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A BASELINE STUDY ON **MEDIA COVERAGE OF INEQUALITY ISSUES IN GHANA**

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**A BASELINE STUDY ON
THE MEDIA COVERAGE OF INEQUALITY ISSUES IN
GHANA**

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Executive Summary

Ghana has been noted for democratic stability, peace and steady economic growth. The country has recorded significant progress in poverty reduction and economic development in the last two decades. The World Bank, the African Development Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the Brookings Institution in recent reviews have identified Ghana as one of the potential fastest growing economies in the world in 2018. With a projected growth rate between 8.3 and 8.9, the country is set to outpace most of the thriving economies in the West and Asia.

Despite these remarkable developments, there exist grave inequalities in Ghana. There are high poverty levels, low income levels, low infrastructure, limited access to education, health care and safe drinking water among large sections of the citizenry. The country's development is not evenly distributed and equally shared among all residents.

The media is noted to have the ability to contribute to the reduction of inequality in society. Through its functional roles of informing and educating, the media is able to expose the inequalities in a country and bring to the attention of duty bearers the disparities existing in the living standards of citizens.

It is in this context that the Media Foundation for West Africa (MFWA) conducted a baseline study to measure the media's coverage of inequality issues in Ghana. The study employed a quantitative content analysis methodology; and purposively selected 22 influential media outlets in Ghana. The media's content was coded, basing on variables of frequency of coverage of inequality issues, kinds of inequality issues covered, mode of generation of stories, prominence given to the stories and framing of stories, for nearly half a month.

The study found that the media gives only 12% coverage to inequality issues in Ghana. Thus, across the 22 media outlets, 783 stories focused on inequalities out of a total of 6,477 stories monitored. It was also observed the media's attention is largely focused on social inequalities overlooking other forms like economic and political inequalities among citizens.

Moreover, 68% of the stories that focused on inequalities were generated through already made or routine news sources such as coverage of press conferences and events, as against enterprising means of generating stories. This indicates the media's lackluster commitment to the coverage of inequality issues. The study further found that 6 out of 10 of the stories on inequality were framed episodically. Thus, majority of the stories were treated as single, isolated incidents of inequality rather than being part of a bigger or broader issue of widespread inequality.

It is, therefore, recommended that, given the gap in inequality reporting as observed through the study, journalists and editors are trained to increase their knowledge on inequality issues and also equipped with the requisite skills to report inequalities for impact and policy redress.

Chapter One

Introduction

Background

Ghana has made considerable progress in poverty reduction and economic growth in the last two decades. The country has on average experienced a steadily rising economic growth since 2005, culminating in the attainment of a lower-middle income status in 2010. Successive national representative living standards surveys conducted between 1992 and 2013 suggest that monetary poverty has significantly reduced—from 51.7% to 24.2%. Thus, Ghana has achieved the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) 1 of halving extreme poverty.

According to the Ghana Millennium Development Goal (MDG) 2015 report, the country has halved the proportion of people without access to safe drinking water (MDG 7B), and have attained universal primary education (MDG 2A) and gender parity in primary school (MDG 3). Moreover, significant progress has been made in reducing HIV prevalence (MDG 6C), reducing the proportion of people suffering from hunger and increasing access to Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) (MDG 8F).

There is, notwithstanding these substantial progress, momentous inequality present in Ghana. There remain substantial disparities in poverty levels. With the Gini index—a measure of statistical dispersion intended to represent the income or wealth distribution of a nation's residents—rising from 37% in 1992 to 42.3% in 2013, the Ghana Poverty and Inequality report of 2016 noted that, “as growth has accelerated, inequality has worsened.” Additionally, a critical examination of the progress of the country beyond the national levels reveals that the improvements over the years have not been evenly distributed across regions, localities and other dimensions of inequality such as gender, children, youth, disabilities etc.

The recent Ghana living standards survey indicate inequality across many levels. For instance, in education, a higher proportion of females (24.3%) have never been to school compared to males (14.6%) and, in housing, less than 50% of the rural population have electricity as the main source of lighting whiles nearly 90% urban households have electricity.

Households in urban areas have a much lower average rate of poverty than those in rural areas—10.6% versus 37.9%. The Northern, Upper East, and Upper West regions continue to have the

highest poverty rates at the regional levels, with Upper West being the poorest and Northern region having the largest number of poor people of any of Ghana's ten regions—about 1.3 million.

Studies suggest that rising inequality have a range of negative impacts on a country's development, political and economic stability and, particularly, on economic growth. Sustained poverty reduction therefore requires a commitment to reducing inequality and improving access to opportunities for all citizens.

The media play an important role in drawing attention to social issues such as inequality. The gate keeping role of the media and its ability to influence what people think about and how they react to issues has long been established. Through agenda setting and framing, the media is able to bring out the salience and impact of issues and subsequently inform policy action.

The media's coverage of inequality issues is particularly important because it has a bearing on economic growth, social cohesion, inclusiveness and human development. These benefits can only be derived on the condition that the Ghanaian media demonstrates immense commitment to inequality through continuous coverage. The interest of the media in the coverage of inequality issues in Ghana however, remain undetermined as there is a lack of empirical evidence.

This study therefore examines how the media frequently reports on inequalities. It assesses the extent and quality of media coverage of inequalities issues in Ghana.

Objectives

The study sought to find out the media's coverage of inequality issues in the Ghana. The specific objectives that underpinned the study were:

1. To examine the frequency of coverage of inequality issues in the media
2. To identify the forms of inequality issues covered in the media
3. To identify the dominant frames used in the coverage of inequality issues in the media.

Chapter Two

Methodology

This chapter details a step-by-step approach used in designing, gathering and analysing the relevant data for the study.

Research Design

The study used a quantitative method content analysis to examine the frequency of the media's coverage of inequality issues, forms of inequality issues reported and the dominant frames used in covering inequality issues.

Sampling Procedure

The study purposively sampled 22 media outlets representing the four main mass media (Radio, TV, Print and online) in Ghana. Four radio stations, four TV stations, four news websites and 10 newspapers were selected. The selection of these media outlets was guided by the following factors:

- Outlets with wide reach
- Outlets with high audience market share
- Outlets involved in political/national issues/current affairs reportage/programming.
- Ownership of the media (covering both private and public owners).

The following media outlets were therefore selected for the study:

TV- **Ghana Television (GTV), United Television (UTV), TV3 and GH One.**

Radio- **Joy FM, Citi FM, Peace FM and Adom FM.**

Newspaper- **Daily Graphic, Daily Guide, Ghanaian Times, Daily Dispatch, Chronicle, Finder, New Crusading Guide, Daily Searchlight, Today and Daily Heritage.**

Online- **Myjoyonline.com, Citifmonline.com, Ghanaweb.com and Peacefmonline.com.**

The sample also consisted of two weeks (5th March-17th March 2018) of editorial content from the selected media (See Table 1 for the programmes monitored).

Universe and Sample

The study focused on a census of all the editorial content, news, talk shows and current affairs programmes of the selected media outlets for the period of monitoring. It is established that the ideal sampling technique to use in content analysis is a census, since it allows for all the texts,

content, related to the variable of significance to be included in the analysis. Focus was thus placed on the following:

- Newspaper (all editorial content)
- TV (News, morning talk shows, current affairs programmes)
- Radio (News, morning talk shows, current affairs programmes)
- Online/Websites (all editorial content)

Coding

Trained research assistants were assigned to do live coding of data for the broadcast media while the print and online content was coded upon publication. Assistants used a comprehensive coding guide in which each variable had been clearly explained and its various categories detailed for ease of identification.

Data Analysis

The information gathered and coded into the coding system were entered into the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) computer software for analysis. This software was used to analyse the results of the study. The results were presented in tables, bars, and pie charts. Statistical tests and cross tabulations were done where necessary to effectively respond to the research questions raised in the study. Percentages and frequencies were used to describe the results obtained.

Table 1: Media Outlets and Programmes Monitored

Medium	Organization	Content to analyze
Newspaper		
Daily Graphic		All editorial content
Daily Guide		All editorial content
Ghanaian Times		All editorial content
Chronicle		All editorial content
The Finder		All editorial content
Daily Searchlight		All editorial content
Today		All editorial content
Daily Heritage		All editorial content
New Crusading Guide		All editorial content
Daily Dispatch		All editorial content
Online		
Citifmonline.com		All editorial content
Myjoyonline.com		All editorial content
Ghanaweb.com		All editorial content
Peacefmonline.com		All editorial content
Radio		
Citi FM		Citi CBS (morning) Mid-day news Eye witness news

	Point Blank The Big issue (Saturdays)
Joy FM	Super Morning Show Mid-Day news News Nite News File Sunday Edition
Peace FM	Kokrokoo Premo ato (noon news) Evening news (nnɔ n nsea kaseɔɔ) Saturday morning Hello FM show (Akoko abɔ n) The platform (Mon, Wed)
Adom FM	Dwa so nsem (morning) Kase3bo is tasty (mid-day) Naket kase3bo (evening news) Burning issues(Mon, Wed)
Television	
TV3	New day (morning including Saturdays) Mid-day news News 360 Agenda (Sundays)
UTV	Morning show Saturday morning show Mid-day news Evening news
GTV	Breakfast show (morning) Mid-day news Evening News Talking Point (Sundays)
GH One	GH Today Mid-day news Evening news State of the Nation

Category Definitions

The monitoring exercise was aimed at examining the visibility of inequality issues in the media, forms of inequality issues reported and the dominant frames used in covering inequality issues.

Inequality can be identified as the measurement of imbalance or unequal distribution in a system, which may be social, economic, political, diversity, etc. The 2014 Ghana Inequality Country Report noted three main forms of inequality in Ghana. Thus, there are mainly economic, social and political representation inequality. These forms of inequalities further have with various dimensions such as

gender, disabilities and space (location). Specifically, the following concepts and terms were identified and operationalised in the study:

Economic Inequality: This was identified as income inequality, wealth inequality, consumption inequality, employment inequality, gender and economic inequality, gender and asset ownership inequality, regional income inequality, etc.

Social Inequality: This was identified as education inequality, health inequality, sanitation inequality, infrastructure and rural inequality, gender-based violence etc.

Inequality in Political Representation: Inequality in gender representation in politics, inequality in spatial representation in politics, inequality in people with disabilities (PWDs) representation in politics etc.

Source of the story/Mode of generation: How the reporter/writer seemed to have gotten the information in doing the story. They include:

Routine: Already-made news e.g. press releases, coverage of press conferences, news agency, intermedia etc.

Enterprise: Story from journalists' own initiative through interviews and other investigative means.

Other: Stories that cannot be clearly classified under any of the formats of news identified above.

Placement: The prominence given to a story depending on the page it was published in or whether it was a headline story.

Story Format: The format used to present the story. They include:

Straight news: A news article presented in an inverted pyramid style. These stories answer the question of who, when, what, why, where and how (5Ws and H) questions. They are often straightforward reporting of the events of the story without any attempt to provide context or links to the big picture issues they bring up.

Feature: These are critical stories that often has a personal slant and written in individual style. They are sometimes clearly labelled as feature stories. They usually attempt to add more depth to the story by going beyond what happened to include in-depth background and context.

Editorial: The newspaper's position on an issue.

Other: Articles that cannot be clearly classified under any of the formats of news identified above.

Story Focus: It examines whether the story focuses on inequality. It includes:

Primary: The article principally focuses on inequality. The gist of the article essentially indicate a form inequality between the subject(s) of the story.

Secondary: The story treats inequality is a parallel issue; a cause or effect of the article's main focus.

Tertiary: Inequality is mentioned in passing, not fully addressed or given attention to.

Generic Frames: Looks at how news articles or stories were presented. Framing constitute how news stories are organised, defined and structured. It shows how a writer, journalist or media organisation interpret and construct reality to audience. Stories can be presented in episodic or thematic frame and responsibility frames.

Episodic Frame: Stories with little background information. Usually the writer or journalist presents the story as a single, isolated event.

Thematic Frame: Stories placed in a context with enough background information. Usually the writer or journalist presents the story as a part of or a manifestation of broader issue.

Responsibility Frame: Stories lay responsibility to certain subjects presented within the coverage. A responsibility frame can either be a causal or treatment responsibility.

Causal Responsibility Frame: This frame seeks to identify where the media assigned the cause of the inequality problem. This includes:

Individual Responsibility: where the blame is placed on the individual.

Societal Responsibility: where the responsibility is placed on the society in which the individual lives.

Political/Government Responsibility: where the responsibility is placed on political decisions or indecisions.

Economic/Business Responsibility: where the responsibility is placed on economic activities.

Fatalistic Responsibility: where the responsibility was placed on an invisible cause.

Treatment Responsibility Frame: This frame explores who was identified in the inequality stories as responsible for treatment. This include

Individual Responsibility: Problem should be solved by individual.

Social Responsibility: Problem should be solved by society.

Government/Political Responsibility: Problem should be solved by government.

Economic/Business Responsibility: Problem should be solved by businesses.

Problem cannot be solved/ is inevitable: Result of human nature/condition and other.

Problem should not be solved/is not a problem: Problem does not really exist, it is a good thing and other.

Chapter Three

Findings

How frequent are inequality issues covered in the media?

Table 2: Frequency of Inequality Coverage

Subject	TV		Online		Radio		Newspaper	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Not related to inequality	1034	85.7%	1492	85.9%	1275	84%	1894	93.6%
Primary	71	5.9%	110	6.6%	119	7.8%	61	3%
Secondary	69	5.7%	63	3.6%	67	4.4%	48	2.4%
Tertiary	32	2.7%	67	3.9%	56	3.7%	20	1%
Total	1206	100%	1736	100%	1516	100%	2023	100%

Source: MFWA, 2018 Field Data

The study sought to find out the volume of coverage on inequality issues in the media. Across the four selected TV stations, a total of 1206 stories were broadcast in news bulletins and discussed on talk shows. Only 172 (14.3%)—a summation of stories with primary, secondary and tertiary focus—of the stories focused on inequalities, and 5.7% (69) of these inequality stories had a secondary focus on inequality.

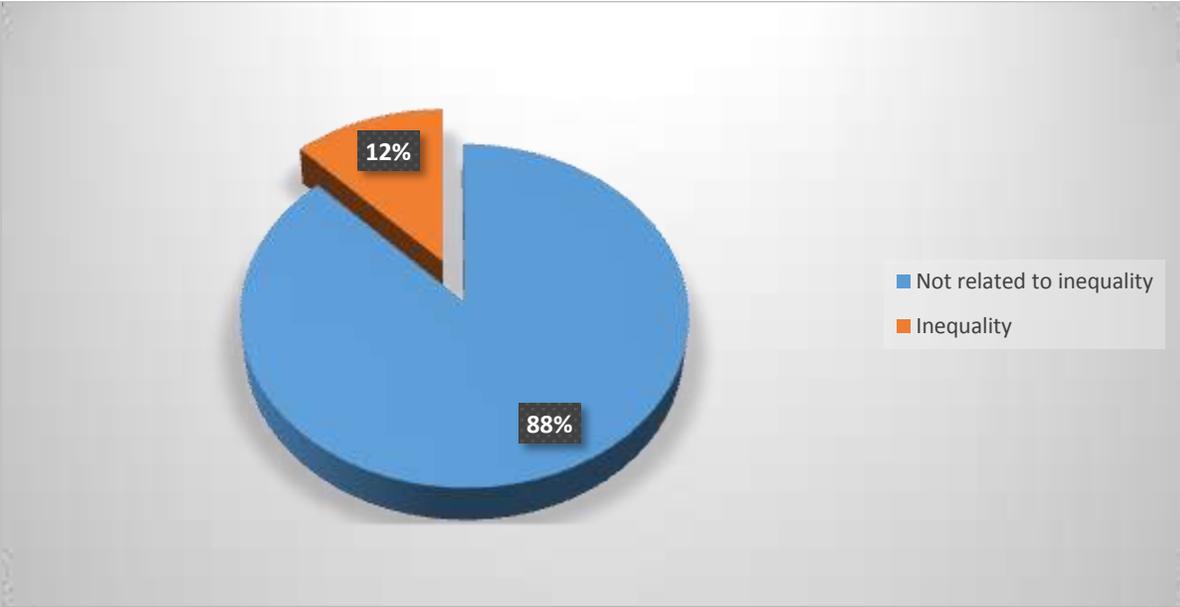
The frequency of the coverage inches up on radio with 241 (16%) inequality stories out of 1,516 stories. Nonetheless, the paltry frequency of inequalities in both broadcast media, the coverage on radio gave more primary focus (7.8%) to the inequality stories than TV (5.9%).

The picture in the news website (online) doesn't look any much better as 85.9% (1,492 out of 1,736) of the stories were not related to inequalities. Thus, only 14.1% of the stories focused on inequalities, which is higher than TV.

The newspapers showed the lowest coverage of inequalities issues. Among the 10 newspapers monitored within the period, with 2,023 total of editorial content, less than 1 out 10 of these stories focused on inequalities.

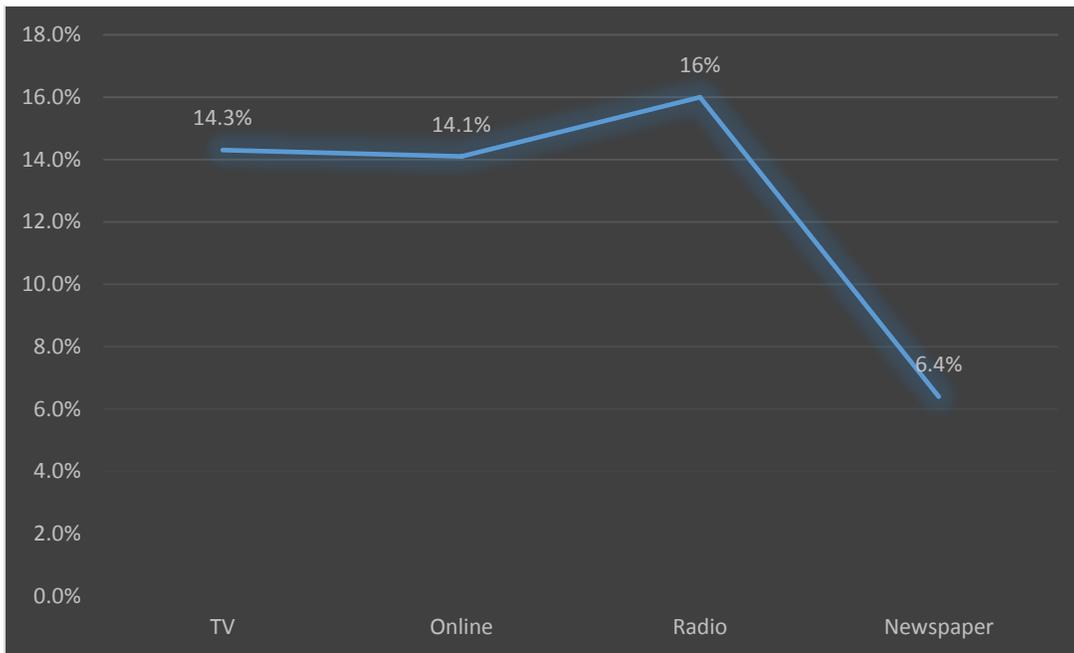
Notwithstanding the significantly low coverage of inequality issues, when the media focuses on reporting them, they seem to cover with a primary focus rather than secondary or tertiary, with the exception of TV. Thus, 50% (360 out 783) of the inequality stories had a primary focus.

Figure 1: Coverage of Inequalities



In all, across the 22 media outlets, a total of 6,477 stories were monitored, and only 783 (12%) focused on inequality. While it is admitted that the media have a gamut of issues to cover, given the importance of inequality issues to the economic growth, human development and inclusiveness in the country, the frequency of the coverage is gravely low.

Figure 2: Average of Inequality Coverage Per Medium



Source: MFWA Field Data, 2018

What forms of inequality do the media cover?

Table 3: Forms of Inequalities Covered

Forms of Inequality	Radio		TV		Newspaper		Online	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Not related to inequality	1275	84%	1034	85.7%	1894	93.6%	1492	85.9%
Economic	76	5%	53	4.4%	16	.8%	85	4.9%
Social	96	6%	86	7.1%	71	3.5%	129	6.9%
Political Representation	30	2%	22	1.8%	10	.5%	27	1.6%
Combination	39	3%	11	0.9%	28	1.4	12	.7%
Total	1516	100%	1206	100%	2023	100%	1736	100%

Source: MFWA Field Data, 2018

Table 3 shows that the selected media outlets covered more social inequalities than any other form of inequality. TV and Radio led the pack with 7.1% and 6% coverage of social inequalities respectively. The online news portals also had almost half (6.9% out 14.1%) of the inequalities stories covered on social inequalities. The coverage moved a notch higher in the newspapers, as

more than half (3.5% out 6.4%) of the inequality stories were on social inequalities. Economic inequality (29.3%) and a combination of any of the forms of inequality (11.5%) followed as the next forms of inequality stories covered. Inequality in political representation (11.4%) was the least covered form of inequality among the media.

How much prominence do the media give to inequality issues?

Beyond finding out the frequency of coverage of inequality issues, the study sought to examine the prominence the media gave to the inequality issues they covered within the period. To examine prominence, the study focused on the placement of the inequality stories in the various publications and programming of the selected media outlets.

Table 4: Comparing Story Focus and Story Placement

Story Placement			Story Focus			Total
			Primary	Secondary	Tertiary	
Radio News	Is it a headline story	Yes	61 (48%)	40 (31.5%)	26 (20.5%)	127 (100%)
		No	27 (54%)	7 (14%)	16 (32%)	50 (100%)
		Total	88 (49.7%)	47 (26.6%)	42 (23.7%)	177 (100%)
TV News	Is it a headline story	Yes	14 (26.9%)	31 (59.6%)	7 (13.5%)	52 (100%)
		No	40 (50%)	27 (33.8%)	13 (16.3%)	80 (100%)
		Total	54 (40.9%)	58 (43.9%)	20 (15.2%)	132 (100%)
Online	Is it a front page story	Yes	44 (31.4%)	36 (25.7%)	60 (42.9%)	140 (100%)
		No	70 (67.3%)	27 (26%)	7 (6.7%)	104 (100%)
		Total	114 (46.7%)	63 (25.8%)	67 (27.5%)	244 (100%)
Newspaper	On which page does the story appear	Front	6 (54.5%)	4 (36.4%)	1 (9.1%)	11(100%)
		Centre	10 (43.5%)	8 (34.8%)	5 (21.7%)	23 (100%)
		Back	3 (100%)	--	--	3(100%)
		Other	42 (45.7%)	36 (39.1%)	14(15.2%)	92 (100%)
		Total	61 (47.3%)	48 (37.2%)	20 (15.5%)	129 (100%)

Source: MFWA Field Data, 2018

From the Table 4 above, radio news placed much prominence on inequality issues, as 71.8% (127 out 177) of inequality stories covered appeared in the headlines during the news bulletins. The situation differs in TV news bulletins. More than half (60.6%; 80 out 132) of the inequalities stories

covered were not in the headlines. The analysis leaves out the broadcast talk shows because they often do not attempt to enforce prominence in the positional presentations of discussion topics.

News websites (online) also hosted a considerable number of the inequality stories covered on the front pages of the websites. Nearly 6 out 10 (140 out 244) of inequality stories were on the front page.

The prominent pages in a newspaper are the front, centre spread and back pages in descending order. Thus a story on front page is deemed more important to a media house than one in any other page. Among the 10 newspapers selected, prominence of inequality stories were very low. About 72% (90 out 129) of the stories appeared in other pages—other than the front, centre spread or back page. Only 8.5% (11) of inequality appeared on the front page, the most important page in a newspaper. The remaining stories were either in the centre spread or back pages of the newspapers.

Who is covering inequalities?

The study sought to separate the mass media forms to assess the commitment of the different media organisations to the coverage of inequality. The analysis is therefore made with the averages of the frequencies of the stories that focused on inequalities only.

Newspapers

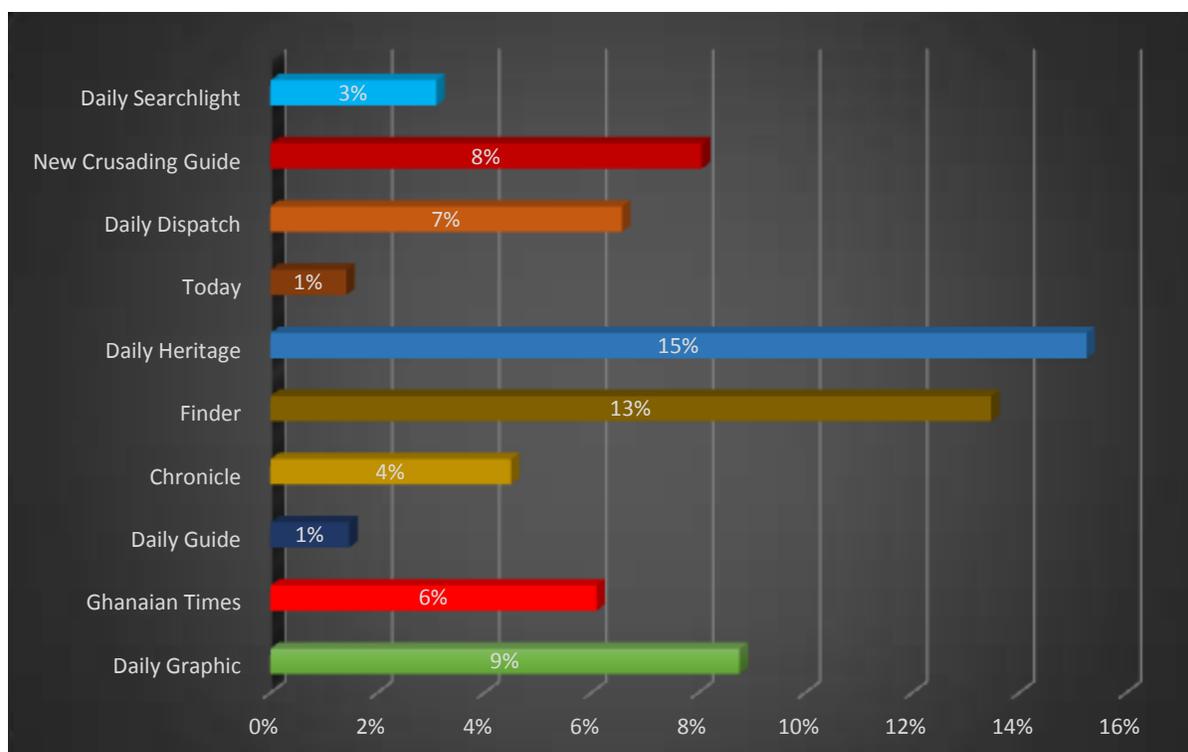
Table 5: Newspapers coverage of Inequality

Newspaper	Story Focus				Total
	Not related to inequality	Primary	Secondary	Tertiary	
Daily Graphic	312 (91.2%)	12 (3.5%)	14 (4.1%)	4 (1.2%)	342 (100%)
Ghanaian Times	231 (93.9%)	9 (3.7%)	5 (2%)	1 (0.4%)	246 (100%)
Daily Guide	268 (98.5%)	1 (0.4%)	2 (0.7%)	1 (0.4%)	272 (100%)
The Chronicle	85 (95.5%)	3 (3.4%)	1 (1.1%)	--	89 (100%)
The Finder	122 (86.5%)	10 (7.1%)	5 (3.5%)	4 (2.8%)	141 (100%)
Daily Heritage	161 (84.7%)	16 (8.4%)	12 (6.3%)	1(0.5%)	190 (100%)
Today	348 (98.6%)	4 (1.1%)	1 (0.3%)	--	353(100%)
Daily Dispatch	128 (93.4%)	3 (2.2%)	3 (2.2%)	3 (2.2%)	137 (100%)
New Crusading Guide	114 (91.9%)	1 (0.8%)	3 (2.4%)	6 (4.8%)	124 (100%)
Daily Searchlight	125(96.9%)	2 (1.6%)	2 (1.6%)	--	129 (100%)
Total	1894 (93.6%)	61 (3%)	48 (2.4%)	20 (1%)	2023 (100%)

Source: MFWA Field Data, 2018

From Figure 3 below, considering only the quantity of stories that focused on inequality over the total number of stories monitored for each newspaper (average), Daily Heritage led the pack with an average of 15% (29 out 190). This was followed by The Finder and Daily Graphic Newspapers with 13% (19 out 141) and 9% (30 out 342) respectively. Daily Guide, Today and Daily Searchlight were the three newspapers with the least average in the frequency of inequality coverage.

Figure 3: Average of Inequality Coverage Per Newspaper



Online

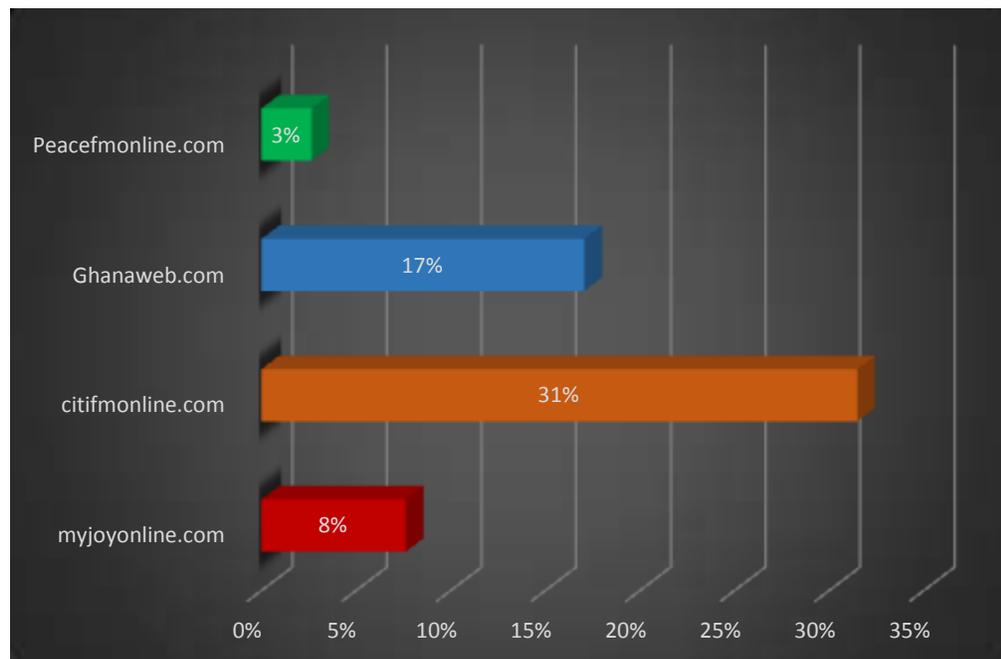
Table 6: News Websites Coverage of Inequality

News Website	Focus on Inequality				Total
	Not related to inequality	Primary	Secondary	Tertiary	
Myjoyonline.com	411 (92.4%)	20 (4.5%)	9(2%)	5 (1.1%)	445 (100%)
Citifmonline.com	261 (68.5%)	33 (8.7%)	31 (8.1%)	52 (13.6%)	381 (100%)
Ghanaweb.com	379 (82.9%)	54 (11.8%)	23 (5%)	1 (0.2%)	457 (100%)
Peacefmonline.com	441 (97.4%)	7 (1.5%)	--	5 (1.1%)	453 (100%)
Total	1492 (85.9%)	114 (6.6%)	63 (3.6%)	67 (3.9%)	1736 (100%)

Source: MFWA Field Data, 2018

From the Figure below 4, among the four news websites, citifmonline.com leads in the coverage of inequalities with a 31% (120 out 381) average. Ghanaweb.com, mjoyonline.com and peacefmonline.com followed with 17% (78 out 457), 8% (34 out 445) and 3% (12 out 453) respectively.

Figure 4: Average of Inequality Coverage per News Website



Radio

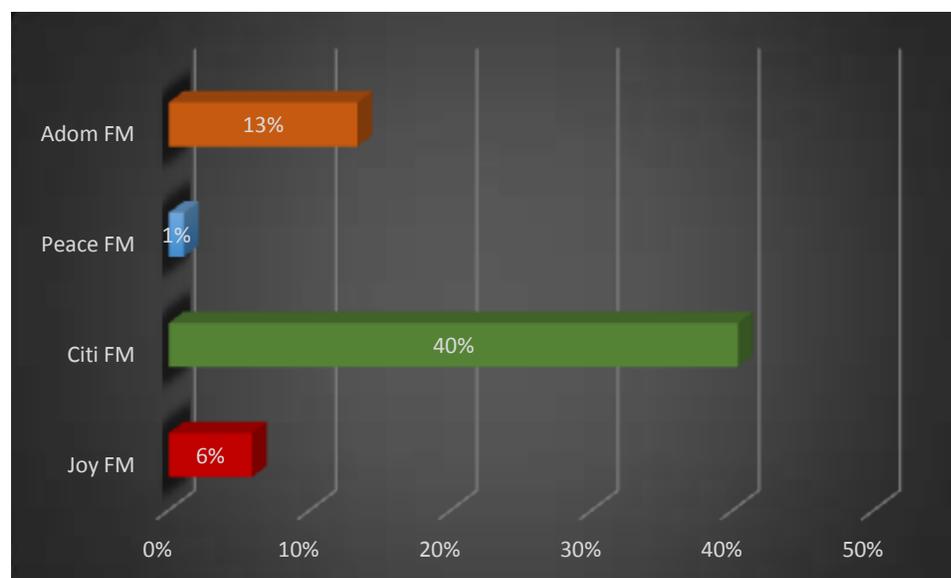
Table 7: Radio Coverage of Inequality

Radio	Focus on Inequality				Total
	Not related to inequality	Primary	Secondary	Tertiary	
Joy FM	431 (94.1%)	16 (3.5%)	8 (1.7%)	3 (0.7%)	458 (100%)
Citi FM	258 (59.7%)	74 (17.1%)	52 (12%)	48 (11.1%)	432 (100%)
Peace FM	368 (98.9%)	2 (0.5%)	1(0.3%)	1 (0.3%)	372 (100%)
Adom FM	219 (86.2%)	24 (9.4%)	6 (2.4%)	4 (1.6%)	254 (100%)
Total	1275 (84.1%)	116 (7.7%)	67 (4.4%)	56 (3.7%)	1516 (100%)

Source: MFWA Field Data, 2018

From Figure 5 below, Citi FM led the in the coverage of inequalities in the summation of the talk shows and news bulletins of the radio stations with a 40% (174 out of 432) average. Adom Fm, Joy FM followed with 13% (34 out of 254) and 6% (27 out 458) respectively. Peace FM covered the least of inequality stories with 1% (4 out of 372).

Figure 5: Average of Inequality Coverage per Radio



TV

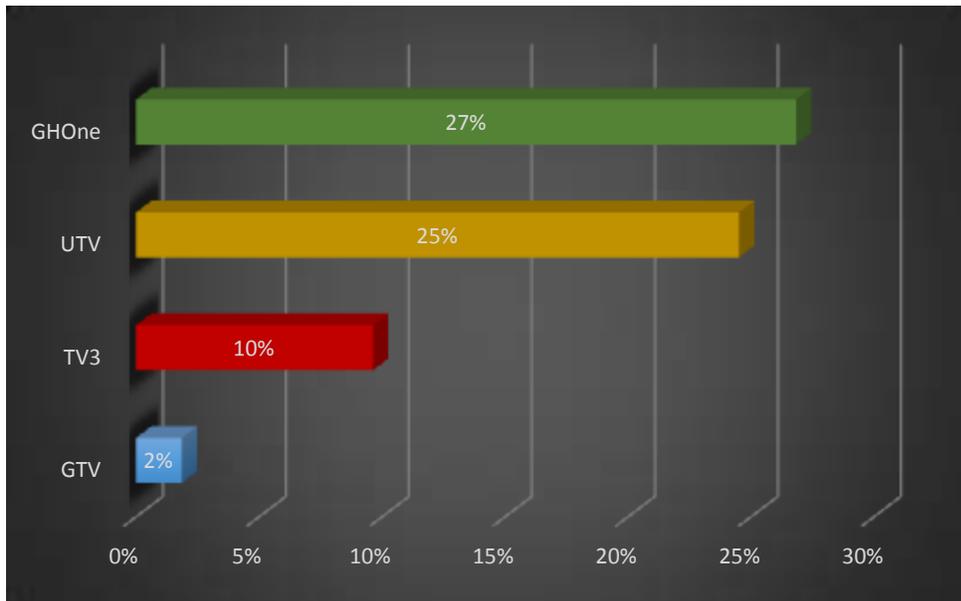
Table 8: TV Coverage of Inequality

TV	Story Focus				Total
	Not related to inequality	Primary	Secondary	Tertiary	
GTV	369 (36%)	1 (1%)	4 (6%)	2 (6%)	376 (31%)
TV3	272 (26%)	11 (15%)	7 (10%)	11 (35%)	301 (25%)
UTV	194 (19%)	37 (52%)	24 (34%)	2 (6%)	257 (21%)
GH One	199 (19%)	22 (31%)	35 (50%)	16 (52%)	272 (23%)
Total	1034 (100%)	71(100%)	70 (100%)	31 (100%)	1206(100%)

Source: MFWA Field Data, 2018

From Figure 6 below, the private-owned TV stations focused more on inequality coverage than the government-owned TV station. While the GH One and UTV led with 27% and 25% averages respectively, GTV trailed in the coverage with 2%.

Figure 6: Average of Inequality Coverage per TV



Mode of Generation of Stories and Presentation Format of Coverage

The study further sought to establish the extent of coverage or commitment of the media outlets in coverage of inequality. Variables like mode of generating/source of stories and presentation format which gauge commitment and the extent of story production were employed. For instance, the presentation of a story in a feature format may demand more time or space in the production of the story. It may also enjoin the reporter/writer to provide more background details, speak to more relevant sources and further discuss the subject matter thoroughly than presenting it in a straight news format. Also, when writers or reporters use enterprise to generate news, they are more likely to explore leads and access different angles to the story. Enterprise demonstrates the writer's commitment to generating the story contrasted from the routine way where stories are already made.

Mode of generation of Stories

Table 9: Comparing Mode of Generation and Inequality Coverage

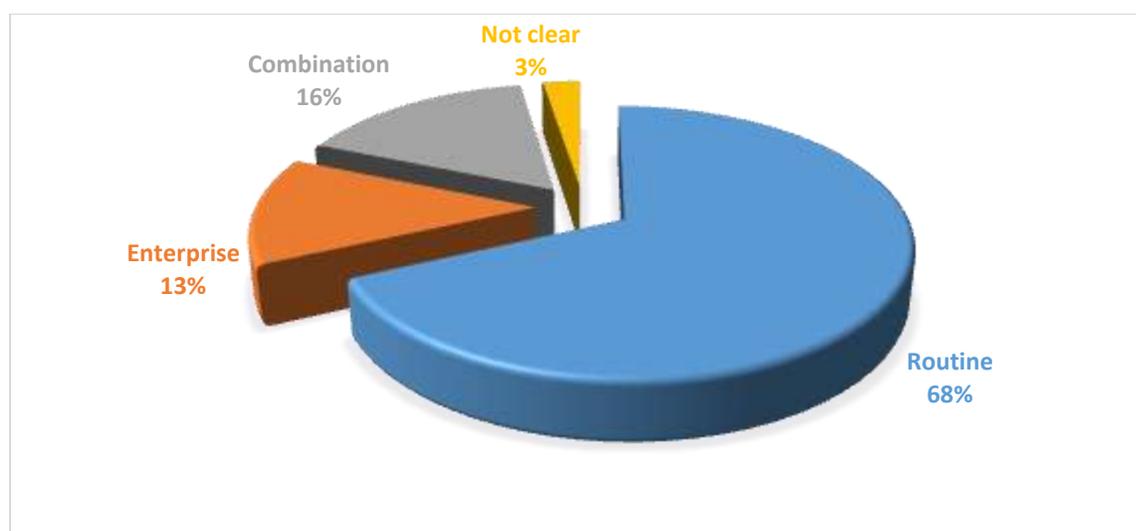
Mode of generation	Newspaper			Total (N, %)
	Primary (N, %)	Secondary (N, %)	Tertiary (N, %)	
Routine	52 (47.7%)	41 (37.6%)	16 (14.7%)	109 (100%)
Enterprise	3 (42.9%)	3 (42.9%)	1 (14.3%)	7 (100%)
Combination	4 (100%)	--	--	4 (100%)
Not clear	2 (22.2%)	4 (44.4%)	3 (33.3%)	9 (100%)
Total	61 (47.3%)	48 (37.2%)	20 (15.5%)	129 (100%)
	Online			
Routine	77 (46.7%)	37 (22.4%)	51 (30.9%)	165 (100%)
Enterprise	29 (85.3%)	4 (11.8%)	1 (2.9%)	34 (100%)
Combination	5 (13.5%)	17 (45.9%)	15 (40.5%)	37 (100%)
Not clear	3 (37.5%)	5 (62.5%)	--	8 (100%)
Total	114 (44.9%)	63 (24.8%)	77 (30.3%)	254 (100%)
	TV			
Routine	38 (52.1%)	25 (34.2%)	10 (13.7%)	73 (100%)
Enterprise	6 (24%)	17 (68%)	2 (8%)	25 (100%)
Combination	10 (29.4%)	16 (47.1%)	8 (23.5%)	34 (100%)
Total	54 (40.9%)	58 (43.9%)	20 (15.2%)	132 (100%)
	Radio			
Routine	53 (48.6%)	27 (24.8%)	29 (26.6%)	109 (100%)
Enterprise	14 (63.6%)	6 (27.3%)	2 (9.1%)	22 (100%)
Combination	13 (39.4%)	11 (33.3%)	9 (27.3%)	33 (100%)
Total	80 (48.8%)	44 (26.8%)	40 (24.4%)	164 (100%)

Source: MFWA Field Data, 2018

From Table 9 above, over 8 out of 10 (84.5%; 109 out 129) of the stories in the newspapers that focused on inequality, were generated in a routine format, with only 5% (7 out 129) of the stories produced through enterprise. A similar picture is painted on the news websites and radio with 65% (165 out of 254) and 66% (109 out 164) respectively generated through routine. The gap between enterprise and routine stories is however reduced on TV coverage, as 55% (73 out 132) of the stories were generated through both enterprise and combination of enterprise and routine. This clearly indicates that the commitment to the coverage of inequality when considering the mode of generation is very low.

At Figure 7 below, across all the media outlets, 68% of the stories were produced through routine. The remaining 32% were produced through enterprise, combination or were indeterminate.

Figure 7: Mode of generation of Inequality Stories



Presentation Format

Table 10: Presentation Format and Inequality Coverage

Format	Newspaper			Total (N, %)
	Primary (N, %)	Secondary (N, %)	Tertiary (N, %)	
Straight News	53 (86.9%)	37 (77.1%)	14 (70%)	104 (100%)
Feature	2 (3.3%)	5 (10.4%)	3 (15%)	10 (100%)
Letters, Opinions etc.	4 (6.6%)	1 (2.1%)	2 (10%)	7 (100%)
Editorial	2 (3.3%)	4 (8.3%)	1 (5%)	7 (100%)
Other	--	1 (2.1%)	--	1 (100%)
Total	61 (100%)	48 (100%)	20 (100%)	129 (100%)
	Online			
Straight News	67 (43.2%)	32 (20.6%)	56 (36.1%)	155 (100%)
Feature	37 (50%)	26 (35.1%)	11(14.9%)	74 (100%)
Letters, Opinions etc.	10 (66.7%)	5 (33.3%)	--	15 (100%)
Total	114 (44.9%)	63 (24.8%)	77 (30.3%)	254 (100%)
	TV			
Straight News	29 (38.7%)	36 (48%)	10 (13.3%)	75 (100%)
Feature	25 (43.9%)	22 (38.6%)	10 (17.5%)	57 (100%)
Total	54 (40.9%)	58 (43.9%)	20 (15.2%)	132 (100%)
	Radio			
Straight News	53 (47.3%)	26 (23.2%)	33 (29.5%)	112 (100%)
Feature	27 (51.9%)	18 (34.6%)	7 (13.5%)	52 (100%)
Total	80 (48.8%)	44 (26.8%)	40 (24.4%)	164 (100%)

Source: MFWA Field Data, 2018

From Table 10 above, straight news took the better part (446 out of 783, 66%) in the presentation of the inequality stories across all the four media forms. In the newspapers, 81% (104 out of 129) stories were presented in a straight news format. On the news websites (online), 61% (155 out of 254) of the stories were also presented in a straight news format. A similar picture continued on radio as 68% (112 out 164) of inequality stories were in straight news formats. The situation on TV presented a better picture. Although still lower than straight news, feature format (43%, 57 out 132) took a commendable part of the inequality story coverage when compared with the other media forms. Conclusively, there was low commitment to the coverage of the inequality issues.

Dominant Frames

As already explained in the concept definitions, framing constitute how news stories are organised, defined and structured. Media reports, through frames, give audiences cues as to how to understand the issues and direct them on which parts to focus on, which parts to ignore and how to evaluate the issues. The study sought to find out the generic frames the media outlets gave to inequality stories.

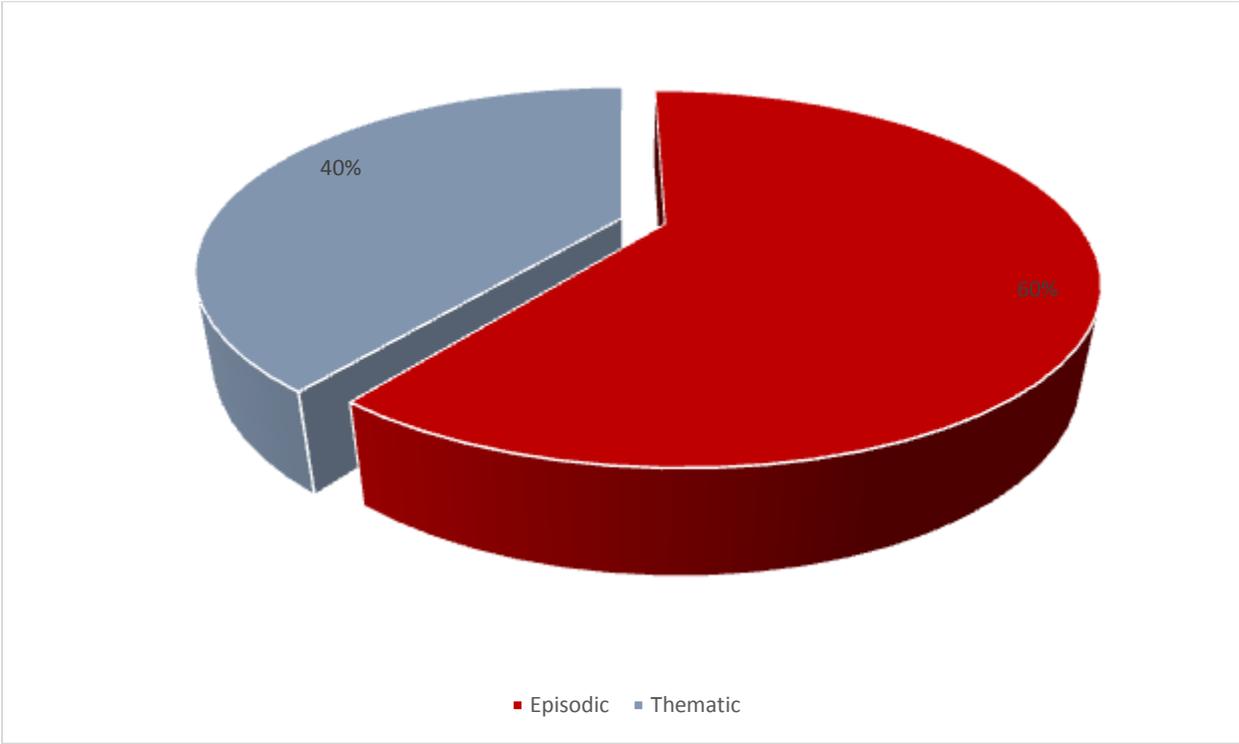
Table 11: Episodic and Thematic

	Episodic (N, %)	Thematic (N, %)	Total (N, %)		Episodic (N %)	Thematic (N %)	Total (N, %)
Daily Graphic	18 (60%)	12 (40%)	30 (100%)	Myjoyonline.com	21 (65.6%)	11 (34.4%)	32(100%)
Ghanaian Times	10 (66.7%)	5 (33.3%)	15 (100%)	Citifmonline.com	77 (62.1%)	47 (37.9%)	124(100%)
Daily Guide	3 (75%)	1 (25%)	4 (100%)	Ghanaweb.com	65 (82.3%)	14 (17.7%)	79(100%)
Chronicle	2 (50%)	2 (50%)	4 (100%)	Peacefmonline.com	8 (72.7%)	3 (27.3%)	11(100%)
Finder	8 (42.1%)	11 (57.9%)	19 (100%)	Total	168 (69.1%)	75 (30.9%)	243(100%)
Daily Heritage	24 (82.8%)	5 (17.2%)	29 (100%)	Radio			
Today	3 (60%)	2 (40%)	5 (100%)	Joy FM	19 (82.6%)	4(17.4%)	23 (100%)
Daily Dispatch	7 (77.8%)	2 (22.2%)	9 (100%)	Citi FM	73 (41.7%)	102 (58.3%)	175(100%)
New Crusading Guide	6 (75%)	2 (25%)	8 (100%)	Peace FM	3 (75%)	1(25%)	4(100%)
Daily Searchlight	1 (25%)	3 (75%)	4 (100%)	Adom FM	12 (52.2%)	11 (47.8%)	23(100%)
Total	82 (64.6%)	45 (35.4%)	127(100%)	Total	107(47.6%)	118 (52.4%)	225(100%)
TV							
GTV	8 (88.9%)	1 (11.1%)	9 (100%)				
TV3	13 (46.4%)	15 (53.6%)	28 (100%)				
UTV	55 (83.3%)	11 (16.7%)	66 (100%)				
GH One	34 (45.3%)	41 (54.7%)	75 (100%)				
Total	110 (61.8%)	68 (38.2%)	178 (100%)				

Source: MFWA Field Data, 2018

From Table 11 above, a bigger portion of the stories across all the media forms were presented in episodic frames. However, while almost all the media outlets used episodic frames more than thematic, The Finder newspaper and Citi FM differed. On Citi FM within the period of monitoring, 58.3% (102 out of 175) of the stories were framed in thematically whereas 57.9% (11 out of 19) of the stories were presented in thematic frames in The Finder. Altogether, 60% of the stories were presented in episodic frames (See Figure 8).

Figure 8: Episodic and Thematic Frames of Inequality Issues Covered



Causality Responsibility Frame

Table 12: Comparing Media and the Use of Causality Responsibility Frame in Inequality Coverage

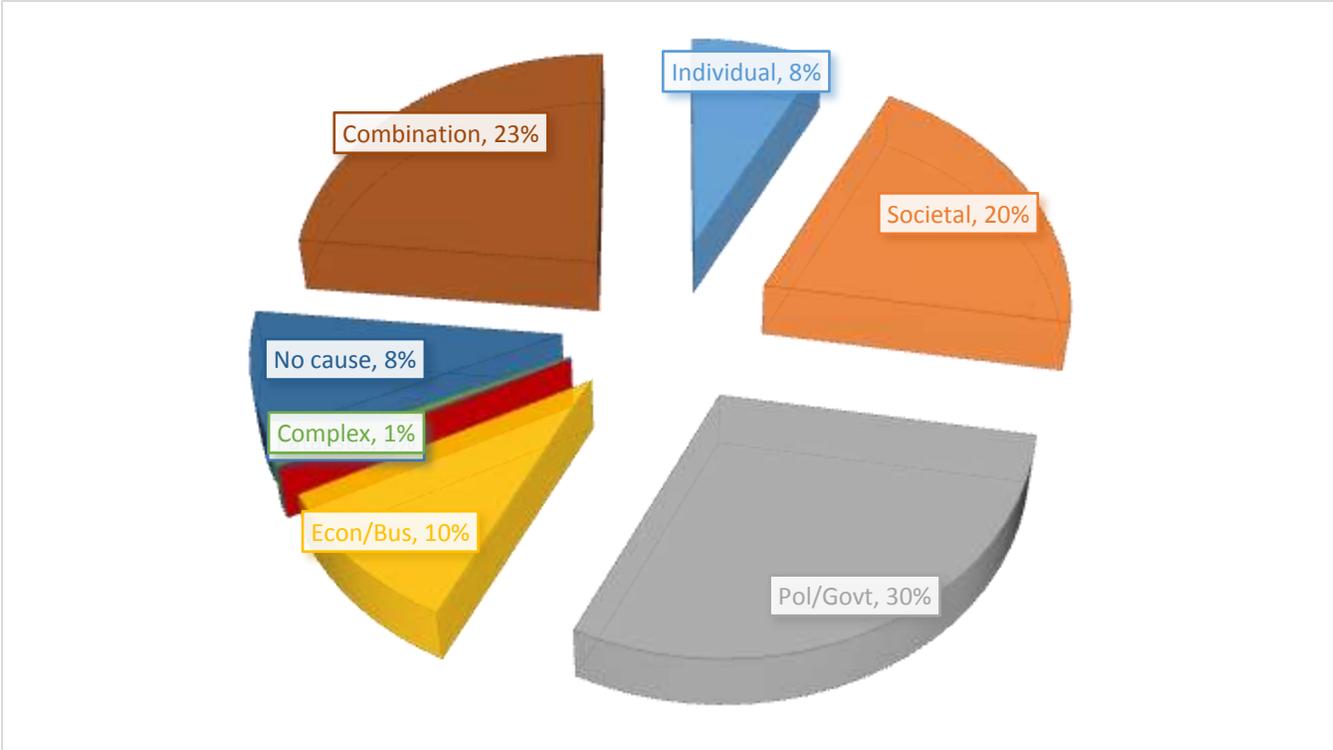
Media Organisation	Radio							
	Individual	Societal	Pol/Gov't	Econ/Buss.	Fatalistic	Complex	No cause	Combination
Joy FM	--	1 (3.2%)	1 (2%)	--	--	--	9 (75%)	12 (16.7%)
Citi FM	16 (76.2%)	17 (54.8%)	42 (84%)	34 (100%)	1 (100%)	1 (100%)	2 (16.7%)	59 (81.9%)
Peace FM	--	4 (12.9%)	--	--	--	--	--	--
Adom FM	5 (23.8%)	9 (29%)	7 (14%)	--	--	--	1 (8.3%)	1 (1.4%)
Total	21 (100%)	31(100%)	50 (100%)	34 (100%)	1 (100%)	1 (100%)	12 (100%)	72 (100%)
TV								
GTV	1 (9%)	7 (13%)	--	--	--	--	1 (14%)	--
TV3	--	11 (21%)	1 (2%)	0	--	--	5 (71%)	11 (28%)
UTV	6 (55%)	15 (29%)	35 (60%)	5 (56%)	--	--	--	6 (15%)
GH One	4 (36%)	19 (37%)	22 (38%)	4 (44%)	--	2 (100%)	1 (14%)	23 (58%)
Total	11 (100%)	52 (100%)	58 (100%)	9 (100%)	--	2 (100%)	7 (100%)	40 (100%)
Newspaper								
Daily Graphic	2 (40%)	1 (3.8%)	12 (34.3%)	--	--	--	10 (33.3%)	5 (22.7%)
Ghanaian Times	--	2 (7.7%)	2 (5.7%)	--	--	--	7 (23.3%)	4 (18.4%)
Daily Guide	--	--	--	1 (11.1%)	--	--	3 (10%)	--
Chronicle	--	--	3 (8.6%)	--	--	--	1 (3.3%)	--
Finder	--	4 (15.4%)	4 (11.4%)	--	--	--	5 (16.7%)	6 (27.3%)
Daily Heritage	--	10 (38.5%)	11 (31.4%)	6 (66.7%)	--	--	--	2 (9.1%)
Today	--	4 (15.4%)	--	--	--	--	--	1 (4.5%)
Daily Dispatch	1 (20%)	1 (3.8%)	3 (8.6%)	2 (22.2%)	--	--	2 (6.7%)	--
New Crusading Guide	1 (20%)	2 (7.7%)	--	--	--	--	2 (6.7%)	3 (13.6%)
Daily Search	1 (20%)	2 (7.7%)	--	--	--	--	--	1 (4.5%)
Total	5 (100%)	26 (100%)	35 (100%)	9 (100%)	--	--	30 (100%)	22 (100%)
Online								
Myjoyonline.com	--	--	1 (1.2%)	--	--	1 (100%)	14 (93.3%)	9 (20%)
Citifmonline.com	14 (66.7%)	9(20.5%)	47 (56%)	23 (88.5%)	--	--	--	28 (62.2%)
Ghanaweb.com	7 (33.3%)	25 (56.8%)	34 (40.5%)	3 (11.5%)	1 (100%)	--	1 (16.7%)	--
Peacefmonline.com	--	10 (22.7%)	2 (2.4%)	--	--	--	--	--
Total	21 (100%)	44 (100%)	84 (100%)	26 (100%)	1 (100%)	1 (100%)	15 (100%)	45 (100%)

Source: MFWA Field Data, 2018

On who the media blamed for inequality in Ghana as cited in the stories covered, Table 12 indicates that the causality responsibility was laid on government, a combination of any of the factors and society.

At a sizeable number of times, the media failed to blame anyone for the inequalities they covered. Altogether, half of the inequality stories pointed at the government (30%) and the society of subjects (20%) as the cause for inequality. (See Figure 9).

Figure 9: Use of Causality Responsibility Frame in Inequality Coverage



Treatment Responsibility Frame

Table 13: Comparing Media and the Use of Treatment Responsibility Frame in Inequality Coverage

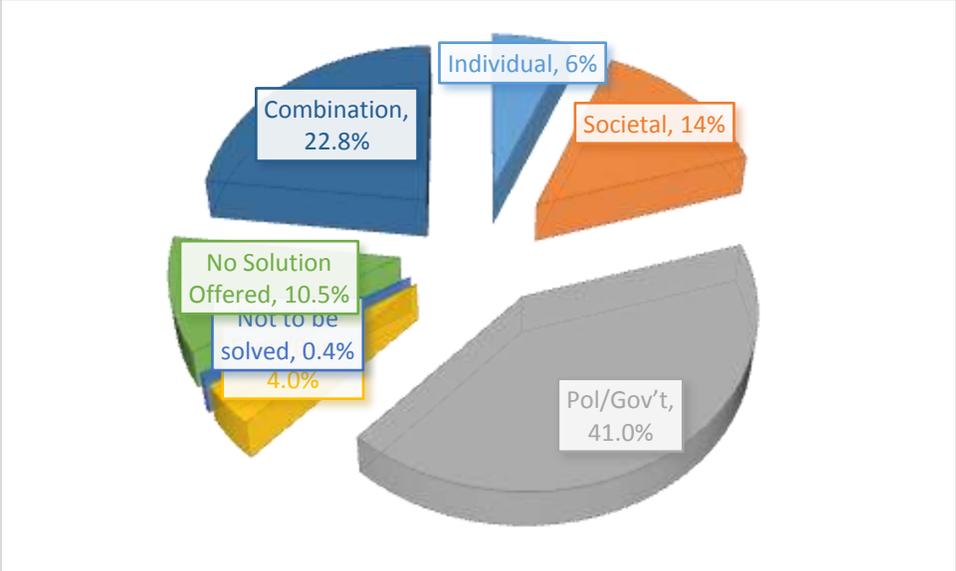
Media Organisation	Radio						
	Individual	Societal	Pol/Gov't	Econ/Buss.	Not to be solved	No Solution Offered	Combination
Joy FM	1 (7%)	--	4 (4%)	--	--	5 (14%)	13 (27%)
Citi FM	5 (33%)	5 (36%)	89 (88%)	10 (100%)	1 (100%)	30 (83%)	35 (73%)
Peace FM	--	4 (29%)	--	--	--	--	--
Adom FM	9 (60%)	5 (36%)	8 (8%)	--	--	1 (3%)	--
Total	15 (100%)	14 (100%)	101 (100%)	10 (100%)	1 (100%)	36 (100%)	48 (100%)
TV							
GTV	--	7 (17%)	2 (3%)	--	--	--	--
TV3	2 (22%)	6 (15%)	5 (8%)	--	--	8 (100%)	7 (13%)
UTV	6 (67%)	14 (34%)	35 (56%)	--	--	--	10 (19%)
GH One	1 (11%)	14 (34%)	21 (33%)	2 (100%)	1 (100%)	--	37 (69%)
Total	9 (100%)	41 (100%)	63 (100%)	2 (100%)	1 (100%)	8 (100%)	54 (100%)
Newspaper							
Daily Graphic	1 (16.7%)	3 (15.8%)	13 (30.2%)	2 (16.7%)	--	4 (20%)	7 (25.9%)
Ghanaian Times	--	--	2 (4.7%)	2 (16.7%)	--	2(10%)	9 (33.3%)
Daily Guide	--	--	1 (2.3%)	1 (8.3%)	--	1 (50%)	1 (3.7%)
Chronicle	--	--	3 (7%)	--	--	1 (50%)	--
Finder	--	2 (10.5%)	7 (16.3%)	2 (16.7%)	--	4 (20%)	4 (14.8%)
Daily Heritage	--	9 (47.4%)	10 (23.3%)	5 (41.7%)	--	1(5%)	4 (14.8%)
Today	--	3 (15.8%)	--	--	--	--	2 (7.4%)
Daily Dispatch	1 (16.7%)	--	5 (11.6%)	--	--	3 (15%)	--
New Crusading Guide	2 (33.3%)	2 (10.5%)	2 (4.7%)	--	--	2 (10%)	--
Daily Searchlight	2 (33.3%)	--	--	--	--	2 (10%)	--
Total	6 (100%)	19 (100%)	43 (100%)	12 (100%)	--	20 (100%)	27 (100%)
Online							
Myjoyonline.com	--	--	1 (0.9%)	--	1 (100%)	16 (94.1%)	14(29.2%)
Citifmonline.com	9 (50%)	8 (21.1%)	72 (63.2%)	6 (66.7%)	--	--	26 (54.2%)
Ghanaweb.com	8 (44.4%)	24 (63.2%)	37 (32.5%)	2 (22.2%)	--	1 (5.9%)	8 (16.7%)
Peacefmonline.com	1 (5.6%)	6(15.8%)	4 (3.5%)	1 (11.1%)	--	--	--
Total	18 (100%)	38 (100%)	114 (100%)	9 (100%)	1 (100%)	17 (100%)	48 (100%)

Source: MFWA Field Data, 2018

From Table 13 above, the media called or pointed out government as the solution to the problem of inequality, followed by a combination of factors.

From Figure 10 below, government (41%) led the pack, combination of factors (22.8%) and society (14%) and individuals followed respectively as factors for the treatment of inequality issues.

Figure 10: Use of Treatment Responsibility Frame in Inequality Coverage



Chapter Four

Summary of Key Findings

A quantitative content analysis approach was used to examine the media's coverage of inequality issues in Ghana. The following are the key findings:

- The coverage of inequality in the selected media is momentarily low. A total of 6,477 stories were monitored across 22 media outlets, and only 12% (783) focused on inequality. Although the media have a gamut of issues to cover, given the importance of inequality issues to the economic growth, human development and inclusiveness in the country, the frequency of the coverage is gravely low.
- That notwithstanding, 50% of the inequality stories primarily focused on inequalities as against a secondary or tertiary focus. This means that while the media's frequency of coverage of inequalities is poor, when they do cover, they give principal attention to it.
- Radio, with 16%, had the highest frequency of the coverage of inequalities. TV (14.3%) and Online (14.1%) followed.
- The media covered more of social inequalities (48.7%) than economic inequality (29.3%) or inequality in political representation (11.4%)
- On the prominence given to inequality issues, radio news placed much prominence to inequality issues as 71.8% of inequality stories covered appeared in the headlines during the news bulletins. This was followed by news websites as 57.4% of inequality stories were on the front page.
- On the individual media organisation's coverage of inequalities, Citi FM led the pack among the radio station with a 40% average of inequality coverage. Daily heritage, The Funder and Daily Graphic led in the newspapers with 15%, 13% and 9% averages respectively. Citifmonline.com led the news websites with 31% whilst Gh One (27%) and closely followed by UTV (25%).
- There is low commitment in the coverage of inequality issues, 68% of the stories were routinely generated whilst 57% were presented in straight news format, not given room for much detailed coverage when compared with a feature format.

- Moreover, 60% of the inequality stories were presented in an episodic frame rather than a thematic frame. This means that a greater part of the stories did not provide much background details and the stories were presented as isolated events.
- Also, using the causality responsibility frame, half of the inequality stories blamed government (30%) and the society of subjects as (20%) as the cause for the inequality and the treatment responsibility frame identified government (41%), combination of factors (22.8%) and society (14%) as factors for the treatment of inequality issues.

Limitation

While the researcher, in ensuring randomisation in the selection of the days for monitoring, would have wished to do a constructed week, the constraint of time only permitted for consecutive days of monitoring.

Recommendations

The goal of this report is to gauge the media's commitment to the coverage of inequalities for the purposes of advocacy. The advocacy is aimed at reducing inequality in Ghana. Based on the findings presented above, the following are recommended:

Newspapers

The newspapers were identified to be the media form with the lowest coverage of inequality issues. Recognising the crucial role the print media plays in news coverage as a traditional media outlet, especially in this age of new media surge albeit with less credibility, it is advised that they commit themselves to covering stories that portray the inequities situations in regions, communities and individuals in Ghana. During the monitoring, it was realised that Daily Graphic had a page dedicated to stories on gender, a key dimension in inequality, which contributed in the frequency of their coverage of inequality, even though newspapers generally fared below par. It is recommended, therefore, that the various newspapers would adopt this strategy in dedicating a page daily to issues of women, people with disabilities (PWDs), spatial opportunity differences etc.

General Media Outlets

The study showed that the media appears to be skewed towards covering more on social inequalities than the other forms of inequalities. Thus one is likely to find stories about schools, hospitals, water, infrastructure and rural development than other kinds of inequalities stories. Meanwhile, there are political inequalities, economic inequalities which when placed in the various dimensions can provide a journalist/writer a lot more to talk/write about on inequality. For instance, under economic inequalities they are key variables like income, consumption and wealth. When these variables are paired with inequality dimensions like gender, location (spatial), children, etc. many stories of inequalities can be told.

More importantly, there's the need to train journalists and editors on the need for the coverage of inequalities issues and how to report them for impact as the general coverage is low.

The measurement of the commitment of coverage of inequalities using the mode of generating stories painted a worrying picture of some sort of lazy journalism where reporters/journalists prefer going in for already-made news (routine) rather than they doing stories from their own initiatives. The traditional media more than ever needs development journalism or journalism for change to ensure relevance in the face this new media surge, and this can largely be attained through enterprising journalism.

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