

**Guyana Elections Commission**  
**Media Monitoring Unit (MMU)**  
**Monitoring Report: 1<sup>st</sup> October, 2009 – 31<sup>st</sup> December, 2009**

**Introduction:**

This media Report is the fourth and final one for this year, and represents the MMU's observations, analyses, conclusions and recommendations in relation to local media performance for the period 1<sup>st</sup> October -31<sup>st</sup> December 2009.

Quite similar to the Reports done for the preceding Quarters (during 2009), the format for the current reporting period remains the same, with absolute demarcations of separate and distinct categories for the Government, and the five (5) Parliamentary Political Parties. Moreover, in the individual matrices constructed for each of the media entities comprising the mainstream broadcast and print media, can be found delineated, the quantitative measurements given by the Unit to the Government and the Parliamentary Political Parties, for the last three (3) months of 2009.

Further, in an attempt to accurately and objectively report on those observed media patterns that extended beyond the previous reporting periods and into the current one, the Unit selectively made quantitative and qualitative comparisons across all the reporting periods, to highlight the inter and intra similarities and dissimilarities that have defined the local media's performance, not just for the current reporting period, but for the entire year (2009).

The local media's coverage of the Government and the five (5) Parliamentary Political Parties, **outside of an election period**, measured by the Unit in minutes (TV and Radio), and column inches (Newspaper), during the above-stated period was taken from:

**Television**

GEN Ch. 2  
CNS Ch. 6  
WRHM Ch. 7  
HBTV Ch. 9  
NCN Ch. 11  
VCT Ch. 28  
MTV Ch. 65

**Radio**

Voice Of Guyana (VOG)

**Newspaper**

Guyana Chronicle

Kaieteur News

Stabroek News

Guyana Times

In like manner, the Parliamentary Political Parties whose political and social activities were reported on by the aforementioned media are as follows:  
**PPP/C, PNCR-1G, AFC, GAP/ROAR, and TUF.**

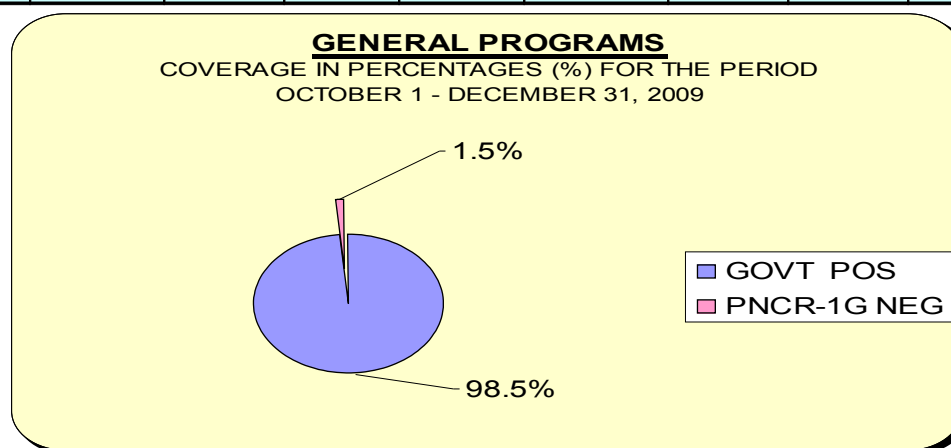
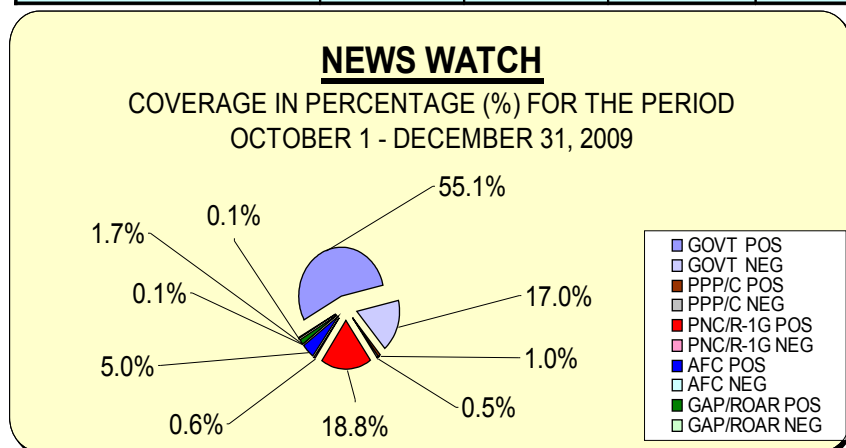
And, in keeping with our mandate to raise the quality of media-reporting in the country, the Unit has highlighted and commented on those instances where it was observed that the media breached the spirit and intent of the **Media Code of Conduct (MCC)**, and generally, the best practices enshrined in the “bible” of professional journalism – the **Society of Professional Journalists (SPJ) Code of Ethics**.

# TELEVISION

## POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE COVERAGE FOR THE PERIOD OCTOBER 1 - DECEMBER 31, 2009

### GEN CH 02

CATEGORY	GOVT (in minutes)		POLITICAL PARTIES (in minutes)									
			PPP/C		PNCR-1G		AFC		GAP/ROAR		TUF	
	POS	NEG	POS	NEG	POS	NEG	POS	NEG	POS	NEG	POS	NEG
NEWS WATCH	443.6	-137	8.4	-3.7	151.8	-4.7	40.4	-1.2	13.6	-1.2	0	0
TALK SHOWS	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
GENERAL PROGRAMS	147.2	-0.4	0	0	0	-2.2	0	0	0	0	0	0



### Observations/Analysis

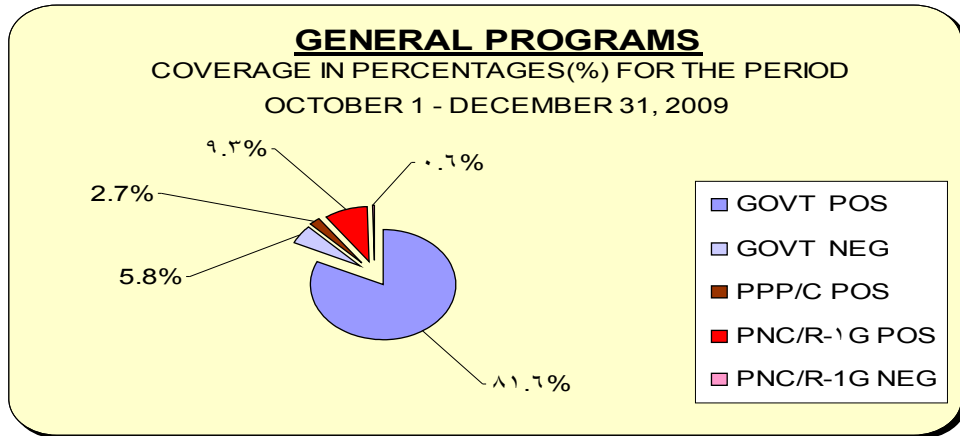
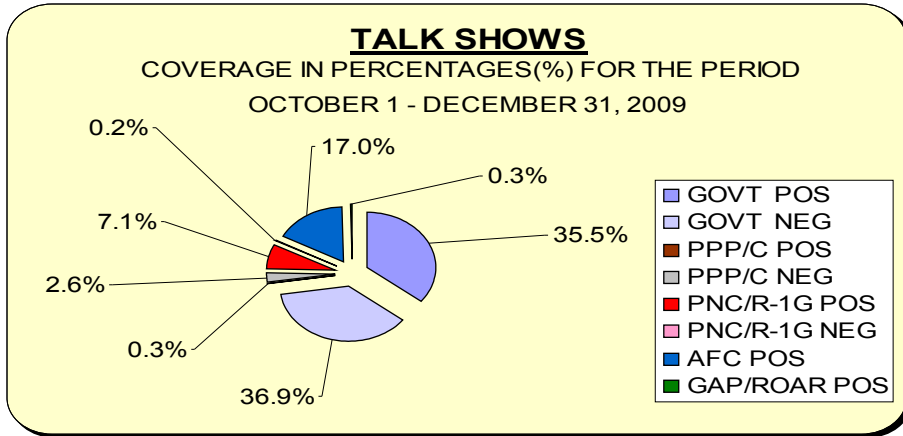
For the current reporting period, the **News Watch** newsteam furnished the Government with a positive to negative ratio of coverage that was just over **3:1**. Additionally, they (the newsteam) plied the PNCR-1G with quantitatively more positive and negative coverage than the other four (4) Parliamentary Political Parties – PPP/C, AFC, GAP/ROAR and TUF. The PNCR-1G received more than **double** the combined positive coverage allotted to the PPP/C, AFC and GAP/ROAR, with the AFC acquiring the second most highest amount, followed by GAP/ROAR and PPP/C. Likewise the PNCR-1G accumulated

the largest share of negative coverage from the newsteam, followed by the PPP/C, with AFC and GAP/ROAR, tied for the least. The figures timed from the newscast for the current reporting period mirrored to a large extent the ratios of coverage given to the Government and the Parliamentary Political Parties from the first through to the third Quarters of this year, and bespoke a pattern of coverage by the newsteam which showed that the Government was provided with unrestricted publicity, while the PNCR-1G was consistently given considerably more airtime vis-à-vis the other Parliamentary Political Parties. However, apart from this minor lack of political equity, the newscast, over the past year, exhibited a high level of professionalism, timeliness and accuracy in the presentation of news to local audiences.

In the **General Programs** section of the Channel, only a few Government Information Agency (GINA) produced programs were screened, from which the Government unsurprisingly hogged the major share of positive coverage, with the PNCR-1G attracting little negative attention. Not much can be read into these figures, except to note that for the current period under review, and also for the entire year, the screening of only GINA produced programs in this section, resulted in programming that was repetitive and quotidian.

CNS CH 06

CATEGORY	GOVT (in minutes)		POLITICAL PARTIES (in minutes)									
			PPP/C		PNCR-1G		AFC		GAP/ROAR		TUF	
	POS	NEG	POS	NEG	POS	NEG	POS	NEG	POS	NEG	POS	NEG
TALK SHOWS	313.4	-325.8	2.5	-23.3	62.9	-2.2	149.9	0	2.8	0	0	0
GENERAL PROGRAMS	336.3	-24.1	11.1	0.4	38.2	-2.5	0	0	0	0	0	0



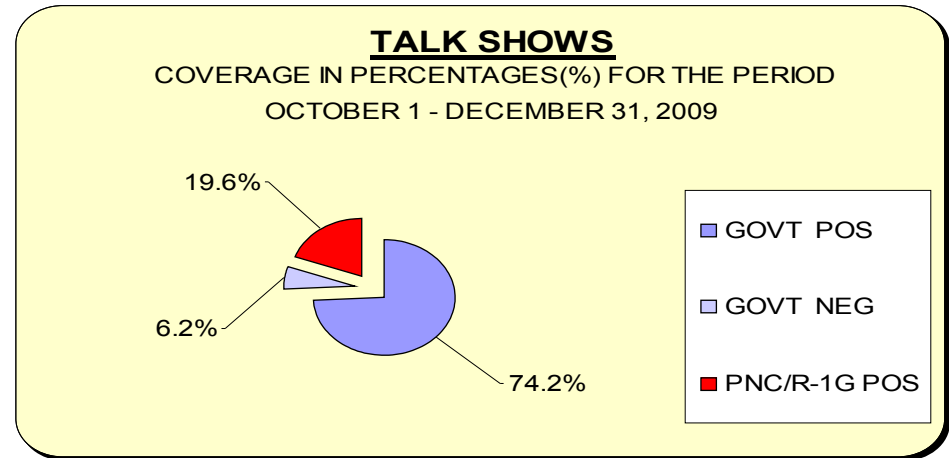
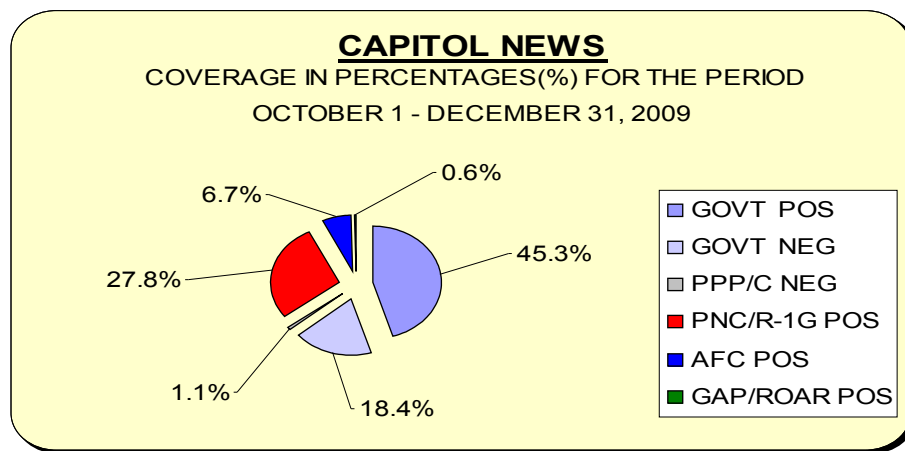
Observations/Analysis

For the current reporting period, the **Talk Shows** category of this Channel elicited figures for the Government and the Parliamentary Political Parties as follows: the Government attracted slightly more negative than positive coverage from the programs aired over the past three months. Amongst the political parties, the AFC collected the best figures in the positive columns, out-competing the PNCR-1G, GAP/ROAR and PPP/C, in that order. Also, the AFC's positive coverage was approximately **twice** the combined positive coverage secured by the other Parliamentary Political Parties. Contrastingly, the PPP/C garnered the largest amount of negative publicity, followed in descending order by the PNCR-1G and AFC. The negative coverage that the PPP/C consumed was just around **10** times the combined negative coverage accrued by the PNCR-1G and AFC. The figures displayed in this category for the current reporting period revealed quite pellucidly that the Government and the PPP/C were the only two entities that sustained net negative publicity, whilst the PNCR-1G, AFC, and to a lesser extent GAP/ROAR accumulated net positive publicity. The pattern of coverage that characterized the current reporting period was identical to the trend that defined the previous three (3) reporting periods. The fact of the matter is that this section of the Channel's programming is completely saturated by pro-opposition - PNCR-1G, AFC, (and JFAP) – produced programs, resulting in inequitable and imbalanced coverage of the negative type being given to the Government and the PPP/C, on one hand, and overwhelmingly favorable publicity afforded the PNCR-1G and AFC, on the other. It stands to reason that until and unless this section can attract programs that can serve as balancers to the raft of anti-Government/PPP/C programs conveyed to viewers, the current status quo will redound to the Government and ruling party (PPP/C) being at a perpetual disadvantage in terms of acquiring positive coverage of their activities and programs.

From the Channel's **General Programs** section, the Government was adorned with approximately **14** times more positive than negative coverage. Also, only two (2) of the Parliamentary Political Parties – PPP/C and PNCR-1G – gained measurable coverage, with the PNCR-1G securing quantitatively more positive and negative coverage than PPP/C. However, separately, both parties received overall net positive coverage. Generally, for the current reporting period, appreciable levels of balance and equity were the hallmarks of this section, with both the Government and the two (2) political parties that received coverage, accumulating net positive publicity. This has been the pattern of information dissemination from this section throughout the course of the year, and represents a model worthy of duplication within the Station's Talk Shows category.

**WRHM CH 07**

CATEGORY	GOVT (in minutes)		POLITICAL PARTIES (in minutes)									
			PPP/C		PNCR-1G		AFC		GAP/ROAR		TUF	
	POS	NEG	POS	NEG	POS	NEG	POS	NEG	POS	NEG	POS	NEG
CAPITOL NEWS	133	-54	0.8	-3.2	81.6	-0.2	19.7	0	1.8	0	0	0
TALK SHOWS	31.1	-2.6	0.1	-0.2	8.2	-0.6	0.2	0	0	0	0	0



**Observations/Analysis**

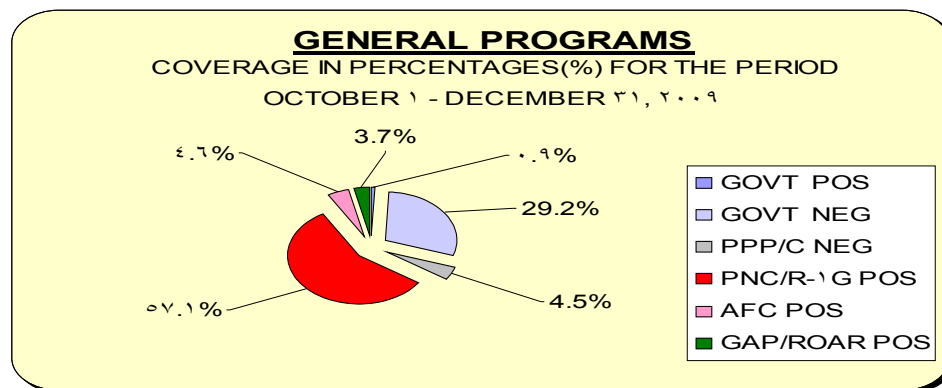
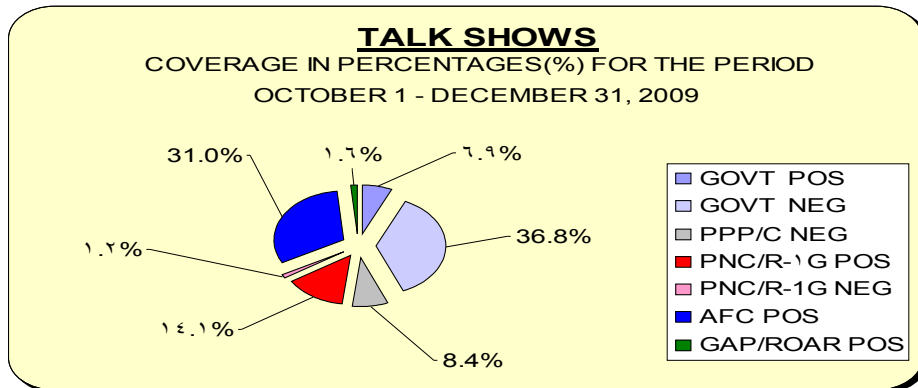
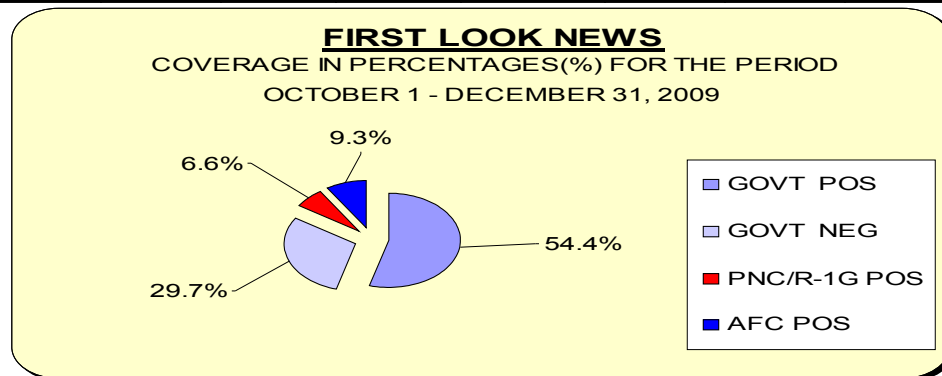
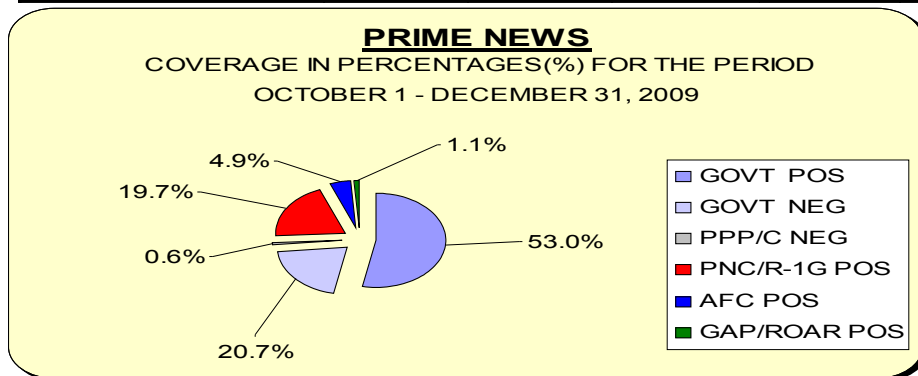
For the above-stated period, the **Capitol News** newsteam covered and reported the Government and the Parliamentary Political Parties to the citizens of the country, in the following way: the Government was given comparably more positive than negative coverage in a ratio of more than **2:1**. Amongst the Parliamentary Political Parties, the PNCR-1G was accredited with the highest amount of positive coverage, followed in order by AFC, GAP/ROAR, and lastly, PPP/C. The PNCR-1G's accumulation of positive coverage was disproportionate relative to the same kind of coverage given to the other political parties combined – PPP/C, AFC, and GAP/ROAR – by a wide margin of more than **3:1**. Only the PPP/C and PNCR-1G were assigned negative coverage, with the PPP/C gaining the largest amount, surpassing the PNCR-1G by a spread of **16:1**. The PPP/C was the only party during the current reporting period that was given net negative coverage by the newsteam. This is the first time – from the start of the year – that a Parliamentary Political Party has been credited with negative coverage by the newsteam, which, by the way, should not be misinterpreted as a manifestation of bias or partial reporting, since the appellation is more or less a reflection of the party's (PPP/C) public and parliamentary performances during this current reporting period. Generally though, for the just completed year, the comparative analysis done by the Unit, of the newscast's conduct and performance for the entirety of 2009, showed that the newsteam presented a daily newscast that was undoubtedly the local TV industry's standard-bearer in the areas of balance, fairness and equity.

The **Talk Shows** section of the Channel's programming served up figures which showed that the Government was parlayed with considerably more positive than negative publicity, to the tune of nearly **12:1**. Amongst the Parliamentary Political Parties, the PNCR-1G commanded the top spots in both the positive and negative columns, whilst the PPP/C and AFC attracted comparatively minuscule positive and negative coverage, respectively. Notably, the figures displayed in this category for the current reporting period was derived primarily from just one (1) program – **Eye On The Issues**. Also, apart from the substantial amount of positive publicity that was given to the Government through the program, the coverage consumed by the Parliamentary Political Parties, during the course of this reporting period, was relatively minor, notwithstanding that the PNCR-1G garnered a fairly reasonable amount of positive coverage vis-à-vis the other political parties. In summary, the coverage given to the Government and other political parties, from this section, over the four (4) Quarterly periods, did not show any particular or definite trend, since the coverage varied from period to period. Moreover, all the entities covered – Government and the Parliamentary Political Parties – were administered with either net positive or net negative publicity at one time or another, indicating that the lone program screened from this section, during the course of the year, successfully straddled a line of political neutrality.



## HBTV CH 09

CATEGORY	GOVT (in minutes)		POLITICAL PARTIES (in minutes)									
			PPP/C		PNCR-1G		AFC		GAP/ROAR		TUF	
	POS	NEG	POS	NEG	POS	NEG	POS	NEG	POS	NEG	POS	NEG
PRIME NEWS	216.9	-84.5	0.8	-2.5	80.7	0	20	0	4.5	0	0	-0.6
FIRST LOOK NEWS	123.6	-67.4	0	-0.1	15	0	21	0	0.6	0	0	0
TALK SHOWS	56	-298.5	0.1	-68.3	114.3	-9.7	251.9	0	13.2	0	0	0
GENERAL PROGRAMS	5.8	-190.2	0	-29	371.9	0	30.2	0	24.3	0	0	0



### Observations/Analysis

For the period in review, the newsteam of **Prime News** newscast disseminated coverage to the Government and the Parliamentary Political Parties in the following manner: the Government was given generously more positive than negative coverage in a ratio of more than **2:1**. The tale of the tape revealed that amongst the Parliamentary Political Parties, the PNCR-1G was portrayed through the newscast in a hugely positive light, resulting in the AFC, GAP/ROAR

and PPP/C, being relegated to second, third and fourth positions in positive coverage, respectively. Also, the PNCR-1G's collection of positive coverage was more than **3** times the combined amount of similar coverage given by the newsteam to the other political parties – PPP/C, AFC, and GAP/ROAR. Just two (2) political parties – PPP/C and TUF – were negatively covered in a measurable way, with the PPP/C receiving the larger share of negative publicity, and being the only party to accumulate net negative coverage. The figures enclosed in the columns of the newscast's matrix for the current reporting period, is the culmination of a consistent pattern of reporting that was observed throughout the year, whereby Government activities were generally given abundant airtime, while amongst the political parties, the PNCR-1G and AFC were the recipients of the bulk of publicity given by the newsteam. In light of this observation and others, the conclusion drawn by the Unit is that the newscast's performance has shown measurable and incremental improvements in quality over the four (4) Quarterly periods, and deserves a high rating for operating within the boundaries of democratic news reporting.

The **First Look** newscast generated figures for the current reporting period that positioned the Government with significantly more positive than negative coverage in a ratio of almost **2:1**. Amongst the Parliamentary Political Parties, the AFC captured the largest slice of positive coverage, followed by the PNCR-1G and GAP/ROAR. The PPP/C was the only party that attracted relatively minuscule negative coverage, and this observation is notable from the standpoint that the party heretofore never managed to achieve net positive coverage from the newscast in any of the reporting periods during the year. When cognizance is taken of this obvious partisan trend of political reporting, the newscast's performance scorecard is not one that the newsteam can be proud of, since it disappoints in the important area of political equity.

From the **Talk Shows** aired on the Station for the current reporting period, the Government was drenched with copiously more negative than positive coverage in a proportion of over **5:1**. Amongst the political parties, the AFC clinched the top spot for positive coverage, followed by the PNCR-1G, GAP/ROAR, and PPP/C, in that order. The positive coverage accumulated by the AFC was almost **double** the combined coverage parceled out to the PNCR-1G, GAP/ROAR and PPP/C. Contrastingly, only two (2) parties were subjected to unfavourable commentaries from the programs aired in this section, and the PPP/C conspicuously occupied the top position for the most negative coverage, followed distantly by the PNCR-1G.

In the **General Programs** category, the Government was tarnished with a disproportionate amount of negative publicity, compared to the scanty positive coverage it generated – the negative to positive ratio being over **32:1**. The PNCR-1G, AFC, and GAP/ROAR were the only three (3) political parties that obtained positive coverage, with the PNCR-1G obtaining nearly **7** times the combined coverage given to the AFC and GAP/ROAR. In the negative columns, the PPP/C was the only party that attracted coverage, and as such, was the only party that secured net negative publicity for the current reporting period.

The figures delineated within the Talk Shows and General Programs categories are strikingly similar, in the sense that in both instances, the Parliamentary Political Parties, namely PNCR-1G, AFC and GAP/ROAR benefited from net positive publicity, while the Government and the PPP/C were the receptacles of net negative coverage. The similarity in coverage purveyed through these two categories was not exclusive to just the current reporting period, but extended backwards to the second and third Quarters, and is the result of both sections being overwhelmed by programs produced and presented by the Opposition Parliamentary Political Parties - PNCR-1G and AFC – and the non-parliamentary JFAP.

## **Comments**

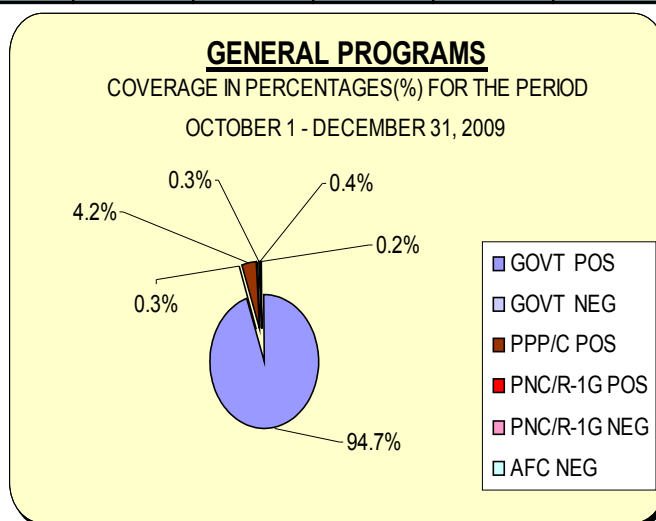
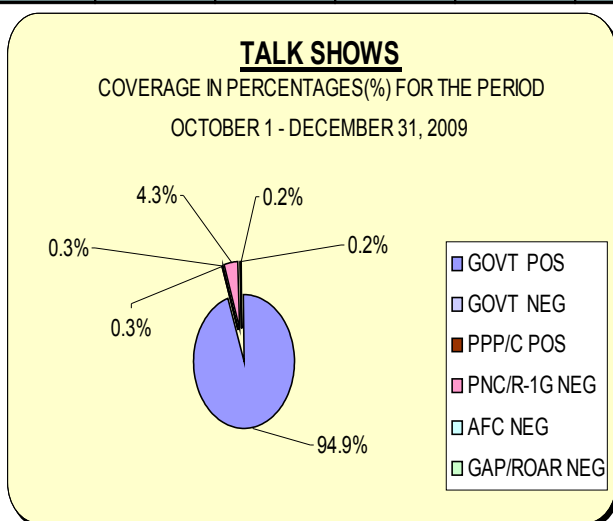
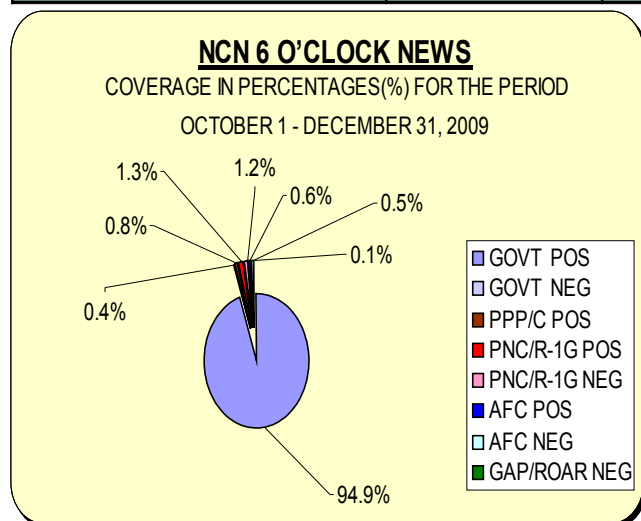
During the airing of the **Nation Watch** program on HBTV Ch. 9, on Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> November, 2009, from 11:00hrs, the MMU observed and documented the unedited dissemination of indecent language – the ‘F’ word – on at least four (4) occasions during the showing of a video clip that graphically portrayed the injuries sustained by two males, allegedly while in custody of the Joint Services.

The Unit noted that the language used, and allowed to be heard by viewers, particularly at that time of day, was from an ethical standpoint, bad in taste, lacked moral sensitivity, and called into question the judgment of the Editor of the program.

[The above observations and sentiments were verbally conveyed to the Manager of the Station, Mr. Charles Griffith, who unreservedly offered his apologies and promised to take up the issue with the Editor and other leading PNCR-1G personnel responsible for producing and presenting the weekly program].

NCN CH 11

CATEGORY	POLITICAL PARTIES (in minutes)											
	GOVT (in minutes)		PPP/C		PNCR-1G		AFC		GAP/ROAR		TUF	
	POS	NEG	POS	NEG	POS	NEG	POS	NEG	POS	NEG	POS	NEG
NCN 6 O'CLOCK NEWS	1154.9	-4.9	9.9	-0.5	16.2	-14.7	7.8	-6.6	0.3	-1.6	0	0
TALK SHOWS	569.1	-1.5	1.7	0	0.7	-25.6	0.2	-1	0.2	-1	0	0
GENERAL PROGRAMS	3998.8	-11.2	178	0	12	-16.7	0.8	-8	0.2	0	0	0



**Observations/Analysis**

The figures for the current reporting period signified that the newsteam of **NCN 6 O'clock News** provided the Government with a surfeit of positive coverage and a tiny amount of negative publicity. Amongst the Parliamentary Political Parties, the PNCR-1G was assigned the largest share of positive coverage, followed by the PPP/C, AFC, and GAP/ROAR, in that order. The PNCR-1G was also the recipient of the most negative coverage from the newsteam, followed in descending order by the AFC, GAP/ROAR, and PPP/C. GAP/ROAR was the only party that suffered net negative coverage, with the party's negative to positive ratio being exactly **5:1**. Individually, the Government along with the PPP/C, PNCR-1G, and AFC acquired net positive coverage of varying proportions, with the Government's positive to negative ratio of coverage being over **200:1**, while amongst the political parties, the PPP/C received the best spread of positive to negative coverage of nearly **20:1**. The PNCR-1G and AFC's positive to negative accumulation of coverage were in both instances slightly more positive than negative. The figures collated and shown above for the newscast, for the current reporting period, denoted that the Government and PPP/C were covered and reported by the newsteam in a comparably more favorable manner than the PNCR-1G, AFC, and GAP/ROAR.

This pattern of reporting has been patently evident throughout the preceding Quarters of the year, and gives justification to the Unit's analysis of the newscast's performance for 2009 as being informative, highly professional, but politically partial.

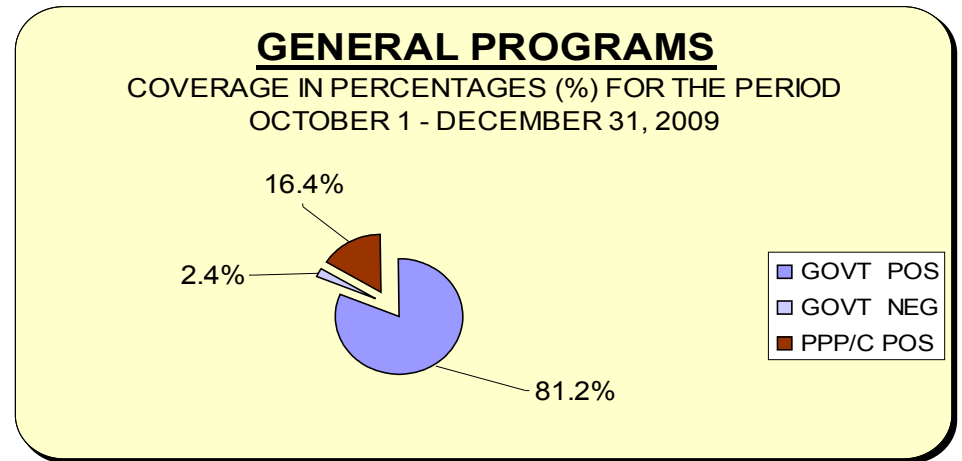
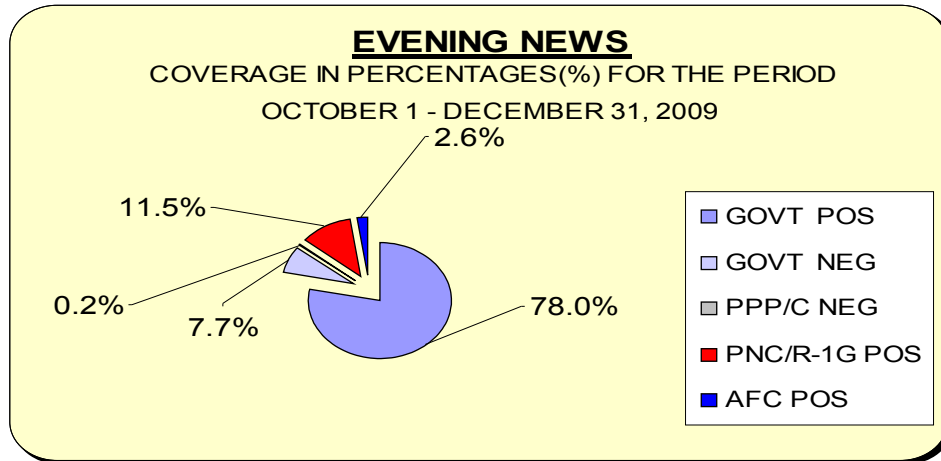
The **Talk Shows** that were broadcast on the Channel, for the current reporting period, were primarily produced and presented by GINA, and they depicted the Government in a hugely positive light, while profiling the main Opposition Parliamentary Political Party - PNCR-1G – in a disproportionately negative way. The PNCR-1G's negative to positive coverage gained from the Station's Talk Shows was more than **36:1**. The other political parties – PPP/C, AFC, and GAP/ROAR – did not attract much attention through the programs, and were principally sidelined to the periphery, even though the PPP/C attained only positive coverage, while the AFC and GAP/ROAR sustained identical amounts of net negative coverage.

The Channel's **General Programs** section provided the Government with extensively more positive than negative coverage. Further, the coverage afforded the Parliamentary Political Parties resulted in the PPP/C accruing significant positive coverage, while the PNCR-1G, AFC, and GAP/ROAR received positive coverage that was relatively inconsequential. The PPP/C's positive coverage outstripped the combined positive coverage of the PNCR-1G, AFC, and GAP/ROAR by more than **13:1**. Also, the PNCR-1G and the AFC manifested net negative coverage, whilst the PPP/C scored net positive coverage. Likewise, GAP/ROAR also captured net positive coverage.

The close similarities seen in the figures from the Talk Shows and General Programs categories for this Quarter in respect of the dominance of the Government and the PPP/C was the direct end result of GINA's virtual monopoly of these two sections of the Channel's programming. It also explains the root cause of the rank political partiality and inequity that characterized the two sections of programming for 2009.

VCT CH 28

CATEGORY	GOVT (in minutes)		POLITICAL PARTIES (in minutes)										
			PPP/C		PNCR-1G		AFC		GAP/ROAR		TUF		
	POS	NEG	POS	NEG	POS	NEG	POS	NEG	POS	NEG	POS	NEG	
EVENING NEWS	338.9	-33.6	0	-1	49.8	-0.2	11.4	0	0.2	0	0	0	0
TALK SHOWS	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
GENERAL PROGRAMS	54.8	-1.6	11.1	0	0	-0.3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0



**Observations/Analysis**

For the current reporting period, the **Evening News** newsteam disbursed coverage to the Government and the Parliamentary Political Parties as follows: the Government collected approximately **10** times more positive than negative publicity, while amongst the political parties only the PNCR-1G, AFC, and GAP/ROAR, gained measurable positive coverage, with the PNCR-1G's coverage being more than **3** times the coverage given to the AFC and GAP/ROAR combined. In the negative columns, the PPP/C and PNCR-1G were the recipients of relatively insignificant amounts of coverage. The newsteam's coverage and reportage of the Government and the political parties for this Quarter was practically similar to the preceding Quarterly periods during the year, in which the Government, the PNCR-1G, and the AFC collectively commanded the most attention. However, even though the other political parties – PPP/C and GAP/ROAR – were somewhat discriminated against in terms of equitable coverage, the major trend detected for the year was that neither the Government nor any of the Parliamentary Political Parties that accrued measurable publicity from the newscast, sustained net negative coverage. Otherwise, the Unit's

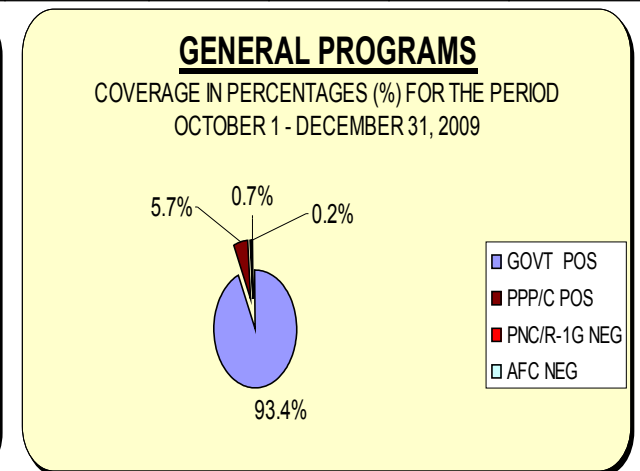
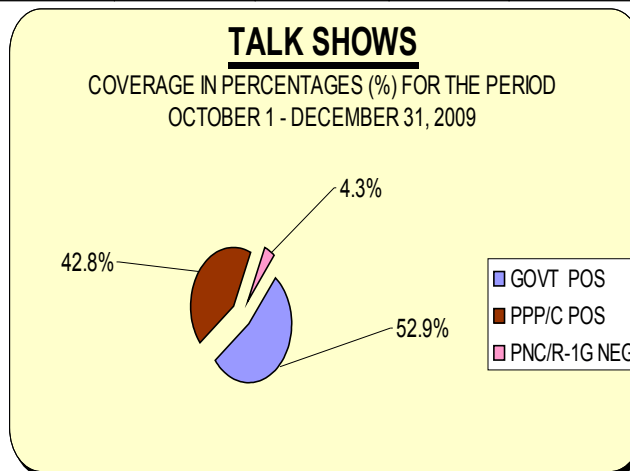
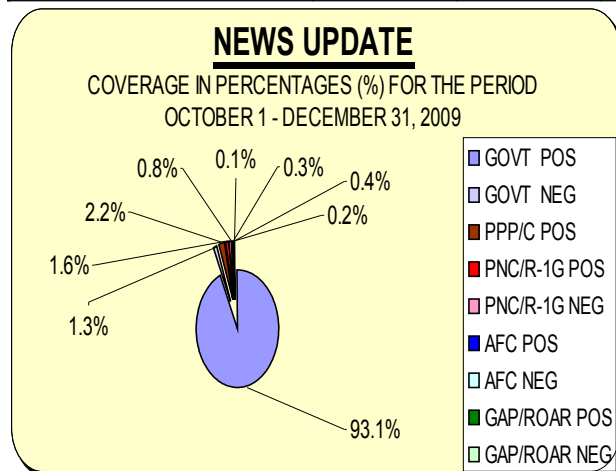
observations also revealed that the pattern of reporting indulged in by the newsteam during the year was severely lacking in equity but scored highly in the areas of timeliness and accuracy.

There were no local **Talk Shows** screened during this reporting period. However, from the few programs aired in the **General Programs** section, the Government and the PPP/C attracted relatively substantial positive publicity, as against minuscule amounts of negative coverage.

The trend of coverage coming out from the Talk Shows and General Programs categories in which the Government was effusively profiled in a consistently positive light while the PPP/C outshone the other Parliamentary Political Parties from the coverage given, is explainable within the context that most of the programs broadcasted from the two aforementioned sections of programming, over the just completed year, were GINA produced.

**MTV CH 65**

CATEGORY	GOVT (in minutes)		POLITICAL PARTIES (in minutes)									
	POS	NEG	PPP/C		PNCR-1G		AFC		GAP/ROAR		TUF	
			POS	NEG	POS	NEG	POS	NEG	POS	NEG	POS	NEG
NEWS UPDATE	1487.7	-21	35.7	0	25.8	-12.9	4.4	-5.7	1.8	-3.6	0	0
TALK SHOWS	99	0	80	0	0	-8.1	0	-0.3	0	0	0	0
GENERAL PROGRAMS	644.2	0	39	0	0	-4.9	0	-1.4	0	0	0	0



**Observations/Analysis**

For the above-stated period in review, the newsteam of **News Update** apportioned coverage to the Government and the Parliamentary Political Parties in the following way: the Government collected an exceedingly greater proportion of positive than negative coverage. Amongst the political parties, the PPP/C copped the highest amount of positive coverage, followed by the PNCR-1G, AFC, and GAP/ROAR, in that order. The newsteam also dished out the largest portion of negative coverage to the PNCR-1G, with the AFC and GAP/ROAR staking claims to the second highest and least amounts, respectively. Additionally, the AFC and GAP/ROAR were the only parties that consumed net negative publicity from the newscast. The figures taken from the newscast for the current reporting period indicated that the Government, along with the PPP/C and PNCR-1G, were the beneficiaries of more positive than negative coverage, with the Government benefiting the most, while the AFC and GAP/ROAR suffered from coverage that was more negative than positive. The newsteam's apportioning of coverage to the Government and the Parliamentary Political Parties for this Quarter was somewhat predictable, based on the pattern of reporting that defined the three (3) previous Quarterly periods in the year. Without fail, the newsteam unsurprisingly provided the Government and



the PPP/C with superfluous positive coverage and minor negative publicity, while the coverage given to the other political parties - PNCR-1G, AFC and GAP/ROAR – was variable from Quarter to Quarter. Paradoxically, notwithstanding this observed trend, the newscast's performance for the year was generally of a high standard, though characterized by a distinctly unacceptable level of partisan political reporting, which conveyed the perception that its primary function or raison d'être is to sell a positive Government image to viewers.

The Channel's **Talk Shows** generated figures during the current reporting period which showed that only the Government and PPP/C acquired significant positive coverage, as against zero amounts of negative publicity, respectively; while the PNCR-1G and AFC consumed differing levels of relatively small amounts of negative publicity.

From the **General Programs**, the Government was the recipient of a fair measure of positive coverage only. The PPP/C was the only party that accumulated substantial positive coverage, while the PNCR-1G and AFC were the receivers of negative coverage, with the PNCR-1G having the most. The PNCR-1G's negative coverage was more than **3** times the same coverage accrued by the AFC.

Altogether, the pattern of coverage allocated to the Government and the Parliamentary Political Parties in the Talk Shows and General Programs sections for this Quarter, was similar in nature to what obtained throughout the year, with the Government and the PPP/C commanding the bulk of positive publicity, and the PNCR-1G, AFC, and GAP/ROAR barely acquiring coverage, albeit mostly in a negative light. The programs aired in the Talk Shows and General Programs sections were products of GINA and the PPP/C, and this resulted in biased representations of the Opposition Parliamentary Political Parties being transmitted to viewers of these programs during 2009.

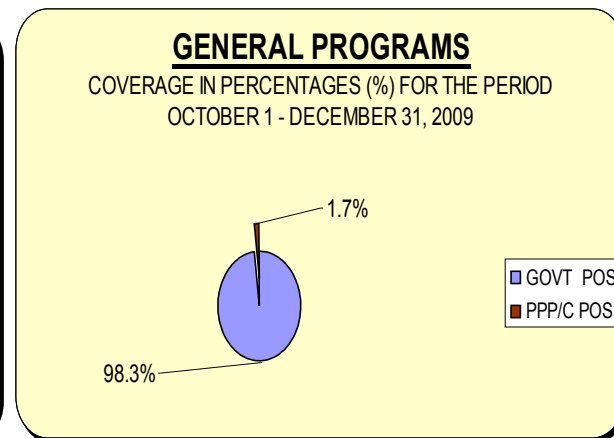
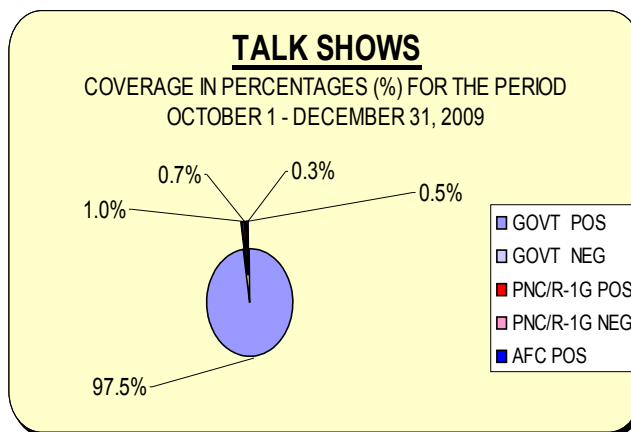
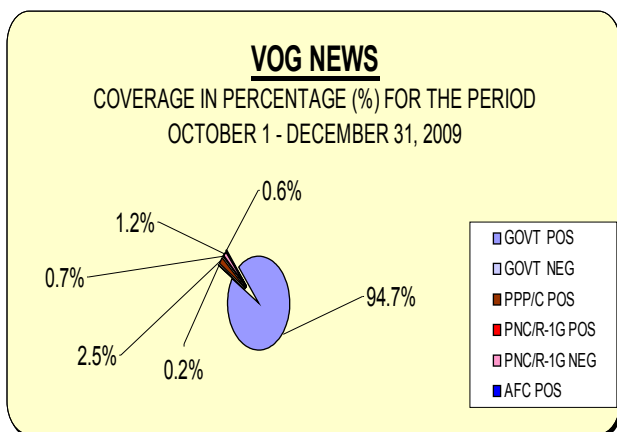
# RADIO

## POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE COVERAGE

### FOR THE PERIOD OCTOBER 1-DECEMBER 31, 2009

## VOG

CATEGORY	GOVT (in column inches)		POLITICAL PARTIES (in column inches)									
	POS	NEG	PPP/C		PNCR-1G		AFC		GAP/ROAR		TUF	
			POS	NEG	POS	NEG	POS	NEG	POS	NEG	POS	NEG
VOG NEWS	550.5	-1.2	14.7	0	4.2	-7.1	3.4	-0.8	0	-0.1	0	0
TALK SHOWS	471.7	-4.8	0.5	0	3.6	-2.2	1.6	-0.6	0	0	0	0
GENERAL PROGRAMS	231.6	0	4.1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0



### Observations/Analysis

For the current reporting period, the newsteam of **VOG News** provided the Government with stupendously more positive than negative coverage, reflected in a lop-sided ratio of over **450:1**. Amongst the political parties, the PPP/C led the way with positive coverage, followed by the PNCR-1G and AFC, in that

order. The PPP/C's positive coverage was almost **double** the combined coverage that the PNCR-1G and AFC attracted. Contrastingly, the PNCR-1G was the most negatively portrayed party on the newscast, distantly followed by the AFC and GAP/ROAR with infinitesimal amounts of negative publicity, respectively. The PNCR-1G, and to a lesser extent GAP/ROAR, were the only recipients of net negative publicity for this reporting period.

From the **Talk Shows** aired on the station, the Government was given extensively more positive than negative coverage, whilst the coverage afforded to the Parliamentary Political Parties resulted in the PNCR-1G gaining the highest amount of positive publicity, followed by the AFC in second place, with PPP/C obtaining the least. Only two (2) parties attracted negative coverage - PNCR-1G and AFC – with PNCR-1G ascribed the most, and AFC, the least. Notably, the Government, and the three (3) political parties – PPP/C, PNCR-1G and AFC – that obtained measurable timings from the programs classified as Talk Shows, were all beneficiaries of net positive coverage, for the current reporting period, with the Government being the major receiver.

The **General Programs** section churned out figures for the Government and the PPP/C, which were in both instances positive only.

An objective evaluation of the figures taken from the three sections of programming for the current reporting period, in juxtaposition with the figures screened from the previous reporting periods during 2009 corroborated the observation that news and information mostly favourable to the Government and the PPP/C dominated the programs spewed forth from within the three sections. Not surprisingly, the Opposition Parliamentary Political Parties - PNCR-1G, AFC, and GAP/ROAR – received comparatively paltry coverage of their activities from the station, during the just concluded year. Moreover, the coverage these entities received was disproportionately negative, for the most part. The marginalization of the Opposition Political Parties on the News, Talk Shows and General Programs of the Station, is not an unsubstantiated perception, but an unwelcome reality, which diluted the station's credibility and otherwise good all-round ethical and professional performances for 2009.

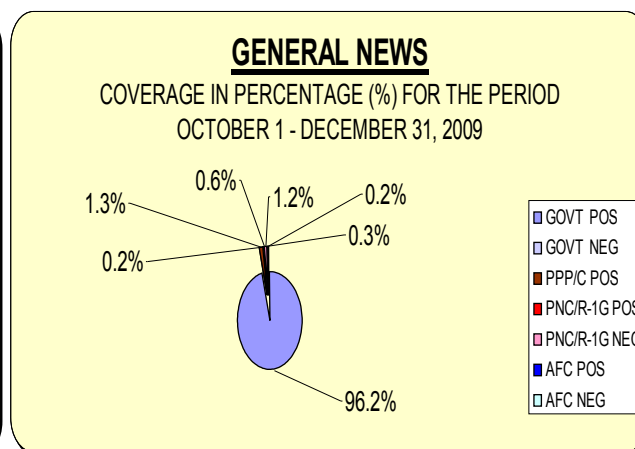
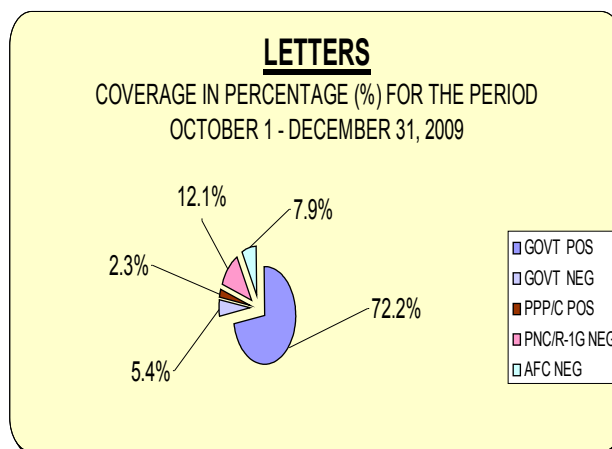
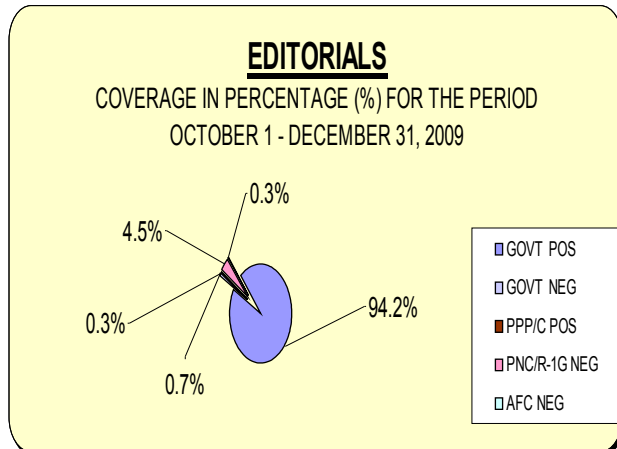
# NEWSPAPERS

## POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE COVERAGE

### FOR THE PERIOD OCTOBER 1-DECEMBER 31, 2009

## CHRONICLE

CATEGORY	GOVT (in column inches)		POLITICAL PARTIES (in column inches)										
	POS	NEG	PPP/C		PNCR-1G		AFC		GAP/ROAR		TUF		
			POS	NEG	POS	NEG	POS	NEG	POS	NEG	POS	NEG	
EDITORIALS	326.3	-2.5	1	-0.5	0	-15.5	0	-1	0	0	0	0	0
LETTERS	303.2	-22.8	9.8	-0.8	0	-51	0	-33.2	0	-0.8	0	0	0
GENERAL NEWS	11251	-27.7	152.8	-2.3	67.1	-135	20.3	-37.6	1.1	0	0	0	0



### Observations/Analysis

The figures extracted from the **Guyana Chronicle** for the current reporting period, divulged that from the **Editorials**, the Government secured exceedingly more positive than negative coverage, with the spread being more than **130:1**. Amongst the political parties, the PPP/C was the only party which attracted

minimal positive coverage. Three (3) of the political parties - PNCR-1G, AFC, and PPP/C – were all negatively highlighted, with the PNCR-1G raking in a relatively significant amount of the coverage, compared to the insignificant amounts served to the PPP/C and AFC. Altogether, the PNCR-1G's negative publicity surmounted the AFC's and PPP/C's combined coverage by over **10:1**.

The **Letters to the Editor** Column generated figures which spelt out that the Government was portrayed expansively more positive than negative in a ratio of just over **13:1**. The PPP/C was the only party that attracted positive comments from writers to the Column, whilst the PNCR-1G was the butt of most of the negative commentaries, followed by the AFC, with the PPP/C and GAP/ROAR jointly receiving the least amounts.

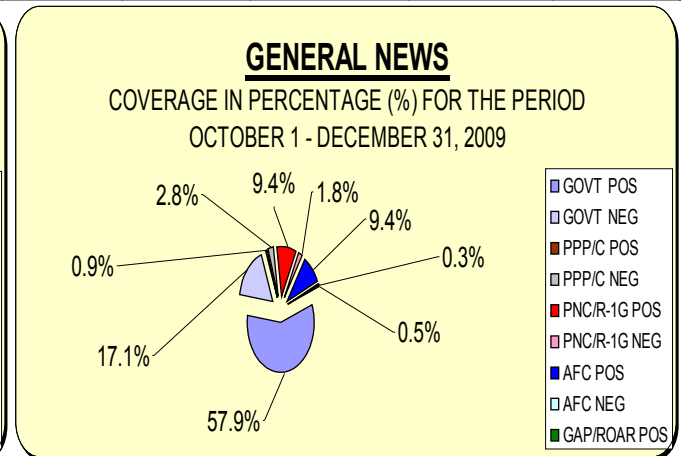
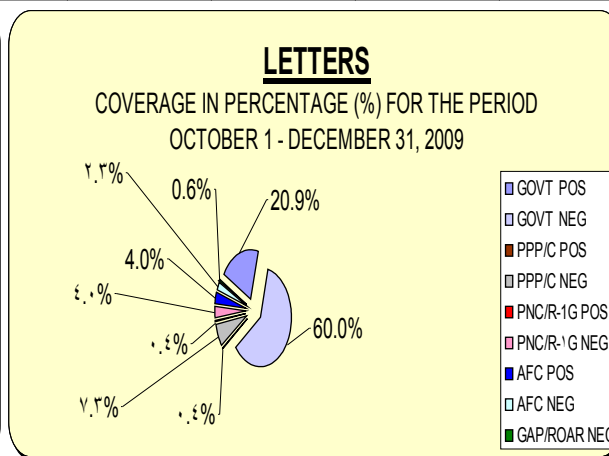
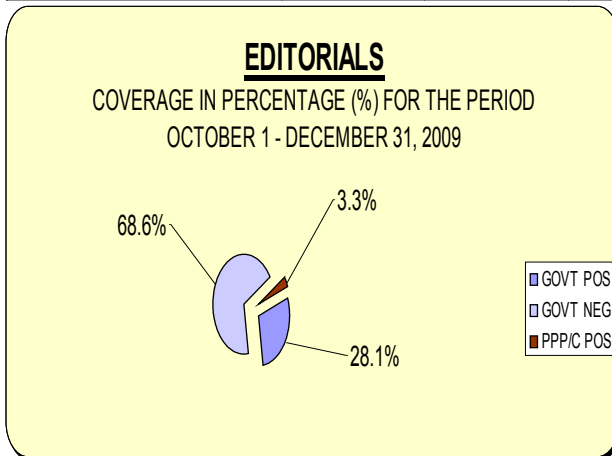
The disposition of coverage shown on behalf of the Government and the Parliamentary Political Parties for this Quarter, from the Editorials and Letters Column was uncannily similar to the coverage the entities received in the three (3) previous Quarterly periods, in which the Government and the PPP/C were always the sole beneficiaries of extensive net positive coverage, while the main Opposition Parliamentary Political Parties - PNCR-1G, AFC, and GAP/ROAR – consumed disproportionate amounts of negative publicity. The similar trends of coverage uncovered in the Editorials and Letters Column over the course of the year was compelling testimony of the (low) levels to which the venerated journalistic concepts of equity and balance were dispatched to during 2009, by the editorial staffs of the newspaper's Editorial and Letters Columns.

In the **General News** section of the newspaper, the Government received quantitatively more positive than negative publicity in a proportion of over **400:1**, for the period in review. Amongst the political parties, the PPP/C gained the major share of positive coverage, followed by the PNCR-1G, AFC, and GAP/ROAR. The PNCR-1G absorbed the lion's share of unfavourable mentions from writers, followed by the AFC, with the PPP/C obtaining the least. Instructively, the PNCR-1G's cut of negative coverage was more than **3** times the combined negative publicity that the PPP/C and AFC attracted.

The contents of the General News section provided net positive coverage principally for the Government and the PPP/C, and net negative publicity for mainly the PNCR-1G and AFC, during this current reporting period. A check-up on the pattern of coverage from the previous reporting periods turned up a consistent trend whereby only the Government and the PPP/C were the objects of huge doses of positive coverage, as against relatively trifling amounts of negative publicity, while the coverage afforded the Opposition Parliamentary Political Parties - PNCR-1G, AFC, and GAP/ROAR – varied from Quarter to Quarter, between net positive coverage (1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarters) to net negative coverage (3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Quarters). This observation led to the conclusion that the year's four Quarterly periods were marked by contrasting and uneven dispensations of coverage given to the Government and PPP/C on one hand, and the Opposition Political Parties, on the other, with the latter faring the worst. And this is so, because of the virtual monopolization of this particular section of the newspaper by Government/PPP-C aligned Columnists and GINA supplied articles.

## KAIETEUR NEWS

CATEGORY	GOVT (in column inches)		POLITICAL PARTIES (in column inches)										
	POS	NEG	PPP/C		PNCR-1G		AFC		GAP/ROAR		TUF		
			POS	NEG	POS	NEG	POS	NEG	POS	NEG	POS	NEG	
EDITORIALS	38.3	-93.5	4.5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
LETTERS	374.6	-1075.2	7.6	-130	6.8	-71.5	72.5	-41.5	0	-11	0	0	0
GENERAL NEWS	5718.4	-1685.2	93.3	-280	924.3	-175.3	929.1	-28.8	45.9	-1.7	0	0	0



### Observations/Analysis

For the current reporting period, the Kaieteur News **Editorials** produced figures for the Government and the PPP/C, only. The Government attracted coverage that was considerably more negative than positive in a ratio of more than **3:1**, while the PPP/C was the object of a small amount of positive publicity. None of the other more important Parliamentary Political Parties - PNCR-1G, AFC, and GAP/ROAR – attracted either positive or negative profiling from the newspaper’s editorial writers. The Government’s tally of net negative coverage from the Editorials during the period in review signaled the second consecutive period, and third overall, that such a trend was documented by the Unit for the year. When the figures were collated and put together for the entire year, the pattern that emerged, showed that the Government’s image as projected by the newspaper’s editorial writers, was for the most part, cast in a negative light. It also provided irrefutable evidence of a conspicuous anti- government bias in the majority of editorial essays penned and disseminated to the general public in 2009.

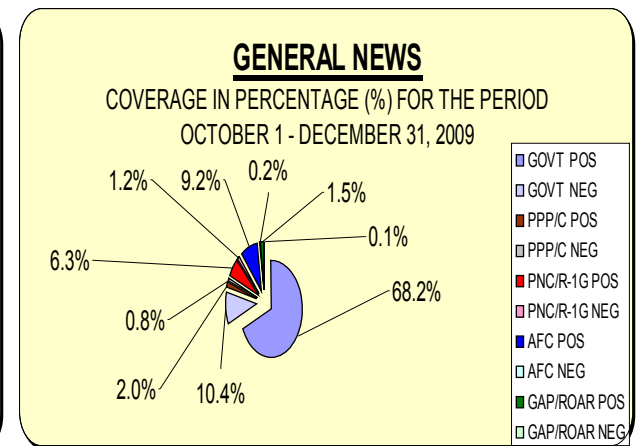
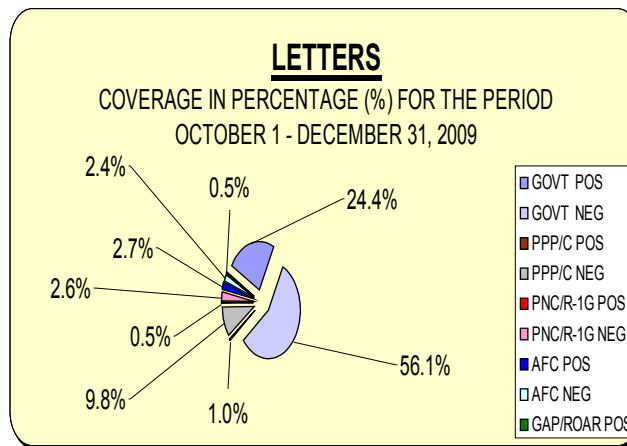
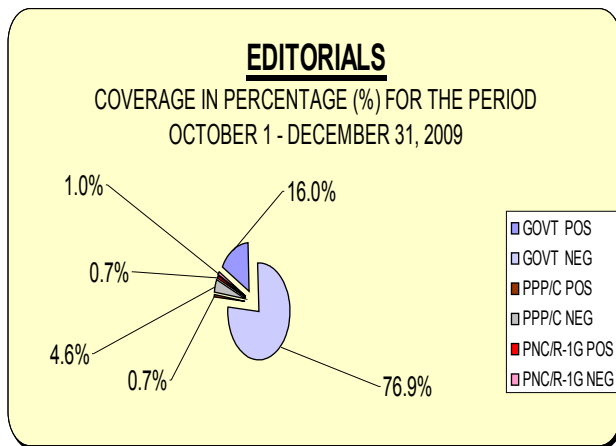
From the **Letters** Column, the Government attracted nearly **3** times more negative than positive commentaries from writers, whilst among the Parliamentary Political Parties, the AFC received the most positive comments, followed in order by the PPP/C and PNCR-1G. The AFC accumulated approximately

5 times more positive coverage than the combined positive publicity received by the PPP/C and PNCR-1G. Dissimilarly, the PPP/C consumed the major share of negative publicity ascribed by letter writers to the political parties, followed by the PNCR-1G, AFC, and GAP/ROAR, in that order. Also the PPP/C's accumulation of negative coverage was slightly more than the same coverage collectively parceled out to the PNCR-1G, AFC, and GAP/ROAR. Notably, however, the Government and all the political parties – PPP/C, PNCR-1G, AFC, and GAP/ROAR – that attracted public attention through letters published in the column, ended up receiving net negative coverage of varying levels, in the process. The pattern of coverage afforded the government and political parties for this Quarter, was the first time that all the entities suffered uniform net negative coverage from the published contents of the Letters Column. Previously, the AFC and GAP/ROAR enjoyed mostly net positive commentaries from the Column's letter writers. However, the Government, PPP/C, and the PNCR-1G have constantly come in for excessively more negative than positive analyses (from the beginning of 2009 to the end of this current Quarter). The trend that evolved from the Letters Column over the course of the year, suggested that letters were published based on a criterion that sought to bring about balance, equity, and fairness to all parties involved in the discourses of contributors. And even though some entities – Government, PPP/C and PNCR-1G – suffered hugely from and inundation of critical comments, there wasn't any pellucid indication of partisan treatment meted out to any of the entities covered. Clearly, from the available evidence, the KN Letters Column stood out during 2009 for achieving a high level of impartiality in the delivery of information to readers.

In the **General News** section, the Government's positive to negative coverage was more than **44:1**, whilst among the Parliamentary Political Parties, the AFC received the largest amount of positive coverage, trouncing the PNCR-1G, PPP/C, and GAP/ROAR, in that order. On the flip side, the PPP/C commanded the lead in negative coverage, outscoring the PNCR-1G, AFC, and GAP/ROAR. Also, the PPP/C was the only political party that was given net negative publicity for this Quarter. The Government and PPP/C's positive coverage were derived almost exclusively from GINA news releases, while their negative coverage came directly from the daily Frederick Kisson Column, and the weekly Columns submitted to the newspaper for publication by the PNCR-1G and AFC. Instructively, the aforementioned Columns were the main sources from which the Unit documented quantitative coverage for the Government and the political parties, over the past year, and of particular note is that management's attempt at achieving an acceptable level of balance between Government and Opposition information in this section of the newspaper, was signally successful and worthy of commendation.

## STABROEK NEWS

CATEGORY	GOVT (in column inches)		POLITICAL PARTIES (in column inches)										
	POS	NEG	PPP/C		PNCR-1G		AFC		GAP/ROAR		TUF		
			POS	NEG	POS	NEG	POS	NEG	POS	NEG	POS	NEG	
EDITORIALS	67.7	-324.8	3	-19.5	3	-4.1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
LETTERS	291.3	-670.3	11.7	-116.8	6.4	-31.3	32.7	-28.8	5.5	-0.6	0	0	0
GENERAL NEWS	4776.1	-731.2	139.4	-59.4	441.2	-86.3	646	-16.1	102	-8.5	0	0	0



### Observations/Analysis

For the current reporting period, the Stabroek News **Editorials** elicited figures for the Government and the Parliamentary Political Parties as follows: the Government was written about and portrayed extensively more negative than positive, reflected in a proportion of over **4:1**. Only two of the Parliamentary Political Parties – PPP/C and PNCR-1G – were the recipients of coverage for this Quarter, with each party attracting the same amount of positive coverage. However, the PPP/C gained considerably more negative exposure from the newspaper’s editorial content, than the PNCR-1G, attracting negative publicity that was more than **4** times the coverage distilled on the PNCR-1G . Significantly, both political parties – PPP/C and PNCR-1G – accumulated net negative coverage from the Editorials for this reporting period, with the PPP/C’s negative to positive ratio being over **6:1**. The Government and the PPP/C’s coverage for the current reporting period, capped the fourth consecutive reporting period that both entities attracted superfluously more negative than positive sentiments from the newspaper’s editorial contributors. Quite differently, the PNCR-1G, AFC, and GAP/ROAR were the recipients of variable coverage, that oscillated between net positive and net negative from Quarter to Quarter. The starkly distinct patterns of coverage given to the Government and PPP/C on one



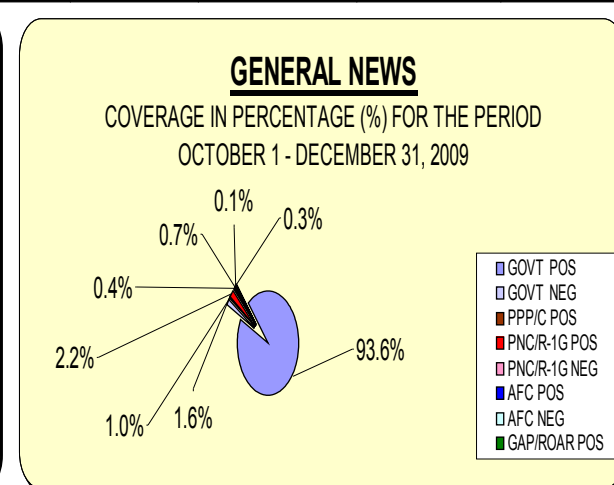
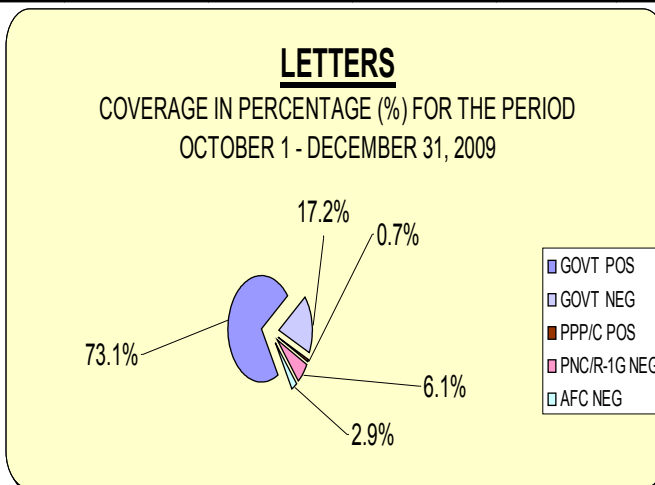
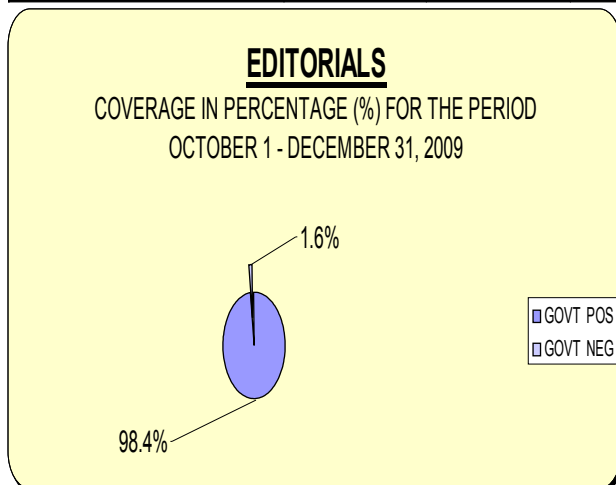
hand, and the other Parliamentary Political Parties on the other, suggested, with the proof of substantiating evidence, that the newspaper's editorial content, for the most part, during the year, was pointedly anti-Government/PPP/C, but, not pro-opposition.

The **Letters** Column was unkind to the Government, the PPP/C, and PNCR-1G for this reporting period, while being charitable to the AFC, and GAP/ROAR. The Government's negative to positive ratio of coverage from the Column was more than **2:1**, while the coverage that the political parties attracted was as follows: the AFC accrued the highest amount of positive coverage, followed in order by the PPP/C, PNCR-1G, and GAP/ROAR. The PPP/C was deluged with the highest amount of negative coverage, followed by the PNCR-1G, AFC, and GAP/ROAR. The PPP/C's negative coverage was almost **double** the combined negative publicity that the PNCR-1G, AFC, and Gap/ROAR consumed. Further, the PPP/C and PNCR-1G were tainted with net negative coverage, while AFC and GAP/ROAR gained net positive coverage from the letters selected and published by the Letters Editor, for the current reporting period. The figures shown in the Letters Column of the newspaper's matrix for this Quarter, unerringly replicated the pattern of coverage seen in the three previous reporting periods, whereby the Government, PPP/C, and PNCR-1G, attracted net negative publicity, while AFC and GAP/ROAR (to some extent) consistently garnered net positive coverage throughout the year. The Unit's analysis of the failure of the Government, the PPP/C, and PNCR-1G to acquire more favorable than unfavorable comments from the Column's writers, evolved the conclusion that the situation was directly influenced by the disproportionate amount of column inches provided to writers with distinct biases against the three entities, as against the amount of space allotted to the publication of countervailing missives, with the marked difference in the two quanta favoring the former.

From the **General News** section of the newspaper, the Government was given a larger amount of positive than negative publicity, in a ratio of over **6:1**. Interestingly, all the political parties (except TUF) captured sizably more positive than negative coverage. The AFC gained the highest amount of positive coverage, followed by the PNCR-1G, PPP/C, and GAP/ROAR in that order. Dissimilarly, the PNCR-1G consumed the largest dose of negative coverage, followed by the PPP/C, AFC, and GAP/ROAR. The PPP/C's ratio of positive to negative coverage was more than **2:1**, the PNCR-1G's more than **5:1**, the AFC's more than **40:1**, and GAP/ROAR exactly **12:1**. Notably, the Government and the main Parliamentary Political Parties – PPP/C, PNCR-1G, AFC, and GAP/ROAR – have all in the past, in similar fashion to the current reporting period, been the recipients of predictable net positive coverage of varying levels. The observed trend of invariable coverage afforded to the Government and the Parliamentary Political Parties throughout the year marked this section of the newspaper as the most balanced and equitable in terms of information dissemination to the general public in 2009.

## GUYANA TIMES

CATEGORY	GOVT (in column inches)		POLITICAL PARTIES (in column inches)									
	POS	NEG	PPP/C		PNCR-1G		AFC		GAP/ROAR		TUF	
			POS	NEG	POS	NEG	POS	NEG	POS	NEG	POS	NEG
EDITORIALS	62.8	-1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
LETTERS	107.7	-25.4	1	0	0	-9	0	-4.2	0	-0.4	0	0
GENERAL NEWS	6915.7	-119.2	73.7	-0.5	161.9	-32.4	50.2	-10.3	22.7	-0.5	0	0



### Observations/Analysis

For the current reporting period, the Guyana Times **Editorials** only produced figures for the Government, and predictably the publicity supplied on their behalf was superlatively positive, tinged with the grudging inclusion of a barely measurable amount of negative coverage, that was from casual observation, more incidental than deliberate.

In the newspaper's **Letters** Column, the Government attracted over 4 times more positive than negative publicity. And amongst the political parties, the PPP/C was the lone recipient of positive coverage, albeit, relatively minuscule, while the PNCR-1G, AFC, and GAP/ROAR, respectively, were adorned with negative coverage of varying degrees.

The pattern of coverage afforded the Government and the Parliamentary Political Parties in the Editorial and Letters Columns, followed a similar trend throughout the year. As such, the figures from the current reporting period were not by any chance isolated or unique, but fitted plumb into a broader picture

that evolved over the past year, in which, at all times, the Government received copious amounts of positive coverage compared to the relatively minute amounts of coverage (positive and negative) that the political parties were provided. Additionally, apart from this observation, it was also generally noted that critical comments directed at the Government was muted in the Editorials and Letters Columns, while the Opposition Political Parties - PNCR-1G and AFC – suffered from an overexposure to considerably more negative than positive commentaries published in the two columns. Based on this evidence, it is non-debatable that the Editorials and Letters Column have been somewhat favorably biased towards the Government, and to a lesser extent the PPP/C, over the past year.

Information from the General News section of the newspaper showed that the Government was provided with a positive to negative proportion of coverage that was exactly **58:1**. Amongst the Parliamentary Political Parties, the PNCR-1G topped the positive coverage list with the highest score, followed in order by the PPP/C, AFC, and GAP/ROAR. The PNCR-1G was also the target of the most negative coverage, followed by the AFC, with PPP/C and GAP/ROAR tied for the least. Statistically, the PNCR-1G's negative coverage was almost **3** times the same coverage given to the AFC, PPP/C, and GAP/ROAR, combined. Generally, the Government and all the Parliamentary Political Parties attracted hugely more positive than negative coverage from this section of the newspaper for the current reporting period, reinforcing a trend observed from the first Quarter of the year (to the end of the current period) in which the Government and all the Parliamentary Political Parties (save and except TUF) were consistently covered and reported in a significantly more positive than negative light, demonstrative of an acceptable level of equity and balance, palpably missing from the Editorials and Letters Column.

## Conclusion

The local broadcast and print media, offered the MMU Monitoring Team, an intriguing lesson in the parallels, contrasts, and nuances of local media behavior, that was both informative and instructive in terms of the observations that were made, the analyses formulated, and the logical conclusions arrived at, for 2009.

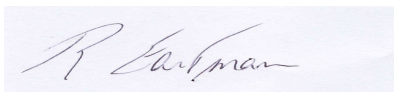
In the TV environment, there was observable and measurable improvement in the overall standard of programming provided to viewers by broadcasters. This conclusion is based on the tremendous drop in ethical violations committed by practitioners, from a high of thirteen (13) in 2008, to just four (4) for this year (2009). Indeed, there is hard evidence to substantiate the fact that actors within the broadcast sector placed greater emphasis and pride in their work, which was reflected in a higher qualitative level of output, during 2009. However, disappointingly, despite this stellar achievement, the efforts of the majority of tele-journalists to positively re-shape the base perspectives of the viewing public in relation to the standard of TV programming in the country, was doggedly contested by a few rogue elements, who made abstruse choices to paddle against the tide of the budding transformative process; preferring instead, to remain sempiternally wedded to antediluvian behaviors, which have no place in modern journalistic practices. Empirical evidence of the referenced behaviors were seen in the unedited screening of profanity-laced programs during daytime hours (on MTV Ch.65 and HBTV Ch. 9), and the direct use of scurrilous language by a program host to malign and vilify a public official (on HBTV Ch.9). In addition to these social excesses, the overall performance of local TV was further dented by the acute void of basic journalistic equity in the content of some newscasts – specifically News Watch, First Look, NCN 60’Clock News, and News Update – and the pronounced lack of political balance (and variety) in the Talk-Shows proffered to the public through Chs. 6, 9, 11, and 65. These observances served to objectively identify the endemic frailties that conspired to negatively affect local TV performance in 2009.

Nevertheless, in spite of the identified challenges which the TV industry as a collective was unable to successfully overcome, the industry’s weaknesses were overshadowed by the temperance exhibited by most broadcasters, along with their voluntary willingness to operate within the delineated limits of acceptable journalism practices.

In like manner, the print media also recorded a reduction in the number of infringements of the MCC and SPJ Codes, for this year, as against last year. More specifically, in 2008, there were six (6) recorded breaches of ethics; while for this year (2009) there were only four (4). Encomiums are in order for those practitioners within the print media whose selfless adherence to the tenets of ethical journalism, resulted in the attainment of this milestone. However, it would seem that the pressure of competition amongst the dailies – Guyana Chronicle (GC), Stabroek News (SN), Kaieteur News (KN), and Guyana Times (GT) – brought out the worst kind of journalism in some, and the best in others. For example, of the four (4) documented breaches, three (3) were committed by the Guyana Chronicle, and one (1) by the Kaieteur News. Also, and this is cause for concern, all four (4) violations were for the propagation of racial incitement; gratuitously disseminated in unedited forms through the Letters and other opinionated Columns of the two newspapers. These incidences, more than any other intervening factors, served to underscore a paradox, that even though there was a measurable decrease in the number of reported infractions by print journalists, and both the Stabroek News and Guyana Times were paragons of ethical journalism, as a collective, the (print) medium ended 2009 in virtual stasis. Explicably, this analysis has its groundings in the evaluation of a number of indicators, spawning from the ethical to the political to the social, on which the mainstream media houses in the print community scored poorly. For example, from the themes of the **Guyana Chronicle**, **Stabroek News**, and **Guyana Times** editorials, and the bent of the missives published in the respective Letters Pages of these newspapers, it is now beyond doubt that the two most influential sections of these newspapers have been surreptitiously captured by partisan political interests, and are now tools that can be used to jeopardize the country’s democratic processes, taking into consideration the subliminal agenda-setting influence that these Columns exact on the thought

processes of the reading public. Additionally, the unwanted by-products of the political-tropism alluded to, were the abysmal lack of political equity, balance, and fairness that tainted the aforementioned sections of these newspapers (during 2009). When the math is done, in totality, the negatives observed in the print media handsomely outweighed the positives that were documented, leaving the medium's performance with a deficit at the end of 2009.

Finally, the overall improvement seen in local reporting standards, **quantitatively measured by an appreciable drop in ethical breaches**, wasn't by any yardstick a fortuitous occurrence; rather, the commendable end-result achieved is directly correlated to the MMU's activities in promoting self-regulation and higher ethical standards in reporting, amongst the country's media practitioners. To this end, during the year, the Unit worked to influence greater adherence to the salient provisions of the MCC and SPJ Codes, by alerting media houses to instances of observed infringements, both verbally and in written forms; the objective being to minimize repeats and/or escalations of similar conduct. The Unit also held a well attended capacity-building workshop for the country's rank and file journalists, where expert guidance and training was imparted to them in the areas of democratic journalism, and media ethics. These activities engendered greater collaboration with local media operatives, resulting in wider acceptance of the Unit's de facto role as the only objective arbiter of media conduct in the country.



.....  
Remington Eastman  
Manager  
Media Monitoring Unit  
Guyana Elections Commission