

AIRWAVES MONITOR

A REPORT ON THE BROADCAST MEDIA MONITORING PROJECT

January 2002



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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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This report was written by **Banji Adeyanju**, Project Manager, and **Mrs. Ayo-Lawal Gbenoba**, Coordinator, Lagos Monitoring Centre of the Media Monitoring Project, with comments from **Tive Denedo**, Acting Executive Director of Media Rights Agenda (MRA); and **Osaro Odemwingie**, MRA's Publications Officer.

Desktop publishing and production of the report were done by **Ayode Longe** and **Bunmi Oke**, Data Entry Officers for the Media Monitoring Project, while **Odemwingie** designed the cover.

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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

June 2001

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

The respective total reports recorded for both arms of the electronic media were arguably the lowest since the project began. The total reports on radio were only 3,071 and 2,320 for television, compared with the figures from the August report: 4,836 (Radio), and 2,720 (TV); September: 6,440 (Radio), and 3,644 (TV); and December: 4,186 (Radio) and 4,519 (TV).

Although monitoring was concluded some days before the month ended, this was not enough to explain the sharp drop in the total number of reports monitored in the broadcast media. The irony was that the publications appeared to have sustained the tempo of their newsgathering at least up till December 24th. The assassination of the Federal Attorney General, Chief Bola Ige, even gave it a little fillip.

The low number of reports relevant to the monitoring exercise is accounted for by the media focus on other important issues that came up during the month. They include the budgetary appropriations by various states and the federal government, banking scams, emerging issues regarding telecommunications licences, civil unrest, the historic winning of the Miss World beauty context by a Nigerian, Miss Agbani Darego, the up-coming Cup of Nations football competition and others. Besides, Radio Rivers 2 could not be monitored and this undoubtedly affected the final tally.

However, in at least one respect, the findings for the Airwaves Monitor have been fairly consistent and this is with regard to the percentage of evaluated reports in comparison with the overall monitored reports.

For radio and television, the figures during the month of December 2001 under review was 25.2% for each. In August the appropriate figures were 25.4% (Radio) and 33.2%. For the September report, the figures were 28.8% (Radio) and 30.7% (TV). It was only in the December report findings that the comparative percentage of evaluated news dipped below 20% to 18.9%, for radio while that of TV was stable at 24.7%.

The implication of this finding is that about a quarter of all news broadcast on the electronic media were found to be relevant to the monitoring project. For the print media, the proportion had always been lower.

For specific topics/variables, Democracy Issues recorded a total of 492 reports in duration of 655 minutes and 28 seconds. The total for Political Issues was higher - 743 reports in a time of 922 minutes and 24 seconds. There were 66 Human Rights related reports for the electronic media aired in a time of 101 minutes and 19 seconds while, the Public Accountability reports were 69 in a duration of 84 minutes, and 20 seconds.

On the whole, while there was appreciable coverage of democracy and politics, the same could not be said for the other variables. In fact, the coverage of human rights and public accountability matters was extremely poor. When viewed against the backdrop of the fact that majority of the poor Nigerians have very few practical rights and that Nigeria is one of the most corrupt countries in the world, the lapse becomes worrisome.

Apart from this, even in democracy and politics, the electronic media barely scratch the surface. Reports generally lack depth and worse still, portray government and other issues in a superficial and uncritical manner.

Specifically regarding objectivity, the broadcast media had a spotty record in a sea of bias with two or three exemplary stations during the month. However, it must be added that cases of malicious or deep-seated bias have reduced in comparison with findings during previous months of the exercise. Another good sign is that

even with stations, which lack objectivity, the managers still paid some regard to journalism ethics. Cases of sensationalism were not too obvious either.

All the technical lapses earlier observed in most of the stations but which abated in November, reared their heads again during the month being reviewed. These include problems of poor reception, sloppy scheduling, breaks in transmission, unexplained cancellation of scheduled news programmes, production and newsroom deficiencies, unprofessional news presentation and the neglect of sound bites and actualities.

Beyond all these, perhaps the biggest failing of the electronic media this month was the over-concentration on government-related issues and events as well as the generally uncritical nature of the reportage.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It was obvious from the monitoring in the month that many practitioners in broadcast journalism lack adequate training and sufficient field exposure. The station managers should endeavour to train their reporters with a view to enhancing their competence. If this is done, the quality of reports produced by such reporters would improve.

SECTION 2: GENERAL FINDINGS

Period of Report: December 1 - 26, 2001

Number of Radio Station Monitored: Five [Radio Nigeria 2, Metro FM, Lagos; FRCN, Kaduna; Kaduna State Media Corporation (KSMC), Kaduna; Aso 93.5 FM, Abuja and Raypower 100.5 FM, Lagos.

Total News Items on Radio: 3,071

Number of Evaluated Reports on Radio: 774

Duration of Evaluated Reports: 15hours, 12minutes, and 43seconds

Percentage of Evaluated Reports: 25.2%

Number of Television Stations Monitored: Six (NTA 2 Channel 5, Lagos; Nigerian Television Authority (NTA), Kaduna; NTA, Abuja; Channels Television Lagos; Murhi International Television Lagos, Minaj Broadcasting International, Obosi).

Total News Items on Television: 2,320

Duration: 85hours, 12minutes, and 36secs. (5113 minutes)

Number of Evaluated Reports on Television: 586

Duration of Evaluated Reports: 16hours, 21minutes, 6seconds (981minutes, 6seconds)

Percentage of Evaluated Reports: 25.2%

TOPICS/VARIABLES MONITORED

Democracy Issues: There were a total of 492 reports for this variable with duration of 655 minutes, 28 seconds. Of this total, radio stations aired 264 reports in a time of 290 minutes, 45 seconds, while the television stations aired 228 reports in a time of 364 minutes, 43 seconds.

Political Issues: The electronic media aired a total 743 reports in 922 minutes, 24 seconds under this variable with the following breakdown - radio stations had 450 reports with duration of 441 minutes, 26 seconds, while the television stations broadcast 293 items in a time of 480 minutes, 58 seconds.

Human Rights: The total of news reports for this topic/variable in both arms of the electronic media was 66 reports with duration of 101 minutes, 19 seconds. Of this total, radio had 23 reports (23 minutes, 53 seconds), while television had 43 reports (78 minutes, 26 seconds).

Public Accountability: There were a total of 69 news reports in a time of 84 minutes, 20 seconds. Radio reports came to 38 with duration of 36 minutes, 29 seconds, while television reports were 31 in a time of 48 minutes, 51 seconds.

Media Projection:

The two institutions, which received the most projection in the electronic media during the month, were the Federal Government and its functionaries (353); and the various state governments and their agencies and functionaries (236).

News Origination:

Most news reports originated from the Federal Capital Territory, which had a factor of 333. In the second place was Lagos State (factor of 149). In the third place was Kaduna State with a factor of 84.

Geographical Scope:

As in previous months, the geographical scope of the vast majority of reports was Nigeria (NGR), which had a factor of 779.

COMPARATIVE DATA: RADIO

	STATION/TOTAL NEWS/TIME	DEMOCRACY Reports/Duration	POLITICAL ISSUES Reports/Duration	HUMAN RIGHTS Reports/Duration	PUBLIC ACC Reports/Duration	TOTALNEWS/TIME MONITORED
1.	Radio Nig. 2 Lagos	62 57mins. 48secs	107 121mins 27secs	5 4mins 41secs	14 11mins 50secs	189 192min 30secs
2.	FRCN Kaduna	12 14mins. 45secs	94 107mins 9secs	4 4mins 21secs	4 4mins 54secs	112 219min 20secs
3.	KSMC Kaduna	25 32mins. 21secs	87 197mins 6secs	6 7mins 27secs.	5 5mins 48secs	124 141min
4.	Aso FM Abuja	103 136mins. 45secs	67 57mins 59secs	5 4mins 48secs	1 33secs	174 210min 29secs
5.	Raypower Lagos	62 49mins. 6secs	95 57mins 45secs	3 2mins 36secs	14 13mins 24secs	174 239min 24secs
	ALL RADIO	264 290min 45secs	450 441min. 26secs	23 23mins. 53secs	38 36mins 29secs	774 912min 43secs

TOTAL MONITORED REPORTS (RADIO)

	Station	Nos of Reports	Time/Duration
1.	Radio Nigeria 2 (Metro FM), Lagos	1,008	1,697 minutes (28hrs. 16min)
2.	FRCN, Kaduna	324	581 minutes (9hrs. 41min)
3.	KSMC, Kaduna	400	720 minutes (12hrs.)
4.	Aso FM Radio, Abuja	377	610 minutes (10hrs. 10mins.)
5.	Raypower 100.5 FM, Lagos	962	988 minutes (16hrs. 38mins.)
	All stations:	3,071	4,606 minutes (76hrs. 45mins.)

COMPARATIVE DATA: TELEVISION

	STATION/TOTAL NEWS/TIME	DEMOCRACY Reports/Duration	POLITICAL ISSUES Reports/Duration	HUMAN RIGHTS Reports/Duration	PUBLIC ACC Reports/Duration	TOTALNEWS/TIME EVALUATED
1.	NTA 2 Lagos	55 70mins. 21secs	52 105mins 45secs	7 14mins 36secs	10 21mins 48secs	115 212min 53secs
2.	NTA Kaduna	3 4mins. 18secs	20 31mins 18secs	5 7mins 23secs	2 2mins 48secs	30 45min 42secs
3.	NTA Abuja	61 118mins. 57secs	65 143mins 59secs	14 27mins 48secs	7 11mins 54secs	147 302min 41secs
4.	Channels TV, Lagos	44 78mins. 53secs	60 97mins 36secs	4 12mins 20secs	7 6mins 47secs	115 195min 36secs
5.	MiTV Lagos	6 5mins. 20secs	22 27mins 24secs	3 4mins 38secs	3 2mins 17secs	34 42min 42secs
6.	MBI Obosi	59 86mins. 54secs	74 75mins 56secs	10 11mins 41secs	2 3mins 20secs	145 181min 32secs
	ALL TELEVISION	228 364mins. 43secs	293 480mins 58secs	43 78mins. 26secs	31 48mins 51secs	586 981min 6secs

TOTAL MONITORED REPORTS (TELEVISION)

	Station	Nos of Reports	Time/Duration
1.	NTA 2 Channel 5, Lagos	677	1,829 minutes (30hrs. 29mins.)
2.	NTA, Kaduna	72	136 minutes 51secs. (2hrs. 15mins.)
3.	NTA, Abuja	329	1,150 minutes (19hrs. 10mins.)
4.	Channels TV, Lagos	329	820 minutes (13hrs. 39mins.)
5.	Murhi Television Lagos	267	532 minutes (8hrs. 52mins.)
6.	Minaj Broadcasting, Obosi	646	1,036 minutes (17hrs. 15mins.)
	All stations:	2,320	5,113 minutes (851hrs. 12mins.)

SECTION 3: FINDINGS ON SPECIFIC RADIO STATIONS

1. RADIO NIGERIA 2 METRO FM, LAGOS (state-owned)

Period	Total Reports	Duration (Secs)	Evaluated Reports	Duration (Secs)	Area	Scope	Mentions
December 1-8	378	36,425	73	5,109	FCT-9 LAGOS-9	NGR-41 LAGOS-8	SG-27 FG-18
December 10-15	317	30,000	68	3,954	FCT-27 LAGOS-14	NGR-31 LAGOS-10	FG-29 SG-14
December 17-22	313	35,400	48	2,487	FCT-18 LAGOS-7	NGR-21 LAGOS-5	FG-31 SG-35
December 1-22	1,008	101,825	189	11,550	FCT-54 LAGOS-30	NGR-93 LAGOS-23	SG-76 FG-78

PERCENTAGE OF EVALUATED ITEMS: 18.7%

TOPICS/VARIABLES: Democracy Issues - 62 reports (3469 seconds); Political Issues - 107 reports (7,288 seconds); Public Accountability - 14 reports (710 seconds); and Human Rights - 5 reports (281 second).

OBSERVATIONS: There was appreciable coverage of democracy and politics in the period being reviewed considering the cumulative total of 169 politically related reports, which were aired in a time of 10,757 seconds (179 min. 17 secs). These figures were the highest for any of the monitored radio stations this month. Unfortunately, coverage of public accountability (14 reports) and human rights (five reports) did not fare quite as well.

Sudden breaks in transmission were experienced with no known causes. On occasion, the news broadcasts at 9a.m. and 10a.m. were skipped.

The station did not do enough to reflect opposing views to government's stand on the Electoral Act. Apart from this, its poor showing in human rights and public accountability variables indicates the poor state of investigative journalism in the country.

The station was sometimes bedeviled by poor reception. Also, an excessive number of jingles were incorporated into the scheduled news period.

On the whole, the station gave far more coverage to the three tiers of government than any other institution with clear disregard for rural communities.

2. FRCN, KADUNA (state-owned)

Period	Total Reports	Duration (Secs)	Evaluated Reports	Duration (Secs)	Area	Scope	Mentions
December 3-8	79	6,105	38	2,517	FCT-15 KANO-5	NGR-17 KANO-5	- -
December 10-15	109	18,000	22	1,476	- -	- -	SG-14 FG-11
December 17-22	136	10,800	52	3,767	KADUNA-7 NA-7	NGR-30	- -
December 3-22	324	34,905	112	7,760	FCT-15 KADUNA-7	NGR-47 KANO-5	SG-14 FG-11

PERCENTAGE OF EVALUATED ITEMS: 34.5%

TOPICS/VARIABLES: Political Issues - 94 reports (6,429 seconds); Democracy Issues - 12 reports (885 seconds); Public Accountability - 4 reports (295 seconds); and Human Rights - 4 reports (261 second).

OBSERVATIONS: The station made an effort to be objective and balanced in its news presentation but this was let down by the narrow sourcing of its reports. For instance, a high proportion of the reports this month were derived from a single news source, which made objectivity fairly difficult. There was overwhelming emphasis on politics and democracy with human rights and public accountability getting short shrift.

Commendably, the news Nationwide, which always aired at 5p.m. usually contained sound-bite although on at least one occasion, this was in Hausa. The newsroom was deficient in sub-editing sometimes because a single news take may contain unrelated items. For example, on the report on Federal Government's plan to spend N548 million to rehabilitate Kaduna State roads, unrelated bit on road construction in Zamfara State crept in. News at 10 was sometimes skipped. Also commendably, many monitored reports on the station were detailed.

3 KSMC, KADUNA (state-owned)

Period	Total Reports	Duration (Secs)	Evaluated Reports	Duration (Secs)	Area	Scope	Mentions
December 3-8	145	15,600	66	4,283	KADUNA-24 FCT-13	NGR-43 KADUNA-13	-
December 10-15	145	9,631	42	3,014	KADUNA-18 FCT-7	NGR-26 KADUNA-9	- -
December 17-22	110	18,000	16	1,164	KADUNA-10	NGR-16 -	SG-7
December 3-22	400	43,231	124	8,461	KADUNA-52 FCT-20	NGR-85 KADUNA-22	SG-7

PERCENTAGE OF EVALUATED ITEMS: 31%

TOPICS/VARIABLES: Political Issues -87 reports (5,826 seconds); Democracy Issues - 25 reports (1,942 seconds); Human Rights - six reports (447 seconds) and Public Accountability - five reports (348 seconds).

OBSERVATIONS: It was noted that the station gave preponderant attention to politically related matters to the detriment of civil and human angle issues. There was noticeable attempt to be objective in most of the reports but having only one news source compromised several of them. The 12-noon report was usually repeated at 3p.m. Worse still, a report on the Jaba Local Government Chairman was aired on both the 17th and 18th.

Most reports concerned the activities of the state and local governments in Kaduna State. The station recently began inserting commercials into breaks between news takes.

4. ASO FM, ABUJA (state-owned)

Period	Total Reports	Duration (Secs)	Evaluated Reports	Duration (Secs)	Area	Scope	Mentions
December 1-7	132	11,118	50	4,973	FCT-35 EBONYI-2	NGR-40	-
December 8-15	147	12,923	52	4,217	FCT-18 A.IBOM-3	NGR-25	-
December 19-22	72	8,600	51	2,439	-	-	-
December 1-22	351	32,641	153	11,629	FCT-53 A.IBOM-3	NGR-65 -	- -

PERCENTAGE OF EVALUATED ITEMS: 46.4%

TOPICS/VARIABLES: Democracy Issues - 103 reports (8,205 seconds); Political Issues - 67 reports (3,479 seconds); Human Rights - five reports (289 seconds); and Public Accountability - one report (33 seconds).

OBSERVATIONS: The station followed the general trend of giving blanket coverage to political matters this month with the inevitable sharp drop in human rights and public accountability reports. Even then, the station manager, however, gave far more attention to the states and federal government than the local governments.

There was a diversion on the 15th when religious issues took over the airwaves probably because of the Eid-el-fitr festival.

The reporters on the station had difficulty in putting together detailed and balanced reports. It was common for them to write reports with just a news source each and no attempt at collaboration or verification.

Sound-bites were rare and most reports were also sketchy. The Peoples Democratic Party received significant coverage. On the whole, the performance of the station this month was lack-luster and amateurish.

5. RAYPOWER FM, LAGOS (privately-owned)

Period	Total Reports	Duration (Secs)	Evaluated Reports	Duration (Secs)	Area	Scope	Mentions
December 1-8	400	24,240	92	3,697	FCT-24 LAGOS-23	NGR-71	FG-39 SG-37
December 10-15	281	14,650	51	9,197	FCT-20 LAGOS-15	NGR-48 AGENCIES-15	FG-25
December 17-22	281	21,000	31	1,470	LAGOS-7 ABIA-8	NGR-32	SG-20 FG-12
December 1-22	962	59,890	174	14,364	FCT-51 LAGOS-30	NGR-151	FG-76 SG-57

PERCENTAGE OF EVALUATED ITEMS: 18.1%

TOPICS/VARIABLES: Political Issues - 95 reports (3,465 seconds); Democracy Issues - 62 reports (2946 seconds); Public Accountability - 14 reports (805 seconds); and Human Rights - five reports (156 seconds).

OBSERVATIONS: Egregious repetition of news items continued on the station this month and reached a peak with the report on the Osun State budget presentation, which was aired on December 4, 5 and 6, without an update. A report on displaced Tivs (Benue State) and Jukun (Taraba State) indigenes was equally aired on December 4 and 5. The use of sound-bites was an occasional thing. On December 20, the News at six was skipped. Global News (7a.m) was skipped on the 22nd.

Reception quality dipped in the third week of the month. In fact it went off air on December 12 for more than two hours in the afternoon from just before 4p.m. to sometime after 6p.m. Nonetheless, it was observed that the geographical derivation of reports across the country was satisfactory. Apart from this, news presentation was professionally handled.

The station also devoted significant attention to public accountability with a total of 14 reports. Unfortunately, in the second week of the month, the station virtually ignored critics of the Electoral Act preferring to air pro-government voices.

1. NTA 2 CHANNEL 5, LAGOS (state-owned)

Period	Total Reports	Duration (Secs)	Evaluated Reports	Duration (Secs)	Area	Scope	Mentions
December 1-8	121	33,480	59	7,205	FCT-25 LAGOS-18	NGR-39 TARABA-4	FG-21 SG-10
December 10-15	289	35,160	35	3,652	FCT-24 ABIA-2	NGR-29	FG-17 FGAS-9
December 17-22	267	41,100	21	1,916	FCT-4 KEBBI-3	NGR-17	SG-14 FG-10
December 1-22	677	109,740	115	12,773	FCT-53 LAGOS-18	NGR-85 TARABA-4	FG-48 SG-24

PERCENTAGE OF EVALUATED ITEMS: 16.9%

TOPICS/VARIABLES: Democracy Issues - 55 reports (4,221 seconds); Political Issues -52 reports (6,345 seconds); Human Rights - 7 reports (877 seconds); and Public Accountability - 10 reports (1,308 seconds).

OBSERVATIONS: It was observed that the station scrupulously read the news at the scheduled times and exhibited other traits of professionalism such as infusion of sound-bites and the use of appropriate actualities. An example was a report on December 7, titled: Controversy trails Obasanjo's assent to Electoral Bill.

Unfortunately, in the third week of the month, the 2p.m. news was skipped. Although reception was generally good, bad picture quality was observed on December 10 and 18, and on the 8th, it failed to transmit the Network News at 9p.m. even though NTA Channel 10 aired it.

However, a commendable thing about NTA 2 this month was that it largely shunned sensationalism. Also, it endeavored to originate reports from any parts of the country. In the second week of the month, the 3p.m. news was skipped except on Friday, the 14th. The 7a.m. news was skipped on the 13th.

Perhaps the only major failing of the station on the editorial side was its over-concentration on government and government-related activities. The number of reports monitored on the station which totaled 677, was the highest for any of the television stations during the month under review.

2. NTA KADUNA (state-owned)

Period	Total Reports	Duration (Secs)	Evaluated Reports	Duration (Secs)	Area	Scope	Mentions
December 1-8	29	4,800	8	570	KADUNA-4	NGR-8	SG-4
December 10-15	32	2,400	18	1,751	KADUNA-18	NGR-11	MASSES-17 SG-13
December 17-22	11	965	4	422	KADUNA-3	NGR-4	IND-3 FG-1
December 1-22 1-22	72	8,165	30	2,743	KADUNA-25	NGR-23	MASSES-17 SG-17

PERCENTAGE OF EVALUATED ITEMS: 4.1%

TOPICS/VARIABLES: Democracy Issues – three reports (258 seconds); Political Issues – 20 reports (1,878 seconds); Human Rights – five reports (443 seconds); and Public Accountability - two reports (165 seconds).

OBSERVATIONS: The station aired an opinion survey of citizens who were interviewed on the Electoral Act on December 7. It was a good initiative, which was, however, marred by its restriction to powerful and well-to-do members of society. One would have expected the station to include citizens from the lower classes as well. The station's fascination with politics was obvious because the political variable had 20 reports while the next highest (human rights) had only five reports. Nonetheless, the station handled its reports in a fairly competent manner especially in its efforts to diversify its news sources and reach out to interest groups outside government.

When actualities were unavailable, the station used graphics to plug the gap. Not all reports were balanced, however, especially in the third week of the month.

3. NTA ABUJA (state-owned)

Period	Total Reports	Duration (Secs)	Evaluated Reports	Duration (Secs)	Area	Scope	Mentions
December 1-8	97	22,200	51	6,052	FCT	-	FG SG
December 10-15	94	18,000	36	4,371	FCT	- SG	FG
December 17-22	138	28,800	60	7,738	FCT	-	FG SG
December 1-22	329	69,000	147	18,161	FCT	-	FG SG

PERCENTAGE OF EVALUATED ITEMS: 44.6%

TOPICS/VARIABLES: Democracy Issues - 61 reports (7,138 seconds); Political Issues - 65 reports (8,639 seconds); Human Rights - 14 reports (166 seconds); and Public Accountability - seven reports (715 seconds).

OBSERVATIONS: There was a palpable tilt in the station’s editorial coverage in favour of the federal government and the ruling Peoples Democratic Party (PDP). The third category of favoured institutions on the station was the various state governments. The station’s managers basically ignored local governments and various other interest groups. This also included the two other registered parties - the Alliance for Democracy (AD) and the All Peoples Party (APP).

The deplorable aspect of this tilt was that the claims and pronouncements of government officials were relayed without recourse to the citizenry for verification or comments. An example of this unprofessional conduct was an airing of President Obasanjo’s statement on government plans to employ disabled persons.

A less important problem was the catalogue of slip-ups, mix-ups and errors observed on the station such as wrong use of actualities, communication breakdown between presenters and floor managers, irritating repetition of bulletins on the same news programme, and pronunciation and other elocution problems.

Also, too many reports were unnecessarily sketchy although a few had some details in them.

4. CHANNELS TELEVISION, LAGOS (privately-owned)

Period	Total Reports	Duration (Secs)	Evaluated Reports	Duration (Secs)	Area	Scope	Mentions
December 1-8	257	29,700	70	7,449	FCT-19 LAGOS-15	NGR-47	FG-31 FGAS-25
December 10-15	72	16,200	37	3,331	FCT-18 LAGOS-8	NGR-27	FG-21 SG-18
December 17-22	47	3,300	8	957	LAGOS-7 FCT-6	NGR-19- INT-1	FG-10 SG-5
December 1-22	329	49,200	115	11,737	FCT-43 LAGOS-30	NGR-93 INT-1	FG-62 FGAS-25

PERCENTAGE OF EVALUATED ITEMS: 44.6%

TOPICS/VARIABLES: Democracy Issues - 44 reports (4,733 seconds); Political Issues - 60 reports (5,857 seconds); Human Rights - four reports (740 seconds); and Public Accountability - seven reports (407 seconds).

OBSERVATIONS: The station presented updates on the contentious Electoral Act throughout the first half of the month. Not only that, most news reports on the 9p.m. news programme had sound-bites and actualities, which was highly commendable and quite rare among Nigerian television stations. Also, the producers usually allowed enough time for each talk, which meant that many reports were quite detailed. There was also an

element of balance in most of their reports. However, the major problem was that reception was often quite poor especially during its 5p.m. news.

Also, it was sometimes difficult to decipher the areas where reports originated. For example, in the first eight days of the month, out of the 70 monitored reports, areas of origination were not indicated in 19. The 10p.m. news of December 4 on the 2002 Lagos State budget was simply a repetition of the material broadcast the previous day. The 5p.m. News Track tended to be repeated till 8p.m. There was also the occasional mix-up in the newsroom such as what happened on December 12 concerning the report of President Obasanjo's reaction to Chief Odumegwu Ojukwu's secession threat. The wrong actuality was presented which showed Information Minister, Professor Jerry Gana.

But on the whole, Channels Television demonstrated a high degree of professionalism in its news coverage during the month under review. It also had the second highest tally (104) of politically related reports.

A less important problem was the catalogue of slip-ups, mix-ups and errors observed on the station such as wrong use of actualities, communication breakdown between presenters and floor managers, irritating repetition of bulletins on the same news programme, and pronunciation and other elocution problems.

5 MURHI TELEVISION, LAGOS (privately-owned)

Period	Total Reports	Duration (Secs)	Evaluated Reports	Duration (Secs)	Area	Scope	Mentions
December 1-8	113	12,159	25	1,754	-	NGR-25 LABOUR-7	FG-16
December 10-15	65	9,000	4	439	FCT-2 LAGOS-1	NGR-4	SGAS-14 FG-2
December 17-22	83	10,800	5	369	LAGOS-2 LAGOS-2	NGR-5	SG-4 MASSES-3
December 1-22	267	31,959	34	2,562	FCT-4 LAGOS-3	NGR-34	FG-18 SGAS-14

PERCENTAGE OF EVALUATED ITEMS: 12.7%

TOPICS/VARIABLES: Democracy Issues - six reports (320 seconds); Political Issues - 22 reports (1,645 seconds); Human Rights - three reports (278 seconds); and Public Accountability - three reports (137 seconds).

OBSERVATIONS: The station recorded very low figures during the month for all the four project variables and its tally of six reports on Democracy Issues variable was one of the lowest since the monitoring project began. However, the station did better with human rights especially in its coverage of the plight of HIV/AIDS sufferers.

Also, the station gave fair coverage to government activities as well as the uproar over the Electoral Act. Unfortunately, the reports generally lacked depth and were usually devoid of sound-bites and actualities.

The station went off air in the middle of news broadcast on December 10.

6 MINAJ BROADCASTING INTERNATIONAL, OBOSI (privately-owned)

Period	Total Reports	Duration (Secs)	Evaluated Reports	Duration (Secs)	Area	Scope	Mentions
December 1-8	144	13,260	37	3,129	LAGOS-15 DELTA-5	NGR-25 FG-6	SG-10 FG-6
December 10-15	268	25,020	54	3,382	FCT-19	NGR-39	FG-38 SG-17
December 17-22	234	23,880	54	4,381	LAGOS-23 FCT-21	NGR-39 INT-8	FG-16 SG-14
December 1-22	646	62,160	145	10,892	FCT-40 LAGOS-38	NGR-103 INT-8	FG-60 SG41

PERCENTAGE OF EVALUATED ITEMS: 22.4%

TOPICS/VARIABLES: Democracy Issues - 59 reports (5,215 seconds); Political Issues - 74 reports (4,556 seconds); Human Rights - 10 reports (701 seconds); and Public Accountability - two reports (200 seconds).

OBSERVATIONS: The station did appreciably well in its overall news coverage. It had a total of 133 politically related news items with a duration of 9771 seconds. Unfortunately, the station placed such a high premium on commercials that scheduled news broadcasts were routinely delayed to air them. Another failing of MBI was that it neglected the northern parts of the country with the exception of Abuja, the Federal Capital Territory. An appreciable proportion of news on the station had nothing to do with Nigeria at all.

However, with regard to the evaluated items, they tended to be fair but generally lacked depth. On the technical aspect, audio reception on the station was poor. Also, most reports in the station lacked sound-bites and actualities. Newsroom operation was often defective with inappropriate library pictures used to illustrate reports. Example of its sloppiness was made evident by the duration of the 30-minute MBI World (aired at 8p.m), which lasted 32 minutes, 34 minutes and 35 minutes at various times between December 1-8.

SECTION 4: STATISTICAL DATA (RADIO AND TELEVISION)

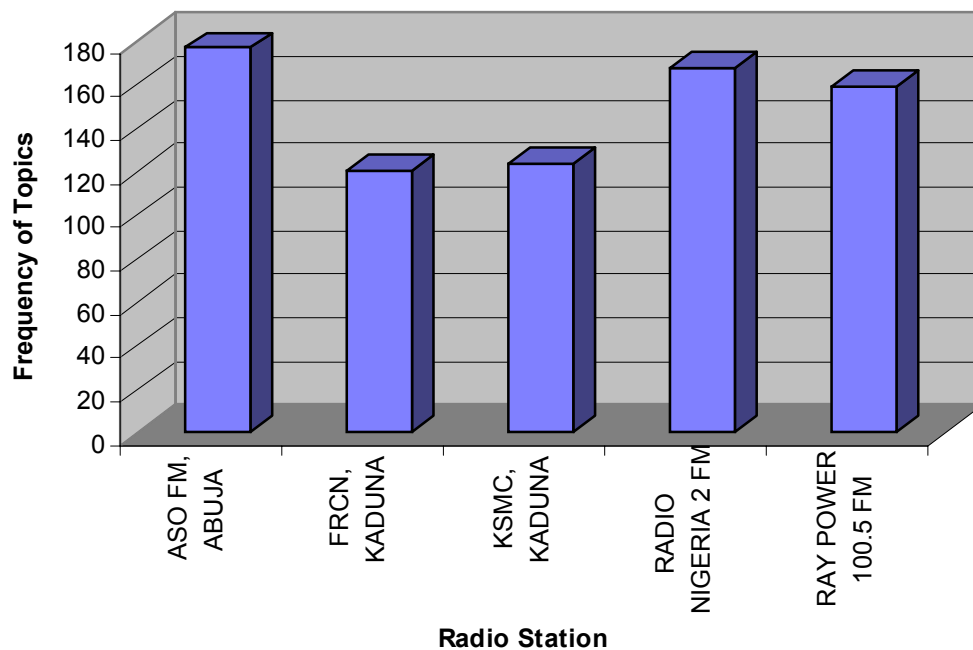
Frequency of Scope of Coverage of Programmes (Radio)

<i>Scope</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage (%)</i>
Abia	14	1.87
Adamawa	5	0.67
Africa	4	0.53
Akwa Ibom	13	1.74
Anambra	5	0.67
Bauchi	2	0.27
Benue	5	0.67
Borno	5	0.67
Bayelsa	4	0.53
Cross River	4	0.53
Delta	4	0.53
Ebonyi	4	0.53
Edo	1	0.13
Ekiti	3	0.40
Enugu	5	0.67
Fct Abuja	35	4.67
Gombe	7	0.93
International	7	0.93
Jigawa	7	0.93
Kebbi	14	1.87
Kaduna	36	4.81
Kano	13	1.74
Katsina	7	0.93
Kwara	7	0.93
Lagos	43	5.74
Nasarawa	14	1.87
Niger Delta	3	0.40
Niger	5	0.67
Nigeria	400	53.40
Ondo	11	1.47
Osun	14	1.87
Oyo	4	0.53
Plateau	25	3.34
Rivers	6	0.80
South East	1	0.13
Sokoto	1	0.13
South South	1	0.13
South West	2	0.27
Taraba	5	0.67
Yobe	3	0.40
Total:	749	100.00

Frequency & Percentage of Reports (Radio)

<i>Radio Station</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage (%)</i>
ASO FM, ABUJA	177	23.63
FRCN, KADUNA	121	16.15
KSMC, KADUNA	124	16.56
RADIO NIGERIA 2 FM	168	22.43
RAY POWER 100.5 FM	159	21.23
Total:	749	100.00

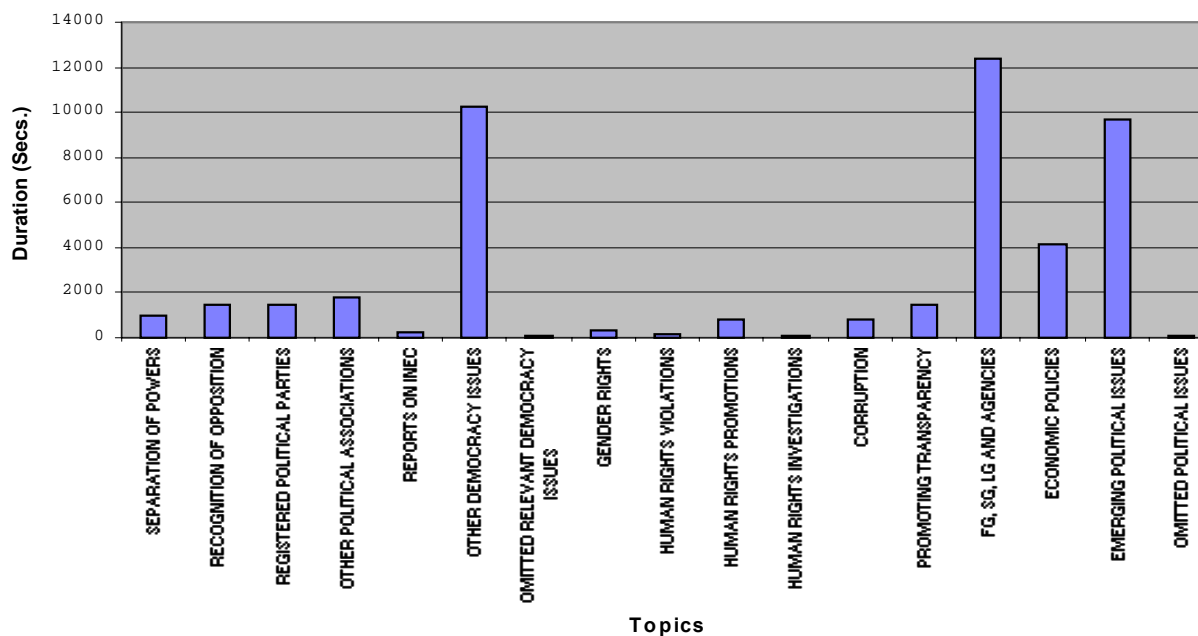
Frequency of Reports (Radio)



Duration & Percentage of Topics (Radio)

<i>Topic</i>	<i>Duration (secs.)</i>	<i>Percentage (%)</i>
SEPARATION OF POWERS	957	2.08
RECOGNITION OF OPPOSITION	1483	3.22
REGISTERED POLITICAL PARTIES	1480	3.21
OTHER POLITICAL ASSOCIATIONS	1762	3.82
REPORTS ON INEC	227	0.49
OTHER DEMOCRACY ISSUES	10252	22.23
OMITTED RELEVANT DEMOCRACY ISSUES	45	0.10
GENDER RIGHTS	340	0.74
HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS	183	0.40
HUMAN RIGHTS PROMOTIONS	828	1.80
HUMAN RIGHTS INVESTIGATIONS	51	0.11
CORRUPTION	812	1.76
PROMOTING TRANSPARENCY	1440	3.12
FG, SG, LG AND AGENCIES	12401	26.89
ECONOMIC POLICIES	4160	9.02
EMERGING POLITICAL ISSUES	9653	20.93
OMITTED POLITICAL ISSUES	44	0.10
Total:	46118.00	100.00

Duration of Topics (Radio)



Frequency & Percentage of Areas of Origin (Radio)

<i>Area</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage (%)</i>
Abia	26	3.47
Adamawa	8	1.07
Africa	1	0.13
Akwa Ibom	12	1.60
Anambra	6	0.80
Bauchi	5	0.67
Benue	11	1.47
Borno	5	0.67
Bayelsa	4	0.53
Cross River	5	0.67
Delta	5	0.67
Ebonyi	4	0.53
Edo	5	0.67
Ekiti	6	0.80
Enugu	5	0.67
Fct Abuja	243	32.44
Gombe	8	1.07
Imo	2	0.27
International	1	0.13
Jigawa	8	1.07
Kebbi	19	2.54
Kaduna	63	8.41
Kogi	3	0.40
Kano	16	2.14
Katsina	12	1.60
Kwara	8	1.07
Lagos	105	14.02
Nasarawa	16	2.14
Niger	10	1.34
Nil	29	3.87
Ondo	12	1.60
Osun	14	1.87
Oyo	8	1.07
Plateau	29	3.87
Rivers	10	1.34
Sokoto	1	0.13
Taraba	17	2.27
Yobe	5	0.67
Zamfara	2	0.27
<i>Total:</i>	749	100.00

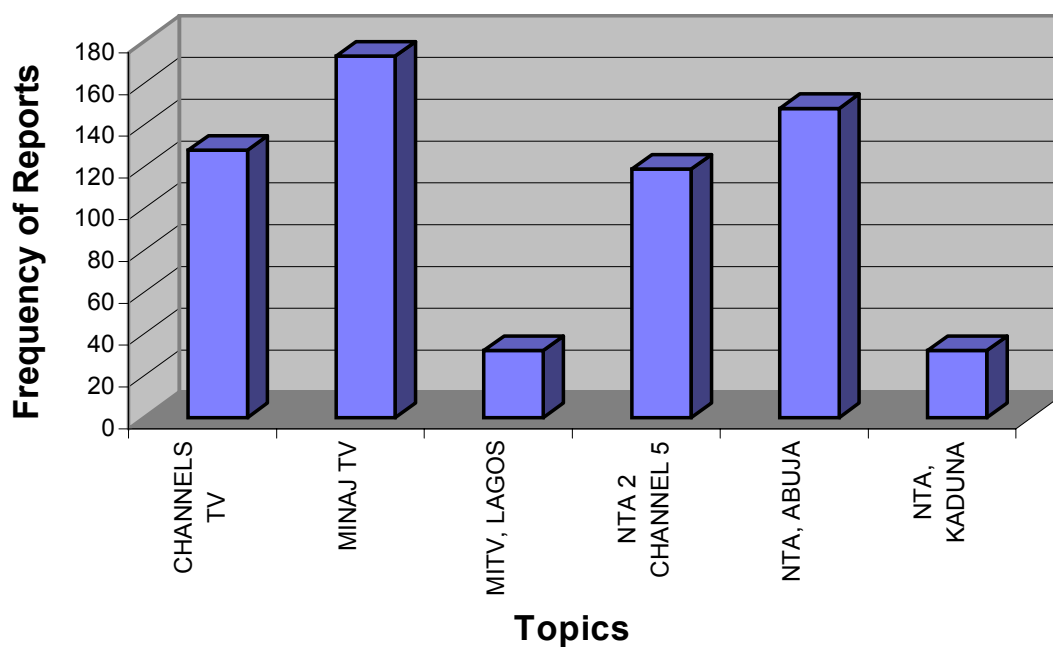
Frequency & Percentage of Scope of Coverage (Television)

<i>Scope</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage (%)</i>
Abia	5	0.79
Akwa Ibom	2	0.32
Anambra	2	0.32
Bauchi	3	0.47
Benue	6	0.95
Borno	1	0.16
Bayelsa	7	1.11
Cross River	2	0.32
Delta	7	1.11
Edo	6	0.95
Ekiti	2	0.32
Enugu	2	0.32
Fct Abuja	13	2.06
Gombe	3	0.47
Imo	1	0.16
International	8	1.27
Jigawa	1	0.16
Kebbi	8	1.27
Kaduna	9	1.42
Kogi	3	0.47
Kano	1	0.16
Katsina	2	0.32
Lagos	25	3.96
North Central	3	0.47
Niger Delta	12	1.90
Niger	1	0.16
Nigeria	433	68.51
Ondo	4	0.63
Ogun	1	0.16
Osun	9	1.42
Oyo	4	0.63
Plateau	6	0.95
Rivers	8	1.27
South East	12	1.90
Sokoto	2	0.32
South South	5	0.79
South West	1	0.16
Taraba	7	1.11
West Africa	3	0.47
North	1	0.16
Zamfara	1	0.16
Total:	632	100.00

Frequency of Reports (Television)

<i>TV Station</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage (%)</i>
CHANNELS TV	128	20.25
MINAJ TV	173	27.37
MITV, LAGOS	32	5.06
NTA 2 CHANNEL 5	119	18.83
NTA, ABUJA	148	23.42
NTA, KADUNA	32	5.06
Total:	632	100.00

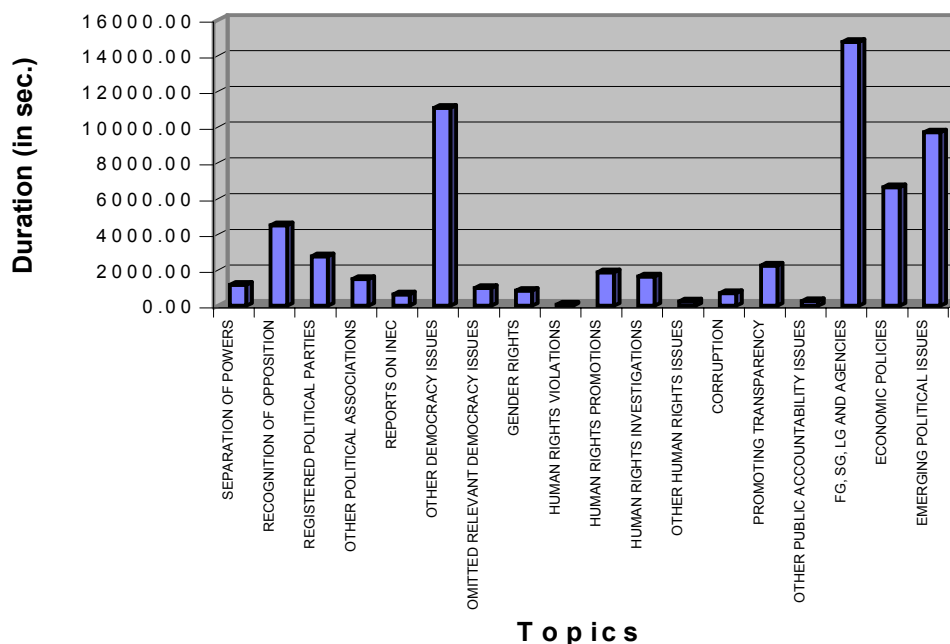
Frequency of Reports (Television)



Duration & Percentage of Topics in Secs. (Television)

Topic	Duration (in Secs.)	Percentage (%)
SEPARATION OF POWERS	1177.00	1.91
RECOGNITION OF OPPOSITION	4515.00	7.32
REGISTERED POLITICAL PARTIES	2766.00	4.49
OTHER POLITICAL ASSOCIATION	1501.00	2.44
REPORTS ON INEC	633.00	1.03
OTHER DEMOCRACY ISSUES	11077.00	17.97
OMITTED RELEVANT DEMOCRACY ISSUES	999.00	1.62
GENDER RIGHTS	842.00	1.37
HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS	65.00	0.11
HUMAN RIGHTS PROMOTIONS	1872.00	3.04
HUMAN RIGHTS INVESTIGATIONS	1635.00	2.65
OTHER HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES	240.00	0.39
CORRUPTION	707.00	1.15
PROMOTING TRANSPARENCY	2250.00	3.65
OTHER PUBLIC ACCOUNTABILITY ISSUES	264.00	0.43
FG, SG, LG AND AGENCIES	14767.00	23.96
ECONOMIC POLICIES	6628.00	10.75
EMERGING POLITICAL ISSUES	9703.00	15.74
Total:	61641.00	100.00

Duration of Topics in Secs. (Television)



Frequency & Percentage of Areas (Television)

<i>Area</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage (%)</i>
Abia	11	1.74
Akwa Ibom	3	0.47
Anambra	3	0.47
Bauchi	7	1.11
Benue	7	1.11
Borno	1	0.16
Bayelsa	7	1.11
Cross River	3	0.47
Delta	19	3.01
Edo	9	1.42
Ekiti	1	0.16
Enugu	10	1.58
Fct Abuja	239	37.82
Gombe	3	0.47
Imo	8	1.27
International	3	0.47
Jigawa	1	0.16
Kebbi	9	1.42
Kaduna	27	4.27
Kogi	3	0.47
Kano	2	0.32
Katsina	2	0.32
Kwara	1	0.16
Lagos	125	19.78
Niger	1	0.16
Nil	54	8.54
Ondo	5	0.79
Ogun	2	0.32
Osun	9	1.42
Oyo	11	1.74
Plateau	11	1.74
Rivers	17	2.69
Sokoto	1	0.16
Taraba	11	1.74
West Africa	3	0.47
Yobe	1	0.16
Zamfara	2	0.32
Total:	632	100.00

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.

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



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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Head Office

Media Rights Agenda, 44, Alhaja Kofoworola Crescent, Off Obafemi Awolowo Way, Ikeja,
P. O. Box 52113, Ikoyi, Lagos, Nigeria
Tel: 234-1-4936033-4, Fax: 234-1-4930831.; E-mail: pubs@mediarightsagenda.org; Web site: www.internews.org/mra

Regional Offices

Abuja
Suite 52, Corner Shop
Zone 2, Wuse,
Abuja

Kaduna
AK. 7, Yoruba Road
Kaduna
Tel. & Fax: 062-240083