

AIRWAVES MONITOR

A REPORT ON THE BROADCAST MEDIA MONITORING PROJECT

September 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)

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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

Executive Director, Media Rights Agenda

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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

* *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

Generally this month, there was high incidence of lapses in the broadcast media. All of them, not excluding the privately owned ones, turned out to be government mouth-pieces. In all the radio and television stations monitored, government at all levels and their agencies got the most projections in a positive way that suggested the media was out to promote government activities, while issues of public accountability and human rights were grossly under-reported.

For instance, between 20th and 24th, NTA2 Channel5 Lagos did not carry any news on human rights likewise Raypower within the same week. From 6th to 11th, Radio Rivers, Port Harcourt had no news on public accountability, likewise Minaj at Obosi between 27th and 31st.

Unlike in previous months where Democracy Issues got the highest number of news items and time, in August, Political Issues dominated the news bulletins on the electronic media. Considering the fact that we are in a democratic dispensation in Nigeria, issues bordering on our system of government should have been the priority.

The media gave prominence to personalities in government which occasioned the high incidence of news items related to the political issues variable and its sub-variable—government and its agencies.

The use of sound-bite and actuality rather than increase, was reducing as stations like Channels and NTA2 Channel 5 which were generously using sound-bites and actualities before, relaxed in these areas. Channels TV for instance, did not use them in its morning reports this month while NTA 2 Channel 5 used voice-overs and still pictures in most cases, especially during the 7pm news.

Poor reception, bad pictures and various technical faults were constantly experienced by virtually all the stations. Aso FM in Abuja went off- air for days. The pattern during the month was that listeners and viewers could not differentiate between paid announcements and news as news bulletins were infused with obituary and missing car announcements while in some other instances, commercials received priority over editorial items. For example, FRCN Kaduna once presented commercials at a time when news broadcast should have begun.

Inasmuch as governments in the three tiers engaged in more activities than any individual or group, the broadcast media, in order not to fail in its responsibility as the society's watchdog, may need to focus more on the accountability of elected officials to the electorate and the matter of citizens' rights. In this wise, cases of fraud and corruption by public officials need to be closely followed and reported while the stations should not turn a blind eye on the victimization of citizens. For example, the issue of registering new political parties by INEC deserves more attention than it received in August.

Electronic media, especially radio, has the bulk of its potential listeners in the rural areas but throughout the month, the people in those places as well as their activities received scant attention. Virtually all the stations focused relentlessly on the towns and cities. The only exception to this was the Radio Rivers 2FM which paid some attention to the people in the hinterland in its news-gathering and dissemination.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It has been said in these reports before but it bears repetition to state that employment of sound-bites and actualities by the radio and television stations would authenticate news reports since one would be hearing “from the horse’s mouth” so to say. It gives flesh to otherwise dry stories and confers some insight into the various happenings around us. Therefore the producers are strongly urged to employ these devices in news-gathering so as to enhance their professionalism.

The noticeable improvement in the services of the National Electric Power Authority (NEPA) did not impact positively on the performance of the broadcast media this month.. This is because the monitoring still picked up epileptic transmission , fade-outs and assorted breaks in transmission. All the stations were affected. Their management should pull resources together and procure equipment which will ensure smooth transmission. After all, broadcasting should be serious business.

SECTION 2: GENERAL FINDINGS

Period of Report: August 1—31

No of Radio stations monitored: Six (6) (Radio Nigeria 2 Metro FM, Lagos; FRCN, Kaduna; Kaduna State Media Corporation (KSMC) Kaduna; Aso 93.5 FM, Abuja; Radio Rivers 2 FM, Port Harcourt; and Raypower 100.5 FM Lagos)

Total News Items monitored on Radio: 6,440

Total duration of news items : 153 hours, 19 mins, 18 secs (9,199 mins, 18 secs)

No of evaluated items falling under project variables: 1,854

Duration of evaluated items: 30 hours, 11 mins, 27 secs (1,811 mins, 27 secs)

Percentage of evaluated items: 28.8 %

No of Television Stations monitored: Six (6) (NTA 2 Channel 5, Lagos; NTA, Abuja; NTA, Kaduna; Channels Television, Lagos; Murhi International Television, Lagos; Minaj Broadcasting International, Obosi)

Total news items on television: 3,644

Duration of news items: 136 hours, 29 mins, 35 secs (8189 mins, 35 secs)

No of evaluated items falling under project variables: 1,118

Duration of evaluated reports: 31 hours, 32 secs (1860 mins, 32 secs)

Percentage of evaluated news reports: 30.7 %

Topic/Variables Monitored

Democracy Issues: On the monitored radio and television stations, a total of 1072 reports were on Democracy Issues in a duration of 22hours, 28mins, 36 secs (1408mins,36secs). Out of this total, radio stations broadcast 631 reports in a time of 10 hours 38 mins, 09 secs while the television stations aired 441 reports in 12 hours, 50 mins, 27 secs (770 mins,27secs). Of the 1854 total reports evaluated on radio, those classified in the Democracy variable were 34 percent of the total while on television, the percentage was 39.4 of total reports.

Political Issues: In this topic/variable, 1531 reports were aired in 29 hours, 55mins, 16secs (1795mins,16 secs) out of which television stations aired 543 reports in 14 hours, 12 mins, 20secs (852mins, 20secs). This worked out at 53.2 percent of the total on radio and 48.5 percent of the total on television.

Human Rights: Reports in this topic/variable were 174 on both arms of the electronic media in a time of 3 hours, 33mins, 57secs (213 mins, 57 secs). Of this total, radio stations aired 108 reports in 1hour, 41 mins, 33secs (101 mins, 33secs) while the television stations broadcast 66 human rights-related reports in 1hour, 52mins, 24secs (112mins,24secs).

Public Accountability: There were 195 evaluated reports in this category with a duration of 4hours,12mins, 47secs (252 mins,47 secs). The six radio stations monitored aired 127 news items in 2hours, 07mins,27secs (127mins,27secs) while television presented 68 reports in a time of 2 hours, 05 mins,20secs. Reports classified under this category constituted 6.9 percent of the total 1,854 evaluated news items on radio. On television, reports classified in the category made up 6.1 percent of the 1,118 which were evaluated.

Mentions (Media Projection)

Highest Positive: Federal Government and its agencies

Least Positive: Local Governments

Highest Negative: State Governments and their agencies

Least Negative: Prominent Individuals

Most Promoted Institution: The three tiers of government

News Origination

The three highest preponderance of news origination (in descending order) was as follows: Federal Capital Territory; Rivers State; Lagos State.

Geographical Scope of Reports

Highest preponderance (in descending order): Nigeria; South-East Nigeria; South-West Nigeria; North-Central Nigeria; International.

COMPARATIVE DATA ON RADIO (Evaluated reports only)

RADIO STATION	DEMOCRACY Reports/Duration	POLITICAL ISSUES Reports/Duration	HUMAN RIGHTS Reports/Duration	PUBLIC ACC. Reports/Duration	TOTAL NEWS Reports/Duration
RADIONIGERIA2, Lagos	128 (121mins 44secs)	202 (169mins 38secs)	26 (22mins 49secs)	25 (23mins 8secs)	381 (337mins 11secs)
FRCN Kaduna	81 (85mins 57secs)	203 (225mins 34secs)	14 (15mins 34secs)	40 (48mins 19secs)	338 (374mins,38secs)
KSMC Kaduna	62 (69mins 26secs)	210 (229mins 46secs)	12 (15mins 33secs)	36 (48mins 19secs)	320 (356mins 25secs)
ASO FM Abuja	117 (152mins 24secs)	88 (74mins 53secs)	4 (4mins 1sec)	1 (37secs)	210 (231mins 24secs)
RAYPOWER Lagos	121 (98mins 25secs)	191 (127mins 35secs)	27 (24mins 25secs)	17 (10mins 14secs)	356 (260mins 39secs)
RADIO RIVERS 2 P.H.	122 (112mins 20secs)	94 (116mins 50secs)	25 (19mins 51secs)	8 (3mins 29secs)	249 (251mins 50secs)
ALL RADIO STATIONS	631 (638mins 09secs)	988 (942mins 56secs)	108 (101mins 33secs)	127 (127mins 27secs)	1854 (1,811mins 27secs)

TOTAL MONITORED REPORTS (RADIO)

1. Radio Nigeria 2 (Metro FM) Lagos.
1621 reports in a time of 2,527 minutes or 42 hours, 07 minutes.
2. FRCN National Station, Kaduna
875 reports in a time of 1,155 minutes, 42 seconds or 19 hours, 15 minutes, 42 seconds.
3. KSMC State Radio, Kaduna
764 reports in a time of 1106 minutes, 57 seconds or 18 hours, 26 minutes, 57 seconds.
4. ASO FM RADIO, Abuja
483 reports in a time of 565 minutes, 19 seconds or 9 hours, 25 minutes, 19 seconds.
5. RAYPOWER 100.5 FM, Lagos
1,597 reports in a time of 1,565 minutes or 26 hours, 05 minutes.
6. RADIO RIVERS 2 FM , Port Harcourt
1100 reports in a time of 2,280 minutes or 38 hours.

ALL STATIONS: 6,440 reports in a time of 9,199 minutes, 18 seconds or 153 hours, 19 minutes, 18 seconds.

COMPARATIVE DATA ON TELEVISION (Evaluated reports only)

TV STATION	DEMOCRACY Reports/Duration	POLITICAL ISSUES Reports/Duration	HUMAN RIGHTS Reports/Duration	PUBLIC ACC. Reports/Duration	TOTAL NEWS Reports/Duration
NTA2 Lagos	76 (133mins 20secs)	136 (252mins 23secs)	12 (19mins 48secs)	11 (26mins 48secs)	235 (431mins2secs.)
NTA Kaduna	13 (21mins 33secs)	44 (59mins 49secs)	4 (5mins 49secs)	7 (10mins 31secs)	68 (97mins 02secs)
NTA Abuja	83 (173mins 35secs)	87 (177mins 31secs)	8 (17mins 35secs)	13 (22mins 22secs)	191 (390mins 23secs)
CHANNELS Lagos	118 (237mins 23secs)	75 (129mins 26secs)	18 (27mins 02secs)	18 (44mins 41secs)	229 (442mins16secs)
MBI Obosi.	131 (168mins 40secs)	157 (179mins 17secs)	18 (27mins 02 secs)	15 (19mins 19secs)	321 (394min 06secs)
MITV Lagos	20 (36mins 36secs)	44 (54min 36secs)	6 (11mins 34secs)	4 (3mins 24secs)	74 (105mins 44secs)
ALL STATIONS	441 (770mins 27secs)	543 (852mins 20secs)	66 (112mins 24secs)	68 (125mins 20secs)	1,118 (1,860mins,32secs)

TOTAL MONITORED REPORTS (TELEVISION)

1. NTA 2, Channel 5, Lagos.
851 reports in a time of 2444 minutes or 40 hours, 44 minutes.
2. Nigerian Television Authority, Kaduna.
176 reports in a time of 308 minutes, 50 seconds or 5 hours, 8 minutes, 50 seconds.
3. Nigerian Television Authority, Abuja.
479 reports in a time of 1,477 minutes or 24 hours, 37 minutes.
4. Channels Television, Lagos.
835 reports in a time of 1,665 minutes or 27 hours, 45 minutes.
5. Minaj Broadcasting International, Obosi
960 reports in a time of 1,568 minutes, 45 seconds or 26 hours, 08 minutes, 45 seconds.
6. Murhi International Television, Lagos.
343 reports in a time of 726 minutes or 12 hours, 06 minutes.

ALL STATIONS

3,644 reports in a time of 8189 minutes, 35 seconds or 136 hours, 29 minutes, 35 seconds.

SECTION 3: FINDINGS ON SPECIFIC RADIO STATIONS

1. RADIO NIGERIA 2 METRO FM, LAGOS

It is noteworthy that there was an improvement in the reception of the 4pm Network News from Abuja. For most part of the month, the audio was quite clear unlike in previous months when the reception was poor. However, the station may be losing touch with the element of proximity in newsgathering and reporting as it broadcast more foreign news than local ones in August.

For example, on August 27, during the World News at 12noon, out of the 12 reports, eight were on foreign events while sports and national news amounted to four (4). Also, on the 29th, during the 8am bulletin, foreign news items were more than national news.

On August 18, during the 4pm Network News, there was no news relevant to the project's topic/variables out of the 20 items relayed on the station.

Although it fared better in terms of origination of news and the geographical scope of reports, the station continued using voice-overs rather than sound-bites. For instance, out of the seven reports monitored during the 4pm Network News on August 21, only two featured sound-bites. On the same programme on the 22th, two items out of eight featured sound-bites. On the whole, the network news tended to be more comprehensive and with more sound-bites than the station's self-generated news. As an illustration, not one internal bulletin monitored between August 20 and 25 had any sound-bite.

Most of the Metro station's news reports in the month under review were fair and reasonably balanced but there were some one-sided reports which neglected to consider opposing or alternative viewpoints. For instance, on August 13 during the 7am Network News, a report on an Ondo state commissioner allegedly involved in some fraudulent transaction, only presented the government's case without a follow-up to get the comments of the accused man.

Lopsidedness was also observed in its rather heavy focus on government activities. As an illustration, the highest number of reports on the station were classified under the Political Issues topic/variable—202 out of a total 381 items. As a further illustration, out of the 62 reports evaluated between August 25 and 25, those on Political Issues were 47 (75.8 %) while in the same period, no report was classified under Public Accountability. From August 1—4, the station carried no reports on corruption in government. If this is added to the already heavy emphasis on news from official sources, the station looked rather like a governmental public relations outfit.

The Metro FM appeared not to be bothered unduly by the topicality of its news. This is because it was observed that repeated reports were not updated. For instance, from the 27th to the 31st, much of the 7am network news was derived from the previous day's bulletins but the reference was still to "today" instead of "yesterday" concerning the reported events. A quoted example is as follows: "The National Assembly today said that it would look into the alleged threat to the life of the Senate president." This was in the news programme of August 30 which was itself a repeat of that of the 29th.

It was also observed that the station went off air intermittently during news broadcasts.

2. FEDERAL RADIO CORPORATION OF NIGERIA (FRCN) KADUNA

On the whole, the news aired by this station was objective and balanced but the sourcing of news required more diversification. For example, out of the 68 items aired from August 20 to 25, fully 49 were derived from a single news source, 12 had two sources each while seven were from three sources each. However, all the reports with multiple sources were detailed.

Out of the 67 items which fell under the project variables, between August 20 to 25, eight lacked balance while only six featured sound-bites. The news broadcasts often commenced a few minutes after the hour perhaps because commercials received a higher priority. It was noted that many commercials were aired at the top of the hour. If the advertisers had stipulated news adjacency in their contract, they certainly didn't ask the station managers to supplant the news with their materials. One possible hazard in the practice is that it may alienate some listeners or mislead others who would erroneously conclude that the news had been canned.

However, the station should be commended for broadening its newsgathering in such a way that much of its reports were derived from Kano State although as stated earlier, further work is required on this. It was also gratifying that it gave reasonable coverage to individuals.

3. KADUNA STATE MEDIA CORPORATION (KSMC) KADUNA

Although there was an improvement in the diversification of news sources compared with previous months, there is still room for improvement as there were more single source reports than any others. For example, between August 6 and 11, out of the 100 items evaluated, not less than 72 each had a single source; 17 had two news sources each; nine had three news sources while two had four sources. There were mix-ups at times. For example on the 11th, the Newsreel at 6pm was peppered with apologies due to the glitches.

Sound-bites were basically restricted to the Newsreel at 6pm. As a result, from the 6th to the 11th, out of 100 reports evaluated, only 14 had sound-bites. Between the 27th and the 31st, out of 62 evaluated reports, only two featured sound-bites. There was relatively heavy focus on government functionaries and their activities.

Issues of democracy and human rights were not given adequate prominence. Most of the reports on the station originated from its immediate catchment area—Kaduna State. Like some other stations, the KSMC also treated many advertisers' announcements like news, thereby confusing listeners.

4. ASO 93.5 FM, ABUJA

The station's reports this month generally lacked balance as several reports were one-sided. Also Aso FM aired the least number of reports (just one) for the Public Accountability category of all the six radio stations being monitored. Although the station usually employed no sound-bite in its 12noon news programme, it made an exception on August 22 when a report on the three tiers of government featured sound-bites.

It was observed that the news and current affairs programme “Parliament Today” was rested for some time perhaps because the legislators were on recess. But this sounds strange because the producers of the programme could easily have kept it going and perhaps even bring vacationing legislators to the studio to comment on outstanding issues.

5. RADIO RIVERS 2 FM, PORT HARCOURT

On this station, prominence was given to state and local government matters while in many instances, paid announcements and other commercials dominated the news programmes. Although it is legitimate for the station to chase advert revenue, too many commercial breaks in a news programme is unfair on the listeners and constitutes the antithesis of a professional presentation. Two examples of these egregious infusions were the Globe at Nine (9am) on August 18 and State News (6.30am) on the 17th.

The station regularly used voice-overs. Apart from this, it always gave considerable attention to news emanating from the Rivers State government and its agencies.

For instance, on the 7th, during the State News at 6.30am, a report on the cleavage between Rivers State Governor, Dr Peter Odili and the Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives, Prince Chibudom Nwuche, received not less than 3minutes, 8seconds of airtime. It got far more airtime than any other item in that programme.

The issues relevant to the project’s topic/variables tended to get short-shrift as the station focused relentlessly on the activities of the state and local governments and their agencies.

As an illustration, out of 299 items broadcast from the 20th to the 25th, only 52 were classified under the four main variables.

Apart from this, irregularity was noted in the duration of scheduled news programmes which is somewhat unusual. The same news programme could air for 10 minutes today and air for 20 the next day. One could not hazard the reason for this variation.

The station didn’t seem to have any interest in doing follow-ups on reports of broad public interest. Often such reports were given limited time. For example, on August 28, the item on the National Assembly’s deliberations on the Electoral Bill and a proposed revenue formula was dismissed in just 26 seconds. The item was not detailed and there was no follow-up on the outcome of the legislative debate.

There was also a time when the station neglected to follow-up an issue bordering on public accountability. This was when the state legislature summoned a supervisor in the works ministry and the treasurer of a local government in the state over the fraudulent mismanagement of a N10million grant. By failing in this task, the station showed some dereliction in its duty of informing and educating the citizenry about the performance of elected functionaries and thereby help to sustain democracy in the country.

However, Radio Rivers 2 FM deserves commendation for its coverage of the grassroots and for an unbroken transmission during the period in review.

6. RAYPOWER 100.5FM, LAGOS

By and large, Raypower's reports for the month showed some balance with much time devoted to follow-ups where necessary. However, a good proportion of the reports lacked sound-bites. As illustration, out of 222 news items evaluated from August 13 to 31, only two had sound-bites and these two were Newsdesk at Noon on the 17th (a report on consultation and dialogue); and Newsflakes at 6pm on the 28th. Commendably, the station tended to disclose the area of origination of its reports. Between the 13th and the 18th, out of 61 reports evaluated in the mornings, 51 contained area of origination.

However, some programmes were so brief that they ended prematurely. An example was the Newsflakes at 8pm and also News at 4pm during the same week. Conversely, the monitoring turned up some detailed and even-handed reports. On August 15, the report on the change of designation of the Nigeria Police Force was an example of competent reportage. The same thing goes for the August 17 report in Newsflakes on the Nigerian Labour Congress.

The practice whereby foreign news outnumbered national ones persisted on Raypower 100.5FM. In the week running from August 27 to 31, for instance, out of total reports of 277, only 16 fell under the four main project variables. The 16 had a total airtime of 422 seconds (7 minutes, 2 seconds).

In the same way, from August 1 to 4, out of total reports of 204, only 9 were classified for the variables with an airtime of 570 seconds (9minutes, 30 seconds).

Occasionally, the station skipped scheduled news programmes. An example was the 7am Global News of August 4 and the 2pm City Update of the 18th.

SECTION 4: FINDINGS ON SPECIFIC TELEVISION STATIONS

1. NTA 2 CHANNEL 5, LAGOS

During the month, the station's reports were largely fair and detailed but from August 6th, it experienced some technical problems which resulted in poor presentation of news programmes and at times, outright cancellation of others. For example, the station which in earlier months employed sound-bites generously, together with actualities, now made do with voice-over and still pictures. On August 10, on the 7pm news programme, there was neither sound-bite nor actuality.

Apart from this, on the 2nd, the broadcast of the item "FAAN staff embark on strike" was badly presented with an inappropriate actuality and poor picture quality. The same things applied to "Chikwe suspends striking FAAN workers" which was aired the same day. Both on the 3rd and the 17th, there was no audio at all during the 7pm news while on the 13th, the 2pm news was skipped for unknown reasons.

Concerning the separate reports on the FAAN strike, the producer ought to have combined them since both related to the self-same subject. The same lapse occurred on the 27th with the reports: "Rivers to unravel assemblyman's killers" and "Police begin manhunt for lawmaker's killers". Both were run separately on the 7pm news. In the month also, there were instances of neglected follow-ups as well as one-sided reportage. An example was the report on the 7pm news programme on the 27th "Senate seeks probe into threat to Anyim's life." The item was tilted to favour Anyim and the producers made no effort to get the views of the opposing camp.

From the 20th to the 25th, technical hitches on this station were quite bad as several news programmes were skipped. Alternatively, some news programmes began abruptly without warning. On August 22, the 7am Headline News was terminated abruptly two minutes into its transmission because there was no audio from the station. On the 20th, the news was marred by poor picture quality.

Another lapse was that the station gave no clue to the geographical area in which it originated several reports and as always, obituary announcements were smuggled into major news programmes. A gratifying number of reports had diversified sources. A notable example was the report on Nigermart 2001 which was a detailed and useful report.

2. NIGERIAN TELEVISION AUTHORITY (NTA) KADUNA

This station has improved the quality of its news bulletins because out of the 16 news items monitored from the 13th to the 18th, two had not less than four news sources each while two others had three separate news sources. There were also six with two exhaustively treated sources each. The use of appropriate actualities together with sound-bites was also observed on the station. Only three reports for instance, had no actualities while eight lacked sound-bites. This was in the 13th to 18th period. It was also observed that there were only two cases of one-sided reportage in the same period. Two other things which the station did well was its good picture quality and clear audio. However, between August 4th and 23rd, there was a reduction in the number of reports which fell under the project's four main variables.

3. **NIGERIAN TELEVISION AUTHORITY (NTA) ABUJA**

Perhaps the biggest lapse of this station was the lack of balance of a significant proportion of its news items. Instead of presenting all the sides to an issue in a comprehensive and fair package, the station often ran stories in a piece-meal manner thereby making it difficult for its viewers to get the whole picture. In some cases, the follow-ups were aired days after the original story was broken and without complementary or explanatory details.

Another lapse was the indiscriminate running of the unverified allegations of government functionaries. Worse still, there was no evidence that the subjects of the allegations were contacted by the station.

Although picture quality was generally good, whenever there was a rainstorm in the Federal Capital Territory, the screen turned opaque. This happened for instance on the 3rd during the broadcast of the News Panorama. The station also suffered from power outages which invariably disrupted transmission. On August 24, during the 12noon news programme, there was a loss of audio due to a technical hitch. On the whole, the activities of the federal government and its agencies dominated the news programmes of the station.

4. **CHANNELS TELEVISION, LAGOS.**

The station this month continued with its presentation of detailed and fairly reported news reports. Better still, the sources of its reports were diversified and were often treated exhaustively. To underline the station's mastery of news coverage, it often referred to the previous reports in its presentation of follow-ups. This naturally made life considerably easier for its viewers since they received a complete news package. It was also commendable that the station broadcast news at the scheduled times while reception was generally good with clear pictures. The actual presentation of news was also competent.

Unfortunately, whenever it was time for the Prime News at 5pm, there was always a problem of lack of audio because it was jammed by Star FM Radio with the result that the radio station took over its audio channel.

It was observed that a few reports needed follow-ups. The report on Anambra's Governor Mbadinuju and Emeka Offor on the 14th, and relayed on the 5pm Prime News for instance, was one-sided in favour of the governor whereas his erstwhile sponsor was given a black-out. Still on the Anambra political godfather crisis, in its reportage of the settlement meeting called by President Olusegun Obasanjo at Aso Rock, virtually the entire focus was on the President and not the principal combatants. This was wrong since the President was only a mediator.

Occasionally, there was cause to question the editorial judgement of the station's producers. For instance on the 16th at least ten minutes were devoted to the three-sided blow-up between Nigeria Airways, Virgin Atlantic and British Airways. This was in the 10pm News. However, in the same programme, an important item on the fight against corruption was presented in a vague, tentative way. In fact, it was terminated abruptly. On the same programme, an item on revenue allocation received similar treatment.

5. MINAJ BROADCASTING INTERNATIONAL (MBI), OBOSI

MBI's reports were generally fair this month. The 12noon news programme was particularly detailed and accompanied by sound-bites. However, the early morning news was always brief, ending in two instead of the scheduled five minutes while in the post-noon hours, news broadcasts didn't start in time. The delay could be as long as ten minutes with the result that bulletins sometimes overshot the scheduled duration. Some programmes were skipped outright such as the News Update for 7am and 8am on the 14th of August.

MBI did not do enough to diversify its news sources in the month in review and in some cases, it was impossible to decipher the area of origination of news items. Also, the station generally employed voice-overs and still pictures even for important national news like the revised revenue allocation formula in the 12noon bulletin on the 22nd.

MBI often went too far in slotting commercials between news items. Occasionally, they were so many that they essentially disrupted the programme in question. Two examples were the World News (8pm) on the 29th and 30th. In both cases, commercial breaks accounted for more than 10 minutes in a 30 minute programme.

Unnecessary repetition of news items was observed in monitoring the station. Sometimes, a single piece of news was aired over two days. As an example, the item, "Edo governor promises to transform state" was first broadcast in the 7am news on August 27 and it was repeated at 7am and 12noon the following day. Many of the monitored items broadcast were found to be stale.

An element of bias crept into the News at Noon of August 24. This concerned the crisis within the Lagos State chapter of the ruling Peoples Democratic Party (PDP). It was clear that MBI only received information from one of the contesting factions. It was also partisan in that it referred to one factional chairman as ex-chairman of the state branch.

6. MURHI INTERNATIONAL TELEVISION (MITV), LAGOS.

Although the station's news programmes in the month were generally fair, they usually lacked actuality and sound-bite. For instance, News at 9pm of the 18th had an item on government workers which was fair enough but omitted these two elements which could have given it more authority. The same thing applied to about 80 percent of the reports evaluated from the 20th to the 25th. Out of the 9 items evaluated on the 20th, only three had actualities and sound-bites.

Two other criticisms of the station were that it did not make enough effort to diversify its news sources and was also tardy in airing scheduled news programmes. Much of the time, the news programme began five to ten minutes later than the advertised time. It was observed that the airing often ended before its stipulated duration.

As an example, on the 23rd, the station disposed of the 9.30pm World News in 17 minutes instead of the scheduled 30 minutes. On the 25th, the same programme was concluded in nine minutes.

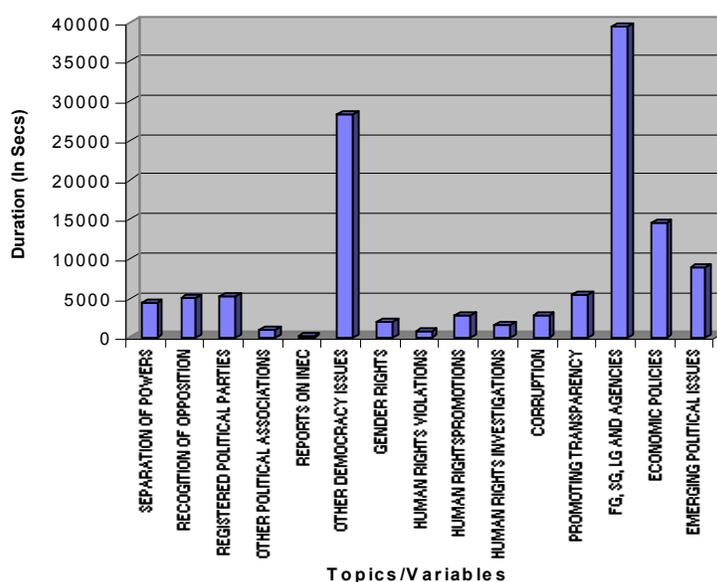
A high proportion of the reports on the station were sourced from south-western Nigeria. Apart from this, the station favoured the use of illustrations in place of actualities.

SECTION 5: STATISTICAL DATA: RADIO AND TELEVISION

Duration/Percentage of Topics (Radio)

<i>Topics/Variables</i>	<i>Duration of Reports. (In Secs)</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
SEPARATION OF POWERS	4401	3.60
RECOGNITION OF OPPOSITION	4946	4.04
REGISTERED POLITICAL PARTIES	5216	4.26
OTHER POLITICAL ASSOCIATIONS	1084	0.89
REPORTS ON INEC	206	0.17
OTHER DEMOCRACY ISSUES	28222	23.06
GENDER RIGHTS	2067	1.69
HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS	754	0.62
HUMAN RIGHTS PROMOTIONS	2854	2.33
HUMAN RIGHTS INVESTIGATIONS	1594	1.30
CORRUPTION	2827	2.31
PROMOTING TRANSPARENCY	5368	4.39
FG, SG, LG AND AGENCIES	39451	32.24
ECONOMIC POLICIES	14543	11.88
EMERGING POLITICAL ISSUES	8844	7.23
<i>Total:</i>	122,377.00	100.00

Frequency of Topics /Variables



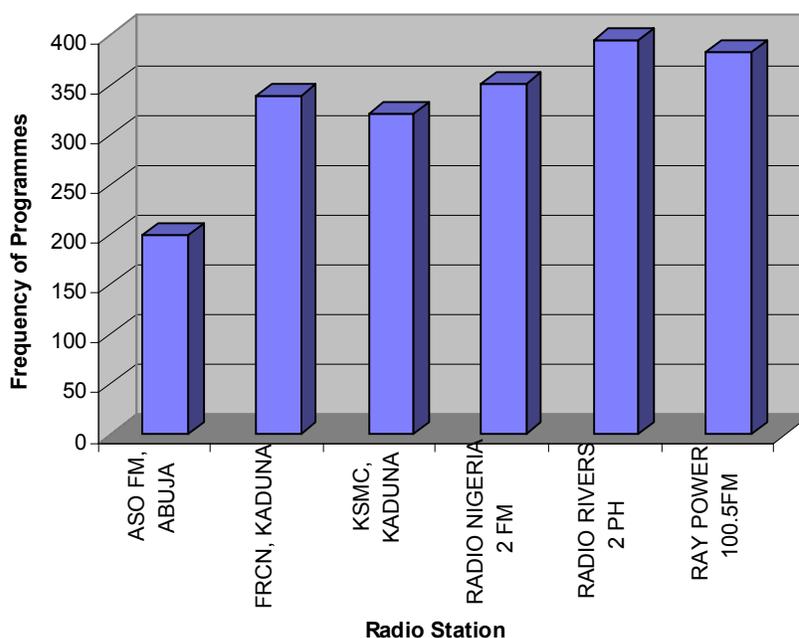
Frequency of Areas of Origin (Radio)

<i>Area</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage (%)</i>
ABIA	20	1.00
ADAMAWA	27	1.36
AFRICA	5	0.25
AKWA IBOM	16	0.80
ANAMBRA	10	0.50
BAUCHI	19	0.95
BENUE	16	0.80
BORNO	14	0.70
BAYELSA	11	0.55
CROSSRIVER	26	1.31
DELTA	7	0.35
EBONYI	24	1.21
EDO	13	0.65
EKITI	14	0.70
ENUGU	31	1.56
FCT ABUJA	483	24.26
GOMBE	22	1.10
IMO	15	0.75
INTERNATIONAL	18	0.90
JIGAWA	17	0.85
KEBBI	24	1.21
KADUNA	200	10.05
KOGI	15	0.75
KANO	33	1.66
KATSINA	20	1.00
KWARA	22	1.10
LAGOS	197	9.89
NASARAWA	23	1.16
NIGER	18	0.90
NIL	105	5.27
ONDO	27	1.36
OGUN	18	0.90
OSUN	20	1.00
OYO	16	0.80
PLATEAU	17	0.85
RIVERS	330	16.57
SOKOTO	13	0.65
TARABA	30	1.51
WEST AFRICA	2	0.10
YOBE	31	1.56
ZAMFARA	22	1.10
<i>Total:</i>	1991	100.00

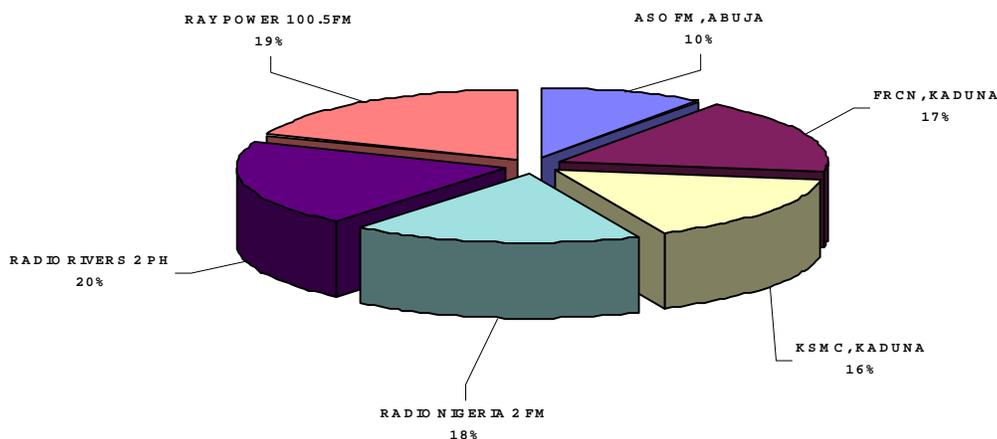
Frequency of Reports/Radio Stations

<i>Radio Station</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage (%)</i>
ASO FM, ABUJA	200	10.05
FRCN, KADUNA	340	17.08
KSMC, KADUNA	321	16.12
RADIO NIGERIA 2 FM	351	17.63
RADIO RIVERS 2 PH	396	19.89
RAY POWER 100.5FM	383	19.24
Total:	1991	100.00

Frequency of Radio Reports Monitored



Percentage of Reports Monitored By Radio



Frequency of Scope of Coverage (Radio)

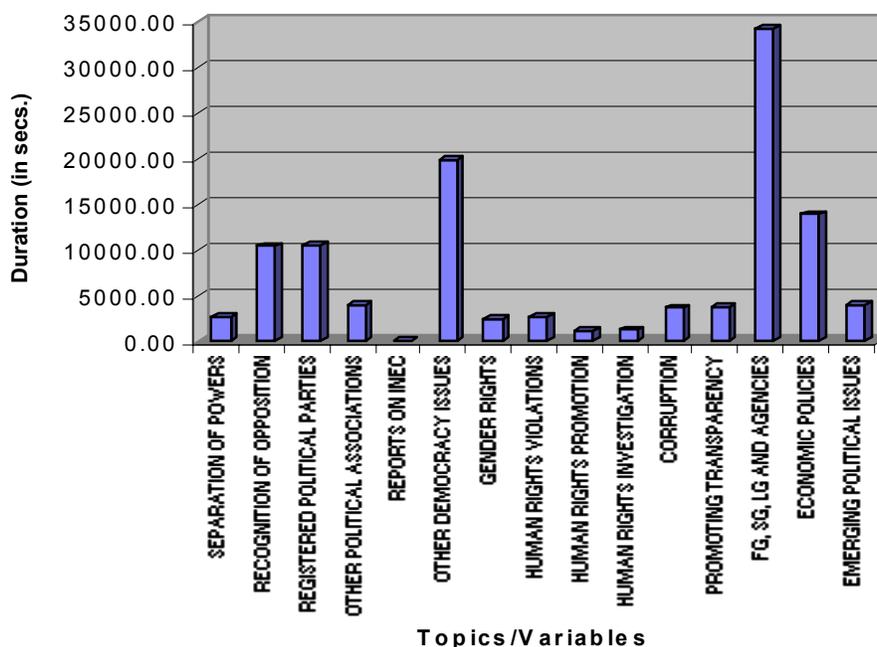
<i>Scope</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage (%)</i>
ABIA	16	0.80
ADAMAWA	20	1.00
AFRICA	23	1.16
AKWA IBOM	11	0.55
ANAMBRA	13	0.65
BAUCHI	14	0.70
BENUE	15	0.75
BORNO	6	0.30
BAYELSA	10	0.50
CROSSRIVER	15	0.75
DELTA	4	0.20
EBONYI	27	1.36
EDO	7	0.35
EKITI	9	0.45
ENUGU	15	0.75
FCT ABUJA	35	1.76
GOMBE	16	0.80
IMO	13	0.65
INTERNATIONAL	25	1.26
JIGAWA	16	0.80
KEBBI	13	0.65
KADUNA	137	6.88
KOGI	11	0.55
KANO	20	1.00
KATSINA	12	0.60
KWARA	16	0.80
LAGOS	101	5.07
NASARAWA	15	0.75
NORTH CENTRAL	1	0.05
NORTHEAST	3	0.15
NIGER	15	0.75
NIGERIA	948	47.61
NORTH WEST	1	0.05
ONDO	20	1.00
OGUN	2	0.10
OSUN	14	0.70
OYO	4	0.20
PLATEAU	4	0.20

<i>Scope</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage (%)</i>
RIVERS	247	12.41
SOUTHEAST	6	0.30
SOKOTO	9	0.45
SOUTH SOUTH	6	0.30
SOUTH WEST	6	0.30
TARABA	21	1.05
WEST AFRICA	3	0.15
NORTH	18	0.90
YOBE	18	0.90
ZAMFARA	10	0.50
Total:	1991	100.00

Duration/Percentage of Topics in Secs. (Television)

<i>Topic</i>	<i>Duration (in Secs.)</i>	<i>Percentage (%)</i>
SEPARATION OF POWERS	2573.00	2.25
RECOGNITION OF OPPOSITION	10419.00	9.10
REGISTERED POLITICAL PARTIES	10588.00	9.24
OTHER POLITICAL ASSOCIATIONS	3922.00	3.42
REPORTS ON INEC	49.00	0.04
OTHER DEMOCRACY ISSUES	19864.00	17.34
GENDER RIGHTS	2483.00	2.17
HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS	2584.00	2.26
HUMAN RIGHTS PROMOTIONS	1196.00	1.04
HUMAN RIGHTS INVESTIGATIONS	1229.00	1.07
CORRUPTION	3633.00	3.17
PROMOTING TRANSPARENCY	3817.00	3.33
FG, SG, LG AND AGENCIES	34233.00	29.89
ECONOMIC POLICIES	13887.00	12.13
EMERGING POLITICAL ISSUES	4054.00	3.54
Total:	114,531.00	100.00

Duration of Topics Monitored (Television)



Frequency/Percentage of Areas (Television)

<i>Area</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage (%)</i>
ABIA	7	0.61
ADAMAWA	11	0.96
AKWA IBOM	4	0.35
ANAMBRA	14	1.22
BAUCHI	5	0.44
BENUE	8	0.70
BORNO	2	0.17
BAYELSA	5	0.44
CROSSRIVER	15	1.31
DELTA	13	1.13
EBONYI	21	1.83
EDO	21	1.83
EKITI	5	0.44
ENUGU	10	0.87
FCT ABUJA	435	37.96
GOMBE	6	0.52
IMO	15	1.31
INTERNATIONAL	12	1.05
KEBBI	1	0.09
KADUNA	73	6.37
KOGI	9	0.79
KANO	6	0.52
KATSINA	4	0.35
KWARA	1	0.09
LAGOS	236	20.59
NASARAWA	5	0.44
NIGER	4	0.35
NIL	82	7.16
ONDO	2	0.17
OGUN	8	0.70
OSUN	5	0.44
OYO	27	2.36
PLATEAU	12	1.05
RIVERS	36	3.14
SOKOTO	2	0.17
TARABA	8	0.70
WEST AFRICA	2	0.17
YOBE	10	0.87
ZAMFARA	4	0.35
<i>Total:</i>	1146	100.00

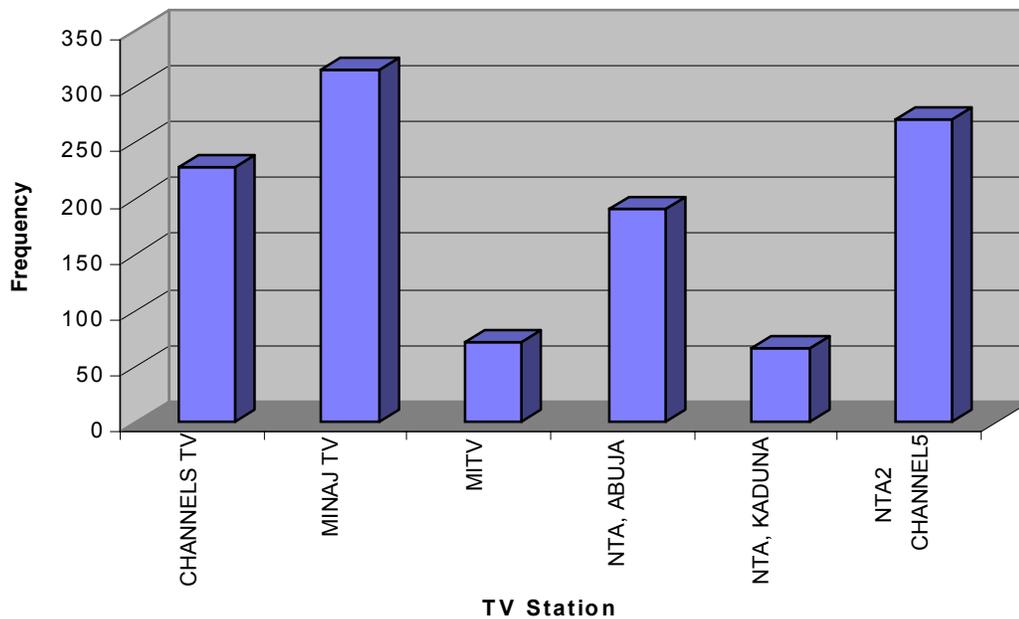
Frequency/Percentage of Scope of Coverage (Television)

<i>Scope</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage (%)</i>
ABIA	1	0.09
ADAMAWA	9	0.79
AFRICA	12	1.05
AKWA IBOM	4	0.35
ANAMBRA	17	1.48
BAUCHI	4	0.35
BENUE	3	0.26
BORNO	2	0.17
BAYELSA	3	0.26
CROSS RIVER	7	0.61
DELTA	9	0.79
EBONYI	18	1.57
EDO	18	1.57
EKITI	4	0.35
ENUGU	2	0.17
FCT ABUJA	17	1.48
GOMBE	3	0.26
IMO	15	1.31
INTERNATIONAL	14	1.22
KEBBI	2	0.17
KADUNA	46	4.01
KOGI	4	0.35
KANO	4	0.35
KWARA	5	0.44
LAGOS	98	8.55
NIGER DELTA	10	0.87
NORTH EAST	1	0.09
NIGER	1	0.09
NIGERIA	730	63.70
NIL	1	0.09
NORTH WEST	1	0.09
ONDO	1	0.09
OGUN	3	0.26
OSUN	3	0.26
OYO	4	0.35
PLATEAU	2	0.17
RIVERS	18	1.57
SOUTH EAST	10	0.87
SOKOTO	1	0.09
SOUTH SOUTH	5	0.44
SOUTH WEST	9	0.79
TARABA	6	0.52
WEST AFRICA	6	0.52
NORTH	2	0.17
YOBE	7	0.61
ZAMFARA	4	0.35
Total:	1146	100.00

Frequency/Percentage of TV Stations/Reports

<i>TV Station</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage (%)</i>
CHANNELS TV	229	19.98
MINAJ TV	316	27.57
MITV	72	6.28
NTA, ABUJA	191	16.67
NTA, KADUNA	67	5.85
NTA2 CHANNEL5	271	23.65
Total:	1146	100.00

Frequency of Television Reports Monitored



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.

KEY TO ABBREVIATIONS

FGEXE	-	Federal Government
SGEXE	-	State Government
LG	-	Local Government
INEC	-	Independent National Electoral Commission
FCT	-	Federal Capital Territory, Abuja
AD	-	Alliance for Democracy
APP	-	All Peoples Party
PDP	-	Peoples Democratic Party



Media 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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