

The Impact of Private Broadcasting in Nigeria

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Abstract: This study examines the impact of private broadcasting in Nigeria following the deregulation of the sector in 1992 by the Babangida regime. Hitherto, broadcasting was an exclusive central government preserve so that the entry of private players in the industry necessitates an appraisal with a view towards ascertaining the benefits that had accrued since the liberalization of the sector. In this sense an assessment of the performance of private broadcast stations was done, taking into cognizance their viability with regards to their advert base to determine if the private stations have been able to wrest control of the industry from public stations. The result reveals a very competitive industry environment with indicators suggesting that the private stations are giving the public stations a run for their money in terms of acceptability through quality programming leading to increased patronage and attraction of adverts. A major find is the socio-cultural, economic and political gains of the deregulation for Nigeria. In the first case, it is seen that private broadcasting has promoted the cultural values of the country with the production and broadcast of indigenous programmes such as dramas, Nigerian home videos, musicals and soap operas etc. Secondly, several hundred-job opportunities have been created in a country where unemployment is rife. Politically, the deregulation has engendered a new spectacle and grandeur in political reporting and analysis. The various political programmes of some of the private stations such as kakaaki and Focus Nigeria of Africa Independent Television (AIT), provides platforms for not only objective and timely political developments within the polity but also reveals a clear departure from the hitherto placid nature of news and political coverage during the era of sole government domination of the industry.

Key words: Impact, deregulation, broadcasting, acceptability, opportunities, Nigeria

INTRODUCTION

Broadcasting is a global phenomenon. As an essential aspect of any nation's social and cultural life, its significance cannot be overemphasized. Combining audio, vision and motion, the broadcast media's effectiveness in communicating information with speed and accuracy to heterogeneous audiences has been proven over the years. Moreover, the broadcast media have helped the individual to share ideas not only within his immediate environment but also beyond his social milieu. So that by means of broadcasting the individual can partake of ideas and experiences that can enrich his life and help him live in a complex, dynamic and humane society.

However, in Nigeria for several decades following the inception of broadcasting in 1957 (Obazele, 1996), the industry led a sheltered life shielded from the winds of free market forces as successive regimes ensured that the sector remained an exclusive monopoly of the Central government. Even the 1979 constitutional provision for the establishment of private electronic media could not

change the trend. Whereas the print media had much earlier experienced liberalization, the broadcast media remained as earlier stated an exclusive preserve of government. It could be argued that perhaps governments initial monopoly of the industry may not be unconnected with the seeming potential of broadcasting as a tool for social change and engineering which as such ought not to be left in the hands of just anyone. Again it is probable that private entrepreneurs would emphasize an orientation towards exclusive commercialism rather than consideration for national interest. This may be another reason for governments grip on the industry over the years.

Be that as it may, the much expected deregulation materialized in 1992 when the Babangida regime promulgated decree 38 which liberalized the industry and also established the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC). This decree (38) of August 24 (1992) empowered the NBC to regulate the entire broadcast industry, both public and private. This singular act by the Babangida military presidency eclipsed the over 50 years of sole

government domination of the sector in Nigeria. Interestingly this action by government heralded a proliferation of private electronic media as entrepreneurs and investors cashed in on the window of opportunity to invest so that at present in Nigeria there are so many privately run radio and television stations operating in an atmosphere of competition with the hitherto existing and even newly established public stations.

It is against this background that this investigation is based on. Essentially it examines the impact of the liberalization of the broadcast industry in Nigeria to ascertain the positive and negative developments that have arisen since the deregulation.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This research is based essentially on a synthesis of primary and secondary sources. The first group covers materials such as the National Broadcasting Commission's (NBC) publications regarding the regulation of broadcasting in Nigeria. Another primary source is the data concerning the volume of advert rates of one of the private broadcast houses.

The second group involves academic and other publications such as books, journal articles and News paper and News magazine publications related to the subject under review. All these were authenticated and analyzed to prepare this essay.

Evolution and growth of broadcasting in Nigeria: The beginning of what can be termed as proper broadcasting in Nigeria that is the ability to originate and disseminate indigenous local programmes can be traced to the middle of the 20th century when the National Broadcasting Commission's (NBC) was established on April 1, 1957 as a statutory department of government with the responsibility for putting in place and running extensive radio network capable of providing programmes to any member of public in Nigeria who had access to either a wireless receiving set or a box (Obazele, 1996).

Hitherto what passed as broadcasting in Nigeria was the rediffusion services of the British Empire Service. Then, the post and telegraph department was the sole authority responsible for distribution of programmes to subscribers in Lagos, Kano and Ibadan.

Under this system, programmes were distributed via landlines from the studios to the various listening boxes for which the subscribers paid a token fee (Nwuneli, 1985). However, the emergence of the National broadcasting commission's witnessed a major departure from the earlier

situation as the rediffusion stations were transformed into fully operational radio stations. This development marked the entry into service of the first broadcasting commission's of its kind in any British colonial territory in Africa. By its character, the NBC was a non-profit making organization with the express responsibility of carrying on the service as a means of disseminating information, educating and entertaining provided that such programme contents were not contrary to the avowed national interests of the country.

For television, Chief Obafemi Awolowo then premier of western region of Nigeria established the first in Nigeria and indeed Africa in 1959. The birth of the Western Nigerian Television (WNTV) has been described as accidental in so far as chief Awolowo embarked on it due to his inability to use the services of the Federal Radio station to reply to the broadcast of then Governor-General Macpherson over the constitutional matters of 1953 (Obata, 1994). It would be recalled that chief Awolowo was denied use of the Federal radio even when the commission's has an obligation to give objective and impartial news and views to its listeners.

Thus angered by this and other related developments and taking into cognizance the 1954 constitutional provision in which broadcasting ceased to be in the federal exclusive list, chief Awolowo established in partnership with overseas Rediffusion Company limited of the United Kingdom, the Western Nigerian Television (WNTV) at Ibadan. The station was operated as an arm of the Western Nigeria broadcasting commission's which by 1960 has introduced radio broadcast over the whole region (Uche, 1989). Following the success of the Western Region's effort, the other two regions in Nigeria then, North and East upon realizing the power and influence of radio and television went on to establish their own broadcast stations.

In 1960, the Eastern Regional government set up the Eastern Nigeria Television Station at Enugu. Shortly after in 1962, the Northern Nigerian Regional government and a British Television company-Grenada Electrical Company established a television station as an arm of the Broadcasting Company of Northern Nigeria (BCNN) in Kaduna.

The station was known as the Radio-Kaduna-Television (Obata, 1994). The coming into being of the regional broadcast stations simply regionalized the industry in Nigeria and it is not out of place to infer that these developments represent the first proliferation of broadcasting in Nigeria. The three regional governments broadcast organizations were wholly independent of

federal government control. As earlier highlighted, one reason behind their creation was dissatisfaction with the NBC and also the need for each region to have its voice heard. Luke Uka Uche puts this fact succinctly:

Each region felt that its own views were not being properly represented by the NBC some accused the NBC of partiality and partisanship... (Uche, 1989)

Thus faced with a situation whereby each region was bent on voicing views which did not tally with its own, the federal government on its own part established in 1962 the Nigerian Television Service (NTS) to protect and serve its interest. However, until the emergence of the Nigerian Television Authority (NTA), the services of the NTS were restricted to the Lagos area alone.

A subsequent addition to the stable of broadcast stations in Nigeria rests on the creation of more states in the country. From then, the number of electronic media houses marked up considerably. For instance, Samuel Ogbemudia then military Governor of the then Mid-West state of Nigeria in 1973 set up the Mid-Western Broadcasting commission's. This station incorporated both radio and television services.

Similarly in 1974 the government of the then Benue-Plateau state established the first station transmitting in colour. Also, with the creation of seven more states by General Mohammed's regime and the subsequent take over of all television stations by the federal government in April 1976 under Decree (24) of 1977 which also established the Nigerian Television Authority (NTA), the numbers of broadcast stations were ten (Obata, 1994) namely:

- Western Nigerian Television, Ibadan (WNTV)
- Eastern Nigerian Television, Enugu (ENTV)
- Radio-Kaduna-Television, Kaduna (RKV)
- Nigerian Broadcasting Commission's Television, Lagos
- Mid-West Television, Benin (MTV)
- Benue-Plateau Television, Jos (BPTV)
- Rivers State Television, Port-Harcourt (RSTV)
- Kano State Television, Kano (KSTV)
- North West television, Sokoto
- Eastern Nigerian television, Aba

By 1983, the impact of state creation on the proliferation of broadcast stations had become pronounced. At this time, the number of stations had increased to 22. There was now either a radio or television

station or both in each of the new state capitals. It should be noted that this proliferation occasioned by the creation of states is not surprising. Indeed, during the period of the second republic (1979-1983) states governed by political parties other than that at the center established broadcast stations ostensibly to project their own views and programmes.

Like the regions of old before them, states such as Imo, Kano and the Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN) controlled Western states had abundant reason to feel that the Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) was not according them adequate coverage. Consequently, they all went on to set up their own broadcast stations so that by the time the military took over the reigns of governance again in December 1983, the following stations had come into being:

- Ogun state Television, Abeokuta (OGTV)
- Television Service of Oyo State, Ibadan (TSOS)
- Imo Television, Owerri (ITV)
- Bornu Radio Television, Maiduguri (BRTV)
- Plateau Television, Jos (PTV)
- Anambra Television, Enugu (ATV)
- Bendel Television, Benin (BTV)
- Cross-River Television (CRTV)
- Kano Television, Kano (KTV)
- Lagos Television, Ikeja (LTV)
- Ondo state Television, Akure (ODTV)

Interestingly, the creation of more states by the regimes of Babangida and Abacha, respectively further increased the number of government owned stations in Nigeria as each of the states had either one or two of the electronic media in operation. However, by 1992 when deregulation was introduced, the industry witnessed a new vibrancy as private stations came on board to compete with public ones.

Deregulation and proliferation of private broadcast stations: For several decades in Nigeria government could not muster courage to allow individuals to own electronic media. The fear expressed then was that radio and television as potent forces for mass mobilization should not be insensitively allowed to slip into the hands of private individuals.

But by 1992 President Babangida announced that one of the legacies he would want to leave behind was the privatization of the electronic media. He then went on to establish the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC), charging it to ensure that private radio and television

Table 1: Private television stations in Nigeria

Name of station	Year of establishment	Staff strength	Location	Channel (UHF)
Murhi International Television	Not available	Not available	Ikeja, Lagos	43
Universal Broadcasting Services Limited	N.A	N.A	Lagos	45
Channels Television	N.A	N.A	Maryland Lagos	39
Channels Television	N.A	N.A	Wuse, Abuja	39
Desmins Independent Television	1994	66	Kaduna	38
Galaxy Television	1994	32	Dugbe, Ibadan	53
Degue Broadcasting Network	N.A	N.A	Ikoyi, Lagos	32
Independent Television	1997	N.A	Airport Rd, Benin city	22
Minaj Broadcast International	N.A	N.A	Mushin, Lagos	41
Minaj Broadcast International	1994	58	Obosi	45
Africa Independent Television	N.A	N.A	Alagbado, Lagos	21
Africa Independent Television	1997	N.A	Garki, Abuja	31
Silver Bird Television	N.A	N.A	Yaba, Lagos	23

Table 2: Private radio stations in Nigeria

Name of station	Year of establishment	Staff strength	Location	Channel
Brilla Sports FM	N.A	N.A	V.I, Lagos	88.9 FM
Steam Broadcasting (Cool FM)	N.A	N.A	V.I, Lagos	96.9 FM
Steam Broadcasting (Cool FM)	N.A	N.A	Abuja	96.9 FM
Ceuna Communications (Cosmo FM)	2003	N.A	Enugu	105.5 FM
Independent Radio	1998	N.A	Benin city	92.3 MHz
Jeremi Radio	1998	58	Warri Delta state	95.1 MHz
Minaj Systems Radio	1996	58	Obosi, Anambra	89.4 MHz
Raypower I and II FM	N.A	N.A	Alagbado, Lagos	100.5 MHz
Raypower FM	N.A	N.A	Garki, Abuja	100.5 MHz
Silverbird Communications Limited (Rhythm 93.7 FM)	1994	70	Old GRA, Port-Harcourt	93.7 MHz
Rhythm 93.7 FM	N.A	N.A	Yaba, Lagos	93.7 MHz
Rhythm 94.7FM	1997	N.A	Gorki, Abuja	94.7 MHz
Star FM	N.A	N.A	Alausa, Lagos	101.5 FM
Nagarta Radio	N.A	N.A	Kaduna	7.47 KHz
Love (Former Crowther) FM	2003	N.A	Wuse, Abuja	104.5 MHz
Freedom Radio	N.A	N.A	Kano	99.5 MHz
Hot FM	N.A	N.A	Gudu, Abuja	98.3 MHz
Vision FM	N.A	N.A	Abuja	92.1 MHz
Zuma FM	N.A	N.A	Abuja	88.5 MHz
Kiss FM	N.A	N.A	Wuse, Abuja	99.9 MHz
Grace FM	N.A	N.A	Lokoja, Kogi	95.5 MHz
Okini FM	N.A	N.A	Offa, Kwara	105.7 MHz

licenses are issued before the end of his administration. Nigerians received this policy by the Babangida regime with aplomb. Indeed according to Ikechukwu Amaechi:

The deregulation elicited great enthusiasm from the people and understandably so since the NTA had inextricably become the propaganda instrument of government

Ikechukwu emphasized further that this enthusiasm and absolute craving for private television by the people was predicated on the belief that like the print media, the independent electronic media was going to provide independent news and entertainment which will inevitably create variety and choice as well as competition which is expected to rub-off positively on the discerning and sophisticated Nigerian public.

Expectedly, the deregulation of the industry by Decree 38 of 1992 elicited not only enthusiasm from the

public but also led many potential private investors to apply and obtain licenses. Between 1992 and 1997, the National Broadcasting Commission had issued two sets of licenses-the first in 1993 and the other between 1995 and 1997.

By January 1998 in the words of Tom Adaba, the first Director General of the NBC, a conservative estimate of private investment in the industry consists of three radio stations, nine terrestrial television stations, 41 satellite redistribution stations and two global television services (Adaba, 1998). As at today (2010), the number of broadcast stations (both public and private) in Nigeria includes about; 100 radio stations, 147 television stations, 35 cable redistribution stations (MMDS), five Direct To Home satellite cable stations (DTH) and four direct satellite television stations (DBS) shown in Table 1-5 for a comprehensive list of private media stations in Nigeria indicating station identity, year of establishment, operating frequency, staff strength and location.

Table 3: Private (MMDS) satellite tv redistribution stations in Nigeria

Name of station	Year of establishment	Staff strength	Location	Channel
Mg Communication System Limited	1995	08	Sokoto	76, 78, 80
Mg Communication System Limited	1993	04	Gusau	N.A
Disc Engineering Limited	N.A	N.A	Ikeja, Lagos	81
Transmit Network Limited	N.A	N.A	Ikeja, Lagos	84
Delta Telecommunications and Electrical System Limited	N.A	N.A	Ilorin, Kwara.	N.A
Worldlink Network Limited	1993	N.A	Warri Delta.	70, 72, 74
Modern Communications Limited	1994	15	Aba	87, 91, 93, 71, 72, 77
Communication Trends Limited (Ct)	1995	44	Port Harcourt	
CTL	1998	14	Lagos	82
CTL	N.A	09	Uyo	76, 78 UHF,8
CTL	1998	10	Ibadan	N.A
CTL	1998	14	Abia	N.A
CTL	1999	13	Anambra	N.A
CTL	1998	14	Enugu	
CTL	1998	19	Owerri	
CTL	1998	14	Warri	N.A
CTL	2003	14	Benin city	N.A
West-Midlands Communication	N.A	N.A	Dugbe ibadan.	N.A
Bauchi Satellite/cable Limited	N.A	N.A	Bauchi	N.A
IBW Cable/satellite	N.A	N.A	Benin city	N.A
Hash-Tromics Satellite Communication Limited	N.A	N.A	N.A	N.A

Table 4: Private direct-to-home cable television stations in Nigeria

Name of station	Year of establishment	Staff strength	Location	Channel frequency
Multichoice Nigeria kimited (DSTV)	N.A	N.A	Victoria island, Lagos	N.A
Trend TV limited	N.A	220	G. R. A II, port harcourt	TPI: 11635 MHz span 36 MHz, 11595 span 36 MHz Kll band
Frontage television	2004	100	Victoria island, Lagos	N.A
HITV	N.A	N.A	Ebute metta, Lagos	N.A

Table 5: Private direct broadcast satellite television stations (global) in Nigeria

Name of station	Year of establishment	Staff strength	Location	Channel frequency
Africa Independent Television	N.A	N.A	Alagbade Lagos	Channel 21 471.25 MHz
Minaj Broadcast Intemational	N.A	N.A	Mushin Lagos	Channel 41 631.10 MHz

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

As indicated in the introduction, private sector participation in the broadcast industry in Nigeria is significant in as much as the hitherto government monopoly has ceased. Also when the current prevailing situation of healthy competition between the private and public stations is considered putting into cognizance the huge capital outlay that private investors have injected into the system as well as fresh ideas and initiative then it is pertinent to do an assessment of the industry since deregulation. It is safe to deduce considering the capital-intensive nature of the industry that total investment so far since deregulation is within the region of billions of naira. Again the need for an assessment derives from primarily wanting to ascertain the impact of the deregulation on the country generally.

To this end an analysis is embarked upon to ascertain whether the pie has been split between the public and private stations in terms of advert funds and commercial patronage. It should be noted that the importance of advertisement support to the viability and sustainability of the private stations cannot be overemphasized. Indeed, an unviable private electronic media is bound to contribute minimally to the overall growth of the nation. Thus an examination of the advert rates and volume of

advert of a select media is embarked upon with a view towards ascertaining whether the private stations have met the expectations of entrepreneurs who have sunk in so much resource to make broadcasting happen.

There are two opposite extremes concerning the viability or otherwise of the private stations. The first position opines that the prospects for private broadcasting were rosy in 1992 when the first set of licenses were granted but that the enthusiasm that greeted its advent appear to be waning. In support of this view a public commentator, Bamidele Babatunde contends that despite the deregulation, the public stations are still enjoying a preponderance of the advertisements, emphasizing that what the advertisers are doing is simply to stay with the devil they know than the angel they do not know. To Babatunde the reason for the inability of the private stations to garner enough advert patronage lies in their inability to fashion out any long term plan or blueprint which could enable them to break even after about 5 years of operation. He believes that a well thought out blueprint will analyze the market based on the character of the station. Also, he offers that the private stations did not research the existing popular but not necessarily loved NTA stations, hence the wrong appraisal of their revenue base.

Again in analyzing the ownership pattern of the private stations, Babatunde posits that not only are they privately and individually owned but that they depend on the whims and caprices of one man. This he sees as a drawback which affects their ability to attract such major advertisers as the multi-nationals which would not like to put their advertisement expenditure on a one man owned outfit.

But he is quick to assert that there are good prospects for the industry on the part of private proprietors if they can put their acts together to make television more attractive and enjoyable. This seems to be the trend in the industry at present. Moreover, other developments identified and linked to the dearth of advert funds for the private stations seems to rest on the irregular payment of staff salaries and outright lay-off of staff by a few of the stations.

The other extreme that argues in favour of private stations contends first that the low volume of advert patronage experienced by the private stations especially when juxtaposed with that of the government stations is not as a result of any strategic planning by the N.T.A. and other government stations but that rather it is as a result of other extraneous factors. An analyst, Ebere Young Acharaiye puts it aptly:

I want to disagree that NTA is enjoying more patronage advert and sponsorship wise than the private stations. What NTA is enjoying now are traditional customers. Many of the corporate bodies advertising with NTA are government agencies or parastatals

While claiming that advertisers are gradually warming up to the private stations, Acharaiye concludes that the private stations are building on groundwork of goodwill that will take sometime to yield fruit. Another industry exponent and president of Galaxy television, Steve Ojo is more categorical and optimistic in his assessment of the fate of private stations. As quoted by, Ojo disagrees with the notion that the advert base of private stations is shrinking. He offers the following to buttress the point:

The major sources of income are advertising and sponsorship. We get a lot and it keeps improving every day because we have kept on saying that a TV station can succeed if it has a focus and its programmes are good. So at Galaxy, we are happy that we have arrived... and the advertisers are putting their commercials on the station

A statement like the preceding coming from an entrepreneur of one of the private stations suggests that

Table 6: AIT Lagos commercial rates

Prime rotation	Duration (sec)	Rates (₦)	
		Week (days)	Weekends
1900-0000 h	60	13,750	16,156
	45	11,672	13,736
	30	09,056	10,800
	15	05,496	06,480

Compiled from AIT commercial rate card at AIT commercial office, shop; 16, rodeo shopping mall, Ikeja, Lagos. July 1998

the fear of unviability of the private stations which may arise from low advert patronage should not be stressed too far.

At this juncture it is imperative to present a comparative analysis of NTA channel 10, Lagos and AIT, a private station also based in Lagos. On the 12th of July, 1998 the day of the final football match between hosts France and Brazil in the Mundial 1998, researchers placed two television sets side by side with one tuned to NTA and the other to AIT. For a period of 6 h beginning from 2 h before the commencement of the match, (the match began at 8 pm while both studios opened for their previews 2 h (6 pm) before kickoff, he monitored their commercials for the period of the duration of the match which was a prime time slot. At the end the emergent result is that the private station AIT had as much advert placement as the NTA station.

It should be noted that apart from the equity recorded by AIT with NTA, most of AITs adverts for that period were 60 sec adverts. Indeed, 15 of the adverts were of the 60 sec duration mark. There were numerous others which lasted from 15-45 sec. From this one can deduce that AIT made so much from advert patronage for the entire period of the world cup. Infact a cursory examination of the commercial rates of the AIT as shown in Table 6 gives a better understanding of their revenue from adverts for the period under review.

One was also able to monitor and record tremendous advert placements on AIT's sister broadcast station, Raypower F.M. particularly on its very popular breakfast show-ultimate morning show which runs from 5-10 am, the number of 60 sec commercials amounted to 35 (the monitoring was done on October 1, 1998). When this volume of adverts is weighed against the rates as shown in Table 7, the result is that the private stations (Raypower in particular) are indeed gradually shoring up their share of the market and that over the years this has even improved so that at present the industry is witnessing a vibrant and healthy competition between and amongst the public and private broadcast stations all over the country. On the whole, it should be noted that broadcasting is a capital-intensive venture that requires

Table 7: Raypower advertisement rates

Time classification	Duration (sec)	Rates (₦)
AAAA (Ultimate morning show)	60	3,644.50
Monday-Friday	45	2,821.25
5-10 a.m	30	3,095.50
	15	1,258.00

Compiled from Raypower advertisement rate card at raypower, commercial office, shop 16, rodeo shopping mall, Ikeja, Lagos

huge capital to sustain. Thus it is expected that the private stations will not only cultivate their markets (zones of outreach) but will also analyze their market positions so as to remain viable and create the enabling environment for acceptability from advertisers. We now turn to the crux of this essay which is how much has the, private stations impacted on the country.

The impact of private broadcast stations in Nigeria: A fair assessment of the impact of private broadcasting in Nigeria since deregulation must take into cognizance the operational problems of the new broadcast stations as they try to meet the expectations of the viewing and listening public. Be that as it may, it cannot be doubted that private broadcasting has made appreciable impact in Nigeria so far and that the sector is still capable of continually facilitating and engendering social, economic and political growth in the country. Now proceed to an illustrative appraisal of the impact of the sector so far in Nigeria.

Socio-cultural impact: The importance of broadcasting as a vehicle for social change is not in doubt. Indeed in recognition of this the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) asserts that broadcasting in Nigeria should project the best and discourage the worst in the society in addition to matching the best in the profession anywhere. It is interesting to note that private broadcasting in Nigeria is already doing the above. First in compliance with the NBC's provisions concerning programme content, 60% of the programmes of the private stations are indigenous. Such programmes range from soap operas, talk shows, musicals (African) to educational programmes for the young.

Definitely, the private stations are showcasing Nigeria's rich cultural values. More important, perhaps is that in these days of cultural imperialism, the two global broadcast stations-AIT and MBI located at Lagos and Obosi, respectively have done much to bridge the communication gap between Nigeria and the outside world. As we know, the world communication order as controlled and dominated by Western Europe and North America has a tendency to portray Africa in bad light. Thus through their (AIT and MBI) programming therefore

the, rich cultural potentials and the true position of developments in Nigeria and indeed Africa are relayed to the global audience. From the programme contents it is seen that the emphasis of the private stations on music, theatre, soaps, drama and documentaries suggests a sharp focus on Nigeria in particular and Africa in general.

Experts have even commended the live phone-in programmes of the private stations. According to Esan, live phone in programmes are good for their spontaneity and appeal. They allow stations to have immediate feedback on specific issues from the public. Indeed, as private broadcasting continues to provide Nigerians with programmes of cultural relevance, even the focus of News in the industry has changed for the better dramatically. It should be noted that during the era of sole government monopoly of the industry, the news from NTA was generally regarded as subjective and placid. Infact people view the NTA as a propaganda instrument of government. However, it has been observed that since deregulation, Nigerians have come to enjoy better information services. Even though the NTA still controls the network belt of the industry, the private stations are giving viewers and listeners within their coverage areas objective, accurate and up to date reports. In Lagos for instance, there is a common phrase that channels television represents Nigeria's own CNN. This is not surprising what, with its emphasis on current news around the country and its philosophy as a purely news channel.

For practitioners/professionals in the industry, the deregulation provided an avenue for them to not only contribute to the growth of the sector generally but also themselves in the form of greater mobility and job satisfaction. Indeed, the new environment provided what was lacking hitherto under sole public broadcasting for them to genuinely put their ingenuity to practice. In this light, several seasoned broadcasters left the public stations for the private ones. For instance, Segun Aderiye, formally of the Nigerian Television Authority (NTA), Network Service, left for the African Independent Television (AIT) as a News Caster. Similarly, Patrick Ugbe, formally of NTA 2 Channel 5, left to pitch his tent with Minaj System Television at Obosi in Anambra state of Nigeria. In the same vein, both Kelly Elisha and Tony Akiotu, formally of the Federal Radio commission's of Nigeria (FRCN), Lagos National Station, left to become senior Producer and Manager, respectively at AIT. Though statistics are not readily available but it cannot be doubted that perhaps better remuneration might have influenced these seasoned broadcasters who have individually put in several years of service in the public stations, to cross over to the private ones. For the

discerning Nigerian public, private broadcasting has provided not only wider variety of programme offerings but such programmes have been of high quality as a result of the very modern equipments used by the private stations. Hitherto, allusion had been made to the weak technological base of broadcasting in Nigeria. But with deregulation, there have been rapid changes in the industry. Now, the problems of unclear signals are issues of the past so much so that even the NTA in the ensuing competition has been forced to upgrade its equipments.

Economic impact: A viable private sector led broadcast Media industry can contribute meaningfully towards the development of any economy. Indeed for Nigeria it is not unsafe to say that considering the level of mass unemployment, private sector investment in the industry has created thousands of new jobs. From 1993 to date as a result of the accelerated development of the industry, the investment figure and number of jobs created additionally might have doubled or trebled. In the absence of hard facts, it may not be out of place to suggest that capital investment in the sector might have crossed the billion dollar mark. Going by this growth rate, prospects for more job spaces are on the horizon, though this will strongly depend on how well private proprietors can commit themselves towards sustaining their stations.

The economic impact of private broadcasting transcends the provision of jobs for only professionals in the industry. Indeed, other auxiliary services which complement broadcasting have also been positively affected. What is obvious is that Advert Agencies have witnessed expansions so as to handle the myriad of commercials to be aired on the various radio and television stations. Consequently, there has been further attendant job openings for graduates of related fields. This extends to theatre practitioners as well.

Again, another economic impact of private broadcasting is in the area of revenue derivable from the exportation of locally produced programmes. Just as the NTA and other public stations have been broadcasting acquired foreign programmes, so also the private stations could with time export their locally produced programmes to other sister African countries. This could become a significant source of revenue to government and the private operators.

Political impact: Like its print media counterpart, private broadcasting has already made considerable impact on Nigeria's political life. According to Sotunmbi, the periodic disappearance of partisan politics with its colour, drama, excitement and conflict has deprived television of

its major attraction to viewers in terms of spectacle and grandeur during sole government control of the industry. However, since deregulation, private television has re-introduced such spectacle back into the nation's politics. Apart from informing Nigerians daily of political developments within the country and around the world, private broadcast media has also endeavoured to present different shades of opinions-politically, since its emergence.

One cannot agree less with Sotunbi's position above. Indeed, during the thick of Nigeria's political crises following the annulment of the June 12 elections by the Babangida regime, most viewers and listeners relied on the private stations to give them up to date and accurate news of happenings around the country. A case in point is the deaths of both General Abacha and Chief M.K.O Abiola which were reported first by some private stations in Lagos before the NTA. This is most encouraging when juxtaposed against the hitherto prevailing scenario in which radio and television news were criticized for their placidity and predominance of government related stories. As such, the private stations have come to offer alternatives to the discerning public. For the political class, gone are those days when incumbents will use executive powers to prevent opponents from utilizing Federal, Regional or State media as was the case between Chief Awolowo and the Colonial Government.

CONCLUSION

The impact of private broadcasting on media practice in Nigeria was investigated. The study reveals that successive governments since the colonial times up to 1992 when the deregulation came into being viewed the sector as a potent tool for social engineering and so monopolized its control. In this light these governments lacked the political will to allow for private ownership of the electronic media. Thus, during this period, the most common criticism of radio and television news was its placidity and the predominance of government related stories.

From the study, it is clear that the deregulation has made appreciable impact on the socio-cultural, economic and political life of the country already. However, it is seen that if the sector must continue to make impact, proprietors and the government must create the enabling environment at all times.

For the proprietors, they should address the issue of proper funding for their stations so as to meet the expected production standards. Again, they should not close their eyes to the material working conditions of their staffs, for it is only a well motivated workforce that can

bring out its best. On the other hand, it is expected of government to through its regulatory agency the NBC; watch closely the industry so as to ensure that operators do not deviate from the avowed national objectives of broadcasting.

Also for the industry to strive well and contribute meaningfully to national development, government must not unnecessarily interfere with its operations. In other words, all attempts to officially censor or gag the media must be discouraged.

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