
IMPACT OF MASS MEDIA AND PUBLIC ACCOUNTABILITY ON SOCIO- ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT OF NASSARAWA STATE

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Abstract

Unfolding events in the Nigerian political strata since 1999 tend to suggest that the governing elite class have soon neglected if not forgotten about the plights of the vast majority of the Nigerian masses who ironically voted them into office. In line with this submission, the paper assesses the 'The Impact of Mass Media on Public Accountability in Nigeria's Fourth Republic: Implication for Social, Economic Development in Nassarawa State. Adopting a mixed-method, and utilized the Marxist theory of democracy as an analytical framework, the paper discovered vicious cycle of vulnerability, poverty and corruption breeds chronic poverty among both men and women, adversely affecting the sustainable development in Nasarawa State and its democratization process, such consequences include the diversion of resources; poor budget implementation, looting the public treasury and rigging elections, among others. The study finds out that, serious investigations into operations of governments, issues of corruption and other negative behaviors are ignored or selectively reported. The finding also reveals the absence of accountability will not be highly consequential to the social and economic development in the study area, due to challenges within the Nigerian media have been molded with an environment that is characterized by instability, repressive legislation and restriction of access to information. The paper concludes, accountability reduces poverty, improves human development and generally enhances the efficiency of governance. The paper recommends strengthening institutions and agencies of anti-corruption and democracy and intensifying awareness campaigns by especially Media, Civil Society Organizations (CSO), with emphasis on oversight and monitoring the activities of the executive and legislative institutions in the state.

Keywords: Accountability, democracy, development, media,

Introduction

Public accountability stems from the widespread recognition of the palpable failure of governments across the world, but especially in the African continent, to measure up to the yearning of the citizens for better life. In Nigeria, the vociferous clamor for the redirection of the polity and its public policy towards ends that could help uplift the standards of the life of the people in all its as the direct result of the disenchantment of the citizens with the current state of affairs. This state of affairs, as evidenced by the pulls and strains from which the polity suffers over the years, only serves to remind about some of the evidently salient problems about how the Nigerian political system and its processes are managed, including the health of the structures, institutions and processes in place to facilitate and monitor effective governance.

Media performance and the quality of the democratic process in a modern nation are inextricably linked. The more robust the democratic credentials of a country, the more likely for its media to be

professionally active, diverse and credible in enlarging the public space and strengthening the structures of freedom, promoting the rule of law, ensuring accountability and upholding the principle of service delivery. The reverse can equally be valid. In democracies," the media are closely tied to the political system; therefore, addressing the issue of the media must be done within the context of the political framework (McQuail, 2005).

Many commentators (Philip &Rayhan(2004);Igwe, 2010);Ogbondah, 2011),have drawn attention to the governance deficit afflicting Nigeria. Various international organizations, including the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), Transparency International, the World Bank, Amnesty International and the Human Rights Watch have, at various times, quarreled with Nigeria's scorecard in matters relating to the major indicators of good governance. The UNDP Human development Report 2008-2009, for example, has variously listed some of the challenges as "personalization of leadership and the use of power; opportunism of the political class, weak, shallow and badly run institutions and the neglect of the popular welfare" (UNDP, 2008-2009, p.102). At the local level, the obvious failure of the state to rise up to the challenge of poverty alleviation, insecurity and the general downturn in the quality of the life of the people have continued to raise doubts on the capacity of the state to achieve much in the task of developing the society and its peoples. Assuredly, the failure in this regard has led to a number of interventions by the state and even international bodies in the bid to strengthen institutions and bodies directly involved in the implementation of the programs and policies formulated to address the developmental hiatus. The reform of the public sector and its myriad of institutions represent some of these interventions.

Democracy has recently become one of the fastest growing forms of government because of its ineluctable drive towards human freedom. It entrenches unlimited freedom and rule of law. Ideally, as a result of this, Media is a symbol of true democracy.Diamond (1999). Politics and the media aim at promoting the individual and collective interests of the society. Thus, while politics serves as a route and means of uplifting the society through good governance and protection and the advancement of people's right; the media on their part operate within the prevailing public sphere to expand the frontiers of freedom and facilitate the citizens' access to quality information that will influence their judgments and decisions in democracies. In the process, the media legitimize the actions of political leaders and institutions and promote the social system as well as challenge anti-democratic tendencies that can compromise democracy and good governance.

The role of the media in promoting, defending and advancing democracy and good governance at various periods in the history of Nigeria from the colonial times has been widely documented (Omu, 1978; Ogbondah, 2011; Oso and Pate, 2011). At various times, the press had played a critical and an appreciable role to enthrone democracy or hasten the exit of anti-democratic elements and tendencies from the country's political landscape (Ogbondah, 2011). The 1999 Nigerian Constitution is emphatic on the responsibility of the media in keeping the government accountable to the people. Apart from their routine tasks of gathering, processing and disseminating information in the country; media organs are required to act as watchdog is weak or appears unable to act appropriately behaves in contrast to societal and profession able expectations or gets "mortgaged" to sectional, commercial and manipulative predispositions.

The implication of this section of the Constitution is that the media has been empowered to investigate and criticize poor and corrupt leadership and promote political stability, economic prosperity and social justice. In May 2011, the country enacted a Freedom of Information Act that compels agencies to provide information on demand from citizens and the media. The law was

welcomed by the media as “as a significant development for widening the space for free flow of information, transparency and accountability in governance; and.....energize the fight against public corruption” (Media Review, August,2011).

However, there are many laws that are capable of undermining the above provisions on the freedom of the media. A number of laws (Official Secrets Act, 1962; Press Registration Act, 1933; Newspaper Act, 1917, etc) including the unlimited powers of the National Broadcasting Commission and the Nigerian Press Council, both of which are Federal Government agencies can, if inappropriately exercised, undermine the establishment and unrestricted operations of the independent media. Equally, the commercialization regime in the industry tends to restrict the participation of the independent media. Equally, the commercialization regime in the industry tends to restrict the participation of the majority of the people that are economically weak and, by extension, undercut the freedom for access to the media space.

Background Information

Nasarawa State was created on 1st October 1996 by the then military regime of General Sani Abacha. The State was created with great hope and pleasantry for all her citizens and groups (Osaghae; 1994, p.29). Nasarawa State was created to bring governance closer and accessible to the people. This was to ensure the maintenance of social peace, law, order and equity. The State was also established to bring about social harmony, solidarity and participation of the people in state-building process (Pannenber, 1989, 43). Social justice and equality was intended to be the cardinal principles for state policies and decisions. As a result, it would facilitate socio-economic development, cordial relations as well as ensure the security of lives and property. At the level of individuals, the State was intended to empower men, women and youths in order to enable them create wealth and enjoy good life (Dalat&Fliba; 2007, p.3). The empowerment of the people would make Nasarawa State a prosperous, functional and just State in Nigeria. Nasarawa State is today considered a pluralistic society, in view of rapid socio-economic and political changes that have taken place over the years. These challenges came with the challenges of social relationship and interaction that raised tension among groups and among the government and the govern. The State has diverse religious, ethnic and political classes with aspirations and interests. Implication for economic development in this study has to do with the social conditions, elements and formalities upon which relationship of inequality, lack of accountability, transparency can be understood. It shows the synergies that produce an effect, problem or development. It has to do with the socio- economic and political experience upon which inequality strives. The State is suffering under the forces of indigenous bourgeoisie on one side and the proletariats on the other hand (Dalat&Fliba; 2007 p.3).

There is need to address some questions that are begging for answers in trying to understand disenchantment of the citizens with the current state of affairs of inequality in Nasarawa state. Isiguzo raised some questions that are fundamental in this regard:

Are all men equal? Is it unjustifiable to treat individuals unequally based on the degree of ability or for utilitarian ends? Is it not an encouragement to give the non-privileged opportunities to benefit from medical care, quality education or access to official positions based on quota system rather than merit? Is this a negation of excellence or a promotion of mediocrity? (Isiguzo, 1999, 197).

The above questions are very important if the problem of Public Accountability in Nasarawa state is to be address. It is true that the idea of equality is fundamental in every human community. But

we must also accept the fact that all men in practice are not equally treated. This is the reason for social stratification and class differences in society. Man's equality is affected and limited by humanity and their actions (Ihuah, 1999, p.89). Apart from the equality of everyone before the law and the right of franchise, absolute equality is not possible in society. This is because all other essentials like education, medical and other opportunities are determined by ones socio-economic and political status and opportunity (Bala, 2021). The fact still remains that equality has its root in human interaction. This is why steps must be taken to establish some degree of need and equality in a nation. There is the need to fairly distribute power, resources (goods and services) and equity based on needs rather than wants. This is to ensure equality and direct political participation by individuals and groups in state policies, decisions and actions. But because of population dynamics, the adoption of representative democracy becomes inevitable in modern societies.

Several researches have been conducted to determine or establish the linkage between mass media and democracy such as (Omu, 1978; Odumisor, 2005; Ogbondah, 2011; Oso& Pate, 2011 and Pate &Maikaba (2014), among others. The general thinking of these scholars is that the media are the channels of mass communication that are actively engaged in the gathering, analyzing and disseminating issues in society. In the process, the media expose and criticize bureaucratic incompetence, dictatorial tendencies and abuse of power among officials. Pate &Maikaba (2014) for instance argue. Most often, serious investigations into operations of governments, issues of corruption and other negative behaviors are ignored or selectively reported. Odumisor (2005) detect pitfalls on our handling of the media institutions and voluntary associations as agents of democracy and probably do something to correct them so as to generate positive contributions toward ensuring a lasting democracy in developing State, but fail to correlate the rate of citizen's participation in voluntary associations as influenced by the level of education of the citizens and the general process of economic development as well as structural differentiation, which give rise to democratic orientation and participant behavior in the citizens. These studies are plausible in their own rights. However, limited research has been carried out on the impact of mass media on public accountability and its implications for social and economic development. This study intends to fill the gap in existing body of literature, using Nassarawa state from 1999-2019 as a reference point.

The work is divided into seven sections. Closely following the introduction, is literature review, which occupies section two. Framework of analysis of this work forms the thrust of section. The research methodology is examined in section four while the results of this study are discussed in section five. The summary of the findings of this study is contained in section six. Section seven is the conclusion and recommendations.

Statement of the Research Problem

The use of mass media in politics is wide spread and shows no sign of abating. While Nigeria may want to play their constructive role in instituting democratic values and good governance, the greatest challenge to the effective performance of the media and indeed Nigeria and Nasarawa state in particular, is in its bid to strengthen the democratic process is the political behavior of politicians, especially those in government, irrespective of political party affiliation. The non-tolerant behavior of politicians in Nasarawa state alternative views or options in the present dispensation is frightening and threatening to journalism and democratic values. Ayih, (2003); Dalat&Filiba (2007); Onyeacholem (2013). In fact, one can argue that, while we have happily embraced democracy politicians in the state have shown that they are unwilling or incapable of imbibing the tenants of democratization since 1999, two of which are tolerance and

the allowance of freedom to dissent. Unfortunately, what we see today in the State is the crude emasculation and physical strangulation of the alternative voice by ruling politicians. Equally, corruption and corrupt activities of officials and business groups have remained cogs in the wheel of the state's democratization progress. Ideally, the media through investigative journalism should be able to expose some of the scams. Unfortunately, a combination of factors has rendered them largely ineffective in this direction. But, how have the mass media been performing in opening up some of these cans of worms? The scorecard may not read well compared to the public expectations.

According to Pate (2008) in countries like Nigeria, citizens have a liberal background, and this enhances free flow of information, although the media in most instances perform with air of regulated freedom. He further asserts that the media is politically polarised in terms of axis, ethnic loyalty, sectional party and selfish interest.

There is discrimination and identity crises of governance in Nasarawa State. The existence of social inequality in the state implies the negation of social equality and justice. The coming of participatory democracy did not eradicate social inequality in Nasarawa State (Dzurgba, 2008, p.2). This seemed to have increased beginning from the creation of the State. The State was already divided along ethnic, religious and political classes with their vested interests. The creation of the State came with a renewed attempt by groups and individuals to outsmart one another (Isiguzo, 1999, p.197).

Against the backdrop that the media is an institution that sustains democracy, it is observed that there is mutual distrust in the relationship that exists between the state and the media in Nasarawa State. In view of the constitutional roles of the media in democracy, it is expected of the media to objectively monitor governance while remaining consistent. They are also expected to always be objective in their reports involving issues of governance, as a subjective report helps widen the gap between the government and the society, using their platform to further engage policymakers in demanding accountability on their commitments.

Research Questions

This paper is guided by the following research questions:

1. What are the roles of mass media and public accountability in creating social and economic development in Nasarawa State?
2. How have the mass media and public accountability contribute towards creating social and economic development in Nasarawa State?
3. To what extent the media and public accountability provide coverage on addressing social and economic development in Nasarawa State?

Objective of the study

The research objectives include:

1. To critically assess of the roles of mass media and public accountability in creating social and economic development in Nasarawa State.
2. To critically evaluate and analyze how the media and public accountability contribute toward creating social and economic development in Nasarawa State.

3. To critically examine and analyze the extent the media and public accountability provide coverage on addressing social and economic development in Nasarawa State.

Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

The review on literature below forms the theoretical framework for this study: Mass Media and Accountability.

Mass Media.

The Media is too critical to be ignored in the democratization process. In fact, it is often argued that the quality and freedom in our governance. For instance, the seriousness and tolerance level in the system can be measured by the behavior of its media.

Deutsch (1963), the chief exponent of communications theory in politics, seeks to apply the concept and methods of modern information technology as well as physiology of nervous system to an analysis of the political system. He is reputed to have particularly introduced the techniques of cybernetics to the sphere of political analysis as the study of the operation of control and communication systems; it deals both with biological system and man-made machinery. Deutsch says his work is concerned less with the bones or muscles of the body-politic than with its nerves—its channels of communications and decision (Gaubas, 2007:98). Citing other authorities, Varina (2006:264) notes that cybernetic model in communication theory in politics attaches much importance to steering and co-ordination of human efforts towards the attainment of a set of goals than to destination. The flow of information, content and carriers are as important as the receiver of the information. The impact of this process brings about change and it is the information which triggers the change.

As a result, I will utilize a combination of the previous ideas. The term mass media will refer to an umbrella term for communications technologies that utilize the Internet as their primary platform and are constantly changing and evolving.

Political Accountability

Political Accountability requires answerability, responsiveness and enforcement. Responsiveness indicates what has been done, while answerability implies the responsibility to report what was done, how it was done and why. Hyden (2010) further asserts that:

Responsiveness comes naturally wherever the principle of reciprocity prevails. Answerability, however, requires a degree of transparency that does not come easily in societies where reciprocity permeates not only the socio-cultural but also the political sphere (Hyden, 2010, p.9).

According to Stapenhurst and O'Brien (2000) enforcement denotes the ability to penalize or sanction offenders, as well as regulate any deviant action or behavior. Political accountability is also to be understood from the vertical and horizontal perspective. Vertical accountability indicates the relationship of power between the state and its officials, the citizens, mass media, and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and so on. Horizontal accountability, however, is within the state itself in terms of institutional oversight, checks and balances like the legislature, the judiciary, the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) and the like (Fox, 2000). Accountability, therefore, refers to the relationships of power between the various factors involved and the institutions of the state. Apart from its relational dimension, accountability is also basically relative, requiring certain standards, which could be social, political and probably unwritten.

The absence of political accountability breeds poverty, thereby strengthening vulnerability and

adverse corruption on citizens. Poverty, which is a social malaise, is the lack of basic necessities; it is going hungry and not having the power to make a difference or change one's life. According to the vividly clear description of the World:

Poverty is hunger, poverty is lack of shelter, and poverty is being sick and not being able to see a doctor. Poverty is not been able to go to school and not knowing how to read, poverty is not having a job, is fear for the future, living one day at a time. Poverty is losing a child to illness brought about by unclean water. Poverty is powerlessness, lack of representation and freedom (cited in Drinkwater, 2005, p.3).

Corruption, as perceived by Philips and Rayhan (2004), is related to the centralization of power, whereby leaders are laws unto themselves and not accountable to the governed. Institutional corruption implies the distortion of the just and normal order by public officials. Resource meant for the reduction of poverty and development projects are diverted for personal gain. Vulnerability, according to Aysan (1993), is caused by such factors, which "act to undermine capacity for itself protection, blocks or diminish access to social protection, delays or complicate recovery, or expose some groups to greater or more frequent hazards than other groups". They include rapid population growth, poverty and hunger, poor health, low level of education, gender inequality, fragile and hazardous location and lack of access to resources and services, including knowledge and technological means and the disintegration of social patterns (social vulnerability). Other causes include: lack of access to information and knowledge, lack of public awareness, limited access to political power and representation (political vulnerability) (Philip & Rayhan, 2004, p.8). Hence, poverty is further entrenched by social and political vulnerability, as well as the prevalence of corruption and social inequality.

The Media Scene

The mass media in Nigeria serve as a major system of communication across the nation. The various organs of the media create the awareness and understanding of happenings among the diverse peoples of the country. These diversities cut across ethnic segmentation, religious affiliations, political orientations, social groupings and economic opportunities, among others. Nigerians are widely served by multiple newspapers, magazines, radio and television stations that are plural in nature and scattered mostly across the urban centers all over the federation. Increasingly, too, online journalism and the social media are commanding extra attention among the younger elements of the population. Currently, there are more than sixty national, regional and state newspapers; magazines published daily and weekly in the country (NPC Website, 2013). They range from the seriously performing ones to the adventurously erratic. They are in all shapes and sizes and for various reasons. Some appear and disappear, many struggle for a year or two and fewer survive as regular publications. The mortality rate of newspapers and magazines is very high. For instance, many promising national publications have gone off the streets due to operational challenges.

The Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies (2011) summarized their opinion as follows:

The media play a major role in keeping the citizenry abreast of current events and raising awareness of various issues in any society. It also has an extremely significant impact on the public's views and way of thinking. The media is the primary means through which public opinion is shaped and at times manipulated. If this is the media's role then in normal course of events, it becomes even more vital in exceptional periods, one of which is electoral junctures, when the media becomes a primary player. Elections constitute a

basic challenge to the media, putting its impartiality and objectivity to the test. The task of the media, especially national media outlets, is not and should not be to function as a mouthpiece for any government body or particular candidate. Its basic role is to enlighten and educate the public and act as a neutral, objective platform for the free debate of all points of view.

On the contrary, Yaqub and Maikudi (2015) argued that the professional competence of the media as enshrined in their code of ethics was greatly flawed. This is because media bias, unprofessional behaviour, and their hate campaign are capable of derailing the populace in decision making during voting. They further insisted that media create much deception during election and quoted the following media report against president Buhari that nearly marred the success of the election. They insist that what came out clearly is the utter neglect of not only the cardinal principle of journalistic practice by all the stakeholders, the politicians and mass media institutions and their owners – but also there was a substantial, scandalous and unprofessional reporting capable of destruction, broadcasted, reverberated and/or subscribed to during the electioneering campaigns:

Public Perception of the Media in Nigeria

The acceptance of messages that emanate from the local media, particularly the government dominated broadcast media sector, is largely dependent on their perception by the general audience. Currently, one can easily summarize the general perceptions into four categories. First, media houses, particularly government owned are hardly objective in matters that involve their government and the ruling political parties.

Secondly, foreign broadcast stations are seen as more reliable in providing credible information about events and personalities in the country.

Thirdly, the resource poor, the rural majority and the female gender are peripherally involved in broadcasting. They are treated merely as receivers than partners in the entire process.

Fourthly, the current commercialization of society has deeply eaten into the media, thereby severely restricting access by the public and subverting the ideals of news, killing the spirit of investigative journalism and devaluing the content of programs and news on radio and television stations. These four observations, contentious as they may sound, have implications on the ability of the media to meaningfully influence the democratic agenda and vigorously promote good governance and accountability based on the principles of inclusivity, diversity, transparency, autonomy and accountability.

The Media and the Promotion of Democracy and Good Governance Accountability

The driving force of the democratic engine is vibrant politicking based on principles, the plurality of ideas, electoral discipline, the diversity of audiences and respect for law and order. They also the hallmark of good governance. On the other hand, the media are the channels of mass communication that are actively engaged in the gathering, analyzing and disseminating issues in society. One major area in which the media has been promoting the country's democracy is through the active reporting of politics and politicking. The media have justifiably focused their attention, in fact, accorded high priority on the government and those in it. In the process, the media are expected to partly expose and criticize bureaucratic incompetence, dictatorial tendencies and abuse of power among officials. But the extent to which the various have been doing that has remained a point of contention. Most often, serious investigations into operations of governments, issues of corruption and other negative behaviors' are ignored or selectively reported/

In fact, the 1999 Nigerian Constitution is clear on its assigned role to the media in the polity. In section 22, it says 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”. Thus, the Constitution has legitimated the functions of the media and imposed on them the role of monitoring and evaluating the performance of our leaders at all levels. The extent to which the media actualize this Constitutional provision in their functions is another issue.

As indicated earlier, the media are generally engaged in active political reporting. That is necessary for the sustenance of good governance where the system of check and balances is required for good governance and democratic sustainability. The media has provided an open forum for “legitimated interest groups” to participate in public affairs. Indeed, as Nimmo and Combs (1992) put it, “historically, the mass media were heralded as the ultimate instruments of democracy... (They) were destined to unite, educate, and as a result, improve the actions and decisions of the polity”. Through that, several issues have been raised and debated across the nations.

Furthermore, the media in the country have been very important in conveying the messages of politicians and political office holders in their bid to capture and retain power, particularly during electioneering periods. In a simplified form, the media have been supplying the electorate with the information for sound political judgment.

Social and Economic Development and their Indices

Development is all about the capacity of members of the society to actualize them self by participating actively in the social engineering of their life and destiny. It entails the ability of the individuals to influence and manipulate the forces of nature for their betterment and that of humanity. According to Seers (1971), the following questions should indicate whether there exists development or not, what is happening to poverty? What is happening to unemployment? What is happening to inequality? Similarly, Todaro (1979) suggested that development has three dimensions.

- (a) Raising peoples living levels-their income and consumption levels of food, medical services, education etc. through relevant economic processes.
- (b) Creating conditions conducive to the growth of people's self-esteem through the establishment of social, political, and economic systems and institutions which promote human dignity and respect.
- (c) Increasing people's freedom to choose by enlarging the range of their choice variables e.g. increasing varieties of consumer goods and services.

In consonance with that, Improvement in GNP and income per capital without a corresponding improvement in the moral life of the citizens is not true development; many countries including Nigeria are not developed not due to lack of development plan, resources and strategies but, because of leaders, citizens, men and women who lack proven transparent character. The above observation merely captures Diamond (2012) arguments, one of the major factors that determine the extent to which citizens value a regime is its performance. If they feel that the political system is working for them, particularly in the economic and political spheres, they are likely to support it. Table 1 presents a summary of some major socio-economic and political indicators, which significantly measure regime performance and the implications on socio-economic development.

ECONOMIC INDICATORS			SOCIAL/POLITICAL INDICATORS		
Indicators of Performance	Elements for Gauging Indicators	Implications of indicators on Development	Indicators of Performance	Elements for Gauging Indicators	Implications of indicators on Development
1. Growth	What is the rate of growth in Per capita Gross National Income?	The Higher the growth rate of the Per capita GNI, the higher the citizens consent and support to government	Accountability	To what extent is there vertical accountability i.e how regular are elections held and how "free and fair" are the elections? What is the level of the operation of horizontal accountability (separation of powers) How responsive and transparent is the government?	The higher the occurrence of free and fair elections the higher the level of legitimacy and economic development. The more responsiveness and transparency of government the more the likelihood of citizen's consent and support.
2. Equity	To what extent are the gains in national income fairly distributed? i.e what is the Gini coefficient - efficient level of the society	On a scale of 0-1, the higher the Gini coefficient - efficient level, the lower the level of socio-economic development and vice versa	Order	To what extent is there an absence of violent conflict? What is the extent of the security of lives and property	The lower the incidence of violent conflicts the higher the level of citizens consent and socio-economic development. The greater the security of lives and property the greater the level of citizen consent and support.

3.Human Development	What is rate of infant mortality, life expectancy and the level of access to education and health etc.	On a scale of 0-1, the higher the level of Human Development Index (HDI) the lower the level of socio - economic development and vice versa.	Freedom	Is the freedom of association and speech guaranteed?	The higher the level of freedom of association and speech the higher the level of citizen's consent and support.
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Source: Developed by Author with insights from Diamond L. (2012), Democratic Development, An Online Course on how Democracies Emerge and Develop, Organized by Stanford University.

Table 1 identifies three major economic and political factors each that determine regime performance with the likely implications for the socio-economic development. The first column under the economic performance. These include: Growth, equity and human development all of which can be measured using per capita income, the Gini co-efficient and the United Nations Human Development Index (HDI) respectively, as indicated in the second column. In the third column, the implication of the economic indicators for socio-economic development is highlighted. These implications essentially derive from the economic doctrines of utilitarianism, which suggest that the greatest happiness of the greatest number should be the end and aim of all social and political institutions. Thus, if the citizens of a state feel that their income is growing steadily, they will be more likely to support the government and vice-versa. Similarly, the major indicators of political performance identified in Table 1 include: the level of accountability, order and freedom and these can be measured by the regularity of free and fair elections, the security of lives and property and the freedom of association and speech, respectively. While regime performance may not necessarily be the only determinant of socio-economic development and legitimacy, it plays a major role in ensuring that a government gets the support of its citizens. Thus, the import of the model identified in Table 1 lies in the fact that it provides a framework for the evaluation of some of the most basic responsibilities of government.

Challenges

While the media in Nigeria may want to play their constructive role in instituting democratic values and good governance, we must also acknowledge some of the major challenges confronting them both individually and collectively/ some of the weaknesses are internally generated while others are beyond their borders. The greatest challenge to the effective performance of the media and indeed Nigeria in its bid to strengthen the democratic process is the political behavior of politicians, especially those in government, irrespective of political party affiliation. The non-tolerant behavior of politicians to

alternative views or options in the present dispensation is frightening and threatening to journalism and democratic values. In fact, one can argue that, while we have happily embraced democracy, our politicians have shown that they are unwilling or incapable of imbibing the tenets of democratization, two of which are tolerance and the allowance of freedom to dissent.

Unfortunately, what we see today is the crude emasculation and physical strangulation of the alternative voice by ruling politicians. There are hardly any exceptions. Elsewhere, it was once observed that:

The unwritten rule nowadays is that the Oga and his team members are always right, their achievement, no matter how mean, unsurpassable and the state will collapse without them. Any view outside this framework is abominable, condemnable, punishable and not to be broadcast. Woe betides whoever that holds or dares to express contrary opinion. Such a fellow is berated, political hustlers are sponsored to reply him in the most uncouth of languages, and media managers are rattled and in worst cases dethroned. Thus, in such a climate, members of the general public maintain sealed lips and broadcast houses become exceptionally selective on who to feature on their airwaves. Sycophantic elements rule the airwaves, honest citizen's recoil into their shells and democratic ebullience takes flight. A culture of resignation, despondency and fear predominates, Democratic values decline and society degenerates (Pate, 2007).

Equally, corruption and corrupt activities of officials and business groups have remained cogs in the wheel of the nation's democratization progress. Ideally, the media through investigative journalism should be able to expose some of the scams. Unfortunately, a combination of factors has rendered them largely ineffective in this direction. Yakubu&Maikudi (2015).

Arguably, in Nigeria today the military may not be regarded as immediate serious threats to the democratic process in the country. Rather, the destruction of existing structural public institutions, the abuse of procedures and regulations, undemocratic tendencies, the massive stealing of public resources, the insensitive, non-principled and desperate conduct of politicians and personalization of state power coupled with the rising level of public frustration are the poisonous arrows that may cripple our young democracy. But, how have the media been performing in opening up some of these cans of worms? The scorecard may not read well compared to the public expectations.

The extent to which our media scrutinize the quality of intending contestants, their manifestoes and their fulfilled promises is also weak. Our media need to develop mechanisms that could gather the manifestoes of office seekers and evaluate the extent to which such manifestoes have been implemented. This is one way by which the public can be assisted to differentiate the performing from non-performing leaders who should be rejected or booted out of office. Pate &Maikaba (2014).

But for all this to happen, individual media houses themselves must be seen to be well informed on the meaning and essence of the on-going democratization reform. To this end,

democratic values should be seen to be reflected in their public relations, program content and professional conduct. Credible feedback mechanisms and standard public opinion monitoring systems should be institutionalized to properly inform and guide reporting, programming pattern and content. After all, they cannot offer what they do not understand or practice. A media house is a change institution whose management requires the dynamics in-flow of innovation, creativity, drive and energy to keep pace with contemporary democratic challenges in the society.

Another critical factor that undermines the function of the media, particularly broadcast stations, is the blanket implementation of the commercialization policy, which automatically disables the majority of the people from any form of involvement in the airwaves. The high charges demanded by the various stations for almost everything disqualifies most people and sectors from any kind of meaningful engagement with the media. As a result, the airwaves are exclusively appropriated by governments, their organizations, money-bags, business groups and big social institutions. They remain the only actors that have easy access to the expensive airwaves, thus further widening the existing unequal balance of power relations in the society. In fact, even editorial judgment is subordinated to economic determinants. Perhaps this is why many people are questioning the fate of investigative journalism and the concept of public interest in the present order. This has also raised further questions on the credibility and integrity of the status of state-owned broadcast media stations as public broadcast service organizations that are positioned to provide independent social service for democratic sustenance. The usual defense of managers is that their stations are dangerously and grossly underfunded that they need to devise alternative sources of survival. In fact, the penury and poverty in some of the media houses are glaringly reflected in the quality and quantity of their services and the intolerable conduct of some of their staff who go for months without salaries. Pate (2007).

Closely related to the funding anemia in these organizations is weak capacity building mechanisms on democratic values through continuous staff development initiatives. The effects of this deficiency are manifested in the conduct and output of the staff at all levels. Unfortunately, the media is one place where hiding one's intellectual and creative deficiencies may be difficult. The consequences can be very glaring to the audiences.

It may also be partially correct to say that many of our media houses are far removed from the global trend. They are poorly equipped to be able to discharge their expected functions of effective coverage, reporting and disseminating value added information for the democratic journey. Many have weak internet connectivity and staff offices are decrepit. Visit some of the newsrooms; they are anything but newsrooms with bare furniture. The newsrooms hardly portray that they are avenues for serious intellectual endeavors equipped for professionals who are set to expand the frontiers of democracy in Nigeria of the 21st century. In other words, we have digitalized transmission equipment managed and operated by analogue managers and personnel who are still grappling with antiquated gadgets and the absence of basic tools; vehicles for movement are in

short supply; the alternative power generators are on and off due to overuse, and visible anger and frustration could be read on the faces of the staff each time one comes across them. How could such media personnel be able to address the numerous challenges confronting our democratization process and instituting of good governance?

Theoretical Framework

The beauty of any academic exercise of this magnitude depends largely on the theoretical framework that best explained the position of the study. However, this discussion employed Marxist position to suitably synthesize the issues of poverty and democratic consolidation in Nassarawa state. Karl Marx and Fredrick Engel are the major proponents of "The Marxist theory of democracy" Marx argues that under the spell of the bourgeois ideology and influence, the masses are made to believe that they are governed with their consent. They are being compelled to follow the dictates of the bourgeois class against their own interest. According to Lenin (1917), in capitalist societies, democracy has always been defined by the narrow limits set by capitalist exploitation and consequently always remains a democracy only for the propertied classes as the workers are crushed by want and poverty.

The majority of the population is debarred from participation in public and political life. The essence of the capitalist democracy is that the oppressed citizens are allowed once every few years to decide which particular representatives of the oppressing class shall represent and repress them in the executive and parliament. The basis of the bourgeois democracy is the capitalist economic system in which the means of production are owned by the capitalist class. The society is divided into two classes, the capitalist and the workers, the exploiters and the exploited. It is however revealed that the relationship existing between the two opposing classes is antagonistic, as a function of dialectical materialism. Hence,

Assumptions of Marxist Theory of democracy

Firstly, Marx believes, democracy as a state institution must be established on the basis of economy, and ultimately, it serves to the economical basis. According to the general logic of historical materialism, any formation of country including the democratic country must adapt itself to a certain productive relationship or the civil society as the natural basis of all the state formation from ancient slavery system to the modern democratic state system;

Secondly, Marx emphasizes on the significance of democratic classic nature. Marx believes in the classic society, democracy is nothing but the political formation to achieve the classic benefits, and essentially, democracy is a means of rule between the classes. Marx considers that any kind of state formation, including democratic politics is affiliated to the ruling class in which each individual try to obtain their private or common benefits.

Thirdly, Marx believes democracy cannot be separated from dictatorship, actually they are the two aspects of one thing; some person's democracy is the other persons' dictatorship. Since democracy becomes the ruling method for the ruling class, it can be

consequently concluded that democracy must protect the political benefits of the ruling class, once the political benefits of the ruling class has been threatened, the governing authority must deprive the political rights of the ruled class without any hesitation, until the benefits of the ruling class can be maintained.

Fourthly, the main contents of Marx's democracy theories are the criticism on the capitalism. Though Marx recognizes the magnificent progress from the feudal autocratic system to the modern capitalism, he has a clear picture of the limitation of capitalism, and pays a lot of effort to criticize the capital democratic hypocrisy. Marx believes the capitalism democratic politics always compatible with capitalism private ownership; it is the best political mask essentially protects capitalists' benefits. For most mass, this kind of democracy is not only hypocrisy but also a kind of exploitation and oppression.

Fifthly, Marx believes democracy is a history category, it is a product of the long development of human society and eventually, it would perish together with the state. One of the basic principles of Marx's democratic theory emphasizes that the state is the product of private ownership and the class society; with the development of productivity. Both private ownership and class would be vanished; and so does the state. Since the state is a history category, the democracy of a state should also affiliate to the history, consequently, it can be figured that one day, and the political democracy will perish in the human society development either.

The five characteristics distinctively distinguish Marx's democratic theory with other democratic theories in the history, and these characteristics are also to be discussed by recent research, however, there are still many other characteristics can be found in Marx's democratic theories.

In view of the above discussion, it is established that there is a nexus between poverty and human existence in general cut across politics which is the bane of democratic practices in any human society. For the Marxists, politics is a reflection of economic system and vice-versa as exemplified in most of the Third World democracies (Nigeria to be precise) where those that have economic power tended to occupy the political offices and the opportune poor who occupy the political offices get richer thereby joining the bourgeois class.

(Mahajan, 2006:829) point out one important features of the bourgeois democracy are elections, mostly on a multi-party basis. On a critical examination, it can be said that the elections are merely shams so far as the working class is concerned. Money plays a very important role in elections and the working class which consists of poor people cannot capture political power through elections. After winning elections, the policies of the government serve the interest of the rich and the poor are appeased merely with slogans and speeches.

This kind of democracy creates ideological misconceptions by setting representative institutions which though pretending to work for all are actually working for the dominant

class. The poorly educated masses are susceptible to distorted facts and capitalist propaganda through the government controlled press. It pays lip-service to the sovereignty of the people to make itself legitimate thus maintaining and serving the bourgeois social order; but since every one regards such order as natural and proper and thus accepts their place within it, everyone then see the state, in working this way as representing the people and acting on their behalf. Moreover, public choices are meant to serve the interest of the elites. The elites being rational and self-interested use the resources of the state at their disposal to maintain order in the society by managing a consensus that represents their interest which is aimed at maintaining the status quo. The elites in government try to structure the debate to quash any problem that would threaten their hold on power (Cochran and Malone, 1999:101). This they achieve through elite repression of forced indoctrination in "political correctness", limitations on dissent, speech and assembly in the name of law and order; and the subversion of democratic values in a paradoxical effort to preserve the system (Dye and Zeigler, 2003:22).

Methodology

The methodology of this study covers the research design, study area, population of the study, sampling procedure and sample size, instruments of data collection and methods of data analysis.

Cross sectional survey research design was adopted in this study. This design was considered appropriate because it allowed the researcher the opportunity of eliciting data from target population through their questionnaires or interview instruments, and subjecting such data to statistical analysis for the purpose of drawing conclusions (Obasi, 1999). It equally allowed the researchers to examine the relationships among variables and developing explanatory inferences.

Population of the study: The state has a total population of 1,863,275 people (NPC, 2006). The population of this study was drawn from Retired and practicing journalists, civil servants, Traders, Artisans, Students, Government officials and unemployed youth residing across the State.

Table1:Nasarawa State Population Distribution by Local Government Area

S/N	Local Government Area	Population
1	Akwanga	113,430
2	Awe	112,547
3	Doma	139,607
4	Karu	205,477
5	Keana	79,253
6	Keffi	92,664
7	Kokona	109,749
8	Lafia	330,712
9	Nasarawa	189,835
10	Nasarawa-Eggon	149,129
11	Obi	148,874
12	Toto	119,077
13	Wamba	72,894
	Total	1,863,275

Source: Compiled by the Author using the 2006 Population

Sample Size and Sampling Technique

A multi-stage sampling procedure was used in this study. This includes purposive sampling, snow ball sampling, and simple random sampling technique. Firstly, purposive sampling technique was used to select the study sites in the state (Akwanga, Karu, Keffi and Lafia LGAs). These LGAs were purposively selected based on the prevalence of mediabehaviors in contrast to societal and profession able expectations who gets “mortgaged” to sectional, commercial and manipulative predispositions, in the second stage, two communities were selected from each of these LGAs making it a total of eight communities in all Snow-ball sampling technique was because of the abuse of procedures and regulations, undemocratic tendencies, the massive stealing of public resources, the insensitive, non-principled and desperate conduct of politicians and personalization of state power coupled with the rising level of public frustration. In the final stage random sampling technique was used to determine the sample size for the study. Using Yamane (1967) statistical formula as given as follows:

$$n = N / 1 + N(e)^2$$

Where N represents population size

n represents minimum sample size

e represents the degree of error expected (0.05)

$$n = 1,863,275 / 1 + 1,863,275(0.05)^2$$

$$n = 399.9$$

Sample size (n) is approximately 400

$$\text{Akwanga LGA} = 113,430 / 742,283 \times 400 = 61$$

$$\text{Karu LGA} = 205,477 / 742,283 \times 400 = 111$$

$$\text{Keffi LGA} = 92,664 / 742,283 \times 400 = 50$$

$$\text{Lafia LGA} = 330,712 / 742,283 \times 400 = 178$$

Table2: Population Size of Sampled LGAs in Nasarawa State and their respective Number of Respondents

Sampled LGAs	Population (2006)	
Akwanga	113,430	61
Karu	205,477	111
Keffi	92,664	50
Lafia	330,712	178
Total	742,283	400

Source: Field Work, 2020
 Instrument of Data Collection

A three point-type questionnaire was administered to the respondents at various points of

interaction. These include offices, residential houses, shops, government ministries and schools. At each of the points, respondents were given a questionnaire each to fill and return to the researcher immediately. Where a respondent could not fill the questionnaire immediately, the researcher had to leave it behind and come back for collection other days. Where classes were used to administer the questionnaire it was done in groups, and the respondents waited upon to fill and return the completed questionnaire to the researcher. The instrument was taken for content and face validity from professionals in order to ascertain its validity and reliability. The secondary data were obtained from different sources which include government publications and documents, works from the review of existing literature on these tiers of industries were collected.

Instrument Validity and Reliability

Instrument Validity pertains to the ability to accurately measure what it intends to measure based on objectives of the study. Due to this, the questionnaires that were sent out were discussed by the researcher with the respondents. The researcher gave explanation to the respondents before they answer the questionnaires. This was purposely done to achieve the meaning of data reliability.

Method of Data Analysis

Data and information collected will be analyzed using different statistical techniques such as percentages and table's etc. research question will be answered to see the Impact of Mass Media on Public Accountability in Nigeria's Fourth Republic: Implication for Social, Economic Development in Nassarawa State

Presentation and Analysis of Data

Introduction

This chapter presents the results obtained after analyzing the data generated for the study. The results were presented in two parts; the first part covers the presentation, analysis and interpretation of the data, whereas the second part covers the results for answering the research questions in order to pass a meaningful judgment on the problem at hand.

Presentation and Discussion of Result

In carrying out the research, a total of four hundred 400 questionnaires were sent out to the respondents. The four hundred (400) questionnaires that were answered are found useful and relevant in the study and this constitutes 100% return of the entire questionnaires presented.

After a thorough and carefully reading, doing a computerized statistical analysis of my finding, the following was revealed, it is shown in a frequency table for the reader to understand also in line with this study therefore, data gathered and collected during the study shall be analyzed and interpreted using tabular form and percentages and frequencies. Hence the various questions asked and their respective responses are itemized below:

Respondents' Sex:

Table 3: Respondents' Sex

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	290	72.5
Female	110	27.5
Total	400	100

Source: Field Survey, 2020.

Respondents' Age Group:

Table 4: Ages of the Respondents

Age group	Frequency	Percent age
Less than 20	0	-
20-29	169	42.25
30- 39	188	47
40-59	34	8.5
60+	10	2.5
Total	400	100

Source: Field Survey, 2020.

According to the table 4 above, it shows that most of the respondents 188 (47%) fell within age of 30-39, follow by age -group 20-29 with 169 (42.25%).The age-group 40-59 were 34(8.5%) while those above 60years had the lowest with 10(2.5%).

Respondents' Educational Background

Table 5: Educational Backgrounds

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Tertiary	234	58.5
Secondary	116	29
Basic	40	10
Others	10	2.5
Total	400	100

Source: Field Survey, 2020 .

From the above table one can see that 40 or 10% of the respondents only attended primary school. Those that attended secondary school are only 116 or 29% while those with a degree from university or HND holders are 234or 58.5 % and they constitute the highest number. However, others are only 10or 2.5% which most of them claims they have attended an Arabic school.

On the Respondent's by Occupation

Table 6: Occupation of the Respondents

Civil Servants	156	39
Traders	43	10.75
Farmers	30	7.5

Source: Field Survey, 2020

From the above table one can see that40 or 10% of the respondents only attended primary school. Those that attended secondary school are only 116 or 29% while those with a degree from university or HND holders are 234or 58.5% and they constitute the highest number. However, others are only 10or 2.5% which most of them claims they have attended an Arabic school.

On the Respondent's by Occupation

Table 6: Occupation of the Respondents

Civil Servants	156	39
Traders	43	10.75
Farmers	30	7.5
Artisans	44	11
Students	98	24.5
Others	29	7.25
Total	400	100

Source: Field Survey, 2020

From the table 6 above 156 (39%) of the respondents were civil servants, traders were 43 (10.75%) of the respondents .Most of the respondents 30 (7.5) of the respondents were farmers and artisans were 44 (11%). 98 (24.5%) were students while 29 (7.25%) were engaged in other occupational activities.

Table 7: On What forms of mass media are you familiar with?

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Print Media	201	50.25
Electronic Media	173	43.25
Others	26	6.5
None	0	0
Total	400	100

Table 7 above shows that, 201 (50.25%) of the respondents opted for print media as the form of mass media they are familiar with, 173 (43.25%) choose electronic media, another 26(6.5%) went for the other category while 0 (0%) did not choose any.

Table 8: What are the roles of the mass media?

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Provision of information events	37	9.25
Provision of comments including guidance and advice in relation to events	16	4
Provision of a forum for access channels for diverse views and for political advocacy	81	20.25
Provision of a two -way channel between citizens and government.	112	28
Acting as critic or watchdog in order to hold the government to account	154	38.5
Total	400	100

Source: Field Survey2020

The result in table 8 shows the collective rank order of the mass media according to how important the respondents see each. It can be observed 154 representing 38.5% of the respondents ranked acting as critic or watchdog in order to hold the government to account as the most important mass media role, followed by 112 representing 28% choosing providing a two-way channel between citizens and government, providing access channels for diverse views and for political advocacy was 81 representing 20.25%, provision of information about events ranked 4 representing with 37 (9.25%) and provision of comments including guidance and advice in relation to events ranked 5 representing 16.5%.

Table 9: Does the mass media influence your ways of life, thinking on public accountability process?

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	370	92.5
No	23	5.75
I don't know	7	1.75
Total	400	100

Source: Field Survey, 2020.

From the above Table 9 shows that 370 (92.5%) of the respondents believe that the mass media influence one's way of life, his thinking as regards the public accountability and democratic process, 23(5.75%) answered in the negative and the rest 7 (1.75%) went for the 'I don't know' option.

Table 10: what form of mass media would you consider as reliable in terms of the information they disseminate in Nasarawa state.

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Print Media	77	19.25
Government-owned electronic media	124	31
Privately-owned electronic media	184	46
None is reliable	15	3.75
Total	400	100

Source: Field Survey, 2020.

The table above shows that 77 (19.25%) of the respondents believe that the print media is the most reliable in terms of the information they disseminate, 124 (31%) opted for the government owned electronic media, 184 (46 %) went for privately owned electronic media while 15 (3.75%) do not think any of them is reliable.

Table 11: How would you rate the impact of mass media in the Democratic Press in Nigeria's Fourth Republic?

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
High	154	38.5
Very high	8	2
Low	201	50.25
Very Low	32	8
I don't know	5	1.25
Total	400	100

Source: Field Survey, 2020.

In response to the question on the impact of mass media in the Democratic Press in Nigeria's Fourth Republic, 201 (50.25%) of the respondents said that it was low, 8 (2%) said very high and 154 (38.5%) of the respondents said it was high. Also, 32 (8%) of them said it was very low and the rest of the respondents who rated mass media in the Democratic Press as low is 50.25% and that of those who rated it as high stands at 38.5%. Thus, majority believed that the impact of mass media in the Democratic Press in Nigeria's Fourth Republic is low.

Table 12: Do you think the mass media are well equipped to carry out their function effectively in Nassarawa state?

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	113	28.25
No	270	67.5
I don't know	17	4.25
Total	400	100

Source: Field Survey, 2020.

It could be observed from the table above that the mass media in Nigeria are not well equipped to carry out their functions effectively. 113 (28.25%) answered in the positive and the rest of the respondents 17(4.25%) went for the 'I don't know' option.

Table 13: Do you agree that the mass media has effective role to play in the Democratic Press in Nasarawa State?

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	340	85
Agree	40	10
Strongly Disagree	3	0.75
Disagree	17	4.25
Total	400	100

Source: Field Survey, 2020.

The table 13 shows that 340(85%) of the respondents strongly agreed that the mass media has an effective role to play in Nigeria's Democracy, 40 (10%) agreed to this, 3 (0.75%) strongly disagreed and 17 (4.25%) of the respondents disagreed.

Table 14: To what impact does the relationship between government and the media have on social and economic development in Nasarawa State?

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Very high	24	6
High	105	26.25
Very low	64	16
Low	207	51.75
Total	400	100

Source: Field Survey, 2020.

From the table 14 shows 24 (6%) of them indicated a very high level of relationship has some impact, 105(26.25%) indicated a high level, 64 (16%) said their relationship was very low and 207 (51.75%) said that the relationship was low.

Table 15: Would you say that media reports on public accountability and good governance are adequate in terms of frequency and prominence in Nasarawa State?

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	80	20
No	313	78.25
I don't know	7	1.75
Total	400	100

Source: Field Survey, 2020.

From the above table we can conclude that 313 (78.25%) of the respondents said no that media reports on public accountability and good governance are inadequate in term of frequency and prominence, 80 (20%) said yes and 7(1.75%) did not have an opinion on this matter.

Table 16: Do you believe media contribute towards counter violent rhetoric through positive public messages of religious pluralism and respect of human rights in Nasarawa State?

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	165	41.25
No	217	54.25
I don't know	18	4.5
Total	400	100

Source: Field Survey, 2020.

From the above table shows that 217 (54.25%) saw media reports on counter violent rhetoric through positive public messages of religious pluralism and respect of human rights as not credible and believable, 165(41.25%) did see it as credible and believable and 18 (4.5%) could neither say whether it was credible or not credible.

Table 17: To what extent the media provide coverage on addressing impunity, countering hate speech, stereotype, biases and negative narratives that can fuel violence in Nasarawa state?

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Very High	32	8
High	105	26.25
Very Low	14	3.5
Low	249	62.25
Total	400	100

Source: Field Survey, 2020.

The analysis of the response presented on table 17 shows that, 105(26.25%) of the respondents said that it was high, 32 (8%) said very high and 249 (62.25%) of the respondents said it was low. Also, 14 (3.5%) of them said it was very low and the rest of the respondents who rated how mass media provide coverage on addressing impunity, countering hate speech, stereotype, biases as low is 62.25 % and that of those who rated it as high stands at 32%. Thus, majority believed that the impact of mass media in addressing impunity, countering hate speech, stereotype, biases and negative narratives that can fuel violence in Nasarawastate is low.

Table 18: *Do you think that the passage into law of the Freedom of Information Bill will enhance public accountability issues in Nigeria's Democratic Press?*

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	359	89.75
No	38	9.5
I don't know	3	0.75
Total	400	100

Source: Field Survey, 2020.

Almost all the respondents 359 (89.75%) believed that the passage into law of the Freedom of Information Bill will enhance public accountability issues in Nigeria's Democratic Press, 38 (9.5%) did not share this sentiment and the rest of the respondents, 3 (0.75%) said they did not know.

Data Analysis and Discussion of Findings

The study revealed that the mass media is an essential, indispensable part of the public accountability in Nigeria's Democratic process as majority of the respondents saw the media as acting as critic or watchdog in order to hold the government accountability. This is clearly evident in the responses in table 8 with 38.5 percent of the respondents affirming this media role as watchdog in order to hold the government to account the most critical.

This study also revealed that the media has a way of influencing the citizen's ways of life and thinking in the Nigeria's Democratic Process. This may be a consequent of the high exposure of the people to media reports on public accountability as can be seen in table 13.

The study find out polarization between religious communities has also been affecting the impartiality of the media in Nasarawastate because the whole agitations and conflicts among groups in Nasarawa State are rooted on resources to satisfy personal tastes and needs.

This study also revealed, Groups and politicians have recognized the fact that political power is the only legitimate instrument to allocate, distribute resources and equity. Today, citizens and groups in the State have divided interests, loyalty and goals. They fight for what is important and good to the group and not the good of the entire state.

Ethno-religious inequality and rivalry have caused a lot of untold hardships, poverty, agitations and violence with negative consequences on lives and property. This has brought social inequality, insecurity, instability and violence in recent years in the State.

The research equally brought to the fore the importance of the Freedom of Information Bill. The research revealed that most information that is crucial to the public and the policy process are forbidden from getting to the public through the media as they are clouded under official secrecy.

Interpretation

Since the return of democracy in May 1999, the media in Nasarawa state have raised the issue of corruption to the plane of public discussion. They have reported corruption cases involving high

profile civil servants and politicians in the country. Jingles adverts and programs about the damaging effect of corruption are frequently seen and heard from local and national television and radio stations across the country. The public are now educated and enlightened about the menace of corruption. All these successes were achieved because the Nigeria media have zero tolerance to the issue of corruption. This is because corruption has caused underdevelopment, poverty and economic backwardness to the nation. This is evident in the scores of public officers that have been indicted on corruption charges. The media have performed credibly well over the years in bringing public officials to account. They have brought hidden cases of corruption to the notice of the public; they have informed, educated and enlightened the public on the dangers of corruption to the nation. These, to some extent, have promoted good governance and transparency in Nigerian democracy.

Thus, the media in Nasarawa state need to overcome some of the above mentioned challenges that limit their performance as a credible institution entrusted with the role of serving as the watchdog of the society without flouting the media ethical standards and squander imperatives for objectivity. In this respect, the media personnel, stakeholders-politicians and Nigerians should take steps of reposition themselves for the purpose of building enduring and stable democracy for sustainable development in Nigerian society. The media through investigative journalism should be able to expose scams and they should not simply collect money and broadcast dubious claims that have been perfected as conducts for the siphoning of public resources/interests. Also, credible feedback mechanisms and standard public-opinion monitoring systems should be institutionalized to properly inform, educate and guide media programming patterns and contents. Many of the broadcast stations may be reformed out of business. A media house is a change agent whose management dynamic in-flow of innovation, creativity, drive and energy to keep pace with contemporary democratic challenges in the society. Nevertheless, the planning, organizing and managing of the media in consonance with the peculiar needs, aspirations and, cooperate existence of Nigeria as a country should be the beacon light of our media practice. Moreover, proper training will imbue the media practitioners with the moral courage that will enable them to persist without fear of danger or intimidation in pursuing that which they believe to be the best in the public interest. Thus, they can then be able to withstand assaults of manipulation from the powers that be without compromising their principles. A continual assessment of both moral and ethical performance of media practitioner is also of vital importance, especially in Nigeria of today, which is still in search of her national identity. Finally, media offerings should be so crafted to the extent that the society gives evidence of media sincerity, patriotism, wisdom, humanity and the right to claim that their efforts, through their professional practice indeed embrace the hopes and dreams of what most Nigerians can share.

Concluding Remarks and Recommendations

Governance involves the examination of the leaders and the led within the relations of power. An understanding of such relations, it is hoped, will enhance and enable effective governance, which will transform the lives of citizenry in Nasarawa State. Good governance breeds accountability, which therefore, removes ethno-religious inequalities to accessing resources for transformative development, which in turn combats corruption and eradicates poverty. Alleviating poverty has tremendous impact on the society in terms of peace and stability in the society, as well as the consolidation of effective democratic governance. In order to understand and tackle the interface between media and the state, it's imperative to note that the media have been molded with an environment that is characterized by instability, repressive legislation and restriction of access to information. The transition of political power from full-blown military dictatorship to civil

rule/governance following the election of 1999, only paved way for the democratization processes aimed at transforming the various institutions that were suffocated in long years of military rule. Despite the diversities and ethno-religious inequalities existing in Nasarawa State, there is still hope for a brighter future for her people. Policy makers should, therefore, effectively change their style of leadership, mindset, values and attitudes of those who leads.

It is no longer in doubt that Nasarawa state is dire need of committed leaders who will deliver on the gains of democracy. But what is in doubt is the possibility of change in the person of the leaders, structures and process of governance that will bring about sustainable development in our national economy.

Based on the issues raised in this paper, the following recommendations are offered as panacea to the socio-economic problem;

We must stop viewing politics as a game. The process of choosing or appointing leaders must be credible, free and fair and handled responsibly. Serious minded people who have the interest of Nassarawa state at heart must come together in a strong alliance, to take an active part in the political process and help salvage the state. They should be intellectually robust, politically astute, morally upright, imbued with the values and aspirations of their environment and enjoying the support of their environment and enjoying the support of their communities. The productive forces should be developed such that it will engender industrialization and thus decongest the pressure on government and also change the perception of people and politicians who see the control of state power as a means to escape poverty.

The National Broadcasting Commission should strictly implement the Electoral Act 2010 No. 6 Section 99-102; on media houses both private and public owned that engage in reporting hate speeches and propaganda. Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) and National Orientation Agency (NOA) should carry out massive improved political education program to educate the electorate on how to decipher between true facts spread by the media by critically analyzing the reports by media organizations. The electorate themselves should learn to be objective and not just flow with the wind and caprices of whatever individuals or the media gives out as information, but should critically analyze, make inquiries, before voting in a candidate that will not bring about growth and development in the country. The Nigerian Press Council and Broadcasting Organization of Nigeria (BON) should monitor hate speeches and attack on personalities that could lead to violence, and sanction media houses that go against the regulations and code of conduct of the Broadcasting and press institution. Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) and the Department of State Security should collaborate to monitor the electioneering campaigns of candidates of various political parties to ensure that they do not engage in hate speeches. Offenders should face stiff sanctions up to disqualification from contesting election for repeated abuse.

A high level of corruption that has eaten deep into the media industry is Ludicrous. It should be strongly campaigned against. All cases of 'Brown envelopes' and 'Ghana must go Bags' that characterize the media resulting in the commercialization of news and promotion of parochial interest for monetary gains should be completely eradicated. Professional bodies such as the Nigerian Union of Journalist, Nigeria Guild of Editors and similar bodies should make such acts a serious offence amongst its members. All political parties should be guaranteed equal access to all government-owned media. A situation where government-owned, especially state government-owned media organizations are used as instruments of propaganda and the opposition are

tactically prevented from accessing such media organizations to make their voices heard is condemnable in strong terms. Finally, the rule of law which is the hallmark or the driving force in a democratic setting should be encourage and used as a yard stick for governance in Nigeria.

While it is admitted that 100% autonomy of the mass media may be utopian in actual sense, the situation where government at all levels gag the media through different censorship policies, intimidation and even physical assault on media workers are worrisome and should be condemned in strong terms. There is equally a need for state-owned mass media to be allowed to do their work without undue interference from their owners- the government as the research reveals that the public prefer the privately-owned electronic to the state-owned ones as a result of their near independence and critical appraisal of issues in some cases.

Despite the diversities and ethno-religious inequalities existing in Nassarawa State, there is still hope. The State has great potential of both human and material resources within her borders and if properly utilized can bring about transformation of the people. A state ideology should be put in place to create a common aspiration among groups in Nassarawa State. This will ensure consensus, peace building, integrity, stability and progress. Ethnic and religious groups should be able to associate freely based on mutual trust and respect. This is to be able to bring about understanding which is necessary for peaceful coexistence. Until this is done, citizens and groups cannot pull their resources together for any meaningful development in Nassarawa State. A comfortable atmosphere and fair participation are requisites to achieving collective aspirations and good.

Some of the limitations have to do with the nature of the questionnaires themselves and the kind of variables and measurement models required. The measurements are perceptions rather than quantitative interval or ratio scale measures taken on the variable. So one can only state results as perceptions rather than measurement taken on observed outcomes (fact city). The study also fails to ask the respondent to indicate the influence that Facebook had on his or her decision to vote for a particular candidate as opposed to the other. This study did not provide information that test for the reliability of the scale in the questionnaire constructed. Or equally as important the validity of the questions/scales used. Typically, Cronbach measures could be used to test validity. However, the researcher used a modified version of the Meta study approach to compare and determine the reasonableness of the results of their tests with other similar studies. This is done extensively in the project and in particular in the discussion section and lends support to the credibility of the study. It also gives a sense of internal and external validity. Conclusively, it should be noted that this study centre's on Nassarawa State, therefore, in order to get a more generalizable results, it is pertinent for further research to include other parts of Nigeria.

Finally, it is also hoped that future study should focuses on Media and Information Literacy: A Critical Response to the Challenge of 'Infodemic' in the Covid-19 Pandemic Era in Nassarawa State. Handling Emotional, Intercultural, and Interreligious Unsolved Difficulties on Media and Information Literacy Expansion in Nassarawa State. These will provide a stepping stone for further research in similar direction.

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