



THE NIGERIAN JOURNAL OF COMMUNICATION

The Journal of The African Council For Communication Education (ACCE), Nigeria Chapter, Vol. 8, Number 1, 2010

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Media Ownership and the Coverage of Child Rights in the Nigerian Newspapers

By

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Abstract

Mass media ownership and its effects on different aspects of mass media performance has been the subject of many studies. This topic attracts many scholars due to the importance of mass media in social life of society and their ability to affect people. Mass media contribute to building strong nations, and create feelings of unity by transmitting values and norms in messages. Mass media play the role of an agent of the secondary socialization process and can contribute to successful socialisation of individuals into existing social life. It is against this important role of the media that this study examined how the coverage of child rights is influenced by the ownership of media organisations. This article, through content analysis, examined two national newspapers of different ownership structure, government-owned and privately-owened. The findings show some differences in the pattern of coverage adopted by the two newspapers. Besides, while coverage of child rights by the newspapers was generally low, it was observed that the government-owned newspaper did a little better in handling some areas of the reportage than the privately-owened newspaper.

Introduction

Several studies have confirmed that media ownership has a way of influencing what the media report. In other words, the interest of the media owner is a factor that is always taken into consideration in the presentation of any media content. Media organizations owned by the government are often accused of serving as government mouthpieces instead of serving the public interest. In the same way, media organizations owned by private individuals are also said to be biased in favour of their owners, and most of the time are profit-driven in their motive.

This study set out to examine how media ownership affects the issue of the rights of the child against the backdrop of the challenge that the media have in this respect. Article 17 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child states that the media should be encouraged to disseminate information and material of social and cultural benefit to the child. Similarly, at the Asian Summit of Child Rights and the Media (1996), the media were given the task to raise awareness about the rights of children and mobilise all sectors of society to ensure the survival, development, protection, and participation of all children. This study therefore set out to examine how ownership pattern affects the delivery of expectations required from the media concerning children and their rights.

Theoretical Framework

The political economy in mass media theory argues that the structure of the media industry influences content (Andrejevic, 2007). The presumption of the theory is that media content is influenced by a combination of the media owners (individuals or corporations), advertisers, competitors/other media, government regulations, and viewers or readers. In the case of media ownership, private individuals decide what information should be provided to the public based on what earns them the most revenue. Chandler (2000) also notes that the ownership and control of the media and the

influence of media ownership on media content cannot be ignored.

Research usually indicates three basic types of mass media ownership: government-owned (or government party-owned), privately-owned, and ownership by both by government and private organisations or individuals (Press Freedom, 1997). Government-owned media are seen to be concerned with social welfare and harmony while privately-owned media are seen as pursuing interests that are determined by the desire to make profit, although this may not always be the case. The fact that media are (partly) owned by government does not mean that channels and content are totally controlled by government. Usually, if not subsidized, these channels have to make profit, which means independence to a certain extent from government's ideological interests.

One of the areas of research that examined media ownership effects on content deals with consolidation of media which occurred in order to pursue economic and organisational advantages. Studies found that the editorials of the big chain-owned newspapers were more likely to express positions on some issues and less likely to vary in positions taken than editorials of non chain-owned newspapers (Akhavan-Majid, Rife & Gopinath, 1991). Another study found that editorial endorsement patterns changed when newspapers were purchased by chains (Rystrom, 1987). Thrift (1977) found that the editorials of the chain-owned papers tended to have less argumentative editorials on local, controversial issues.

Independently-owned daily newspapers had more stories that require more reportorial efforts and used more enterprising news sources than chain-owned (Fradgley & Niebauer, 1995). A study by Olien, Tichenor, and Donohue (1988) found a strong correlation between the type of ownership and coverage (frequency and proportion) of non-local business. Another study found that the more characteristics of the corporate form of organisation a newspaper had, the more the emphasis placed on quality of news coverage (Demers, 1996).

As a source of political information, mass media may affect public behaviour on elections. Scholars examined the effects of newspaper's consolidation on endorsement of political candidates. In a study by Wackman, Gillmor, Giano, and Dennis (1975), they found that chain-owned newspapers in comparison to independent newspapers were more likely to endorse candidates for president, support the favoured candidate of the press, and be homogeneous in endorsing candidates during observed election periods. The authors concluded that chain ownership of newspapers discourages editorial independence in endorsing presidential candidates.

For example, Akhavan-Majid and Boudreau (1995) examined the editorial role perception of chain-owned and independent newspapers. With control for the size of newspapers, there was no difference in editorial role perceptions. Perception changed due to size of newspapers, not due to ownership. Some studies addressed questions about effects of ownership and the size of newspapers on space and allocation of different kinds of content. Lacy (1991) found that ownership did not have an effect on how news space was allocated. Yet group-owned newspapers, when compared to independently-owned ones, had shorter stories and devoted more space and stories to editorial and op-ed material.

Although results of studies on effects of ownership on contents are contradictory, this area of study still attracts researchers and is among the most highly debated. Some studies did in fact show that mass media ownership has some impact on the diversity of its messages on two levels:

- 1) Presenting different points of view or different perspectives on some issue. (for example, while endorsing, a newspaper either endorses one favourable candidate, or presents several);
- 2) presenting a variety of issues in general.

Child Rights

The debate on 'rights' has a long history in the Western world. Its foundations can be traced at least as far as discussions of natural law among Greek and Roman stoics (Tisdall and Hill, 1997). These discussions were revived, expanded and modified by such philosophers as Locke and Thomas Paine who argued for the links involving natural rights, individualism, and liberty. Tisdall and Hill (1997) note that rights are fundamental and universal; and thus override other values because they are based in nature and are of divine creation. However, there are those who believe that rights are socially or legally constructed not natural or divine (Jones, 1994). Some would say that rights are inextricably linked to a particular society, and thus the idea that rights are universal is incorrect. Those who believe that certain rights are universal hold that the concept of human rights has largely replaced that of natural rights, thus avoiding the theological foundation of most natural rights theories. They rely on a concept of basic human needs to provide the basis for human rights (MacCormick, 1982; Freedon, 1991; Eekelaar, 1992). These needs are said to be irrefutable: "Certain needs are so fundamental, it may be argued, that they should be treated as a social right and society should accept a duty to provide them to all citizens," (Charles and Webb, 1986, p. 71).

Many distinctions have been made in relation to rights. A useful distinction is made between legal and moral rights. Legal rights are those set out in law, which are thus enforceable. Moral rights are not established in law, but are put forward as what ought to be. Marshall (1963) also identifies three types of rights: civil, political, and social. Civil rights are defined as those necessary for individual freedom. Political rights involve participation in the exercise of political power. The social rights range from ensuring a "modicum of economic welfare and security to the right to share to the full in the social heritage" (Marshall, 1963, p. 74). The relationship among claims, duties, and rights is another

consideration:

A right is a legal capacity in one person to control or limit or require an act of another. The right resides with the first person, the duty with the second. Rights are about obligation, an obligation fixed in law or fought for on moral and legal grounds, a duty placed on someone other than the rights-holder. Rights establish and support relationships (McGillvray, 1994, p. 354).

Whether someone can have a right without someone else having a corresponding duty has been the subject of much debate (Dworkin, 1978; MacCormick, 1982; Olsen, 1992). With some rights, it is relatively easy to identify who is the duty-holder and what the duty is. For instance, a child may have a right to its parent's care and supervision. The child has the right; the parent has the duty; and the duty is for care and supervision. However, with some rights, identifying the duty and duty-holder can be more difficult. A child may have a right to adequate standard of living, but who has the duty to provide the adequate standard.

There are those who believe that children have no rights (Tisdall and Hill, 1997). For example, Hobbes held that children have no natural rights and are under the absolute subjection of their parents. Locke, however opposed that, arguing that children have natural rights but only adults are fully rational. Thus, parents have authority over children and the corresponding responsibility to educate children into reason. Purdy (1994) believes that children should have no equal rights with adults. She argued that rationality is important because a society where people behave intelligently and morally clearly works better and is more enjoyable to live in than one where they do not. She believes that societal problems arising from the inadequacies of adults are enough to grapple with and the

situation would only be compounded if adults' rights are extended to children. Therefore, all children should have welfare rights or protection rights, such as the right to survival and adequate standard of living and, in fact, have more welfare rights than adults.

Children's rights therefore are claims that all children have for survival, development, protection, and participation. The Child Development Department of the Ministry of Women Affairs and Youth Development, Federal Republic of Nigeria (1995), lists the basic principles of Children's rights:

- (i) Every child has the right to life and be allowed to survive and develop;
- (ii) Every child is entitled to a name, family, and nationality;
- (iii) Every child is free to belong to any association or assembly according to the law;
- (iv) Every child has the right to express opinions and freely communicate them on any issues subject to restriction under the law;
- (v) Every child is entitled to protection from any act that interferes with his or her privacy, honour, and reputation;
- (vi) Every child is entitled to adequate rest, recreation (leisure and play) according to his or her age and culture;
- (vii) Every child (male or female) is entitled to receive compulsory basic education and equal opportunity for higher education depending on individual ability;
- (viii) Every child is entitled to good health, protection from illness, and proper medical attention for survival, personal growth, and development;
- (ix) Every child must be protected from indecent and inhuman treatment through sexual exploitation, drug abuse, child labour, torture, maltreatment, and neglect; and
- (x) No child should suffer any discrimination irrespective of ethnic origin, birth, colour, sex, language, religion, political and social beliefs, status or disability.

The Nature of Human Rights Reporting

During the 1990s, human rights issues became more prominent both in public policy and public opinion. Many governments officially incorporated human rights principles in their policy frameworks, with legal implications. Many international institutions (notably the United Nations agencies) 'mainstreamed' human rights. The media reflected this surge of interest in its coverage of human rights stories. Today, the mass media make reference to human rights in their coverage more often and more systematically (International Council on Human Rights Policy, ICIHRP, 2002).

As in all areas of reporting, the influence of this process is disproportionately concentrated in Northern countries, where the most powerful governments and the most influential media organizations tend to be located. This has significant implications — on perceptions of human rights reporting, on what stories editors and journalists prioritise and how those stories are written. In general, human rights issues are perceived in Northern countries, and by international media, to be a 'foreign' matter that concerns principally less powerful countries. By contrast, for journalists in the latter type of countries, for whom human rights issues are less distant, international reporting of human rights is perceived often to be inadequate, superficial, and subject to bias — precisely because Northern countries tend not to apply human rights principles to their own societies.

Though journalists have expanded coverage of human rights into new areas, many human rights issues, including child rights, are under-reported by the media (ICIHRP, 2002). Much reporting focuses on violations of rights during conflicts. Human rights issues that are less visible, or have slow processes, are rarely covered. Human rights are still taken largely to mean political and civil rights, and the importance of economic, social, and cultural rights is largely ignored by the media in their coverage of economic issues, including

the international economy, poverty, inequity, and social and economic discrimination.

The media do not explain and contextualise human rights information as well as they should. ICHIRP (2002) further notes that data on human rights violations and on human rights standards are not lacking. However, the impact of this information on the public is not as great as might be expected. The media miss human rights stories because they do not pay attention to the specific legal and policy implications they have. Often, they do not have adequate knowledge of human rights and the relevance to the material they are covering. Also, media frequently miss the context of human rights stories. These shortcomings diminish the professional quality of reporting and hamper the communication of information that is sometimes essential for understanding. They indicate that the profession should identify or improve reporting and editorial standards in order to enhance the accuracy and consistency of human rights coverage.

Addressing children's rights in particular, the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child assigns certain responsibilities to the media in the pursuit of the fulfilment of child rights. Article 17 of the Convention states:

States Parties shall recognize the important function performed by the mass media and shall ensure that the child has access to information and material from a diversity of national and international sources, especially those aimed at the promotion of his or her social, spiritual, and moral well-being and physical and mental health. To this end, States Parties shall:

- (a) Encourage the mass media to disseminate information and material of social and cultural benefit to the child and in accordance with the spirit of Article 29;

- (b) Encourage international co-operation in the production, exchange, and dissemination of such information and material from a diversity of cultural, national, and international sources;
- (c) Encourage the production and dissemination of children's books;
- (d) Encourage the mass media to have particular regard to the linguistic needs of the child who belongs to a minority group or who is indigenous;
- (e) Encourage the development of appropriate guidelines for the protection of the child from information and material injurious to his or her well being, bearing in mind the provisions of Articles 13 and 18 (UNICEF 2002, p. 65 - 66).

Hammberg (1996) outlines the specific functions that the media can perform in the realisation of the requirements of the Convention on the rights of the child:

1. To Monitor Abuses and Progress

It is hoped that violations of children's rights be reported in the media. Such scrutiny would probably be more effective than the international procedure prescribed by the convention which requires the government itself to report to the monitoring committee on steps for implementation. However, the media could also draw from the official documentation in their reporting. The convention could be seen as the yardstick against which reality could be measured.

2. To Respect the Integrity of the Child

One of the important aspects of the Convention on the Rights of the Child is that it presents a truly modern attitude towards children themselves. It recognises the vulnerability of children in certain circumstances but also their capacity and strength for development. A major emphasis in the

convention is that each child is unique. All this can be undermined through negative stereotyping. Likewise, the media should be careful not to violate the integrity of individual children in their reporting on, for instance, crime and sexual abuse. The convention specifically protects the individual child from violations of his or her privacy, honour and reputation.

3. **To Allow Children to Participate in the Media**

One of the principles of the convention is that the views of children be heard and given due respect. This is also reflected in articles about freedom of expression, thought, conscience, and religion. It is in the spirit of these provisions that children should not only be able to consume information material but also to participate themselves in the media. The idea is that children, in fact, should be able to express themselves and that their views be sought.

4. **To Protect Children against Harmful Influences through the Media**

While the convention requests access for children to the media, it also reflects concern about the risk of children being harmed by some reports and information material. The idea is that the integrity of the child should be respected in the reporting. Another article states that the State should encourage guidelines to protect children at large from injurious media output, for instance, certain violent and pornographic materials.

Method of Study

The study adopted the content analysis research design. Content analysis is a quantitative research method that integrates both data collection method and analytical technique to measure the occurrence of some identifiable elements in a complete text or set of

messages (Keyton, 2001). Two national newspapers were selected; a privately-owned newspaper and a government owned newspaper. We thus arrived at the selection of *The Guardian* and *Daily Times*. The study covered a period of five years; from 1999, the year Oslo Challenge was launched, to 2003, the year that Nigeria's national assembly passed the Child Rights Act. It is hoped that the study will be a continuous one as to monitor the trend of the coverage of children's issues by the Nigerian press.

A sample size of 600 issues was used for the study. Through the use of simple random sampling, five issues were selected in every month for the five year period. Thus, 300 issues per newspaper yielded 600 for the two selected newspapers. The unit of analysis comprised all articles or stories on child issues in the form of news, features, opinions, editorials, pictures or letters-to-the-editor. They were examined for frequency of coverage, annual reportage on child rights, journalistic genres of reports, actions of children reported, and sources from which the reports were obtained. Inter-coder agreement was calculated using Cohen Kappa reliability test. The result for the variables tested ranged from substantial agreement to almost perfect agreement.

The data were analysed using percentages.

Result

Table 1: Coverage of children's issues by the selected newspapers

Newspapers	Frequency	Percentages
<i>The Guardian</i>	96	49.7
<i>Daily Times</i>	97	50.3
Total	193	100

Table 1 shows the coverage given to child right issues by the selected newspapers. A total of 193 stories were covered over the five-year period of study. *The Guardian*, a privately-owned newspaper, had 49.7 percent of the stories, while *Daily Times*, owned by the government, had 50.3 percent. *Daily Times* reported child right issues more than *The Guardian*.

Table 2: Annual reportage of child rights issues by the newspapers

Newspapers	Year					Total
	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	
<i>The Guardian</i>	16 (16.7%)	16 (16.7%)	20 (20.8%)	18 (18.8%)	26 (27%)	100 n=96
<i>Daily Times</i>	16 (16.5%)	18 (18.6%)	19 (19.6%)	23 (23.7%)	21(21.6%)	100 n=97
Total	32 (16.6%)	34 (17.6%)	39 (20.2%)	41 (21.2%)	47(24.4%)	193 (100%)

Table 2 shows the trend of coverage given to child rights issues by the newspapers during the five-year period of study. It was in 2003 that *The Guardian* newspaper gave the highest coverage, with 27 percent, followed by 20.8 percent in 2001. The year 1999 and 2000 had 16.7 percent each and the least coverage was given in 2002, with 18.8 percent. *Daily Times* had a steady increase in reportage of child rights issues from 16.5 percent (1999), 18.6 percent (2000), 19.6 percent (2001) and came to the peak in 2002, with 23.7 percent. It later dropped to 21.6 in 2003.

Table 3: Journalistic genres adopted in coverage of child rights

Journalistic Genres	Newspapers	
	<i>The Guardian</i>	<i>Daily Times</i>
News	56 (58.3%)	43 (44.4%)
Features	19 (19.8%)	23 (23.7%)
Editorial	4 (4.2%)	4 (4.1%)
Opinion	3 (3.1%)	7 (7.2%)
Picture	14 (14.6%)	20 (20.6%)
Total	96 (100%)	97 (100%)

Table 3 shows that the two newspapers reported children mostly, with straight news. *The Guardian* devoted 58.3 percent of its total stories to straight news, 19.8 percent to feature articles, followed by pictures with 14.6 percent. Editorials and opinion/letters followed with 4.2 percent and 3.1 percent respectively. *Daily Times* devoted 44.4 percent of its stories to straight news, 23.7 percent to feature articles and 20.6 percent to pictures. Opinion followed, with 3.1 percent, and editorial with 4.2 percent.

Table 4: The direction of issues reportage about children

Direction	Newspapers	
	<i>The Guardian</i>	<i>Daily Times</i>
Favourable	39 (42.4%)	48 (58.5%)
Unfavourable	25 (27.2%)	10 (12.2%)
Neutral	28 (30.4%)	24 (29.3%)
	92 (100%)	82 (100%)

Table 4 shows the direction of stories about children. These were stories that reported events about children and actions done to children. They were grouped as favourable, unfavourable or neutral. Favourable stories concern events or actions that are pro-children. Unfavourable stories cover child abuse stories and other stories which may not constitute child abuse but are not in favour of children. Such stories included epidemic and natural disasters that affected children. Neutral stories are neither favourable nor unfavourable to children. From a total of 92 stories in *The Guardian*, 42.4 percent were favourable, 27.2 percent were unfavourable and 30.4 percent were neutral. Out of 82 stories from *Daily Times* 58.5 percent were favourable, 12.2 percent were unfavourable and 29.3 percent were neutral.

Table 5: Acts of children reported in the newspapers

Acts	Newspapers	
	<i>The Guardian</i>	<i>Daily Times</i>
Positive	4 (100%)	10 (66.7%)
Negative	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Neutral	0 (0%)	5 (33.3%)
Total	4 (100%)	15 (100%)

Table 5 shows the reports on children's actions in the newspapers. These acts were categorized into three - positive, negative and neutral acts. Only 4 stories in *The Guardian* focused on actions of children and they were all positive. A total of 15 actions were recorded in *Daily Times*, giving 66.7 percent for positive actions, and 33.3 percent for neutral actions. In all, a total of 19 stories focused on children's action out of the total of 193 for the two newspapers.

Table 6: Sources of child rights reports by the newspapers

Sources	Newspapers	
	<i>The Guardian</i>	<i>Daily Times</i>
Local	69 (71.9%)	82 (84.5%)
Wire Service	27 (28.1%)	15 (15.5%)
Total	96 (100%)	97 (100%)

Table 6 above shows that most of the reports on children were locally obtained. *The Guardian* had 71.9 percent reports obtained locally, as opposed to 28.1 percent reports from wire services. *Daily Times* published 84.5 percent locally source news while 15.5 percent was from wire services.

Table 7: Cross-tabulation of coverage of child rights by ownership

Newspapers	Observed Frequency	Expected Frequency
<i>Daily Times</i>	97	96.5
<i>The Guardian</i>	96	96.5
Total	193	193

$$(X^2=0.003; df=1; p=0.05; cv=3.8)$$

Table 7 provides a closer examination of how the government-owned newspaper performed in comparison with the privately-owned newspaper. The result shows that there is no significant difference in the coverage of child rights between the *Daily Times* and privately *The Guardian* in Nigeria. The calculated chi square value of 0.003 is less than the critical value of 3.8 at 0.05 level of significance and 1 degree of freedom; meaning that there is no significant difference in the coverage of child rights between the two newspapers in Nigeria.

Table 8: Cross-tabulation of child rights coverage by sources of reports

Sources	<i>The Guardian</i>	<i>Daily Times</i>	Total
	Observed Frequency		
Local	69	82	151
Wire Service	27	15	42
Total	96	97	193
	Expected Frequency		
Local	75	76	151
Wire Service	21	21	42
Total	96	97	193

$$(X^2=4.37; df=1; p=0.05; cv=3.84)$$

Table 8 examined whether significant difference existed between the stories that were locally obtained and those obtained through wire service. The calculated chi square value of 4.37 is greater than the critical value of 3.84 at 0.05 level of significance and 1 degree of freedom. This implies that there is a significant difference between locally obtained stories on child rights and those obtained through wire services. In other words, locally obtained stories are significantly greater than those obtained through wire services.

Discussion of Findings

Our findings show that *Daily Times* reported more on child rights than *The Guardian* although the difference in the coverage given by these two newspapers in Nigeria is not significant.

Looking at the coverage given to child rights over the 5-year study period, we see that the newspapers steadily and consistently reported the issues. No significant difference existed in the coverage given to child rights in the five years of coverage. However, we can

observe higher frequency in reportage in some years. Both *The Guardian* and *Daily Times* reported more in 2002 and 2003. It should be noted that the push for the passage of the Child Rights Bill in Nigeria had reached its peak in 2002 before it was eventually passed in 2003. This shows a connection between media agenda-setting and attention to children's rights. This again corroborates Miller's (2005) explanation on the relationship among media agenda, policy agenda and public agenda, which form the broad scope of agenda setting theory. The media agenda deal with a set of topics addressed by the media; the public agenda deal with topics that members of the public believe are important, while the policy agenda represent issues that decision makers, i.e. legislators and those who influence legislative processes believe are particularly salient. We thus see the push for child rights bills (public agenda), passage in to law (policy agenda) and the media coverage of child, issues rights (media agenda).

The newspapers adopted a variety of print media genres in the reportage of child rights. The newspapers used the straight news format most in the reportage of child rights. It thus means that the newspapers were more concerned with delivering the news of child rights first hand to the public. However, the government-owned *Daily Times* used more of features (23.7%) and less of straight-news (44.4%) in comparison with *The Guardian's* 19.8 percent and 58.3 percent respectively. Straight news comes in piecemeal and does not allow for a comprehensive report. Feature is more appropriate for thorough treatment of any issue. It allows background information to be gathered and provides detailed information to educate the readers on any issue. We also observed that *Daily Times* made use of pictures (20.6%) a little more than *The Guardian* did (14.6%). This is quite good, as pictures give greater credibility and meaning to news coverage. Pictures help the readers to visualize the issue being reported on, and at times, pictures alone tell the entire story for readers to understand.

There is also low engagement of the public on the subjects of

child rights, as reflected in the low coverage of opinion. The situation is even worse with, *The Guardian* newspaper with 3.1 percent. *Daily Times* managed to do a little better with 7.2 percent. This shows that the newspapers either did not carry the readers along actively on the issue of child rights or the readers were indifferent to the issue.

We also see that the newspapers did not get involved in presenting much of their organization's opinions on the child rights issues. Both newspapers had over just about four percent editorials. We also examined the nature of stories about children. As earlier mentioned, these were stories that reported events about children and actions directed at children. They were grouped as favourable, unfavourable or neutral. *Daily Times* reported events and actions that favour children (48%), more than unfavourable stories (10%). It is of course expected that government-owned newspaper will likely present social issue like child rights in favourable way as not to present the country or the government in negative light. *The Guardian* however, seemed to maintain a little balance among favourable, unfavourable and neutral stories.

The second aspect of this focused on acts of children, that is, the things that children did which were reported. We see a very low reportage of acts performed by children. A total of 19 stories focused on children's actions, as against 193 stories reported by the newspapers. It was *Daily Times* that reported children's actions more. This implies a low direct representation of children in stories covered by the newspapers.

We also found that more than two-thirds of stories reported by the newspapers were from local sources. This is a good development as it indicates that the child rights issues, at the local level, are of interest to the newspapers. It also shows some commitment on the part of the newspapers to have local news staff who reporting children's issues rather than depending on wire services. But we equally observed that *Daily Times* did better in this

area than *The Guardian* with 84.5 percent of its stories locally-sourced as against 71.9 percent of *The Guardian*. The large amount of local news, as reported by the newspapers gave opportunity for understanding the children's situation within the local space.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The general coverage given to child rights is low. This calls for continued sustenance of newspapers as they are in a position to report development issues. However, because of the commercial interest of privately-owned newspapers, the drive to make profit and succeed as a business may not allow them to give much attention to issues that are not of economic interest. Therefore, there is the need for government-owned media to continue to operate for development purposes. Unfortunately the *Daily Times* was privatized in August 2004, and this has left the country without a national government newspaper. This is then a challenge to the private national dailies to endeavour to give greater attention to development issues such as the child rights than is being currently done. Very importantly, the state government-owned newspapers should raise the standard of their papers, expand the horizon of their coverage, and take the challenge of supporting child rights issues coverage rather than being used predominantly as government propaganda machines within their states.

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