



**COURSE  
GUIDE**

**MAC 314  
ISSUES IN MASS MEDIA IN NIGERIA**

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## INTRODUCTION

The title of this course is: **Issues in Mass Media in Nigeria**. The code is **MAC 314**. It is designed for undergraduate students of mass communication. The course provides the students with the basic knowledge of the history, ethical, legal, professional, socio-cultural and technological issues affecting the mass media industry in Nigeria. It is hoped that at the end of the tutorials in the course, you should be sufficiently exposed to various socio-cultural, ethical, legal, technological and professional issues impacting on the existence and operation of mass media in Nigeria. Precisely, you are expected to have in-depth understanding of these issues and how they affect the mass media practitioners' perceptions and dispositions to their professional practice, using Nigerian media landscape as basis of analysis. You are also expected to acquaint yourself with mainstream literature on evolving issues in Nigeria mass media landscape and development; the major discussion that embed the literature and be able to decipher the basic and knotty issues, concepts and or phenomena that affected or still affect mass media as an organic industry in Nigeria.

This Course Guide therefore, offers you with informative insights into the course contents. It also provides you with a list of relevant materials you will need to gain familiarity with an in-depth understanding of the subject matter. The course design is structured in such a way that would enable you gain far-reaching insight into the course. It will engage you into productive thinking through the underlying issues and developments in the Nigerian mass media industry.

## STUDY UNITS

MAC 314: Issues in Mass Media in Nigeria is a 300 level course for undergraduate mass communication studies. It is a two credit unit course. The course is packaged in five modules of varying units and lengths. The modules and the corresponding units are:

### **Module 1 Taking Off: A Brief Historical Overview of the Mass Media in Nigeria**

Unit 1 History of Print Media in Nigeria

Unit 2 History of Electronic Media in Nigeria

### **Module 2 Ethical Issue in Nigeria Mass Media Industry**

Unit 1 The Brown Envelope Syndrome

Unit 2 The Burden of News Commercialisation in Nigeria

**Module 3      Legal /Extra-Legal Issues in Nigerian Mass Media Industry**

- Unit 1            Newspaper Registration Act
- Unit 2            Deregulation of Broadcast Media in Nigeria
- Unit 3            National Broadcast Commission (NBC)
- Unit 4            Freedom of Information Act
- Unit 5            Extra-legal Measures of Controlling the Press

**Module 4      Professional Issues in Nigeria Mass Media Industry**

- Unit 1            Press Freedom in Nigeria
- Unit 2            Mass Media and Politics in Nigeria

**Module 5      Socio-Cultural/Technological Issues in Nigerian Mass Media**

- Unit 1            Rural News in Nigerian Mass Media
- Unit 2            Gender and Mass Media in Nigeria
- Unit 3            ICTs and the Mass Media Industry in Nigeria
- Unit 4            ICTs and Citizen Journalism in Nigeria

It is important to note that every module offers you a listing of all the units that make it up. Each unit also offers you' the content outlines, introduction and objectives with the main content preceding each unit. Self-Assessment Exercises (SAEs) will be provided to enhance learning, comprehension, internalisation and retention of what you will be taught. To further enhance learning and effectively monitor your progress on the course, every unit will end with one Tutor-Marked Assignment (TMA) which you are to answer and submit for marking.

**TEXTBOOKS AND REFERENCES**

Enormous effort was made to provide you with in-depth and useful materials you need in order to pass this course. However, you will find at the end of each unit, a listing of relevant reference materials you may consult at your convenient time to enhance your understanding of the course. I therefore, expect that you would make out time to consult as many of the relevant reference materials as possible within the time available to you even before attempting to do your exercises.

## **ASSESSMENT**

To excel in this course, you would undergo two important assessments. These are Self-Assessment Exercises (SAEs) and Tutor-Marked Assignment (TMA). Though you are not to submit the answers to SEAs questions to your tutor, it is important you take it serious as it would help you to assess your own understanding of the course. It would also help you to identify the areas you need to improve on as the tutorial progresses. The Tutor-Marked Assignment should also be taken seriously and carefully answered. It should be properly filled in your assignment file for submission and marking. Your performance in this exercise counts as much as 30% of your total score on the course. You are once again encouraged to take it seriously.

## **TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT**

You will find at the end of every unit, a Tutor-Marked Assignment (TMA). I expect that you will carefully answer the assignments and put them in your assignment file for submission as instructed. Note that this Course Guide does not contain any Tutor-Marked Assignment questions. You will find them in virtually all the units of every module in the main course.

## **FINAL EXAMINATION AND GRADING**

As a two-credit unit course, the final examination for MAC 314 will last for two hours. The examination will count for 70% of the total course grade. Note again that the Tutor-Marked Assignment will be 30% of the total grade. Thus, your score in the Tutor-Marked Assignment plus your score in the final examination will determine your final grade in this course. The examination questions will reflect to a large extent, the SAEs and TMAs which you are expected to have answered while studies on the course last. I advise you make proper use of the time you have between the completion of the units and the examination to revise the whole course. You will find this exercise useful as it will help you to be familiar with SAEs and TMAs before your final examination.

## **WHAT YOU WILL NEED FOR THIS COURSE**

To excel in this course, you will need to review your knowledge of Mass Media and Society. This will certainly refresh your mind on the societal factors influencing the mass media industry in Nigeria as well as the mass media impact on the society. Although the main course manual is well detailed and comprehensive, you will need to purchase at least, two textbooks out of the number of textbooks recommended to you. This will aid your mastery of the course. You may also need to visit some

websites for additional reference materials that will facilitate your understanding of the course. Finally, you will need to cultivate quality time to rehearse what you learnt in the course on weekly basis. This will further deepen your knowledge of the course.

## **FACILITATION/TUTORS AND TUTORIALS**

Tutorials in this course will span through 17 hours. The dates and locations of the tutorials as well as the name and phone number of your tutor will be communicated to you once you are allocated a tutorial group. Your tutor will mark and comment on your assignments. Your tutor will also monitor your progress in the course and will be able to assist with your SAEs and TMAs. I therefore, encourage you to feel free to contact your tutor in case of any difficulty and ensure prompt submission of your assignments. Always attend your tutorials regularly and on time. Also ensure you always participate actively in class discussions.

## **CONCLUSION**

This course is strictly based on social, institutional, technological, legal, and ethical issues affecting the mass media industry in Nigeria. The course requires in-depth understanding of the socio-cultural, ethical and regulatory control and issues that shape mass media industry in Nigeria. You will therefore make the most out of the course if you cultivate the right attitude of mind of understanding how those issues already mentioned here affected and perhaps, continue to affect mass media industry in Nigeria.

## **SUMMARY**

This Course Guide is carefully packaged to give you detailed insight into MAC 314 (Issues in Mass Media in Nigeria). The course is designed to equip you with rich insight into ethical, legal, and technical dimensions of the issues impacting on mass media practice in Nigeria. At the end of your studies therefore, you should have learnt not only what these issues are but also, how these issues combine to shape the mass media system we have in Nigeria. However, your success in this course will depend more on the quality and quantity of time you put into your tutorials; the efforts you put into solving your SAE and TMA questions; and your strategic planning for engaged studying and revising of the entire course. I sincerely wish you success in the course and the entire programme.

**RECOMMENDED TEXTS**

Ike S. Ndolo, I.S.(Ed.) (N.D) *Contemporary Issues in Communication and Society*

Luke, U. U. (Ed.). (N.D).*Mass Communication, Democracy and Civil Society in Africa: International Perspectives-*

Nwodu, L.C. (N.D). *Journalism Practice: News, Aesthetics, Laws and Ethics*

Nwosu, I.E. (Ed.) (N.D). *Mass Communication and National Development*

Obijiofor, L. & Hanuschu,F. *Journalism Across Cultures: An Introduction*

Udeze, S.C. (N.D). *Media Law and Ethics*



**MAIN  
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## **MODULE 1      TAKING OFF: A BRIEF HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF THE MASS MEDIA IN NIGERIA**

Unit 1	The History of Print Media in Nigeria
Unit 2	The History of Electronic Media in Nigeria

### **UNIT 1      THE HISTORY OF PRINT MEDIA IN NIGERIA**

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3.0	Main Content
	3.1    The History of Print Media in Nigeria
	3.2    The State of Print Media in Nigeria
4.0	Conclusion
5.0	Summary
6.0	Tutor-Marked Assignment
7.0	References/Further Reading

#### **1.0    INTRODUCTION**

The history of Nigeria mass media began with the print media which dated back to 1859. Since then the industry has remained vibrant. This unit, therefore, aims at offering a brief insight into the history of print media in Nigeria.

#### **2.0    OBJECTIVES**

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- know when the print media began operation in Nigeria
- trace the growth of print media in Nigeria.

#### **3.0    MAIN CONTENT**

##### **3.1    The History of Print Media in Nigeria**

The history of mass media in Nigeria as earlier pointed out began in 1859. Then, a European missionary named Rev. Henry Townsend published the first newspaper in Nigeria called *Iwe Irohin*. The success of *Iwe Irohin* paved way for other newspapers to follow. Thus, between 1863-65, Robert Campbell joined the train with the publication

of the Anglo African newspaper. Over time, Nigerian publishers began to venture into newspaper business. Thus, titles like *The Nigeria Pioneer* published by Kitoye Ajasa between 1914-1937, the *African Messenger* first published in 1921 by Ernest Ikoli, *The Lagos Daily Mirror* founded by Obademi and popularised by Herbert Macaulay in 1927, and *The West African Pilot* published by the great sage Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe emerged in the Nigeria print media landscape (Omu, 1978 and Okafor, 2002).

Today, over 250 newspapers (national, regional and local) and magazine titles circulate in Nigeria (Aliede, 2010:129). Some of the leading newspapers include but not limited to *The Guardian*, *The Punch*, *Vanguard*, *Champion*, *The Sun*, *The Nation*, *ThisDay*, *New Nigerian* and *Tribune*. Also, magazine titles like *Newswatch*, *Tell*, *Insider*, *TheWeek*, *TheNews* and *Ovation* are contributing essentially to national development through their news reports, analysis and interpretation.

### **3.2 The State of Print Media in Contemporary Nigeria**

The print media industry in Nigeria is a burgeoning one. As observed above, so many national, regional and local print media titles now circulate around the country. One unique thing about most of the newspaper and magazine titles is that they appear in full colour. In fact, since *Sunray* newspaper kick started colour newspaper in Nigeria in mid 1990s, most newspapers and magazines in Nigeria now publish with full digital colour separation. This has added to the aesthetics values of the newspapers and magazines circulating in Nigeria in the present time, thereby making them look highly attractive and appealing.

Another remarkable improvement in Nigerian print media industry is the quality of printing. The old methods of printing are fast giving way for digital printing which makes the layout attractive while providing an eye comfort to readers.

Also the language level and quality of stories in Nigerian print media have improved tremendously. It cannot be doubted therefore, that the quality of their story treatment and the language of delivery now match acceptable international standard.

The print media have remained firm in terms of investigative journalism. The cases of Salisu Buhari and Senator Evan Enwerem who lied on oath respectively about their certificate and age will remain shining examples of how resolute the Nigerian print media have been in terms of investigative journalism.

In spite of these, the print media have their own problem in Nigeria. The problems facing the industry presently include but not limited to:

- poor remuneration which tends to expose the practitioners to unethical practices
- lack of job security arising from the frequent rise and fall of print media organisations and which has made the job less attractive. *National Concord* of the 1980s and *The Post Express* of the late 1990s are good examples of well established print media organisations that liquidated and threw their workers back into the labour market
- operating in a depressed economy which has made the operators to often increase the cover prices just to meet high production cost
- poor readership which adversely affect the circulation revenue. Most Nigerians hardly buy, either because they will not find time to read or because they are not literate enough to read print media contents. Even those who can read often prefer tipping vendors to allow them read for a while and return the copy than to buy and read at their convenience. The phenomenon of thronging around newsstands to read and give back to the vendors is now derisively called “Free Readers Association”.

#### **4.0 CONCLUSION**

The print media industry in Nigeria as we earlier noted is a blossoming industry. So many newspaper and magazine titles now circulate in Nigeria – all contributing to the information need of Nigerian citizens, as well as helping to shape issues arising from Nigerian mass media and society. Nevertheless, the industry still suffers a number of limitations some of which were mentioned and discussed above.

#### **5.0 SUMMARY**

This unit focused on a brief discussion on the print media industry in Nigeria. Emphasis was therefore placed on the history, nature and problems of the print media in Nigeria.

#### **6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT**

Discuss the nature of print media in Nigeria pointing out the problems facing the industry.

## 7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

Aliede, J. E. (2010). "An Appraisal of Nigeria's Local and Foreign Images". A Doctoral Thesis Submitted to the Department of Mass Communication, Benue State University, Makurdi.

Okafor, C. O. (2002). "History of Nigerian Print Media" In C. S. Okunna (Ed.) *Teaching Mass Communication: A Multi Dimensional Approach*. Enugu: New Generation Books.

Omu, F. (1978). *Press and Politics in Nigeria: 1880-1937*. Ibadan: Longman.

## **UNIT 2 THE HISTORY OF ELECTRONIC MEDIA IN NIGERIA**

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- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
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  - 3.2 Growth of Electronic Media in Nigeria
  - 3.3 The Challenges
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

Unlike the print media which started early in Nigeria, the electronic media did not start at the same period. It took several years before electronic media began to make in-road in Nigeria. This unit is aimed at brief exploration of the history and nature of electronic media in Nigeria.

### **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- trace the evolution of electronic media in Nigeria
- explain the growth of the industry in Nigeria.

### **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

#### **3.1 History of Electronic Media in Nigeria**

The history of radio in Nigeria began in 1932 as a re-diffusion programme of the British colonial government. Then the colonial government chose Lagos as one of the centres among the British colonies where radio signals were received and retransmitted to Nigerian audience via re-diffusion method. According to Okunna and Uzokwe (2006:75):

- Between 1932 and 1950, the BBC monitoring station in Lagos was developed into an extensive radio distribution service (RDS) to cater for some dense population centres of the colonial government through re-diffusion stations located in Ibadan,

Abeokuta, Ijebu Ode, Kano, Kaduna, Enugu, Port Harcourt, Calabar, Jos, and Zaria; these were converted into fully operative radio stations by the Federal Government to form the media of the Nigerian Broadcasting Service (NBS) which was established in 1951.

It is pertinent to note that NBS later changed to Nigeria Broadcasting Cooperation (NBC), which later metamorphosed into the present day Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria (FRCN) in the year 1978. Presently, virtually all the 36 states of Nigeria and the Federal Capital Territory Abuja now have radio stations. And with the deregulation of the broadcast industry in Nigeria in 1992, private radio and television stations now operate in the country.

In the case of television, the history started in 1959 with the establishment of the Western Nigeria Television (WNTV). The reason television started from the region was attributed to the pre-independence politics which placed more emphasis on regional rather than national development (Okunna, 1993:55). So with the establishment of WNTV in 1959, other regions began to establish their own television stations. Therefore, in 1960, the Eastern Nigeria government established Eastern Nigeria Television (ENTV). This was followed by the Radio Television Kaduna (RTK) in 1962 which functioned as an arm of Broadcast Corporation of Northern Nigeria. The federal government had its own, Nigeria Television (NTV) in Lagos in the same 1962. All these were later brought together under NTA.

In 1976 the federal government established the Nigerian Television Authority (NTA). NTA was then given exclusive right over television broadcasting in the country until 1979 when state governments wishing to operate television stations were empowered to do so.

### **3.2 Growth of Broadcast Media**

Since the establishment of the first radio and television in Nigeria, the industry has recorded steady growth. It is pertinent to note that the federal and various state governments controlled the ownership of the industry for a long time. In spite of the sustained agitation for the deregulation of the industry, the governments hold sway until 1992. Then the military regime of Gen. Ibrahim Badamosi Babangida (Rtd.) promulgated Decree No. 38 of 1992, establishing the National Broadcast Commission (NBC), which was charged with the responsibility of regulating broadcast industry in Nigeria, including granting license to individuals or groups wishing to establish private broadcast stations.

By that Decree, the broadcast industry was deregulated. Deregulation, therefore, means that individuals or groups are allowed to own broadcast stations. It also means that broadcast station should no longer be operated by the federal and state government alone. Following the deregulation of the industry, therefore, a number of privately owned radio and television stations now operate alongside government owned radio and television stations.

Today, virtually every state of the federation including Abuja has a state owned radio and television stations. Also, the federal government has one of the largest television networks in Africa (precisely, the Nigerian Television Authority, NTA for short) which has many regional offices across the country. It also owns and operates the famous Radio Nigeria with unity FM stations in most state capitals of Nigeria. In the case of private broadcast stations, names like Ray Power FM, African Independent Television (AIT), Silver Bird, DBN, MINAJ etc have been waxing stronger by the day, competing favourably with government owned electronic media.

### **3.3 The Challenges**

The broadcast industry in Nigeria is not without some challenges. The industry is faced with the primary challenge of balancing its social responsibility with business interest. Because of this conflict of interest, the operators have often been accused of operating below ethical standard – compromising professional standards with commercial interest (much of this will be discussed in the module that focused on ethical issues).

Another contemporary challenge facing the broadcast industry, particularly, state owned stations is that many of them are still operating on analogue rather than digital equipment. This has limited the reach, clarity and fidelity of their signals.

Also, some of the state owned stations do not offer challenging work environment for their staff. Often times, staff are frustrated by non-payment of salaries, lack of operating fund, dilapidated office accommodations, and obsolete equipment.

Finally, most stations still suffer undue control by their owners. Political influence is crippling most state owned stations, while privately owned stations are still being used to pursue the clannish interests of their owners.

#### **4.0 CONCLUSION**

In spite of the challenges facing electronic broadcast industry in Nigeria, the industry can be reliably said to be doing well. The proliferation of broadcast stations has helped to a large extent, to reduce the high unemployment rate in the country, while contributing to the sustenance of democracy in Nigeria.

#### **5.0 SUMMARY**

The emphasis on this unit is on the brief history and growth of electronic media in Nigeria. The unit, therefore, discussed specific issues relating to the evolution of the broadcast industry in Nigeria, the growth of the industry and the challenges facing the industry.

#### **6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT**

Discuss the evolution and growth of the broadcast industry in Nigeria.

#### **7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING**

- Ndolo, I. S. (2005). *Mass Media Systems and Society*. Enugu: Rhyce Kerex Publishing.
- Nwosu, I. E. (1990). *Mass Communication and National Development*. Aba: Frontier Publishers.
- Okunna, C. S. & Uzokwe, C. E. (2006) "Origin of Modern Mass Media". In: I. E. Nwosu & I. Nsude (Eds.) *Trado-Modern Communication Systems: Interface and Dimensions*. Enugu: Immaculate Books.
- Opubor, A. E. (1985). "Mass Communication and Modern Development in Nigeria" In: O. E. Nwuneli (Ed.) *Mass Communication in Nigeria: A Book of Reading*. Enugu: Fourth Dimension.

## **MODULE 2      ETHICAL ISSUES IN THE NIGERIAN MASS MEDIA INDUSTRY**

- Unit 1      The Brown Envelope Syndrome  
Unit 2      The Burden of News Commercialisation

### **UNIT 1      THE BROWN ENVELOPE SYNDROME**

#### **CONTENTS**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 The Meaning of Brown Envelope
  - 3.2 Arguments for and against Brown Envelope
  - 3.3 Ethical Burden of Brown Envelope
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

#### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

The ethics of any profession prescribe the moral standards every professional is expected to observe in the practice of his/her profession. Once the ethical precept of any profession is codified and adopted as the common ethical standards of a given profession, there is the need for professionals of that given profession to apply the standardised moral codes in the discharge of their professional practice. Journalism practice like other professions has a number of codes of ethics that guide its practice.

In Nigeria for instance, a code of ethics which guide the conducts of journalists in the practice of their professional practice abound. In summary, the ethical code prescribes among others that journalists should exhibit high level of responsibility in deciding news contents; be fair and accurate in reporting issues of public interest; respect individuals' right to privacy; protect the confidentiality of their sources of information; maintain decency in their reportage of issues; avoid discrimination of any kind; protect national interest; and shun the act of soliciting for or accepting bribe and all forms gratifications as precondition for publishing information (Fab-Ukozor, 2000; Nwodu, 2006:165 and Udeze, 2012). The question is: to what extent have Nigerian journalists been able to apply these ethical codes in their

professional practices? This unit examines some ethical burdens confronting Nigeria journalists.

“Demanding and/or receiving gratifications to perform one’s official duties or using one’s position of authority and power to extort gifts or other forms of gratification either directly or indirectly is a problem in any society” (Onyisi, 1996:78). Indeed, the burden of giving gratifications in order to induce someone to discharge his/her officially assigned duty is not only a problem to the society but also inimical to career growth. This is why the ethical precept of journalism practice abhors any form of inducement that negatively influences news judgment. Although the ethics abhors it, the practice has been on the increase in Nigeria. This unit, therefore, discusses the ethical dilemma associated with brown envelope syndrome.

## **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- understand the meaning of brown envelope
- explain the various thoughts on brown envelope
- discuss the ethical problems associated with brown envelope syndrome.

## **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

### **3.1 The Meaning of Brown Envelope**

Stripped of all technicalities, brown envelope in the context of Nigerian journalism is a metaphor for bribery and corruption. According to Onyisi (1996:80) the concept ‘brown envelope’ is “generally used to refer to the practice of offering and receiving gratifications in the form of gifts, drinks, food, sex or money – in order to influence the judgment of a journalist”.

By implication, brown envelope entails giving and receiving gratifications that influences to the negative, a journalist’s sense of news value judgment. The gratification could come in the form of money, gift items, food or other unsolicited and/or unmerited favour.

Today, brown envelope has been giving different names in different parts of Nigeria. In Lagos area for instance, it is called ‘egunje’. In the Eastern part of the country, it is called ‘jenwu’ or ‘kola’. In some other parts of the country, it is called ‘awufu’. Regardless of the name or appeal, the fact is that cheap publicity seekers often offer journalists brown envelope to secure unmerited good press and or to massage their

ego. According to Onyisi (1990:81) whenever cheap publicity seeker gives a journalist brown envelope, there is a “tacit agreement that it is meant to make the reporter feature the story prominently to over-value the newsworthiness of the event, to overlook the deficiencies of the convener and, in some cases, to suppress the rival point of view”.

Onyisi (1998:8 further identifies three dominant settings under which brown envelopes are usually offered as:

- Press conference – a forum where an individual or group (which can be a political organisation, an interest group, government ministry or business group) convening the press conference uses to “announce a policy, a decision, deny an accusation, clarify an issue, or present an issue before the public” via the organs of mass media. At the end of the conference, money is usually packaged in an envelope and distributed to journalists as ‘kola’, ‘transport money’, or appreciation. The snag is that once a journalist receives such offer, he/she loses his/her sense of news value judgment. The story that will emerge from such conference will be slanted to suit the interest of the convener who has paid his/her way through to obtain good press.
- Official tours involving top government officials, captains of industries, leading politicians and opinion leaders in which the press corps covering the tour is usually treated to free launch and spoilt with token branded “transport money” or “hospitality allowance” or “public relations” and sundry terms.
- Ad hoc entails the irregular use of the mass media to pay certain amounts to sponsor a news story and insists on how it should be published, with utter disregard to newsworthiness. The story could be designed to massage the sponsor’s image, assassinate the character of the sponsor’s opponent etc. This setting is considered ad hoc in the sense that the relationship between the journalist and the publicity seeker according to Onyisi (1996:83) is “ephemeral, hence the need to offer an inducement to have the story published”.

### **3.2 Arguments for and against Brown Envelope**

It cannot be doubted that brown envelope has become an endemic ethical problem facing Nigerian journalists. In spite of the hue and cry against the offering and receiving of brown envelope, opinions are divided as to the moral rightness and wrongness of the practice. Those who support the practice has always hinged their argument on the claim that it is cultural and altruistic to be nice to visitors and invitees. To this school of thought, offering brown envelope is simply a display of act of hospitality which they claim is in consonance with African culture. The

advocates of brown envelope also believe that socio-economic realities in Nigeria encourage the acceptance of brown envelope. The argument is that journalists are poorly paid and often not paid for their services and since they have responsibilities and buy from the same Nigerian market, it is only natural and realistic that they should accept brown envelope to survive. In this case, it is realistic to give out brown envelope since it is the fast way of getting your story published or aired the way you want it. Also receiving brown envelope in their view is right since it enhances a journalist's survival in a depressed economy like the Nigerian economy.

However, those against the offering and receiving of brown envelopes have often argued that brown envelope is synonymous with bribe even as it is immoral. To this school of thought, regardless of the circumstance or situation, offering and or receiving brown envelope is anachronistic to ethical journalism even as it perverts "justice, vitiates media credibility and creates disequilibrium in the society" (Onyisi: 1996:24). Whether for or against, the fact remains that offering and receiving of brown envelope is inimical to healthy journalism practice. It should be avoided like a plague.

### **3.3 Ethical Burden of Brown Envelope**

As stated above, brown envelope is one of the major ethical problems that had and continues to weaken journalism practice in Nigeria. The ethical burdens imposed on journalism practice in Nigeria by brown envelope syndrome include but not limited to the fact that:

- it lowers media credibility and promotes lack of trust for the journalist. Accepting brown envelope certainly influences journalists' sense of news value judgment and leads to brazen compromise and distortion of facts just to impress the giver
- it robs negatively on the public's right to know as what finally emerged as news of the day are tainted opinions of the giver of brown envelope rather than public interest-oriented news sifted and selected on the basis of objectivity, fairness and balance
- it portrays the media organisation as a cheap instrument of blackmail which not only robs negatively on media credibility, but also promote insecurity in the land
- it denies the poor who may have authentic information to share, access to the media since only those who can afford to pay their way gain limitless access to the media.

#### **SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

Define and explain the brown envelope syndrome in Nigeria.

## 4.0 CONCLUSION

Brown envelope is an endemic ethical problem confronting Nigerian journalists. It has retarded and is still retarding journalism development and practice in Nigeria. It is a corrupt ill wind that blows no one any good. If Nigerians must restore confidence and respect to the journalism profession, then there is need for both Nigeria citizens and institutions/organisations to desist from offering brown envelope. There is also greater need for journalists to resist accepting such offer that influence news judgment over the years.

## 5.0 SUMMARY

This unit x-rayed brown envelop as an anathema to journalism development and practice in Nigeria. In consonance with the objectives of the unit, issues pertaining to the meaning of brown envelope; the debate for and against its offering and receiving; and the ethical problems of the practice were discussed.

## 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

Explain the major domains of offering and receiving brown envelope in Nigeria, pointing out the ethical burdens associated with the practice.

## 7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

- Ndolo, I. S. (2011). *Contemporary Issues in Mass Media and Society*. Enugu: Rhyce Kerex
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## **UNIT 2      THE                    BURDEN                    OF                    NEWS COMMERCIALISATION**

### **CONTENTS**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 The Meaning of News Commercialisation
  - 3.2 The Origin of News Commercialisation
  - 3.3 Ethical Burden of News Commercialisation
  - 3.4 Socio-Economic Consequences of News Commercialisation
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

MacBride et al (1980) emphasises what then was becoming an ugly trend in news treatment around the globe. According to the scholars, “important developments, especially in the countryside are pushed aside by unimportant or even trivial news items concerning urban events and the activities of personalities. The implication is that most often, journalists no longer rely on professionally set standard for deciding what makes news. The traditional criteria for judging or determining newsworthy events, ideas, places and personalities are fast giving way to “cash and carry journalism” (Nwodu: 2006). This unit is designed to expose the students to the concept of news commercialisation.

### **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- explain the concept of news commercialisation
- trace how it all began in Nigeria
- discuss the ethical problems associated with it
- discuss how it has affected Nigeria’s national development.

### **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

#### **3.1 The Meaning of News Commercialisation**

The term news commercialisation simply means deliberate presentation of commercial news in such a way the unsuspecting audience will take it for conventional public interest-oriented news (Nwodu: 2006). In other words, news commercialisation runs counter to social service role of the mass media which requires that news should be presented as news and advertisement as advertisement.

In the case of news commercialisation therefore, sponsored information is presented to the audience, particularly broadcast media audience as a social or public service news. As MacBride et al (1980) observe, news is commercialised when “important developments, especially in the country side are published aside by unimportant even trivial news items concerning urban events and the activities of personalities”.

Thus, the primary determinant of news value here becomes the ability to pay a media organisation a certain amount of money rather than the core news values. The import is that news in this context is not based on objectivity, professionally approved criteria for determining news worthiness. In all, news commercialisation refers to situation “whereby the electronic media report as news or news analysis a commercial message by an unidentified or unidentifiable sponsor giving the audience the impression that news is fair, objective and socially responsible” (Nnorom: 1994).

#### **3.2 The Origin of News Commercialisation**

It is often said and rightly too, that no media organisation can survive in the long term without advertisement. For this reason, every media organisation tends to court real and potential advertisers to win their account. Thus, with advert revenue and government subvention, most media organisations, particularly government owned media remain afloat.

However, a sudden change in the mode of operation came in 1996 when the military President Ibrahim Babangida introduced the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP). SAP was an economic policy aimed at encouraging self reliance and reduction of over dependence on government business. This made most social institutions to think of alternative survival strategy to make up for the removed government subvention. The mass media as social institutions were not left out in this search for alternative means of survival. Ekwo (1996:63) reports:

- Faced with the inability to pay salaries of workers, produce or service available equipment and myriad of other problems occasioned by the decline in government subvention, the Nigerian Television Authority and Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria devised several other means to make money.

Ekwo (1996) who identified news commercialisation as one of such survival strategies further explained:

- Individuals, communities, private and public organisations, local and state governments and ministries, gain access to the mass media if they are able to pay a prescribed fee. In other words, they can be heard on these media during news times for a prescribed fee.

When this is the case, the messages of sales or ego message that are paid for, are usually designed and tailored in the form of news and presented in the news bulletin in the forms of straight news reports, news analysis, or commentary after the news.

### **3.3 Ethical Burden of News Commercialisation**

Perhaps, a question may be asked: is there anything wrong with a mass medium trying to device a strategic means of surviving the economic crunch in the country? The answer is nothing provided the approach is ethically right. And this is the burden with news commercialisation. As Ekwo (1996:64) puts it:

- It is unethical for the various broadcast media to collect money from news sources and broadcast such stories as if no money was paid. Such news items are put on air with others which the editor has selected for their pure news value (sic) and the unsuspecting audience consumes such information as pure news instead of as an advertisement.

The ethical burden arising from situation like this includes but not limited to the fact that:

- members of the public are often deliberately deceived into believing that a piece of advertisement is news
- news worthy events like community development project in research breakthrough are hardly reported in Nigeria mass media unless the community or the researcher respectively are willing to and do actually pay certain amount of money
- the practice is incompatible with and repugnant to journalistic code of conduct which prescribed among others that journalists

are duty bound to refuse any reward or gratification that would make them to either publish or suppress news or comments

- with the news sources paying to get their interests published or aired, all sorts of information, including those that offend public taste and sensibilities find their way in the media. In this case, the mass media that ought to be the custodian of ethical precepts become ready tools for the propagation of lewd contents that corrupt public minds (Nwodu: upcoming).

### **3.4 Socio-Economic Consequences of News Commercialisation**

The increasing wave of news commercialisation in Nigeria, beyond the ethical problems raised above, also has some socio-economic and professional consequences. Some of these consequences are enumerated below:

- it encourages perpetuity in the voicing of the opinion of the super rich while suppressing that of the numerous poor who may have newsworthy information to share but lack the financial muscle to pay for the airing or publishing of the news
- it erodes the credibility of the news medium. Today, some mass media audience members in Nigeria hardly believe the information they receive from the local mass media because of this credibility problem. Yet credibility as Edeani (1990) observes is so crucial to the extent it enhances the reception, acceptance and authentication of mass media news
- news commercialisation often detracts from real advert revenue accruing to the mass media thus, leading to economic waste. This is true given that often times not all that was generated through this unethical means goes to the media. Those at the top echelon of media management often take the lion share to service their personal needs before allowing such paid stories from unidentified sponsors to appear in the news bulletin. Ekwo (1996:67) documented evidence of this where he writes:
  - a news editor in Enugu State Broadcasting Service (ESBS) has complained that stories which are obviously commercial in his assessment are sometimes forced on him to use from the higher authorities in his organisation. The same story, which if I used would have attracted a surcharge from my salary is then used free probably because the news source is a friend or may have offered some money to the “oga”.
  - the import is that if the same news is carried as an advertisement, the money paid for the advert would have been lodged into the organisation’s account and receipted.

But as commercialised news, the money is easily diverted and by extension impoverishing the company.

- news commercialisation leads to self censorship. Since the news items are paid for, it becomes problematic for the editor to edit the item based on known professional standards or principles. The story becomes so sacrosanct to the extent the editor is constrained to edit the purported news item on the basis of what might interest the sponsor, as against public interest. In this case, money becomes the news determinant
- news commercialisation also leads to the ugly situation where members of the public are starved of public interest news. The common practice in most newsrooms in Nigerian today is to stand important news that could hold enormous interest to the public in order to carry sponsored news. This practice is most common in the print media where after planning the page for the day, the editor will be directed to cede some pages in order to accommodate paid news that just arrived in the news media.

### **SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

In your own words, define news commercialisation stating how it all began in Nigeria.

## **4.0 CONCLUSION**

Advert revenue is needed to sustain the media organisation. However, this survival strategy should not lead to compromising the news values or presenting a piece of advertisement as news. It is condemnable therefore to give “a dose of commercial message as news selected for its fairness, objectivity, balance and accuracy” (Ekwo: 1996:75).

## **5.0 SUMMARY**

This unit dealt with news commercialisation as one of the most teething ethical problems confronting the mass media industry in Nigeria. The unit therefore examined the meaning, origin and ethical as well as socio-economic problems associated with news commercialisation in Nigeria. It concludes that the practice should be done away with.

## **6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT**

Using the Nigeria mass media landscape, discuss the ethical problems associated with news commercialisation.

## 7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

- Edeani, D.O. (1990). "Credibility: Media, Politicians and Government". Paper Presented at a Regional Workshop on Reporting Politics in Nigeria. Mooted Hotel, Owerri.
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## **MODULE 3      LEGAL/EXTRA LEGAL ISSUES IN THE NIGERIAN MASS MEDIA INDUSTRY**

Unit 1	Newspaper Registration Act
Unit 2	Broadcast Deregulation
Unit 3	NBC Code
Unit 4	Freedom of Information Act
Unit 5	Extra Legal Measures of Press Control in Nigeria

### **UNIT 1      NEWSPAPER REGISTRATION ACT**

#### **CONTENTS**

1.0	Introduction
2.0	Objectives
3.0	Main Content
	3.1 Newspaper Ordinance No 10 Of 1903
	3.2 Provisions of the Ordinance
	3.3 Implications for the Newspaper Industry
4.0	Conclusion
5.0	Summary
6.0	Tutor-Marked Assignment
7.0	References/Further Reading

#### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

The media system of any nation is not only a reflection of that society. It is also, very dear to the heart of the people and government of the nation. For this reason, the government of most nations has been in constant move to hatch legal means of controlling the operations of the media. On the other hand, the press has also been in constant search for a better way of operating within the legal framework provided by the state without sacrificing its freedom to hold, receive and disseminate information. This unit and the module as a whole, aim at bringing to light some of the legal and extra-legal issues that influence the operations of mass media in Nigeria.

Newspaper phenomenon began in Nigeria in 1859 at Abeokuta following the establishment of *Iwe Irohin* by a European missionary called Rev. Henry Townsend. Between 1863 and 1865, Robert Campbell published the *Angola African* Newspaper as a follow up. Over time, notable Nigerians like Kitoye Ajasa, Ernest Ikoli, Obademi, Herbert Macaulay, Nnamdi Azikiwe to mention but a few, ventured into newspaper production. One unique feature of the newspaper published

then by indigenous publishers was that most of the newspapers fought a common enemy which is colonialism.

For this and other reasons that may be remote, the colonial government established an ordinance that regulated and still regulates the process of newspaper registration as a control measure. This unit, therefore, seeks to examine the newspaper registration ordinance as an essential issue in mass media industry in Nigeria.

## **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- explain the enabling law for newspaper registration in Nigeria
- discuss the main provision of the enabling law
- state how the law impacts on newspaper business in Nigeria.

## **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

### **3.1 Newspaper Ordinance No 10 Of 1903**

The proliferation of newspaper business in Nigeria in the late 1890s to early 1900s' got the colonial government in Nigeria jittery. The then indigenous newspaper publishers devoted larger chunk of their publications to criticising colonialism and the activities of the colonial masters. The consequence of this worry was the promulgation of Newspaper Ordinance No. 10 of 1903.

The essence of the ordinance, as Udeze (2012:16) observes was “to regulate the publication of the newspaper in the Southern protectorate”. The ordinance, therefore, was not meant for the Northern protectorate since no newspaper was published in the North then. In 1914, the Northern and Southern protectorates were amalgamated to one geographical entity known today as Nigeria. Following that amalgamation, the Newspaper Ordinance No. 10 of 1903 was amended to Newspaper Ordinance of August 9, 1917. The amended Newspaper Ordinance of 1917 unlike that of 1903 before it was applied to the entire nation.

### **3.2 Major Provisions of the Ordinance**

As we earlier stated, the whole idea about the newspaper ordinances was to regulate the ownership and operation of newspaper business in Nigeria. So in view of the desire to regulate and or control the seemingly irrepressible indigenous publishers, the ordinance contained a number of asphyxiating provisions. The provisions range from registration

formalities to bonding and proof of ownership. Some of the major the provisions are as follow:

- registration formalities which require any person or group of persons wishing to venture into newspaper business to first register the newspaper with and obtain approval from the Federal Ministry of Information
- payment of deposit of 250 pounds in the office of the minister concerned with newspaper matters and providing one or more surety as a pre-condition for obtaining approval for take-off from the Attorney General of Federation. Where the proprietor is unable to get a surety, he is required to pay additional 250 pounds summing up 500 pounds before he could be given approval to operate newspaper business
- affidavit or bond which makes it mandatory for the publisher to clearly state ‘at the foot of the last page of every newspaper/supplement, the true and real name and place of residence of the printer, publisher and editor-in-charge as well as the true and real description of place of printing (Udeze; 2012:19 and Elias, 1969:3). Failure to comply with this provision attracts a penalty of 50 pounds for the publisher and 5 pounds for the vendor.

### **3.3 Implications for the Newspaper Industry**

The newspaper ordinances, no doubt has some suffocating implications for newspaper business in Nigeria. Some of those stifling implications include but not limited to:

- the whole idea about registration was ill motivated in the sense that the purpose was to make things difficult for those wishing to go into newspaper business, and by extension, minimise criticisms against colonial government
- the demand for payment of certain deposit which the minister was at liberty to use to pay damages for cases of libel or other infringements by any newspaper is further meant to keep so many people out of the business since only very few can afford it. This is why Udeze (2012:19) rightly observed that:
  - ...as at 1907 when this law was put in place, the highest paid Nigerian civil servant were probably the court messengers (Kotuma, for short) who were earning below 1 shilling a month. The “businessmen” were few palm producers and cocoa dealers. So setting such a money and calibers of sureties must have been a near impossibility and serious deterrent to the development of newspaper business in Nigeria.

- the provision that requires that residential addresses of the printer, publisher and the editor-in-chief at the imprint tend to expose the journalist to a greater risk. This is so given that “the essence of this particular position is to make it easy for the colonial police to access and deal with stubborn editors” (Udeze; 2012; 20). In recent times, where journalists are exposed to all forms of harm from both overzealous government agents and some expose to hoodlums in the society, it is wrong to supply such information, in particular the residential address. The more such information is exposed to the press, the easier it is to trace journalists to their homes and harm them.

#### **4.0 CONCLUSION**

Journalists suffer a lot of harm in the discharge of their duties. They also face lots of restrictions imposed by certain laws that are no longer relevant in contemporary times. It is necessary that such laws like Newspapers Ordinance Acts should be revisited with a view to amend some aspects of the laws that are inimical to journalism practice or better still repeal them.

#### **5.0 SUMMARY**

This unit discussed Newspaper Registration Act as a serious issue of importance in Nigerian mass Media. Thus, issues pertaining to legal requirements or conditions for registering newspapers and implications to journalism practice in the country were also discussed.

#### **6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT**

Discuss the major provisions of Newspaper Ordinances of 1903 as amended in 1917 in Nigeria, pointing out the technical problems associated with it.

#### **7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING**

- Elias, T. O. (1969). *Nigerian Press Law*: London: Evans Brothers Limited.
- Ewelukwa, B.N. (2004). *Introduction to Nigerian Press Law*: Onitsha: Maranatha Press.
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## **UNIT 2     DEREGULATION OF BROADCAST INDUSTRY IN NIGERIA**

### **CONTENTS**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 Reasons behind the Call for Broadcast Deregulation in Nigeria
  - 3.2 Major Provisions of the Decree Backing Deregulation
  - 3.3 Implications of the Decree
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

Prior to the promulgation of Decree 38 of 1992, ownership and operation of electronic broadcast in Nigeria was exclusively government business. By implication, private ownership and operation of television and radio stations were strictly prohibited. With the promulgation of the decree which also, gave birth to the National Broadcast Commission (NBC), the Nigerian broadcast industry was deregulated thereby, permitting private investors to venture into the business of ownership and operation of broadcast station. However, before the all important deregulation, arguments for and against deregulation raged to the extent one cannot conveniently discuss issues in Nigeria mass media without alluding to the deregulation of broadcast industry. This unit is, therefore, designed to teach the students the pre and post deregulation issues.

### **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- define the meaning and state the essence of broadcast deregulation
- explain the need for deregulation
- list the major provisions of the decree that gave birth to deregulation
- discuss issues arising from the provision of the Decree.

### **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

#### **3.1 Reasons behind the Call for Broadcast Deregulation in Nigeria**

The call for the deregulation of electronic media was motivated more by political rather than economic interests. This is true given that most of the advocates of deregulation were not really concerned with the economic gains they could make through the ownership and operation of electronic media. Rather, there was need to have an outlet through which political actors who were denied access to government owned and controlled electronic media firms in the country could make public their political interest and position known to the electorate. According to Onyisi (1996:49):

- The demand for deregulation of the electronic media in Nigeria from the time of independence was muted and almost inaudible until the Second Republic of Shagari, when, perhaps stunned by what looked like an irresponsible misuses of the mass media by the political parties in power for their own selfish ends, the demand became shrill. Deliberate distortions, lies, and fabrications led some Nigerians to question the propriety of a government monopoly of radio and television transmissions in Nigeria.

Prior to the deregulation of the industry therefore, opposition parties were denied access to the electronic media to the extent that when the parties are mentioned in the government owned and controlled radio and or television stations, such mentions were largely skewed to the negative. The only avenue left for the opposition parties then to reply or refute any allegation against them by the ruling party was the plethora of privately owned newspapers circulating in Nigeria then.

Angered by the abuse of government monopoly over ownership and operation of electronic media, the leadership of various opposition parties and concerned Nigerian citizens began to advocate for the deregulation of the industry. Those in government who were opposed to deregulation argue that allowing private participation in ownership and operation of electronic media will undermine national interest. To them, the operators may become lawless and use their stations to disseminate information that is capable of promoting public resentment against the government in power and by so doing, incite the masses against the state. This they believe will lead to mutiny and total breakdown in security. According to Onyisi (1996:49), “arguments for the continued monopoly by the government also included the alleged irresponsibility

of private operations, national security, and lack of adequate financing in the private sector”.

On the other hand, those who advocated for deregulation argued that the deregulation of the industry will create conducive atmosphere for equal access to the media and or opportunity to be heard. They argued that government’s monopolistic hold on the ownership, control and operation of electronic media negates the principle of media pluralism and democratic sustenance. The argument is that the continued monopoly by government was anachronistic as it delivered a worrisome situation where the radio and television stations then “lost credibility and became discredited in the minds of most people (Onyisi; 1996:48).

Rather than play significant role in mobilising Nigerian masses towards active participation in governance, the government owned radio and television station concentrated energy on supporting every government in power thereby truncating the enthronement of virile democracy. The broadcast stations became agents of one-way, top-down communication from the government to the governed with nothing from the governed flowing from these media organs to the top. Thus effort to deregulate the industry was scuttled when attempt to enshrine it in 1979 constitution failed. This failure however, did not put an end to the intense demand for deregulation of the industry.

The Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida led military regime has to set up the Kolade led rationalisation committee. It is worthy to note that the committee’s report favoured private participation in electronic media. This heightened the campaign for deregulation by individuals, investors and political interest group. Consequently, in September 1992, the military Head of State and Commander of the Armed Forces, signed the Decree 38 into law, thereby permitting private participation in radio and television transmission in Nigeria. To checkmate the activities of the licensed private radio and television stations, the government established NBC (which we shall discuss later in this module.

### **3.2 The Major Provisions**

It is instructive to note that the Nigerian Broadcasting Commission (NBC) was designed to play similar role with US Federal Communication Commission {FCC}. The essence of NBC, therefore, is to perform the following functions among others:

- licensing of broadcast stations
- disciplining erring operators in the industry
- allocation of frequencies to applicant
- regulating the activities of the licensees.

In the case of licensing of private radio and television transmission in Nigeria, the decree imposed a number of restrictions on the private stations to come. The restrictions range from areas of coverage to nature of equipment to be used and programme content (Onyisi, 1996:50; Ndolo and Ezinwa; 2010:230 and Udeze: 2011:31). Precisely, the major provisions of the decree as they concern private broadcast stations are:

- private radio and television stations will be allocated frequencies that restrict their broadcast to specific areas
- private radio and television licensees will be restricted to AM and UHF transmission
- the Federal Government owned Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) and the Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria (FRCN) will have a monopoly over Very High Frequency (VHF) and Shortwave Transmission respectively
- sixty percent of all the programmes will be produced locally.

Provisions (i), (ii) and (iii) were put in place to safeguard national security and to allay the fear that private broadcast stations may become lawless and undermine national interest and security. On the other hand, the fourth provision was meant to guard against the unmitigated use of foreign programmes to contaminate and consequently erode our national cultures and identity.

### **3.3 The Snag with the Decree**

Decree 38 of 1992 which ushered in private participation in the ownership and operation of broadcast transmission was applauded by well meaning Nigerians. However, the decree has some snags which tend to limit the level of private participation in the industry. These are:

- restricting private stations' reach to specific geographic areas has been impacting on the economic survival of the stations. This is true given that advertisers are concerned with a medium that has wider reach. The implication, therefore, is that advertisers will not consider placing their advertisements meant to reach national market on a medium whose reach is limited to a specific narrow geographic location or people living in a certain limited radius. Thus, limiting the extent of reach of private stations to specific geographic area just to minimise their market size certainly undermines their economic survival
- the claim that limiting the geographical areas of coverage of private stations will help safeguard national security particularly in times of military coup is unfounded. Onyisi (1996:52) documented evidence of the need for media pluralism that encourage wider reach in times like this. According to Onyisi:

The nation's experience in 1978 when the attempted Dimka's Coup was effectively countered by broadcast from Radio/Television Kaduna and the unfortunate Gideon Orkar coup attempt of April 1990 when Lagos loyalist troops effectively countered Orkar's broadcast on FRCN through their use of radio Lagos are reminders that the multiplicity of voices and channels is an effective antidote to the use of the electronic media as instrument of coup-making.

- the insistence on ceding the right of transmissions on VHF and short wave transmissions to NTA and FRCN respectively is viewed as further empowering government owned station to monopolise nationwide broadcast and further promote government propaganda machinery at the national level. This is considered anti democratic move to further emasculate voices of dissent at the national level.

### **SELF- ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

Critically analyse the argument for and against the deregulation of electronic broadcast in Nigeria

### **4.0 CONCLUSION**

Although the deregulation of radio/TV transmissions in Nigeria has come a long way, a lot needs to be done in terms of minimising so many restrictions that come with it. Some of these restrictions have been pointed out above.

### **5.0 SUMMARY**

This unit examined the circumstance that led to the dawn of private participation in Radio/TV transmission in Nigeria. To this end, arguments for and against deregulation, major provision of the decree backing the deregulation and the snags associated with the decree were discussed.

### **6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT**

Identify and critically evaluate the major provision of Decree 38 of 1992, with particular reference to the deregulation of broadcast stations.

## 7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

Ndolo, I. S. & Ezinwa, C. (2011). "Regulation Environment of Media Management in Nigeria". *In: I.S Ndolo (Ed.). Contemporary Issues in Communication and Society*. Enugu: Rhyce Kerex.

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## **UNIT 3      NATIONAL      BROADCAST      COMMISSION (NBC)**

### **CONTENTS**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 Reasons for the Establishment of NBC
  - 3.2 Functions of NBC
  - 3.3 Matters Arising
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

For nearly six decades, the Nigerian broadcast industry was under the economic and political control of the Federal, Regional and State governments (Ndolo: 2005:115). This government monopoly over ownership and control of broadcast stations in Nigeria continued amid persistent call for the deregulation of the industry until 1992. Then, the military president of Nigeria, General Ibrahim Babangida as stated in unit 2 of this module promulgated Degree number 38 which empowered private investors to own and operate broadcast stations. The decree also established the National Broadcast Commission (NBC) to regulate the affairs of broadcasting in Nigeria. This unit is designed to discuss NBC as an important issue in Nigeria mass media industry.

### **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- explain the rationale for establishing NBC
- discuss the major provisions of the decree establishing NBC
- examine the statutory responsibilities of NBC.

### **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

#### **3.1 Reasons for the Establishment of NBC**

As we noted earlier, the federal military government in 1992 deregulated the broadcast industry in Nigeria. Deregulation of broadcast industry simply means removal of government monopoly over ownership and

operation of electronic media. By deregulation, therefore, government, groups and individuals are free to own and operate broadcast stations with the government providing the legal framework guiding the activities of the broadcast stations.

It is the need to provide effective guidelines for the operation of private broadcast stations that led to the establishment of NBC. The rationale behind the establishment of the commission, therefore, was to regulate broadcast contents in Nigeria. This regulation was viewed to be necessary considering the fear that some unscrupulous private owners of broadcast stations may be tempted to use their stations to undermine the interest and security of the nation if not properly checked.

The National Broadcasting Commission Decree Number 38 of 1992 empowered the Commission to take full responsibility of licensing broadcasting stations, allocating airwaves to the licensees, and regulating broadcast contents in terms of ratio of local and foreign contents. Section 2(1) of the Decree clearly defines the powers of the commission as:

The commission shall have responsibility of:

- advising the federal military government generally on the implementation of the National Mass Communication Policy with particular reference to broadcasting
- receiving, processing and considering applications for ownership of radio and television stations including cable television services, direct satellite broadcasting and any other medium of broadcasting
- recommending applications through the Minister to the President, Commander-in-chief of the armed forces for the grant of radio and television licenses
- regulating and controlling the broadcasting industry
- understanding research and development in the broadcasting industry
- receiving, conserving and investigating complaint from individual and bodies corporate and incorporate regarding the contents of a broadcasting stations
- upholding the principles of equity and fairness in broadcasting
- establishing and disseminating a national broadcasting code and setting standard with regard to the contents and quality of materials for broadcast
- promoting Nigerian indigenous culture, moral and community life through broadcasting
- promoting authenticated radio and television audience measurement and penetration

- initiating and harmonising government policies on trans-border direct transmission and reception in Nigeria
- regulating ethical standard and technical excellence in public, private and commercial broadcast stations in Nigeria
- monitoring broadcast for harmful emission, interferences and illegal broadcasting
- determining and applying sanctions including revocation of licenses of defaulting stations which do not operate in accordance with the broadcast code and in the interest
- approving the transmitter power, the locations of stations, area of coverage as well as regulate types of broadcast equipment to be used and
- carrying out such other activities as are necessary or expedient for the full discharge of all or any of the functions conferred on it under, or pursuant to this decree.

### **3.3 Matters Arising**

From the above, it is obvious that the enabling law establishing NBC entrusted enormous power to it. It is not out of place therefore that a number of issues are bound to arise from thereof. One of such issues bothers around Section 2(1) which empowers the Commission to give or deny approval for:

- the transmitter power
- locations of stations
- areas of coverage
- regulate types of broadcast equipment to be used.

This provision is considered an issue because it tends to stifle the survival of private broadcast stations.

Again, it is not clear why the commission should be concerned with the location of a broadcast station. When one applies for and obtains a license to operate a broadcast station, the person should be allowed to situate his/her station in any part of the country he/she deems fit.

The issue of areas of coverage and types of broadcast equipment to be used has also been of serious concern to private broadcast stations. Today, private stations are prohibited from operating beyond certain degree radius. These limitations in the area of coverage and nature of equipment have combined to give government owned broadcast stations competitive edge over some private stations that would want to cover reasonable distance. These legal provisions, however, have tended to limit the establishment and growth of private broadcast stations.

## **SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

Discuss the rationale behind the establishment of NBC.

### **4.0 CONCLUSION**

The deregulation of broadcast industry in Nigeria is a welcome development. However, some legal limitations in the enabling laws establishing National Broadcast Commission have not really enhanced the desired broadcast pluralism in Nigeria.

### **5.0 SUMMARY**

The unit centered on the issues arising from the establishment of the National Broadcast Commission (NBC). Issues relating to the rationale behind the establishment of the commission, and the functions of the commission and matters arising from thereof were discussed.

### **6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT**

In spite of the deregulation of broadcast industry in Nigeria, private broadcast stations suffer a number of limitations. Identify and discuss these limitations.

### **7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING**

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## UNIT 4 FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT

### CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 Background to the Freedom of Information Act to FOI Act
  - 3.2 The Essence of the Act
  - 3.3 Thoughts on Major Provisions of the Act
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
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### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Nigerian constitution, like the constitutions of other nations and the legal documents of most human rights bodies recognise press freedom as key to individual rights and liberty (Nwodu: 2006). Section 36 (1) of the 1979 constitution (now section 39 (1) of 1999) for instance states that: “Every person shall be entitled to freedom of expression, including freedom to hold opinions and to receive and impart ideas and information without interference”.

In principle, this constitutional provision presupposes that the press as the custodian of public conscience should have unlimited access to information. This is true given that individual freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas according to Nwodu (2006: 159) “can only be guaranteed in a social climate where the press enjoys unrestricted freedom”. In practice, however, the Nigerian press suffers a number of restrictions to the extent the public demand for the passage of freedom of information bill into an Act was considered worthwhile. The essence of this unit is to examine the circumstance that gave birth to what is now known as Freedom of Information Act 2011.

### 2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- outline the hindrances to free flow of information
- itemise the major provisions of the Freedom of Information Act
- offer an evaluation of the limitations of the Act.

### 3.0 MAIN CONTENT

#### 3.1 Background to the Freedom of Information Act to FOI Act

The Nigerian legal environment is replete with draconian and anti-press freedom laws that tend to gag the press. Some of such restrictive Decrees and Acts include but not limited to:

- the controversial “public officers (protection Against False Accusation) Decree No 4 of 1984 which sought to protect government official from the prying eye of the press
- the Official Secrets Act of 1962 and which was reviewed in 1962 and which listed certain official documents as classified document”. According to Nwodu (2006:166) a document is “classified if such document or information contained therein is to be used strictly within government circles”. The import is that such document is not meant for public consumption even when the information contained therein may be of public interest.
- the Criminal Code Act Cap 77 of 1990 which empowers the Federal and State governments to “confiscate any publication likely to bring the government to ridicule, odium or public contempt or inciting the masses against the government with the government determining the likelihood of a publication to cause the said action(s) (Nwodu, 2006)

There are many of such laws that tend to impede individual and press freedom to access, receive and disseminate information. The snag with these legal provisions no matter how good they may seem to be is that they are often misapplied with deliberate intension to erode the very little freedom allowed the press under the law. As Nwabueze (2005) rightly puts it, the snag is that the laws are “often mischievously interpreted to include other information or public records that are of public interest”.

The issue here, therefore, is: how can journalists function effectively in the face of these militating laws limiting the press sacred role of informing the public of government action and inactions. Of truth, it is not clear under the law, where the government right to conserve certain information to itself end and where public rights to know what those in government (that are hold in public trust) are doing or fail to do begins.

This is the circumstance that gave vent to the call for liberalising access to information in Nigeria. The import is that the limitations imposed on journalists’ access to information that is of public interest created the

background for the need, call for and subsequent promulgation of Freedom of Information Act.

### **3.2 The Essence of the Act**

The call for the Freedom of Information Act arose because of the need for greater public (particularly the press) access to information. The bill was, therefore, enacted into law in 2011 to serve the following core purposes' as contained in the preface to the act:

- provide unhindered public access to public records and or information
- protect public records and information to the extent consistent with national interest
- protect individual right to privacy
- protect serving public officers from adverse consequences for disclosing certain official information
- establish procedures for the achievement of those purposes and related purposes therefore.

This clearly shows that the essence of the Act is to limit to a considerable extent, the impediments and sufficiently enhances access to the government information in the interest of the public. In a nutshell, the Act is meant to encourage free flow of information by allowing individuals (including journalists) greater freedom to receive, hold and disseminate certain information that could hitherto pass for official secret without hindrance and or encumbrance.

### **3.3 Thoughts on Some Provisions of the Act**

Although the Act is relatively new and has not been properly digested, some of the major provisions are worth discussing here. First, Section (1) of the Act clearly stated thus:

- Notwithstanding anything contained in any other Act, Law or Regulation, the right to any person to access or request information, whether or not contained in any written form, which is in the custody or possession of any public official; agency or institution however described is hereby established.

The issue of concern here however is that by this very provision, there should be unlimited access to government agencies and institutions' documents upon application. By implication, this provision tends to render invalid, the Official Secrets Act which empowers government and its agencies to classify documents and by so doing, impede access to and dissemination of such information. The question is: how can any

application or request for information based on this provision receive favourable consideration when there is no evidence that the repugnant Official Secret Act has been repealed?

Though the Act provides in Section 2(3) and 3(6) that any person denied right of access conferred in the Act has right to institute proceedings in the court to compel compliance to the provisions of the Act, it is still not clear how this provisions can be enforced with Official Secrets Acts still in force.

And this brings us to another major provision in the Act which is concerned with the nature of documents public institutions are allowed by the Act to publish. These can be found in section 3(3) spreading from A to P. A tight summary of the document to be published range from description of responsibilities of an institution to institutional regulation governing employees functions and conditions of service; shades of opinions expressed in the adjudication of cases; receipts or expenditure of public or other funds of the institution, institutions policy plans, recommendations and decision; voting and participants in the institutions voting and mode of employment, contract awards and grants.

The snag with this provision is that it tends to underscore the very essence of freedom of information. The limitation imposed on the nature of information that should be made available to members of the public upon application appears to be further classification of document in line with the provisions of Official Secret Acts. A true freedom of information to my mind should emphasise conditions for responsible use of public information and not to prescribe aspects of public information to be applied for and used.

Besides, the Act did not make provision that empowers an applicant to an institution's information to check the validity of information provided against the actual documentations of the institution. This snag is weighty given the fact that an institution may deliberately decide to distort the information its give out to applicant knowing that the applicant has no legal backing to cross check what was given against what is actually on record. It is also instructive to comment on Section 13(1) under V of the Act. This provision states that a public institution can deny an application for any information where the information sought:

- Constitute an invasion of personal privacy under section 15 of this Act. However, where the interest of the public would be better served by having such record being made, having such

record being made available this exemption to disclose shall not apply.

According to Click and Bird (1979:274), the right to privacy entails a person's right to be left alone, to keep his name and picture out of the mass media as his right of privacy". Invasion of privacy, therefore, means "mass media incursion into a person's private life or activities" (Nwodu; 2006:185). The snag, however, is that "there is a very thin line between public life and private life of public figures, especially celebrities and political office holders (Nwodu; 2006:180). This is why Baran (1999:395) raised a number of critical questions thus:

- Do public figures forfeit their right to privacy? In what circumstance? Are the president's marital problems newsworthy if they do not get in the way of public? Who is a public figure? When are people's sexual orientations newsworthy? Do you report the names of women who have been raped or the names of juvenile offenders? When is secret taping permissible?

All these rhetorical questions point to one direction - it is not clear where one's private life ends and public life begins. This is true given that public life according to Nwodu (2006:189) "has a way of interfering with private life"

However, Section 13(1) of the act merely protects individual right to privacy without defining when private life becomes newsworthy and of public interest. Even Section 15(1) 1 – V which tried to spell out personal information which an applicant can be denied failed to draw a line between public life of celebrities and political office holders and their private life.

Thus, the Act failed to recognise that news worthiness remains the traditional determinant of news. Journalist are therefore not expected to shy away from reporting a private life that is news worthy and of public interest simply because it is considered to be repugnant to individual right to privacy. This is why Click and Bird (1999) counsels:

- When news worthiness can be proved, a person generally cannot collect damages for invasion of privacy, but if the material in question was used without his consent for advertising or commercial purposes, or in action, a person's privacy generally has been invaded.

## **SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

Identify and discuss the major provisions of the Freedom of Information Act.

### **4.0 CONCLUSION**

Although the enactment of Freedom of Information Bill into an Act is a welcome development, there are some bottlenecks with the provisions of the Act that would further impede access to public information under the act. This unit examined a number of the provisions that need revisiting.

### **5.0 SUMMARY**

This unit discussed the Freedom of Information Act. The circumstances that led to the call for the Act and the major provisions of the Act were discussed extensively.

### **6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT**

Discuss the circumstances that shaped the call for freedom of information pointing out the essence of and the snags associated with the Act.

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## **UNIT 5 EXTRA LEGAL MEASURES OF PRESS CONTROL IN NIGERIA**

### **CONTENTS**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 Unlawful Detention of Journalist
  - 3.2 Beating/Killing of Journalist
  - 3.3 Seizing of Working Equipment
  - 3.4 Razing/Demolition of Media Houses
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

All over the world, national and state governments have legal means of controlling the activities of media men. Some of these legal means are often branded. “laws of libel, sedition, invasion of privacy, violation of copyright, obscenity and indecency.” (Udeze; 2012:93). Beyond these laws however, government have other brazen and suffocating means of controlling and gagging the press. It is those illegal and brazen means of suppressing the press that is called extra-legal means of press control. These means are called extra-legal control measures, because they are not rooted in law or court order. Rather they are based on the whims and caprices of those in authority and their overzealous aids”. In this unit, some of such extra-legal means of controlling the press will be discussed.

### **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- understand the meaning of extra-legal means of controlling the press
- explain the various forms of extra-legal means of controlling the press in Nigeria
- discuss the negative impact of such extra-legal means on national and professional development.

### **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

#### **3.1 Unlawful Detention of Journalist**

The term detention means “keeping or confining in security custody, someone who is undergoing trial in competent court of law over an allegation of crime “(Nwodu; 2006:76). In this case, someone who is arraigned before the court for alleged criminal act can be detained in police custody or any other lawful security custody.

The idea of unlawful detention therefore means locking up someone who has neither been charged to court nor made appearance in the court for as long as the security agents wish. This has been the case in Nigeria. At various times and occasions in Nigerian history, journalists have often be unlawfully detained and punished for discharging their official duties by government and its agents.

Minere Amakiri, the Rivers State correspondent of *The Observer* newspaper will remain a litmus test as well as classical case of unlawful detention in Nigeria. He reported intended strike action by teachers in the state which was published on the 31<sup>st</sup> birthday of the then Military Governor of the State, Commander Alfred Diette-Spiff. He was whisked away by Rivers State Security agents and given 20 strokes of the cane, unlawfully detained in a toilet while his beard and head were shaved with broken bottle. The court condemned the whipping of the journalist which according to it, was abolished by Section 385 of the Criminal Procedure Law in 1970 and award heavy penalty for every stroke of cane given to him (Ogbondah: 2003:97). However, this shows the extent the government and its agents can go in terms of abridging press freedom using extra-legal means.

#### **3.2 Beating/Killing of Journalist**

Beating/killing of journalist is another extra-legal means of controlling journalists in most nations of the world including Nigeria. Whether under the military regime or civilian administration, the beating or manhandling as well as harassing journalists and other media workers have remained a common feature of journalism practice in Nigeria.

Udeze (2012:98) cited a web site where it was documented that Ademoli Oni of *The Punch* and two reporters of *Daily Independence* (Kayode Adeji and Segun Adeleye) were rough handled by the agents of the then Speaker of Ogun State House of Assembly, Honourable Tunji Egbetokun. This is just a tip of the iceberg.

Most times those in government abusively use their official positions to intimidate, harass and beat up pressmen at the slightest provocation. The former Executive Governor of Enugu State, Dr. Chimaroke Ogbonna Nnamani once demonstrated this brazen act when he openly beat the hell out of Late Anene Ugoani, who was then the correspondent of *Anchor* newspaper. It is important to note that this public beating took place in Dr. Nnamani's home, while he (Dr. Nnamani) was burying his father and in the presence of the then President of Nigeria, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, other top federal and state government functionaries, and members of diplomatic corps.

In the case of killing of journalists, Nigeria has recorded a number of gruesome killings of some of her finest journalists. Most time accusing fingers usually point to government and its agents. According to Udeze (2012:104) "the first and most gruesome case of killing of a journalist in Nigeria was that of Dele Giwa."

Citing *Reporters Without Border*, Udeze (2012: 104) further reports that ten Nigerian journalists namely: Bayo Ohu (*The Guardian*); Samson Boyi (*The Scope*); Sam Nimfa Jan (*Details*); Fidelis Ikwuebe (Freelancer), Okezie Amarube (*News Service*); Tunde Oladepo (*The Guardian*); Godwin Agbroko (*ThisDay*); Bolade Fassi (National Association of Women Journalist); Chinedu Offoaro (*The Guardian*) and Bagauda Kaltho have been killed in the process of discharging of their duties.

Recently, a journalist was murdered in cold blood in Kaduna the capital of Kaduna State. The snag with these killings is that it instills fear in journalists and often makes them to compromise their professional responsibility. According to Udeze (2012:104) "this kind of insecurity creates a choking chill on the media practitioners and make some of them adopt the elephant posture of see, hear and say nothing".

### **3.3 Seizing of Working Equipment**

Another extra-legal method of controlling the press that is prevalent in Nigeria is the frequent seizure of equipment used by journalists in the discharge of their duties. Often times, still and video cameras are destroyed including their films with utter disregard to their cost. At times, government and its agents can go as far as the extent of destroying the plates used for printing the news and impounding media vehicles. Related to this, the frequent closure of media houses while their publications are confiscated thereby subjecting the media organisation concerned to heavy financial loss. Financial loss in the sense that when this is the case, the news medium loses the following:

- the money invested in publishing the copies of newspaper or magazine confiscated
- the money that could have been realised through circulation
- the money collected or expected from advertisers for the advertisements placed on the confiscated copies.

A news medium that does not have strong financial standing may run the risk of liquidation when this occurs.

### **3.4 Razing/Demolition of Media Houses**

According to Udeze (2012:101) this is “one of the worst crimes of those in authority against the media”. Udeze further noted that many media organisations in Nigeria have suffered this fate in the hands of unidentified and yet to be arrested agents of government in power. Most times, media organisations are either raised by government instigated fire or outrightly demolished the offices of media organisation as a result of perceived opposition to it or critical comments on government policies and actions.

Case of such brazen act of razing/demolition of media houses abound in Nigeria. They included but not limited to:

- the Circulation Department of Guardian newspaper razed by fire on 16<sup>th</sup> December, 1995 for commenting against the alleged ploy by late General Sani Abacha to transmute himself from military head of state to civilian president
- the office of Independent Communications Network publisher of *News* and *Tempo* magazines also gutted by fire on the same 15<sup>th</sup> December, 1995 by unidentified arsonists suspected to be agents of the government
- the demolition of Abuja office of Africa Independent Television (AIT) which commentators believe the action was connected to AIT’s critical stand against alleged tenure elongation by Chief Olusegun Obasanjo’s civilian administration.

### **3.5 Implications on Journalism Practice**

These extra-legal methods of controlling the press are no doubt more problematic than legally control measures. This is true since the legal measures are clearly stated in various legal documents. The implications of the use of extra-legal means in press control are therefore many and included:

- journalists may be unaware of how the government and its agent may interpret or react to a fair, objective and constructive criticism and what the consequence of such ignorance may be
- it kills journalists' interest and zeal for investigative and interpretative journalism needed by the audience for informed decision
- it does not enhance democratic development since no true democracy can survive in an atmosphere where press freedom is acutely restricted
- it places the lives of journalists on the line to the extent many will prefer dishing out blatant lies and/or half truths to please government and its agents to serving the audience with actual information rooted on public interest.

### **SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

Discuss the various extra-legal methods of controlling the media in Nigeria.

### **4.0 CONCLUSION**

Cases of extra-legal methods of controlling the activities of media men abound in greater proportion in Nigeria. In spite of the enthronement of democracy in Nigeria, not much have changed in terms of the use of extra-legal means to gag and control the press. It is, therefore, necessary that the Nigerian Union of Journalists (NUJ) should rise up against such repressive methods that have crippled journalism practice in Nigeria.

### **5.0 SUMMARY**

The emphasis in this unit is on the extra-legal control measures impinging on journalism practice in Nigeria. Issues relating to beating and killing of journalists were discussed. Also issues regarding the closure of media offices, damaging of media tools/equipment and demolition of media houses were discussed.

### **6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT**

Explain the concept "unlawful detention" and state clearly the implications of extra-legal methods of press control on journalism practice in Nigeria.

## 7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

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## **MODULE 4      PROFESSIONAL      ISSUES      IN      THE NIGERIAN MASS MEDIA**

- Unit 1      Press Freedom in Nigeria  
Unit 2      Mass Media and Politics in Nigeria

### **UNIT 1      PRESS FREEDOM IN NIGERIA**

#### **CONTENTS**

- 1.0      Introduction
- 2.0      Objectives
- 3.0      Main Content
  - 3.1      The Meaning of Press Freedom
  - 3.2      Factors Impinging on the Press in Nigeria
  - 3.3      The Way Out
- 4.0      Conclusion
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#### **1.0      INTRODUCTION**

The mass media industry in Nigeria has come a long way, dating back to 1859 when Rev. Henry Townsend published the first newspaper entitled *Iwe Irohin*. The industry has grown in leaps and bounds. Today, virtually all genres of mass media in the country are innovating and doing well. In the print sector, digital printings with high aesthetic value as well as rich qualitative and quantitative editorial contents have been the order of the day. The broadcast industry is not left out. The application of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in broadcast service has enhanced and continued to enhance the pictorial, editorial and advertorial qualities of broadcast contents in recent time.

However, the story of the mass media industry in the country is not all rosy. The establishment of and operation of mass media industry in Nigeria has thrown up some professional challenges. The essence of this unit therefore is to equip you with some professional issues arising from the establishment and operation of mass media industry in Nigeria. It is said that the individual's rights to freedom of expression is directly tied to the freedom of the press. This is true given that a free press offers healthy platform for the individual to express and receive opinions, views and information. It cannot be doubted therefore that any country's mass media should include press freedom. This unit, therefore, discusses the issues associated with press freedom in Nigeria.

## 2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- explain the meaning of press freedom as a concept
- list the hindrances to effective press freedom
- discuss how the Nigerian press has coped with press freedom.

## 3.0 MAIN CONTENT

### 3.1 The Meaning of Press Freedom

According to Dennis (1984 “freedom of the press is said to assure satisfaction of society’s need for maximum flow of information and opinion and the individual’s right to self fulfillment”. The import is that press freedom as Nwodu (2006:160) points out means that the press must be free to carry out its sacred function of information gathering, processing and dissemination in any society without any slightest form of internal or external control.

Ndolo (2006:221) aptly defines press freedom as “a press free from governmental control, and the relationship of such a press to the form and stability of the government and to economic growth and quality of life”. By implication, press freedom is the right of the mass media to gather, process, hold, store, retrieve and disseminate news, information, opinions, ideas and views without hindrance (Nwodu, 2006:160). In essence, press freedom is said to exist where the government hardly interferes in the activities of the press with reference to the right of the mass media to receive and communicate news, ideas, opinions and information on the premise that it aligns rightly with democratic value of openness, justice and equity (Ndolo: 2006 and Kogah: 2009).

### 3.2 The Legal Foundations of Press Freedom

Press freedom as earlier pointed out in this unit is rooted in the inalienable right of the individual to express opinion without hindrances. This right is clearly stated in Article 19 of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights which states that:

- Everyone has right to freedom of opinion and expression, this right include freedom to hold opinion without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through the media regardless of frontier.

Years before this declaration, the US 1790 Bill of Rights popularly reprinted as First Amendment Act stated that “Congress shall make no law... abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peacefully to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances”.

Similar provision is contained in Article 19(2) of the 1966 International Convention on Civil and Political Rights where it states that:

- Everyone shall have the right to freedom of expression. This right shall include freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontier, either orally, in writing or in print in the form of art, or through any other media of his choice.

The implication of all these provisions is that press freedom is a crucial issue in mass media practice to the extent that “it registered heavy presence in the constitution of most nations including human right based organisations” (Nwodu: 2006:158). In Nigeria for instance, Section 36(1) of the 1979 constitution as amended in Section 39(1) of 1999 Constitution stated that “every person shall be entitled to freedom of expression including freedom to hold opinions and receive and impart ideas and information without interference”. These constitutional and human rights declarations according to Nwodu (2006:159) clearly indicate that:

- there is a thin line between press freedom and individual freedom of expression
- individual freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas can only be guaranteed in a social climate where the press enjoys unrestricted freedom
- information is sacred therefore restricting its flow would amount to gross and brazen denial of human right to freedom of expression
- the power to gather, process and disseminate information is divine right rather than privilege which the press must enjoy to the fullest without hindrance by any individual or authority within the society.

In all, press freedom is rooted in the legal framework of nations which guarantees unrestricted press access to information as well as the freedom to process and disseminate same for public consumption.

### 3.3 Factors Impinging on Press Freedom in Nigeria

Ben Nwabueze cited in Ewelukwa (2004:92) notes that a free press indeed creates an enabling environment for the enthronement of egalitarian society. The snag, however, is that various constitutions and organs that emphasise press freedom still contain clauses that limit press freedom. Nwodu (2006:161) for instance, observes that though the European Convention on Human Rights in its Article 10 of 1950 which took effect in 1953 provided for individual right to freedom of thought and expression, the same document quickly provided a clause which states: “these articles shall not prevent states from requiring the licensing of broadcasting television or cinema enterprises”.

In Nigeria, a number of legal limitations have combined to whittle down the freedom of press. Buttressing this point, Nwodu (2006:161) notes that the draconian decrees promulgated by various military regimes in the country which are still in force have continued to diminish the freedom of press in Nigeria. Nwodu further contends that absolute freedom does not exist. At best, we can talk about degrees of freedom since absolute freedom is hindered by a number of factors to include:

- legal provision which provides for freedom of the press and at the same time denies it through some superiors clause
- security bodies/operatives which at times become overzealous to the extent of confiscating publications at will in pretext that such publications constitute threat to national security and interest
- political and economic problems which tend to stifle the operation of non-government media through denial of subsidies and other economic assistance; restriction of scope of distribution (for print media) and reach (for electronic media); hiking news reel and rate of importation thereto
- denial of public right to know by the government agents through over classification of government documents and papers and excessive limitation of mass media access to government information
- self and external censorships through mass media practitioners’ deliberate distortion of facts and publication of meaningless government handouts; brazen intimidation, harassment and manhandling of media practitioners; closure of mass media houses and of recent, the bombing of mass media houses by dissidents like the Boko Haram insurgents.

### 3.4 The Way Out

From the above, it is obvious that absolute press freedom does not exist in Nigeria and indeed elsewhere. At best and as earlier pointed out, press in liberal democracies like America and of recent Nigeria, can only enjoy reasonable degree of freedom and not absolute freedom (Nwodu 2006:163). In order to ensure effective enthronelement of press freedom there is, therefore, need to ensure that:

- draconian military decree like the 1984 Decree No. 4 dubbed “public officers (Protection Against False Accusation) Decree which are still in force are repelled
- public servants should be encouraged to keep accurate records of government transactions and make government information readily available to the press upon application in line with the provision of Freedom of Information Act
- dubious licensing of channels of mass communication by government should be relaxed to encourage mass media pluralism and by extension, encourage the freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas with less friction
- journalists should be thorough in verifying their facts and dogged in reporting issues of public interest to respectively avoid abuse of the freedom of expression and self censorship
- governments should adopt legal means in bringing recalcitrant journalists/media organisations to book rather than the usual brazen use of force, intimidation, confiscation of published matters and proscription of media houses without trial.

### 4.0 CONCLUSION

“The existence of free press and freedom of speech” according to Nwachukwu (1999:298) “is critical for fortifying the democratic process”. By implication the democratic experience in Nigeria can only thrive and stabilize if the press enjoys greater freedom to function as the watchdog of the society. In doing this, the press must not be stifled with draconian laws, economic and political pressures and other forms of repressive means that deny the press free access to information.

### 5.0 SUMMARY

This unit examined press freedom as one of the critical issues in Nigeria’s mass media industry. Precisely, the meaning of press freedom, the legal underpinning of press freedom, the impediments to press freedom and how to achieve social environment that would guarantee press freedom in Nigeria were discussed.

## 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

What do you understand by press freedom? Using Nigeria as a frame of analysis, discuss the factors that impinge on press freedom.

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## **UNIT 2 MASS MEDIA AND POLITICS IN NIGERIA**

### **CONTENTS**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 Mass Media and Political Development
  - 3.2 Mass Media and Nigeria's Democratic Process
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
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### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

The main thrust of this unit is to discuss the political issues arising from ownership and operation of mass media in Nigeria. Gerbner (1981:15) once described politics as 'a word game'. Okigbo (1992:123) reinforces this when he also described politics as largely 'a verbal profession'. These witty statements clearly show that "no human relation or interaction can take place without one form of communication or the other" (Nwosu: 1990,323). This explains why Nwodu (2004:50) argues that "proper management of information and communication is at the root of any successful political process". The implication of all these is that communication that comes through the mass media is very essential in the political process. This unit, therefore, focused on exploring mass media role in Nigeria's political process.

### **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- explain the mass media roles in a political process
- discuss mass media partisanship.

### **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

#### **3.1 Mass Media and Political Development**

Onyisi (1996:137) observes that "in a democratic system...exercise of power or authoritative allocation of values is mainly through communication'. He further adds 'through the mass media, political parties manipulate party symbols, political rallies, etc'. Akpan (1986:252) earlier observes:

- The broadcast media exist to serve the information needs of the citizenry. Editors, communicators, anchormen and newsmen as a whole work on the principle that the public is entitled to all the facts in a political situation and that on the basis of these facts, it make its own decision. The policies and aims of government are made known through the media and are examined exhaustively by opposition and the general public through the same media.

The implication is that the mass media through political news, comments and electioneering campaigns help immensely in shaping the political system. McComb and Shaw's (1972:75) study of press coverage of 1968 American Presidential election confirmed that the mass media do actually influence political process, especially, voting behavior. Commenting on McComb and Shaw's study, Nwodu (2003:53) notes that "the mass media in addition to setting agenda for political discussion, also dictate the issue on which many people ultimately based their voting decisions". Mass media, therefore, play significant role in nurturing and shaping the political system by:

- objectively focusing on political candidates antecedents with a view to reinforce or expose what is respectively good or bad about their images and reputations
- creating necessary awareness about a candidate and his/her campaign
- guide the electorate's voting decision by influencing their opinions through sound in-depth interpretation and analyses of political matters
- educating the electorate on the overall electoral process and procedures as well as adequately informing them about the election dates, and other relevant information about the election (Nwodu, 2003:53).

### **3.2 Mass Media and Nigeria Democratic Process**

The pre-independent press in Nigeria was united in fighting a common enemy which was colonialism. However, the orientation of post independence mass media organs in the country differs significantly. Scholars like Uche (1989), Nwosu (1990), Nzeribe (1992), Onyisi (1990), Galadima and Enighe (2002); and Nwodu (2003) agree that rather than committing themselves to the preservation of national unity, identity and integration, the post independence mass media in Nigeria were concerned with reinforcing tribal and sectional loyalties and promotion of partisanship. In the first republic for instance, Omu (1978:248) reports:

- In the major events of the sixties, the Action Group crises of 1962, the 1962-63 and 1963-64 census and the federal election of the 1964 and its aftermaths – newspapers provided a remarkable example of overzealous and irresponsible partisanship recklessness.

The second republic also witnessed high level of mass media partisanship in addition to the rise and fall of many ad hoc media organisations. The ad hoc media organisations last for as long as the political interest of their organisations were established to service the interest of the political class, who could not gain access to the ruling party controlled media organs either at the centre or at the state level. Such media organisations were branded ad hoc media because they can only last for as long the political interest of their owners last. In the case of partisanship, most media organisations then ignored the ethical and ideological percepts of the profession which emphasise fairness, balance and equal access to pursue parochial interest of their owners. Nwosu (1990:31) summarised it thus “partisanship, ethnic and religious chauvinism, blackmailing of political candidates, distortion of reality, corruption and politicisation of the North-South dichotomy”.

The situation did not change in the Third Republic. Then, Nzeribe (1992:51) for instance reports that “derisive and abusive name-calling persisted in the print and electronic media and no attempt was made to address some representations that were carried over from the politics of the second republic”. In all, the characteristics of both the electronic and print media in the country with reference to their treatment of political issues could be described as:

- partisanship- promoting the political interest of the owners against the ethical demands of fairness, objectivity and balance
- reckless reportage - blowing some political issues out of proportion to the extent of creating tension and panic in the land. A study of audience credibility rating of Nigerian mass media organs during June 12 crisis revealed among others that reckless media reportage of June 12 crisis was largely responsible for the mass exodus of people from urban cities to their rural areas of origin-an action that claimed many lives and property (Nwodu: 1995, 62)
- parochial and tribalistic - political issues, trends and events are often analysed based on tribal interest and on the parochial and tribal interest/sentiments of the media analysts. The media analysts often hide under the guise of public interest to promote their clannish/ parochial interest.

## **SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

Discuss the specific roles the mass media can play in enhancing the political system of a country.

### **4.0 CONCLUSION**

The mass media system of any nation is an essential tool for the enhancement of the political system. For the mass media to contribute effectively in enhancing the political system, the practitioners must of necessity shun partisanship, reckless reportage of political issues, unverified reports and destructive promotion of clannish/parochial interests which have remained the existing order till date. It is instructive to, therefore, conclude this unit with Opubor's (1980:230) submission that:

- To keep democracy alive, at the level of information requires vigilance in ensuring that the quality of information obtained by the layman and specialist, on any important issue, does not become so divergent as to result in the actual disenfranchisement of the majority, or severe reduction in their ability to make responsible decision. Public vigilance in this direction can be guaranteed through the mass media.

### **5.0 SUMMARY**

This unit focused essentially on issues arising from mass media and politics in Nigeria. The summary of the discussions here therefore concentrated on the relevance of mass media in enhancing the political system and how Nigerian mass media reported political issues in the country over the years.

### **6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT**

Over the years, the mass media in Nigeria have been accused of partisanship. To what extent do you agree with this? Discuss other problems associated with mass media reportage of political issues in Nigeria as identified in this unit.

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## 2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- explain the main thrust of global news flow controversy
- describe how urban and rural news flow in Nigeria.

## 3.0 MAIN CONTENT

### 3.1 Brief Overview of International News Flow Debate

The circumstance that led to the global information flow controversy could be attributed to the call for a new world information order. This call was championed by many Third World and communist countries. Their contention according to Nwodu and Fab-Ukozor (2003:73) was that “international news coverage was dominated by the West, especially news from the United States of American (USA) and that of the Western Europe. Scholars in developing nations and communist Eastern European were, therefore, concerned that “the Western produced Media content were dominating that of the media of developing countries which lacked sufficient resources to create their own quality fare” (Nwodu and Fab-Ukozor, 2003:73).

Other issues raised by the developing countries to justify their call for restrictions on global information include the claim that:

- developing nations are hardly reported in the Western media. This implies that not enough attention was usually given to issues relating to developing countries in the Western Media
- developing nations are negatively portrayed on the few occasions they appear in the Western media. The argument is that whenever issues affecting developing nation appears in the Western media, it usually bother on negativity, hunger, killing, kidnapping, HIV/AIDS etc. The implication is that the Western media hardly see and report anything good about developing nations
- that information flow around the world is one directional meaning that it flows from the Western to the developing world with little or nothing flowing from developing nations to developed nations.

Based on the above claims, communication scholars and practitioners in developing world called for a new order in communication flow that would guarantee restrictions in global communication flow as well as equal exchange.

MacBride *et al* (1981:263) agreed that there exist imbalance in global news flow and supported the enthronement of New World Information and Communication Order (NWICO). UNESCO which set up MacBride Commission also accented the report. But the recommendations was not implemented since the West led by USA and Britain were opposed to NWICO which they considered to be incompatible with and repugnant to free flow of information which the West believe so much in.

Even when Hester (1985:32-33) found that there has been a directional information flow from North to South; cultural and ideological distortion and biases have been predominant in the previous years; and that the growth of technology does not correspond to increased access of people to information nationally and internationally, the old order has remained. However, the issue of great concern here is: how has information been flowing between urban and rural areas in the developing world that raised the issue of imbalance in global information flow. We shall, therefore, use Nigeria media landscape as a case in point in this discourse.

### **3.2 Urban and Rural News Flow in Nigeria**

Lessons from the above show that the concern over the directional flow of global information was brought to international attention by communication scholars and practitioners from developing countries. It also shows that these communication scholars and practitioners are worried about negative portrayals heaped upon them and minimal attentions they received from Western media

Since it is often said that charity begins at home; it is important we examine how local media cover urban and rural issues in developing nations' mass media. This will help us to fathom whether the situation at the international level is the same or at variance with the local level. Again examining the flow of news within national boundaries of developing countries is very important as it will enable us to see how according to Idemili (1992:221) "the developing nations have put their houses in order, before pointing accusing fingers to the Western media".

Few studies in this area clearly point to the fact that the same imbalance which, developing countries agitate against also takes place at the national boundaries. Beltran (1975:8), Atwood and Murphy (1982:16), Ehi (1983:35) and Idemili (1992:220) for instance, found that rural population in most developing nations are outside the reach of modern media.

Nothing seems to have changed several years after. Of truth, mass media phenomenon in Nigeria has remained an urban phenomenon covering

urban-centered issues and very minimal rural issues. Community radio has not taken off in Nigeria for the first time. Even in few places one can find community press, the contents are hardly community-orientated. Few community newspapers in Nigeria have featured contents that suggest they are copying after urban newspapers (Nwodu and Nwammuo: 2006:131):

- Urban news in Nigeria mass media are far larger than rural news. Even when news from the hinterlands managed to filter into urban-centered newspaper, radio, television and magazines, such news usually focuses on negatives. The same thing communication expert from developing countries complained against their Western countries

### **3.3 Need for Greater Rural News**

Ehi (1982:17) contends that without the rural population, “city dwellers and the whole nation might not survive”. This highly encapsulates the relevance of rural communities in national development. It also points to the fact that relegating the rural residence and their communities to the background as if they were unproductive elements will not help the nation.

There is, therefore, enormous need for greater presence of rural issues and concerns in the media. This is why Atwood and Murphy (1982:21) argue that rural news is important to rural readers. Rural news is also needed by urban residents as it helps them to understand the opportunities that abound in the rural areas.

The seemingly never-ending preferential treatment usually given to urban areas need to be reversed. The rural areas are very important sub-system of the Nigerian system and therefore, deserve sufficient mention in the countries mass media.

### **4.0 CONCLUSION**

The current pattern of flow of news in Nigeria is not too good. It is more like the situation that made Head (1977:94) to question whether we are bringing news to rural people or bringing rural people to the news. If Nigeria must effectively carry her rural residents along informationally, then the current trend calls for change. We must effectively and sufficiently bring the rural areas to the news as well as bringing important news to the rural areas. We cannot achieve this with the level of information flow imbalance between the urban and rural areas in contemporary Nigeria.

## 5.0 SUMMARY

This unit focuses on urban/rural information flow in Nigeria. Specifically, issues relating to global information flow controversy, the nature of urban-rural information flow in Nigeria and the need for greater rural news were discussed.

## 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

Discuss the global information flow controversy pointing out its implication to urban-rural information flow in Nigeria.

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## **UNIT 2 GENDER AND MASS MEDIA IN NIGERIA**

### **CONTENTS**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 Gender and Media: A Historical Overview
  - 3.2 Gender Representation in the Nigerian Mass Media
  - 3.2 Gender Images in the Nigerian Mass Media
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

According to Ekwelie (2005:81):

- A crucial battle ground for women liberation is the mass media. No matter what we think of reporters and writers in general, nobody is in any illusion as to the role newspapers and other publications can play in highlighting the status of women in the society and, more important, in helping to enhance that status.

The above assertion waters the ground for the discussion of gender and mass media as a topical issue in Nigeria's mass media industry. This unit therefore is designed to discuss some emerging issues in Nigeria mass media with emphasis on gender related issues.

### **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- trace the historical foundation of gender issues in the mass media industry
- discuss gender representation in the Nigerian mass media industry.

### **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

#### **3.1 Gender and Media: A Historical Overview**

Media practice, according to Obijiofor and Hanusch (2011) “evolved as a male-dominated profession”. Up to the end of 19<sup>th</sup> century, only few female names like Margaret Fuller, Anne Royall and Sarah Joseph Hade made it in journalism practice. In recent times, things have not changed. Obijiofor and Hanusch (2011:88) quoting Chamber et.al, (2004:15) report that:

...there were only 288 female journalists among the 12,308 journalists counted during the 1880 census, a mere 2.3 percent. By 1900 their number had risen to 7.3 percent, which more than double again the ensuing 29 years, when women made up 16.8 percent of journalists. It took another 30 years for the percentage to double yet again, up to 30 percent in 1950.

Several years after, things seem not to have changed. In Nigeria media environment for instance, it is a common fact that Journalism Schools and Departments are thickly populated by more females than males. However, this apparent heavy female presence in journalism institutions does not translate to simultaneous heavy presence in the field of practice. Today the field of practice, particularly the areas of journalism is dominated by males some of whom did not even studied journalism and or mass communication.

#### **3.2 Gender Representation in the Nigerian Mass Media**

As we noted earlier, most journalism and mass communication institutions in Nigeria are dominated by females. On the contrary, the males dominate the field of practice. It is not out of place, therefore, to conclude that gender imbalance exist in journalism/mass communication education and practice. While the imbalance in education tends to favour females, the imbalance in the field of practice on the contrary tends to favour the males. This unit therefore aims at understanding how different gender types are represented in Nigeria Mass Media industry. The 2005 National Report of Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP) evaluated the ratio of male/female representations in the Nigeria media. Report of that evaluation is presented in the table below:

**Table 2.1: News Subjects in Nigerian Television, Radio and Newspapers**

TELEVISION		RADIO		NEWSPAPERS	
Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
N	%	N	%	N	%
14	49	12	102	16	55
22%	78%	11%	89%	23%	77%

**Source: Nwodu (2005): “News: A Mirror of the World” in GMMP Nigeria National Report.**

The above report showed that in spite of the assumption that women will feature in television more than any other medium of mass communication because of its audio-visual advantage; more women were represented in the newspaper medium. Over all, greater percentage of males was represented in the media. Precisely, 78%; 89% and 77% of males were respectively represented in television, Radio and Newspapers as against the 22%; 11% and 23% respectively women in the respective media.

The implication of this very low representation is that since males dominated in these respects, so the views and opinions of males will also dominate that of women. Stretching this further, the report examined women’s and men’s role in the media with particular reference to news subjects in major topic areas. This result is again presented in the table below:

**Table 2.2: News Subjects in Major Areas**

TOPICS	FEMALE	MALE
Celebrity, Arts and Sports	5	36
Crime and Violence	4	15
Economy	7	37
Others	0	0
Politics and Government	17	88
Science and Health	3	15
Social and Legal	6	16
Weather Report	0	0
Total	42	206.

**Source: Nwodu (2005). “News: A Mirror of the World” in GMMP Nigeria National Report**

This result also showed that there is a wide gulf between males and females in terms of news subject. It means males make more news than

females. The implication is that disparity also exists in the position and occupations of males and females in Nigeria society and this disparity rubs on female representation in the media. According to Nwodu (2005:17):

- ...those who occupy better position or occupation in the society tend to have greater access to the media. The implication therefore is that where female and male news subjects occupy similar positions or occupations in the society there will be limited variance in female/male projection in the media.

So more males are projected in the Nigerian Mass Media than females because males tend to occupy greater positions of authority and take action or say things that are more news worthy than females.

### **3.3 Gender Image in Nigeria Mass Media**

The above scenario clearly point to the fact that females are marginally represented in Nigerian media. It also shows that males are robustly represented in the media. This by implication shows that male views and opinions dominated that of female in Nigerian media. In the same vein, the images of females in the media are hardly positive when compared to that of males. A whole lot of times women are portrayed in Nigerian media as weaker vessels who must ride behind their husband's back to make news.

Nwodu (2008:5) decries this where he queries if anything would go bad if women are reported on their own merit without alluding to their husband. Nwodu (2008:7) further reports that wives of the president, governors and notable politicians are often reported and portrayed in the news from the background of their husband. Even when the women concerned occupy prominent positions in the society that could sufficiently identify them as credible news source, journalists would prefer to address them as wife of the president or governor of certain state in their news reports.

Another aspect of gender images that tend to demean the representation by women in Nigeria media can be found in the nature of pictures published. Often times, women are either showcased in a half nude manner or as tools for product marketing. Either way, the manner and frequency of exposure of majority of women who seem to flaunt their nature-given endowment is worrisome. While most men in the same advertisement or display will dress properly, women will be portrayed in an alluring but brazenly erotic manner that debases womanhood.

Also, the role most women play in the media call, for attention when compared to that of males. While women play menial roles more as presenters, women page editor, fashion and entertainment reporters, most men play core roles like producers, editors, and managers etc. All in all, there is enormous great imbalance in the role and image of women in Nigeria media. This call for caution if the negative portrayal of women must give way for a more positive portrayal that could contribute meaningfully to national development.

#### **4.0 CONCLUSION**

Women no doubt contribute immensely to national development. Women, therefore, demand fair treatment. This is why our media organs should rethink their approaches to reporting gender related issues in Nigerian mass media.

#### **5.0 SUMMARY**

This unit is concerned with issues relating to gender and the media. Thus, issues relating to gender representation in the media and image of gender in Nigeria mass media were discussed.

#### **6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT**

Discuss the historical perspective of gender and media in Nigeria pointing out how different gender types are represented in Nigerian media.

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## **UNIT 3    ICTs AND THE MASS MEDIA INDUSTRY IN NIGERIA**

### **CONTENTS**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 Meaning of ICTs
  - 3.2 Extend ICTs Application in the Nigerian Mass Media
  - 3.3 Problems Associated with ICTs
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

In discussing issues in the Nigerian mass media, it is important to include issues revolving around the impact of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs). This has become necessary in view of the fact that “technological convergence is impacting greatly on journalism practice...” (Obijiofor and Hanusch, 2011:177). This unit, therefore, examines how the ICTs have impacted and are still impacting on the mass media industry in Nigeria.

### **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- explain the meaning of ICTs
- show how it has impacted on the mass media
- discuss the problems associated with its application to the industry.

### **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

#### **3.1 Meaning of ICTs**

Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) according to Nwodu (2004:76) refer “to a number of communication hardware used for instantaneous dissemination of information and social values across the globe.” Nwodu further informs that ICTs are of two broad categories which are:

- a. telecommunication which developed from analog to digital telephony and later mobile cellular and GSM phones; fiber

- optics, micro wave technology, satellite technology, cable network etc.
- b. computer communications which are concerned with network of computer that are linked together and which facilitate exchange of message, documents, images, motion pictures and other relevant information via internet, facebook, YouTube and other forms of social media (Nwodu, 2004:72).

Regardless of the form, ICTs have enhanced communication across the globe. Precisely, ICTs have made communication around the world faster, clearer, cheaper and easier.

### 3.2 Extent of ICTs Applications in Nigeria Mass Media

Mass Media organs in Nigeria are fast undergoing serious improvement. The improvements span through the quality and quantity of contents; the speed of reach and accessibility; and so on. The driving force behind the improvement is to a large extent, the effective adaptation of the Information and Communication Technologies in the process of news and information gathering, processing, and dissemination. According to Nwodu (2007:166):

- Many newspapers and magazines are read on-line, while letters to the editor and opinion articles are now sent to audience choice medium via electronic mail. Also, some radio and television signals can be accessed via the internet and reaction to the signals and other burning issues in the country can be sent to the editors via e-mail.

This means that greater percentage of mass media contents in contemporary time are no longer local issues. Nwodu (2009:167) again observes that because of the healthy adaptation of ICTs in the Nigeria mass media, most of the countries mass media contents are read, listened to and viewed in virtually all corners of the world, thereby contributing to the phenomenal globalisation of the world community.

Today, digital broadcasting and printing are fast taking over from analogous approach to broadcasting and printing. The advantages of this development are many and include but not limited to:

- helping to change negative representations of Nigeria and Nigerians in Western media. This is why Obijiofor and Hanusch (2011:193) argue that “new media technologies have helped to challenge and transform Africa’s (**Nigeria inclusive**, emphasis mine) images that are portrayed in Western media such as image of war, violence and poverty”

- helping to diffuse Nigeria's cultures in different nations as Nigerian's and non-Nigerians abroad can log on to Nigerian website, on-line Nigerian print and broadcast media and get exposed to Nigerian cultural content
- enhancing access to the mass media and feedback mechanism as people can easily access media contents in the internet, make contributions to national issues and issues in the media through the new media technologies.

### **3.3 Problems Associated with ICTs**

It is obvious that some news media in Nigeria have gone digital. Media men and media consumers are gradually getting adapted to the offerings of the new communication technologies. However, a number of problems still lie under way. Some of these problems are:

- internet use in Nigeria is still low particularly at rural communities. Internet penetration in Nigerian communities is quite low to the extent the use is still limited to few privileged urban residents
- related to this is illiteracy. Even in this 21<sup>st</sup> century, very few Nigerians are computer literate. Yet, both the media men and media audience need appreciable degree of literacy to plug in well in the exchange of news, information and data via the new media technologies. There is need therefore for training and re-training of Nigerian youths and media practitioners in the use of ICTs for optimum results
- erratic power supply has not encouraged sufficient access to new media technologies wherever they exist in Nigeria. Most time National Electric Power Authority (now Power Holding Nigeria Limited) has not been able to make power supply sufficiently available across the length and breadth of the country. Even few urban areas that are privileged to enjoy power supply from the national power grid, it is very rare to have full day uninterrupted power supply in such areas (Nwodu; 2007:92)
- there is also, limited control over the nature of information posted on the web. Oftentimes, news and information are distributed without verification and regards to fairness, objectivity and balance.

### **4.0 CONCLUSION**

New media technologies have no doubt introduced innovations in the broadcast and print media industries in Nigeria. Some of those innovations include easy access; faster and or speedy message delivery; clearer and enhanced quality of information; to mention a few. In spite

of these advantages, the new media technologies also have limiting factors some of which we have been mentioned above.

## **5.0 SUMMARY**

This unit discussed the meaning and impact of ICTs on Nigeria mass media industry. Thus, the application of ICTs in mass media practice and the problems associated with it were discussed in this unit.

## **6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT**

Discuss the benefits and problems associated with the adaptation of ICTs in Nigeria mass media practice.

## **7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING**

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## **UNIT 4 ICTs AND CITIZEN JOURNALISM IN NIGERIA**

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### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

The emergence of Information and Communication Technology (ICTs) has given rise to a new genre of journalism practice. Prior to the advent of the technologies, particularly, the internet, publishers, editors, sub-editors and reporters as gate-keepers, determine what goes out of media organisations as news. Today, the trend is changing and very fast too. Traditional journalists now compete with members of the public over what news or information is made available to audience members. This unit, therefore, is concerned with exploring the growth of citizen journalism practice in Nigeria.

### **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- explain the concept of citizen journalism
- discuss the extent of its practice in Nigeria.

### **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

#### **3.1 What is Citizen Journalism?**

One of the revolutions introduced in journalism practice around the globe by the new media technologies is the dawn of citizen journalism. Citizen journalism is, therefore, an important issue that is worth discussing as far as issues in mass media of any nation is concerned. What then is citizen journalism? The term citizen journalism has been given so many names across cultures. Prominent among such names are:

- i. Public or participatory or democratic journalism (Baaser:2008)

- ii. Guerrilla journalism (Case: 2007)
- iii. Street journalism (Witschge:2012)

Regardless of the appeal, citizen journalism is a special form of journalism in which members of the public (that is citizens) play active roles in the process of collecting, reporting, analysing and disseminating news and information (Brownman and Wills:2003).

Citizen journalism is made possible by the increasing access to and users' knowledge of web-enabled cellular phone, digital cameras and sundry social media. This has equipped citizens of the world to report breaking news accompanied with live pictures and images faster than the traditional media. Most of the news and images concerning the recent Arab Spring and the Occupy Movements were products of citizen journalism. Glaser (2006) summarises the idea behind citizen journalism in the following words:

- ...people without professional journalism training can use the tool of modern technology and the global distribution of the internet to create argument or fact-check media on their own or in collaboration with others. For examples, you might write about a city council meeting on your blog or in an online forum. Or you could fact-check a newspaper article from the main stream media and point out factual errors or bias on your blog. Or you might snap a digital photo of a newsworthy event happening in your town and post it online. Or you might video tape a similar event and post it on a site such as YouTube.

### **3.2 Evolution of Citizen Journalism in Nigeria**

Adum and Ekwugha (2010:197) once observe that:

- In a situation where internet connectivity becomes rife in Nigeria, like the GSM is, the practice of citizen journalism may mean that many Nigerians would freely exchange information without the intermediary of gatekeepers or fear of government censorship.

Today, citizen journalism is making steady in-road in Nigeria. YouTube, facebook, twitter and other social media users now upload news/information from remote part of Nigeria for public consumption. Also, breaking news and information in traditional mass media are now shared on virtually all these social media. As a matter of fact, social events, criminal acts, sundry activities that may ordinarily escape the attention of traditional media or weeded out in the process of gate keeping are reported in the social media.

The climax of citizen journalism in Nigeria so far was witnessed in early 2012 when the federal government announced the removal of oil subsidy. Then some group of concerned Nigerians mobilised other Nigerians against the removal via the social media. It is not in doubt that the movement dubbed “Occupy Nigeria” in facebook was effectively utilised in mobilising Nigerians towards active participation in the protest against the subsidy removal. The issue therefore is that social media are fast becoming effective tools of mobilisation for social action more than the traditional media. The reason being that messages posted on social media not only get across to the specific target on time but are also easily believed and acted upon by the target audience. The implication is that the traditional mass media should rise up to the challenge of adjusting to the new trend or they will lose their power of social mobilisation.

### **3.3 Problems of Citizen Journalism**

The driving force behind citizen journalism remains the social media which have facilitated social networking among peoples of the world. This brand of journalism is therefore practised more by citizens rather than the professional journalists. For this reason therefore, citizen journalism has often been criticised of lacking essentially in objectivity which is a major factor in determining newsworthiness in traditional journalism. This is considered a problem since the members of the public involved in the practice of citizen journalism often report what they see with high degree of bias and highest level of subjectivity.

Another problem associated with citizen journalism is that it is unregulated even as the source may be hidden. The social media cannot be easily regulated by law and as such users often use unidentifiable names to distribute all forms of information with little or no regard to libel, sedition and invasion of privacy laws. The most worrisome aspect of this problem is that these aspects of our media laws are often violated in the social media without anybody being arraigned before the court for such violation.

The next problem is that the practitioners are often regarded as amateurish. The citizens who engage in social network and citizen journalism are not trained journalists and therefore do not conform to professional standards with particular reference to news judgment and values. Regardless of the snags associated with citizen journalism, the practice has come to stay. It has become a topical issue of great concern to media practice in Nigeria and elsewhere. Nigerian journalists, therefore, need training and retraining on how to cope with the challenges that come with the practice of citizen journalism.

## **SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

Define and explain the concept of citizen journalism.

### **4.0 CONCLUSION**

Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) are revolutionising media practice all over the world. Of particular importance is the impact of social media on journalism practice. It is not in doubt that social media have been helping in information and news gathering and dissemination in Nigeria to the extent that the recent “Occupy Nigeria” in Lagos was perfected on social media. Media practitioners should therefore begin to ponder over how to cope with the emerging challenges associated with citizen journalism fostered by social media.

### **5.0 SUMMARY**

This unit focused on one of the challenging technological issues facing media practice in Nigeria. Precisely, the unit discussed citizen journalism which is gradually making in-road in the country via the instrument of social media. Thus, the unit explored the meaning of citizen journalism, the evolution of citizen journalism in Nigeria and the problems associated with the practice

### **6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT**

Discuss the evolution of citizen journalism in Nigeria pointing out the problems associated with the issue.

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