

GHANA INSTITUTE OF JOURNALISM

**COVERAGE OF ENCROACHMENT OF WATER BODIES IN THE DAILY GRAPHIC
AND THE CHRONICLE**

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DECLARATION

I Deborah Owusu Afriyie, hereby declare that this study is my original research conducted under the supervision of Mr. Osei Kwadwo Adow at the School of Graduate Studies and Research (SOGSAR) of the Ghana Institute of Journalism (GIJ). All used works and studies cited in this research have been duly acknowledged.



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Date: 28th October 2015

DEDICATION

I dedicate this piece of work to my father Mr. David I. King who has been an invaluable source of inspiration.

May God richly bless you.

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ABSTRACT

The study examined the Daily Graphic and the Chronicle's coverage of encroachment of water bodies. The objectives were to ascertain the frequency and prominence given to such news as well as finally make suggestions based on findings.

Thus, the quantitative research technique of content analysis was employed in the achievement of these objectives. Results of the study showed that, the total number of times the Daily Graphic published stories on encroachment of water bodies out of their 317 publication was 57. The Chronicle also published 17 stories out of the 317 publications. On the issue of prominence, the Daily Graphic published most of its stories on encroachment of water bodies on other pages whereas the Chronicle published most of its stories on the center page. For instance, the Chronicle recorded 56.25% on stories published on its center pages whilst the Daily Graphic recorded 55.2% for stories published on the other pages.

This clearly shows that both newspapers can improve their coverage of encroachment of water bodies by giving it adequate prominence and frequency. It is important for the press to attach pictures (illustrations) to their stories in order to affect the emotions of the people and motivate them to take an action or look at the issues seriously. Again it is important for the press to make follow ups on such stories to ensure actions are being taken to curb this menace in our society.

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CHAPTER ONE

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The introduction of the study comprises of the background of the study, problem statement, objectives of the study, research questions, significance of the study, scope of the study and the organization of the study.

Environmental issues are linked to exploitation of or protection of natural resources which form the basis of human existence on earth.

Article 268(1) of the 1992 constitution of the Republic of Ghana stipulates that any activity headed for the exploitation of mineral, water or other natural resources in Ghana will not be permitted unless it is subjected to parliamentary ratification. This implies that, the state and the entire citizenry should make conscious efforts at safeguarding the environment from abuse and misuse. There by making judicious use of the environment. We must ensure renewability and protect the environment for generations unborn. Above all, promote general societal ownership and responsibility for water resources.

Water is life; however, life is dependent on water for survival and today water holds the key to our future survival on this planet earth. Water knows no boundaries as it flows over the earth's surface, it links communities of plants, animals and humans together. When human activities have an impact on the natural environment, it is reflected in the water situation that is quantity and quality according to Grant Pearson.

Water is in great demand; and as the human population increases with its increasing needs for survival, the greater the demand for water. Ghana in general has a limited supply of water

resources and the quality of this water is being threatened by pollution which is primarily caused by human activities and the destruction of rivers which is one major source of water for most Ghanaians.

This however calls for the press to take an action in curbing the situation about the state of our environment with a keen focus on our water bodies. The press has a stake in our environment and must raise awareness about this menace which is hampering our development. “What concerns everybody must be discussed by all”.

1.2 BACKGROUND

Water forms a vital part of our social infrastructure, playing a key role in agriculture, health, energy and the general consumption for human welfare for which there is no substitute, yet the amount of water available is limited. It is estimated by the United Nations that, the world contains 1,400 millionkm³ of water out of which only 35 million 1/3 or 2.5% is fresh water.

According to the Water Research Commission publication on Ghana’s water supplies (2004) fresh water supplies are renewable through precipitation; river inflow and underground recharge are finite. Ghana’s water, like any other country is a fixed dock which is dwindling due to changes in land use, contamination from human settlements, industry and agriculture.

Ghana covers an area of 238,000 km² and is situated on the West of Africa between latitude 4° 30 and 11° N and longitude 1° E and 3° 15 W (according to the Ministry of Water Resource Works and Housing’s report on Ghana’s water resources, management, challenges and opportunities). It is bordered on the north by Burkina Faso, the Republic of Togo on the east, Cote D’ Ivoire on the west and Atlantic Ocean (Gulf of Guinea) in the south. Fresh water covers nearly 5% (11,800 km²) of the total area of Ghana. This is made up of mainly three (3) major

river systems they are Volta River system with 70%, South Western River system 22% and Coastal River system 8% coverage.

The report also states that, the total annual runoff is about 54 billion m³ of which 70% (that is 37.8 billion m³) originates from the country; 16.2 billion m³ from outside. The south western basin has the highest runoff per square kilometer that 245,000 m³ per km² per annum with the Volta basin having the least of 146,000 m³ per km² per annum with the Volta basin having the least 146,000 m³ per km³ per annum.

These three (3) water systems are made up of sixteen river basins which are spread along the length and breadth of the country.

The Volta River System consists of the Red, Black and white Volta Rivers and the Oti River. The south western rivers comprise of the Bia, Tano, Ankobra and Pra rivers. The Coastal Rivers are made up of Ochi-Nakwa, Ochi Amissah, Ayensu, Densu and the Tordzie rivers. The Volta river basin is shared with Cote D'Ivoire, Burkina Faso, Mali, Togo and Benin. The Bia River is shared with Cote D'Ivoire, while the lower reaches the Tano river which forms the boundary with Cote D'Ivoire.



River Basin Map of Ghana

Figure 1.0 River Basin map of Ghana; Developed and printed by CSIR-WRI, Accra.

Barely twenty (20) years ago, Ghana's water bodies were mostly in good shape, however these water bodies have been so tampered with and this has indeed affected aquatic life as well as humans. Water is an essential part of life and ensures the existence of man and other living things.

Water is central in reaching the United Nations Millennium Development Goal health target, especially child mortality and the basic needs for healthy productive lives. Africa is a long way from meeting these basic needs with 300 million people lacking access to improved water resources according to UNICEF. The Millennium Development Goal (MDGs) on water and

sanitation can be reached by enabling access to water and sanitation for 75% of people in Africa. This would avoid 115 million cases of diarrhea, 456 million productive days would be gained and US \$1.6 billion would be averted every year.

However, there are certain indicators that make the emergence of this problem understandable in our country. Statistics from the Ghana Water Research Institute shows that about 60% of our water bodies have been encroached upon by estate developers and individuals who through their personal interest and activities either do not know or care about the effect of their activities on the water bodies.



Fig 1.1 Squatters living at the banks of Korle Lagoon; Developed and printed by CSIR-WRI, Accra.

Another significant contributory factor to this pertinent problem is poor planning of our villages, towns and cities. Indeed one major problem facing us as a country is planning of our cities and towns which have led to the indiscriminate putting up of structures just anywhere; more

especially on wetlands, this phenomenon has become a major challenge for city authorities to tackle. Additionally, the inefficiency of our city surveyors, engineers and planners whose role is to supervise and ensure that people do the right are not up to the task. Enforcement of accepted standards for building is also compromised by these supervisory groups hence the rise of blatant encroachment on our water bodies.

According to CSIR' Water Research Institute, many farmers have encroached on the basins of water bodies in Ghana. Indeed poor farming practices have affected water quality in general. The application of fertilizers, weedicides, fungicides and insecticides in the wrong quantities affect aquatic life and water quality since the land when cleared becomes bare and the least rainfall washes the top soil through erosion depositing silt into water bodies. Moreover, these chemicals are not bio-degradable and its effects are enormous. It makes water unsafe for humans as well as aquatic lives.



Fig. 1.2 Saboba River, Developed and printed by CSIR-WRI, Accra.

The traditional authorities also contribute to this problem and in most instances very evident in our cities. They give away wetlands for their own personal interest and neglect the consequences on the entire populace and the water bodies.

The increase in population is also a big factor especially in the cities where people build or put up structures indiscriminately ostensibly to accommodate the teeming population and this is as a result of rural urban drift which has brought pressure on our amenities and water resources.

According to Daily Graphic report, written by Bentil N.L. on July 10 2008, large portions of the Kpeshie lagoon and its mangrove in La (a suburb) of Accra was being reclaimed and sold to individuals for residential and business development purposes. Consequently, the lagoon and its mangrove were disappearing fast. Extensive portions of the lagoon were being filled with sand, construction debris and garbage ready to be sold to prospective buyers.

As a result of the above mentioned points, encroachment of our water bodies has had a negative effect on our water resources. It has caused many of our water bodies to dry up. More so, this has also caused flooding in our towns and cities since the channels of these water bodies have been encroached upon. Another significant effect is the perennial shortage of water in our towns and cities. Our climatic conditions have also been greatly affected by their exposure of our water bodies to direct sun rays causing intense evaporation and drying up of these waters.



Fig 1.3 Illegal gold miners along the banks of the Black Volta at Tangasie (Nadowli District)

Developed and printed by CSIR-WRI, Accra.

This calls for concern in that, the press which is the major medium for communicating and sensitizing the public effectively on the need to protect our water bodies is not up to the task and must give prominence to such news stories in order to protect the water bodies and the environment at large.

1.3 STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

The press coverage of encroachment of water bodies in Africa in general and Ghana in particular has received some amount of attention in recent times. The press in Ghana is also affected by this problem since they also endure the floods, diseases due to water pollution and water shortages in their various homes and communities.

The attention given to environmental issues particularly water, can be described as insufficient since much attention is given to other news. Although this menace is expected to be high on the national agenda, it is somehow neglected. Surprisingly however, whenever the press sets the agenda it attracts much public interest and attention.

Press coverage on issues of cardinal importance can be said to be largely lopsided to the advantage of political issues to the disadvantage of life threatening environmental issues.

The coverage of encroachment of our water bodies has become a concern to all since this ever growing menace seem to be neglected. McCombs and Shaw, proponent of agenda setting believe that, the mass media have the ability to transfer the salience of issues on their agenda to the public agenda. Ray Funk Houser also observed that, there is a certain amount of influence from the media to the publics. However the media frame is the central point for news content that supplies a context and suggests what the use is through the selection, emphasis or prominence, exclusion and elaboration. This suggests that, the media does not only set the agenda but transfer the salient but specific attribute of issue to public agenda. Thus the media plays a crucial role in safeguarding the environment.

The encroachment of water bodies' definitely concerns the press since it is a big environmental issue and affects the society at large. For the press to give adequate prominence to this issue there should be a more holistic approach when covering such news stories. However, the quest of the press to sensitizing the public about this menace may seem questionable. In this regard therefore, how has the press covered issues of encroachment of water bodies in Ghana?

1.4 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

This study seeks to achieve the following objectives:

1. The study seeks to examine the extent of prominence given to the encroachment of water bodies by the press.

2. To identify the frequency of such news stories that is the number of times they appear in the newspapers.
3. Make suggestions for consideration when covering such news items that will help improve the environment sustainably.

1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The study will dwell on finding solutions to the following questions that bothers this study.

These questions include:

1. What prominence is given to news stories such as encroachment of water bodies?
2. How many times do such stories appear in the newspapers?
3. The study will make suggestions based on the findings as to the coverage of such news.

1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The press has a large circulation and even multiple readerships. However, it is important to find out what it is doing to help check the problem of encroachment of water bodies and also to find out the prominence given to it.

Newspaper stories about encroachment of water bodies can raise awareness about the problem in our society. The media will therefore alert the people about the effect of their actions on water bodies.

The study will generate an interest in media practitioners, journalist and editors as to the importance of reporting on the environment especially on water related issues. In this way,

readers would be the beneficiaries of quality environmental news which is important for their survival and development.

It is highly probable that, the more newspapers devote their resources to the coverage of environmental issues the more it will make the people take action to address any environmental problems present in their communities. The study is intended to create the awareness of the need to dedicate columns or newspapers solely to environmental issues, as one exist for sports for instance.

1.7 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The study will be restricted to two newspapers due to financial constraints. The study will focus mainly on these two newspapers with their coverage of encroachment of water bodies as the topic of interest. The objectives outlined for the study will form the basis for analyzing the findings and data collected as well as the suggestions for the study which will add meaning to it.

1.8 ORGANISATION OF THE STUDY

The chapter one of the study introduces the study and gives a background to the study. This is followed by the statement of problem. Research objectives come next. Following is the research questions. The significance of the study, the scope of the study and the organization of the study follow in that order respectively. The chapter two covers the related literature. It deals with the various water bodies and the effective mechanism for covering environmental

news such as encroachment of water bodies. The study will come out with appropriate mass communication theories for effective coverage of environmental issues.

Chapter three will be concerned with methodology with emphasis on the population and sample, sampling methods, data collection instrument and data handling and analysis while chapter four will entail the analysis of the data and findings. Chapter five will include the discussions and conclusion of the study, the suggestions and limitations of the study.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides a broad theoretical background to the study. It is divided into two parts, part one discusses the broad theoretical framework within which the study was carried out. It also gives an overview of its strength and weaknesses in mass communication research. This study adopted the framework of the agenda setting and the gate keeping theory of communication. The discussion shows how the concepts and perspective within each of these theories and their linkages with each other. The perspectives emphasized in the review of the theories are in no way exhaustive of the literature though they are representative given the research questions and objectives of the study.

Part two deals with the literature relating to coverage of encroachment of water bodies and the environment in general. It further discussed the impact of the coverage of environmental issues on the public at large.

2.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

One of the theoretical approaches for the study is the gate keeping model for the study of mass communication. A gatekeeper determines what information is passed along the chain and how faithfully it is reproduced. This principle of a gate keeping applies to reporters, photographers, editors, communicators and all others who decide what information to use in the media from the vast array of information available to them.

The gate keeping theory can therefore be said to be the stage-by-stage control of the production of mass media information from observation of an event to reporting it as news for the consumer. Along the production chain are editors, sub editors, news editors and reporters who can open the 'gate' to let news flow or shut the gate to news.

Kurt Lewin (1951) who developed the concept of gate keeping perceived that all along an information channel are points at which 'in' and 'out' decisions have to be made and therefore the power to operate these gates and the personalities that govern their operation become crucial in the flow of information.

Bass (1969) states that, 'news gathering and news processing are separate aspects of news production'. A distinction need to be made between the collections of raw news processing.

He further extended gate keeping theory with a more advanced study that included a critique that measured the White (1950) and McNelly (1959) studies to be simplistic. He noted that White's focus on the telegraph editor was misplaced since he "is not the key decision maker" (p.71). Again he noted that McNelly did not distinguish between the various roles of various newsmen and that McNelly's theory built-in readers "as just another communicator" (p. 72). Infact in the *Journalism Quarterly* article adopted from his dissertation, Bass introduced the "double-action internal news flow" theory that showed the flow from "raw news" into the "completed product" for news consumers. Bass' emphasizes that "news gatherers" (reporters and line editors) are different from "news processors" (editors and translators) working at the United Nations. He argued that researchers should focus more attention on the news gathering than on news processing, since news stories that are not reported will never reach a point where they can be processed.

In Ghana, reporters in the districts and regions are known to file their stories and transmit them to the head office in Accra for processing. Even before a reporter files his story, the gate keeping process begins and who to interview on an event will influence the story.

The news editor then processes the story and here more 'gates' may be opened or shut. The news editor as we all know is a task oriented and is concerned with production targets. However, the bureaucratic system and the interpersonal relationships and general atmosphere in the newsroom all affect the gate keeping process (Daily Graphic online).

Gate keeping is in this view more than just a product of an individual's preferences, whims, or errors. Regardless of the editor, or the media outlet, certain types of stories will be selected, while others will not. There is thus a strong possibility that there will be systematic differences between news content and the real world.

According to Itule B. D. and Anderson D. A. (1987), gate keeping by its very acts precludes any 'scientific formula for deciding what is news and where it should be placed in the newspaper'. At several stages in the news room all affect the gate keeping process. At several stages in the news gathering and writing process, decisions to include or exclude information are made.

Criteria such as low news value and a little interest in the issue at stake to a large extent contribute to what is accepted as news by editors. The news man in Ghana is no exception to the above views and environmental issues which are part of the numerous issues available for coverage by newspapers suffer from the gate keeping process. It is however interesting to know what is of value to news editors thus is it news on politics, health, sports, entertainment, economy or environmental issues?

Gate keeping continues even when the focus is on environmental issues. This is because environmental issues encompass various sub themes like water pollution, sanitation, erosion, deforestation and many others.

The news editor decides on what assignment out of the numerous environmental and other issues the reporter may cover. The 'news source' informs the reporter on selecting news event. The reporter files a story which has his biases; the news editor edits these stories and submits them to an editorial conference that is the body which selects stories for publication. Sub editors edit these stories for publication. A sub editor then edits these stories to eliminate irrelevance and also to fit available space of the newspaper. The night editor does additional gate keeping at the type setting stage. An important story may break which may necessitate the reorganization of the front page. The editor finally approves these stories before the papers goes to bed.

One can therefore conclude that the reporter and his editor are the key gate keepers in the transmission of environmental news. This research applied the gate keeping theory to environmental news coverage.

The latest research involving gate keeping theory continues to improve upon previous models – and to consider Internet technology. Bennett (2004), for example, uses a modified approach to gate keeping theory to argue that television news and print, to a lesser degree has shifted from hard to soft news, mostly for economic reasons. In his analysis, he notes four news gates driven by the reporter and these are the news organization, its economics, and the news gathering technology.

The arrival of the Internet as a mass communication source has further sparked considerations of gate keeping in both scholarly research and in popular press. Singer (2001), for example, studied

how traditional newspapers (now referred to as “mainstream” media chose to link or not to link to Web sites, and how those decisions forced more decisions by gatekeepers. Williams and Carpini (2000), who claim that gate keeping seems to be out-of-date – if one information source will not publish something, another one (that is just as easy to find online) will publish it.

The gatekeeper’s choices are a complex web of influences, preferences, motives and common values. Gate keeping is inevitable and in some circumstances it can be useful. Gate keeping can also be dangerous, since it can lead to an abuse of power by deciding what information to discard and what to let pass. Nevertheless, gate keeping is often a routine, guided by some set of standard questions.

Donohue et al (1972) assert that gate keeping focuses on the selection of one event or another, rather than the selective framing of a single event. Events are of course open to interpretation, and there is a large and valuable literature on issue framing. Indeed, some gate keeping work views selection and framing in tandem. The somewhat more parsimonious view, however, and the one adopted here, is that gate keeping theory focuses on the selection mechanism. It is the identification of broader trends in news selection across individuals, and media outlets, and time that have made gate keeping a particularly fruitful theory of news selection. Gate keeping is in this view more than just a product of an individual’s preferences, whims, or errors. Regardless of the editor, or the media outlet, certain types of stories will be selected, while others will not. There is thus a strong possibility that there will be systematic differences between news content and the real world.

The second theory that will form part of the basis of this research will be the agenda-setting theory. The agenda setting hypothesis suggests that the mass media ‘can influence which issues people think about, although they may not be able to instigate changes into how people think’

(Gooch, 1996, p.110, emphasis in original). This implies that heavy coverage of an issue in the media should also result in high public impact (Mazur, 1989).

Agenda setting is the creation of public awareness and the presentation of salient issues by the media. However, two basic assumptions underline most research on agenda setting that are

1. The media do not reflect the reality, they filter and shape it.
2. The media concentrate on few issues and subjects leads to perceive those issues as more important than others.

Baran and Davies (2000) defines agenda setting as the idea that the media do not tell people what to think, but what to think about. This theory asserts that although several events may occur within a particular period of time, the audience or readers tend to ponder only on few dominant ones. These dominant ones that will be registered on the public's mindset are obviously the stories that are frequently highlighted by the media. Significantly, what the mass media often publish is not what the audience frequently thinks about.

According to McCombs and Shaw, (1972) whether social or political, local or national, public issues are generated by the media. Consumers do not only learn about an issue but also how much importance is attached to that issue from the amount of information in a news story and its position. However, they presented another assumption that 'if the media are able to shape the agenda, then is possible that they present problems that are not dominant. In short, the political world is reproduced imperfectly by individual news media. They differentiated between the real world and the media reality, suggesting that, there is a constructed reality that can supersede an

objective reality. The question that is mostly asked of the agenda setting role of the media is 'who sets the agenda for the media'?

The theory states that it is the mass media that set the agenda for public discussion through emphasizing on certain issues and de-emphasizing other issues.

The notion of agenda setting by the media can be traced to Walter Lippman (1992) who suggested that, the media were responsible for the 'pictures in our heads'. To him the mass media shape public perception with images. His notion was based on the public's limited firsthand knowledge of the real world, created the formation for what has become known as agenda setting. This theory contends that the media play an influential role on how issues gain public attention.

Eugene (1974) opined that, agenda setting does assume a direct, though not necessarily an immediate, impact of the media on their audiences. But it also specifies that the impact is not on people's attitudes but on their cognitions, and he attributes these cognitive changes to be the result of the media performing a gatekeeper, or channel, role' in western democracies.

Thus the agenda-setting influence of the news media is not limited to this initial step of focusing public attention on a particular topic. The media also influence the next step in the communication process, our understanding and perspective on the topics in the news.

Hansen (1991) indicates that 'several studies have found agenda setting effects in the relation between media coverage and public opinion on environmental issues' (p.445).

Again in a study on the Finnish major press and public opinion about environmental issues, Suhonen (1993) concluded that ' for most of the fifteen year period under examination the

proportion of those expressing concern for the environment varied in keeping with the amount of press coverage devoted to it', (p.106).

In another study conducted in Canada on public concern over the environmental issues, Parlour and Schatzow (1978) concluded that 'there is no evidence to support the contention that the public was concerned about environmental issues before these were registered with the media' (cited in Lowe & Morrison, 1984, p.75).

Also, Lowe and Morrison (1984), while acknowledging that people have been aware of environmental deterioration, note that it was in a limited and localized context. According to them, 'what the media has done is to broaden that awareness and transform many discrete problems into major issue', (p.76).

Arguing along the same lines, Brookes et al, (1976) suggested that the increase in the environmental coverage brought about a new tendency to redefine what hitherto been considered as individual problems such as traffic nuisance or pollution incidents, as part of a broader problem with the environment (cited in Lowe & Morrison, 1984).

These findings notwithstanding, some scholars have questioned whether it is possible and even credible to make such inferences about the impact on media coverage on environmental issues. They also pointed out that there seems to be relative constancy as well as pervasiveness of environmental concern. To their estimation, this meant that most people were quiet concerned about environmental issues so one could not infer from correlations that the media had influenced them in a way. Others also contend that the media generally follow rather than initiate environmental awareness (Andersen 1991, MacMillan, 1988; Rubin & Sachs, 1972).

In another vein, Abraham et al (1990) have noted that there is a 'bandwagon' approach to the way the media cover environmental issues. They point out that in this approach motivation for coverage is from a 'competition-driven delivery system where market demands rather than a desire to generate awareness dictate lack of funds and also as a result of state control, the state-owned media (newspapers, radio and television) command the greatest proportion of the audience.

Nevertheless, studies have indicated that when it comes to media coverage of environmental issues in Ghana, the state-owned media perform much better than the private media (Amoakohene, 1995; Atuobi, 1996). This is based on the criteria of time and spaces given to the environmental news by the media.

Although the influence of the media agenda can be substantial, it alone does not determine the public agenda. Information and cues about object and attribute salience provided by the news media are far from the only determinants of the public agenda. This substantial influence of the news media has no way overturned or nullified the basic assumption of democracy that the people at large have sufficient wisdom to determine the course of their nation, their state, and their local communities. In particular, the people are quite able to determine the basic relevance – to themselves and to the larger public arena – of the topics and attributes advanced by the news media. The media set the agenda only when citizens perceive their news stories as relevant.

Nevertheless, the agenda setting theory in all respect is simple, can be tested, explains, consistent and organizes ideas. It influenced a whole era of communication research and produced many news theories like priming, public agenda, agenda building or theories about a second level of

agenda setting that deals with sub issues and abstracts items that can only be found between the lines.

One of the most critical aspects of agenda setting role of mass communication is the frame for this phenomenon. In addition, different media have different agenda setting potential. Agenda setting theory seem quite appropriate to help understand the pervasive role of the media for example on environmental communication.

According Lippmann (1992) the pictures in people's minds about the outside world are significantly influenced by the mass media, both what those pictures are about and what those pictures are. The agenda-setting effects of the mass media also have significant implications beyond the pictures created in people's heads. In the original, traditional domain of agenda-setting, the salience of public issues, there is considerable evidence that the shifting salience of issues on the media agenda often are the basis for public opinion about the overall performance in office of a public leader. In turn, the salience of a leader in the news also is linked with whether an individual holds any opinion at all.

According to him, at the second level of agenda-setting, the salience of affective attributes intertwined with the public's cognitive pictures of these leaders represents the convergence of attribute agenda-setting with opinion formation and change. Beyond attitudes and opinions, the pictures of reality created by the mass media have implications for personal behaviors, ranging from college applications to voting on Election Day.

According to Shaw (1979), no media effects on people are seen as the principal result of the day-to-day work of the press in informing its audiences of the opportunities and warning them of the dangers, real or imagined, in their environment and in the rest of the world. The media, by

describing and detailing what is out there, present people with a list of what to think about and talk about.

People are helped in coping with the vast array of items and views by the way the media arrange, organize, and establish the priorities of events and issues that their audiences should attend to and evaluate.

He further states that together with ubiquity and cumulation of this consonance works to increase media's impact on the formation of public opinion by reducing, if not eliminating, the chances people have to practice selective exposure when they use the mass media. One can easily understand how a mass audience's notions can be shaped, even distorted, by the media about what are the majority opinions, standards, and values. People tend to form attitudes about public matters with an awareness that others are also reacting to the same problems, events, and issues. Hence their perceptions, dependent on the media, of what most citizens' hold can create a compulsion to conform. The more easily perusable may even be motivated by their perception of the situation to accept the seemingly dominant viewpoint as reflected in the media.

Since the advent of the Internet and social networks, there has been a variety of opinions concerning agenda-setting effects online. Some have claimed that the power of traditional media has been weakened. Others think that the agenda-setting process and its role have continued on the Internet, specifically in electronic bulletin boards.

According to Shaw et al, although the major tenets of agenda setting theory have maintained their importance with the changes of new media, an aspect of agenda setting theory has changed. This change is known as **agenda-melding** which focuses "on the personal agendas of individuals vis-à-vis their community and group affiliations. This means that individuals join groups and

blend their agendas with the agendas of the group. Then groups and communities represent a "collected agenda of issues" and "one joins a group by adopting an agenda." On the other hand, agenda setting defines groups as "collections of people based on some shared values, attitudes, or opinions" that individuals join.

Again Shaw et al assert that, this is different from traditional agenda setting because the advances in technology have made agenda melding easy for people to develop because there is a wide range of groups and individual agendas. The Internet makes it possible for people all around the globe to find others with similar agendas and collaborate with them. In the past agenda setting was limited to general topics and it was geographically bound because travel was limited.

The agenda setting theory basically explains the correspondence between the rates at which the media cover a story is important. The theory examines the relationship between media and audience priorities concerning the relative importance of news stories. Therefore, seeing that water is vital for human survival and development and is a major developmental issue in Ghana's quest for economic breakthrough, it is relevant to find out what agenda the print media is setting on such issues.

2.3 REVIEW OF RELATED WORKS

Empirical research as to press coverage of encroachment of water bodies is quite far from being exhausted. Quite a number of research studies have been done in the broader environmental spectrum with less than considerable connection on encroachment of water bodies.

Anderson et al (1993) suggest that, the manner in which the press report on environmental issues may depend on the nature of the communities the media serve.

From their point of view, press coverage of local environmental hazards in homogenous communities is very likely to minimize controversies. In heterogeneous communities on the other hand, it is very likely that such hazards will be publicized even if it results in controversy.

A research conducted by Sachs D. P. (1972) highlighted the fact that environmental issues have become regular news beats in the newspaper and serves as a continuous surveillance method. To him the rate at which environmental issues found their way to the front pages of newspapers and into hourly headlines of radio stations in the USA is remarkable. This is also worthy of emulation by the Ghanaian press.

A study conducted by Schramm and Wade (1969), revealed that unlike television, newspapers and magazines are relied on more as a source of information for science and environmental news. They suggest that, newspapers dominate the science news field, while television dominates political campaigns.

Tagne D. N. (1996) in his book titled *Reporting on the environment: A guide for Africa's Journalists* believes that environmental journalists need to adopt a succinct way of writing to make for easy reading. According to him maps, photos, cartoons, drawings and other illustration can help. He states that, the environmental journalist must avoid topics that generalize environmental imperatives or get involved in technical jargons. Instead, topics relating to the daily concerns of readers must be chosen. Topics must be subtitled to break up text to make reading easy. Above all, stories must be placed in catchy eye positions.

White and Siebert (1966) in their findings from gate-keeping study made mention of the editor as the 'gate keeper'. The gate keeper selects from the pile of stories on his desk based on what he thinks make up news for the day. The study also revealed that many editors are too hooked up on

'hot stuff', (stuff that would make his paper sell at the end of the day) to handle environmental news to any appreciable extent.

This has led to many criticisms that environmental reporters are not the jonnie-come-late lies that they are accused to be. Rather, they are well educated and experienced journalist before they turned to the environmental beat. They mostly would have spent at least 5-7 years on general assignment that is 1.5 years on science writing and or 5.5 years on other newspaper duties.

According to Robin and Sachs (1973) interest in environmental reporting increased in the aftermath of explosion in the environmental information which began in the late 1960 and reached its peak in around Earth Day in 1970. They analyzed the content of the San Chronicle, the Readers Digest and the Time Magazine from 1965 to 1970 and coded the environmental articles into subject categories. They found out that, there was a definite increase in the number of environmental articles over the period. With regards to the subject categories, they noted that issues of 'population', 'air' and 'water quality' were discussed frequently whereas issues of 'energy management' were scarcely discussed.

According to Witt (1971) factors such as lack of man power, poorly motivated reporters, indifference of editors and; management and lack of time. Above all, business/industrial and government sectors also pressurize print houses to print news in their favor. Again, too much reportage on 'crises', inherent dullness of technical topics as well as limited reader interest and a little zeal in following up environmental issues in newspapers. Follow-up (stories) is particularly important, considering the complexity and duration of most environmental issues.

Yankah K. (1994) observing the Ghanaian situation, notes that there seems to be a general concern with environmental hazards but their importance relative to other issues is yet to be

grasped, and that reporters have neither special interest nor special skill in reporting the environment. Among the many explanations offered for this state of affairs is the view that, unlike many other topics, the issue of environment is plagued both by enormous complexities tied to a range of economic, social and political consideration and a great deal of scientific uncertainty.

Essegbey (1996 pg.30-34) asserts that environmental reporting belongs to the science and technology sectors. This body of knowledge includes agriculture, industry, health and other allied science based discipline. He adds that on very hot 'hot issues' such as environmental awareness and checking the spread of AIDS, Ghanaian newspapers fail to meet their social responsibilities.

He went on to add that, they hardly devote space for public information. The crucial point he makes in his article is that, there 'is a linkage between head stories and editorials since Ghanaian newspapers hardly carry science and technology stories, it is also reflected in the scarce science editorials in the papers'.

Bennie (1997 pg. 34) identified that, coverage of science in Ghanaian newspapers has generally been declining over the period of 1992-1996. He attributes this to the waning of support and low media coverage of the government policy to the improvement of scientific issues.

Clover (1994 pg. 44-45) similarly made an assertion that, the very nature of the media makes coverage of environmental issues very challenging. He said that 'the world of the media demands excitement, a sense of rapid movement, clean at issues of high symbolism and a rapid turnaround from breaking story to hard copy'. This approach according to him cannot be

transferred to environmental stories that by its nature are supposed to 'seep through the pores' of social change.

Tolba and El-Kholy (1992 pg. 697-704) however focused on how the mass media can educate people in rural areas about environmental issues. To them, the mass media generally appears alien almost always projecting the values of the elite in the cities and rarely communicating in local dialect'. To them, the pressure on the environment is the strongest in the rural areas and therefore, if they are the target, then traditional interpersonal forms of communication should be sought other than mass communication.

Otoo (1993 pg. 46-48) affirm that, for people to appreciate the reality of issue like that of protecting the environment there is the need to provide visuals in the form of pictures and photographs that illustrate the situation. She argues that, psychologically, such visual presentations affect the emotions of individual readers and motivate them to take actions or look at the issues seriously.

Clover (1994 pg. 34) asserts those journalists are not environmental scientist, so they tend to lack both knowledge and a sense of perspective. To Clover, this would not be the case if they are trained into the job, have a good academic and specialist contacts and spend some time understanding the political culture of environmental problems identification and solution seeking.

The average environmental reporter does not consider him or herself as environmental reporter because in addition to the environment beat, the reporter is responsible for a good deal of additional reporting and news duties according to Witt (1974). Until the environment beat is recognized as distinct, it will not be given that high level of recognition.

In a study by David M. Rubin (1969), on the pressures of the media, he stated that the news media suffers from pressures from both external and internal which blunts their performance.

Among the internal pressures are the following;

1. The news media are so structured that they define and gather news through reactions to specific events or news pegs. Because environmental deterioration often occurs almost invisibly and over a long period of time. It does not offer convenient news pegs and this is left out of routine of news gathering.
2. The subject is complicated cutting across many specialties and reporters with the requisite skill are hard to find.
3. Editors do not perceive the urgency of improving environmental coverage and they do not afford reporters sufficient time to develop and report stories.
4. Editors often are unwilling to print serious and lengthy stories; instead they push for pieces with mere zest even at the expense of accuracy.
5. Some editors and reporters believe that interest in the environment is a fad that soon will pass from the scene.
6. Journalists tie themselves to official sources, usually government, for most environmental information while overlooking members of the public with expertise.
7. Environmental stories frequently are regional and editors are often unwilling to cover stories whose major focus lies beyond their circulation and viewing area.

In a study by Quarshie-Awusah W. A. (1998), he observed that, there is the need to increase and sustain all the perspectives of environmental reporting so as to enable the Ghanaian benefit from the knowledge of the need to the environment clean.

Nande (2006 pg. 32-36) cites the Ghana Environmental Analysis study and notes some of the serious issues highlighted as a result of inadequate sanitation services. The most glaring is that 'water & excreta' related diseases are highly prevalent among the poor in Ghana, with the second highest incidence of guinea worm as well as a high diarrhea related diseases contributing to high infant mortality rates. He confirms that sanitation service delivery is hindered by the fact that institutional bases are fairly weak and there are not sufficient capabilities for coordination and management of policies and programs. The point is also made that resources allocated for the management of environmental sanitation services are inadequate and therefore needed improvement.

Furthermore, Nande (ibid) relates that 'there is a widespread lack of compliance to environmental sanitation regulations, weak law enforcement and attitudinal constraints caused by public awareness'. They recommended among other things to intensify community awareness on unsafe sanitation through hygiene education.

The issue of sustainable plastic waste management was addressed by Wiannah (2007 pg. 24-28). In the abstract, Wiannah relates that a great amount of waste is generated as result of increased urbanization and that plastic waste notably sachet water bags seem to be littering the city indiscriminately. The effect is a set of environmental problems including blockage of water ways and rivers, blight of landscape and trees and depletion of resources among others.

To Demanya (2006 pg. 41-44), the residents of Accra identified several environmental issues, most permanent concern raised by residents was malaria, open defecation, cholera, diarrhea and dysentery among others were also identified. Flooding, choked filters and drains were noted as consequences of poor solid waste management in Accra where as in Kumasi residents that is

government officials and private waste companies noted smoke from burning garbage containers at central sites as the most obvious environmental concern.

According to a Water Resource Commission report on the White Volta River basin (2008), the original ecology of the White Volta River Basin was moist Guinea savannah with a considerable cover of broad-leaved trees forming closed canopy of branches in some places. It was relatively rich in species of flora and fauna (teeming game of grazing animals that were in ecological balance with the vegetation). Human activities through time have significantly modified this fragile ecology. A marked deterioration in the ecology has been realized in the basin within the past 10 -20 years. The forested area and tree cover has thinned considerably leading to significant increase in the area coverage of what is classified as open savannah woodland. At present the vegetation of the basin consists of shorter grasses and a few fire resistant trees. This kind of vegetation has resulted mainly from prolonged grazing, burning and cultivation. Two physiognomic types of savannah may be recognized in the White Volta Basin. The north-eastern corner of the basin has been so disturbed by intensive farming that few baobab trees remain.

Fobil & Horgah (2007 pg. 61-85) assert that the effect of this indiscriminate littering of the streets is the choking of drainage system in the city centers resulting in flooding whenever it rains. It was highlighted that, the rise in plastic waste has began to have serious consequences such as pollution since plastic materials are not biodegradable in the environment by natural biological processes and tend to persist for longer period of time. They also noted, rather sadly that 'the disposal culture of plastic consumer public has been irresponsible and proper disposal interventions have been weak and unable to address the plastic load in the waste streams in the cities'.

The objective outlined for environmental communicator by Shoenfeld and Rose (1978 pg. 21-25) place the creation of awareness at the heart of the environmental concern. They further state that it is only when there is awareness that the move to collective action for environmental safety can begin. However, the environmental communicators have an uneasy task in trying to cultivate 'ecological conscience in the minds of the people'. The human mind according to Grunig (1983 pg. 39) lacks in environmental awareness and values.

Victor Kanu (2001 pg. 23-24) acknowledged that water education was indeed very important. He said water education often centered on the most tangible aspects, bore holes, rivers, lakes, lagoons, streams, waterfalls, oceans, rain water, drinking water and many others. According to him water education is also about something less concrete, though not less important. It is about the community's sense of duty as well as the obligation each member has to each other to the use of water itself and to future generations. The community sense of responsibility ought to be strengthened towards the management of water and other natural resources which took billions of years yet which could be diminished or exhausted relatively shorter period of time. Water education is embedded in African traditional values and solidarity, respect for nature and shared responsibility.

Abraham et al (1990 pg. 51-53) contends that the media can bring about environmental awareness by assuming the role of public educators which is moved by the desire to inform the public. This role is guided by the belief that such information is 'good' for the personal development of a listener, reader or viewer and consequently the development of society. They also argue that the role that the media assume is that of critical public educator. This role can be executed by involving the recipients in the process of evaluating the issues raised in the media. Thus 'the critical public educator injects an agenda and debate but does so in a way which

encourages the recipients to make up his or her mind about the issue at stake. However, the media even collectively will find it almost difficult to achieve the role of critical public educator without the support from educational institutions.

MacBride et al (1981) argument reaffirms the recognition of communication as an agent of social change among several others. Once a problem has been diagnosed finding solutions to it follows. However, we should not push our luck on the media for creating awareness on environmental issue too far, thus the media's power is unlimited. They can influence social norms, focus attention and demonstrate skills. They can create a climate for tackling environmental issues rather than bring direct changes.

According to Grant Pearson (2001) Ghana has in general a limited supply of water and the quality is threatened by pollution and destruction of river catchments. Quality water is in great demand and as the human population increases and with its increasing needs for survival, the greater the demand for water. The increase in pollution and destruction of water catchment has greatly affected the quality of water and the natural environment.

2.4 DEFINITIONS

- Water bodies includes rivers, lagoons and lakes but excludes the sea.
- Prominence in the study refers to headline stories and those that are given greater treatment than other stories. Prominence in this study is determined by stories placed on the front, center, back as well as other pages of the newspaper.
- Frequency means the number of times the stories may appear in the newspaper.
- Encroachment is any illegal activity on water catchment areas.

- Coverage means the proportion of news hole of a newspaper that was devoted to a particular encroachment of water bodies' news item.
- Hutment in the study means any wooden or metallic structure which serves as accommodation for people living along the banks of rivers, canals, lakes and lagoons.

CHAPTER 3

3.0 METHODOLOGY

This study will made use of quantitative content analysis research approach. This method was employed to analyze the content of the Daily Graphic and the Chronicle newspapers as to the coverage of encroachment of water bodies' news stories in the 2014 editions. This method afforded the researcher enough room to work on the two newspapers purposively sampled for examination in the study. This helped in the critical analysis of press coverage of encroachment of water bodies in the two Ghanaian newspapers.

3.1 RESEARCH DESIGN

The quantitative research approach follows a deductive model in which an understanding of any particular action is derived from universal, covering premises. Quantitative research recognizes the analysis of certain variables by means of numeric representations and statistical analysis. This methodology leans heavily on the presuppositions of a material, objective reality which can be decomposed into independent attributes which become the object of the study according to Anderson (1987). To him, quantitative research describes behavior in terms of quantification theory.

Most quantitative research is both positivistic and reductionistic. It is positivistic because most quantitative researchers would hold that we can have a positive knowledge of the empirical world. It is reductionistic because its practitioners generally seek explanation which covers broad classes of entities and events, thereby reducing the number of explanations necessary to understand the world. (ibid)

With the quantitative research, statistical data was collected using surveys, questionnaires, interviews and experiments which are designed to determine opinion of people or certain trends in the society. (See Appendix 2)

The use of standardized methods in the quantitative research offered greater objectivity and accuracy of results. This meant that, the data received was more objective and the instruments that we used are more structured. An advantage was that, the study adjusted itself on a few variables and employed prescribed procedures to ensure validity and reliability.

The study relied on Wimmer and Dominick (1997), to generalize the received facts, to predict the trend for the future, to explain and understand some phenomenon.

The study also relied on Berelson, (1952) and Krippendolf (1980) to apply content analysis within the quantitative method of categorizing and describing communication messages in specific contexts. Content analysis was used to analyze text and messages contained in the sampled newspapers.

The study was of the opinion that content analysis could be applied to a wide range of social science topics including gender and race, violence, media reporting and political communication. Insch et al. (1997 pg. 64-69) was very useful for the study.

In applying content analysis, the study looked at written text such as speeches, letters or articles whether digital or in print, as well as text in the form of pictures contained in the sampled newspapers. It was used to examine both the manifest and the latent content of the text in terms or the visible, countable components of messages and to know the meaning that lie behind the

manifest content of the newspapers. The study interpreted the texts in depth for levels of abstraction (Graneheim and Lundman 2004).

The study divided text into units of analysis such as words, sentences, paragraphs and thematically coherent phrases or passages. In categorizing, units were grouped into different categories Merrigan and Houston (2004).

According to Cutlip, Center and Broom (2000) content analysis is a systematic procedure for objectively determining what is being reported in the media. Krippendorff (2004) also defines content analysis as 'a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from text for the context of their use'. The study made quantitative judgments about trends in coverage.

However, as a research technique, it has its own merits and demerits. Content analysis is used to investigate claims about mass communication, because the content of mediated messages is so readily available for analysis. It is inexpensive and yields data that can easily be quantified. This research method can deal with current, past events or both.

On the other hand, it is often hard to obtain working definition of the topic being studied. More so, it is difficult to find a measurable unit. Content analysis can be extremely time consuming. It is subject to error particularly when relational analysis is used to attain a higher level of interpretations. Content analysis has been criticized for its tendency to reduce meaning to patterns of frequency counts that can lose sight of the subtle, ambiguous or contextual significance.

Content analysis can struggle to provide explanations for particular findings where the source of the explanation lies outside of the text itself. Consider, for example, Todd et al.'s (1995) study of skills in information system job advertisements between 1970 and 1990. The authors report a

modest increase in the demand for technical skills and little difference between industries. These 'somewhat unexpected' findings (Todd et al. 1995: 16) invite explanation and the authors offer six alternatives to explain their results but it is not possible to substantiate these from the study of the advertisements themselves.

Other potential weaknesses of the design arise in connection with the process of sampling and coding. Document availability and the sampling process can introduce bias. Developing the coding scheme and coding always involve interpretation, even of manifest content, and thus risk similar biases to those faced by other measurement techniques (Insch et al. 1997). Abstraction of content from its context can also create problems. Taking a word or phrase in isolation of other parts of the text, for instance, may result in loss of meaning. In addition, content analysis risks overlooking what is not said in a particular text. In some situations what is omitted may be as significant as what is included.

On the other hand Krippendorff contends that content analysis has certain strength; it is unobtrusive in that it can be used to analyze naturally-occurring data; it is able to handle unstructured material; it also copes with large volumes of data and lastly content analysis may be helpful in reducing the problem of social desirability bias amongst respondents when researching sensitive topics.

In spite of the limitations identified with this research method, it was possible to conduct a useful research by using content analysis.

3.3 POPULATION

The population for the study is newspapers. It is made up of both private and state owned newspapers and they are the Daily Graphic and the Chronicle.

3.4 SAMPLE AND SAMPLING TECHNIQUES

In parallel with developing a sampling plan, one will need to decide on the unit of text that you will classify during the coding process. We will refer to this as the **coding unit**, although terminology varies. Examples of coding units include words, phrases, sentences, images, paragraphs or whole documents. With regards to this study, the researcher chose the coding unit taking into account the research questions and the concepts that she wishes to identify in the analysis.

The researcher purposively selected two prominent Ghanaian newspapers and they are the Daily Graphic and the Chronicle for the study. Data was collected from the 2014 edition with specific preference to pages covering on news on encroachment of water bodies and other related issues. These two newspapers were considered because Daily Graphic is a prominent state owned newspaper and has a wider circulation. On the other hand the Ghanaian Chronicle, a private newspaper also has a key status in the private press.

Random sampling was used in obtaining the sample that was representative of the entire population. This method was chosen to ensure that each edition in the population had a random chance of being selected. Since both newspapers are dailies, four days of publication were selected from each week to ensure the probability of selecting stories on encroachment of water bodies.

The sampling technique employed for this study was based on the constructed week of days. For example, each day of the week that is from Monday to Saturday on which both newspapers were published was written on slips of paper. The slips were folded and dropped into a container after

mixing them well. Four were picked randomly thereby giving each slip an equal chance of being selected.

3.5 DATA COLLECTION METHOD AND INSTRUMENT

By the objectives of the study, the researcher identified and quantified the press coverage of encroachment of water bodies in the two Ghanaian newspapers that is the Daily Graphic and the Chronicle. It is important to note that both newspapers are dailies and also rollout during weekends with exception of Sundays. This implies that about 317 editions of both newspapers were considered for the study. However, a monthly schedule containing a table indicating frequency and prominence was drawn and presented in a graphical form. This helped the researcher to quantify the prominence and frequency given to the coverage of encroachment of water bodies by the press.

3.6 DATA HANDLING AND ANALYSIS

Based on the data obtained from the critical observation of the past editions of the newspaper publication 2014, the researcher analyzed and presented the analysis in tabular and graphical form. For example the number of times water related issues were published and the prominence given to such news items.

Environmental news must be current and interesting and most important it must reflect the state of the environment which must also concern the people. It must also serve as a wakeup call on their attitudes towards the environment especially water. In this regard, encroachment of water

bodies refers to any illegal activity in water catchments areas which results into water pollution, flooding and other water related issues which is of interest to Ghanaians.

3.7 CONCLUSIONS

The research design for the study was examined in this chapter with emphasis on the importance of content analysis. Justification was made for the choice of the newspapers and rationale for the study. The procedure for sampling, data collection has been discussed. The next chapter focuses on the findings of the data collected from both newspapers

CHAPTER FOUR

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of the study was to analyze the coverage of encroachment of water bodies in the Daily Graphic and the Chronicle (Ghanaian Dailies). The study examined the prominence and frequency of coverage by both newspapers.

This chapter will be focused on the presentation of the findings of the study. Indeed the information presented in tables and chart shows the results obtained as they respond to research objectives. Data analysis and presentation; simple frequency tables were generated for presentation of data obtained from the content analysis of the two newspapers.

4.2 FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

The findings from the study revealed that, the press coverage of encroachment of water bodies has not been given much attention and prominence in both newspapers. From the frequency table representing the Daily Graphic, it was observed that most of the stories published on the issue of encroachment of water bodies were as a result of flooding and water pollution. These stories were generally published during the rainy season that is from the first two quarters of the year. Indeed this is the period where most encroached water bodies spill their banks and largely affect population in their catchment areas.

The frequency table on the Daily Graphic shows that January to June was given much attention (coverage) compared to July to December. However, the percentages from each month also show that, the month of June and September recorded the highest frequency which is 17.5% whereas

October recorded the least that is 0%. The total number of times news on encroachment of water bodies was reported was 71 out of the 317 editions. The results are presented below.

4.2.1 FREQUENCY TABLE FOR DAILY GRAPHIC, 2014 EDITIONS

MONTH	FREQUENCY (NUMBER OF TIMES)	PERCENTAGE (%)
January	6	10.5
February	6	10.5
March	6	10.5
April	5	8.8
May	4	7.0
June	10	17.5
July	3	5.3
August	1	1.8
September	10	17.5
October	0	0.0
November	2	3.5
December	4	7.0
Total	57	100

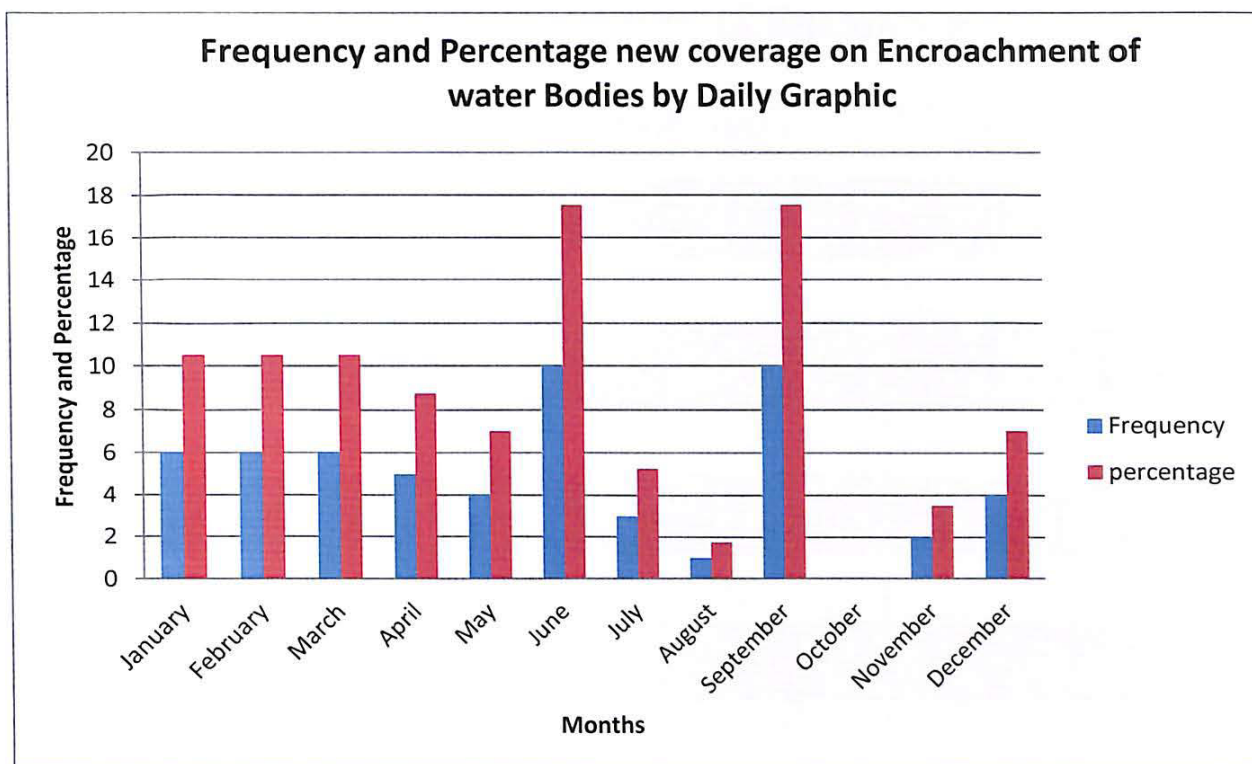


Figure 4.2.1 Frequencies and Percentage of News Coverage on Encroachment of Water Bodies by Daily Graphic, 2014 Edition

On the other hand ‘The Chronicle’ a private newspaper also published many of their stories on encroachment of water bodies during the second quarter of the year 2014; it was not surprising that this period recorded the highest frequencies since it was in the rainy season (April –July). The month of June recorded the highest coverage which is 23.5% representing 4 occurrences. However January, August, November, December recorded the least which is 0. The total number of times news on encroachment of water bodies was published was 17 occurrences which can be considered as poor and clearly shows how much interest they have in environmental issues. The table below expounds the above findings.

4.2.2 FREQUENCY TABLE FOR THE CHRONICLE, 2014 EDITION

MONTH	FREQUENCY (NUMBER OF TIMES)	PERCENTAGE (%)
January	0	0
February	1	5.9
March	0	0
April	3	17.6
May	1	5.9
June	4	23.5
July	3	17.6
August	0	0
September	2	11.8
October	3	17.6
November	0	0
December	0	0
Total	17	100

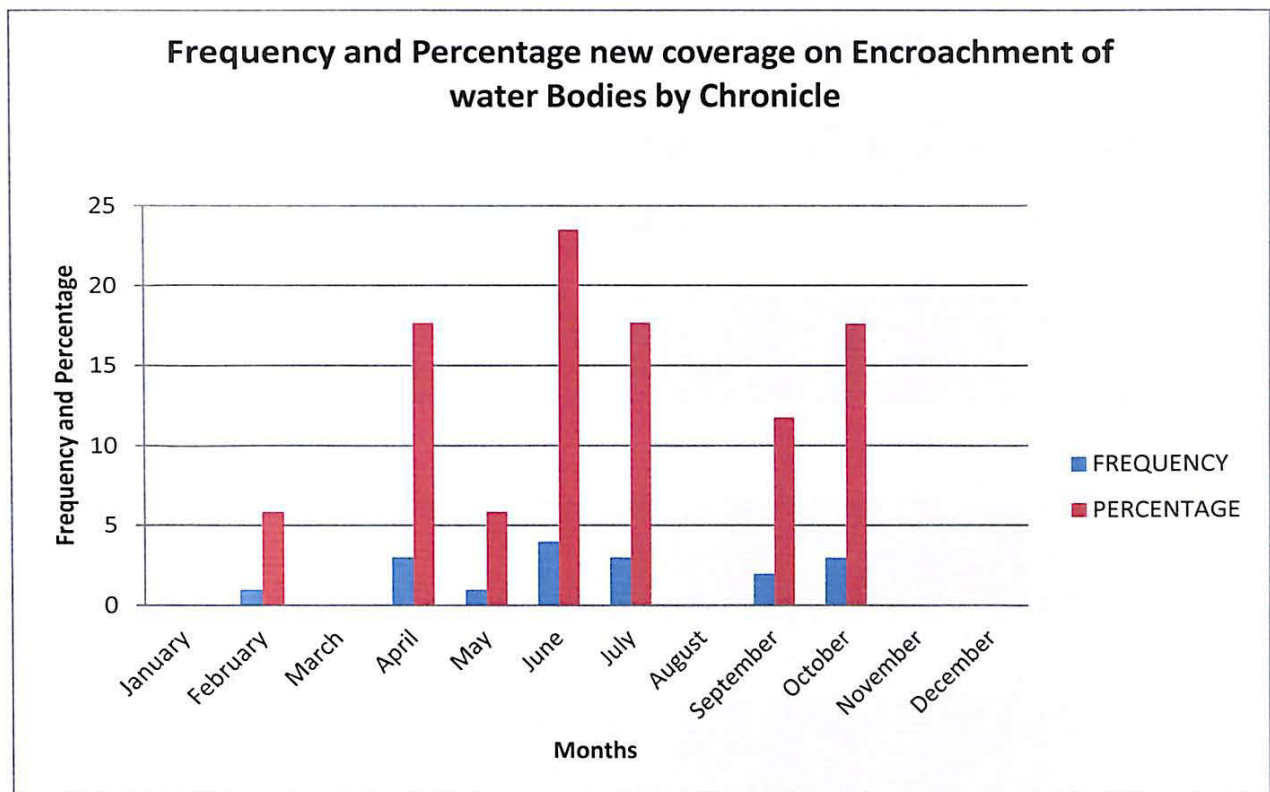


Figure 4.2.2 Frequency and Percentage new coverage on Encroachment of water Bodies by Chronicle

Although the Daily Graphic performed better than Chronicle in terms of frequency, both newspapers must develop some kind of passion and policy for coverage of water related issues and more importantly must be sensitive with the issue since they are also stakeholders of our natural environment; especially water.

Prominence in the study is determined by stories which appear on the front, center and back pages of the newspaper. However, other pages were also considered in order to make critical analysis of the prominence given to stories on encroachment of water bodies. It is presented in the table below.

4.2.3 PROMINENCE TABLE FOR DAILY GRAPHIC, 2014 EDITION

MONTH	FRONT PAGE	CENTER PAGE	BACK PAGE	OTHER PAGES
January	0	1	2	3
February	1	2	0	3
March	0	1	1	4
April	0	1	2	3
May	0	2	1	1
June	2	1	0	7
July	0	0	0	3
August	0	0	0	1
September	2	2	1	5
October	0	0	0	0
November	0	0	1	1
December	1	2	0	1
Total	6	12	8	32
Percentage	10.3%	20.7%	13.8%	55.2%

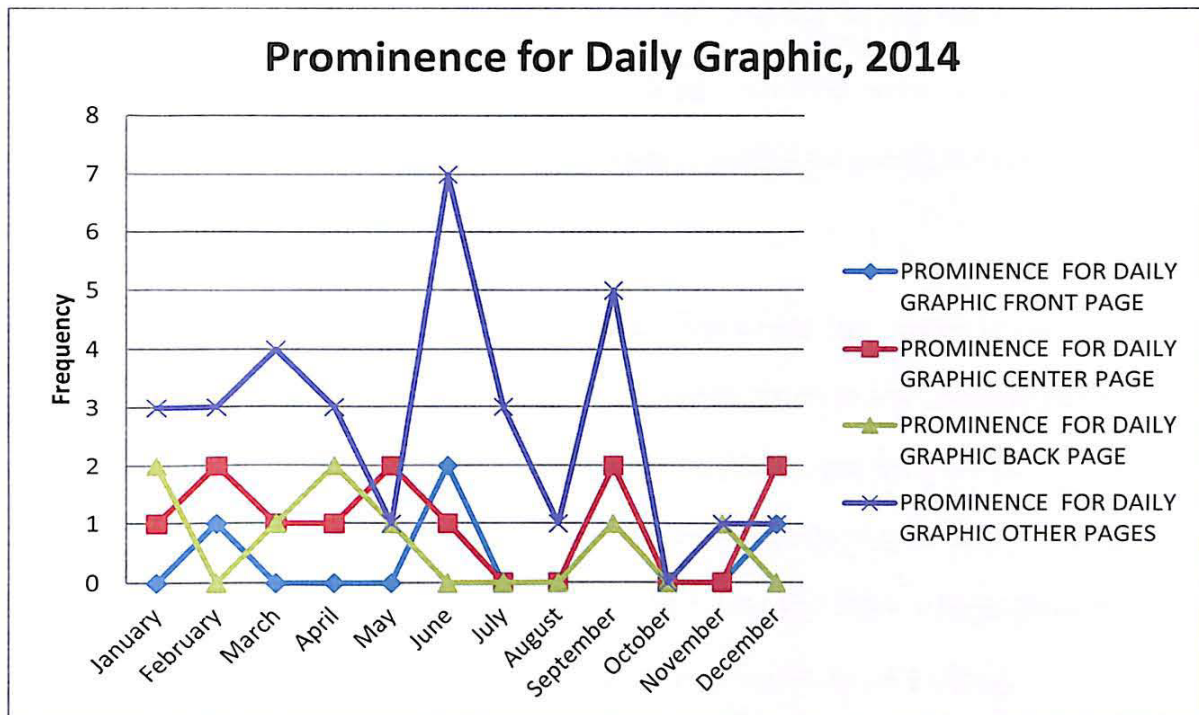


Figure 4.2.3 Prominence for Daily Graphic, 2014

The Daily Graphic from the above graphical presentation gave little attention on prominence especially on back pages of their newspapers, again there was even less attention on the front and center pages. It is important to note that, stories bothering on encroachment of water bodies were given much attention on other pages of their news paper which constitute about 55.2%.

Indeed as a state owned newspaper, Daily Graphic could have done better by giving much prominence on the front, center and back pages of their newspaper. The Daily Graphic front pages recorded 10.3%, center pages 20.7%, back pages 13.8% and other pages 55.2%. This clearly confirms that news on encroachment of water bodies was not deemed important enough to occupy the prominent pages of the newspaper. Rather, other pages dominated the coverage of encroachment of water bodies thereby stressing the prominence given to such news by the media.

It was also observed that most of the stories that appeared in the Daily Graphic were not accompanied with pictures to help create and enhance mental pictures (images) in the minds of the readers. This indeed further explains the motive behind the publication of such news items and the importance attached to them.

However, very little can be said about the Chronicle newspaper, which is one of the leading privately owned newspapers in Ghana. The prominence given to the coverage of encroachment of water bodies is nothing to write home about. The front pages recorded 6.25%, center pages 56.25%, back pages 0% and other pages 43.8%. With regards to pictorial presentation in their coverage, most stories were devoid of pictures. The little that came with pictures were poor to appreciate due to the quality of print. The results are shown in the table below.

4.2.4 PROMINENCE TABLE FOR THE CHRONICLE, 2014 EDITIONS

MONTH	FRONT PAGE	CENTER PAGE	BACK PAGE	OTHER PAGES
January	0	0	0	0
February	0	0	0	1
March	0	0	0	0
April	0	2	0	1
May	0	0	0	1
June	0	1	0	3
July	1	1		1
August	0	0	0	0
September	0	2	0	0
October	0	3	0	0
November	0	0	0	0
December	0	0	0	0
Total	6	12	0	7
Percentage	6.25%	56.25%	0%	43.8%

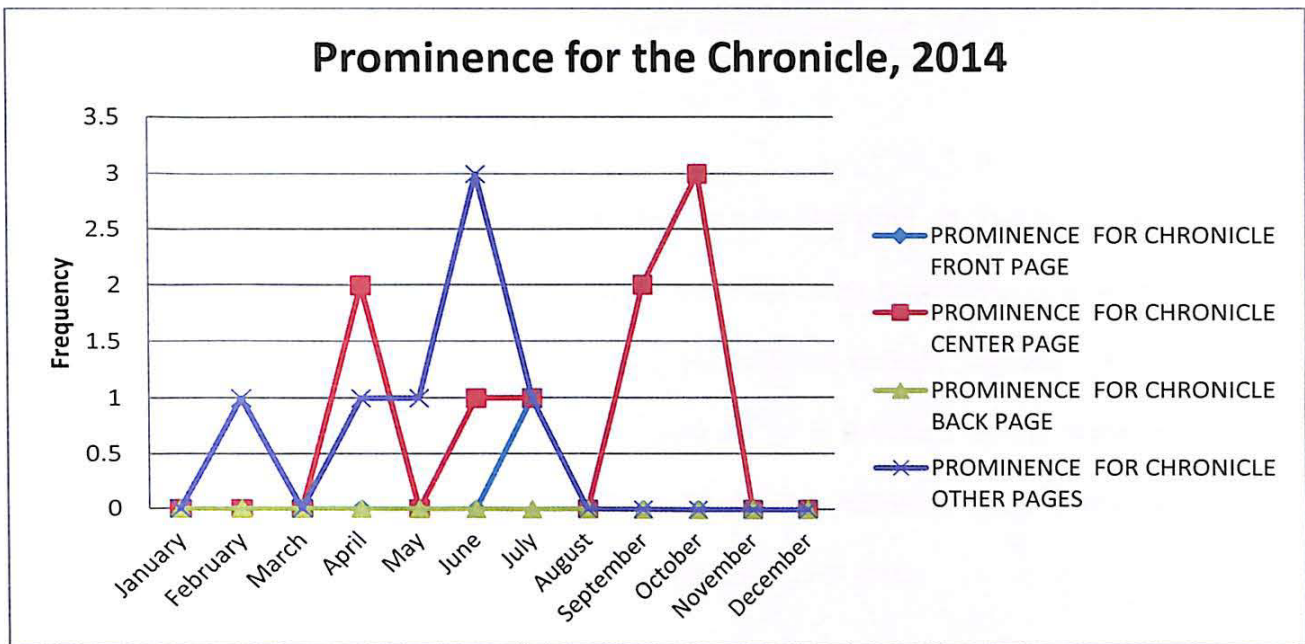


Figure 4.2.4 Line Graph on Prominence for the Chronicle, 2014

On the issue of prominence, the Daily Graphic performed more creditably than Chronicle. The only similarity between these two newspapers is that, they push most of their stories on other pages of their newspaper.

4.3 CONCLUSION

The above findings clearly show the significance attached to stories on encroachment of water bodies by both newspapers. Indeed most of their publications were as result of flooding and water pollution only which was evident in the number of times such stories were published especially in the rainy season. More so, these stories were deemed newsworthy only as result of the impact and injuries people have suffered and not the consequences of people's actions and attitudes towards these natural bodies.

CHAPTER FIVE

5.1 CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

Water is life, and most forms of life are dependent on water for survival. Today, water holds the key to our future survival on planet earth. Indeed water knows no boundaries as it flows over the earth's surface. It links communities of plants, animals and humans together. When human activities have an impact on the natural environment, it is reflected in the water situation, quantity and quality according to Grant Pearson (2001). This statement underscores and clearly defines the importance of water to the survival of man on planet earth.

In Ghana and expectedly in many developing nations, the politicians, policy makers, implementing agencies and people in general alike are utterly in disregard of turning river, canals, lakes and lagoons into drains. However, a typical example of a negative phenomenon that occurs everywhere in Ghana along the banks of our lagoons, rivers and lakes is encroachment in the form of 'hutment' which is a common sight. The banks of rivers, canals and lagoons which had huts sited besides them slowly get converted into concrete buildings and the sewerage and waste from the innumerable dwellers along the banks are let into the easily accessible water body. A typical case in point is the Korle lagoon which has been encroached by the people of 'Old Fadama'.

Therefore, it is the duty of the press to publish such issues in order to serve as a wakeup call for the people to know the extent of damage they are causing to these water bodies.

From the findings, it was realized that, the Daily Graphic gave adequate coverage to the news on encroachment of water bodies in their 2014 edition compared to the Chronicle. However, most of the stories were published as a result of disasters such as flooding and water pollution. The

Chronicle was not different from Daily Graphic since both published their stories due to same reasons. As a result, the stories rarely exposed the causes of the flooding and water pollution but rather sympathized with victims. It is important to note that stories on Galamsey operators who have encroached on water bodies were highly treated which was quite encouraging.

Certainly, the Chronicle does not find encroachment of water bodies as an important issue and this reflected in the frequency and prominence given to such news in their 2014 editions. However, the Daily Graphic gave an average coverage of encroachment of water bodies in terms of frequency and prominence. Out of the 317 publications for the 2014 edition only 57 stories were published which could have been better considering their capacity and reach.

Again the Chronicle and the Daily Graphic failed to hit hard on its treatment of encroachment of water bodies stories and this was evident in how stories were mostly not accompanied with pictures 'which appeals more to the illiterate' were also found mostly on the other pages of the newspaper. It is interesting to note that, both newspapers frequently published their stories on other pages rather than the three key prominent pages that are the front, center and back. For instance the Chronicle recorded 43.8%, which was the total number of stories on other pages of the newspaper whereas the Daily Graphic recorded 55.2%.

Although Daily Graphic performed better than the Chronicle, both newspapers could have done better in terms of the frequency and prominence given to stories on encroachment of water bodies. Undeniably coverage of encroachment of water bodies' news is important news which makes the people conscious of the effect of their actions on these water bodies.

5.2 SUGGESTIONS

When the media tells us about disasters such as floods and water pollution that destroy life and property, it would seem that the crisis is one of too much water rather than too little caused by the encroachment of water catchment areas.

The press has a major role to play in sensitizing the people about the effects of their actions since such disasters can be avoided. Editors must also use their gate-keeping role effectively to positively affect such news items and more importantly dedicate certain portions of their newspaper column for such issues and must not wait for disaster to occur before they publish the causes and preventions

News on water related issues must be backed with picture (illustrations) in order to create a vivid evidence of the reality on the ground. This would also help those who cannot read to interpret the stories with the pictures (illustrations). This indeed can have an impact on the feelings and emotions of the reader. It will also serve as a motivating factor for the reader to take an action, form a new attitude or perception and look at the issues seriously.

The prominence attached to the headlines and the stories determines how important that story is. The headlines of the stories should also be attractive or catchy and must appeal to the interest of the people which should also be devoid of sensationalism. The lead of the story must be constructed around the 'what' of the story and must answer the question what happened. Since people are the causes of encroachment and are involved, the 'what' and 'who' often overlap. The lead must be interesting enough to urge the reader on.

It is important that the reporter tailors the story towards educating the readers. Water education must be about the community sense of duty, the obligation members have to each other with

respect to the use and abuse of water and to future generations. Intrinsicly, water education is embedded in African traditional value of solidarity, respect for nature and shared responsibility according to Victor Kanu (2001). Therefore, the community sense of responsibility ought to be stressed in the story as to the management of water.

From the findings, it was observed that, most of the stories were published during the rainy season from (April – June and July – September). It is essential for editors and reporters to cover issues before the consequences become apparent. This in a way can prevent disasters from occurring. They must also play their ‘watchdog’ role well in order to expose individuals and communities that encroach on our water bodies. The coverage of encroachment of our water bodies is indeed an important issue that deserves all the attention just as the other news items.

As part of the suggestions, the researcher proposes that, subsequent research on coverage of encroachment of water bodies should focus on follow ups on such news after publication.

5.3 LIMITATIONS

Due to financial constraints, the study became a herculean task with reference to typing, printing, accessing the internet as well as photocopying materials. Again transportation was also costly and sometimes inconvenient. More so, it was very difficult in accessing certain materials which were not readily available at the libraries since the study was limited to media coverage on encroachment of water bodies.

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