

## **THE ROLE OF MASS MEDIA IN PROMOTING VALUE RE-ORIENTATION AND TRANSFORMATION IN NIGERIA**

**BY**

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### **Abstract**

*The role played by the mass media in Nigerian current post-industrial society cannot be over emphasized. It is a modern means of communication that reaches large number of people at once in a given society and commonly found in almost every average income households in the world at large. By contrast, local media covers a much smaller population and focusing on regional news of infested. Therefore, this study examined the role of mass media in promoting value re-orientation and transformation in Nigeria. The re-orientation and transformation of value system in the society is a search for national culture that would reshape and remould national character and image of people. This paper employed the review of literature and making logical inferences from them. It is revealed from the study that mass media play a major role in promoting national image, respect for human life and dignity, and corporate values. Based on the outcome of the study, it is advocated that, for Nigeria to thrive and move forward, there must be valued re-orientation among the citizens.*

**Keywords: Mass media, Value, Orientation, Transformation, Citizens**

### **Introduction**

Information is an important tool used in the realization of any objective or goal set by an individual, groups and society at large. It remains the life blood of an organization and valuable resources required in any society. Goldfrab (2006) asserted that many factors initiate the search for information, among these are individual tasks for knowledge advancement, creativity and for future documentation. Information is now accepted as an important factor in the sustained development of any society because it reduces uncertainty and enhances awareness of possible actions to take in solving problems (Adimoh, 1995). Lack of information is argued to act as barriers to development because of importance of information provision in “capacity building” and empowering communities (Wakelin and Simelane, 1995).

According to Okogbe (2002), information and its appropriate dissemination are seen as critical resources for people and society at large. Therefore, it is important to ascertain and distinguish between the information needs of an individual or group as well as how such information needs. However, the major concern is that whatever the medium that the process is being employed is to pass information across to a particular segment of the society, to the society or to the general public. The medium that may be used in one geo-political entry may differ from the other. At the

same time, the processes do change with improvement in level of technology obtained in such an environment. This explains the rationale behind variations in modes and patterns of information dissemination in modern society and in traditional setting.

### **Conceptual Clarification**

In this section, the authors explore the meaning of relevant concepts that give a clearer understanding of this discourse:

- (a) **Mass Media:** This refers to the process of transmission of information, cultures, opinions, attitudes and the like to a relatively large heterogeneous and anonymous audience simultaneously. It includes newspapers, magazines, radio, television, internet, GSM etc.
- (b) **Value:** This refers to deep seated beliefs that influence people's action and the rules by which they make decisions within the society.
- (c) **Orientation:** This refers to the process of changing mind-set of the citizens towards the right direction.
- (d) **Transformation:** The word transformation is derived from Greek word "metamorpho" meaning "to change into another form". Transformation leads to change in actions, character, attitudes, behaviour etc.
- (e) **Citizen:** This refers to legally born people of a given country like Nigeria.

### **Concept of Mass Media**

Mass media is any medium used to transmit mass communication. Mass media comprises of both electronic and printing ones which include, radio, television, internet, GSM, movies, newspaper, journals, magazines etc. Mass media usually aims to reach a very large market such as the entire population of a country. By contrast, local media covers a much smaller population and area focusing on regional news of interest.

Potter (2008) observed that mass media refers to all media technologies, including newspaper, magazines, radio, television and the organizations which control these technologies. According to Edward and Chomsky (2002), the term "mass media" denotes the section of the media specifically designed to reach a very large audience, typically at least as large as the whole population of a nation. Sambe (2004) was of the opinion that the mass media is a process of transmission of information, cultures, opinions, attitudes and the like to a relatively large heterogeneous and anonymous audience simultaneously. McQuail (2000) submitted that mass media is a means of communication that operates on a large scale, reaching and involving virtually everyone in a society to a greater or lesser degree. Media is plural of medium, which means a channel or vehicle through which something is carried or transmitted. This means that mass media are channels of communication in a modern society primarily the print and the electronic ones.

Mass media plays a major role in the socio- economic and political development of Nigeria and the world at large. This illustration was supported by Ate (2008) that mass media, particularly the newspaper, magazines, radio etc. play a tremendous role in the struggle for Nigerian independence in 1960.

### **Historical Development of Mass Media in Nigeria**

The mass media institution represented by the press is a hundred years older than Nigeria as an independent country according to Ameneghawon (2010). This is so as the first newspaper in Nigeria “Iwe Iroyin” was published in Abeokuta in the present day, Ogun State in 1960 according to Momoh (2004). Also, the first magazine to be published in Nigeria was the Nigerian edition of the reader’s Digest which was called “Read” published in 1887. Magazines started when the missionaries saw the need to support messages from the pulpit with written words. Such as magazines included “In leisure Hour” in 1917, “African church gleamer” in 1917, and the “Nigerian Catholic Herald”, 1924. These papers were followed up by newspapers published by early African and Nigerian nationalists which were used as weapons to press home for decolonization and the eventual independence of Nigeria.

Maduka (2009) argued that the introduction of electronic median Nigeria started with the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) which commenced radio broadcasting in the UK in 1927 and within five years had begun to broadcast into Africa. In 1932 a relay service was launched in Nigeria. The service known as Radio Distribution Services (RDS) started in Lagos and extended to Ibadan in 1939. Furthermore, 14 years after Britain had commenced her first television service, Chief Obafemi Awolowo, the then premier of Western Region of Nigeria, established a television service. In 1951, the RDS transformed as the Nigeria Broadcasting service, later incorporated as the Nigeria Broadcasting Corporation in 1957.

Therefore, it was 1959 when the broadcasting law was passed allowed the establishment of regional broadcasting houses. Owing to years of military rule in Nigeria, private broadcast media did not take off until 1992 when the military government implement constitutional provision that allowed private organizations or individuals to own broadcast outfits. Presently, Nigeria has about 113 radio stations and a hundred television stations including those owned by private as well as state and federal governments according to Amenegbawon (2010).

### **Value Re- Orientation and Transformation in Nigeria**

Nigeria is the most popular country in Africa and endowed with both human and natural resources. It is because of this attributes make Nigeria to be giant of Africa. Nigeria got independence in 1960 after 99 years of British colonial rule through the efforts of early nationalist leaders. Since after the first republic, the political history of the country shows that, there is lack of transparency and accountability in governance and increasing the rate of corruption among government officials. Infrastructures are in a state of decay and over the years the social fabric of the Nigeria society which include hardworking, honesty, dedication, sincerity, etc have been totally destroyed.

Furthermore, a lot of people become wealthy overnight without questioning the sources of the wealth. People who embezzle public funds are rewarded by their communities with chieftaincy titles. There is brazen display of wealth in the midst of plenty poverty among the people (National Orientation Agencies, 2009). Therefore, there is need for value re-orientation among the citizens of this great country.

The 1999 constitution of the federal republic of Nigeria emphasized that the country was founded based on the ideals of freedom, equality and justice. Also, section 23 provides the national ethics or value shall be on discipline, integrity, social justice, patriotism, religious tolerance, honesty, dignity of labour etc. However, the live experience of Nigerians is quite different from the ethical values of the country. There is a lot of indiscipline in every facet of live in the country. Integrity and honesty are no longer cherished by many people. Many Nigerians have no respect for the institutions and national symbols. Therefore, there is great need for a value orientation.

The National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS) recognizes this need and value re-orientation as one of the four key strategies of the development strategy. The approach was to lead a campaign to re-instill the virtues of honesty, hardworking, patriotism, moral rectitude and selfless service. Unfortunately, throughout the period of the needs, very little was done to actualize the campaign (Nigeria vision, 2020). The development of Nigeria has posed a lot of challenges to many scholars of development. It has been argued that for development to take place in the country, there must be transformation of all aspects of Nigerian society which include social, economic and political spheres. Nigeria had several development plans since 1962 till date in order to bring desired development and transformation to the country. But, despite the various plans, there has been little changes in the political, social and economic development of Nigeria. This study argues that what is needed in Nigeria is not plan but transformation of the country.

### **Value System in Nigeria**

Countries in the world are judged according to the conduct, attitude and behaviour of her citizenry. Nigeria's reputation is also judged by how citizen live up to their core value of honesty, integrity and respect for other people. The nation principles are based on the core value of trust, transparency, hardworking, honesty and these values indicate what is good or bad that are accepted by an individual or social group according to Utomi (2006). Therefore, the national value systems are principles, standards of behaviour and judgment of what is acceptable by all within a nation. A national value then is a representation of what the people generally consider and strictly adhere to as very integrated to their national success. The values indicate what a given society likes too much and influence the core of norms of that society, Nigerian society valued many children and therefore, the norms allowed the people to marry many wives.

### **Mass Media Role in Promoting Value Re-Orientation and Transformation in Nigeria**

The role of mass media in Nigeria dated back to the colonial era where the media institutions fought colonialism and imperialism and its avaricious merchants and won national independence and political freedom for the country. The mass media has helped to inculcate right value into the citizens through emphasize on good citizenship, honesty and good behaviour. Mass media involves morality and value system. The media in Nigeria have helped, for instance, in the fight against child trafficking, armed robbery, drug addiction, early sex among youths and the evil of kidnapping and ritual killings for peculiarly reasons. A responsible, socially sensitive media will frown at and vociferously kick against any group, act or issues that attack the moral sanctity and value system of society.

Pornography, lesbianism, gay, corruption, celebration and honour of questionable characters in the society will be denied unreservedly and without fear or favour by a medial institution that is socially responsible and interested in the healthy continuity of society. Mass media, according to Oladapo (2004), has helped in reporting micro-economic and macroeconomic issues as they affect citizens and State. They have been on instrument for inspiring the making of public policies and the analysis of such policies. Mass media have been an opinion moulding institution and information bank from which the society draws rational decisions and invariably transformed society to better one.

### **Conclusion**

It is a well-known fact to note that Nigeria as a country has witnessed tremendous economic growth but the truth is that this growth has not translated into meaningful development on part of its citizen's terms of life expectancy, health and quality life, infrastructural developments, housing and educational development. It is on this note that the paper notes that for development to take place, it requires value re-orientation on the part of both leaders and followers. Although, the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (1999) provides for values that can help in development, the values are observed more in breach. Therefore, there is a great need for intervention to sustain the values that have been provided for in the constitution that will make the country to be a great country of good people.

### **Recommendations**

The following recommendations were made:

- i. The constitution, relevant laws and the government of Nigeria should guarantee the independence of the media in such way that they can dispense their job without fear or favour.
- ii. Media organizations and workers in the country should show more social responsibility in their reportage and activities.
- iii. Concerted efforts should be made to build institution on the core values of the country.
- iv. National honours and awards should be given to people who display right values and not to the people who accumulate wealth through dubious means.
- v. The political leaders should live by an example and this will motivate the incoming youths to emulate their right values.

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