

# Journalism Politics and Women's Issues: Portraits of Reporting Women during the COVID-19 Pandemic in Local Media South Kalimantan

Sri Astuty<sup>1</sup>, Yuwanto<sup>2</sup>, Laila Kholid Alfirdaus<sup>3</sup>, Bachruddin Ali Akhmad<sup>4</sup>  
{astutysri30@yahoo.co.id<sup>1</sup>}

Universitas Diponegoro, Indonesia<sup>1,2,3</sup>  
Universitas Lambung Mangkurat, Indonesia<sup>4</sup>

**Abstract.** Studies on women and journalism during the COVID-19 pandemic have not received much attention. The perspective built-in various media reports still tend to be gender-neutral. Even if they get a portion of the news, the focus is more directed at women as objects, in this case, the recipients of social assistance. Meanwhile, women are heavily involved in social work handling COVID-19, by becoming health workers. Not a few are still working amidst the risk of transmitting the virus to support the family economy. In many places, women are also involved in neighborhood-based social work to support survivors and their families. This paper criticizes the media framing of women in pandemic journalism. This paper is based on qualitative research with content analysis and in-depth interviews as data collection methods. This paper sees that women in media coverage during a pandemic are not fully portrayed with their important roles in society. Women are only used as casual objects (spot news) without meaningful constructive framing.

**Keywords:** Journalism, Women, Local Media, media political economy, COVID-19 pandemic

## 1 Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic forces everyone, including women, to be tough both for themselves, their families, and the surrounding community who need a helping hand. Many women still have to work with all the risks that must be faced, including the vulnerability to being exposed to the virus, but also still have the task of providing services to the community as health workers. In addition, there are many women who have to continue to earn a living to support their families and there are even many women who do volunteer work. Women contribute multiple roles in various aspects including being housewives but because of the current situation they must also become educators for their children, women in volunteer activities also play a role in various decision making.

The news about women that is widely covered in national media, both television and newspapers and online media only revolves around women as recipients of aid, women are involved in various crimes as perpetrators, women become victims of crimes, women become drug dealers, women who commit violence against children, women who are the subject of conversation in the world of entertainment, women as sex workers. Even if there is news about the role of women in terms of character or the success of women in the work sector they are

involved in, it is generally published when there is a commemoration of women's day starting from the anniversary of RA Kartini's birthday, Mother's Day, and World Women's Day. This means that gender sensitive news gets less attention in the media, unless it is considered special and interesting so that it is covered and appears to be the consumption of news information. In line with the criteria for journalism in general, where reporting has elements that contain informative values and has educational value to the community, so that it can encourage women to have elements that should be able to encourage changes in thinking and become motivation [1][2].

Local media is the hope to be able to raise gender issues in the news, where local media are the grassroots where the object of news is women. Gender sensitivity in reporting can be built if there is good will from all levels of the media, both journalists and the editorial board. This paper sees that the role of women is not widely written in the news in the local media in South Kalimantan. The highest base of news as a selling point and the speed of information that must be published on news pages revolves more around assistance to the community with the context of women being the most recipients of aid during this COVID-19 pandemic. The attractiveness of women's news that has many roles in particular has not received a portion and attention from the media, whether carried out by male journalists or female journalists and this is also based on media policies, especially matters related to the media economy, however if the media looks at it the power of democracy, where the media is one of the pillars of critical media, inspiring media can build the nation's character [3][4][5][6][7]. To raise gender sensitivity in media reporting, the investigation becomes a measure of the depth of the news and the fulfillment of the elements of journalism [8][9], whether this gets the attention of journalists or local media editors in South Kalimantan.

## **2 Method**

This paper is based on qualitative research with content analysis and in-depth interviews as data collection methods. Content analysis was conducted on information related to women in the news category on 5 online-based local media in South Kalimantan with a large audience and likes and verified by the Press Council consisting of Apahabar.com, Kanalkalimantan.com, Mediakalimantannews.com, Banuapost.co .id, and Baritopost.co.id editions of March 2020 to July 2021 with a total number of 325 news stories which were then reduced based on the criteria of mentioning directly in the news about women and their activities, both personally and in groups or organizations, so that the total news analyzed was 86 news. Next, interviews were conducted with journalists consisting of 2 journalists and 2 media owners as well as editors. Interviews were also conducted on women who work as health workers at the Kayutangi Banjarmasin health center, parking attendants, volunteers and franchise shopkeepers who have to work during the COVID-19 pandemic with the various risks they face, as well as the women journalist community in South Kalimantan

## **3 Result and Discussion**

Reports on the role of women during the COVID-19 pandemic did not receive special attention from the local media in South Kalimantan. The news that appears a lot both on the first page and in other news columns, where the portion of national news ranks at the top

starting from government assistance to the community and distribution of personal protective supplies for health workers without mentioning specifically about women. The news that discussed women in the 5 local media studied and the 86 news analyzed were dominated by the presence of women as objects of assistance recipients with the criteria of women being part of the community. In this paper, by analyzing the content of news texts on local online media studied above, it was found that there were only 2 large portions, namely women who received assistance as many as 45 news and women both as victims and perpetrators of crimes including pornography as many as 32 news. There is only a small portion about the role of women as many as 9 news including those covered in Banuapost.co.id media on August 13, 2020 with the news title "TP-PKK South Kalimantan Preparation of Masks, Media Baritopost.co.id on November 11, 2020 with the title "Women Informal Workers in the Village Prevent Covid". The 9 articles mentioned the role of women in organizations in helping to deal with COVID-19 in the regions, but did not show any verification discipline with a thorough investigation. News is only informational, but it is not carried out comprehensively and proportionally, so that information on women's roles becomes news on a limited scale.

In this paper, by analyzing the content of news texts on local online media studied above, it was found that there were only 2 large portions, namely women who received assistance and women both as victims and perpetrators of crime. This is in line with the results of interviews with the BK news editorial board of Banjarbaru.com and the RMN editorial board of Mediakalimantannews.com which stated that "the mistake of the local media to see news values, some local media may think that news about women during a pandemic is not sexy. The second thing is that not many local media are observant of using different points of view in reporting the pandemic. The media is still fixated on the number of deaths, positives, recoveries, the number of people who have been vaccinated, and so on. Not many local media are willing to go to great lengths to make long and in-depth coverage of the pandemic, for example taking the risk of participating in the activities of ambulance drivers, grave diggers, the activities of those who pray for the bodies. This happened because the news coverage was almost extinct, because there was no money for in-depth coverage. Third, women only become news when they are connected with low tastes, for example, slightly smelling pornography, infidelity, divorce, murderers, murder victims, drug dealers or couriers, and others. Fourth, the old problem in local media is that almost all of them have not yet reached the peak of real media influence, namely inspiring, there is only bureaucratic journalism, fast coverage, making news quickly and making money because the journalist profession is considered a real job, not relying on journalist professionalism".

Furthermore, the results of interviews with female journalists also saw a further problem that the lack of reporting on the role of women during the COVID-19 pandemic in the local media was due to the lack of female leaders at the local level in South Kalimantan and the existing female figures did not have any meaningful action other than in their position. hand over help. The 2020 election campaign in Banjarmasin City was used by one of the female candidates to improve image by also providing social assistance to the community. The existence of an instant-paced journalist orientation, where writing that has a weight is not a measure of the creativity and ability of journalists, the measure is the speed of journalists in producing news. This means that journalists are very fixated on media policy and editorial decisions, that the current online media oriented tends to pursue or display what is viral and the number of followers and news readers from the media is large. The portion of the news will be published if it is considered special, biased into headlines and has a selling point, then journalists are willing to voluntarily pursue the news.

Further interviews on September 4, 2021, female workers both working in the informal sector and the formal sector EP (Puskesmas Kayutangi health workers), SR (Chick-chick franchise shop keeper), NH (Sultan Adam area parking attendant) stated that their work was noble work, despite the risk of having been exposed and having children under five like EP, he is still enthusiastic to continue to provide services to the community. While SR and NH work to support their families because they still have small children, their husbands do not work because they are laid off and their husbands are sick. This means that if these women are published in the news, they can provide inspiration that there are strong and unyielding women, who are still enthusiastic to work lawfully.

Media idealism has regressed. This of course also has an impact on the 4th pillar of democracy, namely the decline of media democracy. This is recognized from the results of the interview that "in the past, when the weight of writing became an achievement, there were many such in-depth writings. Now the media does not demand creative journalists, what is required is the speed of broadcast and ignorance with quality, so that news titles can be seen as strange, the grip is not clear, copy paste news content is commonplace, writing good titles and sure enough, many journalists are unbiased let alone reflect on the provisions of journalism 5W 1H [10]. Inspirational writings usually arise from the creativity of journalists. The media should provide space for that, but many media policies do not encourage this, because good journalistic writing requires a long struggle including funding, and the willingness of journalists also prefers not to bother. This is closely related to the political economy policy of a media, including local media where policy determines the direction and content of the news that will be displayed by the media and the media takes the role of forming morals for the community with news that educates and inspires, so that news about women will also be disaggregated by interests and media entities which are characterized by the presence of women only as symbolic in the news [11][12][13][14].

## 4 Conclusion

Framing in local media in South Kalimantan is oriented to news that is considered to have a quick selling value, news that can be spread quickly, when talking about the role of women to be inputted into news requires journalism activities with in-depth investigations, where this is considered difficult, requires time and money, So news about women is only spot news. Media policy has a big influence on whether or not a news is published and news about women if it is not considered special, interesting and special, it will only become garbage news, so that the role of women is minimal in reporting and local media are also trapped in the orientation of media capitalism in local capacity. where women are only symbolic of the news.

## References

- [1] A. N. Abrar, *Menatap masa depan jurnalisme Indonesia*. UGM PRESS, 2019.
- [2] I. S. Ibrahim, *Jurnalisme kemiskinan: representasi kemiskinan di media lokal*. Penerbit Buku Kompas, 2020.
- [3] M. A. Harahap, *Kapitalisme Media: Ekonomi Politik Berita dan Diskursus Televisi*. Aura Pustaka, 2013.
- [4] H. F. Noor, *Ekonomi Media*. Jakarta: Rajawali Pers, 2010.

- [5] I. Syahputra, *Rezim Media: Pergulatan Demokrasi, Jurnalisme, dan Infotainment*. Gramedia Pustaka Utama, 2013.
- [6] J. Curran, *Media and Power*. London: Routledge, 2000.
- [7] J. Keane, *Global civil society?* Cambridge University Press, 2003.
- [8] H. de Burgh, "Investigative Journalism: Context and Practice." Routledge, London, 2000.
- [9] B. Kovach and T. Rosenstiel, *Elemen-elemen jurnalisme: apa yang seharusnya diketahui wartawan dan yang diharapkan publik*. Institut Studi Arus, 2003.
- [10] D. McQuail, *McQuail's Media and Mass Communication Theory*. California: SAGE Publications, 2005.
- [11] P. T. Jackson, "News as a contested commodity: A clash of capitalist and journalistic imperatives," *J. Mass Media Ethics*, vol. 24, no. 2-3, pp. 146-163, 2009.
- [12] S. Kim, "Feminist discourse and the hegemonic role of mass media: Newspaper discourse about two South Korean television dramas," *Fem. Media Stud.*, vol. 8, no. 4, pp. 391-406, 2008.
- [13] J. Wasko, "The political economy of communications," *SAGE Handb. media Stud.*, pp. 309-330, 2004.
- [14] T. Sunarto, "Kekerasan, dan Perempuan," *Jakarta Kompas Media Nusantara*, 2009.