

Airing out **The** Laundry

Gender Discrimination in Zambian Media Workplaces



Lethabo T. Dibetso

Edited by Lister Namumba-Rikhotso & Lweendo Hamukoma

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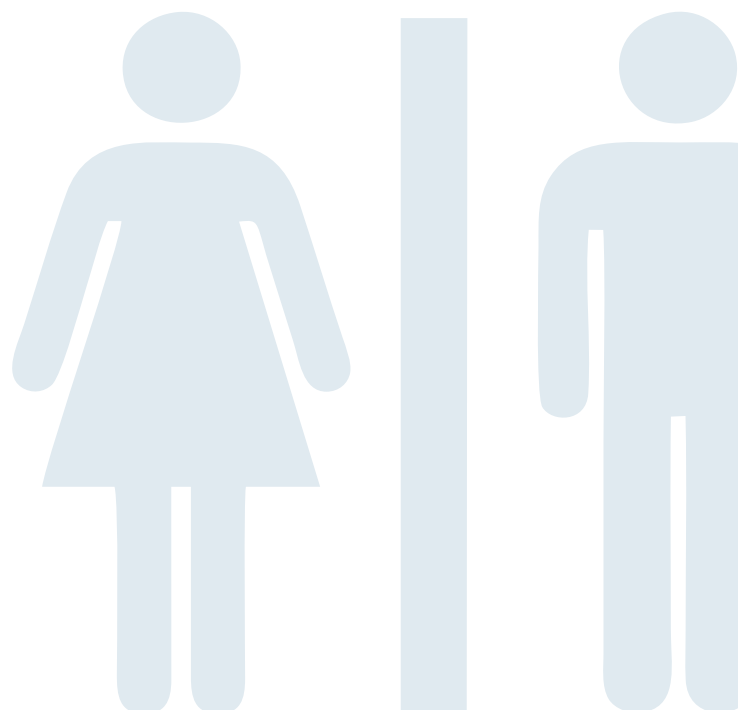
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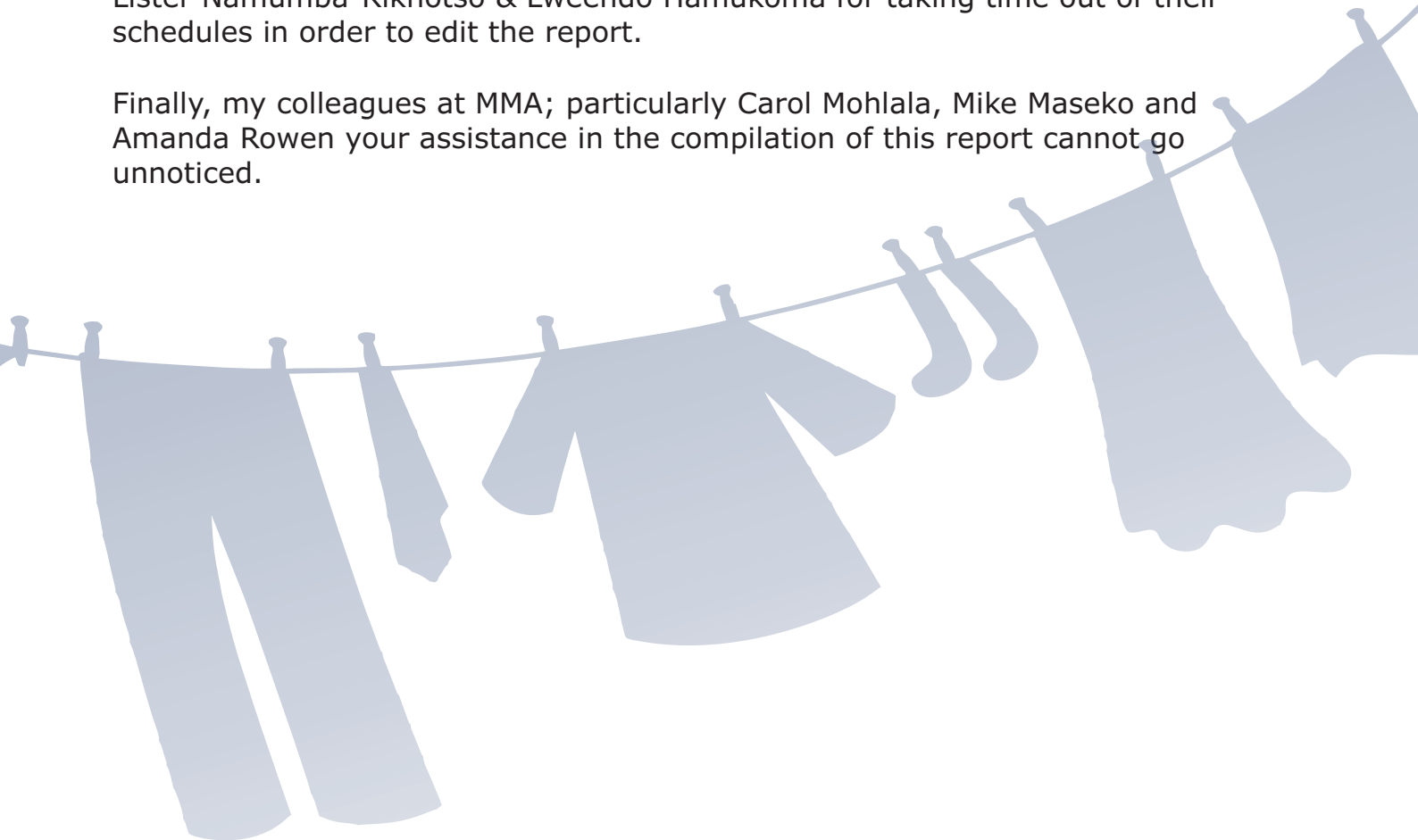
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Introduction

Women in Zambia, like the rest of the world face a number of gender based challenges even in the sphere of employment. The law, being an important instrument to society if used well can help to protect them from such challenges.

In line with the aspirations of the Patriotic Front (PF) Government on Gender and Child issues as outlined in the PF manifesto, a fully fledged Ministry of Gender and Child Development was established in 2011. This would assist in bringing focus on disparities in women's roles and limited opportunities in relation to those of men.

However, despite attempts at addressing gender inequality and achievements in this regard, gender discrimination is pervasive and is known to occur in almost every professional setting.

Newsrooms and the media industry are no exception. As an umbrella term, gender discrimination encompasses various forms of discrimination on the basis of gender, often negatively affecting women more than men. Unequal gender norms within a workplace can compromise productivity as workers are unable to perform their jobs effectively. Things that may lead to this loss of morale and motivation could include jokes about an employee's gender that imply inferiority, offensive jokes of a suggestive or sexual nature and jokes implying that an employee's work is sub-par due to his or her gender. Stereotypical views regarding gender can cause those in senior positions to engage in the illegal practice of passing a person over for promotion due to gender. While this can happen to both genders, management most often passes over women for promotion due to preconceived notions about their roles and abilities.

This report seeks to present a comprehensive understanding of how gender discrimination manifests itself in Zambian media workplaces. This was achieved by exploring the lived experiences of both female and male media workers regarding gender discrimination. The report is based on an online survey and in-depth interviews conducted with female and male media workers in Zambian workplaces between July and September of 2015. The online survey and in-depth interviews sought to examine the:

- Prevalence and nature of gender discrimination in Zambian workplaces.
- Perceptions of gender discrimination among media workers in Zambian workplaces.
- Causes of gender discrimination as well as the challenges victims confront when lodging a complaint or when deciding to remain in the newsroom or abandon the media profession.
- Effect(s) of gender discrimination on both victims and perpetrators.
- Mechanisms (if any) currently in place Zambian workplaces that deal with gender discrimination issues.

The findings of this report raise socially relevant questions and concerns about gender discrimination in Zambia's media workplaces. The findings show that gender discrimination is a problem which is underpinned by a long history of patriarchy; which in many ways has perpetuated inequality among the sexes. Gender discrimination in the country's media workplaces can be attributed to power imbalances as those in positions of authority are often the perpetrators and utilise the inherent power imbalances to victimise those in the lower echelons.

The report is divided into three parts. The first part details how information on gender discrimination in Zambian media workplaces was collected. The second part briefly provides background to what is discrimination in occupation and employment. The third part looks at how gender discrimination manifests itself in the country's media workplaces.

1. How information on gender discrimination in Zambian media workplaces was collected

Like many of the social inequalities prevalent in our society, gender discrimination is a complex issue and no single policy measure can effectively address this. In order to undertake the study and understand the prevalence of gender discrimination in Zambian media workplaces, a survey was distributed in various media workplaces across Zambia where 26 participants responded and six in-depth interviews with both male and female journalists from the respective media institutions were held.

1.1 How the survey was administered

Given the sensitivity of the subject being researched, an anonymous survey was administered amongst media workers. The survey consisted of 31 questions that were answered by media workers. The online survey was crucial in recording the raw statistical prevalence and the magnitude of gender discrimination while in-depth interviews were useful in documenting the various factors underpinning this. The questions were distributed through a web link that was emailed to a contact person in Zambia and subsequently emailed to media workers.

In order to guarantee anonymity on this topic, the responses were only available to Media Monitoring Africa (MMA) employees working on the project. In addition, information that could reveal the identity of the respondents was not required unless otherwise specified by them.

The survey ran for a period of 10 weeks, from the 6th of July, 2015 to the 31st of September, 2015. A total number of 26 people responded to the survey with 15 responding to all the questions in the survey and 11 only answering some of the questions depending on how the questions were relevant to the respondents' experiences.

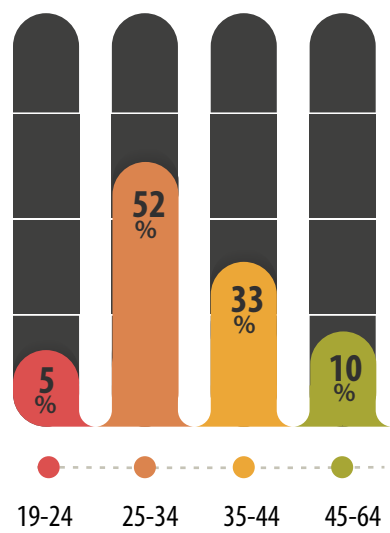
Figure 1: Sex of respondents



Ch1 >

Raising awareness about gender discrimination amongst men is as important as getting women to report issues of gender based discrimination. Often perpetrators of gender discrimination are men and this is influenced by society's understanding of what constitutes masculinity and feminities. Over half of the respondents were female. This is despite the general feeling amongst research participants that the media industry is still very male dominated particularly at management level.

Figure 2: Age of respondents



Those who were most affected by gender discrimination are often those at the lower levels of the professional tier. This could be the reason why most of the respondents were within the 25 to 34 age group, as this is the group most likely to have professionals at lower levels.

Figure 3: Departments respondents worked in

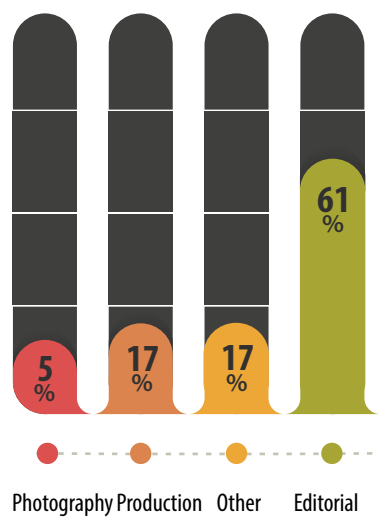
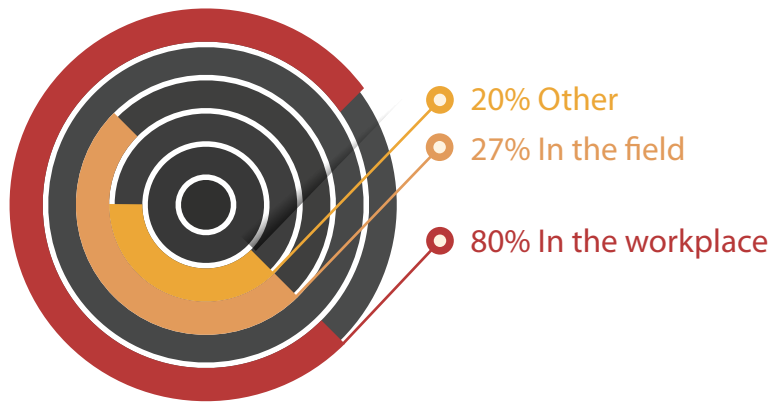


Figure 3 shows the departments which the participants belonged to. Most of the participants belonged to the editorial department which in this research included Junior and Senior Reporters, Line and Sub Editors as well as Editors-in-Chief. Thus demonstrating that the newsroom was the place where gender discrimination was mostly encountered. Although Editors assumed different roles with varied impact on gender discrimination, they were clustered together because ultimately they wield some form of power in the newsrooms. Camerapersons and photographers were combined and the category 'Other' was allocated to those whose positions could not be categorised in the groups described above; these could be Radio Disc Jockeys, Presenters, Station Managers etc. Discrimination was not only restricted to the newsroom or within the bounds or walls of the particular organisations. The figure below also shows that media workers often encountered discrimination in the field.

Figure 4: Where did this form of gender discrimination take place



Twenty seven percent of the respondents also felt that they had encountered discrimination the field,¹ whilst 20 percent stated other. Some of the reasons for their responses are captured below.

"It occurs both in the workplace and in the field, we can't separate it"- Respondent

1.2 Why an online survey was used to gather information anonymously

The logic of using an online survey to gather information about gender discrimination in Zambian media workplaces stemmed from the fact that "asking questions is an effective way of acquiring varied information about the lived experience of media professional's within the Zambian media environment. This assumes that the person answering is able and willing to respond accurately".²

The experiences of these media professional's allows for an acquisition of a broader knowledge base about an issue affecting society such as gender discrimination. This report examines how gender based discrimination manifests itself within a sub-section of society like the media.

Discussions on matters like gender discrimination are sensitive issue especially for individuals who have been victimised. Online questionnaire's which guaranteed anonymity for these media professional's. This in turn allowed for a greater expression of these media professional feelings, thoughts and frustrations around these issues Utilising an online survey also allowed for a completely controlled and standardised analysis and interpretation of information in statistical forms, which was complemented by qualitative information provided through in-depth interviews.

1.3 Why in-depth interviews were used to collect information

Interviews are one of the most commonly used qualitative research techniques. Their obvious benefit to research is "their openness" as they allow the interviewer endless opportunity and potential to get information from the interview. We utilised in-depth interviews because they allowed us to follow a set list of questions making for easier standardised comparison across all interviews, but also allowed us to remain casual and open to diversions, and therefore allowing also the interviewee to deviate from the questions so as to explore information that may not have been anticipated or covered by the prepared questions.

1.4 Limitations to data gathering

The value of survey results is not only determined by the number of people who respond to the questions but also by the way the respondents were identified.⁴ In that regard, MMA relied on Sally Chiwama's media contacts and on her distributing the survey link to them. This meant that there could be limitations to the number of media workers having the opportunity to respond to the survey. Survey results are also dependent on the form, wording and context of the questions asked as well as the people who answer them.⁵ In addition, answers to survey questions also depend on the form in which the questions are asked. As such, by varying the form, wording and context of the questions we asked,⁶ we were able to gain insights into how gender discrimination manifests itself in Zambian media workplaces.

Since surveys ask the same questions in the same order of every respondent, they do not obtain full reports.⁷ Instead, the information they obtain from one person is fragmentary, made up of bits and pieces of attitudes and observations and appraisals.⁸ For that reason, we used in-depth interviews to get more insights into the prevalence and nature of gender discrimination in Zambian media workplaces. However, because the fuller responses obtained through in-depth interviews could not be easily categorised, MMA's analysis of the responses relied more on interpretation, summary and integration. This required more time, care and consideration in order to provide a deeper understanding of gender discrimination in Zambian media workplaces. Overall, combining both quantitative and qualitative methodologies to examine gender discrimination ensured that where one method failed the other complemented.

2. What is discrimination in occupation and employment?

Discrimination is the distinction, exclusion or preference for or against a person on arbitrary grounds. This could either be on the basis of their gender, sexual orientation, religion, ethnicity or social origin, race, marital status, HIV status, pregnancy by an employer which has the effect of nullifying or impairing equality of opportunity in employment and occupation.⁹

2.1 Gender Discrimination at work

Gender discrimination mirrors and reinforces discrimination in other social spheres, e.g. family, community, school and political arena and intersects with other forms of discrimination, such as age or race. As a concept, gender refers to the "differences between males and females that are socially constructed, changeable over time and have wide variations within and between cultures".¹⁰ Unlike sex which is biologically determined, gender speaks to learned behaviours and expectations to fulfil one's image of being a man or a woman.¹¹

Such behaviours and expectations can also be unlearned. Gender is also a socio-economic and political variable with which to analyse people's roles, responsibilities, constraints and opportunities.¹² By extension, gender roles are "socially determined behaviours, tasks and responsibilities for women and men based on socially perceived differences that define how they should think, act and feel based on their respective sex".¹³ Gender roles have a life-cycle dimension thus meaning they can and do change through individual choice and in response to events and processes such as the transition to democracy in the South African context. Gender discrimination can therefore be understood as "any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of socially constructed gender roles and norms that prevent a person from fully enjoying their rights".¹⁴

2.2 Types of Gender Discrimination

Gender discrimination generates inequalities between men and women. More and more women find that they have to prove themselves in their workplaces so that they are seen as equals to their male counterparts at the workplace. Below are some of the forms of gender discrimination:

- Financial inequality whereby women earn a lower wage than men although they share identical professional qualifications and credentials.
- Glass ceiling whereby women are prevented from competing for higher positions and climbing the professional ladder through fair and equal promotion in the workplace.
- Gender stereotypes whereby definitions of femininity and masculinity¹⁵ influence the types of jobs or story topics that female journalists are assigned compared to their male colleagues. For instance, Editors have the tendency to assign "soft news" like entertainment and lifestyle to female journalists and "hard news" such as politics, economics, and sports to male journalists.
- Pregnancy and motherhood, which are frequently used as factors upon which women are discriminated against and denied employment or promotion. These are unfairly perceived to be obstacles to a woman's ability to perform professionally. They are also anticipated as potential threats to a woman's long-term commitment to a job.
- Sexual harassment refers to unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favours, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature.¹⁶

As an extension of most of the above forms of discrimination, age or ageism, as well as woman's physique and aesthetic appearance have been known to play a role in discrimination against women, especially in the media profession, namely broadcast media, where age and appearance often dictates success.

3. Research Findings

Ch3 >

3.1 How do Zambian media workers understand gender discrimination?

Even though women and girls are not exclusively victims of discrimination and violence; women and girls are the most affected and it is a problem of pandemic proportions. According to the 2007 Zambia Demographic and Health Survey; almost half of women (47%) in Zambia have suffered from physical violence at some point since age 15. One-third of women suffer from acts of violence. This proportion is significantly higher for divorced/separated/widowed women (41%) than single women (11%). One in ten women have ever experienced sexual violence!¹⁷

Despite the fact that women are in the majority (51%); Zambia remains a very male-dominated society. It is important for media workers to have a clear understanding of gender discrimination in its various forms. Without a crucial understanding it becomes impossible for both victims and sometimes perpetrators to recognise situations in which gender discrimination takes place, particularly in societies where gender roles are largely embedded in patriarchy.¹⁸

Many of the participants used sex and gender interchangeably often to the point of conflation. In other words, the differences between females and males that are socially constructed, changeable over time and have wide variations within and between cultures are conflated with the biological characteristics that define human beings at birth. Such conflation is problematic in that it may lead some media workers to assume that gender roles, just like sex, are biologically determined and therefore not subjected to scrutiny and in turn cannot be challenged, let alone changed.

We also found that some media workers understand gender discrimination specifically as an exclusion or restriction on the basis of being female. Their responses highlighted gender discrimination as a phenomenon only affecting female media workers as illustrated by the following quotations.

"In our organisation gender discrimination is when the male workmates are favoured to take high profile assignments because the organisation feels that men are better performers than women and as a result female journalists feel discriminated." –

Respondent

"I understand it as a situation where someone is categorized or sidelined based on their sex. For an example preference for certain assignments is given to men and not their female colleagues."- **Respondent**

There was however, a clear understanding of gender discrimination as a violation of human rights and as being prejudicial; thus highlighting gender equality is essential for the achievement of human rights for all. This is illustrated by the following quotations.

"Gender discrimination is prejudice or discrimination based on a person's sex or gender". – **Respondent**

"Discrimination based on gender or sex is a common civil rights violation". – **Respondent**

Though traditionally the face of gender discrimination has been female and as a result most campaigns against discrimination have been targeted at women, it was clear from the responses that gender discrimination was not exclusive to women. This is captured in the quotes below in response to their understanding of what gender discrimination is.

"Discrimination against either sexes especially the female folk. We all have the right to be treated equally". – **Respondent**

"Discrimination based on a person's gender or sex, which more often affects girls and women. Because of gender discrimination, girls and women do not have the same opportunities as boys and men for education, meaningful careers, political influence, and economic advancement." – **Respondent**

"This is the unfair treatment of an individual on the basis of biological make up (either female or male) in whatever circumstance or environment at home, work or in any related activity." – **Respondent**

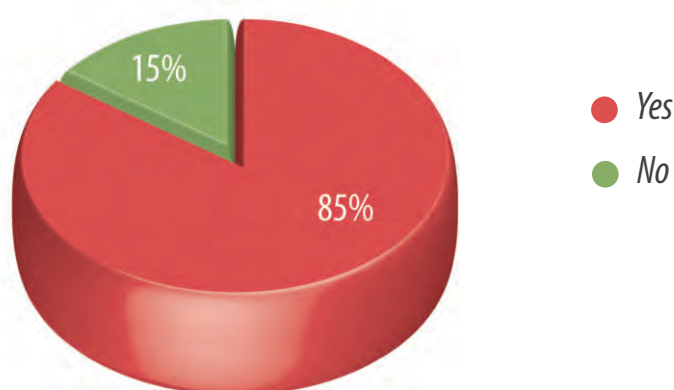
3.1 Is gender discrimination in Zambian media workplaces a problem?

The Zambian Constitution clearly protects the right to liberty, security of the person, freedom of assembly and association, and the protection of the law. However for many in Zambia these rights are far from reality. This is true for the majority of women in Zambia. Women in Zambia account for 51 percent of the total population according to the Central Statistics office 2010 census report.¹⁹

However, women in Zambia are more vulnerable as they are the worst hit by poverty, HIV and AIDS, illiteracy levels which are high amongst women. According to the 2007 Zambia Demographic and Health Survey, 10 percent of women and 17 percent of men have completed secondary or higher education schooling.²⁰ According to UNICEF, the prevalence of HIV in Zambia amongst adults in the age brackets 15-49 is 14.3 percent; 16.1 percent of the females are more likely to be HIV+ and males at 12.3 percent.²¹ This clearly demonstrates that women are the hardest hit by socio-economic ills²¹ on the continent.

This in correlation with the earlier statistics on the prevalence of sexual abuse suggests wider social ramifications for gender based discrimination in both personal and professional spaces. Effects of gender based discrimination are not only felt by the victims of the practice but the consequences have a potential to extend to the organisations they work in resulting in a possible reduction in productivity and motivation of not only the person concerned but also of colleagues who are privy to what is happening. Coupled with the costs of potential litigation and loss of reputation, a lack of attention to gender discrimination may prove costly in many respects. Against this backdrop, MMA sought to enquire into the prevalence of gender discrimination by asking media workers whether they thought gender discrimination in Zambian media workplaces was a problem. Their responses are graphically shown below.

Figure 5: Is gender discrimination a problem in Zambian workplaces



Despite the constitution ensuring protection against violation of human rights and any form of discrimination, the figure above illustrates that 85 percent of the participants thought that gender discrimination was a problem within their work environments. The ability of both men and women to identify gender based discrimination as problematic, suggests that although the victims of gender based discrimination are predominantly women, greater awareness is happening.

The acknowledgement by men; that gender-based discrimination is of value particularly in light of the fact that often the perpetrators of gender based discrimination are likely to be men. What was telling was also what respondents thought were the causes of gender discrimination; which is captured in the following quotes.

“Like many other sectors, gender discrimination has remained the worst vice in media houses and newsrooms. It is unfortunately a notorious fact that gender discrimination is a problem in Zambia and it has been a trend in Zambia's fourth estate that most media outlets are headed and dominated by the male gender. The female gender has remained marginalized not because of education but because of the masculine nature of men. There has been cases of stereotyping and such have not yet been broken and unless and until the female gender becomes more assertive coupled with gender mainstreaming, the journalism family will remain gender discriminative.” – **Respondent**

It is clear that persistent discriminatory practices, social norms and stereotypes which perpetuate inequitable access to opportunities, resources and power exist within the Zambian media industry. Those who were most affected by gender based discrimination are often those at the lower levels of the professional tier. The majority of the respondents to this study are in the 25 to 34 age group, as this is the group most likely to have a cohort of media professional's at lower levels.

There are various factors leading to gender discrimination in media in Zambia. This could be attributed to:

- 1.Culture that allows men to be the decision makers and the leaders in top positions. This is because men are to be the head of the house.
- 2.Myths that allows women to be considered lazy e.g. cannot write and produce on time and also that women cannot head certain demanding media departments e.g. newsroom and camera section.
- 3.Most women are not given an opportunity to air out their views on what matters.

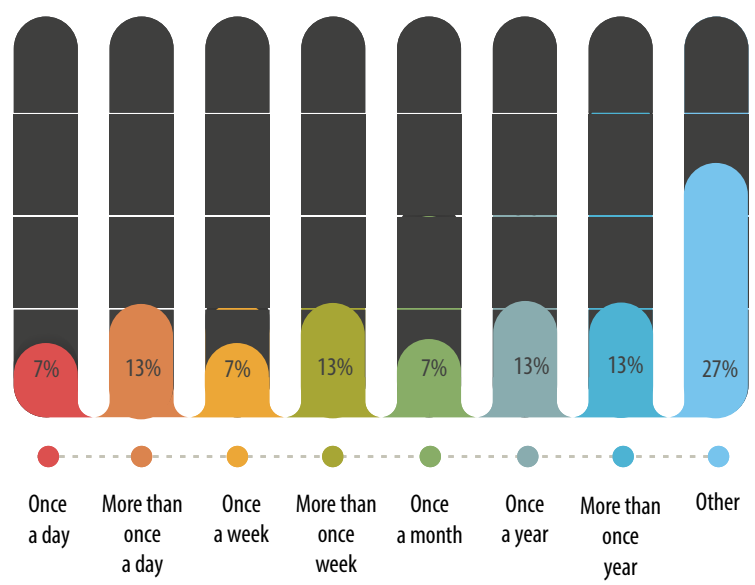
“Women are the most disadvantaged hence the majority are not educated and given an opportunity to further their studies.” – **Respondent**

“It is (a problem) since news is now a competitive arena. Most news rooms will not assign a female reporter at a campaign rally or a by-election in a rural setting on account of this; or at times females are usually very reluctant to do so because of a superiority attitude which manifests itself in 'female reporters' shunning assignments involving a lot of leg-walk. Though many females enrol in training institutions, the picture is that in newsrooms, most are confined to casting the news, continuity announcement on radio or television, while in the print media females tend to report from the courts which consolidates this stereotyped viewpoint. In addition, female journalists prefer working as Public Relations Officers. Secondly, the dress code and prioritization of cosmetics tend to side-line female reporters as the male-dominated media ownership does not want to appoint females to senior positions.” – **Respondent**

3.2 How often does gender discrimination take place in Zambian media workplaces?

In order to further establish how big problem gender discrimination is in Zambian media workplaces, MMA asked those media workers who had been victims of the practice how often it occurred. Their responses revealed startling statistics shown below.

Figure 6: How often does gender discrimination take place?



There is direct correlation in the response that was given by those who were victims of gender discrimination. Thirteen percent of the respondents stated that they encountered discrimination, more than once a week, more than once a year, more than once a day and once a year. This highlights that gender discrimination in Zambian media workplaces has been institutionalised and become the lived experience of many media workers.

The problem with institutionalisation or normalisation of gender discrimination is that media workers may dismiss some of it as part of acceptable newsroom culture. This will have adverse effects on working conditions and greater implications on media workers playing their role effectively as part of the fourth estate. The other issue is; how is it possible that gender discrimination has been allowed to fester to a point where it has become normal?

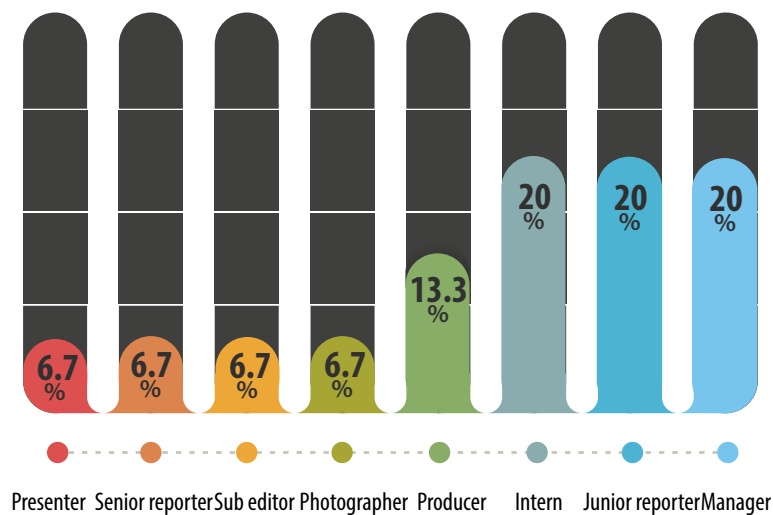
Twenty seven percent of the respondents cited other for this question. When looking at the reasons given, it was still clear that discrimination was a daily experience. There was also a link between the frequency at which discrimination occurs and a certain type of discrimination. This is illustrated in the quotes below.

- "It always happens whenever there is a high profile assignment, male photographers are usually favoured." – **Respondent**
- (Discrimination occurs) "All the time."- **Respondent**
- "Each time there was a presidential assignment abroad." – **Respondent**
- "Quite often. It is not easy to put a time line." – **Respondent**

3.3 Who are the victims of gender discrimination in Zambian media workplaces?

Hierarchical and managerial powers are central to understanding how such a culture develops and continues to; those who are in lower positions in the workplaces are more likely to become victims of gender discrimination; however from the figure below it is also clear that gender discrimination can occur at various levels within an organisation. The entrenchment of patriarchy and its persistence in most societies has ensured that victims of gender discrimination have remained largely women. This was corroborated by stories from interviews with media workers.

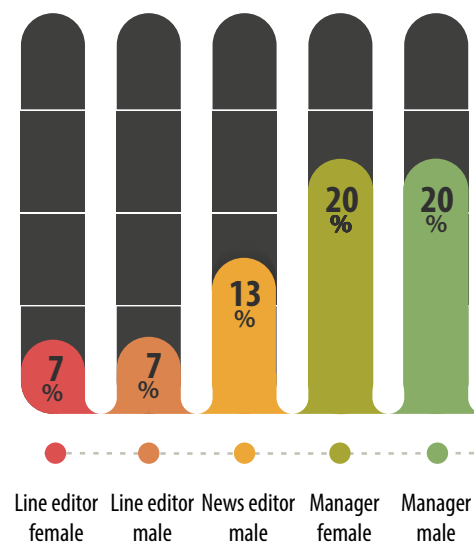
Figure 7: Roles occupied by victims



3.4 Who are the perpetrators of gender based discrimination in Zambian media workplaces?

Patriarchy has also ensured that perpetrators of gender discrimination are mostly men. Although finding out the sex of perpetrators is important, MMA was more interested in knowing the positions of perpetrators. In other words, we sought to find out the positions that perpetrators of gender discrimination occupy in the different media workplaces as this would allow for targeted strategies to solve the problem. We therefore asked respondents to tell us the positions of the people who had discriminated them and found that the majority of the perpetrators are Editors and Managers. Given that there are women who also occupy these roles, this adds a female face to that common face of the male perpetrator.

Figure 8: Perpetrators of gender discrimination by sex

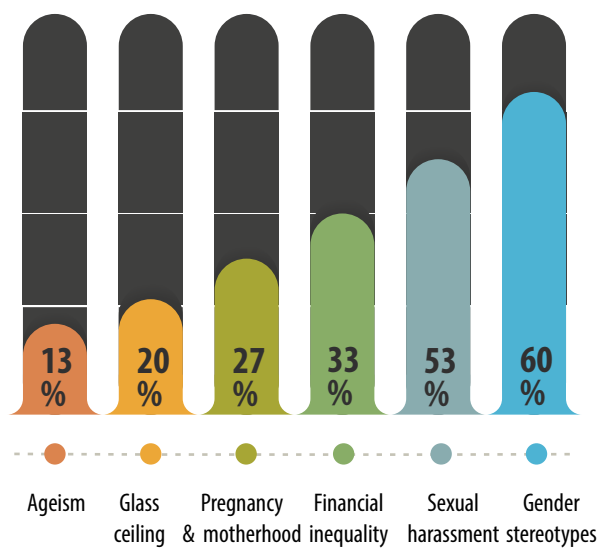


3.5 Which forms of gender discrimination are prevalent in Zambian media workplaces?

Gender discrimination manifests itself in various forms from the overt to the covert. We therefore sought to identify the most prevalent types of gender discrimination by asking respondents to state the types of gender discrimination that they had been subjected to or witnessed.

We were cognisant of the fact that one person could experience more than one type of gender discrimination hence the respondents were given the option of choosing more than one type of discrimination where applicable.

Figure 9: Common types of gender discrimination in Zambian media workplaces



It is clear that many victims of gender discrimination experienced more than one form of discrimination in the workplace. As revealed above, the majority of the victims were subjected to gender stereotypes. It is worth noting that gender stereotypes affect both men and women as some men indicated that they were victims of this form of gender discrimination. Generally, gender stereotypes emanate from societal roles that define what is feminine and what is masculine. Below is a more nuanced discussion of some of the forms of gender discrimination experienced. Another type of gender discrimination that is rampant in Zambian media workplaces is of course sexual harassment as 53 percent of the victims indicated that they have experienced it.

3.6 Gender Wage Gap

With a population of 15 million, 400, 000 of Zambia’s citizens are in formal, pensionable employment and the majority of these are male, according a Central Statistical Survey. While gender activists have mounted various campaigns to balance the gender scale in the southern African state, they are most often met with resistance when it comes to addressing the salary or wage disparate between women and men. The more women we have in employment, the greater potential for economies to grow. Though many will argue that there is no clear connection between economic growth and all aspects of gender equality, an increase in the female labour force or a reduction in the gap between women’s and men’s labour forces results in faster economic growth.²²

Evidence from a range of countries shows that increasing the share of household income controlled by women, either through their own earnings or cash transfers changes spending in ways that benefit children.²³ Women continue to participate in labour markets on an unequal basis with men. In 2013, the Male employment-to-population ratio stood at 72.2 percent while the ratio for females was 47.1 percent.²⁴ Globally women are paid less than men. Women in most countries earn on average only 60 to 75 percent of men's wages.²⁵ Survey participants and media workers that were interviewed stated that there were disparities in the incomes of male and female journalists. This is reflected in the quotes below.

"It happened when i was working for a private media institution. I was given a lesser salary for the same job that the previous employee who was male was given a much higher salary when we had the same qualifications. When I queried, I was told by the Managing Director that he had more responsibilities than I did"- **Respondent**

"My female colleagues and I often went to complain about Housing Allowances from a female Assistant Managing Director and we were always given negative verbal answers and sometimes, rude comments" – **Respondent**

Though research participants did make it clear that issues relating to salaries were personal and required access to payslips of colleagues 33 percent of the survey participants did state that financial inequity was an issue in the different media workplaces. The inequities were also not restricted to remuneration only; female media workers had challenges with regard to receiving benefits like housing and travelling allowances. A huge contributing factor to this inequality was the view that women are economic dependants and the likelihood that women are in organised sectors or not represented in unions. If they are organised then those structures are weak.

3.7 Gendered Allocation of Work

Gender stereotypes can be a result of gender socialisation. Girls and boys are expected to act in certain ways, and these ways are socialised from birth by family and society. The ones who do not conform to gender stereotypes are often ostracized by peers for being different. Perceptions of gender are deeply rooted and vary wildly within and between cultures, and change over time. But in all cultures, gender determines power and resources for females and males. It is this access to power and resources that also contributes to the allocation of work to journalists based on gender.. Gender stereotypes were highlighted as a major problem in media workplaces and are used to rationalise the gendered division of work. The concept of socialisation will be further explored in the chapter below; the impact of culture and socialisation is evidenced in the quotations below.

"I think sometimes the way we are socialised and cultured play a role because there are certain assignments where editors will say 'oh no! We can't give this to a female journalist because it will have this and that and she won't be able to do it because she is a woman' purely based on biological differences and as a result they believe that men can perform certain tasks than women" – **Respondent**

"Yes it's true; usually there are certain assignments which are only given to men. For example if it's a political rally they will usually send a male journalist because there is a perception that if anything goes wrong it will be easier for a man to defend himself. A man would be able to run and find himself out of tight situations" – **Respondent**

"Being overlooked for a promotion although I was more qualified than my male colleague" – **Respondent**

The masculine culture of the newsroom has spilled into the stories journalists produce. Recent research conducted by MMA on how Zambian media covered the 2015 elections shows that 85 percent of the male sources were quoted by media.²⁶ According to Nyondo, a baseline study conducted in 2003 and a follow up research done by Nyondo in 2005 revealed that news beats on politics, economics, business, and sports were reserved for male reporters and their sources were predominantly male; even stories about women or stories written by female journalists rarely had women as sources.²⁷

3.8 Socialisation and Gender Discrimination

Gender equality has been and still is perceived in many societies as something concerning only women, invented for women and implemented by women. Women are struggling for gender equality. What about men? Do they need it? Will they allow it? Will they accept it? The stereotypes concerning both genders are so deeply enshrined in our society that the fight against these inequalities seems pointless.

Gender socialisation is one of the factors responsible for the reinforcement of gender inequality since one's childhood. The society continues to transmit the traditional gender roles to the individual through the various agencies of socialisation. The different institutions of socialisation play an integral part in shaping the adulthood of an individual. Since childhood, women learn to be submissive and men authoritarian.

This is clearly captured in the quotes below.

"I would like to believe that most employers want consistency and efficiency, this has left women disadvantaged. Most employers are for lack of a better term sexist. They would rather go for a man for his physical strength and willingness to cover any story regardless of the dangers it might pose on them. Women on the other hand are viewed as unable. They have to go to great lengths to prove otherwise. This has left the silent but very high discrimination still rampant and alive." - **Respondent**

"Culture! Most Zambians are oriented into thinking that men are better than women. It is these prejudices that have found themselves in our newsrooms. The other is that women also don't try harder to gain positions of influence, which men use to justify their discrimination. Many female journalists in Zambia have not upgraded their education which works against them." - **Respondent**

3.9 Sexual Harassment: It's a Power Game

While sexual harassment may on first glance be taken as simple social ineptness or as an awkward expression of romantic attraction, researchers have spoken against these views as wrong and pernicious because they can lead women who suffer harassment to blame themselves, believing that something in their dress or behaviour might have brought the unwanted attention.

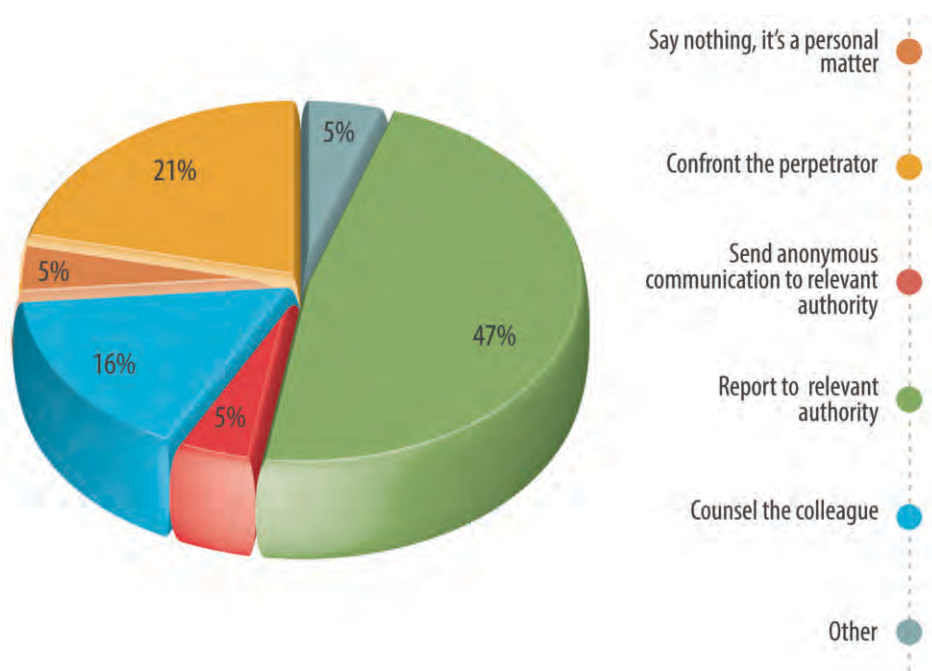
Many research experts on sexual violence state that harassment is a tactic used to control or frighten women. Sexual harassment is most frequent in occupations and work places where women are new and are in the minority. In fact, no matter how many men they encounter in the course of their work, women who hold jobs traditionally held by men are far more likely to be harassed than women who do "women's work." Sexual harassment is also likely to be more prevalent in workplaces where men fill senior positions, either as sub editors, managers or editors.

3.10 How do media workers in Zambian media workplaces respond to gender discrimination?

The first step to dealing with gender discrimination is ensuring that places of employment develop gender awareness policies. Gender relations in the workplace require active and ongoing management. It is therefore important to fully comprehend the broader implications of what constitutes gender equality and conduct employment systems review of policies, procedures and practices. The effectiveness of gender awareness policies will determine an organisations success in dealing with discrimination in the workplace. We felt it was crucial to ascertain the response of media workers to gender discrimination mainly for two reasons. Firstly, the way media workers respond to gender discrimination is indicative of the type of environment that exists in their respective media workplaces when it comes to dealing with gender discrimination. Secondly, any information gleaned from the responses would have a bearing on mapping what needs to be done. Therefore, the response given to gender discrimination within the workplace, be it by those in positions of authority or by the victims of the practice, is of crucial importance to both the prevention and the fight against the practice.

Asked what they would do if a colleague was discriminated, an overwhelming number of media workers indicated that they would take some form of action as evidenced by Figure 10 below.

Figure 10: What would media workers in Zambian media workplaces do when a colleague experiences gender discrimination

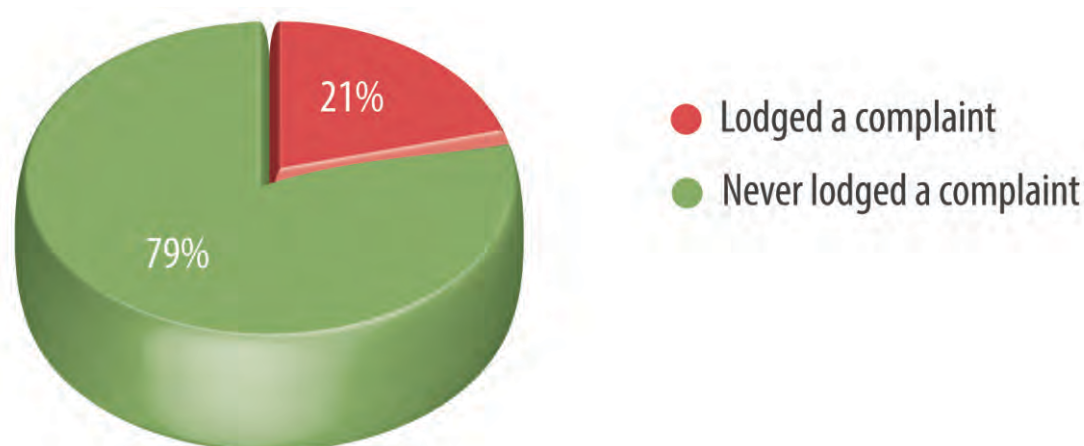


A large majority of the survey respondents; 47 percent were willing to report gender discrimination to the relevant authorities should they be aware that it is happening. This suggests that there is awareness that the practice was wrong and that it needed to disappear from the workplace. This is certainly so because 85 percent of the media workers indicated that gender discrimination is a problem in the country's media workplaces.²⁸ On the other hand, when we asked whether media workers who had been subjected to gender discrimination had lodged any complaint, we found the results below.

"I was basically tolerant and patient hoping things would eventually change." –
 "I complained but the perpetrator was defended by our supervisor."- **Respondent**
 "love what I do, so nothing or anybody can make me quit, I will do whatever it takes to keep doing what I do, even if it means suffer in silence." – **Respondents**
 "I think confronting helps but more appropriately confiding in someone." – **Respondents**
 "Speaking out with friends and some close members of my family because I believe speaking out or sharing with a loved one reduces the tension inside." – **Respondents**

Gender relations in the workplace require active and ongoing management. It is therefore important to fully comprehend the broader implications of what constitutes gender equality and conduct employment systems review of policies, procedures and practices. A media organisation's environment plays an important role in fighting gender discrimination. In addition, its response to gender discrimination has the potential to cause the most damage or foster an environment where gender discrimination is not acceptable.

Figure 11: Whether victims of gender discrimination lodged a complaint or not.



Interestingly, respondents to this question gave a different answer to that asked in Figure 10. It is concerning because it reveals a disjuncture between what media workers would want to do (Figure 10) and what they really do (Figure 11) when they have actually suffered discrimination. Seventy nine percent of the media workers did not lodge a complaint. This is attributed to the level of discrimination being so severe that victims felt helpless because more often than not in instances where it was reported the perpetrators are not taken to task. What is more telling are some of the reasons victims never lodged complaints as reflected below.

"I feared to report my employer despite being unfairly treated because my daily bread (life) depended on the little salary I got from the institution but instead, waited patiently for my time to come so that I can go elsewhere." – **Respondent**

"I just thought I would be wasting my time. What the hell would be the difference anyway?" – **Respondent**

"In this economy, I feared losing the only job I had and I knew that getting employment elsewhere was not guaranteed; in fact it was even close to zero." – **Respondent**

"Unfavourable reporting channels." – **Respondent**

"For fear of being fired or cited for insubordination." – **Respondent**

These sentiments are indicative of an environment where victims fear that making a stand against gender discrimination will have serious negative repercussions for them and also that such efforts will be futile as nothing will be done to address the problem. Some have stayed because they need the salary to support themselves and their families, and are struggling to get other jobs as the country's unemployment rate is high.

In light of the 79 percent that never lodged complaints, we asked what coping mechanisms they had. The responses ranged from passion for the industry and the job they did, confiding in loved ones, persevering and developing a thick skin and working hard in order to climb up the ranks. Their views are articulated below.

"I was basically tolerant and patient hoping things would eventually change." – **Respondents**

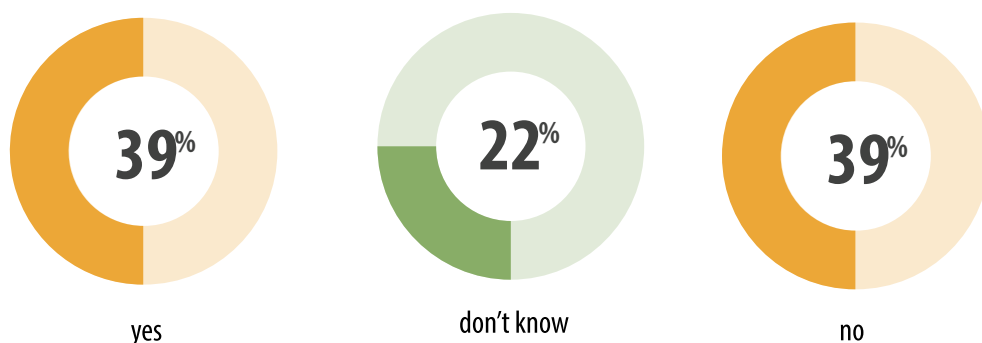
"I love what I do, so nothing or anybody can make me quit, I will do whatever it takes to keep doing what I do, even if it means suffer in silence." – **Respondents**

"I think confronting helps but more appropriately confiding in someone." – **Respondents**

"Speaking out with friends and some close members of my family because I believe speaking out or sharing with a loved one reduces the tension inside." – **Respondents**

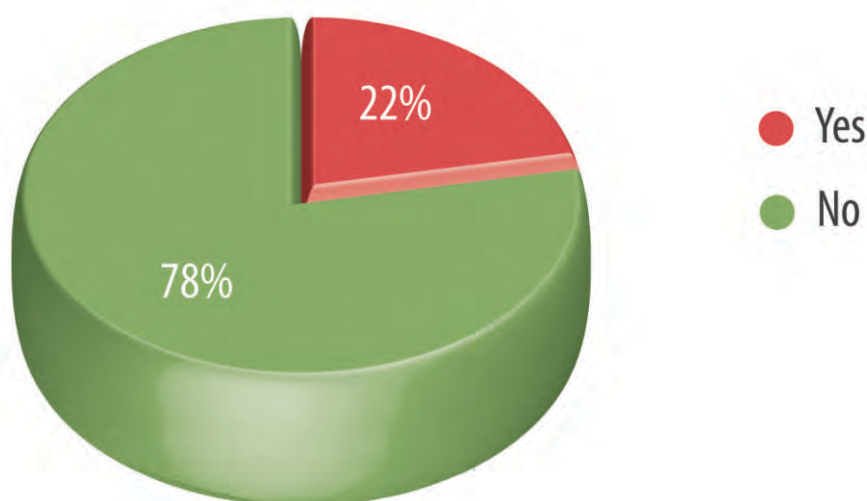
Gender relations in the workplace require active and ongoing management. It is therefore important to fully comprehend the broader implications of what constitutes gender equality and conduct employment systems review of policies, procedures and practices. A media organisation's environment plays an important role in fighting gender discrimination. In addition, its response to gender discrimination has the potential to cause the most damage or foster an environment where gender discrimination is not acceptable.

Figure 12: Do media houses have policies dealing with gender discrimination?



It is however a positive indicator that 39 per cent of the survey participants said that there were policies in place to deal with gender discrimination. In response to the 39 percent of that said they were aware of the existence of policies dealing with gender discrimination and to ascertain the effectiveness of these policies that were present in media houses. We asked about the effectiveness of the mechanisms in place for dealing with gender discrimination; a majority of the participants stated that these mechanisms were ineffective. This is shown in figure 13 below.

Figure 13: Effectiveness of policies and mechanism



This is not surprising as 39 percent of the media workers feel that mechanisms barely existed, nor were they enforced. Respondents also stated that for policies to be effective there needed to be effective management. Some of the explanations given behind this sentiment are:

"Discrimination has continued despite media houses effort to take steps in preventing it e.g. employing few female reporters, camera women etc. Women are still being discriminated, a women cannot be assigned at night based on the fact that she a woman."

– **Respondent**

"The mechanisms are there. What brings in gender discrimination is the type of person managing an institution. I must point out that some media heads have managed to accord equal opportunities to every individual."

"To begin with, mechanisms and methods of dealing with gender discrimination seem to be non-existent even with their being available. However, the mechanisms are not effective because they do not respond to the needs of the female gender. There must be explicit mechanisms and methods backed by policies that should be employed to fight gender discrimination in newsrooms."

"In my view mechanisms and methods of dealing with gender discrimination are effective since most employees and employers are obliged to comply. Though, to greater extent compliance is usually limited to once upbringing and societal construct, as certain cultures regard females as a tool or helping hand both in a homestead or workplace."

– **Respondent**

If gender discrimination in Zambian media workplaces is a big problem and the mechanisms for dealing with it are ineffective as clearly articulated above, then the question is; what could be done to reduce gender discrimination in the country's media workplaces?

Conclusion

The problem of gender discrimination cannot be isolated to media environment. Gender based discrimination is a societal and national problem. The issues highlighted in this report though specific to the media work environment they can be said to mirror gender based discrimination which is prevalent in society, historically and otherwise.

The study has established that root causes of gender discrimination, the inequalities and social injustices that continue to persist are as a result of patriarchy being firmly entrenched in our societies.

Over half of the respondents were female. This is despite the general feeling amongst research participants that the media industry is still a very male dominated environment, particularly at a management level. This in connection with ownership of media houses being held by predominantly male individuals who are of older generations. This suggests that, the upholding of a patriarchal culture in the media work environment may continue to persist.

With the majority of participants being in the lower levels of the professional tier as well as being female, the conflation between gender and sex is problematic in that it may lead some media professionals assuming that gender roles, just like sex, are biologically determined and therefore not subjected to scrutiny and in turn cannot be challenged, let alone changed.

Concern should be raised that in order for a thriving, equitable and diverse media environment to be developed. Media professionals both male and female should be made aware of the impact that gender based discrimination has on the Zambian media environment.

The study has also shown that the reasons for gender based discrimination are nuanced. There is a definitive sense that the various forms of gender based discrimination impact both male and female media professionals. The driving factors behind gender discrimination are clearly far more challenging to combat. This means that solutions to it require innovation and strategic approaches. They require on-going, long-term commitment by various stakeholders who can facilitate a shift in the way men and women relate to each other and are treated, not only on a professional level, but in all other spheres. Among other things this requires not only men's involvement in strategies that seek to eradicate the practice but also strategies targeted at them.

- Prevalence and nature of gender discrimination in Zambian workplaces;
- Perceptions of gender discrimination among media workers in Zambian workplaces;
- Causes of gender discrimination as well as the challenges victims confront when lodging a complaint or when deciding to remain in the newsroom or abandon the media profession;
- Effect(s) of gender discrimination on both victims and perpetrators; and,
- Mechanisms (if any) currently in place Zambian workplaces that deal with gender discrimination issues.

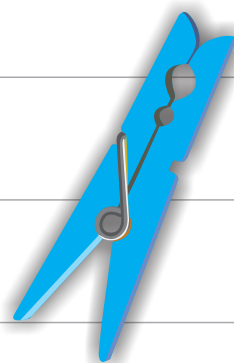
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Notes



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