

Bridging the Gap Between Legislators and Citizens: An Evaluation of Live Parliamentary Broadcasting in Nigeria

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Abstract: *Knowledge and access to information about the activities of Parliament remains a major challenge in Nigeria. In Some cases citizens are not even aware of who are their representative at the National Assembly. This study examines live broadcasting of Nigeria's National Assembly proceedings as an instrument for public enlightenment and democratic engagement, investigating how real time media coverage enhances citizens' knowledge of legislative processes. The research adopts a survey research design, drawing on both primary and secondary data collected through questionnaire and a review of relevant literature. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistical methods. Findings reveal that television remains the dominant source of parliamentary information among respondents. The study establishes that live transmission of parliamentary proceedings substantially improves public knowledge of legislative activities. Key challenges identified include poor broadcast signal reception and the exclusive use of English in live commentary. The study recommends multi-platform coverage of legislative proceedings and translation of live commentary into indigenous languages.*

Keywords: democracy, nigeria's national assembly, legislative process, elected representatives, media, parliamentary proceedings, live coverage.

INTRODUCTION

The importance of Democracy is to the extent of its contribution to the well being of citizens. In essence it is for citizens participation. In every democratic system, governance works best when citizens are aware of the activities of their representatives (Farrell & James, 2025). Democracy is not only about elections, it demands sustained engagement and communication between the people and those who govern on their behalf. For the legislature, this means being open, transparent, and accountable to the public it serves. In many developing democracies, including Nigeria, this ideal remains elusive. A major challenge is that a number of citizens lack timely or complete information about parliamentary activity. Leaders should take advantage of social media live streaming to enhance citizen engagement (Acheampong & Taden, 2024). Traditionally, proceedings are sieved through edited news bulletins broadcast at fixed times. While this has its value, important details of legislative debates and decisions are often omitted or arrive too late to encourage meaningful engagement. Goa (2023) observes that Communication has changed dramatically in recent years. The rise of digital technology and social media has opened new channels connecting citizens to political institutions in real time. Platforms such as Facebook, YouTube, and X (formerly Twitter) now make it possible to transmit events as they happen, allowing citizens not only to receive information but to react and participate in live deliberations.

Scholars have long recognized the significance of these developments. According to Lorenz-Spreen et al. (2023) modern communication technologies especially new media are essential tools for information dissemination, political participation and engagement as well as a tool for rebellion because they enable instant interaction and feedback. In more advanced democracies, governments deploy digital platforms and online portals to provide immediate responses to public concerns, a shift from one way telecast toward genuine two way engagement.

Live parliamentary broadcast fits directly into this new communication trend. When citizens can watch debates, motions, investigative and public hearings and decisions as they unfold, they better comprehend how resolutions are made on their behalf. Shamu (2023) notes that live streaming make communication more real because audiences experience events directly rather than through post hoc analysis. From practical media experience as a parliamentary reporter, this rings true. Viewers tend to pay closer attention and retain more when watching live. News summaries, by contrast, often reduce complex discussions to brief headlines, creating gaps and sometimes distortions in public understanding. This concern is particularly for Nigeria's legislature.

Malik (2023) describes the parliament as representing the will of the people, yet Nigeria's National Assembly has not always enjoyed strong public affirmation. Decades of military rule, weak democratic institutions, and limited civic education have left many citizens poorly knowledgeable about how parliament actually functions, making sustained public communication even more essential.

Nigeria has already seen how powerful live coverage can be. During the 2015 general election period, live broadcasts of political events visibly increased public interest and participation. At the same time, live platforms carry risks, they can be misused to spread misinformation or inflame political tensions. Shamu (2023) argue that live broadcast can actually reduce misinformation when events unfold rapidly, delayed reporting generates rumors, whereas live streaming allows audiences to draw conclusions from direct observation.

Despite these advantages, live parliamentary coverage in Nigeria remains inconsistently implemented. Many citizens still rely on traditional news reports that offer an incomplete picture of legislative activity. This information gap has deepened suspicion. Pratiwi (2025) notes that trust in governance must be built through transparency and consistent communication. Where timely information is absent, suspicion fills the void, leading many Nigerians to view their lawmakers as disconnected or self serving, regardless of whether that reflects reality.

This study therefore examines live coverage of parliamentary sessions and legislative procedures, exploring how it affects public awareness and democratic engagement in Nigeria. It also investigates whether live streaming has improved relationships between legislators and constituents, and what barriers citizens face in accessing such content.

The study is guided by Four objectives: Assessing public awareness of live parliamentary coverage; Examining how live coverage enhances understanding of legislative processes; Exploring its impact on citizen legislator relationships; and identifying the challenges audiences face in accessing live broadcasts.

It is guided by the following research questions:

- (1) What is the level of public awareness of live coverage of Parliamentary sessions.
- (2) How does live Coverage and streaming of Parliamentary sessions? enhance public awareness of parliamentary procedures?
- (3) How does Live Coverage of Parliamentary Sessions improve relationship between Legislators and their Constituents?
- (4) What are the challenges audience encounter in accessing live telecast of Parliamentary activities?

The scope of the research is Nigeria's National Assembly, specifically the House of Representative, covering 2011 to January 2018. This period is significant because it coincides with an important phase of democratic development and media expansion, during which additional broadcasters joined the Nigerian Television Authority in televising National Assembly proceedings. Limitations encountered, including scarce existing literature and delays in data collection, did not diminish the relevance of the findings.

The study contributes to ongoing discussions about media, democracy, and governance in Nigeria, and its findings are expected to be useful to lawmakers, media practitioners, researchers, and policymakers concerned with transparency and citizen engagement. More broadly, it reinforces a simple premise, when citizens are better informed, democracy deepens, trust grows, and governance becomes more accountable. Live parliamentary coverage is not merely a media innovation, it is a communication necessity in an era when citizens expect to witness governance as it happens.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Media and Democracy

The media play a very critical role in democracy. It creates an avenue for information dissemination and interaction (Farrell & James, 2025). The relationship between the media and the public remains one of the most critical relationships in democracy. For democracy to work, citizens must be informed not just during elections, but continuously (Chandralekha, 2024). Kanyisa (2013) captures this well, noting that most theorists agree a democracy can only be described as truly functioning when its citizens actively participate in decision-making. The media is the primary vehicle through which this participation becomes possible, making it central to any process of democratic transition and consolidation.

The media occupies a unique position in society. It is at once a mirror of public life and a voice for those who would otherwise go unheard. This dual role means that the media and the institutions of government are deeply intertwined, what the legislature does matters little if the public never comes to know about it. Anyanwu, Imiti, and Anyanwu (2024) note that is something almost organic about the relationship between a people and their media. When the media fails, a society loses its ability to narrate its own story.

Outsiders step in, and those outside accounts rarely capture the truth of the situation. It was precisely this need to keep citizens informed about what their leaders were doing that gave rise to mass communication in the pre-classical era (Parihar. 2022). Popular consultation as a democratic practice dates back to the Greek city-states, but what matters most is not the practice itself, it is the medium through which citizens and their leaders are able to genuinely interact.

Many developed countries have already recognized this, moving toward real-time, two-way engagement between governments and their citizens. Parihar (2022) reminds us that while mass communication may seem like a modern phenomenon, its roots stretch back further than we often realize. News-sheets existed as far back as 100 BC, and over the past five centuries, communication technologies have continually evolved alongside society. The Industrial Revolution brought literacy, urbanization, and leisure time, all of which fed demand for newspapers, books, and magazines. As appetite for information grew, so did innovation leading eventually to electronic media, satellite broadcasting, and the internet. Today, information can travel instantly across the globe. Yet when citizens remain uninformed about the programs and decisions of their government, a dangerous gap opens between the leaders and the led.

Government, at its core, is a social contract. The people have a right not just to choose their leaders but to follow the process of governance itself (Marciel, 2023). International bodies have long recognized this. The United Nations Conference on Freedom of Information in 1948 declared access to information a fundamental freedom, and a UNESCO survey conducted in 1962 found that more than 70% of the world's population still lacked access to adequate information. The task of the media in bridging this gap, educationally, socially, and economically remains enormous.

Marciel (2023) puts the responsibility of the media in clear terms, describing the media, encompassing newspapers, radio, television, and the internet as a powerful force in shaping a nation's development. Development itself is not a simple process; it involves political, economic, social, and cultural dimensions working together. The real influence of the media in this context depends on the media institutions themselves, the societies in which they operate, and the audiences they serve. These factors vary widely. According to Maniou (2023) media outlet operating under a dictatorship will not wield the same influence as one functioning in a democratic environment. What is not in doubt, however, is the media's importance across all spheres, political, economic, and social. It sets the public agenda, acts as a gatekeeper of public issues, performs a watchdog function against corruption, and serves as the fourth estate, providing checks and balances against the three branches of government. In post-colonial societies marked by ethnic and religious diversity, the media's role in nation-building is especially significant.

Mehraj (2014) draws attention to how dramatically the speed of modern media has reshaped human experience. This sense of shared experience prompted the Canadian communication scholar Marshall McLuhan to coin the term "global village," a concept elaborated by Mahesar (2014) in Pakistan's Daily Times. McLuhan argued that a vigorous media had effectively gathered humanity into a single room, dissolving distances of geography, nationality, and culture. The media no longer merely reports on the world, it places us inside it.

Nertil (2015) connects this to a deeper philosophical tradition. The social contract, as articulated by Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau, holds that people surrender certain individual freedoms to a governing authority in exchange for protection and order. But that contract depends on an informed citizenry.

Consent a cornerstone of democratic legitimacy loses all meaning when the electorate has no knowledge of what those they have elected are actually doing. Where parliamentary practice is not yet firmly established, the public often knows very little about how parliament works or what it does, and tends to fill that knowledge gap with suspicion. The way citizens perceive parliament depends on how it is presented in the media (Russell & James, 2025). Citizens who are not kept fully informed of government activities will inevitably develop misconceptions, and it is the media's role to prevent exactly that

Media Live Coverage

Nigeria's information landscape has improved over the decades, but not nearly enough. The long era of military rule left deep marks on the country's media environment. Olukotun (1999) observes that authoritarian governments whether military or civilian are impulsively driven to control how reality is represented in the media, bending coverage to serve their interests. During Nigeria's transition period, the military regime effectively acted as arbiter, setting the boundaries within which the media was permitted to report. That legacy of restricted information flow did not evaporate overnight.

Study by Ventura et al. (2021) shows that live broadcast do more than just passing information, it is the most credible and effective form of public engagement for government activities. It eliminates the space for speculation and misconception that delayed or edited reporting can create. Crucially, live coverage should not be limited to traditional television and radio. Nigeria's legislature needs to fully embrace the communication technologies now available globally. A media mapping exercise conducted by the Nigeria Stability and Reconciliation Project (NSRP) in Bayelsa and Rivers States in 2011 found that Nigeria had approximately 4.3 million Facebook users at the time, growing at roughly 6% per month. By December 2017, that figure had climbed to 17 million.

What makes Nigeria's situation particularly striking and troubling is that despite this growing social media presence, the country has yet to systematically harness these platforms for live parliamentary broadcasting. Research has established that live television coverage carries more credibility than pre-recorded or edited reporting, because viewers trust what they see with their own eyes (Shamu, 2023). The old maxim holds: seeing is believing however Snoeijs, Vreese, & Semetko (2002) posit that live reporting does not aid recalling of information compared to recorded news.

Live coverage gives viewers the full picture of an event, not a curated version of it. Newman (2010) documented how the 2010 UK general election was heralded as the "internet election" a contest where digital platforms, from X formerly (Twitter) to Facebook, from viral advertising to emotion tracking, gave political parties and media organizations powerful new tools for reaching voters. The broader lesson for Nigeria is clear, social media should be used not only for plenary sessions but for public hearings and oversight visits as well. Its interactive nature allowing citizens to respond, question, and engage in real time gives it a distinct advantage over traditional broadcasting. Social media platforms are by design participatory (Acheampong & Taden, 2024). They allow users to express opinions, share information, interact with peers, and engage with public institutions in ways that conventional media cannot match. Okoro and Nwafor (2013) note that this accessibility has democratizing effects, opening new channels for political participation. Rather than seeing social media and conventional broadcasting as alternatives, Nigeria's legislature should treat them as complementary using both to ensure that no community is left without a connection to its representatives.

Long before legislatures became powerful policy-making bodies, they served a more fundamental purpose, they were the bridge between citizens and government. Even under one-party or highly centralized systems, legislators often found that their most important role was simply to carry the concerns of their constituents to those in power, and to explain government decisions back to the people. As this awareness has grown, some advanced democracies have gone as far as formally transcribing parliamentary votes and proceedings and making them publicly available. The trajectory set by Barack Obama's groundbreaking use of social media in the 2008 US presidential election accelerated this trend globally, inspiring politicians and governments worldwide to use digital platforms to mobilize citizens and encourage participation. Nigeria got its own first significant experience of social media in political life during the 2011 general elections (Okoro & Nwafor, 2013).

The evidence from other countries on the impact of live parliamentary coverage is instructive. Sande and Mugubi (2014) conducted a case study in Ruiru, a small town in central Kenya, examining how live parliament broadcasts affected public knowledge, attitudes, and perceptions. The findings were broadly positive. Myers (2025) observed that effective Media coverage had increased public knowledge about parliament and its functions across socioeconomic groups.

A significant proportion of Nigerian citizens do not know the names of their elected representatives, let alone their constitutional duties. The Kenyan experience offers both a model and a caution. Live broadcasting can work, but it must be accompanied by deliberate efforts to reach all segments of society, not just those already well-informed. The appetite for live coverage is not unique to politics. Just as sports broadcasters have long understood that viewers want to witness events as they unfold rather than receive a summary after the fact, the same logic applies to governance. It was this recognition that led the Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) to commence live coverage of National Assembly proceedings over the years. The NTA currently broadcasts Senate sessions every Wednesday and House of Representatives sessions every Thursday a practice that represents a significant step toward bringing governance closer to the citizenry..

USAID (2010) documented similar outcomes, noting that live parliamentary broadcasts had made legislative debates the most popular programming in the nations studied, and that lawmakers reported a sharp increase in constituent awareness with citizens now expecting to see their MPs speak on key issues. Live coverage also gave the public a fuller picture of parliament, this will ensure the actualization of the four major key issues involved in parliamentary communication which include; information, education, communication, consultation and Participation (Leston-Bandeira & Siefken 2023).

Theoretical Framework

Mass communication scholarship has generated a wide range of theoretical methods: structural-functional theories treat social structures as observable and objective; cognitive and behavioral theories focus on individual psychology; interactional theories view social life as a process of exchange; interpretive theories uncover how people make sense of their own experience; and critical theories examine how communication can perpetuate the dominance of one group over another. Walter Lippmann identified several barriers to effective communication, including artificial censorship, media gatekeeping, shrinking news holes, limited social contact, and scarce audience attention (Suresh, 2003). The earliest

formal theories of mass communication were the normative theories advanced by Siebert, Peterson, and Schramm in *Four Theories of the Press* (1956), which McQuail later described as expressing "ideas of how the media ought to or can be expected to operate under a prevailing set of conditions and values" (as cited in Kalyani, 2003). Each theory is grounded in a distinct political or economic context.

Democratic-Participant Theory of Mass Communication

This study is anchored in the Democratic-Participant Theory of mass communication, this theory is associated with McQuail (1983) which emerged in the 1960s from grassroots media practice and dissatisfaction with prevailing models such as Libertarian and Social Responsibility theories. Karppinen (2013) notes that the performance of media in society is routinely assessed against democratic ideals, and that media and communication systems are widely understood to play an important role in democratic functioning, a role that should guide both media organizations and public policy.

Democracy, however, is not a unified concept. Beyond the general notion of "the rule of the people," it is an ambiguous value deployed across varied meanings and contexts. In political theory, this ambiguity is manifest in enduring debates about democratic models and their normative foundations. In much of media and communication studies, the terms "democracy" and "democratic" often serve as shorthand for any desirable state of affairs, or as a general benchmark for what media should do in a good society.

Hesmondhalgh and Toynbee (2008) point to a fundamental differences between media producers and consumers, despite claims about user generated content and social networking, producers retain precedence because they control form and content. The Democratic-Participant Theory critiques the commercial and professionally dominated media system that results from this asymmetry and identifies it as a key reason why comprehensive live broadcasting of parliamentary proceedings remains difficult to sustain. It calls for the removal of these structural impediments so that media can be genuinely democratic, accessible, and participatory.

The theory holds that media should be pluralistic because it will allow for a more vibrant and healthy public engagement (Brogi, 2025). News should be decentralized, and organized on a bottom up rather than top down approach, with full circular communication, emphasizing participation, equality, and feedback. It rejects monopolization by either public or private interests. Banda (2013) further notes that media grounded in this theory is especially important in rural settings and for cultures under pressure, as it works to conserve local knowledge by affirming rights to information, expression, technological access, and participation in social action. Where communities face financial or technical barriers, the theory expects governments to provide funding, training, and subsidies in support.

According to Nwokeocha (2025) media should be used to strengthen civic engagement. This theory aptly captures the objective of this study which seeks to highlight the significance of live broadcast of parliamentary activities. It's application in this context implies that by providing access to real time broadcast of parliamentary programs citizens' right to access information and participate is protected, as articulated by the Democratic-Participant Theory.

METHODOLOGY

This research work adopted a descriptive survey research design, which provided a structured framework for collecting and analyzing data on public awareness and perception of live parliamentary broadcasting in Nigeria. The descriptive approach was appropriate for this study because it sought to measure and describe existing conditions specifically, the level of citizens' knowledge of and engagement with live coverage of National Assembly proceedings rather than to manipulate variables or establish causal relationships.

The area of study is the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), which comprises six Area Councils: Abuja Municipal, Abaji, Kuje, Kwali, Gwagwalada, and Bwari. According to the 2006 National Population Census, the FCT has a population of 2,247,220 inhabitants. A sample size of 400 respondents was drawn from this population using the probability random sampling method. This technique was selected because it gives every member of the population an equal chance of being included in the study, thereby eliminating bias and enhancing the representativeness of the sample.

Primary data were collected through the administration of structured questionnaires originally collected in 2017 and reanalyzed for this present study. they were distributed across the FCT. Secondary data were obtained through a systematic review of relevant literature, including books, journal articles, and other scholarly materials related to media, legislative broadcasting, and democratic participation. Out of 400 questionnaires administered, 373 were successfully retrieved and found valid for analysis. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistical methods. Responses were examined thematically, identifying and classifying recurring patterns relating to the impact of live coverage of National Assembly proceedings on citizens' knowledge of their elected representatives, their understanding of legislative processes, and the challenges they encountered in accessing live parliamentary content.

RESULTS

Data Presentation and Interpretation

Table 4.1 Respondent by Gender

S/N	Variable	Frequency	Percentage
1	Male	214	57%
2	Female	159	43%
	Total	373	100%

Source: Author's Field Survey (2017).

The researcher started with gender of the respondents so as to determine if there is significant variation among gender of those who follow current affairs on television, especially in the F.C.T. where women are still faced with some domestic challenges which infringes on their time for watching news especially political news.

The table above shows that out of the 373 respondents 214 (57 %) were male while 159 (43 %) were females, invariable male watch news more than their female counterparts.

Table 4.2 : Respondents by Age

S/N	Variable	Frequency	Percentage
1	18 – 30	75	20.107 (20%)
2	31 – 40	105	28.150 (28%)
3	41 and above	193	51.743 (52%)
	Total	373	100%

Source: Author's Field Survey (2017)

Table two above shows that out of the total respondents, 193 (52 %) were made up of people between the age of 41 and above, those between the ages 31 and 40, 105 (28%) while the youth between 18 and 30 were 75 in number that is (20%). The above statistics indicates that residents of Abuja who are above 40 years are more interested in following the activities of their representatives than the younger ones. It was apparent that the younger ones were basically not fully knowledgeable on the need to monitor that activities of the National Assembly especially through the mass media.

Table 4.3 Respondents by Marital Status

S/N	Variable	Frequency	Percentage
1	Single	180	48.257 (48%)
2	Married	193	51.743 (52%)
	Total	373	100%

Source: Author's Field Survey (2017).

From table 3 above it shows that out of the 373 respondents, 193 of them were married making up (52 %) of the total while 180 were single (48 %).

This figure tallied with the age distribution of the respondent as seen in table 2 where the majority of the respondents are people between the age of 41 and above. It implies that the information derived from these respondents were from experienced adults, their marital status was included in the questionnaire because there would be relationship between age and marriage. Therefore, it was included to furnish the reader with basic features of those who provided the information.

Table 4.4 Distribution of Respondents By Educational Qualification

S/N	Variable	Frequency	Percentage
1	SSCE	99	26.542 (27%)
2	OND	83	22.252 (22%)
3	HND/B.SC	105	28.150 (28%)
4	MASTERS	57	15.281 (15%)
5	Ph.D	29	7.775 (8%)
	Total	373	100%

Source: Author's Field Survey (2017).

Because there was a strong relationship between educational attainment and zeal for news, the educational qualification of the respondents became imperative as contained in table 4 above.

The table shows that out of the total number of 373 respondents, 105 (28 %) were holders of highest National diploma and bachelor of science degree, making up the highest number of respondents, followed by secondary school leavers with 99 (26%) respondents, holders of ordinary National diploma 83 (22 %) and those with Masters 57 (15%) while Doctorate Degree holders were 29 (8%).

Table 4.5 Respondent by Occupation

The researcher wanted to establish occupational features of the respondents which could be a significant clue towards variations in their responses.

S/N	Variable	Frequency	Percentage
1	Farmers	117	31.367 (31%)
2	Civil servants	108	28.954 (29%)
3	Business persons	84	22.520 (23%)
4	Students	43	11.528 (12%)
5	Broadcasters	16	4.289 (4%)
6	Others	5	1.340 (1%)
	Total	373	100%

Source: Author’s Field Survey (2017).

From table 5 above farmers constitute the larger number of respondents with 117 (31 %) with civil servants next with 108 (29%), business Persons 84 (23 %), 43 (12%) said they were students, 16 (4%) broadcasters while other non categorized occupations were 5 (1 %)

The Respondents were asked the most common means by which they obtain news on parliamentary proceedings and the responses are contained in the table below.

Table 4.6 Most common means of obtaining News on Parliamentary Proceedings

S/N	Variable	Frequency	Percentage
1	Radio	80	21.448 (21%)
2	Television	142	38.069 (38%)
3.	Computer	-	-
4	Internet	89	23.861 (24%)
5	Mobile phone	62	16.622 (17%)
6	Other sources	-	-
			100 %

Source: Author’s Field Survey (2017).

Table 6 above shows that 142 (38%) of the respondents said they obtain news of parliamentary proceedings from the television, 89 (24%) said through the internet, 80 (21 %) said through the radio while 62 (17 %) said they get information on parliamentary proceedings through their mobile phone.

With the above statistics its apparent that most residents of Abuja watch television more than other sources of news medium. By deduction television was the major and common means through which Abuja residents are informed of happenings especially sittings and other activities of the National Assembly, this is evident from the responses gathered from data as contained in table 6 above.

It also shows that the internet is another common medium of gathering news on parliamentary proceedings as shown on this table having the second highest followers behind television and followed by radio. Although internet is not as old as television and radio from the responses gathered its popularity has become significant.

The respondents were asked if they are fully aware of the activities and procedures of Parliament in Nigeria.

Table 4.7 Fully Aware of Parliamentary Procedure in Nigeria

S/N	Variable	Frequency	Percentage
1	Yes	238	63.807 (64%)
2.	No	135	36.193(36%)
	Total	373	100%

Source: Author’s Field Survey (2017).

Table 7 above shows that out of the 373 respondents 238 (64%) were fully aware of parliamentary proceedings in Nigeria while 135 (36%) said they were not fully aware.

It can be argued that there is serious issue of lack of interest in following the activities of parliamentarians by some Nigerians and this tend to persist if there was no swift sensitization and awareness by authorities especially the civil society organizations. The statistics in the table above is very worrisome because with the level of awareness of parliamentary proceedings among resident of the capital territory it could be argued that at the state and local levels it would be abysmal.

The respondents were equally asked if they are aware of media live broadcast of Nigeria’s House of Representatives activities and their response are displayed in the table below:

Table 4. 8: Aware of Live Broadcast of Nigeria’s Nigeria’s National Assembly?

S/N	Variable	Frequency	Percentage
1	Yes I am aware	210	56.300 (56%)
2.	No I am not aware	163	43.699 (44%)
	Total	373	100%

Source: Author’s Field Survey (2017).

In identifying level of awareness of live broadcast of Nigeria’s house of representatives proceedings it was observed that 210 (56%) of the respondents said they were aware while 163 (44%) said they are not aware. This means that out of the 238 (64%) in table 7 that said they were fully aware of parliamentary proceedings in Nigeria, 28 of them are still not aware that the proceedings of house of representatives are sometimes televised live on television, radio or even streaming.

It can then be argued that with adequate knowledge of live broadcast of parliamentary procedures citizens would be fully aware of the activities of their representatives. This is also where the media should come in to ensure that citizens are aware of the days and time when activities of the parliament are televised live as part of their social responsibility, as media is the watch dog of the society.

The respondents were also asked if media live broadcast of Nigeria’s House of representatives has enhanced their knowledge of parliamentary activities and procedures.

Table 4.9: Media live broadcast enhanced knowledge of parliamentary activities and procedures.

S/N	Variable	Frequency	Percentage
1	Very well	66	17.694 (18%)
2	To some extent	168	45.040 (45%)
3.	Not at all	139	37.265 (37%)
	Total	373	100%

Source: Author’s Field Survey (2017).

In trying to find out if live broadcast of parliamentary proceedings has enhanced knowledge of its activities among the citizens, it was discovered that only 66 (18%) of the respondents said very well, 168 (45%) said to some extent while 139 (37 %) said not at all.

From the above it means that 234 respondents actually believed that live broadcast of parliamentary proceedings had enhanced their knowledge of parliamentary activities although only 66 of them said to a great extent which means the other 168 were yet to fully benefit from the live broadcast, the remaining 139 are part of the respondents who neither watched news of parliamentary proceedings on television nor aware of anything live broadcast of parliament.

The respondents were also asked if watching National Assembly news live keep them informed on the role of their representatives.

Table 4.10: Does watching National Assembly News live keep you informed on the role your Representatives.

S/N	Variable	Frequency	Percentage
1	Yes	299	80.161 (80%)
2	No	74	19.839 (20%)
	Total	373	100%

Source: Author’s Field Survey (2017).

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Table 10 above shows that live broadcast of parliamentary procedures had helped 299 (80%) of respondent to know the role of their representatives, 74 (20%) said it had not keep them informed on the roles of their representatives. It can then be argued that a good number of citizens have come to understand the constitutional roles of their representatives through live broadcast of National assembly Activities.

The respondents were further asked if watching live broadcast of parliament activities and procedures would strengthen the communication between them and their representatives. Their views are illustrated in table 11 below.

Table 4.11: Has watching Live Broadcast of Parliamentary activities strengthen Communication between you and your Rep

S/N	Variable	Frequency	Percentage
1	Yes	303	81.233 (81%)
2	No	70	18.767 (19%)
	Total	373	100%

Source: Author’s Field Survey (2017).

The data in table 11 above indicates that majority of the respondents believed that live broadcast of parliamentary activities would to a great extent enhance communication or interaction between members of the legislature and those who elected them. When asked if live broadcast of parliamentary procedures will enhance the interaction between legislators and their constituents 303 (81%) of the respondents answered in the affirmative while only 70 (19%) said it will not. Therefore, it can be argued that that the misconceptions about the functions of the legislator would be addressed with more live broadcast of their activities. The respondents were also asked if there were challenges they encounter in using either electronic or social media in accessing live broadcast of parliamentary proceedings and their responses are displayed in Table 12 below.

Table 4.12: Challenges encountered while accessing live coverage of Parliamentary activities

S/N	Variable	Frequency	Percentage
1	Poor broadcast signals	135	36.193 (36%)
2	Poor presentation	51	13.673 (14%)
3	Inadequate time allotted to live Programme	80	21.448 (21%)
4	English as dominant language for programs	48	12.869 (13%)
5	All of the above	59	15.818 (16%)
		373	100%

Source: Author's Field Survey (2017).

Table 12 apparently shows that many residents of Abuja have been affected by poor broadcast signal as indicated by 135 (36%) of the responses, insufficient time for live broadcast was also identified as another major obstacle towards following parliamentary procedures live as pointed out by 80 (21%), Poor Presentation was listed by 51 (14%) of the respondents as another challenge. 48 (13%) of the respondents submitted that English as the predominant language for presenting live broadcast had been a challenge as well while 59 (16%) said all of the above mentioned factors put together had hampered access to live broadcast of Parliamentary activities.

FINDINGS

The major objective of this research work is to examine level of public awareness of live broadcast of parliamentary activities and how it has enhanced their knowledge and interaction with members of parliament.

It also tries to find out if there are challenges in accessing parliamentary news through live Broadcast.

The study found that most residents of the Federal Capital Territory obtained parliamentary news through television broadcast, followed by radio and then social media. However, most of these televised news items are not live, as they are recorded and edited before airing. This is a significant concern, given that live broadcast of parliamentary activities remains the most reliable means of real-time engagement and undiluted news from the National Assembly.

Related to this, many residents of the Federal Capital Territory were found to follow live broadcasts of parliamentary proceedings. Unfortunately, such live coverage tends to be reserved for days when the National Assembly is engaged in major activities, while the daily activities of legislators are rarely aired live. This gap underscores the study's recommendation that all parliamentary programs be broadcast live without exception.

Furthermore, the study established that live broadcast of parliamentary activities enhances public knowledge and strengthens engagement between citizens and their elected representatives. Residents were found to place greater trust in news from the National Assembly when it is televised live, viewing recorded and edited coverage as lacking the full reality of events as they unfolded.

The research identified several factors that undermine the effectiveness of accessing live broadcasts of parliamentary activities across the area councils of the FCT. These include poor reception signal, insufficient airtime allocated to parliamentary coverage, and the predominant use of the English language for commentary, all of which pose significant barriers to wider public access and engagement.

CONCLUSION

This study examined the rising deficit of trust between members of Nigeria's National Assembly and their constituents, and established that inadequate and poor dissemination of information regarding the activities of the legislature is a significant factor widening this gap. In a democratic society where the legislature is expected to serve as the foremost representative institution of the people, the inability of citizens to access timely, accurate, and transparent information about legislative proceedings constitutes a serious threat to democratic governance and public confidence in elected representatives.

The research found that when constituents are able to watch and follow the activities of their representatives through live television broadcasts, they are more inclined to trust and accept the information as authentic. This stands in sharp contrast to their perception of reported or edited news items, which a considerable number of respondents viewed with suspicion, believing such content to be selectively presented or doctored to serve particular interests. Live broadcast, by its very nature, eliminates the possibility of editorial manipulation and provides citizens with an unfiltered, real-time view of legislative proceedings, thereby fostering a sense of transparency and direct connection between the legislature and the governed. Furthermore, the study identified socioeconomic and linguistic barriers particularly among rural, elderly, and less-educated populations as compounding factors that further limit citizens' engagement with parliamentary activities. These barriers, if left unaddressed, risk entrenching the disconnect between the legislature and a large segment of the population it is mandated to serve.

Recommendations

From the findings of this study, which drew substantially from data gathered through questionnaire administration, the following recommendations are proffered toward strengthening the live broadcast of parliamentary activities and enhancing citizens' access to legislative information in Nigeria.

Legal Framework for Mandatory Live Broadcast

The study recommends the enactment of a comprehensive legal framework that makes the live broadcast of parliamentary activities mandatory at all levels of government. Currently, the decision to transmit legislative proceedings live rests largely on the discretion of media outfits and individual legislative houses, making it an inconsistent and unreliable practice. A clearly defined legal instrument whether in the form of an Act of the National Assembly or a legislative directive would compel all legislative chambers, including state Houses of Assembly and local government legislative councils, to ensure that their proceedings are televised live and made accessible to the general public. This will guarantee that the provision of real time legislative information to citizens is treated not as a privilege or optional service, but as a statutory

obligation. Such a framework would also establish standards for broadcast quality, regularity, and accessibility, thereby institutionalizing transparency and accountability in legislative process.

Establishment of Public Viewing Centres

Governments at all levels should take deliberate steps to establish well equipped public viewing centres at strategic locations across urban, semi-urban, and rural communities. One of the critical barriers identified in this study is the financial burden associated with data procurement, which prevents a significant portion of the citizenry from accessing live parliamentary broadcasts through digital and online platforms. By providing dedicated public spaces such as community halls, local government secretariats, libraries, and market squares where citizens can freely watch parliamentary proceedings, governments would be taking a proactive step toward democratizing access to legislative information. These viewing centres should be equipped with reliable television sets, internet connectivity where applicable, and a stable power supply to ensure uninterrupted access. The provision of these viewing centres would not only address economic barriers but would also serve as civic education hubs where citizens can engage with and better understand the workings of their legislature.

Indigenous Language Broadcasting

The findings of this study reveal that a substantial proportion of the population, particularly in rural communities, consists of elderly persons and individuals with little or no formal education. This demographic is often the most disconnected from legislative processes, not only due to limited access to broadcast infrastructure but also because parliamentary proceedings are predominantly conducted in English, a language that many rural dwellers neither speak nor comprehend fluently. It is therefore strongly recommended that live broadcasts of parliamentary activities be accompanied by simultaneous translations or dedicated transmissions in the indigenous languages of the respective local communities. Television and radio stations, particularly community and state owned broadcasters, should be mandated to provide linguistic interpretation of parliamentary debates, resolutions, and announcements in locally spoken languages. This approach will significantly enhance comprehensibility, foster a deeper sense of civic inclusion, and empower marginalized and non-literate segments of the population to participate meaningfully in the democratic process. Language should not be a barrier to civic awareness, and making parliamentary information available in familiar tongues is a vital step toward achieving true participatory democracy.

Suggestions for Further Studies

While this study made substantial contribution to understanding the nexus between Live Broadcast of Parliamentary activities and the knowledge of Parliamentary activities, there still remain a number of areas that needs further research such as;

1. Public Hearings in the National Assembly and Public Involvement

Further studies should examine the role of public hearings organized by the National Assembly as a mechanism for citizen participation in the legislative process. Public hearings represent one of the most direct channels through which members of the public can contribute to legislative decision making, yet the extent to which Nigerians are aware of, and actively involved in, these hearings remains largely understudied.

2. Media and Parliament: The Status of Feedback in the National Assembly

Scholarly attention should also be directed at the nature and quality of the relationship between the media and the Nigerian legislature, with particular focus on the status of feedback mechanisms within the National Assembly. While the media plays a critical role in transmitting legislative information to the public, the extent to which the National Assembly responds to public opinion as shaped and amplified by media coverage remains an area requiring rigorous empirical investigation.

3. Public Engagement in Law Making at State Assemblies

Future researchers should also explore the level and quality of public engagement in the law-making process at the level of State Houses of Assembly across Nigeria. Most existing studies on legislative transparency and citizen participation tend to focus on the federal legislature, leaving a significant gap in knowledge regarding how state assemblies relate to their constituents and the extent to which ordinary citizens are involved in or informed about the legislative activities that most directly affect their daily lives. A comparative study across multiple states would provide valuable insights into regional disparities in legislative openness and civic engagement, and could inform policy recommendations for deepening democratic participation at the subnational level.

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