

# THE STATE OF WOMEN IN MEDIA IN KENYA REPORT (2026)

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**AN IN-DEPTH ANALYSIS OF THE CHALLENGES,  
OPPORTUNITIES, AND REALITIES OF WOMEN IN KENYA'S  
MEDIA LANDSCAPE.**



# ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The State of Women in Media in Kenya (2026) report by the Association of Media Women in Kenya (AMWIK) is the result of the collective effort, commitment, and invaluable contributions of many individuals and institutions.

We commend the dedication and expertise of the entire research team at AMWIK whose commitment guided this study from conceptualization to completion. We extend our sincere appreciation to Bernard Ogoi the data analysis expert, whose technical expertise and thorough analysis of the collected data were instrumental in shaping the findings of this report. His work provided critical insights that strengthened the quality, accuracy, and credibility of this study.

We extend our sincere appreciation to all the women journalists who participated in the online survey and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and media stakeholders who participated in Key Informant Interviews (KIIs). Your openness, honesty, and willingness to share your personal and professional experiences form the backbone of this report and have made it both rich and impactful.

We are deeply grateful to our valued partners Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom (FNF) and Coalition on Violence Against Women (COVAW) for their generous support through the provision of resources for data analysis and printing of this report. Your support played a critical role in enabling the production and dissemination of this report, ensuring that these important findings reach key stakeholders and contribute to meaningful changes within the media sector.

We are grateful to our partners and supporters whose collaboration and commitment to advancing gender equality in the media sector made this work possible. Your continued support in promoting safe, inclusive, and equitable media spaces for women is deeply valued.

We also acknowledge the contributions of institutions whose existing research, data, and insights informed this study. Their work provided important context and strengthened the analysis presented in this report.

Finally, we appreciate the leadership and vision of AMWIK led by the Executive Director Ms. Queenter Mbori in championing the rights, safety, and professional growth of women in media. It is our hope that this report will serve as a catalyst for meaningful dialogue, policy reform, and collective action toward building a more inclusive, safe, and equitable media landscape in Kenya.

# FOREWORD

It is my great honor to present *The State of Women in Media in Kenya (2026)*, a landmark report by the Association of Media Women in Kenya (AMWIK). This inaugural publication marks a significant step in our ongoing commitment to advancing gender equality, safety, and professional growth for women in the media sector.

Kenya's media landscape is vibrant, influential, and rapidly evolving. Women continue to enter journalism in increasing numbers, bringing diverse perspectives that enrich public discourse and strengthen democratic engagement. As you will note in our report, a youth-heavy, entry-level dominates the workforce. However, it is very clear that the journey for women in media is still marked by persistent structural and systemic barriers that limit their full participation and advancement.

The findings also paint a compelling picture. While women are highly educated and actively engaged in journalism, many remain concentrated in entry and mid-level roles, with limited representation in leadership and decision-making positions. Challenges such as workplace harassment, pay disparities, unsafe working environments, and inadequate institutional support systems continue to undermine their professional growth and wellbeing. These barriers contribute to high attrition rates, particularly at mid-career levels, weakening the leadership pipeline for women in media.

This report goes beyond highlighting challenges; it amplifies the voices and lived experiences of women journalists across the country. Their stories reflect resilience, determination, and a deep commitment to the profession despite the obstacles they face. They also provide clear direction on what must change.

At AMWIK, we recognize that addressing these challenges requires collective action. We are encouraged by the progress made through partnerships with stakeholders, including media houses, regulators, and development partners, in advancing gender-responsive policies, safety frameworks, and capacity-building initiatives. However, much more needs to be done to translate policy into practice and ensure meaningful, sustained change.

The recommendations outlined in this report call for stronger institutional accountability, enforcement of gender policies, improved safety and protection mechanisms, and deliberate investment in mentorship, leadership development, and mental health support. They also underscore the need for inclusive workplaces that enable women journalists to thrive without compromising their safety, dignity, or aspirations.

As we look ahead, AMWIK remains committed to leading advocacy efforts, strengthening partnerships, and supporting women journalists to realize their full potential. It is our hope that this report will serve as a catalyst for dialogue, policy reform, and collective action among all stakeholders in the media ecosystem.

**Queenter Mbori,**



**Executive Director**

**Association of Media Women in Kenya (AMWIK)**



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# LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

**AMWIK – Association of Media Women in Kenya**

**GBV – Gender-Based Violence**

**HR – Human Resource**

**ICT – Information and Communication Technology**

**JHR – Journalists for Human Rights**

**KBC – Kenya Broadcasting Corporation**

**KIIs – Key Informant Interviews**

**KPIs – Key Performance Indicators**

**KUJ – Kenya Union of Journalists**

**MCK – Media Council of Kenya**

**TFGBV – Technology-Facilitated Gender-Based Violence**

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In this inaugural report, Association of Media Women in Kenya (AMWIK) brings together evidence of lived experiences to shed light on the state of women in the media in Kenya today. As the first standalone report of its kind by AMWIK, it marks a significant milestone in documenting and amplifying the realities of women in the country's media landscape

Understanding the issues they grapple with; including challenges and opportunities, is vital for equitable growth of the news industry, which has experienced significant attrition of women journalists over the years. The report is a summary of responses from 111 online survey respondents, corroborated with findings from 4 KIIs, one FGD, and secondary data from desktop reviews of existing reports. AMWIK conducted this study to examine the state of women in the media in Kenya. Kenya's media landscape is one of the most dynamic in Africa, characterized by over 200 radio stations and more than 180 TV channels, reaching up to 90% of the population through radio and television, alongside a rapidly expanding digital ecosystem with over 27 million internet users, 83% mobile penetration, and about 15 million social media users, reflecting a multi-platform, mobile-first audience where traditional media remains strong even as digital advertising steadily closes in on traditional (Communications Authority of Kenya; DataReportal 2025; GeoPoll; Techweez, 2025–2026).

Despite progress, gender disparities persist, particularly in editorial leadership and media management, working conditions, safety, and career progression. Women journalists continue to face challenges including discrimination, pay gaps, harassment, and barriers to leadership roles. These challenges contribute to the steady attrition of women journalists, especially in mid- and senior-career levels. This study moves beyond anecdotal evidence to collect concrete data on women journalists' participation, professional status, challenges, and support needed. **The findings inform targeted interventions to strengthen gender equity, retention, safety, and career growth in the media sector. Of the respondents, 70% are aged 35 and below, all highly educated yet underutilized professionally as 58% have not more than five years of experience.**

**36% of the respondents are reporters, with only 14.3% engaged as full-time employees. Some of the key findings include high attrition resulting from weak leadership pipeline among women journalists, under-representation in decision-making roles, mental health challenges and reduced productivity as well as limited institutional support. In response, the survey respondents recommended stronger legal protection (66.7%), equitable pay and promotion advocacy (47.2%), job security (37%) and training, mentorship and networking opportunities and mental health support (50.9).**

The survey reveals that while women enter journalism in large numbers, systemic barriers continue to limit their retention and career progression, requiring coordinated action to transform Kenya's media into a safer, equitable, and resilient sector for women journalists.

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Kenya's media industry is one of the most vibrant in Africa, with a wide network of radio, television, print, and rapidly expanding digital platforms emerging as predominant sources of news for most Kenyans<sup>1</sup> across urban and rural areas. The sector has undergone significant transformation over the past decade, driven by digital migration, increased internet penetration, and the rise of mobile and social media as primary sources of information. This growth has positioned Kenya as a regional hub for media innovation, public discourse, and democratic engagement.

However, despite significant progress, gender disparities remain evident in newsroom leadership, management roles, and reporting opportunities. Women journalists face challenges including discrimination, harassment, unsafe working conditions, and limited career progression. These factors hinder professional development, contribute to mid- and senior-level attrition, and affect the overall quality and inclusiveness of journalism. Consequently, the media sector risks perpetuating gender-blind reporting, underrepresentation of women's voices, and limited coverage of issues affecting women and marginalized groups.

Efforts by AMWIK and other media stakeholders have contributed to progress in capacity building, advocacy, and policy engagement. However, gaps persist in translating these gains into systemic change within media houses, including the adoption of gender-responsive policies, enforcement of safety standards, and creation of inclusive workplace cultures.

Addressing these disparities is critical not only for achieving gender equality within the profession but also for strengthening media credibility, ethical standards, and democratic accountability. A more inclusive media landscape ensures that diverse voices are represented, leading to more balanced, accurate, and socially responsive journalism in Kenya.

## 1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

While more women are entering the journalism profession, many are unable to sustain long-term careers or progress into leadership positions. Evidence shows a persistent “leaky pipeline,” where women are well represented at entry and mid-levels but significantly underrepresented in senior and decision-making roles. This attrition is driven by entrenched structural barriers, including limited access to mentorship and career advancement opportunities, gender pay disparities, workplace harassment, and unsafe working environments.

Addressing these barriers is critical not only for gender equality but also for strengthening media diversity, credibility, and inclusivity in Kenya’s evolving media landscape.

## 1.3 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- » **Measure the numerical strength and distribution of women across Kenya’s media landscape.**
- » **Assess professional standing, accreditation status, and membership in industry bodies.**
- » **Identify key challenges faced by women journalists including discrimination, harassment, and safety concerns.**
- » **Evaluate institutional support mechanisms and identify critical gaps in workplace policies.**



## 1.4 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This study focused solely on women journalists in Kenya, particularly to understand their professional environment, challenges, safety concerns and support systems.

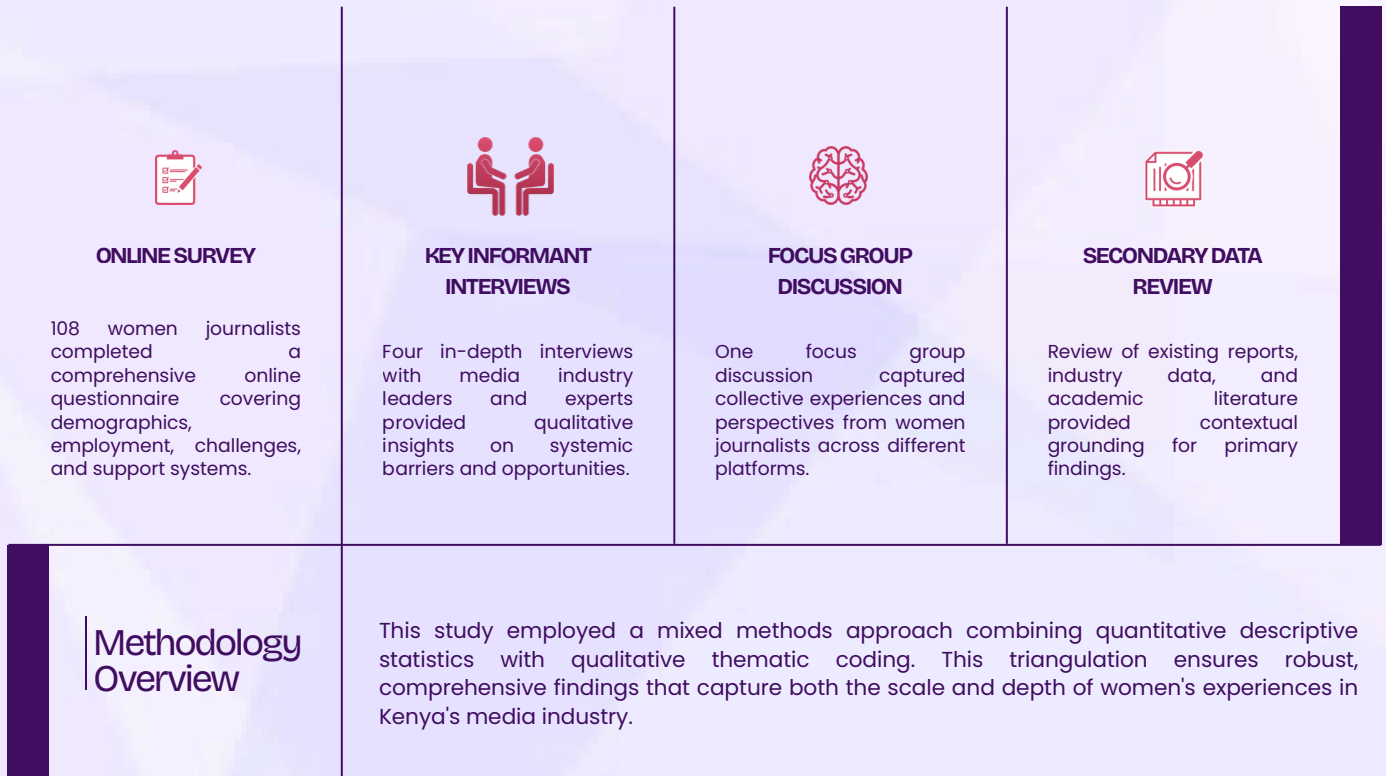
## 1.5 LIMITATIONS

The most visible limitation of the study is the lack of comparative data with male journalists, sampling bias arising from online distribution of the survey, as well as the reliance on voluntary respondents, with the self-reported data likely to carry personal bias. Distributing the survey online via google forms inherently could have locked journalists who have limited internet access, or those who primarily work or correspond from remote rural areas, while it is also difficult to generalize the study findings to the wider spectrum of women in the media, and or even claim evidence of gender-disparity owing to the resultant evidence of women-only experiences from the survey.

## 2.0 METHODOLOGY

### 2.1 STUDY DESIGN

The study adopted a mixed-methods approach, with the survey administered online followed by Phone, Assisted Personal Interviews (Key Informant Interviews and Focus Group Discussions), and a desktop review of existing secondary data.



### 2.2 SAMPLE SIZE AND SAMPLING

A total of 108 women journalists participated in the online survey. This was followed by four Key Informant Interviews to gather qualitative insights

### 2.3 DATA COLLECTION

AMWIK distributed a structured online questionnaire through social media platforms then conducted semi-structured KIIs alongside a review of secondary data for triangulation of the survey data findings.

### 2.4 DATA ANALYSIS

The quantitative data collected from the survey respondents were analyzed and presented through descriptive statistics involving percentages, while the qualitative data were coded thematically for ease of narrative analysis.

## 3.0 PROFILES OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS

### 3.1 RESPONDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

#### 3.1.1 Respondent Age Distribution



##### AGE 25-34

40.9% of respondents fall within this age bracket, representing the largest segment.

##### UNDER 25 YEARS

29.1% are early-career journalists entering the media industry.

##### OVER 45 YEARS

Only 7.4% remain in the profession, signaling high mid-career attrition.

**70.1%**

UNDER 35 YEARS  
OLD

#### YOUTH DOMINANCE

01 The overwhelming majority of women journalists in Kenya are under 35, indicating a young workforce with significant energy and digital skills. However, this youth concentration raises concerns about experience gaps and institutional knowledge transfer.

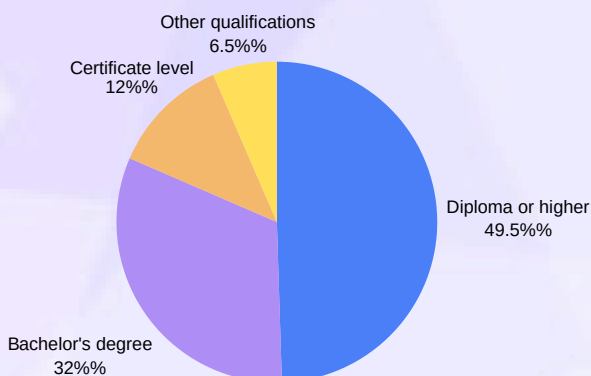
#### LEADERSHIP PIPELINE GAP

02 With only 7.4% of respondents over 45, there is a critical shortage of senior women to mentor the next generation. This "leaky pipeline" threatens the development of future women leaders in Kenyan media and perpetuates underrepresentation at decision-making levels.

#### MENTORSHIP IMPLICATIONS

03 The age distribution reveals an urgent need for structured mentorship programs. Without experienced women journalists to guide early-career professionals, the industry risks losing talented women before they can advance to influential positions and drive meaningful change.

## 3.1.2 Education Levels



Source: AI-generated data. Replace or verify before use.

### Women Journalists' Qualifications

#### 📄 Diploma+

49.5% hold at least a diploma in journalism or communication, demonstrating high qualification levels.

#### 📄 Certificate

Entry-level qualifications remain common among younger journalists.

#### 📄 Degree

Many hold bachelor's degrees, yet face limited career advancement opportunities.

#### 📄 Other

High education contrasts sharply with limited career progression.

## 3.1.3 Years of Experience



### SHARP DROP AFTER 5 YEARS

Experience data reveals high turnover with dramatic decline after the 5-year mark.

### LIMITED SENIOR RETENTION

Only 13.2% of women journalists have over 15 years of experience in the industry.

### PIPELINE IMPLICATIONS

High early-career attrition threatens leadership development and institutional knowledge.

# 58.5%

5 YEARS OR LESS  
EXPERIENCE

### EXPERIENCE DISTRIBUTION

The majority of women journalists in Kenya (58.5%) have five years or less experience. This concentration at entry-level suggests systemic barriers preventing long-term career sustainability and advancement in the media sector.

### HIGH TURNOVER PATTERN

A sharp decline in representation occurs after the 5-year mark, indicating that mid-career women face significant challenges that push them out of the profession—including burnout, harassment, inflexible conditions, and limited advancement opportunities.

### SENIOR EXPERIENCE GAP

With only 13.2% of respondents having over 15 years of experience, the industry lacks seasoned women professionals who could serve as mentors and role models. This perpetuates the leadership gap and weakens the pipeline for future women leaders in Kenyan media.

## 3.1.4 Employment Status

### TYPES OF EMPLOYMENT AMONG WOMEN JOURNALISTS IN KENYA

01

#### FULL-TIME EMPLOYMENT

Only 14% of women journalists hold permanent full-time positions

02

#### FIXED-TERM CONTRACTS

26.2% work on fixed-term contracts with limited job security

03

#### PRECARIOUS ROLES

59.5% in vulnerable roles: interns, freelancers, correspondents

#### THE MOTHERHOOD PENALTY

Career setbacks due to pregnancy and childcare responsibilities

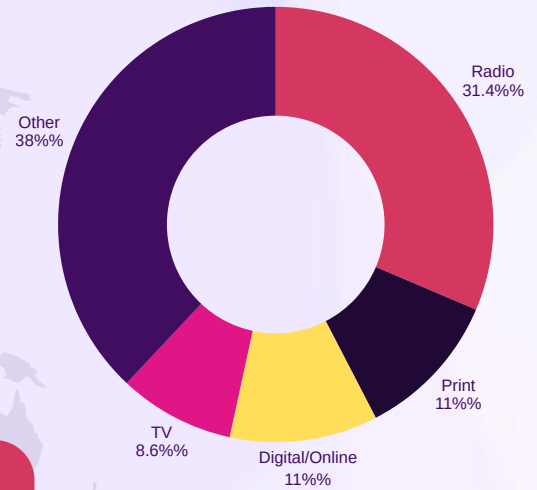
**"If women are denied high-profile assignments that lead to promotion, they remain in the "correspondent" tier indefinitely. Further, a patriarchal newsroom culture can make the environment "toxic" for women, leading to a high attrition rate where women leave stable employment for independent content creation or consultancy,"**

– Kenya Union of Journalists (KUJ).

## 3.1.5 Media Platforms Representation

### DISTRIBUTION OF WOMEN JOURNALISTS ACROSS MEDIA PLATFORMS IN KENYA

Radio remains the dominant entry point for women journalists in Kenya, with 31.4% working in this medium. Print and digital/online platforms each account for 11% of women journalists, while television employs only 8.6%. This distribution reflects the accessibility of radio as a starting platform, particularly in regional markets, while highlighting the need to expand opportunities across all media channels for greater gender representation.



**31.4%**  
WOMEN  
JOURNALISTS WORK  
IN RADIO

Source: AI-generated data. Replace or verify before use.

01

#### Reporters/Correspondents

35.5% of women journalists work as reporters or correspondents, the most common role.

02

#### News Anchors/Presenters

17.8% serve as news anchors or presenters, visible but not decision-making roles.

03

#### Managing Editors

Only 3.7% reach managing editor or media manager positions.

04

#### Media Owners

Just 2.8% are media owners, reflecting severe underrepresentation at the top.

## 3.1.6 Roles and Career Progression

### WOMEN REMAIN CONCENTRATED IN ENTRY-LEVEL ROLES, RARELY REACHING TOP POSITIONS

Women journalists in Kenya remain concentrated in entry-level positions, with only 3.7% reaching managing editor or media manager roles, and a mere 2.8% becoming media owners. This stark underrepresentation in leadership positions reflects the persistent barriers women face in career advancement.

According to the Reuters Institute 2025 report, only 27% of top editors globally are women, highlighting that Kenya's challenges mirror a worldwide pattern of gender inequality in media leadership.

**"At least now we have a woman at the helm of the Standard Group Plc and another at the Kenya Broadcasting Corporation (KBC), but the numbers are still low," - KII participant.**



01

**MCK ACCREDITED**

59.4% of women journalists are properly accredited with Media Council of Kenya

02

**LAPSED STATUS**

24.5% have lapsed accreditation, limiting professional recognition

03

**AMWIK MEMBERS**

28% are current AMWIK members, showing room for growth

04

**INTEND TO JOIN**

39.3% plan to join AMWIK in 2026, signaling strong interest

## 3.2 Professional Status

### 3.2.1 Accreditation and Professional Standing

#### WOMEN REMAIN CONCENTRATED IN ENTRY-LEVEL ROLES, RARELY REACHING TOP POSITIONS

Women journalists in Kenya remain concentrated in entry-level positions, with only 3.7% reaching managing editor or media manager roles, and a mere 2.8% becoming media owners. This stark underrepresentation in leadership positions reflects the persistent barriers women face in career advancement.

**According to the Reuters Institute 2025 report, only 27% of top editors globally are women, highlighting that Kenya's challenges mirror a worldwide pattern of gender inequality in media leadership.**

## 4.0 Presentation & Analysis of Survey Findings

### 4.1 Key Challenges facing Women Journalists

Women journalists in Kenya face systemic barriers that threaten career longevity and media diversity. These challenges drive high attrition rates and limit female representation in leadership positions across the industry.

01



#### CAREER ADVANCEMENT BARRIERS

63.2% of women journalists cite lack of career advancement as their top challenge, limiting professional growth and leadership opportunities.

02



#### GENDER-BASED DISCRIMINATION

39.6% face gender-based discrimination in newsrooms, creating hostile work environments and unequal treatment.

03



#### SEXUAL HARASSMENT CONCERNS

38.7% identify sexual harassment as a major concern, with inadequate employer response and cultural silence.

04



#### SAFETY & PAY DISPARITIES

35.8% experience safety threats while 25.5% report significant pay disparities compared to male colleagues.

**"Women journalists should not face sexual harassment, bias in assignments, or have their stories killed for refusing exploitative demands. Leadership must create transparent reporting systems and ensure fairness, safety and equal professional opportunities," - Survey respondent.**



## 4.2 Impact of the identified Challenges

### 4.2.1 Workplace inequality and pay gap



#### DATA PREPARATION

Women journalists reporting decreased motivation due to workplace inequality.

#### STRESS & ANXIETY

39.2% experience stress and anxiety from pay disparities.

#### PAY GAP IMPACT

Only 21.6% report no pay gap issues affecting their wellbeing.

# 61.8%

REDUCED  
MOTIVATION

#### REDUCED MOTIVATION

01 The majority of women journalists report significantly reduced motivation as a direct consequence of workplace inequality. This affects productivity, job satisfaction, and long-term career commitment in Kenya's media sector.

#### STRESS & MENTAL HEALTH

02 Nearly 40% of respondents experience stress and anxiety stemming from pay disparities and discriminatory practices. Mental health impacts are compounded by lack of institutional support and counseling services.

#### PREGNANCY DISCRIMINATION

03 Women face the "motherhood penalty" with pregnancy discrimination clustering them in lower-paying roles. Contractual arrangements limit maternity benefits, forcing difficult choices between career advancement and family.

"I work so hard to bring the best for my listeners, yet the pay I get does not match what I do. I feel demotivated many a time because of money challenges, debts taken to cover expenses. All these are factors that make me want to quit the media industry."

"Despite the Employment Act of 2007 mandating equal pay for equal work, a significant "gender pay gap" persists. Women are often clustered in lower-tier roles or "soft beats" (features, lifestyle) which typically command lower bonuses and allowances compared to "hard beats" like politics and business,"  
Kenya Union of Journalists.

## 4.2.2 Opportunities for Career Growth

#### UNDERSTANDING THE BARRIERS TO WOMEN'S ADVANCEMENT IN MEDIA

Women journalists face a "glass ceiling" that limits advancement to senior positions. High exit rates after age 34 reveal systemic issues including burnout, inflexible schedules, and persistent harassment that force talented women out of the profession.

Limited Mentorship & Leadership Opportunities  
Burnout From Inflexible Work Conditions  
Persistent Harassment & Hostile Environments  
Ageism & Glass Ceiling Effects

# 34+

CRITICAL  
EXIT POINT





# 38.7%

Identify harassment as a major concern

## 4.2.3 Sexual Harassment

### PREVALENCE, IMPACTS, AND INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSE GAPS <sup>7</sup>

Sexual harassment remains a pervasive challenge for women journalists in Kenya, with 38.7% identifying it as a major workplace concern. The consequences extend far beyond immediate distress –affected journalists report increased stress, damage to professional reputation, and self-censorship that limits their reporting scope. Employer responses are often slow or inadequate, leaving victims without proper support or justice.

Cultural silence and fear of retaliation contribute to significant underreporting, perpetuating cycles of abuse and institutional inaction across Kenya's media landscape.

“

“Sometimes sexual harassment targeting women journalists emanates from the management itself, as well as media colleagues. And it is so unfortunate that even the ones who are supposed to protect you know the law well, “- Respondent.

”



## 4.2.4 Online Harassment



### SELF-CENSORSHIP

20% of women journalists avoid covering certain topics due to online harassment fears.

### LIMITED PROTECTION

Very few media houses have ICT policies addressing digital threats.

### INSTITUTIONAL GAPS

Minimal employer support for victims of online abuse and harassment.

# 33.4%

EXPERIENCE STRESS & ANXIETY

### DIGITAL THREATS

01 Women journalists in Kenya face significant online harassment including trolling, doxing, and coordinated attacks. This digital abuse creates psychological distress and undermines their ability to report freely and safely.

### COPING MECHANISMS

02 Many women resort to self-censorship, avoiding controversial topics or reducing their online presence. Some withdraw from social media platforms entirely, limiting their professional reach and engagement with audiences.

### POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

03 Media houses must develop comprehensive ICT policies addressing online harassment. Training on digital safety, clear reporting mechanisms, and psychological support are essential to protect women journalists in the digital space.

## 4.2.5 Physical Safety and Security threats

### RISKS, PERSONAL SAFETY MEASURES, AND THEIR IMPACT ON JOURNALISTS

A staggering 64.8% of women journalists in Kenya have experienced safety or security breaches during their careers. Only 35.2% report feeling safe in their work environment. High-risk assignments including field reporting, election coverage, and investigative journalism expose women to significant dangers. The consequences extend beyond physical harm—mental health strain, self-censorship, and professional burnout are widespread. Many women avoid covering sensitive topics or dangerous locations, limiting their career growth and reducing media diversity in critical reporting areas.

**64.8%**

EXPERIENCED  
SAFETY  
BREACHES



“

“There is a need for the leadership of respective media enterprises to implement robust measures and hold perpetrators accountable to safeguard journalists from threats, physical attacks, and harassment especially when covering issues like election and corruption.”

”

## 4.2.6 Mental Health and Well-being



44.6% of women journalists report their productivity is significantly affected by mental health challenges in the workplace.

43.6% experience mental exhaustion from workplace stress, harassment, and unsafe conditions.

Limited access to professional counseling services leaves most women journalists without adequate support.

Urgent need for trauma-informed care and mental health resources tailored to media professionals.

## 4.2.7 Maternity Support/Worklife Balance Challenges

65%

REPORT NO  
MATERNITY  
ISSUES

### EXAMINING MATERNITY CHALLENGES AND WORK-LIFE BALANCE GAPS <sup>7</sup>

While 65% of women journalists report no maternity challenges, 28% of those affected experience significant stress. The absence of childcare support in media houses and limited benefits for contractual workers forces many women to choose between career advancement and family.

- No Childcare Support in Media Houses
- Contractual Work Limits Maternity Benefits
- Women Forced to Choose Career vs Family
- 28% Experience Stress When Affected

“The absence of policies that encourage work life balance and career progression for female journalists, makes many of them quit for softer communications roles yet their passion is journalism,” - Respondent.

“Women always bear the burden of care giving and domestic responsibilities which affect their availability for demanding newsroom roles. Personally, I had to resume work two weeks after delivery as my supervisor threatened to sack me if I didn't,” - Respondent.

## 4.2.8 Safety and Election Coverage

17.2%

FEEL SAFE COVERING  
ELECTIONS

### LOW CONFIDENCE

Only 17.2% of women journalists feel safe covering the 2027 elections.

### HIGH RISK PERCEPTION

Nearly half feel unsafe or least safe during election coverage assignments.

### SUPPORT GAP

Significant lack of newsroom support systems for harassment and safety victims.

### ELECTION COVERAGE RISKS

- 01 Field reporting during elections exposes women journalists to heightened physical threats, harassment, and intimidation. The volatile political environment combined with inadequate safety protocols creates dangerous working conditions that deter women from high-profile assignments.

### INSTITUTIONAL FAILURES

- 02 Media houses lack comprehensive safety policies for election coverage. Women journalists report minimal pre-deployment safety training, absence of protective equipment, and no emergency response protocols. This institutional gap leaves journalists vulnerable during critical democratic events.

### VICTIM SUPPORT DEFICITS

- 23 When safety incidents occur, newsrooms fail to provide adequate support. Victims face slow response times, inadequate counseling services, and pressure to continue working despite trauma. This lack of support perpetuates a culture of silence around election-related safety breaches.

# 4.3 Institutional Support Systems

## 4.3.1 Media House Support



35%

**MEDIA HOUSE SUPPORT SYSTEMS RATED BY WOMEN JOURNALISTS<sup>7</sup>**

Women journalists rate institutional support from their media houses at an average of just 4.83 out of 10. The majority describe support as very low to minimal across critical areas.

Support mechanisms for maternal health, workplace safety, pay equity, mental health services, and harassment response remain sparse or non-existent in most newsrooms. This systemic gap leaves women journalists vulnerable and unsupported, contributing to high attrition rates and limiting career advancement opportunities.



# 4.83

Average support rating out of 10



### PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

35.7% of women journalists access support through AMWIK and Kenya Union of Journalists (KUJ), providing advocacy and professional development.



### TRAINING ACCESS

42.9% have access to training opportunities, helping build skills in reporting, digital media, and safety protocols.



### LEGAL SUPPORT GAP

Only 4.8% can access legal support—a critical gap leaving women vulnerable to harassment and rights violations.



### PEER NETWORKS

Peer support networks provide emotional backing and shared experiences, though formal mentorship remains limited.

## External Support Systems

While professional associations and training opportunities exist, the severe shortage of legal support services represents the most critical gap in external support for women journalists in Kenya.

# 4.4 Priority Needs for Women Journalists

## SURVEY FINDINGS REVEAL URGENT SUPPORT GAPS FOR WOMEN IN MEDIA <sup>7</sup>

Women journalists identified their most critical support needs through the survey. Legal protection and harassment response mechanisms top the list at 65.7%, reflecting the urgent need for accountability systems.

Mental health support follows at 51.4%, highlighting the psychological toll of workplace challenges. Equal pay advocacy ranks third at 48.6%, underscoring persistent wage disparities.

Additional priorities include professional networking opportunities, safety training programs, childcare support, job security measures, and structured mentorship programs to support career advancement.

01

### Legal Protection

65.7% prioritize harassment response and legal safeguards as their top need.

02

### Mental Health Support

51.4% require counseling services and psychological well-being programs.

03

### Equal Pay Advocacy

48.6% call for transparency and action on gender wage disparities.

04

### Career Development

Networking, safety training, childcare, and mentorship programs needed.

# 5.0 Conclusions and Recommendations

## 5.1 Conclusions

### SUMMARY OF KEY INSIGHTS FROM THE REPORT <sup>7</sup>

- » Access to training and peer support is strong, but critical gaps remain in mentorship, legal aid, and job security.
- » Gender-specific challenges including harassment, pay gaps, and work-life imbalance push women out of media prematurely.
- » Underrepresentation in leadership persists due to invisible barriers, glass ceilings, and lack of institutional support.
- » Multi-faceted institutional support and gender-sensitive policies are urgently needed to retain women in media careers.



# 5.2.1 Recommendations for Media Houses

## CONCRETE STEPS TO IMPROVE GENDER EQUITY IN NEWSROOMS <sup>↗</sup>

### ENFORCE GENDER POLICIES

Implement zero-tolerance GBV policies with clear reporting mechanisms.

01

02

### PAY TRANSPARENCY

Establish transparent pay structures and safer working conditions for all staff.

### MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT

Provide counseling services and structured mentorship programs.

03

04

### WORK-LIFE BALANCE

Adopt family-friendly policies including flexible hours and childcare support.

# Recommendations for Government & Regulators

## POLICY AND REGULATORY ACTIONS FOR GENDER EQUITY <sup>↗</sup>

### MANDATORY GENDER POLICIES

Require all media houses to implement gender policies with regular compliance audits.

01

02

### PAY GAP REPORTING

Mandate public reporting of gender pay gaps to ensure transparency and accountability.

### PROTECT GIG WORKERS

Amend employment laws to extend protections to freelancers and contract workers.

03

04

### 50/50 HIRING TARGETS

Enforce equal hiring and promotion targets; link compliance to licensing.

01

### Investigative Grants

Establish dedicated funding for women journalists pursuing investigative reporting.

02

### Legal Aid & Advocacy

Create helplines and forums for harassment reporting and collective advocacy.

03

### Leadership Training

Develop networking events and leadership programs to advance women's careers.

04

### Gender Curricula

Integrate gender-responsive training into media education programs.

# Recommendations for AMWIK & Partners

## BUILDING ECOSYSTEMS OF SUPPORT FOR WOMEN JOURNALISTS<sup>7</sup>

AMWIK should establish dedicated grant programs for women investigative journalists, enabling them to pursue impactful stories without financial constraints.

A legal aid helpline would provide critical support for harassment victims, while advocacy forums create spaces for collective action. Leadership training programs and professional networking events help women build skills and connections needed for career advancement.

Academia and training institutions must integrate gender-responsive curricula into media education. Development partners and funders are called upon to prioritize investments in safety initiatives, mental health resources, and leadership development for women in media.

## 5.3 Areas for further Research

### Areas for Further Research



### IDENTIFIED RESEARCH GAPS AND FUTURE STUDY DIRECTIONS

This report identifies critical areas requiring deeper investigation to strengthen understanding of women's experiences in Kenya's media industry:

- 1. Career Exit Patterns After Age 34**
- 2. Further research is needed to explore the specific factors driving the significant drop in women journalists after age 34. Understanding whether exits are due to burnout, family responsibilities, harassment, ageism, or lack of advancement opportunities will inform targeted interventions.**
- 3. Gender-Diverse Perspectives**
- 4. Study the experiences and perspectives of gender-diverse individuals on media representation and workplace inclusion.**
- 5. Long-term Impact Assessment**
- 6. Track outcomes of implemented gender policies and support programs to measure effectiveness over time.**



# Thank You!

## Questions & Dialogue Welcome

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