EVOLUTION GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF MEDIA PLURALISM:

AN ASSESSMENT OF POLICIES, LEGISLATIONS AND REGULATORY FRAMEWORK IN GHANA

BY

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ABSTRACT

The burden of this study is to assess the evolution, growth and development of media pluralism within the context of policies, legislations and regulatory framework in Ghana. Indeed the study has made important revelations, that pluralism and diversity of the media in the country are phenomenal in the annals of media development. That the past twenty or more years have seen a dramatic growth in pluralism and diversity of the media. Besides, there have been various legislations and policies that have run in tandem with the evolution and growth of the media. The challenge is how the government can fashion new laws and regulatory mechanisms in line with international standards, to meet the aspirations of the people, and that any regulation should aim at diversity, plurality, quality and access.

INTRODUCTION

The evolution, growth and development of the media the world over, have followed almost the same trajectory in terms of core characteristics. The trend has spanned the nascent beginnings of oral and written communication, printed communication, electronic and digital communication through to the age of media convergence and the new media with its attendant sophistication.[1]

The Ghanaian experience is no exception to this general trend. From its rudimentary beginnings which took the form of hand written newspapers, through to typed written era, and subsequent dawn of broadcasting; media pluralism and diversity have been characteristic features of the media landscape. Notwithstanding the daunting challenges, one can aptly describe the period of the Gold Coast media from 1822 up to now as watershed in the history of media development.[2]

A BACKGROUND OF THE MEDIA IN GHANA

THE PRESS

The first newspaper to be published in the Gold Coast was The Royal Gold Coast Gazette and Commercial Intelligencer. Its first issue was published on April 2, 1882. The two principal preoccupations of the paper were the threat from the Ashanti empire and, next the battle to enforce the abolition of the slave trade. Besides, reportage on economic activities of the colony, including government proclamations thereon, and education were regularly covered by the paper. The available records show that after the demise of the Gold Coast Gazette in 1824, the first newspaper to rise from its ashes was the Accra Herald, later to be known as West African Herald. It was the first private newspaper of the Gold Coast, founded and owned and edited by Charles Bannerman, a prominent Gold Coast lawyer. The available information would suggest that all the issues of the Accra Herald were written out and copied in long hand. The West African Herald, except perhaps for the first few issues, was however printed.[3]

The policy and content of the first private newspaper in the Gold Coast was summarized in a report delivered by Colonel H. Bird, the Acting Governor of the Gold Coast to the Colonial Secretary of State which partly stated as follows: "…… extracts from the West African Herald, a paper which more generally cavils at than acquiesces in the proceedings of the Government".[4]

The first newspaper to be owned and run exclusively by native Gold Coasters, however, was the Gold Coast Times. The Times was owned, edited and published by James Hutton Brew, one of

the important early nationalist figures of the Gold Coast. First published in March, 1874, the Times was by no means a nationalist newspaper. It was concerned with the major local issues of its time – the need for infrastructural development, trade, domestic matters and especially the continuing threat of Ashanti. The Coast Times folded up in 1885, but in that same year a new newspaper, the western Echo was launched. Be that as it may, the Western Echo, unlike the Gold Coast Times, was against colonial rule. Just as elsewhere the world over, the experience of the press under colonialism in the Gold Coast affirmed its pivotal and indispensable role in the struggle against for freedom and change. The role of the Ghanaian private press in the nationalist movement is without exaggeration. It proved the most effective vehicle for the dissemination of written propaganda[5].

Newspapers ever since have grown in leaps and bounds, establishing cardinal principles of pluralism and diversity in orientation. There are over 300 registered print publications in Ghana at the moment spanning public and private dichotomy and providing teeth to the democratic dispensation of the country.

BROACASTING

Radio broadcasting was introduced into the Gold Coast when a wired radio distribution system was formally launched in Accra on July 31, 1935. Later to be known as Radio ZOY, the wired relay service expanded rapidly. By the end of that year, there were about 400 subscribers and by 1945, this had increased to 4,000. All this was through the determined effort of Sir Arnold Hodson, the then Governor of the Gold coast. Radio ZOY was established as an extension of the "Empire Service". One of the aims of Empire Service among others was to enable British colonialist to and other Europeans to maintain political and cultural links with Britain and the

rest of Europe. In the case of the Gold Coast, the purpose of using broadcasting for general and political education was enunciated quite early.[6] The importance attached to radio as a tool for education is underscored by the fact that by March 1939 facilities had been provided for school children in 17 towns to listen to radio. Besides, broadcast programme was to make Government to control to a large extent the type of mental stimulus which the educated community needed.[7]

Broadcasting for propaganda was never made secret by the then Governor. The object of the propaganda was to inculcate in the citizens of the Gold coast certain aspects of British culture and ideas which might come from outside.[8] The propaganda use of radio was intensified during the Second World War It was during this period that increasing use was made of the local languages in broadcasting.[9]

As far as the development of radio is concerned, the next important milestone is the inauguration of the external service in June 1961. Broadcasting in English, French, Hausa, Swahili, Arabic and Portuguese the Ghana Broadcasting Corporation (GBC) External Service did not take long to make its presence felt as an important tool of the Government of Nkrumah's foreign policy.[10]

Exactly thirty years (30 years) when wired radio was introduced into the Gold Coast, television was introduced in Ghana after Six years of careful planning, preparation and training of personnel with the assistance of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC). In the words of President Nkrumah, television was introduced "for the education, the enjoyment and entertainment of our people."[11] Commercial broadcasting was inaugurated on the 1st February, 1967 as a policy shift in broadcasting in Ghana "to give our business community and other individuals the chance of selling their goods and services through the fastest available means –

radio and television. Besides, it was also intended to generate income to supplement government subvention and thereby lighten the burden of the tax payer.[12]

Broadcasting in Ghana developed from being a relay of the Empire service into a Ghanaian Service, becoming Africanised in terms of technical, programmes and administrative personnel.

THE DAWN OF PRIVATE BROACASTING

Right up to the beginning of 1994, government and its Frequency Registration and Control Board were still reluctant to make any movement in the direction of freeing the airwaves. It was only a matter of time before private broadcasting became a reality on Ghana's media landscape. On December 6, 1994, the then Minister of Information presented the policy statement of the government on private broadcasting to Parliament, committing the government to February 1995 as when "properly authorized FM stations will begin operating throughout the country." He sought to explain the delay in private broadcasting in the necessity to establish regulations and transparent guidelines which "balance the restraints of Article 164 of the Constitution with the freedoms of Article 162." He also informed the House that an attempt had been made to delay the passage of the proposed National Communications Authority bill so as to enable the government to incorporate an amendment that seeks to give the National Media Commission the responsibility for allocating frequencies for radio and television once the frequencies available have been technically determined by the Authority", and further that the House Select Committee on Communications had endorsed this proposal after meeting with the representatives of the National Media Commission.[13] Meanwhile, public outcry over the heavy-handedness with which the powers that be dealt with the operators of Radio Eye, eventually forced the Frequency Board on July 20, 1995, to issue a press statement, announcing 27

companies, including the Independent Media Corporation of Ghana (IMCG) operators of Radio Eye, to whom it had granted frequencies and or franchise to operate broadcasting services. Since then, the numbers of FM stations that dot the airwaves nationwide have grown rapidly.

A sequel to this development is the sad episode that the IMCG and its Radio Eye who trailed-blazed the path of private broadcasting are yet to be on air, locked up in the fanciful logic of the Frequency Board that there is a pending criminal trial against the IMCG and its directors.[14]

A SKETCH OF LEGISLATIONS, REGULATORY FRAMEWORK AND POLICIES OF THE MEDIA IN GHANA

Indeed media legislation and regulation have moved in tandem with the evolution, growth and development of the media to support the jurisprudential position, that the environment determines the type and nature of laws that emerge in society, usually encapsulated in theories of environmental determinism or cultural relativism.[15]

The nature and type of legislations that were passed in the Gold Coast to all intents and purposes were in response to the media climate at the time. One of the first laws governing the publication of newspapers was the Newspaper Registration Ordinance of 1894(Cap 125). It was soon followed by the Books and Newspapers Registration Ordinance of 1897(Cap124). The former was meant to keep a record of the titles, names of editors, publishers, proprietors and printers of newspapers, whereas the latter was to ensure both the registration of books and the preservation of the same in libraries and certain institutions.[16]

Following on the heels of the above legislations, were the introduction of the 1934 sedition Bill with limited censorship as regards publications which could be imported into the country. The

rationale for the enactment of this piece of legislation was to combat the introduction of new ideas from Russia into the colonies.[17]

In historical perspective, the former set of legislations came under the umbrella of registration, whilst the latter came under censorship. It can therefore be argued, that these sets of legislations constituted the cassus belli in appreciating media law in Ghana.

After independence the censorship policy was reinforced by s.183(3) (a) and (b) of the Criminal Code which made it possible for the President to appoint the Ministry of information as censors to censor all news sent from Ghana by resident foreign correspondents and stringers to overseas papers. In 1961, the Book and Newspaper Registration Act (Act73) repealed the two colonial ordinances, Cap 124 and Cap 125.[18]

The Newspaper Licensing Act, 1963(ACT 189) amended s.14 of Act 73. Thus, for the first time on the annals of media chronology in the country, newspaper licensing was introduced. A newspaper which did not obey the conditions of the license could face suspension or revocation of its license.[19]

During the Second Republic, specifically in 1970 the Newspaper Licensing (Repeal) Act (Act319), repealed the Newspaper Licensing Act of 1963. However, after barely three years, newspaper licensing was back on the statute books with the enactment of NRCD 161 of 1973, which repealed Act 319 of 1970. As a sequel to the developments enunciated above, with the overthrow of the SMC by the AFRC in 1979, the latter enacted the Newspaper (Repeal) Decree, to enable newspapers to appear without a Government fiat.[20]

Between 1982 and 1988 an informal form of licensing was introduced by virtue of a circular, whereby it became mandatory for any organization or persons wishing to operate a newspaper to apply to the Information Services Department to that effect.[21]

 In 1988, the situation was modified by the Newspaper Licensing Law, PNDC Law 211, which introduced a de jure licensing system to replace a de facto system. Ultimately, the above law was repealed by the PNDC Law 299, which created the Media Commission under the PNDC, but which law never established the said commission until it was superseded by the one created by the Constitution and the Media Commission Act, 1993.[22]

In the context of constitutional framework, the 1992 Constitution made elaborate provisions concerning the development of the media. Article 162(2) states inter alia that "there shall be no censorship in Ghana." Article 162(3) further states that "there shall be no law requiring any person to obtain a license as a prerequisite to the establishment or operation of a newspaper, journal or other media of mass communication or information." Article 162(4) also provides that: "Editors and Publishers of Newspapers and other institutions of mass media shall not be subjected to the control or interference by Government nor shall they be penalized or harassed for their editorial opinions and views, or the content of their publications." Indeed Article 21(1) is a summation of all that has been provided in the constitutional framework which stipulates that: "All persons shall have the right to freedom of speech and expression which shall include freedom of the Press and other media."[23]

As a sequel to the elaborate constitutional provisions on the media, is the coming into being of The National Media Commission (NMC), which was set up on July 7, 1993 by an Act of Parliament (Act 449). The Act, in pursuit of the provisions of Chapter 12 of the 1992

Constitution is enjoined among others, to take all appropriate measures to ensure the establishment and maintenance of the highest journalistic standards in the mass media, including the investigation, mediation and settlement of complaints made against or by the press or other mass media. Indeed, the National Media Policy which is an off–shoot of the commission is to serve as the benchmark for measuring media performance generally. The policy provides general guidelines for Print, Electronic, Film, Wire service, Advertising and Public Relations. It equally provides for Public Service, Commercial and Community Media.[24]

Following on the heels of the NMC, is the establishment of the National Communications Authority (NCA) by an Act of Parliament (Act 524) to regulate the allocation of frequencies among others in the telecommunications industry in Ghana. In this connection, the NCA has issued 171 radio and 15 television licenses for broadcasting services throughout the country (NCA, 2009). [25]

Fig. 1   REGIONAL DISTRIBUTION OF FM STATIONS IN GHANA

REGION	PUBLIC	COMMUNITY	CAMPUS	COMMERCIAL	TOTAL
ASHANTI	4	-	2	27	33
GREATER ACCRA	3	3	1	22	29
BRONG AHAFO	4	3	-	18	25
WESTERN	5	0	1	18	24
NORTHERN	8	1	-	4	13
CENTRAL	2	3	3	5	13
EASTERN	2	2	1	7	12
VOLTA	3	1	1	4	9
UPPER EAST	3	2	-	3	8
UPPER WEST	3	2	-	-	5

Source: NCA 2009

MEDIA LIBERALISATION

Media liberalization has ushered in a multiplicity of television and radio stations throughout the country. Indeed, this development was given fillip by Article 162 (3) of the 1992 constitution of Ghana which stated among others that "There shall be no impediments to the establishment of private press or media…... there shall be no law requiring any person to obtain a license as a pre requisite to the establishment or operation of a newspaper, journal or other media for mass communication or information". With this provision in the constitution, the media landscape has since expanded. There are over 300 registered print publications in Ghana. Besides, the National Communications Authority (NCA) which regulates telecommunications has issued 171 radio and 15 television licences for broadcasting services throughout the country. In the case of television, it is only the cities of Sekondi – Takoradi and Kumasi that have regional stations, SKYY TELEVISION and CRYSTAL TV respectively. The rest are based in the national capital Accra. The regions with the heaviest concentrations of radio stations are the Greater Accra, Ashanti, Western and Brong Ahafo. Most of these stations are privately owned and operate on a commercial basis, apart from the public FM stations. The urban based stations, particularly those in the capital are able to enhance their reach by syndication arrangements with regional affiliates.[26]

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

Government policy in relation to media is critical to the shape and size of the system. It is necessary to regulate media operations, and that regulation must exist within a policy context that has defined goals about the structure of the media system.[27]

Pluralism is a characteristic of all societies, or certainly of all complex societies. Pluralism is defined in terms of both structure and culture, as connoting simultaneously a social structure characterized by fundamental discontinuities and cleavages, and a cultural complex based on systematic institutional diversity.[28]

Media pluralism permits the expression of diverse opinions, cultures, languages and groups in any given society in relation to various representations. The Media in a democratic society should not only be pluralistic. A vibrant democracy requires an independent and pluralistic media, which is free from governmental, political or economic control and with access to the materials and infrastructure that are needed for the production and dissemination of media products and programmes.

The Ghanaian media have gone through various phases since 1822; so also have legislations governing their operation. At this juncture, plausible questions that can be posed are: a) how has the media in Ghana fared in terms of policy formulation and implementation in an environment of plurality? b) What legal and regulatory framework has characterized the operation of the media and with what effects? c) What legal issues have emerged in the media in the implementation of media policies? d) What policy mechanisms should be adopted in the era of the New Media dispensation in Ghana?

Thus, the burden of this study is to assess the evolution growth and development of media pluralism and diversity, in the context of policy, legislations and regulatory framework in Ghana; besides, the mechanisms to put in place to promote and enhance sustainable development of the media in particular and the new media at large.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The study aims at assessing the policies, legislations and regulatory framework that have characterized the evolution, growth and development of the media in Ghana. Besides, it will examine the development of pluralism and diversity; and above all the New Media and its impact on the media landscape in Ghana.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Findings of the study are expected to bridge the gulf that exists between theory and practice in media policy analysis. In addition, it will provide an up-date account of media policy issues and serve as a resource for communication experts, scholars, teachers, practitioners, policy makers and the general public on media policies, legislations and regulations in Ghana.

DEFINITIONS, ASSUMPTIONS AND LIMITATIONS

DEFINITIONS

- Media: the electronic and the print modes of communication.

- Policy: a planned or agreed course of action based on particular principles.

- Legislation: the act of making laws.

- Regulatory Framework: a system of control usually by means of rules.

ASSUMPTIONS

- Appropriate legislation and policy will promote enabling environment for sustainable development of the media.

- An enforced regulatory framework will produce vibrant media professionals.

- Whenever there is a change in policy and legislation, there is always a consequential effect of the same in society.

LIMITATIONS

This study is technical in orientation, and therefore demands an appraisal of legislations, policies and regulatory framework. By extension, only persons with good knowledge on the issues were consulted.

DIALECTICS OF MEDIA PLURALISM, DIVERSITY AND THE NEW MEDIA

Pluralism is nothing else but the free expression of social and political reality. That is, pluralism is not a simple question of numbers. It is the absence of monopoly and uniformity in social and political life. It demands that variety, difference, contrariety, divergence are permitted, tolerated and even encouraged. Society itself is characterized as such, both in its natural and social expression.

Applied to the mass media, it demands the existence of publications, radio or TV stations free to express and exhibit the ideological expression of this: in politics, in religious beliefs, in economic policy perspectives, in cultural diversity such as the use of any language and respect of differences in practices.

It is expressed in terms of diversity of ownership patterns: private, public, state, commercial and non-profit. It is manifest in the variety of organizational and management structures and practices. Media pluralism supposes and must express diverse objectives, ideological and political orientations, and audiences. It is, at the end of the day, how diverse are the opinions promoted, and the breadth of programme output and the social interests they satisfy.[29] (Karikari, Kwame.1993)

How then can we ensure that pluralism in broadcasting manifests the diverse political, cultural and social interests?

In sum pluralism in broadcasting is an outlet for the widest possible range of Radio or Television station ownership, organization and output. However, the ensuing scenario of a seeming Babel on the airwaves does not have to engender rancorous sectarian outpourings likely to thwart national development or provoke antagonistic divisiveness. Yet as a number of the contributions point out, promoting pluralism must confront this fear and address mechanisms of preventing degeneration into a cacophonous atmosphere of irresponsible broadcasting.[30]

There is a plethora of scholarly research on the media in the developing world, including Ghana. In his pioneering work on the press in Ghana, Jones-Quartey K.A.B. made an exposition of the history, politics and early press in Ghana. He traced the evolution and development of the press in the Gold Coast from 1822 to 1960.[31]

Asante C.E. presented a comprehensive analysis of the historical relationship between the press and government in Ghana over the period 1822 to 1992. He systematically examined the nature and scope of the relationship between the press and government in Ghana.[32]

Karikari (2002) provided a historical background to the contemporary situation. He provided an overview of the application of the laws by the colonial state in relation to the press. The critical leadership role of the press in the anti-colonial movement attracted to itself the legal wrath of colonial authority.[33]

Kotey E.N.A. provided an account of constitutional evolution of freedom of the media in Ghana. He traced this development from the period when the constitution lacked "conceptual distinction" between freedom of the media on one hand and of speech and expression on the

other. He further analyzed some of the prominent testing in court the operational implications of some of the rights provided in the constitution. He also took a critical look at the functions of the National Media Commission. He opined that the consolidation and triumph of media freedom under the constitution demands generous commitment by journalists, law makers, the courts and government. He observed in conclusion that the 1992 Constitution represents the boldest and most imaginative attempt to provide both a substantive law and institutional framework for guaranteeing, protecting and promoting an independent and free media in Ghana.[34]

It is crystal clear from the review that in so far as media policy research is concerned there is a yawning gap to be filled, therefore the urgency of this study.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study will be hinged on the following theoretical and philosophical foundations namely: Media Systems Dependency, Theories of Relational Dialectics and Agenda Setting Theory in order to put the study in context.[35]

MEDIA SYSTEMS DEPENDENCY

Media System Dependency first proposed by Ball-Rokeach and De-Fleur (1976), has at its heart a tripartite system in which media, audience, and society are seen to have dependency relationships with each other. Each of these system components (i.e. media, audience, and society) is seen depending on the other components in the system by drawing on the resources in order to satisfy goals. The theory also considers some of the consequences of dependency relationships. For example, a dependency relationship might lead individuals to frame particular issues as important ones to consider. Theoretical developments in the Media System Dependency have also revolved around the relationship between micro-level issues (e.g. individual use of the

media) and macro-level issues (e.g. relationships among media organizations and other societal institutions). In this discourse, the latter category will be in issue, as media policy analysis depends upon the tripartite role in policy formulation, evaluation and implementation.

THEORIES OF RELATIONAL DIALECTICS

A dialectical approach to relationships proposes that relationships are comprised of inherent contradictions. These contradictions are conceptualized not as dualism but as dialectics in which the tension inherent in the contradiction is not something to be resolved through choice but something that defines the nature of the relationship and sustains the life of the relationship. In the domain of philosophical roots, several philosophers and social theorists have been central in the development of dialectical theory and in its application to relational and communication processes. George Hegel and Karl Marx were instrumental in developing an understanding of the social world as controlled by fundamental distinctions in power. Hegel and Marx outlined a philosophical approach that has come to be known as material dialectics. In this dialectical approach, the thesis is seen as the current structure. The antithesis is the overthrown or reversal of this structure. Synthesis is the resolution of structural inequalities. This theoretical background will constitute the basis upon which this study will be conducted, since policy formulation and enactment of legislation follow the same mode of thesis, antithesis and synthesis in absolute terms.

AGENDA SETTING THEORY

Walter Lippmann argued that the mass media create images events in our minds and that policy makers should be cognizant of those "pictures in people's head."[36] The broad-scope definition of agenda setting involves the consideration of three related agendas: the media agenda, the public

agenda, and the policy agenda. The media agenda is the set of topics addressed by media sources (e.g. newspapers, television, and radio).

The public agenda is the set of topics that members of the public believe is important. Finally, the policy agenda represents issues that decision makers (e.g. legislators and those who influence the legislative process) believe are particularly salient. Each agenda can be seen as a dependent variable in a causal equation. As laid out by Mc-Combs and Shaw, the agenda-setting hypothesis is a relatively straightforward one. Specifically, "agenda-setting is the process whereby the news media lead the public in assigning relative importance to various public issues," The media agenda influences the public agenda by giving it more prominent space and time. This study will be underpinned by the agenda-setting theory, but then with emphasis on the policy agenda component, where legislators and those who influence the legislative process set the agenda for policy decisions.

The three theories enunciated above will constitute the theoretical foundations on which this study will be executed.

METHODOLOGY AND ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

The study was conducted using mix- methods approach. This means both quantitative and qualitative methods were employed in unraveling the problem. Specifically, the survey method using questionnaire was used. The media landscape and other stakeholders constituted the universe of the study. The justification for the use of these methodologies is to adopt multi-dimensional approach in conducting the study in a dispassionate and unbiased manner.

DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSIONS

Bio data of respondents

The survey covered 55 respondents through out the country, including journalists, communication teachers and researchers. The respondents had a male proportion of 65.7%.

The respondents were above 30 years with 82.2% falling between 41 to 60 years. They were mostly married (64.7%) and religiously Christian (82%).

Figure 1: Age distribution of respondents

Media Pluralism

The respondents were asked to indicate what they personally understood by media pluralism. It came out that 82.4% explained media pluralism to mean the condition where there is more than one media which is diversified, while the remaining 17.6% were of the view that it referred to the condition where there is more than one media which is not diversified.

Figure 2: what does media pluralism mean?

WHAT DOES MEDIA PLURAISM MEAN?

■ MORE THAN ON MEDIA WHICH IS NOT DIVERSIFIED
■ MORE THAN ONE MEDIA WHICH IS DIVERSIFIED
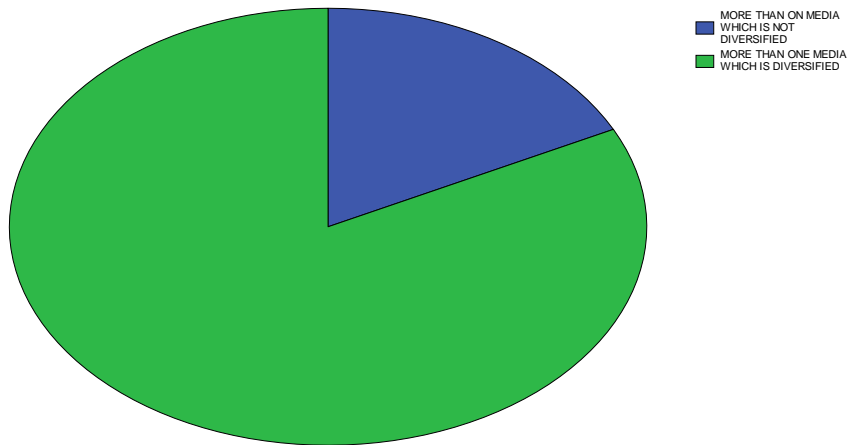
From the survey, it became apparent that media pluralism is a recent phenomenon in Ghana's body-politic. About 94.6% of the respondents stated that they first heard of the expression "media pluralism" less than twenty years ago.

The respondents were asked further to indicate where they first heard of "media pluralism" and majority 74.7% indicated that they heard about it from the media. A less significant proportion of the respondents, 23% also indicated that they came across the expression "media pluralism" from academic journals.

The respondents indicated that the print media in Ghana could be categorized according to functions or ownership. About 52.6% indicated that the media could be categorized into three divisions, 23.5% indicated two divisions whilst 17.6% indicated four divisions.

Figure 3: Categories of Print Media

About 70.8% of the respondents indicated that the print media could be categorized according to ownership that is public, private and political. The last category includes official newspapers owned by political parties which serve as their mouthpiece. About 9.6% of the respondents also categorised the print media according to its function, which are General, Social, entertainment and sports Newspapers.

Similarly they were asked to categorise the electronic media and it came out that 47.1% categorised it into two, 41.2% indicated three and 11.8% indicated four. These were public and private; public, private and political; public private, political and community respectively.

Figure 4: Categories of Electronic Media

HOW MANY GATEGORIES CAN YOU PUT THE ELECTRONIC MEDIA
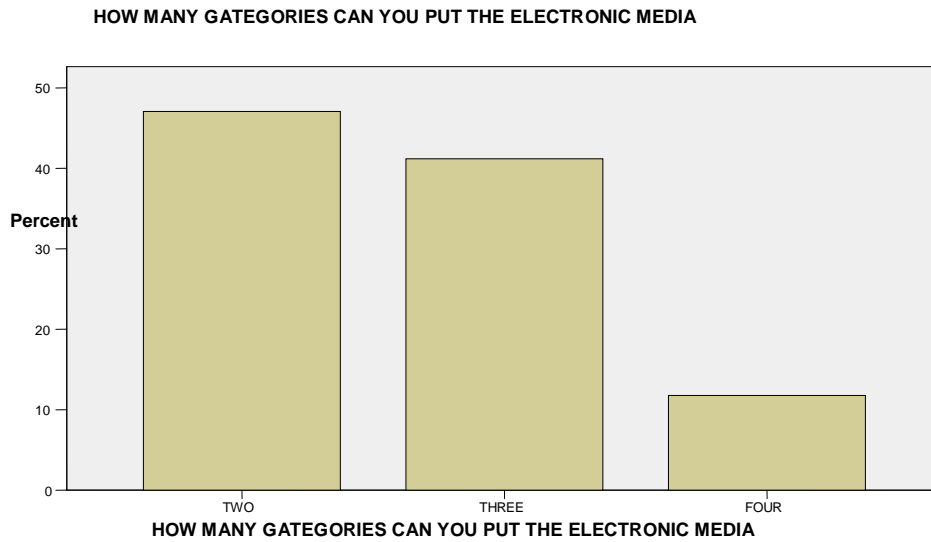
The respondents unanimously indicated that the ownership structure of the Ghanaian media both print and electronic is public, private and community ownership. The public is owned by the state; the private by individuals and organisations while the community ownership has limited coverage across rural community which generally disseminate information in local languages.

On the issue of language use on the print media space, 72.7% of the respondents indicated English is predominantly used by the print media followed by local languages like Akan, Ewe and Hausa (22.7) and French (4.5%) which is scarcely used in the print media.

Figure 5: Languages Used In Print Media

HOW MANY LANGUAGES ARE USED IN THE PRINT MEDIA

HOW MANY LANGUAGES ARE USED IN THE PRINT MEDIA
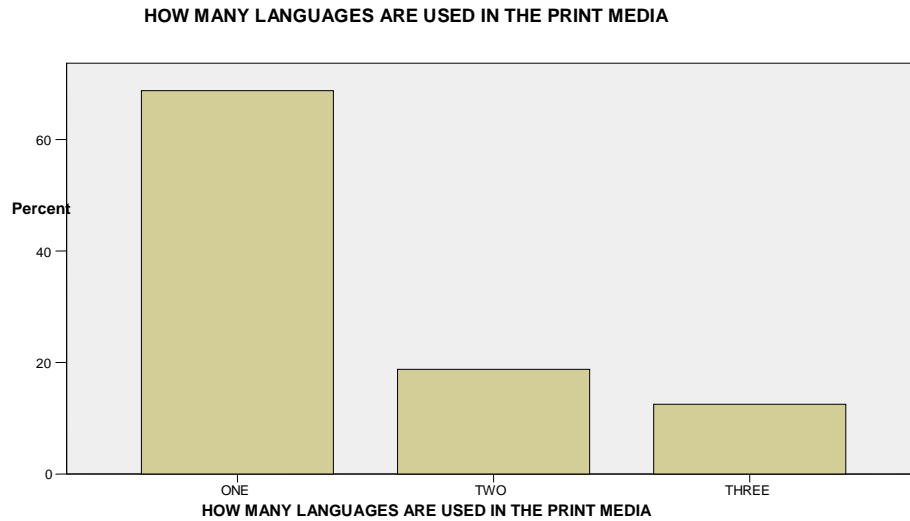
Similarly, on the electronic media landscape, the local languages were adjudged the widely used media with Akan being the most popular (47.1%) followed by English (44.1%) and French (8.8%).

On average, the respondents indicated that there were about 62 print media houses, 105 radio stations and 9 television stations in Ghana with 94.1% located within Accra.

They explained that the concentration of media houses in Accra was due to the localisation of printing presses and commercial establishments in Accra (59.2%), high population and market size (26.7%) and the capital city status of Accra (11.8%).

Figure 6: Reasons for Media Concentration in Accra

Reasons for Location in Accra
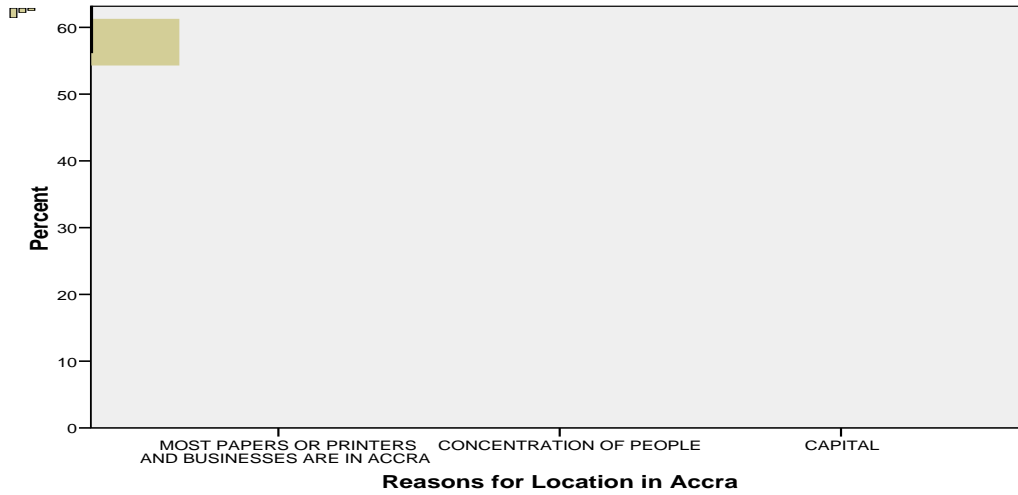
When respondents were asked to indicate whether pluralism is exhibited in the programme of the media about 82.3% answered in the affirmative. They explained that the media houses presented balanced view (29.4%), presented diverse programs (29.4%) and engaged freely in political discussion (23.5%)
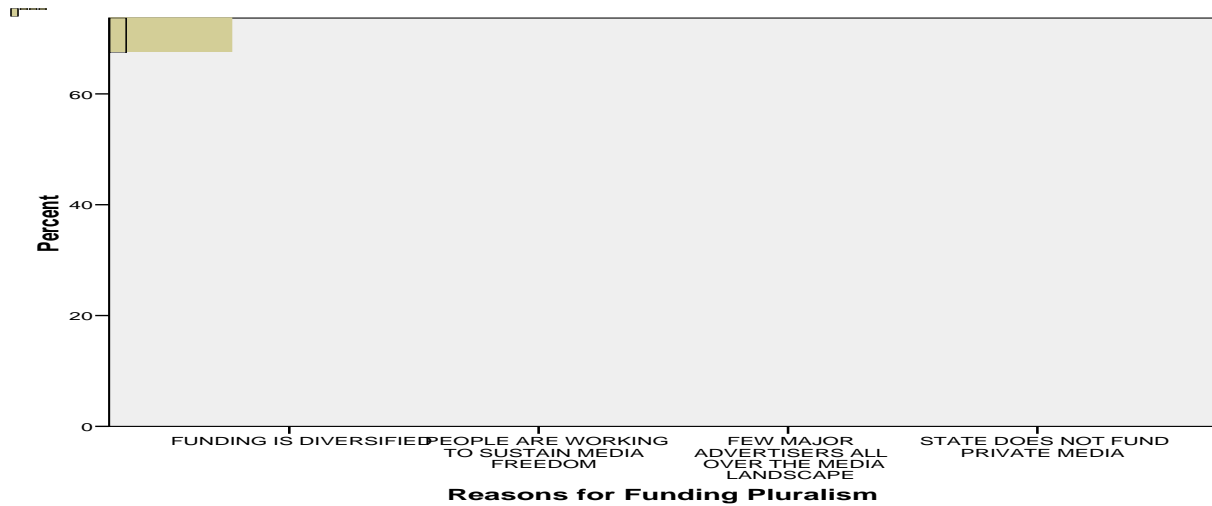
Figure 7: Pluralism in Media

IS PLURALISM EXHIBITED IN MEDIA PROGRAMME
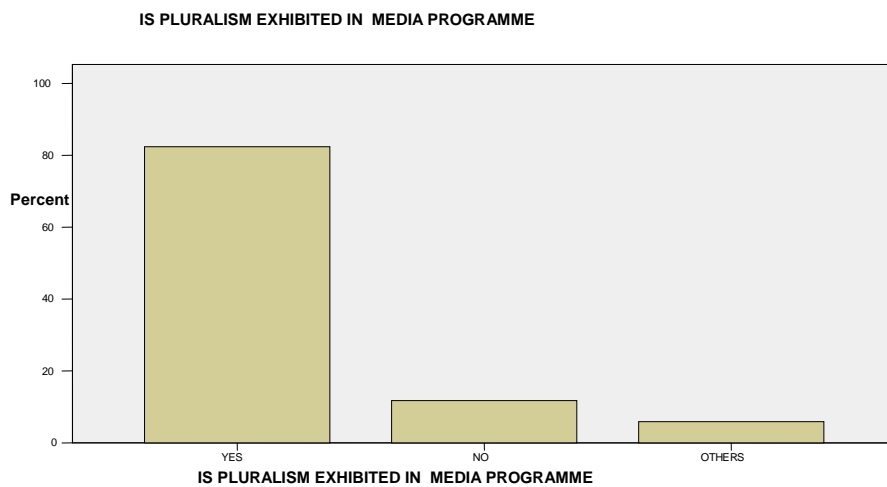
Further to this, when the respondents were asked to indicate whether pluralism exists in terms of funding on the media landscape, 61.5% answered in the affirmative. They explained that funding was diversified

(70%), a lot of people were working strongly to sustain the liberal media landscape (10%), the media was dominated by a few major advertisers (10%) and the state does not fund private media houses (10%).

Figure 8: Funding Pluralism

<figure>
Chart with y-axis labeled "Percent" (0, 20, 40, 60) and x-axis labeled "Reasons for Funding Pluralism" with categories: FUNDING IS DIVERSIFIED, PEOPLE ARE WORKING TO SUSTAIN MEDIA FREEDOM, FEW MAJOR ADVERTISERS ALL OVER THE MEDIA LANDSCAPE, STATE DOES NOT FUND PRIVATE MEDIA.
</figure>

On pluralism exhibited in ownership on the media landscape in Ghana, 86.7% answered in the affirmative and explained that the constitution allowed every Ghanaian to establish a media organisation provided s/he has the means to fund it (75%).

The respondents unanimously indicated that the media in Ghana was characterised by different forms including public broadcasting, commercial / private and community ownership. They explained that this was due to the liberal media landscape (92.9%) and the profit motive (7.1%).

Figure 9: Reasons for Different Forms of Media
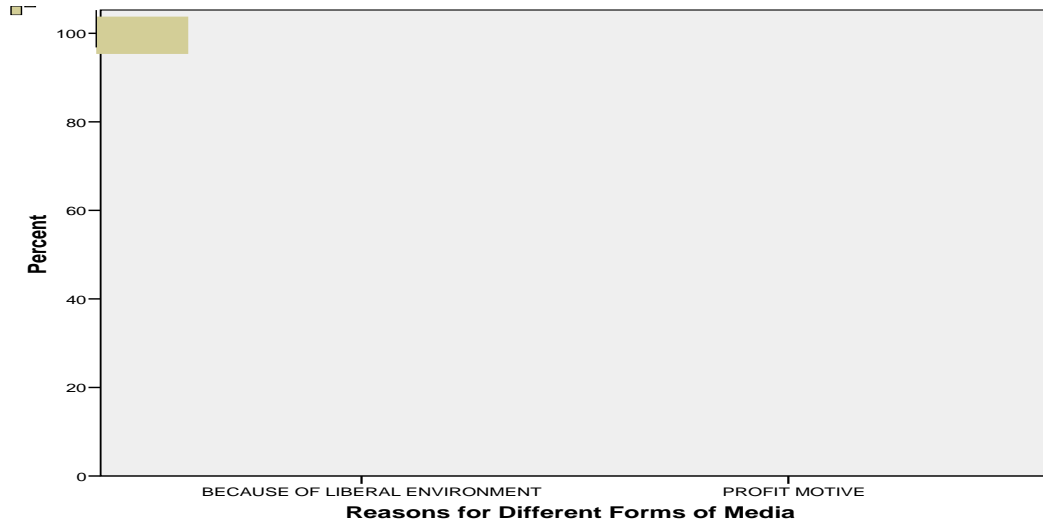
Media Policy

About 82.4% of the respondents stated that there exist media law and policy in Ghana which had been in existence averagely over 15 years. Further to this 66% of the respondents explained that this was contained in the National Media Policy and 33% attributed it to provision of civil libel policy.

Figure 10: Media Law or Policy
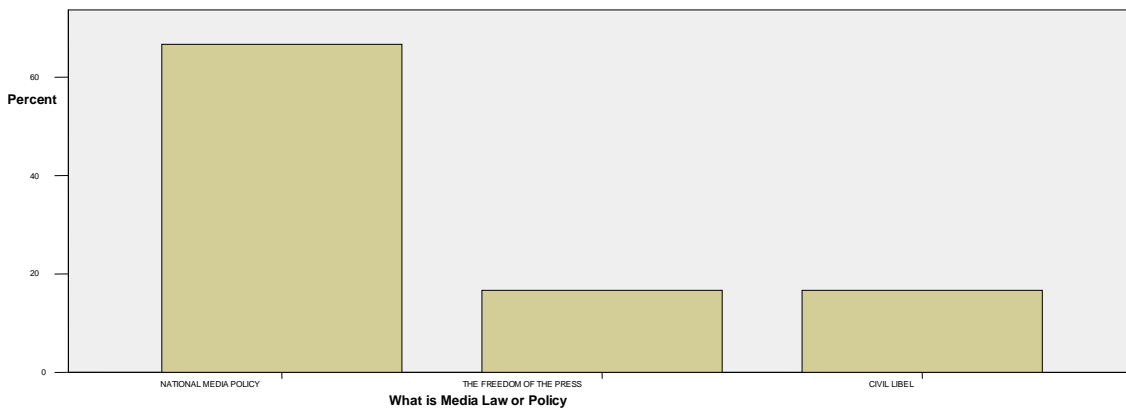
When respondents were asked how they got to know about the law, 30% indicated by radio, 25% newspapers, 15% the constitution, 15% television and 15% internet. About 83.3% explained that the constitution was the main source of the law on media practice in Ghana.

The respondents explained further that the law on media practise in Ghana has brought about responsibility (47.1%), freedom (41%) and integrity. This has resulted in free access to information (54.5%), guided practice (36.4%) and no achievement (9.1%).

National Media Commission

The respondents unanimously indicated that they knew the National Media Commission. About 47% indicated that they have known the National Media Commission over 16 years, 23% between 11 and 15 years and the rest less than 14 years.

Figure 11: How Long Have You Known NMC?

When they were asked to state where they got to know of the National Media Commission, 41.2% indicated the constitution, the rest through the media, print and electronic.
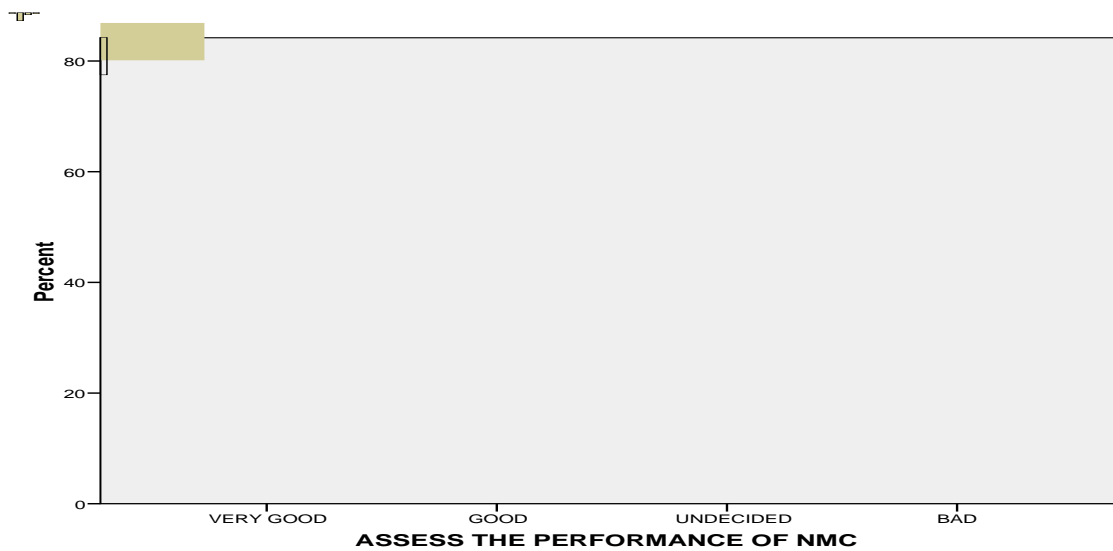
Figure 12: How Did You Get To Know the NMC?
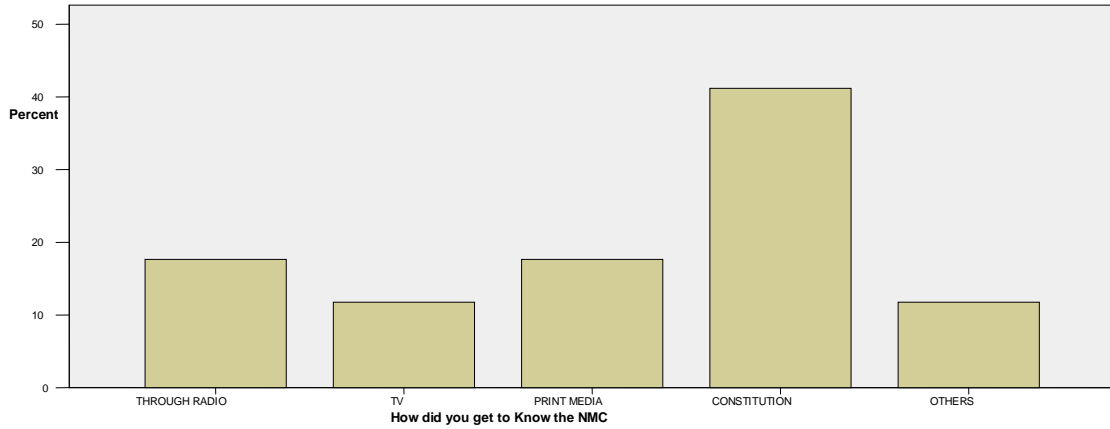
About 93% of the respondents agreed that the National Media Policy served as the benchmark for measuring media performance.

When the respondents were asked to assess the performance of the National Media Commission 70% indicated that it was good, 17% undecided and 5.6% bad.

**Figure 13: Assess the Performance of NMC**

When they were asked to give explanation to their assessment, about 50% stated that the Commission had successfully carried out their constitutional tasks, 25% indicated that the Commission lacked adequate authority to carry our their functions, 12.5% explained that they have insufficient financial resources and 12.5% stated the Commission exhibit political partisanship in their duties.

New Media

When respondents were asked whether they knew of the new media phenomenon in Ghana, 87.2% answered in the affirmative.

When they were asked to explain the new media phenomenon, 84.6% of the respondents explained that the internet is now the new media phenomenon while the rest attributed it to the emerging standards on the media landscape.

Figure 14: New Media
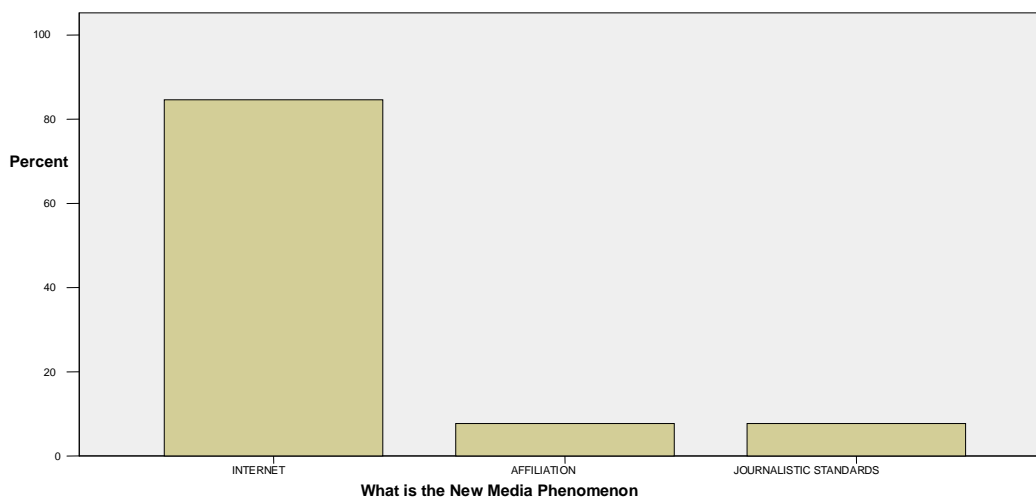
About 44.4% of the respondents explained that almost all the print media houses use new media technology whilst 33.3% indicated about half of print media houses use this technology. The rest indicated that the use of the new media phenomenon by the print media is very insignificant.

Figure 15: How Many Print Media Have Adopted New Media?

How Many Print Media Have Adopted New Media
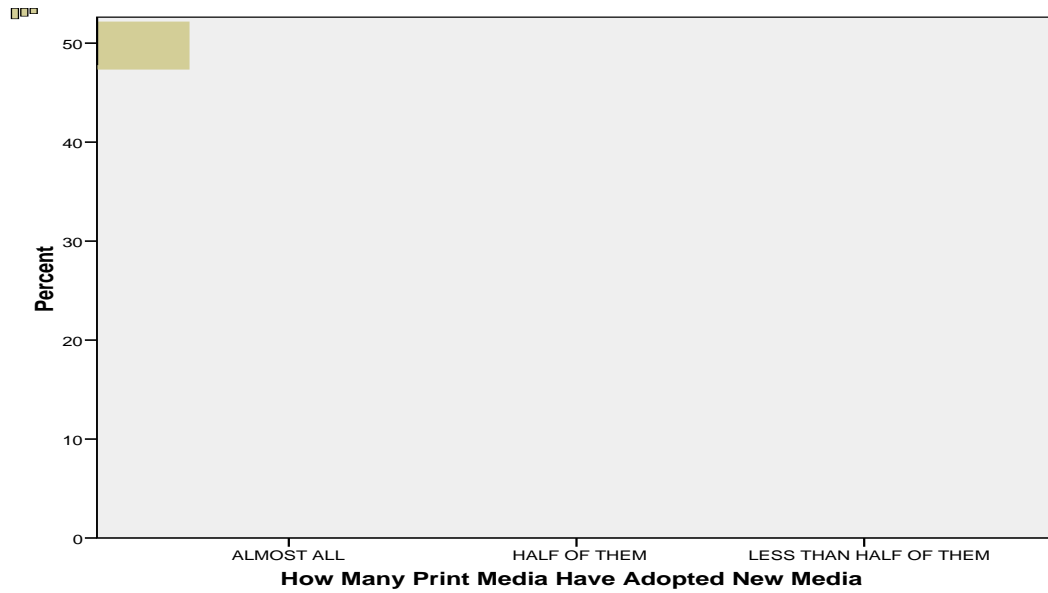
Similarly 50% of the respondents stated that al most all the electronic media houses have adopted the new media whilst 25.5% indicated about half of the electronic media houses have adopted the new media technology.

Figure 16: How Many Electronic Media Have Adopted New Media?

How Many Electronic Media have Adopted New Media?
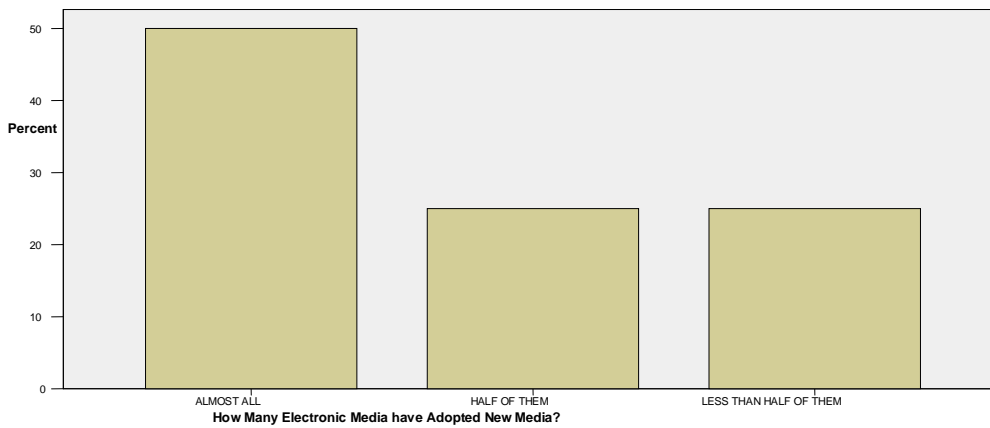
On the challenges faced by media houses adhering to new media practices, 40% indicated inadequate personnel, 26.7% insufficient technological know-how, 20% limited self-regulation and 13.3% poor financial outlay.

The respondents were asked to suggest ways of improving the practice of new media: 38.5% suggested capacity building, 38.5% investment in new technology, 15.4% empowerment and 7.7% effective regulation.

National Communication Authority

When respondents were asked whether they knew the National Communication Authority, 94.1% answered in the affirmative. They explained that they have learnt about the National Communication Authority from the 6 to 10 years (50%), 11 to 15 years (37.5 %) and the rest less than 5 years.

On how respondents got to know about National Communication Authority, 31.8% indicated they got their information from the print media, 27% through the radio and the rest by television or the internet.

Respondents were asked to state the functions of the Authority: about87.5% stated that the Authority's major role is regulation of telecommunications and electronic media establishments and 12.5% indicated allocation of frequencies to these establishments.

On assessment of the National Communication Authority, 50% of the respondents described the performance of the Authority as good while the remaining 50% were undecided.

When respondents were asked to explain reasons for the assessment, 46% stated that the Authority was underperforming, 30.8% indicated that the Authority has done well and have brought about discipline in the telecommunication industry and 15.4% indicated it exhibited political partisanship.

Figure 17: Reasons for Assessment of NCA

Reasons for Assessment of NCA
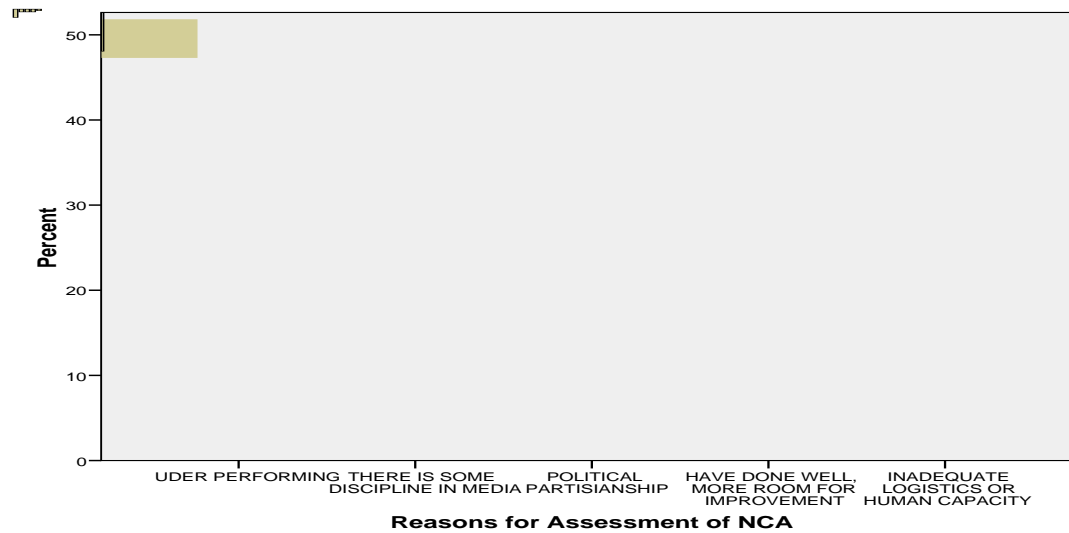
On suggestions to improve the work of the National Communication Authority, 42.9% of the respondents stated that the Authority should conduct their regulatory responsibility effectively, 28.6% were of the view that the management structure should be overhauled and 28.6% stated that the Authority should be transparent with their frequency and permit allocation processes.

Data gathered from the field will be analyzed using statistical package for the social sciences (SPSS). Pictorial representations in the form of graphs, pie-chats, tables and other statistical models will be employed in presenting the data for clarity of understanding.

CONCLUSION

That the past twenty or more years have witnessed a dramatic growth of media pluralism and diversity in the country. From media overwhelmingly dominated by government controlled or state media, the landscape has evolved considerably with the licensing of many private commercial and community media.

An overwhelming majority of the respondents expressed knowledge of the regulatory bodies such as National Media Commission and the National Communication Authority, but as to their core mandate and remit a lot more needs to be done. The Regulatory bodies should endeavor to move away from mere allocating of frequencies to increase access to the media and make sure that a great variety of voices are heard.

Regarding the new media phenomena, a lot of respondents expressed knowledge of it but then, in practice there are serious challenges. The Communication Act which is on the drawing board

should ensure the need for practical and legal changes to take account of the convergence of broadcasting and telecommunications in the country; and that regulation should aim at diversity, plurality, quality and access.

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