WATCHDOG JOURNALISM IN NIGERIA: DEMOCRACY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

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Abstract : Mass media has recorded tremendous achievement in Nigeria political system, particularly towards educating the masses on the government policies and programmes. This action performed by the media has significantly influenced the voting behaviour of the electorates in Nigeria which arguably attributed to the historical landmark success recorded in the country by the opposition party (All Progressive Party) to unseat the ruling party (Peoples Democratic Party) during the 2015 general election. The study examines the media role in Nigeria towards ensuring that the political officers/politicians are accountable to the masses whom their interests is represented. The study makes use of structuration theory that explain how the structure and action of man make the society and that the two are indivisible to study. The actions of man that affects the structure must have be attributed to the role and the kind of information disseminated by the media in such society. The study reveals that some media houses subject themselves to tool of oppression by the ruling party in order deprive the opposition of their rights to access media and canvass for votes. The study equally reveals that the unethical practice among the media to discriminate over the political parties' programmes is capable of jeopardizing the political awareness of the masses. This study therefore is a qualitative in nature that employs the use of secondary data source of data to assess how media ensure that the political officers are accountable to the masses in Nigeria.

Keywords: Media, Accountability, Voting Behaviour, Democracy

Introduction

[. . .] were it left to me to decide whether we should have a government without newspapers, or newspapers without a government, I should not hesitate a moment to prefer the latter [...]" because "[...] once they [the people] become inattentive to the public affairs, you and I, and Congress, and Assemblies, judges and governors shall all become wolves.

(Thomas Jefferson, 1950)

Information and communication technology is a key component in the evolution of participatory democratic government. This has also played tremendous role toward the sustainability and accountability of the elected officers to the citizens. It becomes an argument that technology is neither benign nor evil to the society but a tool that can be

used both positively and negatively depending on the hands it falls. Information and communication technology as asserted by Daryl Slaton and Becker (2000), is a powerful tool which should not be left in the hands of a group in order to prevent unfair advantage from the group that possess it.

The advancement in information and communication technology have impacted positively toward awaken citizens' awareness and responsibility in the representative system of government. It also assists citizens to distinguish the most preferred candidate of their choice at the decision-making process. The information gathered and disseminated to the public by journalism brings out accountability in most political office holders (Bowles, Hamilton & Levy, 2013). Similarly, a survey conducted in America on accountability in 2013, reflects that above two thirds of Americans agreed that "press criticism of political leaders keeps them from doing things that should not be done" (Pew Research Center, 2013).

There are some findings to support the assertion that Journalism aids accountability in political settings. Researches such as Besley and Burgess (2002), Hamilton (2009), Snyder and Strömberg (2010), McChesney and Nichols (2011), Waldman (2011) and Ashworth (2012), indicate that some of the reports made by media on elected officials mostly informed voters more and this invariably promote the level of accountability among politicians. The awareness in electorates through media is capable to make them use the previous performance of an incumbent in determining whether to re-elect the latter or not (Bruns & Himmler, 2016). Therefore, it become imperative for the incumbent who have the ambition to seek for re-election to work hard to ensure peoples' collective wishes and expectation from government are adequately taken care of.

Similarly, media is a powerful tool to combat corruption by preventing the corrupt political officials from seeking re-election into public offices (Brunetti & Weder, 2003; Chowdhury, 2004; Freille, Haque, Kneller, 2007). Apart from stopping the corrupt politicians from seeking re-election, it is also a channel to condemn injustice and change autocratic form of government in the society. For instance, the recent uprising in some African countries like Tunisia, Egypt and Libya where the youths in those countries were informed through the social media on the need for change of government over the claimed injustice perpetrated by the then governments under Zine El-Abidine Ben Ali, Hosni Mubarak and Muammar Gaddafi respectively (Danju, Maasoglu & Maasoglu, 2013). In the same vein, the effect of media in such uprising in African countries and some Arab countries like Bahrain, Jordan, Syria, Oman and Yemen, on the need to

change autocratic dictators led to the overthrown of Zine El-Abidine Ben Ali, Hosni Mubarak and Muammar Gaddafi's governments (Arias, 2011; Danju et. al., 2013). The occurrence of this, led to series of reformation promises by the leaders of countries like Saudi Arabia, Algeria and Yemen in order to avert such incidence in their countries (Danju et. al., 2013). Countries like Morocco and Tunisia were also prompted to organize elections for people to choose their representative through a democratic form of government (Al-Zubaidi, 2011). Therefore, changes that occurred in those countries at different point of time is as a result of the information and awareness received by people through the media about the government of their countries. This shows how significant media is to the society in disseminating information.

Nigerian media is not an exception to this crucial role played by information and communication agent toward ensuring sustainability of democracy and accountability of political officials to the society (Ojo, 2003). Mass media in Nigeria has been one of the channel through which information is disseminate to the people. In fact, the media is one of the weapons used by Nigerian elites to sensitize people on the danger posed by the colonial rule and the need for the country to have independence (Mabadeje, 2004; Mamdani, 2018). Mass media contributed significantly in the formation of the first political parties and democratic government in Nigeria. Similarly, media is a powerful tool to combat corruption by preventing the corrupt political officials from seeking re-election into public offices (Freille, Haque, & Kneller, 2007; Chowdhury, 2004; Brunetti & Weder, 2003).

Mass media in Nigeria has been a sensitive medium of communication between the governed and the governors. The government utilizes the media to show case what its administration is doing, while the masses also express their feelings and views over the government's actions toward their needs (Nwabueze, 2017). The media therefore, plays the intermediary role between the masses who are the governed and the government who are the governor. As argued by Daryl Slaton and Becker (2000), the positive and negative benefit of the technological advancement in information and communication to the society is determined by the user of the media and perception of the public. For instance, if the mass media is used to project the positive image of government through 'brown envelope journalism' at the expense of the masses, such role might be categorized as evil to the latter (Gade, Nduka & Dastgeer, 2017). Similarly, if the media is pointing at the weakness of government by sensitizing the citizens on the likely effect of government's action or policy on the society, such role might be tagged as malicious by the government

but described as ideal to the masses (Enahoro & Ude, 2017; Malinowska & Miller, 2017). Therefore, in order to balance the two sides between the governed and the governors, mass media should serve as an instrument for democratic sustainability that will ensure accountability of political officers to the electorates. It is against this backdrop that the study is examine the role of mass media towards ensuring elected officers/leaders are accountable to the masses.

Statement of Problems

Mass media has been used by many societies to achieve difference purposes. As argued by Daryl Slaton and Becker (2000), Wogu (2017) that the control of the communication and the ownership of it, determines the level of manipulation in the media. Therefore, some use the media as an instrument for propagation of ideology, fund raising, safeguarding of the status quo among others. Media has also been used as a tool for democratization either from military government to civilian administration or from one civilian rule to another. This has canvassed for studies like Danju, Maasoglu, and Maasoglu (2013), Faris (2015) which focused on the role of media on democratization in North Africa and Middle East. Corneo (2006), Kent (2013), Corrigall-Brown and Wilkes (2014), Marzbali, Delavari, and Souri (2016), Bruns and Himmler (2016), Stilwell (2018) emphasized their studies on the role played by media in the democratization of the United States and the United Kingdom. Study conducted by Dash (2012) examined the media impact in India's corporate governance.

Similarly, studies such Uche (1989), Elegalem (1985), Mgbejume (1991), Ojo (2003), Nwabueze (2017) and Wogu (2017) that were conducted on Nigeria and media examined the challenges and contribution of the latter to the country's democracy. Also a study was conducted by Aborisade (2017) which examined the media as a tool to inculcate fear to reduce the rate of crime in Nigeria. However, limited study is found on how the media in Nigeria through its role has influenced the elected/political office holders to be accountable to the society. As it is believed that every rational politician will like their parties to always win elections for them to remain in government, it becomes necessary for the political office holders to perform creditably in order to have the supports of the masses. Media in this regard serves as a channel through which government actions and evaluation of its performance is communicated to the society. It is against this backdrop that the study examines the role of media towards ensuring that

the political officers are accountable to the society for the sustainability of Nigeria's democracy.

Methodology

The study employs a systematic review of literature majorly on accountability, democracy and media with emphasis on Nigeria. The study is a qualitative in nature which is based on the use of secondary data sources. This study used literature on the role of media in democratic settings recorded on journal articles, books, Newspapers among others.

In addition, the study makes use of structuration theory to explain how the media in Nigeria has influenced the political officers to be responsible and accountable to the society that voted for them into the position of authority. This theory was attributed to Anthony Giddens who is a British sociologist (Giddens, 2013b). The term was picked by the scholar from Piaget and Gurvitch but the usage by Giddens is different from theirs. Giddens propounded the structuration theory through his analysis using agency and structure (Giddens, 2013b). He argued on the question whether it is social forces or individuals that determine the social reality of a society. He stressed further that in spite of the fact that people are not absolutely free to decide their actions, but they are the recognized agency that reproduces the social structure which invariably produces the social change (Giddens, 1991; Rose, 1999). Giddens believes that the connection between structure and action is a fundamental attribute of social theory. He expresses further that "social structures are both constituted by human agency, and yet at the same time are the very medium of this constitution" (Bryant & Jary, 2003, p. 253). This implies that structure and action make the society and the two cannot be studied separately. This is because the structures are created, while such is maintained and influenced by actions (Wendt, 1987). The idea of duality of structure by Giddens is to express the values, standards and power of dynamism between the society and man, rather than portraying human capacity as being restricted by the societal structures such as religion, education and political institutions (Giddens, 2013a).

Similarly, the proposition and assumption of the theory that makes the actions of man to have influenced the structure can be attributed to the role played by media in the society. Information from the media helps the masses to assess the extent of the incumbent's contribution towards the improvement of their welfare. The media role in a political setting informed the action of man towards polity. Due to the information acquired by the masses via the media, it gives the society right to decide whether to give

another mandate to the incumbent administration through their votes in another election or not. As a result of this, party in government will like to win peoples' mandates in another election. Therefore, it becomes imperative for it to be accountable to the general populace in order to have their supports to be re-elected in the next election.

Conceptual Clarifications

Mass Media: The term mass media in this study connotes the institutions and channels of mass communications. There are social channels for transmitting and generating information from one person that will spread to the entire world (Ojete, 2008). The mass media in this study include the following television, radio, magazines, newspapers, books and the internet (which comprises of social media networks). Although, emphasis is given to the broadcast and print media in this study. The messages communicated by the mass media to the citizenry can have a great impact during the decision making. This has been argued by Corneo (2006) that television and newspapers gather information and make such available to the citizens, thus can increase the ability of voters to take rational decision during election. The media is an important institution of democracy through which citizens learn and engage in the political activity in their society.

As argued by Fatoba (2012), the duties of the media include the following:

a.   To keep people and government informed.

b.   To serve as watchdog on the government's activities, officials of the government, and members of the public/masses.

c.   To serve as a means of communication among the people.

d.   To serve as a voice for the voiceless, weak, strong, poor, rich, old and young to express their grievances and opinion irrespective of its primitive, irrational or sensible the view is.

e.   To serve as an agent of change.

f.   To serve as a means of entertainment and relaxation.

g.   To serve as a medium of enormous influence on people's attitudes, views, judgment, and value.

h.   To enlighten masses in order to inform their action towards decision making that has impact to their wellbeing.

The above position of Fatoba informed Tsegyu and Ogoshi (2015) to assert that the presence of broadcasting media has been regarded as a potent instrument in

mobilizing the populace to participate in national development programmes. Therefore, media play an important role towards shaping the attitudes and actions of both governed and the governors in order to ensure that the society benefit from the dividend of democracy.

Democracy: On the other hand, democracy as simply described by Barnet and Low (2009) as "Rule by the people" (p. 70). According to the scholars, the meaning of "the people" and of "rule" is far from straightforward. This is because the meaning of democracy cut across the process of finding answers to various problems. Similarly, Richardson (2007) has equally described democracy as a system of government that has rule of law, independent of judiciary, constitution, political parties, freedom of the press, recognition of opposition, freedom of religion among others. However, Sharansky and Dermer (2004) argue that democracy is mostly linked with election by some people but, election is not a true test of democracy. Rather, election is an instrument which can be applied or utilized either positive or negative.

According to Barnet and Low (2009), there are many variants of democratic system/label of government, depending on the type citizens of a given society is familiar with. The following are some of the democratic labels highlighted by the scholars:

i. Anticipatory – an association of disciplined anticipation on markets with the intention to assist in making major decisions.

ii. Defensive – this is a kind of system in which rights and freedom are restricted to serve as a protective measure.

iii. Deliberative – this is an act of searching for possible policy alternative.

iv. E-democracy – use of IT to promote the democratic processes.

v. Market capitalism or Liberalism – this system is usually referred to as a democratic adjunct.

vi. Democratic centralism – majority vote by a political party to select policy.

vii. Dominant party system – this is system by which a single party assume governance alone or with a coalition arrangement.

viii. Economic – this involves ensuring equity in the society between the population and peoples' living standard.

ix. Grassroots - it involves the decentralization of units in order to ensure adequate governance among the people at the lower levels.

x. Jacksonian - a strong presidency and executive at parliament's expense.

xi. Jeffersonian – inalienable rights, supremacy of rural economy.

xii. Parliamentary – a system of government whereby cabinet is the executive, under a prime minister whom parliament can recall by vote of no-confidence.

xiii. Participatory – intensified consensus up and down voting line.

xiv. Social – a socialist form of rule that dispenses with nationalizing industry.

xv. Sortition – Aristotelian system of choosing public servants by drawing lots.

xvi. Soviet – worker-based choice of representatives through councils. Although in practice, the concept was usurped by totalitarian rule.

xvii. Westminster - this is a parliamentary system of government based on the model of the United Kingdom.

Accountability: The term accountability is more than purposive activity of accounting. As observed by Jackson (1982), accountability is described as being concerned with the giving of information by one party to another, to justify what has been done or what has been planned. Roberts and Scapens (1985), viewed it as a relationship where parties are required to clarify and assume responsibility for their actions through the given and demanding accounts. Hyndman and McKillop (2018) argued that there two key questions to be asked when considering accountability. These questions include: (a) to whom is an organization accountable, and (b) for what is an organization accountable?

With respect to the "to whom" question, a government of the day should be accountable to the general public or masses who elected them to the position of authority. Similarly, "for what" question simply refers to those promises made to the public by the political parties or politicians when seeking for the peoples' mandate. These promises could be amenities or infrastructural facilities that can benefit the living standard of the people.

Every candidate or party that is seeking for peoples' mandate, arguably need to be accountable to the voters due to the fact that accountability of government to the electorates informed and influenced the voting behavior of the masses. This has been equally stressed by Falkowski (2013) that accountability of the elected officers to the society should be more pronounced under the majoritarian elections. The reason for this is that it is easier for the electorates to judge the incumbent government on the basis of

his/her performance. Meaning that an agent can either be rewarded or punished for his/her action during election.

Historical Background of Media in Nigeria

Nigeria is the most populated country in Africa with over 140 million (Adebowale, Fagbamigbe & Bamigboye, 2014). According to the Population Division reports of the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Nigeria's population increase yearly by 2.6-3.0 percent (Worldometers, 2018; World Bank, 2018). This has canvassed for the increase in the country's population from 140 million (reported by National Population Commission in the year 2006) to over 190 million recorded in December 2017 which positioned it as seventh most populated country in the globe (Worldometers, 2018).

Nigeria has a healthy print, broadcast and news media landscape. The print media is predominantly owned by the private proprietorship who was interested in both political and economic issues happening in the country. Similarly, the broadcast media is dominantly owned and control by the public or government both at either federal or state levels. While the new media is a mix setup that comprising of both private and public ownership of the enterprises. The new media aimed to serve numerous interest of economic, social and political development in the country (Pate & Dauda, 2013).

Prior to 1850, media in Nigeria can be described as informal or verbal communication among individuals, while the communication between government and the masses was described as formal or systematic communication (Elegalem, 1985). As the time progress and coupled with the complexity nature of Nigeria's size and population, the system became inappropriate to disseminate information among the populace which made the old means of communication to be substituted with modern way. Since 1859, Nigeria happened to be the third country in West Africa to own its newspaper or press (Elegalem, 1985). The newspapers industries in Nigeria were progressing with annual sales of about 26,000 (Mohammed, 1994). Despite all the development and progress in the rise of Newspapers in Nigeria then, there were some challenges that hindered sales of some selected Newspapers like Daily Times and others imposed on them by Nigerian government. Another challenge faced by the media in Nigeria was the low level of advertisement and unattractive economic price of the Newspapers.

The year 1952 recorded the emergence of the Nigerian Broadcasting Services (NBS) which was officially launched on 16 June in the same year. The NBS was later

changed to Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation (NBC) in 1957 with subvention from the federal government as its main source of revenue. Prior to independence of Nigeria in 1960, the broadcasting corporation was under the control of the colonial masters. Immediately Nigeria got her independence, the Federal Republic of Nigeria turned the owner of the corporation with control of the information ministry as part of the legacies from the British colonial masters (Uche, 1989). Although, the transition of old system of communication to modern communication system in Nigeria was concluded in October 1959, when the Western Nigeria Television (WNTV) was officially lunched and began operation in Ibadan (Uche, 1989).

The television station became the first to transmit on air in Africa in which its entire announcer ever forgot to say "The First in Africa" during the transmission. Similarly, the Eastern Region of Nigeria was equally emulating such to launch its television station which was also described then, as "Second to None" (Uche, 1989). By 1962, both the Federal government of Nigeria and the Northern Region had started their own television stations in Lagos and Kaduna respectively. However, the NBC played neutrality towards the sectional politics that were rampant among the media houses operating each of the regions of Nigeria. The reason for the role played by NBC then, was to structure the Nigerian media in order to achieve unity and development in the country which was believed can strengthen the country's political institutions.

In 1977, the Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) was officially inaugurated to replace the former WBTV (NTA, 2018). The NTA is owned by the Nigerian government and runs the biggest television network in Nigeria with stations in several parts of the country. Apart from the NTA that is owned and control by the government then, Nigerian media in the recent time has witnessed other television stations operating in the country that equally assist in educating, informing and sensitizing the masses on the activities of the government. Notably among these private television stations include: Channels TV, Galaxy TV, Africa Independent Television, TVC News, Silverbird TV among others.

Similarly, there are overwhelming print media houses operating in Nigeria that equally enlightening and improving the awareness of the masses in the country. Some of these newspapers or print media houses are: The Punch, The Guardian, Nigerian Tribune, Vanguard, This Day, The Nation, Leadership, P.M. News, The Sun, National Mirror, The Daily Independent, Daily Champion, Tell Magazine among others. According to the reports presented by the European Union Election Observer Mission (EU EOM) on Nigeria's 2015 general election, the number of media outlets in the country was "over

200 radio stations, 150 TV stations and close to 400 private print media" (EU EOM, 2015).

It has been argued that the patronage of newspapers by Nigerian masses as a source of disseminating information is low compare to the rate at which people accustomed themselves to news broadcast from either television or radio stations (Frank, 1973; Abdulla, Garrison, Salwen, Driscoll & Casey, 2002; Iggers, 2018). The reason for the disparity is that the elites in most society are those that frequently patronize the print news media known as the newspapers.

Media and its Awareness to the Masses: An Examination of General Elections in Nigeria

Media is one of the important pillars of democracy in a given society. Apart from the duties performed by the mass media as enumerated by Fatoba (2012), it also serves as a platform for safeguarding and protecting the fundamental human rights of the masses through the freedom of expression. The media role cannot be underestimated in the history of Nigeria, particularly in the political system of the country (Olowojolu, 2016). Nigeria had a prolong military era, where the media in the country stood a firm decision towards sensitizing the masses on the danger and the likely shortcomings of the dictatorship under the military government. Arguably, the role of media over the annulment of June 12 election in Nigeria and the campaign/awareness given to the masses on the tyrannical rule under the regime of Late General Sanni Abacha cannot be overemphasized.

Perhaps, the relentless efforts of the media has contributed to what led Nigeria into a free society that provide for the democratic system of government on 29th May, 1999. Since the return of civil rule back to Nigeria in 1999, the country has successfully conducted general elections in the year 2003, 2007, 2011 and 2015 which produced Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, Late Umaru Musa Yar'adua/Dr. Goodluck Jonathan, Dr. Goodluck Jonathan and Alhaji Muhammadu Buhari respectively. This shows that Nigeria has successfully handed over power from one democratically elected government to another uninterruptedly since 1999 till date (Nyuukonge & Omotola, 2015).

The role played by the media in Nigeria's elections since 1999 up till 2015 and the patronage of the masses to the information, has canvassed for the views of scholars like Aduloju (2016) and Olowojolu (2016) who argued that political elites in Nigeria mostly make use of the media to canvass for votes. In order words, the media in Nigeria

have assisted greatly in influencing voting behaviour of the electorates through the awareness and sensitization of the public to the activities of government in power. However, as postulated that the technology is neither benign nor evil to the society but a tool that can be used both positively and negatively depending on the hands it falls, which made Daryl Slaton and Becker (2000) to have described it as a powerful tool in which its usage (positive or negative) depend on the hands that is controlling it, Nigeria's media is not an exception to this.

The argument has been supported by Bashir, Sani and Zakuan, (2018) that the attitude of dominating the media by the government or ruling party is capable of making the media a tool in the hands of the ruling party. This invariably can lead to oppression of the opposition by the government in power. A case of 2015 general election in Nigeria where the party in government (Peoples Democratic Party) controlled all the activities of the media houses such as NTA, AIT, Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria (FRCN), among others (Adepoju, 2015; Orji, 2015). These media houses were allegedly accused of character assassination and attacking personality of the opposition candidates especially the Presidential aspirant of the opposition party (All Progressive Congress) in person of the Alhaji Muhammadu Buhari.

Apart from character assassination of the political opponents by media, the 2015 electioneering campaign in Nigeria was also characterized with all sorts of denial of opposition parties by the ruling party from transmitting their political programmes/campaign on air (Orji, 2015; Issa, 2016). Despite series of media denial attempts made by the ruling party (PDP) under Dr. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan against the opposition parties (particularly, the APC) during the 2015 Nigeria's electioneering campaign, some political parties maneuvered their ways to reach out to their supporters some media houses (Adaba, 2015; Nyuukonge & Omotola, 2015; Olowojolu, 2016; Seteolu, 2017). This rational opportunity utilized by the APC through some media houses to canvass and showcase the party manifesto to the general public was arguably influenced the voting behaviour of teeming Nigerian population to usurp the ruling party (PDP) which has been in power for 16 years. This shows how powerful media is in awaken, disseminating, educating and guiding the masses in evaluating the performance of government in order to determine their voting pattern.

As argued by Issa (2016) and Seteolu (2017) that, political campaigns are the platform for political aspirants to reach out to their supporters in order to canvass for votes to different seat at the helm of the affairs. Hence, if the opposition parties are

deprived of accessing media to showcase their programmes and manifestos to the public, it may be difficult for the masses to juxtapose between the achievement of the ruling party with what the opposition parties are planning to achieve for the society.

This unethical practice by the media to have allowed the ruling party to use them as a tool to oppress the opposition negate the Nigerian Electoral Act (2010) as amended, the Code of election coverage and the National Broadcasting Commission Code. For example, Section 22 of the Nigerian Constitution stipulates that "the press, radio, television and other agencies of the mass media shall at all time be free to uphold the fundamental objectives contained in this chapter and uphold the responsibility and accountability of the government to the people". Similarly, Article 3.3.3 of the NBC Code accommodate fairness of the media to all contending parties and candidates by allowing them equal access to media houses to woo, campaign and mobilize their supporters. The Article reads thus, "all sides to any issue of public interest shall be equitably presented to ensure fairness". But despites the rule and guidelines set towards ensuring justice to both the ruling party and opposition, some media houses failed to align themselves in line with the rule.

This perhaps canvassed for the view of Olaoluwa (2016) on the unethical attitudes among the media houses in Nigeria particularly, during the 2015 election campaign. He stresses that:

> *...the media allowed themselves to be compromised by desperate politicians and political parties rather than making them answerable to the electorate. The political gladiators went beyond stipulated and acceptable norms and practices, casting aspersion on political opponents beyond the realm of decency with the active support of the mass media, especially the broadcast media. The media became highly partisan in their broadcast, which is against the code of professional practice" (p.19).*

This invariably has made media outfits not to be objective in the discharge of their professional duty. The scholar further opined that "most broadcast media organizations aligned with one politician, political party or region against another. They acted as the mouthpiece of some of the political party they aligned with" (Olaoluwa, 2016). Adherence of media to a ruling party or government of the day is arguably capable of jeopardizing the statutory responsibility and objective set to be realized. This assertion is supported by Agbaje, Akande and Ojo (2007) that, failure on the part of the media to discharge its duties and responsibility without fear or favour can prevent a society from

accessing the dividend of democracy. Therefore, media is encouraged to always avoid been used by the politician as a tool to oppress their political opponent. If such persist, it is arguably capable of jeopardizing the media's objectives, particularly the act of making the political office holders accountable to the general public.

Conclusion

The mass media has contributed immensely to the sustainability of Nigerian democracy. It has also assisted both the masses and the government to know their duties and obligation in the society. The media educate and promote the awareness of the masses on the likely danger and benefit of any policy plan to be formulated or implemented by the government. And aside from that, the media serve as a yard stick to measure whether a government has performed or not, which invariably determine the voting behaviour/pattern of the citizens. Therefore, in order to ensure that the media stick to their traditional role and function, particularly ensuring that political officers are accountable to the masses who elected them, the following are suggested to assist the media in discharging the statutory responsibility to the society:

a. There should be strict adherence to the broadcasting ethics among the media houses and such should be properly monitored by National Broadcasting Commission.

b. The national bodies governing the conduct of the media houses in Nigeria such as NBC, Nigerian Press Council (NPC), Advertising Practitioners Council of Nigeria (APCON) should be more proactive in overseeing the conducts of the media houses in the country, particularly during political campaign.

c. The media should be discouraged from brown enveloped journalism in order to project the clear picture of government activities and,

d. Joint ownership of the media (mix-media setup) should be encouraged in order to avoid been monopolized.

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