

Television Reporting of Pipeline Vandalism in Onicha Amiyi-Uhu and Jesse Communities

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Abstract

This study examines the way NTA reported the vandalism of oil pipelines, especially the direction of emphasis of the report. Two research designs: content analysis and interviews were used for the study. The data for content analysis were derived from a sample of 35 television reports (NTA) on Onicha Amiyi-Uhu and Jesse communities covering the period between 1998 and 2003. The interviews involved the reporters who covered the event. Analysis was done using neutral, favourable and unfavourable rating presented in tabular form. The result shows that truly, NTA was neutral in its coverage of the inferno because items in the neutral zone were higher. The personal interviews also revealed that truly there was no attempt by government to slant the news as the reporters revealed that there was no pressure from any quarters on them. The interview equally brought to the fore for the study issues of neglect by host communities and the need to address the issue of thorough impact assessment on site before oil prospecting and exploration. The study recommended that government should provide necessary facilities for citizens to feel the impact of government and that there should be quick response to leaking pipes. This study therefore advocated that more public enlightenment programmes through television be carried out.

Introduction

Television, the world over is meant to highlight activities that take place in our society. News reporting and dissemination, which are some of the roles of television to society, are important in the life of a man. Governments of different countries are aware of this and as such, invest heavily on news reporting and coverage. It is a known fact that most television stations while reporting news could manipulate some aspects of it to suit the powers that be. This, however, is subjective news reporting and is not surprising as it is often said that the who pays the piper dictates the tune. The

negative impacts of news reporting is disheartening, for instance the purported death of former Biafran leader, Dim Chukwuemeka Ojukwu by some local media was received with shock by some sections of our society. The wrong information sent out by Aljazeera cable network that sectarian violence is taking place in the South Eastern part of Nigeria with the consequent retaliation by the Northern part of the country is also another negative news reporting because this kind of reporting usually leads to loss of life and materials.

In Nigeria, within the last ten years there had been agitation, continuously, emanating from the Niger Delta region of Nigeria, accusing the federal government of neglect and being marginalized. Incessant protests and sabotage of the oil pipeline have led to large casualties as a result of vandals trying to siphon crude oil in order to eke out a living. The role of the media in reporting all these is very important and it is one of the reasons this research work is being carried out. It is important to note that while so many media houses have made reasonable attempt to relay the vandalism of oil pipelines and its effects on host communities, this dissertation places particular emphasis on report from Nigeria Television Authority. The reason for this is not farfetched. The NTA is a government owned media house which is funded by tax payer's money. Therefore, it is expected that in its reporting of news, as a public media house, it should be fair and unbiased. This we shall try to establish.

Literature Review

A medium is a means of communication, a tool or vehicle to transmit message or a collection of messages. The messages are passed either through a single medium or through mass media channels to inform an audience of an event, story or a situation. Ramanujam (2009:1) examines Rogers view of mass media channel as "those means of transmitting messages that involves mass media such as radio, television, newspaper etc and enable one or few individuals to reach an audience of many". Notably it is observable that the mass media constitute an integral part of Nigerian's social and political life. This assertion gains currency as Umeh (1989) quotes Awolowo that "television was initiated because the regional government was convinced that it could play a major role in increasing both the pace and standard of education which was regarded as the key to progress in other fields".

Ibagere (2009:66) furthers that television has a wide reach courtesy of its combination of sight and sound elements, and also it takes its messages straight into the setting rooms of its viewers. He opines that television is the greatest carrier of images because it can reach the people in their respective homes at the same time which other media cannot achieve. Ibagere notes further "few people can walk past a television screen without looking at it". The attractiveness of television makes the medium's messages to be accepted as authentic, this it does through its ability to create empathy in viewers. When the medium entertains, it can be very moving,

eliciting emotions that can impact behavioural change e.g. campaigns on television that arouse emotions can be powerful enough to influence individual behaviour. The emotional appeal influences people who are already concerned and may attract the attention of others who were initially indifferent in the message.

What is News?

Harcups (2009:40) quotes editors as seeing news as “opening a window on the world or a giant mirror reflecting society, warts and all”. But Harcups kicks against this definition, because to him, news also include what does not usually happen; and that it is a selective version of the world's event with a focus on that which is new and or unusual. When something happens, it is recorded by reporters who package it in a form that could be understood by an audience and publish or air it through a medium. In his attempt to define news, Nwabueze (2009:3) explains thus “Many events worth reporting take place at the same time in different places. The one that gets selected, gets written, and gets aired or published is news. Except an account of an event passes through this process, it is not news”. Nwabueze did mention that though the reporter might select an event from the field, it may still not get reported because it may be dropped by the editor in the office who is the final gate keeper.

Defleur and Everest (1988:135) inform that news is a report that presents a contemporary view of reality with regards to specific issue, event or process. Fedler, Bender, Davenport and Drager (2005:123) quote Walter Lippmann, a reporter and columnist as saying that news is “What protrudes from the ordinary.... a picture of reality on which people can act”.

In his own contribution, Nwanne (2008:22) defines news as “a fair and accurate account in the mass media of the important facts of a timely happening of interest or impacts to a large chunk of the audience”. Judging from Nwanne's statement, we will understand that news is all about storytelling, but that the information on the story should be meticulously gathered to ensure accuracy and fairness and that it must be something that recently happened and must be of interest and must make impact on the audience. Nonetheless, most journalists agree that there are common elements that characterize news worthy events. These include Timeliness which explains that news is new; yesterday's news is old news. Proximity, which explains that news, happens close by. Readers and viewers want to learn about their neighbourhood, town or country. Prominence- the more important a person is the more valuable he or she is as a news source. Consequence-events that affect a great many people have built-in news value e.g. a tax increase is an event that has consequence on a society. Human interest-in these are stories that arouse some emotions in the audience that are ironic, bizarre, uplifting or dramatic.

What Is Meant By Reporting

Reporters are news hunters. Though they are hunters, they are distinct from conventional hunters because quite unlike the conventional hunters that are armed with spears, arrows, guns etc. reporters are equipped with a pen, notebook; tape recorder and, or camera. They are always chasing news. In their pursuit of news, they are anxious to know what is happening, where it is happening, how it is happening, when it is happening, who are making it happen and why it is happening. In their news hunting; they are always looking at where to get the news, called news sources, and when they get the news, they think of how to present the news in a manner that will be of great relevance and interesting to the audience or viewers. This is the kernel of reporting. So, what then is reporting? Nwabueze (2009:1), defines reporting as "the process of giving account of news event through a medium to an audience. It consists of gathering facts about an event, occasion or people through careful observation, reasoning and verification and organizing them into a news story with a view to giving mass media audience a good idea of what transpired". Nwabueze reasons that reporting is no child's play as it involves a careful, intelligent and often, meticulous process of taking account of events that are newsworthy and that would interest the audience of a medium.

Stovall (2005: 153), notes that reporting takes a great deal of thought, preparation, and practice". This definition shows that reporting goes beyond jumping or trekking down streets hawking for news. Nwanne (2008:53), defines news reporting "as gathering news worthy and timely information that are of interest to a large number of persons and presenting such news in a style that is accurate, fair and interesting". Nwanne's definition embraces the fact that for news to be appreciated as news, it must be something that will worth people's time and attention, and its appeal must attract a large number of persons in the society and that every effort must be made to show objectivity in its presentation and all the information in it should be the exact truth and nothing less.

Chinedu Obike, assistant news manager, NTA describes television reporting as presentation of an event through the use of a video camera and microphone to facilitate vision and sound. In other words, in reporting for television, the reality of the event is visually displayed on the screen along with the verbal narrative of the reporter and the intermittent ambience (sound) from the environment.

Sarah Menny-Angbare, controller programmer, River State Television Service, sees news gathering and reportage as "a process that could involve a long list of gate-keepers and staff of a television station whose interest are all focused on producing a concise, more excitable story". She argues that a reporter who is assigned to a beat has to develop himself professionally to have nose for news. What it means, is that, by careful listening and attentive calculation, he or she is able to discern what story

would develop to a certain point, if it should be followed up or stopped there.

Nwabueze (2009:31) insists that there are 3 types of news reporting format. They are routine reporting which is the normal reporting where the journalist goes to hunt news for the station, or he or she is assigned a beat to cover. Though, some reporter could be aggressive in order to fret our information, routine or straight news reporting is premised on presentation of basic facts of an event in the quickest and briefest possible time. Nwabueze insists that straight news reporting is the type where news reporters basically present the key facts in a story often in a skeletal format, the reporter may spend less time on investigation and it usually uses inverted-pyramid style in reporting. It is a story format commonly used to break the news hot and fresh to the audience.

Itule, and Anderson (2008:5) call theirs' straight reporting, general assignment reporting. They explain that reporters here cover spot news, which news is occurring now. The spot news are important to any newsroom operation because they are always there when a story breaks e.g. there might be a story from the grapevine that protesters are marching on the street of a town to demonstrate against an increase in the pump price of petroleum products, a general assignment reporter is sent to cover the event immediately. They are usually reporters who are excellent and quick writer who know their communities well. They must know what is going on and who the main players are around town.

Research Design

This study adopted two methods to meet its purpose: Content analysis and survey. Content analysis was used to find out the coverage and portrayal of pipeline vandalism while the survey research was used to determine the perception of Nigeria regarding the vandalism. Wimmer and Dominick (199:135) quoted Kerlinger as saying that “content analysis is a method of studying and analysing communication in a systematic, objective and quantitative manner for the purpose of measuring variables”.

The second research design adopted in this study was the survey. The design became necessary because content analysis alone cannot tell us directly what is in the human mind. The combination of content analysis with survey data allows researchers to guess, connect, and establish relationship between and among phenomena. Survey could be descriptive and analytical. They describe current conditions or attitudes as well as explain the reason for certain existing situation. Osuala (1990, p. 80) states that “survey interprets, synthesizes, and integrates useful data for sound conclusion”. Interview was also used by the researcher to get the perception of citizens of Nigeria to the issue of pipeline vandalism. Seven persons were interviewed. Three from Abia, three from Delta State and the NTA reporter who covered the Onicha Amiyihu's fire disaster in 2003.

Population of the Study

The study employed two research populations. The content analysis universe consisted of all pipeline vandalism news between 1998 and 2003, which came to 35 times. Concerning the survey population, indigenes of Abia State and those of Delta States who viewed NTA reporting of oil pipeline vandalism in the two communities of Onicha Amaiyi-Uhu and Jesse were given questionnaires. This population amounted to 200 persons intentionally selected for this exercise. The reason for selecting the two communities for the research was that the Jesse incident was the first time NTA gave enough prominence to reporting of the issue because the vandalism was becoming more rampant. While in the case of Onicha Amaiyi-Uhu, the waste was monumental, both human and material. Besides, the two towns are all in the Niger Delta region which have been the hot-bed of agitation against marginalization and exploitation of their God given wealth.

Data Presentation and Analysis

The main purpose of this study is to probe the frequency and rate of NTA's reportage of oil pipeline vandalism and to find out whether the reporting was doctored to cover some errors on the part of the federal government. This chapter contains the presentation of the data, data analysis and the discussion of findings. The data in this study emanated from the coding and indexing (analysis) of the 35 times that NTA reported the vandalism of oil pipelines in either Primetime news or at late night news. The data obtained from this study were tabulated and interpreted using frequency and simple percentage. The research is hinged on the following five research questions:

1. What was the frequency of reporting of vandalism of oil pipelines by NTA?
2. What is the level of prominence that NTA attached in their reporting of the vandalism of oil pipeline?
3. To what extent do vandalism news report reflect balance?
4. What is the influence of government, on NTA reporting of pipeline vandalism?
5. Given the frequency of reporting, do you expect positive response from government in terms of arresting environmental degradations?

Data for this study was generated from the study in two major segments: content analysis and survey. The first segment of data presentation and analysis emanates from the content analysis of NTA's reportage of the issue in 2 towns of Onicha Amiyi-Uhu and Jesse. The issue was aired 35 times by NTA and it covers from January 1998 to December, 2003.

The second segment of data presentation and analysis deals with data emanating from the survey of indigenes of the two states of Abia and Delta States. The survey sampled one hundred citizens from each of the two states, making the total number of persons surveyed for the study, two hundred persons.

Content Analysis

This aspect of the presentation deals with content analysis of two Nigeria Television Authority station's reportage of pipeline vandalism. The presentation was done using such news format like Primetime news and late night news.

TABLE 1: DISTRIBUTION OF ITEMS IN ONICHA AND JESSE

	PRIME TIME NEWS	LATE NIGHT NEWS	TOTAL
ONICHA	10	5	15
JESSE	15	5	20
TOTAL	25	10	35

The above table shows that Primetime has the highest number of news items with 25 items or 71% of the total number of items reported by NTA in Onicha and Jesse. In Jesse, it was 60% of the total number of items it reported. In Onicha, it was 40%. The two towns had NTA reporting late night news at 28%. In Onicha, it was 14% and also, the late night news at Jesse, was 14%.

TABLE II: DISTRIBUTION OF ITEMS IN ONICHA AMIYI-UHU ACCORDING TO DIRECTION OF REPORTING

DIRECTION	PRIMETIME NEWS	LATE NIGHT NEWS	TOTAL
NEUTRAL	15	10	25
FAVOURABLE	6	-	8
UNFAVOURABLE	2	-	2
TOTAL	23	12	35

In Table II NTA reported a total of 25 neutral news items, representing 71% of the total news items reported by it on pipeline vandalism. It reported a total of 8 favourable items or 22% of the news on pipeline vandalism, while its unfavourable items on the news were 2, or 6%.

TABLE III: DISTRIBUTION OF ITEMS IN JESSE ACCORDING TO DIRECTION OF REPORTING

DIRECTION	PRIMETIME NEWS	LATE NIGHT NEWS	TOTAL
NEUTRAL	15	8	23
FAVOURABLE	5	2	7
UNFAVOURABLE	2	3	5
TOTAL	22	13	35

In table III, NTA in Jesse reported a total of 23 neutral news items which represented 66% of the neutral stories. Its favourable news items were 7 times, representing 20% of the total stories it aired in Jesse, while it reported unfavourable stories in the news on 5 occasions or 14%.

TABLE IV: DISTRIBUTION OF NEUTRAL ITEMS IN ONICHA AMIYI-UHU AND JESSE

DIRECTION	PRIMETIME NEWS	LATE NIGHT NEWS	TOTAL
ONICHA	10	5	15
JESSE	15	2	17
TOTAL	25	7	32

Given the picture in table IV, it is clear that NTA reported a total of 32 neutral items on pipeline vandalism news; which represents 78% of the total news report. Onicha Amiyi-uhu had 40% neutral item reportage, while Jesse had 53% reportage or 17 neutral item issues reported.

TABLE V: DISTRIBUTION OF FAVOURABLE ITEMS IN ONICHA AMIYI-UHU AND JESSE

DIRECTION	PRIMETIME NEWS	LATE NIGHT NEWS	TOTAL
ONICHA	4	4	8
JESSE	6	5	11
TOTAL	10	9	19

The two towns had 19 news items reported by NTA, being 54% which are favourable news items. Onicha had 8 favourable items reportage, which represent 23% of the news report that are favourable while Jesse has 11 favourable items reported, representing 31% of the total news reported favourably.

TABLE VI: DISTRIBUTION OF UNFAVOURABLE ITEMS IN ONICHA AMIYI-UHU AND JESSE

TOWN	PRIMETIME NEW	LATE NIGHT NEWS	TOTAL
ONICHA	2	2	4
JESSE	4	2	6
TOTAL	6	4	10

As indicated on Table VI, 10 unfavourable news items were reported by NTA, representing 28% of the total news reported. Onicha had 4 unfavourable news items reported, which represented 11% of the total news reported. Jesse had 6 unfavourable news items reported which represented 17% of the total unfavourable news items reported.

Survey

This segment of data presentation and analysis deals with responses obtained from 200 respondents in the two states of Abia and Delta States. The instruments for data collection was a questionnaire given to residents of the two states with each state having 100 questionnaire each. The instrument is made to find out how frequent NTA reported the issue of pipeline vandalism, whether the news report is balanced or slanted, to get their opinion on how they want the government to handle the issue of

pipeline vandalism especially, to help arrest the ugly development. Details of the data obtained from the survey are presented as follows:

TABLE VII: RESPONDENTS' KNOWLEDGE OF PIPELINE VANDALISM STORIES

NTA STATIONS	KNOWLEDGE VARIABLES ADEQUATE KNOWLEDGE	SOME KNOWLEDGE	LITTLE KNOWLEDGE	TOTAL
ABIA	60 (60%)	25 (25%)	8 (8%)	93%
DELTA	75 (75%)	18 (18%)	4 (4%)	97%
	135	43	12	

The study categorized the respondent's knowledge of NTA reportage of oil pipeline vandalism in Abia and Delta States. 60% respondents in Abia State claimed adequate knowledge of the reportage by NTA, 25 some respondents or 25% claimed they have knowledge of the reportage and 8 respondents or 80% of the respondents claimed little knowledge of the reporting.

In Delta State, respondents that claimed adequate knowledge of the reporting were 70 persons or 70%, those that had some knowledge of the reporting 18 respondents or 18% of them and those that had little knowledge of the reporting was 4 respondents or 4 persons. From the above data, it could be deduced that in Abia State, 7 respondents claimed they don't have any knowledge of the reporting and in Delta State, 3 persons or 3% also claimed that they don't have any knowledge of the reporting. The table clearly shows that a greater number of respondents in the 2 states of Abia State witnessed the reporting.

TABLE VIII: RESPONDENTS KNOWLEDGE OF FREQUENCY RATE OF NTA'S REPORTAGE

STATES	KNOWLEDGE VARIABLE		LITTLE KNOWLEDGE	TOTAL
	ADEQUATE KNOWLEDGE	INACURRATE KNOWLEDGE		
ABIA	65 (65%)	20 (20%)	4 (4%)	89
DELTA	68 (68%)	22 (22%)	2 (2%)	92
	133	42	6	181

Table VIII presents data on respondent's knowledge of frequency rate of NTA's reporting of pipeline vandalism. The table above indicates that 65 respondents or 65% of the respondents claimed that they have adequate knowledge of almost all the time NTA in Abia State reported news of pipeline vandalism.

It is clear from this table that 20% of them claimed some knowledge of the many number of times that NTA reported news of pipeline vandalism while 4 persons or 4% of the respondents claimed little knowledge of how many times NTA had reported news of pipeline vandalism. In Delta State, 68% respondents accepted that

they watched almost all the news of NTA on pipeline vandalism and that NTA had been consistent in airing the issue. 22% or 22 respondents claimed some knowledge of the consistency of NTA in the reportage of the issue of oil pipeline vandalism. Only 2 respondents or 2% of the respondents claimed little knowledge of watching the news on pipeline vandalism frequently.

From the table above, it could be deduced that in Abia State, about 11 persons or 11% of the respondents had no knowledge of the frequency of the reporting, while in Delta State, it could also be claimed that about 8 persons or 8% of the respondents had no knowledge, also of the frequency of NTA's reportage.

TABLE IX: RESPONDENTS' REACTION TO NTA'S POINT OF EMPHASIS

STATES	VARIABLES ON ATTITUDE TO POINT OF EMPHASIS			
	POSITIVE	NEGATIVE	BALANCE	TOTAL
ABIA	28 (28%)	5 (5%)	55 (55%)	88
DELTA	30 (30%)	6 (6%)	53 (53%)	89
	58	11	108	177

Table IX presents data on respondents' attitude to NTA's point of emphasis in their reportage. The above table indicates that 28 respondents, representing 28 per cent had positive attitude, meaning that the particular aspects of the issues treated by NTA was okay with them because it was what they expected NTA to emphasize on. In Abia State, 5 respondents or 5 % of the respondents had negative attitude because, possibly NTA's emphasis did not meet their goal or expectation. 55% or 55 respondents were happy with the reporting because it had a balanced perspective, meaning that the story came undiluted or slanted to favour any side or anybody.

In Delta State, 30 respondents or 30% of the respondents also had positive attitude towards the reporting. The issues raised by the reporter and NTA merited their approval. 6% of the respondents had negative reaction to NTA's point of emphasis. They were not well convinced with what NTA highlighted, while 53 respondents or 53 percentage of the respondents believed that story had a balance presentation for viewers to get involved emotionally.

TABLE X: RESPONDENTS' EXPECTATION FROM GOVERNMENT BASED ON THE REPORTING

STATES	VARIABLES ON EXPECTATION OR DEMANDS			TOTAL
	PUNISH OFFENDERS	PROVIDE INFRASTRUCTURE	DISCONTINUE REPORTING	
ABIA	15 (15%)	70 (70%)	8 (8%)	93
DELTA	5 (5%)	75 (75%)	3 (3%)	83
	20	145	11	176

Table X rates respondents that expect government to punish offenders in Abia State, to be 15 respondents or 15% of the respondents. 70% of the respondents in Abia State want government to provide infrastructure as a way of getting citizens engaged in

economic activities; while 8% of the respondents want the government to discontinue with the idea of reporting the issue of pipeline vandalism. In Delta State, 5 respondents or 5% of the respondents want offenders (vandals of oil pipeline) to be punished. It should serve as a deterrent to others, while 75 respondents or 75% respondents want government to provide necessary infrastructure to help the economic life of the citizens. 3 respondents or 3% of the respondents polled wants government to stop the idea of reporting the issue, because, the more it is reported, the more the vandals are emboldened.

TABLE XI: RESPONDENTS' REACTION ON WHETHER THE REPORTING WILL INCREASE OR DECREASE VANDALISM

STATE	VARIABLES ON INCREASE OR DECREASE			TOTAL
	POSITIVE	NEGATIVE	UNDECIDED	
ABIA	51 (51%)	33 (33%)	12 (12%)	96
DELTA	68 (68%)	21 (21%)	5 (5%)	94
	119	54	?	190

From the table above, it is seen that 51 respondents or 51% of the respondents are convinced that because of issues highlighted in the reporting that, they are positive, vandalism of oil pipelines will stop, in Abia State, 33 respondents or 33% of those sampled in Abia State through the questionnaire believe that the reporting will not deter the vandals. 5 respondents or 5% of the respondents will neither support nor oppose the idea that reporting will either increase or decrease vandalism. In Delta State, 68 respondents or 68% of the respondents are convinced that NTA's reportage will stop pipeline vandalism. 21 respondents or 21% of the respondents believe that the reporting will not serve any positive impact. That vandalism will continue. 5 respondents or 5% of the respondents are still undecided on the impact of the reporting.

TABLE XII: RESPONDENTS' REACTION TO THE NEWS REPORT PRESENTATION

STATE	PERCEPTION VARIABLES			TOTAL
	SLANTED	BALANCE	FAIR	
ABIA	17 (17%)	68 (68%)	15 (15%)	100
DELTA	26 (26%)	70 (70%)	4 (4%)	100
	43	138	19	200

From the above table, we will be able to deduce that in the way the news reports on pipeline vandalism was presented in Abia State 17 respondents or 17 percent of the respondents believed that the news was slanted or that it was doctored to protect certain interest. That certain information was not relayed to viewers for their judgment. 68 respondents or 68 percent of the respondents believed that NTA gave a balanced news report. That they were sincere and objective in their presentation; while 15 respondents or 15 percent of the respondents believed that the news report was just fair. Not too well reported neither was vital information withheld from the viewers.

In Delta State, 26 respondents or 26 percent of the respondents claimed that the news was slanted. That most of the facts, mostly, those that will indict the government were taken out of the news. 70 respondents or 70 per cent of the respondents were of the view that the news presented by NTA reflected balance. There was no obvious attempt to smuggle in or remove something from the report. 4 percent or 4 respondents believed that the news report was just fair. Not too great and not too poor.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This section discusses the findings of this study in relation to the seven research questions posed in this study.

Research Question One: What was the frequency of reporting fire disaster resulting from vandalism of oil pipelines by NTA.

The data presented in table VIII are helpful in providing answers to this question. The data clearly showed out of 200 respondents on the issue of frequency rate of reporting pipeline fire disasters in the two communities of Onicha Amiyi-Uhu and Jesse, 133 of the respondents, acknowledged that the rate of reporting the issue had been frequent and they had adequate knowledge of this high rate of reporting. These 133 respondents constituted 67% of the whole sampled population, which is very reasonable.

Secondly, 42 respondents also accepted had some knowledge of the high frequency rate of reporting, which constituted another reasonable 21 percent of the sampled population. What this means is that N.T.A. did not shirk its responsibility to society as a medium that should inform society of development or situation happening in it, or as a watchdog of the society. Beside the 6 persons that the researcher interviewed in both Jesse and Onicha Amiyi accepted the news on pipeline frequency showed by NTA.

Research Question Two: What was NTA'S point of emphasis in their reporting of pipeline vandalism?

The solution to answering the above stated research question could be gleamed from table IX where a total of 108 respondents out of 200 respondents accepted that the news package with the gory pictures in them was convincing. The number constituted 54 percent of those sampled who claimed that the news had a balanced perspective in its reportage.

Beside, the NTA reporter in Abia State, Chinedu Obike who covered the Onicha Amiyi-Uhu fire disaster also insisted that his station gave the coverage a balanced news report. During interview by the researcher, he claimed that no aspect of the news was doctored, that the news was balanced to reflect the issues at stake.

Research Question Three: To what extent did vandalism news report reflect balance?

The answer to this question could be seen from Table II, Table XI and the statement made by six persons interviewed in the two states of Abia and Delta by the researcher. Table 4 in this chapter of the research work shows that NTA in the two communities of Onicha and Jesse reported more neutral items than favourable and unfavourable items. NTA reported a total of 32 neutral news items out of a total of 35 news items, representing the sum of 78% of the total number of the items. This is quite impressive. It means that there was no deliberate attempt to slant or skew the news to favour any side in reporting of vandalized oil pipelines.

In Table XII, 138 respondents, out of 200 respondents accepted that the vandalism news report reflected balanced report. Thus, 138 respondents represented a total of 68% of the total sampled population. This number is reasonable enough to make the assumption that the news report indeed was balanced and not manipulated. Beside, the six persons interviewed by the researchers also accepted that NTA gave a balanced report on the vandalism as the pictures with its gory details of charred bodies, burnt farmlands and polluted streams were well depicted by NTA in their different news reports.

Research Question Four: What was the influence of governments on the coverage of the issue?

The findings show that though federal government owned and funded NTA's in Nigeria, ownership had little or no impact on the coverage of pipeline vandalism as NTA's reported more neutral items than favourable or unfavourable items. Table IV shows neutral items reported by NTA to be in the region of 78%. Supporting this assertion of government not having a hand in the report, NTA's reporter who covered the Onicha Amiyi-Uhu's fire disaster, Chinedu Obike asserts that NTA as a corporate responsible body has a social responsibility of reporting issues and events happening in its host community which is why it was set up in the first place.

Research Question Five: Given the frequency of reporting, do you expect positive response from government in terms of arresting environmental degradations?

In answering this question, I will use data from table I, table X and opinions from the 6 persons interviewed in Onicha Amiyi-Uhu and Jesse to substantiate my claim. Table I shows NTA in the two towns reporting a total of 35 times or one hundred percent on the incidents of pipeline vandalism. In the report, NTA detailed everything that happened with graphic representations of destroyed farmlands, burnt bodies etc. It is this kind of picture in the United States of America in the early 60's that made president John Kennedy to abolish slavery and segregation, when U.S.A national television service showed riot policemen beating helpless, non-retaliating

citizens who were protesting discrimination in the United States. No responsible government, after watching the effect of inferno from vandalized pipeline, will not react to put up necessary policies and infrastructures to arrest the situation. In table X, 145 respondents or 72 percent of the respondents want reaction from government both in terms of arresting environmental degradation, which entails calling oil exploration and prospecting companies to order by enacting reasonable policies that will protect the environment and at the same time, providing the necessary facilities that will help maintain good environment.

From the interviewees, came the report that the government should be up and doing with the necessary legislation to arrest some ugly developments in their states.

Summary of Findings

The following findings were attained:

- (1) The study shows that NTA in Delta State reported more stories on pipeline vandalism than in Onicha Amiyi-Uhu
- (2) In the opinion of respondents, NTA gave adequate coverage to the issue of pipeline vandalism and they were fair in their presentation.
- (3) Nigerian citizens showed adequate knowledge of issues of pipeline vandalism which came from their responses in the questionnaires and personal interviews. It is an indication of importance the citizens attached to the issue of pipeline vandalism. From their response, it was gathered that provision of essential infrastructures in these towns will reduce militancy and youth restiveness.
- (4) NTA in both Jesse and Onicha gave the issue of pipeline vandalism prominence because many of the stories were reported during prime time news and late night news. Prime time news items are usually regarded as more important than late night news because most people are still awake.
- (5) The study helped to highlight the enormous carnage, loss of property experienced by Nigerians which could have been prevented to the over-all good of our socio-economic growth.

Recommendations

For an effective coverage or reporting of serious events, like vandalism of oil pipelines and its reduction or even cessation, the following ideas are recommended:

- (i) Enough publicity should be given to developing issues, like the issue of vandalism of pipelines; such publicity agents as radio, television, newspapers, town criers etc need be engaged to detail the consequences of vandalizing pipelines.
- (ii) The production of programs in our mother tongue should be encouraged by NTA so as to accommodate viewers who are not literate in English to embrace a developing issue and possibly to warn them ahead of any consequence that the issue might develop in the near future.

- (iii) The press should heighten the agitation against corruption by politicians and government officials. It is a known fact that display of ill-gotten wealth by politicians helps trigger the urge to acquire illegal wealth by other citizens.
- (iv) The press should be up to their responsibility in raising awareness and insisting on immediate intervention by officials of NNPC to leaking pipelines.
- (v) There should be improved surveillance or installation and introduction of aerial/satellite monitoring of oil installations.
- (vi) As the fourth estate of the realm, the researcher wants the press to insist that every oil prospecting, and exploration company should conduct a thorough environmental impact assessment exercise on the required areas of land that will be explored. The implication of the environmental impact assessment is to guard against natural disasters in the near future.
- (vii) The NTA should keep on reporting the feelings, reactions and views of Niger Delta indigenes on the issue of neglect and marginalization, having it in mind that they complain ceaselessly that crude oil is taken from their backyard; still, their places remain underdeveloped; Where as, some other parts of the country without oil are better developed. The reportage is meant to elicit positive response from the government.
- (viii) With graphic details shown by N.T.A. in its coverage of the events, it is expected that a responsible government will address issues raised in its report like environmental degradations.

Conclusion

From the data presented and analyzed, the researcher arrived at the following conclusions:

1. NTA was fair and balanced in the reporting of the events.
2. There was sufficient response from viewers which came in the form of response from questionnaires and interviews.
3. People became aware of the danger inherent in oil pipeline vandalism.
4. Loss of life and property could be reduced to the barest minimum if government shows enough interest and will to issues of welfare of its citizens.

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