

Africa Science Communication Conference

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# MEDIA COVERAGE OF THE ENVIRONMENT IN KENYA: OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

BY

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# INTRODUCTION

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- ✓ Environmental Journalism refers to collecting, writing, editing and publishing environmental materials in newspapers and magazines or television and radio and the internet in order to create awareness and provoke action.
  - ✓ Heavy media coverage in the 1990s has made the environment to be taken seriously.
  - ✓ However, Environmental Journalists are perceived as do-gooders who wear green badges on their lapels and lack the objectivity their craft demands (Monte , 2005)
  - ✓ Nalaka Gunawardene – Environmental Journalism would be a whole lot better if it had more of the three Ss: Science.Substance and (good) Stories).
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# MEDIA COVERAGE ON THE ENVIRONMENT IN KENYA

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- v Survey carried out in June/July 2004 on the coverage of the environment between 1993 and 2003.
  - v 5,635 print stories were analyzed
  - v 21 interviews were conducted
  - v 5 newspaper organizations involved
  - v 20 broadcastings houses
  - v 17 magazines
  - v 1 news agency
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# Objectives

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- v To find out the prominence origin, nature of story topics, use of pictures and illustrations
  - v In broadcasting media: geographical reach, gender and position of respondents, presence of environmental reporters, their training and station's rating of environmental issues.
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# Results

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- ✓ PRINT MEDIA:
  - ✓ 79% of environmental stories originated locally and were straight news.
  - ✓ Waste management and conservation (30%) were most covered
  - ✓ Most stories were in the inside pages
  - ✓ Straight news were the dominant format (62%)
  - ✓ Features contributed 32%.
  - ✓ Environmental policies and laws poorly covered with 69% of stories lacking content in this area.
  - ✓ 60% of coverage does not carry pictures or illustrations.
  - ✓ Most stories were written by men (9:1)
  - ✓ Most adverts were on conservation of resources (40%)
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## Results conti...

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- ✓ BROADCAST MEDIA
  - ✓ 63% of respondents regard environmental issues as important.
  - ✓ 71% of broadcast media had no environmental reporter.
  - ✓ Most reporters had no training in environmental reporting.
  - ✓ Nairobi and its environs was most covered .
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## Results Conti...

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- v MAGAZINES
  - v Covered environmental content minimally.
  - v 75% did not cover environmental policies.
  - v 33% use pictures and illustrations in their coverage.
  - v Ratio of 6:1 in favour of male writers.
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# Challenges

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- v Inadequate scientific knowledge
  - v Editors “kill” environmental reports.
  - v Editors consider environmental report as “filler” material”.
  - v Insufficient research facilities.
  - v Timeliness of articles.
  - v Environmental “bad news”.
  - v Competition with other spicy news items like sports and politics.
  - v Lack of support from media managers.
  - v Insufficient funds to run environmental stories.
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# Opportunities

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- v Train more females in environmental journalism.
  - v Offer specialized training.
  - v Establish environmental desks in media houses.
  - v Report on a whole range of environmental issues.
  - v Source for funds to support environmental journalism.
  - v Start more environmental magazines.
  - v Integrate environmental stories with other stories.
  - v Use minimum space available to pass environmental messages.
  - v Publish *readable* stories.
  - v Network with environmental organizations locally, regionally and internationally.
  - v Recognize environmental stories as a corporate social responsibility.
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END

ITS TEAM WORK.  
THANK YOU.  
(ASANTE).

