

## **THE IMPERATIVES OF THE MEDIA AND ITS CHALLENGES IN SETTING EFFECTIVE AGENDA FOR NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA**

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### **Abstract**

*Development is essential to the growth of any nation. To achieve this, the media are expected to inform, educate and enlighten the populace on crucial issues affecting the society's well-being and progress. The media has been identified as a key institution that plays a central role in setting and shaping the public agenda on issues, events, and topics that are seen as vital to the society and public interest. However, certain factors like Insecurity, Poor Remuneration, Capacity-building, Non-Payment of Salaries, etc. has continued to pose great challenges to the media in carrying out their responsibilities in the achievement of national development. This paper therefore, examines the important of the media and its challenges in setting effective agenda for national development in Nigeria. The study is anchored on agenda setting theory. The paper makes use of secondary sources of data and findings revealed that media indeed has a major role to plays in setting the agenda of salience issues that will bring about development in Nigeria. In conclusion, the Media as the Fourth estate and watchdog of the society plays a crucial role in national development. Therefore, the media must strive to live up to the expectations of the people no matter the challenges that might stand in their ways. The study therefore recommends among others, that Private and government owned media must ensure that journalists are taken care of. This will eliminate sharp practices mostly the brown envelope syndrome from the profession of journalism.*

**Key words:** Mass Media, Media, Development and National Development

### **Introduction**

The issue of development has come over the years to the fore as one issue that the mass media are expected to focus attention on. Development is essential to the growth and development of any country. The pride of any government is the attainment of higher value level of development in such a way that its citizens would derive natural attachment to governance. To achieve this, the media are expected to inform and educate the society on crucial issues affecting the society's well-being and progress. Media in this regards, play a central role in setting and shaping the public agenda the individuals, issues, events, and topics that are seen as vital to society and public interest. At the heart of media's agenda setting is the premise that media do not necessarily tell us what to think, but they

do tell us what to think about. They might not necessarily tell us what to think (whether we should choose A vs. B), but they do play a strong role in telling us what to think about (that A and B are indeed the two most important things to ponder), and which aspects of those topics are important in coming to our conclusions. Directly or indirectly, is that very issue the media emphasizes or focus attention on that the public follows. In other words, media set the public agenda (Santas, 2015).

Mass media of any nation certainly play significant role in national development of that nation. Information is seen as a component of empowerment and participation in development. The traditional role of the media is to facilitate the exchange of information, educate and enlighten the citizens has long been identified as very crucial. The media also function to keep the citizens abreast of developments, expose them to new ideas, and serve as a veritable platform for them to contribute to the quality of government's policy, and to the good governance of the nation. Good governance implies development in every aspect of life of the citizens. Good governance is the key to the development and progress of any country. The purpose of development is improvement in the quality of lives of the people, their social and material wellbeing. It also means continued improvement in the human and economic well-being of the people from one stage to another (Suleiman, 2018).

The media is seen as an agent of change and development, hence, the development of a nation is assured when the media are utilized for societal and human enlightenment, through sourcing and dissemination of information and educating the masses. The Nigerian media as an agent of national development has constitutional rights to freedom of expression and therefore should be expected to educate the public, create public awareness and mobilize public support on societal issues. (Asekome, 2008 as cited in Nwaolikpe, 2018) stated that, Section 22 of the Nigerian Constitution, under the Obligation of the Mass Media, states that “the press, radio and television and mass media agencies shall at all times be free to uphold the fundamental objectives of the constitution, and the responsibility and accountability of the government to the people”. Under section 39(1) of the same 1999 Constitution, it is stated that “every person shall be entitled to freedom of expression, including freedom to hold opinions and to impart ideas and information without interference”. Thus, the press in Nigeria has the constitutional rights to freedom of expression, and to provide information to the masses, to sharpen public opinion and also to impart the right information that could mobilize the people to concentrate their efforts in the direction of national growth and development.

The constitution of Nigeria gives the media the freedom to report news and thereby promote national development, providing information for the masses and creating an enabling environment for human development. (Okere, 1996, p. 173 as cited in Nwaolikpe, 2018) observed that, “statements made by the [Nigerian] leaders since independence, and even before, clearly indicate that the media were expected to endorse and support official interpretation of the national unity and economic development”. In line with the constitution of the country, the leaders of the country are also of the view that the media should be an agent of national development.

The mass media play the role of raising public awareness and determining issues for public debates and discussions. They are effective channels of informing the public and sensitizing them on issues of national and societal importance and are expected to provide the public with credible and realistic information that will educate the citizens.

## **Objective of this paper**

This paper attempts to examine the importance of the media in setting effective agenda for national development as well as find out the challenges in carrying out their duties. The paper shall then come up with possible way forward that could assist the media in the discharge of their duties for the purpose of national development.

## **CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION**

### **Mass Media**

The mass media refers to organized means of dissemination of fact, opinion, entertainment and other mass media includes newspapers, magazines, radio, television, internet, books and other forms of published materials. (Hassan 2013 as cited in Abegunde & Fajimbola, 2018) notes that, the term “mass media” refers to the means of public communication reaching a large audience. In essence, mass media are the tools or technologies that facilitate dissemination of information and entertainment to a vast number of consumers. Mass media reaches large numbers of people for information, education, persuasive and entertainment reasons. It is a means of communication for interchange of thoughts or ideas. The mass media plays a pivotal role as agenda setters and also provides avenues for raising up developmental issues for discussion.

### **Media**

Media in this study is conceived as agents of information communication to large groups of people through a group of corporate entities, publishers, journalists, reporters, pressmen, newscasters and others who constitute the communications industry and profession. It also includes the ability to inform, educate and entertain the populace. The print (in particular) and electronic media shall be focused on (Abubakar & Fadeyi, 2017).

In today’s world, media becomes as essential as our daily needs. Media of today is playing an outstanding role in creating and shaping of public opinion and strengthening of society (Jayasree, 2015). It is often said that the world has become a global village. It is the media that has shrunk the world into the village. Telecommunication, television, radio and internet have reduced distances and brought countries of the world closer to each other (Owajiokiban, 2016).

### **Development**

The word Development is difficult to define. However, attempts have been made by erudite scholars to conceptualize development. Some of these definitions will be explored for the purpose of this study. (Gboyega, 2003 as cited in Tolu and Abe, 2011) captures development as an idea that embodies all attempts to improve the conditions of human existence in all ramifications. It implies improvement in material wellbeing of all citizens, not the most powerful and rich alone, in a sustainable way such that today’s consumption does not imperil the future, it also demands that poverty and inequality of access to the good things of life be removed or drastically reduced. It seeks to improve personal physical security and livelihoods and expansion of life chances.

The concept of development is considered to be a multifaceted term. From the economic point of view, it is usually associated with increase in a country's Gross National Product (GNDP) and Gross Domestic Product (GDP). However, with the passage of time, this benchmark for measuring development has been challenged by scholars from the developing countries. They argued that development should include the sum total activities coordinated by the various sectors of a countries economy. Corroborating this position, according to (Barikui 2007 as cited in Santas & Ogoshi, 2015) posits that:

The notion of development has moved from a myopic growth-oriented paradigm, when it was viewed in economic terms with emphasis only on GNP, GDP and per capita income of a country, to include all the activities undertaken by an individual, a co-ordinate group or an established authority to improve the quality of life at the individual, family, national Regional or international levels.

To Nwabueze, (2005) development simply refers to a change process that seeks to better the life and environment of man largely, through his own efforts and at his own pace. He argues that development efforts and activities should involve the people at the grass root. Development must therefore be of the people, by the people and for the people. It must permeate the entire spectrum and strata of society, touching on the lives of the poorest of the poor, lifting them up, as it were, from the abyss of poverty, ignorance, disease, squalor, human rights abuses and similar deprivations.

In essence, for development to take place in the context of Nigeria, the country must experience fundamental changes in the following number of ways:

- The ability of the citizenry to feed themselves satisfactorily.
- A drastic reduction of poverty on a general note in the country
- Ability of the various ethnic groups and religion to tolerate one another and live harmoniously under one umbrella of Nigeria.
- The ability of the country to manage conflict and crisis that could arise occasionally without requesting foreign assistance.
- The ability of majority of Nigerians that will not only be literate but educated
- The ability of the country to establish democratic structures on ground and protect them from destruction.
- The ability of Nigerians to have a crime-reduced society
- The ability of the government to revamp the manufacturing sector of the country
- The ability of the country to have stable power supply (Chiakaan & Santas, 2007 as cited in Santas & Ogoshi, 2015).

## **National Development**

The term national development according to (Adekoya & Ajilore, 2012) is a term that refers to a sustainable growth and development of a nation to a more desirable one. National development is people oriented and its success is evaluated in terms of the impact it has had in improving the lot of the masses. In defining the concept, the third national development plan of 1980 says;

*True development must mean the development of man, the unfolding and realization of his creative potentials, enabling him to improve his material conditions of living through the use of resources available to him. It is a process by which mans personality is enhanced, and it is that enhanced personality- creative, organized and disciplined-which is the moving force behind the socioeconomic transformation of any society.*

On the part of (Onabajo & M'Bayo, 2009 as cited in Adekoya & Ajilore 2012) says 'national development should be man oriented and not institution oriented, that is, individually in collectiveness and not individual. In summary development entails the provision of all the necessary materials and equipment's that will guarantee that man in every society make a living and essence out of life.

This according to (Bhawna, 2019), the term national development is about all aspects of the life of an individual and the nation. It is holistic in approach. It is a process of reconstruction and development in various dimensions of a nation and development of individuals. It includes full-growth and expansion of our industries, agriculture, education, social, religious and cultural institutions. Moreover, national development implies development of a nation as a whole. It can be best defined as the all-round and balanced development of different aspects and facets of the nation viz. political, economic, social, cultural, scientific and material resources.

National development is the total effect of all citizen forces and addition to the stock of physical, human resources, knowledge and skill. Broadly, development of the nation encapsulates such parameters as: Development through a planned national economy, increase in agricultural production through application of modern technical know-how, harnessing industrial production, development of human resource, application of science and technology in production sector, provision of mass education and Provision of various facilities to meet the needs and aspirations of disadvantaged, deprived and poorest of the poor segments of population.

## **Methodology**

A theoretical approach was used for this study. The study employed and makes use of secondary data. These consist of journals, text books, magazine, conference papers and already available information that may have direct bearing on the research.

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

This study is anchored on agenda setting theory.

The agenda setting theory of the press as posited by McCombs and Shaw (1972) serves as a framework for this work. The theory posited that the media tell us not what to think, but what to think about. The proponents of this theory state that the amount of attention given to an issue in the press affects the level of importance assigned to that issue by mass media audience. Agenda setting is a media effect theory which main thrust is that though the media may not change a person's point of view on a particular issue; but it may change the person's perception of what is important (Agbo and Fab-Ukozor, 2000). The mass media which is an integral part of the social system has a crucial role to play in promoting the gospel of national development. As an organ of information dissemination, the broadcast media has huge potentials in bringing to bear messages on national development to the homes of millions of people.

In the same vein, the mass media could place in the consciousness of people on developmental issues which require their attention. The media could do this by frequent reportage or coverage of development news and issues that affect the people and the society in general. That way, these issues discussed by the mass media will be prioritized as important by the people and further activate

community development possibly initiated and furthered by the people. The theory also suggests that media has a great influence to their audience by instilling what they should think instead of what they think. That is, if a news item is covered frequently and prominently, the audience will regard the issue as more important.

### **Agenda Setting Function of Mass Media**

Theoretically, the agenda setting theory of the media as put forward by Maxwell McCombs and Donaki Shaw (1972) during their very influential research on the role of the media in the 1968 US Presidential elections, the two first tested and confirmed the hypothesis that the news media have a major influence on which issues the public considers important. McCombs and Shaw demonstrated that audiences often judge the importance of a news item based on how frequently and prominently it is covered by the media, thus indicating the degree to which the media shapes public opinion (Weaver, 2020). It was also observe that:

In choosing and displaying news, editors, newsroom staff, and broadcasters play an important part in shaping political reality. Readers learn not only about a given issue, but also how much importance to attach to that issue from the amount of information in a news story and its position. The mass media may well determine the important issues that is, the media may set the “agenda” of the campaign.

Overtime, the Agenda Setting Theory research has demonstrated that the more stories the news media do on a particular subject, the more importance audience attach to that subject. In relation to (Stanley, 2002 as cited in Momoh, 2015), holds that the “media may not tell us what to think, but media certainly tell us what to think about” He further argues that the agenda setting power of the media resides in more than the amount of space or time devoted to a story and its placement in the broadcast or on the page.

Let’s take Channels, AIT and TVC News programme and three national newspapers, The Punch, The Guardian and Thisday. News programme in these television and Newspapers are largely representative of other national news outlets across the country and to a large extent help to lead national news coverage. Each day, the issues captured on Television News and the front pages of these newspapers send signals to politicians and citizens alike about which problems are important and which are not. So, therefore, media attention can shape public opinion, governmental attention, and public policy that will bring about National Development (Momoh, 2015).

### **Media do not tell us what to think, but rather what to think about**

In political campaigns for instance, the media may not be effective in swaying public support toward or against a particular issue or candidate. But by continually raising particular questions and issues, or simply by showing an interest in a particular political candidate or issue, the media can lead the discussion toward or away from issues important to the candidate and even to the public (Smith, 2015). In the same vein, media can also bring up developmental issues for the public and government to ponder about and take action.

Example of The Bill Clinton former (U.S. President) scandal of sexual affair with Monica Lewinsky (an intern), created a media frenzy and became sensational news for years. Media gave full pages news as top stories. The media influenced the mindset of people so much and the news got viral to

result in a presidential impeachment. And later, Clinton was acquitted for the crime Bajracharya (2018)

### **Media provide a context for public discussion of an issue, setting the stage for audience understanding**

Media reporting may be very strong leading up to an event such as the World Cup, making it almost impossible for audiences to ignore the event. Such aggressive reporting thus creates an audience of people at least temporarily interested in the sport, even though prior to the reporting perhaps most members of the audience were not sports fans. Rather, they are people who get caught up in the moment due to the public discussion and awareness (Smith, 2015).

### **Fundamental Role of the Media in National Development**

The basic functions of the mass media in the society are generally viewed to include information, education and entertainment. The mass media plays a significant role in modern society. They bring about a general diffusion of knowledge about life in the world today; the following are the major uses to which mass media are put:

**To inform:** The primary use of mass media is to provide the latest information in the fields of interest of the audience. The latest technologies in media concentrate on making this transfer of information from source to audience faster and wider. In a society where information accessibility is a parameter of measuring power, information rules the roost.

**To entertain:** Entertainment is another use that we put media to. In fact, some media theories like the play theory support the view that entertainment is the basic function of media. According to this view, people look for entertainment even in news. After a grilling day at work or studies, everyone looks for some relaxation or an escape from the reality. Media provides its consumers some kind of escape or diversion from the realities and anxieties of daily living. This is made possible by the entertainment function of media.

**To educate:** Media has the advantage of a great reach; it can simultaneously communicate to multitude of audiences which makes it special. The best purpose media can serve and the best way it can contribute to social progress is by educating the masses keeping in mind the real needs of the audience (Seema, 2013).

In essence, the media is being described as performing the above functions. These are the conventional social functions the media render to the public, but which is equally applicable in broader sense in national development pursuit. It could be said that through educating, informing and entertaining, the media thereby make the society or the nation aware of the importance and need to undertake certain processes of national development (Khalid, Ahmed, & Mufti, 2015). Also attached to these three basic roles of media is another role of persuasion, where media are seen as virile tools of applying persuasive efforts to influence people's actions towards a particular direction. The mass media are therefore seen for their role in furnishing the public with necessary information to achieve development or change goals.

The mass media are channels through which people get almost all the relevant information that shape their personality in relation to the society and also shape their perceptions of issues in the

society. Information is very vital in enlightening the people and awakening their interests in order to achieve developmental goals. These roles of media in national development lie in their capacity to teach, manipulate, sensitize and mobilize people through information dissemination. The media also chart a course for the public in line with the agenda setting theory, thereby creating in the minds of the people, issues that would be viewed as priority including development programmes and policies- (Nwabueze, 2005).

National development is a comprehensive and qualitative transformation that involves changes in the economic condition, social situation, and political disposition. The focus of national development is the people. Likewise, the mass media is not solely a commercial enterprise; rather, it's a service aimed at educating, informing and entertaining the people. The overall objective of national development is human development which includes, amongst other things, increasing people's choices for greater access to knowledge and information, education, health, security etc.

Media's function to act as a guardian of public interest and agenda setting are among the most important roles of the media. Media can often determine what to think and worry about. Media is a watchdog that speaks for the people and represents the interests of the people. Media's role in national development can be analyzed from political, economic and social perspectives. In the political sphere, media's role in raising political consciousness and public relations is positive. In the economic sphere, media can play their role in advertisements and tourism. In the social sphere, media has an important role in combating corruption, ignorance, criminal violence, and health problems. For example, corruption distorts economic and social development. The media can act as a force against corruption by exposing corruption (Simon, 2018).

### **Other Roles of Media in National Development**

- The media serves as mirrors of reality in respect of the basic functions of media i.e., for information, education and entertainment.
- The responsibility of informing people about development projects and programmes is another major role of media to national development. Such programmes designed and proposed by policy makers could be entirely new to the people at whom they need to be enlightened, educated and mobilized by the media.
- The media help us to evaluate important burning issues and create awareness of current events. The society we live in is saturated with media. The effect that the media has on society also affects education in a very big way. The media helped in the diffusion of education to the masses by spreading ideas and establishing common interest that help to spread enlightened culture.
- The media play a significant role in moulding public opinion. They increase social awareness, encourage active participation of the individual to discharge his duties and obligations, raise his standard of thinking and behaviour.
- The media also assist leaders in setting a policy agenda, shaping debates on controversial issues and gaining support for particular issue. The media also help in stimulating political transparency. Without the mass media, openness and accountability are impossible in contemporary democracies.



- The media contribute to the constructive use of our leisure time, which would otherwise have been wasted. They help develop new found interest and appreciation on a wide variety of subjects and also foster creative ability.
- Offering solutions to problems is another developmental role of the media, in that they are not only expected to criticize government officials and condemn their actions, but also as watchdogs of the society, they review, analyze, appraise or criticize, as the case may be, activities of government agencies and programmes.
- The media leads to formation of attitude through establishing of values for the society or nation and thereby building a climate of change in the society. This involves the dissemination of news and information in response to basic human need, which is their “right to know” ([www.thetidenewsonline.com](http://www.thetidenewsonline.com))

## **CHALLENGES OF THE MEDIA**

It is worthy of note that, media has a major role to play in the development of any country because the media have the responsibility of channeling their energy towards issues that can bring about development. However, the media have the challenge of mirroring the society. The media only report what happens in the society although their framing of the issues can increase or mitigate the impact such issues can produce. In a society such as Nigeria of today that is highly divided because of political and ethnic interests, one would be tempted to ask: would the media also not fail in their duties if they do not report such cases of insecurity? In Nigeria of today, the rate of insecurity is brazenly high and on the increase by the day. Would the media not fail in their responsibilities if they fail to let the citizens know of where their safety is not secure? If the media report these ugly events, what will be the reactions of investors? Will the investors still be willing to invest where they are not sure of the security of their investments? Here is where the media have found themselves between the devil and the deep blue sea (Ashong, 2018).

Many people have failed to understand that the media do not create the news they report what those who make news have made available to the media. The media cannot set agenda from a vacuum but can only set agenda from what is available to them. If what is available to the media is political insecurity, gender based violence then; the media will set agenda based on the political instability and gender violence that is available. The media have the social responsibility to report truthfully issues that would not mislead the people. Therefore, if there is political instability and insecurity and the media fail to report it, the media would have failed in their responsibility to let the people know where they are safe and where they are not and of worrisome are the following major challenges being faced by the media in the discharged of their duties:

### **Corruption**

One of the major challenges facing the media in the efforts to promote good governance in the country is corruption which has eaten very deep into the psyche of Nigerians, especially those in positions of public responsibility. It is the bane of Nigeria’s socio-economic development. The country’s biggest minus is its corruption reputation. In view of the many adverse effects corruption has on our country, it is the responsibility of the media to constantly expose corrupt practices and collaborate with the anti-graft agencies to fight corruption so as to achieve a zero tolerance level in

our society. For the media to fight corruption, journalists must first of all clean up their house and shun corruption by not taking gifts from people they report on so that their reports would not be distorted. It is time for journalists to rise up and fight for their right to adequate pay and fair treatment by their employers in order for them to be effectively positioned to publish news without bias.

The brown envelope syndrome is a common occurrence in journalism. It simply means bribing a journalist to trade objectivity and truthfulness for pecuniary gains. Also, it refers to money, gifts, food, drinks given to journalists in order to influence their judgement. It means bribing a journalist to either write stories that would give the Nigerian governments, politician's positive reviews in the public domain or edit/delete negative stories that would earn them negative reviews in the public domain. Journalists are bribed to write stories that would arouse public sympathy for the governments, politicians, public office holders, etc. Brown envelope has other names. In some climes, it is called public relations, Brown kola, white envelopes, money paid into bank accounts of journalists. The brown envelope syndrome is worsened by the fact that some unscrupulous journalists demand for brown envelopes after an interview with a news maker or after a press conference.

**Harassment of Journalist by Government:** Every journalist needs an enabling environment that is free from any form of intimidation for best practice. But the reverse is the case because most often Journalists are being harassed by the government for publishing information they perceive as offensive to them. Journalists are upright and noble professionals; people with integrity and focus. They report objective and truthful news. However, truthfulness and objectivity are not the forte of most Nigerian governments. These governments feel insulted about such stories written about them. They feel the journalists have stepped on their toes. As a result, most journalists are arbitrarily harassed, assaulted and in some cases detained. This action is not only condemnable but unconstitutional, violation of individual rights and a threat to the practice of journalism and freedom of speech (Gbenga-Ogundare, 2020).

**Insecurity:** Journalists face insecurity when doing their job. Some of them are kidnapped and killed by insurgents. Sometimes, they are attacked by armed bandits on roads and highways who dispossess them of their phones, electronic gadgets and other valuable items. They are also caught in cross fires between law enforcement agents on one hand, militants and insurgents on the other hand. Many journalists have lost their lives because of insecurity.

**Lack of government financial support:** Government intervention to media owners at this point is very imperative; this is to ensure that the media continues to discharge its constitutional duty. This is because; the survival of the media is sine qua non for the survival of democracy.

**Poor Remuneration:** There is no arguing the fact that media professionals have to be given the right pay for them to serve diligently. It is not in packaging "brown envelopes" when the heat is on; and forgetting that they ever existed when there is calm. Journalists in Nigeria are poorly paid as compared to other professionals. The salary of an average Nigerian journalist is not enough to sustain him/her throughout the month. They result to sharp practices to argument their income. Most People See Journalism As A Get Rich Quickly Profession To Make Ends Meet. Some people go into the profession of journalism with the erroneous belief that they will get rich quickly. If this fails to materialise, they get easily frustrated. Frustration eventually leads them to commit unethical practices.

**Capacity-building:** Lack of training for journalist is another major challenge. Since knowledge is power, there is need to train and re-train the manpower in the media. There is no doubt that many of the staffers have been depending on their residual knowledge in operational dynamics of the system. This is very important because, if one has to be knowledgeable on the job and to be abreast of current trends, capacity building has to be taken seriously.

**Non-Payment of Salaries:** Journalists are not paid their salaries. Even when they are paid, they are not paid on time. This makes them frustrated. This makes them to engage in sharp practices to sustain themselves.

**Problem of Logistics:** Journalists travel a lot to cover events and present news. Their work is hindered by bad road network, inaccessible areas, network problems and inter-communal strife.

**Poor Standard of education:** Most journalists covering development news beat is rather unfortunate. Some journalists in some media houses are school certificate holders and the ones that are first degree holders do not have a slightest idea of what journalism is because they don't have first degrees in mass communication, journalism or media studies. These 'so called' journalists do not have orientation on the kind of news that has the potential to develop the society; therefore, they have some peculiar challenges interpreting the information to the satisfaction of the public. Hence, the journalists develop their own definition of development news which would later on be inimical to the national development efforts of the nation.

## CONCLUSION

The Media as the Fourth estate and watchdog of the society plays a crucial role in national development. Development is very essential and critical to the growth of any nation. The Nigerian media as an agent of national development has the constitutional rights to freedom of expression and therefore should be expected to educate the public, create public awareness and mobilize public support on developmental issues since the media has the ability to influence or encourage the public on what to think about. It is therefore imperative for the media to focus on issues that will trigger or lead to national development through sourcing and dissemination of information. The role that media plays in the development of a nation cannot be over-emphasized; therefore, any media house must strive to live up to the expectations of the people no matter the challenges that might stand in their ways. The media are the last hope for Nigerians and the bonds of the society; hence, they must set the agenda and terms of public debates because, not only do people acquire factual information about public affairs from the media, readers and viewers also learn how much importance to attach to a topic on the basis of the emphasis placed on it in the news. Newspapers for instance, provide a host of cues about the salience of the topics in the daily news, like lead story on page one, other front page display large headlines, etc. Television news also offers numerous cues about salience as well as the opening story on the newscast, length of time devoted to the story.

## RECOMMENDATION

Based on the above challenges the following recommendations were made:

- Private and government owned media house must ensure that journalists are well paid and paid regularly. This will eliminate sharp practices mostly the brown envelope syndrome from the profession of journalism.

- The government must ensure that it provides a secure and healthy environment for journalists to practice their profession. This could be in form of attaching security escorts to journalists.
- The government must ensure that it upholds the principles of honesty, fair play and integrity at all times. They must understand that the profession of journalism is built on credibility, integrity, honesty, objectivity. They must be willing to accept objective and truthful information without bias and sentiments. This will make them to see journalists as partners in progress and not their enemy. They must enact policies that will prevent the entrenchment of dictatorial tendencies against journalists and press houses.
- Private and government owned media house must ensure that journalists go for continues training and re-training in order to be knowledgeable on the job and to be abreast of current trends.
- The government and media houses must partner together to institutionalize award and merit ceremonies to reward excellence, hard work and Integrity among deserving journalists. This will make journalists to give their best to further uplift the profession of journalism and let them know that money is not everything. This will also eliminate the brown envelope syndrome from journalism.
- Journalists are expected to recognize the importance of the media to development and to be committed to use their profession to impart knowledge and information that will contribute to the development of the country. They must bring information about the array of development projects conducted in every corner of the country.
- The journalist is not only to be adversary, but also communicate information, education, instruction, and inspiration. They must also provide context, background, and understanding about cause and effect.

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