RIVERS STATE UNIVERSITY, PORT HARCOURT

ADVOCACY PARADIGMS: UNBUNDLING THE ALBATROSS OF JOURNALISTIC INERTIA IN NIGERIA

AN INAUGURAL LECTURE

By

PROFESSOR GODWIN BASSEY OKON

BA (UYO), MA (NIG.), PhD (UYO)

Professor Of Development Communication/ Media Advocacy

SERIES NO. 70

Wednesday, 27th October, 2021

ADVOCACY PARADIGMS: UNBUNDLING THE ALBATROSS OF JOURNALISTIC INERTIA IN NIGERIA

An
Inaugural Lecture

by

PROFESSOR GODWIN BASSEY OKON

BA (UYO), MA (NIG.), PhD (UYO)

PROFESSOR OF DEVELOPMENT COMMUNICATION/
MEDIA ADVOCACY

SERIES NO.70

Wednesday 27th October, 2021

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

PAGE

Figure   **Title**

LIST OF TABLES

PAGE

Table   **Title**

Protocol

The Vice-Chancellor and Chairman of this Occasion
The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Administration)
The Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Elect (Academic)
The Registrar and Secretary to Senate
The University Librarian
The University Bursar
The Provost, College of Medical Sciences
The Dean, School of Postgraduate Studies
Deans of Faculties/Student Affairs
Directors of Centres/Institutes
Heads of Departments
Distinguished Professors and other members of Senate
All Academic, Administrative and Technical Staff
Students of this Great University
Respected Guests, Friends, Associates and Well Wishers
Gentlemen of the Press
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen

1.0 PREAMBLE

Life throws up daily challenges. No matter how well read an individual may be, the fact remains that each day presents a learning curve. Learning stops at the point of exit. It is in the course of my meditation and reflection on this very matter that it dawned on me that being given the platform to present an Inaugural Lecture is

indeed a rare privilege that should in no way be trivialized. In all humility, modesty and emphasis, I consider my standing here today a tumultuous privilege and to this, Mr. Vice Chancellor, I am extremely grateful.

As a young lecturer, back in the day, I was lost on the import of inaugural lectures because they were rarities then. I observed also that the aspiration of many young lecturers especially those given to *Epicureanism*, back then, across Nigerian universities in the face of prevailing intrigues in the Nigerian university system was to attain the position of a Senior Lecturer. At least as a senior lecturer, in our misconception then, one can become an Acting-Head of Department, more so, even an Acting Dean of a Faculty with prospects of being a Rector or Provost whenever the opportunity comes knocking.

Professorial aspirations back then were merely wishes that could not fly not because of the unresourcefulness of lecturers but because of man's inhumanity to man. In those days, the rule of the game was to align to prosper. Sitting on the fence was considered anathema. Those alignments sometimes failed because change is the only constant. Aptly described, professorial promotions, in the web of those misconceptions, woke up the sleeping dogs while that of Senior Lecturers and below allowed the sleeping dogs to continue in their rest. Fortunately and to the glory of God, that era is gone, forgotten and completely banished from the annals of Nigerian universities.

Mr. Vice - Chancellor, I make bold to say that ours – Rivers State University- is a university that is truly anchored on the pedestal of excellence and creativity. Primordial and parochial propulsions do not thrive in this university. A level playing field is assured for all players with competence as the denominator. My standing here today is as a result of the core values of this university for how would a non-indigene, the son of a commoner, ever aspire to attain this professional height in a foreign land if not for the enabling environment so created.

Without the fear of ambiguity and equivocation, I add impetus to my voice to say that the Rivers State University is a detribalized university where the optimization of human potentials is best assured. This partly explains why it is rated the **University of the Year 2021**.

On an ideal note, inaugural lectures are designed to mark one's peak in the academic hierarchy but in the face of prevailing dynamics, can this ideal be real? With a year spread across twelve calendar months, a university can only accommodate twelve inaugural lectures so if at the end of an appraisal season a university produces twenty professors, this may amount to stretching the timeline which therefore keeps some professors on the waiting list for upwards of four years. The foregoing premise can at best elicit a food for thought.

The distinctiveness of inaugural lectures is indeed unmistakable. It is unmistakable because it is a lecture embellished in a story and the story is an account of one's academic stewardship – the profession of one's chosen path. This is not just a presupposition but a fact. If this position holds sway, it therefore means that the preparation starts at the point of ascendency. Every milestone adds fibre and stature to the unfolding story until the last piece of the puzzle finally fits the fragments into a complete whole.

Mine is a case of having the lines fall unto me in pleasant places. The number 70 is iconic. It expressly finds its way into the memory bank while making the entire interplay enduring. To this end, I stand in all humility as the 70th Inaugural Lecturer of this great university. Having this exercise in the month of October will hold fond memories for my family for reasons that border on the fact that October is the month of my birth, it is also the month of our wedding anniversary, it is the month of my promotion, and with this addition, October will surely go down in my family as our month of celebration. On a comic note, since leadership is by example, I stand

as the Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences to open the floodgates for more inaugural lectures from my faculty.

Mr. Vice Chancellor, I started with the truism that we learn every day. I am a more enlightened person today than I was yesterday. In the course of my putting my academic story together I unveiled some intricate interlinks that can actually move an individual through discourses on development communication and media advocacy where I hold my profession.

Communication is the framework, being the principal thing, with the mass media as the catalysts. Our focus is on the processes that drive social change and how the processes can be harmonized so as to make our society a better place where there is a ray of sun for the utterly despondent and a setting where there is a strong framework for the propagation of virtues and values.

I pray that this scholarly narrative, as it unfolds and ends, will add value to humanity while strengthening the collective fabric of our university as the cradle for excellence and creativity. With renewed strength and zest as buoyed by your kind disposition, Mr. Vice Chancellor, I proceed in a gentle stride to get the cameras rolling…

2.0   THE BACKGROUND

Humanity loses its essence in the absence of communication. This no doubt accords justification to Watzlawick, Bavelas and Jackson's (1967) axiom that man *cannot not communicate*. The implication here is that what distinguishes man from other living forms is communication. To this end, man is phatic and intrinsically linked to verbal and nonverbal expressions. Little wonder, however, why solitary confinement seems to be the worst form of punishment. Communication is it, communication is all, and communication is everything. The underlying notion here is that communication is an indispensable aspect of human existence.

The interesting thing is that communication is an activity everyone engages in yet very few pay little attention to its dynamics. The point to note here is that communication is peace, communication is love, communication is empathy; communication is enduring. Its etymology epitomizes its essence. The process of understanding dovetails within the frame of interactions among interactants as distinct from an exchange of inflammatory rhetoric. If only we could truly communicate amongst ourselves, our entire socio-political space will be embellished in peace. In the semantics of communication, empathy is key. Ironically, any human action that is devoid of empathy is simply barbaric.

It is obvious that the chaos in the world today can be attributed to the problems of ineffective communication. The failure of man to communicate effectively is borne out of selfishness and avarice because its entire guidepost calls for openness and candour. Herein lies the precondition for effective communication which indisputably is the pathway for global peace and understanding. By inference therefore the world can really be a better place through the instrumentality of communication. The epistemology and pedagogy of communication entails an understanding of its forms. This no doubt may require a bit of elucidation. The forms in descriptive terms are:

2.1 Intrapersonal Communication

This is best described as communication within oneself. As a matter of fact this is the   fulcrum of other forms of communication. One remarkable thing about this form of communication is the duplicity of roles in which case the intrapersonal communicator simultaneously serves as the source and receiver of the message. Interestingly, intrapersonal communication lends animation to the aphorism that communication has no beginning and end.

Deep meditation and reflection are hallmarks of intrapersonal communication. On a dramatic tilt, when we talk aloud and speak to ourselves, we manifest traits of intrapersonal communication. Ironically, soliloquy is often mistaken for demonic bouts. Fortunately, people know better in present times and no longer greet soliloquizers with bemusement.

The interesting thing about intrapersonal communication as Okon (2012) notes is that it allows an individual to clearly articulate his thoughts and actions before letting them out. In this way, intractable problems can be averted. Another remarkable thing about intrapersonal communication is that it can help fill boring moments, this manifests when one is faced with a scenario that can be likened to pseudo solitary confinement. In such an instance an individual can find himself playing with his hand device while reading through messages on his sent box. In this way, man's humanism is brought to bear.

2.2   Interpersonal Communication

The term interpersonal communication is communication between two or more persons. The effectiveness of interpersonal communication is fundamental to our understanding of self in the development and maintenance of our relationship with others. For most people, communication with others is largely a matter of "doing what comes naturally." Many people think they communicate about the same as everyone else does. In fact, some people run the gamut from superior to rather poor communicators.

Interpersonal communication could also refer to conversation like the person-to-person interaction with one another or with a small informal aggregate of people. So talking to a friend on campus, talking on the phone with a classmate about an

upcoming test, or discussing a movie with friends over a drink are all forms of interpersonal communication. Intimate relationships and friendships are formed and maintained through interpersonal communication. In the setting discussed above, feedback is immediate because total interaction is the rule.

How we relate with others is strongly influenced by our ability to use the communication skills most associated with conversation, shaping messages, listening and responding. Interpersonal communication is spontaneous, fast moving, and at times difficult to recall accurately. Still, it is subject to analysis, and how we communicate in personal informal settings can be changed and improved upon. We generally think of interpersonal communication as involving two or more people. The literature is however silent on the maximum number of participants and interactants.

2.3   Group Communication

This is a communication form that builds upon inter-personal communication skills. Group communication is basically interpersonal in nature. When several people formali-ze their relationships by meeting to combine talents to solve a problem or to make a decision, they form a decision making group.

The purpose of a decision making group – achieving a goal that represents and is shaped by the thinking of the entire group is basically goal accomplishment because it introdu-ces additional variables that are not found in interpersonal communication. Such variables include elements of the group structure, the need for task and maintenance functions by the group members, leadership and formalized methods of group problem solving and decision making. Each individual belongs

to many groups: the family, social organizations, church organizations, work groups and others. An emerging consideration is that for group communication to be effective, it may entail a form of interpersonal mediation.

2.4 Mass Communication

According to Janowitz (1968),

> Mass communication comprises the institutions and techniques by which specialized groups employ technological devices (press, radio, films etc) to disseminate symbolic content to a large, heterogeneous and widely dispersed audience (p.16).

Implicit in this definition are:

i.   Technological devices

ii. Large, heterogeneous, and widely dispersed audience

It should however be noted that the technology involved in mass communication makes it possible for a mechanical reproduction process thus leading to immediacy in the reception of signals. On the other hand, in contradistinction to other forms of communication, the audience for mass communication is large and heterogeneous. In contemporary terms, this explication includes the new media such as the internet, etc.

As a nursery rhyme, what distinguishes mass communication from other forms of communication is the simultaneity of the message and the heterogeneity of the audience. Worthy of note is the fact that this fourth form is conventionally typified as *the first game changer.*

2.5   The New Media

The glamour and the splendour of the new media have further shrunk the world into a weblet (hamlet) devoid of cultural/religious leanings and cleavages. The new media, by their unique configuration, provide a platform for concentric transactions and rapid transfer. Such transactions may include outright purchases, bids, as well as other forms of ideological interface.

The world today has become fast paced. Alvin Toffler's "future shock" concept finds expression here. Interestingly, Rodman (2012) notes that the "internet is changing the way people communicate around the world and is changing the way the world does business. Therefore to understand the internet is to understand the media of the future" (p.28). No doubt the media landscape has changed considerably with more pervasive propensities.

These proensities have been encapsulated in "electronic" expressions because the language of "e" has become an integral aspect of our daily usage. To this end, Rodman (2012) further notes that "companies that are successful with e-commerce are usually those that take advantage of the Net's unique capabilities: its interactivity, its ability to allow businesses to target specific customers and its ability to offer inventories that couldn't exist in any one physical space" (p.286).

Descriptively, the unique capabilities highlighted above fall within the conspectus of social media. In an earlier review, Chebib and Sohail (2011) highlight that social media is used for communication by a large number of people in society and it consists of so many interactive websites.

The beauty of it all is that the social media platform allows the voiceless to be heard and the seemingly uneducated to contribute to rational discourse because the rules for structured language appear a bit flexible. The imputation is that the toga of "heterogeneity" can be ascribed to social media followership based on the fact that their penetration transcends socio-cultural boundaries. Viewed from a continuum, the passion with which many people bring to bear on issues via the new/social media has never been before paralleled by any other media. This invariably means that people's opinion on issues of varied interests can be shaped through the new media. This accords justification to its reference as the *"biggest game changer."*

3.0 THE WEB OF MEDIA FUNCTIONALITY

The content of any particular medium would to a greater extent reflect the socio-economic, socio-political, socio-cultural and geo-political conditions of the society within which that medium operates. This in other words means that the media derive their colouration from the society.

The foregoing presupposes a two-way relationship or what scientists might refer to as a symbiotic relationship. This relationship becomes glaring when one considers the social responsibility theory. In distilled terms, this theory espouses that since the media enjoy relative privileges from the society they should in turn be responsible to the society. This responsibility becomes manifest in the face of the societal functions of the mass media.

According to DeFleur and Dennis (1994), "the media should act as the means through which group norms are expressed, social controls are exerted, roles are allocated and above all, the entire social process is carried on" (p.26). Also, Lasswell (1972) identified three specific functions of the media to include:

i.   Surveillance of the Environment:

This is one of the traditional roles of the press and, by extension, other media. It involves the collection of news, pictures, facts, and comments required in order to understand and react knowledgably to environmental, national and international conditions as well as to be in a position to take appropriate decisions – informed decisions.

ii.   Correlation of the Different Parts of the Society:

Societies are not only heterogeneous but also large enough that it poses a great problem knowing what is happening outside one's immediate environment. The press correlates these events and activities in a meaningful way for us. The media to a greater extent contribute to national integration in the light of the foregoing.

**iii.   Transmission of Cultural Heritage from One
         Generation to the Other:**

The role of the media in this regard would be regarded as that of a major carrier of culture. Here, the press serves to promote or influence attitudes, to motivate and foster the spread of behaviour patterns and to act as a form of creative expression.

Based on the foregoing, the media also play an important function - Entertainment. This perhaps is routed to the fact that a little bit of relaxation is needed in every aspect of human endeavour; hence the cartoons and other soft stories in our newspapers, films on TV and music on radio.

McQuail (2010) notes that the media in the light of entertainment are "often the location of developments in culture, both in the sense of art and symbolic forms and manners, fashions, styles of life and norms. They express values and normative judgements inextricably mixed with news and entertainment" (p.23).

Scholars have often made reference to the fourth function of the media as "mass entertainment". Perhaps, it is in this light that the three cardinal functions of the media - to inform, educate and entertain - have been deduced.

Wright (1986) developed a basic scheme to describe many of the effects of the media. In this scheme, the media roles were perceived as providing among other things, reward, relaxation and reduction of tension, which makes it easier for people to cope with real life problems and for societies to avoid systemic breakdown.

McQuail and Windahl (1992) dovetailed the role of the media within the framework of "individual relationship" (p.68). This framework looks at the media from the point of view of their audience, their motives for media use and consequences resulting from media use. From their typology, the media audience, their use and consequence are sectionalized into the following categories:

Category I: Information

i. Finding out about relevant events and conditions in immediate surroundings, society and the world

ii. Seeking advice on practical matters or opinion and decision choices

iii. Satisfying curiosity and general interests

iv. Learning, self-education

v. Gaining a sense of security through knowledge

Category II: Personal Identity

i. Finding reinforcements for personal values

ii. Finding models of behaviour

iii. Identifying with values

iv. Gaining insight into one's repertoire

Category III: Integration and Social Interaction

i.   Gaining insight into circumstances of others, social empathy etc.

ii.   Identifying with others and gaining a sense of belonging

iii. Finding a basis for conversation and social interaction

iv.   Having a substitute for real life companionship

v.   Helping to carry out social roles

vi.   Enabling one to connect with family, friends and society

Category IV: Entertainment

i.   Escaping or being diverted from problems

ii.   Relaxing

iii. Getting intrinsic cultural or aesthetic enjoyment

iv.   Filling time

v.   Emotional release

A distillation of the above functions will in simple terms show that the media perform the following functions:

1.   **News Function**: News makes us human because we live in an informed society. News tells us what we should know about our society, about the world, and what is happening around us and about the people we live with and their individual and collective activities. The mass media give us news.

2.   **Economic Function**: The media play some important economic roles in our society because we are bombarded with advertisements via the media. More so, business news flows within and outside our country. A constant flow of such business information is vital for our economic life. On the other hand, information has economic value as the ability to process and store certain types of

data may as well give one country a technological and political advantage over other countries.

3. **Entertainment Function**: The press realizes that a little bit of relaxation is needed in every aspect of human endeavour, hence the cartoons and other soft stories in our newspapers, films on TV and music on radio.

4. **Political Functions:** The media play a very prominent role in the political awareness of the populace by disseminating political information to the citizenry. The media also shine a light on politicians and act as a watch dog of the political system. This function has originated the concept of *the "fourth estate of the realm."*

3.1 General Functions of the Mass Media

The greatest service the media can give to the society is to function responsibly. Good in news, in advertising, in editorial content, and in features. Every medium must also strive to make a living for the publisher and the management but it has a higher purpose than that; it exists not simply to get all it can from the society but to give the society all it can. Its survival as a profit venture depends on these services. The media should reflect community affairs, events and services. They must keep society abreast of the news made by its own people and serve the business institutions by acting as a medium through which they can talk to their customers about their goods and services.

The media must also serve leaders by helping them see the community needs, lend support and help make improvements in the social life of the people. In other instances, they should act as a check on government by holding over them the constant threat of exposure should they become negligent of their duty or attempt to defraud the public.

The media should also be deeply involved in the life of people and be concerned with the things that concern them. A broad understanding of societal needs and a keen sense of journalistic responsibility are reflected in their performance.

3.2   Surveillance Function: The Second Dimension

In addition to the above services the media perform by completely carrying out their fundamental job of news reporting, they completely may be helpful to the society in the following ways:

i.   **Pointing out needs and solutions**: The media can point out social needs and the means of solving them. Their responsibility, in this regard, is to light the way and drive for action. How similar situations were solved in other societies may be highlighted. Commendation by the press for important community accomplishments is always desirable because of the life it gives to community spirit but there are times when a community must be shaken out of its indifference.

ii.   **Interpreting state and national news**: The media may relay news from other states and in the process interpret such news.

Pointing out needs and proffering solutions seems, in our clime, to be an overshadowed function of the mass media not minding the fact that it is a second dimension of the surveillance function of the mass media. Giving the news as it is may not be a sufficient cause for social change. What is however needed is to illuminate varying perspectives and through a thorough synthesis make recommendations borne out of clear cut analysis.

The foregoing no doubt requires a form of elucidation and illumination of burning issues in the social space. The mass media, on an ideal note, ought to interpret the news by illuminating the perspectives that surround the issues with a view to engendering informed opinions for the socially minded and active. In this way rational discourses can be assured while relegating parochialism to the micro-dots of footnote punctuations. The foregoing by no means does not preclude the fact that many may have their independent opinion but truth is that such opinions could be modified, levelled or sharpened through a cross fertilization of ideas as orchestrated by mass media news interpretation.

Truth is that any society with a disproportionate information and interpretation function of the mass media is likely to experience a skewed cognitive processing of issues that affect the society. The proposition here is that a blend of these two seemingly disparate functions of the mass media will ensure a knowledge driven society in contradistinction to one driven by dogmatic world views and stereotype. It is a considered opinion that the mass media should not be silent on the second dimension of the surveillance function which is interpretation. The news should be given as it is to eschew bias but should also be interpreted to illuminate perspectives that will drive the wheel of rational discourse.

The newsroom dogma would always be "do not editorialize the news." This in other words means "do not infuse your own opinion in reporting the news". One may however begin to wonder that if the above maxim holds sway, where then is the place of interpretation? Interestingly, the entire spectrum of news gathering, news processing and news production is enmeshed in a great deal of compartmentaliza-tion. While straight news is straight news, interpretation finds expression through editorials, features and advertorials. The

proposition is not for the sanctity of straight news to be compromised but for the editorial, features and advertorial platforms to be more appropriately utilized within the conspectus of interpretation. The age long adage: "give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar" may be apt in the context of disaggregating avenues for information and interpretation.

Interestingly, the mass media belong to the knowledge industry with media workers (journalists) as an extension of the intelligentsia. This means that media workers (journalists) have been endowed, through professional training, with the propensities to tell truth from falsehood, sound reasoning from fallacies, practicable from impracticable mantra and lots more. Herein lies the beauty of libertarianism as expressed through the doctrine of the free market place of ideas. To this end, and in an ideal sense, the mass media have the capacity to:

    i.   Illuminate

    ii.   Pontificate

    iii. Advocate

    iv. Propagate

In the context of the above, straight news is off with editorial, features and advertorials positioned as enduring platforms for interpretation.

While not belabouring the fact, it must at all times, be noted that media role in social change falls within the purview of diffusion of innovations as postulated by Rogers (1973). Innovation can only be diffused through illuminations that border on rationality. Behaviour change is at the core of development and modernism because the attitude of the individual matters a lot when it comes to embracing change. Modern practices can only be adopted through a constructive change in attitude and behaviour.

Interestingly, the precursor to attitudinal and behavioural conditioning is knowledge which is dependent on information. The mass media role in this regard cannot be underscored. This intricate interplay can be best appreciated when viewed from the prism of a system. Aptly described, the products (news interpretation and illuminations) of the mass media serve as input to knowledge which in turn drives the wheel of attitude and behaviour change.

The inculcation and acculturation of modern habits are no doubt borne out of the foregoing matrix. In this regard, the advantages of adopting new and modern practices are perfected through these interpretative platforms as against straight news. Over time these practices become adopted and the society moves on in the path of growth. In the course of media presentations and projections, how similar experiences were overcome in other climes can be integrated into the overriding discourse as can be initiated by the media. In doing this, care must however be taken so as to shield the media from the pitfalls of *Afghanistanism.*

Models of development are daily projected, imported and exported through the instrumentality of the mass media. The illuminations and interpretations of these models as projected by the mass media in more ways than one bring about domestication. This means adapting the models to the peculiarities of a given society. The imputation is that social change involving attitudinal conditioning and behaviour change can only be borne on the wings of advocacy.

4.0   ADVOCACY AND THE MEDIA NEXUS

The concept of advocacy could be seen as the process of making people aware of their rights to equality and the available mechanisms that would ensure that they receive due respects, rights and privileges against any form of denial, prejudice or discrimination (Holness & Rule, 2014).It refers to efforts put in place with the intention of changing public perception, influence policy decisions and priorities. It is geared towards making a case in support of a given issue (Dzisah, 2019).

Advocacy is seen as an active support for a cause through multiple means and the process for capacity building. This is so because in the cause of capacity building, the drive is not for what is wrong to be strengthened, but the addition of knowledge to what is known to be good and the strategies in meeting such (Short, 2016). Advocacy has also been seen as "Putting a problem on the agenda, providing a solution to that problem and building support for acting on both the problem and the solution" (Sharma, n.d.). This implies that advocacy goes beyond influencing public policy to that of moving public opinion towards a particular direction. It raises public consciousness about an issue that ordinarily would have been left out.

In another perspective, "advocacy is a social change process which not only affects attitudes, social relationships and power relations but goes on to strengthen civil society while opening up democratic spaces" (Save the Children Fund, UK). It includes all the planned activities geared towards educating others about an issue (CJJ, 2013). All efforts invested into the process of advocacy are geared toward bringing about change; a change that will favour the cause being pursued and the people involved.

The fact about change is that it is constant given that it happens all the time. But it appears that change is not so easy for it to take place when the need arises. It is also apparent that the outcome of change is

not predictable, while some changes are easier than others to occur. In this too, is the propensity to halt a change process that is not expected and should not take place in the first instance. That is, it is also tenable to witness a change process that is not worthy to be counted of because such change is in the negative. It is observed that these concerns are not easy to be defined because the knowledge about change is fragmented and cannot be completely garnered in a particular source (Bammer, 2016).

Media advocacy attempts to use different available media platforms, from physical conversations to mediated means, in concert with human resources to inform, enlighten, influence, and change the course of actions and behaviours for public good. Given attention to elements involved in media advocacy is therefore an imperative for development.

Drawing from this premise, Staples (2009), notes that "media advocacy is the act of strategically mobilizing community interest in a problem and its solutions"(p. 175). It follows a series of orchestrated events. First, the issue appears topical and is perceived as important by some opinion leaders in the community. Second, a language develops around the problem including common knowledge about the cause of the problem and what change or policy is likely to address the problem. Third, decision makers are educated and people at the grassroots are urged to speak up and ask for a change from the decision makers. This no doubt involves some form of social mobilization.

According to Wallack, et al (1993), "advocacy is an innovative and sophisticated way of critically using the media to promote change because the mass media have become a powerful force in our society"(p.2).

In this regard, media advocacy can be a significant force for influencing public debate and putting pressure on policy makers by increasing the volume of social voice and in turn by increasing visibility of values and issues behind the voice.

Media advocacy requires the identification of an issue and an accompanying initiative to address that issue. An issue is a burning concern that drives an initiative. Whether it is a problem or vision statement, an issue defines the boundaries from which an initiative is shaped. The initiative could be instituted by an organization or a coalition.

Pershuck and Wilbur (1991), in an earlier development, note that "the key to a successful media campaign is to have the same message conveyed through multiple channels"(p.83). The imputation therefore is that advocacy does not provide a platform for lone rangers. A lone voice will inadvertently be drowned. Advocacy campaigns must be pervasive and collaborative - different channels must be used at the same time and in the same context

No doubt, by structuring public discourse, the media determine our social priorities. This is predicated on the premise that the news media have the power to set agenda on public discourse, direct attention to particular issues and ultimately influence how we think about those issues. The media indisputably create an important link between citizens and their governments.

Media advocacy is sometimes subsumed in the dynamics of social marketing and it is geared towards the engagement of the media to promote the adoption of favourable policies and individual behaviour change.

The Encyclopaedia of Public Health (2002) views media advocacy more broadly since almost identical techniques are often used to encourage people to change health behaviours as those directed towards changing policy. The ultimate targets of media

advocacy as noted, in this reference material, are individuals and policy makers.

Media advocacy may be proactive or reactive. Proactive means instigating action while reactive involves taking action when required especially when non conformists try to mislead or divert attention. Media advocacy offers useful tips for on-going campaigns.

Balbach and Glantz (1998) further note that "certain media content is directed towards politicians and other opinion leaders whose support is needed for anti-tobacco measures while different but related content is aimed at changing policy"(p.402). The latter seeks a behaviour change. Both however share the overall goal of reducing social disorders.

Advocacy is a two pronged tool that can engender policy change on the one hand while moderating behaviour on the other hand. In a related study, Northbrook (1998) found that as a result of media advocacy, cigarette sales and youth smoking prevalence declined significantly while concern by smokers about their health increased significantly. Public Service Announcements (PSA) have also been found to be a staple of tobacco control and other health promotion strategies. (Center for Disease Control and Prevention-1998-. Best Practices for Comprehensive Tobacco Control Programmes, Atlanta).

Woodruff (1996) notes that "media advocacy was instrumental in the success of a campaign that pressured the alcohol industry to change the ways in which they portray women in much of their advertising"(p.332). In the same vein Holder and Trenor (1997) established a link between a drop in perceived risk of drinking while driving and increased news coverage on the issue (p.192).

Deductively, media advocacy must employ paid media campaigns such as informational advertisements in newspapers and other media forms. This is so because paid media campaigns involve

a more programmed delivery of education- oriented information and carry more credibility.

Goldman and Zassloff (1994) have recommended steps in implementing media advocacy. According to them, when developing a media advocacy strategy, "the overt issues need to be determined with possible remedies as well as streamlining those who have the power to make it happen" (p.7).

In terms of evaluation, since the goal of advocacy is aimed at policy change and behaviour change induced by awareness, the impact is measurable. Descriptively, if the goal of media advocacy is to stimulate debate and raise awareness about the importance of the issue being advocated, then this can be measured by the amount of coverage the issue received in the media. With a clear cut delineation of the foregoing, the succeeding issue naturally dissolves into developing an insight into **cognate advocacy paradigms as hereunder listed:**

4.1.1   The Editorial Paradigm

Editorials in newspapers and commentaries on radio represent the corporate opinion of a media house. Wentraut (nd) notes that editorials reflect the majority vote of the editorial board and it is usually unsigned. The mechanics of the editorial is that it builds on an argument and tries to persuade readers/listeners to think in the same pattern and perspective. Wentraut (nd) further notes that editorials are meant to influence public opinion, promote critical thinking and sometimes cause people to take action on an issue.

The Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English sees the editorial as a piece of writing in a newspaper that gives the editor's opinion about something rather than reporting facts. It has also been seen by so many that editorials are like reports that present the opinion of the publisher.

Sagheer (nd) sees the editorial as a section in newspapers or magazines in which the writers or editors share their opinion on ongoing topics. Its outlook is like that of a brief essay on current issues. The writers share their opinion with respect to burning issues in the social space. It has equally been observed that editorials are the heart and soul of newspapers and magazines. The editorial provides a platform to share views, criticize and appreciate topical issues.

Perspectives as highlighted in editorials are conventionally believed to be the generality of the opinion of the paper. This no doubt lends some touch of seriousness to topics so presented as editorials thereby making them topical and analytical. Other features highlighted by Sagheer (nd) include the fact that they are:

i) Topical

ii) Enlightening

iii) Logically attractive

iv) Thought provoking

In according animation to the editorial paradigm, Okon (2015) notes that "editorials generally are meant to influence opinion, promote critical thinking and sometimes cause people to take action on an issue. The implication Okon (2015) further observes is that the nexus of accountability can at best be animated through the platforms of interpretative writing as embellished in the dynamics of newspaper editorials. No doubt the editorial paradigm provides a platform for the ventilation of issues of public concern while taking a stance on a given perspective. It can therefore be adduced from the foregoing that the editorial paradigm abhors sitting on the fence – a stance must be taken on an issue and that stance will now serve as a catalyst for action.

Belmonte (2007) in citing Vandijk (1996), Le (2004), Minphy (2005) opines that editorials are "mass communicated types of opinion discourse which play a definitive role in the formation and altering of public opinion, promote social interaction among journalists with a view to influencing social debate, decision making as well as other forms of social and political actions" (p.2).

The imputation here is that a good editorial is designed to educate and enlighten with a view to working as a catalyst for thought. Rust (2018) observes that editorials are "thoroughly researched, reasoned and crafted" (p.1). Firmstone (2019) in an analogy espouses that editorial and advocacy journalism share an ethos for journalism that endeavours to effect social or political change. The common denominator in the light of the cardinal function of editorials is to instigate change.

This paradigm presents a five step approach to media advocacy:

i.   Identifying an issue of public importance

ii.   Analyzing the issue with a view to streamlining a position geared towards a preconceived notion.

iii.   Presenting the issue wrapped in lucid language and deductive reasoning

iv.   According the presentation the toga of corporate opinion using the reputation of the media organization as a baseline

v.   Driving for action.

A peep into this paradigm shows that the editorial paradigm is primal, apt, functional and catalytic.

4.1.2   The Features Paradigm

This model presents a platform where articles are written to give more depth to topical events, people or issues. They are usually written by people who are knowledgeable on given issues. Features interestingly provide background information on a newsworthy topic as well as the projected perspective. It has been further opined that features help readers to arrive at certain conclusions while providing them possible solutions to problems.

Features no doubt contain some elements of news stories but their colouration rests on the need to humanize, educate and illuminate. In terms of adjectives, the straight news story is referred to as "hard news" while features are generally classified as "soft news." The underlying notion here is that the unfolding "hard news" serves as the bedrock for features. Features use story telling devices to help readers connect with the overall narratives. The tone is usually informative while incorporating creative and descriptive devices in order to heighten appeal.

Bhattacharjee (2020) in a synthesis of lexical expositions observes that the *Oxford Dictionary* defines a feature article as a newspaper or magazine article that deals in-depth with a particular topic while the *Cambridge Dictionary* sees it as a special article in a newspaper or magazine or a part of a television or radio broadcast that deals with a particular subject. Pape and Featherstone (2006) posit that a news story tells you the "what" about an incident while a feature article tells you the "why" of the incident.

Steensen (2011) elaborates that:

> Feature journalism as social action
> comprises two things: first, a specific social
> function, understood as the response to a
> specific exigency, and second a
> recognizable rhetorical form that this
> function is expressed through and the
> exigency addressed (p.51).

In terms of strong structure, VanDijk (1997) outlines twelve different approaches to features writing as embedded in discourse analysis. Prominent in the context is the idea of discourse being understood as strategy. This approach implies searching for the strategic purpose, framing that purpose and expressing that purpose.

Intrinsic in the dynamics of the features paradigm are the crafts of fine writing, hard work and the ability to learn and observe. Interestingly, people who succeed in features writing are the ones who do their research, do solid reporting and are given to analytics.

The features paradigm falls within target communication as distinct from general communication. Here the writer targets a specific audience and fashions his writing to suit the idiosyncrasies of the given audience. The language may be given to neologisms and phraseologies yet the meaning is not lost. In descriptive terms, the features paradigm is given to craftsmanship and *flowetry*. The taxonomy described above is made possible by the fact that features are detailed pieces of writing which explore a wide range of issues, opinions, experiences and ideas.

It has also been observed that the features paradigm is an enduring platform because unlike the straight news, which can quickly go out of date, they (features) have a more general focus and do not go out of date after a few days.

Hioffman and Slater (2007) have hailed the features paradigm as a conduit for the expression of opinions. The features paradigm has also been described as a place where many journalists explore their own literary skills and potential.

The prerequisites of this paradigm include the fact that:

1. Research is key

2. Good literary skills are an embellishment

3. A great deal of imaginativeness and reflection is paramount

4. Facts must be sacred and treated with sanctity

5. Good taste and decency in ideological presentation must not be compromised.

Interestingly, the features paradigm espouses the intricate interlink that epitomizes media advocacy. This interlink takes recourse to the under listed steps:

i. A trending issue is highlighted

ii. Its multi-sectoral perspective is illuminated

iii. A preconceived notion is projected

iv. The crafting of the analysis, synthesis and overall presentation follows the path of rational discourse.

v. The import of the argument so presented makes the cause of action being advocated appealing, desirable and worth engaging in.

The beauty of the features paradigm is that it is hinged on ideology and ideology on the other hand gives stability to constructive public opinion with public opinion as the cradle for sustainable social change.

4.1.3   The Advertorial Paradigm

This paradigm draws its genealogy from the field of integrated marketing communications with public relations advertising as a subset. Here we see a non-personal presentation of ideas not necessarily goods and services. The underlying notion here is the projection of an ideology with a view to galvanizing action towards a preconceived tilt.

Semanticists see advertorial as advertisement presented in the style of journalism noting that it is a combination of two words – advertising and editorial. A stretch of the foregoing analogy presents a scenario where the two may go hand in glove. Aptly described, since editorial is a statement of opinion, advertorial conveys an editorial feel bearing in mind the fact that it presents views as well.

The primary goal of advertorial is to introduce and promote an ideology without necessarily foreclosing products and services. Its salient attribute is that it is more detailed than conventional advertising and as such engenders cognitive assimilation. It has been widely observed that advertorial commands greater attention than conventional advertisements with its content anchored on rational discourse. In this way, believability and credibility are assured.

Advertorials generally employ argumentation, persuasion, explanation and interpretation to drive for action. The point to note is that the information contained therein is given in a seemingly objective manner rather than in a promotional

way. It has also been observed that advertorials are designed to look like a legitimate and independent news article.

Drawing from the above, it can be inferred that advertorials are very subtle in appeals and usually stealth in persuasion. They wear the toga of high quality content geared towards creating awareness while pulling the plugs of credibility and believability.

Balasibramanean (1994) describes advertorials as advertising – editorial hybrid messages. Kim, Pasadeos and Barban (2001) present an empirical base that positions advertorials as gaining more attention than conventional advertisement. They opine that the most common reason is that consumers often mistake advertorials for editorial content. This therefore explains why many are fooled into attending to them.

Lulu and Lu (2009) and Huhman and Albinsson (2012) suggest that advertorials generate more favourable attitudes among the audience. Ironically, Hanson (2016) opines that advertorials can momentarily or completely mislead the audience with respect to the source and nature of the message. With the mandatory labelling of advertorials, this may however not suffice in all situations.

Suggett (2019) sees advertorials as simply seeking to resemble the pages of the publication which they are appearing and are intended to command attention while divulging a myriad of information about the product or services. In all instances, a point of view has to be projected.

Advertorials no doubt can be used to promote abstract concepts, ideas, information, corporate images and social norms. The viewpoint being promoted is that of the sponsor. This is often times thought to be undertaken in the interest of a group or the public. The goal is to sway public opinion in a

direction so desired by the sponsor. It is a two pronged tool that raises awareness while pushing for the adoption of a course of action. It has been functionally described as marketing to support a cause.

The beauty of this paradigm is that it is designed to capture the eye and win hearts and minds with the overriding goals that after being exposed to it, people may take a position on an issue they felt neutral about or may be persuaded to change positions. It is indeed a platform for advancing opinions.

A cognate exemplar of advertorial is the Public Service Announcement (PSA). It presents a veritable platform for advocacy. In recent times, public service announcements have grown into a powerful mechanism that allows non-profits to tell a story, promote a cause, incite change, raise awareness, educate the public and subtly raise attention to societal ills with a view to proffering solutions.

On a general note, they serve to educate the society on important issues like environmental protection, education, physical and mental health, substance abuse, crime, driving safety and other issues that people in the community might face. On the flip side, they are created to make people aware of the issues with a view to encouraging them to take action so as to effect a desirable change while resolving the issue of focus. Okon (2009) sees it as an approach geared towards correcting perceived ills in the society.

The remarkable thing here is that it is proven to be an effective means of creating awareness and driving for change. Social change is the underlying notion. To this end, an illustration of its schema becomes most pertinent:

i. Present an issue

ii. Give it an editorial tilt

iii. Anchor it on glittering generalities

iv. Steer a cause for action

v. This will in turn elicit a bandwagon effect.

With the foregoing in place, social change is assured and social mobilization guaranteed.

4.1.4 The Interpersonal Paradigm

This is an unmediated form of advocacy where interpersonal interface is the mode. Its strength lies on the fact that it breaks the barriers of mediation. It is marked by visits to policy makers, law makers, traditional rulers, regulatory bodies, media executives and proprietors. Some mistake it for courtesy visits but it is in actual sense an advocacy visit. This is so because a point of view is often presented with a view to garnering support for the preconceived line of action.

An online resource (Brain Injury Resource Center, 1998) sees interpersonal advocacy paradigm as all about changing policies, laws or rules that reverberate on the general scheme of things in a given society. It is all about changing policies, laws or rules that impact on the general well being of the society. These efforts can be targeted at local, state or national agencies. The focus can be changing laws or policies.

The key features of the interpersonal paradigm are outlined below:

i. Must educate

ii. Must be factual

iii. Must be subtly persuasive

iv. Must drive for action

The interpersonal paradigm is highly formalized and usually involves a detailed and exhaustive discussion of issues of concerns. Language must be clear cut and unambiguous. The beauty of the interpersonal paradigm is anchored on its flexible nature bearing in mind the fact that it is designed to respond to newly identified needs. With the needs streamlined, a line of action is proffered with the benefits of that line of action highlighted. Salient in the process is the need to acknowledge and credit the role of policy makers and officers of influence. The message in this regard is projected with one voice and in one accord. A good understanding on how things work is key in the light of the foregoing. It is expected that the engagement procedures will produce a common ground through shared visioning, planning, actions and outcome.

Interestingly, this paradigm aids in mobilizing stakeholders to network and act collectively through a unified voice and vision. This approach relies more on exigent dynamics where the vista for social change is unmistakably eloquent. To this end, Okon and Ihejirika (2019) espouse that interpersonal advocates should endeavour to adopt strategies that can resonate quickly with policy makers. Understanding the system of governance is equally pertinent.

In this piece, an attempt has been made at elucidating inherent projections with a view to developing a framework for attaining social change via an ideal conceptualization of advocacy. The schema is both procedural and systematic:

Phase 1
Sensitization on the proposed legislation that will engender the desired social change

Approach – Introduce the cause through interpersonal interface to constituents.

Activity - Dialogue, town-hall meetings, FGDs

Phase 2 –

Deepen knowledge in terms of streamlining the pros and cons

Approach – Research, literature and the production of IEC materials.

Phase 3

Develop an integrated framework for stakeholder communication and consultation taking into consideration the demographics and psychographics of key stakeholders.

Approach – Parley with legislators

Activity – Workshops/luncheons

Phase 4

Lunching out with a view to integrating above- the –line and below- the – line networks

Approach – collaboration with CSOs, NGOs, Content developers, Social media influencers.

Activity – Workshops, interactive sessions with journalists / Bloggers, etc.

Media appearances, Bloggers are to create popups and banners, newsletters and bulletins.

Phase 5

Widespread mobilization

Approach – Edutainment

Activity – Jingles, Rallies/ Roadshows

Source : Okon and Ihejirika (2019)

4.1.5   The Elucidation

An integration of the paradigms so listed will show that organic integration of the key components can most certainly necessitate change. It must also be noted that some paradigms serve as forerunners to other paradigms. In this regard once an issue of general concern has been identified with the clear cut remedy streamlined with a view to entrenching it through advocacy, the features paradigm can be used to create a buzz. Through cumulation, consonance and salience, the issue gains public attention and becomes topical such that the outlined discourse permeates every sector. The sequence that follows will however be the use of editorials to frame it so as to tell the people how to think and perceive. With the framing, through editorials, advertorials now play a complementary role of ventilating the discourse while driving for action. This is interestingly followed by a cascading of the discourse across various demographics. In this way, public opinion is swayed and social change engendered. See figure 1.
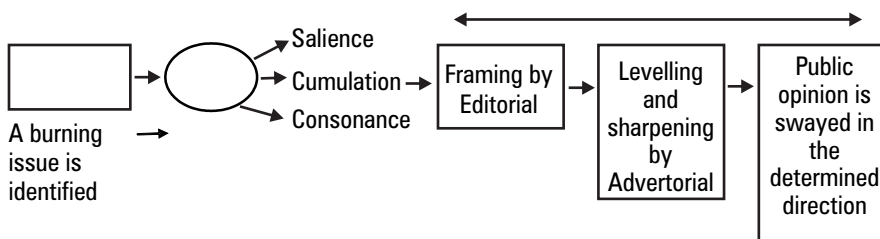
Fig. 1: The advocacy/social change matrix
Source: Okon (2020)

5.0   DEVELOPMENT THEORY: FRAMEWORK FOR MEDIA ADVOCACY

The concept of Development theory resonates with and is suitable for developing societies. The development theory, which was developed as a supplementary concept for the four theories of the press, stemmed from the need for the media to be advocates of the development processes of a given nation. The four theories of the press, also known as the normative theories, were first propounded by Fred Siebert, Theodore Peterson and Wilbur Schramm in their book titled *Four Theories of the Press* (Roy, 2018). The concepts, which arose from the need to understand why the mass media perform certain and various functions in different societies, cast the spotlight on the fact that the media "reflect the system of social control whereby the networks of individuals and institutions are adjusted" (Siebert et. al., 1956 cited in Nordenstreng, 1997). While theories generally provide scientific explanations or predictions of a phenomenon, the four theories of the press, also known as the normative theories, describe the ideal way a media system ought to operate in a given society in juxtaposition to the disposition of the political situation within the said society. The four theories of the press describe what the press 'should be and do' given certain circumstances, under certain socio-political dispensations (McQuail, 2010). "Normative theories then speak of the ways in which the press should properly manage these relationships within the contexts of the political and socio-economic systems in which they operate – or the ways that the press should be properly managed by those systems" (Weiss, 2009, p.576). The focus in this context borders on subtle nosedive into the role of the media in developing societies while examining how the media should fit into the social space especially and specifically in terms of their relationship with the government and its efforts to advance public policies.

The development theory is an offshoot of the four theories of the press. These theories which are also known as the western theories (Tripti, 2015) refer to media expectations, duties and responsibilities of the government and the conditions that underlie these expectations particularly in terms of the relationship between the media, government and the society… the system of social control (McQuail, 2010, p.162, 175). The normative theories link the relationship between the press and the society to the ownership structure of the media and who controls the press in a country. Ojobor (2002) regards the theories as political philosophies of the press. The four theories of the press are: the Authoritarian, Libertarian, Social Responsibility and the Soviet-Communist. Since the theories are based on the type of government and the socio-political structures of a nation, the press and their functionalities differ from country to country.

According to McQuail (1987) the four theories of the press can be compressed into two because:

(i)   the Soviet-Communist theory and the Authoritarian theory are two sides of a coin to the extent that the Soviet-Communist theory is a refined version of the older authoritarian system of government

(ii)   the Social Responsibility is a remodeling of the Libertarian theory.

However, these theories focused on media practices in western societies. This is why there arose the need for a fifth theory, a theory that would take a different approach to understanding the needs of developing countries in relation to their political structures, one that would adequately suit developing societies (Flor, 2007). Nerone (1995) asserts that the "four theories do not offer four theories with four examples" (p.18). Thus, the four theories of the press are the classical theories.

The four theories of the press could not be applied to developing countries because the conditions of the developed and the developing countries are worlds apart. This necessitated the proposition of a new, tailor-made theory that would take into account the issues of developing societies and factors that stagnate the growth of the country. As posited by McQuail (1987), the Development media theory campaigns for press support for an existing government and its efforts to bring about socio- economic development. As its name implies, the theory was purposefully designed for developing societies/countries. The basic intent was to design a theory that would engender a synergistic partnership between the media and the government, taking into cognizance the unique characteristics of the developing countries and the heavy burden on the government of these countries notwithstanding the limitations and socio-economic challenges in bringing about development. The theory as outlined in Oluwasola, (2020) argues that until a country is well established and its socio-economic development in progress, media must be helpful. The Development Media theory, also known as the fifth theory of the press (Flor, 2007) describes how the media in developing nations ought to fore mostly understand the intricacies of their social, economic and political situations and principally task them on lending their voice to national tasks. This means that the blueprint of the Development Media theory is geared towards the agreeability of the media to work with the government and actively assist in achieving the country's developmental goals. In the interest of achieving these goals, the government has the right to intervene in media operations by means of censorship, proscription and regulatory policies to ensure that the press is working in line with the development-oriented activities of the state. Thus, in the scope of the Development Media theory, the media are expected to support and encourage the efforts of the government and use their platform to propagate information that would positively shape national development. As stipulated in Stevenson and Cole (1984, p. 49) "the

roles that mass media have to assume in developing countries are also present in the national development and communication policies that were drafted in the 1950s and 1960s and that are in line with various economic, social and political changes." Hence as members of the society, assisting the government in reaching development heights via advocacy is in the interest of the media because development is hinged on strategic communication.

The Development Media theory "has development at the core of its structuring" (The Student Book, para. 7), which is why the press is expected to be intentional in their reporting and diffuse information that would ultimately bridge the gap of underdevelopment. Itana (2014) explains that information and its type is a major player in the problem of underdevelopment that plagues developing nations and to this end, the media are presented as instruments that would champion the cause to solve it. Development Media theory according to Rakriztah (2010) has the five Is: Inform, Instruct, Inspire, Insist and Involve the public. Furthermore, in taking into account the characteristics of the developing countries in comparison to those of the developed, it is pertinent to understand the basic features. These features show that the developed nations have:

i.   Mature and sophisticated economy

ii.   Advanced technological infrastructure

iii.   Diverse industrial and service sectors.

Comparatively, the developing nations have certain unique features such as:

i.   The ship of their state is fragile

ii.   The democracy of the developing nations is nascent

iii.   Information dissemination is purposive, value-laden and pragmatic

iv.   Development is paramount; therefore, the media should be goal and development oriented

v.   The media are expected to drive change

vi.   The media are not passive and are expected to actively follow the progress and policies using publications to remind the government of its duties

vii.   The media should be citizen-friendly in its method of reportage

Hence, the Development Media theory is superior because at the core of this theory are progression, growth and positive change within certain societies with unique peculiarities where the functions of the media are laced with development objectives and aspirations. The cardinal functions of the mass media include education, information and enlightenment. Development is dependent on the media to carry out these functions with the aim of co-operating rather than being adversaries of the government. The function of disseminating information that advances development cannot be overemphasized (Soola, 2002) because the media in the process, contribute to the growth of society since the people are better informed about government progresses and opportunities. Moemeka (1991) specifically stresses that at the center of all environmental factors that could affect development undertakings is the media and when information on development schemes is carefully crafted and shared widely, communication inevitably fosters development. The superiority of development communication is also entrenched in the fact that Development Media theory is likened to development communication. Development communication is a conscious act of the media to ensure that the goals and implementation strategies of the government are outlined and expressed to stimulate public desires, attention and interests in development-oriented programmes and projects to instigate national participation and support of the development projects that bring about change. As inscribed in

(Gupta, 2015) "the primary role of development communication is fostering an empowerment process, which is aimed at achieving the respective national/ international mandates, the Millennium Development Goals (MGDs), the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and other development priorities of the developing and underdeveloped countries" (para. 2). The benefits of focusing the people's attention on change for development are in two folds: the media prep the society for transformation and the government is awoken to its obligations and expectations. MacBride, et al (1983) cited in Kadiri et. al. (2015) explain that development communication primarily aims at: (a) "increasing understanding of development problems, (b) building up a spirit of solidarity in a common effort and (c) enlarging the capacity of men and women to take charge of their development" (p.108). Thus, in developing societies, the media are deliberate in their news reporting and information dissemination, particularly and most importantly advocating for progression and government development endeavours.

6.0   JOURNALISTIC INERTIA

Journalistic inertia refers to a state of passivity where journalists walk a beaten path without any sense of creativity or innovativeness. It means being stereotypical and status-quo passionate - what in everyday parlance may be described as "doing the same thing over and over", or "doing the same thing, again and again."

Pratt (1992) in his coinage of the concept links it up to the way Africa is reported in global media. In this regard, he notes that "Journalistic inertia encourages journalists to report the region (Africa) in much the same way as their predecessors had done" (p.8)

The term "inertia" is a derivative from physics as extrapolated from Isaac Newton's first law of motion which states that if a body is at rest or moving at a constant speed in a straight line, it will remain at

rest or keep moving in a straight line at a constant speed unless it is acted upon by a force (Nelkon & Parker, 2011). The imputation here is that this law does not give room for endogenous change but posits that if change must happen, it can only be through exogenous means.

With respect to the subject matter, it means journalism practice in Nigeria has remained the same way for well over twenty years without noticeable or discernible change in disposition and approach. It may seem journalism in Nigeria has come a long way but a deep look inside will reveal the contrary. Note that this cannot be likened to the nationalistic press. A peep into the annals of journalism practice in Nigeria, following an empirical timeline, will show that there has been a bit of retrogression with prevailing practice at a standstill. A historical discourse may suffice.

Ismail (2011) describes the Nationalist Press as an articulated vibrant institution who made judicious use of their enterprise to fight colonialists' struggle which gradually led to independence in 1960. This may be typified as progression.

The post independence press was schisistic in disposition. Daramola (2013) espouses that ethnic consideration in political reporting became a norm meaning that a Yoruba journalist will report national issues from a Yoruba perspective and the same goes for other ethnic groups (p. 39).

Okon (2018) in describing the era notes that:

> The press rather than leverage on the enabling environment so created allowed itself to be dragged into wars orchestrated by primordial sentiments. It can therefore be said without the fear of equivocation that the overall disposition of the press at that time was divisive (p.123).

The foregoing era within the same context may be typified as retrogression. This now takes us to the present scenario (present day Nigerian press) figuratively classified as "motion without movement". The appellation – *journalistic inertia* – as ascribed unto the present day Nigerian press can only be substantiated through empiricism. A few attempts have however been made in the context of the subject matter.

Okon (2006) in trying to chart a timeline espouses that the Niger Delta crisis assumed an unprecedented dimension some seventeen years back. This no doubt made the Niger Delta area a flash point in the geo-political map of Nigeria. Incidentally, the economy of the nation, in the face of this, hung in the balance. This was made worse by the attitudinal conditioning of the agitators that violence is the status-quo and therefore remains a way of life in the Niger Delta.

The observation made, in the light of the above, shows that previous attempts at resolving the crisis have often taken a vertical dimension rather than a horizontal one. The best no doubt is the horizontal approach which is predicated on the principles of dialogue. The advantages of this approach are indeed far reaching. For the scholarly minded, this scenario provides a good premise for media advocacy aimed at charting a course of action that will engender sustainable peace in the region. This window for advocacy was not utilized and as time went by, the problem degenerated. Okon (2013) notes that long lasting peace can only be engendered through meaningful dialogue. The platform for dialogue is empathy and the mass media are quite equipped with the requisite zest for generating the platform for meaningful dialogue. This is where advocacy comes in.

6.1   Case 1

The premise so established necessitated a study titled – The Niger Delta Crisis and Advocacy for Peace by the Nigerian Press: A Content Analysis of Three Nigerian Newspapers. In this study, Okon (2013) sought to examine the editorial, advertorial and features content of *The Guardian, The Punch* and *The Niger Delta Standard* with a view to finding out if content was directed towards advocacy for peace in the region. The period of study was July 2008 to June 2009.

Within the period under review, only one of the newspapers studied – *The Niger Delta Standard*- utilized its editorial platform in the light of advocacy for peace. Ironically, this was very shrift – about 28% of the total news hole (Okon, 2013, p.15).

The irony however is that in as much as advocacy for peace in the Niger Delta region was found to be shrift, there was a preponderance of straight news on the Niger Delta crisis by the newspapers studied. The imputation therefore is that the newspapers reported more of the macabre and drama of the crisis than a constructive clamour for peace in the region. A few of the straight news story headlines are listed below so as to illuminate the journalistic hypocrisy:

1.   *Newspaper – This Day –* 1st January, 2009
       *Headline***:** KIDNAPPED U.C. RUSAL – ALSCON
       Director – FEARED KILLED (p.1)

2.   *Newspaper – Niger Delta Standard –*19th January, 2009
       Headline: SHELL'S NEMBE FACILITY ATTACKED
                          BY MILITANTS (p.2)

3.   *Newspaper – The Guardian –* 5th February, 2009
       Headline: EX-PETROLEUM MINISTER'S WIFE
                          KIDNAPPED (p.2)

4.   *Newspaper – The Punch –* 9th February, 2009
       Headline: POWER OUTPUT DROPS, MEND
                CLAIMS GAS PLANT ATTACK (p.15)

5.   *Newspaper – This Day –* 15th February. 2009
       Headline: NIGER DELTA CRISIS: SHELL SHUTS
                IN 180,000bpd (p.1)

6.   *Newspaper – This Day –* 16th March, 2009
       Headline: MILITANTS AGAIN VANDALIZE
                CHEVRON FACILITY (p.6)

Source: Okon (2013)

Conversely, straight news stories of killings and violence in the Niger Delta region, as observed by Okon (2013), often made the front page as well as other prominent pages of the newspapers studied. Although the reasoning for this may not be far from marketing (circulation), it however leaves a sore thumb in the profile of Nigerian newspapers. One however wonders if there can ever be a justification for a newspaper that reports on its front page, in a given issue, that a "Chevron platform at Escravos was blown up and twenty (20) expatriate staff abducted by militants" without a corresponding editorial, features and advertorial that advocates for the adoption of means and ways of ensuring peace in the Niger Delta region.

The presupposition here is that if the Nigerian press focuses attention on the issue of peace in the Niger Delta region, peace would become an ideology for social marketing which when given the right prominence and salience, by the press, paves way for actualization. Drawing from the foregoing, it becomes quite glaring that the issue of peace in the context of the Niger Delta crisis was never treated as an ideology that should be given a voice by the newspapers studied.

6.2 Case 2

In a study titled: The Coverage of *Augusta 109* Naval Helicopter Crash in Bayelsa State by three Nigerian newspapers: The Depth, Disposition and Pattern – Okon (2013) took another peep at the subject matter.

Taking a journey down memory lane, it would be recalled that on the 15th of December, 2012, Governor Patrick Yakowa of Kaduna State and General Andrew Azazi, former National Security Adviser (NSA) were among the many dignitaries who attended the burial of the father of Oronto Douglas, a Senior Special Assistant to President Goodluck Jonathan, on Research and Documentation. The funeral took place in the Nembe area of Bayelsa State.

The *Augusta 109* helicopter was one of the several helicopters that ferried the political class as well as other dignitaries to the funeral. The helicopter crashed ten minutes after takeoff while travelling from the venue of the funeral to Port Harcourt where the passengers were expected to board a flight to Abuja. Governor Yakowa and General Azazi as well as four other passengers aboard the helicopter were burnt to ashes in that crash. This is the third *Augusta 109* lost by the Nigerian Navy out of a fleet of six helicopters since 2006.

Incidentally, this was coming at the heels of a season of air disasters in the country. Orji (2012) recalls that:

> On October, 22, 2005, Bellview airlines' *Boeing 737* carrying 117 people on board crashed at Lissa, Ogun State, soon after takeoff from Lagos killing everybody on board. On December 10, 2005, a Sosoliso *DC 9* crashed at the Port Harcourt international airport killing 103 people on board. On October, 29, 2006, an ADC *Boeing*

737 flight from Abuja to Sokoto crashed killing 106 out of 114 people on board. On June 3, 2012, a Dana aircraft from Abuja to Lagos crashed into residential buildings in Iju, Lagos, killing 152 people on board (p.43).

Okon (2013), in the light of the above, posits that "media reports, when condensed, should extrapolate if the foregoing crashes, especially the December 2012, were borne out of man made errors or worst case scenario be described as unavoidable acts of fate" (p.114). Where the records are not so made available to the media, it still falls within the purview of journalism ideals that advocacy be made concerning the handling of air crash investigations in Nigeria. This is the beauty of journalism when viewed within the context of pointing out needs and proffering solutions.

In this regard, three newspapers – *The Nation, The Punch* and *The Tide* – were purposively studied based on editorial posture and regional dominance. Findings showed that no editorial was devoted to the subject matter. This was further marked by a complete absence of advertorial geared towards sensitizing the public on vital issues that may ventilate the subject matter. The inference is that the newspapers studied demonstrated a complacent disposition towards the helicopter crash. For a country that has witnessed incessant air crashes with seemingly impotent air crash investigations, it would have been expected that the press will be more pro-active in advocacy for air disasters to be matched by proper investigations and reports. The Newspapers studied, especially *Punch and The Nation*, did not significantly differ in category assignment and volume of coverage on the crash. Illustratively, the pattern of coverage is as shown below. See *fig. 2* for extrapolation
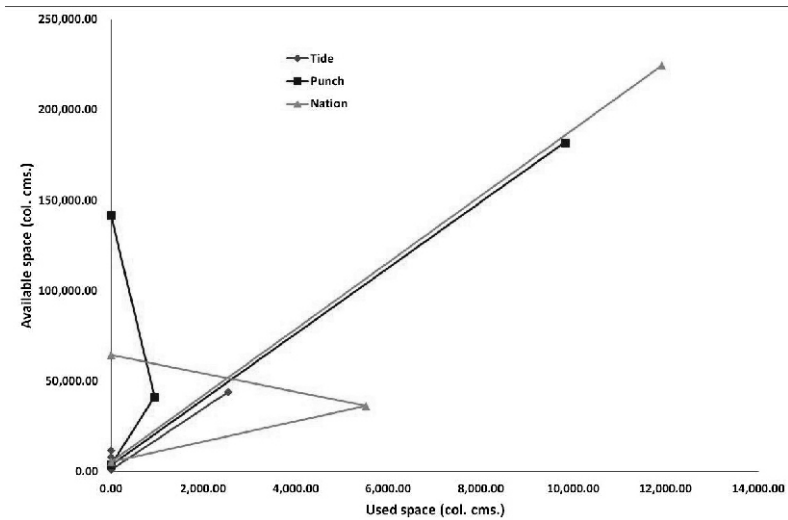
Fig. 2: Pattern of coverage on helicopter crash by *Tide, Punch* and *The Nation* newspapers
Source: Okon (2013)

A distillation of the above shows that the Nigerian press hardly goes beyond straight news reporting in issues of collective opinion and interests.

6.3   Case 3

At the opening of the 2013 Nigeria Oil and Gas exhibition in Abuja, the then Minister of Petroleum, Diezanni Allison-Madueke, noted that President Goodluck Jonathan was worried about crude oil theft in the Niger Delta. Consequently, the presidency was mandated to explore all machinery at its disposal in checking oil theft in the country.

The menace of oil theft is a scourge that threatens the Sovereignty of Nigeria and by extension the well-being of its citizenry. It is a war that must be fought by all Nigerians. The media cannot be aloof in this war. The responsibility of the press in the face of the war against oil theft in Nigeria is to light

the way and drive for action. The press through content should be able to proffer solutions to this ugly trend.

More descriptively so, at the first Benson Lulu Briggs Professorial Chair round table with the theme "sustaining investments and reserves in the face of growing challenges", organized by the University of Port Harcourt, Rivers State, an American oil expert and president, Global Water and Energy Strategy Team (GWEST), Paul Michael Winbey, warned that the continual loss of hundreds of thousands of crude oil to illegal bunkering could undermine the viability of the Nigerian economy. Mr. Winbey further notes that as Nigeria's illicit crude oil business spreads across the world, criminal gangs are on ground to smuggle the product into other economies without the payment of necessary duties.

This no doubt raises fears and worries since the level of crude oil theft in monetary terms is projected to stand at tens of billions of naira. There must however be a voice against lawlessness, injustice and corruption. That voice is the voice of the press.

Okon (2014) through a tripartite spectrum in a study –The War against Oil Theft in the Niger Delta Region and Advocacy by the Nigerian Press: A Normative Appraisal - sought to see how the press fared as the conveyor belt of advocacy journalism. *The Guardian* and *This Day* were purposively selected based on the fact that they are foremost national dailies with widespread readership as outlined by the Audit Bureau of Circulation while *Tell Magazine* was selected based on its ideological posture and national spread.

A synthesis of the data shows that the coverage given to the menace of oil theft in the Niger Delta region was not sufficient to draw attention to the issue and hence cause it to become topical in the arena of public discourse. The inference however

is that the coverage as espoused may not qualify for adequate when viewed in a continuum. It is however expected that since the media set the agenda for public discussion, the reportage on oil theft should have been such that focus and attention will be drawn to the subject matter with a view to sensitizing the public on the inherent dangers of oil theft.

Descriptively, the findings showed that the reportage given to the subject matter by the newspapers/magazine studied was not sufficient to ensure a platform for public enlightenment on the dynamics of oil theft and its attendant implications on the socio-economic wellbeing of the Nigerian nation. This has become worrisome bearing in mind the fact that it is a great aberration when the mass media's disposition on an issue of national interest seems to be that of lukewarmness.

As deduced from the data, the newspapers/magazine studied did not fare well in the foregoing context going by the thrust of fig. 3.
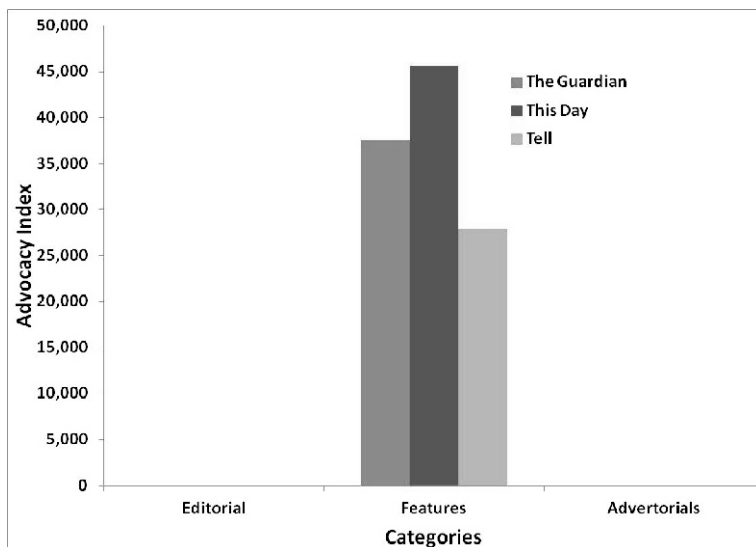
Fig. 3: Bar chart showing levels of advocacy by the newspapers/magazine
Source: Okon (2014)

The frequency of coverage on the subject matter was equally not commendable. This is so because there was no concerted effort by the newspapers/magazine studied to ensure consistency and perseverance through an increase in the number of days the issue was reported as against the period of study. This is graphically represented in fig. 4.
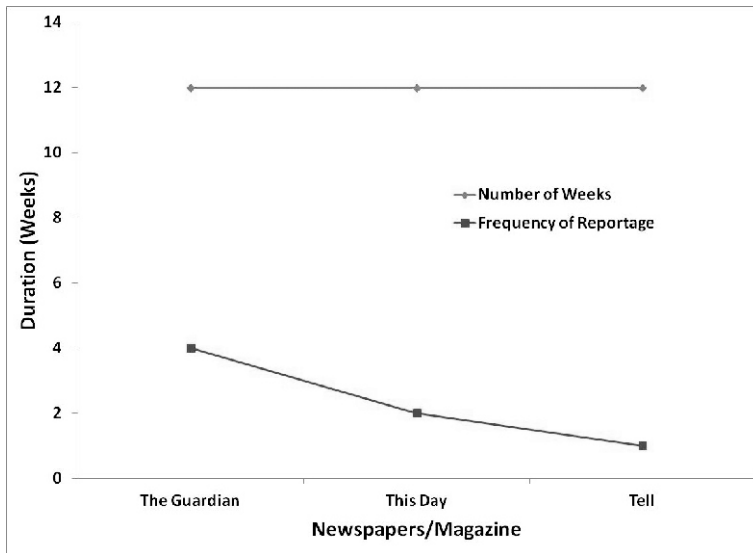

Fig. 4: Graph showing the frequency of reportage
Source: Okon (2014)

6.4   Case 4

It can never be overemphasized that how an issue is reported in the mass media determines how much importance the audience will accord that issue. This no doubt goes to reinforce the key role of the media in opinion formation and the mitigation of attitudinal disposition.

The issue of non-communicable heart disease finds expression here. Diseases naturally pose a threat to wellbeing. Ironically, they form an inseparable part of human existence. They can be lived with, managed and rendered impotent through appropriate life style borne out of knowledge. The indispensable role of the mass media as purveyors of knowledge in this regard cannot be controverted.

In corroboration, Okon and Ihejirika (2014) note that "awareness is key and knowledge is central to the success of projects that border on mass mobilization" (p.46). Okon (2011) in an earlier discourse observed that "global concerns, particularly sub-Saharan Africa, are however shifting to ways people may be mobilized for given programmes or the resolution of problems that impinge on development" (p.62).

Dire as the situation may seem, the mass media can indeed make a difference through conceptualization and presentation because in every facet of life, knowledge is key. Knowledge about the pathogenic properties of a disease can engender prevention. Knowledge about its morphology can guarantee sustainable therapy and remediation. The incontrovertible role of the media in this regard becomes irrefutable.

The Centre for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta, USA, defines non-communicable disease as "chronic conditions that do not result from an acute infectious process and hence are not communicable (para. 1). It has been further described as a prolonged course that does not resolve spontaneously and for which a complete cure is rarely achieved *(www.cdc.gov/globalhealth/fetp/training-modules/new-8/ overview-of-nids_ppt.qa-revcom_0911201 3.pdf).*

Higuera (2014) notes that heart disease is a term often used to describe many different conditions that affect the heart. According to the scholar, coronary heart disease is a "common type of heart disease which results from a building up of plague on the inside of the arteries, which reduces blood flow to the heart and increases the risk of a heart attack and other heart complications" (para. I). Risk factors as observed by Higuera (2014) include family history, age, ethnicity, etc and these manifest in high blood pressure (hbp), high blood cholesterol (hbc), high glucose level (diabetes) etc.

The effects of NCHD, as streamlined by Bloomfield, et al (2011), among others include depriving:

i.   Families of parents

ii.   Workplaces of employees

iii.   Patients of healthcare workers

iv.   Communities of leaders

Generally, these may be subsumed under the notions of:

a.   Loss of quality of life

b.   Loss of productivity

c.   Non realization of human potentials which inadvertently lead to depression and death.

Since focus is on NCHD that manifests in high blood pressure (hypertension) and diabetes, Okon (2015) in a study – Contextualization of Non-Communicable Heart Disease in select Nigerian Newspapers : Approaches and Patterns - examined the manifest content of select newspapers with a view to ascertaining contextualization. This was no doubt geared towards dovetailing content within the preventive, curative or remediative parameters. Three national dailies —

The Guardian, *The Punch* and *The Nation* — were purposively streamlined because of their nationwide reach.

The issues on 14th November, 2014 and 17th May, 2015, naturally lent themselves to this examination because they were marked as the world's diabetes and hypertension days respectively. Discourse analysis followed the conventional pattern outlined by Campbell, Hensen, Gomery, Fabos and Frechette (2014, p. 218).

Mass media contextualizations manifest primarily through content and can best be ascertained through discourse analysis. Content on NCHD was shrift. In other words, it did not feature in all the issues of the newspapers studied. For the few issues that focused on it, contextualization followed the parameters of Campbell, et al., (2014).

Table 1: Contextualization by *The Punch*

S/N	Category	Caption	Direction	Media frame
Case 1	Feature	Can eating chocolate lower stroke, heart disease risk	NCHD	Preventive
Case 2	Feature	…As poor sleep can do more	NCHD	Preventive

Source: Okon (2015)

The above condenses the highlights on NCHD by *The Punch,* within the study period. Descriptively, there were two features on NCHD. The stories are as captioned above.

Table 2: Contextualization by *The Guardian*

S/N	Category	Caption	Direction	Media frame
Case 1	Feature	Guava, bitter leaf protect against diabetes complications	NCHD	Preventive
Case 2	Feature	Local herbs show promise in treating diabetes	NCHD	Preventive

Source: Okon (2015)

Table 2 presents the contextualization of manageability. This contextualization is embellished in features.

A synthesis of the foregoing presentation reveals that the focus on NCHD by the Nigerian print media, especially those studied, was significantly shrift. Invariably the issue does not enjoy comparative prominence in the Nigerian print media. This is quite discouraging going by the fact that the statistics on NCHD (Marthers, et al., 2006) inadvertently call for the adoption of urgent steps aimed at stemming its incidence.

This finding indeed throws up a critical incident analysis such that a historical account plays up in the present. In this context no doubt, Carey's (1975) historical account seems to hold relevance in the present. According to him:

> Because we have looked at each new advancement in communication technology as opportunities for politics and economics, we have devoted them, almost exclusively to government and trade. We have rarely seen them as opportunities to expand our powers to learn and exchange ideas and experience (pp. 20-21).

The obvious imputation here is that more newspaper pages are today devoted to politics and economics than to other issues of human relevance such as health. Newspaper accounts on health, in this regard, can therefore help to expand learning and the exchange of ideas on meaningful health experiences

Summarily, the campaign geared towards stemming the tide of NCHD can indeed enjoy a great boost from media advocacy but unfortunately, this potential has not been actively deployed by the Nigerian print media, especially the newspapers studied.

6.5   Case 5

Since breast cancer has been found to be a leading cause of death among pre-menopausal women, Okon (2016) in a study –Advocacy for Early Detection of Breast Cancer among Premenopausal Women in Rivers State: A Study of Three Broadcast stations in Port Harcourt - sought to ascertain how much airtime broadcast stations devote to advocacy on early detection and the need for routine clinical examination by women.

Life's daily challenges make daily living much more complicated than it appears. It has often been agreed that humans step from one social world to another in much the same way actors move between scenes. The social systems reverberations that confront mankind require more than just a cursory adjustment, especially those reverberations that border on life and death.

In a media dominated world like ours, we are bombarded daily with reports, both formal and non-formal, of breast cancer related deaths among pre-menopausal (middle aged) women. More disheartening is the fact that our healthcare systems is in shambles with a life expectancy considered ridiculously low.

Breast cancer is a leading cause of death among women of prime age. The world is still grappling with its pathological dynamics. Abdulkareem (2009) notes that "breast cancer is the second cause of death in developed countries and among the three leading causes of death in developing countries" (p.2). It has been unanimously re-echoed that early detection of its onset is a key step to surviving it. Since public health has become a planetary concern, the best the mass media can do in this regard is to vigorously raise attention to the plausibility of the logic for early detection and drive for action through advocacy.

The presupposition is that once the consciousness for early detection is created among premenopausal women, behaviour change will gravitate towards the preconceived line of action with corresponding health benefits gained therefrom.

Radio programming, by its taxonomy, accords viability to this ideology. Focus is on those programmes that lend themselves to media advocacy. How these programmes have been deployed by radio to further the cause of early detection of breast cancer by way of advocacy forms the premise of this discourse. The imputation is that media advocacy breaks phobia and dogma. Since phobia and dogma can be assuaged through media advocacy, it is therefore pertinent to analyse content in the light of the foregoing.

The efficacy of radio as a veritable medium for advocacy was highlighted by Lin, Bragley and Koops (2003). In their study, it was found that radio campaigns to encourage women to have Papa Nikolaou (Papa) smears and undergo screening mammography have been run in many high income nations since the early 1990s. Initial experience, predominantly from Australia and the US according to them, suggests that radio campaigns prompted short term increases in pap smear uptake

especially when there was availability of good screening services.

In the light of Okon (2016), three broadcast stations – *Radio Rivers II FM*, *Rhythm 93.7FM* and *Wazobia FM* - were purposively selected based on ideological posture, target audience and reach. The tilt was to analyse how advocacy was deployed by those stations to advance the subject matter. The data below provide great insight.

Table 3: Advocacy Programme Genres

Name of station	News commentary	PSA	Jingles	Radio Drama
Radio Rivers II	A	A	A	A
Rhythm 93.7	N/A	A	A	A
Wazobia	N/A	A	A	A

Source: Okon (2016)

Legend: A –Availability
N/A – Not Available

The above programing genres lend themselves to advocacy. Of these, PSAs and jingles appear common place among the three stations.

Table 4: Advocacy for early breast cancer check by stations

Name of station	News commentary	PSA	Jingles	Drama	Total
Radio Rivers	0	0	0	0	0
Rhythm 93.7	0	720(0.25%)	0	0	720
Wazobia	0	0	0	0	0

Source: Okon (2016)

N = 288,000

From table 4, it was observed that only *Rhythm 93.7* devoted airtime to the subject matter. Interestingly the predominant form of advocacy adopted by the station was Public Service Announcement (PSA).

As inferred, from the data, out of the three stations studied, only one - *Rhythm 93.7* – devoted airtime to advocacy for early detection of breast cancer among premenopausal women. In other words, the two other stations – *Radio Rivers II* and *Wazobia FM* - did not devote any airtime to the subject matter. Meta-analysis revealed that the use of PSA by *Rhythm 93.7* as an advocacy tool on the subject matter was not intensive. This brings to fore the issue of media social responsibility. The mass media should, through the instrumentality of advocacy, address certain ills in the society. The mass media in other words should have the spirit of community service. From the analysis, this was not found to be so except for *Rhythm 93.7.*

Qualitative data analysis using the constant Comparative Technique (CCT) showed that the PSA by *Rhythm 93.7* lacked depth in the sense that it did not highlight sufficient reasons for early check neither did it highlight the consequences for not checking. In other words, the message (PSA) was symbolically ephemeral. Below is an excerpt of the PSA by *Rhythm 93.7.*

"… Breast cancer is a deadly disease. Early detection is key to surviving it."

The above message when distilled can only precipitate sensitization but may not necessarily stimulate or drive for action.

6.6   Case 6

The issues of gender and sex have in contemporary times become planetary concerns. The underlying notion is that women, by virtue of gender, can no longer be limited in capacities and capabilities bearing in mind the fact that sex is biologically determined while gender is socio-culturally determined. This awakening has brought to fore concepts like gender equality, gender balance and gender bias. The presupposition however is that man, in generic terms, can only be limited by sex and not gender. Focus in this context is on attitudinal disposition which in explicit terms is borne out of socio-cultural orientations. Descriptively, socio-cultural inclinations in many societies evolved from patriarchal orientations which inadvertently made the societal role of the female gender to be perceived as second fiddle. Interestingly, this age long stereotype is fast giving way to reorientations and attitudinal conditioning that ascribe societal roles on the basis of capabilities rather than sex. This ideological tilt gained prominence at the turn of the millennium with the conceptualization of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and now Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The MDGs and SDGs are here under listed:

Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)

Goal 1 - Eradicate Extreme Poverty and Hunger

Goal 2 - Achieve Universal Primary Education

Goal 3 - Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women

Goal 4 - Reduce Child Mortality

Goal 5 - Improve Maternal Health

Goal 6 - Combat HIV/AIDS, Malaria and other Diseases

Goal 7 - Ensure Environmental Sustainability

Goal 8 - Global Partnership for Development

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

1. End poverty in all its forms

2. End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture.

3. Ensure health lives and promote well being for all at all ages.

4. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.

5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.

6. Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all.

7. Ensure access to affordable, reliable and sustainable modern energy for all.

8. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all.

9. Build resilient structure, promote industrialization

10. Reduce inequality within and among countries

11. Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.

12. Ensure sustainable consumption and production pattern comes at climate change

13. Comes at climate change

14. Conserve the ocean

15. Protect the ecosystem

16.   Promote peaceful and inclusive societies

17.   Revitalize global partnerships

A synthesis of MDG 3 and SDG 5 will show that their realization predominantly depends on collaboration among mainstream media and cognate interpersonal variables. This is so because the word-***promote***-as used in MDG 3 connotes a proactive effort to discard stereotype and institutionalize best practices especially as they relate to sex and gender. The cardinal role of the mass media in this regard can never be overemphasized.

The imputation therefore according to Okon (2013) is that "there is an association link between media coverage and cognition because the agenda setting function of the media clearly establishes that there is an important relationship between media reports and the peoples' ranking of public issues" (p.10). By extrapolation, if the mainstream media focus attention through content, on MDG 3 (SDG 5) and how it can be actualized, attitudinal disposition will no doubt be gravitated towards practices that engender equality among men and women in the socio-po1itical milieu. Conversely, if the reverse is the case, MDG 3/ (SDG 5) suffer.

In unequivocal terms, the dynamics of MDG 3/ (SDG 5) naturally dovetail within the framework of media advocacy bearing in mind the fact that attention needs to be drawn to key practices that can most certainly necessitate the actualization of MDG 3/ (SDG 5). These key practices can unarguably be condensed into ideologies that serve as the fulcrum of media advocacy.

Ironically, this distribution index does not seem to reflect role assignments in the Nigerian socio-political milieu. On 30th September, 2015, President Muhammadu Buhari, sent his list of ministerial nominees to the Senate for confirmation. The list had 21 names out of which 18 were of the male gender while 3 were of the female gender. The gross gender imbalance in that ministerial appointment became very glaring when viewed against the backdrop of the ideals of the then MDG (3) and now SDG (5). More worrisome is the fact that it showed a downward trend when compared to that of the immediate past administration (Goodluck Jonathan).

It is however expected that the Nigerian press, in the face of this anomaly, should crusade for truth, fairness, justice, and equity with a view to redressing this gender imbalance. Okon and Orlu-Orlu (2016) in a study –Gender imbalance in President Buhari's Ministerial Nominations and Reactions by the Nigerian Press: Advocacy or Complacency? - sought to find out how this played out in content.

Three national dailies – The *Guardian, This Day* and *The Punch* as well as two national magazines- *Tell* and *Newswatch* - were purposively selected not only based on the fact that they are foremost national dailies and weeklies but also due to their editorial outlook and spread in circulation.

Table 5: Aggregation Index (Advocacy/complacency)

Content categories	The punch		The guardian		ThisDay		Tell		News watch	
	Focus on MN col.cms	Focus on GI col.cms	Focus on MN col.cms	Focus on GI col.cms	Focus on MN col.cms	Focus on GI col.cms	Focus on MN col.cms	Focus on GI col.cms	Focus on MN col.cms	Focus on GI col.cms
Straight news	12,040	112	9887	0	17,369	0	1935	0	950	0
Features	2,730	910	1979	0	1502	0	2173	2173	0	0
Advertorials	0	0		0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	15,680	1022 (6.5%)	12,307	0 (0%)	18,871	0 (0%)	3208	2178 (68%)	950	0 (0%)

Source: Okon and Orlu-Orlu (2016)
Legend: MN = Ministerial Nomination
GI = Gender Imbalance

A synthesis of the data reveals that the nature of coverage given to the issue of ministerial nominations by President Muhammadu Buhari and its attendant gender imbalance was basically reportorial — straight news.

Deductively, the issue of ministerial nominations was treated merely as a news story by the newspapers and magazines studied thus accounting for its preponderance. Aptly described, the cumulative reaction of the newspapers and magazines studied, when viewed against the backdrop of gender imbalance in ministerial nominations, was abysmal bearing in mind the fact that the corporate opinion of the newspapers and magazines, as demonstrated through editorial and public service announcements (PSA), did not accord the issue any focus.

The inference drawn from the findings tilts to the fact that the Nigerian press is yet to rise to the occasion of using content to dispel the negative stereotypes that inhibit women

participation in politics through proactive editorial and concerted advocacy. By not lending voice to the glaring gender imbalance in President Muhammadu Buhari's ministerial nominations, the Nigerian Press may not be contributing positively to the promotion of gender equality and women empowerment as structurally captured in MDG3 and SDG5 respectively.

6.7   The Synthesis

Interpretative platforms, in the mass media, serve to illuminate perspectives. More descriptively so, they afford the media the latitude to focus on the ills of the society with a view to charting a course of action. It is most unfortunate that the editorial and advertorial platforms were never utilized by the newspapers as shown in case 1 – Case 6 as reviewed. The utilization of the features platforms, on the other hand,   was significantly shrift.

Interestingly, the foregoing is not a standalone observation/finding because Abinbola (2014) observed that "Nigeria's national dailies are grossly but surprisingly lacking in editorials towards political crisis situations in Nigeria" (P. 68). In another line of affirmation, Brown and Udomisor (2015) note that features ranked second to straight news stories in terms of political news reportage by Nigerian newspapers.

The imputation however is that this pattern of coverage (more straight news than feature) as observed by Okon (2017) "does not really leave much room for ideation on issues of socio-political significance" (P. 295). The same observation goes for advertorials. The beauty of editorials and advertorials is that they allow for pontification. Their non-utilization by the Nigerian press in the general scheme of things is indeed unwholesome and amounts to an abdication of a cardinal

function of reporting events in a context that gives them meaning.

By inference, therefore, the non-utilization of the interpretative platforms of the Nigerian press smacks of media passivism as against media activism. When stretched on a continuum, media activism falls within the purview of media advocacy which basically means calling attention to issues of societal importance with a view to advancing the cause of society.

Noteworthy, in the light of the above, is that scholarly propulsion is now shifting from media use to information and new cognition acquired from the media. The inference is that the media through selective presentation and emphasis set both political and social agenda for the audience. The ability of the media to influence cognition derives from their ability to focus attention on specific events, issues and persons through content.

The overriding summation is that the most powerful effects of the mass media on public knowledge is the ability of the media to determine what public policy issues are important and to establish a debate around them. This is the bedrock of advocacy predicated on the propensity of the media to influence opinion and moderate behaviour through content.

7.0   ALBATROSS AND UNBUNDLING: THE SEMANTIC LOOP

The word albatross according to an online dictionary (vocabulary.com) draws its etymology from the Spanish and Portuguese word – *alcatraz*. The word actually makes a direct reference to a bird – pelican. In contemporary times, however, its usage is no longer restrictive.

Its use became more widespread with the publication of Samuel Taylor Coleridge's poem - *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* – where the sailor of the title was forced by his crew mates to carry the bird he shot around his neck as a symbol and reminder of the bad luck his action had brought them. The excerpt reads thus:

> *Ah! Well a – day! What evil looks*
> *Had I from old and young*
> *Instead of the cross, the Albatross*
> *About my neck was hung*
> **(Samuel Taylor Coleridge)**

In a figurative sense, it refers to something that hinders or poses as a handicap. Its synonyms include: encumbrance, millstone, hindrance, impediments and lots more. To say one has an albatross around his neck therefore means that there is something that persistently causes problems for that person. As it relates to the subject matter, albatross is used contextually to represent the factor(s) that pose(s) great challenges to the mainstreaming of journalistic activism in Nigeria.

Scholarly propulsions precipitated an insight into the impediments that confront journalism in Nigeria with a view to contextualizing them bearing in mind the fact that a problem known (identified) is a problem solved. The approach was predominantly Participant Cluster Observation (PCO) and this threw up a gamut which necessitated a great deal of distillation otherwise known as unbundling.

Unbundling on the other hand is a buzz word in marketing which connotes the act of soliciting markets or making charges separately rather than wholesomely. In an operational sense, it refers to compartmentalization, categorization and deconglomeration.

The presupposition for the functionalization of the word may have come as a result of the fact that problems often referred to as "hydra headed" seem to defy solutions. A basic approach therefore becomes a simplification of complex problems so as to untie knotty webs. In recent times, the word has become akin to pedagogical trends in the field of mass communication where a single line discipline has been turned into a cafeteria line of disciplines with a view to enthroning professionalism.

Since journalism practice in Nigeria has been rightly seen to anchor on passivism, describing such passivism as journalistic inertia may bedrock the problem within the framework of abstractions and thus make its solution dramatically elusive. The best however is to break the problem into smaller bits and components so as to evolve approaches that are solution driven. This is the only way to accord sustainability and verve to remediative processes. If we do not unbundle and solve, journalism in Nigeria will at best engender mediocrity and at worst pave way for negative professional variants. The justification for the use of the words – albatross and unbundling – in this piece is therefore preconceived in the foregoing.

8.0   THE ALBATROSS UNBUNDLED

To say that the glory days of Nigerian journalism are far behind it is to state the obvious. Time was when the Nigerian press was a thorn, an unrelenting thorn, in the flesh of bad governance. Time was when the Nigerian press was a vocal press, an audacious press, an activist press. Time was when the Nigerian press was a force. In those glory days, governments knew they could never get away with any acts of misgovernance without also beating journalists, imprisoning them, and in some instances, killing them. Nigerian journalism used to be a practice of truth and dare.

The story today is a far cry from the narrative of the brave past. In the face of flagrant violations of the sacred tenets of democracy left, right and centre, Nigerians watch in disappointment as the press of today stands by idly, lethargic, stalling, dragging its feet. In the face of graft, wholesale graft and barefaced corruption of a scale as may never have been seen, the press is mum, suspiciously gracious, dangerously 'well-mannered', inert. For a profession which we look to as society's watchdog, inertia, is not only a kinetic anomaly; it is also a pathological condition.

Newton's First Law of Motion states that an object at rest will remain at rest and an object in motion will remain in motion unless it is acted upon by an external force (Nelkon & Parker, 2011). This law is also referred to as the Law of Inertia (Duncan, 2007). As can be noticed from the law, the explanation of inertia can apply even to objects in motion as it does to objects at rest. In other words, for Newton and for physics, just because an object is in motion does not always mean it is any different from another object at rest. For Newton and for physics, if an object in motion continues at the same speed and on the same straight line, and does not change its speed or change its line of motion in response to its environment, that object though in motion is just as much in inertia as any other object at rest.

In the same vein, Nigerian journalism is in inertia. It once was mobile, virile and potent with activist force, but today it is in inertia. There is an evident anomaly in the kinesis of Nigerian journalism. Amid all the tumultuous forces exerting Nigeria –bad governance, corruption and graft, abuse of office, violation of the rule of law, and sheer wickedness in high places – the press in Nigeria is like the mythical ostrich sticking its head in the sand. Of course there are many more newspapers now, new radio houses and TV channels now, and so much more volume of work from journalists now than ever before, but sadly, it has been all motion but little movement. Newton's First Law explains all that motion as inertia. This therefore

brings to fore the notion of unbundling the albatross of journalistic inertia in Nigeria. The factors that contribute to this inertia among others include:

8.1   Issues around Editorial Policy and the Restrictions they impose on Journalists

The editorial policy is a set of guidelines by which a media organization operates. Embedded in the editorial policy are issues that border on a media organization's attitudes towards government and stakeholders while guiding editors in making editorial decisions. In other instances, this refers to the guidelines and policy statements set forth by the editor(s) or the editorial board of a publication.

If viewed commonsensically, from the point of view of a compound word, editorial may refer to the processes that go into the making of news content while policy may refer to the guidelines, rules and norms that oversee such processes.

Mansfield (1982) notes that the:

> Editorial policy reflects in part and ideal, in part a code of operating practice. It is the editor's business to maintain some gap, but not too large a gap, between the two – to keep the ideal always some distance ahead of the practice and to keep the practice from lagging too far behind. And it is inherent in the notion of policy that both ideal and practice embody a degree of rational consistency in statement and application that rules out mere personal caprice (p.129).

Wodi (2017) opines that:

> Every media organization irrespective of type and pattern of ownership has an editorial policy which defines the mission and vision of such an organization. It spells out the philosophy on which media outfits operate. It also spells to journalists, what to cover, how to cover it and how to present it (p.1).

No doubt, editorial policies provide a framework for editorial content. What comes out as the content of a media outfit is borne out of the focus of the editorial policy. Orientation on perspectives is informed by the instrumentality of the editorial policy. Most news houses do not allow the latitude of operating outside the editorial policy. In that particular instance, the policy shapes conduct and controls output.

Since editorial policies control content, they also lay down cognate rules for the use of adjectives, euphemisms and idioms. They are indeed hard and fast rules that guide journalistic conduct. Editorial policies have also been seen as clear statements that prescribe rules of journalistic engagement. In other instances, it has been described as a set of rules that dictate the style, structure and strategy of an organization's brand and branding consistency when creating content.

In an ideal sense, editorial policies as observed by Wodi (2017) help in facilitating fairness and balance in news reportage while assisting journalists in applying morally sound practices. The editorial policies arm the journalist with readymade exit procedures before any problem situation arises. It clearly defines what issues to handle and how to handle them. It must be noted that editorial policy and house style are distinct.

Editorial policies outline a course of action adopted for the sake of expediency, prudence and procedure. Editorial policies are not just content related but conduct related because they also border on issues like news sourcing, judgment and gratifications. Some core areas covered by editorial policies include:

i.   Truth and its operationalization

ii.   Public interest

iii. Government relations

iv.   Accountability and integrity

v.   Use of confidential sources

vi.   Privacy, profanity and obscenity

Different schools of thought abound as to whether to make a media outfit's editorial policy a public document or not. This is so because for some media organizations, their editorial policy is in the public domain while for others, it is strictly confidential. Ironically, some media houses do not even have a valid document that fits within the description but however operate according to the dictates of the editor-in-chief or the proprietor. In such instances, they determine what makes up the editorial content as well as its tilt.

The imputation is that the editorial policy is a framework that prescribes conduct and dictates content. The issue of journalistic activism or passivism draws expression from the editorial policy. A few illustrations may suffice:

Scenario 1

In discussing issues around editorial policy and how they impose restrictions on journalists, we imagine how abstract the discussion will be without concrete examples of what proper editorial policy is. The *BBC* has it as a 367-page document titled *The BBC's Editorial Standards*. *The New York Times* has it as a 36-page document titled *Ethical Journalism: A Handbook of Values and Practices for the News and Editorial Departments*. *The Washington Post* has it as a 9-page document titled *Policies and Standards*. *Sky News* of the UK has it as a 31-page document titled *Sky News Editorial Guidelines*. *South African Broadcasting Corporation* (SABC) has it as a 58-page document titled *SABC Editorial Policies 2020*. These documents spell out the respective media's guidelines for investigating facts, sourcing documents for evidence, determining who is an authentic source and who is not, and they address just about every other concern that could possibly be on a news journalist's mind. The documents also respectively define the news editorial process, stating the editorial officers accountable for each stage of the process, and stating who to refer to if in doubt. It should be stated loudly that all these documents listed in the foregoing are all in the public domain, available on the internet.

That they are available on the internet for everybody and anybody to access is an important criterion for qualifying them as *proper* editorial policy. If a media house's 'editorial policy' is shut in within that media house, shut away from and inaccessible to the public outside that media house, that editorial policy though so called is *not yet* editorial policy; because in part, editorial policy is a

commitment, an oath of some sort, which a journalistic house makes with its public. It is a document for those inside, yes, but it is also a document to inform those outside of what goes on inside and how. As the *SABC* states in its own editorial policy, part of its reason for sharing the policy document in the public domain is "to inform stakeholders, suppliers and members of the public about the editorial positioning of the SABC, and how editorial decisions are taken" (SABC, 2020, p. 1).

Some excerpts from some of the documents listed here help shed light on how editorial policy is an oath of some sort. To begin with, *The New York Time's* document exemplifies this. Under the subheading of *Introduction and Purpose*, it states:

> The goal of The *New York Times* is to cover the news as impartially as possible – "without fear or favour", in the words of Adolph Ochs, our patriarch– and to treat readers, news sources, advertisers and others fairly and openly, and to be seen to be doing so. The reputation of *The Times* rests upon such perceptions, and so do the professional reputations of its staff members (NYT, 2004, p. 2).

The *BBC* in its own document takes a similar oath before its public. In its introduction it makes this commitment:

> The BBC's Royal Charter specifies the BBC's Mission, which is to act in the public interest, serving all audiences through the provision of impartial, high−quality and distinctive output and services which inform,

educate and entertain. It also establishes our independence from government, guarantees our editorial and artistic freedom… (BBC, 2019, p. 12).

Also, under 'Our Editorial Values 'the BBC states:

Our audiences trust us and they expect us to adhere to the highest editorial standards. We have a right to freedom of expression, included in the Charter and protected under the European Convention on Human Rights and the Human Rights Act 1998. This freedom is at the heart of the BBC's independence. (BBC, 2019, p. 13).

We see from these excerpts how editorial policy is in some way an oath wherein journalistic media commit themselves to covering the news "without fear or favour" and promise their audiences or readers that they will uphold their editorial independence and freedom of expression. In the case of the BBC document, the words "freedom of expression" and "independence" were highlighted, actually cast in bold. What that does to a journalist working for them is that it emboldens him to go for the news and to report it without fear or favour because his media house's open commitment to socially accountable journalism commissions him to deliver no less. What this does for a journalist is that it gives him a social and a legal license to go out there and be the watchdog that his professional calling made him. Compare the BBC's stance with that of the *News Agency of Nigeria (NAN)* as shown in excerpts labeled as **Scenario 2:**

Scenario 2

i.   … In its role as the national purveyor of news and opinions, espousing the public good, the *News Agency of Nigeria* must not act as an institutional opponent to any government or interest but where it is in the public interest to report criticisms of public policy; it must do so in a restrained manner.

ii.   In matters that affect the sovereignty and unity of Nigeria, neutrality is not expected of the Agency. It must come out firmly on the side of Nigeria without prejudice to its adherence to the truth which must at all times be its guiding light and governing principle.

The foregoing when synthesized forecloses the use of initiatives and creative decisions in news reporting. It is restrictive and at best judgmental. This explains why such documents cannot be in the public domain.

In the case of Nigerian journalism, there hardly is a media house known to have its editorial policy in a document that is out there in the public domain. It is most probable that the greater part of our media houses hardly have a document their journalists can pick up and find precise house-specific standards and guidelines for gathering, for reporting and for editing news. What the absence of such document leaves is a vacuum which will be filled by whim mistaken for discretion. What the absence will leave is an uncertainty among the editorial leadership about how far they can trust the discretion of the reporter who is often by himself on the field to accurately judge his legal and political boundaries.

For fear of their correspondents running the paper or broadcast house into trouble, the editorial leadership will put restrictions on the reporter, many times far-reaching, and the editor in chief will put restrictions on the line editors. Where a clear-cut well-thought-through editorial policy that is comprehensive and documented is absent, it creates a vacuum that fear mistaken for caution, whim mistaken for discretion, and Mr Editor's self-policy mistaken for house policy will try to fill. Such whimsical teleguiding by an editorial leadership can be so restrictive that it will be a noose (*albatross*) around the necks of journalists. This is the first explanation of how news gets to be covered with hesitancy. This is where inertia sets in.

8.2 Cognitive Contraption of Nigeria as a Dangerous Place to Practice Journalism

A second cause of inertia is an idea in the minds of many Nigerian journalists that Nigeria is a dangerous place to practice journalism. As the phraseology indicates, this idea is a contraption. It is a perception. In so far as journalists see Nigeria as a danger zone for their profession, they will practice it with too much reservation.

Is Nigeria really a dangerous place to practice sound journalism? First, journalism is a hazardous occupation anywhere. We must establish that first. Not only in Nigeria but, as Caplan (1997) submits, "being a journalist or writer remains a hazardous occupation in many parts of the world." (p. 121).The United Nations states that "journalism is one of the most dangerous professions in the world"(UN, 2011). Of course it is less dangerous in some countries than in others, but there always is a degree of danger practicing journalism anywhere.

Nigeria is not that much of a safe place to practice journalism no doubt. A good number of other countries parade a safer record than Nigeria. However, to think of Nigeria as a chronically dangerous place to practice journalism will be stretching the fact too far. It is not that chronically dangerous here. It is dangerous no doubt but not that *chronically* dangerous. Conscientious responsible watchdogging is still practicable here.

The foregoing is intended to challenge the mentality of the average journalist who says, "*There are too many dangers, I cannot stick my neck out" or "There are too many dangers; I have a family to look after and if anything happens to me nobody will take up the care of my family."* The truth is that many times there are no dangers at all. A feeling of danger is often a product of a mental contraption, a product of a mindset borne out of an exaggeration of the true state of danger or safety of Nigeria to journalism practice. This however explains the agitation for the integration of hazard allowance in the salary scheme of journalists in Nigeria. Ironically, this mindset is morbid, but sadly, it is underrated. Though cases of physical assault of journalists, especially those in the political beat, abound they can best be described as infinitesimal. This partly is the cause of much of the inertia we see in journalism practice in Nigeria.

8.3   Predominance of a Pattern of Ownership for Self-Aggrandizement

Another cause of inertia in the practice of journalism in Nigeria is a pattern of media ownership for political aggrandizement. Whereas media ownership in the more grounded democracies like Britain and the United States is mostly by professionally committed media moguls, in Nigeria, it is for the most part by politicians in search of an outlet for self

-aggrandizement. Except for only a few media, like *Channels Television* which was founded and is run by a career broadcaster and out-and-out media man, John Momoh, the greater part of the media in Nigeria is owned by media outsiders venturing as adventurists into the media turf.

A look at who owns what media in the United States immediately shows a dominance of ownership by career media men in that country's industry. For example, *CNN* was founded in 1980 by Ted Turner and Reese Schonfeld. Before their founding of the medium, they each had long-established careers as media men. Schonfeld's career began as early as 1956 with the United Press' *Movietone News* (Parsons, 2008). He rose to become vice president of United Press International (UPI)'s Television News. He later on, in 1975, struck out on his own to found the Independent Television News Association, a news agency that provided a service of news coverage via satellite to independent television stations (Sandomir, 2020).

Ted Turner, the better known of the two co-founders, began his own career in a branch of his father's media business very early in the 1960s. Following his father's suicide in 1963, Turner took up the position of president and chief executive of Turner Advertising Company at age 24. Upon emerging CEO, he grew the business determinedly, transforming it to become a global player, and by the late 1960s, Turner Advertising was ranked the largest advertising firm in the Southeast of the United States (Auletta, 2005).At this point, Turner began buying several radio stations operating in the Southern United States (O'Connor, 2009) only to unexpectedly sell off those same stations in 1969 in order to pay for his purchase of a television station in Atlanta, UHF Channel 17, which by all indication was a struggling station. UHF stations at the time were not anywhere as profitable as VHF stations but Turner uncannily predicted that UHF stations would soon become

surpassingly more popular because people were already hungry for far more choices than VHF could offer.

By 1976, Turner's UHF station had garnered 2 million subscribers and had grown to $100million in net worth. With this subscriber and money capital base under his belt, Turner began to take steps to set up the Turner Broadcasting System which would eventually go down in history as the precursor of CNN. In 1978, he reached out to Reese Schonfeld to strike out with him and put together a 24-hour all-news channel. Schonfeld acceded, certain it was not only workable but also a winning idea. Schonfeld knew so because he himself had been working on the idea for some time. In fact, it was Schonfeld who first in 1977 proposed that same idea to Turner, but at that time it did not yet come across to Turner as an idea worth any serious consideration (Barkin, 2003). One year after, in 1978, Turner could now see what Schonfeld had been seeing since 1977. CNN took off in 1980 with Schonfeld as its first president and chief executive officer.

The ownership of CNN has metamorphosed over the years, beginning in the hands of the Turner Company in 1980 and now since 2018/2019 being in the hands of a new merger involving Warner Media(one time known as the Time Warner Company), Discovery Media and AT&T (Feiner,2019). Buyouts, mergers and acquisitions are common in Western business culture, and it is not always because an enterprise is doing badly that it takes on new ownership or new ownership takes it on. Often, it is for reasons of strategic market positioning. The essence of stating this metamorphosis in the ownership of *CNN* is to make the point that even the 'new' owners of *CNN* all have an unquestionable history and well-established career in media behind them. For example, one set of the owners of the Time Warner Company are the same

people behind the globally renowned *Time* magazine, whose first issue carries the date of March 3, 1923 (Byers, 2012).

Worth noting as another United States example is *TheNew York Times*. Though founded in 1851 by Henry Raymond and George Jones, the ownership of the paper has since 1896 fallen in the hands of a certain Sulzberger family (Dash, 2009). The family has maintained a century-long journalistic career with the paper since then. The current chairman of the The New York Times Company, Arthur Ochis Sulzberger Jr., and the paper's current publisher, Arthur Gregg Sulzberger, are the fourth and fifth generation of the family to run things at *The New York Times* (Levitz, 2016).The Sulzbergers have evidently kept a trans-generational commit-ment with the paper, not laying back as owners but staying actively involved both managerially and journalistically.

We see this pattern of ownership by career media men in the United Kingdom industry as well. Whether with the *Daily Mail* or with *Sky News*, the owners of media in the UK are, in the main, career media men. In the case of *Daily Mail*, currently the UK's highest-circulated daily newspaper (Sweney, 2020), it is owned by Jonathan Harmsworth, a man born into journalism so to speak. The paper was founded by his great-grandfather, Harold Harmsworth, and his great-granduncle, Alfred Harmsworth, in 1896. Jonathan rose up through the ranks, holding various positions in some of the other papers under the umbrella of the parent company, Daily Mail and General Trust (DMGT) PLC, before attaining to the position of chairman of DMGT in 1998, following the sudden death of his father that year (Press Gazette, 2009).

The story of Sky News too is consistent with this pattern of ownership. A leading broadcast house in the UK journalism ecosystem, it is owned by a globally renowned media mogul,

Rupert Murdoch. Murdoch, of English, Irish and Scottish roots, is Australian-born but of American citizenry (Belfield, Hird & Kelly, 1991). Murdoch is a media man out and out. Beyond his ownership of Sky News, he is the owner of numerous media outlets, including *The Sun* and *The Times* newspapers in the UK, and *Fox News* in the US (Hook, 2011).He inherited journalism from his father, taking over his father's Australian newspaper, *The News*, after his father died in 1952. Having taken over *The News*, he began to spread beyond Australia into the journalism spaces of Britain and the United States. He eventually founded *Sky News* in 1989.

In contrast with the British and American paradigm, ownership of media in Nigeria, as pointed out earlier on, is predominantly in the hands of non-journalists, people with no prior work history in media. With a few exceptions like *Channels Television*, *This Day*, the now moribund *Newswatch* magazine and *Tell* magazine whose owners are/were career media men with established histories in journalism, the owners of media in Nigeria are, for the most part, media outsiders adventuring into journalism through the door of their capital. Aboard with John Momoh or Nduka Obaigbena at the head, or with Dele Giwa, Ray Ekpu, Dan Agbese and Yakubu Mohammed as controlling members, or with Nosa Igiebor, Kola Ilori and Onome Osifo-Whiskey as founding owners should have been the excellent model of ownership architecture for Nigerian journalism, all these men growing from the ranks as media insiders and first crystallizing into seasoned professionals before ever striking out to found any media of their own. In contrast, lamentably, the larger part of media in Nigeria is outsider-owned; the driving motivation for their ownership borders more on aspirations other than professionalism. We will review a few to show this oddity, beginning with *Champion* newspaper.

Daily Champion was founded in 1988. Chief Emmanuel Iwuanyanwu, its founder, was 46 that year. At 46, Chief Iwuanyanwu was already an established businessman in construction, having studied civil engineering at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, having worked for a while for a construction company, and having gone on to acquire the construction company he worked for from its foreign operators. To set off his paper on an excellent note and to run it professionally, Iwuanyanwu secured the expertise of Henry Odukomaiya to head its editorial board. Odukomaiya had a distinguished career behind him from his work with leading media including *Daily Times* and *Concord*. True to Iwuanyanwu's expectations and the expectations of all who had followed Odukomaiya's career up to that point, the veteran delivered creditably. However, five years down the line, in 1993, something happened – something which underscores scholarly diagnosis of ownership of journalistic media by journalism outsiders as a leading cause of inertia in the practice of Nigerian journalism.

The June 12, 1993 election had just been annulled by President Ibrahim Babangida and there were riots all across the land. The European Union had frozen the foreign bank accounts of members of Babangida's government and the *Champion* had reported this action by the EU, providing documentary evidence to substantiate its report. The president had felt embarrassed by the report and had 'commanded' Iwuanyanwu to fire his Editor in Chief plus whoever it was that put that report together. Did Iwuanyanwu comply? Odukomaiya tells the fuller story in an interview he granted the *Sunday Telegraph*. Asked, "What led to your exit from *Champion Newspapers*?"(Anyanwu, 2016, p. 32), he had this to say:

…there was an unfortunate situation [that] arose after 1993 after the (June 12) election which produced Abiola. Because the election result was not announced, it produced a lot of political rioting and other things in the polity. So back home at Ilasa House, there was this story that we carried in *Champion*. One young man from the North who had joined the newspaper as a reporter and who we found to be a good person and capable writer; we brought him to Lagos and groomed him to become one of the members of the Editorial Board. His name is Labran Maku who was later to become Minister of Information, he it was that wrote the story. Then he was the Political Editor and the editorial hierarchy of the *Champion Newspaper* had developed confidence in Maku. We sent him to Abuja to cover the aftermath of the non-declaration of the election result. The story that Labran Maku sent to us was what really caused my greatest undoing in my career with the *Champion newspaper*. After election, the Supreme Military Council pronounced so many decrees and those members of the council are known to the international community and Nigerians as well. The European Union decided to freeze the accounts of members of the council in Europe and America. Maku got this story and supported it with documents so that there was no question of doubting the authenticity of the story.

> In my position as Editor in Chief, I decided that this [was] something worth publishing, and that led to my undoing in *Champion newspapers*. That was one of the few occasions if not the only occasion that I saw the red eye of Chief Iwuanyanwu. He descended on me, on us at the Champion House. He asked me to summon all the editorial staff to a meeting where he told us that the story had cost him his career as a contactor of the Federal Government, and that President Ibrahim Babangida asked him to terminate my appointment and the person who wrote the story. He said he was going to fire me regardless of the quality of service I had rendered to him. Later, I got [a] letter to proceed on indefinite suspension with full pay and allowances, because I refused to sack Maku. I packed my things and came back to my house and wrote a letter to express my feelings for record purposes. That was the only disagreement we had. It was a very unfortunate disagreement, but we parted as friends.
>
> (Anyanwu, 2016, p. 32).

We notice in the foregoing that Odukomaiya's "undoing" was simply that as Editor in Chief he had decided that the report which his political editor had turned in was "something worth publishing". He had ascertained that the report was not libelous. There was documentary evidence to concretize the details of the report and authenticate its claims. So, it was a 'scoop', to say it in journalistic lingo. Every true journalist would pray for a fortune like this, even if only once in their career. Odukomaiya might have been expecting a pat on his back from his boss, and another pat on the back of his political

editor. But what did he get from Iwuanyanwu instead? Let us itemize from Odukomaiya's interview what he got from his boss, his board chairman, the owner of the media he worked for:

i.   He got the "red eye" of his board chairman;

ii.   His board chairman "descended" on him and on his colleagues;

iii.   His board chairman told him and his colleagues in a meeting with the editorial staff that their story "had cost him his career as a contactor of the Federal Government", that Mr President had asked him to terminate both the appointment of the Editor in Chief and "the person who wrote the story";

iv.   His board chairman told him that he was going to fire him;

v.   He got a letter to proceed on indefinite suspension beca-use he refused to sack the person who wrote the story.

A critical question to ask is: Did Iwuanyanwu's being non-journalist by career have anything to do with how he responded to the pressure from the powers that be when the evil day came? Indeed, we see from that meeting with the editorial staff that his primary career, his true primary career, was his career as a construction contractor with the federal government. Being not a journalist by career, if he was at least a journalist at heart, would it have made any difference how he would have taken the pressure from Mr President? Maybe a question that could help us answer the foregoing would be: How would Odukomaiya have responded if he and not Iwuanyanwu was the owner of the paper that had published that story? Would Odukomaiya's being a journalist by career and a journalist at heart have made a difference in how he would have responded if he and not Iwuanyanwu was the owner?

Whether or not one is already committed to journalism before one goes on to own media is evidently key to whether or not the media one owns will ultimately be inert. As already mentioned, Chief Iwuanyanwu was not known to have done any work in or had any involvement with journalism before his founding of the *Champion*. Journalism, particularly print journalism, in the Nigerian economy of that time did not offer that much of a promise in terms of profitability, so profitability could not have been his aim for venturing in. In fact, rather than a promise of profitability, print journalism in 1988 presented many threats of no return on investment. What then could have been Iwuanyanwu's true motivation for venturing into journalism at the time that he did? The answer must be somewhere in the following considerations.

Chief Iwuanyanwu himself, in an interview with *This Day*, spoke about the period in his life between 1986 and 1993 where he admitted to nursing an ambition to contest to be president of Nigeria at the time the *Champion* was founded. He said plainly, "I was planning to run for the presidency" (Okocha, 2021, para. 3). Was his founding of the *Champion* a step in his plan to run for the presidency? It is very likely it was. It was, and still is, common among Nigerian politicians to set up media of their own as part of their preparations for running for particularly the highest office in the land. Iwuanyanwu may have thought that Nnamdi Azikiwe had his *Pilot*, Obafemi Awolowo had his *Tribune*, Moshood Abiola had his *Concord*, so he too should have his *Champion*. President Ibrahim Babangida had flagged off his transition-to-civil-rule programme in 1986, lifting the lid on political aspirations, so maybe setting up the *Champion* was one of Iwuanyanwu's strategic first steps towards his running for the presidency.

In 1992, Iwuanyanwu did contest the presidential primaries of the National Republican Congress (NRC) under President Babangida's Option A4 model and won substantial votes in some states (Okocha, 2021) but lost the primaries albeit. Still hungry for the presidency in spite of this setback, he went on to contest the presidency two other times in the next seven years that followed. He himself likens the political ambition he nursed at that time to madness:

> I still contested for president a number of times, totaling three. I can tell you that politics is like infectious madness, once you start, you won't know when to stop. My final attempt to contest for the position of the president was in 1999 under the platform of APP.(Okocha, 2021, para. 5).

Eventually, the "madness" subsided and the Chief announced his retirement from politics in a statement ahead of his 79th birthday (Okeoma, 2021).This news of his retirement from politics followed news of his shutting down his *Champion* newspaper earlier (Odunsi, 2013).Are these two events, i.e. his retirement from politics and his shutting down of his newspaper, related in any way? They very likely are. The two events appear to mutually explain each other. The point being made with these questions is that the *Champion* was founded with a political aspiration in mind and with nearly no journalistic motivation in the heart of its owner. If its owner had managed for 25 years to disguise his true motive for founding the paper, his non-commitment to journalism from the onset was conspicuously betrayed by the way he ran the paper in its last days. Odunsi (2013) reports that "the founder of the newspaper anointed his daughter…to take over the position of the Managing Director. Workers say she was brought into the

company without any prior knowledge or experience of journalism or management" (para. 3).The cause of the inertia that *Champion* newspaper was plagued with was clearly its ownership pattern.

A commercial radio station in Port Harcourt had a similar experience. At the turn of the millennium, a journalist in that station, had course to frequently interrogate the governor's dealings. The journalist's stance was prodding, bold, and unrelenting, and the CEO of the state, at that time, found this irritating and discomforting. What did the governor do? He resorted to the owner of the station. The owner of the station was first a business mogul before venturing into politics. He was well known to have his hand in various businesses but was never known to have any commitment to journalism.

So, when the CEO of the state reported this zealous journalist to him, he made it clear to the journalist that he would not have any gadfly in his station. He would have music in his station but not a gadfly. He warned the journalist sternly, threatening that the next time he (the journalist) would have another confrontation with the CEO of the state would be the last time he would be a staff of the station. This is most discouraging and at best can be described as a zeal dampener. The rhetorical question in the light of the melodrama depicted above is: would a journalist under such circumstances deploy his ingenuity and creativity in his daily rounds? The response most certainly will gravitate towards the negative and if this holds sway, then the pathway for inertia and mediocrity becomes most glaring.

The foregoing is in line with Wodi (2017) who observed that " ownership influence on editorial policy of a media outfit either in government owned or privately owned has resulted in non-professional acts among media practitioners" (p.31).

8.4   The Current Mentorship Void in Nigerian Journalism

Another probable and observed cause of journalistic inertia in Nigeria is the current dearth of real mentors that budding journalists in Nigeria can look up to. Averageness is sitting more and more comfortably in the heart of Nigerian journalism and is getting more and more deeply ingrained in the culture of the profession in our country. It is hoped that the days of heroism are not over for good in Nigerian journalism. When the average journalist converts himself from a watchdog over government and society to a public relations assistant for government and corporate business, then professional heroism becomes relegated to the micro dots of footnote punctuations.

We are at a time in Nigeria when we need to remind journalists of who they really are. Yes, a journalist can render public relations help here and there, and render service to advertisers for a commission from time to time; but a journalist must always remember who he is, primarily. He is a watchdog, a defender of the nation, a conscience. He is not a PR consultant. He is a journalist. It seems like many young journalists are still struggling with this dilemma. If a journalist's loyalty to government or big business overrides or surpasses his commitment to defend his nation and the people, then he is no longer a journalist. Dele Giwa was known to be friends with senior members of the government of his day (Ejinkeonye, 2001) but that did nothing to deter him from taking them on in his writings. Dele Giwa persistently urged journalists to be journalists:

> To all journalists, then, [Dele Giwa's] urgent appeals were: You should have a passion for the job. Be brave but don't be reckless. Don't allow them to beat you into silence. Cry out

> questioningly. Try and rise above trivial pursuits. Give your country quality journalism.(Ajibade, 2016, para. 8).

It was not all just talk. Dele Giwa was known to walk his talk. The following citation is partly a verbatim reproduction of what Dele Giwa himself once wrote about the self-confidence which produced the hero that we knew him to be:

> [Dele Giwa] never liked to be the errand boy of some powerful elements: he enjoyed it when he dominated his environment as a journalist. He once wrote in one of his rejoinders:"I have said at every available opportunity that NOBODY tells me what to write in my column. It is my property, and I guard it jealously, for it is my freedom to think and write as I see. Nobody higher than me in the *Concord Group* has ever demanded my column for editing before publication. Any reaction to any of my columns has come after publication"(Ajibade, 2016, para. 3).

The focus on Dele Giwa is to challenge the journalists of today who think that all it takes to be a journalist is to possess flowery writing abilities. Dele Giwa could write just as flowerily as any journalist we know; maybe even more flowerily than most journalists. He certainly did not come behind in that gift. However, if it was all for his writing giftedness, he would not have been bestriding the history of Nigerian journalism as the colossus that he was. It was for something more than floweriness. It was for courage. About courage, he himself writes:

> Courage is the one crucial element lacking in the Nigerian press. And just as Nigerians like to knock Nigeria for everything wrong with them, as though they don't constitute Nigeria, those Nigerians who call themselves journalists like to knock the press for lack of courage, as though they don't constitute the press. (Giwa, 1981).

Courage is the one crucial element lacking in the Nigerian press, he says. Writing ability is not lacking. Courage is. When I speak about averageness sitting deeper and getting more ingrained in the culture of the practice in Nigeria, it is not averageness in writing that I speak about. Gifted writing is above average in Nigeria. What is average, or perhaps below average, is courage. It is a crucial element, Dele Giwa says, but it is a lacking element, sadly.

Dele Giwa has exited the scene and it seems like courage is now out of fashion. It seems like courage has been factored out of the current paradigm. The danger in this is that young journalists meet the profession castrated of its boldness and think that journalism is all about flowery writing. If there was still a Dele Giwa around, they would have known from example that every watchdog ought to come to duty with a bark and a bite. His writing giftedness was his bark and his guts were his bite. Indeed, a courage-less journalist is a castrated watchdog. He barks alright, but he never bites. His flowery writing is him barking alright, but because he is spineless, he never bites; he never goes for the jugular. Notwithstanding, he shirks, he sidesteps from calling power to account.

This is what Nigerian journalists mostly do these days: evading, shirking, sidestepping, hardly ever calling power to account. But the 1999 Constitution states expressly in Section 22 that "the press, radio, television and other agencies of the mass media *shall at all times be free* to uphold the fundamental objectives contained in this Chapter and uphold the responsibility and accountability of the Government to the people. "Shall at all times be free", says the Constitution; yet the Nigerian press is bound, self-bound actually; self-bound by her own 'couragelessness', and self-castrated. Dele Giwa did not have Section 22. He did not have the Freedom of Information Act. Yet, because he had courage and we do not, it makes it look as if it was he who had our Section 22 and our FOI Act, and it is us who have his Decree 4 of 1984.

Emphatically, if there was still a Dele Giwa around, he would have been one classic model of bark and bite worth recommending to young journalists. However, he having exited the scene, we would have to find a way to make him a mentor who though 'being dead yet speaketh.'

9.0   RECOMMENDATIONS

1.   Mainstreaming editorial policies:

There should be a concerted effort among media managers and proprietors to review their editorial policies in line with international best practices as well as the ideals of journalism practice. The era of government say so journalism is over. Editorial policies should as a matter of necessity focus on truth, fairness and objectivism. When editorial policies are anchored on the above listed pedestal, professionalism naturally sets in. it is also recommended that such editorial policies must be universalized with a view to according internationalization and standardization to journalism practice. The proposed review of editorial policies presupposes that they exist.

On the contrary, where they do not exist, efforts should be put in place to conceptualize and develop editorial policies that will serve as a framework for news sourcing and news processing. In this way professionalism will no longer be sacrificed at the altar of personal idiosyncrasies.

To stretch the argument further, such editorial documents must be condensed into a handbook to which all journalists within a given organization must swear an oath of strict adherence. More so, such documents must be in the public domain so as to ignite the consciousness that paves way for compliance. In this way professionalism is enthroned in practice and integrity is assured in disposition.

2.   Deconstructing negative cognitive contraptions

Often times, stereotypes, world views and prejudices becloud rationality. The perception of journalism as hazardous whittles down courage. In this regard, journalism must be seen as the lifebuoy of every organic society, the trust of the people and the hope of the world. Armed with such conceptions, the average journalist will certainly excel in practice.

There is the need to begin to reorient journalists on the ideals of journalism. It must however be noted that the legal framework accords honour and integrity to the profession. Section 22 of the 1999 constitution serves as a good reference in the light of the foregoing. For a profession that has been accorded the status of the "Fourth Estate," what could be more appealing?

The perception of journalism as a profession full of landmines is only for the professional pervert – those who compromise in the line of duty. For those who play strictly by the ethics, it is a safe haven that etches one's name on marble. Deconstructing negative cognitive contraptions entails making journalists realize that journalism is one profession that engenders self-fulfillment. The re-orientation being proposed here should be anchored on truth, honesty and integrity as the avowed ideals of journalism. With these ideals in place, the journalist becomes not only the conscience of society but the light that banishes evil ripples in the society. This indeed is what journalism is all about and not those negative contraptions often ascribed to it. With the right construction of the profession, sustainable development becomes second index.

3. Anchoring media ownership on excellence without compromise

Since media ownership in Nigeria has been seen to tilt towards self aggrandizement, there should be an inclination towards separating journalistic ideals from personal goals and ambition. Media ownership should no longer be seen as a means to political actualizations but as a tool for safeguarding societal ideals. Politics and journalism do not mix, even in colouration and substance.

There should, as a matter of urgency, be a framework, legal and regulatory, that restrains media owners from having undue influence on content. The framework should illuminate the fact that media business is first public interest and then profit without sacrificing the former at the altar of the latter.

A second dimension to according sanctity to the media business environment is to encourage journalists to venture into media ownership so as to ensure that the terrain is not being dominated by business interlopers and charlatans. Where it becomes daunting, efforts should be made to pool resources, among journalists of similar ideals, to fund media ownership ventures. On a micro-economic sense, thinking along the line of providing soft loans for journalists to venture into media ownership, as is the case with farmers, may not be completely out of place. Interestingly, the sanctity of the profession can be best guaranteed if the foregoing holds sway.

4.   Filling the mentorship void

Mentorship rules the world. Mentorship leads to self actualization. Bill Clinton would not have been a president of the United States if he did not see himself in John F. Kennedy. Mentorship builds the pathway for indoctrination and acculturation. Since it is obvious that we have a mentorship void in journalism practice in Nigeria, efforts should be made to fill that void. From a scriptural perspective, there would have been no Samuel without Eli; no Elisha without Elijah and no Timothy without Paul. Mentorship is everything.

Aspiration is nothing without inspiration. Hardly will any casual discussion with a Nigerian journalist reveal any Nigerian role model in journalism. Recurring names like Richard Quest, Christian Amanpour and lots more are all of western extraction. In a society devoid of homegrown role models, the path of excellence becomes

muddled up. Mentors may abound in the sphere of writing but not in total practice. Dele Giwa epitomized both streams. Since his demise, we can hardly hear of any name, in the sphere of journalism, which can be linked to astuteness, boldness and courage.

What may help in the light of the foregoing may be to put in place a framework for sustainable reward system. This may encourage journalists to rise to the occasion. Role models through a demonstration of dexterity, character and integrity must be seen for emulation. If these elements come in their proper mix then men of skill and character will emerge as role models and this will accord nobility to journalism thereby making it noble rather than the ignoble misconceptions that trail its sociological construct.

9.1   Post Script

The ideal of every society is to create an enabling environment for the actualization of human potentials. Journalism is the conveyor belt of that ideal. Journalism as a profession loses its verve when it is enmeshed in a contraption of mediocrity, docility and complacency. These negativisms no doubt create an atmosphere where a society sails on as a rudderless ship. In the face of this, it becomes most pertinent to establish a framework that dissolves these negativisms into a wimple while enthroning sound practices that can at best engender egalitarianism. This is the beauty of journalism as practiced in an atmosphere that is completely devoid of bibliotherapeautic inertia.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My gratitude goes first to God for His enduring mercies and boundless grace. He alone can transform a man from nothingness to somethingness. To Him I give all the glory, honour and adoration for not only making this day possible but also giving us joy and gladness as our heritage. I sincerely thank Him also for giving unto the Rivers State University another God fearing Vice - Chancellor in the person of Prof. Nlerum S. Okogbule.

It is in the light of the above that I want to sincerely thank our amiable Vice - Chancellor for making himself a vessel in the hands of God. *"When the Righteous rules, the people rejoice…"* is a familiar scripture. Some have only heard of that scripture but have not experienced it, we staff and students of the Rivers State University have not only heard but we have seen it come into manifestation in our university. The university is accomplishing so much within a short time frame because of his unique style of management which I believe is worthy of emulation.

The Deputy Vice - Chancellor (Administration) Prof. N.S. Okoroma is a man of warmth and excellence. My gratitude goes to him also for always giving me a sense of belonging in every forum we find ourselves. He is always proud to introduce me as a worthy in-law. Such confidence brings out the best in an individual. I appreciate dearly our Deputy Vice - Chancellor Elect (Academic) Professor Omubo Pepple. Same emotions go to our Registrar, Dr. Sydney Enyindah, whom I see as a handsome and perfect gentleman. Never will I forget the out gone Deputy Vice – Chancellor (Academic), Prof O.B. Owei, the first female Vice - Chancellor of this University, for her warmth, modesty and uprightness. For the Librarian and Bursar, I say a big thank you for your role in making our work environment uniquely convivial.

My scholarly journey started with the right kind of tutelage which I got from my lecturers, whom I would rather prefer to refer to as my teachers, right from my undergraduate days at the university. Prof. Des Wilson, Professor Mbuk Mboho and Professor Nkereuwem Udoakah are all lecturers and teachers of a rare breed. Interestingly, they go by the sobriquet, '*Living Ancestors*.' They had to travel all the way from Uyo to behold their son become a man. Worthy of mention also is Professor Sylvanus Ekwelie, who indeed is the grandfather of them all – A man of stylistic excellence.

The second strand of my academic journey started with Professor L. Ottih who back then was the Head, Department of Business Administration with Mass Communication as a programme under the department. Then came Professor G.A. Okwandu. He not only came as a Head of Department but as a father. He gave me self-worth and that roused the sleeping giant in me. Emeritus Professors Augustine Ahiauzu and Bedford Fubara of blessed memory were there as role models.

I recall with nostalgia the role Professor B.B. Fakae, a two tenured (former) Vice - Chancellor of this University, played in my life. He opened my eyes to the beauty of excellence and charisma. I appreciate also, Mrs D. Odimabo, the Registrar back then. Never will I cease thanking Prof. I.K.E. Ekweozor, the Chairman, Senate Lectures Committee, for his guidance and support.

I appreciate the Heads of Departments in the Faculty of Social Sciences – Prof. P.N. Ede (Geography), Dr. R.N. Amadi (Mass Communication and Sub-Dean), Dr. Dennis Ewubare (Economics), Dr. E.O. Davies (Political Science), Dr. S. Egbuchu (Psychology) and Dr. L. Onyekwere (Sociology and the mother of the faculty). Space would fail me to mention the entire staff of the faculty who have really demonstrated unwavering love and support. Same goes for the staff of the Department of Mass Communication (my home). I

wish to also thank my colleagues in the Department of Linguistics and Communication Studies, Uniport, now the Faculty of Communication and Media Studies. Your love continually strengthens me.

My elder brother, Mr. Victor Bassey Okon, had to travel all the way from Abuja to behold this event. He is my beloved brother of inestimable value. Same appreciation goes to my mentor, Sir Polly C. Ubechu. On the flip side, I draw a great deal of scholarly inspiration from Prof. Sunny Udeze, a man of unrivalled integrity.

Worthy of mention is the fact that some colleagues came together under the aegis of friends of Prof. G.B. Okon. They facilitated the coordination and general logistics. My undiluted gratitude goes to them. But for space constraints, I would have listed all their names. I may in the face of exigency ask them to stand for recognition.

I want to specially recognize and appreciate the presence of His Eminence, Barr. Nwachukwu Nnam Obi III, the Oba (Eze-ogba) of Ogba land, my wonderful brother in-law and a man of great intellect. Same gratitude goes to the Chiefs on his entourage. To my sisters in-law, including the Olori of Eze-Ogba, Aunty Ify, I say a big thank you. Same gratitude goes to the Hon. Commissioner, Pastor Paulinus Nsirim and the entire staff of the Rivers State Ministry of Information and Communications.

The untiring efforts of Dr. Emmanuel Ikpegbu, Mr. Papamie Belema and Mrs. Tessy Chris - Biriowu were brought to bear in the composition of this volume. My humongous gratitude goes to them. The daily rounds of Amadi Chinedu, Okpowhor Chikwudi and Udorah Nnamso will not be drowned in the cacophony.

I appreciate my right hand man, Mr. Paul Nsek and by extension his family. Pastor Ndubuisi Genuis and family as well as Pastor Hope Konyeha and family are truly appreciated. The list is endless and the space limited. Please bear with me if your name seems missing from this page. Indeed your name and the role you have played in my life are etched on marble.

And to my darling wife of inexhaustible virtue, Mrs. Florence N. Okon, the mother of my only children on earth – Inemesit and Uduakabasi – a woman of rare modesty and character, a woman who has given me peace on every side, one who knows how to abase in abundance and in lack, words would fail me but know this day that your worth is beyond measure, and my love for you beyond literary description. To my only children on earth, my precious daughters, Inemesit and Uduakabasi, the pride of my life, I cherish the two of you with love that stretches beyond chemical composition.

My love for everyone here present is deep and conveyed through a heart that bleeds with so much gratitude. God bless us ALL.

REFERENCES

Abdulkareem, F. (2009). *Epidemiology and incidence of common cancers in Nigeria.* Paper presented at a cancer workshop in Lagos.

Abimbola, R.O. (2014). Cursory look at types of newspapers content on political crisis situations in Nigeria. *Kuwait Chapter of Arabian Journal of Business and Management Review.* 3(12), 59 – 70.

Ajibade, K. (2016, October 26). Remembering Dele Giwa. *Sahara Reporters*. http://saharareporters.com/2016/10/26/remembering-dele-giwa-kunle-ajibade

Anaeto S. G., Onabajo, O. S. & Osifeso J. B. (2010). *Models and theories of communication.* Maryland: African Renaissance Books Incorporated.

Anyanwu, T. (2016, July 10). I am fulfilled at 82 – Prince Odukomaiya. *Sunday Telegraph*, pp. 31-32

Auletta, K. (2005). *Media man: Ted Turner's improbable empire*. New York: W. W. Norton.

Balasubramanian, S.K. (1991). Beyond advertising and publicity: Hybrid messages and public policy issues. *Journal of Advertising.* 23(4), 29 – 46.

Balbach, E. & Glantz, S. (1998) Tobacco control advocates must demand high quality media campaigns: The California experience. *Tobacco Control*. 7(1), 397-408.

Bammer, G. (2016). *Change*. ANU Press. Retrieved from: https://www.jstor.org/j.ctt16wd0cc.5

Baran, S. J. & Davis, D. K. (2012). *Mass communication theory, foundations, ferment, future* (6th ed.). United States: Wadsworth Cancage.

Barkin, S. M. (2003). *American television news: The media marketplace and the public interest*. New York, NY: Routledge.

BBC (British Broadcasting Corporation). (2019). ***The BBC's editorial standards*. London, UK:** British Broadcasting Corporation.

Belfield, R., Hird, C. & Kelly, S. (1991). *Murdoch: The decline of an empire*. London, UK: Fulcrum Productions.

Belmonte, M.I.A. (2007). *Newspaper editorials and comment articles: A "Cinderella" genre?* (researchgate.net/publications/28205752 _Newspaper_editorials_and_comment.

Besley, T. & Robin B. (2002). The political economy of government responsiveness: Theory and evidence from India. *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 117 (4) 1415 – 1451.

Bhattacharjee, S. (2020). *Feature writing: An essential journalistic craft.* West Bengal: Adamas University Press.

Blanchard, M. A. (1977). The Hutchins Commission, the press and the responsibility concept. *Journalism Monographs*, 49.

Bloomfield, G.S., Kimaiyo, S., Carter, J., Binanay, R., Corey, R., Einterz, R., Tierney, W. & Velaquez, E. (2011). Chronic non communicable cardiovascular and pulmonary disease in sub-Saharan Africa: An academic model for countering the epidemic. *AM Heart.* 161(5), 842 – 847.

Brown, N.J. & Udomisor, I.W. (2015). Evaluation of political news reportage in Nigeria's *Vanguard* and the *Guardian* newspapers. *Advances in Journalism and Communication.* 3(1), 10 – 18.

Byers, D. (2012, August 7). Time magazine still on top in circulation. *Politico.*

Campbell, R., Jensen, J., Gomery, D., Fabos, B. & Frechette, J. (2014). *Media in society.* New York: Bedford/St. Martins.

Caplan, G. (1997). Defending and promoting free expression around the world. *Canadian Foreign Policy Journal*, *5*(1), 121–128.

Carey, J.W. (1975). A cultural approach to communication. *Communications.* 2(10), 1- 22.

Castells, M. (2013). *Communication power*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Cengiz, G. (2009). *"Developing media theory" as a mixed communication theory: A Russian media case.* Retrieved from https://www. academia.edu/40042155/_DEVELOPING_MEDIA_THEORY_A S_A_MIXED_COMMUNICATION_THEORY_A_RUSSIAN_M EDIA_CASE

Chebib, N. K. & Sohail, R.M. (2011). The reasons social media contributed to the 2011 Egyptian revolution. *International Journal of Business Research and Management (IJBRM)* 2(3). 67-89.

Community Tool Box (2021). *Working with the media*. Retrieved from https://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/advocacy/media-advocacy/working-with-media/main

Da Costa, P. (2008). *Managing for and communicating Development Results*. Background paper for the OELD informed network of DAC Development Communication (DevCom Network) First class Information (2012, December 27). Normative theories of the press – 6 theories. [Blog post]. Retrieved from bizzybrain2013.blogspot.com/2012/12/normative-theories-of-the-press.html?m=1

Daramola, I. (2013). Ethnic considerations in political coverage by Nigerian media. *Kuwait Chapter of Arabian Journal of Business and Management Review.* 2(12), 38 – 52).

Dash, E. (2009, January 19). Mexican billionaire invests in The New York Times Company. *The New York Times.*

DeFleur, M. & Dennis, E. (1994). *Understanding mass communication*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Duncan, T. (2007). *Advanced physics* (5th ed.). London, UK: Hodder Murray.

Dzisah, W.S. (2019). Relevance of communication strategies and funding orphanages in Ghana. *Ghana Journal of Development Studies, 16* (3), 87 – 108.

Ejinkeonye, U. (2001, October 19). Remembering Dele Giwa. *Thisday.* http://allafrica.com/stories/200110190286.html

Encyclopedia of public health (2002). Michigan: The Gale Group, Inc.

Fayoyin, A. (2007). *Media advocacy and strategic networking in transforming norms and policies*. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/319893228

Feiner, L. (2019, March 4). WarnerMedia reorganizes its leadership team after AT&T acquisition. *CNBC*.

Firmstone, J. (2019). *Editorial journalism and newspapers' editorial opinions*.http://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/978019228613.013.803.

Flor, A. G. (2007). *Development communication: The fifth theory of the press.* Retrieved from https://www.academic.edu/178798/ The_Fifth_Theory_of_the_Press

Giwa, D. (1981, November 22). Mr Oyebola's blah and other blahs. *Sunday Concord,* p…

Golding, P. (1974). *Media role in national development: Critique of a theoretical orthodoxy.* Retrieved from https://doi.org/10.1111/j. 1460-2466. 1974.tb00387.x

Goldman, K. & Zassloff, K. (1994) Tools of the media do's and don'ts. *Sophe News and Views* 1(1), 6-7.

Gupta, D. M. (2015). *Theoretical approaches in development communication: Developing countries.* Retrieved from https://www.linkkedin.com/pulse/development-communication-theoretical-perspective-deepak-m-gupta

Hanson, C.B. (2016). The effect of advertorial format and copy length on attitudes of female (target) and male (non target) audiences. *Atlantic Marketing Journal.* 5(2), 41 – 53.

Higuera, V. (2014). *Heart diseases: Overview and types* (www.helthliine.com/health/heartsdisease/types#overview).

Hoffman, L.H. & Slater, M.D. (2007). *Evaluating public discourse in newspaper opinion articles: Values framing and integrative complexity in substance and health policy issues.* (http://doi.org/10/1177/107769900708400105).

Holder, D. & Trenor, A.(1997). Media advocacy in community prevention: News as a means to enhance policy change. *Addiction.* 92 (1), 189-199.

Holness, W. & Rule, S. (2014). Barriers to advocacy and litigation in the equality courts for persons with disabilities. *PER - PELJ, 17* (5), 1907 – 1963.

Hook, S. V. (2011). *Rupert Murdoch: News Corporation magnate.* Minnesota: Abdo Publishing Company.

Huhmann, B.A. & Albinsson, P.A. (2012). Does rhetoric impact advertising effectiveness with liking controlled? *European Journal of Marketing.* 46(11/12), 1476 – 1500.

Hutchins, R. (1947). *Commission on freedom of the press. A free and responsible press*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Ismail, O. (2011). The Nigerian press: The journey so far. *Continental Journal of Sustainable Development.* 2(1), 8 – 19.

Janowits, M. (1968). *The study of mass communication*. New York: McMillan and Free Press.

Jimoh, I. (2207). *The press and the challenge of rural development: A comparative study of Weekly Trust and Gaskiya Tafi Kwabo Newspapers, 1999 – 2003.* M.A. dissertation, Department of Mass Communication, Bayero University, Kano. [Unpublished].

Johnson, J. & Johnson, W.A. (2013). Explication of theoretical foundation of communication policy. *Arabian Journal of Business and Management Review* (OMAN chapter), 3 (4), 99 – 108.

Kadiri, K, K., Muhammed, Y. A., Raji, A., & Sulaiman, A. L. (2015). Constraints and challenges of the media in the development of Nigeria. *Journal of Sustainable Development in Africa*, 17 (1) 44 – 60.

Kadiri, K. (2009). Constraints and challenges of reporting development news in the Nigerian press. *Journal of Communication and Media Research* 2(1), 125 -146.

Kim, B., Pasadeos, Y. & Barban, A. (2001). On the receptive effectiveness of labeled and unlabelled advertorial formals. *Mass Communication and Society.* 4(3), 265 – 281.

Kim, S. H., Scheufele, D. A., & Shanahan. J. (2002). Think about it this way: Attribute agenda-setting function of the press and the public's evaluation of a local issue. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*. 79 (1), 7–25.

Kumar, V., Abbas, A. & Aster, J. (2017). *Robbins basic pathology*. Amsterdam: Elsevier.

Lasswell, H. (1972). The structure and function of communication in society. In L. Bryson (Ed.), *The communication of ideas* (pp. 37-51). New York: Harper & Row.

Levitz, E. (2016, October 19). A. G. Sulzberger vanquishes his cousins, becomes deputy publisher of the *New York Times*. *The New York Times*.

Lin,V., Bragley, P. & Koops, V. (2003). *Acting on non-communicable diseases: An advocacy guide for the western pacific*. Sydney: La Trobe University.

Lippmann, W. (1965). *Public opinion*. New York: The Free Press.

Littlejohn, S. & Foss, K. (2009). *Encyclopedia of communication theory*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

Lu, C. & Lu, C. (2009). Less is more: printed text with simplicity and clarity design. *The Business Review.* (13(2), 81 – 86.

Malaki, B. & Wahome, C. (2018). *Media as a catalyst: Promoting rural electrification and renewable energy development.* Retrieved from https://east-africa.hivos.org/news/media-as-a-catalyst-promoting-rural-electrification-and-renewable-energy-development/

Masuku, C. (2017). *Feature writing in journalism.* academia.edu/2172893/FEATURE_WRITING_IN_JOURNALISM.

Mathers, C.D., Lopez, A.D. & Murray, C.J. (2006). *Global burden of disease and risk factors.* Washington, DC: International bank for Reconstruction and development/World Bank.

McCombs, M. 2004. *Setting the agenda: The mass public and the opinion*. Cambridge: Polity.

McQuail, D. & Windahil, S. (1992). *Communication models*. New York: Longman.

McQuail, D. (1983). *Mass communication theory: An introduction*. Beverly Hills California: SAGE Publications Ltd.

McQuail, D. (1987). *Mass communication theory: An introduction*. Beverly Hills California: SAGE Publications.

McQuail, D. (2010). Mass communication theory. California: Sage Publication Inc.

Media Development Investment Fund (2017). *Media development's role in social, economic, and political progress*. Retrieved from https://www.mdif.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Media-Developments-Role-in-Social-Economic-and -Political-Progress-Literature-Review-pdf.

Microsoft. (2009). *Encarta Dictionary.* Redmond, WA: Microsoft Corporation.

Nelkon, M. & Parker, P. (2011). *Advanced level physics*. London, UK: Heinemann.

Nerone, J. C. (1995). *Last rights: Revisiting four theories of the press*. Urbana IL: University of Illinois Press.

Nordenstreng, K. (1997). *Beyond the four theories of the press*. Retrieved from https://sites.tuni.fi/uploads/2019/12/1eaed6f8-beyond-the-four-theories-of-thepress-skannaus.pdf

Northbrook, I. (1998) *Counter-tobacco advertising: Summary report.* Atlanta: Teenage Research Unlimited.

NYT (*The New York Times*). (2004). *Ethical journalism: A handbook of values and practices for the news and editorial departments*. New York, NY: The New York Times.

O'Connor, M. (2009). *Ted Turner: A biography.* Santa Barbara, CA: ABC Greenwood.

Odunsi, W. (2013, May 1). Champion newspaper shuts down. *Daily Post.* https://dailypost.ng/2013/05/01/champion-newspaper-shuts-down/

Ojobor, J. I. (2002). Mass communication theories. In C. S. Okunna (Ed.). *Teaching mass communication: A multidimensional approach* (pp.3-26). Enugu: New Generation Books.

Okeoma, C. (2021, September 2). Iwuanyanwu retires from politics, says Nigeria due for restructuring. *The Punch.* https://punchng.com/iwuanyanwu-retires-from-politics-says-nigeria-due-for-restructuring/

Okocha, C. (2021, July 11). Iwuanyanwu: An Igbo president may not solve Southeast's agitation. *ThisDay.* https://www.thisdaylive.com/index.php/2021/07/11/iwuanyanwu-an-igbo-president-may-not-solve-southeasts-agitation/

Okon, G.B. & Ihejirika, W.C. (2014). The 2015 deadline for digitization of broadcasting and awareness/knowledge ratio among information workers in Port Harcourt. *Review of Communication and Media Studies.* 1(1), 40 – 48.

Okon, G.B. & Ihejirika, W.C. (2019). *Draft communication strategy for Hyprep through CERHD.* (working paper).

Okon, G.B. & Omodu, M. (2012). Gender stereotypes and trado-modern communication delivery systems in Rivers State. In M. Mboho & H. Batta (Eds.). *The companion to communication and development.* 479 – 488. Uyo: BSM Resources Ltd.

Okon, G.B. & Orlu-Orlu, H.C. (2016). Gender imbalance in President Buhari's ministerial nominations and reactions by the Nigerian press: Advocacy or complacency? *International Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences.* 6(10), 81 – 89 .

Okon, G.B. (2006). Pressure groups and crisis management in the Niger Delta region: A situational analysis. *Journal of Niger Delta Research.* 8(1&2), 98 – 106.

Okon, G.B. (2009). *Marketing foundations for advertising and public relations*. Lagos: HdX Communication Limited.

Okon, G.B. (2010). Trado/modern media mix for sustainable rural development in Nigeria. In E. Sooala, H. Batta & C. Nwabueze (Eds.) *Communication and Africa's development crisis: Essays in honour of Prof. des Wilson.* 31 – 41. Germany: VDM Verlag, GmbH & Co. KG.

Okon, G.B. (2012). *Basic dimensions in mass communication.* Lagos: HdX Communications Limited.

Okon, G.B. (2013a). The Niger Delta crisis and advocacy for peace by the Nigerian press: A content analysis of three Nigeria newspapers. *New Media and Mass Communication.* 1(14), 7 – 17. (United Kingdom).

Okon, G.B. (2013b). The coverage of *Augusta 109* naval helicopter crash in Bayelsa State by three Nigerian newspapers: The depth, disposition and pattern. *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science.* 12(2), 113 – 122.

Okon, G.B. (2014a). The war against oil theft in the Niger Delta region and advocacy by the Nigerian press: A normative appraisal. *Studies in Media and Communication.* 2(1), 61 – 70.

Okon. G.B. (2014b). Diffusion of innovation patterns among poverty alleviation agencies and sustainable development challenges in the Niger Delta: The Rivers State experience. *Review of European Studies.* 6(2), 40 – 44.

Okon, G.B. (2015a). Contextualization of non-communicable heart disease in select Nigerian newspapers: Approaches and patterns. In F.I. Obiora & S.E. Udeze (Eds.). *Emerging trends in gender, health & political communication in Africa.* 97 – 110. Enugu: Rhyce Kerex Publishers.

Okon, G.B. (2015b). Social media use by the two dominant parties in Rivers State: Their techniques, applications and fellowships. *Review of Communication and Media Studies.* 1(2), 132 – 142.

Okon, G.B. (2015c). A thematic appraisal of political rhetoric in the implementation of the UNEP report on Ogoniland and editorialization by select Nigerian newspapers. *ESUT Journal of Media Studies.* 9(1), 3 – 13.

Okon, G.B. (2016). Advocacy for early detection of breast cancer among premenopausal women in Rivers State: A study of three broadcast stations in Port Harcourt. *EBSU Journal of Mass Communication.* 3(1), 1 – 12.

Okon, G.B. (2017). The Rivers State rerun election and print media content on matters arising: A performance appraisal. *Review of Communication and Media Studies*. 1(4), 282 – 299.

Okon, G.B. (2018). The political economy of Nigerian newspapers in the defunct republics. In M. Popoola & G.H. Oboh (eds). *Political economy of media operations in Nigeria: Essays in honour of HRH Oba Michael Bolorunduro Asaju.* (116 – 131). Oyo: Ajayi Crowther University.

Okon, G.B. (2020). *Lecture notes on advanced communication and society* (unpublished monograph).

Oluwasola, O. (2020). The normative theories of the press in the digital age: A need for revision. *IMSU Journal of Communication Studies*, 4(2), 27-36.

Orji, N. (2012, June, 4).History of plane crashes in Nigeria. *The Sun*. (p.43)

Paper, S. & Featherstone, S. (2006). *Feature writing: A practical introduction*. London: Sage

Parsons, P. R. (2008). <u>*Blue skies: A history of cable television*</u>. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.

Pratt, C. B. (1992). Western Journalism confounded by death and war in Africa. *Media Development* 4(1), 6-8

Pershuck, M. & Wilbur P. (1991) *Media advocacy: Reframing public debate.* Washington: The Benton Foundation.

Press Gazette. (2009, January 21). Rothermere: DMGT remains committed to journalism. *Press Gazette.*

Raza, R. (2012). *Media development theory*. Retrieved from rahib-raza.blogspot.com/2012/10/media-development-theory. html?m=1

Reinikka, R. & Svensson, J. (2004). *The power of information: Evidence from a newspaper campaign to reduce capture.* Working paper 3239. Washington DC: World Bank.

Rodman, G. (2012). *Mass media in a changing world: History, industry controversy* (fourth edition). New York: McGraw Hill.

Rogers, E. (1973). Mass communication exposure and modernization among Colombian peasants. *Opinion Quarterly,* 1(29), 66 – 82.

Roy, P. (2018). The development media model and its role in the implementation of South Asia's developmental policies led by the government. *Global Media Journal.* 16 (30) 104 – 106.

Roy, S. (2014). *Media development and political stability: An analysis of sub-Saharan Africa*. Retrieved from http://www.mediama presource.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/04/Media-Development-and-Political-Stability-Final.pdf.

Rust, F.O. (2018). *Editorial: Are editorials necessary? Teachers and teaching theory and practice.* 24:6,599-603. DOI:10.1080/ 13540602.2018.1477368.

SABC (South African Broadcasting Corporation). (2020). *SABC editorial policies 2020*. Johannesburg, South Africa: SABC.

Sagheer, S. (nd). *Editorial: Definition, importance and types*. https://sociologyship.com/editorial-definition-importance-types/

Sandomir, R. (2020, July 28). Reese Schonfeld, a founder of CNN and Food Network, dies at 88. *The New York Times*.

Scheufele, D.A., & Tewksbury, D. (2007). Framing, agenda setting, and priming: The evolution of three media effects models. *Journal of Communication.* 57(1), 9–20.

Seers, D. (1977). The meaning of development. In T. Uphoff & E. Warren (Eds). *The political economy of development: The theoretical and empirical contributors* (pp. 23 – 34). Berkeley: University of California Press.

Sharma, R.R. (n.d.). *An introduction to advocacy: Training Guide*. SARA: USAID.

Short, K.G. (2016). The 2015 NCTE presidential address: Advocacy as capacity building: Creating a movement through collaborative inquiry. *Research in the Teaching of English, 50* (3), 349 – 364

Siebert, F., Peterson, T. & Schramm, W. (1956). *Four theories of the press*. Urbana, IL: University Press.

Staples, H. (2009) Media advocacy: A powerful tool for policy change. *North Carolina Medical Journal*. 70(2), 175-178.

Steensen, S. (2011). The featurization of journalism. *Nordicom Review.* 32(2), 49 – 61.

Stevenson, L. R., & Cole. R. R. (1984). Issues in foreign news. In R.L. Stevenson & D. L. Shaw (eds.). *Foreign news and the New World Information Order* (pp.48-53). Iowa: The Iowa University Press.

Suggett, P. (2019). *How to write an advertorial that works*. http://thebalancecareers.com/how_to_write_an_advertorial_38471.

Sweney, M. (2020, June 19). Daily Mail eclipses The Sun to become UK's top-selling paper. *The Guardian*.

The Student Book (2016, May 6). *The fifth theory of the press is dialectically superior to the earlier four: Discuss.* Retrieved from thestudentbook.blogspot.com/2016/05/the-fifth-theory-of-the-press-is.html?m=1

Tripti, S. (2015). *Theories of the press*. Retrieved from www.legalservicesindia.com/article/1316/Theories-of-Press.html

UN (United Nations). (2011, October 5). Journalism - one of the world's most dangerous professions. *OHCHR*. https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/Journalism-oneoftheworldsmost dangerousprofessions.aspx

UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization). (2016). *Journalists' safety indicators (JSI)-related project in Nigeria 2014-2015*. UNESCO.

VnDijk, T.A. (1997). *The study of discourse: Discourse on structure and process*. New Delhi: Sage publications.

Wallack, L. (1999) *News for a change: An advocate's guide to working with the media.* London: Sage Publications.

Wallack, L., Dorfman, E., Jernigan, D. & Themba-Nixon, M. (1993) *Media advocacy and public health: Power of prevention.* Newbury Park: Sage Publications.

Weintraut, A. (nd) *Writing an editorial gereseo*. edu/-bennett/Edwate.htm.

Weiss, D. (2009). Journalism and theories of the press. In S. W. Littlejohn & K. A. Foss (Eds.). *Encyclopedia of communication theory* (pp. 574 – 579). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications Inc.

Wodi, A. (2017). *Editorial policy and journalists' professional duties: a study of FRCN Abuja network centre*. Dissertation submitted to the Postgraduate School Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria.

Woodruff, K. (1996) Alcohol advertising and violence against women: A media advocacy case study. *Health Education and Behaviour*, 23(3), 330-345.

Wright, C. (1986). Mass communication: A sociological perspective. New York: Random House.

CITATION

Godwin Bassey Okon, a native of Oku-Iboku in Itu Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State, was born on 11ᵗʰ October, 1968. His first School Leaving Certificate (FSLC) was from Cameroon Barracks Primary School, Aba, in the 1979/1980 academic session. He attended Government College, Umuahia, popularly known as the Eton of the East between 1980 and 1985 from where he obtained his WASC. He proceeded to the University of Cross River State now University of Uyo for a B.A. in Communication Arts and graduated in 1990 with a second class upper division in the days of comprehensive examination and 3.75 minimum CGPA for second class upper. His National Youth Service scheme was at the Government House, Calabar, in 1991.

With his path vaguely defined, he enrolled for a Masters programme in Mass Communication at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, and completed the programme in a record time of eighteen months with a CGPA of 4.92 on a 5 point scale. With this feat, he was offered a lecturing job at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, which he turned down believing that his destiny was in the advertising industry in Lagos. To this, destiny played a trick on him.

He had a brief stint as a Client Services Executive in Rock Forte Advertising Agency, Lagos. At the realization that he lacked fulfillment in the job, he came down south; to where destiny beckoned. With his pathway clearly defined, he applied for a job as an Assistant Lecturer in the then Rivers State University of Science and Technology, now Rivers State University. Interestingly, destiny smiled at him on this path and he was offered employment as an Assistant Lecturer in 1994 at the age of 26. With a dint of diligence

and resourcefulness, he rose through the ranks. His PhD was obtained in 2004 from the University of Uyo. In the course of his career, he has held key administrative positions among which are:

1. Departmental CCE Coordinator -2003 – 2009

2. Faculty Representative to Senate Curriculum and Instructions Committee (C & I) – 2010 – 2018

3. Ag Head, Department of Mass Communication – 2009 – 2015

4. Ag. Chairman, Senate Curriculum and Instructions Committee – 2019

Being known for administrative excellence, he left his mark in the various capacities listed above. As an Acting Head of Department, he founded a campus newspaper – *Campus Sentinel* – which was the flagship of the Department. He also founded a high impact factor departmental journal – *Review of Communication and Media Studies*. His landmark achievement as an Acting Head of Department was the resuscitation of the Departmental Radio Studio – *Excel FM*. It is on record that the transmitter he procured for the studio in 2015 has never broken down till date not even for a second.

As a Member and Acting Chairman Senate Curriculum and Instructions Committee, he facilitated the development of content/curricula for many programmes. He pioneered the drive for the approval of academic programmes under the Open and Distance Education (ODE) platform.

His achievements as the Dean of Social Sciences include:

1. Creating a convivial work environment where oneness of purpose and singleness of hearts are the cornerstones.

2. Setting up a virtual reading room with a direct access to the e-resource of the central library.

3.   Putting in circulation a high impact factor faculty journal with a corresponding website.

4.   Facilitating the construction of a knowledge garden for recreation/relaxation.

The list is indeed endless.

His romance with town has seen him consulting for government agencies and international organizations, especially UNICEF. His stint with UNICEF has been marked by the following milestones:

i.   Training the Trainers on Acada Model (2003)

ii.   The drafting of a two (2) year communication plan for Rivers State in 2009.

iii.   Monitoring and Evaluation of "*Do something*" (2010)

iv.   Facilitating a pilot test on 2L2Y in Rivers State (2018).

The expertise with which he discharged his responsibilities with UNICF made the organization to prevail on the Management of the University to release him for 4 months to serve as the Rivers State Communication Consultant for the Integrated Measles Campaign in 2015. His forte in the field of Communication and Behaviour Change Strategy is very eloquent. To this end, he and his colleague, Prof. Walter Ihejirika of the University of Port Harcourt, served as Communication Consultants to HYPREP in 2019 through the Centre for Environment, Human Rights and Development (CERHD).

In recognition of his strides, in the knowledge industry, he was listed in *Nigeria's Who is Who* in 2008. More so, he was honoured with the 5th Distinguished Nation Builder Award in 2008.

In terms of professional affiliations, he holds membership with cognate professional bodies like the African Council for Communication Education (ACCE), the International Association for Media and Communication Research (IAMCR), the International Environmental Communication Association (IECA) and lots more. He has presented papers at conferences across four continents. With glaring national and international visibility, his research profile can be accessed on Research Gate and Google Scholar.

He is, at present, an External Examiner to about eight (8) universities across three go-political zones in Nigeria. He has to his credit the supervision of well over 15 PhD theses and numerous Masters Dissertations. He is a proud father of two daughters and a husband to one wife and his wife is a woman.