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**ROLE OF MASS MEDIA IN THE RECONSTRUCTION, REHABILITATION AND  
REMAKING OF SOCIO-ECONOMY AND POLITY OF NORTHEASTERN NIGERIA**

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***Abstract***

*Mass media are known to be vehicles for the transformation of societies. Now the focus of governments, Non-Governmental Organisations and people in the Northeastern part of Nigeria which has been ravaged by insurgency is that of fashioning out plans of rehabilitation and reintegration of those people displaced by the insurgency. Using a review of some relevant literature in related areas, the study discovered that some of the major factors that have remained a hindrance to the development of the region can be addressed through reviewing the ownership structure and operations of the mass media in the sub-region.*

***Keywords: Mass Media, Reconstruction, Rehabilitation and Remaking of  
Socio-economy, Northeastern Nigeria***

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**Introduction**

*“There can be no such thing as a purely military solution to an  
insurgency because insurgency is not primarily a military  
activity.” –General (Sir) Frank Kitson, British Army*

In contemporary Nigeria, religious sentiments have been used to justify almost all situations, and this is worrisome for there has been a steady growth

of religious extremism since the 1980s (Umar, 2013). Since 2009, ten years after the return to democratic rule, the North-eastern region of Nigeria has been ravaged by violent insurgency that has claimed hundreds of lives and property worth millions of naira and millions of people displaced as result of the insurgency, making the region one of the most devastated not only on the continent but on the entire planet. The insurgency which has become most difficult to define, given the roles religion it is said to have played at the initial stage of the whole crisis, appears to have persisted because of the high level of poverty and unemployment in the region.

The crisis has resulted in hundreds of people thrown into various criminal activities driven to violence by poverty, illiteracy, and hopeless situations in their localities (Umar, 2013). Although normalcy is gradually returning to the area, the major challenge is that of confidence restoration because without people having confidence that the violent insurgency has been nipped in the bud, no serious investment can be made in that particular violence-prone area. The major driver of extremist activity, according Huma Haider (2007), cited in Umar, (2013), are socio-economic factors as the major potential, and specifically observes further that the socio-economic situation of the people within the state, including the lack of employment opportunities and access to education and to social services could determine its resort to extremism.

Today, all over the world violence has come to be considered a serious aberration in the quest for effecting changes or as a means of achieving social change, direct actions are still very much a legitimate way of voicing dissent for activists and movements in their struggles. Movements which pursue violent revolutionary tactics 'seem to pay the cost of violence without gaining the benefits of employing it. They are both threatening and weak, and their repression becomes a low-cost strategy for those whom they attempt to displace.' There is a resultant increase in population displacement especially in the Northeastern Nigeria (Umar, 2013).

Many studies conducted in different parts of the world where insurgency is taking place have shown that significant socioeconomic inequalities could generate conflict especially when the economic growth prospects are negative (Umar, 2013, Awojobi, 2014). Given Africa's subservience in the global economic system, every nation on the continent must strategically plan for integration of Mass Media in charting a new cause for its development. The mass media plays significant role either in mass mobilisation, motivation or

even in persuasion. In Africa, like in other parts of the modern world, mass media can be deployed to improve socioeconomic activities. The early Mass Media (newspaper, magazines, phonogram, cinema, radio and television), has developed to become an integral part of the society; with an increasingly impact in modern society, in the spheres of politics, culture, daily social life and economics (McQuail' 2010).

This shows that every country or society begets the media that reflects its social system, especially its economic and political systems. Democracies have 'free press' while nations under some forms of dictatorship wallow under serious and sometimes horrible 'repressive situations'. Nigeria is obviously not an exception to this because compared to the freedom the mass media operate today and the situation under the military, the media can be said to have remarkably gained some measure of freedom now. Within the country, some socioeconomic and geopolitical differences among the states spur some significant differences in the freedom the media enjoy. For instance, the hostilities in the Niger Delta and the northeast states have chased journalists away from the said regions, making it difficult for journalists to investigate and anything about the massive corruption that is alleged to be committed by the governors of the said regions in the name of 'security votes'.

Today's world is a dynamic one where every activity is becoming complex and the units that make up the world are fast becoming interconnected into a 'global village' owing to industrialisation, digitalisation and globalisation. Because of this incredibly unprecedented rapid global connectivity, everything ranging from commerce, politics and all other socioeconomic activities taking place in one part of the world are automatically and instantly known in other parts of the world just as those in the place where the activity is taking place.

It has been confirmed that all over the world, the task of developing any society and promoting its socio-economic activities lies not only in the entrepreneurs or governments, but is everybody's business; meaning that all hands are required to be on deck for meaningful development to be recorded in any society. America and other developed nations of Western Europe attained their developments with the full support of all interest groups, ranging from soldiers, artisans, engineers, doctors, lawyers, entrepreneurs, journalists and all other stakeholders.

### **Methodology**

This study only reviewed the relevant literature in related areas like the mass media ownership structure and content control, programming, community press and community radio, as well as use of the social media.

### **Geo-political and Socio-economic activities in the six regions of Nigeria**

The idea of the creating six geo-political zones that make up today's Nigeria was first conceived during the military era when the 1995 constituent assembly was convened. Although the idea could not be brought into the 1999 constitution that is being operated in the country, People's Democratic Party, PDP, the party that has ruled the country since the military left the scene has clearly promoted the idea in allocation of public offices and appointments. This was said to have been done in order to promote popular participation and equitable distribution of the 'national cake'. That at the inception of the time of returning to democratic rule in 1999 three of the six states in region were under the influence of opposition parties makes it one of the areas the administration should have focused attention in its 'transformation agenda' to turn its 'lost to gains'. Today, the region is considered to be the most impoverished in the entire country.

Though a noble idea that was popularly received especially among the political and economic elite, this arrangement of creating the six geo-political zones has failed to promote any socioeconomic activity or investments that could create more jobs particularly in the northeast zone, in fact people of the region including its political leaders accused the federal government of 'abandoning' it, may be because the region has been identified with opposition politicians and political parties. At the inception of this republic in 1999, of the six states that make up the region, the People's Democratic Party, PDP, won gubernatorial elections in Bauchi, Adamawa and Taraba while Borno, Yobe and Gombe states, leaving the opposition All People's Party, APP, now All Nigeria People's Party, ANPP. To date, the sub-region has remained the stronghold of the opposition in the northern region, comprising of members of All Nigeria People's Party, ANPP and Buhari's Congress for Progressive Change, CPC. With the merger of major opposition parties in the country to form the All Progressives Congress, APC, two of the six states in region, the ones most hit by the insurgency are under the control of the new political party.

The northeast region, with large porous borders with Niger, Chad and Cameroun republics, is largely rural, agrarian underdeveloped and mostly desert area is easily accessible to foreigners, notably from Chad whose rebels have been known to have terrorised most parts of the region for decades as petty armed robbers. According to Anaeto and Solo-Anaeto, (2010) "rural areas refer to the countryside, with serene atmosphere on a fervour of something cultural/traditional that cannot be obtained, seen or felt in the hustle and bustle of city life".

North-eastern part of Nigeria which comprises of six states of Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Taraba and Yobe is one of the regions that have recently been in the news, especially in international media outlets, as one of the most volatile and violent regions, resulting in hundreds of deaths and the collapse of socioeconomic and other commercial activities. Before 2009 when the region began to witness insurgency, its major challenge had always been that of lack of industries and viable commercial activities that would provide employment to the teeming unemployed youth. According to American House of Representatives Report on BOKO HARAM Emerging Threat to the U.S. Homeland (2011) northeast region is being ravaged by poverty and military presence, which in turn helps in promoting the insurgency:

...residents in northern Nigeria live in extreme poverty. In Maiduguri, most residents live on less than two dollars a day. Shettima Khalifa Dikwa, chairman of the Voters Forum at the University of Maiduguri, blamed the government and heavy security practices for the growing public sympathy toward Boko Haram. "If it escalates it is the fault of the government and JTF (Joint Task Force). You can't have JTF searching your house, invading your privacy, mistreating people without you having sympathy for Boko Haram."

On July 30, 2009, the battle of Maiduguri ended when Nigerian security forces captured and killed Boko Haram's leader, Mohammed Yusuf, in what human rights groups have deemed an extrajudicial killing. Yusuf's execution was videotaped by soldiers and later broadcast on television, (American House of Representatives Report on BOKO HARAM Emerging Threat to the U.S. Homeland, 2011). The main source employment in the region has always been agriculture, until 1999 when politicians began to offer 'dividends of democracy' to the people in the form of motor cycles which endemic poverty necessitate their use as taxis.

A number of factors have been attributed to fuelling *Boko Haram's* violence and fanaticism, including a feeling of alienation from the wealthier, Christian, oil-producing, southern Nigeria, pervasive poverty, rampant government corruption, heavy-handed security measures, and the belief that relations with the West are a corrupting influence. These grievances have led to sympathy among the local Muslim population despite *Boko Haram's* violent tactics, (American House of Representatives Report on *BOKO HARAM* Emerging Threat to the U.S. Homeland, 2011).

In a federation, anything that affects any of the federating units ultimately affects the others. Already, the effect of the insurgency in the northeast is gradually being felt all over the country as the economy of the federating units which has interconnected the six regions makes one region dependent on the other. What is produced in one region is needed in the other which exchanges it with what it needs in return. With a combined population of about twenty million people, the northeast region cannot be ignored in the nation's scheme of things, and already the crisis in the region has already started having significant effect on other parts of the country.

### **Ownership Structure of the Media in the Northeast**

In the entire region, there are at the moment thirty broadcast stations – radio and television stations in 2013. The remaining stations are owned by either the federal government or the governments of states in which they are established. In the entire region, there are however no functional newspaper or magazines as the few that were established by the state governments have all gone moribund, owing mainly to poor funding, mismanagement and lack of commercials which result from lack of editorial independence that affect their readership.

According to Adler, Roland B. and Elmhorst, Jeanne Marquardt, (1983, p60 Communicating at work) many cultural problems are not caused by malice but by lack of knowledge, (McGraw-Hill Higher Education). The Social Responsibility Theory of the, according to McQuail, (1987) Mass media must retain its freedom from government control, but in exchange media must strive to serve the public. (McQuail, 1987):

- Media should accept and fulfil certain obligations to society.
- Media can meet these obligations by setting high standards of professionalism, truth, accuracy and objectivity.

- Media should be self-regulating within the framework of the law.
- Media should avoid disseminating material that might lead to crime, violence or civil disorder or that might offend minority groups.
- The media as a whole should be pluralistic reflect the diversity of the culture in which they operate, and give access to various points of view and rights of reply.
- The public has a right to expect high standards of performance and official intervention can be justified to ensure the public good.
- Media professionals should be accountable to society as well as to their employers. (McQuail, D. p477).

### **Political Bosses versus Press Freedom**

Politicians, especially those in developing countries, believe that the mass media are established to serve the interest of the state only, regardless of who owns the media outlets. In several countries where relations between politicians and major mass media with high commercial interests have been more harmonious, but conflict still abounds at the local level, where powerful political power brokers and their lobbies use their influence over the judiciary and security forces to intimidate and silence critical journalists and media outlets.

This mentality is particularly so in Nigeria where there is strong military hangover that is characterised by oppression and expectation for blind and unquestionable followership to the wimps and caprices of the military dictators. Similarly, the democratic experiment of these emerging democracies is very fragile and is yet to be fully evolved and institutionalised. One of the most common weapons deployed against these 'erring journalists' or 'uncooperative journalists' consists of laws against defamation, slander, and libel. The most celebrated case is that of African Independent Television, AIT, which had its license suspended by the government it chose to transmit live the proceedings of the National Assembly when the aborted 'third term' bid of President Olusegun Obasanjo was being debated in 2006.

### ***Boko Haram* Insurgency and the Mass Media**

For some times now, several governments and organisations are engaged in supporting reintegration and social cohesion and restoration of local government and basic services, as well as citizen participation in governance

and community activities by involving local communities in the decision-making process around local services and their development priorities. According to Brechenmacher, (2019), in Northeastern Nigeria, donor-funded local stabilization programs have centered on the following priorities areas:

- strengthening local- and state-level conflict prevention and community security mechanisms to help communities prevent and solve emerging conflicts and tensions;
- rehabilitating civilian infrastructure and basic services to strengthen government legitimacy and responsiveness to citizen needs; and
- supporting the reintegration of former fighters, civilian militia, and those associated with insurgent groups, as well as local-level social cohesion more broadly, with a long-term view toward social healing and reconciliation.

The insurgents have severally threatened to 'deal' and have indeed dealt with some media outlets that were identified to be 'hostile' and not 'objective to the cause', leaving some journalists dead and forcing many others to relocate from the northeast zone as a result of the massive attackers carried out on the 'unfriendly' media organisations. This is aside the many coordinated attacks carried on the masts of telephone service providers in the region. As a result of these attacks today, most media organisations have no representatives in the region, particularly Borno and Yobe states, and they rely more or less on wire service and citizen journalists who operate from the violent areas. Such is a scenario is bad to the mass media and very dangerous because it denies journalists the opportunity to crosscheck facts while allegations of human rights infractions against the military can easily go unreported or merely dismissed by the authorities as propaganda against the military Special Joint Task Force, like the allegation of coldblooded murder of many unarmed suspected Boko Haram members in 2009 as reported by *Aljazeera*. While all these are happening on the legacy media practitioners, the insurgents have evolved a more sophisticated means of reaching out to world with their messages. The communication and media they employed are martyrdom video and the internet.

On September 18, 2011, *BBC News* reported that Agence France Presse (AFP) news agency obtained two videos, each 25 minutes in length, of the Boko Haram U.N. bomber that had surfaced in Nigeria. Pictured holding an AK-47



rifle with two other people standing against a wall, the suicide bomber asked his family to understand his decision and explained that the bombing was designed to send a message to the “U.S. President and ‘other infidels (American House of Representatives Report on BOKO HARAM Emerging Threat to the U.S. Homeland, 2011).

### **Identifying the Problems of Mass Media**

The problems of the northeast region appear to have defied any particular remedy because it has become violent that governments have not been able to restore peace, security and order in the region since 2009 when the violence erupted. People of all social status are being killed with impunity and businesses, including those of media are collapsing and leaving the region. Ordinarily, media men are known to be in pursuit of news, regardless of the safety of the areas where the news is unfolding.

Since modern development is a product of strategic communication and other variables, Abiola (2010) argued that development in real sense of the word should not be misconstrued just as “physical development manifested in expressed roads, electricity supply, industrialization, aesthetics, architectural structures and landscape. Development that does not include attitudinal changes that will respect the dignity of labour and the propensity towards social changes, and a self-reliant economy is at best incomplete”.

### **Investing in the Mass Media**

The ‘business’ of establishing media organisations has not been well accepted in this part of the country because those who have the wherewithal to do so do not see it as not a lucrative one because it does not immediately yield monetary returns like other businesses do. The major areas they invest their money are in construction, banking and political investment, probably because they don’t know that the same media, if well established, may not directly yield financial returns but may be used to secure other high-profit-yielding returns.

For a very long time in Nigeria’s political history, most states outside of the Southwest have been complaining of ‘media imbalance’, like in other critical areas of development. It is true that this imbalance does exist, but who, apart from the people of the region can make that desired investment to simply address a feeling of imbalance? The other regions that enjoy ‘media

advantage' actually made it so not by any government effort but by strategic planning and self-sacrifice which the northeast region appears not to be interested in.

To break this jinx and address this imbalance in media distribution, professionals and other entrepreneurs must put heads together and establish formidable media organisations. It is reassuring to know that the region is blessed with some of the best hands the country has ever produced in the practice of journalism and media management. This the region can start by establishing private regional media outlets that can serve the entire region (including private newspapers, television and radio stations as obtained in other parts of the country and device ways of subsidising media productions by frequently facilitating supplements and other forms of advertising to ensure that the media organisations remain in business).

In establishing these media organisations, care must be exercised not to allow politicians with partisan political interests take over them. From experience, anybody with partisan political interest that makes significant investment in the establishment of media organisation will most certainly strive to take over the control of the media organisation's editorial independence and twists it to his political advantage and once that is done and the audience allowed to understand that the organisation has particular political leaning, the medium loses some other segment of its audience and erodes the very reason for establishing the media organisation in the first place. This particular interference with the editorial content of newspapers, poor management and lack of constant source of advert are the main reasons for the collapse of virtually in the newspapers established by various state governments.

As an institution, the region has confirmed its poor management skill of media business from the way the once vibrant *New Nigerian* newspaper was allowed to rot and remained so. The state government making up the region cannot therefore establish any media outlet that will make any meaningful impact on the lives of the people of the region.

History of managing newspaper in the country has shown that the most sustainable way of establishing media organisation is when the professionals come together and establish it without direct investment of politicians. Some classical cases of media platforms established by professional journalists that have endured all the odds against the business in this country are those of Media Trust, publisher of *Trust* newspapers and *NewsWatch* magazine, which

later gave birth to *Tell, The News* and other weekly newsmagazines are good examples.

Another way of establishing sustainable media organisations is by the coming together of many entrepreneurs cutting those without political interests and equally bringing those across partisan political interests to establish an organisation with clearly defined interest which that of advancing the general interest of the entire region and its people and not that of any particular individual because no single individual has controlling shares in the investment that will provide him the avenue of manipulating the organisation.

### **Media Training Institutions**

It has been argued over and over again that journalism practice is not a profession but an art. However, it is a known fact that regardless of one's talent, training makes the best of journalists, even where they are talented. Establishing institutions for training journalists is a fundamental requirement for developing high standards of journalistic training in the northeast region. At the moment, apart from University of Maiduguri that runs degree and postgraduate degrees, it is only The Federal Polytechnic in Bauchi and Mubi that have diploma programmes. Don't forget that collectively, these institutions do not turn out a thousand graduates annually, and more importantly, the institutions being federal ones in a country that strives to promote unity among the federating units, they are ostensibly established to service not only the region but must allocate some admission slots to other parts of the country.

### **Business Programmes**

Private sector participation must be encouraged and facilitated through tax waivers, government credit facilities, and incentivized investment opportunities (Umar, 2013). According to McNamara (1968), any society that seeks to achieve adequate military security against the background of any acute food shortage, population explosion, low level of productivity, inadequate and inefficient public utilities, and chronic problems of unemployment, has a false sense of security. Northeast region has the least reading culture among the six geo-political zones, owing to its low level of education. This poor reading culture, coupled with excruciating poverty leads to low level of reading newspapers. Therefore, to effectively reach the

common man within any message in the mass media in this particular area and mobilise its people towards accepting and adopting any new innovation, one requires deploying massive usage of broadcast media especially radio. Fulani herdsmen whose lifestyles involves nomadic cattle rearing in the bush, for instance, are seen with their radio sets hung on their shoulders listening to news and programmes wherever they are seen. In this region, what the people lack from low level of newspaper readership, they make it up by strong radio listening culture because virtually every household relies on radio for its news needs.

In rebuilding the northeast region, therefore, the mass media must embrace business programmes. In this part of the world particularly those that have tasted prolong military dictatorship, this concept of business programmes is relatively new in the practice of mass communication, though its trends, sophistication and operations are being tailored towards promoting economic activities within a given society. In broadcasting, particularly in times of peace building and conflict resolution, 'business programmes' basically are those television productions that aim at conveying particular economic and commercial messages in the form of news items, reports, or even entertaining productions such as movies and TV series.

Business programmes generally aims at conveying economic and commercial ideas or messages; and therefore, need to have complete understanding of what they aim at delivering to the recipients of the messages, otherwise they will fail to pass the ideas in question as accurately as possible across to those targeted in the first place. The business programmes in the case of the present northeast Nigeria may focus on reviving the age-long collectivised communal efforts in addressing social problems, promoting the idea of community development efforts that target enhanced popular participation like community policing. This particular feat has paid a great deal at the height of the insurgency in areas where police and other security agents were forced to go under and local traditional community leaders were the ones resolving conflicts amongst the people.

Moreover, they should bear in mind that introducing empirical researches is just as important as complicated theoretical aspects for the audience. The role that a researcher could play in this regard has been paid less attention in Iran than in developed countries. If the researchers of television programmes, who are responsible for developing the original theoretical ideas into a practical

model, do their job properly, the intended idea will be conveyed far more effectively.

The best and most effective business media is one that possesses a good knowledge of the national and local economic system of a country, has theoretical and procedural stability in its pursuit of national goals, and utilises a logical scientific method in its analyses. There's no doubt that there are quite a lot of solutions to economic problems but introducing these solutions is a burden shouldered by the mass media. As such, the Iranian national media is required to follow a certain economic path, one that is comprised of the overall framework of the domestic economy as well as that of the Islamic methodology and ethical values.

### **Promoting Community Press**

Political communication is one area that has not received enough of attention of media scholars, partly because democracy itself is not fully developed in the country which makes literature virtually none available about the country's political experience. The truth is that studies are seriously needed in this important area because is that traditional African societies have unique identities that require special media treatment before any impact can be made in political communication. Africans strongly believe in anything that promotes community participation because of the communality of its lifestyle. Community press is one such important aspect of life of the Africans can best serve the information needs of the African societies, especially in political communication because it provides the people with a platform for discussions about the political information needs of the society. For the people to accept and embrace any political communication message, they should be made to have an input into that message as something they strongly believe in. For this, Blumler and Gurevitch, (1981: p42) averred that "political communication originates in mutual dependence within a framework of divergent though overlapping purposes. Each side of the politician-media professional partnership is striving to realise certain goals, vis-à-vis the audience: yet it cannot pursue them without securing, in some form, the cooperation of the other side".

The concept of community press, especially as it regards political communication, according to Romirez (1989), is intended to be a window of the community to the outside world and it is the link with the mainstream of

information and national life. Also speaking in the same manner, Nwosu (1991) notes that rural community newspaper provides a better interpreted and an in-depth information to the rural people and places development issues in greater perspective than urban-based newspapers, provides the community with a voice, encourages participation in the community life, promotes diversity, creativity and freedom. It is forum for dialogue and understanding.

### **Citizen and Civic Journalism**

Many scholars and commentators, especially those of the Marxists school, have argued that a pluralist society does promote inequality in the coverage and reportage of news and other events that make up news in mass media, including political matters. Among those who share this belief are Murdock and Golding, (1978) who argued that “the mass media are thus integrated into an already structured and unequal society and, more importantly, those systemic inequalities are not self-sustaining but require agencies such as the mass media, the education system, the Church to maintain and reproduce them”.

African societies are perhaps the societies that suffer most of this inequality in the coverage and distribution of news because most of the African societies have few, if any, privately-owned media outfits; a reason which makes information flow to be one-way i.e. from the government to the governed without any provision for the governed to respond, while opposition party is left with little or no outlet to reach out to the electorate. This calls for civic journalism that opens up the rather closed doors of information flow by providing them a channel that serves them in spite of their lack of media of mass communication, especially among those disadvantaged members of the society.

The long history of citizen journalism is traced to the United States, one of the leading democracies in the world that boasts of having the ‘freest press’, a cornerstone of libertarian democracy. Citizen journalism emanated because of the belief that an average citizen can engage in the act of journalism, mainly because journalists have not been able to adequately cover and report events that happen daily around the world and journalists became part of the public, or civic journalism movement, a countermeasure against the eroding trust in the news media and widespread public disillusionment with politics and civic affairs.

Civic journalism actually aims at proposing a new contract between the people and the press. It begins with the understanding that journalists have a fundamental responsibility strengthening civil culture. Standing apart, as seemingly neutral observers while public life public life collapses is no longer

possible, even if journalists wish that it were. Civic journalism is about making connections between journalists and the communities they cover, and between journalists and the communities they cover, and between journalism and citizenship, (Adamu, 2011).

Although civic journalism seeks to strengthen civic culture by “working to reconnect people to their communities, draw them into politics and civic affairs, and reclaiming the system as public property – is at the heart of civic journalism. This requires redefining the relationship of journalism and political coverage. Mughan and Gunther, (2000: p1), argued that “the mass communications media are the connective tissues of democracy. They are the principal means through which citizens and their elected representatives communicate in their reciprocal efforts to inform and influence”.

Despite growing diversity in the range of issues covered by civic journalists, most still return to the reinvention of political coverage as a starting point for reconnecting citizens and politics. Adamu (2011) further argued that political coverage is the arena in which civic journalism was born. In its effort to remake the socio-economy of the northeast, the region must fashion out ways of promoting civic journalism because that is the major way of mobilising the people to engage, either as individuals or a community, in contributing to remaking the region and restoring its lost glory.

Smart phones accord more and more people, especially youth the opportunity of surfing the internet to access news and other pieces of information about their societies. Civic journalism is one of such platforms that are employed not only for receiving news and useful information, but also for members without any formal professional training or experience, using their cameras, smart phones and other electronic devices to cover and report events that are daily unfolding in areas where journalists cannot venture. There are quite very few media organisations and too fewer practitioners to cover all the events happenings around and many more people reading news posted on the internet as a result of development in information and communication technologies, making the world truly a ‘global village’. If these events are to be properly covered, civic journalism must be embraced and professionalised. Although sometimes seen as an unprofessional encroachment, citizen journalism has come to stay.

Simply put, ‘Civic journalists’ refers to individuals playing the role of journalists in the process of collecting, reporting, sorting, analyzing and disseminating news and information—a task once reserved almost exclusively to the professional news media outlets. Citizen journalism is a new and, some say, crude development in the ‘practice’ of journalism. Though its approach and practice are sometimes very amateurish and unprofessional, yet it has come to be accepted as a necessity in this information age particularly because of the explosion of internet sites, blogs spots and other

social networks that provide news and information across national boundaries to hundreds of millions of people whose news and information needs cannot be serviced by professional journalists alone.

Citizen journalism today has generated confusion even among mass communicators and students of journalism, and it is very interesting partly because it is sometimes confused with community journalism or civic journalism, which are all practiced strictly by professionally trained journalists, while some other people mistake it for collaborative journalism that is practiced by a team of professional and non-professional journalists working together to serve a common goal.

Mobile phones are the major vehicles for carrying out citizen journalistic reporting because they provides almost every mobile phone user the power of reporting any event taking place around him. Certainly mobile phones provide a very convenient, low-cost option for people wishing to engage in citizen journalism operations. The practice of citizen Journalism became widespread and sophisticated essentially as a result of the rapid development in Information and Communication Technology which it exploits as a "specific form of citizen media as well as user generated content". Sometimes known as "public", "participatory", "democratic", "guerrilla" or "street journalism", citizen Journalism is a concept of journalism where members of the public get the opportunity to play "an active role in the process of collecting, reporting, analyzing, and disseminating news and information" to the general public just as other professional journalists do, though with some marked differences.

Jay Rosen describe citizen journalists as "the people formerly known as the audience," who "*were* on the receiving end of a media system that ran one way, in a broadcasting pattern, with high entry fees and a few firms competing to speak very loudly while the rest of the population listened in isolation from one another -- and who *today* are not in a situation like that *at all*. ... The people formerly known as the audience are simply the public made realer, less fictional, more able, less predictable." Thus, Citizen Journalism came into being as a response to the failure of 'professional' journalists to meet the aspiration of their audiences, thus citizen journalism is a public response to the lost of trust journalists suffer in their journalistic responsibility.

### **Harnessing the Region's Tourism and Oil Potentials**

Tourism is very important source of revenue in global international business and has remained a major source of foreign earner to many countries in the world that have adequately harnessed it and promoted it using the mass media. It needs to be clearly stated that any investment in tourism is failed investment if the mass media are dishing out negative stories about the tourism destination. If properly developed and adequately harnessed on the one hand, and the media only reports the good and the positive about the



tourism destination, tourism can transform the economy of Nigeria. Interesting, the northeast region which has been devastated by civil strife has some of the most promising attractions and sources that can generate more money to region than what it presently receives from petrodollar. The media has a duty to promote these potentials since it is the platform that sets agenda for public policy formulation and discourse in the public sphere.

Secondly, it has been reported that the republics of Chad and Niger have oil deposits in commercial quantities and being neighbour to these countries, the Nigeria's north eastern region has great possibility of getting oil and it becomes the responsibility of the media to promote and push for the exploration this important mineral resource. But since the northeast has no serious media organisations, the onus lies on them the entire region to ensure that enough investment is made in projecting the image of the region and not the bad state that it is in today.

### Conclusion

Rebuilding any society destroyed by crisis like insurgency requires everybody stakeholder's contribution including that of the mass media. The media is seen as the most important because of its apparent power it possess of mobilising the general public. It is now evident that socioeconomic activities in the northeast which was destroyed as a result of the insurgency can only be restored when the media deploys its power to project that region's positive sides and the negative sides are deemphasised. The challenge is not that of one individual or government. It the collective responsibility of all stakeholders and the media to make sure that the best the region has are brought out while attracting investors through reportage.

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