



# **AIRWAVES MONITOR**

## **A REPORT ON THE BROADCAST MEDIA MONITORING PROJECT**

**October 2001**



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## Other Publications by Media Rights Agenda (MRA)

- \* *Media Rights Monitor* (Monthly Journal) published since 1995
- \* Annual Reports on the State of the Nigerian Media
  - + *Sentenced to Silence*, 1998
  - + *Back from the Brink*, 1999
  - + *A Harvest of Blooms*, 2000
  - + *At A Crossroads*, 2001
- \* Other reports and publications
  - + *Unshackling the Nigerian Media: An Agenda for Reform*, July 1997 (In collaboration with ARTICLE 19)
- \* *Media Scorecard* (Report of the Print Media Coverage of the Political Transition Programme - six issues, from January - June 1999)
- \* *Airwaves Scorecard* (Report of the Broadcast Media Coverage of the Political Transition Programme - six issues, from January - June 1999)
- \* *Unlocking Nigeria's Closet of Secrecy*, August 2000 (A Report on the Campaign for a Freedom of Information Act in Nigeria)
- \* *Broadcasting In Nigeria: Unlocking the Airwaves*, February 2001 (A Report on the Framework for Broadcasting and Telecommunications in Nigeria - In collaboration with ARTICLE 19)

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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# Foreword

With about 60 percent of Nigeria's estimated population of 120 million illiterate and, therefore, incapable of reading newspapers and magazines, radio and television remain the most important means of mass communication in the country. Besides the illiteracy level, radio and television have an unrivaled potential for reaching the rural population and enlightening them on human rights and political issues. Radio and television are also the most important tools for molding the political opinion of this section of the population in addition to a high proportion of the literate segment.

But with an ownership structure dominated by Federal and state governments and the existence of a powerful regulatory body under the control of the government, there are fears that a large segment of the population may effectively be denied access to the media both as a means of receiving information and as a vehicle for expressing their views and opinions. There have also been allegations that the broadcast media, both state-owned and privately owned, are simply being used to project the political interests and views of those who have control over them, while discrediting those with opposing views, and therefore, undermining genuine democratization.

Without doubt, the issue of whether the deregulation of broadcasting in Nigeria has engendered pluralism in programming and information sources as well as truly independent broadcasting remains a highly contentious one. Prior to the deregulation of the broadcast sector of the Nigerian media, there were frequent reports of the various governments exerting control over the media to ensure that only news and information favourable to them were aired. With the emergence of private ownership of broadcast stations, a question arises as to how effective the independent media have been in providing alternative sources of news and information and how much these have balanced those emanating from the government-controlled news media.

While independent broadcasters are severely restricted in their areas of coverage to their state of location or, at best, to neighbouring states, the Federal Government-owned Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) and the Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria (FRCN) have the capacity to broadcast nationwide and regularly run network news and other programmes such that they remain the main source of news and information.

This project is intended to provide some empirical data on how the media covers public issues, especially democracy, politics and human rights and in the process highlight the fairness or otherwise of their programmes to all interest groups as well as monitor how they seek to enhance the political process.

The objective of the project is not to condemn the media's coverage of these issues or to create a competition among the various media establishments. Its primary purpose is to provide a barometer for media establishments to measure their performance in the reporting of public issues and government activities and undertake voluntary adjustments to bring themselves into conformity with international standards in the coverage of political issues.

**Edetaen Ojo**

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## PREFACE

In any democratic society, the media plays the foremost role in the shaping of public opinion. This is why in undemocratic societies, the media is one of the first targets of repression by the government. If a democratic government is sophisticated, it may opt for media control and manipulation as a way of controlling the flow of information and teleguiding public opinion. Where the government is crude, the media especially the public state-owned media, is simply used as a mouthpiece.

But even in democratic countries, different sections of the society and economy openly try to influence the media. Publishers, editors, correspondents and reporters are cultivated by different interest groups and significant amounts of money are openly spent on advertising and public relations. It has also been known to happen that informal incentives (such as brown envelope journalism) influence some journalist. Furthermore, journalists have their individual biases and this sometimes gets in the way of objectively, balanced and factual reporting. In some cases, it may just be lack of adequate training, lure of sensationalism or laziness that gets in the way of good reporting. Whatever the reason for inaccurate, fictional or unbalanced coverage, the results are the same. Distortion of information can have, and has had, catastrophic implications for society.

But the media must strive to overcome all obstacles to fair, accurate and balanced reporting. The strategic position of the media in modern society as regards influencing and shaping public opinion means that the media has an obligation to ensure equitable access for all sections of society. All reports must be truthful, factual and reflect the views of all parties to any issue. Pictures, headlines and reports must not be misleading and no one should receive undue projection over others. Unfortunately the media does not always live up to these ideals and the consequences to the society are often much higher than we imagine.

The most damage to public psyche could be achieved through a manipulation of the broadcast media. This is largely because of its reach, which far surpasses the print.

In his introduction to *Television and Elections*, former US President, Jimmy Carter, noted that television has become a principal source of news and information around the world. According to Mr. Carter, “*its rapid spread and unheard-of penetration is nothing short of phenomenal. In affecting the lives of people everywhere, and, more particularly, in communicating messages in times of changes and crises, it can help to shape the most decisive events that move both citizens and their leaders\**.”

Truly, the importance of the broadcast media, Television and Radio, as vehicles for political education and mobilisation is paramount. While television, with its visual effect, can create the

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\* *Television and Election*, 1992, by Ellen Mickiewicz and Charles Firestone, The Aspen Institute and the Carter Centre, Maryland, US

most potent awareness and emotion, radio is especially important in a country such as Nigeria where illiteracy is high, where newspapers do not circulate outside the major towns and where television is not widely available because of poor electricity supply and the high cost of television sets.

Even in the poorest of countries, most rural families will have access to portable radios and have sufficient funds to buy batteries for their radio sets.

By this same fact, it goes without saying that any authority, be it the government or interest group, that can manipulate the mass media, can ultimately manipulate the political process.

The liberalisation of the broadcast sector of the Nigerian media by the National Broadcasting Commission Decree No. 38 of 1992, has led to the emergence of numerous private broadcast media. This has engendered a more robust broadcast media environment in Nigeria, at least to the extent that there are now many alternative stations available to Nigerians to listen to or watch.

However, there are still some pertinent questions to be addressed if the society is to realize the fullest benefit possible from the broadcast media. The primary aim of this media monitoring exercise is to assist the media in achieving this objective.

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The primary aim of the media monitoring exercise is to assess the role of the media in upholding and promoting democratic culture and practice as well as ensuring transparency, accountability and good governance.

Some of the questions to be addressed are: How well does the media provide a robust atmosphere for the promotion of political debate, democratic governance and public accountability? How well does the media ensure the fair, accurate and objective coverage of political issues and political interest groups? How well does the media ensure fair, accurate and objective coverage of human rights issues and safeguard the rights of disadvantaged and minority groups?

The project seeks to determine the extent of coverage given to these issues by both the state-owned public media and the private media. It also seeks to identify the significant issues covered and those which were ignored.

**The Topics\Variables covered in the monitoring were:**

### **Political Issues**

1. Reports on federal, states and local governments and their agencies
2. Reports on political-economic policies and the public's responses to them
3. Reports on emerging political issues

### **Democracy Issues**

1. Reports on separation of power (between the three arms of government)
2. Reports on the legitimate role of the opposition and opposition activities
3. Reports on the registered political parties— AD, APP, PDP.
4. Reports on other political associations and organisations
5. Reports on the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC)
6. Reports on other general democracy issues

### **Human Rights Issues**

1. Reports on gender issues.
2. Reports on human rights violations
3. Reports on human rights promotion
4. Reports on human rights violations investigations

### **Reports on Public Accountability**

1. Reports on corruption in government
2. Reports promoting transparency in public life.

## **SECTION 1: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

During the month of September, the independent broadcasters were in a dispute with the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) over some contentious issues. The issues were the NBC code which requires independent broadcasters to pay to the NBC 2.5 per cent of their gross income and attempt by some independent broadcasters to form a network. To a considerable extent, the war between the two camps dominated at some point in September. The monitoring failed to turn up one report favourable to the NBC on the private stations included in the monitoring exercise, obviously on account of the dispute.

One remarkable thing about the dispute was that the station owners and their managers threw decorum out the window and employed coarse language and means in stating their collective case. In the battle, professional objectivity was the first casualty.

All the other anomalies like repetitions and breaks in transmission were still rife. A major professional and ethical flaw that was noticed in the broadcast of virtually all the stations monitored in the exercise was that like its print counterpart, the stations neglected the tragedies that occurred in Nigeria while those of other countries were highly publicised. One such incident was the bombing of the World Trade Centre in New York and the US Department of Defence by terrorists. Although the event was in many ways very significant and newsworthy but its reportage was done to the detriment of suffering and dying Nigerians in Plateau and Taraba states who were engulfed in various ethnic and religious clashes at the time.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The media should learn to be dispassionate, objective and mindful of its professional ethics in reporting issues that affect it. There were, for example, other means of rejecting the regulatory body's move than by name-calling. For example, the broadcast stations involved in the disagreement with the NBC could have stated reasons why the levy was ill-advised and also indicated possible reasons why the commission's action was in bad faith. The whole disagreement could have been addressed in a better way than by throwing to the winds.

The broadcast media generally still need to work on the use of sound-bites and actualities while the station managers should source funds so as to rectify the rampant technical hiccups witnessed on virtually all of them. These include getting better equipment for clearer pictures and audio. The stations should take the poor reception of their signals seriously so that they would be able to function effectively as society's ears, eyes and voice.

It is also recommended that the stations should de-emphasize ego-massaging reports concerning government and its functionaries. Instead, they should focus more on the citizens of this country, especially the rural dwellers.

The station generally needs to improve the quality of its audio reception to make it clearer to listeners. They also need to have studio arrangements structured in such a way that they put an end to the incessant distraction caused by the telephone calls during broadcasts.

## **SECTION 2: GENERAL FINDINGS**

### **RADIO:**

Period of Report: Monday, September 3—Saturday September 29

No of Radio Stations Monitored: 6 (Radio Nigeria 2Metro FM Lagos; Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria (FRCN) Kaduna; Kaduna State Media Corporation (KSMC) Kaduna; Aso FM 93.5 Abuja; Radio Rivers2 FM Port-Harcourt (government-owned); and Raypower 100.5FM Lagos (privately-owned).

Total News Reports monitored on Radio: 5,634

Duration of Reports: 119 hours 24 minutes 49 seconds (7,164 mins, 49secs)

Number of Evaluated News Reports: 1,374

Duration of Evaluated News: 22 hours 10 minutes 36 seconds (1330 mins, 36secs)

Percentage of Evaluated News Reports: 24.4 %

### **TELEVISION:**

Number of Television Stations Monitored: 6 (NTA 2 Channel 5, Lagos; NTA Kaduna; NTA Abuja (government-owned); Murhi International Television, Lagos, Channels Television Lagos; and MiNAJ Broadcasting International, Obosi (privately-owned)

Total News Reports monitored on Television: 3,537

Duration of monitored Reports: 128 hours 48 minutes 3seconds (7728 mins, 3secs)

Number of Evaluated News Reports: 907

Duration of Evaluated Reports: 24 hours 26 minutes (1,466 mins)

Percentage of Evaluated News Reports: 25.6 %

## **MONITORED VARIABLES**

1. **Democracy Issues:** There were a total of 769 news items categorised under this variable during the month of September under review, with a cumulative duration of 14 hours 57 minutes and 32 seconds (897 mins, 32secs). Out of the total, radio stations accounted for 441 reports in a time of 6 hours 47 minutes. Television reports totalled 328 with a cumulative duration of 8 hours 10 minutes 32 seconds (490 mins, 32 secs)
2. **Political Issues:** This had total reports of 1,030 with a cumulative duration of 19 hours 29 minutes, 48 seconds (1169 mins, 48 secs). Of this total, the radio stations aired 670 news reports in a time of 10 hours 30 minutes 36 seconds (630 mins, 36 secs), while the television stations aired 360 news reports in a time of 8 hours 59 minutes 12 seconds (539 mins, 12 secs).

3. **Human Rights:** Under this variable, 333 news reports were evaluated with a cumulative duration of 9 hours 9 minutes 16 seconds (549 mins, 16 secs). Of this total, the radio stations broadcast 164 news reports in a time of 3 hours 25 minutes 16 seconds (205 mins, 16 secs), while the television stations aired 169 reports which were broadcast in a time of 5 hours 44 minutes (344 mins).
4. **Public Accountability:** A total of 149 reports were evaluated under this variable with a cumulative duration of 3 hours 3 minutes 40 seconds (183 mins, 40 secs). The radio stations had 99 news items in a time of 1 hour 28 minutes 4 seconds (88 mins, 4secs), while the television stations had 50 news reports with an airtime of 1 hour 35 minutes 36 seconds (95 mins, 36 secs).

## **MEDIA PROJECTION**

Highest Positive Projection: Federal Government, its agencies and functionaries

Least Positive Projection: The Local Governments and their functionaries

Highest Negative Projection: The State Governments

Least Negative Projection: Political Organisations

Most Promoted Institution: The three tiers of government in the country

## **AREA OF NEWS ORIGINATION**

The highest preponderance (in descending order): Federal Capital Territory, Abuja; Lagos State; Kaduna State.

## **GEOGRAPHICAL SCOPE OF REPORTS**

Highest preponderance (in descending order): Nigeria; Africa

## COMPARATIVE DATA ON RADIO (Evaluated reports only)

	STATION/TOTAL NEWS/TIME	DEMOCRACY Reports/Duration	POLITICAL ISSUES Reports/Duration	HUMAN RIGHTS Reports/Duration	PUBLIC ACC Reports/Duration	TOTALNEWS/TIME MONITORED
1.	RADIO NIGERIA LAGOS 2,309mins.28secs 38hrs.29mins. 28secs.	120 [11mins. 31secs] 1hr. 51mins.31secs	174 [31mins. 25secs] 2hrs. 11mins.25se.	58 [85mins. 19secs] 1hr. 25mins 19secs	28 [17mins.] 50secs	380 346mins. 25secs. 5hrs. 46m. 25se.
2.	RAYPOWER, LAGOS 1,440mins. 24hrs.	69 [53mins. 34secs]	142 [105mins.44secs] 1hr. 45mins.44secs.	39 [39mins.46sec]	26 [17mins. 41sec.]	276 216mins.45secs. 3hrs.36mins.45secs
3.	FRCN, KADUNA (586) 941mins. 11secs./15hrs. 41mins.11secs.	34 [32mins.35secs]	174 [197mins.15secs] 3hrs.17mins.15sec	21 [27mins. 05secs.]	21 [23mins. 24secs]	250 2800mins.19secs 4hrs.40mins.19ses
4.	KSMC, KADUNA [607] 999mins 52sec. 16hrs.39mins.52secs.	40 [41mins. 46secs]	104 [126mins.18secs] 2hrs.06mins.18sec	16 [17mins.37secs]	20 [25mins 35secs.]	180 210mins.36secs 3hrs.30mins.36se.
5.	ASO FM, ABUJA [1,498] 614mins. 18secs 10hrs. 14mins. 18secs	121 [124mins.40secs] 2hrs.04mins.40sec	40 [38mins.49secs]	12 [21mins.56secs]	1 [1mins. 435sec]	174 187mins.08secs 3hrs.07mins.08sec
6.	RADIO RIVERS 2 FM, Port-Harcourt [704] 860mins. 14hrs. 20mins.	57 [42mins.54secs]	36 [31mins. 05secs]	18 [13mins.33se.]	3 [1min.51se.]	114 89mins.23secs 1hr.29mins.23se.
Total	5,634 7,164mins 119hrs.24mins. 49secs.	441 407mins.32secs 6hrs.47mins.	670 630mins.36secs 10hrs. 30mins 36secs.	164 205mins.16se. 3hrs.25m. 16se.	99 88mins.04se. 1hr. 28mins 04sec.	1374 13306mins 10mins.36sec.

## COMPARATIVE DATA ON TELEVISION (Evaluated reports only)

	STATION/TOTAL NEWS/TIME	DEMOCRACY Reports/Duration	POLITICAL ISSUES Reports/Duration	HUMAN RIGHTS Reports/Duration	PUBLIC ACC Reports/Duration	TOTALNEWS/TIME MONITORED
1.	NTA 2 CHANNEL 5 Lagos (937)(2,309mins) 38hrs. 29mins	55 [89mins. 27secs] 1hr. 29mins 27secs	104 [185mins. 01secs] 3hrs. 05mins 01secs	40 [88mins. 22secs] 1hr. 28mins 22secs	14 [27mins.] 04secs	213 389mins. 54secs. 6hrs. 29m. 54se
2.	CHANNELS TV, Lagos [862] [1,867mins. ] 31hrs. 07mins	60 [115mins. 13secs] 1hr. 55mins. 13secs	61 [9mins. 58secs] 1hr. 31mins. 58sec	43 [88mins.46sec] 1hr.28m.46sec.	15 [34mins. 47secs]	179 330mins.44secs. 5hrs.30m.44se.
3.	MBI, Obosi [979][1,653mins.]	112 [125mins.24secs]	116 [130mins.57secs]	33 [51mins 21secs]	10 [13mins. 04secs]	271 320mins.06secs 5hrs.20m.06secs.
4.	MiTV, Lagos [288] [550mins] 9hrs. 10mins.	16 [14mins. 30secs] 6secs	16 [12mins.24secs] 1 sec	7 [6mins.46secs] 3secs	0 - -	39 33mins
5.	NTA KADUNA [103][189mins. 03secs] 3hrs. 09mins. 03secs	4 [5mins.56secs]	22 [29mins.59secs]	7 [12mins. 58secs]	5 [8mins.35sec]	38 56mins. 08secs
6.	NTA, ABUJA [368][1,160mins] 19hrs. 20mins. 5hrs.36m.08sec.	81 [140mins. 02secs] 2hrs. 20m. 02secs	41 [88mins. 53secs] 1hr.28m. 53secs	39 [95mins.47se.] 1hr. 35m.47se.	6 [12mins.06se.]	167 336mins.08secs
Total	3,537 7,728mins. 03secs 28hrs. 48mins 03secs	328 490mins.32secs 8hrs.10mins.32secs	360 539mins.12secs 8hrs.59mins.12sec	169 344mins 5hrs44mins	50 95mins.36secs 1hr. 35m. 36se.	907 1,466mins 24hrs. 26mins

## SECTION 3: FINDINGS ON RADIO STATIONS

### 1. RADIO NIGERIA 2 METRO FM LAGOS

During the month under review, Radio Nigeria's reports were mostly fair. The station's news sourcing was good as reports originated from virtually all parts of the country especially during its 7am Network News.

However, the station continued to neglect sound-bites and often used voice-overs instead. For instance, out of the 26 news items evaluated between September 1 and 8 in the afternoon bulletins, only 8 had sound-bites. On the 3<sup>rd</sup>, the report titled: *NLC appeals to ASUU*, which could have been given more credibility with sound-bites, lacked this important element of broadcast report.

However, most of the station's reports were well-researched with enough time given to all sides to the issue so as to ensure balance. During the 4pm news when sound-bite was sometimes used, the station's audio was usually poor and inaudible, thereby defeating the purpose of the device.

The hourly broadcast of news from 7am to 1pm were mostly repetitions of the first news programme at 7am. The 12noon broadcast, however, tended to contain new material.

It appeared the station had technical glitches during the month as it went off air for about two hours in the course of transmitting the 1pm bulletin on the 8<sup>th</sup>.

The station should be commended for its relatively high focus on human rights this month. It had the highest total of 58 items in the category with a duration of 1 hour 25 minutes 19seconds. For example, between the 17<sup>th</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup>, the station broadcast seven reports on human rights in 12 minutes 38 seconds (758 seconds). the station had 16 reports on government activities in an airtime of 110 minutes 34 seconds (634seconds), and there were only six Democracy reports. It was also noteworthy that the station gave adequate coverage to the Jos and Ebonyi crises but gave scanty attention to reporting rural areas. It was also observed that the station usually aired news broadcasts in a timely manner.

### 2. RAYPOWER 100.5 FM, LAGOS

The reports on the station during the month under review, were mostly fair. But there were instances of lopsidedness in some reports. For example, in the report on the leader of of the factions of the Oodua Peoples' congress (OPC), Ganiyu Adams, which was aired on the 14<sup>th</sup>, only the Police were given coverage while the OPC leader was blacked out. Also, in the case of the Nigerian Union of Teachers versus the Lagos State Government over the return of private and missionary schools to their owners, NUT received extensive coverage while government views were ignored.

Virtually all the news items on the station lacked sound-bite while some needed follow-up for balance. The station also performed below average in diversification of news sources as many reports were generated from single sources. Added to the fact that the reports lacked sound-bites, this practice left monitors with the suspicion that the station culled some reports from other media or perhaps news agencies without giving them credit.

Raypower continued to give prominence to foreign news most especially the terrorist attack in the United States on September 11. The national news aired were mostly generated from Lagos State which meant that the station scored poorly in the scope of news sourcing.

However, the station deserved some credit for clear reception and timely airing of news bulletins. But some presenters made nonsense of their job by making unnecessary pauses and picking words from the script. Egregious repetition of news items was still rife on the station while it skipped several news programmes on Saturdays. For example, the 7am and 2pm news of Saturday September 15 were not relayed, while the 6pm and 8pm Newsflakes of the 22<sup>nd</sup> were also skipped with no reasons given for the lapses.

### 3. **FEDERAL RADIO CORPORATION OF NIGERIA, KADUNA**

The FRCN Kaduna, during the month in review, aired fairly objective reports. There were, however, some unbalanced reports. Out of 67 reports aired between the 10<sup>th</sup> and the 15<sup>th</sup> for instance, six were one-sided and needed follow-up. An example was on News Nationwide on the 20<sup>th</sup>. Some reports were detailed and well-researched but even these lacked sound-bites. As an example, out of the 31 reports evaluated between the 17<sup>th</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup>, only two had sound-bites.

The federal and state governments were highly projected and the station also placed more emphasis on personalities rather than government policies. Most reports were sourced from the Federal Capital Territory Abuja to the disadvantage of other parts of the country and even Kaduna where the station is based. Several of the reports in September had only single news sources. Out of the 67 reports evaluated, 41 had a single source each; 20 had two sources each while there were five cases of three sources and only one report had four news sources.

Commendably, the station employed sound-bites during the 5pm News Nationwide but there was a misapplication of the device on the 3<sup>rd</sup> during the report on the Kano State governor's speech to flood victims because the sound-bite was relayed in Hausa in an English language broadcast. Another commendable thing the station did was that during its bulletin on the day in reference, it referred to Niger State governor Abdulkadir Kure as Abdullahi Kure although the error was later corrected. Most other stations would over look such correction.

During the month, there were incessant power cuts at the station which affected its reception and some broadcasts were virtually inaudible. As an example, the news at 10am, 12noon and part of 5pm News Nationwide on the 3<sup>rd</sup> could not be monitored as the station was off air. It also indulged in starting bulletins late. But on the whole, reports were accurate and fair.

### 4. **KADUNA STATE MEDIA CORPORATION RADIO, KADUNA**

There were some cases of open bias on this station such as the black-out of reports on the Alliance for Democracy (AD). The other parties and especially the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) received generous coverage. KSMC did not employ sound-bites in its news broadcasts except during the 6pm Newsreel. Out of 72 reports evaluated between the 17<sup>th</sup> and the 29<sup>th</sup>, only eight were boosted with sound-bites.

However, there was an improvement in news sourcing diversity as four reports had not less than three sources each; 16 had two sources each and 20 were generated from single source each between the

17<sup>th</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup>. Government functionaries were heavily promoted as they formed the bulk of the news sources used by the station. The state House of Assembly, the state government functionaries featured prominently on the KSMC.

The bulletins tended to give information on area of news origination which was mostly Kaduna. It used Hausa in its 6pm Newsreel of the 15<sup>th</sup> when a member of the All Peoples Party (APP) called on the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) to reduce the N20,000 registration fee for councillorship contestants.

Unstable power supply resulted in poor reception of signals while some bulletins were skipped. The station repeated reports constantly while some bulletins had no items relevant to the main topic/variables.

#### 5. **ASO 93.5 FM, ABUJA**

Apart from being aggressively pro-government, the Aso station carried several one-sided reports. As an instance, during the 12 noon bulletin on the 27<sup>th</sup>, none of the items was balanced and they were not detailed either. Even when carrying reports on the three tiers of government, they were also one-sided. Reports on public accountability were virtually non-existent. During the entire month, the station aired one public accountability item with a duration of a minute and 43 seconds. The 12 reports on human rights were, however, balanced as government response to allegations of abuses were reflected.

Unfortunately, the newscasting was marred by grammatical errors, misuse of titles and inappropriate headings. Wrong titles were ascribed to some persons while the 6pm bulletin of the 27<sup>th</sup> was confusing. In a report on the Electoral Act Amendment Bill, the station announced that the final hearing was yet to be had while the sound-bite averred that the hearings had been concluded.

It was noteworthy, however, that the area of news origination was always indicated. Several reports were repeated and power failures were also noticed despite government ownership of the station. On September 1<sup>st</sup>, for example, the station went off midway through the 12 noon bulletin and it was off air throughout the 14<sup>th</sup>.

#### 6. **RADIO RIVERS 2 FM, PORT -HARCOURT**

The station was monitored only from the 1<sup>st</sup> to the 15<sup>th</sup>. During that period, it aired news relevant to all the main project variables. Unfortunately, several news broadcasts were interrupted by paid announcements. Events happening outside Port Harcourt received little attention unlike in the previous month when the grassroots got significant attention.

Some bias was observed. The report on the proscription of a youth organisation by a local government chairman was aired on the 7<sup>th</sup> in the 8pm State News in 46 seconds. The station merely aired the chairman's claims and blacked out the youth body.

Unnecessary repetition of reports was also noted. However, not less than 57 reports were classified under Democracy with a duration of 42 minutes and 54 seconds. Furthermore, between 1<sup>st</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> of the month, out of the 52 news reports evaluated, 23 were Democracy items.

## FINDINGS ON SPECIFIC TELEVISION STATIONS

### 1. NTA 2 CHANNEL 5, LAGOS

The reports had a wide reach-out as they covered virtually all parts of the country. It was generally noted, however, that NTA2 Channel 5 used sound-bite and actuality generously in its noon news bulletins, while the monitored news were devoid of such except on few occasions, such as during the 7 a.m. Headline News on the 6th, and a the report on the retrenched Laos State workers who besieged the House of Assembly.

Meanwhile, in the morn news bulletins between 10th and 14th, out of 11 newsitems evaluated, one had sound-bites. For example the 7 a.m. Headline News of the 13th titled: *Southern Govs reject new revenue formula*. On the other hand, the 7a.m. Headline News of 12th, in a report titled: *NLC and FG agree to liberalise oil sector*, had accurate actuality but lacked sound-bite. Another example of actuality without soundbite was the 9p.m. Network News of 4th when President Olusegun Obasanjo spoke on oil windfall. This represented a clear case of unprofssional practice in view of the importance of the topic. The station ought to have allowed viewers to hear the information the President was putting across.

There were also instances where the station's picture quality was poor and wrong actualities were used. For instance, during the 9p.m. Network News on the 20th, wrong actuality was used for a report on Golden Eaglets, Nigeria's under- 17 football team. Also, some of its reports needed follow-up, like the one on the former head of state, Retired General Abdulsalami Abubakar's non-appearance at the Oputa Panel, during the 7a.m. news on the 18th.

The overall performance of the station was not balanced as opposition political groups were not given adequate coverage. The reports centered mainly on government activities, while the ruling People's Democratic Party (PDP) dominated in the Democracy reports. For instance, between 24th and 29th, 33 items were covered under government activities while the subvariable, opposition, had fewer news items.

The station habitually hocked up late to the Network News during the month, and as well occasionally went off air abruptly, thereby cutting off certain aspects of the news. On some other occassions, the station failed to end news broadcasts properly before beaming commercials and paid announcements.

The station also habitually of skipped news bulletins for other programmes. For instance, for four days, between 10th and 15th, the 4p.m. and 7p.m. bulletins were not aired due to either football tournaments or the President's activity, while the 2 p.m. News on the Hour was skipped for Oputa Panel sitting . On Tuesday, 11th, half of the reports in the bulletin were on the terrorists bombing of the US.

The station performed excellently in mentioning the reports' area of origination.

### 2. NTA, KADUNA.

NTA Kaduna carried mainly reports on the state government and the reports were balanced with very diverse sources. The station used appropriate actualities and soundbites. For instance, out of the nine items evaluated between 24th and 29th, five cases of actualities and four sound-bites.

Four news items had single source, two double sources; one had three sources and there were two cases of four sources.

However, some of the station's reports needed follow-up which were not done. For instance, the case of 53 year-old man who impregnated a 13 year-old girl, reported on the 10th ought to have been followed up, but it was not done.

The station's reports were sometimes blurred while there was no transmission from the station on the 18th and 19th.

### **3. NTA, ABUJA**

Most of the station's reports were not balanced as issues were mainly presented from the government's point of view. Perhaps due to the station portraying the government in a positive light, only six reports were on public accountability out of a total 368 news items carried by the station. The six reports were given 12 minutes 06 seconds out of the 19hrs. 20 minutes used to broadcast news. Some unbalanced items were evident in the News Panorama of 1st.

However, between 17th and 22nd, the station's reports were mostly balanced, though the balance was achieved in reports not involving the federal government. Out of the total number of reports aired by the station, 167 news items in 5hrs 36mins.08secs were relevant to the project exercise and evaluated.

The station also sometimes skipped its News Panorama at 12 noon for the Oputa Panel. There were cases of excessive repetition of news items on the station.

### **4. CHANNELS TELEVISION, LAGOS**

Channels' reports were mostly detailed, comprehensive and balanced. But in some instances, they were one-sided or needed follow-up which were not done. For instance, a September 13th report on National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) threatening to close private broadcast stations defaulting in the remittance of 2.5 per cent of gross income to the commission. The report was biased and tilted in favour of the private broadcast stations. Also, the NLC, NULGE protest in Abuja, carried on the 12th, needed follow-up for balance, but this was not done.

The station's reports were dominated by the Afghanistan bombing from the 11th and the early news did not have sound-bite except actualities. But the 10p.m. News at Ten was always beefed up with appropriate sound-bite and actuality. For instance, between 24th and 29th, out of 34 news items evaluated, 17 lacked sound-bite. A report on September 25 titled: *Former CSO to Abdulsalami testifies at Oputa Panel*, did not have sound-bite in the 6pm, 7 pm and 8p.m news bulletins, while appropriate actuality and sound-bite were used in the 10p.m. news.

Although reports were given professional handling by Channels, most of the reports evaluated between 1st and 8th, were mainly from Lagos and Abuja FCT.

Generally, government activities got most projection. But the station aired many human rights reports between 17<sup>th</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup>. The station had the highest human rights reports (43) in September and the

second highest overall number of evaluated news reports among all the broadcast media ( radio and TV), while its time (1hr. 28mins.46secs) for the reports was even higher than RN2's 58 reports in 1hr. 25mins. 19secs. Most of the station's bulletins did not contain news items relevant to the project's topic variables. For example, 5p.m. Prime News on the 17th; 6p.m. News Track on 19th and 20th.

The station was jammed by Star FM radio on some days and this did not allow for any news evaluation. For instance 5p.m. prime News of 20th, 21st and 22nd. The station sometimes showed blurred pictures e.g. the 7p.m News Track of 13th, while it skipped its bulletins, like the 6p.m and 8p.m. Newstrack on 22nd.

#### **5. MINAJ BROADCASTING INTERNATIONAL (MBI), OBOSI**

On the whole, reports carried on MBI were fair with over 60 per cent having area of story origination mentioned. It was also observed that after the 7a.m. News Update, the remaining morning bulletins were repetitions. Reports from Africa and the international scene dominated on the station during the period under review, especially the September 11 terrorist attack on US. This accounted for the low number of news evaluated on the station (112 in 2hrs. 05mins. 24secs) out of a total news of 979 in 27hrs. 33mins).

Background reports were not added to make reports comprehensive and where there was background information, it was not detailed. For instance, the report of 19th 7a.m. News Update on a court's restraint on NBC over shutting of private stations was not detailed enough as there was no background information on what led to the court's judgement. The geographical spread of its news sourcing was restricted and reports on rural areas were scanty.

Over 90 per cent of the evaluated reports were without sound-bite and actuality. For example, between 24th and 29th out of 34 items evaluated, only 2 had sound-bite and actuality. Sometimes, the sound-bite did not correlate with actuality. For instance, on September 8, in a report on the Enugu North council boss, the sound-bite used did not correlate with the subject of discussion. At other times, the station used inappropriate actuality. For instance, on the 13th, inappropriate actuality was used in the News at Noon in a report titled: *FG and NLC agree to liberalise oil sector*. Instead of showing the meeting at which the agreement was reached or where the parties were addressing the press on their parley, the actuality of May Day Match past was shown and there was no sound-bite.

The station also carried one-sided reports like the one on, *Traditional leaders wade into Anyim, Egwu crisis*. Technical hitches also disrupted the station's transmission as manifested in delays in showing actualities - 11th, report on southern governors among 7a.m. News Update. The picture quality of actualities shown on the 21st, AM News, was bad, while the station went off air on the 20th and did not broadcast the news at noon. No explanations were given for this break transmission.

#### **4. MURHI INTERNATIONAL TV, (MiTV), LAGOS**

This station scheduled only one news for a day and that news, most of the time were either started late, allotted shorter time than scheduled or outrightly skipped. On the 5th, the 9.30p.m. news was traded for European football and the news started very late behind schedule when the football match had ended by 10p.m. Sometimes, the duration of its scheduled news programme was shortened. For instance, on the 27th, the 30minute news broadcast within 25 minutes, while it was only for 15 minutes on the 29th.

Where balanced and well analysed reports were carried, MiTV did not use actuality and sound-bite. it mostly used still pictures. An example is a news report on September 4th titled: *Titilayo Ajanaku calls for equal opportunity for men and women*. All the reports carried between 17th and 22nd lacked soundbit and actuality, except two reports on 22nd on Oputa Panel and a LG boss on zero allocation.

However, over 80 per cent of the stations reports under review stated the area of news origination.

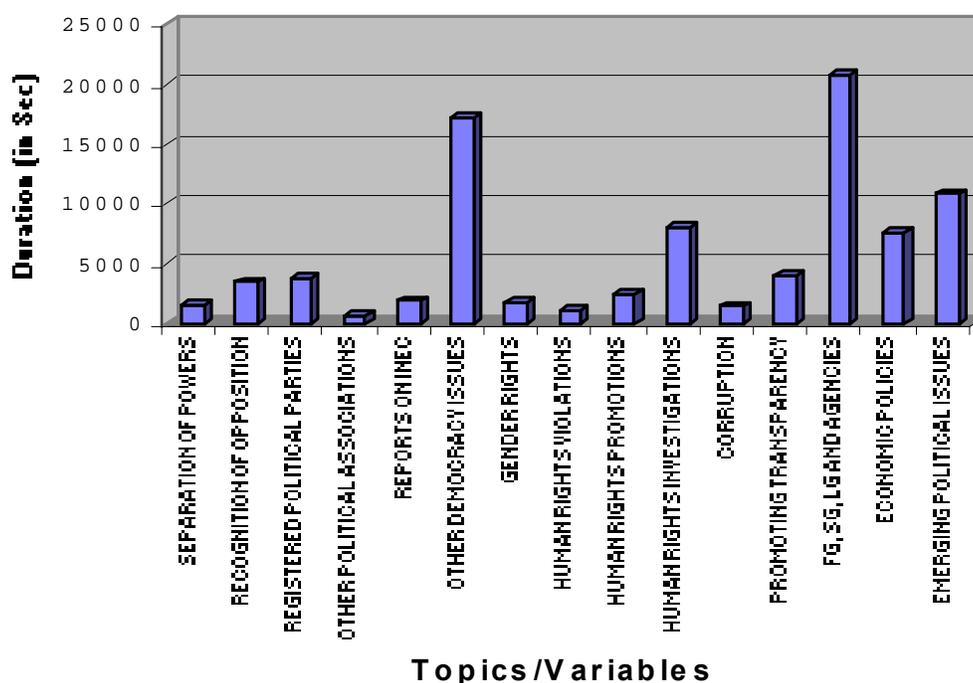
The station did not carry any public accountability report in September.

## SECTION 4: STATISTICAL DATA: RADIO AND TELEVISION

### *Duration/Percentage of Topics(Radio)*

<i>Topic/Variable</i>	<i>Duration of Progs.(In Sec)</i>	<i>Percentage (%)</i>
Separation of Powers	1546	1.79
Recognition of Opposition	3426	3.96
Registered Political Parties	3817	4.41
Other Political Associations	684	0.79
Reports on INEC	1873	2.16
Other Democracy Issues	17225	19.89
Gender Rights	1799	2.08
Human Rights Violations	1170	1.35
Human Rights Promotions	2442	2.82
Human Rights Investigations	7989	9.23
Corruption	1437	1.66
Promoting Transparency	4017	4.64
FG, SG, LG and Agencies	20804	24.03
Economic Policies	7511	8.67
Emerging Political Issues	10844	12.52
<b>Total:</b>	<b>86584.00</b>	<b>100.00</b>

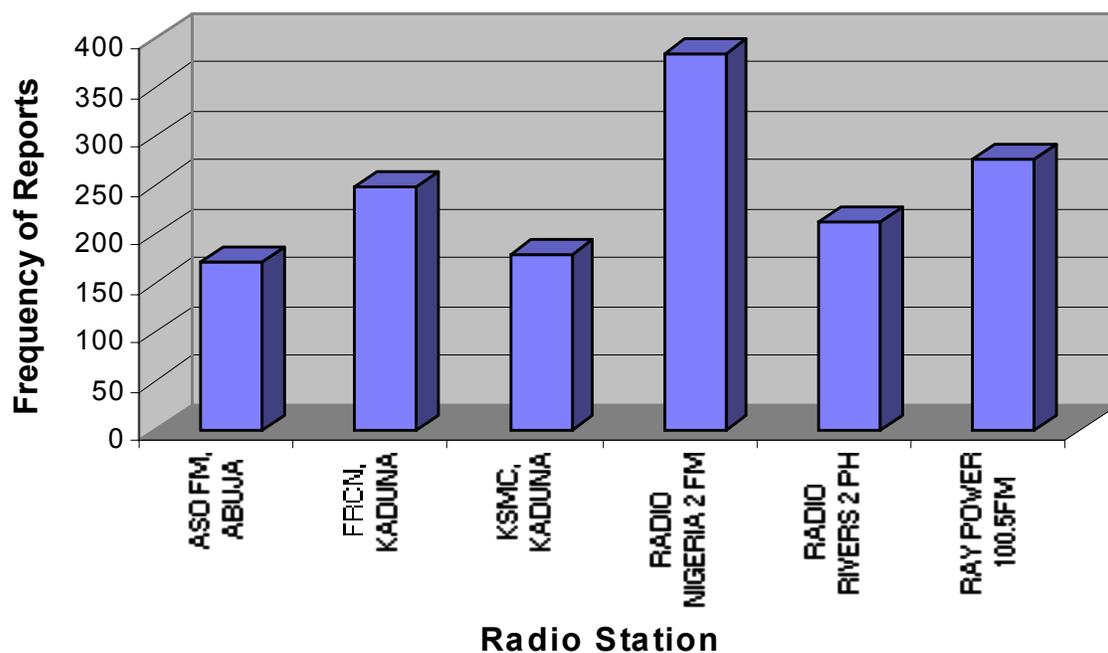
### **Duration of Topics in Seconds (Radio)**



## Frequency of Radio Stations (Radio)

<i>Radio Station</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage (%)</i>
ASO FM, ABUJA	172	11.67
FRCN, KADUNA	249	16.89
KSMC, KADUNA	179	12.14
RADIO NIGERIA 2 FM	385	26.12
RADIO RIVERS 2 PH	212	14.38
RAY POWER 100.5FM	277	18.79
<b>Total:</b>	<b>1474</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Frequency of Reports (Radio)



## Frequency/Percentage of Areas of Origin (Radio)

<i>Area</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage (%)</i>
ABIA	11	0.75
ADAMAWA	12	0.81
AFRICA	3	0.20
AKWA IBOM	19	1.29
ANAMBRA	12	0.81
BAUCHI	17	1.15
BENUE	11	0.75
BORNO	3	0.20
BAYELSA	6	0.41
CROSS RIVER	16	1.09
DELTA	5	0.34
EBONYI	23	1.56
EDO	6	0.41
EKITI	3	0.20
ENUGU	16	1.09
FCT ABUJA	472	32.02
GOMBE	4	0.27
IMO	3	0.20
INTERNATIONAL	12	0.81
JIGAWA	29	1.97
KEBBI	26	1.76
KADUNA	160	10.85
KOGI	5	0.34
KANO	13	0.88
KATSINA	11	0.75
KWARA	9	0.61
LAGOS	145	9.84
NASARAWA	17	1.15
NIGER	10	0.68
NIGERIA	1	0.07
NIL	94	6.38
ONDO	10	0.68
OGUN	10	0.68
OSUN	6	0.41
OYO	38	2.58
PLATEAU	37	2.51
RIVERS	134	9.09
SOKOTO	15	1.02
TARABA	14	0.95
YOBE	10	0.68
ZAMFARA	26	1.76
<i>Total:</i>	<b>1474</b>	<b>100.00</b>

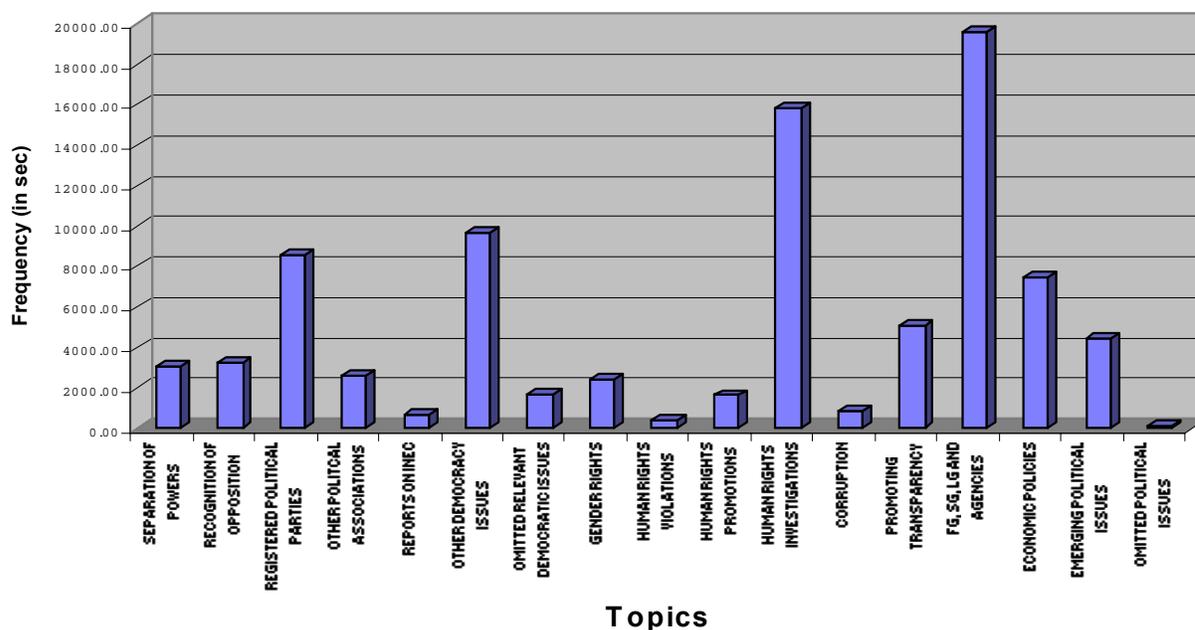
## Frequency of Scope of Coverage (Radio)

<i>Scope of Coverage</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage (%)</i>
Abia	6	0.41
Adamawa	9	0.61
Africa	7	0.47
Akwa Ibom	14	0.95
Anambra	9	0.61
Bauchi	10	0.68
Benue	12	0.81
Borno	3	0.20
Bayelsa	2	0.14
Cross River	11	0.75
Delta	5	0.34
Ebonyi	30	2.04
Edo	4	0.27
Ekiti	1	0.07
Enugu	12	0.81
Fct Abuja	22	1.49
Gombe	4	0.27
Imo	2	0.14
International	22	1.49
Jigawa	23	1.56
Kebbi	21	1.42
Kaduna	109	7.39
Kogi	4	0.27
Kano	6	0.41
Katsina	9	0.61
Kwara	7	0.47
Lagos	74	5.02
Nasarawa	12	0.81
North Central	1	0.07
North East	1	0.07
Niger	5	0.34
Nigeria	837	56.78
North West	1	0.07
Ondo	4	0.27
Osun	5	0.34
Oyo	4	0.27
Plateau	29	1.97
Rivers	76	5.16
South East	1	0.07
Sokoto	7	0.47
South South	7	0.47
South West	4	0.27
Taraba	9	0.61
South	6	0.41
North	2	0.14
Yobe	8	0.54
Zamfara	17	1.15
<b>Total:</b>	<b>1474</b>	<b>100.00</b>

## Duration/Percentage of Topics in Secs. (Television)

<i>Topic</i>	<i>Duration (in Secs.)</i>	<i>Percentage (%)</i>
SEPARATION OF POWERS	3053.00	3.49
RECOGNITION OF OPPOSITION	3259.00	3.73
REGISTERED POLITICAL PARTIES	8616.00	9.86
OTHER POLITICAL ASSOCIATIONS	2617.00	3.00
REPORTS ON INEC	675.00	0.77
OTHER DEMOCRACY ISSUES	9686.00	11.09
OMITTED RELEVANT DEMOCRACY ISSUES	1687.00	1.93
GENDER RIGHTS	2375.00	2.72
HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS	408.00	0.47
HUMAN RIGHTS PROMOTIONS	1636.00	1.87
HUMAN RIGHTS INVESTIGATIONS	15820.00	18.11
CORRUPTION	864.00	0.99
PROMOTING TRANSPARENCY	5070.00	5.80
FG, SG, LG AND AGENCIES	19615.00	22.45
ECONOMIC POLICIES	7464.00	8.54
EMERGING POLITICAL ISSUES	4400.00	5.04
OMITTED POLITICAL ISSUES	120.00	0.14
<i>Total:</i>	<b>8,7365.00</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Duration of Topics (insec)



## Frequency/Percentage of Areas of Origin (Television)

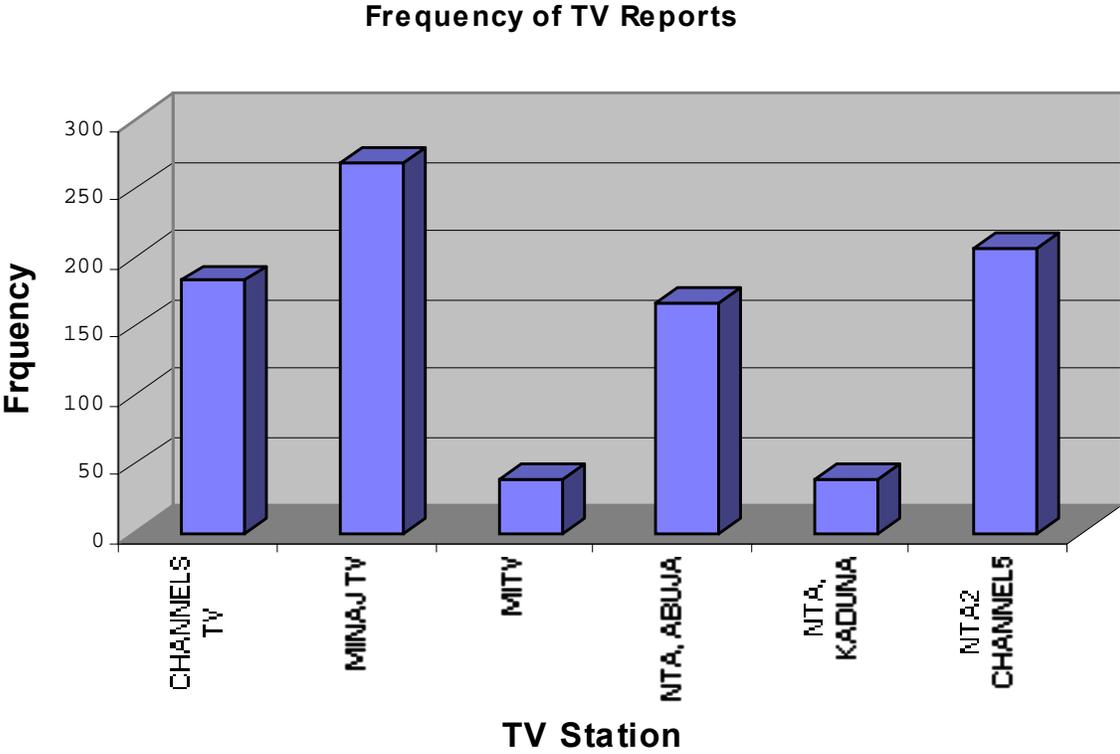
<i>Area</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage (%)</i>
Abia	3	0.33
Adamawa	2	0.22
Akwa Ibom	4	0.44
Anambra	10	1.11
Bauchi	15	1.66
Benue	2	0.22
Bayelsa	10	1.11
Cross River	9	1.00
Delta	5	0.55
Ebonyi	14	1.55
Edo	18	2.00
Ekiti	5	0.55
Enugu	16	1.77
Fct Abuja	419	46.45
Gombe	1	0.11
Imo	7	0.78
International	20	2.22
Jigawa	5	0.55
Kaduna	47	5.21
Kano	12	1.33
Katsina	10	1.11
Kwara	1	0.11
Lagos	125	13.86
Nasarawa	1	0.11
Niger	1	0.11
Nigeria	1	0.11
Nil	44	4.88
Ondo	13	1.44
Ogun	4	0.44
Osun	5	0.55
Oyo	25	2.77
Plateau	24	2.66
Rivers	5	0.55
Sokoto	2	0.22
Taraba	10	1.11
West Africa	1	0.11
Yobe	1	0.11
Zamfara	5	0.55
<b><i>Total:</i></b>	<b>902</b>	<b>100.00</b>

## Frequency/Percentage of Scope of Coverage (Television)

<i>Scope</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage (%)</i>
Abia	2	0.22
Adamawa	1	0.11
Africa	2	0.22
Akwa Ibom	4	0.44
Anambra	8	0.89
Bauchi	2	0.22
Benue	2	0.22
Bayelsa	6	0.67
Cross River	8	0.89
Delta	6	0.67
Ebonyi	13	1.44
Edo	13	1.44
Enugu	6	0.67
Fct Abuja	7	0.78
Gombe	1	0.11
Imo	1	0.11
International	16	1.77
Jigawa	1	0.11
Kaduna	33	3.66
Kano	7	0.78
Katsina	6	0.67
Lagos	42	4.66
Nasarawa	1	0.11
North Central	4	0.44
Niger Delta	10	1.11
North East	3	0.33
Niger	1	0.11
Nigeria	637	70.62
Ondo	5	0.55
Ogun	1	0.11
Osun	2	0.22
Oyo	2	0.22
Plateau	18	2.00
Rivers	3	0.33
South East	9	1.00
Sokoto	3	0.33
South South	1	0.11
South West	4	0.44
Taraba	4	0.44
West Africa	3	0.33
South	2	0.22
North	1	0.11
Yobe	1	0.11
<b>Total:</b>	<b>902</b>	<b>100.00</b>

# Television: Frequency of TV Reports (%)

<i>TV Station</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage (%)</i>
CHANNELS TV	183	20.29
MINAJ TV	269	29.82
MITV	39	4.32
NTA, ABUJA	167	18.51
NTA, KADUNA	38	4.21
NTA2 CHANNEL5	206	22.84
<i>Total:</i>	<b>902</b>	<b>100.00</b>



## **SECTION 5: NOTES AND KEY TO ABBREVIATIONS**

The news reports which were monitored but not evaluated can be categorised into many departments. They included sports, business and finance, overland and maritime transport, aviation, law and adjudication, violence and crime, communication, agriculture, religious matters, the environment, the arts and entertainment, housing, education and the traditional institution.

<b>FGEXE</b>	-	Federal Government
<b>SGEXE</b>	-	State Government
<b>LG</b>	-	Local Government
<b>INEC</b>	-	Independent National Electoral Commission
<b>NGR</b>	-	Nigeria
<b>PORG</b>	-	Political Organisations
<b>IND</b>	-	Individuals
<b>NORTH</b>	-	Northern States
<b>FGJUD</b>	-	Federal Judiciary
<b>FGAS</b>	-	National Assembly
<b>FCT</b>	-	Federal Capital Territory, Abuja
<b>AD</b>	-	Alliance for Democracy
<b>APP</b>	-	All Peoples Party
<b>PDP</b>	-	Peoples Democratic Party

## SECTION 6: GLOSSARY OF TERMS

1. **Monitoring:** Assessing the programmes or publications of a news medium in terms of journalistic standards and production characteristics.
2. **Square Inches:** This refers to the length and breadth of the news item being monitored.
3. **Topic:** This concerns the variables being monitored in a particular publication or station.
4. **Subject:** This concerns the precise issue being monitored under a particular topic. For example, the annual convention of a political party is a subject under democracy (DM).
5. **Source:** This applies to the person, group or authority from whom or which the information was elicited for the news report being monitored.
6. **Mention:** This concerns the person, group or institution being promoted in the report being monitored. Note that the promotion could be positive or negative.
7. **Area:** The term refers to the city, state or region where the report was sourced. For example, Abuja Federal Capital Territory
8. **Station:** This means the electronic broadcast medium being monitored. For instance, Channels Television.
9. **Bulletin:** An item of news in a programme.
10. **Duration:** This refers to the length of time that a news item being monitored was aired. For instance, 20 seconds.
11. **Actuality:** The screening of the event being reported in a broadcast.
12. **Still:** A library picture used to illustrate a news report
13. **Sound-bite:** This refers to the actual voice of the person being reported in the news broadcast. It means hearing the news subject speak on radio or television.



**M**edia Rights Agenda (MRA) is an independent, non-governmental organisation established in August 1993 for the purpose of promoting and protecting press freedom and freedom of expression in Nigeria. MRA is registered in Nigeria, and has Observer Status with the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights in Banjul, The Gambia.

The Aims and Objectives of Media Rights Agenda are:

- to promote respect and recognition for press freedom and freedom of expression in Nigeria;
- to provide protection and support for journalists and writers engaged in the lawful pursuit of their professional duties;
- to promote the highest standards of professional ethics, integrity, training and conduct in the journalism profession; and
- to bring about a conducive social and legal atmosphere for the practice of journalism, and ensure the protection of the journalist's right not to be compelled to work against his or her conviction or disclose confidential sources of information.

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