

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF JOURNALISTS IN NIGERIA: IMPLICATIONS FOR DEVELOPMENT

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ABSTRACT: The thrust of this paper is to review the rights and responsibilities of the journalists in Nigeria, in a bid to understand those rights and duties, know the responsibilities that are attached to the job of a journalist, examine whether those responsibilities are capable of forestalling the abuse of those rights and ultimately to examine how acquaintance and adherence to those rights and responsibilities helps the media to serve the social, political, economic and cultural systems, and bring about development in those areas in an emerging democracy and developing country such as Nigeria. The rationale is that journalists educate the public about social, political, economic and cultural events and issues and how they affect their lives. Doing so is a non-negotiable responsibility which the press, as an obligation, owes the masses and the political system that they serve, and that responsibility that comes with certain inalienable rights. The social responsibility theory served as the theoretical standpoint of this paper. The library research method was employed. The conclusion is that when journalists are well-grounded in those rights and responsibilities in Nigeria, they are better equipped, through their coverage, to contribute to social, political, economic and cultural developments in the country.

Keywords: Rights, Responsibilities, Development, Journalists, Journalism.

INTRODUCTION

In a democratic and developing society such as Nigeria, the role of the press is to serve the social, political, economic and cultural systems by gathering, structuring and disseminating accurate and comprehensive information on matters of public interest. In so doing, it is believed that the press will help to facilitate understanding of and the support for development process. This is because, as the development media theory proposes, there is a strong interconnection between accurate and comprehensive information and development to the extent there will be no meaningful development without information and communication (Nwodu & Fab-Ukozor, 2003).

However, any constraint on or hindrance to these activities of journalists infringes on the public's right to information and concomitantly hampers their contribution to development. Freedom of the press flows from the fundamental freedoms of thought, speech, expression and opinion enshrined in various national and international laws, charters and declarations. But in the interest of public good, rights do not exist in isolation (Barker, 2012).

The concept of "the public interest" is constantly evolving, making it difficult to define. The idea remains abstract and without meaning unless it is applied to a specific society at a given

time. Nevertheless, it can be said that information of public interest is that which is necessary to enable citizens to participate fully in the social and political dimensions of life. Media and individual journalists, in determining what is in the public interest, must do so in complete independence, free from all constraints save those stemming from the exercise of their functions and relevant legislation. These decisions must be equally free from personal interests and prejudices.

Journalists, just as humans, have certain inalienable rights and also have certain responsibilities placed on them. Rights are predominately privileges granted to individuals by governing bodies, and are generally written into laws (Hoffman, 2018). A right is not just a law that allows individuals or governing bodies to do or say anything they wish. Every right manifests itself through a series of obligations or duties that flow outward from the central law. Those rights include, among others, free access to all information sources, and the right to freely inquire on all events conditioning public life, right to refuse subordination to anything contrary to the general policy of the information organ to which he collaborates such as it has been laid down by writing and incorporated in his contract of employment, as well as any subordination not clearly implicated by this general policy.

Responsibility means a sense of duty or obligation to do something. Responsibility can be as limited to a list of duties assigned by an employer. It can also be broad, and morally or ethically accountable within the greater society. Responsibility can be assigned to an individual job, or assumed by an individual. It can be applied to an individual, or implied in the broader context of societal behaviour. Whether in contractual law or social behaviour, without responsibility nothing would ever be accomplished. The prime responsibility of the media is bringing the truth ethically and objectively without hurting anybody's sentiment (Dasgupta, 2018).

The thrust of this paper is to differentiate between the rights and responsibilities of the journalists in Nigeria

The Problem

Journalists educate the public about events and issues and how they affect their lives, and that makes them formidable agents for development. They spend much of their time interviewing expert sources, searching public records and other sources for information, and sometimes visiting the scene where a crime or other newsworthy occurrence took place. After they have thoroughly researched the subject, they use what they uncovered to write an article or create a piece for radio, television or the internet. With those responsibilities, they hold the power and have an important place in facilitating social, political, economic, cultural and holistic development process. But the power that comes with their duties, if unchecked, can lead to abuse. Therefore, what are the elements that are in place to forestall the abuse of rights and duties of the journalists in Nigeria, and how can adherence to their responsibilities help to facilitate the development process?

Objectives

The specific objectives are to:

1. Understand the rights and responsibilities of the Nigerian journalists

2. Examine the role of the journalists in the development process
3. Examine the implications of the rights and responsibilities of the Nigerian journalist to various perspectives of development.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Journalism Profession

Journalism is the production and distribution of reports on current events based on facts and supported with proof or evidence. The word journalism applies to the occupation, as well as collaborative media who gather and publish information based on facts and supported with proof or evidence. Journalistic media include print, television, radio, Internet (Hasan, 2013).

Journalism is also explained as the activity of gathering, assessing, creating, and presenting news and information. It is also the product of these activities. The American Press Institute (n.d.) explains that “journalism can be distinguished from other activities and products by certain identifiable characteristics and practices. These elements not only separate journalism from other forms of communication; they are what make it indispensable to democratic societies.”

The purpose of journalism is thus to provide citizens with the information they need to make the best possible decisions about their lives, their communities, their societies, and their governments. Kovach and Rosenstiel (2018) stress that journalism is not defined by technology, nor by journalists or the techniques they employ.” The purpose and principles of journalism are determined by its impact in society.

There are several forms of journalism with diverse audiences. Journalism is said to serve the role of a fourth estate, acting as a watchdog on the workings of the government. A single publication (such as a newspaper) contains many forms of journalism, each of which may be presented in different formats. Each section of a newspaper, magazine, or website may cater to a different audience (Stone, O’Donnell & Banning, 1997).

Importance of Journalism

The function of journalism is to give people the information they need to make better decisions about their lives and society (Carlyle, 2005; American Press Institute, n.d.). Journalism also involves the conscious, systematic application of a discipline of verification to produce a “functional truth,” as opposed to something that is merely interesting or informative. Yet while the process is critical, it’s the end product – the story – by which journalism is ultimately judged. The journalist places the public good above all else and uses certain methods – the foundation of which is a discipline of verification – to gather and assess what he or she finds.

More so, the primary role of journalists is to provide information to several millions of people. They can affect the society and vice versa. He further explains that their importance lies in the fact that they are a major cause of whatever modes of perception, thought, public discourse, and political action (Daramola (2003). Journalists are important components of the checks and balances that form part of modern democracy. Only through journalists can the

governing communicate with the governed or rulers to the ruled in any mass sense. Journalists guarantee the accountability of government officials and defend public interests.

The media are also known as agenda setters, which describes the process of media influence (intended or unintended) by which the related importance of news events, issues or personages in the public minds are affected by the order of presentation (or relative silence) in news reports. It is assumed that the more the attention given to a topic by the media, the greater is the importance attributed to it by the news audience (Ate, 2008).

The Concept of Rights as it Pertains to Journalism

There is considerable disagreement about what is meant precisely by the term rights. It has been used by different groups and thinkers for different purposes, with different and sometimes opposing definitions, and the precise definition of this principle, beyond having something to do with normative rules of some sort or another, is controversial.

Rights are legal, social, or ethical principles of freedom or entitlement; that is, rights are the fundamental normative rules about what is allowed of people or owed to people according to some legal system, social convention, or ethical theory. Rights are of essential importance in such disciplines as law and ethics, especially theories of justice and deontology (Gordons, 2003)

Rights are given by State to individuals so that they can seek redress against the excesses of the State and also to allow the development of their best capabilities. In the context of State, the rights were given to the individuals to restrict the state from acting arbitrarily. However, responsibilities of the individuals include strengthening the cohesion between them and the State, carrying out community development works, active participation in civil society groups, etc. (Yadav, 2019)

The following are a review of the rights of the journalist:

Access to Information

In order to inform the public of the events and issues of the day, to give accurate expression to political, social and cultural currents, and to promote widespread and open debate, it is essential that the media have unhindered access to sources of information. Freedom of the press is an indispensable precondition for informed public opinion and debate (Barker, 2012).

Gathering of Information

The media and journalists must be free to gather information about facts and events without hindrance, or threat or reprisal. In deciding what to cover and how to cover it, they must be free to exercise their editorial judgment. Outside influence or interference in this process may well constitute a form of censorship (Gunter, 2003).

Access to Government Information

Governments have an obligation to make their administrations as transparent as possible. Public institutions and authorities have a duty to respect this democratic principle, and to

facilitate access to public documents. That the state exists to serve its citizens and is accountable to them is a principle recognized both by the Nigerian constitution. Citizens have the inalienable right to be fully informed about the actions and decisions taken by their governments and public officials. When a government, citing the public interest, forbids or delays publication of information, it should not assume that the press will agree with it about where the public interest lies. Governments should not confuse their own interests with the public interest (Gunter, 2003). It is essential that the press have access to information regarding the government and all public institutions and organizations. Any hindrance, whether judicial or administrative, undermines the freedom of the press and the legitimate right of citizens to be informed of the events, actions and decisions that affect them.

Access to Judicial and Quasi-Judicial Proceedings

The administration of justice is a public matter and it must be conducted openly, despite the personal and sensitive nature of some cases. Courts and tribunals should exclude the public only in the most exceptional of circumstances, and even in such cases, the press should be present in order to report on matters of public interest and the administration of justice (Habermas, 2019). Separate rules of access for the press and the public should be established by legislation that would, at the same time, better balance the right to personal privacy, the open and public administration of justice and the right of the public to be informed on matters of public interest.

Protection of Sources and Confidential Material

Freedom of the press and the public's right to know depend on journalists' right to keep certain sources of information confidential. Courts and quasi-judicial bodies may compel journalists to testify, reveal their sources and surrender documents; there are no laws of privilege affording the Nigerian media any protection in this regard. The Press Council recognizes that journalists have the right to remain silent. It is the duty of the judiciary to use great discretion and discernment in weighing the competing interests involved. The council believes that before compelling journalists to co-operate with courts or tribunals, the judiciary should ensure that the confidential information the journalist has is indispensable to the resolution of the case and that there is no other reasonable way to obtain it. It should be emphasized that what is necessary to protect is the exercise of journalism, not journalists as individuals (Gunter, 2003). Freedom of the press and the public's right to information require that journalistic activity, that is, the gathering, processing and transmission of information, as well as the conditions necessary to practice journalism, be protected to ensure the public's access to comprehensive information on all matters of public interest.

Freedom from Censorship and Government Interference

News reports, commentaries and opinion pieces, especially those about political issues, should be free of legal restriction or censorship. The law should never be invoked to restrain the right or ability of the press to criticize any level of government, including municipal government. Governments can help create the conditions for the existence and development of a press that is free and of high quality. Their role should be to support the public's right of access to comprehensive and accurate coverage of the events and issues of the day. The state should avoid taking any action or enacting legislation that might limit or alter news media content (Bowman & Willis, 2003).

Editorial Freedom and Journalistic Formats

The information the public receives from the media is the product of various types of editorial decisions. Information can be presented in different forms (for example, news stories or commentaries), at different lengths, with or without images and so on. These choices are a matter of editorial judgment by journalists and are the prerogatives of journalists and media management. The media and journalism professionals must remain free to report events and comment on them without hindrance, or threat or reprisal. The press is not required to conform to any particular ideology. Each media organization can, therefore, publish stories of its own choosing and accord them the prominence it deems appropriate.

Working with People

Even though a news article bears a single journalist's byline, the process requires significant collaboration. How good a journalist's story is often depends on how adept he is at communicating and working with others. For example, journalists take instruction from their editors regarding what angle to approach when writing a story, how long the story should be and whom to interview. They also need strong people and communication skills so they can persuade sources to talk to them. Journalists frequently approach people they don't know, whether when reporting from the scene or calling to request an interview. If they're uncomfortable around strangers, they'll make others uncomfortable as well, making it less likely that people will want to be interviewed.

Responsibilities of the Journalist

The term responsibility has two different senses in management literature. Some writers explain it as a duty or task which assigned to a subordinate on the basis of his position in the organization. Responsibility is also the obligation of an individual to perform the duty or task assigned to him (Gordons, 2003). That is, it is the sense of duty or obligation to do something.

Responsibility can be as limited to a list of duties assigned by an employer. It can also be broad, and morally or ethically accountable within the greater society. Responsibility can be assigned to an individual job, or assumed by an individual. It can be applied to an individual, or implied in the broader context of societal behaviour. Whether in contractual law or social behaviour, without responsibility nothing would ever be accomplished (Hoffman, 2018)

As for the journalist, the major responsibility of the media is bringing the truth ethically and objectively without hurting anybody's sentiment (Dasgupta, 2018). The main responsibilities of the journalist are as follows:

The Nigerian Press Council's (1998) enumerates the responsibilities of the journalists are follows:

- a) Editorial independence: decisions concerning the content of news should be the responsibility of a professional journalist.
- b) Accuracy and fairness: The public has a right to know. Factual, accurate, balanced and fair reporting is the ultimate objective of good journalism and the basis of earning public trust and confidence; a journalist should refrain from publishing inaccurate and

misleading information. Where such information has been inadvertently published, prompt correction should be made. A journalist must hold the right of reply as a cardinal rule of practice; and in the course of his duties a journalist should strive to separate facts from conjecture and comment.

- c) **Privacy:** As a general rule, a journalist should respect the privacy of individuals and their families unless it affects the public interest. Information on the private life of an individual or his family should only be published if it impinges on public interest. Also, publishing of such information about an individual as mentioned above should be deemed justifiable only if it is directed at: exposing crime or serious misdemeanour; exposing anti-social conduct; protecting public health, morality and safety; and preventing the public from being misled by some statement or action of the individual concerned.
- d) **Privilege/non-disclosure:** A journalist should observe the universally accepted principle of confidentiality and should not disclose the source of information obtained in confidence; and a journalist should not breach an agreement with a source of information obtained as “off-the-record or as background information.”
- e) **Decency:** A journalist should dress and comport himself in a manner that conforms with public taste; a journalist should refrain from using offensive, abusive or vulgar language; a journalist should not present lurid details, either in words or picture, of violence, sexual acts, abhorrent or horrid scenes; in cases involving personal grief or shock, enquiries should be carried out and approaches made with sympathy and discretion; and unless it is in the furtherance of the public’s right to know, a journalist should generally avoid identifying relatives or friends of persons convicted or accused of crime.
- f) **Discrimination:** A journalist should refrain from making pejorative reference to a person’s ethnic group, religion, sex, or to any physical or mental illness or handicap.
- g) **Reward and gratification:** A journalist should neither solicit nor accept bribes, gratifications or patronage to suppress or publish information; and to demand payment for the publication of news is inimical to the notion of news as a fair, accurate, unbiased and factual report of an event.
- h) **Violence:** A journalist should not present or report acts of violence, armed robberies, terrorist activities or vulgar display of wealth in a manner that glorifies such acts in the eyes of the public.
- i) **Children and minors:** A journalist should not identify, either by name or picture, or interview children under the age of 16 who are involved in cases concerning sexual offences, crimes and rituals or witchcraft either as victims, witnesses or defendants.
- j) **Access of information:** A journalist should strive to employ open and honest means in the gathering of information; and exceptional methods may be employed only when the public interest is at stake.
- k) **Public interest:** A journalist should strive to enhance national unity and public good.
- l) **Social responsibility:** A journalist should promote universal principles of human rights, democracy, justice, equity, peace and international understanding.
- m) **Plagiarism:** A journalist should not copy, wholesale or in part, other people’s work without attribution and/or consent.
- n) **Copyright:** Where a journalist reproduces a work, be it in print, broadcast, art work or design, proper acknowledgement should be accorded the author; a journalist should abide by all rules of copyright, established by national and international laws and conventions.

- o) Press freedom and responsibility: A journalist should strive at all times to enhance press freedom and responsibility.

Other Categories of the Responsibilities of the Journalists Include:

Legal Responsibilities

In addition to serving the public interest, journalists must also follow the law, especially regarding the confidentiality and privacy of the people they interview or write about. For example, while journalists often tape record their interviews to ensure accuracy, federal and state laws generally make it illegal to record a conversation without the permission of the other party. In this case, journalists must tell their sources they're recording the interview before it begins. Journalists must also understand the laws regarding libel and invasion of privacy. If a journalist is careless when reporting criminal allegations against a person, for example, he could face a defamation lawsuit if the accusations are proved untrue.

Ethical Responsibilities

Some aspects of a journalist's job are not subject to any kind of law but are just as important. Journalists must strive to present an accurate, well-balanced explanation of the stories they cover. For example, they have an obligation to present all sides of an issue, and to conduct extensive research and talk to several sources knowledgeable about the subject (Domingo, 2017). If they present only popular opinion, or if they conduct minimal research without fully exploring the subject, they don't give readers and viewers the information they need to understand the implications of the event or issue. Journalists must also be honest with the people they interview, telling them before talking to them what the article is about and that they plan to quote them in the piece.

Review of Development and its various Perspectives

The word 'development' ranks among the most loosely used terms in social science literature. For this reason, professionals in diverse fields of learning tend to perceive development from their various narrow professional points of views (Nwodu & Fab-Ukozor, 2003)

Economic Perspective of Development

It is economic change that realistically enhances people's earnings in addition to raising their living standards via large scale production of goods and services (Nwodu & Fab-Ukozor, 2003).

It is the capacity of a national economy whose initial economic condition has been more or less static for a long time, to generate and sustain an annual increase in its gross national product at rates of, perhaps, 5% to 7% or more (Todaro & Smith, 2003).

It is the maximisation of growth of the GNP through capital accumulation and industrialisation (Meier, 1989). The import of the above definitions is that development in economic sense is all about growth measured in terms of gross national product (GNP). A nation is therefore said to be developed if there is sustained upward growth from original static condition to an appreciable increase in the nation's GNP.

Philosophical Perspective of Development

Philosophers are not really concerned with material aspect of development. Their concern however, is on man's mental health. Development, therefore, is easily associated with the level of mental alertness. The emphasis is on mental capacity to think right and ability to properly adjust to societal norms and values. According to Nwodu and Fab-Ukozor (2003), development in this context refers to "the attainment of meaningful degree of mental alertness, and the sophistication of human faculties to the level the individual in society cannot only reason well but also, adopt a logical approach to issues arising from human society". This definition clearly shows that the indices of development, in philosophical sense, are: possession of high mentality, possession of highly developed faculties, ability to reason well and adjust properly to the social system, and ability to understand and interpret social trends.

Socio-Cultural Perspective of Development

The major concern here is on socio-cultural perspective of development. Development in this context is concerned with conscious move away from primordial and archaic cultures to a more cohesive, dynamic and secular ones. The human society is said to be developed when such society creates conducive atmosphere for: social mobilisation i.e. where the units of the society operate in a social climate that encourages solidarity and the spirit of oneness, cultural secularity i.e. where socio-political actions and activities are based on high level of rationality and empiricism, high prevalence of universalistic norms i.e. human conducts and behaviours are guided by laws that are universal, recognition of achievement over and above ascription i.e. individuals occupy positions of authority on the basis of merit rather than on basis of family status and other demographic factors.

Holistic Sense of Development

Let us therefore consider a few of the definitions that tend to reflect broad sense of holistic development. Broadly defined therefore, development is: concerned with improving the human, cultural, socio-economic and political conditions of the individual, and consequently, of society (Moemeka, 1989). Multifaceted in process, in human society. At the level of the individual, it implies creativity, self-discipline, responsibility, and material well-being. The achievement of any of those aspects of personal development is very much tied to the state of the society as a whole (Rodney as cited in Todaro & Smith, 2003).

Theoretical Framework

The Social Responsibility Theory

This discourse was underpinned on the social responsibility theory. The media social responsibility theory came to be as a result of the "The Commission of the Freedom of Press" in the United States of America in 1949. The theory posits that much as the press should be free to operate in any society, such freedom should carry certain responsibilities or simply the press freedom does not mean the press should do as it pleases. It should operate in recognition of societal needs and aspiration. According to Hassan (2013), an extension of libertarian theory, in that the press recognizes that it has a responsibility to society to carry out its essential functions.

The social responsibility theory has some basic tenets:

- a) Serving the political system by providing information for discussion and debate on public affairs.
- b) Enlightening the public so as to make it capable of self-government.
- c) Safeguarding the rights of the individuals and serving as a watchdog against government.
- d) Serving the economic system primarily by bringing together the buyers and sellers of goods and services through the medium of advertising.
- e) Providing entertainment.
- f) Maintaining its own self sufficiency as to be free from pressures of social interest (Nkwocha, 1999).

The theory stipulates that the press is free to cover events as part of their duties and rights but at the same time, they owe responsibility to the people whom they serve. There is a non-negotiable responsibility which the press as an obligation owes the masses and the political system they serve: these responsibilities are within the purview of their duty to gather, structure and disseminate accurate and comprehensive information on matters of public interest in a way that will facilitate understanding of and the support for development process.

The reason the authors anchored this paper on social responsibility theory is because the theory helps to explain that, in as much as journalists have the right to carry out their duties they should do their job with a sense of responsibility as they are integral part of development; as such they are expected to be responsible so that their actions will not hinder development in the society that they operate.

Methodology

This paper adopted the desk research method otherwise known as library research method. According to Jumbo, Macaulay, Megwa, Okpongpong, Edikan and Etumnu (2022), this method involves identifying and locating significant secondary data, analysing it in line with the subject matter under investigation and then developing and expressing one's idea. It is a good source of secondary source of data collection where researches by other scholars can be accessed, analyzed and evaluated. Secondary source makes information easily accessible. This method allows for easy use of secondary data that can be gotten from journals, books, newspapers, magazine, internet etc. and then use for discussing issue at stake by researchers.

Discussing the Implications of the Rights and the Responsibilities of Journalists for Development

Having earlier explained the rights and responsibilities of the Nigerian journalists, the crux of this section is to discuss the last two objectives: to examine the role of the journalists in the development process, and examine the implications of the rights and responsibilities of the Nigerian journalist to various perspectives of development.

The Role of the Journalists in the Development Process

There is strong interconnection between communication provided by the journalists and development to the extent there will be no meaningful development without communication. Okenwa (2002) opines that communication is central to the process of development to the extent that the dependence of one on the other has virtually been taken for granted. Communication and development play complementary roles. While communication facilitates understanding of and the support for development process, development in turn leads to improved communication skills and infrastructure. Communication and development are interconnected to the extent they play complimentary role to each other.

In pursuance of these roles for development, mass media play array of roles in Nigeria society. They range from social, cultural, political, roles. They are explained as flows:

1) Political Role:

Mass media provide viable platform for political engineering of a democratic nation. They provide the platform for political campaigns, presentation of political manifestoes, and candidates for election on radio, television, internet, face book, billboards, newspaper, magazines, telephone, etc. This role enables the electorate to make informed political decision so as to vote the candidate of their choice. Mass media also educate the electorate on election guidelines and their civic responsibility which helps in breaking their political apathy. The media today stand as vibrant people's parliament in order to enlighten the electorate on how to vote and protect their votes.

2) Economic Role:

Mass media provide the fundamental framework upon which goods, services, ideas, political parties and their candidates are presented and promoted to the target public or prospective consumers for acceptance, loyalty and patronage. This role, no doubts, serves as a catalyst for industrial revolution of a capitalist economy like Nigeria. Economic actors need accurate and timely information to allocate resources efficiently. Investors and other groups increasing value and demand a governance-monitoring role from the media. A free and independent press can provide information and monitoring to the economic policy development process leading to more effective economic policies. It can also reduce political risk and increase good governance—conditions that are important for robust economic development

3) News/Information Role

It is the primarily role of the mass media to gather, process and disseminate news and information on happenings and what is about to happen in society within and outside the nation. They disseminate information concerning major issues, events and people across the world. The traditional role of the mass media in national development is to inform the masses about societal events (Nkwocha 2005, p.205). Merrill, (1990, pp.59-60) cited in Nkwocha (2005) states that the mass media keep the people informed on political and government matters to enable them make rational decisions. The mass media are also dispensers of corporate organizations and educational institutions information to the masses or target public.

4) Education Role:

The media of mass communication have significant assignment in educating the masses on issues of public interest. The education could be formal or informal. According to (Ekwelie, 2006, Ndimele & Kasarachi, 2006), the media are potent tools for imparting knowledge to people in society. They are also veritable instruments for skills acquisition in different fields of human endeavour aimed at attaining national development.

5) Entertainment Role:

Mass media are sources of entertainment in society. This role reduces boredom in our lives especially when we are stressed up. Media provide a catharsis to the lives of their audience. Some of the media programmes titillate us to the point of taking media drama as real-life event.

6) Social Role

In order for development to be just and sustainable, citizens must productively participate in the decisions that shape their lives. Participation requires an informed citizenry. A free and independent media supply timely and relevant information to citizens allowing them to change their own behaviour and to demand higher social standards for society.

Implications of the Rights and Responsibilities of the Nigerian Journalist to Various Perspectives of Development

First, it is important to point out that the rights and responsibilities of a journalist exist together. Even in landscape where there is freedom of speech, there is free coverage but at the same time this freedom is moderated by responsibility which the press as an obligation owes the masses and the political system they serve. The right gives total media freedom on one hand but the external control by the public on the other hand. The relationship between rights and responsibilities of the journalists is such that the later balances the former.

The implication of the interface of journalist's rights and responsibilities for various perspectives of development is demonstrated as follows:

1. Political Role:

The journalist provides viable platform for political engineering of a democratic nation. They provide the platform for political campaigns, presentation of political manifestoes, and candidates for election on radio, television, internet, face book, billboards, newspaper, magazines, telephone, etc. This role enables the electorate to make informed political decision so as to vote the candidate of their choice. Mass media also educate the electorate on election guidelines and their civic responsibility which helps in breaking their political apathy.

That means, the journalist has the responsibility to serve as an independent monitor of power by performing their watchdog roles. Being an independent monitor of power, according to Kovach and Rosenstiel (2007), means playing the watchdog roles: searching out and discovering the news; examining the unseen corners of society;

making the management and execution of power transparent; making known and understood the effects of that power.

If a journalist has the responsibility of being an independent monitor of power by performing their watchdog roles, then he is even independent of his media house's general policy if it contravenes with their capacity as an independent monitor. There is also the responsibility of editorial independence, which means that decisions concerning the content of news should be the responsibility of a professional journalist.

What is the implication of the journalist's right in this situation? He has the right to refuse subordination to any opinion from political actors that are contrary to the general policy. The media and journalism professionals must remain free to report events and comment on them without hindrance, or threat or reprisal. It is only by doing this can the political development role of the journalist be achieved.

2. Economic Role:

It is the responsibility of the journalist to provide economic information that will help people, organisation and the government to make informed decisions. Economic actors need accurate and timely information to allocate resources efficiently. Investors and other groups increasing value and demand a governance-monitoring role from the media. A free and independent press can provide information and monitoring to the economic policy development process leading to more effective economic policies. It can also reduce political risk and increase good governance—conditions that are important for robust economic development

In terms of right, the journalists have the right to freely access economic information regarding the government and all public institutions and organizations. It is only by doing this can the economic development role of the journalist be achieved.

3. News/Information Role

It is the responsibility of the journalist to gather, process and disseminate news and information on happenings and what is about to happen in society within and outside the nation. They disseminate information concerning major issues, events and people across the world. The traditional role of the mass media in national development is to inform the masses about societal events.

In terms of right, the journalists have the right to freely inquire and to have unhindered access to sources of information in order to inform the public of the events and issues of the day, to give accurate expression to political, social and cultural currents, and to promote widespread and open debate. It is only by doing this can the news/information development role of the journalist be achieved.

4. Social Role

In order for development to be just and sustainable, citizens must productively participate in the decisions that shape their lives. Participation requires an informed

citizenry. A free and independent media has the responsibility to supply timely and relevant information to citizens allowing them to change their own behaviour and to demand higher social standards for society.

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Conclusion/Recommendations

The press has a central role in a democratic society. It plays various roles in development. But only when it is free can it serve the public good by empowering well-informed citizens to participate fully in democratic life. The rights of the press and the responsibilities that flow from them ensure that the public's right to know is served. The right gives total media freedom on one hand but the external control by the public on the other hand. The relationship between rights and responsibilities of the journalists is such that the later balances the former.

Journalism is a sacred profession that has been accorded significant recognition as an institution that services the modern democratic system and helps the modern society to develop. Therefore, journalists are expected to be well-grounded and be well-armed with their rights and responsibilities to be able to contribute in facilitate social, political, cultural, political and economic development. Journalists are therefore advised to be armed with their rights and responsibilities if they must effectively contribute their quota to development at all levels of society.

More so, they are advised to see themselves as partners in development in society; by so doing, should be mindful of the implications of the information they put out to the public. Journalists are part of development process as such they should carry out their developmental function with every sense of responsibility so that they will not hinder the process of development.

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