

Mass Media and Freedom of Expression: Implications for Good Governance and Accountability

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Abstract— This paper is a critical evaluation of how mass media's right to the freedom of expression has facilitated the principles of good governance and accountability. The paper is premised against the background that mass media have the statutory responsibilities of providing to the general public information about government's programme, policies and activities. Mass media also have the corollary responsibility of generating necessary feedback from the public on government policies, programme and activities. Against the background that these responsibilities are facilitated by freedom of expression which is anchored on the press freedom and the rights of the public to the freedom of information (FOI), this paper evaluated the implications of these basic sets freedom on good governance and accountability. The social responsibility and the Agenda-setting theories formed the theoretical construct of the paper, which among other things, principally aimed at ascertaining the extent of the relationship between the rights of mass media to the freedom of expression and sustainable good governance and accountability. The paper further aimed at evaluating the prevailing nature of the practise of freedom of expression and mass media's responsibility in the fight against corruption. The paper adopted a historical and a critical analytical approach. The concepts of mass media, freedom of expression, press freedom, freedom of information (otherwise called the Right To Know RTK) were dialectically reviewed to sufficiently establish their significant relationship with good governance, accountability and transparency in governance. Results from the review led to the conclusion that mass media rights to the freedom of expression significantly facilitate democratic principles of accountability, good governance and transparency. The paper recommended that in the face of the current technological revolution in the media industry, mass media should inject more professionalism in maximising their rights to the freedom of expression.

Index Terms— Mass, Media, Freedom, Expression, Accountability, Good and Governance.

I. INTRODUCTION

Mass media are channels of communication, created by technology to facilitate the transfer and dissemination of information and social interaction in the society. The importance of mass media to the society is reflected in Karl Deutsche's (1966) assertion, cited in Anim (2007, pp 1 – 2), that “it takes the selection, production and passing of signs from one person to another, from one group to another, in

such a way as to produce meaning between the two sides.” In essence, human communities thrive because of their ability to convey messages, to have them quickly and to accurately understand and to predict one another's behaviour from introspection. Pate (2007) aligns to the foregoing assertion and also states that society will be incomplete without a communication system that facilitates intra and intergroup interaction.

Mass media have improved the communication needs of the society tremendously. From the periods of signs and words, languages, reading and writing, post and telephone, group and local media, to the period of mass media and the internet, the communication needs of the society witnessed improvement that suits the societal development of that period. There is, therefore, a direct correlation between the level of sophistication of the communication phenomenon and the means of disseminating it and the progress and development of the human community. The specific demands of every new stage of human development call for a more efficient system of communication.

At present, the world community has moved into what many call “the information age” and the “internet era”. The corresponding communication channels are the mass media and the social media platforms (facebook, twitters, whatapps, google apps, among others).

Traditionally, mass media (including social media) are credited with three functions, as identified by Harold Laswell (1948) – one of the foremost scholars to call attention to the functions of mass communication. These functions, cited in Akinfeleye (2003) are: surveillance of the environment, correlation of the responses of the entire society to the environment, and transmission of societal inheritance from one generation to another. Basically, the ability of mass media to perform these functions satisfactorily is dependent upon the availability of information. In other words, information is the raw material through which mass media perform their function to the society. This is particularly important, since public opinion is dependent more than ever on those who supply objective, fruitful and unbiased news and information. For this reason therefore, mass media practitioners claim the right to seek out information without hindrance and to transmit it safely and effectively. MaBride et als (1980, p. 233) state that some journalists (mass media practitioners) also claim the right to express opinions, freely, when this is the function for which they are employed as editorial writers, columnists and commentators, adding that:

It is a question, on one hand, of freedom of information and

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of expression, on the other hand, of the right of the reading and listening public to be informed and to hear diverse opinions, which belongs to every citizen but depends in practice on the freedom of journalists. It is of course true that the right to seek and impart information, and the right to express opinions, should be enjoyed by everyone. But journalists need to exercise these rights as a basic condition of doing their jobs efficiently.

The supposition from the above excerpt is that freedom of the press, in its widest sense, represents the collective enlargement of each citizen's freedom of expression, which is accepted as human rights. It is therefore unarguable that it is the right of the public to know that is the essence of media freedom, which mass media practitioners are only custodians.

With these responsibilities, cushioned by the inalienable fundamental right to the freedom of expression, mass media are essential to the workings of any democratic system. In the views of McBride, et al (1980), the press (mass media generally) has been described as the fourth estate of the realm" because full and accurate information on matters of public interest is the means by which government institutions, organizations and all others

in authority, at whatever level, are held accountable to by the public. The right of the media and the public to freedom of expression and the corresponding responsibility of the government to formulate and implement policies, programmes and activities based on public opinions generated by the media contends are expected to ignite the democratic principles of good governance, transparency and accountability.

II. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM:

Mass media are communication industries that interrelate with the other institutions (agencies) in the society to facilitate the workings and the development of the society. The roles, responsibilities and rights of mass media in the society are expected to result to a mutual relationship between the general public and the government. The media, using their powers to the freedom of expression and drawing their strength to the theories of social responsibilities and agenda – setting, are the organs of the society that make the government to be responsible to the yearnings and aspirations of the general public. This perhaps explain why the one-time American President, John F. Kennedy, states that were it left for him to choose between a government without the press and the press without the government, he will not hesitate to choose the latter. It is equally the same John F. Kennedy that once said that the pen (press) is mightier than the sword. Therefore the media have the powers to make the government accountable to the governed. Against this background, this paper investigates the correlations between mass media and freedom of expression. The paper also ascertained the extent of the bargaining powers of freedom of expression and mass media roles in ensuring good governance, accountability and transparency in governance. The paper further investigated

the extent to which the bargaining powers of the freedom of expression influence mass media's responsibilities in the society.

III. OBJECTIVE OF THE PAPER:

The general objective of this paper is to look at mass media and freedom of expression and how they correlate with good governance, accountability and transparency. The specific objectives of the paper are as follows:

1. To ascertain the significant correlation between mass media and freedom of expression.
2. To ascertain the extent of the bargaining powers of freedom of expression and mass media's roles in enhancing good governance, transparency and accountability.-
3. To find out the extent to which the bargaining powers of the freedom of expression influence mass media's roles in the society.

IV. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The agenda setting theory (including framing, and priming), and the social responsibility theory formed the theoretical foundation for this study.

Agenda Setting Theory: McQuail (2005) explains that the term, agenda-setting was coined by McCombs and Shaw

(1972; 1993) and that the core idea is that the news media indicate to the public what the main issues of the day are. According to Walgrave and Van Aelst (2007), agenda setting theory was formally developed by Max McCombs and Donald Shaw in a study on the 1968 American presidential election. In the 1968 Chapel Hill Study, McCombs and Shaw demonstrated a strong correlation coefficient ($r > .9$) between what 100 residence of Chapel Hill, North Carolina, thought was the most important election issue and what the local and national news media reported was the most important issue (McCombs and Reynolds 2002). By comparing the salience of the issues in news content with the public perceptions of the most important elections issue, McCombs and Shaw were able to determine the degree to which the media determines public opinion (McCombs, 2005).

According to McCombs (2005), agenda setting theory describes the ability of the news media to influence the importance placed on the topic or the public agenda. The predictions about agenda-setting theory are that if a news item is covered frequently and prominently, the audience will regard the issue as more important. Agenda setting is therefore a creation of public awareness and concern on salient issues by the media. As well, agenda setting describes the way that the media attempts to influence viewers and establish a hierarchy of news prevalence. Dearing and Rogers (1988) inform that the basic assumptions underlying most researches on agenda- setting are:

1. The press and the media do not reflect reality; the filter and shape it.
2. Media concentration on a few issues and subjects leads the public to perceive those issues as more important than

others.

The agenda setting theory is suitable for this paper because the salience given to governments policies, programmes and activities by the media would certainly influence public opinion on the matter.

Social Responsibility Theory: The social responsibility theory was the aftermath of the private commission of inquiring set up in 1942 and headed by Robert Hutchins. The aim of the commission was to examine areas and circumstances under which the press of the United States is succeeding or failing; to discover where free expression is or is not limited (whether by government censorship, pressure from readers or the un-wisdom of its proprietors or the timidity of its management (McQuail, 2005, p. 170). The findings of the commission (Hutchins 1947) were critical of the press in its frequent failings and for being so limited in the access it gave to voices outside the circle of a privileged and powerful minority (McQuail, 2005). The report coined the notion of social responsibility and named the key journalistic standard that the press should seek to maintain – provide a full, truthful, comprehensive and intelligent account of the days events in a context which gives them meaning; serve as a force for the exchange of common carrier of the public expression; give a representative picture of constituent groups in society, and also present and clarifies the goals and values of society (Severin and Tankard, 2000, p98). The foregoing standards explain the suitability of the theory of source responsibility for this study. If the press can paint objective and unbiased

truthful pictures of the government’s activities, the general public would not only have been sufficiently informed, but they would make informed decision/input that would influence positively government’s activities.

The Media Conceptualizing: The media or mass media are basic sources of news and entertainment. They are also means of carrying messages which could build communities into nations. They are sources of information. John (2001) categorizes the media into three basic groups: print, electronics and photographs and states that this categorization differentiates the technology that produces them.

According to Dominick (2002), the primary print media sources are books, magazines, newspapers, while the electronic media sources are basically television, radio, sound recordings and the web. The primary sources of the photographic medium are movies. John (2001, p. 6) however observes that there are the media source traditional to ancient societies, which is oral, beating of drum, lighting fire, making representation, drawing diagrams and the use of the town crier. This paper nevertheless will be more concentrated on the modern media sources, including the social media.

Bittner (1991) informs that the print media has the characteristics of binding, regularity of content and timeliness, adding that the technological basis of the print media is the printing press, which dates back to the 1440s. The print media are permanent sources of reference. Martin Luther, King Jnr. Cited by Ebiniter (2007) alludes to the permanence of the

print media when he states that

“No other agency can penetrate so deeply, abide so persistently witness so daringly and influence so irresistibly as the printed pages”.

John (2001) further explains the electronic media comprises television, radio, sound recording flashy, stating that the Pioneering work on the electronic media began in 1800s but was however consolidated on the 20th century. Unlike print messages, television and radio messages disappear as soon as they are terminated, except they are stored in tapes and other devices.

The photographic media are both still and motion. It could be produced through chemical media, could be stored in silver halide (negative) and photo album while digitally produced media could be stored in flash drive, diskettes, external hard drive, CD plates, etc. Dominick (2002, p. 16) defines the media thus:

In the broadcast sense of the word, medium is the channel through which a message travels from the course to the receiver,...sound and light waves are media of communication. Mass media are channels of communication which include not only the mechanical devices that transmit and sometimes store the message... but also the institutions that use these machines to transmit messages. When talk about the mass media of television, radio, news papers, magazines, sound recordings and films, we will be referring to the people, the polices, the organizations and the technology that go into producing and distributing mass communication. Dominick.

The implication in Dominick's understanding of ' the media includes the structural framework, the actors, personnel and the medium through which the information is derived (got), used and retained. Wolvin (1998, p. 362) in considering the influence of the media says this:

We are influenced by the media, radio, television, internet, magazine, newspaper, film, etc. Radio and television play a role in the communication lives of almost every person. When you consider that the typical person spends four hour and fifteen minutes a day in front of a television set, you can appreciate the potential influence the media can have. Add to this, the popularity of the internet as a communication tool, and your awareness of the influence should increase even more.

The above excerpt demonstrates that the media has an influential potential in sharpening the way and manner of the thinking process and thought patterns of individual and groups. The media is capable of correcting certain believes and impressions the people hold in some matters. The media are effective tools in modifying behaviours.

This era is assumed a media literate dispensation. It stands that people have developed the capacity to access information through the media, which essentially comprise the print, electronics, specifically the internet and general computer knowledge.

V. MASS MEDIA AND SOCIETY

The world is complex – made up of events, issues, ideas, people, institutions and organizations that are complex. The media lie between us and this complex world. According to McQuail (1987) cited in Aliede (2015,

p. 34), the media have a mediating role between objective social reality and personal experience. The media connect us to "reality" as:

- a window on experience, which extends our vision, enable us to see what is going on for ourselves without interference or bias;
- an interpreter, which explains and makes senses of otherwise fragmentary or puzzling events;
- a platform, or carrier for information and opinion;
- an interactive link which relates senders or receivers by way of different kinds of feedback;
- a signpost, which actively points the way, gives guidance or instruction;
- a filter, selecting out parts-of experience for special attention and closing off other aspects of experience, whether deliberately and systematically or not;
- a mirror, which reflects back an image of society to itself – usually with some distortion by accentuating what people want to see of their own society or sometimes what they want to punish or suppress;
- a screen or barrier which conceals truth in the service of propagandist purpose or escapism.

The mass media serve very many functions for society as well as for individuals: from providing information, escapism, entertainment, to giving us self worth and linking us with other nations. LassWell (1948), Wright (1960) and McQuail (1987) according to Nwosu (2000, p. 2) are among the many scholars that have studied the functions of mass communication: Correlation, cultural transmission, entertainment, mobilization, personal identity, integration and social interaction.

VI. FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

During 20th, century the international community developed the concept of defining and protecting human rights, including the right to freedom of expression, collecting and dissemination of information, as well as the means of their protection. Bishop (2011) informs that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is the first international document which provides for protection of the freedom of speech, citing the Art. 19 of the Universal Declaration on Human Right as stating: "Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers." Diallo (2013) adds that the freedom of speech referred to in Articles 19 and 20 is regulated in more detail by the International Covenant on Civil and Human Rights from 1966. This document, according to Diallo (2013) has been adopted by more than two thirds of the countries all over the world, requiring them to commit to respecting and guaranteeing the rights of all

individuals in their territories. Birkinshaw and Varney (2011) state that Article 19 of this Covenant defines the freedom of expression as one of basic rights of each person: "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 frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of an. or through any other media of his choice. This right may be subject to certain restrictions, but only such as expressly provided by law if it is necessary for respect of the rights or reputations of others and/or the protection of national security or of public order, or of public health or morals" (Universal Declaration on Human Rights, Art. 19). Everyone has the right to freedom of expression; however. Article 29 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that "everyone has duties to the community in which alone the free and full development of his personality is possible" (Schudson, 2013). According to Calland and Bentley (2013), even the European Convention on Human Rights does not allow a possibility of unlimited freedom of expression. Article 10 of this Convention, similar to the respective Article of the Covenant on Civil and Human Rights, provides the right to freedom of expression, subject to certain restrictions that are "in accordance with law" and "necessary in a democratic society" (Calland and Bentley 2013).

The freedom of expression is one of the greatest values of a society. Essentially, it is based on the freedom of thought to which it is firmly connected and compatible with. While the freedom of thought is an absolute civil right, the freedom of expression is a political right which can be subject to certain legal restrictions. Freedom of expression incorporates several elements, such as freedom

of information, freedom of speech, freedom of the press and freedom of the media in general. The limitations of these liberties to a great extent depend on specific circumstances and individual cases. If considered as a phenomenon, through a prism of its multiplex content, freedom of expression represents a compilation of existing human rights whose manifest forms range from the expression of personal opinions and attitudes to the institutional freedom of the means of communication, i.e. mass media. The major segments of freedom of expression are: a) freedom of thought, or freedom to think freely without any influence, interference and force, b) freedom of speech and information, i.e. freedom to seek, receive and impart information, news and ideas.

The right to seek, receive and use information and ideas is a specific right from the corpus of human rights and liberties. In many ways, it represents a spiritual basis and unavoidable precondition for the consummation of all other rights and liberties. Also, in some way it determines the content and character of other rights and liberties. The state which cherishes the freedom of expression and media is more likely to be a fruitful ground for respecting other rights and liberties and for effective sanctioning of their violation. In an ideal social constellation, the press and other media at the same time both inform and educate the public. Thus, they influence (lie creation of educated (rather than briefed and manipulated) audience, whose strength represents the final instance in

sanctioning the violation of human rights. On the other hand, the existence of free media represents a powerful means for exercising human rights in a broader regional and international context.

VII. FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION, PRESS (MEDIA) FREEDOM AND FREEDOM

OF INFORMATION (FOI) – THE INTERFACE

Having clearly defined what freedom of expression means, it is considered important to also, synoptically, look at the other related concepts so as to draw an analogy between the concepts. Ekeanyanwu (2008), cited in Pate, Nwabueze and Idiong (2013, p. 140) defines press freedom as:

The freedom to source for news and information of whatever nature, from anywhere and at anytime; and the freedom to report such news and information in any form, through any medium and to the people in whose name the freedom is being exercised.

Giving that information is the 'raw' material for journalists and mass media practitioners, freedom of the press or otherwise called media freedom gives them an unlimited (except on strictly internal security matter) access to information, and to pass the information to the people using any medium of their choice. One of the basic principles of the media freedom is that it is exercised for the people. This perhaps gives rise to the Right to Know (RTK) law otherwise called freedom of information.

Freedom of Information (FOI) is the right the general public has to access public records without denial

or interference. According to the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) 2011, FOI is the right of any person to access or request information, whether or not contained in any written form, which is the custody or possession of any public official, agency or institution however described. The primary objective of the FOIA is to make the government transparent and accountable to the people and thereby nip corruption on the board.

The synergy among the three basic freedoms is that all of them have their root in the fundamental human right. The people deserve the right to know what is happening around them and therefore can request for information from any public institution on any matter of their interest. The media in a similar vein, can assume both the right to know and freedom of the press to gather information and transmit same for public consumption. The right to freedom of expression requires not only that everyone is free to express themselves but that they are free to do so over a range of different types of media.

Freedom of expression includes the right to receive information and ideas. Also, the right to freedom of expression also protects the right of the media. Thus, the expressive and information rights of individuals and the media are inextricably intertwined.

VIII. INSTRUMENTAL RATIONALES FOR FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

The Centre for Development communication, CDC, (2006) informs that the broad set of rationales for freedom of expression is that free expression is a means to an end - it is necessary for achieving important societal goals. According to the CDC (2006), there is no closed list of these goals, but there is consensus on at least two of the main ones: the search for truth in the marketplace of ideas; and that freedom of expression is essential for democracy.

The search for truth in the marketplace of ideas: The argument behind this rationale is that it is only through the ongoing and open expression of different ideas that we are able to test the 'truth' of any single idea. This rationale is based on the recognition that freedom of expression is central to people's ability to:

- Develop, hone and refine their own ideas, opinions and views
- Reject, discard or replace ideas, opinions and views
- Convince others of their arguments, ideas, opinions and views
- Consider and assess others' arguments, ideas, opinions and views

The process of sifting through the notional 'marketplace of ideas' is effectively a search for truth. This point is powerfully made with regard to academic or scientific research, which relies heavily on frank peer review 'expression' to sift out erroneous conclusions. But the same is true for our general discourse.

Only through free expression can one ensure that there will be competing ideas or views which human beings can adopt or reject for themselves. The enterprise of human development is based on ideas, viewpoints and arguments. For there to be progress, these need continually to be assessed, challenged, validated, refined or discarded. And this cannot happen fully without free expression.

Freedom of expression is critical to democracy: This rationale is based on the notion that democracy – which recognises that people-have the right to elect a government of their choosing – cannot exist in any meaningful way without the right to freedom of expression.

There are many aspects to this rationale, but the fundamental concept is that in order for democracy to be effective, the citizenry that votes in elections and engages in public processes with government must be informed and must have the right to participate freely in public discourse.

If there is no freedom of expression – if people are not free to share information and express a range of ideas, opinions and political views; and, the corollary to that, if people are not free to receive information in the form of a range of ideas, opinions and political views – they will not be sufficiently well informed to make appropriate and meaningful political choices, whether at the ballot box or in their interactions with government more generally.

Mass media as democracy and good governance advocate: Linked to its general educational role, but more controversially, the press can also play the role of democracy and good governance advocate. This role is controversial because it envisages the press as both advocate and impartial reporter. In this role, the press comments on issues of the day and advocates improved democratic practices and good governance.

In this advocacy role, the press sees itself firmly on the side of the ordinary citizen, whose life can be improved or worsened depending on how public authority is exercised. This advocacy role is also closely linked to the watchdog role of the press; however, it goes further. The press as advocate will report not only on what is happening but on what should be happening.

The press in many developing countries is almost forced to playing this role because improving basic human living conditions cannot happen without democratic practices and good governance.

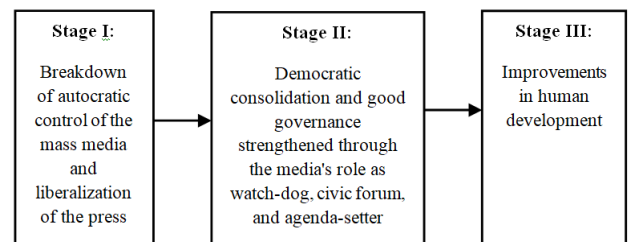
Mass media as catalyst for democracy and development: If the press is able to perform only its most basic function – that is, reporting on matters of public interest – it nevertheless acts as a promoter of transparency, openness and accountability. Governments (even repressive ones) and private sector actors dislike negative press coverage. Of course, a government may try to respond to negative press coverage by clamping down on press freedom through legal and illegal means, but this is not a sustainable long-term response and usually only serves to hasten the erosion of public confidence in, and support for, the government.

If the press is able to perform some or all of the roles set out above, it can act as a catalyst for democracy and development, helping to make public participation meaningful. The public supports a press that reports accurately and provides reliable news and information about matters of public concern. As this public support grows, governments come under public pressure to be more transparent and accountable, and to work with the press and not against it. As governments learn how to respond appropriately to press criticism, so the space for the media opens up and a positive cycle of more sophisticated government-press relations can ensue. In this way, the government sees the independent media as a key vehicle for communicating with the public about its programmes and actions, and also as a gauge to measure its own popular standing and support, as the press often (although not always) reflects public opinion.

IX. THE ROLE OF FREE PRESS IN GOOD GOVERNANCE AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

Many observers emphasize that a free press is not just valuable for democracy, a matter widely acknowledged, but the final claim is that this process is also vital for human development. This perspective is exemplified by Amartya Sen's argument that political freedoms are linked to improved economic development outcomes and good governance in

low-income countries by encouraging responsiveness to public concerns. The free press, Sen suggests, enhances the voice of poor people and generates more informed choices about economic needs. Amartya, (1999, pp. 629-640). James D. Wolfensohn has earlier echoed these sentiments when he was the president of the World Bank: "A free press is not a luxury. A free press is at the absolute core of equitable development, because if you cannot enfranchise poor people, if they do not have a right to expression, if there is no searchlight on corruption and inequitable practices, you cannot build the public consensus needed to bring about change." Wolfensohn, (1999, A39).



ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

Accordingly, Mahatma Gandhi, quoted by Yadav, (2001, pp 1-4):

One of the objects of a newspaper is to understand the popular feeling and give expression to it, another is to arouse among the people certain desirable sentiments: the third is fearlessly to expose popular defects.

A responsible press or media equally helps in socialization of people into citizenship, democratization of the State and political society, institutionalization of civic culture through unfettered flow of information, and rationalized use of power in social relations. In a nascent democracy like Nepal, media can also help voters with the contents of civic and political education and strengthen the culture of democracy. This is the reason political scientist Karl Deutsch has called that the system of communication proves a "nerve of the polity," and any breakdown of the nerve may cause dysfunctional impact in the performance of the polity causing governance decay. The Nigerian press is indeed very vibrant and has contributed immensely in the socialization process of the society.

X. A CRITICAL DISCUSS

The foregoing review prints a vivid picture of the roles and responsibilities of mass media in achieving the democratic principles of good governance, accountability and transparency. The review also reveals that freedom of expression is imperative in the discharge of their duties by mass media. At this juncture, therefore, it is important to take a critical look at how the media have couched their rights to freedom of expression to achieve good governance in Nigeria.

There are a plethora of literature to support the role of the press in providing educational information to the general public on electoral processes. For instance, Nwanolue (2013) carried out a study on the influence of mass media in electioneering campaigns using the 2013 Anambra State

governorship election and found out as follows:

- That the electorates rely on the media to know the political options during the said election;
- That the electorates rely on the media to be educated on the parties/candidates manifestoes during the said election; and
- That the electorates rely on the media to assess the profile of the political candidates; and the election and their pedigree
- That the electorates rely on the foregoing information to make voting decision during the said election.

Aside from the electoral process, the public further relies on the media to be informed about government's policies programmes and activities. Government, in turn, relies on the media to generate relevant feedback that would refine their activities to suit the yearnings and the aspirations of the public. This is actually one of the areas where freedom of expression is not respected by the government. There are a lot of occasions where government would ignore the opinions of the public as expressed by the mass media and goes ahead to execute unacceptable public policy. For instance, when the Buhari administration proposed an increase to pump price of petroleum products, there were mass media frenzy against the increase. But government ignored the opinions and views of the public as expressed by the media and still went ahead to increase pump price of fuel from N85 to N145 per litre.

Furthermore, the government suppresses all forms of freedom of expression that aim at their corrupt practices. The penama papers' leak of the foremost politicians who stash money in foreign countries in 2015 was swept under the carpet. The reports of the pension scam, the power sector probe, the N34m Jamb scam among others were all swept under the carpet. In fact, any further attempt to point at the corrupt practices of the government in power as well as her inefficiencies, is viewed as an act capable of breeding public unrest. Just recently, the Chief Executive Officer/Managing Director of the Daar Communication Ltd. – the Operators of the African Independent Television and the Rang Power fur station – Chief Ray Dokpesi – was relieved of his operational license by the Nigeria Broadcasting Corporation. His offence was broadcasting the truth about the Islamization agenda of the Buhari administration.

The lopsidedness and obvious lack of equity in federal appointment have filled mass media contents since 2015, but government failed to listen to these views and failed to address same. The challenges in the health sector, educational institutions, infrastructure, agriculture, and the economy have equally filled the media contents but they appear to have been neglected. It is therefore realistically safe to argue that freedom of expression only exists in theory and not in practice.

XI. CONCLUSION

Mass media have tremendous tasks in propagating the concept of freedom of expression. The web-based media, which have widened the mass media alternatives available to the general public, have played significant roles in the

propagation of the freedom of expression. These developments, no doubts, have implications for good governance, accountability and transparency. Although the media have used the powers under freedom of expression to facilitate good governance evidence about that it is not yet where as there are many challenges. It is therefore recommended that Nigerian government, which poses some challenges to the responsibilities of the press in utilizing their right to freedom of expression to improve good governance, should copy the international standard set up by American and the United Kingdom.

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