

Impact of Government-Media Relationship on Development Communication in Nigeria

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Abstract

This study analyses the government-media relationship and development communication in Nigeria. The objectives are to identify and look into how government-media relationship can play a major role in development communication and national development in general. Methodologically, this paper relies majorly on relevant literatures on government-media relationship and development communication. The study shows that government-media relationship is fundamental to development communication and indeed national development especially if the relationship is that of partners in progress and not of master-servant one. On the basis of many studies about media relation with government, this study reveals developmentcommunication as good as it sounds, the political structure of the environment is an essential element for national development. The paper also unveils how good relations between the two institutions could bring about social, cultural and political development through developmentcommunication. The dominant reason for this study is on the premise that Nigeria, as a developing nation requires a working relationship between government and the media so that development communication objectives can fully be harnessed. Therefore, this paper recommends that media practitioners should always abide by the tenets of Social Responsibilitytheory as a foundation for their journalistic practice. The recommendations also suggested inthis study will help a lot in maintaining good working relationship between government and the media and thereby enhance development communication.

Key words: Development Communication, Government –Media Relationship

Introduction

Onosu (2009), citing, Nguigi (1995) defines development communication as ‘a systematic utilization of appropriate communication channels and techniques to increase people’s participation in development and to inform, motivate and train rural populations mainly at the grass-root level. In the same vein, Onosu (2009) citing Nwodu (2005) defines development communication as the use of all forms of communication in reporting, publicizing and production of development at all levels of a society.

According to Tukur (2012), while assessing the role of communication and development, describes development communication as the process of eliciting positive change such as social, political, economic, moral, environmental, etc through an effective exchange of pertinent information in order to induce people to action.

Development communication according to Fashanu (2005) has been characterised as that form of communication which is geared towards the development of man and society. Thus, words and concepts like empowerment, self-reliance, participation and modernisation has been used to describe development communication (Wisam, 2005).

Development on the other hands is a positive transformation from one point of situation to another, by implications, it is human centred and it is expected to safeguard all human basic needs at all times. Development as it were today is a problem that African and other Third World countries are battling with. Underdevelopment has been the bane of Nigeria characterised by high rate of unemployment, poverty, low productivity in agriculture, crime waves, insecurity, death, high rates of out-of-school children (especially girl-child), poor health care delivery system, poor infrastructure, low standard of education, environmental degradations etc. Hence, it has become a major problem for successive governments including economic stakeholders, civil societies, Non-governmental Agencies (NGOs), international communities, media etc. to find sustainable solutions to these myriads of problems facing Nigeria.

However, on the part of the media, it has developed what can be described as Development Communication as part of measure to reduce those mentioned problems. According to Okunna (2002), development communication is aimed at actualizing social change. She further argues that development communication is the entire process of communication with a specific group of people who require development. Simply put, development communication should be directed towards sustainable and workable change which requires synergy among stakeholders.

But how would mass media achieve the process for development communication without directing attention to environment in which the media operate? It is said that the kind of institutions a society gets is a reflection of that society and Nigeria media is inclusive. This brings us to government-media relationship because this is largely where disagreements and frictions are common in the practice of journalism. Development communication can only work where there is synergy between government and the media. According to one of the seasoned Nigerian journalists, Babatunde Jose, the relationship should not be that of master- servant but that of partnership.

Statement of the Problem

We are facing a crucial transformative moment in the history of Nigeria. Around the world, people are calling out for good governance, respect for the rule of law, freedom, transparency and self-determination. Journalists are playing a central role in this effort but many of them have been victimised, battered, injured and even killed as they have sought to report on grave challenges facing Nigeria. Despite that, Nigerian media must take a driver seat in holding the elected public officers accountable to the people. Arogundade, (2003), states that ‘Nigeria is becoming increasingly hostile to transparency and accountability. People who have things to hide would do anything they can to scare journalists away. Majority of such people are found within the government.

It should be noted that the media plays a significant role of communication and informative management in the society is a truth that cannot be disputed in Nigeria. But over the years, the press has suffered in the hands of governments through the enactment of press laws that inhibit press duties. Some of the cases are that of banning of *Newbreed* magazine, in 1978, jailing of two journalists, Messr. Tunde Thompson and Nduka Irabor, for publishing the list of ambassadorial nominees before it was made public by government, killing of Dele Giwa in 1986 etc using such laws like Decree No. 43 of 1999, which stipulated stiff registration conditions for even existing newspapers; the Seditious Offences Ordinance of 1909; the Official Secret Act of 1962; the Newspaper Act of 1964 etc.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives are as follows:

1. To examine the roles of development communication in Nigeria environment.
2. To understand how government-media relations can play positive or negative role in the performance of the Nigerian media.
3. To examine the ethical concerns of the Nigerian media.

Conceptual Clarifications

In any part of the world, the relationship that exists between government and the media is of great importance by all ramifications. In any political arrangement where government does not allow the media to practice their profession within the ambit of laws and ethics, which centres around freedom to perform its traditional role of watchdog of the society as clearly stated by Lasswell (1948) will continue to experience bad governance, lack of development, stagnation and stunted growth of the democratic culture and ultimately harbours poverty. Authors, experts, thinkers and writers have offered different views and opinions as to what an ideal relationship should look like. One of such views is that of Ismail Babatunde Jose who suggests that there should not be master-servant relationship, but that of partnership in progress (Momoh, 1998). Nwosu (1988:175) says that the level of the relationship may be related to the country's level of development, hence recommends that it should be *a continual state of improvement of progressive development*, if a meaningful progress is to be attained. However, Nzimiro (1988:140) opined that in Nigeria the relationship continues to change from one regime to another.

Nzimiro (1988) further argues that both the government and the mass media seek their legitimacy and objectives mainly from the Nigerian Constitution. But looking back since 1900 the relationship between Nigerian government and the media can summarily be described as that of a cat and mouse affairs. The following factors can be identified as the major causes of the frequent disagreement or friction between the two major institutions:

- There has always been the problem of mutual mistrust between the two. Most times, government points accusing fingers at the media by tagging it as 'irresponsible and unpatriotic' Akinfeleye, (2007), while the media on the other hand accuses the government of not performing to the expectations of the people by out rightly betraying

the people's trust. For example, insecurity in the country, especially in the North East, high cost of living, ritual killings, communal crisis, electoral malpractices and violence, corruption, nepotism and until recently between the period of July-September, 2020, increase in petrol pump price and electricity tariff was introduced by the Federal Government of Nigeria. This was considered as the highest point of insensitivity.

- Government capitalizes on Official Secret Acts of 1962 to keep so many secrets. The Nigerian mass media sees this as a tactical way of not disclosing information about its activities and that of her agencies; government hides behind national security to deny people certain information.
- Corruption on the part of government officials is another factor. Many government officials often use their positions to steal, collect bribes and other forms of gratifications for selfish interests and therein see mass media which is the watchdog of the society as an enemy. The recent verbal attack on a reporter by former Minister of Aviation, Chief Femi Fani-Kayode is an example.
- Refusal of the government to take the media into confidence on matters on national interest.
- There is also this tendency of the mass media, acting alone or as agents of frustrated contenders to public office, to smear or pull down those in public office even when such actions are not just and unwarranted.
- Furthermore, there is this undue restriction imposed on the media by government through obnoxious legislations and extra-judicial actions.

Brief History of Government-Media Relationship

At media level, many press had existed during the decades of the 1890s, it was actually from the 1900 that according to Omu (1978:132), *a new ferocity entered into the involvement of the newspaper press in Nigerian Politics*. It was during the 1900s that bad blood between government and media was sown and nurtured. This marks the era for movement and restoration of the dignity of the black man. In Nigeria for instance, courageous journalists like Horatio Jackson and Herbert Macaulay, among others fought the colonial masters (Omu, 1978).

During the first republic (1960-66), the post-independent government which was headed by late Alhaji Abubakar Tafawa Balewa was highly criticised for not repealing the obnoxious laws inherited from the colonial masters. The government even went further to enact more of such as Seditious Meeting Act No. 48 of 1966, the Official Secrets Act 1962, Newspaper Amendment Act 1964 etc. however, those laws were rarely enforced (Okoye, 2003).

The government-media relations during the Ironsi and Gowon regimes are also instructive. Though the regime of Major-General T.T.U Aguiyi-Ironsi was brief, he took certain positive steps to improve government-media relation. This includes lifting of the bans that several Regional and Municipal governments had placed on the circulation of certain newspapers in their areas of jurisdiction.

Instructively, the support the Gowon regime got from the Nigerian media helped Gowon to prosecute and defeat the secessionist Biafra especially in the areas controlled by the Federal

troops. But after the war, the media withdrew their support because the regime failed to return Nigeria to civil rule. And this attracted criticism from likes of Wole Soyinka, Tai Solarin, Henry Onyedike and others (Momoh, 2002).

The Murtala/Obasanjo regime was rated as a popular regime, yet it did things that were unhealthy for government-media relations. Some of it are 60% equity shares of the Daily Times newspapers, which was rated as longest-surviving newspaper in Africa and the first to be quoted on the stock exchange was taken over by the government; this slowly and painfully led to the death of the newspaper. As if this was not enough, the regime went further to take over the New Nigerian newspapers and all the television stations from their state owners. Newbreed magazine was also banned in 1978. On positive side, the regime released and pardoned the Editor-in-Chief of the African Spark Magazine, the late Dr. Abarogie Ohunbanu, who had published an editorial castigating the Head of State, General Murtala Muhammed of blessed memory.

The Nigerian Press Council (NPC) which was to serve as a mechanism for ensuring ethical standards and guide the practice of journalism in Nigeria was established by the Murtala/Obasanjo regime. This was a landmark achievement.

In the case of Shagari regime (1979-1983), the era witnessed unbridled freedom of expression and the press. The political parties that emerged at that time played a major role in controlling the media that existed at that time and even established new media houses for the purpose of advancing their political agenda and propaganda. The remarkable thing here is that the government did not pose any threat to this freedom only that the National Assembly towards the end of that administration came up with the Electoral Act which sought to monitor the media during the 1983 elections. The media was not pleased with this and criticised the government. Government had to drop the idea of enforcing the Act when election eventually took place.

Another watershed was the Buhari regime (1984-1985); shortly after taking over the government of Shagari, the regime promulgated two unpopular decrees i.e. the State Security (Detention of Persons) Decree No.2, 1984 and the Public Officers (Protection Against False Accusation) Decree No.4, 1984. Under the former, many Nigerians especially politicians were detained without trial. The latter decree saw to the jailing of two journalists, Messr. Tunde Thompson and Uduka Irabor, for publishing the list of ambassadorial nominees when government have not made it public. Even the Guardian Newspaper where the two journalists worked was not spared. The organisation was fined N50, 000 to boot. That explains why Nigerian journalists hate this government and of course embraced Babangida's regime when it came calling in 1985 (Onagoruwa, 1985).

Of course, the coming of Babangida regime (1988-1993) was like a God sent. The government courted the friendship of the journalists initially by releasing some people earlier detained by Buhari, especially the pardoning of the two journalists of the Guardian newspapers. By year 1990, the administration approved a mass communication policy for the nation, which was the product of the Badagry Conference of 1986.

In spite of the above achievements, the administration later went into the bad book of the media because of the following unfortunate events:

- The death of founding editor of Newswatch magazine, Dele Giwa by a parcel bomb.
- Newswatch magazine was also banned in 1987 for six months after it had published a report 'Political Bureau' which prescribed the guidelines for the return to civil rule.
- The annulment of June 12, 1993 Presidential Election widely presumed to have been won by late Chief M.K.O Abiola.
- The regime refused to return Nigeria to civil rule but instead installed Interim National Government (ING).

The Shonekan Interim National Government did not command the respect of the Nigerian press and most Nigerians. The government was seen as mere *rubber stamp* of the military rule which annulled the 1993 Presidential Election. The government was later pronounced as illegitimate by a High Court and eventually schemed out by General Sani Abacha, who returned the country to full blown military rule.

While Abacha holds sway (1993-1998), many obnoxious laws were promulgated. These include: Decree No. 43 of 1999 which stipulated conditions for registration of even existing newspapers. Others were the Nigerian Media Council (NMC) and the National Communication Commission (NCC) by which a special court was put in place to try erring journalists. Consequently, the Nigerian Press Organisation (NPO) challenged the idea of press court to a standstill and eventually rubbished it. (Momoh, 1998).

Furthermore, the Abdulsalam Abubakar transitional government came on board at the time when Nigeria had the worst image in its history. The task before him was to redeem the image both at home and internationally. Expectations were high especially that the unjustly detained and jailed journalists and activists be set free. Also, to dismantle the obnoxious laws put in place by past military regimes. Abdulsalam regime to some extent delivered on this high expectation and succeeded in conducting peaceful elections which brought in civilian government of Chief Olusegun Obasanjo.

The first two years of Obasanjo's government bent backwards to deliver to Nigerians the *dividends of democracy*. The administration was rebuilding relationship with the media which had experienced worst moments before then. Freedom of expression and the press has improved considerably. Obasanjo also holds regular parley with journalists on the radio and television. In 2001, a jamboree was organised for journalists in the forms of countryside media tour, for the newsmen to see first-hand the achievements of the various elected governments. The National Assembly was expected too to pass into law a Freedom of Information Bill which seeks to remove hindrances in the way of access to official information.

Influence of Media-Government Relationship on Development Communication

There are certain theories of the press that typically explains the relationship that exist between the media and government. They are the Authoritarian Media Theory, the Libertarian Media

Theory, the Soviet-Communist Media Theory, the Social Responsibility Media Theory, the Development Media Theory and the Democratic-Participant Media Theory.

The assumption of Authoritarian Media Theory for instance as propounded by P.S. Siebert, T.B. Peterson, and W. Schramm in 1956 was to effect that the theory is based on the principle of supremacy of the state as embodied in the authorities. Thus, the role of the mass media is one of subordination to the state and uncritical support of the status quo. The media is often used towards achieving the government's goal. The press is usually gagged through licensing and prior censorship. According to Bitner (2003), 'today, the authoritarian system of the press is still in operation in nations under dictatorial control, and in some third-world countries, a free press is little more than a theory without practice.'

Also, the Soviet-Communist Media Theory propounded in 1963 by F.S. Siebert, T.B. Peterson, W. Schramm depicts the relationship that exist between media and government as analysed by Ojobor (2002), which sums up the postulation thus: The media should serve the interest and be under the control of the working class; there should be no private ownership of the media; the media should serve positive functions of society by socialisation to desired norms, education, information and mobilisation; the media have a duty to respond to the wishes and needs of their audiences; society has the right to use censorship and other legal means to prevent or punish any deviant publication etc.

Mickiewick (1988) states that the media's task under this theory had two (2) dimensions: First, the media had to change the ethical and moral outlook of the population. The second dimension was to arouse the population to contribute to the economic goals of the state. As such media were used to mobilise the public to achieve the goals of the state.

The Soviet-Communist Theory removed the profit motive from press operations. Therefore, since press is an organ of the government, then it should be financed by the government. In this theory, advertising was rare. And when used, it was only to supplement policy message or to encourage buying patterns to compensate for holes in the economy. Communist theory placed importance to 'partiality' which technically means that every issue must be seen and interpreted from the standpoint of the communist party (Folarin, 2002).

Again, there is the Libertarian Media (or free press) Theory which was propounded by P.S. Siebert, T.B. Peterson, and W. Schramm in 1963. This theory emerged around 17th century and was re-labelled free press by McQuail in 1987. The assumption of this theory is that humans are natural and inclined to seek truth and be guided by it. Under this, the people are presumed able to separate between truth and falsehood and, having been exposed to a press operating as a free marketplace of ideas and information, they will help determine public policy. (Daramola, 2003).

Challenges of Development Communication

Professionalism: Development communication requires absolute professionalism where training, right tools and resources are needed. A classic example is the case of Christiane Amanpour of the Cable Network News (CNN), who covers war beats fully kitted and equipped

with all that is required for effective coverage putting the safety of the reporter first. This is rare in Nigeria.

Brown Envelope Syndrome: According to Momoh (2004), brown envelope refers to the form of gifts, drinks, food or money given to journalists to influence the judgement of a journalist. In other words, it means bribing a journalist. Brown envelope is also the money given to reporters or editors to persuade them to write positive stories or kill a negative story (Nwocha 2004).

Ownership: There is this saying that 'he who pays the piper dictates the tune'. This is clearly the issue with ownership of the media outfit in Nigeria. Cases of ownership influence on journalists can be seen from the angle of stories published in the national dailies or broadcast on the electronic media.

Afganistanism: This is a practice of concentrating on problems in distant parts of the world while ignoring immediate controversial local issues. This is unethical act in development communication where journalists or media stations give attention more on foreign development or far-away issues ignoring more pressing issues at home in order to divert attention. It is also a political tool government uses to shift the attention of the public from fundamental issues.

Character Assassination: Character assassination can be libellous or slanderous that is written or spoken. Character assassination according to Asemah (2011) refers to when a journalist damages the reputation of an individual, he is guilty of character assassination. This is an unethical and illegal practice in national development.

Junk Journalism: Asemah (2011), describes junk journalism otherwise known as sensationalism as the tendency to publish information that causes any interest or emotional reaction. These kind of practice is used to in aspects of celebrity gossips, sex news, anniversaries of major events etc. major events etc. Nonetheless, these incidents are not newsy despite the personality involved. This is because, they lack sound impact. Therefore, to look at McQuail (2005) submission, junk journalism is not adding to the development of a nation and should be shunned.

Theoretical Framework

The Social Responsibility Media Theory and Development Media Theory states the relevance of these theories to the current study. They advance strong assumptions that provides basis for discourse in this paper. The assumptions are hereby posited thus:

The Social Responsibility Theory was propounded by F.S Siebert, and T.B Peterson & W. Schram in 1963. The premise of the theory is that freedom carries concomitant obligations and the press, which enjoys a privilege position under the government, is obliged to be responsible to the society for carrying out certain essential functions of mass communication (Anaet et al 2008).

Since this paper is concerned with relationship between government and the media, then the social responsibility theory is relevant to the practice of journalism because only the

government that has the constitutional powers to regulate the activities of the media. Also, the cordiality of relations between government and the media would depend on how responsible the media is in their performances and extent of government interference in the business of journalists. This further takes us to development media theory which is important to the role of the media in bringing development to the people.

The Development Media Theory (Assumptions and Principles).

This study is also set within the framework of the Development media as propounded by Dennis McQuail in 1987. The theory seeks to prescribe the functions of the press in developing nations of the world in which Nigeria is one. It holds that the media have a role to play in facilitating the process of development in the developing countries. According to development media theory, the media are to be used to serve the general good of the nation; the media can do that by functioning as a government instrument for achieving economic and political growth, cultural development, national sovereignty etc. They are seen as agents of development and social construction which should be used to complement the government's efforts by carrying out programmes that will lead to positive behavioural change among the people. The development media theory according to Okunna (1999), accepts that economic development and nation building should take precedence over some freedom of the press and of individuals. This theory presupposes that mass media should accept and carry out positive developmental task in line with national established policy. The theory expects media to give priority in their content to national culture, language and developmental issues (McQuail, 1987). Nwanne (2013) has identified that a typical developmental press should be one that capitalizes on its surveillance and agenda setting roles to prioritize critical development issues in rural communities.

Methodology

For the purpose of generating quantitative data which is suitable for this study, a survey research method was adopted to serve as instrument for primary source of data gathering. The survey method is used through the instrument of questionnaire. Fifty (50) journalists both in print and broadcast media are to be served with questionnaires having a total of fifteen (15) questions which they are expected to respond to. All the respondents reside in Ilorin, Kwara State, Nigeria

Presentation of Survey Result

These under listed information were presented in the form of questions contained in the questionnaire to the respondents. The fifteen (15) questions cover issues such as: Media and Governance; Purpose of Governance; Communication and Development and Relationship between Communication and Development.

Media and Governance

The importance of the mass media in the art of governance cannot be underestimated. Some people see the fourth estate of the realm as a powerful instrument in governance. In fact, a one-time American President, Thomas Jefferson cited in Abati (2007), summed up the

indispensability of the mass media in the art and science of governance. Jefferson places the media on a higher pedestal than governance when he observes:

The basis of government being the opinion of the people, the very first object should be to keep that right; and were it left to me to decide whether we should have a government without newspaper or newspapers without government, I should not hesitate a moment to prefer the latter.

According to McQuail (2005:234), the term governance describes the overall set of laws, regulations, rules, conventions which serve in the general interest including that of media industries. Governance in his views refers not *only to formal and binding rules, but also to numerous informal mechanisms, internal and external to the media by which they are 'steered' towards multiple (and often inconsistent) objectives.*

Government from the above deductions, therefore, concerns itself with leadership in totality for the sake of the people. The theme of politics is power-who controls it at the expense of who? (Daramola, 2003). Talking about the relationship of the media and governance, Daramola (2003:48) contends that the political philosophy of the society determines the type of press such society will have. Ate (2007:2) argues that *the media connects the government to the governed, electorates to the candidates in a democratic setting.* The message about media and governance is that the latter dictates the former in the society and both play complementary roles in serving the populace. Ate (2007) argues that mass media organisations are educators and key information sources that can be used for promotion of transparent governance.

From the responses collected and analysed, ninety-three percent (93%) of the respondents considered media and governance as bedrock for participatory democracy. Majority of the respondents agreed that media has a fundamental role to play in governance of any nation. This according to the respondents describes the media as the fourth estate of the realm. Democracy and rule of law which is fundamental in true democracy cannot be achieved if the media is gagged through the enactment of obnoxious laws which hinders development communication. Also, eighty-seven (87%) of the respondents indicated that the media is the bridge between the people and the government.

From the above discussion, it is clear that majority of the respondents have clear knowledge of what the media and governance is all about. These findings are in line with the statement one-time American President, Thomas Jefferson, cited in Abati (2007).

Purpose of Governance

The forms of governance that apply to the media, McQuail (2005:234) argues reflect the diversity of purposes served. He outlines the purposes of media and governance as:

- . Protection of the essential interest of the state and of public order, including the prevention of public harm.
- . Safeguarding of individual rights and interests.

- . Meeting the needs of media industry for a stable and supportive operating environment.
- . Promotion of freedom and other communication and cultural variables.
- . Encouraging technological innovations and economic enterprise.
- . Setting technical and infrastructural standards.
- . Meeting international obligations, including observance of human rights.
- . Encouraging media accountability.

Again, to attest to this finding i.e. purpose of governance, ninety-seven (97%), the respondents confirmed that government does not exist for nothing but to serve all aspects of human endeavours particularly protecting lives and properties. Similarly, seventy-six (76%) of the respondents agreed that the bane of underdevelopment in third world countries or developing nations like Nigeria cannot be separated from bad governance. In the same vein, seventy-six (76%) of the respondents were able to highlight the fact that inability of leaders to understand purpose of governance is one of the reasons for poor governance. Majority of the respondents agreed that basically, it is the responsibility of government to provide basic amenities to members of the society. Government also has the mandate of maintaining law and order as well as providing security to members of the society among other functions.

Development Communication

Development communication is justified for a number of reasons. First, its importance can be appreciated from the standpoint of the role communication plays in developing the society. Second, development communication reflects the aspirations of third world countries. (Urakwe 2003:58).

Consequently, development has been described as planned and deliberate attempt to ensure growth and effects social change in the society. In consonance with this, Ogai cited in Urakwe (2003: 58) captured the concept of development:

Development also refers to a widely participatory process of directed social change in a society intended to bring about social and material advancement including greater equality, freedom and other valued qualities for the majority of the people through their gaining greater control over environment.

He argued that some scholars view development as a changeover from a traditional to an industrial society. Development, in genetic sense to him may be *conceived as planned mobilization and direction of scarce resources to achieve constantly rising national goals and objectives formulated by national machinery.*

Seventy-six percent (76%) of the respondents argued that there is justification for development communication. 50% of the respondents are of opinion that after the World Wars, pockets of developed and developing communities can be found in almost every world region. This according to the respondents has created the need for a new concept of development, which

emphasises cultural identity and multidimensionality. The majority of the respondent's view on development communication is in consonant with United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), which states that 'communication for development seeks not only to transfer messages but also to promote interactions around the messages for target audiences to understand them better, accept them and practice healthy behaviour proposed, not once, but long enough to reap the benefits that such behaviour brings.

Relationship between Communication and Development

Ninety-two percent (92%) of the respondents agreed that communication is an important tool in achieving socio-political and economic developments. This is in tandem with assertion of Okunna (2002:293), Nwodu, (2002), and Fab-Ukozor (2003:27). This suggest that communication is so closely interconnected with development that there can be no development without communication. The above postulations cannot be faulted because of the roles of communication play in the development enterprise. Nwodu (2002) outlines some of roles:

- . Creating a climate of development by adequately informing the people and encouraging them to embrace positive changes that can enhance their well-being.
- . Encouraging people to aim high as well as developing new taste to the point of desiring good things in life.
- . Focusing people's attention to developmental process thereby sensitizing their maximum participation in development effort.
- . Helping the people to understand and appreciate government policies meant to enhance their living conditions.

The link between communication and development is so powerful that the concept of Development Communication (DEVCOM) is fast attracting the attention of scholars. Nwodu and Fab-Ukozor (2003:27) define this concept as the *overall deliberate efforts to acquaint targets development with the desired message of development.*

DEVCOM whose primary aim is to create adequate awareness about the development projects designed to enhance the well-being of members of the society according to Nwodu and Fab-Ukozor (2003: 27)) *involves deliberate, well desired and articulated communication codes aimed at bringing development to the knowledge of development targets.* Development entail the use of multi-media approach to prosecute the gospel of development for the good of the society.

Discussion of findings

Eighty-seven percent (87%) of the respondents agreed that there is clear manifestation that government-media relation appears more cordial or fared better during civilian-democratic administration than the military regimes. Seventy-six percent (76%) of the respondents are also of view that there is up and down movement i.e. that the government-media relations is moving from bad to worse and later goes to good (back and forth).

Again, eighty-six percent (86%) of the respondents agreed that any government that has poor relations with the media is not likely to have high image rating. This is because the impressions people have is mostly as portrayed by the media. On whether government-media relations have nothing to do with functions of development communication in a nation, seventy-six percent (76%) of the respondents disagreed with the above statement. Arguing that development communication cannot succeed where there is distrust between government and the media. Also, eighty-two percent (82%) of the respondents aptly that unethical behaviour among journalists is a challenge to operations of development communication.

Furthermore, while examining the relationship between government and media, the respondents indicate thus: the scores indicate that Shagari and Obasanjo scores sixty-two percent (62%) and sixty-one percent (61%) respectively. General Abdulsalam scores forty-nine percent (49%), Shonekan, Ironsi, Murtala-Obasanjo, Balewa and Gowon follow with forty-three percent (43%), forty-one percent (41%), and forty percent (40%) respectively. General Babangida thirty-percent (32%), Buhari twenty-six percent (26%) and Abacha eleven percent (11%).

Conclusion

Development communication is about growth and positive development of a nation. The idea of development communication is to bring developmental news closer to the people so that they can make intelligent choices in their everyday lives. However, frosty relationship between the government and media may be a setback to this agenda of development communication. Therefore, a 'partnership' relationship is suggested and not 'master/servant one. This is in line with Akinfeleye when he suggests that government-media relationship should be in a continuous state of important for meaning progress to be made.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the press should work hand in hand with the government in the articulation and pursuit of the national interest. This implies that government and media are supposed to be partners in progress. Therefore, an enabling environment for that partnering must be created on a continuous basis. Government should therefore not try to restrict the press through obnoxious legislation and/or exercise of arbitrary powers. Media or press on its part should offer informed criticism of government policies and assist in setting agenda of priorities.

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