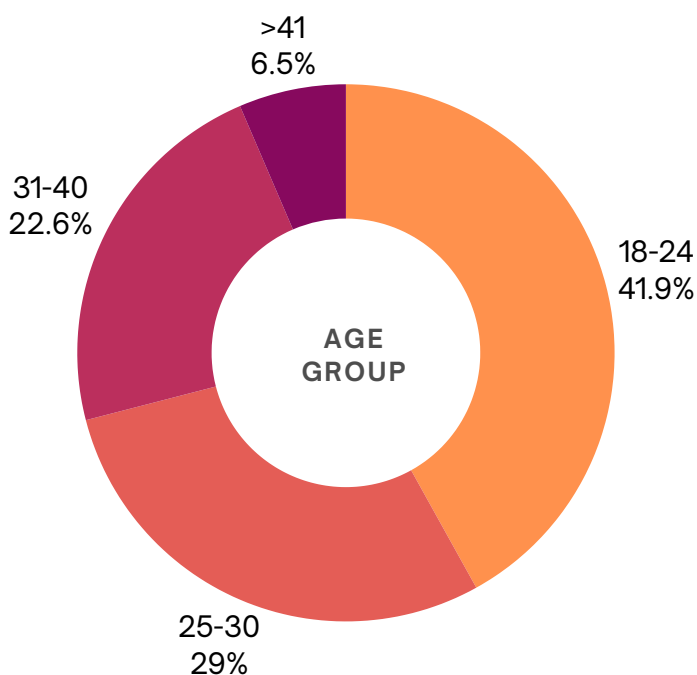


FIG: 2

The survey data on age distribution among journalists offers valuable insights into the dynamics of the field. Notably, the substantial representation of the 18 - 24 age group suggests a noteworthy influx of young journalists, indicating a growing interest in pursuing journalism as a career among the younger demographic.

On the flip side, the lower representation in the 31 - 40 age group and the "Other" category hints at a potential attrition of journalists with increasing age, pointing to the possibility that individuals may opt out of the journalism profession as they advance in their careers.

This age variance in journalism prompts further exploration into the underlying factors contributing to these trends, whether they stem from evolving career preferences, industry dynamics, or other influences.

How do you primarily use digital skills in your journalistic work?

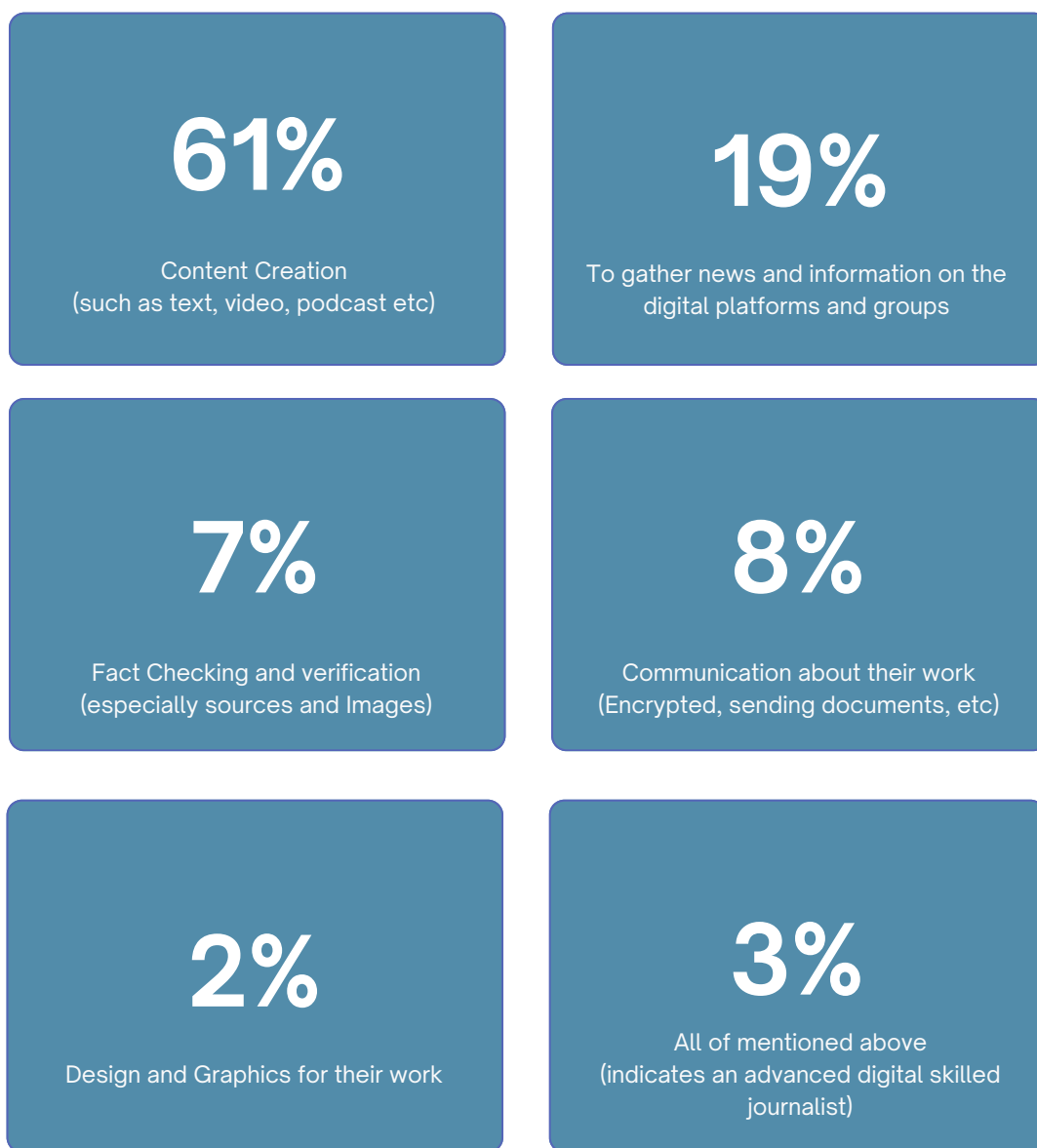


FIG: 3

The survey shows that most journalists use digital skills in different ways. The majority, around 62.10%, focus on creating content like text, videos, and podcasts. About 19.35% use digital skills to gather information, and 7.26% check facts for accuracy. Communication, including encrypted messages, is done by 5.65%, and 2.42% use digital skills for design and graphics.

Interestingly, while these options are available, working with these groups over time has revealed that many journalists tend to stick to the basics of using digital skills in their work. This means that, despite various possibilities, a lot of journalists prefer using digital skills in simpler ways for their journalism.

How would you rate your proficiency in using digital devices for journalistic purposes?

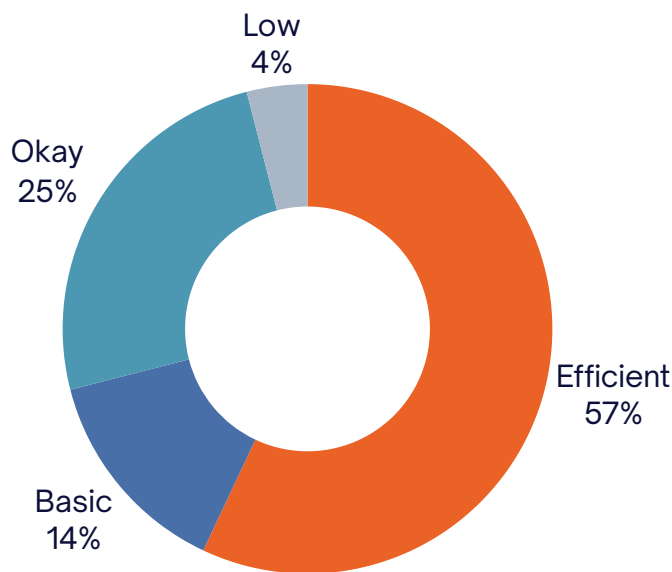


FIG: 4

The respondents' proficiency in using digital devices for journalistic purposes varied, with 57% (71 individuals) rating themselves as "Efficient." Additionally, 14% (17 individuals) considered their proficiency to be at a "Basic" level, while 25% (31 individuals) described it as "Okay."

A smaller percentage, 4% (5 individuals), expressed a "Low" proficiency level in using digital devices for journalistic purposes.

What Digital Platforms do you use most in your journalistic work?

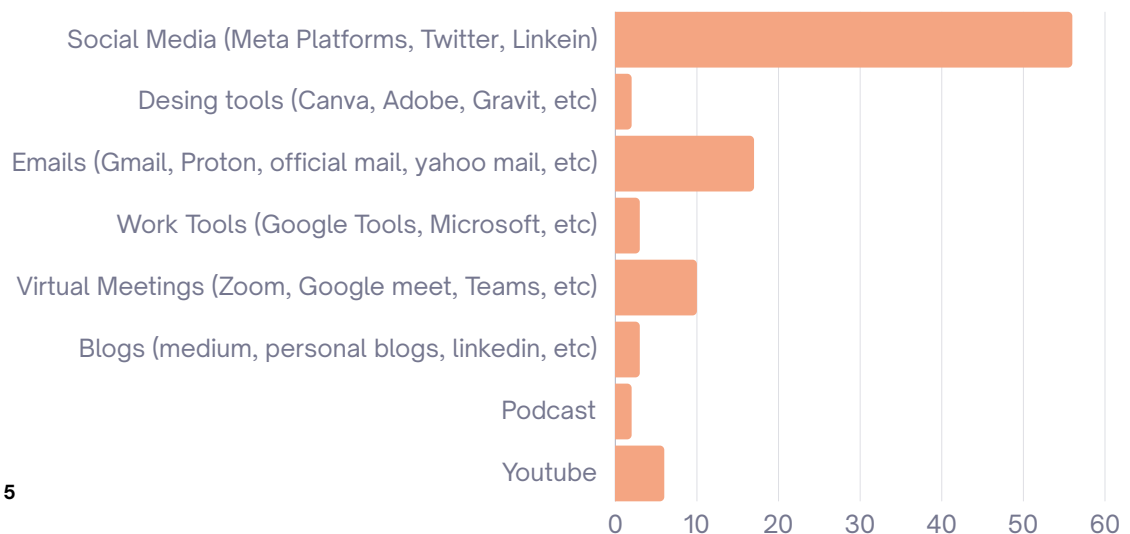
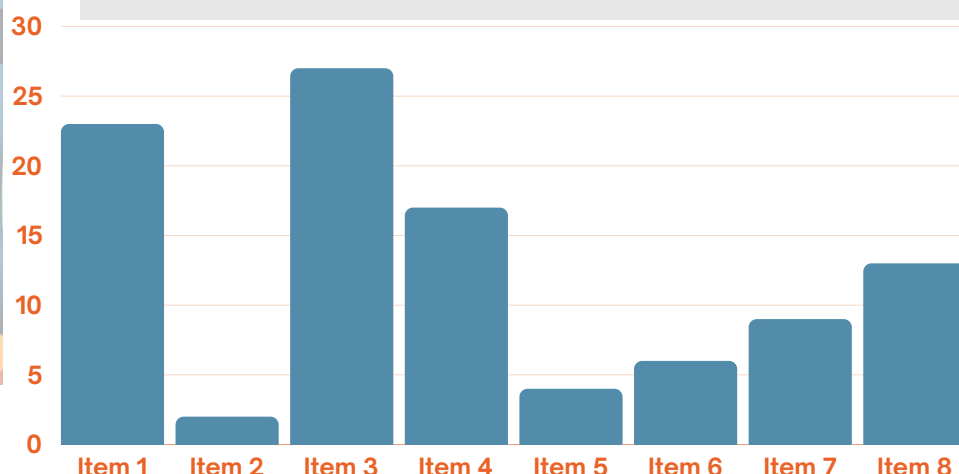


FIG: 5

The data reflects diverse use of digital tools among journalists, with a notable 61% relying on social media platforms like Meta, Twitter, and LinkedIn. Design tools have minimal usage at 1%, while email platforms constitute 12%. A smaller percentage, 4.7%, use work tools such as Google and Microsoft, and 3.5% engage in virtual meetings.

Blogs, podcasts, and YouTube see varied usage at 10%, 1%, and 6%, respectively. The data emphasizes the significant role of social media in journalists' workflows and illustrates a spectrum of digital resources employed in the field.

What areas are you mostly interested to learn?



27%

Digital Platforms & Digital Storytelling scored the highest with 33 journalists opting for it

FIG: 6

- Item 1 Basic Digital Skills for journalists
- Item 2 Internet Governance
- Item 3 Digital Platforms & Digital Storytelling
- Item 4 Digital You - Branding for a Digital Journalists
- Item 5 Data in Media
- Item 6 Introductions to Cyber laws and Regulations
- Item 7 How to access Online Opportunities for Journalists
- Item 8 Fact-Checking & Tackling Misinformation

In these findings it was observed some had lesser preference because most journalists didn't understand how relevant it was to their work.

The survey results highlight a strong interest in Digital Platforms & Digital Storytelling (27%), underscoring the crucial role of storytelling in contemporary journalism. Additionally, there's significant attention to personal branding (17%) and professional development areas like accessing online opportunities (9%) and fact-checking (13%). Foundational digital skills also matter, with 23% expressing interest. However, there's relatively lower interest in topics like Internet Governance (2%), Data in Media (4%), and Cyber Laws (6%).

Do you understand the term Online Gender-based Violence (OGBV) confidently enough to be able to explain it in detail?

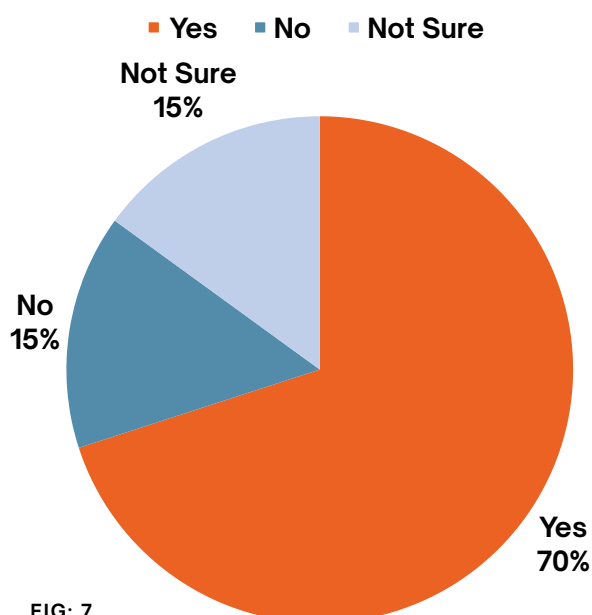


FIG: 7

The results suggest a mixed understanding of the term Online Gender-based Violence among the respondents. While a majority (70) indicated understanding, a notable percentage (15) responded with "No," and an equal percentage (15) expressed uncertainty with "Not sure."

This indicates a need for awareness-building and education regarding OGBV, as a substantial portion of the surveyed individuals either lacks clarity or is unsure about the concept. Addressing this knowledge gap is crucial for fostering a more informed and vigilant journalistic community.

Do you believe that OGBV is an obstacle for female journalists to actively engage online?

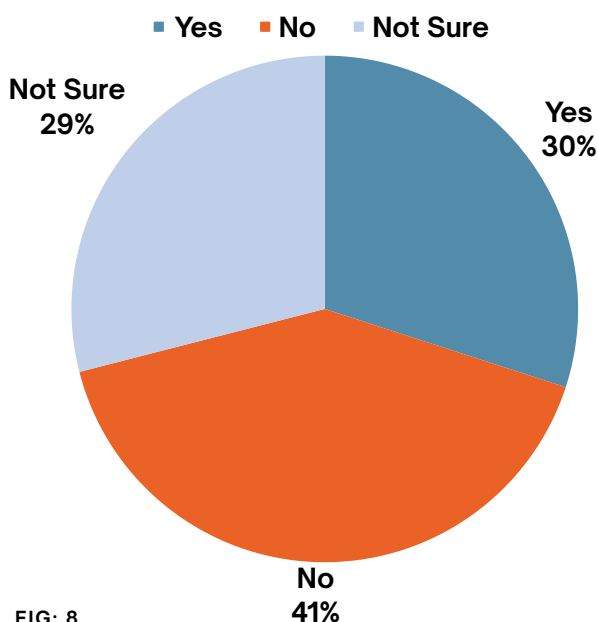


FIG: 8

The results reflect a diversity of perspectives regarding whether Online Gender-based Violence (OGBV) poses an obstacle for female journalists to actively engage online. While a significant portion (41%) responded with "No," indicating they don't perceive OGBV as a hindrance, a substantial number (30%) acknowledged it as a barrier with a "Yes" response. Additionally, a notable percentage (29%)

expressed uncertainty with a "Not sure" response. These varied responses suggest a nuanced landscape of opinions, highlighting the need for further exploration and dialogue on the impact of OGBV on female journalists' online engagement. The results underscore the importance of ongoing discussions and efforts to address the challenges posed by OGBV and promote a safer online environment for all journalists.

Have you ever experienced OGBV?

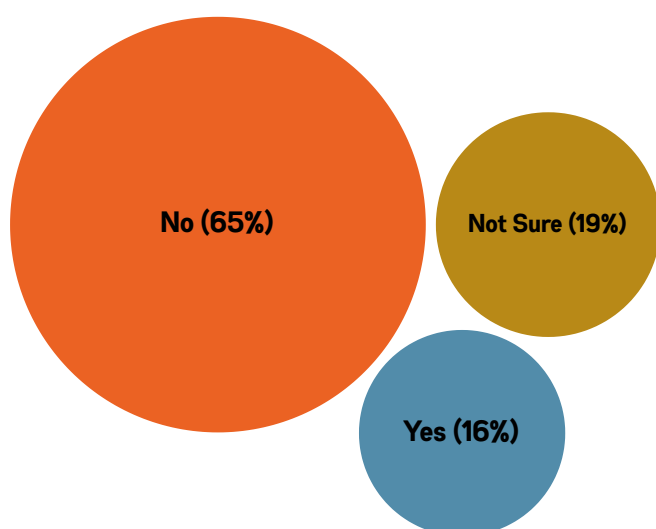


FIG: 9

The survey results indicate that a notable percentage of respondents, 16% of individuals, have experienced Online Gender-based Violence. In contrast, the majority, consisting of 65%, reported not having experienced OGBV. A significant yet smaller portion, 19% of the individuals, expressed uncertainty about whether they have encountered OGBV. These findings underscore the prevalence of OGBV experiences among the surveyed journalists, emphasizing the need for increased awareness, support, and strategies to address and prevent such incidents in the digital landscape.

Do you actively engage (comment or post) on Social Media using your personal Social Media Accounts?

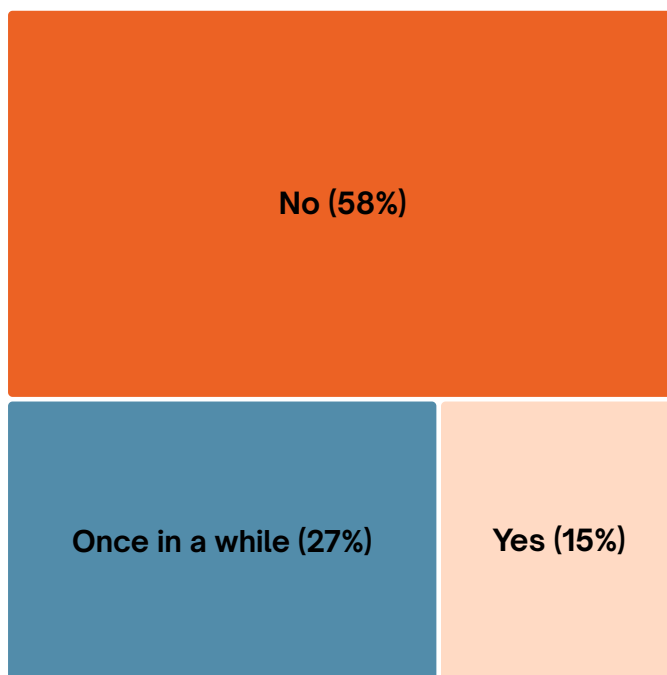


FIG: 10

In a world where information sharing and expression of thoughts and ideas are commonplace, one might expect a majority of journalists to actively engage online. Nevertheless, the results suggest a varied pattern in the active engagement of journalists on social media using their personal accounts. A notable 58% responded with "No," indicating a significant portion refrains from active engagement.

In contrast, 15% affirmatively stated that they do engage actively. Another 27% mentioned engaging "Once in a while," reflecting a middle ground between consistent and complete disengagement.

These findings highlight a range of preferences among journalists regarding their level of participation on personal social media accounts, possibly influenced by various factors such as privacy concerns, professional boundaries, or personal preferences.

Are you confident in your journalistic capacity to cover news on OGBV?

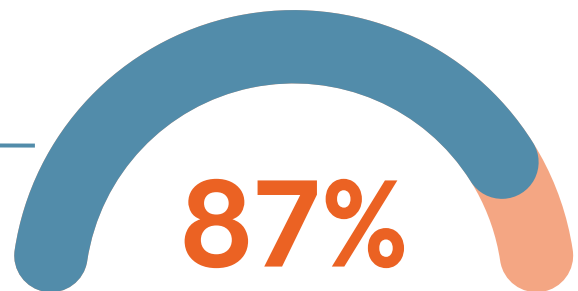


FIG: 11

The results indicate that a significant majority of respondents, 87%, express confidence in their journalistic capacity to cover news on OGBV, while a minority of 13% do not feel confident in this regard. This suggests a generally positive self-assessment among journalists regarding their ability to report on Online Gender-based Violence.

It is important to know that, the capacity or willingness of the journalists to write on OGBV does not equate to an increase of stories in the Media Houses. The executives and owners have to be on board with the agenda for it to be approved and published or covered.



PART THREE

THE MEDIA LANDSCAPE

An analysis:

An Insight the OGBV link
into the Dynamics of Mainstream
Media versus Digital Media

-

Key Highlights



- 08 A substantial gap persists in the digital skills required for journalists to navigate online spaces effectively. This extends from understanding self-protection measures to fostering digital resilience and leveraging online platforms for career growth and income generation. There is a need for comprehensive training to bridge this knowledge gap among journalists.
- 09 The observed knowledge gap had tangible consequences on reporting practices. Journalists admitted that their lack of understanding affected the way they reported and wrote stories or articles related to OGBV. This highlighted a potential disconnect between the realities of online violence and the narratives presented to the public.
- 10 The training sessions revealed that journalists were not fully aware of the profound impact OGBV can have on individuals, ranging from emotional distress to long-term psychological consequences. This lack of awareness underscored the urgency of sensitizing journalists to the human toll of online violence.
- 11 Participants were surprised to learn about the ripple effects of OGBV on communities. The interconnectedness of individuals within a community was a revelation, with journalists recognizing that their reporting practices could either contribute to mitigating the broader societal impact of online violence.

It is important to have the journalists understand Online Gender Based Violence and also cover it on media because journalists have the power to set the agenda to their communities and therefore they can play a pivotal role in challenging stereotypes, debunking myths, and contributing to a more nuanced understanding of OGBV.

Equipping journalists is an ongoing journey and the need for developing and disseminating ethical reporting guidelines specifically tailored to OGBV, should be part and parcel of their daily activities. It is crucial that journalist lie at the center of shaping the public opinion. The media, including journalism, plays a pivotal role in shaping public opinion on social issues.

By consistently covering OGBV, journalists can influence public perception, dispel myths, and challenge prejudiced attitudes. It is important to have as many journalists active of Digital Platforms as possible. Journalists can leverage their platforms to amplify OGBV. This, in turn, contributes to the normalization of conversations around OGBV and helps dismantle the stigma associated with being a victim.

Drawing upon these groups involved discussions in regards to Mainstream and Digital Media, in terms of preferences of what and which the journalists preferred most.

In this, there exists a notable divide between the perceived credibility of mainstream/traditional media and the acknowledgment of online platforms as serious sources of news by professional journalists. Despite recognizing the online space as a valuable information source, many journalists still primarily align themselves with the perceived gravitas of traditional media outlets.

The Tanzanian journalism landscape is marked by a complex interplay between traditional and digital media. Journalists navigate their professional identities in a changing landscape, not only in altering perceptions of digital media but also in affirming the credibility of individual journalists working online as serious contributors to journalistic discourse.

The following are the three main traits:-

1. Preferences in Traditional Media

Majority of Tanzanian journalists tend to associate their professional identity with mainstream or traditional media, such as newspapers, television, and radio. The perception of seriousness and reliability is deeply ingrained in these established channels, which have historically been the main channels for news dissemination.

Although online platforms are acknowledged for news distribution, they are often seen as supplementary rather than primary sources for serious journalism. This mindset reflects the enduring influence of traditional media in defining what constitutes credible journalism.

2. Digital Media and Entertainment Focus:

A significant trend in Tanzanian digital media is that journalists working online often focus on the entertainment segment. This shift towards entertainment is driven by the interactive nature of online platforms, where audience engagement is central to success.

The demand for easily digestible content aligns with the nature of online interactions, leading journalists towards topics that generate high levels of engagement. However, this trend raises questions about the perception of online journalism, as the emphasis on entertainment may overshadow the potential for in-depth reporting on serious issues.

3. Changing Norms by Digital Media Houses:

Within this landscape, some digital media houses such as The Chanzo, in Tanzania are actively challenging and reshaping online journalism norms. These platforms leverage the interactive nature of digital media while maintaining a commitment to journalistic principles. They strive to be more than mere entertainment outlets, engaging in investigative reporting and in-depth analysis.

However, the shift at the institutional level doesn't always seamlessly extend to individual journalists. While digital media houses are making progress, the perception of individual journalists within this space as serious professionals remains a work in progress.

There is a difference between the collective efforts of these media houses and the individual journalist who may still grapple with the challenge of being recognized as a serious contributor in the online realm.

Gender-based violence has, for far too long, been a pervasive peril, manifested in physical, emotional, and economic harm especially directed at women. It is so far taken seriously and seen as worth the news coverage in media houses. While it might seem an agenda that has always been accepted and taken serious by the media, it has not always been so. It took a lot of work and effort, for instance it took a lot of brave journalists to consistently advocate and influence the formulation of Sexual Offence Special Provision Act (SOSPA) in the 90s[3].

Traditionally confined to physical spaces, the digital age has given rise to a new, insidious avatar—Online Gender-based Violence (OGBV) and mostly Online Violence Against Women (OVAW). This digital evolution of gender-based violence expands the battleground beyond the confines of physical walls, entering the vast and often unchecked expanse of the internet.

The online dimension introduces a layer of complexity and anonymity that distinguishes OGBV from its traditional counterpart. In the digital arena, perpetrators can exploit a veil of anonymity to execute acts of harassment, stalking, and character assassination with heightened impunity. This veil, facilitated by online platforms, emboldens offenders, exacerbating the power dynamics inherent in gender-based violence.

Moreover, the virality of information in the online sphere can rapidly escalate the scope and impact of OGBV. A single act of aggression, when disseminated across social media platforms, can reverberate globally, causing lasting harm to the victims

reputation, mental health, and overall well-being. The permanence of digital footprints compounds the challenges, as victims often grapple with the enduring repercussions of online attacks.

The digital landscape amplifies challenges associated with OGBV, including the difficulty of establishing accountability, investigating incidents, and providing adequate legal recourse. Unlike traditional GBV, which may leave physical evidence, OGBV often operates in the ephemeral realm of cyberspace, leaving victims with limited tangible proof.

Furthermore, the intersectionality of OGBV introduces new dimensions of harm, particularly affecting marginalized communities. Discrimination based on gender intertwines with other axes of identity, intensifying the harm experienced by individuals at the crossroads of gender, race, sexuality, and socio-economic status.

As we navigate the distinctions between GBV and OGBV, it becomes evident that the online realm is not merely a reflection of societal norms but a dynamic arena where power dynamics and vulnerabilities manifest in different and powerful ways. Recognizing and understanding these distinctions is a crucial step toward developing effective strategies to combat OGBV and create a digital environment where all individuals can thrive free from the shadows of online violence.

It should be noted that, Online Gender-based Violence topic in Tanzania is still embryonic and there is yet a policy to address the problem or even the efforts of the State Actors to rebuke on the issue and motivate online safe spaces for all[4].

[3] Study on Sexual Corruption in Media Houses, December 2020, see - <https://bit.ly/3GAVkex>

[4] An Overview on Online Gender-based Violence of Women in Politics, Legal Framework section. See <https://tmc.co.tz/REPOR-OGBV-on-Women-in-Politics-2021>



Other obstacles to Online Participation



The focus group discussions highlighted on the other factors that hinders active Participation of Women online' indicated below

- 01 Affordability of mobile data presents a significant challenge, especially for women who bear responsibilities in both production and reproduction. They often grapple with prioritizing expenses, such as choosing between spending on mobile data and ensuring there is food on the table.
- 02 Accessibility encompasses factors like the type of devices available, the presence of Internet Service Providers, and the essential digital skills required for effective use. This triad of considerations plays a crucial role in determining equitable access to digital resources. And a lack of electricity especially in rural areas.
- 03 Digital illiteracy at individual, family, and community levels has led to misconceptions regarding the benefits of internet use. A prevalent belief that the online space is unsafe for women further compounds challenges, emphasizing the need for comprehensive digital literacy initiatives.
- 04 The availability of valid, high-quality, and relevant content remains a challenge, with a significant portion of content being in foreign languages. Advocacy for increased production and accessibility of local, quality content in Tanzania is imperative for addressing this gap. This was shared to the group as a great opportunity. While content creation does not have immediate return, consistency makes it worth while for journalists who invest time and content.
- 05 Online Gender-based Violence and abuse, including forms such as bullying, harassment, and blackmailing, persist as grave challenges, necessitating concerted efforts to establish a safer and more secure online environment.
- 06 Overregulation, exemplified by laws related to cyber crimes and online content (such as EPOCA), was mentioned as posing a potential hindrance. Balancing regulatory frameworks to address online risks while safeguarding freedom of expression is crucial for fostering a conducive digital space.

As we acknowledge various challenges, it's crucial to recognize that the impact of OGBV stands out distinctly. Unlike other challenges, OGBV has a paramount effect, instigating self-censorship and eroding confidence in exercising Freedom of Expression. This, in turn, creates a barrier to accessing information. OGBV not only hampers individual expression but also has broader implications for the free flow of information, making it imperative to address OGBV comprehensively for the sake of fostering an environment where freedom of expression and access to information can thrive without undue constraints.



PART FOUR

THE OGBV PERSPECTIVE

Compilation of
Insights from 10 Media Figures
within the Tanzanian Landscape

Reaching out to Experts with huge influence on the Media Landscape in the region posed some commitment challenge, especially when seeking input from male participants. The prevailing sentiment among many was that the agenda of Online Gender-based Violence (OGBV) was relatively new, mirroring a broader perception of the issue. Despite aiming to engage 15 experts in the study, it took 23 attempts to secure the desired contributors of 15.

Noteworthy, those who eventually agreed to participate did so without hesitation thus, reinforcing a robust commitment to voicing their thoughts on this evolving matter. This observation sheds light on the evolving discourse surrounding OGBV and the varied perspectives held within the expert community.

The OGBV Perspective



Jacqueline Lawrence

Director, Highlands FM Radio, Mbeya

Media can play a crucial role in addressing OGBV by consistently calling it out and taking action against perpetrators who often disguise their actions as 'jokes' or 'soft banter.' Media outlets should publicly address these actions and blacklist accounts that engage in OGBV, preventing them from influencing, securing gigs, or benefiting financially from their online popularity.

Moreover, another effective strategy involves educating the public about the various forms of online violence, fostering awareness and understanding in order to collectively combat and prevent such harmful behavior.

Online Gender-based Violence is difficult to manage and we have tried on many instances to ensure spaces our journalists engage are safe.

Managing Online Gender-based Violence (OGBV) is challenging, and we've made efforts to create safe spaces for our journalists in two ways. Firstly, we define what online violence looks like and consistently call it out when it occurs.

Secondly, we actively unveil the identities of online bullies, ensuring that those who create unsafe spaces are exposed for their actions.

The OGBV Perspective



Dustan Kamanzi

Executive Director, Tanzania Media Foundation

We live in a community that has a lot of violence, especially against women. Social media and digital media mirror and reflect the violence in the communities, and sometimes we have normalized this violence as part and parcel of life in a way even the best of us can sometimes, in rare cases, miss the hidden negative meaning behind messages in the remarks.

We have a lot of negative remarks aimed at showing how a woman is less of a human being. When a man shows some weakness, he will be told “Jikaze Kiume” (man up), “acha tabia za kike” (stop that girly behavior), and the like. It is now more pronounced on social media platforms.

I would like to share a case study - In 2022, there was a leader who got married. One of the most celebrated politicians in the 90s. He was old, and thus, the news circulated online that he was getting married in his old age. In a few hours, there was an image of a young university student circulating as the new wife. The flood of negative comments, the amplification of several images of that young woman went viral. The headline, a young girl marrying a man fit to be the grandfather because he was rich. It took like 3 to 4 days to emerge that that was not the wife. I think that is what prompted the leader to do an interview with now the real wife almost a week later. While all this was happening, can you imagine what that young lady must have gone through, the embarrassments, the emotional turmoil, the backlash from the society sometimes even family must have been hard. If media houses had OGBV as part of an agenda in their media houses, maybe one of the reputable media houses could have reached out on the same day to verify the news. They have the resources in place and credibility to be quickly taken care of. They did eventually, but it took time, and because now it was worth the clicks.

Thinking about what the media should do is still a huge challenge. One of the best ways of ensuring that implementation is part and parcel of the media house is to have policies in place. In this case, I will have to emphasize that we need a code of ethics that is on paper and in practice, considering OGBV as part of those code of ethics and editorial policies. Most Tanzanian media houses are really good when it comes to policies, simply because they are part of the compliant criteria by bodies such as TCRA when establishing media houses. When you visit and ask the owner or executive, they will tell you they have the policies. You go to the newsroom to the team and ask if they have ever seen their GBV policy (or any other policy relevant), they will say NO. We need for the owners and executives to know why it is important, how they are responsible, and what the consequences are.

Thinking about all this really troubles my mind. Something must be done. The media has to be intentional and go back to the drawing board, and review GBV and OGBV. And we are all responsible to make sure it is done. For instance, Tech & Media Convergence, you can reach out to universities and colleges, offer service to review the module on their Media Literacy Skills for journalists and review what can be added to embrace all aspects. And now that we are in a world where anyone can be a citizen journalist, thus, the media literacy could benefit everyone from top to bottom.

The OGBV Perspective



In my active engagement on social media, the prevalence of cyberbullying has regrettably become an all-too-familiar experience, with women being disproportionately targeted.

Zamaradi Kawawa

Assistant Director, Information Services
Tanzania Communications Regulatory Authority (TCRA)

The disconcerting reality is that certain social media platforms, exemplified by those managed by figures like Mange Kimambi[4], seem to perpetuate and even amplify Online Gender-based Violence.

On Instagram, prominent artists in the country often contribute to the prevalence of OGBV through their posts. The visual nature of Instagram often becomes a canvas for the dissemination of harmful narratives and stereotypes, further exacerbating the challenges faced by individuals, particularly women, in the digital space. This phenomenon underscores the urgent need for a critical examination of the impact and responsibility of influential social media figures.

Recognizing the media as a crucial societal watchdog, it is paramount for this influential platform to assume a pivotal role in shaping cultural norms. By reporting stories that educate the public on human rights and exposing those involved in OGBV, media practitioners can actively contribute to the elimination of this pervasive issue. It is the responsibility of media professionals to develop programs and articles that promote positive culture, peace, good manners, and social ethics, thereby actively combating GBV and OGBV and fostering a more inclusive and respectful society.

[4] Mange Kimambi, recognized as a gossip influencer with a significant presence in political circles, serves as a source of information where she has leveraged on her strength of gossip to build a gossip domain popular as Mange Kimambi App. While her content includes the exposure of personal scandals and political events, a notable aspect of her platform involves the dissemination of gossip news for public figures especially those in entertainment. This news often delves into private moments, featuring content that includes non-consensual intimate images—a practice that raises concerns, particularly regarding its degrading impact on young women.

The OGBV Perspective



Dr. Joyce Bazira

Media Trainer, Coach & Researcher

However, after some time (not so long ago), I noticed that there are people who use these platforms very well. I decided I to join and learn more on the best way I could engage. So far, I only share about my work. I keep personal matters about my family very private unless it is a very special occasion. I acknowledge that there is Online Gender-based Violence and to me I have observed although a lot of women are victims, it is worse if you are a politician or the entertainment industry. This makes many people avoid and fear social media. I remember a training on Sexual Harassment; a journalist shared a testimony. She wrote on social media and had her personal matters exposed, some of it false. That writer wanted to commit suicide because she was so affected emotionally and psychologically and didn't know how to face her community.

As Media Trainers, we focus a lot on Gender-Based Violence (GBV). For many of us, COVID-19 opened our eyes to the fact that there is significant gender-based violence online. Many jobs moved to virtual platforms, and now journalists had to actively engage on digital platforms. For the first time a realization dawn on us that OGBV sometimes can be more cruel and detrimental than GBV. Online violence reaches a wider audience, the whole community knows about the harassments, while some of the GBV that happens in the community, it might remain a secret to the victim or to a few that they choose to trust and share. I work with a lot of young female journalists, I know several really good female journalists who decided to quit and never return online because of this harassment. It is hard to convince them to go back online.

There are places where a woman can go to report or seek help if subjected to GBV, but when it comes to OGBV, it becomes really confusing and depressing for the victim. There are no support mechanisms in place. The victims don't know who to complain to, how to seek for justice nor what to do. There are also cases where, some people don't know what OGBV looks like; someone once was happy with the comments they received on their social media post. Then you look closely at the comment, you realize they had been violated without even realizing it. As time goes by, I am happy that there are a very few who can become resilient online.

I am active on social media, but not that much. I am very careful about the kind of content I share. I joined social media very late because I never intended to, I was afraid of online violence that happens to many people especially women.

I have built my reputation in the Media Sector over a long time of my career. I believed that being active would subject me to being harrassed and my name destroyed. Without proper digital etiquettes of using social media, I was worried there will come a time I might write things that could expose me and my family and damage the reputation.

The OGBV Perspective



Tony Alfred

Co-Founder & Managing Editor, The Chanzo

My observation is that OGBV happens in two ways, intentionally and non-intentionally. Sometimes actors promote OGBV due to the lack of knowledge and understanding on the matter.

The first strategy is to train actors in media with actual relatable examples. It's important for us to know that sometimes the way we frame issues in the media end up damaging and hurting people, as well as their reputations and emotions. The temptation of trending and going viral is not worth it when lives of people are devastated.

The second, is for media to call out cases of OGBV as much as they call out other cases of GBV. GBV is given more airtime and seriousness compared to OGBV. Media internal Editorial policies need to evolve and be updated to cover both sides of the coin. It is important to note that, this can only be achieved when media owners and editors fully grasp the concept.

At the end of the day, there needs to be consequences for people who practice OGBV, for example we have seen cases of nude leakages, sometimes involving celebrities. Somehow, most Tanzanians feels it's okay for celebrities to be harassed (*wamejitakia*), I think this is very wrong. Media need to come out to call against celebrating such OGBV cases or even making any kind of jokes.

The Media needs to rebuke to the extent that the society grasps that it is not right no matter whom it happens to. The Government also needs to act, I'm saying this with some skepticism though; most of the time when you call for government actions, instead of regulating and holding the culprits accountable, they always confuse it with an invitation to violate rights.

But again, I ask myself and other journalists, why should I care, why should media care? My answer is short. We should care because people's lives are being destroyed, we have seen the case of Mange Kimambi App, this should not be part of our society.

The OGBV Perspective



I stay resilient on Social Media by always focusing on the content and judging it rather than the person. Sometimes the offender is unaware but more often the abuser is aware that it is hurtful and can impact the person negatively. It is often used as a way to silence me.

Maria Sarungi Tsehai

Executive Director, Mwanzo TV

I think many of us women are not aware of the nonphysical Gender based violence and we experience it often online. I decided to deal with such violence by ignoring and blocking often but where I feel I can make a difference I try to explain why such content is not appropriate. I believe that media has the mandate to advocate against OGBV. But more often than not in Tanzania the capability is not there because of the stereotype thinking and point of view that most of us were raised in. Also gender equality and women rights often is associated with feminism in a negative way. Thus often media will focus on what is acceptable but in many cases will seek to avoid being labeled feminist.

My advice to female journalists who are threatened by the violence online and shy away from using Social Media, is to make it stop. We have to be out there in numbers and push back. You don't need to address everyone as many are just there to follow "the crowd" for they want to belong to a certain tribe. However, where needed push back and stay resilient on the platform.

Another important aspect is to have each other's back and always defend the other with well crafted arguments and speaking up for the victim. Build a circle of trust (women and men) to have each other's backs.

The OGBV Perspective



Joyce Shebe

Chief Editor, Clouds Media Group

I am not very active online; I post once in a while. Also, I have chosen to work with a very knowledgeable lady when it comes to digital communication and the proper use of social media. The nature of my work is very demanding, and no matter how much I try to be active, my responsibilities often overcome my intent.

Working in the media exposes me to witnessing OGBV every now and then. I have seen it happen a lot to other people and even my colleagues. As a leader, when such instances happen to a colleague, I try my best to guide, advise, and support the victim.

We have had instances before when the violence and harassment were too extreme, to the extent that we had to intervene as an office, support her, and also as an institution to reach out to the culprit. It was a really bad experience, but at least she had our support as a media house.

Very recently, we also had a bad experience. When we were commemorating 36 years of TAMWA on November 29th, 2023, we had the Minister of State in the Prime Minister's Office (Policy, Parliament and Coordination), Hon. Jenista Mhagama, as the Guest of Honor. When she was making her remarks, one of the statements shared on one of the respectable media houses was "*Adui wa Mwanamke ni Mwanaume*," meaning "*an enemy of the woman is a man*," while the whole statement was "*an enemy of the woman is a man who is against development*." Yes, the caption was misleading, but when you read their whole content, it showed the full statement—to them that was more than enough. Unfortunately, the online community does not care for further explanations; they pick up headlines and make their conclusions from there.

As the Women Media Association, to the ignorant community, the ceremony was now being associated as an association of women who hate men. Such headlines are very amplified and reach a lot of people. All efforts to reach out to the media house were in vain because they are more interested in clicks and impressions than the damage that they cause. You can see now that such a headline amplified OGBV to our guest and to the women at TAMWA.

It is time we realize that there needs to be mechanisms that create awareness of how to use online platforms, how to create and curate content, and learn how OGBV looks like and how deep the consequences are. At the end of the day, this really is a turn-off for most women and girls, especially in the media, to be active on social media.

We need to have a strategy in place and see ways in which we can involve the authorities by having a legal framework that is protective and assures safe online spaces. We know that most know that there are opportunities out there, but the negative attributes are too visible and scary.

The OGBV Perspective



Iman Henric

General Manager, Kings FM Radio

Being a digital rights advocate and journalist active on social media, it really hits me hard to see many female journalists holding back due to fears of Online Gender-based Violence. They're such a vital group, and missing out not only on professional opportunities and diverse news but also on the freedom to express themselves, it just doesn't sit right with me.

Online Gender-based Violence is a real hurdle for women journalists. It's not just about their personal struggles but also about how it affects their ability to report on OGBV effectively.

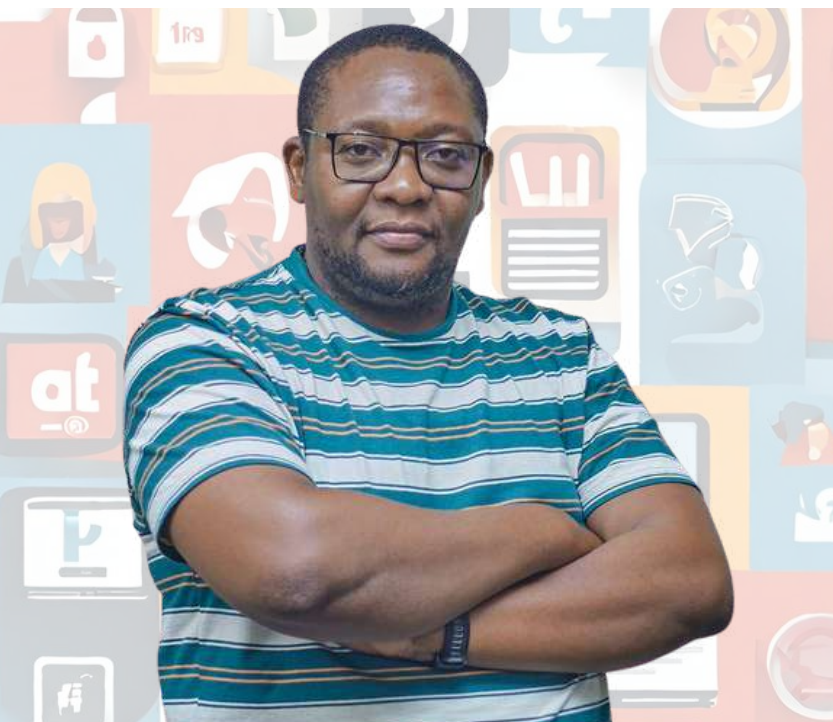
By shying away from the digital scene, they might be missing out on crucial details and, in turn, finding it tough to bring attention to these issues. What really gets to me is how this constant threat of OGBV chips away at the confidence of female journalists online. They end up second-guessing themselves, and it's not just about holding back; it adds to the whole digital gender gap we're trying to bridge. That is one of the reasons behind the "Dig it with Iman" Podcast inspiration. Explore conversations around digital rights and advocate for safe spaces among a few.

Addressing this challenge means rallying together to create a safer and more inclusive online space. We need to champion digital literacy, advocate for robust online protection, and foster solidarity within the journalistic community. It's not just about making the internet safer for women journalists; it's about improving the overall quality of journalism through diverse voices and perspectives.

Media coverage of OGBV (Gender-Based Violence) often lacks accountability. Many stories depend on events, engage in victim-blaming, and exhibit unprofessional coverage. Some media outlets contribute to the issue by presenting provocative headlines, potentially causing harm, especially to women. Additionally, a significant number of stories rely on single sources.

Accountability in media reporting on OGBV is essential, as the role of journalists and media houses is crucial in informing, educating, and advocating for policy and law amendments. It is imperative that journalists are equipped with in-depth knowledge about the topic and understand how to cover these stories effectively and ethically.

The OGBV Perspective



Michael Baruti

Media Specialist & Fonder, Men Men Men Podcast

I have experienced OGBV online and in most cases men are perpetrators although there are women as well. An additional layer of complexity in addressing Online Gender-based Violence is the notable gender disparities observed in online perpetration..

The Tanzanian context, writers don't really use digital platforms with efficient journalistic etiquettes not the required proficiency. There are so many opportunities to use digital media to cover that which journalists

find hard to get airtime or space on mainstream media. And I mean starting digital products such as blogs, vlogs (popular as online TVs) and podcasts. This in itself is an opportunity to nurture the newly upcoming journalists on the best way they can adapt to digital technologies while embracing ethics that promote digital rights for all. With the increase of Internet users, journalists can use space such as Insta-live, X-Spaces, Facebook live and many others. My observation is that,

A significant portion of the population lacks adequate digital literacy skills to effectively navigate and counteract the various forms of OGBV prevalent on social media platforms. The absence of these skills hampers individuals' ability to safeguard themselves and others from online threats and harassment.

While there are existing laws pertaining to online offenses, their current emphasis leans more towards restriction rather than protection. Additionally, the enforcement of these laws is often lax, leading to a lack of accountability for perpetrators. This absence of consequences diminishes the deterrent effect of legal measures, contributing to a sense of impunity among potential wrongdoers.

A widespread lack of awareness persists regarding the lasting impact of content shared on social media. Many users fail to grasp that once something is published online, it can endure indefinitely and may resurface with far-reaching consequences. Particularly concerning is the insufficient understanding of the potential long-term ramifications of negative online postings, as users may not fully comprehend the lasting impact on personal and professional lives.

All these are part of the problem that amplifies OGBV. It should be noted however that the internet is just a reflection of what is happening in the community and thus gives an indication of how big the challenge is.

The OGBV Perspective



The media has a huge role in addressing OGBV. While there has not been huge coverage in mainstream media, we have been aware of the challenge.

Esther Mvungi

News Editor at Mwananchi Communications

We have engaged in several information sessions, mainly done through workshops, seminars, and meetings organized by other organizations such as the ones organized by Tech & Media Convergency (TMC).

So far there are no guidelines or policies that have been put in place to identify and acknowledge OGBV in media houses. I acknowledge that the victims of Online Gender-based Violence still do not have a platform to be heard on, in the media. Additionally, there is still no journalism that is mainly focused on addressing OGBV. It is time to address and a need for awareness to the editors and media owners to recognize the importance of informing the public about this form of abuse and integrate it to as set agenda.

It is imperative to advocate for heightened awareness among editors and media owners regarding the significance of addressing OGBV in journalistic content. Media outlets play a pivotal role in shaping societal attitudes, and by recognizing the importance of informing the public about this form of abuse, they can contribute to dismantling the culture of silence surrounding OGBV.

The OGBV Perspective



One of the most important strategies is for the media to fully understand the extent of the OGBV problem. This can be achieved through a combination of research and awareness building.

Fausta Musokwa

Programme Manager, International Media Support (IMS)

In this way, the media will fully understand what OGBV is, the forms that it takes, who the perpetrators are, and the effects that it has. Additionally, it is important for those who are the targets of OGBV to be provided with support. This could include clear information regarding where to report incidents when they happen and guidance on how to respond otherwise, including dealing with online trolls (if responding is necessary).

Targets of OGBV need a certain level of knowledge, and I believe that is another strategy. Specifically, media and media outlets need to have policies in place. This is related to reporting and the journalists that they put out there. Media needs internal policies that clarify the right way to engage online, reduce risks, and outline how to respond to these issues when they occur to protect the journalists who are part of their companies and outlets.

Another important strategy involves multiple stakeholders. Media needs to be part of coalitions and initiatives where they are linked with people who can provide psychosocial support, training, and immediate responses when the issue comes up. The concept of coalitions is crucial in almost all sectors that deal with the protection, security, and prevention of OGBV.

The OGBV Perspective



I mainly use Instagram for posting, liking, and leaving occasional comments, finding it more engaging and friendlier than other platforms.

Marygoreth Richard

Head of Production, BBC Media Action

Although I used to be active on Twitter, my participation has waned due to its male-dominated environment with strongly voiced opinions that seem less open to meaningful engagement. Fortunately, I have not personally experienced Online Gender-based Violence, but my observations have brought to light its distressing prevalence, especially impacting young women and girls.

This widespread problem presents itself in a number of upsetting ways, including harassment, direct threats, and the worrisome uninvited sharing of graphic content—which is sadly rather typical in today's digital environments. It is depressing to observe the negative consequences on victims, who frequently experience a severe breach of their privacy in addition to emotional pain.

The urgent need for heightened awareness and effective measures to combat such behaviors becomes increasingly evident. Beyond the visible harm caused, the psychological toll on victims underscores the importance of fostering a digital environment that prioritizes safety, respect, and empathy. Addressing OGBV or VAW requires a comprehensive approach involving education, advocacy, and the establishment of robust preventive measures to ensure that everyone, especially young women and girls, can navigate the digital landscape free from fear and harm. This emphasizes the collective responsibility to create a safer and more inclusive online space for all users.

The OGBV Perspective



OGBV is a new phenomena in Tanzania. The same as digital media. Some Media Houses are still struggling and are yet to adapt to new technologies such as Digital Media. So it is understandable that they are not even aware of what is happening online for instance the OGBV prevalence.

Nuzulack Dausen

Chief Executive Officer, Nukta Africa

Very unfortunately because of the skills gap, most of the journalists are in one way or another perpetrators of OGBV. Sometimes journalists publish content that has all the traits of OGBV. There are headlines, especially on Digital Media such as YouTube, with titles that dehumanize women, objectify them and sexualize even if the news is about their capacity or intelligence. As media, I should acknowledge that we have not done well in tackling the OGBV issue. We could have done better. The challenge is that most media executives and chief editors do not understand it. If the executives would have identified it as a problem, it would have been taken into account.

Simply go and Google, to see the headlines and how some media houses are amplifying in one way or another OGBV and they are not aware of the damage that they are imposing. The other challenge is that media do not have Social Media Policies or Digital Policies, frameworks which would have been key to incorporating OGBV in them. On top of that, we have media houses that are still struggling with adopting GBV aspects into their policies. So you can imagine how bad it is in reference to OGBV.

We are still in the early stage of the conversation. I agree it is a serious problem, and I am sad to acknowledge that we have not done the best we could do. In the near future, we will be intentional and reach out to partners such as you, Tech & Media Convergency, and see how we lay out a foundation of fighting OGBV. It is indeed a serious problem.

The OGBV Perspective



As an active participant in the online sphere, I frequently witness distressing occurrences, particularly the prevalence of backlash, bullying, and violence disproportionately directed at women.

Dr. Mzuri Issa

Executive Director, TAMWA - Zanzibar

Within our organization, we keenly recognize the impact of online bullying, a phenomenon that we have observed has significantly discouraged and keep on discouraging many young women from engaging in digital spaces. Acknowledging the enormity of the challenge in combatting Online Gender-based Violence, we, as a media focused entity, understand the significant role that we are required to play.

Serving as society's watchdog, the media bears the responsibility to address OGBV and exhibit sensitivity towards issues concerning women. It is crucial to establish safe online spaces for women, shielding them from undue harassment and creating awareness that actively discourages online bullying directed at them.

Media outlets must undertake advocacy efforts focused on women and young girls. Initiatives should be intentional, promoting increased participation of women and girls in the digital realm. This involves fostering gender-neutral online spaces, minimizing aspects that perpetuate a masculine bias, and ensuring an environment where women and girls feel comfortable, included, and free from marginalization.

The media's role extends to actively initiating and advocating for the full and equal participation of women and girls on social media platforms. There is a pressing need to reflect on existing practices and intentionally design initiatives that contribute to a more inclusive and empowering online experience for women and girls, thereby addressing the multifaceted challenges associated with OGBV.

The OGBV Perspective



Zakia Ng'washi

General Manager, Mashujaa FM Lindi

My experience with OGBV is deeply disheartening, particularly in the context of female journalists who often face unwarranted bullying simply because of their gender.

Female sports journalists, for instance, encounter a distressing trend where fans, angered by sports results, channel their frustrations toward these professionals, using their gender as a focal point for attacks rather than engaging in sports-related discussions. The attacks often manifest as personal and appearance-focused criticisms, with female journalists becoming targets of objectification.

Consequently, many female journalists opt to limit their online presence or report under pseudonyms to avoid becoming victims of relentless bullying.

In addressing this challenge, media houses play a crucial role in creating supportive environments for journalists, especially women, to counteract the discouragement caused by online harassment. Establishing robust support structures is essential to instill resilience, ensuring that female journalists can persist in their reporting without succumbing to intimidation. Media organizations should offer tangible backing to these journalists, fostering a sense of solidarity that prevents isolation. Unfortunately at the moment there is no support and safety mechanism, so even if the female journalist is really passionate, the pressure is too much and choose to opt out. The experience they go through is entirely different from that of male journalists.

When these female journalists become the focal point of online attacks, it is imperative for them to receive support from their respective media houses. The impact of these attacks is such that female journalists may, at times, decline to serve as sources of information, aiming to shield themselves from becoming the subject of the story and exposing themselves to additional online assaults. The need for support from media organizations is crucial in empowering female journalists to carry out their roles without fear of victimization and to ensure the integrity of the information-sharing process remains uncompromised.

Moreover, the need for stringent laws addressing OGBV cannot be overstated. Enacting comprehensive legislation is a crucial step, but the effectiveness lies in the rigorous implementation of these laws. Holding perpetrators accountable for their actions is vital to deter future instances of online harassment. By combining legal measures with supportive workplace environments, we can work towards creating a safer online space for female journalists, encouraging them to continue their important work without fear of victimization.

General Recommendations and conclusions

A healthy OGBV Support System



Each society needs a comprehensive support system and a vision for addressing Online Gender-based Violence (OGBV). To enable this, there is an emphasis of the interconnected roles of various stakeholders in creating a compassionate society that cares and is responsible.

To share how such a healthy ecosystem looks like, through this report we bring to you a diagram that represents a comprehensive support system and a vision for addressing Online Gender-based Violence. It illustrates the interconnected roles of various stakeholders in fostering a compassionate society and providing assistance to OGBV victims.

At the core of the support system is the OGBV victim, experiencing various forms of harm such as harassment, abuse, emotional distress, privacy invasion, social isolation, reputation impact, and legal consequences. The immediate community, family, and close ones form the central support network for the OGBV victim. They play a crucial role in providing emotional support, encouragement, maintaining a safe environment, and facilitating social inclusion.

The media sector is tasked with enhancing awareness, promoting responsible reporting, and informing the public about OGBV. This helps create a more informed and empathetic society. While on the other side, the Mental health practitioners contribute to the support system by offering emotional support, trauma recovery, and promoting mental wellness for the OGBV victim.

Respective authorities and policymakers are pivotal in the establishment of effective legislation, law enforcement, and accountability mechanisms to address OGBV at a systemic level.

Civil society organizations (CSOs) and the private sector contribute to creating a supportive environment through victim assistance, legal advocacy, the establishment of safe online spaces, corporate responsibility, and ensuring employee well-being. The CSOs work closely with the Development partners and funding agencies. These, play a critical role in supporting OGBV-related initiatives by providing financial support, strengthening agendas, and influencing policies.

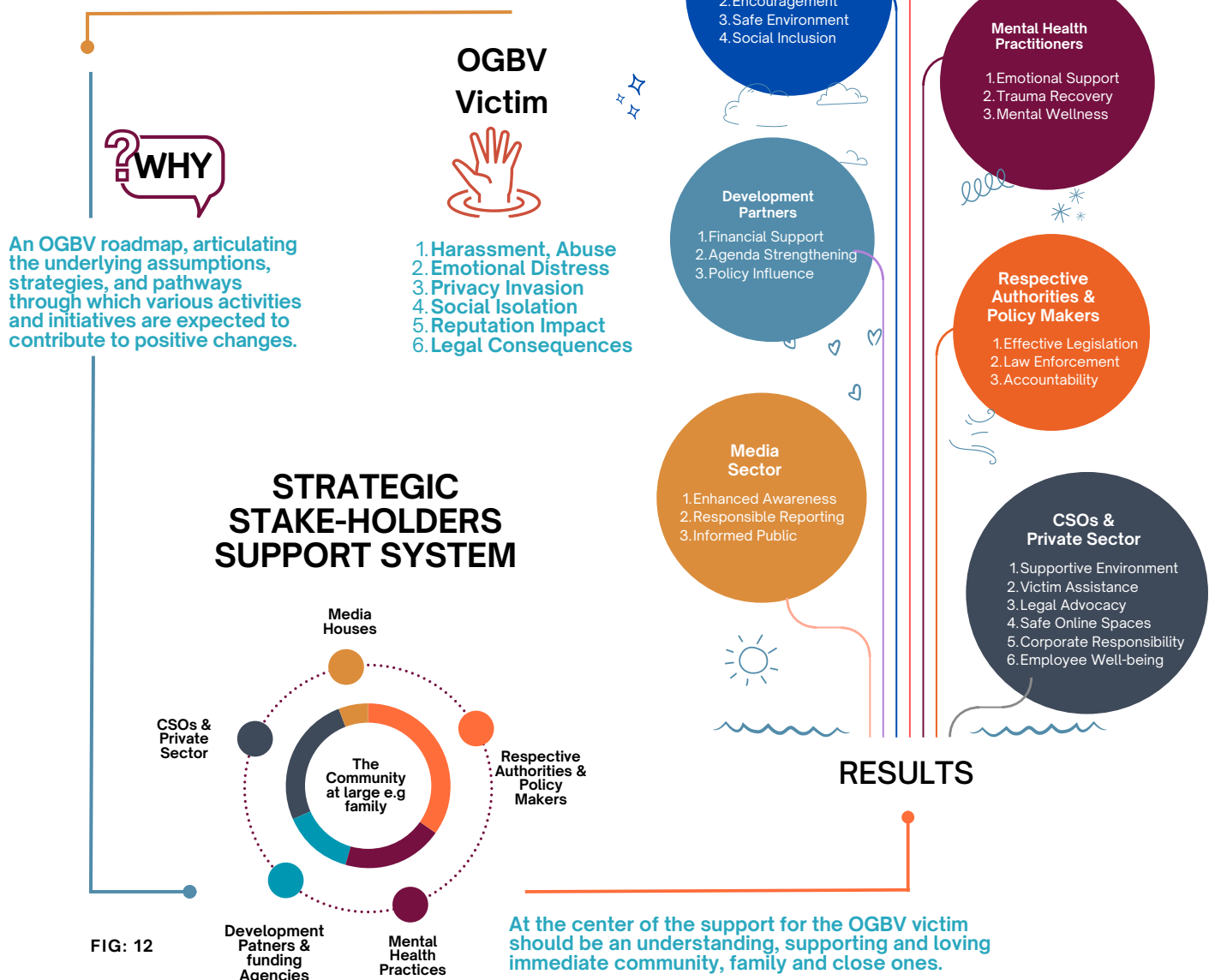
The vision emphasizes on building a compassionate society and includes mental health practices, strategic stakeholders, media houses, respective authorities, CSOs, the private sector, and development partners. It aims to create a healthy ecosystem through recommended results and actions, fostering positive changes in addressing OGBV.

Recommended Healthy OGBV Ecosystem



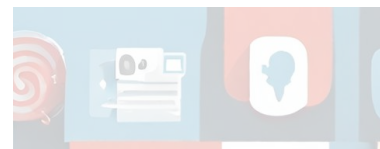
Building a Compassionate Society:

A Vision for Addressing Online Gender-based Violence (OGBV)



This road map developed by TMC informed by the capacity building sessions indicates how a healthy ecosystem looks like. It helps in identifying key inputs, activities, outputs, and intended short-term, intermediate, and long-term outcomes at addressing OGBV and OVAW. Essentially, it provides a strategic guide for stakeholders, helping them understand how their efforts can collectively lead to the envisioned impact of reducing and preventing OGBV, fostering a safer online environment, and promoting gender equality. The road map is collected from a series of the journalists group discussions and focus group sessions over time.

Recommended OGBV/OVAW Tool Kits



To make things a bit clearer, we've gathered a bunch of tools in this report, kind of like a beginner's kit for both groups. These toolkits are like learning centers, helping individuals and leaders understand the different ways Online Gender-based Violence happens and boosting overall awareness. They give practical tips so that people can spot and handle online threats, making them feel more ready and resilient. What's cool is that these toolkits also keep everyone up-to-date on the latest digital threats and how to stay safe online. So, think of these toolkits as handy guides that help everyone, from big organizations to individuals, navigate the tricky world of OGBV and OVAW, and make the internet a safer and smarter place for everyone.

Organisation/Institution	Name of the Tool Kit	Link to the Tool Kit
1 Cyber Safe, EU	Stop Violence Online, Cyber Safe Toolkit	https://www.stoponlineviolence.eu/cybersafe-toolkit/
2 Defenders Safe	Digital Security Toolkit for HRDs	https://www.defenderssafe.org/_files/ugd/159979_ba5e9800ca7d494da6f271f839a3522b.pdf
3 GitBook	OGBV Resource ToolKit	https://kryssnetwork.gitbook.io/resourcetoolkit/
4 Glitch Charity, UK	Fix the Glitch Toolkit	https://glitchcharity.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Fix-the-Glitch-A4-holding-x4-A6-cards-1.pdf
5 International Republican Institute	New CEPPS Toolkit: Preventing Online Violence Against Women (OVAW)	https://www.iri.org/news/new-cepps-toolkit-preventing-online-violence-against-women-ovaw/
6 National Democratic Institute (NDI)	#think10 - an Offline and Online Security designed for women in politics	https://think10.demcloud.org/
7 Pen America	Online Harassment Field Manual	https://onlineharassmentfieldmanual.pen.org/
8 Pollicy Org	Digital Safe Tea	https://www.digitalsafetea.com/
9 Power and Associates	Deconstruct: Online Gender-based Violence Toolkit	https://powerlaw.africa/2021/06/18/online-gender-based-violence-toolkit/
10 StopNCII.org	Stop Non-Consensual Intimate Image Abuse	https://stopncii.org/how-it-works/
11 UN Women	Youth Guide to End Online Gender-based Violence	https://www.ungei.org/sites/default/files/2023-04/Youth-Toolkit_14-Dec_compressed-final.pdf
12 Women at Web, Rwanda	Understanding Online Violence Against Women	https://www.womenatweb.rw/_files/ugd/4eb49e_db7f06e3c63e44a09e73db2a4100df33.pdf

Recommendations to the Media Houses

This strategic and comprehensive approach will not only fortify media houses against the perils of OGBV but also contribute to fostering a safer and more responsible digital media environment.

- 01 It is imperative for the media to recognize the information gaps in Tanzanian ICT-related news, encompassing accessibility, security, internet rights, and governance, so as to elevate these issues and make them key elements of the media agenda. This strategic focus should also extend to ensuring safe online spaces and addressing OGBV as specialized areas of emphasis.
- 02 A critical review of existing guidelines is essential to seamlessly integrate OGBV as newsworthy content. Given that the majority of media houses already uphold policies against Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and Sexual Harassment, extending these policies to incorporate OGBV aligns with the evolving landscape of digital challenges.
- 03 Media houses must revisit their editorial policies, particularly those related to the management of digital platforms, including social media pages. Rigorous measures should be in place to prevent the negative and harassing comments, especially on platforms that offer tools for effective management, such as Instagram.
- 04 The time has come for media houses to actively engage with partners and stakeholders committed to this agenda. It is crucial for owners, editors, and journalists to undergo orientation, enhancing their understanding and preparedness in addressing the multifaceted challenges posed by OGBV.

It's widely acknowledged that media houses prioritize content that drives engagement on their platforms. However, amidst the ongoing global technological and digital transformations, there is an opportunity to reconsider this approach with a fresh perspective. The media industry should embrace creativity and explore innovative approaches that not only contribute to societal well-being but also have the potential to generate revenue.

A collaborative effort involving the media, Civil Society Organizations, OGBV experts, and government entities can yield win-win solutions for agenda-setting on OGBV. By leveraging the collective expertise and resources of these stakeholders, a sustainable mechanism can be established to address OGBV issues effectively. This collaborative approach not only enhances social impact but also opens up avenues for financial sustainability in the evolving media landscape.

Recommendations to the Journalists



Journalists need to be well-versed in leveraging digital platforms for impactful storytelling and audience engagement. They should embrace continuous learning about emerging digital trends, ensuring they stay ahead in the dynamic digital landscape. Furthermore, journalists should actively participate in community-building initiatives and engage with their audience to foster a positive online environment.

01 Journalists bear the responsibility of understanding the content that can inflict harm on victims, learning to recognize it and effectively advocating against it. Instances of normalized OGBV, particularly when perpetrated by journalists, exacerbate the severity of the issue.

02 It is crucial for journalists to proactively seek ways to address challenges like online harassment. This involves acquiring skills in content curation, understanding what to publish online, and using language that minimizes the risk of attracting negative comments.

To address this, journalists should be receptive to learning effective strategies for mitigating challenges like online harassment. This includes acquiring skills in content curation, understanding what to publish online, and employing language choices that minimize the risk of attracting negative comments.

03 While capacity building is important for journalists, it is important for them to be aggressive and ready to explore digital platforms. Learn about them and most importantly how to protect themselves while using the platforms.

While the media holds the power to actively incorporate OGBV (Online Gender-based Violence) into the agenda, journalists possess a greater capacity for prompt adjustments due to their independence from bureaucratic systems. It is imperative for the media houses not only to transform the mindset within their guidelines, policies, and personnel but primarily within their journalist cadre. While with journalists, once there is a shift in mindset positively embraced by identifying the challenges, the solutions will draw significantly closer. The impacts of OGBV are profound, evidenced by instances where individuals lost their lives, jobs, families, or spouses due to what was said on social media. Unfortunately, these consequences are often not given the attention they deserve, and society tends to punish victims more than perpetrators.



Recommendations to the Government

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We will prioritise in the areas of Research and Innovation in Information, Communication and Technology as well as strengthening the Security. And in the next five years we intend to accelerate the delivery of the national Fibre Optic in a variety of areas especially at the district level

H.E Samia Suluhu Hassan

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The President of the United Republic of Tanzania - April 22, 2021

In her first address to the parliament as President, H. E. Samia Suluhu Hassan emphasized the importance of prioritizing innovation in ICT and strengthening security. Notably, security is a crucial aspect that cannot be overlooked. Strengthening ICT security should encompass identifying and addressing rampant harmful practices such as OGBV and OVAW.

The government, through its relevant ministry - the Ministry of Information, Communication and Information Technology, authorities like the Tanzania Communications Regulatory Authority (TCRA), TCRA Consumer Consultative Council (TCRA CCC), and policymakers, plays a vital role in promoting safe online spaces. Only if they recognize it as a serious threat. Mechanisms need to be in place to hold publicly known perpetrators of violence and harassment accountable. We acknowledge the Members of Parliament coalition, led by Hon. Neema Lugangira advocating on the matter and hope that more efforts will be made with more actors joining the cause.

We have received distressing testimonies from victims who approached the special gender desks at the police force, only to face inhumane treatment marked by derogatory comments and unsympathetic expressions. Unfortunately, these victims find themselves judged and stigmatized before their cases are even heard, merely because they are on the receiving end of the offense happening on digital platforms and are considered as self-imposed problems.

That is why legislative frameworks, such as section 14 of the Cybercrime Act (2015), require examination and modification in light of OGBV and OVAW issues - specifically NCII. It violates human rights when someone who has been the victim of non-consensual intimate images (NCII) published to the public on social media by their adversaries or ex-partners is held responsible for the image or videos that were leaked. This usually is in addition to the emotional and psychological toll that victims endure, which includes humiliation in front of their families and immediate communities. The entire community looks down on them and treats them badly.

This understanding should be woven into the fabric of their support mechanisms, ensuring that the OGBV agenda becomes an integral part of the broader media landscape. Challenges arise when new obstacles emerge within a community that trivializes the gravity of these issues. OGBV goes beyond surface-level concerns; there is undeniable evidence of lives lost, careers jeopardized, and families torn apart due to the impact of online actions.

Building upon the aforementioned recommendations, esteemed bodies like the Media Council of Tanzania (MCT), Union of Tanzania Press Clubs (UTPC), MISA Tanzania, and various others can play a pivotal role in advocating for self-regulation mechanisms specifically designed to address OGBV and OVAW.

A final word from the Project Officer



Linda N. Amos

Project Officer, Women at Web Program
Tech & Media Convergency (TMC)

For me, the “Women at Web” regional program serves as a transformative movement for enhancing safe spaces, and this activity with journalists was a great channel for us in showing the journalists how the online space can be both a platform for empowerment and a breeding ground for harm.

As the programs officer, of this transformative initiative, my journey has been one of dedication, resilience, and a firm belief in the power of digital literacy capacity to reshape the narrative surrounding Online Violence Against Women.

We had designed the training and mentorship program to bridge the digital divide, ensuring that journalists, regardless of their background or prior expertise, could navigate the online world effectively. Recognizing that responsible reporting goes hand in hand with ethical online conduct, our training emphasized not only the technical aspects of digital navigation but also the importance of ethical journalism in the digital age. Journalists were empowered to use their voices and mighty pens, not only as storytellers but also as advocates for positive change in the online sphere.

Reflecting on what we could have done differently drawing from the learnings during the training, I wish we could have had the resources to conduct the OGBV training workshops in other regions especially in Kenya, Uganda and Rwanda where we have partners there. This so as to ensure a more geographically inclusive representation of journalists apart from Tanzania. To give a more thorough understanding of the matter across the region.

It has been bugging our team. “*How could we be more impactful and reach more journalists?!*”. This question, makes me also wish we could develop an online learning platform where journalists can access OGBV training modules at their own pace. This not only allows for scalability but also accommodates journalists with busy schedules or those in remote areas. Through this approach, I am confident we would influence more journalists for them to understand holistically OGBV and all its aspects. This would perfectly align with an iterative approach, incorporating lessons learned from each training session into the development of subsequent sessions. This ensures that the training program evolves to meet the changing needs of journalists.

By incorporating these strategies, the OGBV training sessions can become more inclusive, scalable, and tailored to the diverse needs of journalists across different regions and media outlets in Tanzania. This approach not only ensures broader reach but also fosters a more comprehensive and impactful response to the challenges of Online Gender-based Violence in the journalism community and the media at large. Through this report, we are hopeful that it will be as step further into better portrayal of women in the media online and offline.

Conclusion & Way forward



The Women at Web Initiative is serious about OGBV. That is why for us it is not an activity nor just a program, this is a movement. We understand how serious its consequences are, and how we need serious stakeholders and partners supporting the agenda. In the lines of its seriousness, we have achieved getting serious stakeholders to be part of this conversation, with intent, hope, and belief that there will be actionable results influenced by this report. The initiative to tackle OGBV through media involvement is intentional, necessary, and timely. As a learning organization, what sets our programs apart is the bidirectional learning approach—we impart acquired knowledge, and we also actively seek feedback to enhance future initiatives.

From this report, we can observe that, while OGBV remains a relatively novel concept for a majority of media professionals, the escalating impact of technology demands immediate attention. The swift evolution of technology introduces new dimensions to OGBV, bringing in the urgency of understanding these dimensions, such as the role of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Technology-Facilitated Violence. It is no longer an option to have intentional mechanisms in place that address biases inherent in AI systems, advocating for prompt regulations, and, crucially, emphasizing the indispensable role of journalists in championing this cause.

Tech & Media Convergency recognizes the need for collaboration and urges partners of all calibers to join us in this significant journey. Central to our mission is the imperative call to address the digital gender divide. In an era where technology is advancing rapidly, the number of internet users increasing massively while the gender digital divide becomes wider - the collaboration of diverse stakeholders is paramount to enhancing women's participation online and creating safer digital spaces for all. Together, we can bridge gaps, foster inclusivity, and ensure that journalists play a pivotal role in shaping the narrative surrounding OGBV and its intersection with technology.



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