

GENDER IN MEDIA POLICY



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Let us do the counting that does – how many camera women in this picture?

DEFINITIONS

Discrimination: means any act, omission, distinction, exclusion or any differential treatment which disadvantages or compromises any person either directly or indirectly based on sex, race, pregnancy, age, disability, nationality, and/or marital status or other analogous ground.

Media: is all means of communication channels including traditional and digital platforms.

Media Ethics: are moral standards that apply to the media. Media professionals use media ethics as a compass when discharging their duties.

Gender stereotyping: means portrayal of a person or persons of a certain gender in a manner that exploits, objectifies or demeans.

Negative gender portrayal: refers to language, attitudes or representations (either explicit or implied) which tend to associate particular roles, modes of behaviour or characteristics to people on the basis of gender in a manner that restricts and entrenches the role of persons of such gender in society or sections of society.

APPLICATION

The Gender in Media Policy: will govern the conduct and practice of all media practitioners, media owners, publishers and media institutions including digital forums that are members of the Media Council of Tanzania.

The Gender in Media Policy: should be read in line with the Media Council of Tanzania Code of Ethics for Media Professionals.

Gender in Media Policy: is intended to and create a safe, supportive work environment in the media outlets. It includes:

- i. Zero – tolerance sexual harassment policies with adequate complaint mechanism;
- ii. Training to address the special security concerns of women in media houses;
- iii. Strive to address cultural barriers to equal access. For example:
 - Mobile media stations, sharing transport, or providing escorts to help those restricted from traveling alone or late at night;
 - Special training or ‘women only days’ to build confidence for women in media; and

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- Establish a 'gender desk' at the media outlets to help ensure women's equal participation.
 - iv. Reporting facts about a sexually abused or exploited woman/man by crosschecking with objective and reliable sources.
 - v. Media houses shall at all times give fair and equal space to men and women in their reporting.
 - vi. Broadcasters, newspaper columnists and online publishers shall increase the number of programmes and columns on gender specific topics as well as that challenge gender stereotypes.
 - vii. In their coverage of politics, economic issues or war, media shall ensure that women's voices and views are heard.

A. GENDER AWARE HUMAN RESOURCE POLICY IN THE MEDIA

For both women and men, the global labour force participation rate is declining. However, women are, on average, less likely to participate in the labour force than men.

Factors contributing to this gender gap in employment include structural barriers and

cultural restrictions and overrepresentation of women among marginal part-time in employment.

Women also face segregation in terms of the sector, occupation and type of job, lack of employment opportunities, particularly for young women and a 'category bias' in which a whole group which predominantly happen to be females is treated less favourably than another group which happens to be predominantly males. If human resource policies are not gender aware the existing gap will continue.

GENDER SENSITIVITY WITHIN WORKPLACES

- i. Media employers - senior executive, managers, human resources managers should incorporate gender balance in the recruitment and selection policies to ensure equitable representation of women in all levels of decision making.
- ii. The issue of staff retention must be part of workplace planning and projection with particular recognition of competent female employees.

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- iii. Media houses are encouraged to ensure that their employees have access to training and mentoring programmes that are inclusive for both female and male staff with special attention to female staff.
 - iv. Media houses should adopt policies that discourage sexual harassment at workplace.
 - v. Media houses should state a career pathing, capacity building, fast tracking and promotion policy to ensure that both female and male employees have equal opportunities to specialize in reporting any beat in the newsroom.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT GUIDELINES AT WORKPLACE

Sexual harassment guideline is a tool in addressing and mitigating workplace harassment, including sexual harassment and bullying, which has become a global trend. Its implementation will lead to the creation of workplaces that are free of sexual harassment where employers and employees respect one another's integrity, dignity, privacy and their

right to equity in the workplace.

WHAT IS HARASSMENT IN THE WORKPLACE?

The unwelcome conduct that affects the dignity of women and men, which is considered as unwanted, unacceptable, inappropriate and offensive to the recipient, and that creates an intimidating, hostile, unstable or offensive work environment. Harassment can be sexual and non-sexual, verbal and non-verbal, physical and non-physical.

Non-Sexual is a discriminatory type of harassment that includes and not limited to:

- Race, colour or national origin
- Sex or gender
- Age
- Physical, intellectual, mental or psychiatric disability
- Pregnancy or potential pregnancy
- Marital status or family responsibilities
- Religion

Some of the most common workplace harassment actions include:

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- Sexual harassment
 - Unwelcome sexual advances
 - Verbal harassment that may result to intimidation, ridicule, insults
 - Offensive pictures
 - Requests for sexual favours
 - Coercing or physically forcing a person to engage in a sexual act against their will and others.

If employee experiences any of these situations, the incident should be reported to their supervisor or to the Human Resources department as soon as possible.

DISCIPLINARY CONSEQUENCES

Every harassment action, when determined and proved, will be subject to clearly laid out disciplinary and corrective action. Some of the most common disciplinary actions include, but are not limited to:

- Counseling
- Warnings
- Suspensions
- Termination

B. GENDER REPORTING

SEEK THE TRUTH AND REPORT IT AS FULLY AS POSSIBLE

- i. Media houses shall all the time give fair, honest and user-friendly methods to obtain news, photographs and documents about sexually abused and exploited children.
- ii. Media practitioners shall be encouraged to continuously probe and research on gender issues in order to keep themselves abreast of current debates on the subject.
- iii. Media houses shall put in place training programmes to improve their media practitioners' knowledge of current and emerging gender issues and its various manifestations.
- iv. MCT shall use its mandate as a self-regulatory Council to collaborate with media training institutions to ensure the mainstreaming of gender in their curricular.

ACT INDEPENDENTLY

- i. Media houses shall take proactive steps to equally seek out the views of both women and men in their diversity regardless of their social standing.
- ii. Media practitioners shall at all times strive to be impartial and avoid publicly associating themselves with partisan statements or organizations. They shall immediately correct any inaccurate, misleading or distorted reporting on women/men issues.

OBJECTIVITY

- i. MCT members shall increase programmes on gender specific topics and allow more women to be involved in the production of such programmes.
- ii. News on women sexual abuse and exploitation should be comprehensive, but structured in a way that it can be understood easily and avoid stigmatizing the victim.
- iii. MCT recognizes that women are not a homogeneous group. Media houses are

encouraged to give inclusive coverage of all women that go beyond differences of class, social standing and whether they are from rural or urban areas, including expanding opportunities for both women and men to produce broadcasts and publishing on all topics, including on gender specific issues.

ACCOUNTABILITY

Journalists shall hold all policy makers accountable for ensuring that gender equality is achieved in their areas of work in accordance with national, regional and international commitments.

BALANCE AND IMPARTIALITY

- i. Cross-check information by getting both sides of the story before publishing or broadcasting it, taking into account the best interests of the woman.
- ii. Due care should be taken in reporting a story on sexual abuse when the matter is already in court of law such that it may not jeopardize the judicial process.

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- iii. News on sexual harassment and abuse should not contain emotional language, overstatements, propaganda or vague words.

STIGMA AND TRAUMA

Media houses shall desist from reportage that advocates hatred or incite violence based on gender. Media houses shall be required to refrain from:

- i. Publishing the identity or details of rape or sexual violence victims that could lead to their identification;
- ii. Promoting pornography and violence against women and children;
- iii. Depicting women as helpless or deserving victims of violence and abuse unless the violence is integral to the story;
- iv. Degrading women or exploiting women as helpless victims of violence and abuse;
- v. Degrading or exploiting women and undermining their positive role and position in society;

- vi. Reinforcing gender oppression and stereotypes;
- vii. Publishing stories that might incite violence and hatred based on gender, and broadcasting or publishing material that glamourizes violence against women.

MINIMIZE HARM

Media has a mandate to report on all issues as fully and awl, media houses shall be required to balance harm and discomfort with alternatives that maximize the goal of truth telling. Broadcasters shall not report material, which judge within context, contains scenes, simulated or real, of any of the following:

- i. A person who, is depicted as being under the age of 18 years, participating in sexual conduct or a lewd display of nudity;
- ii. Explicit violent sexual conduct;
- iii. Bestiality;
- iv. Explicit sexual conduct which degrades a person in the sense that it advocates a particular form of hatred based

on gender and which constitutes incitement to cause harm.

LANGUAGE

- i. Media houses shall prohibit the use of sexist language in their coverage.
- ii. Media practitioners shall respect the dignity of women and desist from making derogatory and discriminatory references to people on the basis of gender.
- iii. When editing and selecting facts, headlines, news highlights, pictures, audio and graphics, media houses shall not oversimplify and report gender issues out of context.

MARKETING AND ADVERTISING

- i. Media houses should ensure that consistent standards are applied between advertising and editorial content.
- ii. Gender stereotyping or negative gender portrayal should not be permitted in advertising.

SECURITY

- i. Create a comfortable and safe environment for an interview with an affected person/victim of gender mistreatment by limiting the number of interviewers and photographers/camerapersons and exclude members of public.
- ii. Change the name and obscure the visual identity of a victim who is identified as a sufferer of sexual abuse or exploitation while reporting the case in the media.
- iii. Stories or images that might in any way put the person (a woman or a man) at risk should not be published.

