



# Who Shapes the Narrative?

**Media Coverage Analysis of SRHR in Kenya**

October 2023 - June 2024



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# Executive Summary

This report delves into the crucial role of media in shaping public discourse on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) across Kenya. By analyzing coverage by county, media type, and the societal figures steering these narratives, the report offers a clear snapshot of the current landscape and highlights actionable recommendations for improvement.

## Key Questions Addressed

- i. **How is SRHR framed in Kenyan media?** The report uncovers the narrative strategies employed by journalists, from personal and emotional storytelling to legal, moral, social responsibility, and human rights lenses. These frames are pivotal in shaping public perception and policy response to SRHR issues.
- ii. **Where are SRHR issues being covered?** Significant disparities in SRHR coverage have been identified, with urban centers like Nairobi and Mombasa receiving more media attention than underreported areas such as Garissa and Trans-Nzoia. This imbalance underscores the need for a more equitable distribution of media focus.
- iii. **Who shapes the narrative?** The influence of religious leaders, political figures, legal bodies, and human rights organizations is profound. Their voices and actions significantly steer public opinion and policy direction, making their involvement critical in shaping the SRHR discourse.

## Conclusions

The report reveals glaring gaps in SRHR coverage, particularly in less-urbanized counties. A call for more balanced and comprehensive reporting is imperative to ensure that all regions receive the attention they deserve. The framing of SRHR issues is a powerful tool in shaping public opinion and policy, and each narrative approach should be strategically employed to enhance SRHR awareness and uptake.

The influence of key societal figures and institutions on SRHR narratives cannot be overstated. Their roles in molding public perception and driving policy implementation highlight the need for broad, inclusive engagement to ensure that SRHR issues are comprehensively addressed.

## Recommendations

- **Encouraging Balanced Coverage:** Media houses should be motivated to deliver more balanced, insightful, and proactive coverage of SRHR issues across all counties, ensuring no region is left behind.
- **Strategic Framing for Impact:** Developing strategies that frame SRHR narratives in a way that boosts awareness among the public and prompts action from policymakers is essential.
- **Engaging Influential Stakeholders:** Effectively engaging religious leaders, political figures, and human rights organizations to support and amplify SRHR advocacy is crucial for sustained progress.
- **Government Action:** Ministries should intensify efforts to enhance public understanding, drive policy implementation, and inspire positive action on SRHR issues across Kenya.



# 1.0 Introduction & Background

## 1.1 Context and Purpose

Kenya has over 500 radio and TV stations serving various segments of society, a growth accelerated by the transition to digital terrestrial television in 2015 (MCK, 2024). Furthermore, the country enjoys one of the highest internet penetration rates in Africa, driven by the widespread use of mobile phones (CAK, 2024). This vibrant media environment is critical in informing, educating, and shaping public opinion on various issues, including Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR).

However, challenges persist in how the media approaches SRHR reporting. Despite increased access to information, the tendency toward sensationalism and the prioritization of click-worthy content often hinders comprehensive coverage of critical issues such as SRHR. This report assesses how SRHR issues have been covered in Kenyan media between October 2023 and June 2024, focusing on how SRHR topics are discussed, framed, and given prominence and how media coverage relates to broader human rights violations.

Kenya's media, from print to broadcast, is frequently filled with stories of rape, incest, and abortion, yet these narratives often fail to connect to broader issues of justice, healthcare, or policy

**Between 2011 and 2015, digital migration significantly expanded media coverage in Kenya (MCK, 2024).**

**Despite increased access to information, the tendency toward sensationalism and the prioritization of click-worthy content often hinders comprehensive coverage of critical issues such as SRHR.**

**The primary aim of this analysis is to examine the media coverage of SRHR issues from October 2023 to June 2024, identifying key trends, biases, and areas of improvement.**

interventions. Such gaps in coverage leave critical SRHR violations as sensational headlines without addressing the systemic failures that impact young girls and women of reproductive age. The report aims to provide actionable insights for journalists, policymakers, and civil society on improving the quality and depth of SRHR reporting.

## 1.2 Media Landscape in Kenya

Between 2011 and 2015, digital migration significantly expanded media coverage in Kenya (MCK, 2024). The population with access to television broadcasting increased to 66 %from 55%. During the same period, the number of television broadcasters grew to 65 from 14, and the number of broadcasters with coverage in multiple cities rose to 22 from five. While radio and television remain Kenya's most widely used media platforms, online news sources have steadily increased, with 30% of Kenyans now consuming news digitally. In comparison, only 10% of the population reads newspapers. The rapid growth in smartphone usage and internet access has accelerated the digitization of media outlets, contributing to the rising trend in digital news readership.

The media's agenda-setting power becomes critical in the context of SRHR. How SRHR issues are framed, highlighted, or presented can have profound implications for public understanding and policy development. This analysis evaluates how media coverage of SRHR aligns with or detracts from the core principles of human rights, providing insights for stakeholders seeking to foster more effective media engagement on these issues.

## 1.3 Rationale for the Analysis

The primary aim of this analysis is to examine the media coverage of SRHR issues from October 2023 to June 2024, identifying key trends, biases, and areas of improvement. The analysis explores the extent to which media reporting on SRHR is comprehensive, accurate, and reflective of the real challenges individuals and communities face, particularly concerning human rights violations.

This analysis is critical for various stakeholders—civil society organizations, human rights defenders, and policymakers—seeking to enhance public discourse and advocacy around SRHR. By identifying gaps in media reporting and understanding the factors influencing media narratives, this report contributes to ongoing efforts to ensure that SRHR issues receive the attention and depth of coverage they deserve.

## 1.4 Objectives of the Analysis

The purpose of this analysis is to highlight the media's critical role in reporting accurate information and shaping public perceptions of these facts. Additionally, the analysis offers practical recommendations for journalists on enhancing the quality and depth of SRHR reporting, positioning them as protectors and advocates of human rights. It also underscores the responsibilities of policymakers and civil society to act on media reports and drive meaningful change.

The report analyzes media coverage of SRHR issues between October 2023 and June 2024, evaluating the framing, prominence, and perspective from a human rights lens. The specific objectives of this analysis are:

- i. To assess the regional distribution of SRHR coverage across the country.
- ii. To analyze the framing of SRHR narratives in Kenyan media.
- iii. To identify key voices and influencers shaping SRHR media narratives.

## 1.5 Research Questions

The following research questions guided this analysis:

- i. What framing techniques are employed in media reporting of SRHR issues in Kenya?
- ii. What is the regional distribution of SRHR-related coverage?
- iii. Who are the key voices influencing SRHR narratives in the media?





## 2.0 Scope & Methodology

### 2.1 Scope and Sampling

To meet the objectives and answer the research questions, this analysis conducted a comprehensive content analysis of SRHR coverage across multiple media platforms, including print, television, radio, and online. The analysis examined media coverage in all 47 counties, providing a detailed breakdown of how SRHR issues were discussed in different regions. Additionally, the analysis uncovered the influence of various stakeholders on media framing around SRHR stories.

The content analysis focused on SRHR coverage between October 2023 and June 2024, specifically looking at story types (news reports, editorials, commentaries, etc.), the frequency and prominence of SRHR issues, and the themes and tones employed in media narratives.

### 2.2 Limitations and Future Research

This study analyzes media coverage of SRHR cases. It also investigates media coverage trends. There is still a gap in understanding how deeply coverage and shared narratives influence public attitudes or policy decisions. Future research could explore these dimensions, potentially incorporating public opinion surveys and interviews with media stakeholders to gain a broader understanding of SRHR reporting.

### 2.3 Data Collection and Content Analysis

The content analysis employed qualitative and quantitative approaches to examine SRHR

media stories. Qualitative analysis focused on identifying recurring themes, tones, and narratives, while quantitative data provided insights into the frequency and placement of SRHR stories in different media outlets. Key indicators examined included the type of story (news, opinion, or analysis), space allocation, placement, and the prominence of SRHR topics.

### 2.4 Methodology

To understand the coverage of SRHR, the study ran a comprehensive content analysis on print, television, radio, and online outlets. The analysis covered all 47 counties in Kenya, offering a regional breakdown of SRHR issues covered between October 2023 and June 2024.

The analysis focused on both qualitative and quantitative data. The qualitative approach identified recurring themes and narratives, while the quantitative analysis measured frequency, channel, and medium of coverage. The study examined coverage metadata, including the time of release, the media house where coverage is done, and the framing of SRHR issues.

The data collection sample size was 524 SRHR cases covered in the media. This data was accessed and availed from galleries and tracking sources hosted by Globetrack, a Leading worldwide body for media intelligence and communications research. It was processed and analyzed using SPSS and Excel and visualized on Looker. These programs and software are accredited for accessibility, reliability, and good visual options in presenting data.

# 3.0 Data Analysis, Presentation, Interpretation, and Discussion of Findings

## 3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a detailed analysis of the coverage of SRHR in Kenya from October 2023 to June 2024. It provides insights into how media outlets present, frame, and portray SRHR issues and the frequency and prominence of such coverage. The analysis also explores the sources and voices featured in media reporting, which contribute to the overall framing of SRHR issues within the country.

Additionally, the chapter examines the regional distribution of SRHR topics reported during the monitoring period across Kenya. It further discusses the key narratives and policy frameworks that either support or hinder young people in making informed decisions regarding their sexual and reproductive health.

By integrating empirical data with qualitative analysis, this section aims to offer a deep understanding of the SRHR landscape in Kenya. Identifying the major stakeholders, trends, and reporting methods will help inform policy formulation and advocacy efforts, ultimately contributing to enhanced media coverage of SRHR nationwide.

## 3.2 SRHR Landscape in Kenya (October 2023 - June 2024)

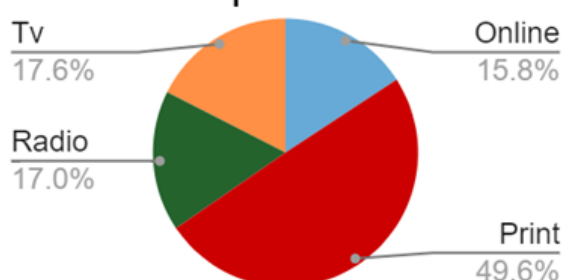
According to the Reproductive Health Network Kenya (RHNK), anti-sexual and reproductive health rights (SRHR) movements in Kenya are becoming more assertive, increasingly influencing government agencies and participating in SRHR decision-making forums. By leveraging cultural and religious narratives, they have made it challenging for Kenya to fulfill its SRHR commitments. This has weakened

SRHR laws and policies, which have escalated the intimidation, harassment, and attacks on SRHR healthcare providers, advocates, and individuals seeking SRHR services. On the other hand, SRHR civil society organizations in Kenya lack coordination, hindering their ability to effectively address the country's SRHR challenges (RHN, 2023).

### 3.2.1 Volume of Case Reporting by Platform

The analysis examined coverage of media reports on SRHR from October 2023 to June 2024, across the four major channels. Print media accounted for the highest coverage at 49 %. Television and radio tied attribution at 17 %, and online coverage had 15 % over the period. This trend raises concerns about the overall coverage of SRHR issues in Kenya, owing to a 2023-24 report by the Media Council of Kenya (Media Council of Kenya, 2024) indicating that TV and radio were Kenyans' main sources of information. According to the report, approximately one in every three respondents (33 %) indicated that they consumed TV content within the last week, 32 % from radio, and 18 % from social media, with print coming in fourth at 6%. As a result, the limited SRHR coverage in widely consumed media channels restricts most of the population from accessing critical information and discussions on SRHR issues.

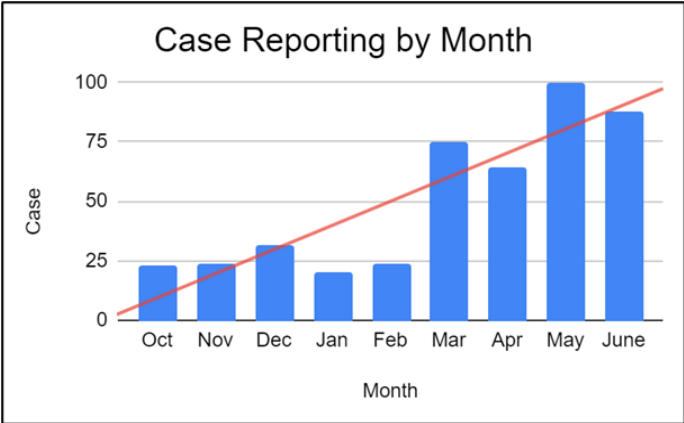
### Issues Reported





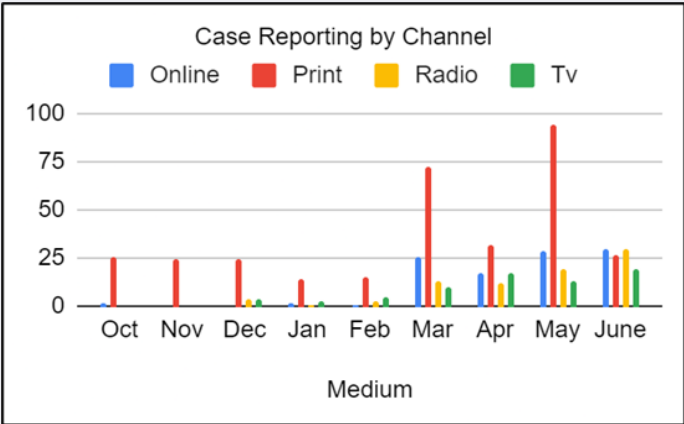
**3.2.2 Volume of Case Reporting by Month**

From October 2023 through February 2024, the media consistently covered SRHR issues. However, coverage intensified from March to June 2024, with May emerging as the peak month for SRHR reporting. This increase in coverage was largely driven by the observance of International Women’s Day in early March, which sparked a wave of sustained SRHR-related activities and media attention in the following months.



**3.2.3 Channel Reporting by Month**

Overall coverage of SRHR increased significantly in the second half of the coverage period. Radio and TV coverage, although marking the least among the four selected channels, have seen consistent growth patterns over the period ending June 2024. Online coverage of SRHR grew significantly in the second half of the analysis period and consistently maintained a twenty-fifth percentile of total coverage by month. Print media representation saw a significant jump in coverage in March and May.



The analysis revealed that media reporting on SRHR tends to be reactive and lacks investigative depth. Coverage is often driven by official campaigns or external events, with little exploration of the systemic social and economic factors underpinning SRHR issues. This calls for more proactive, investigative journalism highlighting the real-life impacts of human rights violations linked to SRHR.

**3.2.4 Breakdown of Human Rights Issues Coverage by Month**

Teenage pregnancy remains a significant concern that requires close monitoring by relevant authorities and key stakeholders. Over the months, this critical SRHR issue has continued to draw media attention due to the complex challenges associated with it. Data leading up to this report highlights various contributing factors, including poverty, lack of education, and harmful community practices such as early marriages. For instance, the 2023 report by Open Institute (Open Institute, 2024) on Kilifi County revealed that 4,091 school-going girls aged 10 to 18 years became pregnant in the first six months of 2023. Comprehensive sexuality education (CSE)

ranked second in media coverage, accounting for a third of the overall SRHR coverage. Media attention to CSE was fairly consistent, with notable peaks between March and May, reaching a high of 91 mentions. In contrast, topics such as Gender-Based Violence (GBV), Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), HIV/AIDS, rape, and STIs received minimal coverage, especially in the first half of the period, with only a small number of reports compared to other SRHR issues.

On the other hand, abortion cases received consistent coverage, peaking at 15 mentions in March and totaling 43 mentions over the period. Contraceptives were moderately covered, with a peak of 23 mentions in May, totaling 51. The lack of extensive coverage, as reflected in the data, reveals a significant gap in

SRHR Issue	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	Total
Teenage Pregnancies	5		98			32	46	49	77	209
Comprehensive Sexuality Education	11	18	20	13	12	31	14	24	11	154
Abortion	5	6		7	6	15	7	8		65
Contraceptives	3		11		6	8	3	23	8	51
Gender-Based Violence	2						1	9	5	17
Female Genital Mutilation							3	3	3	9
HIV/AIDS						4		3		8
Rape	2					1		2	2	7
STIs							4			4
<b>Total</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>121</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>524</b>

media attention to these critical human rights issues. This disparity raises concerns about the underrepresentation of certain topics, potentially leading to limited public awareness and advocacy.

Enhancing media attention on underreported issues is essential for a comprehensive and balanced portrayal of human rights issues. This broader coverage can increase public understanding and informed discussions, ultimately supporting human rights and public health efforts.

### 3.2.5 Breakdown of Human Rights Issue Coverage by Media Outlets

Print media remains dominant in covering SRHR issues, with a wide range of sources contributing to the reporting. During the analysis period, *The Standard* led with 60 mentions, followed closely by *The Star* with 59, *Daily Nation* with 57, and *People Daily* with 39 mentions. This highlights the ongoing importance of traditional newspapers as a key platform for human rights reporting. On average, each print source featured approximately 21 mentions, with significant peaks in coverage during May and March.

Online media ranked second in SRHR coverage, averaging about five mentions per source. The Star's online platform and Nation Africa led the way with 23 and 14 mentions, respectively.

North Rift stands out with 15 mentions in the radio category, reflecting its significant influence in the Rift Valley region. Radio Citizen follows closely, reporting half that number. Although radio coverage has

fluctuated over the period, it has remained consistent, and its strong regional presence suggests an untapped potential for raising awareness on SRHR issues. The average number of mentions for radio sources is 4.

The television sector is dominated by TV47, which has a leading total of 32 cases covered. This perhaps sparks an interest in how "New entrant" media houses propagate the SRHR coverage. The analysis underscores that print media provides the most extensive coverage of human rights issues, followed by radio, online, and TV.

The variation in coverage across different media channels and months underscores the diverse resources available for reporting on SRHR. However, these platforms are not fully utilized to shape public awareness and discourse on SRHR issues. Media outlets are crucial in disseminating accurate, factual, and timely information on SRHR. This is essential for increasing public awareness and informing the response of key stakeholders in addressing and managing SRHR issues as they arise.

Medium	Channel	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	Total
Print	The Standard	7	11	5		5	4	14	6	8	60
	The Star	11	2		1	4	5	32	2	2	59
	Daily Nation	4	7	3	9	5	6	10	10	3	57
	People Daily	3	1	3		7	6	8	3	7	38
	The Saturday Standard		1	1	1		1	4	1	3	12
	Taifa Leo	4	2		1	1	1			2	11
	Saturday Nation	2		1		1	1	2	2		9
	The Sunday Standard			1	1	2	1				5
	Business Daily	1		1			1				3
	The Mount Kenya Times					2					2
	Sunday Nation				1					1	2
	Citizen Weekly							2			2
TV	TV47	8	1			3	18	2			32
	KTN News	4		1	3	2	5	1			16
	KBC	2		2		3	2	3			12
	K24 TV	1				3	3	3			10
	Citizen Tv	2		1		4	3				10
	NTV		3	1		2	2	1			9
						2					2
	KU TV						1				1
Radio	North Rift Radio	3				9		3			15
	Radio Citizen	2		1		2	1	1			7
	Milele FM	1	1	1		3	1				7
	KBC Radio Taifa					2	5				7
	KBC English Service	1					5	1			7
	Hot 96			1		3	2				6
	West FM					1	4				5
	Ramogi FM	1				1	2	1			5
	Bahari FM	2					1	2			5
	Radio Waumini					2	1				3
	Radio Maisha					2	1				3
	Classic 105	1						2			3
	Radio47					2					2
	Radio 47						1	1			2
	Homeboyz Radio						1	1			2
	Sauti ya Pwani FM					1					1

MEDIA COVERAGE ANALYSIS OF SRHR IN KENYA: OCTOBER 2023 TO JUNE 2024

	Radio Kaya					1					1
	Radio Jambo				1						1
	Kiss FM						1				1
	KBC							1			1
	Hope FM		1								1
	Ghetto Radio					1					1
	East FM		1								1
	Classic 105 FM		1								1
	Capital FM	1									1
Online	Star Online	6			1	9	1	6			23
	Nation.Africa	1		1	1	8	1	2			14
	Standard Digital					3	1	1			5
	KBC Digital	1				2		2			5
	The Times	1						3			4
	Kenya News Agency	2						2			4
	The Mount Kenya Times	1				2					3
	People Daily Online							2		1	3
	Health Business	1				1		1			3
	Nairobi Leo	1						1			2
	Tuko News					1					1
	The Star Online									1	1
	talkafrica.co.ke					1					1
	Taarifa News	1									1
	Science Africa							1			1
	Odri Media					1					1
	News Unplug							1			1
	KU TV Digital						1				1
	Kivumbi							1			1
	Kiss FM							1			1
	Kenyans.co.ke							1			1
	Kelin Kenya					1					1
	KBC TV Digital	1									1
	K24 Digital	1									1
	Citizen Digital						1				1
	Capital Digital							1			1
	Business Now					1					1
Grand Total		78	32	24	20	106	91	121	24	28	524

### 3.2.6 SRHR Coverage by Media Type and County

Counties exhibited varied coverage patterns across these media types. The highest total of 330 mentions across all media covers the category with unspecified counties. The broad but non-geographic content type produced and covered signifies the different approaches in identifying and covering SRHR issues, presenting an opportunity and a gap in presentation. Homabay County leads in the coverage and reporting of SRHR cases with its leaders, governor, and members of parliament, leading in major headlines over the period.

With 16 mentions, Nairobi portrays a balanced media engagement: one TV, five online, five print, and five radio mentions. Kakamega and Kiambu are also prominent, with 16 and 13 mentions, respectively.

County	Tv	Radio	Print	Online	Total
-	49	47	192	42	330
Homa Bay	3	4	9	5	21
Nairobi	1	5	5	5	16
Kakamega	3	3	4	6	16
Kiambu	4	2	3	4	13
Machakos	3	3	2	2	10
Meru			8	1	9
Kilifi		3	4	1	8
Bungoma	1	1	2	4	8
Narok	3		3	1	7
Mombasa		3	2	1	6
Migori	1	4	1		6
West Pokot		4	1		5
Kajiado	4			1	5
Busia	1	1	3		5
Makueni	2		1	1	4
Kwale	1	1	1	1	4
Kisumu	3		1		4
Uasin Gishu			3		3
Turkana	2			1	3
Trans Nzoia	1	2			3
Siaya			2	1	3
Samburu	1	2			3
Nakuru			3		3
Muranga			2	1	3
Migori	1			2	3
Lamu	2	1			3
Garissa			1	2	3
Nyandarua	2				2

Marsabit		1	1		2
Kisii	2				2
Bomet			2		2
Baringo			2		2
Vihiga		1			1
Tharaka Nithi				1	1
Taita Taveta			1		1
Murang'a			1		1
Kitui	1				1
Isiolo	1				1
Embu		1			1
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>260</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>524</b>

### 3.2.7 SRHR Issue by County

The data on human rights issues by county over nine months highlights significant regional disparities in the focus of SRHR coverage. The data suggests that urban areas like Nairobi and Mombasa are more active in addressing diverse human rights issues, possibly due to higher media presence, media personnel, and advocacy efforts. For instance, Nairobi leads with a total of 30 mentions, prominently addressing CSE, abortion, and teenage pregnancies.

In 2024, KHRC analyzed data from the 2022 Kenya Demographic and Health Survey (KDHS) report and identified the top 10 counties with high teenage pregnancies among adolescent girls aged 15 - 19. The top six identified counties were Nairobi, Kakamega, Bungoma, Nakuru, Kiambu, and Kilifi. The data in this report directly implicates the same counties in other SRHR cases covered for the period.

Conversely, regions like Garissa, Kwale, and Trans-Nzoia need more coverage, suggesting potential underreporting or less focus on these critical issues. This highlights the need for targeted interventions and increased awareness to ensure a comprehensive approach to addressing human rights concerns.

County	Abortion	CSE	Contracep -tives	F G M	GBV	HIV/ AIDS	Rape	STIs	Teen Pregnancy	Total
-	45	117	43	1	15	4	3	4	98	<b>330</b>
Homa Bay		2			1	1	1		16	<b>21</b>
Nairobi	3	4	3			1			5	<b>16</b>
Kakamega	4	3	1			1			7	<b>16</b>
Kiambu			1						12	<b>13</b>
Machakos	1								9	<b>10</b>
Meru		1		2					6	<b>9</b>
Kilifi		2							6	<b>8</b>
Bungoma	1	3	1						3	<b>8</b>
Narok		1	1	2		1			2	<b>7</b>
Mombasa	2	3							1	<b>6</b>
Migori		5							1	<b>6</b>
West Pokot		1		2					2	<b>5</b>



Kajiado		2							3	<b>5</b>
Busia									5	<b>5</b>
Makueni	3						1			<b>4</b>
Kwale									4	<b>4</b>
Kisumu	3	1								<b>4</b>
Uasin Gishu					1				2	<b>3</b>
Turkana	1								2	<b>3</b>
Trans Nzoia									3	<b>3</b>
Siaya									3	<b>3</b>
Samburu									3	<b>3</b>
Nakuru	1	2								<b>3</b>
Muranga									3	<b>3</b>
Migori		1	1						1	<b>3</b>
Lamu									3	<b>3</b>
Garissa				1					2	<b>3</b>
Nyandarua									2	<b>2</b>
Marsabit		1					1			<b>2</b>
Kisii									2	<b>2</b>
Bomet		1		1						<b>2</b>
Baringo		2								<b>2</b>
Vihiga							1			<b>1</b>
Tharaka Nithi									1	<b>1</b>
Taita Taveta									1	<b>1</b>
Murang'a	1									<b>1</b>
Kitui									1	<b>1</b>
Isiolo		1								<b>1</b>
Embu		1								<b>1</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>154</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>209</b>	<b>524</b>

### 3.3 Framing of SRHR Narratives in the Media

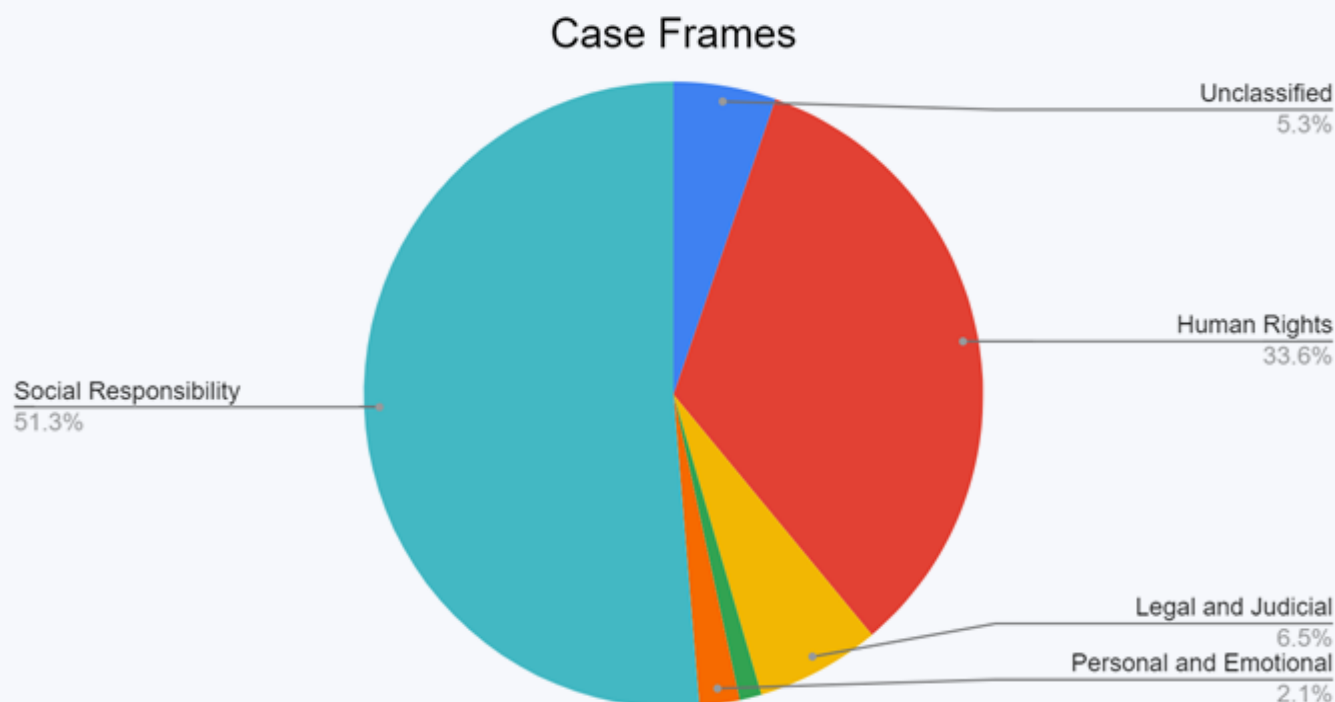
Journalists are pivotal in shaping the discourse on SRHR. They raise awareness and influence public opinion through comprehensive reporting on issues such as unsafe abortions, lack of sexuality education, and reproductive health issues. Journalists highlight critical challenges and drive public conversations by framing stories and presenting investigative reports, swaying public perception and spotlighting the need for reforms. They are thus instrumental in holding institutions, stakeholders, and individuals accountable for their shortcomings in offering and addressing SRHR issues.

Additionally, journalists play a crucial role in advocating for marginalized voices, including teenagers struggling with pregnancy and women facing reproductive health challenges. They contribute to a more inclusive dialogue on SRHR by featuring these perspectives. Their educational content, ranging from in-depth articles to documentaries, helps inform the public and facilitates meaningful discussions among diverse societal groups,

including policymakers and religious leaders. This role is essential in fostering a collaborative approach to addressing SRHR issues and promoting effective solutions.

While journalists serve as the conveyors of these news pieces and stories, they often use various frames to amplify specific messages within media reports. Van Gorp's account of Belgian press coverage of asylum seekers showed a division between a frame of 'victim' that invited sympathy and a frame of 'intruder' that raised public fears and opposition. Haw, A. L. (2021).

Framing is a way of giving some overall interpretation to isolated items of fact. It is almost unavoidable for journalists to do this and, in so doing, to depart from pure 'objectivity' and to introduce some (unintended) bias. When information is supplied to news media by sources (as often is), it arrives with a built-in frame that suits the purpose of the source and is unlikely to be purely objective. (Gorp, 2005, 484-507). In Identifying these frames, the report better identifies and magnifies SRHR case coverage and awareness.



### 3.3.1 Personal and Emotional Narrative Frame

This frame emphasizes and humanizes SRHR issues by sharing personal stories of suffering, advocating for safe reproductive health options, and discussing positive and negative aspects of SRHR within the community. It seeks to provoke action and raise awareness about the real-life consequences of various SRHR practices. The report identified 2.1 percent of the total coverage from this frame.

For example, an article dated January 2, 2024, in Taifa Leo by Pauline Ongaji, titled "Gharama kubwa ya uavyaji mimba kwa mbinu duni" (The high cost of botched abortions), recounts a mother's tragic experience with unsafe abortion methods. The emotional and personal nature of the story highlights the severe consequences of inadequate healthcare and its impact on individuals' lives.

### 3.3.2 Legal and Judicial Frame

This frame covers SRHR, focusing on the judiciary's role in shaping policy and ensuring constitutional adherence. It highlights the ongoing struggle between judicial pronouncements and traditions and community beliefs, the judiciary and other branches of government, and the influence of judicial decisions on SRHR and other critical issue coverage in Kenya. This frame additionally encapsulates provisions of the law on the administration, formulation, and implementation of laws touching SRHR. 6.5% of the cases covered within the period stemmed from legal and judicial platforms.

In an article covered by The Star newspaper on May 20, 2024, the journalists praised comments by Oyugis senior principal magistrate Samson Ongeri, who urged Homa Bay residents to take child abuse seriously. Ongeri said it is unfortunate the cases continued to rise despite the court's stringent measures and sentences. The magistrate asked parents and caregivers to care for the children and report the perpetrators to help the judiciary deliver justice. This view from the magistrate, if followed, will help in the fight to curb the high number of teenage pregnancies, improving and securing the future of girls.

### 3.3.3 Morality and Religious Beliefs

This frame presents the issue from a religious perspective, emphasizing doctrinal disagreements and moral objections. It affects how choice and abortion rights are perceived within religious communities, influencing public and institutional responses.

In his article "Church at Crossroads" on December 27, 2023, Leonard Khafafa from The Standard covered the emerging trends in SRHR with a view from the Bible. In an excerpt from his article, he shared how the church needs to take a bold stand as it cannot afford to equivocate on social, political, and economic issues of the day. He shared that this decision would face either a fallout from a section of the community who are comfortable with the vice or persecution by the government's intolerance of those speaking truth to power. Worse still, it risks being deemed socially irrelevant by those who think the Christian canon is archaic and out of touch with reality.

### 3.3.4 Social Responsibility Frame

This frame emphasizes the need for a more awareness and supportive approach to teenage pregnancies, focusing on educational and social responsibility rather than punitive measures. It advocates for better sex education and support systems for young people. Half of the cases covered within the analysis period spoke on this frame in handling SRHR. This finding elaborates on the dire need to engage the public and understand key challenges in dealing with SRHR cases.

An excerpt from Faith Oneya's Daily Nation article on January 19, 2024—Dear Governor Lusaka, teenage mums are not the problem; we are—opined on public discourse. The letter critiqued Governor Lusaka's proposal to ban pregnant teenagers from resuming education, arguing that it oversimplified the issue and failed to address the broader social responsibility for CSE violating the right to education.

KBC Digital covered the April 2024 visit to Kakamega County by Dorcas Rigathi, the wife of Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua. The

coverage focused on her passionate appeal to Kakamega men to protect their girls. Dorcas expressed concern over the high rate of teenage pregnancies in the county.

She advocated for the raising of male champions against GBV and FGM as they would educate their men and the community against the vices. She also attributed most of the rape and defilement cases to intoxication and urged women to stop the brewing of illicit liquor for their children.

### 3.3.5 Human Rights Frame

The core aims of the human rights advocacy frame are to correct misinformation, provide accurate legal interpretation, and point out biases while guiding and providing coverage of SRHR. A piece on Saturday Nation, April 13, 2024, by Joachim Osur, Kenya-based reproductive and sexual health expert and a reproductive rights advocate, titled, "How sheer sexual ignorance on campus extinguished a woman's family ambitions", paints a clear picture of this frame.

The writeup summarized how women who are unable to bear children are humiliated by society yet according to Joachim Osur, half of the infertility cases are as a result of men not being able to impregnate a woman. Additionally, he highlighted advancements in reproductive technology which has revolutionized infertility treatment being overlooked in resolving this issue.

He gave an example of an interviewee who had lost her marriage of 6 years due to a lack of sufficient CSE education and ongoing marital issues around childbearing.

## 3.4 Shapers of SRHR Narratives

Counties continue to grapple with alarmingly high rates of unsafe abortions, teenage pregnancies, and other sexual and reproductive health challenges. Public and private platforms offer opportunities to express concerns, views, information, and opinions. However, the discourse surrounding SRHR is heavily influenced by key societal figures and institutions, including religious leaders, political and government officials, and legal bodies.

These entities are crucial in shaping public perception, influencing policy development, and determining the extent and nature of media coverage on SRHR issues. These influencers affect public perception, development, and implementation of SRHR policies, coverage, and awareness of SRHR issues.

### 3.4.1 Political Figures and Government Officials

Political leaders and government officials shape SRHR narratives through policies, public statements, and legislative actions. These, in turn, impact public debates, awareness, and understanding while influencing the implementation of SRHR laws and educational programs.

These shapers also affect the accessibility and quality of reproductive health services. In a video published by Nation in February 2024, former Health Cabinet Secretary Susan Nakhumicha responded to a question on whether she would give condoms to teenagers by saying: "I am Mama Kanisa (a church woman), therefore number one is abstinence; that we teach our youth, our adolescents to abstain, Where they cannot abstain, then of course, condoms have been said as one of the ways to use protection. But I believe with firm Christian foundations that our adolescents should be able to abstain."

The former health boss made these comments following Kenya's ranking as the third-highest country for teenage pregnancies, according to a 2022 KDHS report. The report also indicates that 15 % of the girls aged 15-19 years have ever been pregnant, and these numbers have been increasing by 3% among 15-year-olds to 31% among 19-year-olds.

### 3.4.2 Legal and Judicial Bodies

Judicial rulings establish legal precedents that can either enhance or limit SRHR coverage and implementation. Legal institutions also impact how rights and policies are enforced and interpreted. These decisions can uphold or challenge existing laws and policies, influencing the broader legal and social landscape for SRHR issues and shaping legality, rights, and constitutional principles.

The Kenyan judiciary has distinguished itself by prosecuting and penalizing violations of SRHR laws and has also played a key role in advising

the parliament on key SRHR matters.

In her remarks on May 11, 2024, at the unveiling of an analysis conducted by the National Council for Law Reporting Kenya Law and ForumCiv, done between August and December 2023, Chief Justice Martha Koome challenged counties to review their policies and laws regularly. Justice Koome also called for training of stakeholders, including those involved in formulating the laws and policies. The analysis established gaps in formulating and implementing policies and assessed capacity needs among technical officers. It focused on policies and laws on education, water and environment, health, HIV/Aids, SRHR, gender and persons with disabilities (PWDs), and public participation. The findings stress the importance of continuous, tailored training for all stakeholders involved in policy development - from county officials, and members of the civil society, to community members - empowering them to contribute knowledgeably and constructively in the process of policy formulation. (Kenya Law, 2024)

One of the key challenges in the administration of justice is the length taken to receive court rulings. In May 2024, Clifford Akumu from People Daily covered a sad incident that occurred in June 2020. A schoolgirl had been raped by her father, got impregnated and ended up giving birth. The case took long to be heard. At home, it was not safe for the girl, and she had to be referred to a nearby rescue center for teen mothers. When justice takes too long to be served, society loses confidence in the right processes, derailing the fight to uphold SRHR.

### **3.4.3 Human Rights Organizations**

Human rights organizations frame SRHR issues through advocacy for universal rights and freedoms. Their spaces often focus on justice, equality, and the protection of marginalized groups. Human rights organizations work to frame SRHR issues in terms of human dignity and equality. They also advocate and champion policies and legal reforms that align with international human rights standards.

Gabriel Kudaka from The Daily Nation covered a story about Young Champions Fistula Clubs and Young Adolescent Mothers Programs. This human rights organization was established in 2011 and has supported over 2,000 women.

Through solidarity groups, their social integration and economic empowerment have supported 27 groups of 553 women. These initiatives go a long way to empower adolescent girls to become agents of social transformation. The founder, Sarah Omega, explained that there was a need for menstrual hygiene training and the production of reusable sanitary pads, a preventive strategy to curb teen pregnancies. She added that they engaged in community education where they identified and dealt with gaps in maternal healthcare, in partnership with health departments in counties of operation.

Their advocacy for SRHRs and comprehensive reproductive health policies highlights the ongoing efforts to foster human rights and close gaps in SRHR. These organizations work to challenge regressive policies and advocate for inclusive rights, often facing backlash from conservative sectors but also driving progressive dialogue and legislative changes.

### **3.4.4 Health Professionals and Educators**

Health professionals and educators provide expert opinions, conduct research, and implement educational programs. Their voices, focused on health, safety, and evidence-based practices and their direct engagement with young people and educational reforms, play a vital role in shaping informed perspectives on sexual health and rights.

An example of an educator and a health professional whose practical application has accelerated dissemination of SRHR information is Beverlyn Polet, covered alongside the Headteacher of Khayega Primary by the Daily Nation on January 9 2024, in a story titled, "Taming teen pregnancies one conversation at a time". Polet conducted a reproductive health session that highlighted the impact of unsafe abortion methods, emphasizing the need for CSE.

The Headteacher of Khayega Primary reported positive outcomes from sexual and reproductive health education, suggesting that education changes can significantly reduce teen pregnancies.

These voices highlight the importance of evidence-based health practices, education in addressing SRHR issues and advocating for informed approaches to health and well-being.



## 4.0 Recommendations and Conclusions

### 1. Media Houses

The data shows that the sources for SRHR stories are limited. These include court proceedings, human rights organizations, and KDHS. To enhance the quality and impact of SRHR reporting, journalists need specialized training on how to cover these issues comprehensively while protecting sources. This approach could empower media professionals to serve as community advocates, fostering better public understanding and advocacy.

Media houses can adopt a more balanced approach when covering SRHR issues. This involves representing diverse voices, including those from marginalized groups, to ensure comprehensive narratives that reflect the realities on the ground.

Rather than reacting to specific events, media outlets can consistently report on SRHR topics to create social impact. This will build sustained public engagement and awareness. Regular reporting will highlight ongoing challenges and promote a deeper understanding of these issues. In addition, media houses should follow up on SRHR stories to hold relevant stakeholders accountable. Continuous coverage

of unresolved SRHR cases can drive change and ensure that key issues remain on the public agenda.

The media landscape also reflects a preference for political and trending topics, with less attention given to SRHR issues. To address this imbalance, there is a need to incentivize media coverage of SRHR topics, possibly by involving communities more directly in the reporting process. Raising awareness about the importance of SRHR issues, often seen as taboo or bizarre, could help normalize these discussions and encourage more balanced reporting.

Additionally, the data presents broad-based coverage by journalists. Notably, many media outlets do not have dedicated journalists assigned to cover SRHR cases in depth. SRHR is a health issue and should thus be reported within the frameworks of health reporting. This inadequate coverage hampers the ability to initiate effective responses, hence the rise of insensitivity in the public, private, and governing sectors. There is a need to increase levels of awareness and accountability to the respective media houses.



## **2. Human Rights Organizations**

Human rights organizations can utilize the media to impact more and drive action. By leveraging media stories, they can increase pressure on decision-makers to prioritize SRHR issues and enforce existing laws and policies. Additionally, there is a need for increased focus on SRHR issues in remote and underserved regions. Human rights organizations should partner with local media to ensure that voices from all counties are heard and represented in the SRHR discourse.

## **3. Legal & Judicial Bodies**

The legal system should prioritize the swift resolution of SRHR-related cases. Delayed justice undermines public trust and often exacerbates human rights violations. A more efficient judicial process will signal a stronger commitment to upholding SRHR laws.

Legal institutions must engage in public education campaigns to ensure citizens know their SRHR rights. Sensitizing the public to existing laws will empower individuals and guardians to seek justice when their rights are violated.

There is an urgent need to review and, where necessary, repeal outdated laws that hinder SRHR rights. Legal bodies should work closely with policymakers to modernize and align laws with international SRHR standards.

Amplifying the accessible legal awareness channels will help demystify the judicial process for SRHR cases. This could involve establishing campaigns on community outreach programs where individuals can get legal assistance for SRHR-related violations.

## **4. Government Officials and Religious Leaders**

Both government officials and religious leaders should ensure that their public statements regarding SRHR are informed by factual, evidence-based information. Misinformation can perpetuate stigma and hinder progress in SRHR advocacy.

They must balance their worldview with respect for human rights. Promoting compassionate, inclusive dialogue can help bridge cultural and religious gaps in SRHR discussions. The leaders can take on active roles in championing SRHR rights. By publicly supporting policies that promote sexual and reproductive health, they can influence both policy direction and public perception, ensuring a more rights-based approach to SRHR in Kenya.

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