

Guyana Elections Commission
Media Monitoring Unit (MMU)
Monitoring Report: 1st January 2008– 31st March 2008

Introduction:

This report is the first for this year, and is a forthright attempt at objectively summarizing local media performance for the period 01/01/08 – 31/03/08. It chronicles in very clear and unambiguous terms the MMU's observations, analyses, conclusions and recommendations relating to the mainstream print and broadcast media in the country for the period under review.

In this report the Unit has highlighted and commented on those instances where it was observed that the media breached the spirit and intent the 2006 Media Code of Conduct (MCC), and generally, those abiding principles underpinning acceptable journalistic best practices.

The pattern associated with our reports over the preceding years has been reproduced in the format used for graphically illustrating the Unit's observations.

In essence, this report captures the types and amounts of coverage given to the Parliamentary Political Parties by the print and broadcast media, outside of an elections period, and is limited to the activities of the following political parties : **PPP/C, PNCR-1G, AFC, GAP/ROAR** and **TUF**.

The broadcast and print media that were monitored and evaluated during this reporting period are:

Television

GWTV Ch 2
CNS Ch 6
WRHM Ch 7
HBTv Ch 9
NCN Ch 11
VCT Ch 28
MTV Ch 65
NTN Ch 69

Radio

Voice Of Guyana (VOG)

Newspaper

Stabroek News
Kaieteur News
Guyana Chronicle

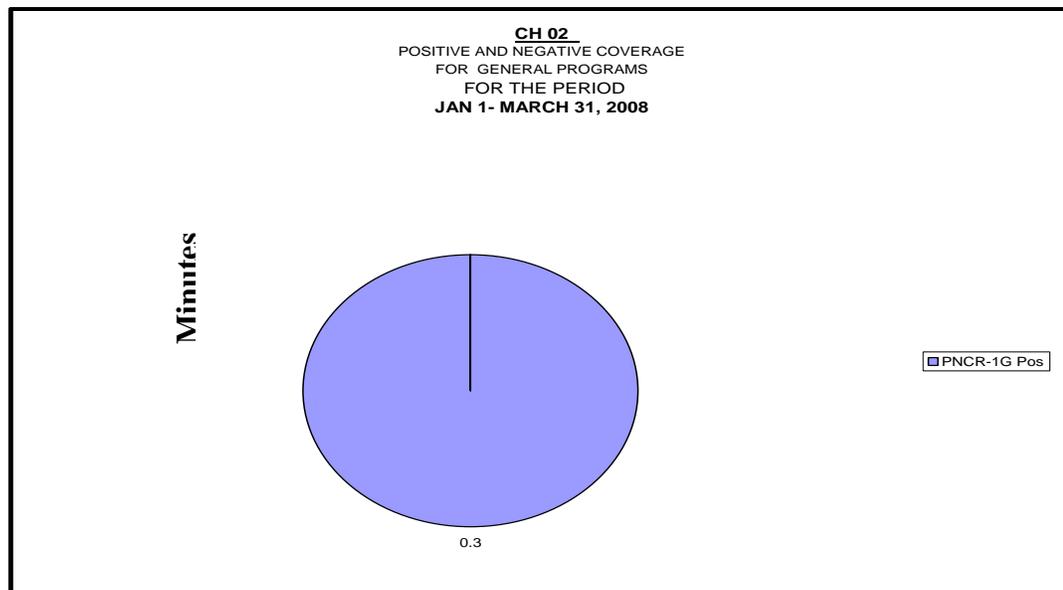
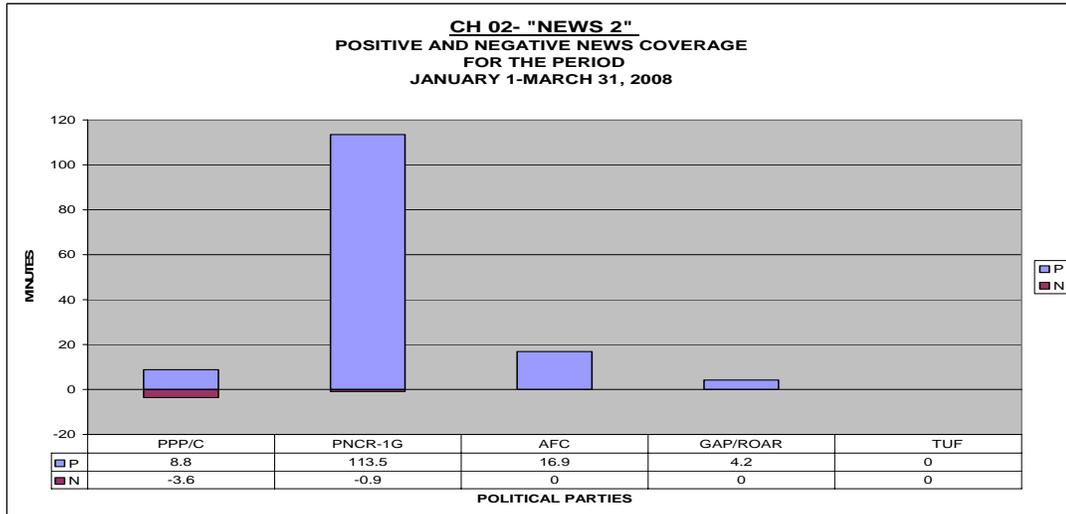
The Unit continues to be guided in its observations and analyses of local media behavior by the principles set out in the 2006 Media Code of Conduct (MCC) until such time that this document is revised or replaced by another. Further, the MMU does not limit itself to the Code for guidance, but has sought to extend our observational ambit to include the best practices of international journalism as performance benchmarks for the local media.

Generally, this report sums up in a holistic way how **social, political and governance issues** among others were reported to the public, and how the activities of the five (5) Parliamentary Political Parties were disseminated by the media.

N B:

The figures given on the bar charts overleaf depict the amounts of positive and negative coverage given to the aforementioned Parliamentary Political Parties by each TV Station's newscast, the VOG newscast and the newspapers. The pie-charts show the coverage given to the parties in the general programs of each TV station and the lone radio station. General programs are exclusive of the newscast and include programs that contain political content such as Talk Shows, Current Affairs Programs, Magazine Programs, Commentaries and (Political) Party Programs. And, even though the charts highlight the types and amounts of coverage each party received for the current reporting period, all the parties are not shown on every chart because once a political party did not receive a certain minimum amount of coverage it was not included.

Television



CH 2 "News 2" (Bar-Chart)

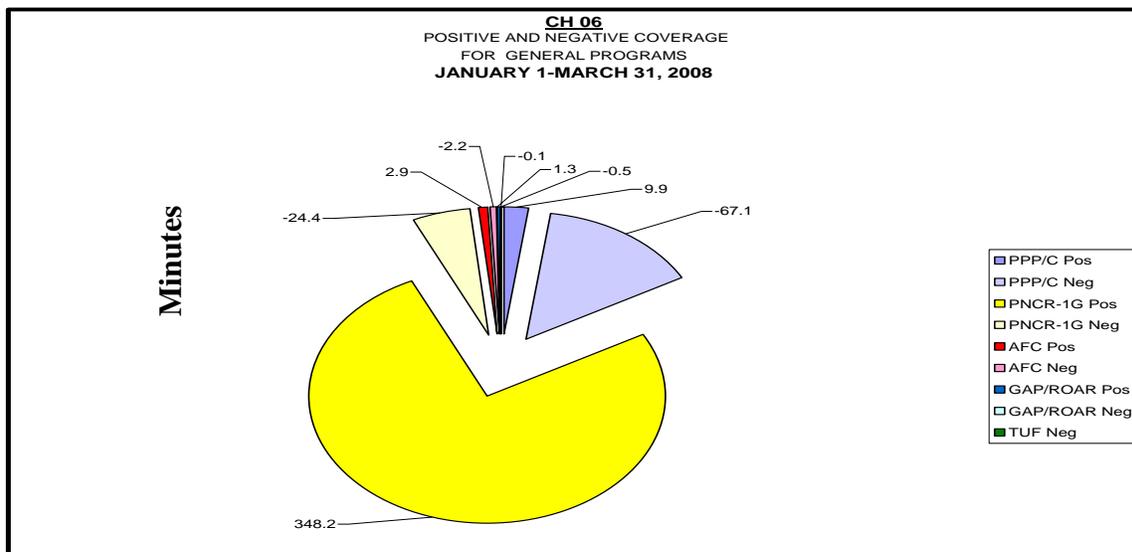
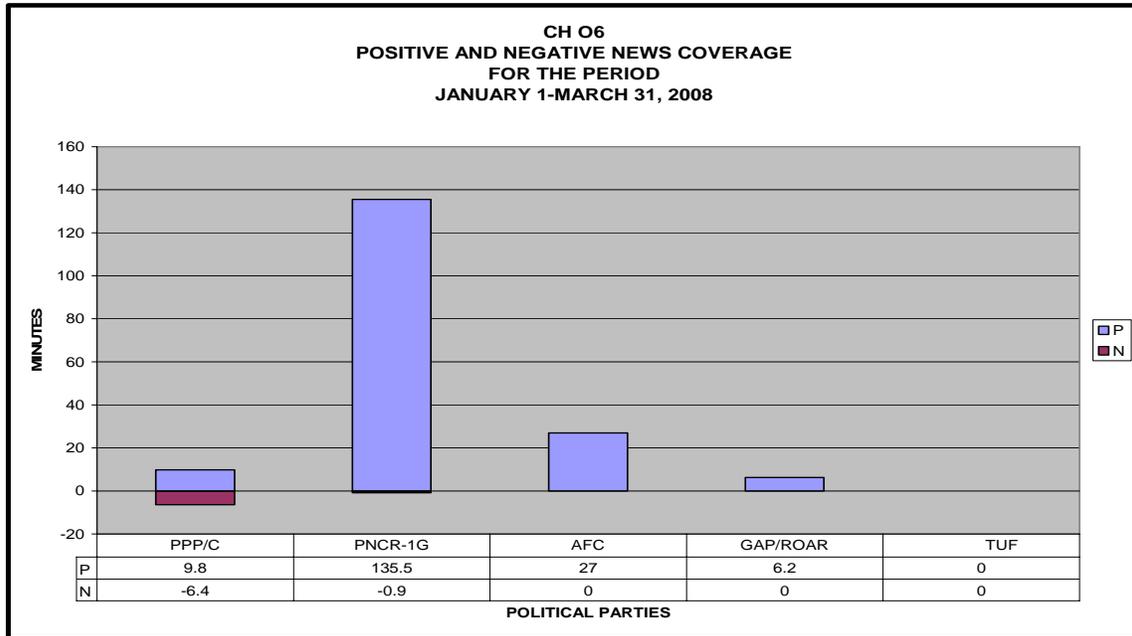
For this current reporting period (1 January- 31 March 08), the newsteam of **News 2** gave the PNCR-1G almost 4 times more positive coverage than all the other political parties combined. The AFC received the second highest amount of positive coverage followed by the PPP/C and GAP/ ROAR. Only two (2) of the aforementioned parties were given negative coverage in the news for this period: PPP/ C and PNCR-1G, with the PPP/C obtaining the greater amount. TUF did not register any positive or negative coverage for this period.

General Programs (Pie-Chart)

Only the PNC/R-1G was given a recordable amount of positive coverage in the channel's general programs.

Analysis

The towering bar in the bar-chart representing the amount of positive coverage given to the PNC/R-1G in the newscast for this first quarter, significantly dwarfed the other bars arranged linearly and which are representative of the positive coverage allotted to the other parliamentary political parties. The lop-sided and grossly inequitable allotment of positive coverage to the PNC/R-1G is indicative of the lack of balance in this newscast. The nascent evidence compiled over the past three (3) months suggests that there is a calculated reluctance on the part of the newsteam to give equitable airtime on the newscast to the other parliamentary political parties. This fact is an observed trend of this newscast which has persisted from last year into the start of this new one, and is a situation that the newsteam seems quite comfortable with, that is, to be labeled as a pro-opposition medium. This description (or label), however, can be erased if the news team makes a concerted effort to be steadfastly professional and politically neutral in their delivery of news content.



CH 6 “News Today” (Bar-chart)

For this current reporting period the **News Today** newsteam gave the PNC/R-1G approximately 3 times more positive coverage than the other political parties combined. The AFC received more than twice the amount of positive coverage given to the PPP/C and over 4 times the amount of positive coverage accorded to GAP/ROAR. The PPP/C and PNC/R-1G were the only two (2) parties negatively covered in the newscast, and TUF got neither positive nor negative coverage. Of particular note, is that the PPP/C’s net positive coverage was considerably diminished when the amount of negative coverage it received is taken into account.

General Programs (Pie-Chart)

In the general programming of CH 06, specifically those programs with political content, the main opposition PNC/R-1G commanded a significantly disproportionate allotment of positive coverage vis-à-vis the other parliamentary political parties: the party's positive coverage was more than 23 times the combined positive coverage of the other parties; and, almost 33 times the party closest to it in the chart, that is, the PPP/C. The PPP/C recorded the largest amount of negative coverage, which was more than twice the same coverage given to all of the other parties combined, and almost 7 times the positive coverage it received. The PNC/R-1G copped the second highest amount of negative coverage, while AFC, GAP/ROAR and TUF received comparably minute amounts of same.

Analysis

The **New Today** bar-chart amply delineated the distribution of coverage given to the political parties in news items that were featured on the newscast over the past three (3) months. The noticeably huge disparity between the positive coverage given to the PNC/R-1G and the other parties brought sharply into focus the operationalising of the guiding principles of fairness, equity and balance in news reporting. From the chart, one gets the ineluctable impression that the newsteam is probably inclined towards the position that the PNC/R-1G is competitively more saleable or attractive as a newsmaker than the other political parties. This would explain the contrived dominance of the party's perspectives on national issues, in such a way, that the limited inputs of the other political parties on the same issues covered by the newscast was eroded. The bias and overt favoritism toward the main opposition party is an incontestable fact derived from the Unit's observations of the newscast over the past three(3) months , and which ought to be seriously addressed if **News Today** is to be rated as a credible and balanced newscast.

The station's general programs pie-chart is very similar to the **News Today** bar-chart, in that the PNC/R-1G was apportioned a surfeit of positive coverage, while only a few minor differences separated the distribution of positive and negative coverage given to the other political parties. However, unlike the spread on the bar-chart, the PPP/C received a ridiculously high amount of negative coverage compared to its positive coverage, and herein lies the distortion in the chart's distribution. A closer analysis into the cause(s) of the wide disparities in positive and negative coverage recorded for the PNC/R-1G and PPP/C revealed that the strong relationship in the correlation between the two extremes is traceable to the introduction into the channel's programming schedule in February 2008, of the once-weekly PNC/R-1G's program "**Facing The Nation**". This is in addition to the daily "**Voice Of The People**" program which mostly portrays the government and the PPP/C separately and collectively in a negative light. The juxtaposition of these two (2) programs influenced to a very large extent the statistics that appeared on the pie-chart.

Comments

Voice Of The People

- The Unit has observed over time that there is a deliberate attempt by the host of the Voice Of The People (VOP) program, Mr. C N Sharma, to both impugn the integrity of GECOM and to influence public distrust in the preparatory processes linked to upcoming Local Government Elections. One of the many examples of the active pursuit of this agenda by Mr. Sharma is this comment that he unequivocally made on the program, broadcast on 12 January, 2008:

“...What I see with this Local Government Election, it already prepare to rig...You will see what will happen this elections, they already have but things in place....”

The above allegation has to be rationalized in the context of the host being the leader of a political party – JFAP - and against this backdrop it can be seen as insidiously setting the stage to incite public rejection of and dispute the results of these elections, whenever they are held.

The Unit wishes to advise the host of the VOP to be more responsible with his remarks on national TV, since his medium is very popular and plays an undoubted influential role in shaping people’s opinions, especially the uninformed. Also, the Unit further recommends that in the interest of maintaining a peaceful and stable environment during and after Local Government Elections, that the host refrains from making allegations that are not grounded on facts or supported by incontrovertible evidence.

- On the **VOP** program aired on 16 February, 2008, the host, Mr. C N Sharma, was documented condoning the opinions of a caller whose fulminations against the Joint Services exercise in Buxton could be construed as a directed threat to public order and national security. The following verbatim remarks are accredited to the said caller:

“I want the brethren from Buxton recognize that they have no compensation in future for their crops at all. The only they could try to do is gear up their mind for an all out scale war because there is no compensation....Buxtonians must prepare for know that they ain’t go get nothing and if it’s war it got to be war and nothing else cause the government of the day is racial to black people only” (sic).

The pernicious aspect of the diatribe above was the persistent interjections by the host, using encouraging remarks such as “ Yes” ,“Ok” and an appreciative “Thank you, very very much” at the end of the call.

The Unit chides the host of the VOP program for actively encouraging the communication of this kind of rhetoric through his program to the general public. This is in view of the potential of the statement to inflame ethnic passions and give vent to actions that could have dissipated the fragile social peace that prevailed in the country in the immediate period after the Lusignan killings.

The Unit would like to remind Mr. Sharma that it is a breach of Article B (1) of the MCC to broadcast matter with a potential for, or likelihood of **“promoting or inciting racial hatred, bias or contempt or any matter with the potential for, or likelihood of, promoting or causing public disorder, posing or becoming a threat to the security of the nation”**.

- On the **VOP** program aired on 21 February 2008 (and rebroadcast on the 22nd and 23rd February 2008, respectively), the host, Mr. C N Sharma, entertained a caller who communicated a personal threat to kill the president of this country (His Excellency, Mr. Bharrat Jagdeo), in the event that any harm should come to her family because of the prevailing crime situation. The caller was documented as stating in an unmistakably belligerent tone the following:

“...because look at these killings that going on, nobody can't give account about these people lives and Jagdeo going taking a high risk chance to go and tell people calm down, calm down, he is going to bury the dead bodies. **If anything like that happen to my family I am going to kill Jagdeo, I won't take it easy...**”

The Unit observed that after the above threat was made, the host immediately disconnected the caller and mildly reprimanded her for the remarks. However, what was unacceptable and totally indefensible are the rebroadcasts of the same program on two subsequent occasions without the expressed threat being edited out. This allowed for a wider cross-section of the population to be exposed to the offending remarks, thereby amplifying the seriousness of the threat made. The irresponsible conduct of the host of the program and owner of Ch.6 in allowing the uncensored airing of the rebroadcasts, clearly infringed Section 11B (1) of the MCC which states in part that the media should at all times **“refrain from the publishing or broadcasting of any matter with the potential for, or likelihood of, promoting or causing public disorder, posing or becoming a threat to the security of the nation.”**

Good Morning Guyana

On the **Good Morning Guyana** program aired on 29 January 2008, the host, Mr. Naim Chan allowed comments by callers to the program that were inflammatory, racially divisive and unsubstantiated. An example of the foregoing is this allegation leveled by a caller:

“In my opinion the incident that happened on the East Coast at Lusignan, the terrorists have won, the PNC have won. This has been boiling up for very long. They are doing these things to pull down this government....**Mr. Corbin has won and the terrorists, armed PNC terrorists, because they are from Buxton, it’s a PNC people direct act...it’s a direct act of the PNC**”

The Unit observed that in the course of these ill-advised allegations being made, the host was perceptibly nodding his head in agreement with the caller’s remarks, instead of cautioning the person about the likely negative effects his statements could have upon the brittle political and social relations in the country.

The Unit takes this opportunity to inform and remind Talk-Show hosts that as moderators it devolves upon them in pursuit of the national good to exercise their considerable influence to caution, rebuke and correct misinformation from callers making assertions that are unsubstantiated, slanderous and divisive.

Facing The Nation

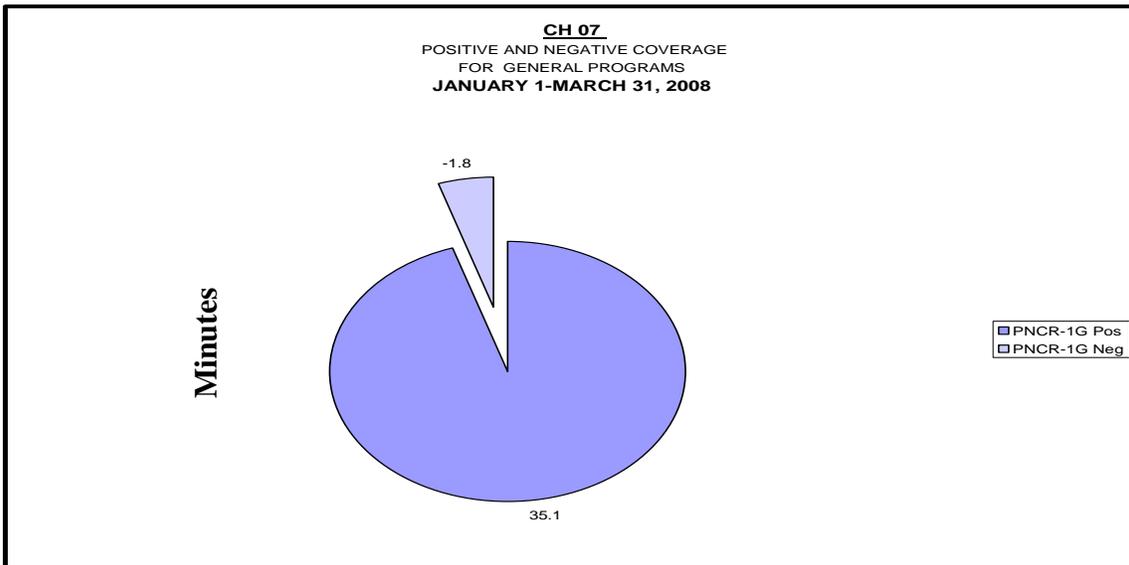
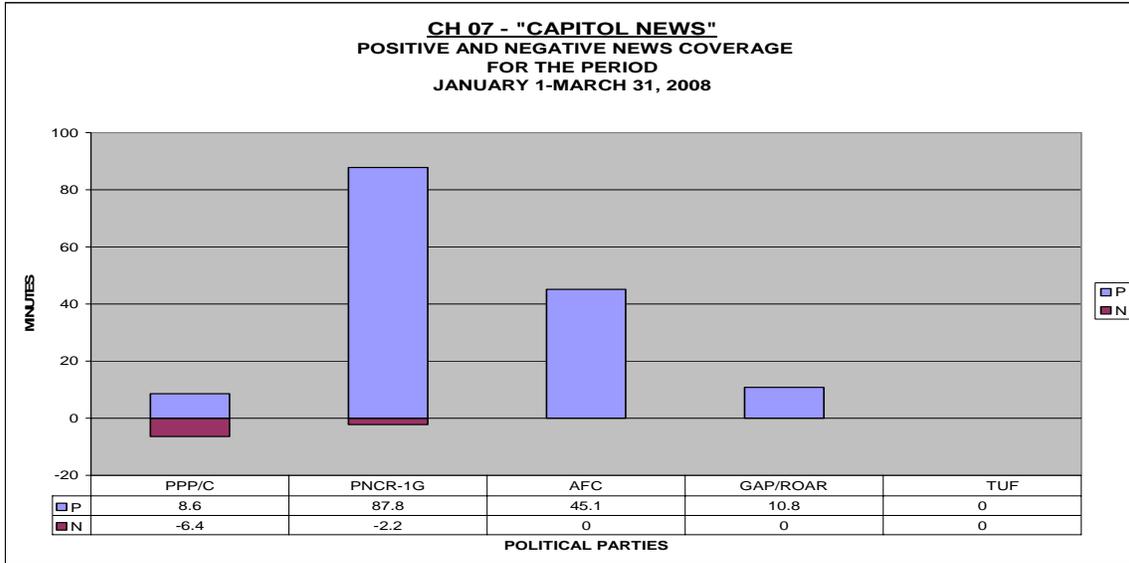
On the program **Facing The Nation** hosted by the leader of the PNC/R-1G, Mr. Robert Corbin, aired on 08/02/08, a caller made an unsubstantiated and racially prejudiced allegation that the host gave credence to, instead of asking the contributor to refrain from making remarks likely to exacerbate a volatile period of ethnic insecurity in the country. The following is the verbal communication exchanged between the caller and host:

Caller: “...another concern of mine is this government does not care about the African community, we have to call a spade a spade....**the fact of the matter is that 300 farmers in Buxton who have sought employment because the government refuses to give African employment** and they have taken it upon themselves to seek employment and the government now feels it is okay to weed down those land on the pretext that they are criminals at the back dam is totally unacceptable” (sic).

Corbin: “My point is I agree with you fully...”

It was observed that during the time the caller was speaking the host (Mr. Corbin) was listening very intently and at the end stated that he endorsed the sentiments expressed.

The Unit noted that the host was moderating the program in his official capacity as Leader of the Opposition and the PNC/R-1G, and is within this context that his condoning of the remarks made is cause for serious concern. It was logically expected that the host being a prominent politician in the society – one whom a significant section of the population looks to for positive leadership- would have taken the opportunity to point out to the caller the tenuity and spuriousness of her expressed perceptions, and possibly educate and inform her of the potentially negative impact such racially divisive and unsubstantiated allegations can have on the society.



CH 7 “Capitol News” (Bar-Chart)

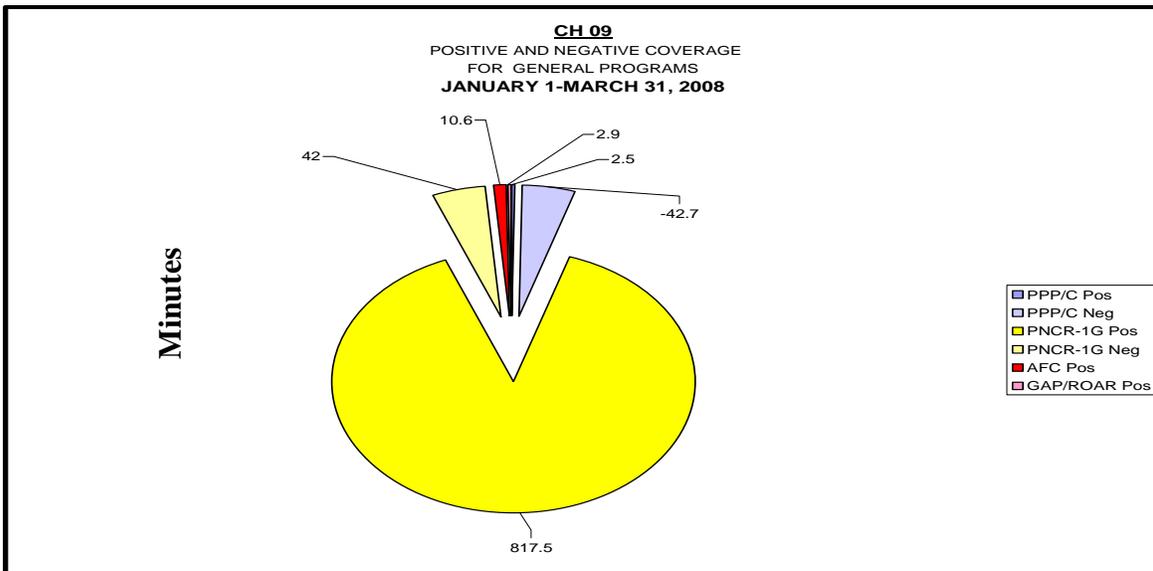
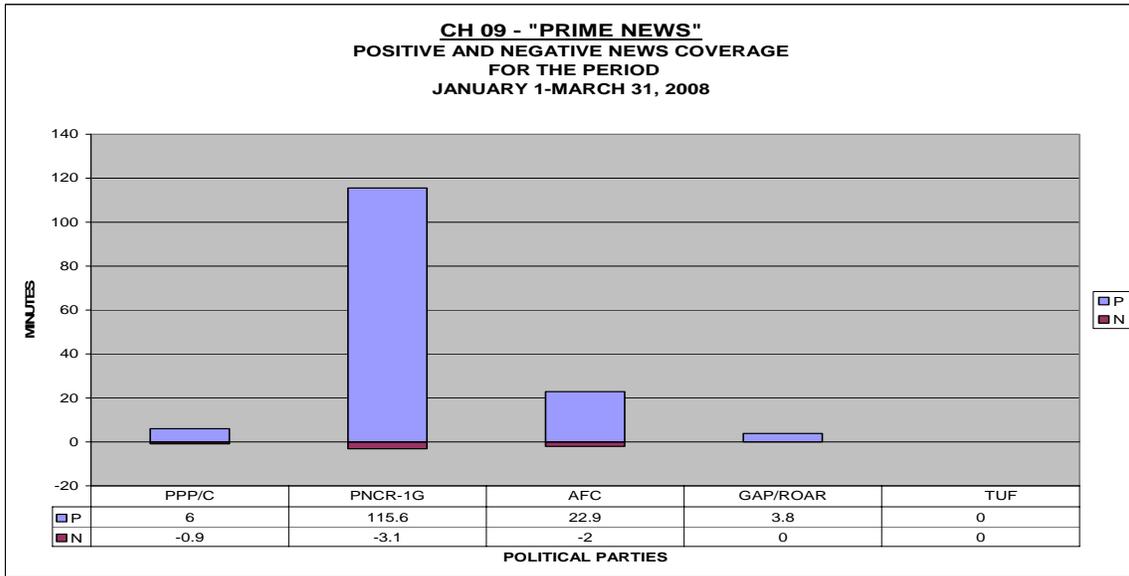
For this period under review (01/01/08-31/03/08) **Capitol News** gave the PNC/R-1G the largest share of positive coverage relative to the other parliamentary political parties. In fact, the comparison shows that the PNC/R-1G received 10 times more positive coverage than the PPP/C; 8 times more than GAP/ROAR and almost twice the amount received by the AFC. And, in terms of negative coverage only two(2) parties were negatively covered with the PPP/C being the most favored in this respect, receiving almost 3 times more negative coverage than the PNC/R-1G.

General Programs (Pie-Chart)

Only the PNC/R-1G received any coverage in the Channel's General Programming and the positive coverage the party attracted was more than 19 times the negative coverage it received.

Analysis

Capitol News output was distinctly shaped by the newsteam's bias in favor of the PNC/R-1G. The PPP/C's meager positive coverage was nearly obliterated by the large negative coverage the party was given. Conversely, the PNC/R-1G's lead in positive coverage was hardly affected by the infinitesimal negative coverage it received. Both the AFC and GAP/ROAR received equitable amounts of positive coverage and this is to the credit of the newsteam. However, the anomaly that is patently obvious on the bar-chart, is not the quantum of positive coverage bestowed on the PNC/R-1G, but the dispersion of positive and negative coverage for the PPP/C which is in contradistinction to the dispersion of coverage for the other parties. The data compiled and presented for Capitol News in this first quarter shows that the newscast has started the year with an 'unbalanced gait'. This conclusion is at variance with the high standards generally exhibited by the newscast during last year and is a situation that necessitates urgent adjustments to the newscast's balancing act; a task not beyond the capacity of the newsteam to accomplish.



Ch 9 ‘Prime News’ (Bar-Chart)

The apportioning of coverage to the parliamentary political parties by **Prime News** for the first three (3) months of the year was as follows: the PNC/R-1G received the best share of positive coverage, followed by the AFC, PPP/C and GAP/ROAR in that order. And, the positive coverage given to PNC/R-1G was more than 3 times the combined positive coverage shared by the other three (3) political parties. The PPP/C, PNC/R-1G and the AFC recorded inconsequential amounts of negative coverage which did not adversely impact the positive coverage they received to any significant extent, while TUF was excluded from the schema.

General Programs (Pie-Chart)

The figures on the chart revealed that the PNC/R-1G garnered the major portion of positive coverage for this current period. The positive coverage the party received was a whopping 51 times more than all the other parties put together. The AFC trailed distantly in second position, followed by GAP/ROAR and PPP/C in that order. Both the PNC/R-1G and the PPP/C received virtually equal amounts of negative coverage; however, the PPP/C's quantum of negative coverage in effect cancelled out the comparably minute positive coverage the party received.

Analysis

The coverage that was apportioned to the PPP/C, AFC and GAP/ROAR by **Prime News** cannot be considered as being within an equitable framework. Notwithstanding the fact that the allotment of positive and negative coverage are influenced by and dependent on many variables, such as the parties' levels of activism, public profiles and ability to engage the media's attention, the gargantuan disparity in the amounts of positive coverage separating the PNC/R-1G from the other parties still begs for a convincing explanation. This aberration can only be logically understood in the context of the newscast being favorably disposed to giving PNC/R-1G officials greater latitude (or airtime on the newscast) to articulate their positions on issues of the day, as against the timings afforded to the other political parties. The Unit's position, which is guided by the disposition of the chart's figures, is that Prime News can do itself a great service, and gain the public's confidence at the same time, by striving to ensure equity in the news content it is delivering to consumers.

The pie-chart figures are indicative of the dominance of the PNC/R-1G for attracting positive coverage in the Talk-Shows, commentaries etc. aired on Ch 9. The superfluity of negative coverage recorded for the PPP/C is a natural spin-off from the surfeit of PNC/R-1G sympathetic programs that are aired on this channel. The PPP/C's predicament is also explainable when seen against the background of heightened political activism channeled through this medium in the aftermath of the Lusignan and Bartica tragedies that occurred in the months of January and February respectively. Also, this station is the medium of choice for the paid PNC/R-1G twice weekly program **Nation Watch**. And even though the smaller parties fared reasonably well in terms of positive coverage from the programs of the station, the general trend is that the PPP/C has always found it difficult to be accorded any significant positive coverage on this channel.

The Unit recommends that the management of Ch 9 undertake an objective study of how the station's programs with political content are perceived by the general public in terms of balance; the findings may prove instructive and informative in the (re) formulation of the station's policy.

Comments

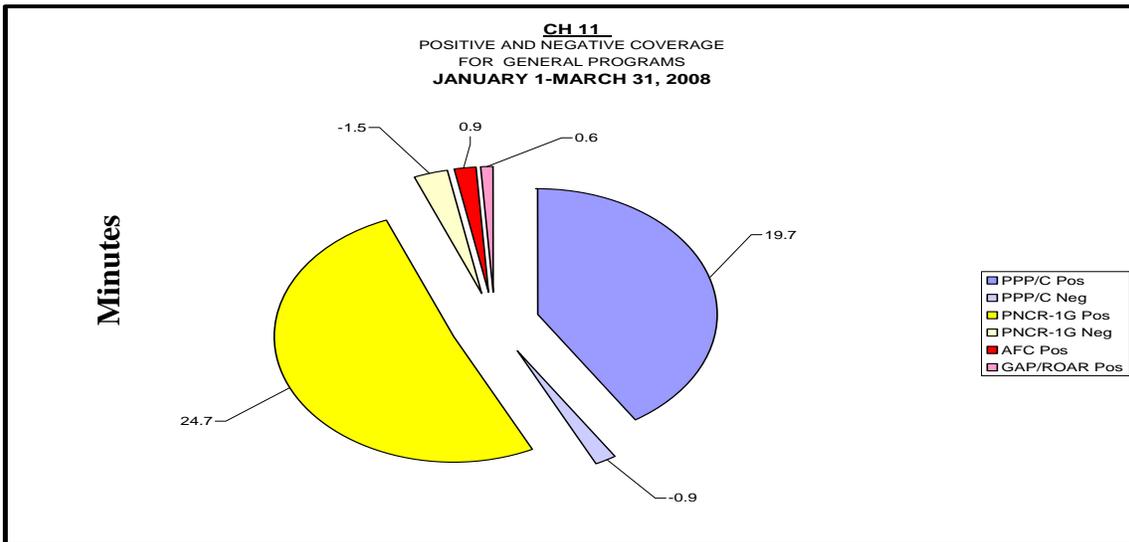
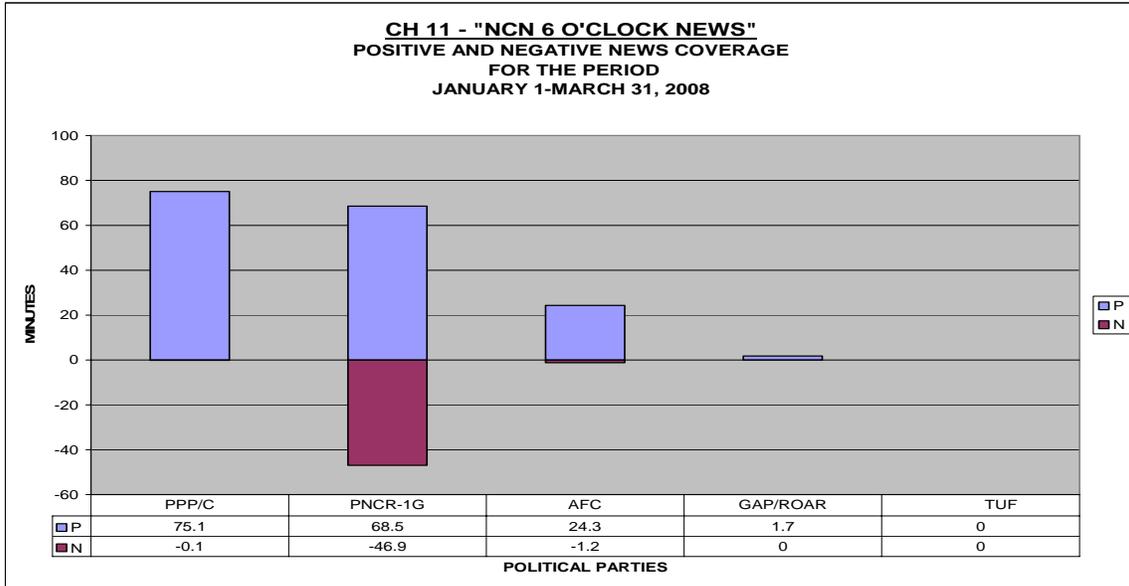
Black Repatriation Forum

The program **Black Repatriation Forum** aired on 1 February 2008, showed explicit sexual scenes that brings into focus the necessity for the local media to engage in prudent self censorship so as to promote high standards in public morals and journalistic ethics when channeling information to the consuming public.

During the program, the host, Mr. Jonathan Adams, in alluding to certain aspects of slavery attempted to reinforce the points he was making with video clips which showed graphic, uncensored visuals of:

- An African woman being brutally raped by a white European male, while some small African children (probably between the ages of 5-7 years old) looked on with horrified expressions on their faces; and,
- The privates of stark-naked African women (slaves) being fondled and derogatively described by white males.

The Unit took into consideration the timings of this program, which started around 16:30 hrs, and strongly advises the host that in future he should factor into his considerations the potential audience at that period in the afternoon, which is very much likely to include little children and teenagers with impressionable minds and a significant adult population whose values would have been offended. Further, discretion could have been exercised by displaying a cautionary notifying of the scenes to follow before the actual showings - as is normally done by conscientious practitioners of journalism. This was not done, and as such, the Unit is compelled to advocate the need for Talk-Show hosts in particular, and Editors in general, to be always aware of the sometimes unintended negative effects that uncensored prurient material can have on the public.



Ch 11 “NCN 6 O’Clock News” (Bar-Chart)

The bar-chart plotted for the **6 O’Clock News** shows that the PPP/C gained the highest positive coverage followed closely by the PNC/R-1G, AFC and GAP/ROAR in that order. The PPP/C’s positive coverage was slightly more than the PNC/R-1G, but almost thrice that of the AFC and GAP/ROAR combined. Only three (3) of the parties were negatively covered, that is, PPP/C, PNC/R-1G and AFC; however, the PNC/R-1G received 36 times the negative coverage given to PPP/C and the AFC combined. The PNC/R-1G’s net positive coverage placed the party just ahead of GAP/ROAR in the positive rankings.

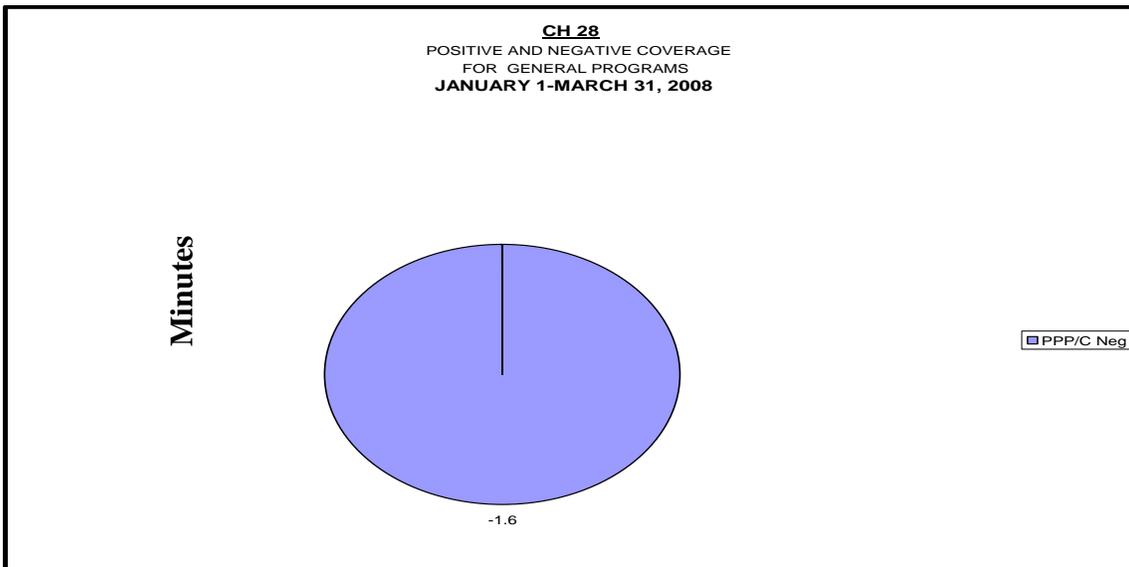
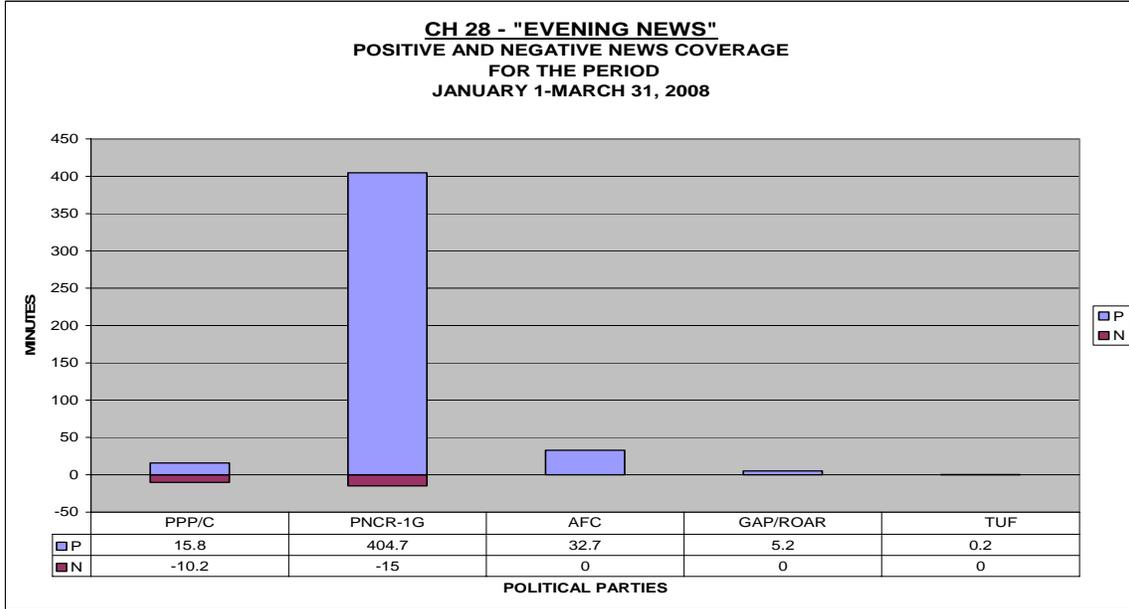
General Programs (Pie-Chart)

The spread of data on the station's programs chart revealed that in the general programs of the station the PNC/R-1G edged out the PPP/C for the largest share of positive coverage. GAP/ROAR and the AFC were accorded small amounts of positive coverage, and neither of the two (2) was negatively portrayed. The PPP/C and PNC/R-1G were the only two (2) parties that recorded negative coverage, though not in any significant amounts.

Analysis

The apportioning of positive coverage to the political parties by the news team of the 6 O'Clock News was somewhat equitable. The bar-chart was spoilt by the non- appearance of TUF on the radar screen, which in all fairness cannot be blamed on the newsteam; in fact, there exists a causal relationship between the torpidity of the party and its inability to be graphed. Contrastingly, the disproportionate amount of negative coverage that the PNC/R-1G attracted in comparison to the other political parties was a direct result of the profusion of government (and PPP/C) views and positions highlighted on the newscasts in the aftermath of the Lusignan and Bartica incidents, that were for the most part critical of the PNC/R-1G. Taking these factors into consideration, the newsteam is commended by the Unit for a reasonably good performance; it is a good start to build on for raising the newscast professional standards, once the principles of balance, equity and fairness are adhered to.

The station's general programs chart was a very good example of equitable distribution of coverage received by the political parties. Looking at the chart's figures, no party that was covered can feel cheated or slighted. Similar to the 6 O'clock News chart, the station's programs chart reflected an auspicious start to the new year and raises expectations that this performance will be bettered in the months ahead.



Ch 28 “Evening News” (Bar-Chart)

For the period under review the **Evening News** gave the PNC/R-1G the highest amount of positive coverage, followed by the AFC, PPP/C, GAP/ROAR and TUF in that order. The PNC/R-1G’s positive coverage was over 7 times the same coverage given to all the other political parties combined. Only two (2) parties received negative coverage- PPP/C and PNC/R-1G. The negative coverage given to the PNC/R-1G was not that impacting as to seriously diminish its overall commanding lead of positive coverage; however, in the case of PPP/C the opposite obtained. The negative coverage the PPP/C received left it with a net positive coverage that relegated the party to just above GAP/ROAR in the placement order of the parties.

General Programs (Pie-Chart)

The Unit only documented measurable timings (albeit negative) for the PPP/C in the general programs of the station.

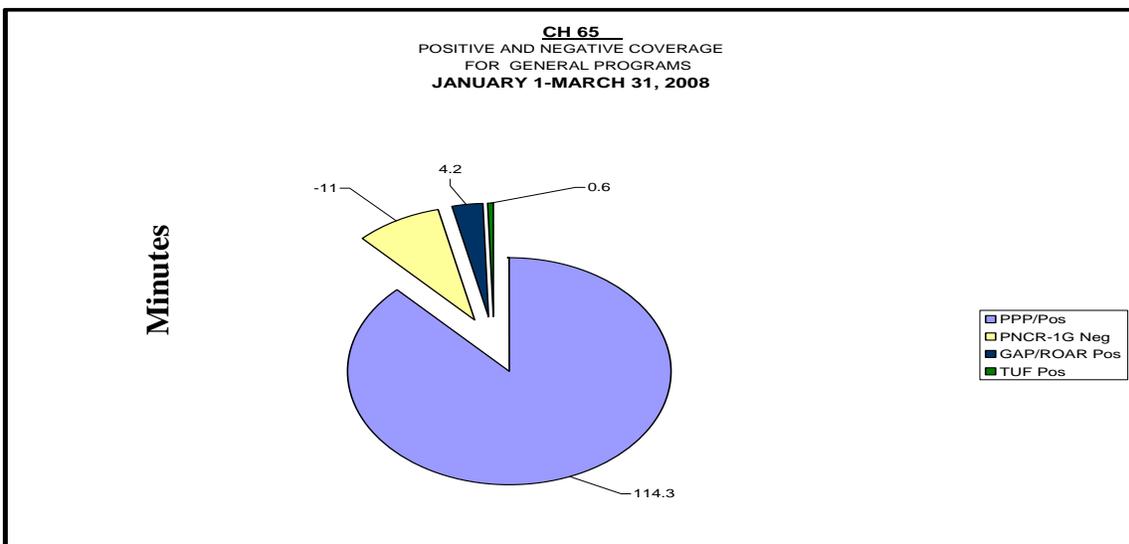
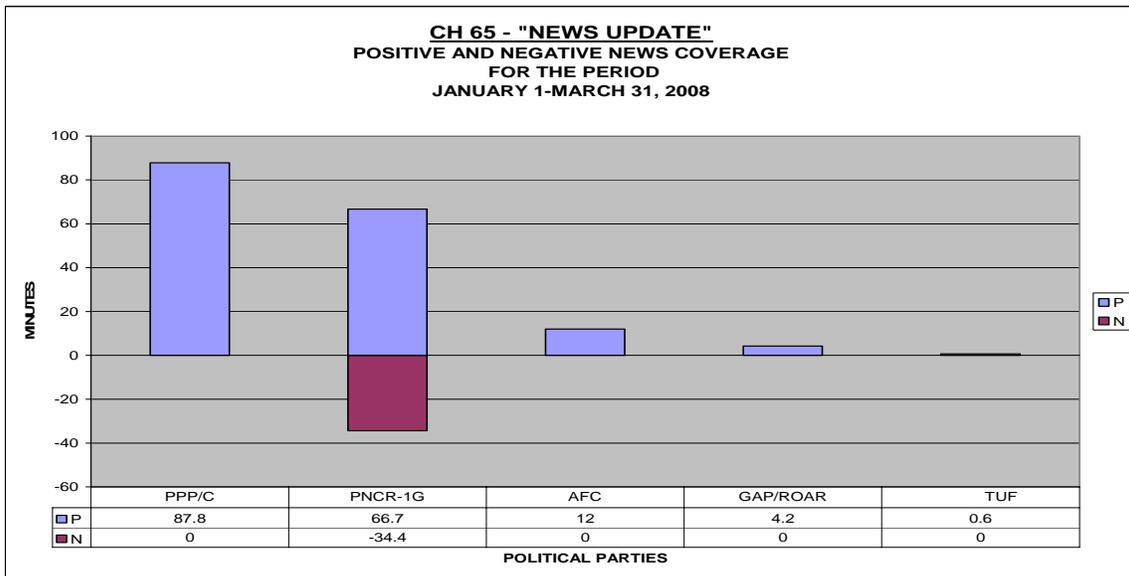
Analysis

The **Evening News** chart presents contrasting statistics which infer that the newscast lacks balance in its offerings to the Guyanese public. The huge disparity in positive coverage between the PNC/R-1G and the other political parties that is candidly exposed on the chart cannot be disputed. The figures on the chart reflect the preponderance of PNC/R-1G's views on issues and events that are conveyed to the public through the newscast on a daily basis. This observed trend cannot be separated from the fact that the owner of the station and publisher of the newscast is a PNC/R-1G parliamentarian; a nexus that has eroded the credibility of the newscast to deliver fair, factual and unbiased information to the public, without attempting to burnish the image of the party in the process. Balance and equity are two (2) vital ingredients missing from the Evening News, and management will have to dutifully concern themselves with correcting the identified faults that led to this anomaly if the newscast is to be taken seriously and considered as being professional by the general public.

Comments

Evening News

The Unit takes the Editor of the Evening News to task for failing to exercise good judgment in the dissemination of news to the citizens of this country. The specific instance being referred to is the broadcast of the Evening News on 25/02/08 (rebroadcast on 26/02/08) which aired a story about the alleged arrest by the Joint Services of a female GECOM scrutineer from Buxton. In the insert to the story, the alleged victim in relating the circumstances leading to her arrest and subsequent release on station bail uttered the **f** word twice. The use of expletives by the aggrieved victim could have been a direct result of her pent-up emotions, which in the circumstance was understandable, but what was reprehensible is the publication of the narrative in its entirety. Also, the fact that it was not a live recording, suggests that there was adequate time to excise the superfluous adjectives (expletives) if not from the original broadcast, then at least from the rebroadcast, in the interest of good taste; an important value that should always inform and influence the selection of news content.



Ch 65 “News Update” (Bar-Chart)

During the first three (3) months of this year, **News Update** gave the five (5) parliamentary political parties coverage as follows: the PPP/C got the largest share of positive coverage, closely followed by the PNC/R-1G, AFC, GAP/ROAR and TUF in that order. The PPP/C and PNC/R-1G’s positive coverage were considerably better than the three (3) smaller parties. The PPP/C’s positive coverage was over 5 times the combined positive coverage of the smaller parties (AFC, GAP/ROAR and TUF), whilst the PNC/R-1G obtained almost 4 times the combined positive coverage of the same parties. The PNC/R-1G was the only party that received negative coverage from the newscast.

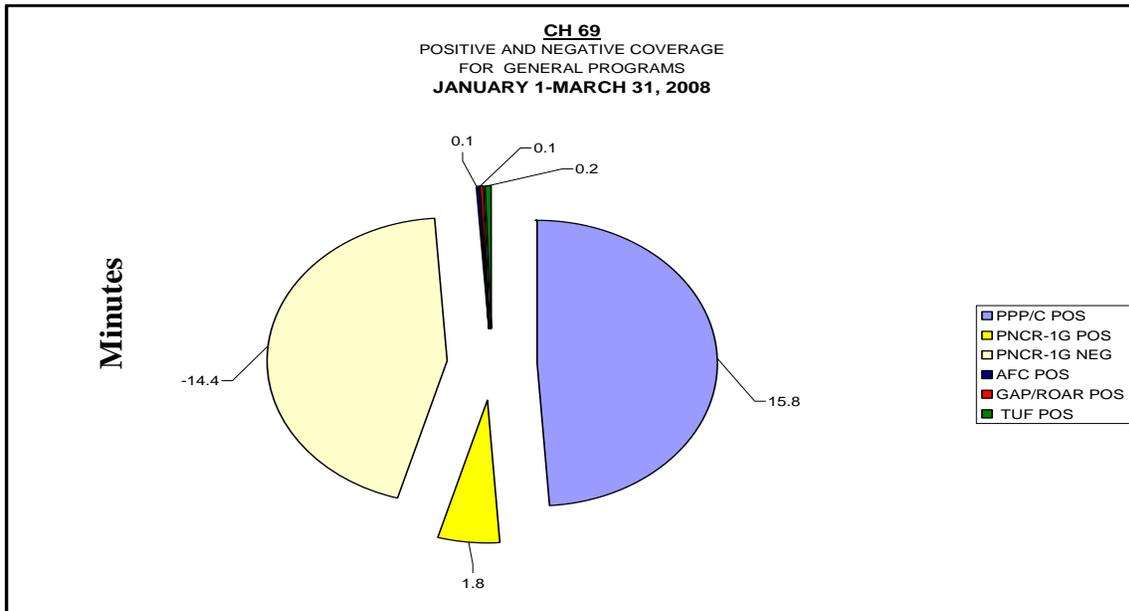
General Programs (Pie-Chart)

The figures from the station's general programs chart show that the PPP/C gained the lion's share of positive coverage, outdistancing both GAP/ROAR and TUF (the other parties that were also positively covered). Interestingly, the PNC/R-1G was the only party accorded negative coverage. The PPP/C's positive coverage was almost 24 times the positive coverage garnered by GAP/ROAR and TUF combined.

Analysis

The **News Update** chart suggests that all the parliamentary political parties were given positive coverage to a level approaching equity, based on their numerical strength in Parliament. However, the commendable distribution of positive coverage accorded to the parties was sullied by the concentration of negative coverage in the statistics for the PNC/R-1G. A perusal of the Unit's documented observations of this newscast over the past three (3) months revealed that the negative coverage given to the PNC/R-1G is a result of the barrage of news items broadcast daily on the newscast that were overtly favorable to the government and the ruling party (PPP/C), and which by their subjective construct portrayed the main opposition PNC/R-1G negatively. Nevertheless, to the newscast's credit, it showcased the views of PNC/R-1G's officials, and officials from the other smaller parliamentary parties, on many important national issues, although these appearances were few, in between, and not as lengthy as the amount of time normally given to government spokespersons. The Unit also detected a pattern whereby news items were skillfully manipulated to ensure that neither the Government nor the ruling PPP/C was negatively portrayed. Outside of these indiscretions, which are correctable - once the news team has the will to improve their professionalism - the newscast delivered an average performance for this first quarter.

The chart for the station's general programs is almost a replica of the News Update chart in terms of the distribution of coverage to the political parties, but with a few minor variations. Dissimilar to the news chart, the general programs chart's figures shows that the PNC/R-1G did not accumulate any positive coverage; and, the AFC was not measurably covered either positively or negatively. The similarity to the news chart is that the PNC/R-1G was the only party negatively covered and the PPP/C accumulated the largest slice of positive coverage relative to the two (2) smaller parties - GAP/ROAR and TUF. The figures from the programs chart were drawn mainly from the PPP/C paid political program, **Getting It Right**, aired twice weekly on this channel. As such, the reason(s) behind the PNC/R-1G being the only party to receive negative coverage in the station's programs chart is self-explanatory.



This station does not have a news program. The pie-chart reproduced above gave the figures recorded for the parliamentary political parties taken exclusively from the Talk-Show, **People’s Forum**, which started broadcasting from 16/02/08.

Ch 69 “People’s Forum” Chart

The distribution of coverage amongst the political parties from the **People’s Forum** program showed that all the parties were positively portrayed; however, the PPP/C was given the largest share of positive coverage which was a little over 7 times the same coverage given to the other parties combined. Also, of note, is that the PNC/R-1G was the only party that received negative coverage in a quantum that replicated the PPP/C’s positive coverage relative to the other parties.

Our records at the Unit confirm that the stark contrast between the extremes of positive and negative coverage netted by the PNC/R-1G and PPP/C from the program is attributable to the subjective rhetoric of the personalities who habitually frequented the program as “Guests” and who are known PPP/C members and supporters. Even though the program is not advertised as a paid PPP/C program it has all the hallmarks of being a new forum for the expatiation of that party’s views, and for countering opposition allegations, rather than a serious and professional Talk-Show capable of delivering fair, balanced and equitable content.

Comment

The **People's Forum** program broadcast on Saturday, 23 February 2008, typified the general trend of misguided encouragement given to extremist views by moderators of Talk-Shows in the aftermath of the Lusignan and Bartica killings. The behaviour exhibited during this particular program by the host (Mr. Romel Roopnarine) and his guest (Mr. Anil Nandlall), left much to be desired in terms of social responsibility; and, contributed immeasurably to the program's unacceptable tone and content. The excerpt reproduced below is an example of the many documented exchanges between the host, "Guest" and one of the many callers to the program:

Caller: "...**you don't have to be a rocket scientist to know that Mr. Corbin is part and parcel of this criminal gang...**now back to Mr. Corbin, this is a community [Buxton] that kidnap people and murder them....so you don't have to be a rocket scientist to know that these people using these means to get into power..."

Guest (Mr. Anil Nandlall): "**But rather than accept that caller, rather than accept that is the reality, Mr. Corbin wants more time on GTV Television...**"

Host (Romel Roopnarine): "Okay caller, we understand your frustrations. "

The Unit strongly admonishes the host and his guest for giving verbal support to the allegations made, knowing same was unsubstantiated and likely to polarize the society along political and ethnic lines at a time when the exigency of the prevailing situation demanded a high level of responsibility by media operatives to keep tensions under control. Further, the above statements attributed to the caller and Mr. Nandlall are a breach of Section H of the MCC which states that "...**deliberate distortion of reality so as to lead the public to a particular understanding of events and issues without regard for reality can poison the processes of democracy.**"

General Observations – Television

An analytical dissection of the news charts and programs charts for each TV channel for the first quarter of this year indicated a pattern which intimated that there was rank favoritism towards the two (2) major parliamentary political parties. The figures revealed that on certain channels (2, 6, 9 and 28) the PNC/R-1G influenced the content of news items, specifically those with a political orientation; likewise, the PPP/C was most influential with Channels 11, 65 and 69. This observed dichotomy amongst the channels has been alluded to and substantiated on many previous occasions with irrefutable statistical evidence, this being the latest of such categorizations. The major casualty of these cleavages has been the professionalism of some newscasts which have shown alarming regressions over the past three (3) months.

In light of the foregoing, the Unit recommends that the editors of all TV newscasts take a moment out to reflect on the degeneration of standards pervading the industry and to collectively put the elevation of standards above their political subjectivities, so that the current distressing state of affairs is ameliorated.

MMU Comment (TV)

The period January 28- February 28, 2008, that is, in the aftermath of the Lusignan and Bartica tragedies, the broadcast media in the form of several TV stations went on an excursion into mischief, breaking all the acceptable principles and customs of professional journalism. Instead of admirably rising to the challenge of delivering factual news about the two (2) incidences to an aggrieved public, some TV stations chose instead to dissolutely indulge in a politically influenced propaganda binge that is antithetical to their putative role, and damaging to the psyche of the nation as a whole.

Amongst the plethora of observances documented by the MMU of the broadcast media's performance during the aforementioned period, critical attention was directed to those reports that emanated from TV stations immediately following the Lusignan tragedy which occurred in the early morning hours of Saturday, 26th January 2008. These initial reports stood out prominently since they left much to be desired in terms of accuracy, fairness, balance and adherence to the tenets of good journalistic practices. Reporters, News Anchors and Talk- Show Hosts, engaged in fierce competition to outdo each other in getting information out to the public, and within this milieu less effort was expended in initiating and completing the process of verification before presenting information as 'facts' to the public. Also, some TV stations abandoned the hallowed precept of journalistic integrity by allowing their channels to be 'commandeered' by politicians seeking political mileage out of the engineered politicized environment which temporarily prevailed.

The Unit also observed with some amount of apprehension, the effusive and uncensored use of profanities that were audibly heard during the re-broadcast of footage from protest actions involving East Coast Demerara residents, and during the visit to Buxton by

Leader of the Opposition in the days following the Lusignan tragedy; CNS Ch 6 and HBTV Ch 9 are the two stations guilty of this transgression.

And, the foreboding that characterized national life in the aftermath of the two killing sprees was further compounded by the contemptible behavior exhibited by some Talk-Show hosts who seized the occasions (Lusignan and Bartica) to go into frenzied overdrive. Their actions in entertaining and condoning inflammatory, racist and divisive remarks made by callers to their programs, contributed in no small measure towards exacerbating the fragile social conditions that manifested in the wake of the tragedies. The Talk-Shows that were egregious in this regard are **VOP** (Ch 6), **Nation Watch** (Ch 9) and **People's Forum** (Ch 69).

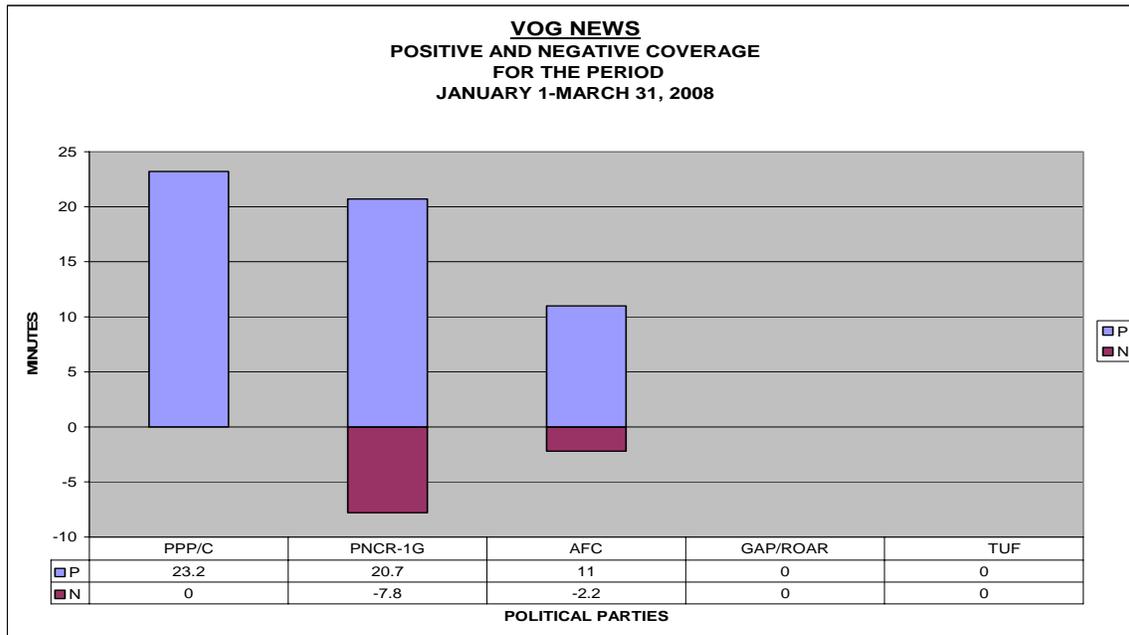
The foregoing scenario shaped the contours of the news and programs charts of the majority of TV Channels for this period under review and brought to the fore in a very profound way the political allegiances that continue to influence the presentation of news and information to the public by these stations.

**TOTAL POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE COVERAGE (MINS) EACH PARTY RECEIVED
FROM TELEVISION STATIONS FOR THE PERIOD
1st January – 31st March, 2008**

CHANNEL	PARTY	POSITIVE COVERAGE		TOTAL POSITIVE MINS	NEGATIVE COVERAGE (MINS)		TOTAL NEGATIVE MINS
		NEWS	GENERAL PROGRAMS		NEWS	GENERAL PROGRAMS	
		JAN 1- MAR 31	JAN 1- MAR 31	JAN 1- MAR 31	JAN 1- MAR 31	JAN 1- MAR 31	OCT 1 - DEC 31
2	PPP/C	8.8	0	8.8	-3.6	0	-3.6
	PNCR-1G	113.5	0.3	113.8	-0.9	0	-0.9
	AFC	16.9	0	16.9	0	0	0
	GAP/ROAR	4.2	0	4.2	0	0	0
	TUF	0	0	0	0	0	0
6	PPP/C	9.8	9.9	19.7	-6.4	-67.1	-73.5
	PNCR-1G	135.5	348.2	483.7	-0.9	-24.4	-25.3
	AFC	27	2.9	29.9	0	-2.2	-2.2
	GAP/ROAR	6.2	1.3	7.5	0	-0.1	-0.1
	TUF	0	0	0	0	-0.5	-0.5
7	PPP/C	8.6	0	8.6	-6.4	0	-6.4
	PNCR-1G	87.8	35.1	122.9	-2.2	-1.8	-4
	AFC	45.1	0	45.1	0	0	0
	GAP/ROAR	10.8	0	10.8	0	0	0
	TUF	0	0	0	0	0	0
9	PPP/C	6	2.5	8.5	-0.9	-42.7	-43.6
	PNCR-1G	115.6	817.5	933.1	-3.1	42	38.9
	AFC	22.9	10.6	33.5	-2	0	-2
	GAP/ROAR	3.8	2.9	6.7	0	0	0
	TUF	0	0	0	0	0	0

CHANNEL	PARTY	POSITIVE COVERAGE		TOTAL POSITIVE MINS	NEGATIVE COVERAGE (MINS)		TOTAL NEGATIVE MINS
		NEWS	GENERAL PROGRAMS		NEWS	GENERAL PROGRAMS	
		OCT 1 - DEC 31	OCT 1 - DEC 31		OCT 1 - DEC 31	OCT 1 - DEC 31	
11	PPP/C	75.1	19.7	94.8	-0.1	-0.9	-1
	PNCR-1G	68.5	24.7	93.2	-46.9	-1.5	-48.4
	AFC	24.3	0.9	25.2	-1.2	0	-1.2
	GAP/ROAR	1.7	0.6	2.3	0	0	0
	TUF	0	0	0	0	0	0
28	PPP/C	15.8	0	15.8	-10.2	-1.6	-11.8
	PNCR-1G	404.7	0	404.7	-15	0	-15
	AFC	32.7	0	32.7	0	0	0
	GAP/ROAR	5.2	0	5.2	0	0	0
	TUF	0.2	0	0.2	0	0	0
65	PPP/C	87.8	114.3	202.1	0	0	0
	PNCR-1G	66.7	1	67.7	-34.4	-11	-45.4
	AFC	12	0	12	0	0	0
	GAP/ROAR	4.2	4.2	8.4	0	0	0
	TUF	0.6	0.6	1.2	0	0	0
69	PPP/C	-	15.8	15.8	-	0	0
	PNCR-1G	-	1.8	1.8	-	-14.4	-14.4
	AFC	-	0.1	0.1	-	0	0
	GAP/ROAR	-	0.1	0.1	-	0	0
	TUF	-	0.2	0.2	-	0	0

Radio

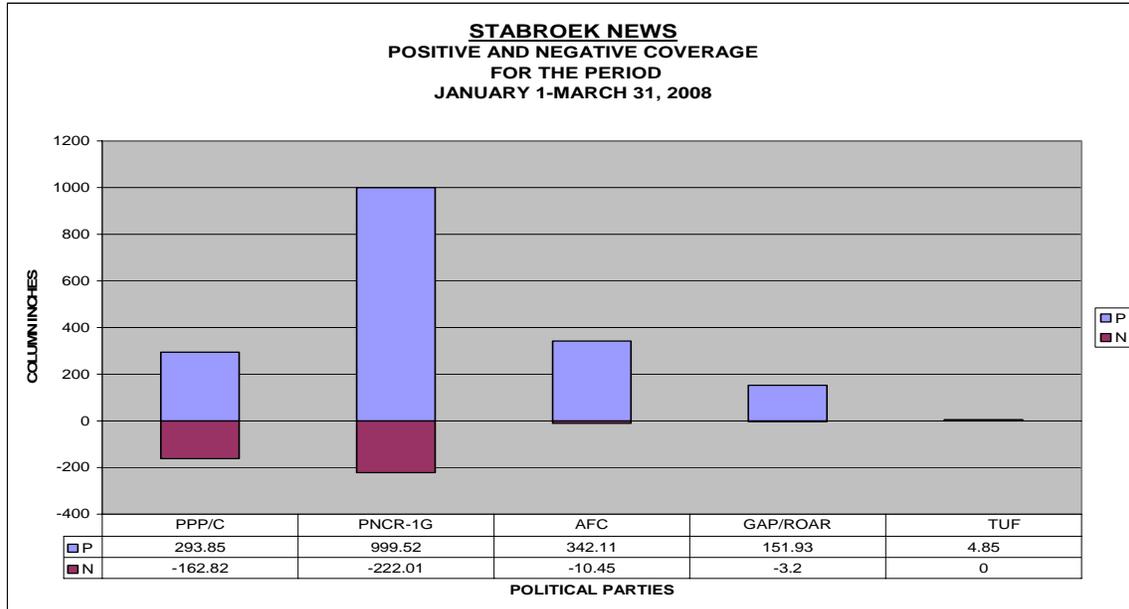


Voice Of Guyana News (Bar-Chart)

For the period under review the **VOG News** covered only three of the five parliamentary political parties and the coverage they received were as follows: PPP/C gained the highest amount of positive coverage, closely followed by the PNC/R-1G with AFC bringing up the tail. Only two (2) of the three (3) parties were negatively covered: PNC/R-1G and AFC, while neither GAP/ROAR nor TUF recorded any measurable coverage.

Analysis

There was a canny consistency in the apportioning of positive and negative coverage to the PNC/R-1G, PPP/C and AFC. And, even though the PNC/R-1G and AFC were the only two parties to endure negative publicity, the amounts of negative coverage they attracted did not alter their placements, which is indicative of the newscast achieving a reasonable level of balance and equity in its output. The non-appearance of GAP/ROAR and TUF in the chart's statistics can be attributed to those parties' low public profiles in national life and not necessarily to a deliberate stratagem by the station to effectively sideline them. Taking all these factors into consideration, the VOG News can be adjudged as performing just about average for this first quarter.

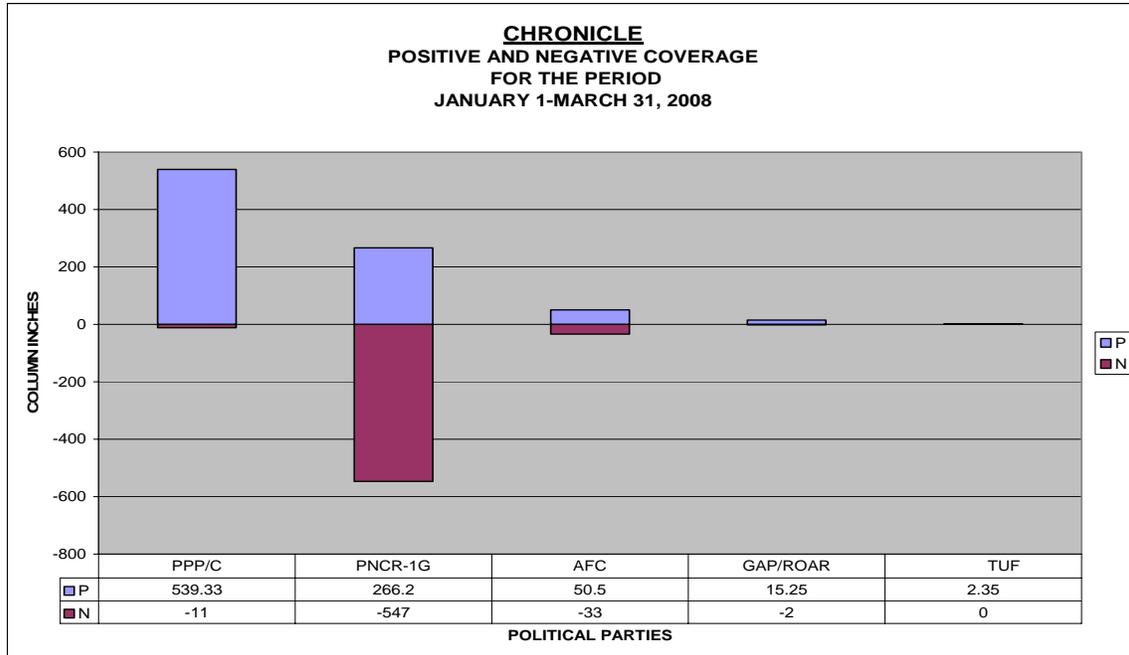


Stabroek News (Bar-Chart)

In the first quarter of this year, the **Stabroek News (SN)** gave the **PNC/R-1G** the largest share of positive coverage. The **AFC** gained the second highest amount of positive coverage followed by the **PPP/C**, **GAP/ROAR** and **TUF** in that order. The **PNC/R-1G** picked up the largest slice of negative coverage followed in order by the **PPP/C**, **AFC** and **GAP/ROAR**. **TUF** was the only party that was not negatively covered. The positive coverage accorded to the **PNC/R-1G** was just around three (3) times the positive coverage given to the **AFC** and **PPP/C** respectively, and over 6 times the positive coverage allotted to **GAP/ROAR**. In like manner, **PNC/R-1G's** negative coverage was appreciably more than the combined negative coverage of all the other political parties.

Analysis

The SN chart presented an array of figures that bespoke a genuine concern for the achievement of equity and balance in news reporting. The lesser amount of positive coverage that was given to the **PPP/C** relative to the **PNC/R-1G** and **AFC**, though it is the party that forms the government, has its causation in the fact that the conceptual distinction between the ruling party (**PPP/C**) and government is rigidly adhered to by the Unit for the purpose of accrediting coverage to that party. This policy which has always been sacrosanctly practised by the Unit, severely limits the favorable showing of the **PPP/C**, but is necessary in the interest of accuracy and maintaining objectivity in the Unit's work. With this variable factored into the analysis of the newspaper's performance over the past three (3) months, the conclusion is that the newspaper's delivery of news to consumers was above average, and typified a high standard of professionalism by the outfit.



Guyana Chronicle(Bar-Chart)

In this period currently under review, the distribution of coverage to the political parties by the **Guyana Chronicle** (GC) was as follows: PPP/C was apportioned the highest amount of positive coverage, followed in order by the PNC/R-1G, AFC, GAP/ROAR and TUF. The PNC/R-1G attracted the greatest share of negative coverage and was followed in decreasing amounts by the AFC, PPP/C and GAP/ROAR. TUF was the only party excluded from negative coverage. Of significance, is that the PPP/C's positive coverage was more than the combined positive coverage of the other political parties, while the PNC/R-1G's negative coverage was almost 12 times the combined total of negative coverage for the other political parties.

Analysis

The expansive downward projection on the PNC/R-1G's bar in the chart is most striking because of its deviation from the pattern of statistical representations. The glaring contrast between the positive coverage allotted to the PPP/C and negative coverage given to the PNC/R-1G is a behavioral trend typical to the GC that has been observed and documented over time by the Unit. A perusal of our records revealed that over the past three (3) months, the letter pages of the GC has been swamped with letters that were virulently anti-opposition [read PNC/R-1G] on one hand, and overtly supportive of the government and PPP/C, on the other. The anti-opposition construct of the letter pages was buttressed in other opinion-influencing sections of the newspaper through articles written by a phalanx of columnists, who in like manner are invariably critical of the opposition and abashedly favorable to the PPP/C. The lack of balance evident in the

newspaper's output tarnished its credibility, and if not addressed in the short-term by management, will redound to the concretization of the public's perception of the newspaper as being the exclusive preserve for the ventilation of pro-government and pro PPP/C views only.

The Unit advises the management of the GC to change the current direction of the newspaper, or else it will never realize its latent potential to become a creditable media.

Comments

- In the GC of 9 February 2008, there was a letter to the editor captioned "Stop using people for your own political expediency" (pg. 7), in which the author using the sobriquet '**Amen**' made certain potent allegations that the Unit felt should have been editorially excised from the missive for want of substantiation of the claims made and in the interest of providing the public with the facts at all times. The writer alleged in the letter (at para. 2) that :

"As for the opposition PNC/R and Robert Corbin, they are fixated with one village in Guyana - Buxton. **They support crime and criminals** and fan the flames to disrupt the smooth running of Guyana and rob all Guyanese of their happiness".

Basic journalism principles relating to objectivity and fairness posit that allegations of the nature made above require that the newspaper's editor solicit a response from the party being accused. Whether this was done was not stated. This aside, the timing of the publication (in the aftermath of the Lusignan tragedy) calls into question the soundness and rationality that inheres in and guides editorial judgments as to what should be released into the public domain.

The Unit refers the editor of the GC letter pages to Section D (2) of the MCC which states very clearly that "**No story is fair, if it includes essentially irrelevant information, rumour or unsubstantiated statements at the expense of significant facts.**"

- The GC of 13 February 2008 printed a letter to the Editor from Rickford Burke (pgs 6-7) in which the under-mentioned comments were made (at para. 28) :

"The PNC/R is in a state of disintegration but its leadership is in a state of delusion. **Its African Guyanese constituents have been marginalized and impoverished to the point of servitude. Their villages have been dismantled and starved of infrastructure**"

The first sentence of the above statement can be considered as falling within the parameters of legitimate criticism, but the other two certainly do not. The latter part of the statement is an unsubstantiated and damning allegation that has recently gained currency. However, its proponents, including Mr. Burke, should provide factual evidence to substantiate same. This oft repeated allegation of African marginalization and impoverishment infers that there is a centrally orchestrated and directed plan by the present government to ‘punish’ people of African descent. Mr. Burke’s letter flatteringly echoed this chorus; a perception that is fuelling discord, suspicion and intense feelings of racial animosity between the two major races of this country.

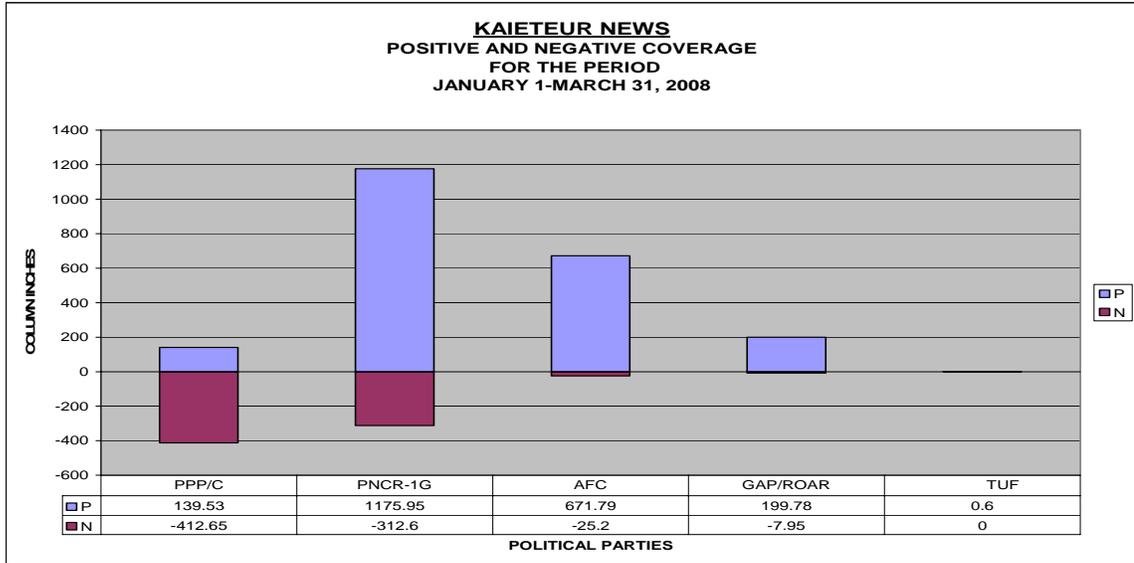
The Unit has noted this editorial indiscretion on the part of the GC editorial department and recommends that careful attention be given to the veracity of allegations being leveled through the newspaper’s letter columns, so that the consuming public is not unduly influenced by the printing of falsehoods, unsubstantiated statements or racial dogma.

- In the GC of 5 March 2008, a letter was addressed to the Editor, captioned “Don’t poison policing with racial politics” (pg.7), in which the writer, Ken Murray, stated the following (at paragraph 5):

“The victims of violent crime in Guyana identify their assailants as Afro-Guyanese most of the time. Afro-Guyanese, in other words, are committing a disproportionate amount of violent crime compared to their representation in the population and that’s according to the victims themselves”.

The above statement made by Mr. Murray is a gross misrepresentation of the facts, and typifies racial stereotyping at its worst. It is the height of irresponsibility that this variant form of subtle racial profiling was allowed to pass as freedom of expression by the Editor of the GC letter pages. These remarks, given space in a national newspaper, is ammunition for the racial extremists in our midst and its publication due to poor or misguided editorial judgment is a great disservice to the ongoing efforts being directed at forging national healing and reconciliation, specifically so, in the aftermath of the Lusignan and Bartica massacres.

The Unit would like to draw the Editor’s attention to Section 11(B1) of the MCC which states in part that the media should **“refrain from the publishing or broadcasting of any matter with the potential for, or likelihood of promoting or inciting racial hatred, bias or contempt...”**



Kaieteur News (Bar-Chart)

The distribution of coverage by **Kaieteur News (KN)** for the current reporting period revealed the following: the PNC/R-G led the way with the largest amount of positive coverage, distantly followed by the AFC, GAP/ROAR, PPP/C and TUF in that order. The PPP/C accumulated the largest portion of negative coverage, closely followed by the PNC/R-G, AFC and GAP/ROAR. TUF was not accredited any negative coverage. The positive coverage given to the PNC/R-G was comparably higher than the combined total of positive coverage given to the other political parties. Of interest, is that only the PPP/C received a larger amount of negative coverage than the positive it was given. The PPP/C’s negative coverage effectively cancelled out its positive coverage and left the party with net negative coverage.

Analysis

The incongruity manifested through the excessive appendage on the negative side of the PPP/C’s representation on the chart, emphasized the level of unfavorable publicity the party attracted in the KN. Conversely, the mammoth lead in positive publicity accrued by the PNC/R-G reflects the more favorable sentiments towards the party conveyed through the newspaper. The AFC’s reasonable share of positive coverage and to a lesser extent GAP/ROAR are also indicators of the good publicity that these parties got from the KN. The dichotomy between the coverage given to the PPP/C and other the political parties has to be viewed against the background of the incessant bombardment of anti-government and anti-PPP/C views disseminated through the newspaper on a daily basis from the pen of a particular columnist (Freddie Kissoon) and the collection of rabid anti-PPP/C columnists writing once-weekly articles for the newspaper. The Unit has noted the introduction of two (2) new articles within the pages of the newspaper, one thrice weekly-“The Parrot Speaks”- and the other twice weekly- “Blame it on the Government”-

which are intended to balance out the preponderance of anti-government and anti-PPP/C views that characterize the fulminations of most KN columnists. However, as much as this policy is highly commendable, it has not so far delivered the expected dividends, that is, the achievement of balance, because even though both articles are decidedly pro-government they are not necessarily pro PPP/C. In the circumstance, the KN is not to be blamed for the disparity in coverage recorded for the parties, since this is being influenced by variables not easily controlled by management. After objectively interpreting the nuances of the information presented on the bar-chart, the Unit made the logical deduction that the KN did an above average job of informing and educating the Guyanese public in a manner that was perceptively unbiased and largely balanced. The Unit hopes that this trend is sustained in the long-term.

Comment

In the aftermath of the Lusignan tragedy which occurred on Saturday 26 January 2008, KN published the photograph of one of the victims on the front page of its Sunday, January 27, 2008 issue, that the Unit observed was at variance with the high standards of professional journalism expected from a national newspaper, and which contravened Section B (2b) of the MCC which explicitly states in part “...**the gratuitous publication of gruesome detail or inflammatory language for sensational purposes is unacceptable**”

The photograph in question showed **a small child lying face down with his intestines protruding from beneath his abdomen.** We (the Unit) are fully aware of the argument that has been used in the past by media entities (internationally) to justify the portrayal of such incidences in graphic detail, that is, a picture is worth a thousand words and exposes a reality that is otherwise difficult to articulate. However, this argument taken to its limit does not negate the fact that the prominent depiction of the dead (on the front page) in such a grotesque way is insensitive to the values of a significant section of the population; a violation of the sanctity and dignity of the dead, and a particularly traumatic experience for relatives of the deceased to see the remains of their departed loved ones callously exposed in the media.

The Unit wishes to advise the management of KN that in future they should exercise better judgment in the selection of photographic material for public viewing, and not to allow the economic benefits of selling a few newspapers more to outweigh the ethical imperative.

General Analysis/Observations – Newspapers

A comparative analysis of the performances of the three dailies has to be guided by the conclusions arrived at by the MMU in terms of each medium's output over the last three (3) months. The Stabroek News and Kaieteur News were commended for creditable performances which were highly rated by the Unit for balance, equity and fairness in news reporting. If the professional standards achieved by these two (2) media houses can be sustained, built upon and emulated, then it augers well for the development of an enviable high quality media in the country. The aberration that is at variance with this optimistic outlook, is the persistent and consistent partisan posture of the GC that shows no inclination of either being reversed or shelved, in spite of the palpable damage being self-inflicted on the newspaper's reputation and credibility. The bane of the Guyana Chronicle is the unprincipled policy being followed by the management of the newspaper that effectively shuts out all views that are not praiseworthy of the government. This unprofessional and undemocratic practice has all but turned the newspaper's letter pages into a farce. The management of Chronicle has to recognize certain salient facts; first and foremost is that the GC unlike the other two dailies is owned by the people of Guyana, and therefore exists to serve all Guyanese. Secondly, the newspaper's letter columns are out of sync with the ethics of democratic journalism. By recognizing these facts and implementing a pro-active approach in pursuing their national responsibility to deliver fair, accurate and balanced information to the Guyanese public, irrespective of pressures to the contrary, management of Chronicle can jump-start the process towards rebuilding its image and joining the Stabroek News and Kaieteur News for having high credibility amongst consumers of media fare in the country.

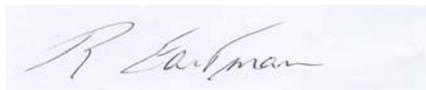
Conclusion

The analyses that were separately conducted for the broadcast and print media performances for the first three months of the year highlighted the depths to which some media entities depreciated. This fact was evidenced by the many examples of inappropriate conduct culled from the Unit's observances. On the positive side, the retrogression in professional standards exhibited by some media houses and operatives in both the TV and newspaper industries was counterbalanced, though not completely, by the laudable performances of a few entities in both spheres. Nonetheless, the overall picture that emerged for this quarter was in the least very disquieting.

In the broadcast media, some TV stations (notably Channels 6, 9 and 69) exposed their soft underbelly when in a tentative period of national crisis they put the interests of their political laagers above that of the nation, whilst, in the print media, the Guyana Chronicle stood out like a 'sore thumb' for its unprofessional and undemocratic behavior. The detrimental actions of these media entities aided their momentum as they slid precipitately to the nadir of public expectation. Whether they have the will to begin the tedious ascent to the attainable summit of high standards, is left to speculation.

The need for the nurturing of a progressive media in the country that is influenced by the best practices of the journalistic creed, cannot be more emphasized at this point in time, when for example, media reportage emanating from sections of both the broadcast and print media in the wake of the Lusignan and Bartica tragedies, put the public in the unenviable position of having to rely on media sources who were consciously substituting reality with misrepresentations, falsehoods, distortions and blatant propaganda.

Finally, consensual action is needed to urgently suture the hemorrhaging taking place in some sections of the local media. If media behavior during this first quarter sets the trend for the remainder of the year, then the portents are grim for a responsible media environment, which is absolutely necessary for the holding of Local Government Elections later this year. The local media's performance over the past three months should serve as the clarion call for a national discourse between all stakeholders to arrest the decline into a dysfunctional and unsalvageable media environment.



.....
Remington Eastman
Manager
Media Monitoring Unit (GECOM)