

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **1.1 INTRODUCTION**

This research work studies the mass media's contribution to the political values of openness and democratic accountability that go by the name of 'transparency'. In fact, the metaphor of transparency encompasses three separate political virtues, which often work together but are analytically distinct. The first kind of transparency is informational transparency, knowledge about government actors and decisions and access to government information. Informational transparency can be furthered by requiring public statements of the reasons for government action, or requiring disclosure of information the government has collected. A second type of transparency is participatory transparency, the ability to participate in political decisions either through fair representation or direct participation. A third kind of transparency is accountability transparency: the ability to hold government officials accountable either to the legal system or to public opinion where they violate the law or when they act in ways that adversely affect people's interest. In theory, at least, mass media can make the political system more transparent in all three respects: mass media can help people understand the operations of government, participate in political decisions, and hold government officials accountable. In practice, however, its effect are often quite different. In the age of mass media, democratic governments and politicians may find it useful to stimulate the political virtues of transparency does not

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serve the underlying political values that motivate the metaphor of transparency. Instead, it is a transparency that observes and obfuscates, that frustrates accountability and hides important information in a mass of manufacturing political realities. It is a form of transparency that is not transparent at all.

This paper analyses the watchdog role played by the media in the coverage of human rights issues in Nigeria. It discusses the role of the media in the transition period between 1988 and 1999, as well as their championing of a cleaner and healthier polity in expressing highly placed state officials who got into office through fake credentials or by making bogus claims. Case studies of the media in this respect include the disgrace from office of Alhaji Salisu Buhari, former speaker of the house of representatives as well as the fall of Senator Chuba Okadigbo, former senate president, who was impeached in the wake of allegations of corruption and misappropriation of funds. To get to grips with the role of the media in the national controversies, the editorial content of the publications, which championed these struggles were identified and collated. These were complimented where possible, by interviews with some of the editorial personnel involved in these episodes.

### **1.2 STATEMENT OF THE RESEARCH PROBLEMS**

In democracy, the mass media are the watchdog of the people. The citizens are usually mobilized and informed to create awareness on the political culture.

Political culture refers to a system of politics in which sovereignty is vested on the people rather than a small clique, or an oligarchy, a political arrangement that places emphasis on the accountability of polity where the rule of law, majority rule and constitutionalism is the basic guiding principle.

Perhaps, it could be argued that the political crisis that pervaded our recent past points to the fact that most of our people are ignorant of an

apathetic towards the country's observe that in Nigeria electioneering and voting pattern cannot be validated, in the voting pattern of Nigerians and the possible estimation of the voter's attitude towards politics.

## **THE ROLE OF THE PRINT MEDIA IN THE COVERAGE OF HUMAN RIGHT ISSUES IN NIGERIA**

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