

Promoting Good Governance in Nigeria through Pre-Election Discourse: The Challenges for the Media

Julius Nwosu Chibuike¹ Gloria Fafiolu²

1.Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka , Nigeria

2.Department of Languages, Rufus Giwa Polytechnic, Owo, Ondo State, Nigeria

* E-mail of the corresponding author: similove002@yahoo.com

Abstract

The current trend in media has opened up more active participation of the media in the promotion of good governance. As the media provides a platform through which the framework of governance is viewed, it is imperative to examine the challenges and bottlenecks that media practitioners face in the course of promoting good governance. Proper management of information and communication can never be overemphasized in a developing country like Nigeria. Hence, the paper reviews the current situation by bringing to fore various challenges of the media and necessary recommendations for the promotion of governance, especially, at pre-election period.

1. Introduction

The year 1999 marked a very important point in the history of Nigeria; it ushered in a political dispensation that heralded the democratic landscape which Nigerians are enjoying today. This period however, was preceded by a time of political travesty; as Nigerians witnessed a time of total lack of direction, loss of political will, total abuse of political power and the sudden demise of democracy. Commenting on the Nation's political challenges at this period, Kukah (2006), while delivering a lecture at the Northern Forum Senator's conference, had this to say:

Why inequality continues to deepen in Nigeria, Why our communal and internecine conflicts persist? Amidst all these, why, many people ask, does our future seem doomed? It is impossible to answer these questions in this forum. However, contrary to what has become very popular parlance, I do not see these failures as a disease. Rather, I see them as the symptoms of a disease. And this disease to my mind is called military rule. Unless we can dissect, critique, analyse and gauge the quantum of damage that military rule has inflicted on us as a people and on all institutions of our national life, we shall continue to go round in circles wondering if we are cursed.

The period Kukah reminisced was replete with challenges that the Nigerian political space found difficult to contend with, the "Khakhi Boys" had invaded the country, claiming they came to correct the abusive nature of the previous administration. This purported correction took very long time, as one military government left either in haste or after a long time, another followed. Nigerians consequently suffered at the hands of these juntas for more than two decades. The death of General Sani Abacha however, ushered in the democratic dispensation the country is still enjoying today. Nevertheless, irrespective of the arrival of the much waited-for democracy, the Nigerian polity continued to grope in the dark, with plethora of challenges. These challenges, as the case may be, have continued to mar, disrupt, disorganise and disturb the Nigerian political process. Reminiscing on the joy that heralded the move from military to civilian rule in 1999, Nwosu (2003, p.56) writes:

The nation was caught in the ecstasy of new change of government, as Nigerian citizens shouted the joyful song of "Uhuru at last" with the transition to civil rule led by the former Military head of state, General Olusegun Obasanjo. However, this happiness was short-lived, as the hopes of Nigerians seemed dashed, after a period of eight years of Obasanjo's corrupt government. The President, who even worked hard to be elected for the third term had no other option than to hand over power to the frail President Musa Yar Adua in 2007, when Nigerians and the media mounted pressure on him to hand over.

When the Presidential baton was handed over to Shehu Musa YarAdua, the challenges were still visible. Commenting on the political gimmicks that characterized YarAdua's government, Idoro (2011:2) notes that "Nigerian politics in the era of President Musa Yar Ardua became a platform for political twists and turns, Nigerians were tricked, misinformed, dis-informed and deceived to sustain a government that had no ability to lead the giant of Africa to her Eldorado." These leadership challenges undoubtedly affected the smooth running of the country. The situation also was not different in 2011, when President Goodluck Jonathan assumed power. It was either the scandalous and shameful acts of the legislature as perpetrated in "Ette gate" saga, the reckless misappropriation of state fund by government officials and the Boko Haram ethno-religious crisis. All these situations only pointed to one fact; the inability of Nigerian leaders to maintain good and responsive governance. The question that becomes crucial at this point is why has good governance always eluded the Nigerian polity?

Are there possible solutions to this quagmire, or at least ways of considerably ameliorating the insistent political challenges that are characterised by never-ending poor governance, poor understanding of the political terrain by the political leadership of the country, abuse of power by political candidates? What is actually the reason for the failed leadership in Nigeria? Is it that our leaders constitute the problem we face today in Nigeria? If that is so, does it mean that our electoral process has failed to produce the right leaders? What actually has been the reason for our leaders' of lack direction in their role of governance? Or does it mean that they are not prepared for the responsibility they were elected to carry out?

These challenges seem to have lingered for a long time in the Nigerian political terrain and might presumably remain the same as Nigeria approaches another transition to a new government. It is against this backdrop that this discourse becomes imperative, to critically examine the challenges of good governance in Nigeria, vis-à-vis the role of the media, as a platform for discourse on the promotion of good governance.

2. Theoretical Perspective

Riaz (2008:8) says 'we live in a world where millions of events are taking place simultaneously. Media organisations and institutions have employed thousands of people to observe those events and report them.' The news media tell us which issues are important and which ones are not. The media inform us daily about the latest events and changes in the world beyond our reach. One of such issues that has remained very sensitive and germane to the growth and advancement of the Nigerian society is the quest for good governance. It is only when the media, place importance on some issues that they become meaningful to the masses (Agba, 2003:68). The theoretical perspective of this study will revolve around the Agenda- Setting Theory.

The Agenda setting theory is one of the important media theories of the present time (Raiz, 2008:8). The concept of agenda setting took its name from the idea that the mass media have the ability to carry the salience of items on their news agenda and transfer it to the public agenda. Usually, the journalists deal with news in several important ways. First, they decide which news to cover and which to ignore. They also assess all the available reports, while some of these news stories are published in a greater length, and prominently displayed. The newspapers, for instance, clearly state the journalistic salience of an item through its page placement, headline and length etc. Agenda-setting describes the transmission of these saliencies as one of the most important aspects of the media (Funkhouser 1973).

The theory of agenda-setting can be traced to the first chapter of Walter Lippmann's 1922 classic, *public opinion Quarterly* (Lippmann, 1922) in a chapter "The World outside the Pictures in our Heads" Lippmann argued in this work that the mass media are principal connection between events in the world and the images in the minds of the public. Though, he may not have used the word agenda setting, he was clearly writing about what we would today, call "agenda-setting" Following Lippmann's lead, Bernard Cohen observed that the press "may not be successful much of the time in telling people what to think, but stunningly successful in telling its readers what to think about," "The world will look different to different people" Cohen continues, "depending on the type of map that is drawn for them by writers, editors and publishers of the papers they read" As early as 1960s, Cohen had expressed clearly a theory that led to formalisation of agenda setting theory by McCombs and Shaw (1968) in the Chapel Hill study of 1968 American presidential election. McCombs and Shaw tried to compare the salience of issues in news content with the public perception of the most important election issues; they were able to determine the degree to which the media determined public opinion. For them to do this, they examined Lippmann's idea of construction of pictures in our heads, by comparing the issues at stake with the key issues on the undecided voter agenda, they found evidence of agenda setting by identifying that "salience of the news agenda is highly correlated to that of the voter agenda." In a similar study, Smith (1987) measures the public agenda in his research study, investigating the relationship between local newspaper coverage and public concern about community issues. He found out that there was strong relationship between the issues of concern identified by the public and the media news coverage. All these lend credence to the fact that the media agenda when consistently emphasised becomes the public agenda.

There are two basic assumptions that underlie most research on agenda setting. First, the press and the media do not reflect reality, they filter and shape it and second, the media's concentration on a few issues and subjects leads the public to perceive those issues as more important than other issues (McCombs and Shaw 1972:102)

When viewed in line with this discourse, it becomes imperative that the media understands the importance of advocating for good governance through its agenda setting role. The implication of this submission is that when the newspapers houses, radio stations, television houses and all other forms of media are used to mount campaign on the importance of good leadership, credible, free and fair elections, good leadership, educate the electorate and the politicians on the imperative of selfless leadership, when the media sets agenda through her channels on what Nigerian leaders are expected to do, when they educate the electorates on the need to make choice of the most credible leaders and not to vote for anyone as result of financial inducement; especially, as the 2015 election draws close, they would have to a great extent, taken a good step towards

promoting good governance in Nigeria. It is only when such challenges like the need for good governance in the Nigerian is made public issue (agenda), through the media (agenda-setter) that a wider part of the media audience (society) would be able to make meaningful contributions towards promoting good governance. (Raiz, 2008:1)

3. The Notion of Good Governance: A Conceptual Exposition

Good governance is a fundamental concept for every democratic development in many countries around the world during the past few decades. Udomslip (2012) notes that “countries around the world today work very hard to see that balance is maintained between the official’s role as a representative of the people and the process of governing the people” (p.1). He further adds that “Thailand today is one of the countries of the world, which has embraced the idea of ensuring that good governance takes precedence over every other thing, as no country achieves her goal outside her political will for good governance, accountability and probity” (p.2)

The concept of good governance can be looked at from different perspectives. One of this is widely accepted focus on the capability of the state to perform its key functions in response to the needs of the citizens and to be accountable for what it does. In this regard, Udomslip (2012) explains that “in conceptualising the notion of good governance, emphasis has been placed on people-centered ideology -needs of the people, public interest, transparency, accountability and responsibility of the policy makers”(p.4) All these components, he argues, “have become central to the establishment of a sustainable development through good governance.” Apreda (2005) sees good governance as “the separate process of management or leadership that makes decisions, defines expectations, grants power and verifies performance for the general good of the state and its citizens.” (p. 22). Amineeduu (2002) defines governance as “the regime of laws, administrative rules, judicial rulings, and practices that constrain, prescribe and enable government activity, where such activity denotes the production and delivery of publicly supported goods and services” (p.5)

Apreda, (2005) further posits that,

the main targets of every good governance includes the quest for principles, rules, procedures and good practices, the design, implementation and follow up of functional representation, voting, accountability, transparency, countervailing, monitoring, incentives and standard of performance.

Good governance refers to the proper running of a state, taking into account mechanisms by which the government should work efficiently. It deals with the effective governing of structures and attempts to cope with a set of distinctive issues, with the view of ensuring that the affair of the state is run properly. The concept of good governance according to Poluha et al (2002) “often emerges as a model to compare ineffective economies or political bodies with viable economies” (p.4). It revolves around the responsibility of the government to meet the needs of the masses as opposed to select group in the society. Poluha et al (2000), further argues that:

Making good governance sometimes imply different things in different contexts, in the international affairs, the analysis of good governance can be mirrored through relationships between the government and markets, government and citizens, government and the private voluntary sectors, elected officials and appointed officials, local institutions and urban and rural dwellers, legislature and executive branches, nation state and the institutions etc. (p.33)

Good governance represents an ideal, and in order to work towards the achievement of these ideals, individuals, corporate bodies, groups and government must be guided by certain values, norms or principles in their dealings. These principles include: participation, equity, rule of law, transparency and accountability (Nwosu, 2008; p.56). Dunu (2013) aptly concurs with Nwosu, when she observes that:

Accountability, transparency, equity and participation are the central factors towards attaining good governance. Not only in the governmental institutions, but private sectors and the civil society must be accountable to the public. Participation is also an intrinsic part of good governance, as it indicates the inclusive nature of the system of decision making. It raises a question whether the interest of the both men and women, young and old, minorities and the vulnerable are considered in decision making. (p.8)

Good governance entails the utilization of national resources for sustainable development. This requires that the government should be responsive and responsible in order to meet the needs of the citizens. The level of corruption in a society indicates the level of good or bad governance in such society. It thus must be noted that corruption goes beyond issues related to money and material things. Process of governance could also be corrupt and when the process of running or maintaining the affairs of a country is corrupt, the growth and advancement of such country is severely impeded. (Dunu, 2013:9)

4. The Media and Good Governance in a Developing Democracy

The mass media are the agents of mass communication. They are channels through which communication is carried out (Nwosu, 2003:23). The media is a complex, non-state actor, whose activity has been made more complex as a result of the quantum leap recorded in technology. Ubani (2008) underscores the importance of the media when he argues that:

From the primitive period when the local gong was the main instrument of disseminating messages to the mass number of villagers through the village town crier, the leaf-lettering of the anti-colonial movements, the bold headlines of national dailies, the crystal clear news footages of the cable television networks, to the internet blogs, no one can seriously ignore the impact of today's mass media on politics and governance, especially in the developing democracies.

It is obvious that the media are operated with the sole objective of transmitting information. This information spans the length and breadth of life and as such, affects the life of the citizens. Nwosu aptly captures the inevitability of the role of the media vis-à-vis the growth and development of the society thus:

With the growth and demands of the society in the political, social, economic sectors, with the various factors affecting the day to day life of the citizens, with the enhanced growth of individual interest, with the increases need of the government and public officials to be accountable of their actions to the society, the mass media has inevitably become a viewer of these developments and in turn, the mirror through which societies developments, challenges and consequences could be probed digested or even regurgitated. These attributes therefore have placed on the media, a lot of indispensable importance. Because the media is daily involved with the society and its governance, it affects the society and how it is governed.

Akpan (1986) lends his voice in support of the above view:

In a free and democratic society, the press as a whole is the market place of political thought. The broadcast media exist to serve the information needs of the citizenry. Editors, commentators, anchormen and newsmen as a whole work on the principle that the public is entitled to all the facts in a political situation and that on the basis of these facts; it can make its own decisions. The policies and aims of the government are made known through the media and are examined exhaustively by the opposition and the general public through the same media

Viewed from the above statement, the media provides a platform through which the framework of governance is viewed. Furthermore, the lesson derived from the above scenario is very clear; no political activity takes place in the absence of the watchful eye of the media. Therefore, it will not be out of place to admit that the proper management of information and communication is the root of good governance. (Nwodu 2003:51)

Furthermore, Dare (1997) argues that "the press is so fundamental to good governance and the health of every democratic society that its freedom is often formally guaranteed." This submission is exemplified in the constitution of the United States and also evident in the Nigerian constitution of 1979 and 1989, where the press is given mandate to perform certain functions, the latest of such development was evident in the approval of the Freedom of Information Bill in 2012 by President Goodluck Jonathan, a position that has given the press an air of freedom that it has worked with in the recent times.

Obijiofor (2008) comments on the relationship that exist between the media and the society this way

the media has become a conduit through which the actions of the state is viewed; activities of those who speak in the name of the state are brought to limelight, it has become the template for constructive criticism, viewing the policies of government, while suggesting ways through which the state actors govern within the ambience of the law. The media has become the eye, ear and voice of the larger society, upholding the right of the public to know. This is a very critical component of every democracy and good governance. (p. 8)

Furthermore, Zakaria (2012) rightly points out that "the media as an important source of public information is expected to be a vehicle to encourage the principles of good governance" (p.2). This is because facts, events and viewpoints can be presented to the society through the media.

Nwaebuni (2012) also supports the above view when he notes that, "there is an unquestionable correlation between the pattern of media delivery and the quality of governance obtainable in every democratic society" based on this assertion, Nwaebuni argues that, "the more balanced, professionally objective and well resourced a country's media is, the more able it is to strengthen governmental institutions, structures and processes, thus producing a state with the consciousness of good governance." Although the mass media do not participate directly in the decision making process of the government or corporate organizations, they do through their contents which affect the disposition or indisposition of the public officials toward important issues. (Akpan, Udeze and Nwosu 2013 p.105).

Ultimately, the way the media functions in every society is contingent upon host of variables, which combine to define and shape its character. Again, the ability and willingness of the media to carry out its functions in relation to the development of the society and achievement of good governance depend largely on the form of the state that the media operates and the character of the media itself. Ubani (2012:2) concurs when

he notes that, 'It is incontrovertible that the distinguishing features of any democratic form of government is the existence of free and independent media' To this end, Nwosu (2003:103) argues that 'when the press is given freedom to operate in a society, it makes use of tools within its disposal to help ensure that there is checks and balances such society; an idea that invariable fosters good governance'

5. Evaluating the Role of the Media as an Enhancer of Good Governance

Haruna (2013) observes that

The quest for good governance, freedom of association good healthcare, basic facilities, respect for human rights and dignity, press freedom and improved standard of living for the people has remained a pipe dream in Nigeria. Qualitative education has unfortunately eluded the Nigerian people. Adequate facilities, portable drinking water, uninterrupted power supply, good road network, employment opportunities and vibrant economic development have not been the government's major concern in the present.

Good governance can be seen from a wider perspective to mean a situation where the government does not hesitate to provide basic amenities and make life worth living for the citizenry. But what is on ground in Nigeria today is disgraceful, unwarranted and a big shortfall of the great expectations many Nigerians had wished for. No doubt, our journey through the years has been full of trials, travails and troubles. Several governments over the years have failed to promote people-oriented programmes and policies; they instead have created an atmosphere where corruption, nepotism, misappropriation, mismanagement and violation of human rights thrived. Over thousands of lives have been lost through insurgency and other acts of insecurity. Media houses, churches, schools, mosques, schools and public infrastructures have been lost in the process. Corruption has continued to grow in an unprecedented way. From the hundreds of billions stolen from the pension fund to ten billion estimated to have been lost through the NCC frequency scam to the record breaking 2.6 trillion of fuel subsidy fund stolen, all pointing to the fact that something is wrong with our leadership (Nwahunanya, 2008:44)

The above submissions capture the present level of decadence and quality of governance in Nigeria. The implications of these arguments are that our systemic approach to governance is faulty. What we have today in Nigeria is far from what could be regarded as good governance, this is so because, institutions conduct public affairs in secrecy and resources are often mismanaged. (Nwahunanya, 2008:65). The question that becomes imperative at this point is how can this anomaly be addressed through the role of the media as an enhancer of good governance?

The media generally are known to carry out certain functions that are germane to the advancement of every state. It plays very vital role in enhancing governance in democratic spheres. Greenberg and Page (1999) identify four roles of the media towards enhancing and sustaining good governance thus:

The media act as a watchdog over the government. Her position as a non state actor ideally place her to act as watchdog to the government, she does this by digging information about political process and alerting the public. In so doing, the media push the government on the path of accountability. Again, the media clarifies electoral choices; they do this by furnishing the society with information in clear terms about the electoral choices available to them. For example, the ideological differences between and among parties, positions of electoral candidates on public policies are made clear to the people by the media. They also provide information that educates the populace on the policies of the government, the pros and cons of such, and the reality of alternative policy frameworks. The media provide an avenue for the government to speak to the public and also the channel through which the people can get back to the government.

Keghku (2004:65) pertinently points out that "the media promotes and projects national interest and certain behaviours, especially during times of national crises". In carrying out these functions, the media advances the national interest in the sphere of politics, economic development, religion sports etc.

One of such instruments of harmonising national interest to attain high level of good governance is communication, and communication comes through the mass media. (Onyeisi 1997:137). Again, Nwaebuli (2013:5) notes that "the media and political system are involved in an intricate nexus of relationship, co-operation and complimentary activities; this correlation is geared towards the promotion of good governance for individual and collective interest of the society". To this end Nwaebuli concludes,

while politics provides a platform for organising and advancing the society through good governance and protection of people's right, the media operate within the context of the prevailing political climate to advance the course of freedom, expediting the citizens access to quality information that will influence their sense of judgment and decisions at all times. By carrying out these roles, the media conversely legitimises the actions of political leaders and institutions, promotes the social system, as well as challenge anti-democratic tendencies that can compromise democracy and good governance.

In addition, the media provide a platform for constructive criticism, discussion and suggestion on matters of

public concern. For example, the issue of corruption (which encumbers the level of good governance) is brought to limelight through media coverage and critical account of news stories. This invariably affects the level of promoting transparency, accountability, credibility and responsibility, which are core principles of good governance. (Zakaria 2012:4)

The mass media also play very important role during elections and political campaigns, equal time slots or opportunities are allocated to political parties and candidates. In the course of elections, messages that encourage goodwill and harmony among ethnic groups, religious, gender, culture, languages, regions and communities are broadcast. Shukla (2014:4).

Konkwo (2003) summarises in a rather remarkable way:

The mass media play the role of orientation to the politicians; they educate the political candidates on the need to see politics as primarily a call to serve the public not an invitation or license to ride on the back of the masses or steal what belongs to them. If the politicians saw politics as a call to serve, why should they often engage in buying the votes of the electorate to win elections? The electorates are also informed through the media, on the need to vote for a candidate not on the basis of how much they (the electorates) have been paid, but on the bases assessment and acceptability of the political candidates. (p.98)

6. Promoting Good Governance through Pre Election Discourse: The Media and its Catalytic Roles

A key aspect of good governance observes Lines (2009:10) “is the ability for people, citizens and public institutions to relate to each other, in order to make change happen”. This is so because without communication structures and processes, which enable a two way exchange of information between state and citizens, it is difficult to imagine how the state can become responsive to public needs and expectations. The media crucially provide a two-way communication that enables the citizens monitor the state’s activities, they help the people enter into dialogue with the state on issues that matter to them, and consequently influence political outcomes.

Konkwo (2003) argues that “the mass media has a big role to play towards promoting good governance through a pre- election dialogue” This responsibility he argues, “is carried out via the media’s ability to provide a platform that helps liberate the masses by educating them.” He adds, “When the electorates are enlightened, ignorance and its dangers are reduced to the barest minimum and this ensures the existence and survival of democracy at all times.” In this regard, it becomes important that the masses are educated through the media on the importance of selecting the right leaders and the dangers of voting people to power based on sentiments and financial inducement. Here, the media are deployed to educate the electorates on the dangers of money politics. On other part, political candidates are educated by the mass media on the importance of seeing politics and governance as primarily a call to serve and not an invitation to steal from the society. (Duru 2011, p.55) Nwosu (2003) agrees with Duru, he repeats:

It is the “do- or- die” notion of politics in Nigeria today that led to led to all forms of corrupt and objectionable conduct from people who are supposes to be the leaders of the country. If politicians saw politics as a call to serve, why should they often want to engage in inducement of the electorate in order to succeed in their quest to become leaders? (p.9)

It is against this backdrop that Lines (2009) considers “*capability, accountability and responsiveness* as the three essential ingredients of good governance and argues that the media is an essential tool toward giving these factors meaning in any democratic setting. They of course, should make these points clear to both the electorates, political parties and their candidates, so that the bases for giving out one’s vote to a particular candidate will be clear, while the political candidates, parties and other stakeholders understand the reason asking for the electorate’s votes

The media also play the role of an agenda setter by raising awareness of social problems. They inform the elected or to-be elected officials about public concerns and needs. A number of studies have demonstrated that issues presented by the media as important are the same as those the public subsequently think are important. As a watchdog, the news can provide a check on powerful sectors of the society, including leaders within the private and public domains. Investigative journalism in particular can uncover corruption and monitor public interest. As a gatekeeper, the media can be a forum for public debate and the discussion prior to election periods. It can represent a plurality of perspectives, including those of poor and marginalized groups, striking a balance that would ultimately ensure a free, fair, credible and free-from violence elections.

In practical term however, while generalised assumptions about the media’s positive contribution to democracy ad good governance are often made in the literature, a number of structural bottlenecks often prevent them from living up to this ideal. Furthermore, postulations have been advanced, that while the media may in principle be critical in public discourse, it cannot by itself; guarantee improved state accountability or responsiveness (DFID 2008). To this end, this paper examines the challenges of the media towards achieving these goals.

7. Review of Past Empirical Studies

Gberebie (2014) examines democratic institutions and good governance in Nigeria. He tried to identify the problems that have militated against Nigeria's democratic sustainability in the past; this study indicated that some of such factors like lack of proper democratic institutions and poor accountability of government officials and poor electoral processes contribute to poor governance in Nigeria. The study therefore concludes that for democracy to achieve its goal in Africa there is need for government to put in place measures to strengthen the nations democratic institutions and intensify political education among politicians and citizens as precursor to good governance and development in Nigeria.

Nwosu (2013) works on a study on leadership and accountability: The challenges of development in Nigeria. Using historical research methodology, the paper carried out an analysis of secondary data, obtained from, journals, and internet resources, magazines and newspapers as they relate to the challenges of political development in Nigeria. The investigation found out that the challenges of good governance in Nigeria are premised among others, on poor leadership at various levels of government, poor electoral processes, poor accountability and transparency. The study however concludes that for the living standards of Nigerians to be enhanced through proper governance, there is need to enforce strict compliance of public officials with rules governing the management of public resources, thereby curbing corruption.

Omenugha (2013:67) examines the role of women in governance and democracy in Nigeria, between 1999- 2012. She observes that though female of ages, 20 and above constitutes 50.10% of the Nation's population; their appointment into position of authority is infinitesimal compared to their male counterparts of the same age. It reveals further that the dominance of males in the nation's politics, and the low involvement of women in election participation and their appointment into positions of authority have created the politics of near exclusion of women in favour of their male counterparts. The paper recommends among others, the integration of women into political process in terms of their actual involvement in public policy formulation and implementation as basis for sustainable democracy and development be given consideration.

Again, Uzor (2012) looks at democratic governance and development: Nigerian experience. The paper argued that the democratic and political culture based on shared national, rather than sectional or ethnic sentiments engender good governance for development and hence enhance the living standard of people. The paper recommends that Nigerians should live together as united people, as there is need for citizens to avoid all forms of undemocratic norms, as this will serve panacea for political stability and development in a multi-ethnic society like Nigeria. This paper also observes that the above suggestion is more likely to be realised when proper training on democratic norms are given to office holders and people who intend to vie for leadership role. It should also be extended to the entire citizenry to enable them imbibe proper democratic culture for development in Nigeria.

Similarly, Gberebie (2006) examines the relationship between political culture and good governance in Nigeria. It found out that the absence of democratic culture brought about poor governance in the country. Hence, the paper suggests that in addition to political reforms, there should be the recognition and empowerment of the civil society; it also adds that there is the need to put in place adequate constitutional provisions and adequate mechanisms to evolve political culture that would foster transparency, stability, social justice and equality in the country.

Ngaki (2011) looks at the contribution of government communication capacity to achieving good governance. The study tried to find out how important the government's capacity to communicate effectively with its constituents, the role that communication plays in good governance. The paper however, discovered that good communication is a fundamental function of modern governance. It recommended that effective two way communication between the government and the public strengthens legitimate public authority. This in turn increases the likelihood of attaining good governance.

Similarly Nwosu and Duru (2011) carry out a study on communication for good governance and accountability. They sought to find out how communication supports good governance. The paper argues that communication contributes immensely to good governance, primarily on the area of influence. They add that skilful communication can increase the stakeholders support for governance reform objective, influencing opinion, attitude and behaviour change towards greater emphasis on more participatory and deliberative process. In another study, Odugbemi (2008) carries out an investigation on "Public Opinion, the Public Sphere and Quality of Governance: An exploration in governance reform under Real World Conditions. The researcher tries to find out the best framework for achieving capable, responsive and accountable governance in developing countries? How political communities can be changed to ensure that public resources go towards securing the general welfare? The study argues that the power of the public opinion is a critical factor. Further, it adds that a democratic public sphere provides a vital structure through which good governance may be secured.

Ukonu (2009) investigates the role of the Nigerian media in good governance. The study explores the reasons and how the media shapes governance relationships in Nigeria, in doing this, the paper summarises the

key global trends that are leading to change in country. It also explains the incentives and the disincentives driving the sector, which can lead the media to play a positive or negative role in strengthening democratic politics.

Norris and Odugbemi (2010) carry out an enquiry into the role of the press in promoting democratisation, good governance and human development. The study sought to find out the extent free and independent media contribute to good governance and the consequences for human development. The researchers examined a large cross section, analyzing the impact of press freedom on multiple indicators of democracy and good governance. They tested the hypothesis that “where the media functions effectively as a watchdog and agenda setter, there is the possibility of good governance which will engender human development” Findings of the study support the claims that free press is important both intrinsically and instrumentally to democratic and good governance.

In a similar study, Lines (2009) investigates the importance of the media towards credible, free and fair elections. Using a survey research design, the study found out that the media plays a very crucial role when they set agenda on electoral issues. Generally, the above studies have focused on the role of the media in promoting good governance. They have succeeded in carrying out their responsibilities effectively and also where they have fallen behind. The overall conclusion of the review points to the fact is that for a society to have responsive, good and responsible governance. The presence of an objective and responsible media is imperative. This position also becomes germane in Nigeria as a central variable that will engender good governance through election discourse

8. Challenges faced by the Media in their Role in Promoting Good Governance: The Nigerian Perspective

Traditionally, the conception of the press as the watchdog of the society presents the media as an inevitable component of the democratic society. It sees the press as representing the democratic conscience of the society whose role it is to continually scrutinize the actions of the state institutions and stakeholders towards insuring that they conform and not steer from the democratic ideals. Conversely, Petley (2004:4) seeks to objectively reappraise this role. His submission brings to bare the fact that “the press has largely fallen short of this splendid role as a result of the continuous conflict between her role and that of self-interest”. These self interests Petley, broadly classified under the economic and the political. He argues that “by her profit making character, the media is bound to veer out of its original role. This situation apparently jettisons overboard the original watchdog role of the media; making it more of a commercial venture. Petley argues in addition, that “apart from the economic reasons, the media has emphatically or subtly sought for friendship with the government of the day, in a bid to win policies that are consistent with its survival quest” The result of this type of position by the media, Ndolo (2009:34) argues, is “the production of a press that becomes cover up for the government and its authorities”.

Aside this, romance with the political institutions, the media on many occasions represented a more extension of the political class-being that their ownership are either politicians, or aristocrats who invariably are close to the corridors of power. (Nwosu 2011:88). This situation reflects vividly in Nigeria where most of the leading media houses are either owned by the politicians or their cronies. The resultant effect of this position is that the media consequently become the mouth piece of the politicians than the voices of the people (Ndolo, 2011:55)

These and other challenges are faced by the media, while discharging their duties, as promoters of good governance. Such problems like lack of citizens engagement with the media, patrimonialism, poor journalistic capacity and professional standard has also been identified as contributing immense setback to the media as a promoter of good governance in Nigeria.

9. Conclusion

The discourse revolves around the task in the face of the media as a tool to enhance good governance as the 2015 election draws close. The paper deals particularly on the role of the media as a platform for discourse that will engender quest for good governance in Nigeria. In doing this, the juxtaposition of the role of the media, vis-à-vis the search for good governance in Nigeria was explored. Furthermore, the function of the media as a catalyst towards achievement of good governance was also examined against the challenges faced by the Nigerian media in carrying out these responsibilities. The study also looked at a number of empirical studies that has been done in the area of this study. The paper further argues that if the forthcoming election in Nigeria must be conducted properly, the indispensable role of the media must not be taken for granted. In addition, if Nigeria must come out from the doldrums of challenges she is going through now, she must wake up to the task of using her media extensively in educating her citizens on their rights and duties as the 2015 election approaches. This position is very important if the country must get rid of rigging, bribing the electorates, money politics, thuggery, political conflicts and other vices that will hamper the successful conduct of the 2015 Nigerian general election. The media should also gear towards using her platform to mobilize the divergent sections of the Nigerian society and

consequently pass the message of peaceful election as against politics of rancor and acrimony which has remained prevalent over the years. The responsibility lies on the media to use her voice as mobilising, mediating and conscientizing platform to the electorates, the political parties and their candidates on the importance of good governance.

10. Recommendations

The message is simple; the Nigerian media as the fourth estate of the realm, and the fifth element in the society should see itself as powerful instrument of change and bring its influence to bear on governance among others. They should effectively carry out their AWA (Adversary, Watchdog and Agenda-Setting function) effectively. If the press sets itself up against political and economic leadership, it is being adversarial, if as part of its adversarial role it maintains a steady watch on the leadership, it is being a watchdog and if it lets the people know what is important and what is trivial, it is setting the public agenda (Altschull, 1984 in Ndolo 2011)

The issue of professionalism in journalistic practice should be addressed by media regulatory bodies, such idea that anyone can pick a pen and write or talk in front of the microphone should be stopped. Hence, a re-orientation on the observance of journalistic ethics should be emphasized for the Nigerian media practitioners. This will go a long way in addressing some ethical problems witnessed in the Nigerian media.

The Nigerian journalist should be encouraged and motivated with reasonable pay packets as this will encourage them work objectively, rather than within the whims and caprices of politicians, public office holders and people who reward them and in turn expect the journalists' protection. Motivation addresses the selfish passion of the human person, who likes to work for economic and social rewards" (Owuamalam, 2007, p.312).

References

- Agba, P.C. (2002) 'International Communication Principles, concepts and issues.' In C.S. Okunna (Ed.) *Teaching Mass Communication. A Multi Dimensional approach* (Pp. 274 - 271) Enugu: New Generation.
- Akpan E. (1986) 'Broadcast Journalism in a Multi-partustate' In O.E. Nwuneli (Ed.) *Mass Communication in Nigeria: A book of Reading*. Enugu: Fourth Dimension Publishing Co. Ltd.
- Akpan U, Udezies and Nwosu, J. (2013) 'The Mass Media and the Reputation Paradigm in corporate Governance' *Review of Mass Communication and Media studies* 1 (1) pp.102 - 107.
- Dare O. (1997) 'The Press' in L. Diamond, A, Kirk-Green and O. Oyeleye (Eds.), *Transition Without End*. Ibadan: Vintage Publishers (P. 535).
- DFID (2008) *Media and Good Governance: A DFID Practice paper* Department for International Development.
- Dunu, I. (2013): *Good Governance in Nigeria: "What Role for the Mass Media: European Scientific Journal* 9 (31) pp. 29 - 37
- Duru, H. (2012) *The Metaphor of Dwarfish Giant*. Unpublished Paper. Department of Mass Communication. Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka.
- Funkhouser, W (1973): 'The Issues of Sixties: An Exploratory Study in the Dynamics of Public Opinion' *Public opinion quarterly* 37 (1) pp. 62-75.
- Greenberg and Page (1999): 'Media and Democracy: Is Media Danger to Democracy?'. Retrieved from: <http://www.thirdworldtraveller.com/democracy/mediadangerdemocracy.htm>.
- Haruna, A.A (2013) 'Good Governance, a Mirage of Nigeria' *Pakistan Journal of Social Sciences* 8 (1) pp. 23 - 26.
- Idoro I. (2011) *The Gimmicks of Public diplomacy: Case of Shehu Musa Yaradua*. Unpublished Thesis, Department of Mass Communication, Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka
- Keghku (2003) 'The Role of Mass Media in Politics' In I.E. Nwosu, (Ed.) *Polimedia: Media and Politics in Nigeria*.
- Gberebie, E. (2006). 'Political Culture and Good Governance in Nigeria' A Publication of the Faculty of Social Sciences Olabisi Onabanjo University Ago Iwoye. *Ago Iwoye Journal of Social and Behavioral Sciences* 2 (1) pp. 121-139.
- Gberebie, E. (2014). 'Democratic Institutions and Good Governance in Nigeria' A publication for Organisation for Social Science Research in Eastern Africa (OSSREA) *Easter African Social Science Research Review* 30 (1) pp.135-152.
- Kukah, M.H. (2006), 'Towards Credible Elections in 2011' Paper Delivered by Reverend Father Mathew Kukah at The Northern Senators Forum in Minna September 5 2006.
- Lines, K., (2009), *Governance and Media the Media: A Survey of Policy Opinion*. London: BBC World Service Trust.
- Ngaki, R. (2011). *The Contribution of Governance Communication Capacity to Achieving Good Governance Outcomes*. Washington: World Bank.
- Norris, P. & Odugbemi, S., (2010) 'Assessing the Extent to which the News Media Act as Watchdogs, Agenda Setters and Gate Keepers' in P. Norris (Ed) *News Media and Governance Reform*. Washington: World Bank.

- Nwosu, J., & Duru,, H.C (2011) ‘Communication for Good Governance and Accountability Programme’ *Journal of Communication* 2 (1) pp.210-221.
- Nwosu, P. (2013) Civil Society, Democratic Governance and Development in Nigeria, 1999-2012. *Contemporary Journal of African Studies* 2 (1) pp. 234-245
- Odugbemi, S, (2008). ‘Public Opinion, Public Sphere and the Quality of Governance: An Exploration in Governance Reform under Real World Conditions’ in S. Odugbemi and T. Jacobson *World Bank*. pp. 15-37.
- Omenugha, K. (2013). ‘Women in Governance and Sustainable Democracy in Nigeria, 1999-2002’ *Journal of Communication Research*. 6 (1) pp.89-107.
- Ukonu, A. (2009) ‘The Contribution of Government Communication Capacity to Achieving Good Governance Outcomes’. Conference Report World Bank.
- Uzor, I.O. (2011). ‘Democratic Governance and Development: Nigeria’s Experience’ *A Journal of Contemporary Research* 9 (4) pp.171-188.

The IISTE is a pioneer in the Open-Access hosting service and academic event management. The aim of the firm is Accelerating Global Knowledge Sharing.

More information about the firm can be found on the homepage:

<http://www.iiste.org>

CALL FOR JOURNAL PAPERS

There are more than 30 peer-reviewed academic journals hosted under the hosting platform.

Prospective authors of journals can find the submission instruction on the following page: <http://www.iiste.org/journals/> All the journals articles are available online to the readers all over the world without financial, legal, or technical barriers other than those inseparable from gaining access to the internet itself. Paper version of the journals is also available upon request of readers and authors.

MORE RESOURCES

Book publication information: <http://www.iiste.org/book/>

Academic conference: <http://www.iiste.org/conference/upcoming-conferences-call-for-paper/>

IISTE Knowledge Sharing Partners

EBSCO, Index Copernicus, Ulrich's Periodicals Directory, JournalTOCS, PKP Open Archives Harvester, Bielefeld Academic Search Engine, Elektronische Zeitschriftenbibliothek EZB, Open J-Gate, OCLC WorldCat, Universe Digital Library, NewJour, Google Scholar

