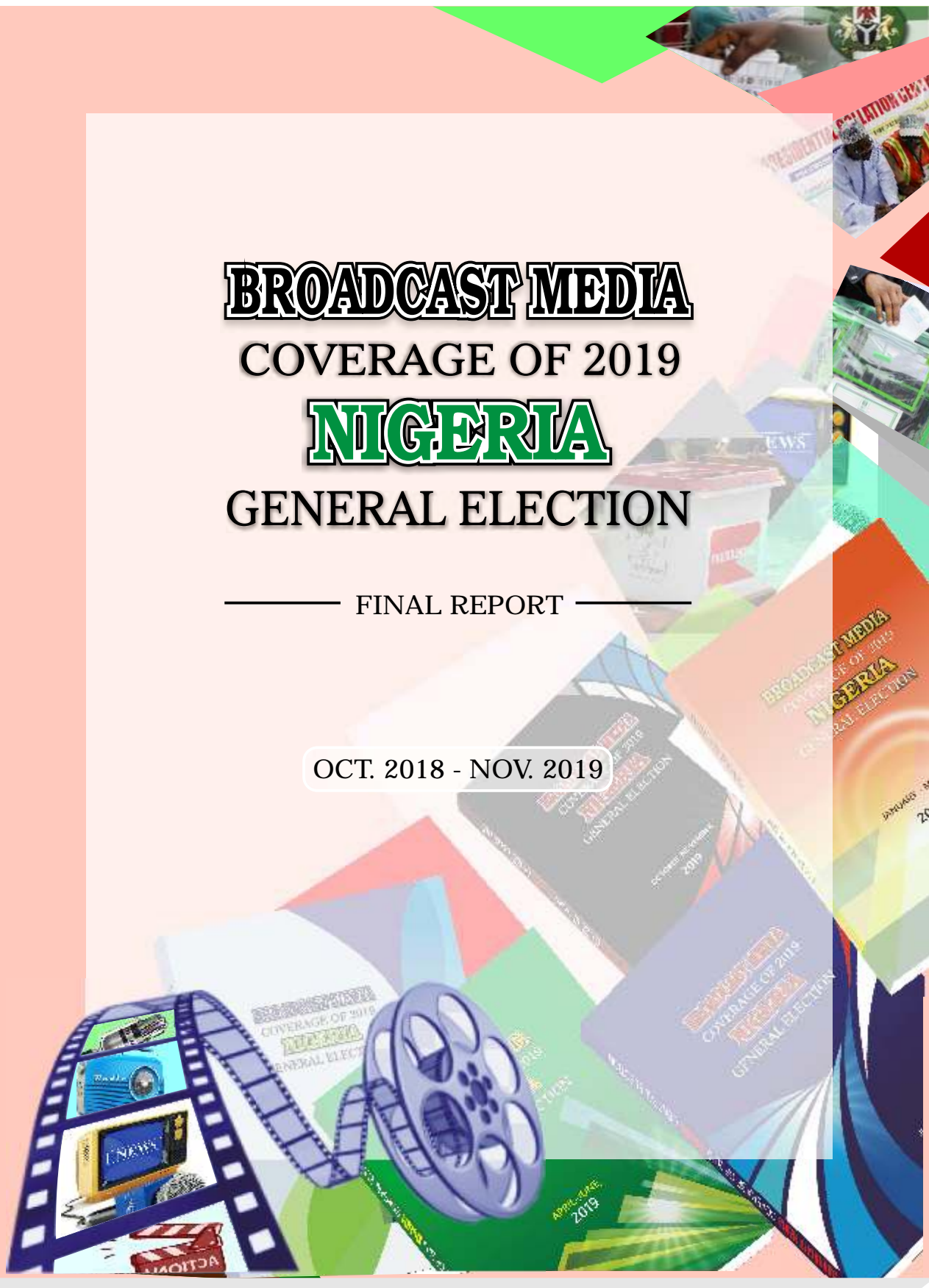


# BROADCAST MEDIA COVERAGE OF 2019 NIGERIA GENERAL ELECTION

— FINAL REPORT —

OCT. 2018 - NOV. 2019





**BROADCAST MEDIA**  
COVERAGE OF 2019  
**NIGERIA**  
GENERAL ELECTION

———— FINAL REPORT ————

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European Union



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# CONTENTS

|  |             |
|--|-------------|
| <b>FOREWORD</b>  | <b>vi</b>   |
| <b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</b>  | <b>viii</b> |
| <b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b>   | <b>ix</b>   |
| <hr/>  |             |
| <b>PART I:<br/>CONTENTS OF POLITICAL PROGRAMMES<br/>ON RADIO 15</b>                        | <b>17</b>   |
| <hr/>  |             |
| <b>PART II:<br/>CONTENTS OF POLITICAL PROGRAMMES<br/>ON TELEVISION</b>                     | <b>30</b>   |
| <hr/>  |             |
| <b>PART III:<br/>COMBINED CONTENTS OF POLITICAL PROGRAMMES ON<br/>RADIO AND TELEVISION</b> | <b>45</b>   |
| <hr/>  |             |
| <b>CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS</b>  | <b>69</b>   |

## F O R E W O R D

The Institute for Media and Society is delighted to publish this report. It has emerged from a hard and focused work by dedicated hands who carried out a variety of connected roles.

Media content monitoring is an important component of the work of our organization. In the context of the European Union Support to Democratic Governance in Nigeria (EU-SDGN) Project, its focus is on broadcast media, that is, radio and television, with particular reference to media content during the electoral process.

Across many months from 2018 to 2019, our team members monitored contents of broadcast media across the country. From centres in Yola (Adamawa State), Port Harcourt (Rivers State), Kaduna (Kaduna State) and Lagos (Lagos State), the monitors gathered data for processing in our Head Office in Lagos.

From the analyses of the data, monthly and quarterly reports emerged – for radio, television and a combination of both. This report presents an overall picture for the entire period which involved five quarterly reports.

When we started putting structures in place for media monitoring activity in various parts of the country in 2018, our expectation was to have outputs which would, among other things, help us to strengthen project implementation through refining our capacity-building activities and engaging broader interactions with media professionals across the industry.

We envisioned outputs which would contribute to enhancing media professionalism to enable the media provide fair, accurate and ethical coverage of the electoral process.

Following in the footsteps of preceding quarterly reports, this final edition is an output which lives up to expectation. We have used and continue to use its content to equip our programming and engage election actors. We also see that it is a material for re-tooling media professionalism for improved engagement of the electoral process in Nigeria.

This publication is highly recommended. It is useful for the media professional as it is for other election stakeholders such as civil society, local and international observer groups, election management bodies, regulators, researchers and others

Dr. Akin Akingbulu  
Executive Director  
Institute for Media and Society (IMS)

## A C K N O W L E D G E M E N T S

This final report on our media monitoring work across Nigeria, implemented towards the 2019 general elections in Nigeria, is also a component of our activities within the European Union Support to Democratic Governance in Nigeria, (EU-SDGN) Project.

We wish to thank our field and head office team for their quality work on data gathering and processing.

We are grateful to Professor Ayobami Ojebode and his assistant, Dr. Obasanjo Oyedele, for their work of analysing the data and crafting this report.

Our gratitude goes to the European Union for providing funding support for the media monitoring activity, including this important report.



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The role of the media in deepening democracy has been strongly acknowledged. Yet, given the complexities of the social, political, ownership and other factors under which the media operate, it cannot be taken for granted that the media performs this role creditably all the time. This necessitates occasional and periodic assessments of the media. This is a report of such an assessment.

Focusing on the broadcast media, this activity examined the coverage of the 2019 General Elections in Nigeria. It asks the following questions:

1. What were the broadcast media talking about?
2. Who were the actors given coverage by the broadcast media?
3. What was the quality of reporting with reference to balance?
4. Were there traces of incitement or hate or extreme speech?

It conducted incidence and character counts of the political programmes on 33 broadcast stations: 17 radio and 16 television stations. Data collection lasted fourteen months: October 2018 to November 2019.

The findings showed that the broadcast media dealt with a wide variety of issues and topics during the election. However, the laid a lot more emphasis on election-related conflicts (33.2%), election administration (14.7%) and campaign strategies (11.9%). They paid scant attention to persons with disability (2.2%) and issues concerning women (3.7%). Even voter education (5.6%) and voter registration (3.3%) received much less attention than election-related conflict.

The broadcast media employed a variety of formats and programme types in covering election issues. The most prominent, however, was news (78.2%). Documentaries, news commentaries and analysis, phone-ins and debates were hardly used. Even debates among contenders or their representatives amounted to only 0.1% of the total broadcast items.

The broadcast media devoted far greater attention to the concern of male actors (71.8%) than those of female actors (28.2%). Even when female actors were referred, they were often portrayed as passive actors being urged to vote, rather than frontliners. The focus of the broadcast media was predominantly

on the urban areas (84.6%) than on the rural areas (13.6) though most Nigerians live in the rural areas.

The lopsided nature of the focus of the broadcast media also showed in their attention to politicians (55.85) compared to other citizens (44.6%). The executive arm of government got far more attention (51.1%) than the legislature (26.6%) or the judiciary (22.3%). The attention given to the judiciary increased from the pre-election phase through the election and the post-election phases whereas the attention given to the legislature declined across the phases. That of the executive maintained constant lead.

The media also focused more on INEC, the electoral agency, than on other agencies of government, including even the security agencies. The ruling party got the largest share of attention among the parties (41.8%) followed by the main opposition party (33.9%) while all the other 89 parties got only 24.3%.

Young people got more attention (59.2%) than others (40.8%). However, textual analysis shows that most of the time that young people are mentioned it was often to appeal to them to participate in the elections or to avoid violence. In fact, this appeals seemed to conceive of young people more as trouble makers or those with apathy than as positively active citizens.

Incidence of extreme speech were detected in the broadcast items, across both government (48.6%) and private (51.4%) stations. The incidence was highest in the pre-election phase, declined during election phase and took on gradual rise again in the post-election phase.

The broadcast media were influenced by their traditional focus on conflict, on prominent individuals and on the mainstream of the society. This does not augur well for the democratic process. They were also influenced by lack of requisite equipment and training in producing such crucial programmes as commentary and analysis.

Capacity enhancement for journalists especially in the area of diversity reporting, capacity enhancement for female politicians to bring them from the margins of politics to the mainstream, increased support for community radio and rural broadcast stations to correct the lopsided focus on urban areas alone, and greater synergy between INEC and other agencies of government are some of the ways of supporting the broadcast media towards a more rounded and pro-democratic coverage of elections and the electoral process in Nigeria.

## OCTOBER 2018 TO NOVEMBER 2019



### **INTRODUCTION**

By Sunday, November 18, 2018, the campaigns for the 2019 general elections officially started. However, in the months before November, there were intra-party campaigns for party nomination or selection of party flagbearers who would contest for the various offices in the election. Some of the campaigns were subtle while some were not. As parties were getting ready, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) was also busy with election preparations including party registration, election administration and voters' education. Government agencies, especially security agencies, were also actively involved in the electoral process already at this point. The same was true for non-governmental agencies and community-based organisations. Although the elections were four months away, the nation was already busy with the electoral process and activities.

The broadcast media, as one might expect, were actively involved as well. Given the history, globally, of the indictment of the broadcast media in cases of electoral infractions, incitement, hate speech, lopsided coverage and others, it was important to document and evaluate the way the broadcast media participated in the 2019 electoral process. This was the overall objective of this project.

As a way of achieving the above, the Institute for Media and Society began a monthly monitoring and reporting of broadcast media coverage of the electoral process, starting from October, 2018 and ending in November, 2019. This is a distillation of the fourteen monthly reports.

## **A NOTE ON THE METHODOLOGY ADOPTED FOR THE PROJECT**

Content-analysing broadcast media is often a difficult task because of the fleeting nature of the contents. Unlike one analysing the print media, the researcher analysing broadcast media contents is struggling with a content that is fast moving and changing. Recording them for later analysis is often the preferred option, though the possible drudgery arising from large accumulation of recordings can be discouraging. This thus calls for sensitive and well-advised methodological decisions. This short section is a summary of the methodological choices that guided the monthly, quarterly and this final reports on broadcast media coverage of electoral issues in Nigeria.

The purpose of the broadcast media monitoring activity was to examine and capture the coverage of the 2019 Nigerian elections by the broadcast media. With reference to the election coverage, the monitoring sought answers to these questions:

1. What were the broadcast media talking about?
2. Who were the actors given coverage by the broadcast media?
3. What was the quality of reporting with reference to balance?
4. Were there traces of incitement or hate or extreme speech?

In other words, we asked if the media dealt with the topics that mattered, if they were inclusive in their coverage, if they maintained high quality, and if they avoided extreme speech. Therefore, we paid attention to the thematic focus of the stations in connection with the election, visibility of the different actors, balance of reporting, and language of reporting with a focus on the instances of hate or inciting speech.

The population for the activity was all the broadcast media in Nigeria: the

radio and television stations; the sample was however made up of 33 media outfits (17 radio stations and 16 television stations) selected from across the six geo-political zones in Nigeria. These were monitored from four monitoring offices set up in Kaduna, Lagos, Port Harcourt and Yola. For the month of November 2019, when there were elections in Kogi and Bayelsa States, three other stations from those states were added to the regular ones – making 36 in all. Our choice of programmes was purposive: only programmes and other broadcast items concerning the elections were singled out for analysis.

The general unit of analysis was what we named a broadcast item. Some broadcast items are full-fledged programmes (such as discussions, news, and magazines); others are short. Anything in-between two duty continuity announcements or breaks was also taken as a broadcast item. In sum, we considered broadcast items that dealt with the elections.

In analysing “what the broadcast media talked about”, we identified themes in the broadcasts: Campaign Promises; Campaign Strategies; Election Administration; Election Related Conflict; Issues Concerning the Peculiar Needs of Persons Living with Disability (PWD); Voters Education; Voters Registration, and the Peculiar Needs or Views of Women. Coders embarked on a count of the occurrences of the broadcast items that dealt with each of these themes in the broadcasts.

In analysing the contents for inclusivity, coders adopted character counts. The content categories for gender were male and female; for age we had “young people” and “others”. Our definition of young people was the one in the National Youth Policy (Federal Ministry of Youth Development, 2009) which defines a youth as someone between the ages of 18 and 35 years. However, we had to guesstimate actors' age or status from their (self-)introduction (as youth leader or youth representative), and from voice (in the case of radio) or voice and physical appearance (in the case of television). Where coders were not sure, they left out the particular instance.

In analysing inclusivity along disability line, “PWD” and “others” were used as content categories. The monitoring also examined the origin or location of stories and we coded this along urban and rural locations so as to study geographical inclusivity. Still on inclusive coverage, monitors examined the extent to which the media focused on other citizens, not just on politicians, in the election stories.

Corporate inclusivity was examined as well, with attention not to individual but to corporate actors such as the arms of government, agencies of government (including the Independent National Electoral Commission, INEC), non-governmental organisations, and political parties. For all these, we adopted character counts and developed our categories along each of the corporate units.

In examining quality, coders paid attention to instances of extreme speech: insults, incitement, aspersions and others like these. We counted instances of these in the broadcasts. Coders also examined the presence of balance in the reports. Reports where the reporter sought out the views of the different parties to an issue were coded as “balanced”; where this did not happen, we coded as “not balanced”. In situations where balance did not apply, such as reports of campaign promises, we left stories out when deciding on the proportions of balanced and unbalanced reports.

The focus on programme types was partly for inclusivity and partly for depth. Certain programmes (such as discussions, debate, phone-in) facilitate democratic involvement more deeply than others (such as news). Certain programme types such as commentaries and analysis also facilitate the surveillance role of the media. Analysts coded and analysed the programme types employed by the broadcast media with a view to determining their inclusivity and depth.



The radio stations monitored were:

1. Adamawa Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) Yola
2. Anambra Broadcasting Service (Awka 88.5 FM), Awka
3. Arewa Radio, Kano
4. Dream FM, Enugu
5. Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria (FRCN) Abuja
6. Glory FM (Bayelsa State Broadcasting Corporation, BSBC), Yenagoa
7. Gotel Radio, Yola
8. Grace FM (Lokoja, Kogi State)\*\*
9. Kaduna State Media Corporation (KSMC) Radio, Kaduna
10. Kogi Radio, Lokoja\*\*
11. Nigeria Info, Lagos
12. Osun State Broadcasting Corporation (OSBC), Osogbo
13. Progress FM Gombe
14. Radio Benue, Makurdi
15. Radio Kwara, Ilorin
16. Radio Lagos
17. Radio Lagos/Eko FM
18. Rhythm 93.7, Port Harcourt
19. Rhythm 94.7, Yenagoa, Bayelsa \*\*
20. Splash FM 105.5 Ibadan

\*\* = added only for November 2019 when there were governorship elections in Kogi State and Bayelsa States.

The television stations were:

1. Africa Independent Television (AIT), Lagos
2. Adamawa Television (ATV) Yola
3. Channels Television, Lagos
4. Desmims International Television (DITV), Kaduna
5. Galaxy Television, Lagos
6. Gotel TV, Yola
7. Independent Television (ITV), Benin City
8. Kaduna State Television (KSTV), Kaduna
9. Liberty Television, Abuja
10. Lagos Television (LTV), Lagos
11. Nigeria Television Authority (NTA) Lagos
12. Ogun State Television (OGTV), Abeokuta
13. Rivers State Television (RSTV), Port Harcourt
14. Silverbird Television (STV), Lagos
15. TV Continental (TVC), Lagos
16. Wazobia Max TV, Port Harcourt

A total of 15,743 items were monitored, observed and analysed for the period, October 2018 to November 2019. Of the broadcast contents, 6,472 were from radio stations and 9,271 broadcast programmes were monitored from the selected television stations listed above.

The method of analysis was in simple percentages. However, in many of the sections that follow, we culled representative excerpts to illustrate the trends shown in the quantitative data.

This report is presented in three parts. Part A presents the analysis and interpretation of radio broadcast contents. Part B presents the television



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broadcasts' analysis and interpretation and Part C presents the analysis and interpretation of the combined (Radio and TV) programmes.

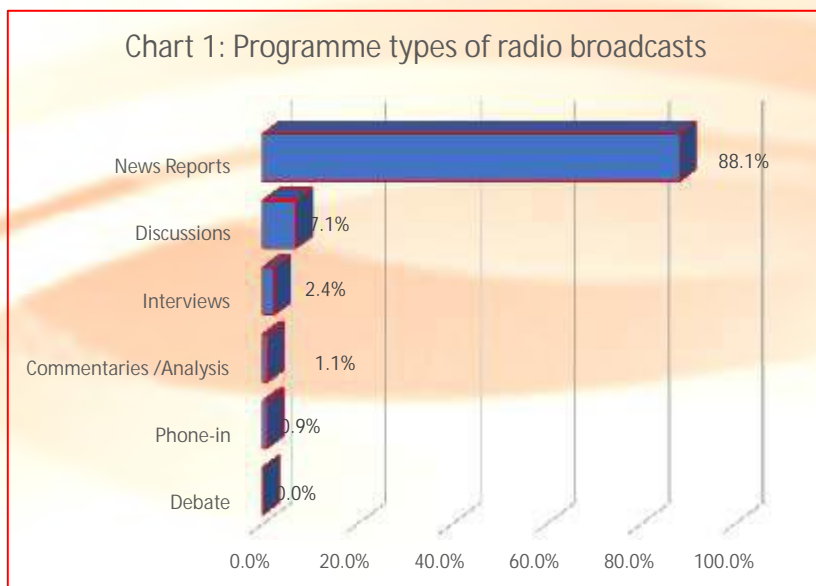
## **PART I:**

### **CONTENTS OF POLITICAL PROGRAMMES**

#### **ON RADIO**

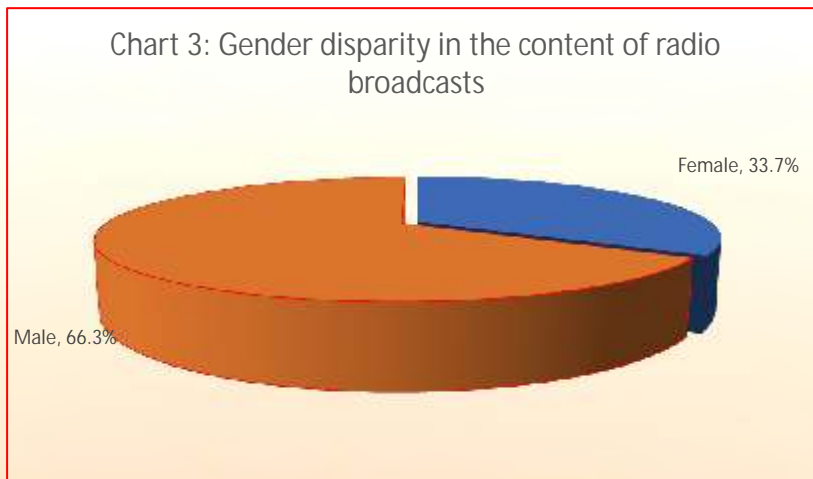
#### **PROGRAMME TYPES USED IN POLITICAL BROADCASTS ON RADIO**

The data show that radio broadcast items during the period could be grouped under six programme types: news, discussions, interviews, commentaries, phone-in, and insignificantly, debate. The prominence or frequency of each of these is the focus of Chart 1 where news reports (88.1%) was the most prominent type of programme on radio stations, on which political issues were covered.



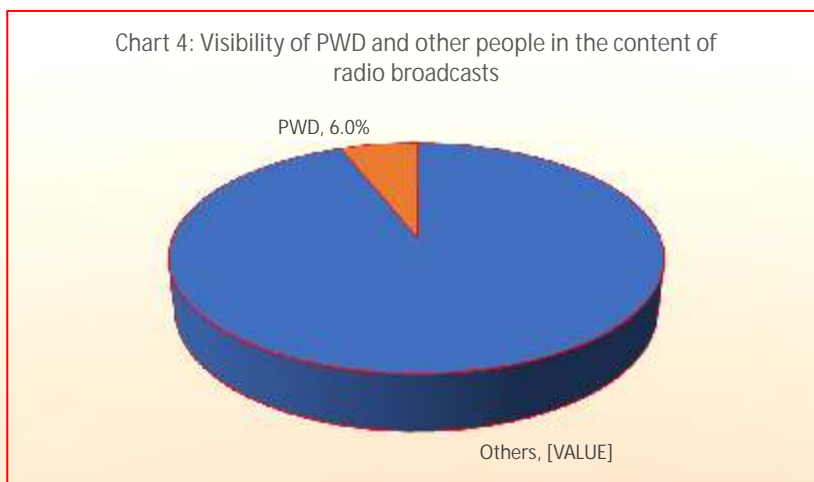
Political debate (0.0%) among candidates in any election is uncommon in a nation where many candidates fail to honour invitations to participate in such an exercise. This could explain the reason debate was totally insignificant as a radio programme during the period. Instead of talking about debates, radio stations were extensively covering news reports about politics. The percentage devoted to news reports was expected given the fact that radio stations mostly prioritise news reports, programmes, music and advertisements in their offerings to the audiences. Political discussions (7.1%) featured prominently in the coverage of selected radio stations also because programme presenters and their guests would be busy analysing and discussing the prospects and challenges of parties and their candidates, so also issues that characterised the elections. Political discussions should be an avenue for education, information and sensitization for the potential voters who listen to the stations; that may be the reason it ranked after news reports. Phone-in (0.9%) and commentaries/analysis (1.1%) programmes with a focus on politics were not prominent during the period. In a commentary, radio journalists or presenters can easily offer their informed (though personal) opinions on political issues, while in a phone-in programme, audiences' participation in political issues being featured is also possible. These important considerations and opportunities for improved political development were not seriously considered by the radio stations. That interviews came a distant third could be attributed to commercialization of broadcast time making it difficult for all political candidates to feature on the programme.

Having established that news reports, discussion and interview programmes connected to politics ranked in descending order respectively, the next preoccupation is to identify which of the thematic issues about the elections gained prominence in radio broadcasts. In chart 2, data show that election related conflict (33.2%) was dominant.



A usual trend in the series of reports has been the issue of male dominance over female in media visibility. This has not changed even with academic and public discourses on why campaigns on gender equality and women empowerment should incorporate sizeable media visibility for women, especially in politics. The question of reduced visibility for women could however be answered by the patriarchal political culture in operation in Nigeria, where major posts at party and governance levels are taken by men. Political candidates are mostly men and this accounts for the gross gender imbalance in political representation at all levels in Nigeria. In radio broadcasts during the period, this line of male dominance was toed as male visibility (66.3%) was double that of female (33.7%). Where women in politics do not participate in events commanding media coverage, it might be difficult for radio stations to focus their political news reports and programmes on them.

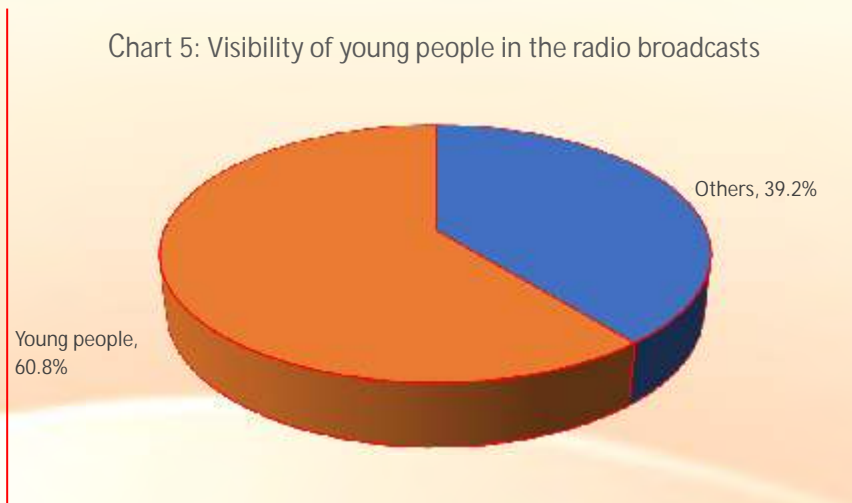
Persons with disability (PWD) are categorised with women and girls as minorities when inclusive participation is discussed. What happens when the visibility of PWD is compared with that of their counterpart? The answer is presented in chart 4.



Political contents on radio stations within the period was totally unfavourable to the PWD (6.0%) who were invisible in radio broadcasts as against other people (94.0%). Charts 3 and 4 actually show why rigid classification of women as minorities might be untenable in some instances when data are disaggregated. Where women commanded 33% of visibility in radio broadcasts, PWD would be described as poor minorities. Therefore, calls for affirmative action and inclusion of women in governance should also incorporate some consideration for PWD. This set of people might not be part of political broadcasts on radio unless on election days when they struggled to vote and on other days politicians were providing some support for the less-privileged and they were there. Therefore, they featured as news items and not news-makers. Their rights to vote, be voted for and demand accountability from elected representatives should be respected and allowed to operate as the nation plans and works on inclusive growth and development.

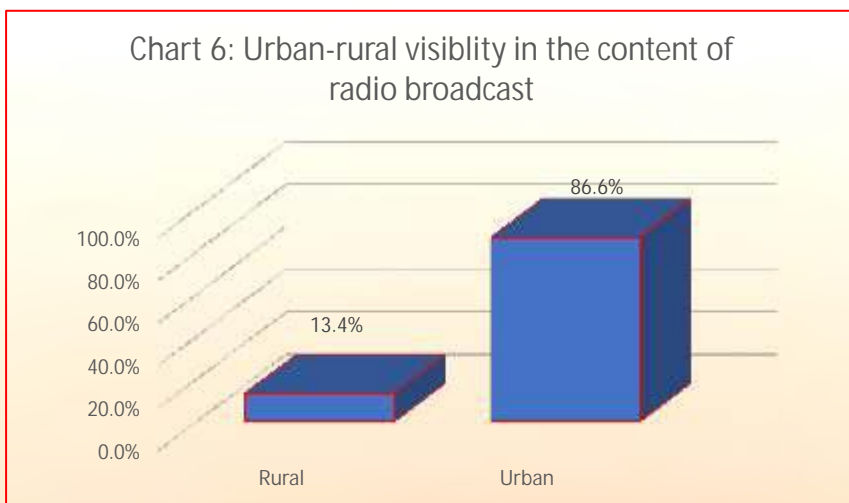
Young people (or youth) have the largest population in Nigeria according to the World Bank, 2019), and this numerical strength should swing politics in their favour if they are able to organise, demand and strategize for political inclusion. The usual public opinion about young people in Nigeria they that they are apolitical, or that they are used for political violence and seen as

'leaders of tomorrow' who are yet to be trained in the acts and arts of politics of today. This report presents the visibility of young people in political contents on radio as against the visibility of other groups in the country within the period.



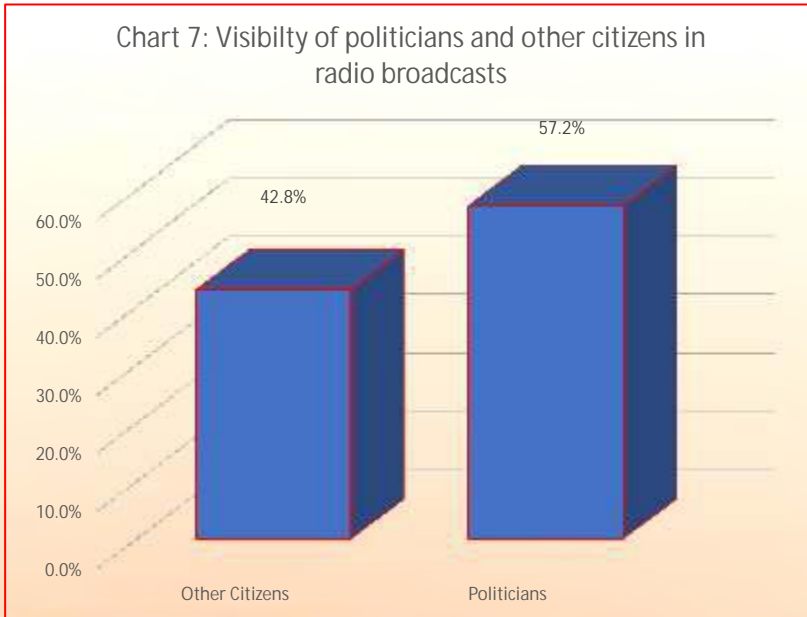
Young people (60.8%) gained almost double of the visibility that older men and women could gain in political contents on radio within the period. Though they might have featured in radio contents for the wrong reasons, this improved visibility signals a change in media and political dynamics from established super-imposition of coverage of rich politicians and older political actors over activities of young people. This could mean that young people were involved more in news reports, they made news and participated in discussions, granted interviews and were visible in other programmes to command this greater level of visibility. Also, offline and online activities of youth-groups in the last ten years have led to calls for young people to be more involved in politics and could signal greater political participation among them. In chart 6, the report presents data on rural—urban share of visibility in political contents on radio stations. As established in previous reports, the dominance of urban centres in media coverage of political events has not changed.





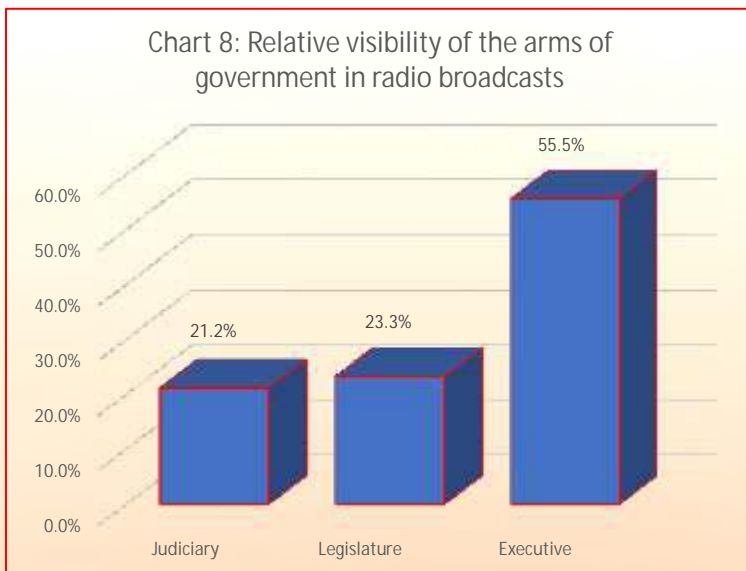
What explanations will suffice for 13.4% visibility of rural areas and 86.6% devoted to urban areas in radio broadcasts? Most of what is defined as news can be categorised as events happening in urban areas. Rural areas and their inhabitants may not make news unless there are connections with crimes, outbreak of diseases, unusual events, opening of projects termed 'dividends of democracy' or political candidates have visited rural communities to campaign for votes. The percentage which accrued to rural communities in this visibility showed that people in rural communities have not used their population base as a weapon for media visibility. In most cases, they were not seriously active in granting interviews, participating in discussions, organising rallies and campaigns for their inclusion and consideration for governance, and involving themselves in other activities that media could cover. This might be because radio stations are established in urban communities, making access to, and accessibility of radio, a mirage to rural communities.

Furthermore, the report presents data on the share of visibility between politicians and other citizens in chart 7. Expectedly, politicians are newsmakers and before, during and after elections, they may not be out of the news. What is confounding in chart 7 is the comparable share of visibility recorded for both entities, which shows that political broadcasts on radio were not entirely about politicians.



Where politicians got 57.2% of media visibility, other citizens attracted 42.8% showing that the selected radio stations tried to balance the allotment of time between the two groups. It is important for all Nigerians to note that politicians are not the only actors in the electoral process; as a matter of fact, they need all the other stakeholders to achieve their objectives. Other citizens and their events are equally important for media coverage so as to identify how the actions and inactions of these stakeholders contribute to successful elections in Nigeria.

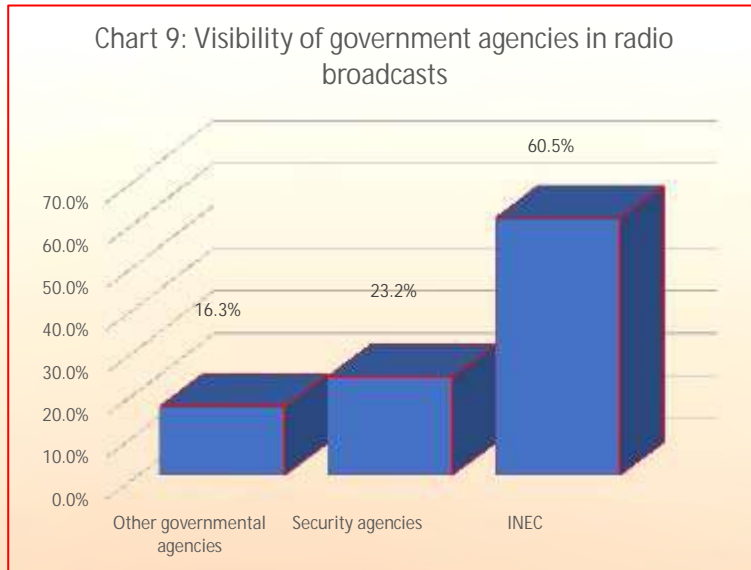
The Independent National Electoral Commission, security agencies, political parties, political candidates and voters are primary stakeholders in every election in Nigeria. But, the three arms of government play significant roles in this process and radio stations are expected to focus on their activities before, during and after elections. They provide necessary resources and directives for election administration, justice and national peace. Chart 8 presents information on how they shared media visibility among them in the period under review.



The judiciary (21.2%) and legislature (23.3%) got almost equal visibility in radio broadcasts and the executive (55.5%) towered above them. Emphasis was on the executive possibly because public opinion and the constitution placed them above the other two arms of government. Usually, the judiciary would not make news until election petition tribunals start; the legislature is saddled with the responsibility of making and amending laws for proper election administration; while the executive appoint the INEC chairman with the approval of the legislature, and provide all resources and directives needed for INEC and security agencies to be successful in their operations. The ‘background’ roles that the other two arms play may be responsible for the dominant visibility enjoyed by the executive.

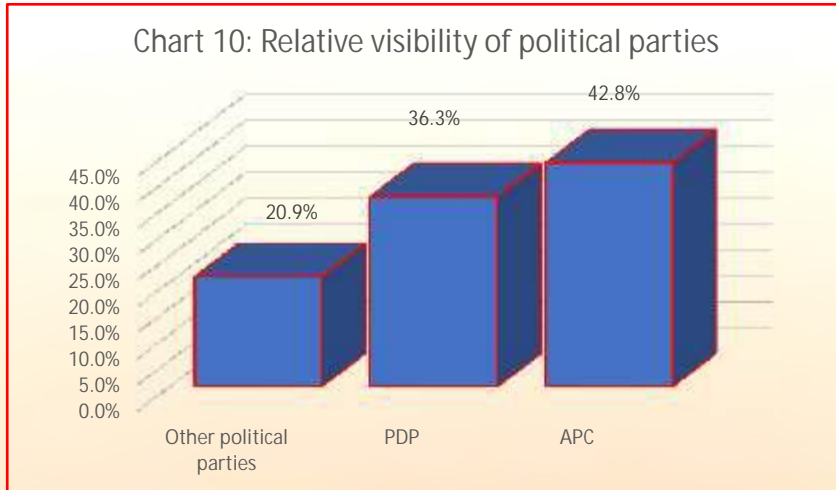
In chart 9, the report moves from considering the visibility of arms of government to the performance of government agencies in radio broadcasts. As noted in chart 8, INEC and security agencies are mostly considered as important government agencies in every election; in chart 9, focus is on how other agencies of government competed favourably with these two recognised agencies.





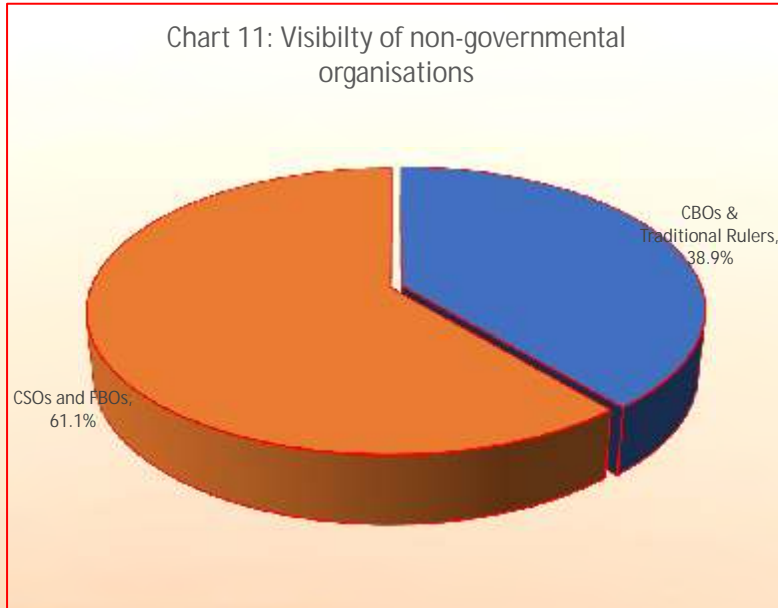
The percentage taken by INEC (60.5%) was large because of its primary roles enshrined in the constitution. The INEC Chairman, his directors and the entire workforce of the commission cannot run from being involved in news reports, interviews and discussions on elections as politicians and their parties, arms of government and the public expect the commission to deliver on its mandate before and during elections. Even after these elections, the tribunal proceedings make INEC vulnerable to media onslaught. Furthermore, security agencies are on the spotlight whenever violence, rigging and other vices combine to destroy peaceful conduct of elections. These two agencies actually dominated the share of visibility because of their critical roles in elections. Though other unnamed agencies are also important, their underground roles could account for their reduced visibility in radio broadcasts.

The focus is shifting to political parties and their visibility in radio broadcasts in chart 10. There are many political parties in Nigeria but PDP and APC are notable contenders.



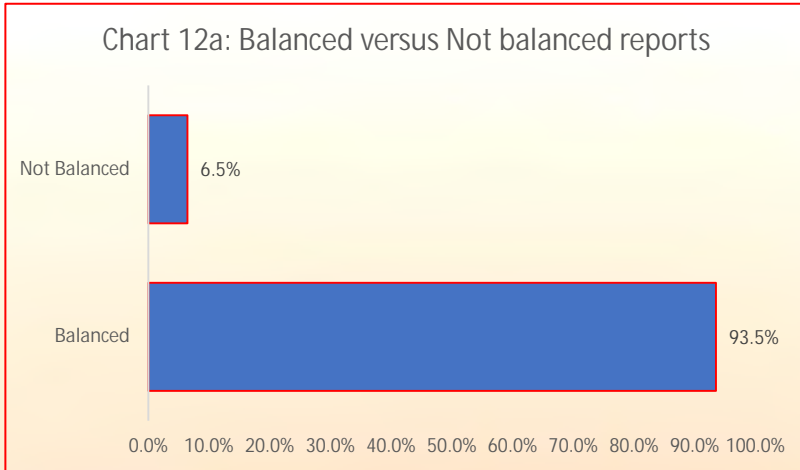
Between 1999 and 2015, PDP was the party in control of the national government and most of the states in Nigeria. Immediately Dr Goodluck Jonathan handed over to President Muhammadu Buhari, it became a contest between APC and PDP in all the states. This understanding should clear the air on the visibility of APC (42.8%), that of PDP (36.3%) and of the other political parties (20.9%). As explained earlier, the party in power (APC) in most of the states got the highest visibility because of public attention and expectation, while PDP followed probably because of its scrutiny or challenge of the activities of the ruling party. It should not be amazing that other parties as a combination got 20.9% because most of them do not have elected representatives and cannot present candidates for most of the elective positions.

In the next chart, attention has shifted to the visibility of non-governmental organisations, such as the civil societies, faith-based groups, traditional institutions and community-based organisations. These are organisations working together to ensure justice, peace, progress and development in the society. They may not have constitutional roles in election management, but their critical contributions to the society cannot be jettisoned.

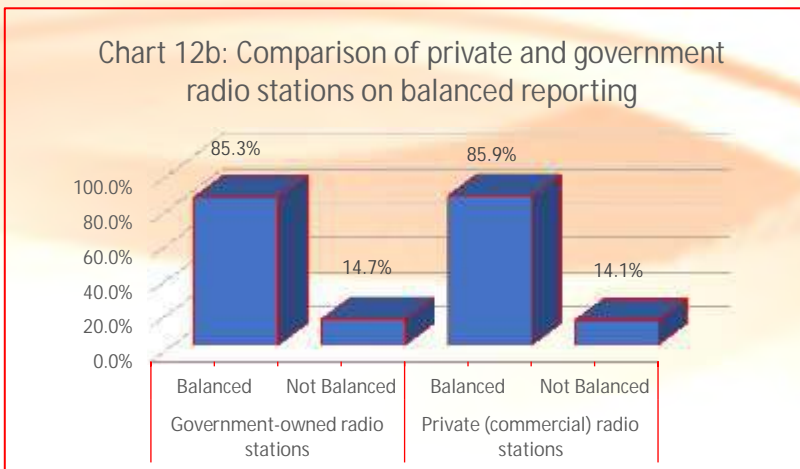


The community-based organisations and traditional rulers (38.9%) maintain law and order in their communities, ensuring that their members and subjects respectively perform their civic duties in the society. They can help all government agencies and arms to participate in elections and ensure that they maintain peace and order before, during and after elections. The civil society organisations and faith-based organisations (61.1%) that got a higher visibility (almost double what the other group got) are less cultural but ensure that government fulfil their responsibilities in the society. The civil society groups and faith-based organisations are always close to government and could be part of media coverage during their conferences, meetings and even protests on the activities of government.

To end this section, the report focuses on the percentage of balanced and not balanced reports in radio broadcasts during the period. The hallmark of journalism is truth predicated on balanced reportage of all sides to a story. In Nigeria where political, cultural, social, religious and ethnic interests affect media operation and coverage of issues, media organisations are expected to strive for impartiality, balance, truth, and courage. In chart 12, the issue of balance is explained.



The radio stations lived up to expectations with the percentage of balanced reportage (93.5%) over stories not balanced (6.5%) during the period. This shows that the radio stations maintained a high level of impartiality/neutrality and openness in their coverage. The meagre percentage of stories not balanced (6.5%) could be from personal opinions in interviews and discussion programmes where those radio stations had no opportunity to institute any control. To understand where the balanced and not balanced reportage emanated from, chart 12b is presented which compares the shared percentages between private and government radio stations



According to data in this chart, there was a slight difference between the two groups on both ends. However, private radio stations led with a negligible margin in political contents on balanced and not-balanced parameters. Media stations are controlled by their owners and the percentage of contents not-balanced may be about conflicting interests which journalists had no control over. Having explained that trust, balance and impartiality are critical to journalism, journalists and media agencies should work to uphold the tenets of the profession and ensure that other interests do not overcome professional ethics.

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## **PART II:**

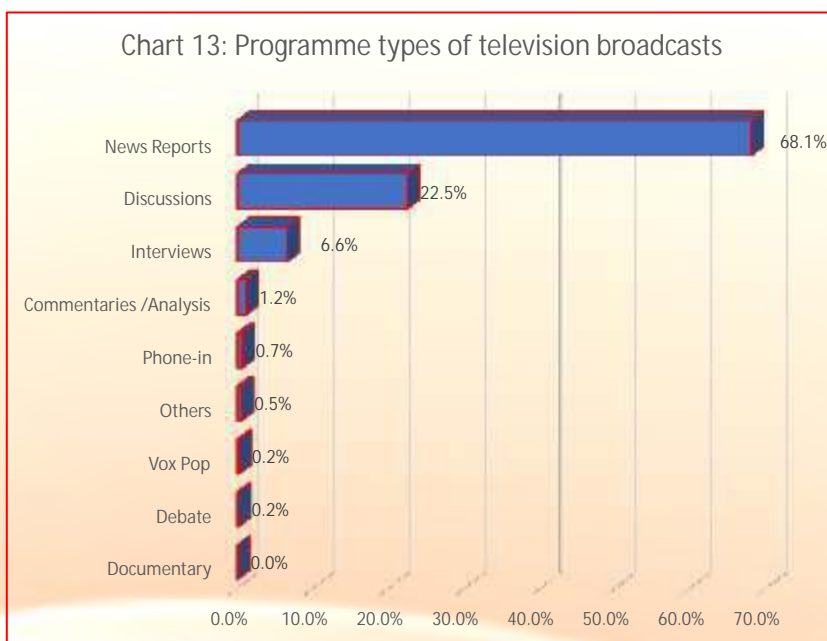
### **CONTENTS OF POLITICAL PROGRAMMES ON TELEVISION**

Radio and television as broadcast media are important in politics. In Nigeria where literacy level is low, the two are relied on by political parties, government and its arms and agencies and other stakeholders in election administration to reach voters in rural and urban areas. Television combines sight and sound, big advantages responsible for its popularity among the audiences. In the second part of the report, television broadcasts' analysis and interpretation are presented.

#### **PROGRAMME TYPES USED IN POLITICAL BROADCASTS ON TELEVISION**

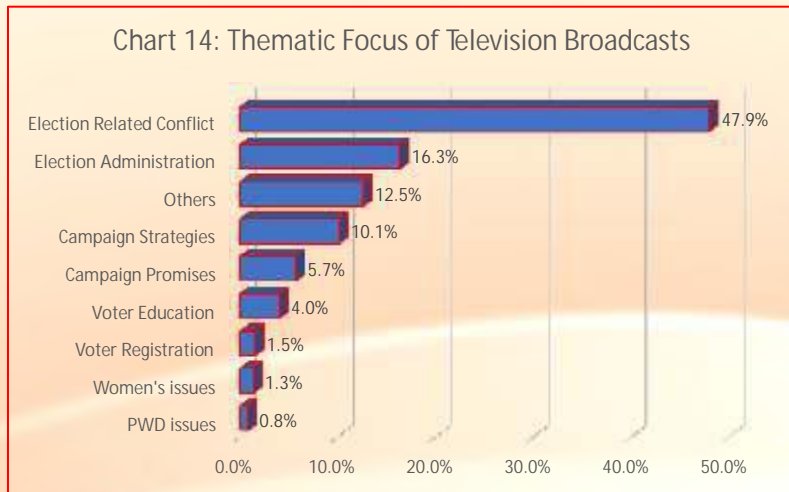
Political news can come as national or state news on television stations during the news hours daily. Apart from news reports, other political programmes could be in form of discussion, interviews, commentaries and documentaries. In chart 13, we present the visibility of each programme type in television broadcasts.





Possibly, television news reports (68.1%) before, during and after elections were daily occurrences, explaining its highest visibility above other programmes. People rely on news reports to understand issues around preparations for, and the actual conduct of, elections, possible post-election conflicts and tribunals, and what political representatives are doing to fulfil election promises. The line of visibility seen under radio broadcasts was replicated under chart 13 where discussion (22.5%) and interview (6.6%) programmes ranked after news reports in descending order. It should be noted that the gap between the three could explain the priority accorded each programme type as news occurs always every hour on television stations. Discussion and interview programmes may be weekly or special appearances because of the political situation in the country. Data in chart 13 also show that commentaries (1.2%), phone-in (0.7%), vox pop (0.2%), debate (0.2%) and documentary (0.0%) were rare occurrences on selected television stations. An improvement on programme schedule of television stations to accommodate

these arguably relegated types of programme could enrich the political space. Now that the report has established the visibility of each programme type, the next chart presents and analyses data on the thematic focus of the television broadcasts, where election-related conflict also led the visibility race with 47.9%.

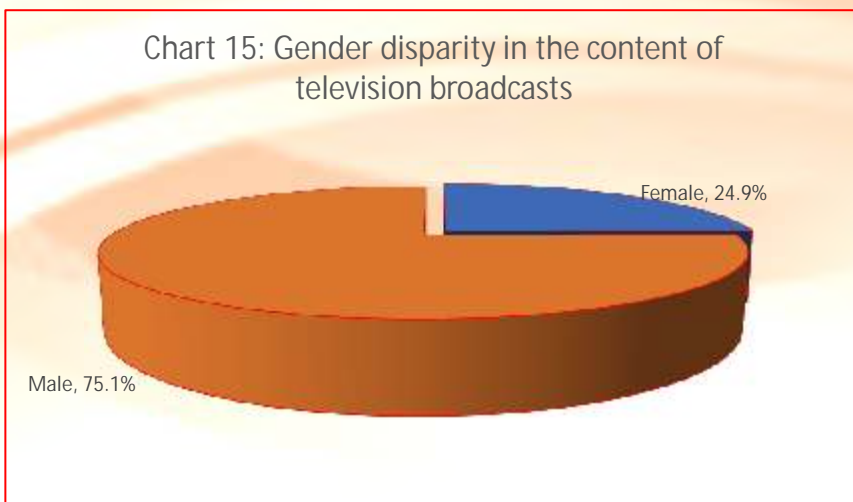


Election-related conflict was higher in television broadcasts than in radio broadcasts. This means that more reports on election violence were covered by television stations. This thematic focus with almost half of the entire visibility has been noted in the interpretation on radio broadcasts as a perennial discourse during elections in Nigeria since thuggery, hooliganism, ballot stuffing, multiple voting and other vices precipitate to violence, culminating in unnecessary loss of property and lives, cancellation of election results in some places, and waste of other resources for re-run elections. The gaps among election administration (16.3%), others (12.5%) and campaign strategies (10.1%) were minimal, showing the relevance attached to them. Election administration and campaign strategies have some implications for peaceful conduct of elections and continuation of democratic governance because where proper administration is not in place, chaos and failure could occur.



There were instances of postponement of elections in the past because of problems with logistics and other issues. On campaign strategies, political parties and their members need to be warned and monitored during campaigns to prevent confrontations and violent conflicts, thereby ensuring that real, notable issues govern campaigns and not frivolities. Campaign promises (5.7%) and voter education (4.0%) did not share sizeable percentages but are important aspects of democratic governance. Electorate must be educated to understand how to vote and critical items to look for while deciding on who to be voted. These two variables are linked to post-election performance of elected candidates and increased media coverage of them should be encouraged if the transition from election to qualitative performance will be assured. The reduced visibility that affected campaign promises and voter education extended to voter registration (1.5%), women's issues (1.3%) and PWD issues (0.8%). Low turn-out of eligible and potential voters to register can be corrected partly with media sensitisation and mobilisation; women's and PWD (people treated as minorities) issues are also critical for greater political participation.

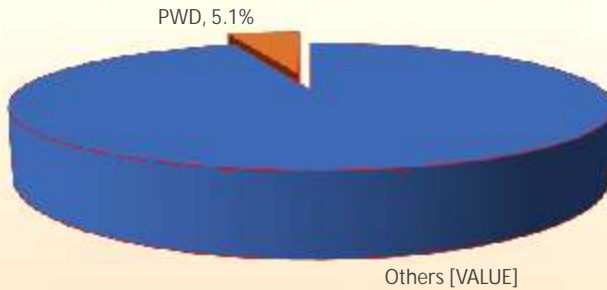
The issue of gender in elections is the focus of chart 15 where data on shared visibility between male and female in Nigeria are presented and interpreted.



The female gender got a greater visibility under radio broadcasts than under television broadcasts (24.9%). The discourse of male's dominant visibility continued with political contents on television and it was not a surprise given the position of patriarchal political entronement identified in section 1. More men are nominated and confirmed as aspirants in various political parties, more men as party executive members determine the fate of women aspirants in political parties, and more men are political candidates seeking elections into positions of authority. This development makes it difficult for television stations to manufacture or fabricate a greater visibility for women in politics. For this to change, women movements will lobby at all levels to ensure that the affirmative action and other statutes on women participation and gender equality in politics are actively implemented.

The visibility of PWD and other people in the contents of television broadcasts is presented in chart 16. A difference of 0.9% existed in the visibility of PWD in radio and television broadcasts, in favour of radio (PWD were 0.9% better in visibility in radio broadcasts). This notwithstanding, it is grossly inadequate for issues of PWD in politics to be reduced to 5.1% visibility in television broadcasts. There are specific pronouncements on the rights of PWD in the nation and these people also vote and can be voted for. Therefore, how their well-being will be championed by elected representatives, their safety during and after elections, ease of voting (because of their challenges) and other issues concerning them should get them a greater visibility.

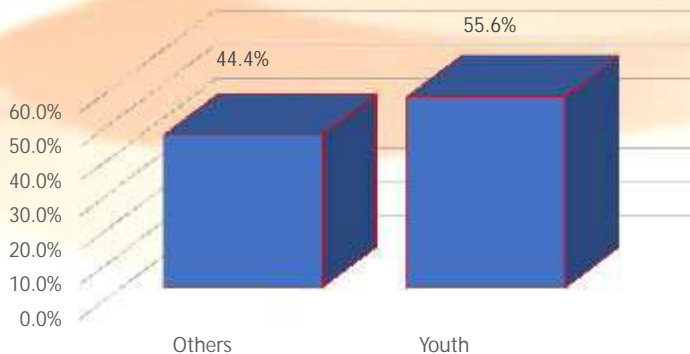
Chart 16: Visibility of PWD and other people in the content of television broadcasts



Television stations can do better by focusing on these issues affecting the PWD during and after elections to reduce this bloated focus on other people (94.9%). Media stations with their contents are central to the understanding and enforcement of the rights of PWD and reduced visibility in the media could mean neglect by elected representatives.

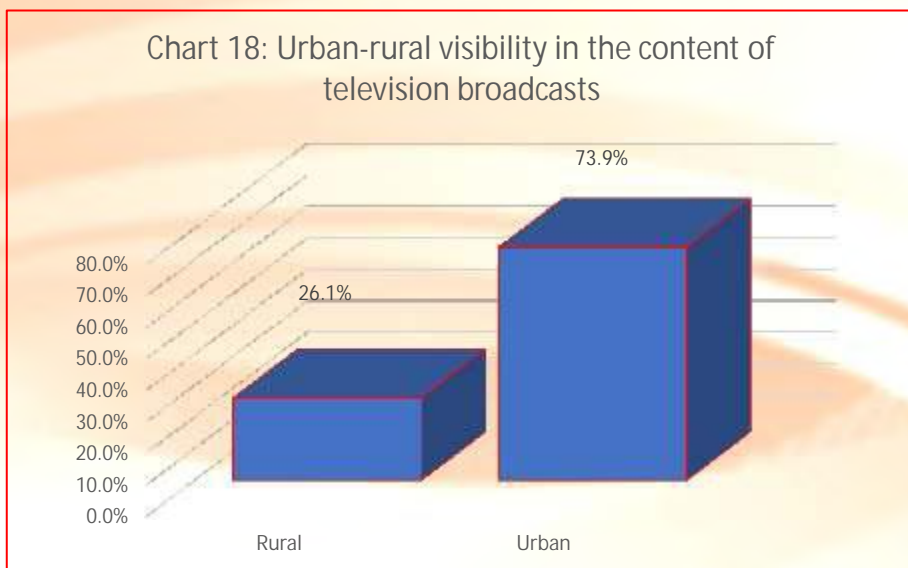
As explained under radio broadcasts, data on population are in favour of the young generation of unemployed and Internet-savvy Nigerians who can decide who takes any political position, if they are united. In this chart, focus is on their visibility in television broadcasts.

Chart 17: Visibility of young people in the television broadcasts



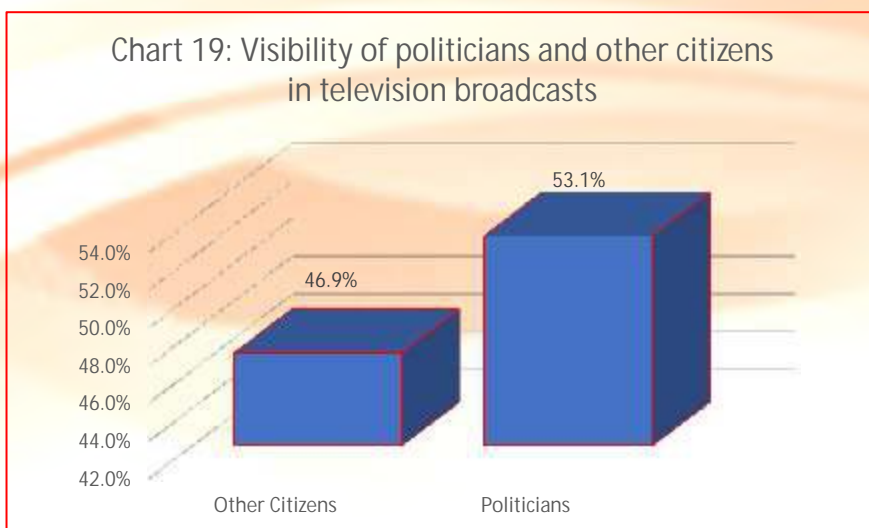
There was an agreement between official statistics on national population and percentage of visibility got by young people (55.6%) in this report. The combination of all visibility for older adults and very old people in this report was less than what young people got. This implies that more young people were connected to media coverage than other population groups and more young people were involved in election issues than these other groups. This is a sign that this group of Nigerians might spring a surprise in no distant future if they would continue with their fruitful participation and involvement in political activities that mass media cover. They might be able to organise and use the mass media for timproved visibility.

If the young people were well-represented in television broadcasts, what was the performance of rural areas in the country where millions of peasant farmers, traders and artisans with no serious formal education reside. In chart 18, the report considers the visibility of urban and rural areas in television broadcasts with political contents.



The visibility of rural areas in media coverage has been a subject of academic and public discussion since independence. Industries, government agencies and offices, technology, administration and other infrastructures are mostly located in urban areas. Most of the secondary schools and tertiary institutions and especially media houses are found in cities. This means that news gathering and reporting may not favour rural areas and their occurrences. Where urban areas got 73.9% visibility and rural scored 26.1%, the imbalance in visibility explained has been established. Politics and politicians focus on urban areas and that was why rural areas did not make news. When will someone from a rural community participate in political discussions and interviews or documentary? If a political actor did not go to a rural community to campaign for votes or open a project, that 26.1% might not have been recorded. The nation needs to extend its inclusive participation drive to accommodate millions of people in rural communities as a way of safeguarding their rights.

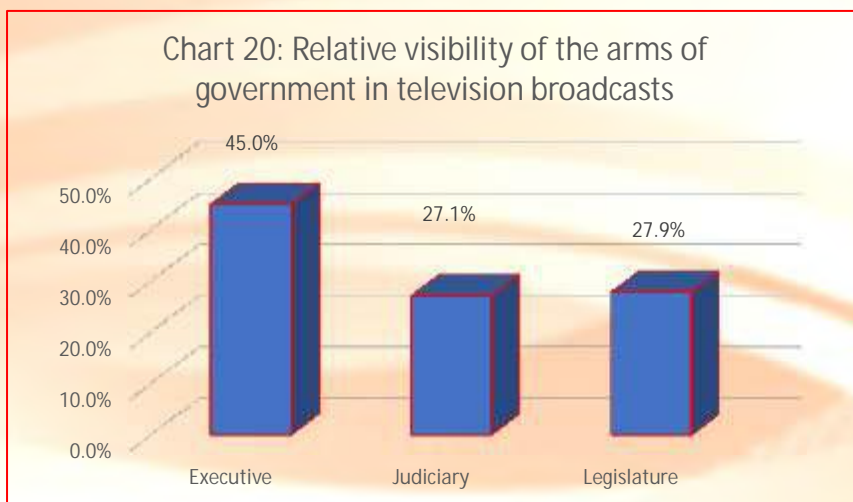
If rural areas do not make news, politicians must. They are popular and their activities must be covered as news or features. When the visibility of this group of Nigerians is placed against that of other citizens, what will the results be? The answer is in chart 19.





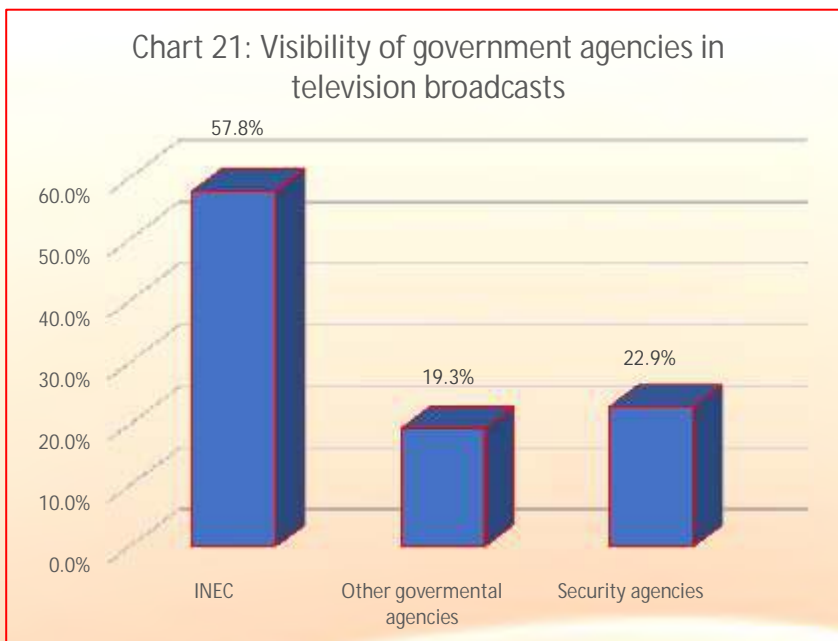
Politicians led the visibility chart with 53.1% because it was a political season and focus must be on politicians' activities. As a matter of fact, those who were talking/those involved in television broadcasts as other citizens (46.9%) might be talking about politicians and their chances during, and performance after, the elections. Therefore, it was not surprising that politicians got that visibility. However, an improvement in visibility for other citizens should be encouraged since politicians alone cannot successfully operate if inclusive governance must be guaranteed. More Nigerians should participate in political discussions and interviews and other media programmes because their criticisms and suggestions can be pivotal to national development. Democracy succeeds with citizen participation and this is mostly possible through the media. In most cases, people may not have access to elected officials in their (elected officials) offices, but they can be reached through the media.

The visibility of arms of government that played out under radio broadcasts was almost totally replicated in television broadcasts in chart 20.



The executive arm (45.0%) might continue to win the visibility race when politics is the theme. This is because matters on election are predominantly for the executive, until INEC is ready to defend its budget with the national assembly (27.9%) and tribunals and direct court cases (27.1%) give prominence to the judiciary. The President and his cabinet, state governors and their cabinets and local government chairmen and their cabinets as the executive arm of government even control government television stations (maybe not local government chairmen) and nominate members of the board and chairmen who monitor/supervise these agencies. Private television stations will also be following the activities of governors, presidents and their cabinet members because they are news-makers.

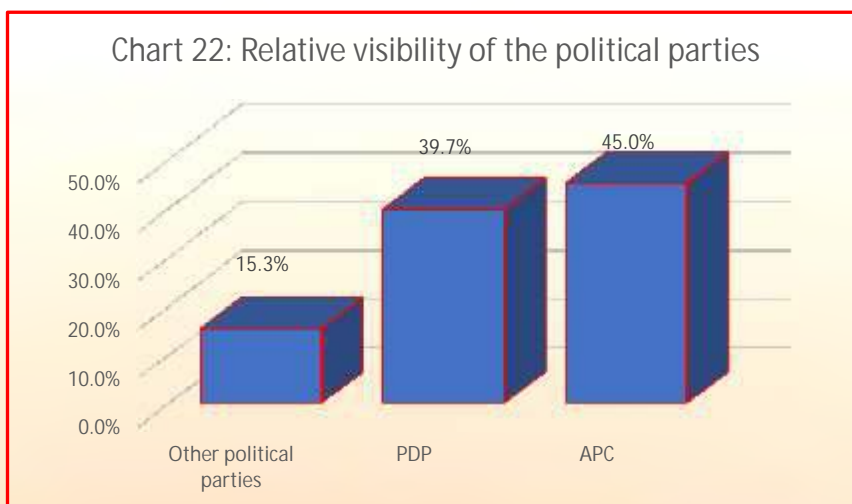
After the arms of government, government agencies follow. In chart 21, the visibility of INEC, security agencies and other governmental agencies are discussed. Issues of politics and elections are matters that INEC and security agencies work on, though other agencies such as ministries of information, culture and national orientation, budget and finance and internal affairs also play some roles. INEC expectedly took the lead with 57.8%, followed by security agencies with 22.9% and other agencies taking 19.3%. This shows that activities of INEC were arguably in the news and discussions every day and focus was also on security agencies as they were preventing breakdown of law and order.



Usually during election tribunals, plaintiffs allude to the complicity of security agencies in the mismanagement and disorganisation of the process and procedures of free and fair elections. In some other cases, security agencies and INEC officials at the polling booth are called as witnesses where issues of rigging, disturbances, falsification of results and other vices occurred. However, the important roles of other agencies in politics need to be accentuated in media offerings so as to identify their contributions to the success or otherwise of political events and elections.

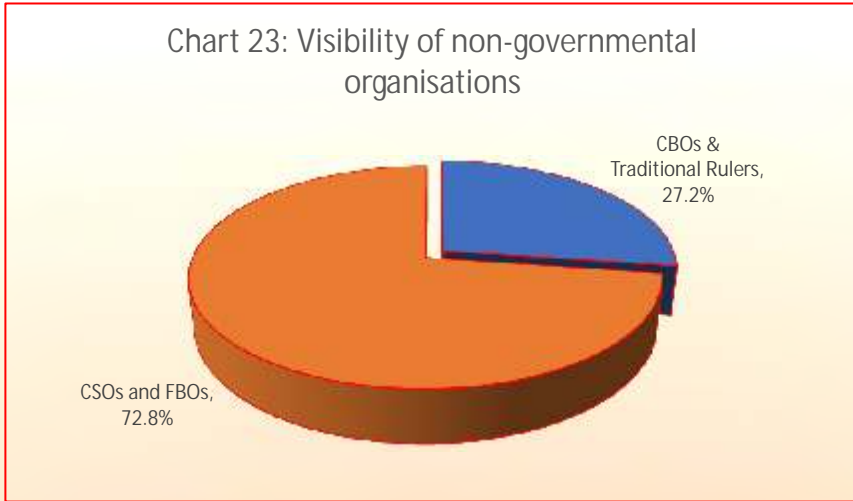
Political parties send their nominations for elective positions to INEC after stages of internal screening before INEC does its own. Long before elections will be conducted, political parties must have started their weekly meetings and campaigns to get the nod of voters. Therefore, party politics dominate media contents on television even after the elections. In chart 22, the percentage shares of visibility of political parties in television broadcasts are presented and discussed.





That APC got 45.0%, PDP took 39.7% of the total visibility and 15.3% was left for other political parties combined should not be a surprise. The pattern in Nigeria is for the ruling party to over-shadow other parties in visibility, especially when the opposition is weak or not coordinated to offer a strong presence. Where a major opposition party is occasionally involved in the media and other parties hibernate until the next elections, data will always show. Another explanation for the dominant visibility of APC is the proliferation of federal government-owned television stations in Nigeria (each state has at least one national television station). The party in power also has access to the managing directors of other television stations and can use that influence to place its programmes on TV for wider reach. PDP would be visible as the major opposition when accusations, protests, conferences, briefings and meetings are called to condemn, criticise, analyse and offer a different opinion on issues of local and international relevance.

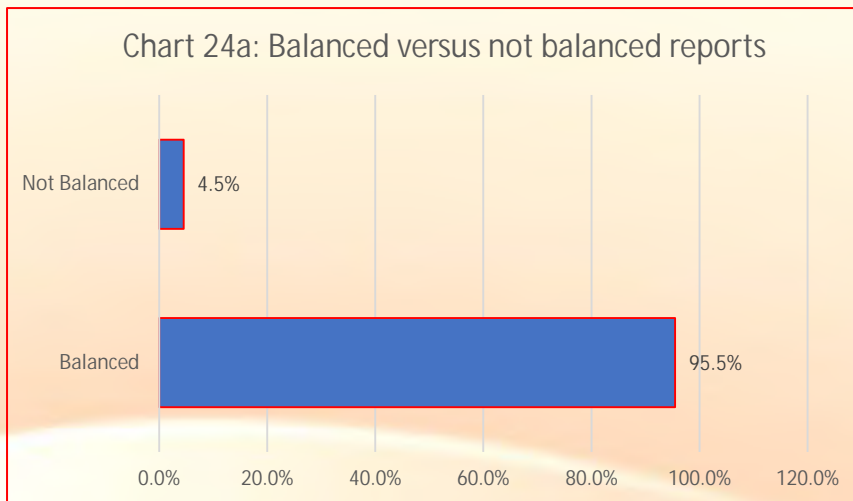
The next consideration is the visibility of non-governmental organisations in television broadcasts during the period. These are the civil society and faith-based organisations, traditional rulers and community-based organisations in chart 23



If a list is made of all registered and unregistered organisations that can be found in any of the two groups in chart 23 above, thousands of them will make the list. From cultural to interest groups, they help government in maintaining accountability and peace, ensuring that their members perform their duties as expected in the society, maintaining law and order and giving social capital to members. As seen under radio broadcasts, the CSO and FBOs (72.8%) led the visibility which the community-based organisation and traditional rulers (27.2%) could not match. Members of the more visible classification are like pressure groups with close and constant contacts with government and the media, while the community-based and traditional rulers are not usually in the media since they do not usually lead protests and conduct conferences on local and national events. However, traditional rulers and leaders of community associations, though not visible in these television broadcasts, are active and important to successful political development. At the grassroots, they are involved in community and local government administration and maintenance of peace and security. Therefore, during elections, their experiences and participation can be beneficial.

In the next two charts, focus is on balanced reporting, one of the issues creating ethical dilemma in journalism. The tiny thread between balanced and unbalanced television contents could involve issues such as checking for

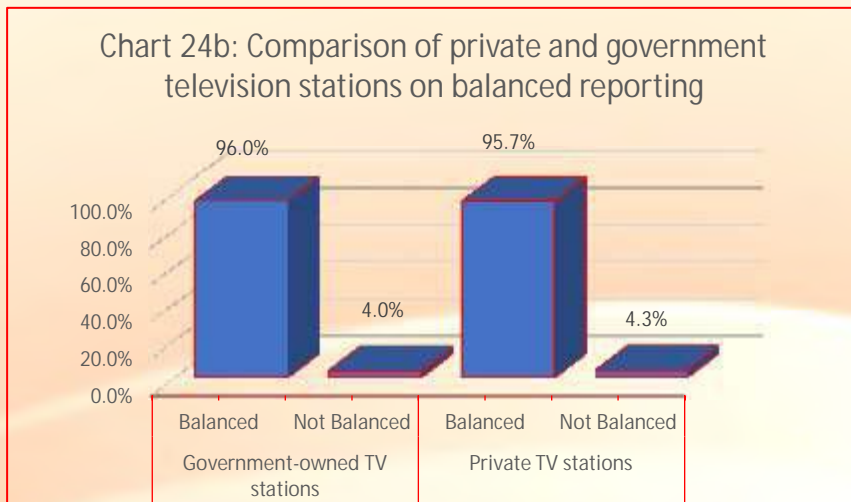
details, verifying authenticity and sources, checking for the opinions of the other person or group or party, and ensuring that all unconfirmed contents that are not factual are left out.



The report noted the encouraging level of balance achieved by the selected radio stations in this study. The same highest level of performance was replicated here as balanced contents on television about politics were 95.5% and those that were not balanced got 4.5%. Though many of the stations are owned by governments which can pressurise 'their television stations' to favour them, that kind of development was totally reduced. This shows that the journalists and other workers of the concerned television stations actually allowed ethical standards to guide their professional activities. For the stories not balanced, it might be because the other parties to the stories did not bother to defend their own sides of the stories. Balancing in television broadcasts could entail allocating equal time to all parties, not superimposing one party over the other, presenting direct statements of each party and ensuring that the audiences are left to judge and not you. Complete balancing is something that can be achieved in television broadcasting especially if an external party is not involved. When contents emanate from sources external to a television station,

a declaration of neutrality is expected before or after the broadcast for the audiences to know that the television station recognises that personal opinions of their guests do not represent the views and positions of the station on such matters.

In the last chart in this section, how private and government television stations performed on balancing is analysed.



More balanced stories were seen in the coverage of government-owned television stations (96.0%) than in private television stations (95.7%), although the difference was quite negligible. It may be totally impossible to rule out some interests in media practice since owners or controllers of television stations are humans with personal, cultural, religious and political networks. Among media workers, personal leanings determine the angle from which a reporter or moderator or presenter sees an event and this raises a question of balancing as there are at least two parties in a story. Humans are political animals who may have interest in a particular political party. Where such happens, balancing can be sacrificed. A golden suggestion is to allow ethical principles guide media operations and ensure that every doubt or favouritism is ruled out. Where everyone works to unearth the truth, balancing does not suffer.

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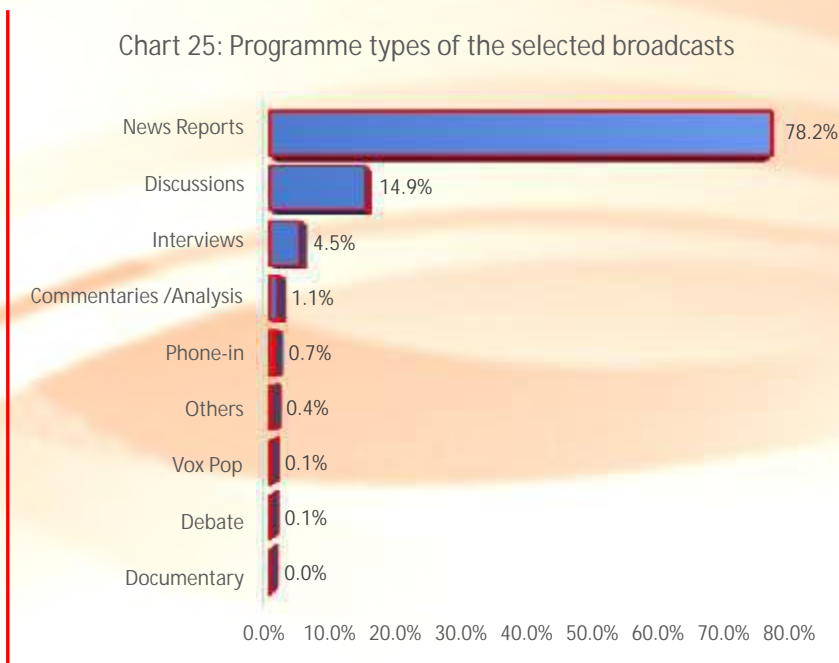
## PART III:

### COMBINED CONTENTS OF POLITICAL PROGRAMMES ON RADIO AND TELEVISION

The last section of this report is a combination of the visibility on radio and television which gives a total picture of the performance of the broadcast media based on set parameters. As usual, the section begins with a consideration of the different types of programme on the broadcast media and their political contents.

#### PROGRAMME TYPES USED IN POLITICAL BROADCASTS ON RADIO AND TELEVISION

There are nine programme types but three had sizeable and visible political contents.

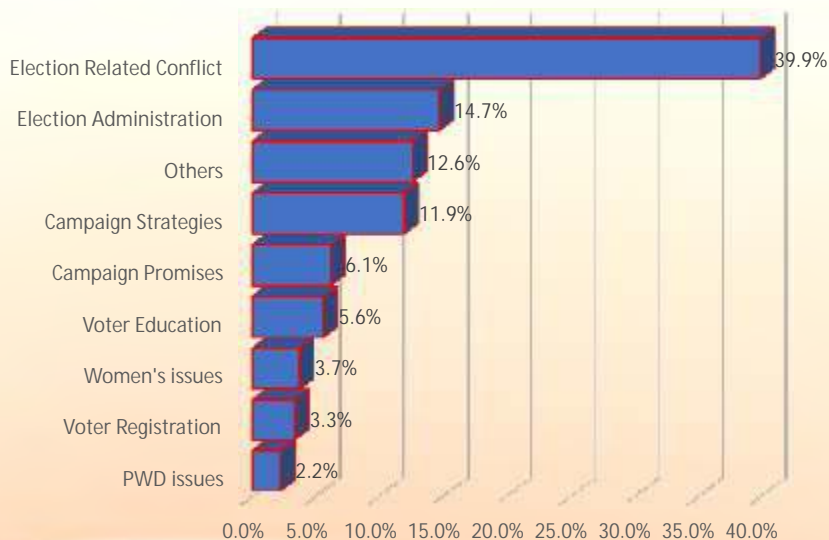




Daily broadcast on radio and television is arguably 78.2% news. Today, there are television and radio stations with 90% of their daily coverage devoted to news reports. Audience listen to political news to know what political parties and their candidates are saying; they want to know which politicians are giving good promises; as a matter of fact, people are interested in dates of election, declaration of results, announcement of winners and court pronouncements on election disputes. These and other reasons must have combined to give that highest visibility of 78.2% to news reports in chart 25. Discussions (14.9%) on radio and television before and during elections can be many as analysts and radio and television guests dissect manifestoes, campaign promises and conducts of political gladiators. That might explain why discussion ranked second on the visibility table. Interviews (4.5%) was third but far from news reports and discussions. Interviews might have been scanty because stations cannot have experts granting interviews on radio and television on a daily basis. Apart from commentaries/analysis that was just a little above 1%, others such as debate (0.1%), vox-pop (0.1%), phone-in (0.7%), others (0.4%) and documentary (0.0%) were scarcely used as types of programme for disseminating political contents. This shows that an overly concentration on three major programme types has not changed, a development that does not encourage dynamism. Sometimes, audiences are interested in getting their usual political contents through an unusual mode of delivery. That is why the opportunities embedded in these untapped programme types should be explored. Politicians and other Nigerians cannot do this but media workers who select programme types.

Political contents on radio and television were mostly news reports, discussions and interviews, but what themes dominate these political contents? This question is answered in chart 26.

Chart 26: Thematic focus of the broadcasts -



After combining data from radio and television broadcasts, election-related conflict (39.9%) still led the visibility table and election administration (14.7%) followed. The prominence of election-related conflicts should be understood to include actual report of election and post-election conflicts as well as appeals and plans to avert election violence. Reports of election-related conflict include one reported by Glory FM (15 November, 2019):

*Bayelsans have expressed their displeasure over the violence that resulted in the loss of lives including a Radio Bayelsa staff on official assignment during the PDP Campaign in Nembe.*

In another report by Grace FM (25 November, 2019), it is reported that:

*Police arrest suspects in connection to the death of the PDP woman leader in Kogi state who was killed.*

An example of such plans and appeals against violence is one broadcast by the



KSMC on 05 October, 2018 under the headline:

*An APC chairperson in Soba LGA of Kaduna state has appealed to youths in the area to live in peace irrespective of political and religious differences.*

The international dimension of these appeals is illustrated by the call from the Bishop of Cameroun as broadcast by FRCN on 08 October 2018 under the headline:

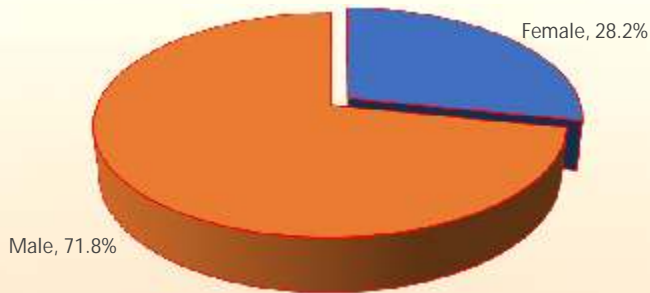
*Archbishop of Cameroun has advised Nigerians to shun money and vote people who would positively impact the nation without violence.*

Another notable thematic focus was the campaign strategies (11.9%), where campaign promises (6.1%), voter education (5.6%) and women's issues (3.7%) took the rear visibility. At the lowest rung of the visibility ladder were voter registration (3.3%) and PWD issues (2.2%). From these data, it is clear that critical issues about elections were relegated in the coverage.

Voter education and registration and campaign promises and strategies are important variables in the election equation and their relegation could mean that in the period under review, those issues were not as important as election-related conflict and election administration. When elections are over, sensitization on voter registration and all issues relating to campaign are usually not visible again. That may be a period for government agencies to be settling election-related conflicts, administering justice in election tribunals and reviewing the conduct of elections to see what can be modified in election administration before the next election. However, this report highlights the relegation of issues of women and PWD as a relegation of the minorities which does not promote inclusive political participation.

This observation is important given the information in chart 27 where the visibility of male and femela is discussed.

Chart 27: Gender disparity in the broadcast contents



Women's issues should not be treated as minority issues because such a treatment influences women's visibility in broadcast media. Where men could garner 71.8% visibility as against 28.2% for women, it is important scholars and professionals check portrayal and coverage of women by the media. On issues about politics, women might not command high visibility in a society where male culture is dominant. Apart from women's leader in any political party, other posts at all levels are usually dominated by men. Political candidates are mostly men as discussed earlier, so also political appointees. Men are the ones usually invited by radio and television stations to discuss politics and grant interviews; they are also leading as actors in the news. To change this story, media focus on women will need to change. Instead of interviewing and inviting only men as guests and experts on programmes, it is better to maintain gender balance and be gender sensitive as media practitioners.

Even where women are mentioned, many of the broadcast items do not depict them as active actors or sources of news and other contents. Rather, they are seen playing passive roles such as canvassing for the male politicians through political advertisements, or they are spotted on various campaign grounds, entertaining the public. An example is when Governor Jibrilla Bindow of Adamawa State, appealed to card-carrying members of APC, particularly the women and young people to “come out en-masse and exercise their franchise for purposeful

representation.” This event was aired on ABC Yola on 24 October, 2018. Also, the broadcasts included several instances of women were missing in action, and external parties soliciting for their participation. For example, news content by Lagos television in November, 2018 reported that the Association of Cooperate Governance in Nigeria advocates for more women in government and political positions. In addition, the Islamic Organization of Nigeria says Muslim women were free to hold political offices and positions that they are interested in and should count on the organisation's support at all levels.

However, there are some instances where women featured as sources of news reports, other contents, and as individual mentions. In a news report by Channels TV on the campaign activities and promises by various presidential aspirants, one of the six female among the 73 presidential candidates, was recognised based on her manifesto and other campaign strategies. In the report,

*Oby Ezekwesili, a presidential candidate of ACPN (Allied Congress Party of Nigeria) spoke on her plans for restructuring Nigeria economically*

Another instance of women's involvement in the 2019 general elections was a commentary/analysis section on DITV in November, 2018. The report is as follows:

*Governor Nasir El-Rufai picked Dr Hadiza Balarabe as running mate come 2019. Some women are of the opinion that he took the right decision by trying to empower women not minding whether it is a Muslim or Christian. Another added that he did it for his selfish ambition to divide us and cause chaos not truly doing it to recognise women in the state.*

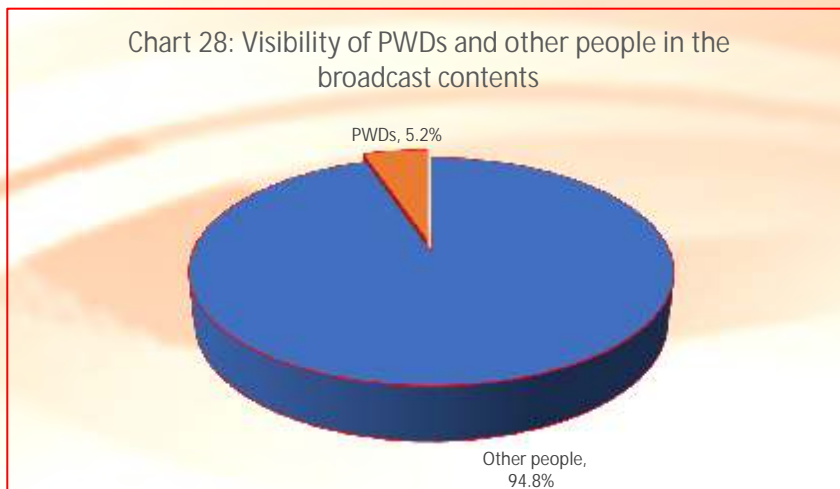
Another significant one was a news report broadcast on Liberty TV, where women supporters in the North spoke for other women in view of the 2019 general elections.

*Women in northern Nigeria speak against discrimination in the nation's political process and solicit support for women who will actively participate in the 2019 elections.*

In spite of the exceptions where women were seen in action, rather than being cajoled to vote or to contest for political positions, they still had 28.2% of attention in the contents of television and radio broadcasts. During a discussion on Liberty TV titled, “Women in Politics,” one of the guest speakers, a politician, addressed the need for women to be given more opportunities to serve in various leadership capacities. The report is as follows:

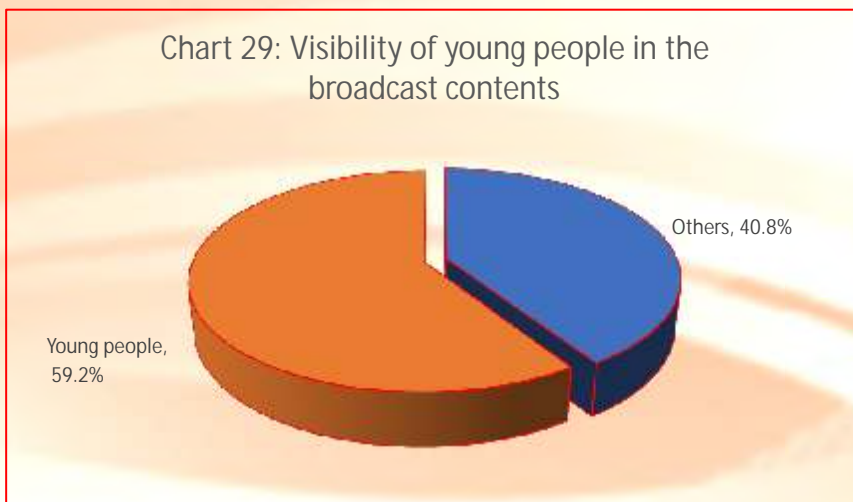
*The first guest said what limits women from actively involving in politics most times is their religious and marital restrictions. The second guest said a lot of things that are yet to be fixed in different aspects of the nation can only be fixed by women because they are generally more coordinated than men are.*

The lot that befell women in chart 27 also affected the PWD in chart 28 which shows that PWD are nearly non-existent in media coverage within the period.



In television broadcasts that have political contents within the period, PWD got 5.2% visibility and other people got 94.8% visibility. This shows that it was once in a while that PWDs appeared in radio and television broadcasts and this might be during the elections when PWDs were struggling to vote or when political candidates gained popularity for elections using situations connected with PWD. There are states in Nigeria where PWD are special assistants or senior special assistants to governors as a way of promoting inclusive participation. That sort of arrangement ensures that issues of PWD are not relegated to the background. The possibility of these assistants featuring in radio and television programmes could account for the visibility, so also a discussion on how PWD would vote conveniently during the elections.

Furthermore, the report considers the visibility of young people when political contents of radio and television broadcasts were combined. Data still reinforced established conversation on the population strength and popularity of young people in Nigerian media.





Though the percentage of visibility which accrued to other people (40.8%) was sizeable, it was not at parity with what the young people (59.2%) mustered. Among these 'other people' were male and female adults and even politicians and other groups of influential Nigerians. Therefore, that young people in Nigeria gained a greater visibility over older sets of Nigerians is an encouragement that the young people are getting involved in politics and appearing in media mention. Youth-organisations cannot be ruled out as one of the factors that triggered this visibility since they are fond of organising conferences, protests, solidarity meetings and rallies. When such events are staged, they invite radio and television reporters and issue out communiques for national visibility. The number of times guests on radio and television mentioned youth and how many times young people were guests on programmes could also be a factor. In all, the visibility is a sign that young people are somehow changing the narrative about their near absence from politics and political discourses in Nigeria.

However, it is not in all the cases that reference to young people denoted their involvement in politics and election. From our analysis, politicians, political parties and community leaders made constant appeals to young people as regards their involvement in some electoral activities. One of the several cases is reported by KSTV, and it goes thus:

*A Christian cleric in Kaduna state urged the church to sensitise their members especially youths on ensuring peaceful elections*

In other times, young people were advised to shun electoral violence and exercise their legitimate rights by voting in their preferred candidates. An example of is a news report by NTAi on political parties and their campaign strategies. Parties such as SDP, ADC, and DPP were mentioned in the report.

*Youths have been called upon not to be used as political thugs for 2019 election. Other parties also spoke on their readiness for the 2019 election, SDP and ADC and different*



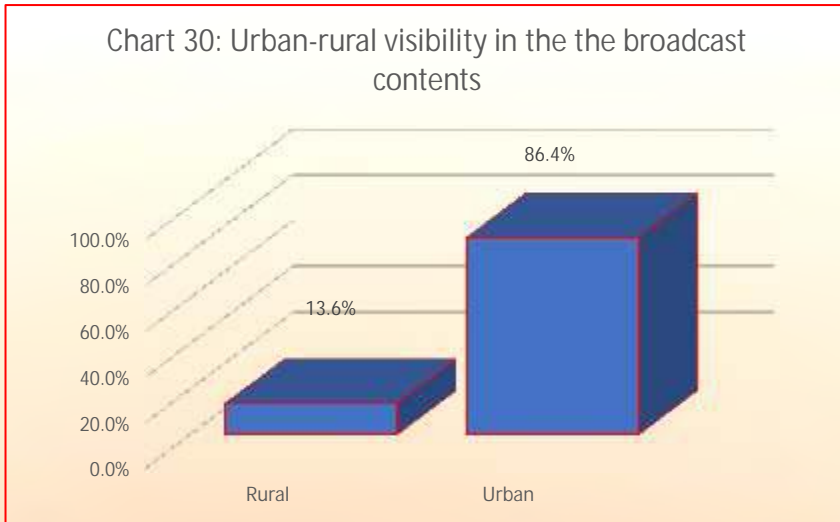
*parties featured in this report and duly represented others under mention.*

Another instance is when the president of the National Youth Summit on peace urged Nigerian youths not to allow themselves to be used by politicians to cause havoc during the forthcoming 2019 general elections. Moreover, the Sultan of Sokoto urged Muslim and Christian youths not to allow themselves to be used by selfish politicians during the 2019 general elections.

The implication of the above is that young people were considered more as a threat to free and fair elections than as active stakeholders working actively towards democratic advancements.

Only a small percentage of the broadcasts focused on the activities of young people. An example is a report aired on Liberty TV during the evening news hour, on the 28<sup>th</sup> of November, 2018. In the report, their voices were articulated even as aggrieved young people in Kaduna state decamp from APC to PDP for what they call lack of transparency.

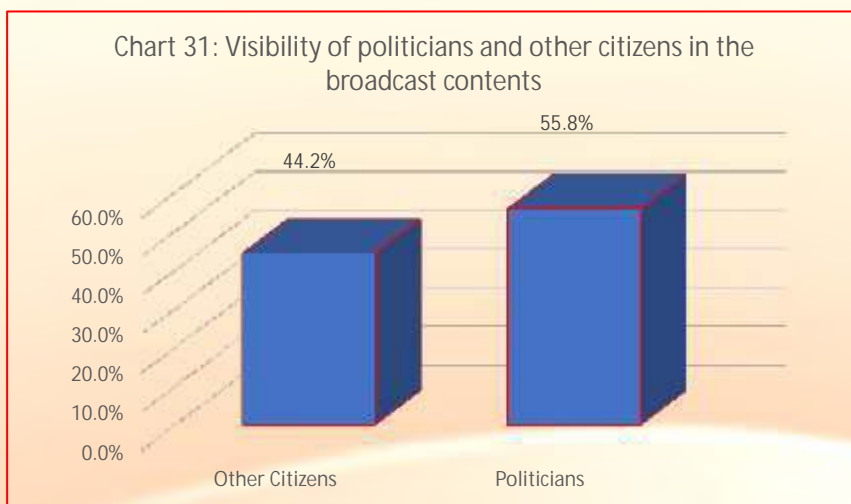
The World Bank estimated the rural dwellers in Nigeria to be about 47.9% of the population. It was therefore important to examine if the broadcast media gave attention to the electoral issues pertaining to rural dwellers in the month under consideration. In chart 30, attention is shifted to rural-urban visibility in political contents in the broadcast media. City centres in Nigeria are many, but there are more rural communities in Nigeria than urban areas. The hands that feed the nation are in the rural areas where farmers produce food items and traders ensure that these and other goods reach the urban areas. People in rural areas also contribute to political development by participating in political activities and eventually voting during elections. What percentage of visibility is devoted to them by broadcast media houses? Chart 30 provides an answer to this question.



The combined visibility of rural areas in radio and television broadcasts on politics was 13.6% and urban areas got 86.4%. If this is turned to broadcast schedule, it means that rural areas were mentioned in either news or feature-programmes once in a month, whereas urban areas are in daily media broadcasts. As explained in previous sections, rurality and rural populace cannot sell in a commercialised media space where money dictates what goes on air. Again, the bulk of political decisions are taken at the urban centres and lack of infrastructures and social amenities in rural communities prevents media workers from seeing those communities as places for getting contents. The danger in giving preference to urban areas is that the majority of the population of Nigerians made up of those in the rural areas are shut out. Politicians possibly focus on urban areas when planning development projects because media attention is also on those areas. This imbalance is not healthy for even development and it is one of the factors that produce rural-urban migration.

Chart 31 is devoted to the visibility of people who make news and feature in programmes. Media contents are usually about people, their challenges, successes, conflicts with other people and nature, solving development

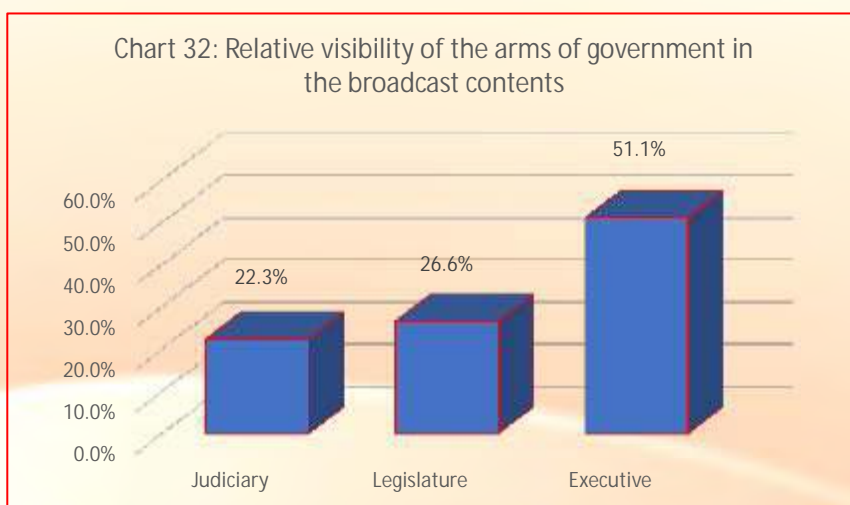
problems, governance structures, allocation of resources to meet the needs of citizens, and other issues that affect life. In this chart, what accrued to politicians and other citizens as visibility are presented and analysed.



Celebrities, public officials and other important people in the society make news and are invited as guests on programmes. Unless it is odd, other Nigerians are left in their enclaves without any media focus. The expectation is that, once you are a big politician, your private and public actions are rich contents for media broadcasts, since audiences are interested in knowing and seeing such. It is therefore not surprising that politicians got more than half of the total visibility here. Especially before and during the elections, news and programmes are usually about notable politicians as broadcast journalists strive to interview, monitor and give prominence to them. However, 44.2% for other citizens cannot be disregarded because people in that group must have done things worthy of coverage for the media attention given to their activities. Even if they were partially mentioned in news or their issues discussed in programmes, it was a sign that the media gave some prominence to them and they were also seen as critical to political development.

In this report on visibility in broadcast contents, performances of stakeholders

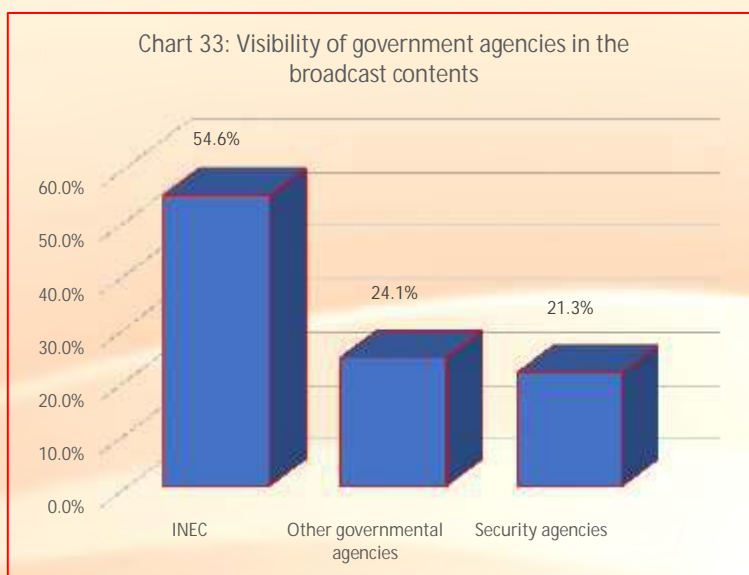
such as rural and urban areas, young people and other Nigerians, men and women, politicians and other citizens have been discussed. The relative visibility of arms of government in broadcast contents on politics is the next in chart 32. The executive arm of government led the visibility race.



The race for a better visibility in broadcast contents was close between the legislature and the judiciary, but with a difference of 4.3%, the legislative arm of government (26.6%) led where the judiciary made 22.3%. The executive arm of government with 51.1% was the best of the three and some reasons have been provided for this development. It is important to reiterate that the politics and elections of the president, governors and local government chairmen are arguably prioritised in Nigeria. It has been highlighted earlier also that the INEC governance structures are more answerable to the executive than to the other arms of government. The legislature and judiciary need to be more involved in the media for citizens to better appreciate their contributions to governance. Tribunals, appeal court and supreme court proceedings and verdicts on elections should be more prominent in the broadcast media while legislative proceedings on politics should be more open to media coverage for improved visibility. Broadcast media stations also need to re-focus their

schedule and give improved coverage to political activities of the other two arms of government since media are the eyes and ears of the public.

Government operates through its agencies. In chart 33, the report presents and explains data on the visibility of government agencies in the broadcast contents of radio and television. Since it was about politics and elections, INEC was the most visible among them.

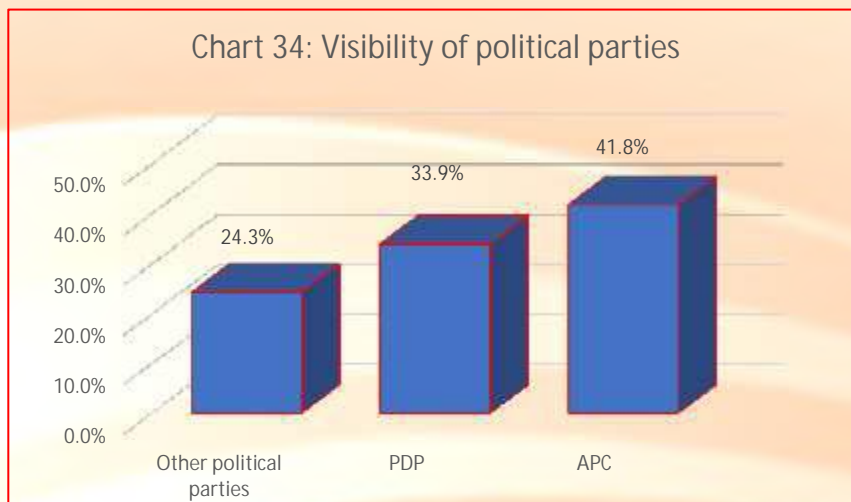


The combined visibility of government agencies did change from the usual because after INEC with 54.6%, other governmental agencies came second with 24.1%, while security agencies was third with 21.3%. In the separate analysis of data on radio and television, security agencies ranked after INEC. The Independent National Electoral Commission deservedly got the highest visibility because its activities and office should directly be contacted on elections. From working with political parties to conducting elections and ensuring that elected officials are given certificates of return, INEC must be visible in media contents when such issues are in the media. Although security agencies were always ranking after INEC, there was a possibility that after elections and attendant security challenges, security situations in relation to



elections had normalised and media contents on security agencies were dwindling. For other agencies to rank second, the possibility could also be traced to news reports, discussions and interviews that touched on their operations, which warranted some media focus on them. This shows that media attention on agencies and people is situation-based, only agencies that the situations throw-up will make news. However, occasional focus on special activities on agencies should be encouraged, even if situations do not confer any special status on them to have warranted being covered.

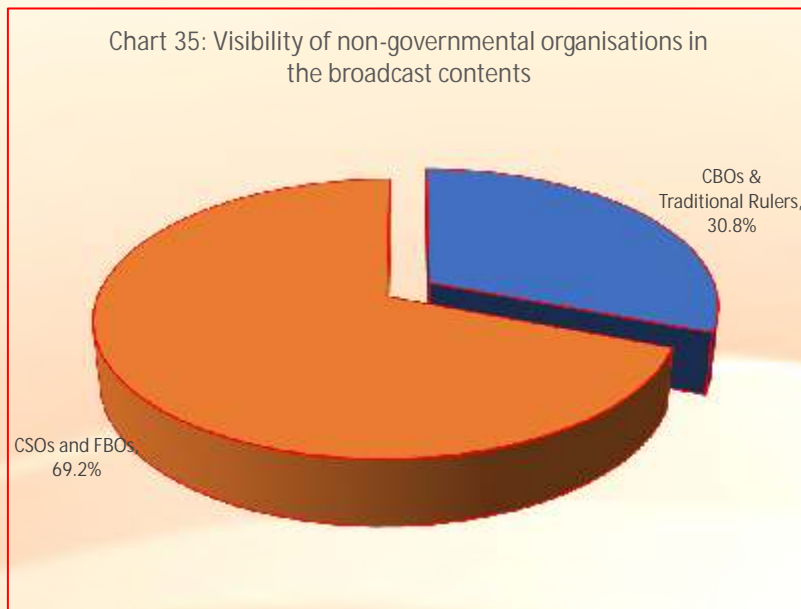
Attention is shifting to the visibility of political parties in chart 34 where APC led the pack.



The capacity of aggregated data to open-up new perspectives, no matter how little, is at play here. The visibility of other political parties was poor in a clime where two dominant parties shared the visibility in separate data presentation in previous sections and periods of this larger report. However, this combined visibility has given some recognisable impetus to the performance of other political parties with a visibility of 24.3%. Given the fact that almost all these other, small political parties could not even win a ward in any elections, the broadcast media still gave attention to their activities. The APC as the ruling party had to shed some of its weight of



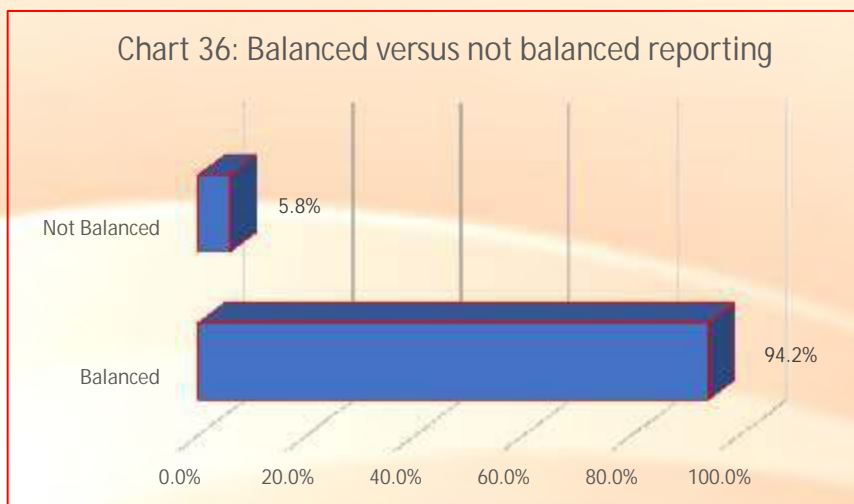
visibility to 41.8%. while the same lot affected the PDP with 33.9% visibility. This shows that if these other political parties could dissolve into one or two functional parties, they could muster some form of physical and media challenge against the dominance of the two leading parties.



In chart 35, the civil society organisations and faith-based organisations got 69.2% visibility from combined data on radio and television. The community-based organisations and traditional rulers with 30.8% averaged the performance of the first group and this shows that most of the organisations in communities and traditional rulers were not involved in the media. Since most of their events and or activities were not opened to or not covered by the media, their visibility was low. The civil society and faith-based organisations are known for media coverage; they invite the media to their events and ensure that they send messages to government and other concerned authorities. Even on politics and elections, it might be difficult for traditional rulers and community-based organisations to call attention to

themselves because of their functions, goals and reduced need for the media, as against the other group that sees the media as an instrument for achieving their goals and objectives.

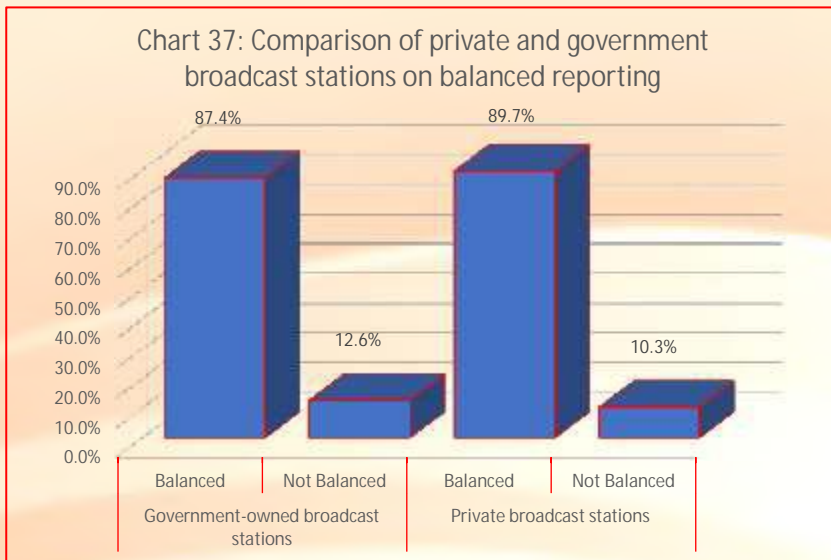
After examining other issues, the report considers the percentage of balanced and not-balanced news and programmes having political contents in the schedule of radio and television stations in the period. Balanced stories were significantly impressive as shown in chart 36.



There are regulations and sanctions against unprofessional conducts by media houses and professionalism is usually marked by conscious efforts at steering clear of these acts of misconduct. Truth is beclouded where news and programmes are not balanced, the other party is offended. Although 94.2% of balanced reporting was highly remarkable, a dot or spot on truth and objectivity mars the whole story. Therefore, 5.8% of not balanced reporting must be corrected. Nobody is interested in half-truth or 99.9% truth in a profession where trust and public conscience must be protected, no matter what will happen. If it is not in news stories, radio and television stations can

check their feature programmes for sentiments and personal opinions which can reduce balance and trust. Truth, balance, objectivity, openness and fair-play are critical in political reporting in a country where political and election-related violence come with loss of lives and other valuables.

It is good to trace where contents that are categorised as 'not balanced' came from, from government owned or private broadcast stations? Chart 37 gives the answer to this question.



Two percent was the difference in objectivity between the two groups. Balanced reporting was 87.4% for government-owned broadcast stations and 89.7% for private broadcast stations. The competition for balance and objectivity was high and the two groups actually tried to follow the professional codes of ethics. As explained earlier, both need to work on their contents since 100% objectivity is what every broadcast station desires to prevent moral and legal sanctions. Government-owned broadcast stations battle political and job pressure while striving to maintain professional standards. This is because those in power see the media as instruments of

politics needed for achieving their personal and political objectives. In the private sector, profit motive and other interests also affect objectivity and both climates must bend those interests and not professionalism if the public must win always and truthfully.

## QUALITY OF REPORTING: CASES OF EXTREME SPEECH

We examined the incidence of hate or extreme speech as one of the indices of reporting. We identified 215 cases in the fourteen months being reported here. Table 1 shows that these cases were almost evenly distributed between private and government-owned broadcast stations.

Table 1: Incidence of Extreme Speech in Private and Government-Owned Stations

|            | <b>Government Owned Stations</b> | <b>Private Stations</b> | <b>Total</b> |
|------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------|
| Radio      | 40                               | 51                      | 91           |
| Television | 65                               | 60                      | 125          |
| Total      | 105                              | 111                     | 216          |

When converted to percentages, 51.4% of occurrences of extreme speech came from private radio and television stations while 48.6% came from government-owned stations. The difference is indeed marginal. The radio stations had less incidence of extreme speech than television stations: 42.1% of the occurrences were from radio stations while 57.9% were from television stations. The possible reason for this is that most reported occurrences of extreme speech were from those called political bigwigs and these prefer to be interviewed or be involved in discussions on television than on radio – the latter is considered less elitist.

There were cases of extreme speech in the media contents such as the following:

*"PMB [President Muhammadu Buhari] is mentally unfit"* - (spokesperson of a group of political parties)

*"PMB is inept and clueless"* – An ex-aide to a former President

*"Atiku is an attack dog, he attacks like a dog and eat dog mandate"* – A guest on a programme

A chieftain of one of the bigger political parties set the tone for possible post-election violence when he said during a campaign in Rivers State, carried by one of the leading television stations:

*Let me on behalf of the leadership of my party at the headquarters warn INEC, if you want to cause crisis in Nigeria, then rig the election.*

In this situation, the politician was implying that if his party lost in a rigged election, it would resort to violence, rather than head for the court of law.

On various other television and radio programmes, there were statements such as the following:

- *PDP is an association of "frustrated persons"*
- *President Buhari is "one who is followed by violence wherever he goes"*
- *Mr Joe Igbokwe, a prominent member of the APC, is "a political infant"*
- (Former President) *"Obasanjo will see the wrath of God for supporting Atiku"*
- *Mr Rochas Okorochoa is "an embarrassment to the party"*
- *Governor Ibikunle Amosun is "behaving like an emperor"*
- *APC is "an evil political party"*



- *APC is “a party of darkness”*
- *If you want to do elections please do elections, if you want electoral war then tell us, we will be prepared, it will be a balance of terror; nobody has monopoly of violence, no political party has monopoly of violence, that is understandable”*

## SOME TRENDS ACROSS PHASES OF THE ELECTORAL PERIOD

In the next three charts, we present trends in the visibility selected actors, extreme speech and incidence of election-related conflict across electoral phases respectively. It is important to note that the phases are pre-election, election and post-election phases. For this report, the pre-election phase was October to December, 2018; the election phase was from January to June 2019

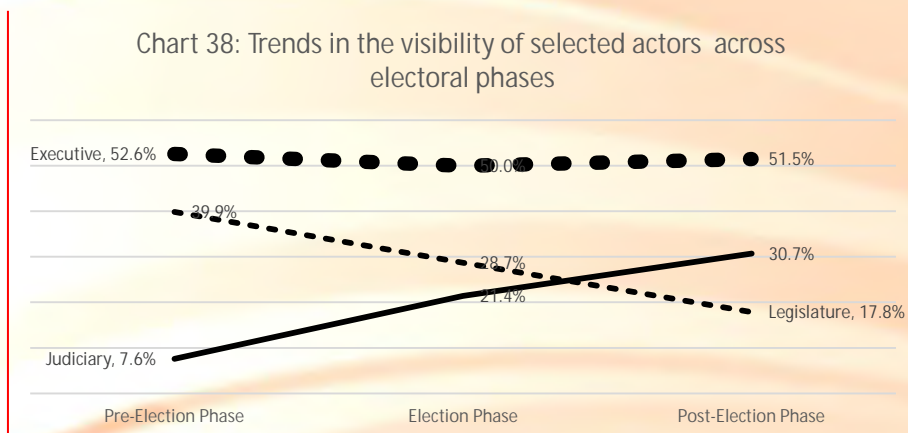
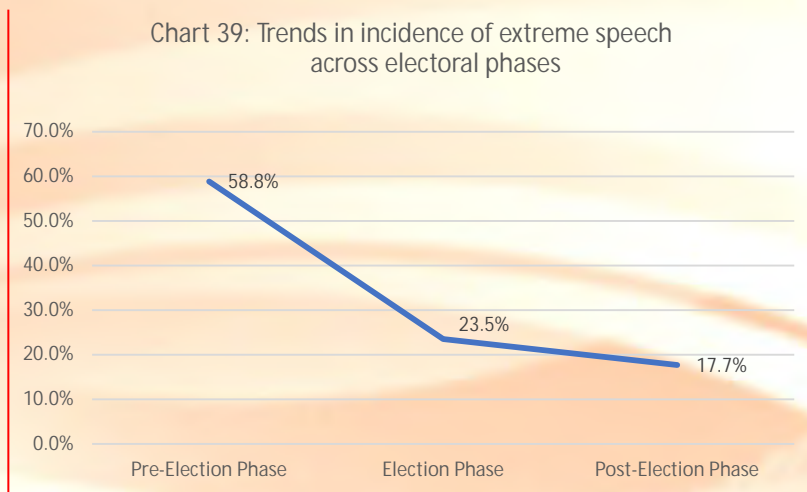


Chart 38 shows the trends in the visibility of the three arms of government in the phases identified. The three phases had the executive at the top of the ladder maintaining some distance from the other two throughout with a performance above 50% in each phase. The legislative arm's highest visibility was in the pre-election phase (39.9%); there was a downward performance from that period until it got even with the performance of the judiciary during the election phase and then further nose-dived into 17.8% in the post-election



phase. The judiciary started from its lowest performance (7.6%) in the pre-election phase and made a rising prospect to the election phase with a further rise to 30.7% in the post-election phase. The possibility of a further analysis beyond the period under consideration could see a continuous rise for this arm of government because of tribunal cases and penchant for supreme court's final judgement on election matters in Nigeria. The biggest information from this analysis is the downward performance of the legislative arm, which shows that media focus on this arm of government is not as deep and frequent as what is available for the other two arms. This shows that this arm of government is always prominent in the news before the elections.

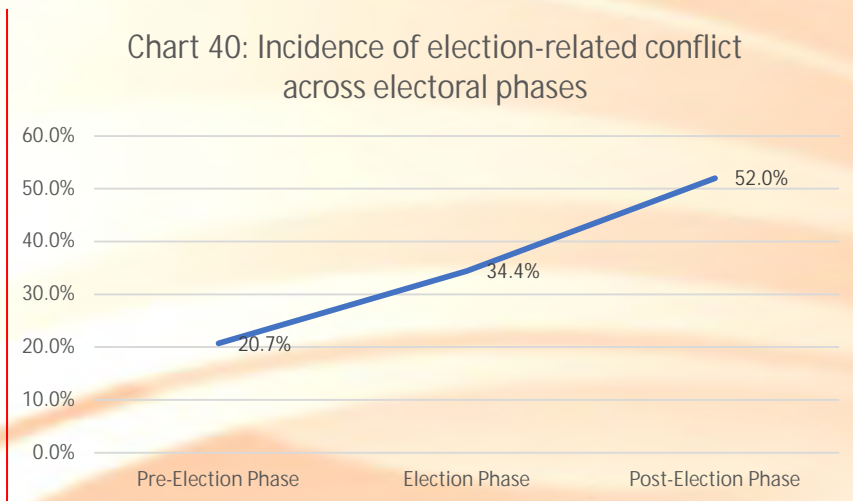
Hate speech is a criminal offence in Nigeria and its monetary sanction has been raised to five million naira. Because of its harmful effects on the cultural, ethnic, political and religious survival of the nation, government and other agencies or groups campaign vigorously to discourage people from indulging in hate speech. Chart 39 shows the incidence of hate speech across the three electoral phases.



The highest incidence of extreme speech was during the pre-election phase. About 59% of all the incidence of extreme speech took place around this time. It crashed to 23.4% during election – by this time, the National Broadcasting

Commission had meted out sanctions against many stations. It slipped further down to 17.7% in the post-election phase. The incidence and fatality of extreme speech partly justifies the rise in the monetary sanction on hate speech, but paying some fines may not land a final blow on the scourge. Some professional mechanisms must be instituted to control hate speech; so also some literacy programmes must rise beyond occasional announcements on radio and television. This has to be decentralised, involving micro units of human organising for people to get the messages and desist from hate speech. Many purveyors of hate speech might not even be aware of what they are doing, showing that they need training.

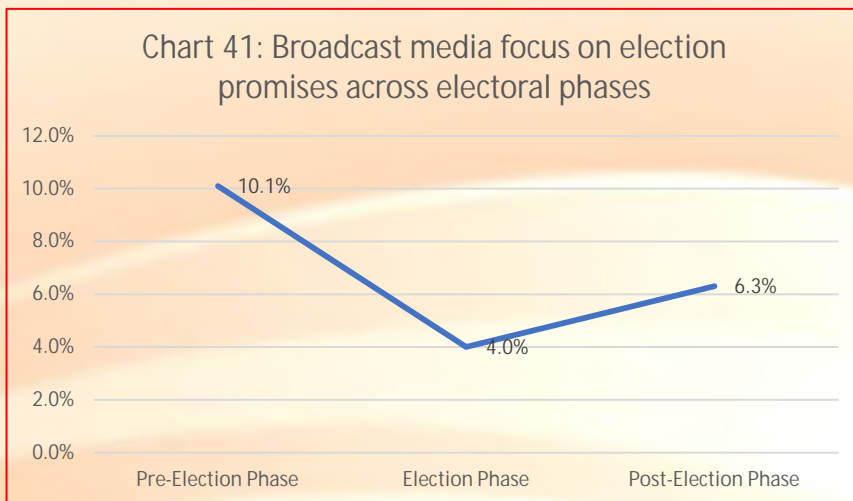
The report examined average incidence per month for election-related conflicts in the three phases. Average per month focus on electoral conflict maintained a steady rise across the three phases.



The campaign against election-related conflict in Nigeria is pervasive, but the incidence seems uncontrollable if the information in chart 40 is properly distilled. There was a rise from the pre-election phase to 52.0% in the post-election phase. This is worrisome because what was to ordinarily fizzle out with the elections became an intractable phenomenon after the elections. One

expected violent conflict to be reported more during the campaigns and rallies but after the elections when serious politicking must have ended for administration to begin, election-related conflict started dominating daily media headlines. This might have resulted from grievances associated with the conduct of those elections and the onslaught of weaponised political thugs maiming for their masters.

In the chart that follows, focus is on how the selected radio and television stations ensured the accountability of political office-holders to the electorate by focusing on the electoral promises made by politicians.



Broadcast media stations maintained uneven focus on election promises throughout the phases. However, this was most intense during the pre-election phase. This was a period the stations were interviewing the political candidates on their promises to the people. It is important to note that politicians will always want to be in the news this time for an opportunity to present their manifestoes to the public. Therefore, focus is always on what they will do when elected and this explains the highest point (average of 10.1% per month in pre-election phase) recorded here. From that point onward, it went down to average 4.0% per month in the election phase because the political candidates must have stopped all campaigns according

to the mandate of INEC and broadcast media houses must now focus on the conduct of the elections nationwide with reduced focus on election promises in their broadcasts. After the elections, real administration must start. This could be responsible for the slight rise in focus on election promises from 4.0% (average per month in the election phase) to 6.3% (average per month) in the post-election phase. The broadcast stations have risen to their social responsibility of challenging the elected officials to fulfil their promises to the electorate and in news reports, interviews and discussions, focus is on performance in office. This is a good development which must be encouraged, although the percentage does not show that if another report is instituted to focus on the post-election period extensively (say four years of a political mandate), a meaningful rise in focus on election promises will be recorded.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The broadcast media focused on varied electoral issues prior to the 2019 general elections. These issues included key themes or topics of discourse, programme formats, visibility of individual and corporate actors, quality of reports and the quality of language. The media significantly covered the activities of INEC, the executive and legislative arms of government, and other issues involving voter registration, campaign strategies, campaign promises and election administration. Additionally, men and young people received notable coverage as sources of news reports, other contents and as mentions. Most of the reports were commendably balanced.

Despite all of the remarkable efforts made by the broadcast media, it still faltered in some cases. For example, voter education received little attention in political broadcasts. With reference to the months under review (particularly, the pre-election phase), official campaigns began in all political parties, and citizens were urged to register as eligible voters. It is assumed that activities and discussions on voter education would attract increased attention in

broadcast contents. This is vital to directing or re-directing the focus of the electorates to making choices that will affect the Nigerian economy positively.

Likewise, women and persons with disability (PWDs) were almost totally neglected by the broadcast media as they rarely featured as sources of contents or as mentions in political broadcasts. Rather, the attention of the media was centred on the male candidates and people without special needs. In addition, most of the broadcast contents concentrated on the strategies and promises of politicians, rather than other important issues surrounding the elections such as: buying of votes, registration of underage voters, declaration of assets, reformation of the judiciary, unhealthy party rivalry, among others.

Lastly, political broadcasts focused more on the urban areas and very little on rural settlements. This suggests unprofessionalism of the Nigerian broadcast media. News reports and every other contents ought to be disseminated in both rural and urban areas in order to ensure that all citizens are well informed and educated continually. So, the media ought to be brought closer to the rural areas too.

From the findings and conclusion, the following recommendations are made:

1. Training of journalists on diversity sensitivity: Most journalists define news and newsworthiness in the classical traditional way which, among others, makes them to focus on prominent persons in the society. Very often, these persons are men, politicians, the leading political organisations. This outlook is not sensitive to the diversity found in the society. Journalists need to be helped to unlearn the old outlook and imbibe new ones that are conscious of and responsive to the diversity in the society and thus, promotes inclusivity. Non-governmental organisations, funding agencies and such agencies committed to deepening democracy should prioritise helping journalists in this core area of need.
2. Capacity enhancement for female politicians: The broadcast monitoring showed little presence of women in the contents of the broadcasts. Among the reasons for this is that women are still mostly on the fringes when it comes to



political participation. They are, most of the time, supporters rather than leading actors. They are also mostly being appealed to for support and for participation as voters. The capacity of women to venture more daringly into politics should be enhanced. This could be in the form of direct enhancement such as through training in public speaking, leadership skills, organisation and advocacy skills, media relations, among others. It could also be in the form of tackling and removing institutional and cultural obstacles to women's involvement in politics. Part of this could be lobbying or incentivising political parties to create a quota for women, among others. Civil Society Organisations including women focused groups and pro-democracy funding agencies should consider taking on this important role.

3. Increased attention to persons with disabilities (PWDs): Media attention to PWDs is depressingly low. It is like they are not a part of this society that deserves visibility and participation in the electoral process. It is therefore important for the media to give priority attention to PWDs and issues affecting their participation. Some initiatives to address the current situation could include sensitising and networking journalists towards PWD issues, developing and circulating among media professionals guidelines on coverage of PWD issues, training of PWDs on media engagements etc.

4. Increased support for community and rural broadcast stations: Findings show substantial neglect of the communities in rural areas and predominant attention on the cities. This, among other reasons, is because most broadcast stations are located in the urban areas. Focusing only or mainly on urban areas is detrimental to the health of democracy especially in a nation with a huge rural population. Efforts should be made by broadcast stations to increase their coverage of the political issues and events in rural areas. More importantly, support for community radio stations is both urgent and important. These stations are located in the rural areas, and are best positioned to cover rural issues. This is true of both community radio stations and the few commercial/government broadcast stations located in rural areas that are not community radio stations. Training for their staff and volunteers is important.



The Institute for Media and Society as well as other media-supporting organisations should be supported and funded by agencies to provide training support for these stations. Beyond training, technical and equipment support should also be directed towards them. In addition to these, the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) should downwardly review the licensing fees of these stations as NBC's further contribution to the growth of democracy in Nigeria.

5. Partnership between INEC and broadcast media: INEC should see the media as partners in progress and sustain an enduring relationship with media groups all the time – before, during and after elections. Such partnership would promote journalists' commitment to and involvement in voter education. They would also help INEC to understand journalists' information needs and help them to understand INEC's needs and challenges. INEC should always reward accurate, fair and ethical reporting of electoral activities as motivation for more of such.

6. Greater synergy between INEC and other agencies of government: The need for stronger synergy between INEC and other agencies of government, especially mobilisation agencies such as the National Orientation Agency and others cannot be over emphasised. These agencies should be better funded during the electoral process, so that they can better undertake such responsibilities as voter education and interface more with INEC.

7. Deliberate efforts by journalists: Broadcast media journalists should make deliberate efforts to preserve their practice of balanced reporting. They should also make deliberate efforts to adopt peace-journalism approach to reporting election-related conflicts, and should hone their skills on those programmes that deepen democratic discourses and culture such as debates and discussions, documentaries, and commentaries. Media owners must provide the needed equipment and capacity enhancement support to journalists and producers so that they can produce these crucial programmes.

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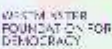
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