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**THE ROLE OF THE MEDIA IN PROMOTING CIVIC PARTICIPATION AND  
ENGAGEMENT IN DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE AND POLICY MAKING**

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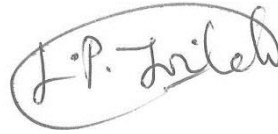
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**THIS DISSERTATION PROPOSAL PRESENTED TO THE SCHOOL OF GRADUATE  
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COMMUNICATION**

**OCTOBER, 2021**

**DECLARATION**

I declare that this thesis is the result of my own effort. Sources to which I am indebted are duly acknowledged in the references. I further declare that this work has never been accepted in substance for any degree and is not being concurrently submitted in candidature for any degree.



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Date

## DEDICATION

*“If I have seen further it is by standing on the shoulders of giants” – Isaac Newton*

I dedicate this dissertation proposal to a man whose convictions and leadership has brought me thus far. A man of modest upbringing and the fear of God. He raised me single handedly and led me to the Lord.

This project is dedicated to Mr. Stephen Latgben Lambon, a father, leader and a guardian of the faith, to him I owe much gratitude for his selfless leadership and charisma that has shaped me into a responsible man with a heart of love for God.

*Proverbs 1:7 The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge...this journey would not have been possible without the foundation you gave me before your heavenly call. May you rest in perfect peace until we meet again, in the second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ!*

Amen!

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God richly bless you all!

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## **ABSTRACT**

Global efforts at ensuring effective civic engagement processes have been instrumental in mobilizing the citizenry towards deepening democratic governance. Notwithstanding Ghana's efforts in embracing democratic forms of governance, much effort has not been made in building civic culture engagements and participation in democratic governance and policy making. This has led to the decline in civic attitudes in relation to issues pertaining to governance and policy making.

The research study employed a qualitative methodological approach, utilizing a focused-group discussion technique to engaging key stakeholders within the media fraternity. Using a purposive sample of 24 respondents from 6 traditional radio and television stations, the study revealed a high level of knowledge of the various respondents with respect to program design, structure, target objectives and target audiences. The study also revealed that the drivers for selection of such programs mainly centered on the need to promote accountability, transparency, nation building, and ensure checks and balances among government officials. The findings reveal a moderate role of the various media platforms in relation to shaping policy and governance discourses in the country amidst various challenges. This study implication reveals the need for a much more assertive media in spearheading governance and policy discourses aimed at driving civic engagements in the country. It also calls for a collective effort by stakeholders in addressing key challenges inhibiting the media in the discharge of its mandate.

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.0 Background of the Study**

Global efforts at ensuring effective civic engagement processes have been seen as very instrumental in mobilizing the citizenry towards the deepening of democratic governance structures. The concept of participation has been given several meanings in relation to community participation in local governance and policy making (Gaventa & Valderrama, 1999). This is largely driven by growing interest in ensuring effective engagement of the citizenry in various policy making decisions (Yetano et al., 2010; IDEA, 2008). The idea of participatory approach has been seen as the most effective medium of engaging community members in the design of policy.

The spread of global norms has led to the institutionalization of best practices that seek to foster civic engagement processes within democratic governance systems and policy making. The drive to ensure civic engagement at the grassroots has received global attention with many global policy action plans targeting community participation and engagement. It has become a catalyst to socially engineering members of the community into ensuring effective engagement processes at the core of most democracies around the world.

At the core of most advanced democracies around the world, the media has become very instrumental in amplifying the discourse on governance and policy making (Odugbemi & Norris, 2010). As agenda-setters, the media play a critical role in highlighting topical issues of national concern and providing a medium of conveying those concerns to government (Norris, 2010). The media as an agenda-setter, continues to play a crucial role in spearheading national discourses in

relation to issues on governance, security, development, economy, health, education, and other sectors of national development.

The media, according to McQuail (2005, p.83) is seen as “a window on events and experiences” “a mirror of events in society and the world”, “a filter or gatekeeper” “a signpost, guide or interpreter”, “a forum or platform for the presentation of information and ideas” and “as an interlocutor or informed partner in conversation”. This is evidenced in the priming and framing of national discourses within specific media programs or shows centered on governance and policy making. The media leads the discussion on topical national issues by setting the public agenda where the citizenry get informed, educated, and enlightened on daily events.

Today, it is not surprising to see that the media have become conduits of political education by which they educate citizens on voting rights. Aside this, “the media has extended its role beyond this function to include investigation and watchdog through which it is able to monitor and expose acts of impropriety in state institutions and among public officials” (Tettey, 2002, p.9). These roles have led to shaping discussions and channeling government’s efforts at addressing the many plights of its citizenry. Media civic responsibility seems to gain grounds globally as more and more media practitioners are becoming key players in the global space. This has given global media a voice in global policy making and international summits.

The essential role of the media is further emphasized by Hadesian (2006) who asserts that the media is the dominant actor in the shaping of public views in this modern era. The media continues to play critical roles in exposing corrupt practices, poor governance, embezzlement, and human rights abuse. It has also become a voice for marginalized communities which have been deprived of national development. Its prominent role is evidenced by stories and news coverage on climate

change, corruption scandals and human rights abuse. Therefore, equal access to information is important for enabling citizens to have informed discussions affecting their lives (Cornwall & Coelho, 2007, p. 8; Daruwala & Nayak, 2007, p.10).

According to Odugbemi and Norris (2010), as watchdog, the media in developing countries remain pivotal in highlighting topical national issues which requires pragmatic measures to be taken by the national government or the international community. In Ghana's case, the media despite several obstacles continues to discharge its role in ensuring that the citizenry are informed, educated and enlightened on topic national discourses. For example, an investigation by the private media enabled the government to abandon an attempt to raise an amount of US\$1 billion from a fictitious source which claimed to be the International Finance Company (Gadzekpo, 2008, cited in Arthur, 2010, p. 210).

In recent times, public opinion has become a key element in influencing decision making processes at the community, national, regional, and international (Anam, 2007). The media in discharging its mandate has been at the fore front of informing and updating the public on issues of climate change since anthropogenic climate change emerged as a major global issue. Studies have revealed that the mass media has been a major dominant source of climate news for the public (Brulle et al., 2012; Nelkin, 1995; Wilson, 2000a), journalists (Wilson, 2000b) and policy makers alike (Sundblad et al., 2009).

Media coverage of climate change has shaped public views in relation to the media's role in highlighting scientific discourse and consensus on climate change with regards to rising global temperature caused human activities and emissions of greenhouse gases from industrial production. (Antilla, 2005). The media continues to shape discussions on climate change by calling

on global actors especially national governments to commit to realizing climate targets by reducing specific emissions within country specific boundaries. This is evidenced by several global reportages on climate issues and trends over the years that has led to some form of global action plans and policy frameworks geared towards a committed effort at reducing global emissions.

In advancing the discourse of climate change, the essential role of the media has been explored in relation to coverage in the USA (Antilla, 2005; Antilla, 2010; Gelbspan, 2004; McComas & Shanahan 1999; Nissani, 1999; Trumbo, 1996; Zehr, 2000; Boykoff 2008). Scholarly work undertaken using Anthony Downs' issue attention cycle (1972), states that media attention performs an agenda setting function (McCombs and Shanahan 1999; Trumbo 1996). As more coverage is given to climate issues, there is a high possibility that this would gain public attention thereby calling for global actions to be taken to address global warming.

Schmidt et al. (2013) took this step further in their investigation of media attention on climate change in 27 different countries between 1996 and 2010. The researchers found that climate coverage peaks during "focusing events" such as the release of the film 'The International Truth' and the announcement of the IPCC Fourth Assessment Reports. Of these focusing events, some of the largest peaks occurred during COPs, particularly COP15 in Copenhagen (Schmidt et al. 2013, p. 20). Consistent with the findings in Schmidt et al. (2013), COP21 in Paris in 2015 elicited another spike in media coverage of climate change (Luedecke et al., 2016). This has led to global commitments by various member states who pledge to reduce country specific emissions despite the lack of non-compliance by some other countries.

As agenda-setters, the media continuous to emphasize urgent social issues and channel public concerns to policymakers in government (Norris, 2010). This can be seen in the discharge of its

role in Ghanaian public discourses, as the media played a critical role in passage of the ‘Right to Information Bill’ which has since been a landmark event in the history of the Republic of Ghana. The promotion of a free press and civic freedoms are core western values that been seen as the anchor of democracies around the world which must be upheld. The media despite the lack of transparency and accountability mechanisms, continues to push forward for significant measures to be employed as a check on office holders (Schedler, 1999, p.14). This is evidenced in the panelists discussions hosted on the various media programs which involves several experts centered on issues of governance and policy making. In order for the media, to fully assert its mandate, it is incumbent on all stakeholders to commit to these values.

Efficient media programming is key to generating the needed discussions on various airwaves as it helps to sample public opinions on matters of national interest and nation building. According to Media and Governance Series, the availability of mass media is a pre-requisite or necessity for active engagement in a contemporary world (MFWA, 2019; Lerner & Schramm, 1967). As several research suggest that the media remains influential in the discharge of its mandate as a gatekeeper in representing the voice of the voiceless in society. A well-established media space is pivotal towards driving the agenda of information dissemination, public education and advocacy. The media is therefore reflective of public opinion as evidenced in various national discussions carried on the airwaves during its live broadcast.

Due to the space occupied by the media in society, it facilitates discussions thereby providing government with feedback on national policies. This is evidenced in the various functions discharged by the media namely as a source of entertainment and arts, source of news and information, source of analysis and comments and the source of education and directives (Hibert, 1991). These roles have over the years driven the media agenda in its reportage, news coverage,

event analysis and programming. The media as a beacon of democracy continues to thrive despite several exogenous and endogenous factors that tend to stifle its mandate as a gatekeeper in governance processes. In the exercise of its mandate several forces such as political interference, ownership interest, censorship, regulation, donor funding, ideological affiliation etc. tends to malign its efforts at effectively performing its mandate.

Notwithstanding these stumbling blocks, democratic theorists like Milton, for example:

Asserted that a free press advances the cause of democracy by performing watchdog functions over governments and thereby preventing the latter from appropriating to itself excessive power with which to abuse the citizenry and the political process. The media perform this function by monitoring the activities of governments and taking them to task for any transgressions (Gurevitch & Blumler, 1990, p. 270).

As the media serves as a nexus between citizenry and government, the role of the media is to enhance civic participation thereby spearheading inclusive governance and entrenching democratic practices. This would help to spearhead the agenda of inclusive participation. As several modern approaches of participatory frameworks are being introduced to ensure more citizenry involvement in the discharge of governance. Civic cultures are essential in driving participatory approaches in governance and policy making.

The media can perform its role by shaping public opinion through the selection and presentation of information in a particular manner (Iyengar, 1994). In shaping the public opinion, professional media organizations ensure that stories churned out are factual, accurate and credible to not misled the public. Previous scholarship on public opinion also reveals that citizen's attitudes can be influenced significantly by how media frame political controversies (Chong & Druckman, 2007a,

2007b; de Vreese, 2005). Media framing therefore plays an influential role in driving the public agenda by way of panel discussions and contributions from experts and opinion leaders on topical national issues. It is also widely held that the extent to which citizens obtain, consume and have confidence in information and this information is transmitted or conveyed is progressively influencing social, economic and political outcomes (Meskell, 2009; Stott, 2009; Tolbert, McNeal, & Smith, 2003).

This is largely true as majority of the citizenry consume newsworthy information which in turn influences their decision-making process. The beauty of democracy is to have each and everyone's voice heard, which the media plays this role effectively. It is therefore cognizant that stakeholders create a conducive atmosphere for the media to grow and continue to create spaces for the voice of its citizenry.

### **1.1 Statement of the Research Problem**

Since the return of multiparty democracy in 1992, the Ghanaian media landscape has witnessed a growing trend in private commercial media due to the liberalization efforts by previous governments. The rise of several private owned media houses particularly radio, television and print media can be traced to the liberalization process that begun in the 1980's. The African continent despite embracing democratic forms of governance, have largely remained a tool for conducting elections (Lise et al., 2007; Imam, 1992; Jotia, 2012). This has led to the decline in civic attitudes, as most citizens have over the years developed apathy on issues pertaining to governance and policy making.

Notwithstanding, the decline in civic attitudes, the issue of citizen participation has been well embraced by development agencies and civil societies. This is as a result of the quest to find lasting

solutions that would seek to address the traditional approach to governance where decisions emanate from the top to the bottom which has largely failed to deliver (Yetano et al, 2010). It is expected that, with the emergence of unfettered and independent press, the media would be well positioned towards ensuring effective governance systems that guarantee the right to freedom of expression, transparency, accountability, rule of law and providing a pluralist platform for political expression about controversial issues (Norris, 2010; Scholte, 2002). Thus, the media remains very instrumental towards the entrenchment of democratic governance.

Despite these structural changes permeating traditional governance sphere, the press in terms of developing countries, continues to be considered a key player in highlighting crucial issues, which require urgent action taken by the national government or the international community (Odugbemi & Norris, 2010). It has therefore become imperative that governments around the world provide a conducive atmosphere for the media to thrive in order to deliver on its civic mandate by encouraging civic participation and engagements in democratic governance and policy making to further deepen, consolidate and entrench democratic practices and cultures.

## **1.2 Research Questions**

In order to achieve the aims and objectives of this study, the following research questions would be addressed:

1. How does the media use its programming to promote civic engagements and participation?
2. What is the role of the media in shaping governance and policy discourse?

## **1.3 Research Objectives**

1. Investigate how media programming is used to promote civic engagements and participation.

2. Examine the role of the media in shaping governance and policy discourses.

#### **1.4 Scope of the Study**

This research study focused on the role of the media in promoting civic participation and engagement in democratic governance and policy making. The study critically investigated the role of specific programs in shaping governance and policy making in the country. It also examined how these programs are designed to harness civic engagement cultures. The study focused on Citi FM (Citi Breakfast Show), Pan-African TV (Good Morning Africa), GBC (Focus), Joy FM (Newsfile), Metro TV (Good Morning Ghana), Angel TV (Angel Morning Show) and Onua TV (Onua Maakyee). Due to their wide reach network to other parts of the country with corresponding affiliate stations airing their shows, content from the above stations were deemed appropriate for the study from the period 2010 to 2021.

#### **1.5 Significance of the Study**

The significance of the study lies in its ability to inform civil society organizations, governments and policy makers on effective participatory approaches that can be harnessed using the media as a tool to galvanize civic engagement in democratic governance and policy making. Therefore, the research is important because it contributes to understanding the role of the media in promoting civic participation and engagement in governance and policy discourses. The study seeks to contribute to existing literature on the roles of the media in promoting civic participation with emphasis on democratic governance and policy making. Undertaking this study, would inform policy making by way of the design and implementation process so as to harness maximum participation of the citizenry.

## **1.6 Organization of Chapters**

The study is organized into five main chapters. Chapter one covers the research design. It introduces the subject and gives a brief background to the research area, problem statement, outlines the research questions and objectives, scope and significance of the study and finally the organization of the study.

Chapter two provides an introduction and overview of the literature and theoretical framework deployed or incorporated within the study. The literature review highlights key essential discourses within the media's role in promoting civic participation and engagement in democratic governance and policy making. It highlights key roles of stakeholders in further deepening democratic practices and norms through carefully designed media programmes focusing on governance, current affairs, politics and national discourses.

Chapter three involves the methodology that would be adopted in the study. This includes an introduction, research design, source of data, population, sampling size and technique, research variables, unit of analysis, data collection methodology, data analysis methodology, ethical consideration and summary. Therefore, the study used a qualitative methodology in conducting the research with the data being collected through interview guide, secondary document and literature reviews.

Chapter four would involve the analysis of data collected from the field and presentation of findings. Finally, chapter five would present a summary of the findings in relation to the literature, conclusion and as well as offers some policy recommendations.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.0 Introduction**

The literature review chapter highlights the works of various scholars and provides a much clearer understanding of key concepts in relation to the role of the media in promoting civic engagement and participation. The study also examines how these roles contribute to shaping national discourses on democratic governance and policy making through meaningful engagement processes that offers the citizenry a voice on topical issues. The theoretical framework underpinning the study is well situated within the research.

#### **2.1 An Historical Overview of the Ghanaian Media Landscape**

The African press was a colonial off-shoot which developed by virtue of its connection with the press in Europe and North America (Faringer, 1991). Notwithstanding, the diverse nature of the media in Africa, there still remains some form of shared traits and a common colonial heritage binding them (Bourgault, 1995). Ghana's contact with the West can be traced back to the 15<sup>th</sup> century and the 19<sup>th</sup> century during British colonial rule (Anokwa, 1997). Ghana's historical heritage played a critical role in the development of the media fraternity which has seen a burgeoning media pluralism in the country.

The Ghanaian media continues to thrive making it the envy of many young democracies in the West African sub-region. This can be traced to the liberalization of the media space during the emergence of the fourth republican constitutional rule that paved way for other media actors to operate thereby entrenching democratic governance practices in the country. The country's takes

its name from the Ancient Ghana empire which flourished in gold trade. The trade in gold flourished, boosting the Kingdoms fortunes during that period.

The period 1857 saw the emergence of the West African Herald which later saw other print media emerge in 1931 and 1949 owned by Africans. The educated African class during this period fought for the freedom of the press through advocacy and activism (Anokwa, 1997). The role of nationalists in the Pan-African struggle led to the mobilization of various groups who criticized the colonial government due to the continuous exploitation of the continent and abuse of power (Biney, 2011).

As a result, several laws were enforced to restrict the right of freedom of expression. Despite, the introduction of draconian laws to restrict the media space, the media continued to thrive further promoting the culture of tolerance towards press freedom (Hasty, 2005). This largely portrays the good image of Ghana, as a beacon of democracy where the citizenry has a voice in national discourses despite several attempts to hijack the media spaces by several instances of political influence in the country.

## **2.2.0 Development of Electronic Media in Ghana**

### **2.2.1 Radio Broadcasting**

The emergence of radio broadcasting can be traced to 1935 which saw station ZOY emerge as the pacesetter during that period (Asare, 2009). Radio broadcasting during this period performed a variety of roles which includes information dissemination, cultural and entertainment needs that was geared towards serving the needs of the ruling elites (Karikari, 1995). Nkrumah's instrumental role could be seen in the deployment of radio broadcasting to several regions to facilitate literacy.

He undertook this initiative because he had realized that illiteracy was a bane to his national development policy and so he pushed for broadcasting in several languages so as to spearhead of development policy (Biney, 2011). Radio broadcasting became a tool for mobilizing collective efforts towards addressing national issues.

Despite its limited reach, it served as an essential medium to reach out to rural communities who were isolated from the business of governance. Station ZOY was later changed to Gold Coast Broadcasting Service (GCBS) and finally renamed Ghana Broadcasting Corporation (GBC) (Alhassan 2005 in Asare 2009). There has since been a proliferation of radio stations in the country, with several ideological inclinations and developmental focus. The first private broadcasting was introduced in 1995 known as Radio EYE. Ghana has since had so many radio stations spring up due to the emergence of media pluralism. These include Peace fm, Joy fm, Adom fm, Citi fm, Atinka fm, Asempa fm, Neat fm, Okay fm and many more stations spread around the country.

### **2.2.2 Television Broadcasting**

The era of the television industry can be traced to 1965 which saw GBC providing services to some parts of the country due to its limited infrastructure. Nkrumah at that time had envisioned that the television could be as an ideological tool that would propel national development (Biney, 2011). For Nkrumah, the press, radio and television were not only arenas for public discourse on national issues, but also a closely guarded and tightly controlled machine for achieving the major objective of political education, socialist ideals, national unity and the liberation and unification of Africa (Biney, 2011). Television broadcasting during this period provided viewers with information and visuals on issues concerning national development and governance. Due to media pluralism, Ghana's media landscape has seen the emergence of several television platforms.

Today, there exist a plethora of television stations providing variety to a large viewership. Some of the television stations currently operating include TV3, Metro TV, TV Africa, UTV, Citi TV and Pan-African TV. The advancement of television broadcast is largely due to media pluralism and emerging digital innovation across the globe leading to several channels migrating from analog broadcasting to the digital broadcasting of television.

### **2.3 Media and Civic Engagement Practices**

Several scholars, such as Park and Perry (2008) defined the concept of civic participation as the active involvement of the citizenry in national affairs (pp. 238-239). Besides, Norris (2001) defined civic participation as a process that equips the citizenry with knowledge on national issues, patriotism and the opportunity to engage in governance and policy discourse. According to Flew (2006), citizenship as a concept emphasizes the many ways in which democratization practices are viewed within the media sphere.

For instance, Golding and Murdock (1989) have provided a definition of media citizenship which highlights how the citizenry are informed on their rights, accessibility to information, views on national discourses and the opportunity offered to the various citizens to make inputs within the media sphere. The media performs several functions which include the role of informing the citizens; to criticize situations in society; to express opinions and let other's express their opinions on issues; to entertain; to educate citizens; and to promote commerce: the media are just a business (Reinders 1996, Maduro 2004, Goede 2006, Graber 2003). These functions spell out the role of the media in society and with key actors in the areas of governance and politics. These roles have been segmented to meet the dynamic nature of societal demands. The media as a medium discharges these duties in the form of reportage, discussions, commentaries, and editorials.

Sometimes these roles overlap depending on the structure of the program, show, topics, issues, and panelists.

Information remains a highly demanded commodity within the media space, as most actors rely on these for their use depending on the nature of their social-cultural needs (Graber, 2003). Without information, society would not be able to function properly as expected. The information dissemination role of the media is essential for various actors, either a news commentary on business finance, education, health, politics, or governance discourses. As Wasburn (1995, p. 647) points out, “in modern democratic states, citizens largely depend, directly and indirectly, on the media to provide most of the material out of which they construct their understanding and subsequently form their evaluations of political structures, policies, actors and events”. This has afforded the audience the opportunity to freely criticize situations in society which they feel should be addressed by political leaders and government.

In planning ahead, media programs must always be shaped to address the dynamic nature of national issues that tends to undermine democratic governance (Baran & Davis, 1995). With an engaged citizenry using the media as a tool would deepen civic culture. It is therefore essential to acknowledge the fact that a vigilant press is essential to holding government officials and institution accountable for their actions through constant monitoring (Graber, 2009). This would help to promote transparency and accountable governance.

In the same way, Norris (2010) contends that the media act as the watchdog, plays a crucial role through its checks and balances on the executive particularly the political elites within the private and public domains. The media equips citizens with accurate reports, news, commentaries, and discussions that help to form opinions by the public. It leads the discussions on national issues that

stimulates the cognitive processes of the citizenry thereby harnessing positive civic attitudes. The media therefore contributes to the social construction of the mindset of the citizenry through its agenda setting.

The role of the media is well captured by Sandbrook (1996, p.81) who states that:

The privately-owned media play important roles in democratic life. They inform citizens on matters of public policy by presenting and debating alternatives. Where parties remain weak to fulfil this policy role, newspapers, radio and television may fill the gap in forging a more informed electorate. The media may also help empower their readers and listeners by making them aware of their civil and political rights, and why and how these rights should be exercised.

Wanyande (1996) also provides evidence from Kenya to support the mobilizing and educational role of the media in the promotion of democratic ideas. He notes that:

The Daily Nation's editorial of 2<sup>nd</sup> July, 1996, provided very sound arguments about the seriousness of the issue of constitutional reform. This shaped the minds of the people who begun to think about the issue more critically than would have been the case if the whole debate was left to politicians alone (p.14).

Schudson (2008) contends that the media provide six important functions in a democratic society, which includes information, investigation, analysis, social empathy, public forum and mobilization. These functions remain more than relevant till today, as it spells out the essential role of the media in the discharge of its mandate. The World Bank (2010) asserts that a diverse and independent media sector is capable of ensuring that government is held accountable which

would inure to the greater good of the vulnerable segments of society. This is further confirmed by Ali (2006) who asserts that, in Bangladesh, the media play a strong and meaningful role in bringing a variety of governance concerns to public attention.

The media continues to function as a civic forum for political debate, facilitating informed citizen's political knowledge and political efficacy (Dahlgren, 1995). The media provide a public sphere where citizens can discuss issues and events, acting as a channel between the governors and the governed (Habermas, 2006). This reflects the conscious efforts made by the media in driving the agenda of development and giving a voice to the vulnerable.

By disseminating information, mass media provides mediums in which the citizenry can contribute diverse opinions in relation to the socio-political and economic spheres which further deepens civic engagement processes (Hudock, 2003; Besley, Burgess, & Prat, 2002). The media in performance of its mandate provides a public sphere where citizens can discuss issues and events, acting as a channel between the governors and the governed (Habermas, 2006).

As a research on audience participation conducted by Md. Salleh and Zakariah (1993, p. 27-28) on the Seremban local radio station revealed that:

The station encouraged audience response to all its programmes through phone-ins during programme broadcast. As a way of ascertaining the effectiveness of programmes and also to ascertain the informational needs of the rural folk, the local radio station continued to encourage direct cooperation between their programme producers and the rural people through local development agencies. Audience involvement in radio programming production was undertaken via live radio discussions and telephone interviews with audience members conducted by the radio staff as part of radio programmes.

As highlighted by Salleh and Zakariah (1993), discussions were recorded in the field and played back at the studio. Other times, the discussions took the form of a live broadcasts where the audience can call to contribute to the show or program. During such live discussions, the panel is often made up of radio programmer who acts as a host or moderator, representatives of local and state development agencies and two or three members of the local community (Md. Salleh & Zakariah, 1993, p. 28).

Salleh (1989, p.28) found that generally the broadcasters held positive attitudes towards their audience. Producers of the radio programmes realized the necessity of being aware of rural problems when producing rural development programmes. The accessibility of media especially radio in these rural communities should be of concern to major policy makers. As most of these rural folks do not have access to various forms of media so as to remain informed on national discourses and equally participate in the programming of radio and television. Sometimes the proximity of these radio and television stations do not reach the large audience further hindering the spread of global norms such as inclusivity in national discourses. Also, the study by Md. Salleh and Zakariah (1993, p.28) showed that the rural audience has positive attitudes towards the local radio stations and this in turn has a positive influence on audience participation in radio development programmes.

Another study was conducted in the extension area of University of Agriculture Malaysia (now Universiti Putra Malaysia) to determine the knowledge and level of participation in the popular programme “Era Jaya”. Abdul Razak (1993, p. 20) found in this research that 75% of the respondents listened to the program. Among those who listened, only 32% who knew the time of broadcast, 48% knew the duration of broadcast and 47% knew the content. Of the 75% who listened to the program only 2 respondents reported that they used the telephone to call into the

program when it was on air. It is apparent from the research findings that the level of participation of rural audience in radio programme was low. These findings are relevant to the study as it informs on media role and civic participation.

The media has been one of the key cornerstone of Ghana's young vibrant democracy since 1992. It has fairly distinguished itself in the discharge of its roles of informing, educating, entertaining and advocacy in relation to national development. The media has also been at the forefront of creating spaces or mediums through its programming which enables the citizenry to contribute to national discourses thereby enhancing democratic governance. The onus lies on various stakeholders towards ensuring the creation of a conducive atmosphere for the media to thrive in its as watchdog of society.

## **2.4.0 Theoretical Framework**

### **2.4.1 Agenda Setting Theory (AST)**

In his work, Bernard Cohen discusses the 'The Press and Foreign Policy'. He writes that the press "may not be successful much of the time in telling people what to think, but it is stunningly successful in telling its readers what to think about" (1963, p. 13). The conveying of information to the public has always been one of the key roles of the media. The media is portrayed as the mouthpiece of the masses by virtue of its mandate as a watchdog of society. Scholars such as McCombs (2005) have undertaken several studies in the field of agenda setting. He espouses the view that when an idea is repeated continuously by the media, it becomes acceptable as the norm due to the prominence given to it (McCombs, 2005).

The agenda setting theory which emerged several years ago, is of the view that mass media possess the power to influence agenda through its emphasis of specific issues, persons or subjects. As defined by McCombs and Reynolds (2002), the agenda setting theory explains how the media tend to influence public agenda via its various mediums and discussions. The theory basically holds that mass media as a tool can be used to influence various national issues through its various reportage, commentary and discussions. This helps to build the agenda that tends to influence the public since the media occupies an important space in the lives of the people.

Through its various mediums such as print, electronic and wireless services, mass media holds great influence in shaping discussions and thought process of the public. Rogers and Dearing (1988) identified three types of agenda setting in their work, "Agenda-setting research: Where has it been, where is it going?". Their work highlights three affected parties namely public agenda setting, media agenda setting and policy agenda setting.

The theory can be traced to the period of 1972 which was published in a public opinion quarterly by Dr. Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw (McCombs & Shaw, 1972). The study focused on the 1968 Presidential Election which saw the incumbent Democratic nominee Lyndon B. Johnson being removed by his Republican political opponent Richard Nixon. It became known as the "Chapel Hill Study". The study surveyed 100 residents of the Chapel Hill, North Carolina on what they considered as the most essential issues during the election and a comparative study was undertaken based on local and national media reportage. The media as the frontrunner in public information dissemination and opinion formation plays a crucial role by deciding what issues to give prominence to and how these issues are to be diagnosed.

It is worthy to note that the media occupies a very enviable position in society by virtue of its mandate as the watchdog of society. This space enables the media to influence strategically information production, distribution, and consumption. As more and more people consume news items, their thought process are shaped and formed based on what issues are very essential. This is evidenced during campaigns, where candidates churn out various slogans, as a result the media highlights which one's are to be considered and given prominence (McCombs, 2003). Through the spinning wheel, the media is able to project its agenda thereby influencing the public agenda. The prominence given to specific news item directs audience attention.

This enables the media to advance its course using persuasive language which tends to influence the cognitive processes of individuals. Cohen (1993) suggests that the world we live in, would be viewed differently in relation to the kind of map generated by writers, editors, and publishers of the paper they read. In exploring Lippmann's idea of imagery during the 1968 election, McCombs and Shaw (1972) found out that voter's agenda highly correlated to that of the news media. This study was undertaken to examine media's agenda by comparing it with the key issues of undecided voters. The media certainly influences voter's behavior through the prominence it generates during electioneering campaigns.

#### **2.4.2 Basic Assumptions of AST**

In its most basic sense, agenda setting is the creation of public awareness and concern of salient issues by the news media. Agenda setting theory rests on two basic assumptions. The first one states that the press and the media do not reflect reality; they filter and shape it and the second assumption states that, media concentration on a few issues and subjects leads the public to perceive those issues as more important than other issues (University of Twente, 2014). These

assumptions drive the theory of agenda setting and helps to explain how the theory works in relation to mass media consumption.

Agenda setting occurs through a cognitive process known as “accessibility,” which implies that the more frequently and prominently the news media covers an issue, the more that issue becomes accessible in the audience’s memory (Iyengar & Kinder, 1987). For instance, a survey conducted to find out how people feel about how their country is run or issues the country faces revealed that respondents most of the responses were similar to the issues raised by the media. This is in relation to the Democratic nominee at that time Barack Obama who the media raised questions with regards to this origin of birth.

This led to FOX News issuing a poll regarding the President Obama’s birth certificate, as 37 percent of Republican respondents said they believe that Obama was not a natural born citizen compared to just 12 percent of Democrats (Blanton, 2011). The agenda setting theory when used to explain this example, reveals that repeated coverage by FOX News of the birth certificate issue regarding Obama led to influencing the respondents. Agenda setting operates effectively when the issue is spinned continuously gaining momentum within the media space. The more the issue is given prominence, it gains acceptance within the wider public space.

Agenda setting theory can be explained in relation to how audience are exposed to particular beliefs. This is highlighted by the audience effects model, which emphasizes the role of the media in covering specific issues and events in a manner that shapes audience perception and thought process in relation to key issues discussed. There is therefore a probability that an audience that is highly sensitive to such issues would be influenced depending on the prominence given to it (Walgrave & Van Aelst, 2006).

As human's we are predisposed to various news items and issues that influences our cognitive processes. By virtue of the prominence given to the issue, it gradually forms our opinions. We are constantly shaped by the media in relation to issues bothering on our social, political, economic, and religious needs. As time goes on, the public opinion is formed based on media emphasis on specific issues. The audience as a key group are thereby shaped by the nature of issues churned out by the media. The media is able to swing the issues ensuring some form of balance during discussions which in turn elicits inputs from the audience.

With agenda setting, some issues tend to be obtrusive and others unobtrusive. The obtrusive nature of issues occurs in the context where issues tend to affect almost everyone. An examples is the increase in prices of fuel or food stuffs. Unobtrusive issues also occur when the issues are much isolated from the public such as political scandal or corruption. As research reveals that the obtrusiveness of an issue is connected with the everyday personal experiences of the audience. This is as a result of the nature of the issue, as some issues do not affect others such as the rise in the unemployment rate which might not affect those in stable jobs (Walgrave & Van Aelst, 2006). Regardless of the differences, the audience forms a crucial part of the process of agenda setting in relation to the effects given to these issues.

### **2.4.3 Criticisms of AST**

The agenda setting theory has faced several criticisms mainly the difficulty in measuring its impact or application. The use of surveys in relation to media content and public responses are mainly based on categories. The results become too inflated to be considered truly relevant or accurate. According to Rogers and Dearing (1988), the theory itself is inherently casual both in its surveying method and the sheer number of variables that affect the results. For instance, a study of the

media's effect on violence in society, would require that one has to consider the difference between factual violence and fictional violence.

The individual might not be able to distinguish between reality or fiction. Therefore, reality must be distinguished from fiction which makes it difficult to analyze the effect on society. If one has to embark on analyzing how many times an incidence occurs within the media by calculating how many times a person is exposed to that content, would require that one examines all general rates of violence in order to come to a conclusion or draw any correlation between the data gathered. This makes it very impossible to undertake such a study.

Regardless of these criticisms, the agenda setting theory has proven to be very useful for explaining how the media contributes to shaping public agenda via its various roles such as information dissemination and education. This theory thus best explains the role of the media in promoting civic participation and engagement in democratic governance and policy making. The theory is relevant to this study, as it would inform key stakeholders within the media fraternity on how the media can discharge its mandate while consolidating on its gains in the area of deepening democratic governance and promoting civic attitudes among the populace.

## **2.5 Summary**

In summary, this chapter focused on literature review with an emphasis on the historical overview of the Ghanaian media landscape and development of the electronic media in Ghana. It also provides literature in relation with civic engagement practices and the theoretical framework underpinning the study. The next chapter outlines the methodology applied within the research study in relation to research design, sources of data, sampling technique, sample size and population, data collection, data collection instruments, data analysis and ethical considerations.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.0 Introduction**

The main purpose of this chapter is to explain the research methodology and procedures for data collection. Undertaking a research requires that one employs a methodology that would guide data collection. According to Babbie and Mouton (2001), research methodology entails the research process and the kind of tools and procedures to be used. The essence of a research methodology is to ensure that the research is undertaken using the appropriate method. Therefore, the chapter provides a description of the method employed in the study, research design, population, sampling and sampling technique and data collection.

#### **3.1 Research Design**

Research design according to Vogt (2005, p. 87), “is the plan that a researcher will follow when conducting the study”. According to Kumar (2011), a research design is a guide in planning one’s work in order to collect data which provides solutions to the research questions or research problem as stated in the study. The essence of a good research design is further highlighted by O. Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) who assert that it provides clarity to the aim of the study and some form of consistency to the research questions and proposed research method. For the purposes of this study, a qualitative research paradigm was employed in this research to gather and analyze data. Qualitative research attempts to understand a phenomenon from the viewpoint of the population involved. Lindlof (1995, p. 5) makes the point that qualitative research allows a researcher to interview people as a means of understanding their views “on a scene, to retrieve experiences from

the past, to gain expert insight or information, to obtain descriptions of events or scenes that are normally unavailable for observation.

This approach helps to foster trust, to understand a sensitive or intimate relationship, or to analyze certain kinds of discourse.” Creswell (2014) articulates that the purpose of the qualitative approach is to discover and understand experiences, perspectives, and thoughts of participants. The researcher therefore employed a qualitative research design due to its exploratory and open-ended nature of the research questions. This is to enable the researchers elicit responses in relation to the role of the media in promoting civic participation and engagement in democratic governance and policy making. Samples tend to be small since it does not focus mainly on “how many”.

Some common qualitative methods or techniques include interviews, focus group discussions and participant observation (Watkins, 2012). These techniques are employed based on the nature of study one is conducting and the variables involved. As humans make everyday decisions, so is one required to have a methodology to guide one’s research which helps to arrive at decisions concerned with areas of research and data gathering techniques (Silverman, 2005). The methodology as a guide helps the researcher in making the correct decisions as to what kind of data to gather, target population, sample size suitable for the research and the techniques required to arrive at that decision. The qualitative research method has been criticized as being subjective. However, it best suits this study because it offers ample information and fundamentals for better understanding of the research problem of this study (Zikmund & Carr, 2000). It provides the researcher with great insights into a given phenomenon through its rich data that is collected during the study.

It provides the researcher with a pool of data to make informed conclusions. This approach guarantees the researcher in-depth data from respondents based on their responses. As suggested by Duncan et al (2009), the researcher is assured of the safety in employing a qualitative research approach in his work since he or she cannot guarantee the nature of responses from the participants. It therefore provides one with an open realm of response where participants provide responses or feedback from questions posed to them based on their extensive knowledge and experience in that area of study.

### **3.2 Sources of Data**

The research made use of both primary and secondary data, which were gathered from diverse sources, including, archival sources, textbooks, journals/articles (both published and unpublished), and internet sites. The primary research was tailored to suit the needs of the research. This research involved the collection of raw data, which forms the main basis for achieving the research objectives. The research also made use of secondary data. Secondary sources provide relevant analysis of data found in primary sources including books, journals, reports and so on (Wimmer & Dominick, 2011; Du Plooy, 2009). These sources were used in the data collection process.

### **3.3 Population**

Population of a study refers to the complete set of individuals that a researcher is interested in (Gravetter & Forzano, 2009). It constitutes the overall collection of all units of analysis that the researcher wishes to make specific inferences (Johnson & Christensen, 2008). Wimmer and Dominick (2011, p. 87) describe a population as a “group or class of subjects, variables, concepts or phenomena.” In this study, the population therefore consisted of media practitioners across the various stations within the media fraternity namely Citi FM (Citi Breakfast Show), Pan-African

TV (Good Morning Africa), GBC (Focus), Joy FM (Newsfile), Metro TV (Good Morning Ghana), Angel TV (Angel Morning Show) and Onua TV (Onua Maakye).

### **3.4 Sampling Technique and Sample Size**

In conducting a qualitative study, requires that specific sampling techniques are employed with the right sample size so as to derive the necessary results when it comes to data collection. Sampling, especially in qualitative research, allows researchers to have a deeper understanding of a problem under study (Black, 2012; Stacks, 2011). The study's sample was purposely selected to yield material relevant in answering the research questions.

Participants were therefore selected based on their deep knowledge and experience of the issue under investigation using purposive sampling (Merriam, 2009). This is because purposive sampling allows cases or units to be specifically selected due to their ability to give detailed information about the issues that are important to the research. For the purposes of this research study, a sample size of 24 respondents were selected from the six (6) traditional radio and television media houses.

These participants were selected based on their extensive knowledge in the area of their respective careers within the media industry. Using a purposive sampling technique, the station manager, host of the show and two production assistants were selected for the interview. The respondents were carefully selected based on specific programs centered on governance and policy. Other criteria for selection included the discharge of roles and responsibility in relation to program design, structure, content and production process of the various governance shows or programs. The period under study covers 2010 to 2021 with a total number of 24 participants who took part in the study.

### **3.5 Data Collection**

Data collection techniques enables the researcher to learn about a phenomenon by gathering information from individuals, groups, and text in any medium (Biber et al., 2011, p. 5). Approaches to data collection in qualitative research usually consist of interacting directly with participants either on a face-to-face level or in a group setting. Data collection was undertaken using an interview guide that was administered to participants taking part in the study. The data collection instruments included a recorder, pen, interview guide and a focused group discussion guide.

The qualitative research interview sought to describe and give meanings to the central themes in the life of the subjects. Interviews are particularly useful for getting the story behind a participant's experiences. Interviews may be useful as follow-up to certain respondents to questionnaires (McNamara, 1999). The interview guide was structured around open-ended questions that enabled the respondents to freely express themselves. The general interview guide approach adopted in this research study was to ensure that the same general areas of information are collected from each interviewee. This helps to provide more focus.

With an interview guide, respondents were asked specific questions within a focused group discussion setting tailored to the research objectives. The interview process provided participants within study a much more flexible approach in relation to responses generated. A focused group technique was employed within the data collection process which enabled the researcher to collect an appropriate amount of data in a short period of time. This technique enabled the researcher to obtain rich data that are not usually achieved when applying an instrument individually. It's fairly easy to conduct or drive since the same interview guide is administered to all members of the group. And lastly, the focused group discussion technique is quite cheaper than other methods.

Interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs) were therefore used as data collection tools or instruments. They are typically used as a research strategy to gather information about participant's experiences, views and beliefs concerning a specific research question or phenomenon of interest (Lambert and Loiselle, 2007). The interview guide consisted of an outline of categories that are relevant to the research and on which interview questions are ultimately based (Polit & Hungler (1995). As a way of ensuring that the respondents feel at home, a rapport was established so as to build trust in the interviewing process thereby creating a conducive atmosphere where more sensitive questions could be asked or posed to the various interviewees.

The researcher ensured that prompts were administered intermittently when the need arises since the interviewee might sometimes not stay within the scope of discussion. This is very helpful in permitting the interviewee to expand on a particular issue or in getting them to re-engage with the interview process if they lose their train of thought (Robson, 2002). The researcher also followed the sequence of questions outlined in the interview guide so to enable some form of coherence in the data collection process. Tod (2006) suggests that the flexibility of the interview structure is one of its greatest strengths. The use of the interview guide served its purpose of flexibility as it enabled the interviewer to elicit responses in a manner that sought to engage the interviewee.

### **3.6 Data Analysis**

Data analysis is the process of coding, categorizing, editing and tabulation of accumulated data to a manageable size, developing summaries, along with searching for patterns of relationship that exist among data-groups (Kothari, 2004). Data transcription was undertaken by listening to each audio recorded session of focus group discussions undertaken and transcribing verbatim responses of each respondent. Data was then organized into similar themes, assorted, and assigned codes to

ensure that each focused group responses was captured. Data presentation was undertaken using a thematic approach that was derived based on the interview guide. This enabled each theme and sub-theme to be well captured within the findings. Data analysis was done devoid of bias in this study by reporting exactly what respondents said via a recorder and transcription done using thematic analysis.

The process of analysis was systematically undertaken ensuring that patterns in observations are well evaluated. The process of data analysis also included inspecting, cleansing, transforming, and modeling data with the goal of discovering useful information and informing conclusions. Data interpretation took into cognizance the responses generated during the data collection process and assigning meaning to the collected information and determining conclusions, significance, and implications of the findings. Discussions of findings ensured that the significance of findings was well situated within the body of literature in order to draw insightful conclusions.

### **3.7 Ethical Considerations**

Ethics simply refers to the moral principles or values that govern the actions of a researcher, that is, it deals with what is right and wrong (Wimmer & Dominick, 2011, p. 65; Babbie, 2008, p. 66). An important ethical element is informed consent, which deals with ensuring that the subjects under investigation are notified about the nature of the research project and permission sought prior to their participation in the study. As a result, ethical considerations were taken into account to ensure that no form deception in data gathering occurred during this study.

This was done by ensuring that interviewees were informed about the academic nature of the study. An ethical review checklist and ethics approval application form was filled and approved by the Research Ethics Committee of the Ghana Institute of Journalism. Respondents were given a

participant's consent form that enabled them to sign if they agreed to take part in the research. Participants were assured of the confidentiality of their sources which would be used solely for academic purposes.

### **3.9 Summary**

This chapter analyzed the methods adopted in gathering data necessary to achieve the research objective. The research methodology applied in this study was the qualitative research approach which enabled the researcher to gain insights on the roles of the media in promoting civic participation and engagement in democratic governance and policy making. It explored how primary and secondary data was adopted in collecting data via a recorder with participants. It also touched on the data analysis process that involved assorting the data, coding process of the various participants and their responses based on the themes to generate meaningful data for interpretation. The next chapter focuses on data presentation and analysis.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

#### 4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents an analysis of findings along the study research questions and objectives, on the role of the media in promoting civic participation and engagement in democratic governance and policy making. This chapter is developed from primary and secondary data used for this study. The findings of the research study are presented in this chapter according to the themes and sub-themes that emerged from data collected through an interview and focused group discussion with hosts of the programs/shows, two production assistants and the station manager.

**Table 1: Codes Representing Respondents**

Metro TV (FGD1)	Angel TV (FGD2)	Pan-African TV (FGD3)	GBC (FGD4)	Citi FM (FGD5)	Joy FM (FGD6)	Onua TV (FGD7)
R1- Female	R1- Female	R1- Male	R1- Female	R1- Male	R1- Male	R1- Male
R2- Female	R2- Male	R2- Male	R2- Male	R2- Male	R2- Male	R2- Male
R3- Male	R3- Male	R3- Female	R3- Female	R3- Female	R3- Male	R3- Male
R4- Male	R4-Male	R4- Male	R4- Male	R4- Male	R4- Male	R4- Male

Instead of participants real names, codes were used to refer to the respondents in relation to the interview responses. Each focus group discussion (FGD) comprised 4 individuals, for a total of 24 respondents for the study.

#### **4.1 The Role of Media Programming in Promoting Civic Engagements and Participation**

The first objective of this study was to investigate how media programming is used to promote civic engagements and participation in democratic governance and policy making. The sub-themes sought to find out some of the specific governance programs mounted by the various stations to promote civic participation and engagement. This theme critically identified selected programs that tackle issues of governance and policy making and sought to find out how many of them have been mounted to influence civic culture positively in the country. The findings from the study reveals that there exist specific programs or shows designed to shape and promote civic participation and engagement in democratic governance and policy making in the country. It also reveals that these programs or shows are largely mounted to tackle topical national issues and current affairs with respect to governance and policy making.

This was evident in some of the responses from participants in a focus group discussion who made reference to some of the specific governance programs or shows designed to shape and promote civic participation and engagement in democratic governance and policy making. In FG6, a participant stated that their station has several programs that cover issues on governance:

There are quite a number of governance programs at our stations such as the JOY Super Morning Show, Newsfile, AM Show and PM Express on television. Beyond PM Express, you also have the UPFRONT and Ghana Connect Program”. (FGD6, R1, Joy Fm)

Another participant indicated that:

Good Morning Africa program is designed to inform and ensure the participation of the audience through public participation and then we have Hot News and so these programs

largely look at national issues focusing on civic participation in issues of governance.  
(FGD3, R2, Pan African TV)

Programming is therefore a key instrument for attracting the audience, which also determines the sustainability of a media company (Obono & Madu, 2010). According to Miletic (2009), program management can also be seen as the creative communication center of the media company, as the stronghold of trust which lies in creativity, analytical skills, knowledge of markets, media technologies and the needs of the audience. The availability of a variety of programs or shows reveals the desire of the station to contribute in diverse ways in promoting civic participation and engagement in democratic governance and policy making.

In FGD5, a participant also noted that:

At Citi fm, we have ‘The Big Issue’, Citi Breakfast Show (CBS), Point of View’, ‘Face to Face’ on radio and ‘The Chamber’ on Citi TV focusing on parliamentary deliberations. (R1, Citi Fm).

All the FGD participants demonstrated awareness of existing governance programs focusing on current affairs, national issues, policy making and domestic issues affecting the citizenry. They showed an appreciable knowledge level regarding programs hosted by their respective stations that focus on governance and policy making in the country. Some of the factors that account for the selection of such programs include the need to promote national dialogue, tackle developmental issues, ensure good governance and accountability of public office holders and to influence the direction of policy making in the country.

With regards to program selection, a participant indicated that:

We look at national issues driving the agenda of the public, that is issues that are happening in the country particularly in the area of governance. (FGD4, R4, GBC)

Another participant, expressed the view that:

The 'Big Issue' is a current affairs program that organizes issues that are making the trends. The intent is to look at the major current affairs discussion in the course of the week (FGD5, R4, Citi Fm)

Finally, a participant in FGD1 reiterates the fact that:

It's basically, everything about the development of the country...even though 'Good Morning Ghana' is a political talk show, it still delves into development, national issues that is governance and policy making specifically. (FGD1, R1, Metro TV)

The responses from the various participants reveals that the media is well positioned to address issues of governance and policy making via effective media programming taking into cognizance social, economic and political factors shaping the discussions. The views expressed by the focus group participants supports the findings reported in chapter 2, that a viable media remains pivotal in discharging its mandate as a watchdog of society by providing a medium that highlights on the issues affecting the general public. This is further highlighted by Habermas, who states that the media provides a public sphere where citizens can discuss issues and events, acting as a channel between the governors and the governed (Habemas, 2006).

The research findings also reveal that most governance programs were structured by way of tackling trending issues in the dailies, expert discussions on the topics and viewers or listener's

contribution via phone-ins into the show, text, or social media handles such as Facebook, WhatsApp, and Twitter are read to the general public.

It is also worth noting that within the organizational structure of media companies, one can distinguish: program or editorial management, technical management (management of physical media resources), human resource management and management of general affairs (Miletic, 2009). Some of the features that distinguishes one platform from other platforms include maturity, truth, factual, flexibility, timing, calibre of guests, in-depth approach, fields of expertise, character's affected by the issues especially those affected by policy, think tanks, strong research team, type of viewership or listenership, and nature of audience participation.

This is evidenced in the response provided by the various participants in representative quotes who commented that:

Good Morning Ghana is very matured and our viewership are mainly those who matter such as the political elites, presidency, national security, ministries and other key stakeholders within policy making and academia. (FGD1, R2, Metro TV)

The difference is that, ours is basically people who understand the topics and some experience on the issues been discussed from the viewpoints of governance experts, think tanks and civil society organizations who are well vexed in such topics and can enrich the kind of discussions we are having". (FGD5, R2, Citi Fm)

The distinguishing factor is the calibre of guests that we empanel on our show because there are times when we would engage politicians, people at the front of governance, CSOs, consultants and academics who have in-depth knowledge from their various fields of

expertise to speak on such issues and sometimes we bring in the characters affected by the issues (FGD6, R3, Joy Fm)

The responses from the various participant's reveals that the various platforms possess a distinguishing factor endearing them to the general public by way of issue focus, concept development, target audience, objectives, calibre of guests, research in-depth and content. It is worthy to note that, these various governance platforms have been set-up with several distinguishing features so as to create a symbiotic relationship with the audience by way of brand name, type of guests, structure of discussions and meaningful analysis to various national issues on governance and policy making.

Some of the target objectives of the various governance programs ranged from informing, educating, entertaining, putting government on its toes with respect to accountability and transparency, educating the public through information dissemination, canvassing the issues that happened in the week in a more thoroughly and comprehensive manner from an intellectual perspective for our audience especially in the area of governance, providing a perspective of deeply researched point of view and to influence policy in a manner that takes into cognizance the best of the country and providing practical solution driven perspectives.

This is evidenced in the responses given by the various respondents below:

The intent is to look at the major current affairs discussion in the course of the week. (FGD5, R4, Citi Fm)

The objective is simply to canvass the issues that happened in the course of the week for our audiences bothering on governance through a thorough, comprehensive, and a perspective

of a deeply researched point of view, from an intellectual perspective, from very practical solution driven perspective and to influence policy making and we know as a matter of fact that we are a big influencer of policy in the country. (FGD 6, R3, Joy Fm)

Our target objective is to inform the people and promote accountability by way of ensuring that government is held accountable to the people and in so doing promote nation building. (FGD7, R2, Onua TV)

These finding support the literature presented in chapter two in relation to the diverse roles of the media which include information dissemination, education and entertainment. The media agenda has been to drive the issues by defining their objectives which underlies their roles as watchdog's of society. This is emphasized by Dahlgren (1995) who states that the important role of media is to function as a civic forum for political debate, facilitating informed citizen's political knowledge and political efficacy (Dahlgren, 1995).

By disseminating information, mass media creates space for diverse public views regarding socio-economic and political processes and increases people's scope for democratic participation (Hudock, 2003; Besley, Burgess, & Prat, 2002) consequently its role has become "larger than life" (Anam, 2007). Schudson (2008) contends the media provide six important functions in a democratic society, including information, investigation, analysis, social empathy, public forum and mobilization.

The media therefore has the power to set a nations agenda via its objectives which is largely tailored to addressing issues faced by the public. Amongst these respondents, the prevalent belief is that their objectives are to promote accountability, transparency, information dissemination and

to proffer solution to national issues that would inform policy making and governance in the country.

Finally, the study revealed that the target audience for the various governance programs or shows ranged from policy makers, government, national security, middle class, corporate leaders, academia, middle income earners, lower income earners, electorates, politicians, members of the various constituencies, government official and public office holders. These participants indicated that:

It's mainly policy makers and especially people who sit in their offices and the presidency as well as national security. (FGD1, R4, Metro TV)

The target audience of this program are one, the electorates, before the people that we elected to power. (FGD3, R2, Pan-African TV)

The target audience are your middle class, corporate leaders, these are your people in academia, your politicians, and policy makers. (FGD6, R3, Joy Fm)

In the above discussion, it can be posited that the various target audience of the various governance programs are meant to satisfy a niche within the public setting by focusing on their needs and how these needs can be addressed by various stakeholders. As the various quotes reveals a mix of target audience carefully selected by an informed decision of the management of the station, host and production team.

The sub-themes also focused on key factors that influence management decisions in designing such programs, how the station undertakes its audience segmentation taking into cognizance regional integration, religious and socio-cultural differences and political affiliation, how audience

are incorporated into the design of governance programs, strategies employed in promoting civic attitudes among the audience, specific mediums used to reach audience during the hosting of the program and the level of dedication of the station to ensuring that such programs are well designed in order to achieve its targets and goals.

The findings from the study reveal that factors which influence management's decision in designing such programs are mainly lack of jobs, crime, security issues and corruption, commercialization, news worthy, current trends and affairs, the need for accountability and transparency, providing an alternative critical platform, the worsening state of affairs and poor governance, lack of jobs, crime and security related issues and corruption in the country. This is reflected in the responses of the various respondents who indicated that:

Newsfile is one of the oldest political current affairs programme. It was designed as an alternative critical platform since it was only GBC's 'Talking Point' at the time. (FGD6, R3, Joy Fm)

The worsening state of affairs of our country in relation to policy planning, implementation and poor governance, accounts for the reason why management decided to mount such a program to tackle such issues. (FGD7, R4, Onua TV)

The findings support the assertion made in chapter 2, that the media focus on shaping and influences issues via media programming. This is highlighted by Iyengar (1994) who indicates that the media shapes public opinion through in-depth research which involves the selection and presentation of information in a particular manner. By virtue of management decision, programs designed are tailored towards addressing gaps in governance and policy making. This is reflected in the quotes presented above. It also reveals that these programs or shows are largely structured

in relation with introductions on trends in the news, panelist discussions and contributions via text, phone-ins caller segments and interactive media such as the use social media handles that enables viewers or listeners to make inputs.

It is worthy to note that previous scholarship on public opinion has revealed that citizen's attitudes can be influenced significantly by how media frame political controversies (Chong & Druckman, 2007a; 2007b; de Vreese, 2005). By way of shaping public opinion, the media is well positioned through the selection and presentation of information in a peculiar way which is geared towards informing the public (Iyengar, 1994).

The above quotes reveal that media stations are pragmatic in their approach of designing programs with an end goal in mind which is well situated or defined in the target objective of the show or program. This also confirms the findings in chapter 2, which reveals the essential role of the media in entrenching democratic governance thereby ensuring accountability and transparency in its dealings with the public.

According to Miletic (2009), program management can also be seen as the creative communication centre of the media company, as the stronghold of trust which lies in creativity, analytical skills, knowledge of markets, media technologies and the needs of the audience. In this sense, Albarran (2010) lists several basic activities for which the program management is responsible which includes planning the media contents in consultation with other managers in line with the strategic goals of the company and using different strategies, which are mainly based on the model of offering programs that will attract both audiences and advertisers. After the realization of media content, the program is evaluated, where the program management uses the data obtained from surveying the audience. The process of evaluation enables them to make

decisions about changing the format, adjusting the broadcasting schedule, or the abolition of a specific program.

In undertaking audience segmentation taking into cognizance regional integration, religious and socio-cultural differences and political affiliation, some of the participants gave the following responses:

That is also another part that helps inform the program in relation to happenings on the grounds and pushes the station very far...as we have various audience coverage across the various regions. During the segments of the show, somebody calls in and this actually informs the program. (FGD3, R2, Pan-African TV)

Since we have national coverage across the various, we are able to ensure regional balance. Our presence in the various regions attest to the fact that we are committed to ensuring that all regions are covered and adequately represented...as a result whatever happens in any of the regions, we get to know of it since we have presence there. (FGD4, R3, GBC)

It is therefore worthy to note that., media companies are competing in designing new contents and formats, the quality and diversity of which become more and more reduced (Li Chiang, 2001; Anderson & Coate, 2005; Wurff & Cullenberg, 2001; Fink, 1986). Whiles on the other hand, the strategy of the commercial media, which is based on the logic according to which the audience should be supplied with programs, the advertisers with audience (Keane, 1991) only shows that a large audience is an imperative for the financial success of the media. Audience segmentation therefore remains key to the sustainability of the commercial media as it attracts advertisements due to its large audience.

After undertaking audience segmentation, it is also critical that the audience are incorporated into the design of the governance programs. Some participants revealed that:

The program is designed because of the people and so they are factored into the various segments of the show and sometimes brought into the studios due to their role as serial callers because they have vital information that we need. (FGD3, R3, Pan-African TV)

Our viewers and listeners do send comments on our programs and as we monitor them, we incorporate them into the overall planning and evaluation process. So feedback from our audience and viewers are taken very seriously. (FGD4, R1, GBC)

Our programs are designed in such a way that audience feedback is taken seriously, as we create spaces for our listeners and viewers to send in their comments and texts via our social media handles and phone-ins and at least once a month the show is opened to the audience by way of contributing through text messages. (FGD6, R1, Joy fm)

The findings of this study on audience incorporation into the design of the governance programs reveals that the various platforms make it a point to incorporate the views of their audience into the programming of the show. This reveals the essential role of the audience when the show commences and ends. It further reveals that there is a deliberate effort by the host and production team to have the audience well represented within their various programs through segments or slots made available during the show.

The findings confirm the vital role of the audience in making inputs and contributions to the program. As such the various programs ensure that the views of the audience or viewers are taken into account in their programming so as to meet audience preference in relation to program

coverage, topics, guests and discussion segments. Therefore, the creation of opportunities for the mass media to get in touch with ordinary people, to collect information, and to create sustainable change is very essential (UNDP & TI, 2011). Also the participation by citizens has been viewed as essential towards promoting transparency which goes a long way to entrench good governance (UNESCO, 2005).

In undertaking this study, a sub-theme that was developed from the literature focused on some of the strategies employed by the various stations in promoting civic attitudes among the audience in democratic governance and policy making. Some of the participants who took part in the focused group discussion indicated that:

Our strategy mainly lies in promoting our programs well ahead of time and so we ensure that our listeners and viewers are well informed in terms of time, guest, topic which captures the calibre of presenters we have hosting the shows, as such our listeners and viewers are always glued to their sets ready to watch our programs. (FGD2, R2, Angel TV)

Making sure we have the right guest all the time, the issues are thoroughly researched, a very serious research desk, so that would ensure that the issues are well addressed. (FG6, R3, Joy Fm)

We always have discussions outside the show which is a pre-production which we usually undertake. This is sometimes done quarterly to assess the quality of the show and factor our audience into future planning of the show. (FGD5, R4, Citi fm)

The above findings illustrate the importance of strategies which involves effective planning of the show or program in order to promote its sustainability among the audience and the general public.

This is confirmed by the findings in chapter which indicate that in planning, media programs must

be tailored towards addressing the needs of the general public. The program scheme can be planned on a daily, weekly and seasonal basis (Turkovic, 2005). According to Ellis (2000), programming the media offers is the last creative act in television and represents the basic choice that defines the programmatic orientation of media company. The programming strategies are usually combined, but the certainty of outcome in terms of the size of the audience and satisfaction with the program is difficult to predict. Because of this, programming is a skill and an art. It can be concluded that the processes of selecting, scheduling, promoting, evaluating program define the work of the programmer (Eastman & Ferguson, 2013).

So therefore, the various strategies employed must aim towards promoting an effective civic culture geared towards participation of the citizenry through the diverse media programming in democratic governance and policy making. Another interesting sub-theme generated from the literature is in relation with some of the specific mediums the stations utilize in reaching the audience during the hosting of the program. Some of the participants revealed the following statements with regards to specific mediums employed by their stations.

We mostly use social media that is the Instagram, YouTube, and WhatsApp, Facebook, texts and call-in-segments. (FGD3, R3, Pan-African TV)

We use Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and phone-in sessions. (FGD4, R2, GBC)

In a study conducted by Salleh (1989) among rural and agricultural radio and TV programmes, it was found out that the most used methods by producers to get participation from the rural people included interviewing rural audiences in programs, either live or pre-recorded, phone-in shows or segments. This method was mentioned by 15 producers whilst other methods were critiques of programmes by listeners and viewers; through letters; through informal discussions; initiating

dialogue in programmes; inviting members of the audience to the studio; and utilizing local people as news readers, script writers and script presenters. Another research on audience participation was conducted by Md. Salleh and Zakariah (1993) on the Seremban local radio station. The station encouraged audience response to all its programmes through phone-ins during programme broadcast.

In relation to management's dedication to the stations media programming and design, some respondents revealed that:

I can say it is 95% percent as dedication of management is very high to our programs which is evidenced by the organization of staff rotation and training sessions which served to augment their skills. (FGD4, R4, GBC)

Management is really dedicated to the show, don't forget that we are running a commercial radio and tv station, so management is interested in every program which runs on our radio and tv. Management is always involved in running of our shows in terms of logistics, equipment's, funding, finances. (FGD5, R3, Citi fm)

Newsfile is the flagship of the station, and so it is taken very seriously and so everybody wants to be sure that everything goes on, I mean right". (FGD6, R2, Joy fm)

#### **4.2 The Role of the Media in Shaping Governance and Policy Discourses**

The study also sought to investigate the role of the media in shaping democratic governance and policy discourses in the country. The findings of the studies reveal a moderate role the media plays in relation to shaping governance and policy discourses.

Most of the participants indicated the following:

For ‘Good Morning Ghana’, topics that are raised are tailored to addressing issues of governance and policy making at the higher level. The show has really gone a long way to influence or shaping policy in the country especially the flagship programme that is the ‘Free Senior High School’ policy. (FGD1, R4, Metro TV)

It has helped in so many ways, as we have been able to influence policy at the national, regional and community levels through our various platforms where public officials are interrogated based on policy interventions undertaken by their ministries which leads to positive policy outcomes. Through our program ‘Constituency Connect’, we did a story in one of the communities, and in the next two months, the roads were fixed...this was in the Dome-Kwabinya Constituency of Hon. Sarah Adwoa Sarfo. (FGD3, R1, Pan-African TV)

To a very large extent, I would say Focus has contributed immensely because the Right to Information Bill for instance, it was discussed on a number of occasions and we brought various stakeholders together especially academia, public and parliamentarians and today the right to information bill has been passed. (FGD4, R3, GBC)

Voltmer (2010) mentioned that the media are expected to provide a forum where a broad range of voices-opposition parties, civil society actors, independent experts and ordinary citizens-can express alternatives views. In providing a forum, the media is able to garner the views and inputs of major stakeholders thereby influencing policy making and governance in the country. This is also evidenced in the transmission of information by the media which serves as a source of information and a public space within which participation can take place (Delli Carpini, 2004).

As can be inferred from the views inputs by the participants on several national issues, one can deduce that there is a strong correlation between the media and the citizenry in the promotion of

discourses centered on national policy making and governance. This thereby creates an arena where inputs are generated for policy feedbacks and recommendations. The findings also reveal that key policy makers and those who matter in government tune into the shows as a way of informing them on the views of the public on specific policy directions of the government.

Wanyande (1996, p. 14) provides evidence from Kenya to support the mobilizing and educational role of the media in the promotion of democratic ideas. He notes that:

The Daily Nation's editorial of 2<sup>nd</sup> July, 1996, provided very sound arguments about the seriousness of the issue of constitutional reform. This had the important effect of at least making people begin to think about the issue more critically than would have been the case if the whole debate was left to politicians alone.

Another way in which the media have held politicians to account is by advocating on behalf of various elements in society who for one reason or the other would be negatively affected by government actions. They have also provided opportunities for voices do not have the resources to articulate their voices in dealings with the repressive apparatus of the state to find expression for those voices and to rally support for their cause. (Tettey, 2001). This is evidenced in the views of the following participants in relation to accountability and transparency:

Perhaps in so many ways as I could recall the Kelni GVG issue that came up and it was one of the topics that we discussed. I remember at the time, the Deputy Minister of Communication, Mr. George Andah joined us on set and they had to make some room for civil society organizations who advocated for a good deal for the people of this country since it did not go down well with the public. (FGD5, R2, Citi Fm).

The District Assembly's Election's project (MMDCE's) which they started and were almost done and getting to the date for the elections to be held, if you remember in 2016, they were just about a couple of weeks to the referendum and I started a campaign against the 'YES VOTES' on the segment that is called 'SAMSON'S TAKE'. I raised the issue about the fact that we cannot be having a YES vote to make district assembly elections also partisan and that was it, the referendum was put aside down and suspended. That's an example of influencing policy in the right direction". (FGD6, R1, Joy Fm)

Taylor notes that the media functions as a self-instituted watchdog of government and that the role of the media which is independent of government is to keep an eye on the ruling government and make known to the people what the media owned by government will not (Taylor, 2000, p. 9). In other words, a free media serves as the public eye in watching over the bureaucracy and makes sure nepotism is reduced to the barest minimum if not removed entirely. This makes officials of government as well as administrators careful in taking decisions and when decisions are taken, they are made available to the public (Keane, 1991, p.16).

A vigilant press is capable of monitoring political officials and institutions that are supposed to remain transparent and accountable, because citizens believe that the press should inform them about government wrongdoing (Graber, 2009). In the same way, Norris (2010) contends media act as the watchdog, which provides a check on powerful sectors of society, in particular political leaders within both the private and public domains. Schudson (2008) contends the media provide six important functions in a democratic society, including information, investigation, analysis, social empathy, public forum and mobilization.

In terms of developing countries, the press is considered to play an important role in highlighting crucial issues, which require urgent action taken by the national government or the international community (Odugbemi & Norris, 2010). The media as an important political institution in democracies provides a source of information for citizens. Thus, Cohen (1963, p. 13) states that the media “may not be successful much of the time in telling people what to think, but it is stunningly successful in telling its readers what to think about.” As agenda-setters, the media emphasize urgent social issues and channel public concerns to policy-makers in government (Norris, 2010).

The media’s ability to get results is affirmed by the above findings as it reveals key roles the various media platforms have played over the years. It reveals moderate results amidst challenges encountered by the media in discharging its mandate. The media provide a public sphere where citizens can discuss issues and events, acting as a channel between the governors and the governed (Habermas, 2006). This situates the findings in the literature by way of confirming the vital role played by the media as a medium to galvanize public support on issues of governance and policy making.

The findings affirm the essential role of the various platforms in shaping policy and governance discourses in the country. This highlights the essential role of the media as asserted by Hadesian (2006) who states that, “the media is the most powerful tool for the formation of public opinion in contemporary times”. Now-a-day public opinion consequently becomes a key factor in the decision making process (Anam, 2007). This is largely evidenced by the degree to which people access, use and trust information, and how they communicate, is increasingly shaping social, economic and political outcomes (Meskell, 2009; Stott, 2009; Tolbert, McNeal, & Smith, 2003; Raiz, 2012; Quattrociocchi, Conte, & Lode, 2011).

As the various findings from the participants reveals glimpses of positive impact made by the media in the area of policy making and democratic governance. From the above findings, one can deduce that there is a deliberate agenda on the part of the media to influence policy making and governance by way of ensuring that it highlights specific issues via framing which is geared towards getting results from various stakeholders.

Other sub-themes identified within the study focused on audience participation and how audience participation is assessed within media programming. It is worthy to note that civic participation connotes the individual and collective engagements of the citizenry in the national affairs of their country and not just limited to voting during elections but also non-political activities (Park & Perry, 2008, p. 238-239). Audience participation is therefore critical in the promotion of the media's agenda of advancing civic culture among the citizenry via its media programming and coverage on democratic governance and policy making.

Undertaking audience participation assessment is critical towards promoting governance and policy discourses in the country. In order to determine the practice of audience participation among producers of rural and agricultural radio and TV programmes, Salleh (1989) conducted a study among the producers of RTM in Peninsular Malaysia. The study revealed that more than half of the producers (54.2%) claimed to have always practiced media participation in programme production. Twenty-six producers (31.3%) said they did it most of the time; 11 (13.3%) did it sometimes; and only one producer said he never involved audiences in his programs.

As a means of ascertaining the effectiveness of their programmes and also to ascertain the informational needs of the rural folk, the local radio station encouraged direct cooperation between their programme producers and the rural people through local development agencies. Audience

involvement in radio programme production was in the form of live radio discussions and telephone interviews with audience members conducted by the radio staff as part of radio programmes. Sometimes, such discussions were recorded in the field and played back at the studio. Other times, the discussions were part of live broadcasts. During such live discussions, the panel is often made up of a radio programmer who acts as a host or moderator, representatives of local and state development agencies and two or three members of the local community (Md. Salleh & Zakariah, 1993).

Some findings generated during the focused group discussion among participants revealed that audience participation was keenly given the needed prominence in media programming. Some participants indicated that:

With the introduction of the FSHS at a particular point teachers were gagged as they spoke about the needs of the school, which brought fear but our show gave a voice to some of these teachers to speak about issues that needs to be addressed...a particular case was when a particular school lacked desks and tables and as soon as our platform picked it up, it was addressed by the government via the district assembly. (FGD5, R2, Citi Fm)

Audience participation assessment is by way of the contributions that is social media interactions, and sometimes there are no guest on the shows but the audience or viewers become guests by way of giving us critical information that is needed to augment our shows or programs. This helps to determine the demographics of the program and gives an idea of how far the show travels around the country. (FGD1, R3, Metro TV)

Audience attitudes towards the communicator (Partil, 1985) and the communicator's attitudes towards his audience (Upendra, 1986) are factors that determine the success of effective

communicators. Salleh (1989) found that generally the broadcasters held positive attitudes towards their audience. Producers of the radio realized the necessity of being aware of rural problems when producing rural development programmes. Also, the study by Md. Salleh and Zakariah (1993) showed that the rural audience has positive attitudes towards the local radio stations and this in turn has a positive influence on audience participation in radio development programmes.

The findings also agree with a study conducted Abdule Razak (1993) at the extension area of the University of Agriculture, Malaysia, who found out that in this research that 75% of the respondents listened to the program. Among those who listened, only 32% who knew the time of broadcast, 48% knew the duration of broadcast and 47% knew the content. Of the 75% who listened to the program, only 2 respondents reported that they used the telephone to call in to the program when it was on air. The study was carried to determine the knowledge and level of participation in the popular programme 'Era Jaya'. Though the study revealed low participation, it reveals the need for more pragmatic strategies that would promote civic engagements across the various programs.

In relation to factors taken into account in selecting a panelist for the various specific governance programs, one of the participants indicated the following:

We look for matured personalities and it is interesting to note that, there are some ministers we would not allow on our platforms due to the design of our programs. So we take into consideration the level of your maturity and analytical skills. (FGD1, R1, Metro-TV)

Furthermore, feedback is very essential when it comes to media programming. The incorporation of audience feedback goes a long way to enriching program design. Some participants shared their views on this sub-theme as illustrated below:

As a representative public service broadcaster, we ensure that feedback from audience in relation to a particular policy that has not gone down very well with the public is discussed on our platforms to highlight on its importance. (FGD4, R4, GBC)

We have had several cases, when there had to be some changes made to policy and so a case in hand was when the National Security Minister, Kan Dapaah asked for a particular document one from our resource persons due to the audience feedback on specific issues and there were times when parliamentary committees call in to ask for excerpts of our show to listen to. (FGD5, R1, Citi Fm)

Moreover, the study sought to find out, to what extent has the media been able to discharge its mandate effectively as the “watchdog” of society. According to Norris (2010), the media act as the watchdog, by providing a check on powerful sectors of society, in particular political leaders within both the private and public domains. Schudson (2008) also contends that the media provide six important functions in a democratic society, including information, investigation, analysis, social empathy, public forum and mobilization.

In performing its mandate, the media are expected to provide a forum where a broad range of voices-opposition parties, civil society actors, independent experts and ordinary citizens can express alternative views (Votmer, 2010). The research findings reveal mixed reactions with regards to the discharge of the media’s role as a watchdog of society. The media therefore acts as a platform for the convergence of diverse opinions.

Some participants expressed their views by stating that:

We have always been able to play the watchdog role of society by pointing out wrongs in government, public sector and then in the private sector and so media is really a watchdog of society. (FGD2, R4, Angel TV)

I would say the media has really failed since most of them are not able to adopt a neutral stand on national affairs. As such some stations are not able to fulfil their mandate as watchdogs of society coupled with the fear as a story I once did was shelved due to fear by my boss that it would tarnish the image of the institution which might affect us also. (FGD3, R2, Pan-African TV)

Well, sometimes, I like to think about that kind of questioning this way, imagine that you didn't have the media, even in the midst of the media, look at what is going, so imagine that you didn't have the media? The enormity of corruption going on, without the media to shed light and expose some of these issues, how would the situation be? So in my opinion, the media has very clearly done a great job in galvanizing public opinion and perceptions on national issues. (FGD6, R2, Joy Fm)

Another way in which the media have held politicians to account is by advocating on behalf of various elements in society who for one reason or the other would be negatively affected by government actions. They have also provided opportunities for voices do not have the resources to articulate their voices in dealings with the repressive apparatus of the state to find expression for those voices and to rally support for their cause (Tettey, 2001).

The multiplication of the media has led to a greater opening up of Ghana politically. This is because the media has been critical, polemic and combative, raising issues with particular reference to morality and accountability in public life and have been consistent advocates in the area of democracy by providing a platform for Ghanaians from all walks of life and political spectrum to engage public officials freely and openly on the affairs of public concern, trying to make sure good

governance prevail in order to avert the abuse of power and office (Ninsin in Boafo-Arthur, 2007, p. 88-89).

The media performs continues to perform very important democratic functions including surveillance of socio-political developments, identifying issues that are important to the development of the state, creating the platform conducive for fruitful debate that covers a wide range of views, holding officials to account with regards to how they exercise power, and also to create an atmosphere that encourages citizens to learn, make choices and be active participants in the political process thereby having the ability to resist the efforts of forces outside the media to undermine their independence (Fog, 2004, p.1&2).

The above findings therefore reveals diverse opinions in relation to the discharge of the mandate of the media as some participants lamented generally on political influence, media ownership, media pluralism as key factors militating against the performance of the media's role as a watchdog of society, however, some participants expressed optimism and moderate success of the media as a viable entity in arresting corruption, exposing corrupt officials, promoting accountability and transparency in democratic governance and policy making.

Despite, some major pitfalls in relation to unprofessional conducts, the media has duly played its role as an information provider, and in the process, conscientizing and sensitizing the citizens. This means the media is needed by the citizens to inform them about current developments in order to form their views on those developments as well as debating the issues. This clearly gives the media that responsibility of being the mediators of the democratic process and gatekeepers of the same (Jakubowicz in Council of Europe 1998, p.17).

### **4.3 Challenges Encountered by the Media in the Discharge of its Mandate**

With the spread of modern communication technologies and the existence of an unfettered and independent press, the media are essential for democratization and guaranteeing good governance through freedom of expression, transparency, accountability, rule of law and providing a pluralist platform for political expression about controversial issues (Norris, 2010; Scholte, 2002). One major means by which communication flow is ensured between citizens and those who represent them is the mass communication media which operates to sustain democracy (Gunther and Mugban, 2000, p. 1).

Again, “the media through the information they convey to the mass public, serve as a key guarantor of elite accountability and popular control of government in democracies, since a broadly and equitably informed citizenry helps assure a democracy that is both responsive and responsible” (Gunther and Mugban, 2000, p. 4 quoting Delli et al). The media also serves as a channel or link between government and citizens where the issues are debated for an effective policy formulation and decision making (Coronel, 2004, p.2-5).

Despite the essential role of the towards shaping policy making and democratic governance in the country, it has over the years encountered several challenges that militate against its progress in promoting civic engagement in national discourses.

In representative quotes some participants revealed that:

Well, it has always been the government of the day trying to intimidate the presenters and reporters in the media and some are being influenced by the politicians. (FGD2, R3, Angel TV)

The pluralization of the media landscape is a major problem as it has led to springing up of many media houses who are transmitting through free to air transmissions, which has led to others criss crossing others frequencies. (FGD4, R3, GBC)

Access to information from public office holders a major issue while a lot of media personnel are not paid well which sometimes makes them compromise on their journalistic norms just to be able to make a living. (FGD5, R3, Citi Fm)

The biggest challenge is financing. The driving media you see around are what they are because they get money from advertisement. Without money, news file will not exist. It is finance that is critical, if you want the best quality. You must hire the best quality in terms of new anchor, producers, editors etc. The money would speak to the issue of quality. Other issues include sub-standard people getting into journalism, mercenary journalism and politicians paying people money something called soli and unnecessary attempts to control the media particular critical media. (FGD6, R1, Joy Fm)

The findings generally support Minnie's (2007) claim in relation to political ownership of private media being a constraint, as some media houses are owned by politicians in their private capacities. Other challenges identified include financial obstacles, low professional standards due to the lack of structured incremental training and lack of quality control within the media and low pay contributing to high staff turnover in the various media stations for lucrative careers.

#### **4.4 Summary**

This chapter focused on data presentation and analysis which was undertaken to address the two main research objectives. The first major theme focused on how media programming promotes civic engagements and participation. It sought to investigate key factors that are considered in

media programming such as design, structure, strategies, features, target objectives, target audience and paneling of the various platforms and how these are tailored towards promoting civic engagements. The second major theme also sought to examine the role of the media in promoting governance and policy discourses in the country. The findings discussed highlights the key role of media programming to promoting a positive civic culture centered on governance and policy discourses.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.0 Introduction**

Based on the outcome of the study, this chapter presents the summary of findings of the research, conclusion and recommendations which are supported by both primary and secondary data. The findings were analyzed according to themes developed which reveals the existence of several platforms specifically focused on governance issues and policy making. The findings also reveal the deliberate effort of media stations in designing programs that would contribute to nurturing civic culture in democratic governance and policy making by ensuring that the average citizen is well informed, educated and enlightened on national discourses. The findings further reveal moderate progress chalked by the media in promoting civic participation and engagement in democratic governance and policy. Despite challenges encountered by the media over the years, there still remain some form of optimism among stakeholders that the media is on the right path towards discharging its mandate as a watchdog of society.

#### **5.1 Summary of Findings**

In order to answer the first research question of this study (how does media programming promote civic engagements and participation?), respondents from the various media stations mainly the station manager, hosts and production assistants were asked various questions in relation to the selection of specific media programs, program structure, features, target objectives and target audience. The study found out that there was a deliberate effort to mount these specific media

programs tailored towards promoting civic engagements thereby harnessing civic culture among the citizenry.

The agenda setting theory was largely evidenced in the nature of media programming specifically topical issues, panel discussions, structure, content and delivery. This is evidenced in the various responses provided by respondents which reveals the existence of a plethora of media programs or shows directly focusing on governance and policy discourses in the country. The various respondents showed a high level of knowledge with respect to the various programs or shows they are directly involved in relation to target objectives, target audience and programme structure.

The study reveals that media programming took into cognizance the state of affairs of the nation in relation to issues bothering on nation building, policy making, accountability, transparency, developmental issues and good governance. The drivers for the selection of such programs mainly centered on national issues, trends, relevant guests, checks and balances, audience attraction and perspective focus. The factors above also influenced the nature of the programming structure of the various governance platforms.

The findings also reveal that these platforms were distinguished by specific features ranging from maturity, truth, flexibility, timing, calibre of guests, research in-depth, fields of expertise and nature of audience amongst other features recorded during the focused group discussions. Some of the target objectives identified included education via information dissemination, promoting accountability and transparency, canvassing issues in a comprehensive, providing an intellectual perspective on national issues and promoting discussions centered on well-researched topics.

This contributed to enhancing public views on issues of governance, as the agenda setting theory reveals that the public form opinions by virtue of the prominence given to issues and events in the

media (Wanta & Hu, 1994). Because of its role in shaping public opinion through its agenda setting function, the media has been able to highlight key issues and events within governance and policy discourses. The media therefore serves as a channel by which the citizenry can be informed on key policy directions of government via discussions held on the various governance platforms.

In addition, the study revealed that the various platforms were deliberate when it comes to their target audience. This is because most media programming takes into cognizance gaps within national discourses that needs to be addressed via a well-designed program tailored to satisfy the particular needs of a segment of the population. This supports the assumption that audiences, as part of forming opinions on topical national issues of governance and policy making, also contribute to determining the prominence given to issues or events with regards to the role the media play in highlighting these issues (Cohen, 1963; McCombs, 1992; McCombs & Shaw, 1972; Kwansah-Aidoo, 2003). Therefore, the findings reveal a mix of target audience preference ranging from policy makers, government officials, national security, lower income earners, middle income earners, upper class (elites), corporate leaders, academia and the electorate.

Another sub-theme sought to find out how the various programs are designed in order to harness civic engagement in democratic governance and policy making. The findings reveal that there exist various factors that influence management's decision in designing such programs which include unemployment, poor security, increase in corruption, competition leading to commercialization, worsening state of current affairs of the country, rise in the standard of living and poor governance structures. The study further reveals that program design takes into cognizance balance of issues, expert inputs during discussions, addressing corruption, impact analysis, checks and balances among public office holders and entrenching democratic governance.

Also, media programming takes into cognizance audience segmentation which mainly focuses on ensuring regional balance during coverage, political representation during national discussions especially during manifesto debate sessions and political backgrounds. The study also revealed that there was a deliberate effort to incorporate audience view into media programming design which has led to enriching the various platform in terms of idea generation and needs of the publics. This was made possible via feedback received or contributions by the audience on the various interactive platforms such as Facebook live, WhatsApp voice notes, text and phone-in segments which enables the audience to share their views and opinions in relation to the program. This has therefore created a symbiotic relationship between the various platforms and audience.

The various platforms also incorporated various strategies that enhanced audience participation. This included early promotion of the show ahead of time to get the audience glued to their sets during live programming, neutrality via values centered on facts, having the right guests, a well-researched desk and taking stock of progress made during pre-production sessions. The findings also revealed that specific mediums utilized in reaching the audience mainly consisted of Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, WhatsApp, Twitter and phone-in sessions.

The study also revealed that management of the various stations took keen interest in the program design, content and delivery of the specific governance platforms or shows due to its high patronage by the public which boost the image of the stations in terms of media ratings and trends. Therefore, management ensures these particular platforms are well resourced in terms of personnel, equipment, maintaining standards, staff rotation and capacity building training opportunities, funding, revenue generation through adverts via its marketing and sales departments and delivery in relation to host and guests on the show.

The second objective of the study sought to investigate the role of the media in shaping governance and policy discourses in the country. The findings reveal a moderate role played by the media's various governance platforms in relation to shaping policy and governance discourses, evidenced by the responses of the various respondents. The findings confirm the essential role of the media in promoting issue based discourses that seeks to inform the citizenry on policy making whiles entrenching democratic governance. The media gives prominence to key specific issues that is geared to shaping the public's agenda (McCombs & Estrada, 1997).

In shaping governance and policy discourses, the media has the ability to influence which issues people think about (Gooch, 1996). The implication is that media agenda tends to override public agenda which might sway issues to suit the agenda of the few and as such audience agenda priorities are bound to fail, which can affect the quality of issues discussed on the various media platforms (McCombs & Estrada, 1997; Kwansah-Aidoo, 2003). As there is convincing research evidence from different countries to prove that the media agenda does influence the audience agenda (Ghanem, 1997; Kwansah-Aidoo, 2003). This is evidenced by the nature of prominence given to selected topics by way of framing across the various media platforms, as respondents revealed what goes into the selection of such programs, paneling, features, target objectives and target audiences.

In relation with assessment of audience participation, most media platforms undertook this exercise by monitoring contributions via text messaging, phone-in segments, live streaming and trending ratings amongst others. Also, the findings reveal a deliberate effort in ensuring that paneling is gotten right in relation their maturity level and expert on topic related issues during discussion segments. The responses from the various guest revealed that feedback goes a long way towards enriching the various governance programs as it provides the host with inputs, comments

and insightful contributions to augment the discussions from the view point of guests or experts during panel discussions on various topical national issues.

The study also sought to find out the extent to which the media has been able to discharge its mandate as a watchdog of society. The findings reveals mixed feelings with regards to the media's mandate as a watchdog of society as some respondents cited several issues ranging from overcrowding, political interference and media ownership posing problems as a result of politicians owning most of the media stations while some expressed some moderate success chalked by the media in relation to the performance of its role of promoting checks and balance on public office holders, exposing corruption via interrogation of issues and neutrality on issues based on fact check.

Lastly, the research study sought to find out challenges encountered by the media in promoting civic participation and engagement in democratic governance and policy making. The findings reveal various challenges which include intimidation of journalists, lack of an independent media, lack of effective checks and balances, underpaid workforce, unprofessional conducts in relation to taking bribes (soli), lack of professional journalist training, media pluralism, interference in frequency transmissions, media ownership by politicians, lack of an effective regulatory system, sensationalism, access to information, lack of financing, sub-standard journalism, security threats and abuse of media personnel and proliferation of the media space.

## **5.2 Conclusions**

The media continues to be a powerful force to reckon with in society as it mandates as the fourth estate of the realm is enshrined in the constitution of the Republic of Ghana. Notably, its moderate success can be seen in the discharge of its mandate of informing and educating the public on

national issues and policy making which has led to considerable influence with regards to nature of policy and governance discourses in the country. This role is undertaken via discussion segments of the various governance programs which highlights government's policy intentions for the coming year as a way of keeping the citizenry well informed and also civil society groups in the society. There are several commendable roles that the media continues to perform, notably as a development partner.

The adage that the media gets results has been largely true, since it gives a voice to the marginalized in society especially vulnerable segments of the population who are isolated as a result of government's inability to provide good roads, quality health care, schools and jobs for the unemployed youth in those communities. The media as a development partner facilitates a working relationship with civil society group's and the private sector which has led to considerable developmental gains for those communities in relation to critical infrastructure for deprived communities.

Despite the enormous influence of the media, several factors militate against its progress which mainly tends to create mixed reactions with regards the efficient discharge of its mandate as a watchdog of society. The media has faced several challenges which includes underpaid workforce, political influence, intimidation, attack on journalists by the state, media ownership by politicians who are not journalists, the issues of bribery and corruption of journalists, sub-standard journalism taking over our airwaves and limited funding. Notwithstanding, these several challenges, some respondents are of the view that, the media has performed credibly well when it comes to its mandate as a watchdog of society which is evidenced by the nature of topics discussed, quality of paneling in relation to expertise, feedback received and audience participation enriching the design of media programming in the country.

### 5.3 Recommendations

The study revealed moderate success chalked by the media in the discharge of its mandate as a watchdog of society. The study further highlighted certain loopholes which hinders the collective efforts of the media with respect to the performance of its roles of informing, educating and enlightening the citizenry. The following recommendations are proposed for consideration by stakeholders, policy makers and civil society groups in consolidating the gains made by the media in promoting civic engagements in democratic governance and policy making:

1. Based on the findings, the study recommends the establishment of a media fund to support the media in the discharge of its mandate as a watchdog of society. The establishment of a media fund should take into cognizance contribution to development, media ownership, staff welfare, capacity building opportunities and access to credit facilities. This would also require an introduction of a sustainable membership dues to augment the association's operations and activities.
2. The study also recommends, the creation of a common platform of sharing of information and coordination of media activities in the country. This would serve as a central point of information dissemination for all stakeholders within the industry which would be managed by a credible team of professional journalists with the aim to standardizing media practice in the country. As the media is the main source of information and acts as a bridge between the government and citizens, it is incumbent on media practitioners to exhibit professionalism within the practice of their profession so as to gain the trust of the public. This would therefore require that media reporters uphold the values of the journalistic profession in the discharge of its functions whiles informing and educating the citizenry.

This would help empower the viewers or listeners with facts geared towards promoting civic engagement in governance discourses (Farhana, 2017).

3. This would require the support of the Ghana Independent Broadcasters Association (GIBA) in collaborating with the Ghana Journalist's Association (GJA) in ensuring that the common platform is used to harness credible journalistic standards while promoting democratic governance and policy making. This would also ensure oversight role by various stakeholders with the view to strengthening the media's capacity to deliver on its mandate and provide a solid platform for leveraging its influence nationally, regionally and globally.
4. Finally, to ensure compliance among media organizations, an effective regulatory framework must be implemented that would ensure that, all media organizations are performing in relation to the GJA code of ethics while adhering to the National Communication Authority's (NCA) directives in terms of operation and licensing. The implementation of an effective regulatory framework would seek to ensure that non-compliance by media organizations in relation to licensing, standards and discharge of its mandate is fairly applied to all in relation to fines, withdrawal of license and misconduct of journalist's regardless of their status. Within the regulatory framework, an introduction of a compliance motivation mechanism should be put in place to reward responsible journalism. This would be key to motivating other media organizations to emulate their counterparts within the media fraternity.

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## APPENDIX

### INTERVIEW GUIDE

#### GHANA INSTITUTE OF JOURNALISM

#### SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH (SoGSAR)

#### TOPIC-THE ROLE OF THE MEDIA IN PROMOTING CIVIC PARTICIPATION AND ENGAGEMENT IN DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE AND POLICY MAKING

*The objective of these questions is to obtain your opinion and views about the role of the media in promoting civic participation and engagement in democratic governance and policy making. This is solely for academic research as part of requirements for a post-graduate MA Degree Certification. Responses to the following questions will be treated with high confidentiality and solely for the purpose of the research.*

My name is PETER JOILAH LAMBON, an MA student at the Ghana Institute of Journalism. As part of the requirements for the award of the MA Degree, I am conducting a study titled “**THE ROLE OF THE MEDIA IN PROMOTING CIVIC PARTICIPATION AND ENGAGEMENT IN DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE AND POLICY MAKING**”.

The research study focuses on the media’s diverse roles in shaping civic attitudes that seeks to deepen democratic governance and policy making via its various media programming. The study seeks to identify specific governance programs that are designed to promote civic participation and engagement processes and how these programs contribute to shaping civic attitudes. This research is driven or motivated by the desire to exploring various approaches by which civic participation and engagement processes can be harnessed for the greater good of society.

A central aim of the study is to investigate the role of the media with key emphasis on programming structure, content, delivery and participation by the audience.

**This is only for academic purposes and confidentiality of the information provided is fully assured.**

This study seeks to address the following research questions in relation to “*The role of the media in promoting civic participation and engagement in democratic governance and policy making*”.

**1.0 What are some of the specific governance programs your station has designed to promote civic participation and engagement in democratic governance and policy making?**

- What accounts for the selection of such programs by your station?
- How are the programs structured in relation to programming content and delivery?
- What are some of the features that distinguishes your program from other platforms?
- What are some of the target objectives of the programs hosted by your station?
- Who are the major target audience of your programs?

**2.0 How are the programs designed in order to harness civic engagement in democratic governance and policy making?**

- What are some of the factors that influence management decisions in designing such programs?
- What are some of the factors that are considered when designing such programs?

- How does your station undertake its audience segmentation taking into cognizance regional integration, religious and socio-cultural differences and political affiliation?
- How are the audience incorporated into the design of your governance programs?
- What are some of the strategies employed by your station in promoting civic attitudes among the audience?
- What are some of the specific mediums your stations utilize in reaching the audience during the hosting of the program?
- What has been the level of dedication of your station to ensuring that such programs are well designed in order to achieve its targets and goals?

**3.0 What has been the role of the program in shaping governance and policy discourses?**

- How do the various specific programs or platforms contribute to shaping governance and policy discourses in the country?
- How do the existing structures and spaces created help to promote effective civic participation and engagement processes in democratic governance and policy making?
- What are some of the roles played by management in ensuring such programs are well segmented and mounted in order to achieve the desired results?
- What are some of the strategies adopted to ensure that the program is able to attract audiences?
- How is audience participation in your programs assessed?
- What are some of the factors taken into account in selecting a panelist for your program?
- How are the panel members constituted?
- How is feedback from audience incorporated into policy making and governance processes?
- To what extent, would you say, the media has been able to discharge its mandate effectively as the “watchdog” of society?

**4.0 What are some of the challenges encountered by the media in promoting civic participation and engagement processes in democratic governance and policy making?**

- In your opinion, what do you suggest can be done to address some of the challenges that the media encounter in promoting civic participation and engagement processes in democratic governance and policy making?
- What are some of the support systems you think government as a stakeholder can do to support media’s role in entrenching democratic governance and policy making?

*Thank you so much for your time and co-operation. I hope this information will provide a useful and reliable source of data to help me carry out my research successfully.*

**TRANSCRIPT OF INTERVIEWS  
FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION WITH METRO TV (FGD1)**

*Interviewer/Moderator-* Good Morning Madam and the team. I know you are very busy and grateful for your time. To begin with, what goes into the selection of your programs in terms of its design by your station?

*Respondent-1-* Its basically, everything about the development of the country...even though ‘Good Morning Ghana’ is a political talk show, it still delves into development, national issues that is governance and policy making specifically. Everything thing developmental focused on national issues, as we are driven by a political administration. We pick particular topics and specific questions as the program is perspective focused and so we undertake research to determine the nature of topics and questions to ask.

*Interviewer/Moderator-* Who are the major target audience of your programs?

*Respondent 4-*Its mainly policy makers and especially people who sit in their offices and the presidency as well as national security.

*Interviewer/Moderator-* So what are some of the features that distinguishes your program from other platforms?

*Respondent 2-* Good Morning Ghana is very matured, viewership is of those who matter in power and authority. The viewership is very different from the normal or average Ghanaian. Due to its distinctiveness Good Morning Ghana is viewed by those in offices, presidency to national security, ministries because they make the policies. Another feature of Good Morning Ghana is to make factual statements that can be verified.

*Interviewer/Moderator-* So how does your program contribute to shaping policy and governance issues?

*Respondent-4-* if you have discussions and you don’t or it doesn’t effect change or tackle issues then you would not be making any impact but for ‘Good Morning Ghana’, topics that are raised are tailored to addressing issues of governance and policy making at the higher level. So topics that are raised on Good Morning Ghana that are attended to meet certain criteria that goes a long way to influence or shape policy in the country especially the flagship programme that is the ‘Free Senior High School’ policy led by the Nana Akuffo Addo administration. The media played a crucial role in the initial implementation when stakeholders especially parents had issues with respect to fee charges, double track system, quality of teaching and placement systems etc.

*Interviewer/Moderator-* Are there specific discussions or topics you have had over the years, that you think has contributed to shaping policy and governance in the country?

*Respondent 3-* Yes, Free SHS is been one of the flagship programs of the current government that we have worked on and the current situation with covid when Ghanaians would travel outside and we heard the UK Government were taking Ghanaians out of those we have quarantined and so we did a story on that it led to them releasing Ghanaians. There are stories that the news covers and does not get much attention but the moment the program picks it, it gets much attention and those who matter attend to.

*Interviewer/Moderator-* What goes into the selection of your panelists?

*Respondent-1* We look for matured personalities and interesting to note that, there are some ministers we would not allow on our shows or platforms due to the design of our programs. So we also consider the level of intelligence and expertise when it comes analysis of issues.

*Interviewer/Moderator-* To what extent would you say the media in Ghana, has been able to discharge its mandate as the watchdog of society?

*Respondent 2-* In fact, the media is currently overcrowded with so much political influence but the main problem is media ownership. Media ownership makes people not being able to deliver to the professional standards. Media ownership influences the nature of topics chosen but some stations are fairly doing well so if you want Metro is one and TV3 to some extent. So media ownership to a very large extent has influenced the nature of media agenda and doesn't allow us to put in check those in authority. So I think I would give the Ghanaian media a 20% rating due to the influence of media ownership with some politicians owning these media stations making it difficult drive the agenda of accountability and transparency in relation to governance and policy making.

*Interviewer/Moderator-* So what are some of the suggestions or solutions to addressing the challenges faced by the media in promoting civic engagement and participation in democratic governance and policy making?

*Respondent 4-* In the future, I think the proliferation of the media space or platforms, first of all, should be controlled. Since everybody wants to own a media house, since there are various media houses that are springing up as they host programs despite the closure of a number of them. So we really have to make the law, where media ownership is tightened and politicians do not own media stations that stifles individualism that is individual initiatives and objectiveness.

*Respondent 1-* And when it comes to training of Journalists, I think there should be a revision of the GJA code of ethics of Journalism since it's too ambiguous giving everyone the leeway in doing journalism in this country. Since there has been a lack of proper training for some journalists and so it affects the practice. When it comes to people understanding issues and doing the right thing, you can't just say anybody or everybody can be a Journalist. And that's why we are having a mess within the media space because anybody or everybody can be a journalist.

*Interviewer/Moderator-* How do you assess audience participation?

*Respondent 3-* Audience participation, assessment is by the contributions that is social media interactions, and sometimes there are no guest on the shows but the audience or viewers become guests by way of giving us critical information that is needed to augment our shows or programs. They support the discussions and that has been a central role played by our audience or viewers. That is how you can assess the level of participation of the audience to know the number of people that are watching and those communicating from outside the country and that would also determine your demographics of the program

It helps to know how far the program travels around the country. You can then tell that your message is centered around a particular area and so you would know that this is the active demographic in terms of area watching your programs. Its therefore very important to assess audience participation and so we check using text messages, phone-in-segments...and sometimes even by request on the show, that is what they want you to do, then you would know that they trust the program and would want you do that particular story. And you see, when you trust the program so much, they also get the effect or impact.

### **FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION WITH ANGEL TV (FGD2)**

*Interviewer/Moderator* – Good Evening to you all.... thanks for being here for today's focus group discussion....to begin with, what goes into the selection of your specific governance programs?

*Respondent 1-* Yes, we look at our focus, every show has a concept and then the idea for the show determines the name for it. We ask ourselves critical questions such what do you want to achieve and this guides us in designing the show. And so since it's a Morning Show, a lot of people choose a name that would attract people to the show and stations as well.

*Moderator-* What are some of the features of your show, that makes it different from other platforms?

*Respondent 3-* Well, our morning show is very, very flexible...we don't pack it so much even though our viewers are lower income earners, they want to benefit from our show because the viewer segments suit them.

*Moderator-* So what are your target audience of the show?

*Respondent 2-* Middle to lower income earners

*Moderator-* And what are the target objectives of that particular program?

*Respondent 3-* Our objectives are to inform people, educate people and also entertain them

*Moderator-* What accounts for the selection of such programs?

*Respondent 1-* to promote national dialogue on issues, good governance and policy making in the country.

*Moderator-* What are some of the factors that you think forms management's decision to design such a governance program?

*Respondent 4-* Well, current affairs are something the audience like and so managements consider the audience needs in the design of such programs.

*Moderator-* So how do you do you conduct audience segmentation for your program or shows?

*Respondent 1-* The show is actually a four and a five hours' program and so that four and five hours we are able to feed our audience within the categories I have mentioned and they have the opportunity to interact with us via social media platforms and mobile phone text.

*Moderator-* With respect to regional balance, political differences and ethnic differences, how does that influence your program in terms of audience segmentation?

*Respondent 2-* we have the community based stories, political, health segment, and so we have the entertainment and sports segments and so they are segmented to meet the needs of the various audiences.

*Moderator-* So how do you incorporate your audience into the design of your shows or programs?

*Respondent 4-* we sometimes have to put ourselves into their shows and then from the perspective of individuals, from every individual this is what we would need...so we even have a program called 'Patients lives matter' which looks at health governance in relation to how our health sector is managed. We know there are a lot of people in need of help that is the vulnerable segment of our society and so we call on government to address their needs through policy making.

*Moderator-* So what are some of the strategies you use to get the audience involved in the discussions that take place on your programs?

*Respondent 2-* Well, we use our various media platforms to promote our shows ahead of time, let's say a day before, we promote it and we let the viewers know the calibre of guests and presenters coming on the shows and because of that it draws the audience to us because when they know that this is the kind of presenter and guest coming to host the show, they are always ready to come around. So the strategies involve the use of various mediums such facebook, Instagram, whatsapp voice notes and videos, and tiktok to reach our various audiences.

*Moderator-* What has the level of dedication of your management to the program designed?

*Respondent 3-* 100%

*Moderator-* How do the various governance programs that you have contribute to shaping civic attitudes in governance and policy making?

*Respondent 4-* One of them is accountability. We hold them accountable especially public officers for their role and so we are able to follow up on stories, when it's about the government of the day and allow participation from the public as well. We do follow up on stories which helps to keep

the government on its toes and keep our audience informed. As such our programs shape policy by way of informing the public that equips them with information to call in and make inputs and through these inputs government officials, policy makers and those in authority pick it up to address policy gaps and failures.

*Moderator-* How do you assess audience participation?

*Respondent 1-* We are able to assess by way of the views on our social media platforms and because we stream online, we are able to monitor viewer ratings and comments of our audience.

*Moderator-* What are some of the factors you take into consideration when selecting your panelists for your programs?

*Respondent 4-* We look at the topics and then we look at who is more delved into that area and so we call you and we arrange you for the show. It depends on the severity of the issue, it could be a week or two days, or sometimes we can call you and say we are putting you on.

*Moderator-* In terms of feedback from the audience, how do you incorporate it into the design of the show?

*Respondent 1-* When audience or viewers are with you, they are always able to suggest some of the things that they want to hear and so you would understand their preference and you ensure that it qualifies to be their inputs into our programs.

*Moderator-* To what extent, would you say the media has been able to discharge its mandate as a watchdog of society?

*Respondent 4-* Yes, we have always been able to play the watchdog role of society by pointing out wrongs in government, public sector and then in the private sector and so media is really a watchdog of society. We play our role as a watchdog of society, because we definitely would come to you, not to arrest you but to talk about whatever you do thereby ensuring accountability.

*Moderator-* So what are some of the challenges the media has encountered over the years in discharging their mandate when promoting civic engagement in democratic governance and policy making?

*Respondent 3-* Well, it has always been the government of the day trying to intimidate the presenters and reporters in the media and some are being influenced by the politicians.

*Moderator-* In your opinion, what are some of the things that can be done to address the challenges faced by the media?

*Respondent 2-* It is a bottleneck approach, that is we have our media agencies and so those are the people who are supposed to formulate policies and laws to protect and binding us to achieving an excellent media friendly environment.

*Moderator-* Great, we have come to the end of our discussion. Thanks so much for your time everyone...I am really grateful to you all and the whole team.

### **FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION WITH PAN-AFRICAN TV (FGD3)**

*Moderator/Interviewer-* Good Morning to you all and happy to meet you all for this interaction and discussion centered on the role of the media in promoting civic participation and engagement in democratic governance and policy making.

*Respondent 1-* What are some of the specific governance programs your stations have designed to promote civic participation and engagement in democratic governance and policy making?

*Respondent 2-* That is the Good Morning Africa program designed to inform and ensure the participation of the audience through public participation and then Hot News and so these programs largely look at national issues. As people call in to contribute to issue of national concern, it helps to promote civic participation in issues of governance that actually ensures that people

participate in the discussions and also suggest solutions to their predicaments in their various constituencies.

*Moderator-* What do you think accounts for the selection of such programs by your station?

*Respondent 4-* Yes of course, when you look at governance, the government would be so powerful if we don't get people to point out its flaws or mistakes, it is making in the country. And so based on that, such programs are designed to be able to address some of the mistakes of government and offer or proffer solutions thereby ensuring accountable governance.

*Moderator-* Great, so apart from that, how are the programs structured in relation to promoting civic participation in democratic governance and policy making?

*Respondent 3-* The program is actually structured in a way that, it starts with newspaper review and then newspapers enables them to collect information in the various newspapers to discuss the trending issues and so the next segment, we have the experts who discuss these issues and they help to find solutions to these issues.

*Respondent 2-* We have the other segments where people would have to call to tell what problems they are facing because sometimes the media can report a story and then someone from that constituency can call in to confirm or deny that particular story because he or she is from that constituency giving the narration in a real account. This makes it actually connect with the viewers who are actually watching. This makes it factual, because it is not coming from the presenter's mouth but a concerned citizen. The panel gets to hear from the horses own mouth...so that also another segment that makes the program really concrete.

*Moderator-* What are some of the features that distinguishes your platform from others?

*Respondent 1-* When you look at the guest of PAN-AFRICAN TV that is the Good Morning Africa Program or Show, it speaks the truth and not to a particular political party as it helps to define our brand.

*Moderator-* So what are the target objectives of your governance programs?

*Respondent 3-* Our main target is to ensure that the government is doing the right thing with respect to accountable governance to the citizenry.

*Moderator-* So who are the target audience of your governance programs?

*Respondent 2-* The target audience of this program are one, the electorates, before the people that we elected to power such as the politicians and assembly men.

*Moderator-* How are the programs designed in order to harness civic participation in democratic governance and policy making?

*Respondent 4-* This program is designed to unleash or uncover all these potholes in relation to poor governance, leadership and corruption.

*Moderator-* What are some of the factors that are considered when designing such programs?

*Respondent 1-* Some of the factors that would be considered when designing such programs would include highlighting on developmental issues in the communities and the need for accountability and transparency in our governance systems.

*Moderator-* How are audience incorporated into programme design in order to promote civic participation in democratic governance and policy making?

*Respondent 3-* The program is designed because of the people and so they are factored into the various segments of the show through phone-in segments, via social media platform or interactive platforms such as facebook live stream...etc. And so sometimes some of these people are brought into the studios because we have some certain serial callers because they have vital information that we need and so the moment they feel part of the show, they go in all out to give you some

deadly information even to the point that such information is deadly, they would take that risk to give you such information.

*Moderator-* What are some of the strategies your station deploys in promoting civic participation in democratic governance and policy making?

*Respondent 1-* Talking about civic participation, some of the strategies we employ as a station is based on neutrality because we as Pan-African TV believe in values so we seek to ensure that stories covered are the facts to expose bad deeds or wrong doings of government to put them on their toes.

*Moderator-* So what are some of the mediums you use to reach out to your audience?

*Respondent 3-* We mostly use social media that is the Instagram, YouTube, and WhatsApp, Facebook and also some people would like to remain anonymous and so would not like people to know them or hear their voice so they come to the inbox and send private messages and some of the information are very sensitive and that helps to address several issues of national concern.

*Moderator –* So how do the various programs contribute or impact positively in promoting civic participation in democratic governance?

*Respondent 1-* It has helped in so many ways, as we have been able to influence policy at the national, regional and community levels through our various platforms where public officials are interrogated based on policy interventions undertaken by their ministries which leads to positive policy outcomes. Through our program ‘Constituency Connect’, that seeks to unleash the various social problems that they have led to revealing several issues by talking to stakeholders especially people of the community, politicians and policy makers has to some massive changes in the road sector. As we did a story in one of the communities, and in the next two months, the roads were fixed by Hon. Sarah Adwoa Sarfoh, MP for Dome-Kwabanya Constituency.

*Moderator-* So how are the panelists on your programs constituted?

*Respondent 2-* So we look at people who are knowledgeable in their areas of expertise such as governance and are in a good position to suggest what the government should have done in the first place such as Comrade Kwasi Pratt.

*Moderator-* So how is feedback from audience impacted on your programme design?

*Respondent 3-* The feedback from audience are very positive because some Ghanaians are seeing Pan-African TV as the only station of truth since they relay facts about issues. This can be seen in our viewer ratings which has increased over time.

*Moderator-* To what extent, would you say the media has been able to discharge its mandate in promoting civic participation in democratic governance?

*Respondent 2-* In my view, the media has failed woefully since we have people who are interested in how they can make their lives better but they don’t care about the and so on the scale of 100%, trust me I would give the media 20% except a few ones like Power FM who at some point spoke for the opposition.

*Moderator-* So what are some of the challenges you think the media has encountered over the years?

*Respondent 4-* Some of the challenges the media experiences are that, the media is not given some level of independency as some stories are not carried out due to threats from the top and insecurity which has led to some reporters being abused walking with damaged skulls, political interference and lastly under-paid workforce.

*Moderator-*What in your opinion, can be done to address some of these challenges?

*Respondent 3-* First and foremost, media houses would have to start to pay their workers well and have to insure the lives of their workers. This is necessary because every media staff has a family

and as such in the event of any occurrence my family can be compensated. Media houses have to insure the lives of their workers and pay them well that would yield excellent stories.

*Moderator-* Lastly, what are some of the support systems you think government can offer to support the media?

*Respondent 2-* Trust me government cannot support the media, if government decides to support the media, the government is telling us that it is buying the media because imagine, when you sponsor someone to school, they hold their loyalty and trust to you...and so when the government supports the media it is indirectly buying them. A critical example, is the case of Presidential correspondents who move with the president's team, they sing the praise of government instead of speaking about the ills of government and so the government should be kept out of bounds within the media settings.

*Moderator-* Thanks very much for your time and to all team members I am very grateful for the opportunity to have these discussions with me.

#### **FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION WITH GBC (FGD4)**

*Moderator:* Good Evening to you all and the team. I am grateful to meet the entire team. To begin with, what are some of the governance programs your station has?

*Respondent 1:* We have Focus as a program and we have World View as another program, Moomen Tonight and the Weekly Review.

*Moderator-* What accounts for the selection of your governance programs?

*Respondent 4-* So with regards to program selection, we look at national issues driving the agenda of the public. With Focus it looks at issues that are happening in the country particularly in the area of governance and so they bring in resource persons to come and answer the questions to which people would ask or people are asking to a problem at hand. It usually deals with current issues around governance and policy making in general.

*Moderator –* How are the programs structured?

*Respondent 2-* Focus is structured in relation to various segments such as intro, discussion, call-in, text and social media interaction with visuals or videos to the story. It takes place on Wednesday 9pm to 10.30pm. It's one and half hour program. There is the introduction of the programme, commercial break and interviews are done and there is a whatsapp line that is for the viewers to make inputs or comments.

*Moderator-* What distinguishes your program or platform from other platforms in relation to features?

*Respondent 3-* The timing is one, done in the middle of the week (Wednesday), audience participation is undertaken via zoom or WhatsApp...

*Moderator-* Who are the target audience for Focus?

*Respondent 2-* The target audience for Focus is for adults mostly the middle income earners who mostly are literate. So you would people at home and offices...people watch a lot from Facebook also.

*Moderator-* What are the target objectives of Focus as a program?

*Respondent 4-* The target objectives therefore are to educate the public through information dissemination. So an issue discussed on the Breakfast can be brought to the Focus program to be discussed extensively where it digests the issues with a panelist.

*Moderator-* So in relation to mounting the program, why do you think management would mount such a program in your station?

*Respondent 1-* To meet the needs of the public. As a public service broadcaster, you have the public to serve as your first point of call, in terms of your mandate. Your mandate is to serve the public educating, entertaining and informing them. As a public service broadcaster, it is your duty by law or the constitution of the land to serve the people in terms of information, education, and in terms of entertainment.

*Moderator-* How do you ensure that audience segmentation is efficiently carried out towards promoting civic attitudes in governance taking into cognizance regional balance and ethnic differences?

*Respondent 3-* So in ensuring regional balance, our presence in the various regions attest to the fact we are committed to ensuring that all regions are covered and adequately represented and so there is a feed from all the regions which makes our stories balanced and we are able to know what is happening in the various regions at any point in time.

*Respondent 4-* With regard to political differences, during the 2020 elections, for instance, various systems were developed in that, when you do a particular political party story, you are supposed to log, the duration and all that to ensure that there is fairness to all parties.

*Moderator-* So how do you incorporate the audience into the design of your programs?

*Respondent 1-* We undertake a lot of monitoring on our programs through social media especially facebook and so we are able to share the current affairs programs and you would have people commenting on facebook and so all these views are incorporated into the planning of the programs.

*Moderator-* Great...you mentioned that you use facebook to reach your audience, and so what other mediums do you also use apart from facebook in reaching your audience?

*Respondent 2 –* We use twitter, Instagram and phone-in sessions

*Moderator-* What has been the level of dedication of your management to the programs?

*Respondent 4-* I can it is 95% percent and so the dedication of management is very high to our programs as management organized for staff rotation and training sessions for staff directed towards augmenting their skills in which they took turns to make presentations were done and going forward it helped staff to be equipped with new skills in helping the station develop as they build on their capacity.

*Moderator-* So how do the various programs help in shaping governance or contributed to shaping governance in the country?

*Respondent 3-* To a very large extent, I would say Focus has contributed immensely because the RTI-Right to Information Bill for instance, it was discussed on a number of occasions and we brought various stakeholders together especially academia, public and parliamentarians and today the right to information bill has been passed. And the recent one on the LGBTQI bill we brought in panelist who spoke for and against the bill which has helped the discourse in relation to discussions on our platforms.

*Moderator-* So how is audience participation undertaken in your programs?

*Respondent 2-* It is done basically through the phone-ins, comments via texts...

*Moderator-* To what extent is feedback from the audience incorporated into the design of your program?

*Respondent 4-* With regards to the feedback from audience, you know sometimes people would make requests for certain panelist to be present on our shows and so we take that into consideration in setting up our shows. And so then it behooves on the host to ensure that the audience are satisfied through a balanced discussion where reps from various sides are part of the show

*Moderator-* To what extent, would you say, the media has been able to discharge its role as a watchdog of society?

*Respondent 1-* To a very large extent, thanks to the media, right now, this social media thing, right now nothing can go unchecked. Now there is citizen journalism and GBC has a citizen journalism platform that encourages citizens to send in their reports on issues and events. So the media has been up and doing especially with regards to the fourth republic.

*Moderator* – In terms of challenges, what are some of the challenges encountered by the Ghanaian media?

*Respondent 2-* In terms of the challenges you would realize that people do not necessarily go through any professional training before getting into media and as such do not understand simple terminologies used in the media space such off-record, on-record, embargo and what a classified information and what an un-classified information is and the way interviews are granted.

*Respondent 3-* The pluralization of the media landscape is another major problem in that where you have private media outlets, people get a one or two rooms to represent media houses transmitting. There are now more than 500 media outlets with some criss cross others frequencies and then private ownership of media outlets, whereby you have people who don't really have any idea or grips of the profession as they are profit oriented, so profit overrides what professionalism is in terms of media work.

*Respondent 4-* Again, politicians owning media houses is an issue that must be considered as politicization of national issues has gained ascendancy affecting collective efforts at addressing these issues to the extent that politicians are owning media houses and using it as a platform to incite the people.

*Moderator-* What support do you think the media would need from stakeholders to be able discharge their mandate?

*Respondent 1* – With regards to that, I think regulatory measures, in that there should be caveats directing media operation such as avoidance of sensationalism and embellishments in reportages.

#### **FOCUSSED GROUP DISCUSSION WITH CITIFM (THE BIG ISSUE) FGD5**

*Moderator-* Good Morning to the team and everyone here present today. It's a privilege to have you all. The first question I would be asking is concerning programs on governance and policy making. Can you tell some of the specific governance programs you have here at Citifm and Citi Tv?

*Respondent 1-* We have 'The Big Issue', Citi Breakfast Show (CBS) and we have the 'Point of View', we have 'Face to Face' and 'The Chamber' on Citi TV focusing on parliamentary deliberations and it is hosted by Duke Mensah.

*Moderator-* How are these governance programs selected and what are the factors in mounting a program like 'The Big Issue'? What are the factors considered in mounting such a platform like the 'The Big Issue'?

*Respondent 4-* The Big Issue is a current affairs program that organizes issues that are making the trends. The intent is to look at the major current affairs discussion in the course of the week and bring in the relevant guest and some relevant politicians in the mix for the weekend programs. We look at the relevant guests to be able to have our discussions and we bring down the issues that came over the week.

*Moderator-* How are the programs designed in promoting civic engagement?

*Respondent 3-* Its basically design in looking at the biggest current affairs discussions which are deemed relevant for our listeners and in terms of content we start with the discussions making impact during the week and we look the topics which could economic, political, social etc.

*Moderator-* What are some of the features that distinguishes your platform from that of other platforms in other stations?

*Respondent 2-* For us we usually deal with the trending issues and once in a while bring in politicians. The difference is that ours is basically people who understand the topics and some experience of whatever issue we are discussing and background in whatever discussion we are having and not necessarily politicians, but there are a lot of governance experts, think tanks and civil society organizations who are well versed in such topics and who have experience on their work that we engage that enriches the kind of discussions we are having...

*Moderator-* So what is the target objective of 'The Big Issue'?

*Respondent 4-* To ensure that by the time the show ends are listeners and viewers would be able to have a good appreciation of whatever the issues outside the political angle.

*Moderator-* So who are the major target audience of your show?

*Respondent 3-* The main targets are people who are literate. We have age criteria such as 18 upwards.

*Moderator-* So how are the programs designed in order to ensure that it promotes or cultivates civic engagement towards democratic governance and policy making?

*Respondent 1-* The program is designed in such a way that we just don't have the views of a particular group of people on but we have the views of experts on issues we discussed that is aimed to inform our listeners for them to have a fair appreciation of the topics from different angles and so that we build a more collective civic culture and deepen democratic practice.

*Moderator-* What are some of the factors considered in mounting or designing such a governance program 'The Big Issue'?

*Respondent 2-* Its basically due to the fact we want to entrench democratic practice and tackle economic issues. Our target is to ensure that our listeners understand the various issues whether governance, democracy etc. It's a listener viewer based program so our target is to be able to educate our listeners.

*Moderator-* So how do you undertake audience segmentation in relation to the design of your program?

*Respondent 4-* So in looking at audience segmentation, we ensure that we bring people from diverse backgrounds and rich perspectives so that we can have various perspectives on issues and not just bringing people with a particular political belief or inclination but we ensure that we bring people who with different political inclinations with a particular economic belief ... we bring people from diverse areas with different views.

*Moderator-* With it comes to incorporating audience views into your programs, how is it undertaken? What are some of the means you use to reach your audience?

*Respondent 1-* I think text messages and social media engagements using WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter etc.

*Moderator-* So what are some of the strategies you employ in sustaining the programme and audience participation?

*Respondent 4-* At the end of every period, every quarter we have to really look at the show and ask ourselves whether we have achieved the objectives of the show...and if we are, how do we make it better or improve the show...how do we get our listeners to be more interested in our discussions and when we have to make amendment's we have to...we would always have discussions outside the show is a pre-production and production process which we usually undertake...we do have quarterly meetings to assess the quality of the show and access all what we have done and factor our audience into future planning of the show.

*Moderator-* What has been the level of dedication of management to the show "The Big Issue"?

*Respondent 3-* Management is really dedicated to the show...don't forget that we are running a commercial radio and tv station, so management is interested in every program which runs on our radio and tv. Management is almost and always involved in running of our shows in terms of logistics, equipment's, funding, finances...management is always prepared to provide for the success of the show.

*Moderator-* How does the program "The Big Issue" contribute to shaping governance in the country and policy making?

*Respondent 2-* Oh yes, perhaps in so many ways as I could recall the Kelni GVG issue that came up. It was one of the topics that we discussed and I remember at the time, the Deputy Minister of Communication, Mr. George Andah joined us on se and they had to make some room for civil society organizations who advocated for a good deal for the people of this country.

*Moderator-* Are there any other issues that your platforms have shaped?

*Respondent 3-* Even security issues, there are times when there were high rates of robberies and crime and police officers and security officers were shot etc and so the platform shaped the issues to some extent by bringing on board several stakeholders who talked about the issue and even economic issues that led to the government organizing an economic forum to discuss how to salvage Ghana's economy. Our team played a critical role led by Bernard Avle and so when it comes to shaping issues of governance, we continue to deliver on that mandate...

*Moderator-* How are audience feedback views shape your programs and governance?

*Respondent 1-* I would say, even though you read messages, most at times, these policy makers listen to the program and sometimes they take these views on board policy and this has led to some changes in policy. A case in hand, is where where the National Security Kan Dapaah asked for a particular document one of our resource persons had and also there were times when parliamentary committees call in to ask for excerpts of our show to listen to or for a particular information given up on the show.

*Respondent 2-* With the introduction of the FSHS at a particular point teachers were gagged as they spoke about the needs of the school, which brought fear but our show gave a voice to some of these teachers to speak about issues that needs to be addressed...a particular case was when a particular school lacked desks and tables and as soon as our platform picked it up, it was addressed by the government via the district assembly at that place or region.

*Moderator-* To what extent do you think the media has been able to discharge its role as a watchdog of society?

*Respondent-4-* The circumstances we find ourselves, such as the economic circumstances, freedom of expression and the media has done its best...

*Moderator-* What are some of the challenges?

*Respondent 3-* access to information from public office holders, that is one of the major issues and also there are a lot of media people that are not paid very well which has led to some compromising on their journalistic standards.

*Moderator-* What can be done to address these issues?

*Respondent 4-* The economic issues need to be addressed, so that people generally have a decent life and are paid well.

## FOCUSSED GROUP DISCUSSION WITH JOYFM (NEWSFILE) FGD 6

Good Evening Sir and your team, it's great to have you for this brief discussion interview on the role of the media in promoting civic participation and engagement in policy making. I would like to proceed with my questions since you don't have much time. Go ahead, we have time for you. I am really grateful.

*Moderator:* To begin with, what are some of the specific governance programs that Joyfm has at your station?

*Respondent 1-* There are quite a number of governance programs at our stations and so if you take the morning show, which is called the JOY Super Morning Show (JOY SMS) which is shortened as JOY SMS, basically it looks at the news as they happen and very often there are governance issues to be dealt with. And so some of these issues on Newsfile extensively. And also the AM Show and PM Express show on JOY TV. Beyond PM Express, you also have the UPFRONT and the Ghana Connect Program.

*Moderator-* Please what distinguishes your program, Newsfile from other programs?

*Respondent 3-* Okay, we want to believe that the distinguishing factor is the calibre of guests that we empanel, that's number one. Because it has to do with discovering the expertise which involve academia, CSO's and sometimes politicians with in-depth knowledge such as Prof Kwadwo Attuah, Prof. Kwaku Asare, Prof H. Kwasi Prempeh, Prof Audrey Gadzekpo, Prof. Takyiwaa Manuh and Prof Kwasi Annin of the Kofi Annan International Peace Keeping and Training Centre, and then when there is the need we bring in the characters affected by the issues by engaging them and fine tuning what they have to say, and properly situate them within the discussions.

*Respondent 2-* We also want to pride ourselves with the fact that, myself as the host I have a strong research team and when it comes to issues with legal implications, as a senior lawyer, its give me the advantage because I am the host and so I am able to bring the various aspects of the law to bear on governance. As such the show has had an un-paralleled audience for so many years, as we have been topping the trends every week.

*Moderator-* So please what is the target objective of the program?

*Respondent 3-* So the objective is simply to canvass the major issues that happened in the course of the week for our audiences particularly issues that borders on the governance of the country. To canvass them in a way that we believe that it is thorough, comprehensive, and a perspective of a deeply researched point of view. So to be able to serve our target audience, these are your middle class, corporate leaders, academia, politicians, and policy makers. As we know as a matter of fact that we are a big influencer of policy in the country.

*Moderator-* That's very emphatic!

*Respondent 2-* It's because we know for a fact that we won't talk about anecdotes and as host of the show, I get called and spoken to by policy makers and ministers, always and they call and they ask for certain segments of the show, they want to watch again.

Even today, after we finished the show, I got a call from one minister, very sensitive ministry, and he requested that we send one of the segments to them because they want to listen, because they are doing something within that area of discussion.

*Moderator-* That's interesting!

*Respondent 2-* It's regular and not new as one appointed board chair of a very important utility company sent me a message and the person got in touch with us. And he said that we discussed one issue concerning his sector not long ago and so he wants a copy of the program because he

needs to pick up one or two things in there and there are certain things that needs to be done and so this is how the program influences policy.

*Moderator-* Your show is really getting results!

*Respondent 4-* If you followed today, we had about 30 mins to finish the show and we dedicated the 20 mins to discuss the radio stations that were shut down and now they are being revived...and the new license that has been issued and so hundred and thirty three 133 new licenses which affects also about 99 of the stations were shut down earlier when the government came to power...and I asked the NCA's Acting Director in Charge of Engineering, whether stations like Radio Gold, XYZ, they are going to give them back their original frequencies? And he said, that was not guaranteed, that even though it was possible, it was not a guarantee that they would get like Radio Gold would get 90.5 mgh.

And as he said that, I asked him once, twice and the third time and he couldn't say that they are going to get it and so one of our usual panelist, Kweku Baako sent me a text message and said that's not good enough and that he thinks they should get their original frequencies. And Sammy Gyamfi felt that yes, they should get their original frequencies, and Martin Kpebu also supported that view stating that they should give them back their original frequencies and Kofi Bentil who was on the show, also used law and said that they are entitled to their original frequencies. All of this happened in less than ten minutes (10mins, as the Director of the National Communications Authority (NCA), had to make an intervention and state equivocally and give an absolute guarantee that they would get their original frequencies.

*Moderator-* Wow...wow

*Respondent 4-* Meanwhile the Acting Director in charge of the Engineering of this side of business, was on the show, and was saying that, that is not a guarantee, but in less than 10 mins having discovered the views shared by our guests, on the spot the show had influenced the decision of the NCA and the head of the NCA had to make a direct intervention to give assurance that is absolute assurance both qualified that they were going to get their original frequencies. I am just using that to illustrate to you, the influence the show has.

*Moderator-* wow...its really been influential in that regard.

*Moderator -* So what are some of the factors management considers before designing such a program like Newsfile?

*Respondent 3-* Newsfile is one of the oldest political current affairs programme. Newsfile is about 21 years old. Newsfile came to the scene where there was no critical show, as it was only GBC that had a bigger platform that is TALKING POINT at the time, and so it was only Newsfile that came in then as an alternative. When it started it was the guest that used to be editors and so it was an editor's forum for those who edit the news, as they come into the studios to now discuss the details of the issues that were published in the course of the week.

*Moderator-* Please how do you undertake audience segmentation considering regional balance, political affiliation and ethnic differences in the country?

*Respondent 2:* What we may think about is the political backgrounds of the various panelists. If we don't want to host politicians on an issue clearly, we think where your background is and therefore we would not bring in politicians and if we have to bring in politicians, then we make sure that at least the two major parties are represented....

*Moderator-* How do you incorporate your audience in terms of the design of your programs?

*Respondent 1-* so you would discover that our show has audience feedback and so we have phone-ins and so we do phone-ins at least once a month and at least every show is opened to the audience by way of contributing through text messages and posting comments on our social media handles.

*Moderator-* What has been the level of dedication of management to your program Newsfile?

*Respondent 2-* Newsfile is the flagship of the station, and so it is taken very seriously and so everybody wants to be sure that everything goes on, I mean right.

*Moderator-* When it comes to governance and policy making, how does Newsfile contribute to shaping governance and policy making?

*Respondent 3-* I mentioned earlier, the policy makers they are tuned into the show, we know that for a fact...we know that the president/presidency, takes the show very seriously, at that level, they all tune and make sure they don't miss the show. There are times, when these prominent personalities would call me when my show is played back saying that I was a bit harsh on them with respect criticisms that is both NDC and NPP.

*Respondent 1-* The district assembly elections project, they started and were almost done and getting to the date for the elections to be held, if you remember in 2016, they were just about a couple of weeks to the referendum and I started a campaign against the "YES VOTES". And yes I started a campaign, there is a segment that is called "SAMSON'S TAKE". So I raised the issue about the fact that we cannot be having a YES vote to make district assembly elections also partisan and that was it, the referendum was put aside down and suspended. That's an example of influencing policy in the right direction. There are times when the political groups, may come to management to complain about how they want the paneling to be and they come to complain and so on and we know these things as matters of fact...

*Moderator-* I am really grateful...for this piece of information...so what are some of the strategies you adopt to ensure that you have continuously an active listenership in your program?

*Respondent 3-* Making sure we have the right guest all the time, the issues are thoroughly researched, a very serious research desk, so that would ensure that the issues are well addressed. So there was a case where the C.J directed Dr Dominic Ayine to render an apology to the Supreme Court using Newsfile as a platform. This was after Dr Dominic Ayine and Lawyer Ace Ankomah came to Newsfile to discuss what the issues were at that time. So the platform Newsfile going forward was the preferred choice of the highest court of the land. With regards to the policy on how to run legal education, the decision was taken to use Newsfile as a platform to articulate their concerns and they knew that after talking about it, they get the necessary feedback they needed from the public.

*Moderator-* So to what extent would you say the Ghanaian media has been able to discharge its role effectively as a watchdog of society?

*Respondent 2-* Well, sometimes I like to think about that kind of questioning this way, imagine that you didn't have the media, even in the midst of the media, look at what is going. So imagine that you didn't have the media, as those who give us aid and money to try and improve our development, they tell us that annually, an estimated 380 million dollars is unaccounted for in this country that tells you the enormity of the corruption. Without the media to shine the light and to expose some of these issues, I mean can you imagine, what the situation would be? Right, so the media has very clearly done a great job that in contributing in a manner that you talking about...the media is able to galvanize public opinion, perceptions and reactions. The media is the one that begun the campaign against galamesey and the government started to follow the path of the media.

*Respondent 1-*The biggest challenge is financing. The driving media you see around are what they are because they get money from advertisement. Without money news file will not exist and finance is critical, if you want the best quality. You must hire the best quality in terms of news anchor, producers, editors and the money would speak to the issue of quality. Another issue is substandard people getting into journalism and mercenary journalism. As politicians are paying

people money something called *solli*, if people are paid well they would not succumb to that form of bribery. In the case of covid, there had been some form of downsizing in terms of personnel and also unnecessary attempts to control the media particularly critical media which has seen a very bad regime particularly within the current government. There has been attempts to muzzle the media with key media practitioners such as Bernard Avle and Mannasseh Azure saying they are scared of their security as Journalists are beaten and political parties mobilize their people against media.

*Moderator-* We have come to the end of today's session of the interview. Thanks very much Sir and the team. I am very grateful for granting me this interview.

### **FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION (ONUA TV) FGD 7**

*Moderator-* What accounts for the selection of Onua Maakye?

*Respondent 1-* It's a morning show mostly based on current affairs and government issues.

*Moderator-* How is the program structured?

*Respondent 3-* We have the introduction, discussion and contributions segments of the show.

*Moderator-* What distinguishes your platform from other platforms?

*Respondent 4-* It's about one content, most of our content we send people out to do productions on issues and I think when it comes to well-fed issues because of the personality and being truthful to the public also counts in distinguishing our platform from that of other platforms.

*Moderator-* What are some of your target objectives of Onua Maakye show?

*Respondent 2-* Our target is to let the people know the truth and what is really going on as we seek to promote accountability and transparency in governance affairs. Our aim is help build the nation.

*Moderator -* So who are the major target audience of the show?

*Respondent 3-* The show looks at the various targets audience which include lower income, middle income and the upper class of society in relation to substantive issues on institutional governance building and policy making. So our target audience are the parliamentarians, politicians, policy makers and the government officials as well as the electorates.

*Moderator-* What are some of the factors that influenced management to design such a program?

*Respondent 4-* The worsening state of affairs of our country in relation to policy planning, implementation and poor governance that affects every average Ghanaian. So these factors including lack of jobs, crime, security issues and corruption has been an influencing factor to management's decision to mount such a program. The name of the show "Onua Maakye" actually tells you what our show is about. Maakye means Good Morning and so we remind our viewers of a new day and we use that opportunity to drive the issues of the day.

*Moderator-* When it comes to audience segmentation how do you undertake it?

*Respondent 1-* We give the audience opportunity from all parts of the country to make an input into our show by opening our phone lines for them to call in ensuring that all average Ghanaians in all parts of the region are well captured.

*Moderator-* How do you ensure that the audience are incorporated into your show in relation to feedback obtained?

*Respondent 3-* For the audience, their inputs are very important to us and so we ensure that they are part of the show by way of an interactive medium so that their views can be used to project the show and its vision. The audience are therefore very important to the show as they support the show through ideas, information and comments making the show very rich.

*Moderator-* How has your program shaped governance

*Respondent 2-* The Saglemi issues which had to do with the abandoned government projects which we called upon government to do the needful by ensuring that those houses are completed and maintained for Ghanaians. We gave so much coverage to the issues such that it led to government acting as the public were much agitated by the state of affairs of that project. We also went to cover the issue of the abandoned Aferi Hospital, as the Defence Minister came to witness what we did as we called upon members of parliaments and MCE's.

*Moderator-* What are some other policy interventions that your program has been able to successfully ensure that government attends to?

*Respondent 3-* The Aferi project and the state of Konongo Hospital, we spoke on air and that led to the hospital authorities and government acting...

*Moderator-* How has feedback from your audience been incorporated into

*Respondent 4-* we provide our viewers with mediums to share their comments and for their contributions.

*Moderator-* What are some of the challenges you think the media faces in Ghana?

*Respondent 2-* The lack of security and as I talked to you, I was rescued when we were covering a program and would have been beaten...so our security during investigations and putting our stories is at risk and we need government's assurance in that direction.